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Practical Criticism of Classical Arabic Poetry: an investigation of the attitude of Arab poets and their audiences towards poetry in the early classical period.

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Arts in the University of Glasgow.

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my mother

أهدي لك عبر مكارم ملكك واحترام من الهدية التي لم يخلفها العرَمَ (اللَّهُ)

To my father, to my brothers and sisters, in particular my elder brother Al-Tayyib and his wife Batūl, and to my wife Su’aad and my son Muhammad, to all of them I dedicate this thesis.

Mehdi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am especially grateful to my kind supervisor Dr. John N. Watten, Head of the Arabic and Islamic Department in the University of Glasgow, and I should like to express my sincere gratitude to him for his patience, his invaluable help, his useful advice, and his kindness throughout the whole period of this research.

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I am heartily indebted and grateful to my wife Su‘āda Muhammad al-Hada and to my son Muhammad, for their constant love, endless patience, and for their great support and kindness to me. To them I should like to express my deepest gratitude and best wishes. Finally many thanks are due to Mrs Dot Briggs for her kindness and great endurance in typing this thesis.
This thesis seeks to present, through the examination of the views of as many as possible of those who were principally concerned with the subject, a general conspectus of the contemporary criteria for excellence in Arabic poetry from its beginnings until the time of Ibn al-Mu'tazz. There are a number of problems that face anyone attempting such an examination; much of the information is scattered and fragmentary, and even when it is readily accessible, it is still often difficult to interpret, owing to its unspecific, and sometimes contradictory, nature. Nonetheless, it is possible to make a number of suggestions, on the basis of the collected comments of poets themselves, critics of varying interests and approaches, and laymen with a more or less informed concern for poetry, which, it is hoped, serve to provide further illumination on some aspects of this vital but mysterious topic. It is not claimed that any revolutionary new interpretations have been offered; the nature of the subject, and the material available, do not lend themselves to this. It is only by attempting gradually to approach a fuller understanding of the elusive terms in which the mediaeval Arabs spoke of their poetry, and of the unfamiliar assumptions that lay behind it, that we can hope eventually to arrive at a proper critical appreciation of it. It is hoped that the present study makes some contribution to such an understanding.

The thesis is divided up on a somewhat broad basis for the earlier part of the period, both chronologically and geographically; subsequently the divisions become narrower, first by schools and then by individuals. Ibn al-Mu'tazz was chosen as the final figure to be considered, as representing the culmination of a certain type of criticism.

The chapters of the thesis are as follows:
Chapter One:
The Jāhiliyya

Chapter Two:
The Early Islamic Period

Chapter Three:
Hijāri Poets of the Umayyad Period

Chapter Four:
Iraqi and Syrian Poets of the Umayyad and Early Abbasid Periods

Chapter Five:
The Muhdathūn

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The Opinions of the Poets

Chapter Seven:
The Old School of Critics (Ruwāt, Philologists, and Grammarians)

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The Modern School 4. Ibn al-Mu'tazz

a. A General View

b. The Quotations in Taṭqāt al-shu'arāʾ al-muhdathin
INTRODUCTION

A great deal remains to be discovered concerning classical Arabic poetry. The unanswered questions are many and obvious, more particularly in connection with the Jahili period, but also to some extent in connection with later periods as well; they concern the origins of Arabic poetry, its methods of composition, its conventions, its subject-matter, its authenticity, its meaning, and its very object. The obstacles confronting those examining these questions are formidable: the inherent difficulty of much of the material, the uncertain state of the texts, the fragmentary way in which some of the poetry has been preserved, but principally the sheer bulk of what has to be studied and the limited numbers of those available to study it. It is possible, and even probable, that the application of modern aids to scholarship, such as the computer, will eventually give answers to the more technical of these questions; others will always require a breadth of knowledge and a certainty of taste that are bound to be as rarely found in individual scholars as they have always been.

One fundamental question that we are still a long way from answering is: what did the Arabs, the poets themselves, their contemporaries, and their later readers, regard as constituting good poetry, and what criteria did they apply in making such decisions? To some extent, the first part of this question can be answered by instinct. It is not difficult to make a short list of names that one knows, as it were impressionistically, would generally be regarded as among the principal Arab poets, e.g. Imru' al-Qays, al-Mutanabbi, Abū Nuwās, al-Asfahānī, Abū al-‘Alā al-Ma‘arri, and one or two others. Apart from such obvious candidates, however, there are a very large number of contenders for consideration, all of whom would no doubt have their champions, and it is at this point that the second part of the question becomes particularly pertinent. When a body of poetry is clearly
based on an elaborate set of conventions - conventions so rigorous that it is often difficult to distinguish the work of individual poets of the same general period - the criteria that the poets and their audiences employed in their respective capacities necessarily assume greater importance for the later student of the poetry than would be the case with more diversified material. Our understanding of these criteria is all too small. A certain amount of work has been done on the writings of the more academic Arab critics of the later part of the classical period, and this has yielded much valuable information. It seems appropriate, however, also to consider in as much detail as possible the views expressed, or reported as having been expressed, by those closer in time to the poets in question, whatever their qualifications may have been for expressing such views, for it is probable that what the later critics had to say was, at least in part, based on these.

The material considered in this study is of a very diverse nature. At one end of the scale we have the works of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, himself a distinguished poet, who devoted a great deal of attention to all aspects of his craft, in addition to concerning himself, of necessity, with the political and religious affairs of the Arab empire; he occupied a unique position in the history of Arabic literature and criticism, and his views are therefore of the greatest possible interest and importance. At the other end are the scattered comments on the subject by the early caliphs, whose views on literature may be supposed to have been influenced by a variety of considerations, perhaps the least cogent of which was aesthetic. In between come the writings of the philologists and lexicographers, whose approach to poetry was of a very particular kind, the classifiers of Tabaqāt, whose systems appear idiosyncratic and frequently obscure, and the Adab-writers such as al-Jahiz and Ibn Qutayba, who often present some of the most interesting opinions. The views of poets themselves are patently of great value; it is unfortunate that so many of these - and
they are not very plentiful - are recorded in the form of isolated, often casual, remarks, which are incompatible with, or flatly contradict, other such remarks, and to which too much weight should not be given, even assuming that their attribution is correct. Nevertheless, it has been thought right to assemble as much of this disparate information as possible, in the hope that, despite the difficulty of evaluation of individual items, some kind of comprehensive picture may emerge of the way in which the adherents of this fascinating but elusive medium thought about it.

Some of the material considered here is, of course, already familiar. It is improbable that any startlingly new insights will accrue from a wider-ranging examination, but it is to be hoped that this will, at all events, provide some evidence either to confirm or to cast doubt on various points, the validity of which has until now depended largely on impressions rather than on documentary evidence. It is likewise to be hoped that future students of this poetry may find indications of directions for future profitable research.

As to the period covered, its beginning was easy enough to establish, but its end did not suggest itself nearly so obviously, since it would have been interesting, and no doubt useful, to pursue the history of Arabic poetic criticism a good deal further. Considerations of time and space, however, demanded that a limit should be set; it seemed not intolerably arbitrary to set it at the point at which the controversy over the muhādthin and the ancients, on which critics had achieved some sort of compromise, was about to break out afresh. This point was also that at which the more theoretical critical works, already referred to, began to be written. It marks the end of the period of what, in modern terms, may be called 'practical criticism' - although, in view of the obscurity of
some of this criticism, 'practical' is perhaps an unduly optimistic adjective. Some of the less academic criticism advanced in these later works is, in fact, mentioned, so that we do not, with Ibn al-Ma‘tazz' writings, come to a clean break in the tradition. Nevertheless, they proved a convenient mile-stone at which to pause to take stock, and, in the event, to conclude this already perhaps over-extended study.
CHAPTER ONE

The JĀHILIYYA

The aspect of Jāhili poetic criticism which I propose to discuss is that of *muwazana*, or poetic comparison in which a critic compares two poems, lines, or poets in order to tell which or who is better. This type of criticism is the most common one in Jāhili times, and it continues throughout the history of Arabic literature. The idea of *muwazana* probably appeared in the field of criticism due to the nature of the Arabs' life in the Jāhiliyya, when they indulged in tribal *mufākara* and *munafara* concerning power, courage, generosity, eloquence and other valuable qualities. In each field a tribe claimed that they were the best, and this idea was transferred to the poetic field, where we find the poet who claimed himself to be the best. The practice continued, both in society as a whole, where, under Islam, piety became the criterion -

\[ \text{بَنِيُّ الْمَلَكَةِ عِنْدَ الْأَسْلَامِ} \]

and in poetic criticism, where explicit criteria were gradually established.

The critics at the time of the Jāhiliyya were, in general, the poets themselves; and by making use of those views attributed to them we may be able to form an idea about the sort of poetry they preferred. Those critical views are few and scattered and it seems that a great deal of them have been lost, as Abu ʿAmr b-al-ʿAlā' states. In general, those views are concerned with either one line or two, and sometimes with a whole poem or the whole poetry of a poet as compared with another. Sometimes they deal with a poet himself and describe him instead of talking about his poetry. A critic may be asked to give his opinion about the best poet or the best type of poetry, or he may be asked to compare and
judge between a group of poets. A poet may simply claim himself the best, and another may compete with others in writing poetry spontaneously on a certain subject so as to see who is the most successful. No doubt some of those critical views are influenced by tribalism and personal conflicts, and therefore they cannot always be taken at their face value. Nevertheless, they give us an idea about the nature of criticism at its earliest stage, and we can see in them the seeds of later poetic criticism.

Before we talk about what we think to be the criteria used by the Jahilīs in their poetic comparison, it may be useful to consider briefly the methods followed by the Jahili poets in order to satisfy the taste of their audience, either in their own tribes, at the fairs like 'Uqāz, or during their travels in Arabia. Al-Nabīgha and al-'Aṣhā are good examples of travelling poets. There were also the reciters who transmitted the poems of their masters, and by this method the Jahili poet had his poetry spread over a wide area. It is notorious that the Jahili poet had to conform rigorously to inherited conventions; the Jahili gasīda generally opens with nasīb and atlāl, then comes the rahīl which includes the description of the she-camel, and then comes the main subject of the gasīda, whether madīḥ or another topic. Within these general limits the poet would attempt to achieve a poem perfect in the judgement of an audience whose apparently insatiable appetite for similar themes and details must have been informed by considerable expertise in the matter of vocabulary, metre and rhyme, and perhaps, even at this date, by an appreciation of the finer points of simile and īstiʿāra.3

The Hawliyyat of Zuhayr give us an idea of the effort that the poet made in order to compose perfect poems. Zuhayr himself was aware of the fact that he could do nothing but follow earlier poets, and in one of his lines he made it clear that he and his contemporary poets were only repeating
what had been already said by their predecessors:

When 'Antara wrote the line that opens his mu'allaqa:

\[ \text{قال} \quad \text{كانت} \quad \text{الشجرة} \quad \text{تُصَرَّرُ} \quad \text{تُصَرَّرُ} \]

he was in fact regarding himself as a modern poet; as Ibn Rashīq put it:

"'Antara considered himself a mubdath in comparison with the earlier Jahili poets when he mentioned in his above-quoted line that he had arrived at poetry when all its topics were finished and covered by the earlier poets before him, and there remained nothing for him to say".⁵

A poet might be criticised and disparaged because of a single defect in a poem. It is said that al-Mutalammis or al-Musayyab was criticised by Tarafa for his line:

\[ \text{وَقَدْ أَنْسَسْيَ الْحَمَّمَ} \quad \text{غَنِّيَ احْتَفَارُهُ} \quad \text{نَاجِعُ عَلَىِّ السَّعَرَةِ مُّكَرَّرَ} \]

When Tarafa listened to the line he said: "Istinwaqa al-jamalu" or "the camel has become a she-camel". This is because the poet attributed to the male a quality (say'ariyya) which can be applied to the female only.⁶

For these reasons the Jahili poet found it necessary to scrutinise and polish his poetry, in order to satisfy his discriminating audience. The best examples of this are provided by poets like Zuhayr and those who followed his path such as al-Hutay'a and Ka'b b. Zuhayr. Imru' al-Qays himself admitted that he used to scrutinise his poetry carefully and select for recitation what he thought to be the best. He wrote:

\[ \text{أَذَوَّرَ الْقُوَالِيَ عَشَّى وَنَحَرَ اسْتَبْنَى} \quad \text{فَأَعْزَرُ مُرَجَّانَهَا جَانِيَّ} \]

Imru' al-Qays also used other methods to appeal to his public. Some Jahili poets did not properly bring their poems to a close, and he did the same in his mu'allaqa, ending it with the following line:

\[ \text{كَأَنَّ الْسَّبَاعَ فِيَهُ عَرَقَ عَشَيْةَ} \quad \text{بِأَرْجَاهِمَ الْفَضْرُ أَنَا بَيْشَ عُنْصُرُ} \]
As Ibn Rashīq says, the listener feels that the *gasīda* is not yet finished and there is something more to be added. This sudden breaking-off of the *gasīda*, as Ibn Rashīq suggests, attracts the listener, and increases his interest in the *gasīda* and his desire to hear more of it. This abrupt conclusion is praiseworthy, because it is a sign of *tabīb*. Another device that Imru' al-Qays is fond of is the frequent use of similes in which the preposition *ka* does not appear, e.g.:

\[
\text{سَمَّىَ الْبَرْقُ الْبَرْقِيَّةَ،}
\]

and:

\[
\text{وَأَيْماَ الْبَرْقُ الْبَرْقِيَّةَ}
\]

This device is also used by other poets of the Jahiliyya like al-Munakhkhal al-Yashkuri, e.g.:

\[
\text{فَرَفَعَهَا رُكْنَاءَ أَفْعَطَ وَمَشَىَ الْقَطَّانَ إِلَىَّ الْفَجِيرَ.}
\]

What al-Qādī al-Jurjānī writes in his *Wasātā* about some of the criteria used by the Jahili Arabs in their poetic criticism and comparison may cast more light on the sort of poetry admired by them: "The Arabs, when comparing poets, look for the sublimity and correctness of *manā* and eloquence and soundness of phraseology. They prefer that poet who writes excellent descriptions, and produces apposite similes, the one who writes poetry spontaneously, the one who includes many proverbs and famous unique lines. They do not care for *tajnīs*, *mutābaqa*, and *isti̇kāra*. The only thing they care for is that poetry should be composed according to the *tāmuḍ al-shī'ar*. The two qualities of eloquence *jazāla* and soundness required in the phraseology of poetry are the same as those required by the Jahili Arabs in their speech. Sublimity (sharaf) of *manā* is a criterion which appeared later when critics called for exaggeration in *madīn*, *nasīb* or *hijā', regardless of sincerity. It appears probable that al-Jurjānī did not mean that the Jahili Arabs understood sublimity of *manā* in the same way as later critics understood it, though we do not deny that some Jahili critics called for hyperbole in poetry, as we shall see later. It
seems to me that the Jahili Arabs looked for decent subjects which accorded with reality and facts. They cared for words, tashbih, spontaneity and proverbs. They were interested in unique individual lines, probably containing hikma, a proverb or even an excellent tashbih.

What al-Jurjani says is affirmed by Ibn Rashiq in his remark that the Jahili Arabs did not care for jinaas, tibaa or muqabala, and that they were interested in eloquence and firmness of speech, clarity of mana, sound formation of poetry, and perfection (ikhām) of rhymes, and required that the sentences in the gasīda should be connected with one another; he called it tašāhum al-kalām. This last quality is shown in the gasīda of al-Huṣayn in the following lines of madīh:

Ibn Rashiq quotes other lines as an example of what he thinks to be a sort of san'a admired by the Jahili poets, though unlike the san'a of the muhdathīn. The lines quoted are by Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhal, describing wild asses and a hunter:

Ibn Rashiq, quoting the above two pieces, thinks that "the formation of
the discourse in that connected manner" in the lines of the former and
the repetition of the letter fa' in the latter indicates that the two
poets were aware of what they were doing and that they were intentionally
making use of a sort of san'a. It was with this kind of san'a in view
that Zuhayr felt obliged to polish and re-appraise his poetry while
composing his Hawliyyat. 12 Al-Hutay'a, in the lines quoted above, repeats
the first half of the first line in the second. This repetition is called
takrār; it is regarded as a poetic felicity, and was frequently used by
poets. When it is used in madāh, as in the lines above, its purpose is
to glorify the madāh, here the tribe of Qurayş. Takrār also occurs in
nāsidh, with the poet repeating the name of his beloved. A good example
of this is found in Imrū' al-Qays:

ربّ وَلَسَّمَ خَافِيًا يَزُّ الْيَلِّوُبَادَيُّ الْمَرَّةِ أَوْلَى سَيِّيَّةٌ أَوْعَالٍ
فَخَفَّسَ مَسْلِمٌ رَأَّنِي نَزْلًا
لِبَالِيَ سَلِيمٌ إِذَا تَرْكِّبُ مِنْهَا
وَجِيدًا كَرِيْبُ الرَّمْلِ لَتْسُيَّرُ عَنْهُ

13

Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī is fond of takrār. In his poem beginning:

أَمَّرَحْيَرُ عَلَيْهَا كَنِّي الشَّيْمِ قَلْبُّٰل
وَقَرَبَّ سَيِّيَّةٌ رَأَّنِي نَزْلًا كَوْفَةً
فِي الْوَصْفِ أَوُلَى سَيِّيَّةٌ أَوْعَالٍ
فَخَفَّسَ مَسْلِمٌ رَأَّنِي نَزْلًا
لِبَالِيَ سَلِيمٌ إِذَا تَرْكِّبُ مِنْهَا
وَجِيدًا كَرِيْبُ الرَّمْلِ لَتْسُيَّرُ عَنْهُ

he repeats the following line seven times:

فَإِذَا وَذَلِكَ لَيْسَ إِلَّا ذَكْرُهُ
وَإِذَا مَفْعُوْلُ شَهِيْدٌ كَانَ لَمْ يَعْتَلَي

14 Ibn Rashiq's text is different from that in the Diwan al-Hudhalīyyīn
in which the line occurs only once, at the end of the poem. 15 However,
Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī certainly repeats the same line in four poems. Its
occurrence is in the poem starting:

أَزْهَبْ هُلَّ عَلِيَّةٌ فَنَبِيَّةٌ مَّقْصُرٌ
أَمْ أَرْسَيْلَ إِلَى الشَّبَابِ الْجَمِّيْرِ

Its third is in that starting:

أَزْهَبْ هُلَّ عَلِيَّةٌ فَنَبِيَّةٌ مَّقْصُرٌ
أَمْ أَرْسَيْلَ إِلَى الشَّبَابِ الْجَمِّيْرِ

And its fourth is in that starting:

أَزْهَبْ هُلَّ عَلِيَّةٌ فَنَبِيَّةٌ مَّقْصُرٌ
أَمْ أَرْسَيْلَ إِلَى الشَّبَابِ الْجَمِّيْرِ
He also frequently repeats the name of his daughter Zuhayra in his poems, together with other words. Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhali, whose lines we have quoted above for his repetition of the letter fa', seems to be particularly fond of that conjunction, which he uses a great deal in the rest of his poetry. It seems that he uses it as a means of connecting his lines closely with one another; this is apparent in the lines quoted above and those that follow, from the same poem. Describing a wild bull with a hunter and his dogs, he writes:

This close connection of the lines with one another seems to be the same as the idea of giran discussed by al-Jahiz later. A poet is reported as saying to another that he is the better poet and when the other poet asks why, the answer is: "because I write a verse and its brother and you write a verse and its cousin". Al-Jahiz explains this to mean that the other poet has no connection between the ideas in his lines. This may suggest a sort of unity that the Jahili poets were aware of, and
admired. Al-ʿAṣḥāb in one of his poems writes:

Al-Jāḥiz adds to his explanation that a verse can be the brother of another if there are similarity and harmony between them. What concerns us here is that he stated that the line of Al-ʿAṣḥāb quoted above has the same idea of connection and harmony between the lines of a poem. 

It seems that the Jāhilīs also admired length in poetry, as is evidenced in the observation concerning the poetry of al-Nābigha compared with that of Imru’ al-Qays. When they asked al-Nābigha to prolong his poems as Imru’ al-Qays did, he said to them: "he who writes poetry should select". 20 This was al-Nābigha’s excuse for the shortness of his poems; he used to select the good lines from a poem and reject the bad ones, and this made his poems shorter. Though Imru’ al-Qays also made a practice of selecting the good lines, nevertheless his poems are longer.

Al-Nābigha, whom we regard as the critic of the Jāhilīs, had many critical views attributed to him. When he was once asked "who is the best poet of all?" his answer was: "He is the one whose excellent poetry is admired and whose bad poetry is laughed at". Ibn Rashīq comments: "It is hard to believe that such a view could be held by al-Nābigha because if a poet’s bad poetry is laughed at, that means he is one of the worst poets, unless al-Nābigha meant by "bad poetry" hiǧā’ poetry". 21 However, if al-Nābigha meant by "bad poetry" hiǧā’ poetry, it may indicate that the best hiǧā’ poetry, in his view, is that which contains most mockery. This is perhaps supported, as we shall see later, by his mocking hiǧā’ of Āmīr b. al-Tufayl.

Al-Nābigha also seems to have preferred hyperbole in poetry and for him the best poet is the one who lies most. He is again reported as saying:
"The best poet is the one whose lies are admired and whose bad poetry is laughed at" or "the one whose lies and mutābaqa are admired".\(^{22}\) Besides hyperbole, to which we shall refer later, we notice that al-Nābigha indicates mutābaqa as a characteristic of excellent and admirable poetry. He does not give any example from poetry and therefore it is not easy to know what he meant by mutābaqa, and whether the term had the same meaning as it did later for the poets of bādī."^\(^{22}\)

The idea of the best poetry as being "that which lies most" is also attributed to Hājar, the father of Imru' al-Qays, who is reported as saying to his son: "O my son, the sweetest poetry is that which lies most; how can you allow yourself to lie?"\(^{23}\)

Nevertheless, among the Jahili poets there were apparently some who preferred sincerity and truth in poetry. The following lines are attributed to many poets, among them Hassan b. Thābit:

\[
\text{وَأَيُّ الْشَّعْرُ لِبَيْنَ الْمَرْبُوبَةِ عَلَى الْجَالِسِينَ إِنَّ كَيْساً وَإِنَّ فِيّاً}
\]

These lines are attributed also to Zuhayr in \textit{al-Iqd al-Farād}\(^{24}\) and to Ḍaqīla al-Akbar in \textit{Kitāb al-sina‘atayn} of Abū Hilāl al-Askari\(^{25}\). If Zuhayr is the author of the two lines, they probably reflect his own character, as described by Ibn Qutayba:

\[
\text{وَلَنْ زَعِبَ يِتَالَةً وَيَغُنِّي فِي شَعْرِهِ}
\]

However, al-Askari, in his comment on the first line of the two, says that it means that the best poetry is that which teaches wisdom and contains preaching that amends the soul, and that which indicates good habits to be cultivated and bad to be avoided. Al-Askari adds that the line may also refer to that madīh poetry which praises men with genuineness and sincerity, avoiding exaggeration. "Those who admired the poetry that lies most", said al-Askari, "were looking for exaggera-
According to Yûnus b. Ḥabīb, the most effective hijā' for the Jāhilīs was that called hijā' bi-l-tardīl or igdha'. In this sort of hijā' a poet compares two men or two tribes, praising one and dispraising the other in obscene manner. Later on, this sort of hijā' was prohibited by the Prophet, and 'Umar threatened al-Huṭay'a if he wrote it. That it deals in obscene mockery at least seems to be the view of al-Nabigha al-Dhubyanī, who criticised the poets of his own tribe when they wrote hijā' poems on 'Amir b. al-Tufayl. According to al-Nabigha, these poems were full of obscenity, which is not suitable in hijā' against a noble man like 'Amir, who was the chief of his tribe. A noble man should be satirised with poetry containing mockery like that in the following lines of his:

When 'Amir heard the lines he was most upset and said, "No poet who has satirised me has achieved anything, except al-Nabigha, who mocked me and described me as a foolish and ignorant man, while the others described me as a chief and a wise man of my people."  

When al-Nabigha said: "the best poet is the one whose excellent poetry is admired and whose bad poetry is laughed at", he probably meant by "bad poetry" that which causes laughter - poetry of decent hijā' that contains mockery.
Concerning what was good madīḥ, according to the Jāhilīs, we have only the view of al-Nuʿmān b. al-Mundhir, whom al-Nabigha praised in a gasīda in which he says:

إِذْ يُبِينُ قِرَانٌ جَلِيلٌ مَّا لَهُ نُفْسٌ
فِي البَيْسِ وَالبِيْدِ وَالبَيْنِ بَينَ الْبَيْسِ وَالْبِيْدِ
وَطَيَّرتُ الْمَعَالِيَةَ دَوَائِرَ مَطْرِعٍ
وَضَرَّرْتُ الْوَقَعَ مُرْسَلِهِمْ فِي سُوَٰرَةِ الْقُرْآنِ

On listening to these lines, al-Nuʿmān was so delighted that he ordered the mouth of the poet to be filled with pearls and is reported to have said: "By such poetry hearts will be delighted and with such poetry kings are to be praised". 29 It seems that al-Nuʿmān admired the lines for two qualities, exaggeration and brevity. The poet uses the word jallat (became very great) when describing the good qualities of the māmdūḥ. He exaggerates in praising them as unlimited. We notice that the poet creates contrasts by expressing his ideas in a dualistic way. The māmdūḥ is praised for two contrasted qualities, baʿṣ and ḫud; there is a contrast between ṣūd and ḥadār; the māmdūḥ is described in two opposite situations: in time of peace and in time of war; he is also credited with beauty and light when compared with the moon. This trend of praising opposite qualities is later followed by the muḥdathīn, as we shall see later when we discuss the critical views of Ibn. al-Muʿtazz.

As part of Jāhilī tribal mufaqhara, every tribe claimed that her poets were the best, and that they were the source of poetry from which other tribes learned. It is said that when the poet Bishāma b. al-Qadār was near death he divided his wealth among his family. Zuhayr b. Abī Sulma, to whom Bishāma was uncle, asked for his share. Bishāma told him that he had inherited his poetry, that all Arabs admitted that their spring of poetry lay in his tribe of Ghatafan, and that he was the best poet of that tribe. 29a

Imruʿ al-Qays is said to have been very proud of his poetry; he engaged in many disputes about it with other poets. He used to practise mumātana
with them, that is the holding of a competition in writing poetry spontaneously in which one poet recites a half-verse and the other poet supplies the second half. One such mumātana took place between Imru' al-Qays and al-Taw'am al-Yashkūrī, with his two brothers Qatāda and Abū Shurayh. Imru' al-Qays recited the following half-line:

\[ \text{الحرا تـر ي بـيريفا ـتـي وقـنا} \]

and al-Taw'am completed the line thus:

\[ \text{كـنار ـ قبويـس تـسبـع استعـارا} \]

The four poets continued until the poem was complete. When Imru' al-Qays saw the ability of the other three, he expressed his admiration by saying to them: "I wonder why your house does not catch fire through the excellence of your poetry". It is said that from that day the family of the three poets was called Banū al-Nār and that Imru' al-Qays decided not to indulge in mumātana with any other poet after being defeated by al-Taw'am and his brothers.30 His comment on their poetry perhaps indicates that Imru al-Qays valued "warmth" in poetry. Mumātana, or mumālata, as it is sometimes called, emphasises a poet's tabī, because of the necessity of extemporising. This quality of tabī possibly plays a considerable part in Jahili judgments between poets that are otherwise unexplained.

Poets were divided into various classes according to excellence. Al-Hutay'a says - the lines are at any rate attributed to him - that there are four classes of poets:

\[ \text{الـشـيرأء فـاعلـن أـربعـه فـشاعـر لاـ بيرـيـن لـنفـعـه وـشـاعـر يـنـشـر وـشـتـاـتـه وـشـاعـر آـخـر لاـ يـنـبـي مـه وـشـاعـر يـقـال} \]

Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī was probably influenced by views such as those expressed in the lines quoted above and did something similar in putting four poets into each tabāqa. One of the classes of poets of the Jahiliyya
is that of shuwayfur, or poetaster, such as Ibn Abi Himrân, who was called shuwayfur by Imrû'al-Qays. Critics in the Jahiliyya were influenced by their Bedouin environment in offering their critical views. This is clear from the fact that they borrowed the names of types of camels and used them to indicate a poet’s rank in poetry. He may be called thînàn, meaning "weak," or muqham or tawwî. The three categories of poet are mentioned in the following line by Aws b. Hajar:

Al-Nâbigha wrote:

Other titles could be conferred on a poet in order to show his superiority. A poet like Tufayl al-Ghanawî was called al-Muhabbir, either as critics later explained, because of his excellent descriptions of horses or because of his beautiful poetry in general. The title came from the verb habbâra or habara, which has various meanings, one of which is "to embellish and refine something"; it also means "to compose in elegant style." Tufayl al-Ghanawî was famous for his "excellent descriptions of horses." We have no examples of his poetry on that subject which the Jâhilîs admired, and therefore it is not easy to discover the criteria used by them in preferring Tufayl, together with Abû Duwâd al-Iyâdî and al-Nâbigha al-Jâdî. If Tufayl was called al-muhabbir because of his beautiful poetry in general, and this seems to be what they meant by the title, this may indicate that he used to refine and embellish his poetry; we do not know, however, what sort of embellishment he used - it probably consisted of similes and istinâra. It may equally well reflect the Jâhilîs appreciation of beauty of style and form in general, and of the type of san'a used by Zuhayr, his son Ka'b, and al-Hutay'a.

The interest of the Jâhilîs in "refined poetry" is reflected in the title
by which they called the poet 'Abd b. Rabī'a: al-muhalhil. This
derives from the verb halhala, which means "to weave finely". It is
said that he was "the first poet who refined poetry and avoided using
gharīb and unfamiliar language in it". This explanation indicates that
the Jāhilīs were praising the poet when they called him by this title,
but another explanation claims that it was given to him as a means of
disparaging him. This says that he was called al-muhalhil because in
his poetry you find the quality of halhala, a word used to describe a
piece of cloth that is not excellently woven in some of its parts. This
implies that he achieved different levels of excellence in his poetry;
some of it is excellent and some is bad. It also may mean that some of
it is not soundly formed, as may be inferred from Ibn Sallām.37 The
title is also said to have been given to the poet because he was the
first one to compose long gasīdas; this indicates their interest in
long poems. It is also said that he was so-called because he was the
first to make poetry delicate (ra'īq), implying that he incorporated
ghazal in his poems. If we look at his poetry, however, we find that
most of it is rithā' for his brother Kulayb and refers to wars between
his tribe and others. Still others say that he was called al-muhalhil
because of the following lines:

A third poet whose poetry seems to have been admired by the Jāhilīs is
al-Namr b. Tawlab, who was called al-kayyis "because of his beautiful
poetry".40 Among the different meanings of the word is that of "skillful".
We do not know in what sense al-Namr was 'skillful' in his poetry.
Probably he used to select his words carefully and scrutinise his poetry.
However, both al-muhalhil and al-Namr are described as "liar" poets.41
This implies that they exaggerated in their poetic ma'āni. Is it
possible that the Jāhilīs admired these "lies" in the two poets' poetry?
As we have mentioned before, some Jahilis believed that the "best poet is the one that lies most".

Sometimes the Jahilis expressed their particular admiration for a poem by giving it a name, as they did the one by Suwayd b. Abī Kāhil that begins:

They called it al-Yatīma (the peerless pearl). According to al-Asma‘ī the Arabs of the Jahiliyya "preferred this poem and counted it among their "wisdoms". The fact that the poem was regarded by them as a "wisdom" may indicate that they were interested in moral poetry which manifests itself in lines of wisdom and proverbs. Al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf is reported to have quoted various lines from this poem, among them:

The poem of Hassan b. Thabīt that starts with the line:

was admired by the Jahilis and called by them al-Battara. The poem contains madīh, and it is probably for this and its muḥakha that it was considered excellent. Al-Hutay‘a honoured Hassan for a line of madīh in the same poem. 43

Hassan himself, whenever poets gathered to recite their poems, used to ask: "Did they recite the poem of al-Huwaydira?" By that he meant the poem that starts:

They also admired the mu‘allaqa of Āntara and called it al-mudhhaba (the golden). 45 It is also reported that the poet ‘Alqama al-Fahl visited Quraysh and recited to them his two poems that start:
The Qurashites expressed their admiration for the two poems and called them simāt al-dahr (the two necklaces of time).\(^46\) The mu'allaga of 'Antara, as has just been mentioned, was called al-mudhhabba together with the other mu'allagāt, which are al-mudhhabbat. Whether they were suspended in the Ka'ba after being written in gold or not, it seems that the title al-mudhhabbat was probably used for distinguishing them and it may be an indication of the respect shown for these poems. The idea of selecting and collecting certain poems as being particularly excellent seems to have been known to the Jāhilīs, and it may affirm the story of the mu'allagāt. The king of Hira, al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir, is reported to have had a diwan in which he had collected the poetry of the fuhul and the poetry written in his praise. This diwan, or at least part of it, is said to have been in the possession of the Umayyad Marwānids.\(^{46a}\) What Ibn Sallām says may throw some light on al-Hirmāzi's statement that the mu'allagāt were collected by 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān for the first time, and that there had been no-one who collected them in the Jāhiliyya.\(^{46b}\)

It seems to me probable that the diwan said to have been collected by al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir contained some of the mu'allagāt, and other poems, and that 'Abd al-Malik was inspired by the idea of that diwan to add poems not included in the "Seven Odes". We shall discuss his critical views concerning poetic comparisons later.

However, neither in connection with al-Nu'mān nor 'Abd al-Malik is any mention made of the criteria used for making such selections; perhaps the simple fact that the "Seven Odes" are long poems was the principal one. Other reasons are suggested by al-Hirmāzi, who states that the
Arabs of the Jāhiliyya collected four poems that contained a number of different topics like nasib, wasf, preaching, proverbs and fakhr. Those poems were by Zuhayr, 'Tarafa, al-Ḥarīth b. 'Allīza and Suwayd b. Abī Kāhīl. Tayfūr b. Abī Tahir thinks that some of the mu'allaqāt, like that of Imru' al-Qays and that of Zuhayr, were selected because they contain numerous ma'ānī which are not found in other Jāhili poetry. The mu'allaqā of 'Tarafa was chosen because it contains beauties not to be found in any other poem and also because it has a gnomic conclusion. The mu'allaqā of Abīd b. al-Abras is written in a distinguished metre and tarud. Whether the Jāhiliūs were really aware of what later critics suggested about their criteria or not, the reasons given above may give us an idea about the grounds on which they expressed a preference for certain poems.

In connection with their interest in metre and rhyme, it is said that al-Nabigha perpetrated iqwa' in one of his poems. When he visited Yathrib and recited his poem they told him about the defect but he was unable to detect it until it was sung to him.

It is said that Abī 'Shaqī taught his daughter how to judge poetry and that he used to recite his poems to her and ask her opinion about it. Some of his poems he called al-mukhzyiyāt (poems that disgrace the efforts of other poets). Whenever he asked his daughter to recite some of the mukhzyiyāt she would recite the poem in which he says:

أَعْرَبْ أَرَوَّعْ يِمْسَيْسَيَهُ الْفَالِقُ قُرُّى
لَوْقَاعُ النَّاسِ عَنْ أَحْسَى بِهِمْ قُرُّى

She would also recite other ones similar to this one. The poem in question is long - 76 lines - and begins:

بَانَتْ سَعَادَةٌ وَإِمْسَيَّةٌ حَبِيلَةٌ لَّقَالَهَا وَاحْذَّةٌ الْعُمُرِ وَخَرَّى فَالَّقَيْأ

The nasib continues for seven lines, ending:

وَمَا طَلَّبْكُمْ شَيْئًا لَّسْتَ مَّدْرُكُ مَا لَكَ يَنَا عَلَى عَرَبِ الْبَيْنِ وَمَا وَرَقَعَ
Then the rahil begins:

In the lines following he addresses his daughter who does not want him to travel. Then he tells the story of the people of ancient Yamām who were destroyed by the army of a king called Dhū al-Ḥassān. He then takes up the rahil again:

The description of his she-camel begins:

He compares her with a wild cow which he describes for thirteen lines, introducing also a hunter and his dogs. It is somewhat inappropriate that the wild cow to which he likens his she-camel is killed by this hunter. The maddīn which is the main subject of the poem occupies thirty-six lines, beginning:

It is not easy to guess the criteria used by the poet's daughter in selecting that poem and others similar to it. In fact the poem was bitterly criticised later by Ibn Tabbata (d. 322), who described it as poetry consisting of "unprofitable words, cold mašāfī, artificial structure, and uneasy rhymes".49 According to him the whole poem is mutakallaf poetry, with the exception of the following lines:

However, it seems likely that the poet's daughter admired the length of the poem; as Abū ʿUbayda says, al-Aʾshā was known for his "long excellent poems".50 The poem contains a number of so-called "poetic
beauties" in the first line we find tasrí:

in the lines that follow we find contrast:

and:

The poem contains many lines containing what later critics called tawšíh, in which the rhyme of the line can be guessed from the other parts of the line. This implies that the rhyme has a kind of connection with the meaning. Qudíma b. Ja'far gave some examples, such as the line of ʿAbdús b. Mīrás:

and the line of Nusayb:

In both lines the beginning suggests the rhyme. Al-ʿAṣḥā's poem has similar lines, such as:
Though it is hard to believe that the Jāhiliyyah can have known of the various elements that make up "poetic beauties" as tabulated by later critics, one can claim that they were aware of these "poetic beauties" as such, and that they admired them in poetry in spite of the fact that they may not have called them by the same names. Probably the daughter of al-A'šā was attracted by the presence of some of these "beauties" in her father's poem, and had derived her appreciation of them from him, since he was the one who taught her how to judge poetry. The Jāhiliyyah, in all probability, recognised the "poetic beauties", or certain types of them, and in fact the remark made about the mu'allaqah of Tarafa, that "it contains some beauties not to be found in any other poem", may affirm this claim.

Some of the Jāhiliyyah critics gave reasons when preferring one poet to another or comparing two poems or lines. When Imru' al-Qays argued with 'Alqama (al-Fahl) b. 'Abada about poetry, each of them claimed that he was a better poet than the other. Umm Jundub, the wife of Imru' al-Qays, asked each of them to write a poem in the same rhyme on the subject of description of horse and camel. Imru' al-Qays wrote the poem that starts:

خليانٌ مَٰرَىٰ مَٰرَىٰ آنَىٰ ْعَصَىٰ جَذَّبَىٰ
لَبَنَىٰ الفَوْقَاءَ المَكْرُوبَنَ

'Alqama wrote the poem that starts:

دَهْوُنَ سَنَ الْجَبَّانَ سَنَ خَيْرَ مَسْهَبٍ
وَلَمْ يَنْتَ جَاهِلًا كَلَّا هَذَا التَّجْمِيعُ

On listening to the two poets Umm Jundub gave her judgement for 'Alqama, and said to Imru' al-Qays: "the horse of Ibn 'Abada is better than yours!" When he asked her to explain, she replied "you shouted at your horse to make him run, you kicked him with your feet and hit him with your whip. You say:

فَأَخْرَجَ ٌ عَيْنَٰهُ ُوَالْسَاطِقَ دِرَّةٌ
وَلِلسَّوْطِ مِنَ وَقُوعٍ أَخْرَجَ مُهِبٌ
"Alqama describes his horse:

His horse overtook them (gazelles, wild asses or wild cows) with its reins shortened. "Alqama did not whip it as you did and his horse was not tired." It is said that Imru' al-Qays did not accept his wife's explanation and told her that she was in love with 'Alqama and that this was why she had preferred him to her husband. He divorced her and 'Alqama married her. This is why he was called 'Alqama al-Fahl. 52a

Probably the title of al-Fahl was given to 'Alqama because he defeated Imru' al-Qays in poetry and not because he succeeded him as his wife's husband. According to al-Mubarrad, any poet who could defeat another in hijā' is worthy to be called a fašl. 53 As we have noticed, Umm Jundub limited herself, when comparing the two poems, to one line in each, and she preferred 'Alqama for one line only. She did not take an overall approach to a poem as a unity — or perhaps she did have such a view but she found that the two poets equalled each other except in those particular two lines quoted above. It seems that she did not expect a poet to be sincere and describe reality, but to give an ideal picture of what he was describing. She criticised her husband for describing his horse realistically; he forced it to run, whereas 'Alqama's horse required no effort on its master's part to cause it to overtake animals, and was in fact able to do so even when he restrained it. 'Alqama exaggerated and gave an ideal picture of his horse. Umm Jundub's criticism of the line of Imru' al-Qays demonstrates the relation between ma'na and words; Ibn Tabātāba, criticising the line, said that it fell below the acceptable level both in ma'na and in words. 54 The same, he said, applied to the line of al-Musayyab or al-Mutalammis previously quoted. The žahilīs seem to have had some understanding of the relation between ma'na and words.
Though al-Nabigha al-Dhubyānī had some important critical views, he frequently, like other contemporary critics, gave no reasons for preferring a particular poet or admiring a particular poem. It is said that he once met Labīd when the latter was a young boy at the court of the Hiran king al-Nu'mān. Al-Nabigha asked Labīd if he wrote poetry and when Labīd replied that he did, al-Nabigha asked him to recite some of it. Labīd recited his poem that starts:

\[
\text{أَلَمْ تَرْبَعَ عَلَى الْرُّذَّمَ النَّوَائِلِ}
\]

Al-Nabigha, having heard the poem, said to him: "You are the best poet among the Banū 'Amir (the family of Labīd)". He asked him to recite more and Labīd recited his poem that starts:

\[
\text{ثَلَّ لَوْلَاةَ بِالْرُّسْبِسِ قِرْمِ}
\]

Al-Nabigha was even more impressed and declared Labīd to be the best poet of Qays or Hawazin. It is also said that Labīd recited his mu'allaga and al-Nabigha declared him to be the best poet among the Arabs. It is not credible that Labīd should have written his mu'allaga at such a young age; if he had done so, al-Nabigha should at least have heard of him and known his poetry. The point is, however, that al-Nabigha offers no justification for his judgements concerning Labīd's poetry, and it is difficult not to regard his extravagant praise as the expression, as so often with Jāhili critics, of a capricious and momentary enthusiasm.

Hassān b. Thābit reported that he once saw al-Nabigha in the market at Yathrib and listened to him reciting his poem that starts:

\[
\text{عَرَفُتْ مَنآرَ بِعَرْفِيْنَانِ ُقَلْعَّٰلِ الْبَرَّ يَلِٰلَا الْيَمِينِ}
\]

Hassān described the poem as having "a difficult rhyme", and he doubted whether al-Nabigha could continue to extemporise at length in such a rhyme. On finishing his recitation, al-Nabigha called on any poet who would like to recite his own poetry. Qays b. al-Khatīm came forward
and recited his poem that starts:

Abū l-Faraj al-Isfahānī says that the poem is one of the poet's best, and that al-Nābigha acclaimed him for it. It is said that before Qays had finished reciting the first line, al-Nābigha declared him to be the best poet of the Arabs.⁵⁶

At 'Ukāz, al-Nābigha used to have a skin tent pitched for him, to which other poets came to recite their poems and receive his judgements. Once al-Aʿshā came and recited his poem that starts:

After he had finished, al-Khansa recited her poem starting:

When she reached the lines:

al-Nābigha swore that if al-Aʿshā had not recited before al-Khansa and he had not already recognised his superiority, she should have been proclaimed the best poet of the Arabs.

The poem of al-Khansa is rithāʾ for her brother Sakhr. The two lines which al-Nābigha admired contain takrār in which she repeats the name of her brother three times. Ibn Rashiq quotes the same two lines as an example of excellent takrār, which is, according to him, recommended especially in rithāʾ. The repetition of the name of the elegized person is a means of glorifying him and indicating his importance.⁵⁷ Once again, we find a hint, as with al-Nābigha's mention of mutābaqa and the general admiration for the exceptional "beauties" in Tarafa's muʿallaga, that the Jāhilīs may have been aware of the artistic devices catalogued by later critics, even if they did not classify them in a systematic way,
or distinguish them with a consistent nomenclature.

After al-Khansa' had finished reciting, Hassān claimed that he himself was a better poet than al-Nabigha. The latter challenged him to compose two such lines as the following:

\[\text{فإِذَا كَانَ الْجَيْلُ الْخَيْبَاءُ مُكًّرًا وَإِنْ خَلُّتُ أَنَّ المِثْلَ عَالِمًا وَاسِعًا خَطَأْتُهُا} \]

Hassān claimed that he had in fact composed two lines better than those of al-Nabigha, namely:

\[\text{نَّا اَلْعِفَانُ الْفِيْلَيْمَينَ بالْخَيْبَاءَ وَاسِيَةَنَا بِتْحَرِّرِهِنْ يَدَّ} \]

Al-Nabigha, however, criticised him for diminishing the number of his bowls by using the plural form jafanät rather than jifan, and of his swords by using asyaf rather than suyuf. He also criticised him for describing the bowls as yalma'na bi-l-duha (shining in the forenoon), saying that it would be more eloquent and excellent to say yashruuna bi-l-duja (giving light in the darkness), on the grounds that guests arrive during the night more than during the day. He further criticised Hassān for saying of his swords yaquruna min najdatin damā (they drip blood from a fight). This, he alleges, is a rather weak statement, in that it implies only a limited amount of bloodshed; it would be more effective to say yajrina min najdatin damā (they run with blood from a fight). Finally he criticised him for boasting of the sons that his tribe had borne, without boasting of their grandfathers, who ought to be mentioned in poems of mufakhara.59

Al-Nabigha's criticism here is of considerable interest. In every case, the "improvements" that he suggests are designed to reinforce a conventionally dramatic effect, at the expense of a more realistic, if scarcely understated, portrayal. It suggests that Jāhilī sensibilities,
as represented by al-Nābigha, at any rate, had become so blunted by exposure to hyperbole that they were incapable of responding to anything less than an all-out assault. We must, of course, make allowances for the fact that mufakhara might be expected to be less subtle than other genres, and that restraint here might be taken at its face value. It is also possible, although unlikely, in view of his acknowledged eminence, that al-Nābigha is merely displaying a weakness in his own literary judgement.

Qudama b. Ja‘far, for his part, declared that Hassan was right in using the words criticised by al-Nābigha. He believed that Hassan was describing "reality", and that when he used the word ghurr to describe his bowls he meant to emphasise their fame rather than their whiteness. Therefore al-Nābigha was wrong to recommend Hassan to use ḫid instead of ghurr. Hassan was following the traditions of the Arabs in using the words that he did; yaṣṭurna is the conventional word used of swords, and yajrīna would be unorthodox. Al-Nābigha, he thinks, is pursuing exaggeration and ifrāt in his criticism. 60

Towards the end of the Jahiliyya we find a critic comparing four poets of Tamīm, and basing his judgements on a review of the whole body of poetry of each. The poets concerned are al-Zibriqān b. Badr, al-Mukhabbal al-Sa‘dī, ‘Abada b. al-Tabīb and ‘Amr b. al-Ahtam. They submitted to the judgement of Ṣa‘īd b. Hudār, who asked each to recite his poems. The judgements he gave differed in kind, and we do not know what poems the poets recited. To al-Zibriqān b. Badr he said: "Your poetry is like meat which is not thoroughly cooked but only heated, so that it is not fit to be eaten. At the same time, it has not been left as it was, so that it could be (properly) made use of." He further said: "You are like a man who has found a slaughtered camel, and taken some good
meat from it but mixed it with bad."

He described the poetry of 'Amr b. al-Ahtam as "striped variegated garments that shine for some time, but then the shining disappears."

He also described it as "striped garments from Yemen which can be either folded up or spread out." The poetry of al-Mukhabbal, he says, is "less good than that of his friends, but better than that of other poets."

It consists of "meteors sent by God, who throws them at whom He wishes."

Finally, the poetry of 'Abada is "like a water-skin which is very well tied and from which nothing drops." 61

Though Rabī'ā's views concerning the poetry of these four poets are not very clear, it is not difficult to guess at some of his criteria, and to discover which of the four he prefers. First, he appears to favour poetry which has a consistent level of excellence; this is clear from his remarks on the poetry of al-Zibriqān. Secondly, he appears to require profundity of poetic ideas. This emerges from his judgement on the poetry of 'Amr b. al-Ahtam, which he describes as shining but then gradually losing this appearance. When heard for the first time, it attracts the reader, but when he hears it again he does not find the same attraction. It may be written in beautiful language, but its ideas are simple. Al-Mukhabbal is regarded as the least talented of the four, but his poetry is described as "meteors from God". This judgement perhaps indicates that portions of his poetry make a particularly strong impression, but it is more probable that he is a composer of hijā'i, and the implication is that occasional shafts of his satire are especially wounding to his victims.

'Abada is the poet who appears to receive Rabī'ā's fullest approval. The comparison of his poetry with a well-tied water-skin suggests a
soundness of poetic technique that permits no deviation from a consistent standard. It does not necessarily indicate a high standard. It is difficult to assess precisely the status accorded by Rabi'a to a water-skin, which is, after all, an object of everyday use and of no great intrinsic value; on the other hand, water is a commodity of considerable interest and use in a desert environment, so it is likely that the comparison implies a high degree of praise, if not perhaps the very highest.

This last example of poetic comparison in the Jahiliyya represents a type of mufakhirah in the field of poetry. Those who judge the claims of rival poets are called muhakkamin, as are those appointed to arbitrate in any other kind of dispute, and the act of judgement is called hukuma. It should be emphasised that muwazana (poetic comparison) constitutes an essential part of Arab social and tribal life, in exactly the same way as does arbitration on various other questions. The earliest attempts at criticism naturally took this form, just as the criteria by which poetry was judged evolved from those applied in other areas of Arab experience. It is not always clear what these criteria are, or if they are applied in any consistent way; where, however, we think we can discern some basis for the judgements arrived at, this appears to have a strong connection, as is only to be expected, with practical aspects of tribal life.
Poetic comparison continued in early Islam, and the criteria used for judging between poets were generally those of sincerity and truth, good poetry being considered that which agreed with the teachings of Islam. Critics, at this period, were accordingly more concerned with the ma'na of a poem than with the words or any other element, except as is indicated by opinions attributed to 'Umar and some others.

This preoccupation with truth and sincerity in poetic ma'ani is to be found in a hadith of the Prophet: "Poetry is speech composed of various things; whatever is in agreement with truth is beautiful, whatever is not lacks any goodness."¹ It is also to be found in his remark on a line by Labīd:

\[
\text{أَنْتُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَّا خَلَّا اللَّهُ بَعْلًا وَلَنّ نَّنْمَمٌ لَّا مَكَالَةٌ زَائِلَةٌ}
\]

The Prophet is reported as having described this line as "the most truthful word ever spoken by a poet." In a third hadith he is reported to have said: "In poetry there is hukm" (or "there is hikma") - inna min al-shī' la-hukm/la-hikma. Ibn al-Athīr's commentary on this hadith is that in poetry there is useful and good counsel that restrains men from bad actions. This probably alludes to poetry that contains ma wa'iz and proverbs of an improving nature, and is based on the reading hikma. The reading hukm would imply knowledge, figh and justice.² At all events, the Prophet was concerned with poetry that agreed with the truth and taught people morality and good habits. In general, "wise" aphoristic sayings were a favourite component of poetry at this period, just as they had been, to some extent, in the Jāhiliyya. It is said that 'Umar b. al-Khattāb asked Ka'b al-Aḥbār (a Jew who had embraced Islam) if he had ever read anything about poets in the Torah. Ka'b replied that he had read in

¹ It is also found in al-Ṭibrīzī's 'Ishārāt al-falak fi ṣaḥāfa al-ṣin'ā'ī, p. 242, ed. 'A. Bāzīr, Cairo, 1352/1933, where the Prophet is reported to have said: "In poetry there is hikma and mawaqiz, and we do not want our poetry to be a second-class poetry."

the Torah that "there are people who belong to Isma'il and who have their books in their hearts. They utter hikma and proverbs." Ka'b then said: "We believe that these people are none but the Arabs."³

The hadiths of the Prophet and other remarks made by him and by his companions about poetry had a remarkable influence on Muslim inquiry concerning the value of poetry and on the evaluation of poetic characteristics and qualities, as Cantarino suggests.⁴

Although, as I have said, in general, moral criteria were the principal ones used in judging poetry, others were also applied. The quality of ṭab‘, which we have noticed in connection with Jahili criticism, is now to be found linked with that of sincerity. Both the Qur‘ān and the Prophet disapproved of takalluf, and the Prophet advocated simplicity and brevity of speech.⁵

The first Islamic statement on poetic comparison is that attributed to the Prophet concerning Imru' al-Qays: "he is the greatest of all poets and he is their leader to the Fire", in which it is supposed that he was referring to the poets of the Jahiliyya and the mushrikin.⁶ We do not know on what this comparative judgement was based, but it is said that the Prophet once praised the "opening" of the mu'allaqa of Imru' al-Qays.⁷

As far as Islamic poets were concerned, the Prophet listened to their poems. He listened to al-Khansa' recite her rithā' poems on her brothers Sakhr and Mu'awiya, to al-Nabigha al-Ja‘dī and others, and he rewarded Ka'b b. Zuhayr for his qasida, Fānāt Su‘ād. He himself had three poets who defended the Muslims against the poets of the non-believers: Hassan b. Thabit, Ka'b b. Malik and 'Abd Allah b. Rawāha. He praised their poems, seeming to have preferred Hassan.⁸ All
subsequent critics seem to have been influenced by his preference for Hassan; Abu 'Ubayda (one of the ruwat and 'ulama') preferred him to the urban poets, as did Ibn Sallām and others. Critics also seem to have been influenced by his remark about Imru' al-Qays, and we find 'Ali b. Abī Talib, among others, according him pre-eminence.

A short time after the Prophet, we find the first caliph, Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, giving (somewhat vague) artistic reasons for preferring al-Nabigha to all others, on the grounds that "his sea is the sweetest and his depth is the deepest." This may perhaps be taken to refer to the form as well as the content of his poetry.

Among the earliest Islamic critics 'Umar b. al-Khattāb must be considered the best. His views on poetry are characterised by two things; while he certainly applied moral criteria, he did not disregard artistic criteria. Whenever he heard a line that contained hikma or a moral dictum he would repeat it again and again to show his admiration for it. It is also said that he would recite lines of poetry in order to support his views, and he is reported to have said: "recite the most virtuous poetry and the most beautiful speech." He also used to advise people to recite noble poetry to their sons. Provided that poetry contained good morality he admired it and encouraged poets to write more. On listening to a line of Suḥaym 'Abd Banī al-Hashās:

'Umar said to him: "If you continue to compose poetry like this line, I will reward you for it." Another version of the incident makes him say: "If you had mentioned Islam before shayb I would have rewarded you for it".

For him the best poetry was that which taught noble manners, and upright-
ness, and which detailed genealogies. In a message to Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (one of his governors) he recommended him to order his subjects to learn poetry because it contained these qualities. 13 Aside from its value in imparting moral precepts, ʿUmar used poetry as a source of historical knowledge and called it "the science of the Arabs." He also acknowledged the effectiveness of concise madiḥ poetry in enabling a poet to obtain what he wanted. 14

Because of his moral view of poetry, ʿUmar prohibited al-Hutayʿa from writing hijāʾ mugdhiʿ, which had also been prohibited by the Prophet. When al-Hutayʿa inquired about this kind of hijāʾ, ʿUmar replied: "it is hijāʾ in which you compare two persons, tribes or peoples with each other, to the advantage of one and the disadvantage of the other. It is poetry based on praising some people and satirizing others."

Al-Hutayʿa said: "You know about hijāʾ better than I. 15 It would seem that the term hijāʾ mugdhiʿ must have been coined in Islam because al-Hutayʿa himself asked ʿUmar to explain the meaning of it. Even if this name was not used, however, this variety of hijāʾ was not unknown in the Jāhiliyya, as can be seen, for example, in al-Nābighaʾs satires on ʿĀmir b. al-Tufayl.

We have three separate reports about ʿUmar's preferences in poetry and on each occasion he favours a different poet. It is said that when al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbi al-Muttalib asked ʿUmar about poets, ʿUmar replied that Imruʿ al-Qays was their leader: "he dug for them the spring of poetry and there poured forth, instead of 'one-eyed' mafānī, those with sounder sight."

"Umar's words are explained by some as meaning that the Yemen, from which Imruʿ al-Qays came, had not attained the same standard of eloquence
as the tribe of Nizar, and that Imru' al-Qays changed this. Ishaq b. Ibrahîm al-Mawsili gives a similar explanation, but referring to Mudar rather than to Nizar. He somewhat obscures matters, however, by maintaining that ‘Umar continued to consider Imru' al-Qays's poetry as inferior to that of Mudar. ‘Umar seems to have adopted the remark attributed to the Prophet referring to Imru' al-Qays as the leader of poets, and to have added his own critical elaboration.

Elsewhere ‘Umar is reported as having favoured al-Nâbigha al-Dhubyanî for a number of his lines that are of an elevated aphoristic character.

Two of the lines that he would repeat are:

وَلَسْتَ لَبْنً إِلَّا مَهْدٌ
وَلَسْتُ لَبْنً إِلَّا مَهْدٌ

Others are:

عَلَى رَجُلٍ نَّظَرَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
فَأَقْتَلَهُمْ الأَمْمَةُ لَمْ تَنَأْنَهَا

and:

وَلَسْتُ بَرَاضِي لَغُدِّ فَطَامًا
حَدَّرْ غَرِّ لَكَ غَدَّ فَطَامٌ

When a delegation from Ghatafan came to see him he told them that al-Nâbigha was their best poet on account of these lines. ‘Umar also seems to have favoured al-Nâbigha for his itidhar or apology. The first two examples quoted above are on this topic. ‘Umar was probably influenced by Abu Bakr's opinion, and their combined approval may well have had its effect on subsequent critics who championed al-Nâbigha.

The third poet whom ‘Umar is said to have favoured is Zuhayr. Ibn ‘Abbas reported that ‘Umar asked him to recite for him "poetry by the best of poets." When Ibn ‘Abbas inquired who that was ‘Umar replied that it was Zuhayr "because he did not use mużala in his poetry (kana lâ yu‘ażile bayn al-kalam), he avoided wahshi and never praised anybody except for those qualities he in fact possessed."
Another version of this account makes 'Umar refer to Zuhayr as "the poet among poets" (shā'īr al-shu‘āra') and add to the list of his virtues that of not saying what he did not know. As an example of his admirable madin, he cites:

It is also said that the one who praised Zuhayr was Ibn 'Abbas himself, and that 'Umar agreed. In this instance, Ibn 'Abbas justifies his praise with the following quotation:

From those reports it would seem that the qualities that 'Umar admired in the poetry of Zuhayr are connected with the words, form, ma‘na and some of the mahasin al-shi‘r. When 'Umar praised Zuhayr for avoiding mu‘azala he may have meant that his expression is clear and not complicated. If, however, we accept the explanation given by Qudama b. Jaffar of mu‘azala as fahish al-istiﬁ‘ara, then we may infer that 'Umar approved of Zuhayr's use of istiﬁ‘ara. Qudama gives an illustration of what he means by fahish al-istiﬁ‘ara from Aws b. Hajar:

The application of the word tawlab, "young ass", to a child is an ugly
Umar clearly admired Zuhayr for avoiding archaic and obscure words and thus, by implication, for clarity of ma'na. The statement that Zuhayr did not praise anybody except for qualities he in fact possessed reflects Umar's desire for sincerity and reality in poetry. There is no exaggeration in the poetic ma'ani of Zuhayr and he does not go beyond reality, as suggested by his fondness for the word law in the examples cited here. Ibn Rashīq comments that Umar admired sincerity, both for its own sake and because of the noble characteristics it implied.

Also to be found in the lines by Umar are tasdir and tashīm which are counted as poetic beauties. In both of these the rhyme is connected with the first half of the line and the listener can guess it in advance.

Examples of this are in the following lines. In the first citation:

\[
\text{وَأَنَّ الْمَهْدَىَّ الْمَهْدَىَّ النَّاسِ لَمَّا تَضَلُّ وَكَانَ عِلْمُ النَّاسِ لَمَّا مَيْتَ}
\]

and in the second:

\[
\text{لَوْلَا يُقَدِّرُ فُؤَدُ السَّبِيعِ مِنْ كَرِيمٍ أَوَّلٌ يُقَدِّرُ غَيْرِ الْيَوْمِ مِنْ أَحِدٍ لَّا يَنُفِقُ الْإِلَيْهِ عِنْمَاتِ مَا يَقْفُ}
\]

Repetition of a root (tajnīs), without involvement of the rhyme-word, is also to be found in these citations:

\[
\text{سَيِّبَتُ إِلَيْهَا كَلِلَّ لَتْنِيَ بَرَرَ} \quad \text{سُوْقُتُ إِلَى الْغَابِلَاتِ غَيْرِ مَرَّتِيُّ}
\]

and:

\[
\text{فَوْقُ أَبُو بُعْرَمِ سَبَنَ حَبَّةَ ثَمَّ دَفَنُهُمُ الطَّابِعُ مَا وَلَدُوا لمَّا بَدَأَ فِي مَالِهِنَّ يَلِدُونَ بِكِيلٍ أَوْ مَوَازِيَةَ مَالٍ بَرْقُوجٌ وَمَالٍ بَرْقُوجٌ وَمَالٍ بَرْقُوجٌ}
\]

It is probably this kind of sānta, for which Zuhayr and others were later to be called by al-Asma’ī "slaves of poetry", that pleased Umar.

There is no evidence that the terms tashīm and tasdir were used at that time but it seems clear that such poetic embellishments were discerned and admired. Ibn ‘Abbas is said, on hearing Umar b. Abī Rabī’a
recite the half-line:

to have completed it thus:

whereupon 'Umar said: "That is what I wrote."\textsuperscript{25}

It also seems possible that 'Umar was attracted by the use of \textit{taqsim} (subdivision), another of the "poetic beauties". If we look at the second poem quoted we find \textit{taqsim} in the following line:

This may also be considered as \textit{tarsе}, following what Qudāma says about this figure.\textsuperscript{26} There are other reports which indicate very clearly that 'Umar was interested in \textit{husn al-\textit{taqsim}}. Al-\textit{Jahiz} says that 'Umar would repeat again and again the line of Zuhayr:

"as if wondering at the poet's excellent subdivision." He also repeated the second half of the line of Abādā b. al-\textit{Tabīb}:

"for its excellent \textit{taqsim} and \textit{tafṣīl}."\textsuperscript{27} There is also an indication that 'Umar was interested in \textit{muqābala} although he did not use the term. It is said that he admired and used to repeat the following line of Abū Qays b. al-\textit{Aslat} (which also contains \textit{taqsim}):

The \textit{muqābala} is made between \textit{al-hazm} and \textit{al-\textit{idhn}}, and also between \textit{al-\textit{quwma}} and \textit{al-fakka}.\textsuperscript{28}

In the early Umayyad period we can trace the influence of 'Umar b. al-\textit{Khattāb} on those who champion al-\textit{Nābigha} or Zuhayr. Qudāma quotes 'Umar on three points. He quotes him on the subject of good \textit{madīn}, referring to his approval of Zuhayr, in that "he did not praise a man
except for qualities he in fact possessed." On this view Qudama bases his theory of ma'ālī. He also quotes him as saying that Zuhayr avoided wahshī. Qudama accepts this and counts wahshī as a defect in poetry. Finally, he quotes him concerning mu'āzala as another poetic defect to be avoided. 29

'Ali b. Abī Talib, who seems to have been influenced by the Prophet in regarding Imru' al-Qays as the best poet, laid down some general principles for poetic comparison and probably also himself exerted some influence in promoting the pre-eminence of Imru' al-Qays. He is reported as saying: "If the earlier poets were now able to gather in one place at the same time and compete in writing poetry on a certain subject, we should be able to tell which was the best of them. But since it is not possible to have them all together at one time, I may say that the best of them is the poet who wrote poetry neither out of desire nor out of fear, and that is Imru' al-Qays. I have noticed that he was the best of them in producing incomparably excellent lines and he surpassed the rest in writing poetry spontaneously;"

When the men of his army argued about the best poet, 'Ali asked Abū al-Aswad al-Du'ali to give his opinion. The latter gave it for Abū Du'ali al-Iyadi, for his two lines describing a horse:

\[\text{\ldots} \]

'Ali then spoke in favour of Imru' al-Qays, in terms very similar to those just quoted. 31 Ibn Rashīd's version of this is that 'Ali favoured Imru' al-Qays because the latter wrote poetry naturally (sana'a bi-\text{tabī'īhi}) unaffected by greed or fear. 32 Ibn Abī Taraf and those who followed him, like Ibn Qutayba, in speaking of the effect of desire, fear, pleasure and anger on the poetic ability of poets like Zuhayr, were
very likely influenced by this remark of 'Alī b. Abī Tālib on Imrū' al-Qays. The views of these critics will be discussed later. In the version of 'Alī's remark given in the Aghanī, it is also implied that each poet was excellent on a certain topic. Though 'Alī did not give examples, his influence may perhaps be seen later in al-Asmā'ī, concerning the excellence of poets in certain poetic topics. The same influence may be seen in Ibn Abī Tarafa, before al-Asmā'ī.

Abū al-Aswad al-Du’ali may have based his preference for Abū Du’ād al-Iyādī on his approval of the tarsī which is used in the second line. It also contains muqābala: mikarr/mifarr.

Other companions of the Prophet, and those who followed them, had views concerning poetry. Ibn 'Abbas encouraged 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a and listened to his poems. It is said that 'Umar recited to him his poem starting:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ibn 'Abbas learned it by heart.} & ^{33} \\
\text{Ibn 'Abbas was chiefly interested in poetry that could be cited as a witness for linguistic usage and as an aid to the interpretation of the Qur'ān. He seems to have started a school which included such critics among the ruwat and grammarians as had the same interest in poetry. Ibn 'Abbas advised people to consult Arabic poetry in order to understand the meaning of the Qur'ān. Whenever he was asked about the meaning of a Qur'ānic verse, he would recite a line of poetry. When Nāfi' b. al-Azraq (leader of the Azāriqa sect of the Khawārij) asked him about some verses of the Qur'ān, Ibn 'Abbas supported his interpretation by reciting some lines of poetry.} & ^{34}
\end{align*}
\]

Ibn 'Abbas also seems to have been the originator of the literary theory
that separates poetry from morality and religion. This theory was adopted later by critics like Ibn al-Mu'tazz, al-Qūrī and 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jurjānī, as we shall see. Ibn 'Abbās was once asked whether or not poetry was to be regarded as a sort of rafath (obscene speech). In denying that it was, Ibn 'Abbās is reported to have recited the following line, in which the poet used an obscene word:

Ibn 'Abbās, who was about to begin his prayer, added "obscenity (rafath) is with women"; he then began to pray.35

The same concept of separating poetry from morality and religion was followed by Ibn Sīrayn, who was famous as a religious man and a faqīh. He was in the mosque when someone asked him about the legality of reciting poetry during the month of Ramaḍān and whether or not the recitation of poetry nullified ablution. Ibn Sīrayn, who was also about to begin his prayer, answered the two questions by reciting the following line:

It is also said that he recited the following line of Jarīr, satirizing Farazdaq:

Nevertheless, the trend towards emphasizing the moral and educational elements in criticizing poetry continued. We find critics like al-'Umarī, who is reported as saying "recite poetry to your children because it makes them fluent, it encourages the coward, it helps the miser to be generous and it teaches noble manners."37 At the same time, the other trend, towards separating poetry and morality, continued, as we shall see later from the views of Ibn Abī'Atīq. Among those who followed the moral and educational trend we find Muṭawīya b. Abī Sufyān, for whom good poetry was that which taught noble manners, and in whose view we may detect the influence of 'Umar b. al-Khattāb. Muṭawīya
is reported as saying: "A man should educate his son, and poetry is the highest degree of education”. On another occasion he said: "Busy yourselves with poetry and learn it". It is said that when al-Harith b. Nawfal visited Mu'awiya with his son he asked him: "What have you taught your son?" Nawfal replied that he had taught him the Qur'an and the religious duties (fara'id). Mu'awiya said to him: "Teach him eloquent poetry, because it opens the mind, makes the speech fluent and teaches mar'a and courage. On the day of the battle of Siffin I was about to run away from the fight when I remembered the following lines of 'Amr b. al-Atta'바:

абьه لي عفني فأني بلاني
و أخذتهم بالثمر الربع
واعتادنا على الحرو المالي
لذ الفرع عن مائير سعالي
و كسي بدر عن معرق شعالي
لي شلنك قولين المثل معا
وبقينا رأيت على التيب

Mu'awiya is reported to have considered the tribe of Muzayna superior in poetry. According to him, the best of the Jahili poets was from that tribe, namely Zuhayr, as were also the best of the Islamic poets, Ka'b b. Zuhayr and Ma'n b. Aws. In preferring the last-named to other Islamic poets, Mu'awiya seems to have been guided by his moral and educational tendency in judging poetry. He is said to have admired the following poem of his and based his preference for him on it:

لهوراك ما أدرى وانى لا وجل
و إن ذوقك الدائم العهر فإذن
أحرب بين حارين من زى عراوة
و إن لستين يومًا صاحبُت في القرب
لا ناك تشفي منك داين مسائلة
و إن على أشياء منك سينبغي
قدام لن يصفع على دال مجيل
يملك فانظر أي كفأ تبزور

39
Mutawiya’s admiration for Zuhayr was apparently based on the merits of his madih poetry, since he agreed with al-Ahnaf b. Qays, who gave as his reason for admiring Zuhayr the opinion that "he had relieved those who praise of (the necessity of using) an excess of words" (alqā'an al-madihīn fudūl al-kalām). As an example of this he recited the line:

\[
\text{فَلَا بَدِّيَ مِنْ حَبْبِ أَنْوَةٍ فَبَآٰلَا تُوْرَ رَأْيُهُ أَبَاهُمُ قَبْلَ}
\]

It seems that, like 'Umar b. al-Khattāb both Mutawiya and al-Ahnaf appreciated poetry which was free from hashw and exaggeration and was characterized by that brevity which was regarded by critics as a sign of eloquence. In the line recited by al-Ahnaf this brevity is to be found in the fact that the poet is able to praise the madmūh, his father and his grandfather for every noble quality in one line. On another occasion, Mutawiya championed Tufayl al-Ghanawī, about whom he said: "leave me Tufayl and you can keep all other poets." A third report tells that Mutawiya used to prefer 'Adī b. Zayd to all other poets. He did not give any reasons for preferring the last two poets, but it seems probable that, following his moral and educational tendency in poetic criticism he favoured 'Adī for his poetry of exhortation (mawā'ir), zuhd and hikma. Tufayl he seems to have admired for his poetry describing horses, in which the poet is said to have excelled.

‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān said about him: "he who wants to learn to ride horses should recite the poetry of Tufayl."
The influence of the critical views of 'Umar b. al-Khattāb in favouring Zuhayr seems to have continued into the Umayyad period, especially in Medina, and it may well explain to us the attitude of the people of the Hijāz in general in their preference for Zuhayr and al-Nabigha that we shall encounter later. In Medina, Qudāma b. Mūsā, whom Ibn Sallām describes as a learned man, is reported to have admired Zuhayr and to have declared that his most admirable poem is the one in which he says:

```
قد جعل المبتغون أثبر في جفري واسالون إلى أسرائه فرحاً
من يلق بوما عائلاً صرحاً بلسان السماحة منه والنيه فرحاً
```

The same poem was also admired by 'Umar b. Shabba, who declared that Zuhayr had surpassed all other poets with this poem of praise. The second line quoted above contains one of the "poetic beauties", that is *tardīd*: the poet repeats the word *yalqa* twice. At the same time, the poem also contains another of the "poetic beauties", *husn al-taqsīm*, in the following line:

```
بُطْنَالْبُهْمَ ما أَرْمِوُا حَتَّى إِذَا طَنَّوُا صَارَبَ حَتَّى إِذَا مَا صَارَبْوا أَعْصَمَا
```

This line is considered an excellent example of *taqsīm*, according to Ibn Rashīq. It is also quoted by Ibn Qutayba as an excellent line, in that the poet "has collected in one line all kinds of fighting."

Zuhayr was also admired for his *madīn* poetry by Bilāl b. Abī Burda al-As‘ārī, a governor of al-Basra during the Umayyad period. Bilāl used to recite the following lines of Zuhayr as being the best *madīn*:

```
رَكَّزْتَ مَن يَطَأُ آبَآيَةَ رَكَّةً تَوَارِىَ آبَآيَةَ آيَاتِهُمَا فَيَتَّلُ
فَقَضَّ الْبَيْنَ الْمِرَأَنَّ إِلَّا وَضَحَّيَهُ وَتَغَرَّسَ إِلَّا فِي صَوْنِهَا النَّيْلُ
```

Second to Zuhayr Bilāl classed al-Nabigha al-Dhubyānī for the following line:

```
فَأْسَىُ يُضْعِبْتُمَا أَحَدُ ارْتَنَيْهَا عَلَى شَفَعِيْ أَيْ الرِّجَالِ المُهْرِبُ
```

Bilāl seems to have appreciated the same qualities as were admired by critics before him in Zuhayr's poetry. He referred to the line quoted by al-Ahnaf as being poetry in which Zuhayr had avoided "an excess of
words". The second line of Zuhayr and that of al-Nābigha quoted by Bilāl are aphoristic. The influence of 'Umar b. al-Khattāb is to be seen here in the reasons given for favouring both poets. We shall later find Hammad al-Rawiya citing the same line to justify his admiration for al-Nābigha.

We have traced the influence of 'Umar b. al-Khattāb on the early Umayyad critics and we have found this to consist principally in the rejection of exaggeration and the appreciation of sincerity and reality in poetry. It may also be considered to have been responsible for a general dislike of wahshī, complicated expression and muʿāzala (or ṣāhish al-istiʿara), and an interest in some of the "poetic beauties", especially husn al-taqsīm.

Nevertheless, in the Umayyad period, we find some people who favoured exaggeration and who actually did not care for sincerity. Some also favoured humour in poetry; Ziyaḍ b. Abīhi is reported as saying:

"Poetry is lies and humour, and the best is the most humorous."

This liking for exaggeration continued, and the most important Umayyad critic of those who admired it was 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān. His concept of poetry was otherwise no different from that of Muʿāwiya, in that he looked in poetry for noble manners, murū'a, courage, and also for fluency. He ordered the tutor of his sons to teach them poetry in order to make them noble. As he himself was a great admirer of al-'Aṣḥāb, he said to his sons' tutor: "educate them well by reciting to them the poetry of al-'Aṣḥāb, because it has sweetness and it will guide them to the beauties of speech. May Allāh fight him! How sweet is his sea and how hard his rock! Anyone who considers any poet superior to al-'Aṣḥāb must be ignorant of good poetry."
'Abd al-Malik mentioned the "beauties of speech" as something found in the poetry of al-A'sha, but we do not really know what he meant by this and whether or not he was referring to the "poetic beauties". There are two other elements admired by him in the poetry of al-A'sha, namely the "sweet sea" and the "hard rock". Again it is not easy to tell what he really meant by these two things. The "sweet sea" was admired before by Abū Bakr al-Siddiq in the poetry of al-Mābigha al-Dhubyānī. The interest of 'Abd al-Malik in moral poetry is to be seen in his admiration for certain lines of Ma'n b. Aws al-Muzani. He referred to them as the best poetry he had ever heard, and he considered the poet superior even to Imru' al-Qays, al-A'sha and Tarafa. The lines are:

beside the moral content, we notice definite indications of ṣamā in the repetition of words within individual lines. In the second half of the first line the word hilm is repeated; in the first half of the second line the root sum: sumtuhu and sāmani; in the third line bni: abnī and yahni and had: yahdimu and al-hadm; in the fourth line raghmi and raghmu occur; and in the sixth line dighn is repeated, as is the root sal: astallu and salaltuhu. The repetition in the first line constitutes tasdir, one of the "poetic beauties". Tasdir is not very different from tardīd, but it involves the rhyme-word, while tardīd is confined to the rest of the line. In the first line the tasdir occurs in the second half and comprises the first and last words. We also find tasdir in the second and third lines. The other lines contain tardīd. Besides these two "poetic beauties" the lines have a unity in that they
deal with one subject. This unity of subject is also found in the poem by Ma'n b. Aws quoted by Mu'awiya, as we have seen. 'Abd al-Malik's liking for aphoristic and wise poetry also made him declare that al-Nābigha was the best poet of the Arabs, for this line:

\[ \text{ deal with one subject. This unity of subject is also found in the poem by Ma'n b. Aws quoted by Mu'awiya, as we have seen. 'Abd al-Malik's liking for aphoristic and wise poetry also made him declare that al-Nābigha was the best poet of the Arabs, for this line:} \]

Here again we may detect the influence of 'Umar b. al-Khattāb, who, as we have seen, quoted the same line. His influence is also clearly seen in the case of al-Shā' bī, whom 'Abd al-Malik asked to give his opinion concerning al-Nābigha. Al-Shā' bī replied that 'Umar b. al-Khattāb had already favoured him and that he agreed with 'Umar.56

'Abd al-Malik, like Mu'awiya, favoured poetry that taught bravery and noble manners. He is reported to have asked Sulaymān b. al-Ahnaf al-Asadī to recite to him the best poetry in which he (Sulaymān) was praised.

The latter recited the following lines:

\[ \text{Abd al-Malik said to him "What the brother of al-Aws wrote is better than what you have recited." Then he recited the following line by Abū Qays b. al-Aslat:} \]

It comes from a poem quoted later by Ibn Tabāṭaba as an example of poetry in which the poet exaggerates greatly in his poetic mašā'ī.
The second line of the poem recited by Sulayman (the mandūḥ) is also quoted by al-Mubarrad as an excellent line of madīḥ because it shows the importance and high status of those people who are considered respectable and received at the doors of kings. The last line describes the mandūḥ as having a bald head from using too much musk, bathing too much, and having his hair combed too much by beautiful women. Ābd al-Malik preferred another line of Abū Qays b. al-Aslat in which he claims that the baldness of his own head is due to his continuous wearing of his helmet in battle.

Ābd al-Malik's liking for such qualities in poetry is to be seen on other occasions on which he approved of certain lines. He disagreed with al-Sha'bibī, who considered al-Khansa' as the best poetess on the basis of these two lines:

The poem from which Ābd al-Malik recited the two lines is attributed also to Afsah Bāhila, elegizing al-Muntashir b. Wahb al-Bahilī. The poem is said to be one of the best poems of rithā', greatly admired by the Arabs and much imitated.
regarded A'isha Bāhila as a fahl for this poem. In the two lines by al-Khansa‘ al-Sha‘bi admired the conciseness of her exclamation in the second line: "What a man they are taking to the grave!" Critics admired this conciseness of eulogy and considered it a sign of eloquence. They used to recite the following line of al-‘Ajja‘j as one of the best lines on that subject:

اين لدمع التايم وما لا تزور

‘Abd al-Malik’s reasons for admiring the two lines by Laylā al-Bahiliyya were probably, first, the more general one that it was conventionally considered fitting to describe the subject of ritha‘ as a lean slim-waisted man;63 and, secondly, that the second line contains a figure that is one of the more important of the "poetic beauties". In her description:

لا تقول يدعو الناس الى الهدار عند الانشودة

Laylā is using what critics later categorized as irmāf. This means that the ma‘nā is not directly expressed, but is approached indirectly, by means of a second ma‘nā, which “follows” the first and implies it, so that the ma‘nā intended can be inferred from that actually stated.64 Ibn Rashīq calls this figure tatbi‘, and considers it a form of ishara, the use of which connotes eloquence, since it involves a subtle means of achieving conciseness through a direct, but allusive, image. Other critics, he mentions, use the term tajawuz for this figure. He credits Imru‘ al-Qays with the first use of it, in the line:

فيا العين البهية، يا رواشما، أتريد الحكاي لست مسلي عن ذلك

Here the poet expresses the ma‘nā of the woman’s living a life of idleness and luxury by means of three concrete examples, without actually putting into words the bald statement of the fact.65

Both Qudāma and Ibn Rashīq quote the line of Laylā al-Akhyaliyya:

وادم كأولى النعيم خالص وسط البيون من اليمان سقيماً
This line contains tābī', according to Ibn Rashiḍ, and iṣdāf, according to Qudāma. Both of them agree that the poetess wishes to describe the man as generous, and, instead of saying it directly, describes his shirt as being torn, because those who are in need gather round him and pull his shirt in order to attract his attention. This implies his generosity and his willingness to listen to people's demands. The same applies to the line admired by 'Abd al-Malik in which in fact there is more than one iṣdāf or tābī'. The first states that the man has a slim waist, implying that he is generally thin, and the second states that his shirt is torn, implying generosity.

'Abd al-Malik's liking for exaggeration appears in his admiration for some lines by al-ʿAṣṭa which he preferred to some others by Kuthayyir. Kuthayyir praised 'Abd al-Malik in a poem in which he says:

\[
\text{كُتْبَتُ شُجُّدَةً بِمُفْلِحَةٍ،}
\]
\[
\text{مِنَ الْفَتْرَةِ حَيْثُ كَانَتْ مُحْضَرَةٌ،}
\]
\[
\text{فَتَمَّتَ الْعِدَائُ عَلَيْهِ بِعِدَائِهِ،}
\]
\[
\text{وَفَوْقَ مَثْلِهِ بِمَثْلِهِ.}
\]

'Abd al-Malik did not like the lines, preferring those by al-ʿAṣṭa in praise of Qays b. Maʿād Karib in which the poet says:

\[
\text{وَرَأَيْتُ بِنَسَمَةٍ عَلَى إِنْفُضَاءٍ،}
\]
\[
\text{فَبِسَمَةٍ أَتَّمَّتَ بِسَمَائِهَا،}
\]
\[
\text{فَبَعْدُ مَثْلِ السَّيِّدَةِ مَثْلِهَا.}
\]

Kuthayyir defended his lines, on the grounds that he had described 'Abd al-Malik as a wise man, who put his armour on before the battle, while al-ʿAṣṭa had described his madūn as a foolish man, who fought without armour.

Al-Marzubānī comments: "I have heard those who know poetry well express a preference for the lines of al-ʿAṣṭa because they think that exaggeration is better than moderation. Al-ʿAṣṭa exaggerated in describing
bravery by representing the courageous *mamdūh* entering the battle without wearing armour, even though wearing it in battle is a wise thing to do. The description of al-ʾAshā is strong evidence that his *mamdūh* is brave. Kuthayyir failed to achieve a good description of bravery." 67 Qudāma b. Jaʿfar adopts the same view as ʿAbd al-Malik, and criticised Kuthayyir for moderation. 68 Both Qudāma and al-Marzubānī in this way condone ʿAbd al-Malik's preference for exaggeration in *madīḥ*.

Besides his liking for exaggeration, ʿAbd al-Malik enjoyed *madīḥ* that attributed spiritual virtues to the *mamdūh*, as witnessed by Qudāma. He criticised ʿAbd Allāh b. Qays al-Ruqayyat for eulogizing him in these terms:

"بَنَيَّانَ السَّلَاحِ فَوَقَّانُ مُّقَرِّقُينَ ١٠٠ عَلَىِّ كِبْنِيَّ كَأْنَّهُمْ النُّهَبُ"  

while eulogizing Musʿab b. al-Zubayr thus:

"إِنَّمَا مُضَعِّفُ شُهَابُ يَنِيَّ اللَّهِ ١٠١ قَلَّتُ عَنْ خُيْلَهُ الْلَّهُ"  

He complained: "You have described him as a light from Allāh, and you have described me as having a beautiful crown on my golden face, as though I were an "Ajamī king." Qudāma considered that ʿAbd al-Malik was justified in his complaint. 69

ʿAbd al-Malik revolted against the traditional similes in the *madīḥ* poetry. He is reported as saying to some poets: "O, you poets, you sometimes liken us to the lion, which is *abkhar* (suffering from halitosis), sometimes you liken us to the mountain, which is rugged, and sometimes you liken us to the sea, which is bitter; why do you not use words like Ayman b. Khuraym, who praised the Banū Hāshim thus:

"ناَّكُمْ مِكَابِيَّةَ وَعَلِيَّةَ ١٠٢ وَلِيَّةَ البِرْرَةَ وَالنُّورَ ١٠٣ وَاسْتَنَدَّتْ فِيَّمَا دَكَ الْبِلَاءَ ١٠٤ أُعَمِّل مَا أَعْمَلْتُمْ سَوَاءَ ١٠٥ وَيِنَّيْمَ وَبِنَيْمَ الْهَوَاَذَّ ١٠٦ وَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْهَارُكُمْ وأَنْهَارُكُمْ وَعَهِينُهَا وَأَرْسٌمْ سَهِّ ١٠٧"
A similar remark made by him to al-Akhtal indicates that he also required brevity, exaggeration and fresh terms of praise. When al-Akhtal came to recite his poem in praise of him, ‘Abd al-Malik said: "If you have likened me to the eagle and the lion I do not wish to hear your poetry, but if you have praised me in excellent poetic *mādīh* like those of al-Khansa’ then I can listen to you." ‘Abd al-Malik then recited these lines of al-Khansa’:

\[
\text{Fatma-bil-fātih lī ṣamir ʾawrāʾ sīsāwāh i bāb fi ʾaṭlās ma ṣīnā ʾātān,}
\text{wālī ʾl-muhir tāʾil al-wahu rār al āzī fīlā ʿāqfūl.}
\]

Al-Akhtal said that although the lines were excellent, he had written better ones. He then recited to ‘Abd al-Malik:

\[
\text{Iḏā maʾn man al-ʿarīf wa-tawṣūl azīn ʾl-nānās rār al qibli māšir,}
\text{wālī ṣalātīn ṣalātīn waʾmsālūn ʾl-dīn waʾl-dinārī fīlā ʿāqfūl.}
\]

Although ‘Abd al-Malik admired these lines, al-Askari criticises the poet for mentioning death, "which is not a pleasant thing to mention when addressing kings." We notice that the two pieces quoted by ‘Abd al-Malik, that by Ayman b. Khuraym and that by al-Khansa’, are *mādīh* poems in which the poet makes a comparison between the *mandūh* and others, asserting his superiority. This type of *mādīh* is not very different from the *hijāʾ* *mudnīḥ* prohibited by the Prophet, and also by ‘Umar.

The lines of al-Khansa’ are an example of concise and exaggerated *mādīh*; those of al-Akhtal contain a kind of dualistic *mādīh*, by virtue of the reference to dīn and dūnyā. In the poetry of the *muhdathīn* quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz in his *tasbīḥat*, we shall see that poets frequently employ the juxtaposition of dīn and dūnyā in their *mādīh* poetry, implying that the *mandūh* is both a man of religion and a man of outstanding worldly merit - that he is generous, brave, etc.
Abd al-Malik was also in need of a good "opening" to a poem of praise. He criticised Jarīr for beginning a mādīḥ poem to him:

أَتَكُرُ أَمْرَكَ مَآ أَكثَرَ صَبْحِ

Abd al-Malik was angry, even though he knew that the poet was addressing himself in the first line. The same thing happened when Dhū al-Rumma visited Abū al-Malik and recited his poem that begins:

ما بَالَ عِينٍ مَنْهَا الْحَمْرُ يَشْكِبُ

It is clear that the poet is addressing himself in his tashbīb, but because Abū al-Malik had one eye that wept continuously, owing to some complaint, he was extremely angry and dismissed the poet, saying: "Why do you ask about this, 0 ignorant man?"

Some poets used to address the mādīḥ by his matronymic in order to make the poem more famous. Abd al-Malik disliked this habit and asked his brother, Abū al-‘Azīz: "Why does Abū Allāh b. al-Ruqayyat address you in his mādīḥ poems by your matronymic, as if you had no nobility from your father’s side?" In his criticism of Hassān, we have seen that al-Nābigha wished the poet to boast of his fathers and grandfathers rather than of his grandmothers.

In nasīb, Abū al-Malik admired rigga, by which he seems to mean the poet's producing evidence of the sincerity of the passionate love that he claims to feel and of the reality of the suffering that it causes him. When ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa, Jamīl and Kuthayyir visited him, Abū al-Malik asked them each to recite the most sensitive nasīb that they had ever written. He considered ʿUmar’s nasīb to be the best, on the grounds that his expressed willingness to go anywhere to meet his beloved, even to Jahannam, indicated the sincerity of his passion. The nasīb runs:

أَلَيْتُ لِنَتَّبَعُكَ وَأَنْعَمَ بِمَيْتِكَ

In his criticism of Hassan, we have seen that al-Nabigha wished the poet to boast of his fathers and grandfathers rather than of his grandmothers.
In his views concerning nasib, 'Abd al-Malik, like most of his contemporaries, was guided by traditional etiquette concerning woman in that society. This may be clearly seen in his criticism of the poet Nusayb, who wrote:

'Abd al-Malik wished the line to be changed to:

As far as poetry in general is concerned, 'Abd al-Malik is said to have made a collection consisting of seven major poems. He was possibly influenced in this by the supposed collection of al-Nu‘man b. al-Mundhir which was inherited by the Marwanids, according to Ibn Sallām. The poems selected by 'Abd al-Malik were the mu'allaga of 'Amr b. Kulthūm, that of al-Hārith b. Hilliza, a poem by Suwayd b. Abī Kāhil, one by Abū Dhu‘ayb al-Hudhalī, one by 'Abīd b. al-Abras, one by Antara and lastly that by Aws b. Maghra‘ in which he says:

The gasīda of Suwayd is known as al-Yatima, and begins:

That of Abū Dhu‘ayb begins:

And that of 'Abīd begins:

It is not clear on what basis 'Abd al-Malik selected these poems, but it is likely that he was influenced, in general, by the admiration that they had received in the Jahili period.

The poem of Abū Dhu‘ayb al-Hudhalī is ritha‘ for his five, or seven,
sons, all of whom died on one day. This poem has been discussed in connection with Jahili criticism, and we indicated then the kind of san'a in it which the Jahilis admired. Besides that, it contains a certain amount of hikma, such as:

وإذا المحبة أنساب أذلالها إلى نسيم رفع
ومن النفس راحية فإذا رفعتها فإذا زعدت إلى فليل نقع

and some of the elevated moral sentiments of which 'Abd al-Malik was fond, such as:

هنى ناس لموارد صغيرة يقسم المشوق للبوم نقع

and:

فول لبشرى المشاهين أرهم أن يزعب الروح لا أتمنى

It may be, however, valuable to consider it in more detail, in order to obtain some idea of what constituted an ideal, or at least a highly commended rithā' poem, in the eyes of 'Abd al-Malik, apart from the somewhat general poetic features just mentioned. The most obvious feature is the double repetition of one half-line, once in consecutive lines:

و الرسم رحب من حديانه في رأس شاهقة آخر ضع
والرسم رحب من حديانه جون السراة له جدبر أست

and then a few lines later:

والرسم رحب من حديانه بسب أوبره الليلان مرغ

After the first two lines quoted above, the poet describes the killing of wild asses by a hunter and his dogs, and after the third line, he describes a wild bull which meets the same fate. The lines just quoted, together with others, like:

لا رجاء من نصي أن يكون أمان
ولكي أره إن البلايا سفراء

and:

كل من مس جمع النجوم الموجي، بنوا بسما، أعظم
فكن بسما نجوم مما، إلى بأهل مورين مثل

are intended as a means of obtaining consolation. After the expression
in the opening lines of the poet's grief at the death of his sons, the whole poem is based on this idea of consolation, which is not uncommon in ṭithā' and received general critical approval, as we shall see. It may be difficult to determine, at first, how the sections that we have just referred to, the two hunting scenes, can be thought of as part of the theme of consolation, although, in a gasida, a hunting scene may often follow a ṭahfil, which itself is sometimes introduced as a means of consoling oneself for the departure of one's beloved. It may be that there is something of this idea present here, but there is, in fact, a more obvious connection. The poet implies that even those wild animals that hide themselves from man in wild and remote areas and high mountains cannot escape the sentence of time and cannot avoid being hunted; it is thus not surprising that his sons have passed away and have been unable to protect themselves.

This same poem was admired by other critics, like ʿUmar b. Shabba, who on the basis of it, pronounced the poet superior to all other poets of the tribe of Hudhayl.77

If we leave ʿAbd al-Malik aside and consult other critics, we find both similar and different criteria for judging poetry. One of those critics is al-Shaʿbī, who considered al-ʿAṣaḥī pre-eminent in some poetic topics, e.g. in a line such as this that deals with courage and fighting:

\[
\text{فَقَالَوا الْإِخْرَاجُ فَقُلُوا رَبَّنَا أَنْتَ كَفَىٰ بَالٍ مَّعَنَّا أَوْ تَنْزِلُونَ يَتُومُونَ نَزْلَٰنُ}
\]

Though al-Shaʿbī was here attracted by the manā, he was also probably attracted by the figure of iltifāt, which is one of the "poetic beauties". Iltifāt is defined by Ibn al-Muʿtazz as "a switch from the second to the third, or from the third to the second person." It also occurs where the poet switches suddenly to another manā.79 In the line quoted by al-Shaʿbī, the poet switches from the third person to the first, and then to
Again al-Sha'bi admired al-A'ashā for a line of *ghazal* in which the poet describes his beloved when she walks:

\[
\text{غَرَاءٌ، غَرَاءٌ، مَسْتَفْلِعَتْ عَوارِضَهَا، تمْشِي الْعُوْنُمًا كَأَمْكَّنَى الْمَحْرُوجُ الْمَرَّرُ.}
\]

In this line, al-Sha'bi may well have been attracted by the figure of *ighal*. This "poetic beauty" is connected with the rhyme. The *ma'na* intended by the poet is complete before the rhyme-word is reached, and its addition merely serves to intensify the already completed *ma'na*. The line of al-A'ashā admired by al-Sha'bi is also quoted by Ibn Rashīq as an example of excellent *ighal*. The poet Muslim b. al-Walīd seems to be following al-A'ashā when he describes a drunken man:

\[
\text{إِذَا مَا عَلَّمَ مَنَّا ذَوَابًا شَارِبًا، كَبْسَتْهُ هُدْسُ الْمَلْحِبِ فَالْمَوْلُ.}
\]

Al-Rashīd, who admired the line, said: "May Allah fight him [the poet]. He not only likened him to a man in fetters but even made him walk on mud." The *ighal* in this line is formed by the last two words.

Al-Sha'bi also admired a line by al-A'ashā describing wine and considered him superior to al-Akhtal, who writes:

\[
\text{فَأَنْعُورْنَى النَّكَبَينَ حَنَانُهَا، نَقْصِمُ رَيَاحًا مَرْكَامُ.}
\]

Al-A'ashā's line runs:

\[
\text{حَبْأ تَعَلَّمَى عَلَى قَدْ أَتَى فَنَانَهَا، كَلْمَ، نَسْلُ عَمَّةَ المِرْكَامُ.}
\]

Al-Marzubānī commented that those who preferred al-A'ashā did so because he produced a complete *ma'na* and he exaggerated more than al-Akhtal. The latter describes the strong smell of his wine as being perceived even by a man with catarrh, while al-A'ashā describes his wine as something that can cure catarrh itself.

People differed in their judgements on *nasīb* poetry, but the most common opinion is that the best kind is that which contains *rigga*,

...
this being demonstrated by the expression of the suffering caused by love, and by the depiction of humbleness, slavery, and submission to the beloved. This trend in the criticism of nasīb probably started in the first century of the Hijra with critics like Ibn Abī ṬāĪq and Abū al-Ḥaşim al-Makhzūmī, both of whom, incidentally, were famous for their religious knowledge. The views of Ibn Abī ṬāĪq will be discussed later. Abū al-Ḥaşim al-Makhzūmī criticised the poet Ishāq al-ʿAjamī, a mawla of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān, for the following line of nasīb:

When the line was recited to Abū al-Ḥaşim he said: "May Allah disfigure him [the poet]. No, by Allah, he never loved her, even for an hour." Abū al-Ḥaşim criticised the poet because the latter does not display humility and servility to his beloved. He puts himself in a higher position than her, and declares that when she does not do what pleases him he leaves her, because "he is a man of dignity and pride". Abū al-Ḥaşim saw this as an indication of insincerity in love, considering that if the poet was really sincere he would accept humbly whatever treatment she chose to accord him, without thought of his dignity and pride.

Al-Walīd b. Yazīd, the Umayyad caliph, took the same view in preferring a line of nasīb by ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa to one by Jamīl, in that ʿUmar displays servility and humbleness in his line:

Whereas Jamīl declares that whenever he meets his beloved he feels his love for her diminishing and dying, but returning when she leaves him:

In the early Abbasid period the same tendency in nasīb criticism is
evident, and we find the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi preferring al-Ahwas to Imru' al-Qays and Kuthayyir in nasib. On hearing a line of Imru' al-Qays:

وَمَا ذَهَبَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ فَأَقْرَأْتُهَا فَسَيَمُرَّهَا فِي أَثْنَاءِ غَلْبِ مَعْنَى

al-Mahdi said: "This is an uncivilised Bedouin". When he then heard a line of Kuthayyir:

أَبْيَدَ الْيَّسِىَ ذَلِكَ أَوْلَادِي فَكَأَنَّ يَمْنُلُ لِي لَيْيَ بَلِّي بَلِّي سَيْبِيل

al-Mahdi commented: "This is not good; why does he wish to forget her?"
The line of al-Ahwas that he then heard he accepted as a most sensitive line of nasib:

إِذَا أَقْرَأْتُ إِنَّ مُسْتَيْسَيْ يَلِيقَهَا هَمُّ السَّلَاحِي بَيْنَ اِيْبَنَ سُفِيَ

Al-Mahdi's comments on the three lines probably reflect the somewhat sentimental attitude of the reasonably educated, but undiscerning, man of this period to romantic love as portrayed in nasib. His reason for rejecting Kuthayyir's line is clear, if unsophisticated; a desire to forget one's beloved must indicate a lack of sincerity. His reasons for criticising the line of Imru' al-Qays, which was regarded by other critics as one of the best written by any poet, are obscure, but the form taken by his criticism would seem to imply a distaste for the Bedouin imagery (if it is that) used in the second half of the line. Certainly the sentiments expressed seem unexceptionable.

From early times, there seems to have been a prejudice, in some quarters, in favour of idealised description, at the expense of reality. This is exemplified by the objections raised by a woman to Kuthayyir concerning his lines:

وَمَا رَوَىَ بَالَّوْنَ عَلَيْهِ الْنَّرَى يُصُبُّ الْنَّرَى بِجُنُبَهَا وَيَقُلُّهَا

بَلْ بِمَا أَرَّدَنَ عَرْشَ مَوْعِدَةَ إِذَا أَوْفُقَتْ بِالْجُبُورِ الْلَّدَنَّ نَارُهَا
She expressed a preference for Imru' al-Qays's line:

on the grounds that it was more fitting to describe one's beloved as smelling nice naturally. Any slave-girl could perfume herself; the beloved should be distinguished from the common herd.

Some people expressed admiration for certain lines of *nasib* and pronounced them superior to other lines on the same topic, without giving any reasons that would allow us to guess at the criteria they applied. The following lines by al-Simma al-Qushayri were quoted by Ibrahim b. Sulayman al-Azdi as the best lines of *ghazal* ever written, either in the *Jahiliyya* or in Islam:

Probably the critic admired the lines for the *rigga* expressed in submission and slavery to the beloved in the second and third lines.

Another example of such criticism in which there are no clear criteria is `Umar b. `Abd al-`Aziz's judgement that the following lines of Qays b. al-Khatim were the best lines of *nasib* ever composed:

It was probably the *ma'na* that `Umar b. `Abd al-`Aziz principally admired, but one can point to a kind of *tasım* in the first line, and *tatbiq* in the first half of the second line, where the poet implies that his beloved lives in luxury and she does no work at home because she has servants. This *ma'na* is similar to that of Imru' al-Qays.
which we have already quoted as ṣalāḍ:  

Conciseness is sometimes a criterion. Some critics admired the poet who was able completely to express a number of ideas in a few words. Al-A‘ṣāh is admired by some for the two following lines of ghazal, but he is criticised by others for the same lines. ‘Alī b. Abī Tahir considered al-A‘ṣāh superior to all other poets for these lines:

Other critics, however, while admitting his excellence, criticised him for being unable to express the ma'nā in one line. They preferred the single line of Tarafa with the same ma'nā:

Critics also required a good "opening" for a poem, one of the characteristics of which they considered to be brevity. They agreed that the best "opening" ever composed was Imru' al-Qays celebrated:

They also admired the "opening" of another poem of his:

The first line is regarded as the best "opening" because "the poet has stopped and requested his companions to stop, wept and requested them to weep, and mentioned his beloved and her dwelling, all in one half-line."

It was said that this "opening" of Imru' al-Qays was first admired by the Prophet. However, both of these lines of Imru' al-Qays also contain ṭakhrīf.

Brevity is also required in tashbīḥ. A poet is regarded as excellent if he is able to compress a number of similes into one line. It was for this reason that this line of Imru' al-Qays was greatly admired:
The poet here likens two things in different conditions to two other things also in different conditions. Other poets followed him in this. Labid has:

\[
\text{جَلَّ النَّبِيُّ عَلَيْهِ السُّوءَ فَيَذَكَّرُ بِمَعْلُوَاتِهِ أَوَّلُهَا}
\]

likening tulūl to zubār and suyūl to aqlām. Bashshār is reported to have said: "I could not settle after hearing that line of Imru' al-Qays until I was able to write a similar one:

\[
\text{لاَ تَصَدِّقُ النَّاسُ فَوَقَ رَوَيْتِهَا وَأَسْبَأَتُ لِيُّ تَمَهَّى كُوَارِبُهُ}
\]

The line of Imru' al-Qays was also quoted by al-Asma'I to Harūn al-Rashīd as the best line describing an eagle.

It also seems that those who admired the line were attracted by the figure of muqābala, as pointed out by Ibn Rashīq. The muqābala is produced by the words ra'āb, 'ummāb, yābīs and ḥashāf.

The "perfection" and "completion" of the ma'na were sought by early critics. This "completion" is often achieved through the "poetic beauty" of tatmīm, which is sometimes also called ihtirās (caution).

Some poets were criticised for leaving a ma'na incomplete, through not having applied tatmīm or ihtirās. Dhu al-Rumma is criticised for this line:

\[
\text{أَّنْ يَا أَسْلَمُ بِإِدَارِ بَيْتِكَ عَلَى الإِلَّهِ وَلَا رَزَالٌ مُنْهَلًا بِحَمَايَةِ الْقَكَّر}
\]

in that the ma'na is incomplete because he did not take precautions that the rain might not harm his beloved dwelling when he prayed for it to be watered. Taraf'a's line on the same subject was preferred:

\[
\text{قَسَمَ دِيَارَكَ بِمُفَسِّيْعًا مَّقْرِفِ الرَّيْبِ وَرَيْبِهِ مَقَّسُ}
\]

for he made the proviso ghayra mufsidihā, which constitutes the tatmīm of the ma'na. He prays that the dwelling may be watered by the spring
rain, provided that it does not harm it. \(^{101}\) Other critics defended Dhū al-Rumma, saying that he had implied a precaution (ihtiras) in the first half of the line by praying for the dwelling to be at peace (aslami) before being watered by the rain. \(^{102}\)

Similar is the criticism of Tarafa b. al-ʿAbd for the following line:

\[
\text{أَشْهَدَ بِنِعَمَتَهَا نَحْبُواَ وَنَبْعَاَ لَكَ أَمْوَٰلَٰ وَطُرٰٰرٰ}
\]

The maʿna is imperfect and incomplete because one may understand from the line that the people being praised are generous only when they are drunk. This means that their generosity is not something natural but only a temporary condition. In order to complete the maʿna, the poet should take the precaution of showing them as generous in all circumstances. Hassan b. Thabit is also criticised for following Tarafa on the wrong path:

\[
\text{بَلْ يَدَيْنَا مَا كَانَ فَعَلَّنَا أُوْلَٰٰ-
}
\]

Hassan's case is considered even worse than Tarafa's, because while the latter at least describes them as being brave as lions before they are drunk, Hassan makes them as brave as lions and as generous as kings only after they are drunk. Better than either is ʿAntara, who, in similar circumstances, makes certain that there shall be no misunderstandings:

\[
\text{وَإِذَا شَهِيَتُ فَعَلَّنَا مُصْلِحًا مَالٍ وَعِجَابٍ وَافِدٍ مَّنْ يُفَضِّلُ}
\]

He makes it clear that although he spends money when he is drunk he does not harm his honour, and that his generosity and noble manners and deeds are permanent and not limited to the condition of drunkenness. Though ʿAntara is considered superior to Tarafa and Hassan on this maʿna because of his ihtiras, Imruʿ al-Qays is superior to him, because, besides completing and perfecting the maʿna by means of ihtiras and tatmim, he compresses it into one line:

\[
\text{سَيَعَى ذَا دَرَجَةَ وَزَهرَةَ دَرَاجَةً َُوَفَاءَ دَأَّ وَنَامَلَ دَاً إِذَا عَمَا وَإِذَا سَكَرَ}
\]
Ibn Tabātabā quoted the same line of Imru' al-Qays, with this one before it:

قَنْتُ فِي هَذَا أَبِيِّ شَمَالَةَ وَمَيْنَايَلَةَ وَمَا خَالِفَهُ وَمَا خَرَّ بَلْ خَرَّ نَحْرٌ

He cited the two lines as an example of excellent mādīh because of their eloquence and brevity. It seems also that critics approved of the tagsīm in the second half of the line where the poet mentions the two conditions of drunkenness and sobriety.

From early Islamic times, the public differed widely as to who was the best poet of all. Some judgements comparing poets were attributed to the Jinn, and, in fact, these judgements reflect the views of the public themselves. According to Abū 'Ubayda, a man from al-Hasra claimed that he met a Jinnī who discussed poetry with him and preferred Imru' al-Qays for the following line:

قَدَّرَ الْفَزْرَ الْمَرْفَعَ الْفُرُصَانَ يُسَقَطُضُ عِندَ أَعْمَاسِ الرَّيْبِ مَنْ قَنُّلَ

He declared that second to Imru' al-Qays came Tarafa, for his line:

نُفَرُّ الْفَزْرَ الْمَرْفَعَ الْفُرُصَانَ وَكَيْبَالَ الْقَرْبِ يَنْ جَاءُ مَنْ تِلْقَر

Third is al-'Ashā, for his line:

وَثُبَّرَ بَرْدُ رَزَايِ العِرْضِ بِالْعَصُّ الْقَرْطَبِ فِي الْعَيْبَةِ

Again, according to Abū 'Amr b. al-'Ālī, another man claimed that he had met a Jinnī who declared that al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī was the best poet of all. As we have said, these and similar stories reflect the opinions of the common people and sometimes of the scholars themselves. The lines just quoted have been mentioned before, quoted by other critics as lines of sensitive nasīb, or as examples of brevity and excellent māfīña.

It was apparently impossible for people at that time to reach agreement concerning the best of all poets. As Umar b. Shabba mentioned, every
tribe claimed that their poet was the best. The Yemenites claimed that Imru’ al-Qays was the best; the Banu Asad preferred their own poet ‘Abîd b. al-Abras; the tribe of Taghlib their poet al-Muhalhil; the tribe of Bakr the two poets ‘Amr b. Qamî’â and al-Muraqqiah al-Akbar; and the tribe of Iyâd their poet Abû Du’âd. Other tribes, such as Tamîm, claimed that Aws b. Hajar was the best poet; others, as Ibn al-Kalbi mentions, preferred ‘Adî b. Zayd. One of their poets, al-‘Harîth b. Badr al-Ghûdânî, wrote a line in which he declared that real poetry is like that of ‘Adî b. Zayd al-Tbâdî. He wrote:

Haïmâd al-Rawiya also mentioned that he had met some people from the tribe of Tamîm who did not consider anyone superior to ‘Adî in poetry. AwS b. Hajar was also put first by ‘Umar b. Ma‘âdh al-Tâymi, who put Abû Dhu’ayb al-Hudhali second, according to Ibn Sallâm.

Some people regarded Zuhayr as the best poet and al-‘Utay’a as second to him, according to Ishaq al-Mawsîlî. Another critic, Ma‘âdh b. al-Harrâ’, declared Imru’ al-Qays, Zuhayr and ‘Abîd b. al-Abras as the best poets of the Jâhiliyya. Other critics differentiate between the poets of the bâdiya and those of the towns. They declared that Hassan was the best poet among those of the towns (ahl al-madar). None of these tribes or individuals gave reasons or indicated the criteria on which they based their judgements. It seems that those who preferred ‘Adî b. Zayd and Aws b. Hajar liked moral poetry, wisdom, descriptions and aphorisms. ‘Adî was famous for his poetry of "preaching", "advice", and zuhd; Aws was famous for his aphorisms. He was described as "a wise man in his poetry, famous for his many proverbs and descriptions of wild asses, and bows and other weapons". In championing Zuhayr and al-‘Utay’a, al-Mawsîlî was concerned with "refined poetry", which contained no defect and maintained a consistent
level of excellence. These were apparently the characteristics of the
two poets' poetry. We have more specific judgements about poets, in
which we find a poet declared to be the best on a certain topic. Such
a judgement is attributed to Ibn Abī Tarafa, who is reported as saying:
"You may be content with four poets, namely: Zuhayr for desire; al-
Nābigha for fear; al-ʿashā for delight; and ʿAntara for rage." This
remark is also attributed to the poet Kuthayyir (or Nusayb), and may
mean that Zuhayr is the best in mādiḥ since mādiḥ is motivated by
desire for reward; that al-Nābigha is the best in iʿtidhar (apology)
since this topic is based on fear (of the King of Ḥira, al-Nuṣrān b.
al-Mundhir in the case of al-Nābigha); that al-ʿashā is the best in
khamriyyāt, together with poetry about songs and music; and that
ʿAntara is the best in the description of war, alluded to here by the
word "rage". This sort of classification is based on the idea of
specialisation in certain topics and we shall see later that al-ʿAsmāʾī
and Abu ʿUbayda adopted and extended the same idea. Ibn Qutayba,
too, as it seems to me, based his theory of tafāwut al-tābaʿa on the idea of
desire, fear, delight and anger. It also seems likely that Ibn Sallām
al-Jumahī was to some extent influenced by it in dividing up poets into
four in each tābaqa, in the same way as Ibn Abī Tarafa mentioned four
poets. Ibn Sallām, however, with regard to the number four, seems also
to have been influenced by other views, as we shall see.

A similar judgement to that of Ibn Abī Tarafa is attributed to other
critics, who seem to be influenced by him. They said: "the best poets
are Imruʿ al-Qays when he rides, al-Nābigha when he fears, Zuhayr when
he desires, and al-ʿashā when he drinks." Imruʿ al-Qays is added
here as the best poet either in horse description or in hunting poetry.
Some critics say that poetry is based on four emotions, desire, fear,
delight and anger. The association of the various genres of poetry
with one particular emotion is as we have seen above: madīn with desire, 
ī'tidhar with fear, nasib with delight, and hijā, 'itāb and so on with 
anger. Probably Ibn Abī Tarafa himself and those who followed him were 
all influenced in this by either Kuthayyir or Nusayb, or by the poet 
Artāt b. Suhayya who visited 'Abd al-Malik when he was very 
old, and on being asked: "Do you write poetry now?" replied: "I do 
not feel delight or anger; I do not drink wine, and I desire nothing, so 
how can I write poetry? Poetry comes only with these four things for 
which I am now too old." 113

The poets Dhū al-Rumma and Kuthayyir had similar views about the motives 
behind writing poetry. When Kuthayyir was asked what he did when he 
felt unable to write poetry, he replied that he would walk in gardens 
and grassy places and then poetry would come into his mind. Dhū al-
Rumma, when asked the same question, replied that he caused poetry to 
come by sitting alone and remembering those whom he had loved. 114 Al-
Asma'ī was perhaps influenced by Kuthayyir when he said that the best 
way to evoke poetry was "looking at running water, and walking in the 
hills and empty places". 115 Al-Farazdaq followed the same method. 
Abū Nuwas used to drink before writing a poem. 116 Ibn Qutayba, as Ibn 
Rashiq suggests, was probably influenced by all these views when he 
discussed tabr in al-Shīr wa-al-shu'ara. 117 We shall deal with Ibn 
Qutayba at length in due course.
CHAPTER THREE

Hijazi poets of the Umayyad period

During the Umayyad period Hijaz flourished as a centre of religious studies, and at the same time it witnessed a development in the arts of music and singing, as can be seen from the Kitab al-Aghani of Abu al-Faraj. Due to social and other factors, most Hijazi poetry at this time was concerned with ghazal, which divided into two kinds. One was decent and virtuous ghazal, which had flourished in the badiya at the hands of poets like Jamil and Kuthayyir. The other kind was the frank, open ghazal which had been developed in Mecca and Medina by 'Umar b. Abi Rab'Fa, al-Ahwas and al-Arajî. Though the poet Nusayb lived in this milieu, his ghazal was decent and admired by the people of the badiya because it agreed with their concept of ghazal, as we shall see later. Among the other urban poets were 'Abd Allah b. Qays al-Rugayyât and al-Harith b. Khalid al-Makhzumî.

As we have seen in the last chapter, Hijaz was the source of literary critical views concerning poetic comparison. This sort of criticism continued, but in a different direction. Although we find the moral trend in poetic criticism as in the past, we also have now critics who concerned themselves with the elements of excellent ghazal poetry and put the moral criteria aside. The critics who appeared at this time were themselves men of high social and religious status. The most important among them were Ibn Abî 'Atîq, Abu al-Sa'ib al-Makhzumî, Sukayna bint al-Husayn and 'Aqîla bint 'Aqîl b. Abî Tâlib. There were also Mus'âb al-Zubayrî, 'Abd Allah b. Mus'âb and his grandson al-Zubayr b. Bakkâr. Comparisons were made between these poets, and judgements were given according to the different tastes of the critics, most of whom agreed in preferring 'Umar b. Abî Rab'Fa to all other poets for
certain qualities found in his ghazal poetry. According to Ibn Abī Atīq, Umar b. Abī Rabī‘a surpassed his companions and was the best of the poets of Quraysh because "his poetry has links with the heart and attachment with the soul; it satisfies needs, as no other poetry does. Allāh, praise be to Him, has not been so disobeyed in any poetry more than in that of Ibn Abī Rabī‘a. He is the best among Quraysh poets because his poetic ma‘nā is finely and precisely written, his madkhal is delicate and gentle, his makhraj is easy, his hashw is firm, his poetic "borders" are connected with one another, his poetic ma‘tānī shine clearly, and his feelings are plainly expressed." It is not easy to represent in English the sense of Ibn Abī Atīq’s comment; the original Arabic reads:

Although it is difficult to pin down precisely what Ibn Abī Atīq means by each of his remarks, their general import is clear. He refers to ‘Umar’s sensitivity of ma‘nā, ease of expression, and firmness of construction. The various parts of a poem are well connected with one another. In other words, it has talāhum al-kalām. By madkhal and makhraj is probably meant embarking on, and leaving, a subject, but it is possible that madkhal may also refer to the way in which the poetry enters men’s hearts. Hashw here clearly cannot have its usual meaning of "functionless words", but must refer to the construction of the poem. "Links with the heart" and "attachment with the soul" presumably denote rigqa (sensitivity) in the poetic expression. The principal characteristics admired by Ibn Abī Atīq in ‘Umar’s poetry appear to be its
plain, easy style and expression, which nonetheless convey considerable subtlety and both impress the mind and satisfy the emotions. The strong impression made by his poetry on critics is a distinctive feature shared by no other poetry. Other critics remarked on this. ‘Abd Allah b. Mus‘ab said: "‘Umar's poetry makes a beautiful impression on the heart and forms a mukhālата (union) with the soul. No other poetry has the same quality. If there is a poetry that charms men it is the poetry of ‘Umar." ²

Because of its strong attractiveness and great charm, ‘Abd Allah b. Mus‘ab forbade his poetry to be recited at his house to women, because it was not good for them to listen to poetry that easily and gently entered their hearts.³ Other critics too repeated the same views concerning the charm of ‘Umar's poetry and how it led men to disobey God.⁴

Mus‘ab b. ‘Abd Allah al-Zubayrī, while forbidding the recitation of ‘Umar's poetry to women, seems to have admired it and studied it thoroughly. In preferring ‘Umar to other poets of ghazal and in justifying people's admiration for his poetry, Mus‘ab spoke about the characteristics of this poetry as follows: ‘Umar b. Abī Rabī‘a amazed people and excelled his peers in facility of poetry, in firmness of composition, in beauty of description, in subtlety of concept, in aptness of choice of starting-point, in directness of achieving his object, in expressing the thoughts of deserted dwellings and the heart, in fineness of consolation, in conversation with women, in decency of discourse, in infrequency of digression, in affirmation of evidence, in causing doubt to prevail in place of certainty, in elegance of excuse, in initiating amorous dalliance, in adducing pleas, and in placing guilt
on his detractors. He excelled in expressing distress, in accusing deserted dwellings of withholding information, in conciseness of narrative, and in sincerity of passion. If he struck a spark he kindled a fire, if he apologized he satisfied, if he complained he inspired compassion. He proceeded only after reconnaissance, he did not excuse himself for recklessness. He took sleep captive; he made the birds grieve; he travelled swiftly; he disturbed the water of youth; he expressed his characters' thoughts fluently; he measured and increased love; he disobeyed and deserted his beloved; he made his hearing and sight ally against him; he described his messengers well and he warned them; he both announced and concealed his love; he kept it within him and displayed it; he persisted and insisted; he wedded sleep to men; he culled conversation and beat its back against its belly; he made its difficulties easy; he was content with hope of fulfilment; he incited his murderess; he made his detractor weep; he shook off sleep; he caused the pledge of Mina to be forfeited; he caused his slain to remain unavenged and, as well as all this, he was eloquent.\footnote{5}

The examples quoted by Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī from the poetry of Umar, illustrating what Muṣṭafā al-Zubayrī had said about it, may throw some light on the characteristics that Muṣṭafā admired in his ghazal poetry. Examples of lines in which Umar excelled his peers in "facility of poetry" are the following:

\begin{quote}
فَلَيْنَ تَأوَافُواْ وَسَلَّمُواْ أَشَّرَتُ

\end{quote}

An example of "beauty of description":

\begin{quote}
لَا يَحْمِلُ الْأَنْثَى مَعِينًا وَسَيْسَتُهُ

\end{quote}

An example of "subtlety of concept" and "aptness of choice of starting-point:

\begin{quote}
عِجَآ لِلَّهِ الْحَمْلاَنَّ وَالْمَرْأَةَ مِنْ أَنْسَاءِ الدُّلْيَار

\end{quote}
An example of "directness of achieving his object":

أَيْنَاءَ الْمَكْيِّ النَّرْيا مُسْهِلٌ
وَسَهْيٌ رَأْىَ مَعْلَى
هِيَ شَامِيَةٌ رَأْىَ مَا مِسْتَطِلُ

An example of "expressing the thoughts of deserted dwellings":

سَابِقًا الرَّبِّ بِلَيْلٍ وَطَلَّبَ بُيُوَّةٌ شَوَروأ لِلْفُرَاء طُوفًا
أَمْامَيْنِ هَيْنَما رَأْىَ مَا مُنْهُمْ أَذْهَبَ أَرَابَ جِبَالًا
فَجَا سَأَلَاهَا فَأَجَابَهَا وَفَسَدَلَهَا وَرَغَّى وَلَوْ كَمْ مُسَبِبًا
سُهِوَنَا وَمَا سُهِيَّةَ جُوَارًا وَأَحِبَها دَماةً وَسُهْوَلاً

The same lines were quoted by Ibn Abī Ḥāṭīf when he compared Umar favourably with al-Harīth al-Makhrūzī as we shall see.

An example of "expressing the thoughts of the heart":

قَالَ لَي فَيَبْلُغَ مَا قَالَ قَالَ مَا يَقُولُ الرَّمَمُ
قَالَ لَيْ تَعْجَلُ سَعِيَ وَدُمَيْهَا فَجَابَ الْقُلُبُ لَآ أَسْتَطِيلُ

An example of "fineness of consolation":

إِنْ أَفْقَهْ أَنْ دَارَ الرَّبَابِ تَبَاءَنُنَّ وَأَيْثَرْ حَلَّ أَنْ قَلْبُ طَابُرُ
أَفْقَهْ أَنْ دَارَ الرَّبَابِ تَبَاءَنُنَّ وَأَيْثَرْ حَلَّ أَنْ قَلْبُ طَابُرُ
الْهَوَى وَاسْتَكِيمَنَّ بِرَجْيِ المرَكِّر
نَدَبَّ أَوْ نَدَبَّ الرَّبَابِ المَفَارِض
مَعَشِيَّةٌ كَمْ مَا لَنَّ شَيْهُ وَهُمْ
هُمْ يَدَارُ أَوْ مَنْ غَيْبَةُ الْفَتْرُ
أَحِبَتُ مِنْ يَدَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ حَامِرُ

The same lines were regarded as the best lines of ghazal and attributed to Hassan b. Yasar al-Taghibi by al-Daḥhak b. Uthmān al-Khuzāmī, according to al-Marzubānī.

An example of "conversation with women":

أَيْذَأ أَقْلَى أَقْلُ أَقْلُ السَّماك
كَمَا انفُقَتْ نَفْحَطْ ضَعُيَ السَّلاك
أَعْتَدُّهُ مَعْيَهُ نُفْحَأ
فَيَلَكُ وَأَنْ هُوَانَا هَوَارِك
تَقَرُّ بِهَا العَبْيُ قَٰنُةٌ أَرَائِكَ
al-Zubayr b. Bakkar said: "these lines were accepted by the people of our country who know poetry well as the best lines of ghazal poetry."

An example of "decency of discourse":

An example of "infrequency of digression":

An example of "affirmation of evidence":
An example of "surprise"

An example of "surprise" and some data

An example of "surprise" and some data

An example of "surprise"
An example of "placing guilt on his detractors":

An example of "expressing distress":

An example of "accusing deserted dwellings of withholding information":

An example of "conciseness of narrative":

An example of "sincerity of passion":

and:
An example of "If he apologized he satisfied":

An example of "If he struck a spark he kindled a fire":
An example of "if he complained he inspired compassion":

An example of "he proceeded only after reconnaissance":

An example of "he took sleep captive":

An example of "he made the birds grieve":

An example of "he travelled swiftly":

An example of "he disturbed the water of youth":

An example of "he expressed his characters' thoughts fluently":

An example of "he proceeded only after reconnaissance":

......

An example of "he took sleep captive":

An example of "he made the birds grieve":

An example of "he travelled swiftly":

An example of "he disturbed the water of youth":

An example of "he expressed his characters' thoughts fluently":

 Québró a Jafar con lágrimas y compasión, luego se dirigió hacia la tienda y cuando vio que estaba sola, se acercó y le habló.

Firás, hijo de Jafar, te dirijo estas palabras para que entiendan que las acciones que has tomado son correctas.

¿No te das cuenta de que has cometido un error grave? ¿No ves que lo que has hecho va en contra de lo que has luchado por todo el tiempo?

An example of "he proceeded only after reconnaissance":

An example of "he took sleep captive":

An example of "he made the birds grieve":

An example of "he travelled swiftly":

An example of "he disturbed the water of youth":

An example of "he expressed his characters' thoughts fluently":

Fírmate a Jafar y no te dejes engañar por las bromas de la gente. Sé que has actuado con justicia y que tu sacrificio no ha sido en vano.

Fírmate, hijo de Jafar, y no te dejes engañar por las bromas de la gente. Sé que has actuado con justicia y que tu sacrificio no ha sido en vano.

Fírmate, hijo de Jafar, y no te dejes engañar por las bromas de la gente. Sé que has actuado con justicia y que tu sacrificio no ha sido en vano.

Fírmate, hijo de Jafar, y no te dejes engañar por las bromas de la gente. Sé que has actuado con justicia y que tu sacrificio no ha sido en vano.

Fírmate, hijo de Jafar, y no te dejes engañar por las bromas de la gente. Sé que has actuado con justicia y que tu sacrificio no ha sido en vano.
An example of "he measured and increased love":

An example of "he disobeyed and deserted his beloved":

An example of "he made his hearing and sight ally against him":

An example of "he described his messengers well and he warned them":

and:

An example of "he both announced and concealed his love":

An example of "he kept his love within him and displayed it":

An example of "he persisted and insisted":

An example of "he wedded sleep to men":

75
An example of "he culled conversation":

وَجَّلَ مَسَاعِينَ عَلَى الْأَلْفَٰٰجٰرِ
فِي حِسَانٍ مَّلَعُّ النَّجَارِ
قُدْ دَعَانٍ كَوُرَّ دَاهَانٍ لأَلْفٍ
فَأَجَنَّبْنَا خَيْرٍ دِينِيَّ ثَيِّارٍ
جَآَنِ

An example of "and he beat its back against its belly":

فَخََّأَ ذِكرٍ مَّن الْأَلْفَٰٰجٰرِ
فَخََّأَ ذِكرٍ مَّن الْأَلْفَٰٰجٰرِ
وَأَنْثَى مَنْ أَمْوَى مَا هَوْيِنَا

An example of "he made the difficulties of conversation easy":

فَحَلََّ أَقْصِمُ فِي الْةُيُوْسَٰسِ يُسَبِّبُهُ
وَأَحْضَبَهُ بَيْنَ خَلْقِ الْأَعْلَى
فُضَّلَتْ إِلَى الْأَعْلَى أَطْلَبَ بَعْضٌ

An example of "he was content with hope of fulfilment":

فَقَوْى نَالَوْا وَإِنَّ مَنْ نَبِيٌّ يَقُولُ مَا يَبْعَثُ الْحَمَّ الرِّجَالِ

An example of "he incited his murderess":

فَبَعَثَ جَارِيَّةً وَقَلَّتْ لَهَا اذْهَبِينَ
وَأَكَبَّلَ الْيَدَ ما عَلَى وَلَسَائِلٍ
كَفَّ كَلِمٍ خَيْرٍ خَيْرٍ خَيْرٍ خَيْرٍ وَمُنْبِثٍ
وَبِيَاءٍ إِنَّ هَذِهِ أَوْجَاهُ دَيْ كَمْ خَيْرٍ
فَقَوْهُ مَنْ قَوْهُ مَنْ قَوْهُ
كَفَّ رَهَينَهُ فإِنَّ مَنْ نَقَلَ

An example of "he shook off sleep":

فَبَعَثَ جَارِيَّةً وَقَلَّتْ لَهَا اذْهَبِينَ
وَأَكَبَّلَ الْيَدَ ما عَلَى وَلَسَائِلٍ
كَفَّ كَلِمٍ خَيْرٍ خَيْرٍ خَيْرٍ خَيْرٍ وَمُنْبِثٍ
وَبِيَاءٍ إِنَّ هَذِهِ أَوْجَاهُ دَيْ كَمْ خَيْرٍ
فَقَوْهُ مَنْ قَوْهُ مَنْ قَوْهُ
كَفَّ رَهَينَهُ فإِنَّ مَنْ نَقَلَ

An example of "he caused his slain to remain unavenged" and "he caused the pledge of Mina to be forfeited":

فَقَمْ مِنْ قَتِيلٍ مَّا بَيِّنَيْ بَيِّنَيْ
وَمَنْ عَلَقَ أَرَاحَ مَا أَوْلَى
فَقَمْ مِنْ قَتِيلٍ مَّا بَيِّنَيْ بَيِّنَيْ
وَمَنْ عَلَقَ أَرَاحَ مَا أَوْلَى

For the people of Quraysh there was no poet equal to Umar b. Abi Rabī'a in ghazal poetry. The qualities for which they favoured him are rejected by others and considered as signs of insincerity and of the
wrong direction in *ghazal*, contrary to that followed by the Arabs. What the people of Quraysh admired in his *ghazal* poetry is that he praises himself, instead of praising women, and talks about himself as the beloved one. He used to boast of his adventures with women and not conceal them. Such things, although admired in his poetry, are disapproved of if written by other poets.8

This tendency of "Umar to "praise himself" is criticised by Ibn Abī ʿAtīq and others as something opposed to the *riqa* required in *ghazal*. Although Ibn Abī ʿAtīq was a great admirer of "Umar and preferred him to all other *ghazal* poets, he criticised him for these lines:

İbn Abī ʿAtīq justified his criticism and rejection of the lines by saying to "Umar: "You have not written *nasīb* about her but rather about yourself. You should have said: I talked to her and she talked to me, and I put my cheek on earth and she trod on it."9 Ibn Abī ʿAtīq considered that what "Umar had written was the opposite of *riqa*, which consisted in showing full submission, humility and servility to the beloved. The poet should represent himself, and not the woman, as the one who loves, suffers and pursues. Later critics appear to have agreed with Ibn Abī ʿAtīq's criticism. Al-Mufaddal b. Salama, for instance, said: "He is not sensitive in his *ghazal* as other poets are, because he never complains of separation from his beloved and he does not show his sufferings if his beloved turns away from him; most of his poetic descriptions and similes are about himself and he represents women as suffering more from their love of him than he does from his love of them. In the following lines:

\[ ... \]
he claims that his beloved wishes what he himself wishes, that he avoids her house intentionally, for no reason, and that he turns away from her, without any offence on her part, although seeing her is better than seeing paradise. In a line already quoted:

he claims that women talk about his beauty, comparing him with the moon. Elsewhere he writes:

claiming that a woman is weeping out of unreciprocated love for him and desire to be with him.¹⁰

Al-Mufaddal, like Ibn Abi Ṭātīq before him, required *riqa* in *ghazal* poetry. This entailed, among other things, that the poet should not put himself in an equal position with his beloved. He should express his suffering in love, he should complain about his beloved turning away from him, and he should exhibit his sadness at being deserted by her. He should represent his beloved as uncaring and himself as being the one who cares and pursues, himself as the lover and her as the beloved. He should not show indifference or dignity if she left him. His attitude in all cases should be that of a sincere and sensitive lover in complete submission to his beloved. These are the characteristics of *riqa* in *ghazal* and the signs of sincerity in love.

This view, which lasted for a long time, of what were proper sentiments to be expressed in love poetry goes back, according to *ʿAbd al-Karīm b. ʿIbrāhīm al-Nahshali*, to traditional Arab ideas of the relations
between men and women, which represented the man as the one who longed for and pursued the woman, suffering in the process, and the woman as the often indifferent object of this longing and pursuit.

Both Qudama b. Ja'far and al-Askari also maintain that the best nasib (or tashbib) should demonstrate deep feelings of intense love (sababa), and should be sensitive (raqiq) and submissive, and without any manifestations of roughness or pride. 11

Ibn Rashq added that the language of nasib should be sweet and straightforward; the marf should be simple and plain. It should express deep feelings that move and delight the gentle and please the sad. 12 Such were the components of the rigga that Ibn Abi Atiq used as his criterion in judging ghazal poetry and comparing its exponents. He also stated that the poet should "be content with little from his beloved"; this was regarded as a sign of sincerity and true love. He should not consider himself as his beloved's equal. Thus, Ibn Abi Atiq criticised Kuthayyir for his line:

وَلَسْنَ بِرَاسٍ مِنْ خَيْلِي سَاءَلِ قَميِلٍ فَلَأَرَسَ لُهُ قَميِلٍ

He said: "This is the speech of an equal and not of a true lover. The two Qurashites, 'Umar b. Abi Rabia and 'Abd Allah b. Qays al-Rugayyat, are more content and more sincere than you. Ibn Abi Rabia writes:

لَبِيبْ حَيَاةَ الطَّلُبِ العَبْسِ يَصُدُّ مِنْهَا الْقَلَيْلُ المَهْنَأ

And he is satisfied with merely a promise from her:

فَعَّرَيْنَ نَائِلَةً وَأَنْمَمْ ثَبَيْلٌ إِنَّهُ يَقْطَعُ الْمَلِيْقَ الرَّجَا

The other poet, Ibn al-Rugayyat, writes:

رَحْمَنَ بِعِيشَكِ لَا تَقَبُّرْنَا وَمِنْيَنَا الْمَلِيْقَ يُعْطَبْنا

Abu al-Sa'ib al-Makhzumi, who had the same concept of rigga in ghazal
poetry, also criticised Kuthayyir for the line quoted above and called him "creditor". He wondered why Kuthayyir did not write like Ibn al-Mawla, who followed the right path in the following lines:

According to Abu al-Sa'ib, this is a true and sincere lover, who does not expect his beloved to share his suffering with him. He shows his submission to her and apologises even if he is right and she is wrong.

Ibn Abi 'Atiq also believed that the ghazal poet should not expect his beloved to be trustworthy when she promised to visit him. He thought that it was the habit of women not to keep their promises and that this habit made them more attractive. From this point of view, Ibn Abi 'Atiq criticised Kuthayyir for this line:

He said: "Have you loved her for her trustworthiness?" And when Kuthayyir recited the following line:

Ibn 'Atiq said to him: "this habit of breaking their promises is beautiful and makes them more attractive to the hearts of men." Ibn Abi 'Atiq favoured 'Abd Allah b. Qays al-Ruqayyat "because he knows better about women and puts things in their proper perspective when he says:

It is said that, when Kuthayyir heard these lines, he was delighted and accepted what Ibn Abi 'Atiq said about his own lines.15 Ibn Qays al-Ruqayyat was preferred by Ibn Abi 'Atiq for the lines just quoted because "he put things in their proper perspective" by accepting his
loved ones' breaking their promises to him and actually praised them for that. This meant that the poet accepted their lies and did not expect them to be trustworthy. It also meant that he did not consider himself equal to them but was submissive to them; in this way he demonstrated his sincerity and achieved rigga in his ghazal.

A third test used by Ibn Abī Ātīq for rigga in ghazal poetry was the way the poet addressed the deserted dwelling. He should be sensitive and gentle when he addressed the dwelling, as if he was addressing his beloved herself, and he should show real sorrow on account of those who had left. He should be careful not to wish anything bad to the dwelling. It was for this reason that Ibn Abī Ātīq criticised al-Harith b. Khalīd al-Makhuṣūmī for these lines:

He complained that "he had wished his beloved ill luck when he described her deserted dwelling as being turned upside down, and that he intended to pray God to drop on it pellets of baked clay." He preferred ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa because "he is more friendly towards the dwelling and addresses it more beautifully than al-Harith does. ʿUmar writes:

The lines quoted here by Ibn Abī Ātīq were quoted later by Abū al-
Faraj in the Aḡānī as an example of excellent poetry addressing a dwelling in accordance with the views of Muḥāṣab al-Zubayrī concerning
Riaga also demanded that the poet should express true sorrow when describing the departure of beautiful women. However excellently he described them, failure to convey the proper degree of sadness at their departure meant that he could not be considered really sensitive and sincere in his poetry. Accordingly, Abu al-Sā'īb al-Makhzūmī criticised Urwa b. Uthayna for these lines:

in that, although the poet described very well the women about to return after completing their pilgrimage, he expressed no sorrow at their departure. Kuthayyir made a similar mistake when he wrote:

Kuthayyir was criticised for describing the place where the departing women gathered before they left as a lovely one and then contradicting himself by saying that he was not content with it. He should also have expressed his sorrow at their departure. According to Abu al-Sā'īb, al-'Arjū was more sincere and more sensitive than the other two poets. His lines indicated his true friendship and love for the departing women in that he went out to see his beloved, with the other women, on her way home from Mina after the pilgrimage. He expressed his love for her, and his sorrow for her departure, as follows:
The concept of *riqqa* adopted by Ibn Abi Atiq and Abu al-Sā'ib appears to have been one that was widespread at that period. When `Azza, the beloved of Kuthayyir, criticised him and expressed a preference for the poetry of al-Ahwas, she was comparing the elements of *riqqa* in the two poets' poetry. She believed that al-Ahwas "is more sensitive and gentle in his poetry, and more submissive to women than Kuthayyir."

She declared that she admired the following lines by al-Ahwas:

\[
\text{يَا أَيُّهَا الْرُّجُمَةُ فِيهَا لَأَشْجِعُ أَلْدُنُّ لُوًانَ يَعْصِي مَنْذَكَ إِلَّا}
\]

\[
\text{أَدْرَاكَ قُلُبِّيَ نَعْلَوْناً إِذْ وَسِينَتُ بِهَا أَلْقَبُ مَسِلِّيَةً ولَا فِي مَذْهَبَهَا عَالِ}
\]

and she described the following line by him as "sensitive, soft and gentle":

\[
\text{وَماَلِتُ رَتْنَارَ وَلْيٍ ذَا الْهَوْيِ إِذَا لمْ بَرَّرَ الْبَرْمَانَ سِبْورَ}
\]

She also admired this line:

\[
\text{وَماَلِبَيْنُ إِلَّا مَا نَلْدُ وَتَسِينُ وَإِنَّ لَمْ لَمْ فِي دُوَالِهَا وَهَنَّأً}
\]

She criticised Kuthayyir because "he was too rough with women" in this line:

\[
\text{وَكَادَتَ تَلْبَيْنُ غَلْبَهَا فَلَمْ تَرْبِينُ أَرْبَى بِسَبِيْلَ وَهَنَّأً}
\]

She also criticised him because "he wished her prolonged misery" when he wrote:

\[
\text{هِبَانَ وَأَيِّى مُقِيِّبَ تَمْ نُهُرُ عَلَى حَسَنَهَا حُسَنَيَّةً عَظِيمَةً وَأَرْجُنَ}
\]

\[
\text{فِلاَفَهُ بُرِئَانَا وَرَتْنَارَ نَطْلُ بَعِيْدَ}
\]

She thought that if he was sensitive he would wish her something more pleasant. 18

Kuthayyir was also criticised by `Aqila bint `Aqil b. Abi Talib
for being hard-hearted and showing no sorrow at his beloved's departure. When he recited this line to her:

\[
\text{أَنْ رَبَّمَ أَجْهَالَ وَفَازَرَتِهَا، وَلَعَظَ غَرَابُ البَيْضَةِ أَنَّهُ خَرَىَُ}.
\]

she was astonished and asked him: "When should there be sadness if not at the moment of departure?" Kuthayyir acknowledged his lapse of taste and offered these two lines as a more acceptable treatment of the same topic:

\[
\text{أَرْحَمُنَّ بِنَّى عَلَى ٓوَفَتَّيْنِ كُبْبَى سَقِيمًا جَالِساً} \\
\text{ٍضَبْنَ النَّضَرِّ وَالْهَادَةِ خَرَةً، مَكَانُ السَّبَىَّ مَالِيشُ قُبُرُ.}
\]

Compared with Jamīl, Kuthayyir was said to lack sincerity in some of his love-poetry. Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī reported that Jamīl's line:

\[
\text{خَيَالَّآ، يَمْعَنُ بَيَّةٓ، حَلَّ رَأَيْتَهُ} \\
\text{ْقَتَرَلا، كَيْنَ من حُبَّ قَاَّلِهِمُ قَبْيلٍ}
\]

was generally admired, and preferred to Kuthayyir's:

\[
\text{أَرْبَى لَدُخَّسَ ذَلِكَ فَكَانَ فَيْتَى} \\
\text{ثَيْنُ لِي لَيْلَ بُلُّ سَبْيَل}
\]

centering which people asked: "Why does he want to forget her?" Jamīl was approved of for his total submission to his beloved. Even if he died of her love he wept for his killer. This indicated riqa and sincerity. Kuthayyir was also criticised for insincerity by 'A'isha bint Talha because he wrote:

\[
\text{إِذَا أُرِادَنَ حَلَّةٓ، أَنْ تُزَدَِّلَ} \\
\text{ْأَيْسَيْنَا وَرَفَتَانَا الْحَاجِّيَةَ أَوْلِ} \\
\text{ْمُشْتَلِإَكَ عَرَفَنَا إِنْ أَرِدَت مَنَّا} \\
\text{ْكَيْنَ لِلَّدُخَّسَ الْحَاجِّيَةَ أَوْمَل} \\
\text{ْلِيَا مَهْلَكُ لِي بَلَّ سَبْيَلُ} \\
\text{ْبَيْنُ لَا يَسِلَّطَ عَدَلُهُ} \\
\text{ْوَسَابِقَةً فِي لَيْلَهُ ما تَسْتَوِيُ.}
\]

In the next line he said that he might love another woman besides his beloved 'Azza even though the latter was more lovable to him. 'A'isha considered Jamīl's sentiments to be more acceptable:

\[
\text{وَلَوْنَ تَغَارِيْ نَ عَلَيْنَا وَحْلَهَا} \\
\text{ْفَاجِيْنَا فِي الْبِئْثَةِ بعد تَسْرُهُ} \\
\text{ْحَبٍّ وَمَلَّكَتَهُ أو أَتْنَاهُ رِسَالَةً}
\]
Other critics, however, preferred Kuthayyir and believed that he was more sincere than Jamil. They said that evidence for Jamil's hardness and insincerity was to be found in lines such as:

They contrasted with this ugly outburst of anger Kuthayyir's forgiveness of 'Azza, when she had abused him:

In this particular comparison, Kuthayyir certainly has the advantage over Jamil in the riqqa that manifests itself in submission to the beloved. As we have seen, however, Jamil generally displays this characteristic in his love-poetry, and when he visited Sukayna bint al-Husayn with other ghazal poets, she acknowledged his superiority in the following lines:

being pleased with his finding pleasure in women's conversation and his regarding the victims of passion as martyrs.  

Sometimes comparison of ghazal poets was more general and concerned with whole poems rather than individual lines. When Mus'ab al-Zubayrī compared 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a with Jamil, he considered 'Umar the superior in his poems rhyming with the letters rā and sāyn, but Jamil in his poem rhyming with the letter lām starts:

and 'Umar's:

Other critics, however, did not accept this judgement. Al-Zubayrī b.
Bakkār described Jamīl's lāmiyya as "having differing levels of excellence and not being harmonious; in it one finds both high and low ground. 'Umar's poem is the better, since its parts are homogeneous and its lines are of an equal standard and well connected with one another. If Jamīl tried to address women in his poem as 'Umar does, he would not succeed."24

This is one of the earliest instances of a critic's using sophisticated terms like "differing levels of excellence", and, indeed, of treating a poem as a whole, rather than as a collection of individual lines or groups of lines.

There are "poetic beauties" that may have appealed to earlier critics and men of letters in the poetry of 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a. We have seen that Mus'ab al-Zubayrī appreciated the istifāra and majāz, as well as other qualities, in the ghazals of 'Umar. Some of the lines he quotes contain hushān al-taqsīm, tashakkuk and irdāf or tadbīr. Early ghazal poets such as Kuthayyir seem to be well aware of such elements of poetic craft.

Ibn al-'Athīr mentioned that Kuthayyir wrote one of his poems in luzum mā lā yazam. It is the poem that starts:

خَبَّاءَ هَذَا سُلْطَةٌ فَاعِظَةٌ، فُلُوسُهُمَا يَفْضِعُ ابْكِيَةَ حَيْبَىْ حَمَّىْ

The poet Abū al-'Aynā' noticed the figure taqsīm in 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a's poetry and quoted the following lines as outstanding in that figure:

تجيبُ إلى لَمْ يُمْلِي الْيَتَّمُّ جَامَعَ وَالْيَتَّمُّ مَوْسَلَ، وَلَا أَنْتُ مُفْهِرَ وَلَا فُرْقُبٌ تَفْخِيرٌ إِلَّا أَنْتُ مُفْهِرٌ وَلَا نَسْيَةً مَّلَامَ، وَلَا أَنْتُ نُفْصِلٌ

Some early men of letters criticised Jamīl for "incorrect taqsīm" in the following line:

لَوْأَنَّىٰ بَعْضُ الْقَلَمِ لَفَتَقَّى فَلاِمَا، فَقَلْ، دَمْلُكُ أوَّلُ وَرَسَاهُ فَإِلَّا

They said that he repeated himself in the second half of the line when he told the woman whom he was addressing that if there was room in his
heart for another love he "would either communicate with her or write to her". They considered that writing could not be treated as an alternative to the more general "communication". 27
CHAPTER FOUR

Iraqi and Syrian poets of the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods.

In the last chapter we saw that the main genre of poetry in which people were interested in the Hijāz during the Umayyad period was ghazal, for which they had certain criteria based on the concept of rīq. They seem not to have been greatly interested in other genres.

In Syria and Iraq during the same period, the most important poets were Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akhtal. Besides these there were others such as Dhū al-Rumma, al-Kāʾ al-Numayrī, “Adī b. al-Riqāʾ, Muhāhim al-Uqaylī, Kaʿb b. Juwayl, and some rājaz poets, like al-ʿAjjāj and his son Ruʿba, al-Aghlab and Abū al-Najm. In general, their verses have much in common with Jāhili poetry, in both content and style; they have the same quality of jazāla (firmness), and they still contain the tribal mufākhara that played such an important part there. In fact, mufākhara, both tribal and personal, is the main subject touched on by these poets, who expressed it mainly in poems of hijāz. As the poets of the Jāhiliyya met at the market of ʿUkāz to recite their poems, the Umayyad poets met at the market of al-Mirbad in al-Basra. Each poet had his own circle of his own supporters. As a result of tribal and political conflicts, encouraged by the Umayyad Caliphs, a great deal of this kind of hijāz poetry was produced, exemplified by the Naqāʿid of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, and by the arājiz of al-ʿAjjāj, his son Ruʿba, and others. Since the products of these poets differed from those of the Hijāzī poets with whom we dealt in the last chapter, the nature of the poetic criticism applied to them also differed, in that critics had to deal with different poetic topics and were not restricted to one topic as in the case of the Hijāzī poets.
The question of who was the best poet of the three, Jarīr, al-Farazdaq or al-Akhtal, was a controversial one in Umayyad, and even in early Abbasid, literary criticism. The relationship between the three poets was one of rivalry and there was a fierce exchange of hijā' between Jarīr on the one hand and al-Farazdaq and al-Akhtal on the other. Each poet had his own supporters both among the general public and among men of letters. Besides the issue of the hijā' between them, politics in Umayyad Syria influenced people's views about them. The main type of poetry in which the Caliphs were interested at that time was mādīḥ. The Caliphs themselves were struggling against several parties, such as the Shi'ites, Zubayrites, Kharijites and, later, the Abbasid movement. Their opinions of the poets depended on the attitudes of these towards the various parties and their relations with the Caliphs themselves. Al-Akhtal was most generally admired, and, as we have seen, was regarded by ‘Abd al-Malik as the Umayyad poet.

Each of the three had his partisans, the dispute about them continued, and critics could not reach a definite answer to the question of who was the best. Nevertheless, as 'Umar b. Shabba put it: "The Arabs agreed that the three of them were the best poets of Islam but there was no agreement about who was the best of the three." Some critics did not consider al-Akhtal as equal to the other two.

After stating that they were the best poets of Islam, and mentioning the disagreements of men of letters in comparing the three of them, Abī al-Faraj al-Isfahānī said that al-Akhtal had intervened between Jarīr and al-Farazdaq and supported the latter, when the two rivals were in the final stages of their struggle against each other. When he joined them, he was already old, and although he had his own excellence, his
poetic background was not at all like theirs. On another occasion, speaking about people's disagreement over the three poets, Abu al-Faraj added that the early experts and reciters of poetry did not regard al-Akhtal as equal of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, because "he had not reached their position in poetry, had not the same poetic art as they had, and was not able to write in all fields of poetry as they were". He stated that "people claimed that the tribe of al-Akhtal, Rabī'ā, had an inflated opinion of him in considering him to be as great as Jarīr and al-Farazdaq". Concerning the latter two, Abu al-Faraj informs us: "there are two groups of critics: those who admire firmness, jazāla, fakhamaz and great attractiveness, shiddat al-Asr, in poetry preferred al-Farazdaq; those who admire natural matbuʿ poetry, and beautiful speech, prefer Jarīr".5

Though the dispute was limited to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, there was no agreement about who was the better of the two, and, as Yunus b. Habīb, the grammarian, stated, whenever the two poets were mentioned there was a disagreement about them.6

Some critics preferred Jarīr not only to al-Farazdaq but to all other poets. When Ibn al-Mahdī al-Bāhilī, one of the Arab Ulama, as Abu al-Faraj described him, was asked to give his opinion about Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, he replied "Jarīr is the best poet of the Arabs; the poets will remain waiting on the Day of Judgement until Jarīr arrives to decide between them".7 Some considered him simply the best Islamic poet. Such a view was attributed to Yahyā b. al-Jaww al-Abī, the reciter of Bashshar, who said: "We, the reciters, are the weavers of poetry in the Jahiliyya and in Islam, and we are the ones who know best about it. Al-ʿAshā was the master of all poets in the Jahiliyya and Jarīr is their master in Islam".8
A story is told that illustrates the passions aroused by the continual debate concerning the relative merits of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. Al-Muhallab b. Abī Sufra, the governor of Khurasan, was disturbed one day during his campaign against the Azāriqa, a Khārijite sect, by an uproar in his camp. On inquiring the reason for this, he was told that some of his soldiers were disputing as to whether Jarīr or al-Farazdaq was the better poet. When asked himself to decide the issue, he declined to do so, comparing the situation of such an arbiter to that of a man being torn to pieces by two dogs. He advised his men to ask the opinion of the enemy Azāriqa, who might be thought to be impartial in the matter, but who were Arabs and good judges of poetry. Accordingly, when ābaya b. Hilāl, one of the Azāriqa, issued a challenge to single combat the following day, his would-be opponent insisted first on obtaining his opinion on this question. Although ābaya irritably indicated that such matters were trivial in comparison with the study of the Qur'ān and fiqh, he nonetheless quoted the following lines:

and asked who had composed them. "Jarīr", was the reply. Whereupon ābaya said: "he is the better poet".

According to Ibn Sallām, ābaya recited only the last line of these four, which contains tashbīh. The lines as a whole are wasf concerning horses and ābaya did not give any reason for admiring them. It is possible that their martial flavour appealed to him, as being appropriate to the warlike attitude of the sect to which he belonged. As in so many of the anecdotes concerning the Khārijites, a far greater acquaintance
with, and interest in, literature of a secular type is suggested than one might expect to be compatible with the movement's religious outlook.

Jarīr was much admired by the people of the bādiya, who preferred him to all other poets. Ibn Sallām reported that he asked an aʿrabi of the Banū Asad to compare Jarīr with al-Farazdaq and to tell him which was the better in the view of the people of the bādiya. The aʿrabi replied: "Lines of poetry are of four kinds: fakhr, marāfī, hijāʿ, and nasīb; in all of them Jarīr is superior. In fakhr Jarīr says:

In marāfī:

In hijāʿ:

And in nasīb:

Ibn Sallām commented that what the aʿrabi said was generally believed by the people of the bādiya.

Another aʿrabi from the Banū Qūhra was asked by 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān about the best lines ever written in marāfī, fakhr, hijāʿ, ghazal and tashbih. He recited the lines quoted above and added the following one for tashbih:

The line of hijāʿ quoted by the two Bedouins has two characteristics. First, it is considered as an example of decent hijāʿ, and secondly, it is an example of hijāʿ by tafāl, or hijāʿ in which the poet compares two men or groups and prefers one to another. This sort of hijāʿ is
also called hija' munḍhi and is regarded as the most effective, as we have mentioned before. The line is also quoted by Ibn Tahātān as an example of hija' in which the poet exaggerates too much. The line of tashbīh is also an exaggerated one because it contains the "poetic beauty" of ighal in its last two words.

It was the decency admired by the people of the bādiya in the poetry of Jarīr that they also admired in the ghazal poetry written by the poet Nusayb. A sign of this was that he never wrote nasīb except about his own wife. The people of the bādiya used to call him al-Nusayb instead of just Nusayb in order to honour him. Sukayna bint al-Nusayn preferred Jarīr to al-Farazdaq for his lines of rithā' and nasīb. She instanced the following lines of his nasīb:

\[
\text{بيتِي بِسِبَّةٍ عَزَّرْتُ عَلَى وَقَتَلَنِي رَأَتَ } \\
\text{وَرَأَتُ إِذَا جَعَلْتُ النَّيَامَ}
\]

and:

\[
\text{يَكِنُّوا يَكِنُّوا فَكِنَّا } \\
\text{فَكِنُّوا أَنْفَضَتُ خَلْقُهُ نَدَاكُنا}
\]

and:

\[
\text{ولَزَنَّ قَبْرَهُ وَهُمُ الْيَلِدُ وَكَفْتُنَّ الْأَسْرَ } \\
\text{لِلْيَلِدِّ الْقَرَدَانَاتِ بِنَفْرَنَا}
\]

Although Sukayna, like the two aṣrāb who favoured Jarīr, did not give any reason for admiring the lines of nasīb quoted, it seems likely that she did so because they contain rigga. This is to be seen in the poet's speaking of dying of love, being killed by her eyes, and submitting to this. This concept of rigga, as viewed by Sukayna, and Hijāzī urban...
critics, as we have seen, was also adopted by the people of the badiya.

'Amir b. 'Abd al-Malik al-Misma' also regarded Jarîr as superior to al-Farazdaq in nasib, hija' and tashbih. These views, attributed to various men of letters, indicate that Jarîr varied his topics, and that he essayed all, or most, of the poetic fields. One of the earlier critics, Zayrak b. Hubayra al-Mannâni, described Jarîr as "the field of poetry. Those who have not run on that field are unable to write anything. Those who are defeated by Jarîr in hija' poetry are to be regarded as better than those who have surpassed others in the same topic." However, Jarîr was most admired, and considered superior to al-Farazdaq, for his nasib, as Abu al-Zinad informs us on the authority of his father. Those who compared them in nasib criticised al-Farazdaq for his line:

ベアとなる 妇女に 混さず さくしゅる たけに せしむ おる 申し おお も

He was considered to be insensitive in threatening his beloved that his sons would avenge him if he died of love for her. Critics asked:

"What has the ghazal-poet to do with mentioning his sons and revenge when addressing his beloved? Why did he not say, as Jarîr did in his line:

ختلنا ثم يا سيب قتلنا

In their view, Jarîr followed the right path in ghazal when he spoke of those who were killed by love as remaining unavenged. This again is the same concept of riqa as we have already discussed. Jarîr himself, however, did not escape criticism on these grounds. His lines that we have already cited as being admired by Sukayna:

بنفسعى من طبقة عربة ىلسن زيارته لعمر

were admired also by Abu Muhallim, and both compared them favourably
Abū Muhallim wondered why, if the poet described his beloved so beautifully in the second line, he should not have welcomed her when he saw her in his dream. The other lines are better because they are more sensitive. Sukayna, criticising Jarīr, said to him: "Why not, instead of driving her away, take her by the hand, welcome her and say to her what she - and those who are like her - deserves! You are a virtuous man but you are weak".

Jarīr seems to have been influenced by Tarafa and Labīd, both of whom had been criticised for writing similar lines. Tarafa was the first to introduce the conceit of driving away the wraith of his beloved who visited him in his dream. He wrote:

Labīd declared that he broke off relations with his beloved because she was irregular in her communication with him. He wrote:

This fashion in ghazal was developed later by the Muhdathūn, some of whom even declared their intention of killing their beloved. Both Qudāma b. Ja'far and Ibn Ṣaḥiḥ criticized this as being contrary to ṣīrqa. In accordance with this view, Qudāma also criticized al-Nabīgha of the Banū Taghlib for this line:

on the grounds that he regards himself as equal to his beloved, and he ill-treats her. Ghazal should be free from such unromantic conceits.

Other critics preferred Jarīr to al-Ṣarazdaq for his ḥiṣā poetry: as Maslama b. Abī al-Malik put it "al-Ṣarazdaq builds and Jarīr pulls down what the former has built; there is nothing that can resist
demolition". By this he probably meant that al-Farazdaq wrote excellent fakhr but that Jarîr answered him and refuted what he boasted of. Even in fakhr, Jarîr was preferred to al-Farazdaq as we saw when quoting the two a'rabîs of the Banû Asad and Banû Qudhrah. When the two poets were requested by Bishr b. Abî Marwān to compete in fakhr, they extemporised several lines, and when al-Farazdaq boasted:

\[ \text{Jarîr answered him:} \]

Bishr considered Jarîr's line to be superior in that he said that "he cut the halter of the she-camel". Al-Farazdaq had likened himself and his people to the halter by which others were led, but when Jarîr cut that halter he was overcome.

Again, when al-Hajjāj requested the two poets to compete in praise of him, al-Farazdaq wrote:

\[ \text{Jarîr wrote:} \]

Al-Hajjāj adjudged Jarîr the superior and criticised al-Farazdaq for saying: "The birds fear him". "This is nonsense", said al-Hajjāj. "Birds fear everything, such as a piece of cloth, even a small boy".

Al-Farazdaq had failed adequately to describe the power of the mamlûk; an emir should be praised by means of a more extravagant ma'āna, and in a manner more befitting a man in his position. Al-Marzubānī, who seems to have favoured al-Farazdaq, agreed that Jarîr's line is better, but he claimed that he had made use of al-Farazdaq's line in which the ma'āna was initiated.

It seems that al-Nawwâr, al-Farazdaq's wife, preferred Jarîr to her
husband as a poet, and told him that Jarīr surpassed him in sweet poetry and shared with him in bitter poetry. According to another tradition, she reversed the remark: "He has shared with you in sweet poetry and surpassed you in bitter poetry".28 In the first version, the implication is that Jarīr surpassed al-Farazdaq in nasīb, madīn, fakhr, tashīn and wasf, and in the second, that he surpassed him in hijā'. In any case, al-Farazdaq was not as famous for nasīb and rithā' as Jarīr. Some later critics, like al-Marzubānī, discounted the remark of al-Nawwār about her husband, believing simply that they were not on good terms with each other.29

Jarīr was also favoured by some critics on the basis of poems to which they claimed that there was nothing similar in the poetry of al-Farazdaq. Such a poem, they said, was that which starts:

\[\text{مَعَ اَلْمَوَاتِ} \text{فَأَحْمَدْ} \text{أَمَّا} \text{كَفَّرُ مَنْ مَنَاسِبٍ.}\]

According to Ibn Abī Alqama, who preferred Jarīr, al-Mufaddal, who preferred al-Farazdaq, failed to find a similar poem in the latter's poetry. Another critic, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Muʿadhadhhal, informs us that his father believed that the above poem was Jarīr's best and that the latter was superior to al-Farazdaq because he competed with him all his life without Al-Farazdaq being able to defeat him.30 Although this poem was regarded by critics as his best, Jarīr himself preferred another, which starts:

\[\text{أَهْبِ أَرَادْ بِرَأْيٍ مُّقْوُدَ} \text{اَمَّا} \text{بَالْجَيْسِ مِنْ مَدَافِعٍ أَوْدَاً.}\]

Neither the critics, like Ibn al-Muʿadhadhhal, nor Jarīr gave any reason for their preference, and both poems contain tasnīf in their first lines. As mentioned before, Jarīr was described as the "field of poetry", meaning that he wrote on all the different poetic topics. Such a poet is called mutasarrif, and this is regarded as a virtue.
This is one of the grounds on which Jarīr was considered superior to al-Farazdaq; those who did so said: "he has many kinds of poetry unknown to al-Farazdaq".32

Jarīr was also considered superior by many from the point of view of his language and style. When the aʿrabi from the Banū Kūhna championed Jarīr against all other poets, ʿAbd al-Malik asked him: "Do you know Jarīr?" The aʿrabi replied: "No, but the poems of many poets reach us and I have never come across a poetry that has more sensitive metre and can fill the mouth more than his poetry".33 This probably alludes to the qualities of ṣuḥūla and jazāla in the poetry of Jarīr. It was also regarded as a virtue for a poet to be able to exchange ṣuḥūla (easiness, softness) for jazāla when appropriate, and in this respect too Jarīr was considered to be more versatile than al-Farazdaq, who was alleged to display only jazāla, being incapable of ṣuḥūla. As an example of Jarīr's ṣuḥūla, the following two lines are cited:

\[
\text{كَتَبَ الْزَّابِلَةَ مَنْ أَنَّاَ سَلاَمَ}
\]

and for his jazāla, this line:

\[
\text{دَارَتْ الْلَّبَنَ إِذَا مَا لَزَّ قُرْنِي مَسْلِطَةُ الْبُرَّ الْقَنَايِسِ}
\]

Nevertheless, there were those for whom al-Farazdaq's jazāla was the principal reason for favouring him. He was also esteemed for the excellence of some of his short poems.35

Jarīr was also considered superior to al-Farazdaq on account of his "most celebrated" or "unique" lines, according to Ahmad b. Yahyā. Ibn Sallām al-Jumāḥī declared to Ahmad that al-Farazdaq had more of these lines, but he failed to produce a single one from the whole of his poetry, putting forward instead some of the poet's "complex" lines.36
Those who preferred al-Farazdaq seem to have been the 'ulama' and grammarians, while those who preferred Jarir were the people of the bādiya and the common folk. When he was told this, at any rate, by someone whose opinion he had asked, Jarir was pleased, and said: "There is not one man in a hundred who is learned".37 The 'ulama' who preferred al-Farazdaq were men like al-Mufaddal, Yūnus b. Ḥabīb, Ibn Sallām and al-Marzubānī. The reason for this is that, as grammarians, they admired the complications of language that al-Farazdaq introduced into his poetry. Examples of his "complex" lines are:

\[\text{Examples of his "complex" lines are:} \]

and:

\[\text{and:} \]

Many of these "complex" lines are quoted by Ibn Sallām and later by Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī in his ʿArāḥānī.38

Some critics criticised al-Farazdaq for these "complex" lines and regarded them as saqāṭ or worthless. ʿAmir b. ʿAbī al-Malik al-Mismac was of this opinion, while his brother Mismac regarded such lines as a sign of great intelligence, in that they required deep thought in order to be understood. For his part, he regarded as saqāṭ lines of Jarir such as the following:

\[\text{which he considered to display poetic incompetence.} \]

Concerning al-Akhtal and the comparison between him and the other two, we have mentioned that, according to Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, tribalism played a role in his being considered their equal. This view is
affirmed later by Bashshar. Nevertheless, al-Akhtal was sometimes considered superior in certain poetic genres. Comparing the three poets, Qutayba b. Muslim judged al-Farazdaq to be the best poet of his time in fakhr, Jarir in hija and al-Akhtal in wasf. When Shabba b. Uqal dealt with the three poets, he remarked on the difference in nature tab between Jarir and al-Farazdaq and indicated the genres of poetry in which al-Akhtal surpassed them. He is reported to have said: "Jarir takes poetry from a sea and al-Farazdaq cuts it from a rock, and al-Akhtal is excellent in madih and fakhr." By this, he appears to refer to the easiness, gentleness, plainness and abundance of Jarir's poetry, and the firmness, strong attraction (shiddat al-asr) and less natural character of al-Farazdaq's. To him poetry comes with more effort, as if he were cutting it from a rock, than it does to Jarir, who writes as easily as if he were taking water from the sea; al-Akhtal is superior in the two genres specified. What Shabba says about Jarir and al-Farazdaq is similar to what Abū al-Faraj says in his Aghani, as we have seen. In his comparison, Shabba gives us no examples from the three poets' poetry. The reasons for his views are not very clear, as is so often the case with the views of critics and men of letters concerning poetic comparison. He alleges that al-Akhtal is excellent in fakhr, compared with the other two, but this is not the view of most other critics, who consider al-Akhtal to be superior in madih and wasf.

According to Khalid b. Safwan, al-Farazdaq has the best fakhr, the best i'tidhar, the most famous aphorisms and the sweetest ilal, and is most eloquent. Al-Akhtal is the best of the three in wasf and has written the most excellent line both of madih and of hija. Jarir has the "largest sea", the most elegant, gentle and sensitive poetry and the most wounding hija. It is not clear what Khalid meant by sweet ilal (arguments?) in speaking of the poetry of al-Farazdaq. When he
said that al-Akhtal had written the most excellent line of madīḥ and of hijā', he did not quote these, but it seems likely that the line of madīḥ is the following:

شمس العداوة حتى يستفأ لحماً وتائم الناس أحلاماً إذا قرروا

since it is quoted elsewhere as an excellent one.43 The line of hijā' referred to may be the following, according to certain men of letters:

قوتم إذا استنضي الأغباب كلهم خالل لأقوم بلغ على النار.

What he said about Jarīr perhaps implies that his poetry is the most natural and easy; this is what one would most readily understand from his remark about Jarīr's "large sea", assuming it to be parallel to that of Shabba b. 'Uqāl, quoted above, in which he speaks of Jarīr as taking poetry from a sea.

Other critics, like al-'Alā' b. Jarīr al-'Anbarī, noticed that, in the various comparative assessments of the three poets, al-Akhtal comes either first or third, al-Farazdaq always comes second, and Jarīr sometimes comes first, sometimes second and sometimes third. They accordingly likened them to race-horses. The first horse is called sābiq, the second is called musallī and the last is called sukkat. Al-'Alā' b. Jarīr al-'Anbarī, according to Ibn Sallān, said that al-Akhtal "has five, six or seven poems which are long, excellent, and famous, by virtue of which he comes first (sābiq); the rest of his poetry is less excellent than that of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, and thus, as far as this is concerned, he is placed last (sukkayt). As for al-Farazdaq, he is less excellent than al-Akhtal is in his above-mentioned poems, but better than him in the rest of his poetry, and therefore he is always placed second (musallī). Jarīr has excellent and wonderful poems by virtue of which he is placed first, poems of medium quality by virtue of which he is placed second, and other poems, less good even than the medium ones, by virtue of which he is placed last".
Another critic, Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik, regarded al-Akhtal as always
placed first; concerning Jarir and al-Parazdaq he gave similar
judgements to those of al-'Ala' b. Jarir al-'Anbari. A third critic,
Abū al-'Askar, gave the same judgements as Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik
but differed from the other two critics in giving examples from the
poetry of Jarir. Abū al-'Askar gave the following line of Jarir as an
example of poetry in which the poet surpassed his two rivals:

\[
\text{سِرْ تُؤْمِرُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ نَجْمِهِ فَنَادِبْنَ فِيهِ النَّبَلُ المُقَلِّلُ}
\]

He also gave the following line as an example of Jarir's bad poerty, in
which he falls behind:

\[
\text{الْمَلِيْكَةٌ فَرَحْةُ جَلَّاسٍ وَالْمَلِيْكَةٌ جَارَةَ الشَّيْبَانِ}
\]

Al-Akhtal was called the poet of the Umayyads and the best poet among
the Arabs by 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan, who was delighted by the poem
praising him that starts:

\[
\text{خَفْ أَفْلَامَ فَرَاحوا مَنْكَ أَوْ كَبْرَوا}
\]

"Would you like me to write to the other countries of the empire stating
that you are the best poet among the Arabs?" 'Abd al-Malik asked him.
He ordered one his clients to reward the poet and then to conduct
him through the streets of Damascus, calling out: "Here is the poet
of the Commander of the Faithful! Here is the best poet of the Arabs!"
On another occasion, he again ordered his client to reward al-Akhtal,
and was then reported to have said: "Every people has their own poet
and the poet of the Umayyads is al-Akhtal".

Besides being admired by 'Abd al-Malik for his madih, al-Akhtal was
also considered, by Ishāq b. Marwān al-Shaybāni, to be superior to
Jarir and al-Parazdaq in hiya', as we are informed by Ibn al-Nattāh.
When Ibn al-Nattāh remarked that al-Akhtal was said to be the best of
the three poets in madīnah, Ishaq disagreed with him and stated that al-Akhtal was the best of them in ḥiṣā' also, because neither of the other two could write a line of ḥiṣā' similar to the following:

In the circle of al-Maquqini, Abū Qassān defied Sabān b. Ḥaqān to recite two lines of ḥiṣā' from the poetry of Jarīr or al-Farazdaq similar to the following ones by al-Akhtal:

"Umar b. Shabba agreed that al-Akhtal was superior to the other two poets in wounding ḥiṣā', and he added that the ḥiṣā' written by al-Akhtal was free from obscenity. This decency in ḥiṣā' referred to by Ibn Shabba is also mentioned by al-Akhtal himself, who said: "I have never written a line of ḥiṣā' that a virgin would feel shameful to recite to her father".

According to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-ʿAzīz, who preferred al-Akhtal to Jarīr in ḥiṣā', the fact that al-Akhtal was a Christian restricted his scope in writing ḥiṣā' against Jarīr. This was because Jarīr belonged to the large tribe of Mudar, to which the Umayyad Caliphs also belonged, while al-Akhtal belonged to Rabī'a; thus he could not write what he liked against the tribe of Mudar without angering both the Caliphs and many other Muslims. Therefore his ḥiṣā' is limited, while Jarīr had nothing to fear if he exaggerated in his ḥiṣā' against Rabī'a. Knowing this, a man from Rabī'a begged al-Akhtal not to write ḥiṣā' against Jarīr. Al-Akhtal told him that he would "pick out Jarīr and his tribe Kulayb from the large tribe of Mudar and write against them a sort of ḥiṣā' that will make them feel ashamed for all time. You should realise that a man who knows poetry well will admire an excellent line of poetry and does not care whether it is written by a Muslim or a Christian".
It is clear that this notorious unresolved dispute was complicated by a number of factors other than purely artistic consideration. Nevertheless, insofar as these can be distinguished, they would seem to suggest that, in general, each of the three was considered superior to the other two in certain poetic genres. Jarir was famous for his gentle and delicate nasib and for his natural poetry, al-Farazdaq for his fakhr and for his firm composition, and al-Akhtal for his madih, wasf and decent hija'.

As far as other Umayyad poets are concerned, al-Harari al-Numayri is said to have been "the fahl (master-poet) of Nudar until he was bitten by the lion", which means Jarir, who wrote a famous poem of hija' against him and his people, containing the line:

\[
\text{جَفَّتُ الْمَرْقَةَ أَنَّكَ مِنْ تَمْبَرٍ فَلاَ كَعِبَ بْلَغَنَّ وَرَكَلَنَا}
\]

To be regarded as a fahl by critics at that time the poet had to master four genres of poetry, madih, fakhr, hija', and tashbih, in other words to become a mutasarrif. This criterion was used later also by Ibn Sallâm and other critics, as we shall see. According to this criterion, Dhū al-Rumma was not counted among the fuhul. When al-Butayn was asked whether Dhū al-Rumma was a fahl or not, he replied that "those who know about poetry have agreed that poetry is based on four elements: excellent madih, hija', fakhr and tashbih. These four elements are all found in the poetry of Jarir, al-Farazdaq and al-Akhtal. As for Dhū al-Rumma, he was not excellent in madih, hija' or fakhr; in fact, in all these genres he fell below the acceptable level. He was excellent only in tashbih, and therefore he is only one quarter of a poet". In tashbih, Dhū al-Rumma was regarded by many ulama' as the best among Islamic poets. He was also admired for his excellent
taṣḥīḥ, wasf, and weeping over deserted dwellings, according to Khalīd b. Kulthūm. He added that if Dhū al-Rumma tried to write madīḥ or hijā', he did not write anything worth while.52 Critics offered the following line as evidence of his failure to write good madīḥ:

_text in arabic script_

He wrote the line in a poem of madīḥ on Bilāl b. Abī Burdā; Saydāh is the name of his she-camel. Bilāl criticised him for this poem and said: "he does not know how to praise well."53

It is also said that Dhū al-Rumma tried to imitate lines of madīḥ by al-ʿAfsāh and al-Farazdaq, but he "deformed and bolted (without properly chewing) the maʿnā produced by the two poets, when praising Bilāl b. Abī Burdā". Al-ʿAfsāh initiated this maʿnā:

_text in arabic script_

Al-Farazdaq then borrowed it:

_text in arabic script_

Dhū al-Rumma's version was:

_text in arabic script_

Though he was generally regarded as not writing good hijā', some of Dhū al-Rumma's lines in that genre were quoted by al-ʿAskārī and Ibn Rashīq as excellent examples. Al-ʿAskārī described the following lines as the most "eloquent lines of hijā'":

_text in arabic script_

Ibn Rashīq quoted other lines by him as lines in which the poet used takrār in hijā', in order to make his hijā' more wounding. These lines
As has already been mentioned, the 'Umayyad poets included some important poets of rajaz, among whom we singled out al-‘Ajjaj and his son Ru‘ba, and al-Aghlab and Abu al-Najm, both of whom belonged to the Banū ‘Ijl. In comparing them with one another, critics remarked on the development of rajaz which took place at the hands of al-Aghlab al-‘Ijlī. One critic, Ibn Abī Habīb, is reported to have said: "The Arabs used to write rajaz in times of war, and for huda (the animating song of the caravan leader) and mufākhara, but in all this they wrote only a few lines. When al-Aghlab came along, he was the first to write rajaz as gasīd (gassada al-rajaz), and people followed him in that". Although Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī claimed that al-Aghlab was the first one who wrote rajaz, it seems that this is not true, to judge from what Ibn Abī Habīb said. Al-Aghlab lived at the time of the Prophet and was probably the first to prolong rajaz poems, although Abu ʿUbayda claimed that al-‘Ajjaj was the first who did so. By prolonging rajaz and writing it like a gasīda they meant that the rajaz poem now contained nasīb, descriptions of deserted dwellings, the poet's weeping over these, and causing his companions to halt there, laments for lost youth, descriptions of the rahīl, and other subjects contained in the gasīda. Those who were able to write gasīd as well as rajaz were considered superior to others who limited themselves to rajaz only. For this reason some critics
preferred Abū al-Najm al-ʿIjī to al-ʿAjjaḍ; the former used to write
excellent gasăd besides writing rajaz.⁶⁰ Other poets of gasăd also
wrote rajaz: Jarīr, al-Parazdaq, ʿUmar b. Lajaʾ, Humayd al-Argat and
al-Umanī. Al-Parazdaq, they say, wrote only a few rajaz: less than
the other poets. As for Dhu al-Rumma, he used to write exclusively
rajaz at first but he left it and turned to gasăd; when asked why he did
so he answered that he found himself unable to compete with al-ʿAjjaḍ
and Ruʿba.⁶¹

These poets and ruḫaḍ who lived during the Umayyad period busied
themselves mainly with maddīḥ, hijāʾ, mufākharā, tashbih and wasf. Their
gasăd and rajaz-poems were evaluated by their critics according to the
criteria which we have discussed in the last few pages. Parallel to
this movement of poetry and criticism, at the same time as these poets
were competing with one another to please the Caliphs, the critics and
the public with their poems in the different poetic genres, another
poetic movement came into existence, led by the Kharijite poets, whose
poems are coloured by the spirit of Jihād against the Umayyad caliphate
and by their preoccupation with the practice of the teachings of Islam,
with martyrdom and paradise. In their poems one finds sincerity,
enthusiasm, depth of belief, love of worship and admiration for bravery
and warfare. They praised neither Caliphs nor anyone else, and indeed
they criticised those who did so. When the Kharijite poet ʿImrān b.
Ḥattān saw al-Parazdaq reciting one of his maddīḥ poems, he criticised
him thus:

According to them the best poet was the one who expressed sincerity
towards God and fear of Him, and the one who wished to die as a martyr
for the sake of his religion. It was in the light of this that they
evaluated other poets; one of them called al-Farazdaq "the poet of the non-believers" and one of their own poets "the poet of the believers". While other poets had artistic criteria, based on Jāhilī poetry, the Khārijite judged poetry according to its sincerity and its adherence to their notions of religious truth. They appear to have applied moral criteria in their criticism even more rigorously than had ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and the other moralistic critics whose views we have mentioned. It is actually rather surprising to find so vigorous a poetic school associated with a puritan, revolutionary, religious movement, particularly as much of its poetry, while invariably conforming to the movement's doctrines, is not directly religious in theme; elements of the Jāhilī conventions persist, in the phraseology and general approach, above all, in the raiding and battle scenes, which are frequent.
CHAPTER FIVE
The Muḥdathūn

The appearance of the poets known generally, probably from the time of Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', as the muwalladūn or the muḥdathūn is associated with the growing conflict between critics among the 'ulama' and ruwat of the earlier periods, who supported the ancients and preferred them, and other critics and men of letters who admired modern tendencies in poetry. According to Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā' even Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akhtal were muwallad poets, compared with the Jahili, the Mukhadramūn, and the early Islamic poets. The admiration of the 'ulama' (grammarians) and ruwat for the ancient poets will be discussed later. What concerns us here is that this idea of admiring the ancients had gradually developed and resulted in the emergence of two rival camps of literary critics, in which we find the supporters of the ancients and those of the muḥdathūn. The opinion of the first group found its expression in the scattered views of the ruwat and the early 'ulama', as well as in a number of books, such as Fuhūlat al-shu'arā' of al-Asma'ī. The opinion of the second group found its expression in various works of al-Jahiz, such as al-Hayawan and al-Bayān wa-al-tabyīn, in al-Shi'r wa-al-shu'arā' of Ibn Qutayba, al-Kāmil of al-Mubarrad, Tabaqāt al-shu'arā' of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, and Akhbbār Abī Tamām and Akhbbār al-Buhtūrī of al-Sūlī. The last two books, in which the author championed the muḥdathūn in the person of Abū Tamām, stand opposite to Kitāb al-muwaza'ana bayna shi'r Abī Tamām wa-al-Buhtūrī by al-Āmidī, who supported the ancients in the person of al-Buhtūrī, whom he indirectly indicated as being superior to Abū Tamām. Other literary works, such as Al-Wasāṭa bayn al-Mutanabbi wa-khusūmihi by al-Qādī al-Jurjānī, Kitāb al-sīnāʿatayn by Abū Hilāl al-Askarī, al-Mathal al-sā'ir by Ibn
al-Athîr and al-Umda by Ibn Rashîq, all have some concern with the subject of the dispute about the merits of the muhdatun and the ancients.

We shall not here discuss in detail poetic comparison made between the earlier and the muhdatun poets, but rather that made between the muhdatun themselves, at the same time pointing out some aspects of the admiration shown for the ancients. The most important muhdatun poets examined are Bashshār b. Burd, Marwān b. Ābî Ḥafṣa, Muslim b. al-‘Alî, Abû Nuwâs, Abû al-‘Atâhiya, al-Ḥusayn b. al-Dahhâk, al-‘Abbas b. al-Ahnaf, al-‘Attâbî, al-Ṣayyid al-Ḥimyari, and Abû Cuyayna.

Before we start to discuss the views of the critics about these poets it may be useful to discover the opinions of one or two people among both the commons and men of letters about the nature of good poetry. According to an a‘rabî who was questioned by Ishaq al-Mawsili, "the best poet is the one who, if he speaks, does so quickly; if he speaks quickly, he invents; if he utters, he causes others to listen; if he praises, he raises up; and if he satirizes he humbles". It seems that the a‘rabî preferred a poet who had the ability to compose poetry spontaneously, with invention (ibdâ‘) - though we do not know whether this implies practising the art of badî‘ or simply composing wonderful poetry. Since the a‘rabî admired a poet who composed spontaneously, he added the condition that what he composed should be excellent. This is the most probable meaning of ibdâ‘ in this context. The compelling voice of the poet and the rapidity of his utterance which are required by the a‘rabî are clearly thought of as signs of a strong poetic talent. They may also reflect something of the restless and impulsive nature of the Bedouin life and way of speaking. However, the a‘rabî mentioned only two poetic genres, mādîh and hijâ’, as criteria for judging a poet. This may reflect the importance of these two genres in the opinion of
critics at that time, some of whom, indeed, said that poetry was divided into two types only, namely, mādiḥ and hijā'a. From each of these derive other genres.3 Others added rithā' to mādiḥ and hijā'a. The poet 'Abd al-Samad b. al-Mufadhdhal was reported as saying: "poetry is summed up in three words (i.e. the three genres specified) and not everyone will be able to compose them (i.e. the genres designated by the three words) excellently. If you praise, you should say 'you are'; if you satirize, you should say 'you are not'; and if you elegize you should say 'you were'".4 Other critics gave priority to rithā' and preferred a poet who was excellent in that genre because, according to them, rithā' was written neither out of desire nor out of fear. They also preferred a poet who had the ability to praise a woman and elegize her in the same poem. The combination of rithā' and mādiḥ in one poem was frequently taken as a measure of excellence, as we shall see later in the criticism of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

It seems that the general opinion about poetry at the time of the muhdathūn was that the most admirable poetry was that which displayed the qualities of facility and clarity. One critic said that the best poetry was "tractable poetry that attains the object".6 Ibn al-Mu'tazz reported that a madman was asked about the best poetry and he replied that it was the poetry that "enters easily into the heart without any obstacle". This may refer to 'natural', easy, clear poetry. The view of Abū 'Abd Allāh, the vizier of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdī, is a moderate and acceptable one. He is reported to have said: "the best poetry is that which is understood by the commons and accepted by the elite".7 In saying this, the vizier was calling for simplicity, clarity and facility in poetry; these were perhaps considered the qualities of 'natural' poetry. At the same time, he required correctness of
language and beauty of expression, and that poetry should not be too simple. These last qualities were required also by the elite, who included men of letters, 'Ulama', and those among the upper class who were interested in literature.

These views concerning poetry are new, in the sense that they refer generally to poetry and are not limited to particular genres of it, such as hija' and madīḥ. In general, however, the dominant critical criterion by which a poet was judged remained his excellence in those genres, and it was in accordance with that that the muhḍathūn were judged.

The majority of the muhḍathūn lived during the Abbasid Caliphate. From the very beginning of this Caliphate we notice the admiration of the Caliphs for the earlier poets and for the genre of madīḥ in particular. The first Abbasid Caliph, Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Saffah, summed up in a few words his opinion of the muhḍath poets. When he was told that a poet had praised him and wished to recite his poem, he asked: "What can he say about me, after Ibn al-Nasrāniyya (al-Akhtal) has written the following excellent line in praise of the Umayyads?" :

The same line was quoted by Harūn al-Rashīd as the "most splendid and excellent line of madīḥ". A third Caliph, al-Maʾmūn, expressed his admiration for the earlier poets, and probably the poets of madīḥ, when he said "Poetry disappeared with the Umayyad Kingdom".

Admiration for the earlier poets may be indirectly found in the views of the Abbasid critics and men of letters concerning the muhḍathūn. The criteria used by them in judging the latter were based on the traditional methods used in judging between the earlier poets. In
other words, the ancients were themselves used as standards for judging the muhāṭhūn. In his comparison of Bāshār, Mārwn and Ābū Nūwās, Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawsīlī showed his admiration for the earlier poets and his distaste for the muhāṭhūn. In preferring Mārwn to Bāshār and in rejecting Ābū Nūwās, he was guided by his high opinion of the ancients, whom he used as standards for preferring one poet to another.

It is said that Ishāq "did not believe in Bāshār", and he used to say about him: "there is a great mixture in his poetry. His poems are different from one another". Ishāq quoted the following lines by Bāshār to prove his claim:

Ishaq criticised the poet, saying: "If he wrote the most excellent poetry and then added these lines, it would be spoilt". Ishāq preferred Mārwn to Bāshār, on the grounds that "Mārwn has more regular poetry than Bāshār. His speech and his style of poetry are more similar to those of the Arabs." Ishāq always "neglected Ābū Nūwās, not counting him as a poet at all; he saw no good in him".

When Ishāq referred to the 'Arabs', the style of whose poetry Mārwn followed, he meant the earlier poets, and it is clear that he considered them to be perfect standards by which to judge Mārwn and Bāshār; he favoured the former because of his similarity to the ancients and rejected the latter because of the variation in his poetry. This means that Ishāq required either a consistent level of excellence or a consistent namat (style) of poetry. This criterion of a single namat was used later by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his Tabaqāt al-shu'arā' al-muhāṭhūn, as we shall see.
If Marwan was admired by Ishaq al-Mawsili and considered superior by him for his "regularity in levels of excellence" and for "following the path of the earlier poets", he was criticised and rejected by others for defects in his poetry. According to Muhammad b. Dawud, Yazid al-Muhallibi said: "the people of Yamama have no fluency (fasana) or facility in their poetry". Muhammad b. Dawud also commented that "Marwan b. Abi Hafsa used to refine his poetry and re-examine it; he was not a natural poet". Perhaps this not being a natural poet may explain to us the "regularity of levels" in Marwan's poetry; this quality may have resulted from refinement and re-examination. Later, we shall see that al-Asma'i preferred poetry which had "different levels of excellence", such as the poetry of al-Nabigha al-Ja'adi. He regarded this "difference of levels" as a sign of naturalness (tab). This perhaps affirms the view of Muhammad b. Dawud that Marwan was not a natural poet. It is strange that Marwan was believed to have inherited his poetry from al-Nabigha al-Ja'adi but that he nonetheless wrote a different kind of poetry from his grandfather. The idea of 'inheriting poetry' we encountered earlier with Zubayr and his maternal uncle Bishama b. al-Qadir. According to Marwan b. Abi al-Janub, a poet who was a grandson of Marwan b. Abi Hafsa, "the mother of Yahya b. Abi Hafsa was Lakhna' Bint Maymun, who was a descendant of al-Nabigha al-Ja'adi. Poetry came to the family of Abi Hafsa from there".

The admiration of Ishaq al-Mawsili for the work of the earlier poets appears also from his remark to Abu Tammam: "Oh, my boy, how much you depend on yourself!" This means that Abu Tammam did not follow the ways of the ancients but his own method of poetry. When he talked about Abu Nuwas, Ishaq described him as "a maker of mistakes". Al-Marzubani commented that Ishaq always used to champion the earlier poets, and that Ali b. Yahya said that he used to recite to Ishaq excellent poems by
Abū Nuwas but Ishaq did not care much for them, because of his bad opinion of that poet. Once ‘Ali recited to Ishaq the poem of Abū Nuwas which starts:

but Ishaq "was not moved at all and he remained firm in his bad opinion of Abū Nuwas". ‘Ali said to him: "If that poem had been written by an ḥarīb from the tribe of Hudhayl, surely you would admire it and regard it as the best poetry you had ever heard". Ishaq said to him: "Abū Nuwas makes mistakes and he does not follow the path of the poets". 14

‘Ali b. Yahyā mentioned that Ishaq would prefer the poem if it was written by an ḥarīb from Hudhayl; admiration for the poets of that tribe is a phenomenon that appears early and it is said to have originated with Hassan b. Thābit, as we shall see; later, Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Ala' also spoke of the fluency of Hudhayl in poetry.

Though Ishaq criticised Abū Nuwas, he admitted that he had written some excellent poems. However, this, in his view, was not enough to place Abū Nuwas in the first class of poets. According to al-Fadl b. Muhammad al-Yazīdī and others, Ishaq was once heard to say: "I did not think that I should live to see the time when the poetry of Abū Nuwas would be so admired. I thought him (some time ago) the lowest of his class. Nevertheless, he is excellent from time to time". 15 Restricting poetry only to madḥ and hijā’, Abū ‘Alī al- Başīr rejected Abū Nuwas and those like him. According to Ahmad b. Abī Tāhir, Abū ‘Alī al- Başīr accepted neither Abū Nuwas nor Muslim b. al- Walīd, nor those poets who followed their style. Ahmad b. Abī Tāhir, who supported Abū Nuwas, argued with al- Başīr and claimed that if one assumed that Abū Nuwas had one or two excellent lines in every poetic genre that he wrote in, he would have a total of enough excellent lines to be regarded as one of
the most excellent and versatile poets. He added that no-one could deny the excellence of Abū Nuwaṣ. Abū ʿAlī al-Baṣrī replied: "poetry is based on mādih and ḥijā', in neither of which genres Abū Nuwaṣ is excellent. The best of his poetry is about wine and hunting (tard), and even then, the best of it is plagiarised. If Abū Nuwaṣ borrows a poetic ma'na he is unable to develop it and is reduced simply to copying it. For instance, his line:

\[
\text{قد دون بالناب كانت في الراء}
\]

is borrowed from al-Afšahā:

\[
\text{بأخرى تراوحت منها بها}
\]

which is better than his. He also borrows the line:

\[
\text{كان الشبلة مليئة البقل}
\]

from al-Nabīgha al-Dhuyyānī:

\[
\text{ما بن بكر عامر فرمالجفار}
\]

\[
\text{كان شبلة البقل الشبلة}
\]

He also borrows:

\[
\text{لي بني السيس من حجاب كلهلة الأشميل من جبلية}
\]

from the line of Abū al-Najm al-Iṣṭālī:

\[
\text{ك诰لة الأشميل من كسامه}
\]

Besides these lines, he commits further plagiarism on an indescribable scale from the poetry in which poets have preceded him; so, if he is unable to rise to the level of these poets in poetry in which they have excelled him (i.e. if, in spite of having earlier poets' mārānī to draw on, he fails, because of his inability to develop these, not only to surpass, but even to equal, them), what do you think of that poetry in which he is below his contemporaries? (i.e. in the kinds of poetry in which he has not got such resources of already-established mārānī to take over, he is even worse than in the former kinds. The precise sense of this sentence is somewhat obscure, but this must be the general implication). The only thing I can say about him is that he has been lucky in having his poetry widely circulated and transmitted. The people of his country have favoured him even though his work contains
many grammatical mistakes and absurdities (ihāla); if you realise this, you will throw away most of his poetry. Nevertheless, he is excellent in many poems, but not to the exaggerated extent that the ignorant believe.16

Clearly, besides excellence in madīḥ and hijā’, and correctness of language, Abū ʿAlī required of the poet that he should add to the lines he borrowed from others and present what he borrowed in a better way. If he merely copied the idea, in similar words, this would be regarded as simple plagiarism. Though Abū ʿAlī criticised Abū Nuwās for not writing excellent madīḥ, other critics, on the contrary, considered Abū Nuwās superior to all other muhdathūn in some of his lines of madīḥ. According to ʿAlī b. Hārūn "people of knowledge have agreed that the best lines of madīḥ ever written by the muwalladūn are the following two by Abū Nuwās:

Some critics preferred the other two lines:

Abū ʿAlī did not precisely give a scientific explanation when he referred the fame of Abū Nuwās to the fact that the poet was just a lucky man. The approach of Abū al-Mundhir to the problem is more reasonable. He believed that "the poetry of Abū Nuwās is admired by people because of its facility and beauty of words, as well as the great quality of bādāʾī that it contains; these are the things that people actually admire in poetry".18

Those who had an exaggerated admiration for Abū Nuwās and preferred him to Bashshār did so because they were ignorant of the latter, in
al-Suli's view. According to him, Bashshar was the master of all the muhdath poets; all of them had followed him and borrowed his concepts. He defended Bashshar against those who claimed that Abu Nuwas was superior to him. Those who believed this quoted lines by Abu Nuwas in which they considered that he showed distinction. Al-Suli countered their arguments by pointing out the originals from which Abu Nuwas had borrowed these lines. For example, his supporters admired these two lines:

إذا أتيننا عليك بحالي فانت كأنت ما نحن وفوقى الزئ نحن
وأت يجزي اللفظاء بعضاً. فاصفياً لعمرك إذا إنساناً فانت الزئ تعني

Al-Suli stated that the first line was borrowed from the following line of al-Khansa:

ما بلغ المهروون الناس صرحًا فقل أنتموا إلَّا الذي يبى أحقن

and also from the following line of 'Adi b. al-Riqā:

أتيني فلا ألم وأعلم أنك فوق الزئ أنتاء به وأقول

The second line was borrowed from one by al-Parazdaq, addressing Ayyūb b. Sulaymān:

ومن واجب نفسني في كتبه للا لربو إجابة ثمن بما

Like Abu 'Ali al-Basir, al-Suli was looking for originality above all. He preferred Bashshar to all other muhdathun because of this quality, in which all others were behind him. Al-Jahiz, on the other hand, as we shall see, adopted a more moderate view; he preferred Bashshar to all other muwalladun, but ranked Abu Nuwas next to him. Because of his originality and his mastership among the muwalladun, Bashshar was compared with Imru' al-Qays, in the sense that "he preceded the muwalladun and they borrowed from him, just as Imru' al-Qays preceded the ancients in creating certain poetic maqāmī which they borrowed from him. For that reason Bashshar was called "the father of the muhdathun".
Abū Nuwas was likened to al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī in "eloquence, firmness of composition, gracefulness, elegance of style, and skill in praising kings". Similarity between Abū Nuwas and al-Nābigha in "skill in praising kings" may stand as evidence against Abū ʿAlī al-Basīr in his criticising Abū Nuwas for not writing excellent madīḥ. Bashshār was also admired for his powerful tabī, in which he was likened to al-ʿAṣāḥa; other similarities were also recognised between them. It was said: "al-ʿAṣāḥa is called sannājat al-ʿArab because he was the first to mention cymbals in his poetry; but it is also said that he was so called because of his powerful tabī and the beauties of his poetry. If one recites it, one will imagine that someone else is reciting with one. The poet who is most similar to him among the muhdathūn is Bashshār; if one of his poems composed in the shortest ḍarūd and in the most delicate language is recited, the reciter will feel a sense of movement and emotion. This is because of the powerful tabī of Bashshār, who is also similar to al-ʿAṣāḥa in having an unlimited ability to write in a variety of poetic genres such as madīḥ, hijāʾ and fakhr, to compose in the whole range of ḍarūd, and to produce long poems".

Although Ibn al-Muʿtaṣī had referred badīʾ to a time before Bashshār and Abū Tammām, and had discovered it in the Jahilī poems, in the Qurʾān and in the Hadīth of the Prophet, those who gave Bashshār superiority over the other muhdathūn and regarded him as their master claimed that his originality lay in using badīʾ. When Ibrahim b. Yahyā al-Madani spoke of Muslim b. al-Walīd he described him as "a very excellent poet of madīḥ", and alleged that "he was the first poet to widen badīʾ; Bashshār was the one who initiated it". Ibn Rashīq, stated that the first to use badīʾ among the muhdathūn were Bashshār and Ibn Harma; the latter is known as the rear-guard of the Arabs and the last poet whose poetry is quoted as a hujja. These two poets were
followed in using badīʿ by Kulthūm al-ʿAttārī, Mansūr al-Nanfī, Muslim b. al-Walīd and Ābu Nuwās. These again were followed by Ābu Tammān, al-Buhtūrī and Ābd Allāh b. al-ʿUṯtazz. The last is described by Ibn Rashīq as having "the knowledge of badīʿ and poetic craftsmanship gathered together in his hands; they are sealed with him". 25 Ibn al-ʿUṯtazz himself, as we shall see later, admired Bashshār, preferred him to all other muḥdathūn and stated his superiority and his mastership over them. 26

Besides his powerful tabīʿ, his originality in using badīʿ and his other poetic qualities, Bashshār is considered superior for his lines in certain poetic genres. The following opening of a poem was judged the most excellent of any by a muḥdath poet:

أبى مَلَكَةٍ حَيَّةٍ فَانْبِلَبَتْ وَمَا ذا عَلَى لِمِنْ أَجَابْ تَمِينًا
وَبِلِفَقَّةٍ آنَارَ لِيُؤْنِي وبَلْوَى سَلَامًا مَا يَعْقُوبُ الَّذِيْنَ تَسُوَّقُ

He was also considered to have written the "most splendid lines of fakhr ever written by a muḥdath". His lines read as follows:

إِذَا ما غَسَلَتِنَا غَسَلَةٌ خَلْفَةٌ هَكِنَا هُؤُلَاءَ الشَّهْسَهَ أوْ قَفَّرَنَّ أَمَا
إِذَا ما أَمْرُنا سَبِيدًا فِينَردَةَ عَسَى عُدُمًا عَلَى دُسْلُي

The most important quality for which Bashshār is admired is tabīʿ. He, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyārī, and Ābu al-ʿAtāhiya were described as the "most natural poets among those of the Jahiliyya and Islām; no-one is able to collect the whole of their poetry for there is too much". 28

Both Ābu Nuwās and his friend al-Ḥusayn b. al-Dahrāk known as al-Khaliṣ were the pupils of the poet Wāliba b. al-Ḥubāb, who "had no equal in the poetry of mujūn and khalaṣa", and from whom they borrowed and learned the art of mujūn, as we are informed by Ibn Abī Fanān. 29 Ābu Nuwās and al-Ḥusayn competed in wine poetry and the latter claimed that he had
surpassed his peer by his wine poem that starts:

When al-Husayn claimed superiority over Abū Nuwās and other muhdath poets on the strength of this poem, he was criticised by Ahmad b. Khallād, who believed that he was only "imitating and circling round the other wine poem by Abū Nuwās, which is better". The poem of Abū Nuwās, in the same rhyme, starts:

Ahmad b. Khalād preferred the poem of Abū Nuwās to the one by al-Husayn because the latter contained no "unique lines" except the following:

Abū Nuwās' poem, on the other hand, contained the following lines:

Khallād claimed that al-Husayn would never be able to write similar lines to these.30

The most important fact about the wine poets such as Abū Nuwās, al-Husayn b. al-Dāhhāk, Abū Haffān and others, as we are informed by Sadafa al-Bakrī, was that they were all able to write excellent poetry of wine owing to the fact that "they had looked into the poetry of Abū al-Hindī and discovered his poetic marānī of wine description".31

Abū Nuwās was considered superior to Muslim b. al-Walīd for "writing poetry spontaneously" while Muslim "pretended to be restrained and calm and to not write poetry unless after deep thought". He was also considered superior to him by virtue of being a mutasarrīf and writing poetry in many different genres and in many styles, while Muslim
restricted himself to one manner and never changed it". The following lines are quoted as an example of the "easy, fluent and plain poetry" of Abū Nuwās:

These others are an example of poetry by Abū Nuwās containing "firmness of composition":

Al-ʿAskari quoted another example from the poetry of Abū Nuwās in which he had a variety of firm and delicate composition, just as we have noticed in the two examples quoted above.

Although Abū al-ʿAtāhiya was said to be the "most able poet at writing poetry spontaneously", Abū Nuwās was considered superior to him because he "is better than Abū al-ʿAtāhiya at going deeper into the craft of poetry and because he is more excellent than him in all poetic fields".

Ibn al-Athir stated that Abū Nuwās was to be preferred to other poets of his time because of the "fluency, facility and delicacy of his poetry". Abū al-ʿAtāhiya was admired for similar qualities, as we shall see, but he was criticised by Ishaq al-Mawsili for "poetry which is nearer to prose than to real poetry". Ishaq refused to accept the following line of Abū al-ʿAtāhiya as poetry:

He was also criticised by Muhammad b. Yahyā for writing muđamman poetry, which was regarded as a major defect. Ibn Yahyā quoted the following
According to Muḥammad b. Yahyā, the best kind of poetry is that, each of the lines of which - and, indeed, on occasions, parts of each line - can stand by itself and independent from the others, such as the following line of al-Naḥīga, the parts of which are independent and give a complete meaning:

If one recites the part:

it gives a complete sense; the same is true if one recites the other part:

It seems likely that this idea of the independent line, or part-line, of al-Naḥīga originated with Ḥamad al-Rāwiya who admired al-Naḥīga for such lines, as we shall see when we discuss the views of the ruwat and 'ulama'. The unity of a poem, according to this outlook, is apparently considered to be better achieved by a series of independent lines constituting a progression or train of thought than by the unsymmetrical and untidy practice of ṭadīn.

Abū al-Atāḥiya, at all events, was well known for his great quantity of poetry and for his powerful ṭabṣ, to the extent that most of his
speech was said to be poetry or to have poetic characteristics, as Abū al-ʻAnqāʼ al-Ḍarsī observed. In his opinion, the ghazal of Abū al-ʻAtāḥiya was very soft, like the discourse of women and in harmony with their nature. In this, he was similar to ʻUmar b. Abī Rabī'a and al-ʻAbbas b. al-ʻAhnaf. When Harūn al-Rashīd, who was a great admirer of Abū al-ʻAtāḥiya, argued with Ishaq al-Mawsili, who preferred al-ʻAbbās b. al-ʻAhnaf, he recited the following two lines of Abū al-ʻAtāḥiya and ordered Ishaq to learn them by heart. Harūn appears to be influenced by considerations of rigga in ghazal here:

He claimed that he had never heard anything like:

Abū al-ʻAtāḥiya was also admired for mādīḥ poetry because "he reduced tashbīb". When he praised ʻUmar b. al-ʻAlā', the latter rewarded him with seventy thousand dirhams. A poet criticised ʻUmar b. al-ʻAlā' for giving Abū al-ʻAtāḥiya more than he deserved for his mādīḥ poem, which was not so excellent. ʻUmar b. al-ʻAlā' replied: "A poet among you [addressing poets] will go round and round a poetic mana, trying to write it down, but he will fail and will not succeed until he has written about fifty lines of tashbīb, after which he will praise me in only a few lines. This man (Abu al-ʻAtāhiya) seems to have had all poetic mana gathered together for him. He shortened the tashbīb and praised me in these terms:

He claimed that shortness of tashbīb is recommended in a mādīḥ poem. When a poet praised Nasr b. Sayyār in a poem that contained a very long tashbīb,
Nasr said to him "there is no excellent poetic *maňā* but that you have used in your *tashbīb* instead of in my praise". The poet came the next day with another poem, this time of *ra'iz*, which contained only half of a line of *tashbīb*, the rest of it being in praise of the emir. It began:

Nasr did not accept this poem either and said to the poet: "No, it is neither that nor this; but it is better to be in between". 42

Al-Rasīd also admired the *madīn* poetry of Abū al-'Atāhiya and preferred him to all other poets of *madīn* for the following lines:

Abu al-'Atāhiya was the only poet who received the Caliph's prize on that day when poets came to recite their poems in praise of al-Rasīd. 43

The poem in which Abū al-'Atāhiya praised the Caliph al-Mahdī may show us some of the characteristics of his *madīn* poetry by which he excelled other poets:

Ibn al-Athīr, who described the poetry of Abū al-'Atāhiya as "like water in softness of words and elegance of composition, and free from weakness", spoke about this poem as follows: "And you should know that these lines quoted above belong to 'delicate' *gharal* and *madīn*. ALL poets at that time submitted to this. The poem had reached its final point of fluency and elegance; such poetry is called the "apparently easy but impossible to imitate" (*al-sahl al-muntani*); if you recite it,
you feel that you can write poetry similar to it, but if you try to, it jinks away as a fox does; this is what poetry and speech should be, and
the best is that which enters the ear without permission". 44

As we have mentioned before, Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya was likened to ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa and al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ahnaf. The similarity between the three lies in their "softness and delicacy in discourse with women in ghazal poetry; their language is in harmony with the nature of women". 45 The difference between Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya and the other two is that he also wrote madīn, while they restricted themselves to ghazal poetry. There were other poets who avoided madīn, as Jamīl Euthayna and al-Rammāḥ b. Mayyāda. Al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ahnaf was said by Muṣʿab al-Zubayrī to be the "ʿUmar of Iraq". He meant that al-ʿAbbās was, for the people of Iraq, like ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa for the people of the Hijāz, in the sense that both of them concerned themselves with ghazal poetry and neglected madīn and hijāb. Nevertheless, al-ʿAbbās received prizes from al-Rashīd and other Caliphs for his excellent ghazal and his gentleness in approaching tashbih. 46

Though al-ʿAbbās was famous for his ghazal poetry and his gentleness in discourse with women, he was regarded by some as an unsuccessful poet, in spite of the fact that he restricted himself to that genre. According to al-Madāʾinī al-ʿAbbās and Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya were incapable of achieving their object. Al-Madāʾinī is reported as saying: "al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ahnaf was in his ghazal poetry similar to Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya in his zuhd poetry. Both of them made many incisions but failed to reach the joint". This means that they were unable to hit the mark and that they failed to express themselves. Al-Madāʾinī criticised al-ʿAbbās for the following line:

فِيَن َبِقِينَ نِكِضَنْنَ َنِمْ َنَبَوَل َشَيِّنَ مَكَرَحَانَ قَوْمٍ نِم َحَيْثَ يِنَوَأَ َوُعَيْل
accusing him of being insensitive towards his beloved in threatening her that his sons would avenge him if she caused him to die of love for her. 47

Al-‘Abbās b. al-Ahnaf was also compared with al-‘Attābī and was considered superior to him. Muhammad b. Yahyā al-Sūlī reported that Ahmad b. Yahyā b. ‘Alī al-Munajjim disputed with a certain al-Mutafaqqih al-Mawsīlī about the relative merits of al-‘Abbās and al-‘Attābī. Al-Mutafaqqih alleged the superiority of al-‘Attābī over al-‘Abbās, and al-Munajjim, in reply, wrote a short treatise in which he compared the two poets and argued the superiority of al-‘Abbās. In this he wrote: "Al-‘Attābī has not the qualifications to excel al-‘Abbās in poetry and he would not expect anyone to prefer him to his peer; if anyone claimed to do so, al-‘Attābī would reject that, because he knows well about poetry and knows that he cannot reach the position of al-‘Abbās. Indeed, I have never seen a critic who alleged any similarity between the two poets, or anyone who preferred al-‘Attābī to al-‘Abbās. This is because of the fact that the two poets are different from each other in their styles of poetry. Al-‘Attābī is a mutakallif while al-‘Abbās is a very natural poet. His discourse is plain and sweet while the speech of al-‘Attābī is complicated and rigid. The poetry of al-‘Abbās contains freshness, softness and sweetness; while in the poetry of al-‘Attābī there is coarseness and solidity. The poetry of al-‘Abbās is in one poetic genre, ghazal, which he has written a great deal, and it is excellent. On the other hand, al-‘Attābī has a variety of poetic genres but in all of them he is just as described above. The best of his poetry is the poem in which he praised al-Rashīd, starting:
In it he wrote:

\[
\text{في شيء الإشباع جَوَّةِها، وَفُحُودِهَا،}
\]

This he borrowed from an excellent line by Bashshār:

\[
\text{جَفَّتِ عَيْنِكَ عَلَى التَّمْهِيمِ فَذَّكْرَنَّهَا نَفْسًا قَصَّرً.}
\]

Bashshār himself had borrowed the idea from Jamīl Būthaynā's line:

\[
\text{كَانَ الْهَدَى قَبْلُ الْبَفْوُينَ، لِلنَّعْمَاءِ السَّهَادَ، وَلَمْ تَقْصِرُ.}
\]

Though Bashshār's line is excellent it does not equal Jamīl's. Then when al-Ḥattābī borrowed the ṭākhān, he misrepresented and abused it.

If a poet borrows a ṭākhān from a predecessor, he should represent it in a better and more excellent way than that in which it was originally written. He should add something to the original idea so as to give the line its due. If he fails to achieve this object he is to be blamed for plagiarism and for inability. When al-Ḥattābī entered his battle of hīs with Aḥū Qābūs al-Nṣrānī, he was defeated even though Aḥū Qābūs was not a good poet.

To return to the poem mentioned above, al-Ḥattābī included the following lines:

\[
\text{ماذا لو سي مَدَّحَكَ بَيْنَ عَلَبِهِ قَدْ ناَدرَتِ الرُّمَيْنِ تَقِيسِ وَذَهِبُ.}
\]

Here he used the word al-māmādīh in the second line; if he had instead used al-mādā'īh, it would have been better, lighter on the ear and more in accordance with the practice of skillful and natural poets. He also used the word mustantīqāt in the same line; if he had used na'ātīqāt instead, it would have been better and more natural. Finally, he used the word al-dāmā'īr, thus ending his line with an extremely heavy word, which, if dropped in the sea, would pollute it. Though it is correct, it is not familiar and not sweet. Indeed, there is nothing better in poetry, after correctness of ma'ānā, than beauty of words. These
Defects of al-Attābi are actually due to affectation and faulty ταβέ. As for al-Abbās, he has many merits. The treatise of al-Munajjim is one of the earliest works concerning poetic comparison and there is no doubt that al-Āmidī, in his comparative study of the poetry of Abū Tammām and al-Buhturi, owed much to his predecessors, like al-Munajjim, in this field.

Although al-Munajjim found al-Abbās, in general, superior to al-Attābi, and, in fact, put him on an altogether different level of ability, it is clear that he considered that there was no proper basis for a comparison, since there was so little similarity in their poetic production. He concentrated therefore on their use of language, in which some sort of comparison was possible, even though one might imagine that the natural, limpid style that was well suited to ghazal was less appropriate to madih. There was obviously a considerable body of opinion at this time that favoured a simple, unaffected style in all poetry, although admirers of a more florid, complex style were never lacking.

Al-Munajjim did not prohibit a poet to borrow a poetic μάνα from another, but he insisted that the borrower should add to the original idea and represent the μάνα more excellently. He paid much attention to ταβέ, and in criticising some words used by al-Attābi he described them as heavy on the ear and removed from what was natural. Although he admired beauty of words however, correctness of μάνα came first for him.

One of the exaggerated notions in the field of poetic comparison is that of khatm al-shu'ara ("the seal of the poets"). It means the last person who actually deserves the name of poet. The term seems to be associated with the appearance of the muhāth or muwallad poets, and it appears
that Abū 'Amr b. al-‘Alā', who did not recognize the muqalladūn, was among the first critics to use it, although we do not know when it was used for the first time and by whom. However, it appears to me that the philologists were the first group to introduce the idea of khatm al-shu'ara' to mean the last poet whose poetry deserved to be cited as a witness for correct language. One of the poets who was accorded the title was Dhū al-Rumma, who was regarded as khatm al-Shu'ara' by Abū 'Amr b. al-‘Alā'. This judgement of Abū 'Amr's was later rejected by his own great-grandson Salm b. Khālid b. Mu‘awiyā b. Abū ‘Amr. According to al-Hasan b. ‘Alī al-Ansārī, Salm was reported as saying: "My great-grandfather, Abū ‘Amr, used to seal poetry with Dhū al-Rumma, but if he had seen Amāra b. ‘Aqīl b. Jarīr, he would have known that he was better than Dhū al-Rumma in the ways of poetry. Amāra's poetry is even more consistent (in level) than that of Jarīr because Jarīr had some weaknesses (ṣaṣāt) in his poetry and there is nothing worthless in Amāra's poetry". 

The comment by Muhammad b. Yazīd on the remark made by Salm about Amāra's poetry, may perhaps confirm our explanation for the term khatm al-shu'ara', as used by the earlier philologists and ruwa’t. He said: "Eloquence in the poetry of the muhdathūn is sealed by Amāra b. ‘Aqīl". 

Another term which is similar to khatm al-shu'ara', and for which a straightforward explanation can be given, is the one referred to Ibn Harma, who is said to be "the rear-guard of the Arabs" (ṣaṣāt al-farab) also meaning "the last poet whose poetry is cited as a witness", as interpreted by Ibn Rashīq. Later, the term khatm al-shu'ara' was used in a wider sense, when, for example, critics said: "poetry was begun by
the tribe of Kinda and was sealed by it". This may mean that the first who deserved the name of poet was Imru' al-Qays, who belonged to the tribe of Kinda and that the last was al-Mutanabbi who is said to have belonged to the same tribe. Others said: "poetry was begun by a king - meaning Imru' al-Qays - and was sealed by a king - meaning Abū Firās al-Hamānī". Or again: "poetry was begun by the tribe of Rabī'a - meaning by its poet al-Muhalhil - and was sealed by it - meaning by Abū Firās, who belonged to the same tribe".52

The critics almost certainly borrowed the term khatm from the Qur'ān, where we find the Prophet Muhammad declared to be the khatim of the Prophets, meaning the "seal" of them, after whom no true prophet will come. Though the word khatm may have been known to the Jahilīs, the influence of the Qur'ānic term on critics may be seen in the new significance that they give to khatm, in using it to describe a poet as the last whose language is correct, fluent and worth citing. Probably such a poet followed the style of the ancients and his poetry was full of Bedouin concepts, as was the case with Dhu al-Rumāma. Anyhow, it seems to me that the terms khatm and sa'cat, which have similar meanings, are used in a literary-critical context as a sign of hostility towards the muhdathūn. They are used to demarcate the beginning of the era of the muhdathūn and the end of that of the early poets who were regarded as the only true poets by Abū Qamar b. al-ʿAlā' and his generation.

The term khatm was also used in the field of mysticism, where we find khatm al-awliyā' used by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 296), and later by Muḥyi al-Dīn b. ʿArabī.53
The use of the terms khatm and sāgat al-shu'ara' by critics among philologists, ruwat and grammarians, bears the same significance of using the ancients as criteria for judging the muhaththun as we have seen in the case of Ishaq al-Mawsili when he championed Harwan because "he was similar to the early poets", and rejected Abu Nuwas because the latter "made grammatical mistakes". The fact that they explained these terms to refer to those whose poetry might be cited as witnesses for language, in itself confirms our claim that the ancients were used as standards for judging the muhaththun. The latter were admired as long as they followed the early poets. Even those among the muhaththun who were admired for their badī', such as Bashshār and Abu Nuwas, were admired because they were similar to Imru' al-Qays, al-Nabigha and al-Arishā, as we have seen. The poets of ghazal, like al-'Abbās b. al-Ahnaf, and Abu al-Atāhiya in his ghazal poetry, were admired for the quality of ṭiqqa found in their poems. Both of these were judged and measured against Ḥumair b. Aḥf Rabī', to whom they were likened. The standard of "consistency in levels of excellence" which we have seen in the criticism of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār of the two lāmiyyas of Ḥumair b. Aḥf Rabī' and Jamīl Buthayna, is also found in Ishaq al-Mawsili, who preferred Marwan to Bashshār on that basis. The standards of variety of poetic genres, and of difference in poetic manner (firmness or softness of composition) were also used in judging the muhaththun, when Abu Nuwas was preferred to Muslim b. al-Walīd. Other poetic qualities were also demanded in muhath poetry; such were correctness of the matnā and of language, beauty of words, firmness and facility, shortness of tashbīb and natural poetry. As a later critic, Ibn Wākip al-Ḥasan Abū Muhammad, commented "the poems of the muwalladūn are recited because of the sweetness and delicacy of their words and the sweetness of their maṭnī. If they had tried to follow the ancients in using gharīb and in
describing deserts, wild animals and insects, their poems would not be recited, because the ancients are more associated with those topics than the muwalladūn. People nowadays are not very much interested in literature and they are looking for a kind of poetry that can be admired by both the elite (khāssa) and the commons (camma) ...

The last remark of Ibn Wakhīf about poetry that can be accepted by the elite and admired by the commons, is not very different from what Abū 'Abd Allāh, the vizier of the Abbasid Caliph, said, as we have seen. They appear to have meant that admired muhdath poetry is that which combined the characteristics of ancient and muhdath. In other words, it should be grammatically correct, contain firmness of composition, facility of ma'na, natural poetic ma'ani, and some of the "poetic beauties" and bādi'. This is the sense that emerges from these general comparative views concerning the ancients and the muhdathūn. Critics said that "the ancients are quoted for their words and the muhdathūn are quoted for their "poetic beauties" and bādi'." Ibrahim b. al-Hasan b. Sahl said: "the ancients are regarded as a hujja, and these people (the Muhdathūn) have more beautiful characterisation".
CHAPTER SIX

The Opinions of the Poets

As a preliminary to the discussion of the poets' own opinions about good and bad poetry and about the merits of each poet and his views on his own and others' poetry, it may be useful to quote some lines by different poets in which they speak of their position in poetry.

Boasting about one's poetry was a habit among poets, and they expressed their high opinions of themselves in different ways. For example, a poet might claim that his jinnī, who inspired him with poetry, was the amīr of the jinn of all poets, meaning that he is the best poet of all. One rajaz-poet wrote:

Besides claiming that his jinnī was the leader of all poets' jinn, that is to say that he himself was the leader of all poets, he also claimed that he was inspired to write in all different poetic genres, and that he was a natural poet; this is what the word tazannī in the last line implies: that he did not need to think hard or consider when he wrote poetry.

Another rajaz-poet, Abū al-Najm al-Ṣalīfī wrote a line in which he declared his superiority over other poets by claiming that he had a male jinnī, while others had female ones:

Some poets, from the time of the Jahiliyya, when comparing themselves with other rival poets, described the latter as 'dogs'. This is exemplified in the line of Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī:
where the word 'dogs' is explained as meaning poets, and also in a line by Abu Lubayd al-Tawil, in which he refers to certain poets whom he has silenced as dogs:

الليلة إذ الليلين وجهاً
وقعت صمتاً ما ينهب
لديدك الشعراء، منفتح
ف الشعر يان سكنوا وإن بقوا

The poet Tamim b. Abi Muqbil compared all poets with barking dogs and claimed that whatever they did they could not reach his position in poetry:

الليلة إذ الليلين وجهاً
وقعت صمتاً ما ينهب
لديدك الشعراء، منفتح
ف الشعر يان سكنوا وإن بقوا

In other lines he talked about himself and about his poems as follows:

لذا دم من كم الدواوين كتب خرب
وأنثر بيناً سافراً ضباً لما
ف جبال الشعر حتى نبتها
ف أمير غريباً يسمع الناس وجهه
كما تسمع الأربع الزهر المشقرا

Ibn Muqbil in these lines speaks of his 'unique' and 'unfamiliar' lines; al-Parazdaq did the same, and stated that his poems were famous and recited everywhere:

بلغن الشمس حين كونون شرحاً
و مستط رأساً من جثثاً
بكل شبيهة وكل لغيرة
عرائشون تنسب إنساً

Abu Shurayh al-Umayr spoke of the eternity of his poems, which are perfect, like beautiful garments, and could be quoted as aphorisms:

فإن أعمله فقد أكتب بعد
فواه تجب المبصرينا
لذينان المقالو مجلبان
لوان الشعر يبصق لا رتيبنا

The beauty of his poems, it seems to be implied, lies in the words and in perfection of structure.

Al-Ramah b. Mayyada claimed that true poetry is that written by the poets who belonged to the tribes of Qays and Khindaf, who were the spring of poetry. Their lines were many, and they wrote natural poetry. Poets from other tribes merely wrote an unnatural and diverting poetry:

فيا نبي الله وحرم
فاصفع فيه ند الرواية يسمع
Uqal al-Qayni opposed al-Rammah and rejected what he claimed. Uqal declared that poetry was written for the first time by the tribes of the Yemen, and that other poets then followed them:

Natural poetry was also praised by Abū Hayya al-Numayrī, who claimed himself to be a natural poet who wrote poetry easily; when he embarked on a difficult rhyme it would yield to him, but if another poet attempted it he would find it unwilling and difficult. He declared that he used not to re-examine his poems because he was such a skilful poet:

Hashshār boasted of his skill even though he was born blind. He praised his natural, beautiful, easy, and harmonious poetry in the following lines:

When he was asked how he contrived to excel his contemporaries in the beauty of his poetic maqāmī and in his polished words, he replied:

"because I do not accept every idea that comes into my mind; I search out the essence of things, and elegant similes, towards which I walk with thoughtfulness and a powerful instinct; thus I get right to the
Besides the quality of naturalness (تاَّفُ) in poetry, poets seem to have admired some sort of unity in a poem. They boasted that they wrote poems in which the lines were connected with one another. This quality of connection between the lines of a poem met us when we spoke of poetic comparison in the Jāhiliyya when we mentioned talāhūm al-kalām in the poem of Ābu Dhu'ayb quoted by Ibn Rashīq and in the line of al-ʿAšā quoted by al-Żahiz. Later on, in Islamic times, we find the poet and rajiz Ṭūma b. Laja' saying to another poet: "I am a better poet than you". When the poet asked Ṭūma to explain, he replied: "because I write a line and its brother and you write a line and its cousin". That is to say that his lines have some relation with one another. A similar opinion is expressed by Ṣu'ba b. al-ʿAjja' about his son's poetry. He described it as having no girān, or connection, between its lines. Ibn Qutayba explained the word girān here as meaning that he "does not link a line in a poem with another similar to it". A poet criticised another poet's poetry and described it as follows:

The poetry of this man is likened to the dung of a male sheep that scatters when it falls. The poet meant to say that his poetry contained different thoughts (ماَةَنَف), it was not written in one style, and there was no similarity between its lines. The line quoted above shows us the influence of the Bedouin environment in poetic criticism, in likening poetry to sheep's dung.

It also seems that shortness in a poem was something admired and recommended by poets. This quality we also met when we discussed the views of al-Nābigha in the Jāhiliyya. In different Islamic periods we
find many poets who call for shortness in a poem and praise it. When the mukhadram poet, Ibn al-Zib'ara was asked why his poems were short, he replied: "because short poems are quicker to enter the ears, are more famous, and are recited in gathering-places". A similar question was put to al-Ḥutay'a. His daughter asked him: "Why are your short poems more in number than your long ones?" He replied: "Because the short poems enter the ears more quickly and they are more recitable".

Al-Ḥarazdaq was asked: "Why have you started to write short poems after having been used to write long ones?" He made a similar reply to that of Ibn al-Zib'ara and al-Ḥutay'a. He said: "Because short poems settle in men's hearts and are more famous in the gathering-places than long ones".

When a muhdath poet was asked: "Why do you not write more than two or four lines?" he replied: "because a few lines settle in men's hearts better than many, they are easier to learn by heart, they are more recited, they gather together more poetic maṣāni in a small compass, and the poet who writes so is more eloquent". Another muhdath poet was asked why he did not prolong his poems. To this he replied in the following lines:

The poet Ibn Hazim, in the above lines, praised himself as being an eloquent poet because he expressed his thoughts in brief words, especially in poems of hijā'. His poems are eternal and they are made famous and spread abroad by being recited by the transmitters.
Shortness in the poem of hijā' in particular was recommended by many poets, most of whom agreed that the best of hijā' poetry is that which is short and decent. Jarîr was an exception to the majority of poets concerning shortness in the poem of hijā'. He was reported by his grandson, 'Amâra b. 'Aqîl, to have told his sons: "If you praise, do not prolong the poem, because its first lines will be forgotten and its last lines will not be committed to memory, and if you satirize, you had better write at length".19 On another occasion, Jarîr was reported as saying: "If you satirize, make others laugh".20 The risible hijā' mentioned by Jarîr may be the kind of hijā' demanded by al-Nâbigha al-Dhubyâni, and it also may be the kind of hijā' that contains mockery and amusing images which we shall encounter in the quotations of Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his Tabârît.

Some of the muḥdathun avoided gharīb and criticised those who used it; they called for natural and easy poetry. Abî al-Atâhiya criticised his contemporary Ibn Munâdhîr for using gharīb in the following line:

\[ \text{gharīb in our time is regarded as indicating incapability of expression} \]

He accused the poet of trying to imitate al-'Ajâj and his son Ru'ba in using gharīb, and he asked him about the meaning of al-marmarîs.21 When the muḥdath poet al-Sayyid al-Himyârî was asked: "Why do you not use gharīb in your poetry?" he replied: "Using gharīb in our time is regarded as indicating incapability of expression (إظهار شعور)، and I should be an unnatural poet if I used it. I have been fortunately endowed with the quality of tabâ and great facility of speech, and so I write what is understood by young and old and never needs an explanation."22

The quality of tabâ and easy poetry were also praised by the muḥdath poet al-Khuraymî who was asked why his poetry was admired and accepted by everyone who listened to it. He replied: "because I attract speech so that it becomes easy and natural for me, and if anyone listens to it, it will be easy for him to admire it". 23
Another muhādhīth post referred to the fact that he "did not make much incision, but "easily reached the joint and hit the most vulnerable spot of speech". He wrote "excellent openings and endings", and "elegant transitions from nasīb to madīn and hijā".\(^{24}\)

The poet Ābu al-Abbas al-Nāshī criticised those who used gharīb and neglected easy and plain words, and also those who wrote impossible and mean thoughts. He stated that ideal poetry is that which is regular in form, has similarity between its parts and connection between its lines, in which there should be a relation between the beginning of a line and its end; that in which the madīn and the words serve each other; that in which the madīn is long and sincere, nasīb is easy and apposite, and hijā' is decent and written in a compromise between direct and indirect statement (taṣādīl). According to al-Nāshī, the most correct poetry is that which is excellent in form, and if heard is admired; that which is apparently easy but impossible to imitate. He expressed his opinion in the following poem:

\[\text{لا فين الله عصمة الشعر ماذا بخصوًن الغريب منه على ما وقّرون الملال شيئًا معيناً جَعَلْنَّ أَفَطَرَت الصواب منه، طلبر فهم عند من سوا بلامو إنا الشعر ما ناسب في النظم فأشت بعضه يشاقل بعضًا. كأن ما يمّا أن نعمل بينه ما فشان عن البين إلى أنّ فكان ال관계 فيه جوو فائتا في الماء حسب الزيان فإذا ما مدح للشعر حا، حَيْلَت النسيب شهلاً شرفاً وتنبلت ما نهجين في السمع.}\]
In another poem he advocated brevity and told poets the methods they should follow in writing different poetic genres. According to him ideal poetry always takes a middle way and is a combination of two things. He wrote:

We also may notice the idea of combination in the previous poem in the sixteenth, nineteenth and twentieth lines. Because of his advocacy of
brevity he claimed in his book *Tafṣīl al-shīr* that he had excelled Jarīr, who wrote:

> يد العيون التي ضغطوا عليك
> بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
>

with a line that "is better than these two lines of Jarīr because it is briefer". His line read as follows:

> لا تستنى أعجب مما عرض إليهم الله عفوان القرآن إلا إذا ضعفا

Ibn Rashīq criticised al-Nāshī because the latter had exaggerated in praising his own poetry and preferring it to the poetry of all *fuhūl*; actually, his poetry was on a low level.  

In his advice to al-Buhtūrī, Abū Tamām told him to write poetry at certain times, namely when he was free from worries and relaxed. The best time for that was dawn, because the body would be relaxed after it had rested all night. He should not try to write poetry when he was restless and if he felt so while writing a poem he should stop and take a rest. When he felt that his worries had left him, and he had a desire to write poetry, he might do so, because desire would enable him to be excellent. He should also look at the poetry of the ancients and consult the *ulama* to determine their opinion of it. What they admired he should follow and what they rejected he should avoid. When he wrote *nasīb* he should use sensitive words, beautiful or graceful *maṭānī*, many expressions of great passion; he should show his suffering and gloominess; his longing for his beloved and his sadness at her departure. When he wrote *nādīḥ*, he should make the virtues of the *mamduḥ* very famous, praise him highly and enoble his status. The poet should avoid unfamiliar *maṭānī* and contemptible words. He should be like a tailor; he measured clothes correctly and made them fit, exactly as a poet should select
suitable words for his poetic maṣāni'.

From the comparative views adopted by poets about themselves it is not easy to form a complete theory of poetic criticism; all we can do is to gather these scattered remarks, concerning both their own and others' poetry. By putting these together we may gain some idea about what is seen as good and bad poetry by the poets.

Among the mukhadramūn we have Labīd b. Abī Rabī‘a, who, according to his own assessment, was the third of the chief pre-Islamic poets, the first two being Irμu‘ al-Qays and Tarafa. He called Imru‘ al-Qays "the wandering king with the wounds", and Tarafa "the slain youth from the Banū Bakr". Labīd did not give any reason for considering Irμu‘ al-Qays as the chief of the Jāhilī poets or Tarafa as the second; probably the latter was so rated for his mu‘allāqā.

Another mukhadramī poet, Hassān b. Thābit, when asked about the best poet, replied that the tribe of Hudhayl was the best in poetry and that Abū Dhu‘ayb al-Hudhalī was the best poet among that tribe. On another occasion, Hassān declared that "the best tribe in poetry are the blue-eyed ones from the Banū Qays b. Tha‘labā", referring to the people of al-A‘shā.

Hassān also championed the poet Qamar b. al-Atnāba, who is described by al-Marzubānī as an ancient poet who belonged to the tribe of Khazraj. Hassān declared him to be the best poet on the strength of this line:

Allāh 'an n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-
Concerning himself and his position among poets, Hassan had great confidence in his poetic powers and was reported to say proudly: "If I were to put my tongue on a hair, it would shave it off, and if I were to put it on a rock, it would split it". Hassan stated that he was distinguished from other poets by two qualities: first, that he did not steal others' lines, and secondly, that his poetry is different from theirs; he did not, however, make it clear in what sense his poetry differed. He wrote:

لا أُسقّي الشعراء ما نفعوا به بل لا يوافق شرهم شرئ

Probably he meant that others' lines would not fit in his poetry if he borrowed them, because they were not as excellent as his.

A third mukhadram poet, al-Hutay'a, seems to have considered himself as possessing less excellence in poetry than Zuhayr and his son Ka'b. He himself had been the transmitter (rāwiya) of these two and other poets of their family for a long time. Talking to Ka'b b. Zuhayr, he was once reported as saying: "O Ka'b, you know that I have been the transmitter of your poetry and that of your father for a long time. Now, all master-poets have passed away except you and me, and I think it would be best if you were to write a poem in which you mention your name and then mention mine. People admire and recite your (the family of Zuhayr's) poetry more than that of others". Ka'b complied with the request and wrote the following lines in which he praised his own poems and those of al-Hutay'a:

[Translation of the poem]
In the first line, Ka‘b claims that poems will not find a poet who can write them excellently when he and al-Hutay‘a die. In the second and third, he indicates that they polish and re-examine their poetry and select the best of it. Poets did not accept what Ka‘b said about himself and his friend. The poet Muzarrid b. Dir‘ wrote a line in which he preferred Hassān, al-Shammākh, and al-Mukhballāb:

Al-Kumayt b. Zayd also rejected Ka‘b’s opinion and stated that poems would never be harmed if both Ka‘b and al-Hutay‘a died. He wrote:

Ka‘b himself was proud of being a pupil of his father, Zuhayr, and he noticed the similarity between the latter’s poetry and his own poems. He stated that he had not been influenced in poetry either by his maternal uncle or by his cousin but by his father only. He praised his father for his great knowledge of poetry and said that he had imitated his poems:

In praising the sort of poetry written by his father and in imitating him, Ka‘b b. Zuhayr seems to favour re-examined and polished poetry which stands in opposition to the natural poetry favoured by al-Asmacī as we shall see later. Ka‘b did not say in what sense his poems were similar to those of his father but it seems that the similarity between the two lies in their lengthy re-examination of poetry. This sort of poetry is called hawlī. Al-Hutay‘a is reported as saying: "The best poetry is al-hawlī al-muhakkak (re-appraised)". When he was asked about his master Zuhayr he declared him the best poet, for his mastery of
Al-Hutay'a praised Zuhayr for mastering different rhymes and for having many styles of madā'īh and hijā'. Later we shall find that al-Buhṭurī preferred al-Farazdaq to Jarīr because the former satirized the latter in many styles while the latter stuck to a few when satirizing the former. When talking about the qualities of Zuhayr's poetry, al-Hutay'a was aware of the importance of madā'īh and hijā', though he neglected the genre of hikma, for which Zuhayr was famous. Al-Hutay'a characterised his own kind of poetry clearly when he described himself as "howling after the rhymes", by which he probably alluded to his lack of tabaq and his difficulty in evoking poetry, even though he was a master-poet. As his master did, he used to re-examine and polish his own poems, spending a great deal of time correcting them. He believed that poetry was not an easy thing to write for those who were unfamiliar with it. In two of his lines he says:

الشعر معبّرٌ وطويلٍ سببهُ
إذا انتهِ فيه الزي رفعهُ
زنْزِن به في الغيب تروهُ
بريد أن بعده فيجيءُ

Though he put himself second to Zuhayr, on another occasion al-Hutay'a mentioned ʿAbīd b. al-Abras as second after him. He liked Zuhayr's line of hikma:

وَمَن جُعِلَ المورَى مِن دونْ عِفْرىٌ
فِي هَيْئَةٍ وَمَن لا يَقِل الشَّكُّ بِحِسَبِهِ

He also liked ʿAbīd b. al-Abras' line of hikma:

من يسأل الناس حُمودٌ
وَسَائلَ الله لَا تَنْبَثُ
Though his appreciation of the two lines indicates a moral trend in his criticism, al-Hutay'a might have been guided by his own interest as a greedy and avaricious poet, in that the two lines were composed for begging indirectly. He knew that his position in poetry was affected by his greediness, as he told Ibn 'Abbās when the latter asked him about the best poet of all. He believed that the same reason had detracted from al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī, even though he was not inferior to Zuhayr. In his reply to Ibn 'Abbās, al-Hutay'a declared Zuhayr the best poet among the ancients and championed him for the line of ḥikma quoted above. He admired the line of al-Nābigha-cited as a proverb - in which the poet says:

\[
\text{وَلَسْتُ بِمَسْتَبَقِيَّ أُحَلُّ أَنْ أَلْهَمُهُ عَلَى سَعْنَاءٍ أَيُّ الْرِّجَالِ الْمُهْرِبُنَّ}
\]

He stated that al-Nābigha would not have been considered inferior to Zuhayr, had it not been for his "humility and cupidity" for money. The same applied to himself, who, had it not been for greed, would have been the best poet among the ancients. Nevertheless he claimed that he was the best of his contemporaries and that his "arrow is the best at hitting the target".  

However, although he considered that greed was responsible for holding him back from reaching the standard of the ancient poets, on another occasion, he claimed himself to be the best poet when he was greedy or when he was affected by desire or fear, "howling after the rhymes as if I were a thirsty young camel crying for its mother". He seems to be the origin of the idea that associates "desire and fear" with the ability to write excellent poetry. We have seen that 'Alī b. Abī Talib used these two words when talking about Imru' al-Qays. They were also used by Kuthayyir, Ibn Abī Tarafa and Ibn Qutayba, as we shall see later.
Ibn Rashiq criticised al-Hutay'a for regarding Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī as the best poet on the strength of his poem that starts:

Ibn Rashiq commented that though "Abū Du'ād is an ancient master-poet whose poetry Imru' al-Qays made use of and transmitted, no critic has ever declared him the best poet as al-Hutay'a does. Al-Hutay'a put Abīd b. al-Abras next to Abū Du'ād on the strength of his poem with the line:

Both poems contain lines of hikma, which al-Hutay'a seems to appreciate. Before he died, al-Hutay'a was requested by his family to make his will, but he merely kept reciting some lines of poetry declaring that al-Shammākh b. Dirrār was the best poet, on the strength of the following line:

The line describes a bow, a weapon which al-Shammākh was famous for describing. He also stated that Dābī b. al-Ḥarith al-Burjumī deserved to be called a poet because he wrote the following line:

He also declared that Imru' al-Qays was the best of all Arab poets in having written the line:

and that Hassan was the best poet in having written this line:

Lastly, al-Hutay'a, pointing to his mouth, declared: "this hole is the best poet, if it is greedy for some good".

From the different comments and judgments made by al-Hutay'a at different times, it is difficult to tell who was in fact his favourite
poet. His quotations from Zuhayr, al-Kabīgha, Abu Du'ād and ibn b. al-Abraṣ indicate that he was interested in the poetry of ḥikmah. Ideal poetry for him is ḥawālī, which the poet spent a great deal of effort and time correcting and polishing, such as the poetry of his master Zuhayr. He identified psychological motives such as fear and desire that affected a poet and caused him to be excellent in his poetry.

If we now leave the mukhadramūn aside and look at the Hijāzī poets of the Umayyad period, we shall find that 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'ā was regarded by poets as the best of them, at any rate in ḥaṣṣāl poetry. According to Ya'qūb b. Ishāq, the Arabs admitted that Quraysh was the best tribe in religious, social, political and economic matters, and when 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'ā appeared, they recognised the superiority of Quraysh in poetry also. Jamīl Buthayna, on listening to the ḥaṣṣāl poem of 'Umar that starts:

جرد ناسح بالوزر بين وبينها فتقرن بدم الحساب إلى قتلى

admitted that he would never be able to write a poem like it because there was "no-one who can address women and talk to them like 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'ā".

When al-Farazdaq listened to the same poem he said: "this is what the poets were looking for, but they missed it, and instead of finding it, they kept weeping over deserted dwellings. This man has found it". The same opinion is expressed by Jarīr when he listened to another poem of 'Umar starting:

سائلاً السرّ بالبيان وفرولاً جفت شوقاً في العبارة غربان

He said: "This is what we were looking for and missed; this Qurashite has now attained it." On another occasion, Jarīr is reported as telling the people of Medina, who requested him to recite some of his poetry, that they were interested in nasīb and that they should look
for it in the poetry of 'Umar because "he is the best poet in nasīb".\footnote{50} What poets were looking for seems to have been rinsa, which is expressed in delicate conversation with women, gentle and sensitive ways of addressing the deserted dwelling, humility and submission to the beloved, and other such qualities which we have already pointed out in the poetry of 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'ā.

Though Jarīr had declared that 'Umar was the best poet in nasīb, on another occasion he preferred Kuthayyir.\footnote{51} Kuthayyir himself, who was the transmitter of the poetry of Jamīl, spoke about the latter as his master in the "path of nasīb". If he was asked about his nasīb poetry, he would say: "God has taught me about nasīb through Jamīl".\footnote{52} When the poet Nusayb asked him to compare himself with his master Jamīl, he asked him in astonishment: "Is there anyone who has facilitated nasīb for us except Jamīl?".\footnote{53}

The poets of the Hijāz were classified by Nusayb, when he was asked to compare them, as follows: "Jamīl is our leader, 'Umar is the best among us in describing women, and Kuthayyir is the best among us at weeping over departing women and at praising kings". These, as a group of nasīb poets, were also described by Nusayb on another occasion: "Jamīl is the most sincere in his poetry, 'Umar is the most untruthful among us, and I myself write what I know".\footnote{54}

Kuthayyir criticised 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'ā, using the same argument as used by Ibn Abī 'Atīq, that "instead of writing nasīb about his beloved, 'Umar wrote it about himself". He cited the following lines:

الناسب الراجح في حديث
فالناسب عن الأميرة
كأنها تارة
فقال له ليبهرنا
فقال له تفر عزته فأتي
ثم استبشر تشتند في أثرٍ
He added that a woman should be described as "bashful, reserved, desired but unattainable". He believed that what al-Ahwas wrote was the ideal and better than what ‘Umar wrote. He quoted the following lines of al-Ahwas:

In criticising ‘Umar and preferring al-Ahwas, Kuthayyir was guided by traditional etiquette and good manners in dealing with women, to which the lines of ‘Umar are contrary, just as they do not conform to the requirements of ‘rigaa. The lines of al-Ahwas preferred by Kuthayyir fulfil these requirements. But, because Kuthayyir was always concerned with traditional manners in nasib, he also criticised al-Ahwas for following the wrong path in ghazal on other occasions, as for instance when he wrote:

He told him that it was not the way of the fuhul to say that he did not care if she left him. It was contrary to the demands of ‘rigaa, and the true lover should care for his beloved "not only if she left him but even if she broke his neck". The one who followed the right way, he said, was Nusayb in the following line:

because he went to see her before she departed and told her that he was not bored with her even if she was bored with him. This was a sign of sincerity and humility to the beloved. Again, however, he criticised Nusayb for writing:

because it was not decent for the poet to wish for someone to love her after he had died. From his remarks on these lines by different poets it seems that Kuthayyir was no different in his views from Ibn Abî ‘Atîq.
and other critics in what he required of nasib poetry. He himself, however, was criticised for not conforming to this style of nasib in some of his lines.

The Iraqi poets of the Umayyad period were headed by Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akhtal. Jarīr, in his reply to Ābi al-Malik, the Caliph, or his son, al-Walīd, when he was asked about certain poets, gave his opinion about them in general and vague terms, especially when he spoke about Zuhayr, Ka'b his son, Imru' al-Qays, and also al-Farazdaq and al-Akhtal. His views of his own poetry are clearer and more valuable, though still somewhat vague. According to him, the best poet of all is "the twenty-year old", meaning Tarafa, and "the poetry of Zuhayr and his son Ka'b is full of light". Imru' al-Qays he speaks of as "the wicked" who "used poetry just as he used his pair of shoes"; if he had met him he "would have raised the hem of his garment". Dhū al-Rumma, he says, was "capable of writing elegant, strange and excellent poetry to which no-one was able to write anything similar". As for al-Akhtal, "he died with much poetry unspoken". Al-Farazdaq "holds in his hands a nabī of poetry". About himself Jarīr said that he was "the city of poetry from which it goes out and to which it comes back". He had written"nasib that caused delight, and madīn that raised up, and hijār that humbled". He had also written much poetry in the metres ramal and rajaz. He was better than those other poets mentioned because each of them had only written in one genre of poetry, and he wrote in all poetic fields.\(^\text{56}\)

In speaking about Imru' al-Qays as having used poetry as "a pair of shoes", Jarīr may mean that he had a powerful poetic ability and tabāfat that made it easy for him to write poetry in all genres and whenever he liked, since it was just like putting on his shoes or taking them off. His admiration
for him is indicated by his saying that if he had met him he would "have raised the hem of his garment", which probably means that he would have served him and followed his style of poetry. The description of the poetry written by Zuhayr and Ka'b as being "full of light" may mean that it is clear and carefully written; Jarir described it on another occasion as "polished and sharpened". Though his judgement on Zuhayr did not state his position with regard to other Jahili poets, Jarir preferred him to all others when asked by his sons about the Jahili poets in general. His judgement on al-Akhtal, that "he died with much poetry unspoken", may indicate his powerful talent for poetry, but Jarir did not tell us about the position of al-Akhtal compared with himself and al-Farazdaq. The latter, who was described as having a nabq of poetry in his hands is not clearly judged either. The word nabq may mean a "spring", and it also may mean "a kind of tree whose wood is used in arrow-making". In any case, the remark of Jarir indicates the richness of the poetic source of al-Farazdaq. In preferring himself to all these poets Jarir used the standard of "multiplicity of poetic genres" and the "ability of a poet to write in rajaz and in all other poetic metres". We do not know why Jarir should have mentioned the ramal metre in particular.

We have a more specific judgement on al-Akhtal by Jarir, when he was asked for one by his son Ikrima. According to Jarir, "the poet of the Jahiliyya is Zuhayr", and, concerning the poets of Islam, "al-Farazdaq is the nabq of poetry, and al-Akhtal is excellent in praising kings and in describing wine". When his son said that he had left nothing for himself, Jarir said "leave me aside, for I have slaughtered poetry thoroughly". Comparing himself with the other two poets, Jarir repeated his opinion that he was "the city of poetry", and that
"al-Farazdaq is a man of boasting"; as for al-Akhtal, Jarîr said: "He is the best among us in shooting at the farâ'is (the part of the body between the shoulders and the ribs of a horse), the one who is best able to express himself briefly, the best at describing wine and 'the red ones’ (women)." Jarîr repeated that he was "the city of poetry" on many occasions, and that "al-Farazdaq was the nabî of poetry". "Anyone who claims that he is better than al-Farazdaq is a liar".

In spite of his favourable judgement on al-Farazdaq, Jarîr said that the former would not resist him (in hijâ') and though he once said about al-Akhtal: "I met him when he was old and had only one canine tooth; if I had met him when he had two he would have eaten me; whenever I saw him I feared that he would swallow me", he said about him elsewhere: "there were two things that helped me to overcome him, his old age and his unbelief".

However, Jarîr considered himself superior to his two contemporaries, the reason being that he was "the city of poetry" and that he had "slaughtered poetry thoroughly", both of which remarks indicate the multiplicity of poetic genres in which Jarîr had excelled the others, according to his own criteria. Nevertheless, he admitted that al-Farazdaq was excellent in fakhr and that al-Akhtal surpassed both of them in madîh and in the description of wine and women (humr). The skill of al-Akhtal in shooting at the farâ'is may indicate ability at hijâ'. Besides, al-Akhtal was praised by him for his brevity. The "unbelief" of al-Akhtal helped Jarîr in the sense that his being a Christian in itself stood as an obstacle to his satirizing Jarîr and his large tribe Mudar, as we have indicated before. Jarîr admitted that al-Akhtal had excelled him in his line:

أَبُوُ كَلِبِّيْ إِنَّ عِمَّيْ الْلَّدَا ذَلَّلَ المَلْكَ وَفَقَرََ الأَعْضَالَ
Jarīr preferred the poem of al-Akhtal which contains that line and which starts:

![Poem 1](image1)

to his own poem which starts:

![Poem 2](image2)
simply because it contained that line.63

His comments on the poetry of al-Raḍī al-Numayrī and on Dhū al-Rumma reflect the importance of the genres of hijāʾ and madīḥ, and may also indicate that for Jarīr the maṣnā is more important than the word. His opinion of the poetry of Dhū al-Rumma is that "it is like the dots (decorations) of a bride and the dung of a gazelle". His opinion of al-Raḍī is that "he is a poet, but has busied himself with the description of his horses, his camels and the desert. He has lost the way".64

The statement that al-Raḍī concerned himself with the poetic topics mentioned above implies that he ought to have paid more attention to other genres such as madīḥ, hijāʾ, nasīb and fakhr, and to have tried to cover all poetic fields. Jarīr was again applying his criterion of "multiplicity" as he did when he preferred himself to other poets.

His remark on the poetry of Dhū al-Rumma may mean that it had beauty and decorativeness but there was no depth in his poetic maṣnā. The similarity between his poetry, the "dots of a bride" and the "dung of a gazelle" suggests that the beauty of his poetry will not last long, just like the decorations of a bride, and the dung of a gazelle which has at first a pleasant smell because of the grass that it eats, but this gradually disappears. Anyhow, Dhū al-Rumma was praised by Jarīr for his "tashbīh and elegant, unfamiliar, excellent poetry in which no other poet could compete with him".65 On the poem of Dhu al-Rumma that starts:
Jarīr said that it was the poem which he would like to be attributed to him rather than to its real author, and that if Dhū al-Rumma had stopped writing poetry after that poem he would have been considered the best poet of all. It is strange to hear Jarīr admiring "unfamiliar poetry" that Dhū al-Rumma had written. It is not clear whether this unfamiliarity was in words or maṣnā; probably the word unfamiliar means here "wonderful" rather than sharīb, though on another occasion we find him admiring ḥushī or strange and unfamiliar poetry.

In his reply to ʿAbd al-Malik, the Caliph, who asked him whether he would like to have the poetry of other poets attributed to him, Jarīr answered that he would not, except that "a poet called Muzāhim al-ʿUqaylī writes a ḥushī poetry that no other poet can imitate; I should like to have some of his poetry exchanged for some of mine". On another occasion, Jarīr wished that he was the writer of the following two lines by Muzāhim al-ʿUqaylī:

\[
\text{ذَوَّادَنُ عَلَى مَا لَيْنَ دَنَّ شَرَفَ الْفَعْلِ} \\
\text{فَغَشَّّرَ الَّذِي أَنَّ ما قَالَ يَقَلُ} \\
\text{فَسَرَّعْتِ أَيامَّ مَقْبُّدَةً وَلَذَةً} \\
\text{نُوْلَتْنُ، وَهُدِّي بَيْنَ الْفِضْلَيْنِ أَوْلَىٰ}.
\]

In his critical views al-Farazdaq appears more specific than Jarīr, though sometimes he too makes rather vague remarks about poetry. The idea of poetic inheritance was adopted by him and he claimed that he had inherited poetry from a group of Jāhili poets whom he mentioned in this line:

\[
\text{وَهَلَّبَ الْفَنْسَدَّ لِبِنَابَيْنِ رُزَمَهُ} \\
\text{وَأَبُو بَيْزَدَ وَهُذَا السُّرْحَ وَجَيْرُونَ}.
\]

The poets he meant here are al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī, al-Nābigha al-Jaḥrī, and al-Nābigha al-Shaybānī, Imru' al-Qays, al-Hutay'a and Abū Yazīd al-Mukhbbal al-Sa'īdī. He believed that he was descended from these poets through his grandmothers. He also claimed that he had inherited poetry
from his maternal uncle, al-‘Alā’ b. Qarāqa al-Jabbi. It is strange that all poets claimed to have inherited poetry through their mothers, as we have seen in the case of poets already mentioned, like Zuhayr and Marwan b. Abī Hafsa.

According to al-Farazdaq, poetry is connected with, and influenced by, the nobility or otherwise of the poet. For him, ideal poetry is that written by slavees. Criticising Nusayb for praising an Umayyad Caliph instead of boasting, al-Farazdaq wrote:

وَجَبَرُ الشَّمْرُ أَشْرَفَهُ رَجَالًا وَشَرِّ المَشْرِمُ مَائَالَ العَمْيٖ

He likened poetry to a huge old camel that had been divided up; Imru’ al-Qays had taken its head, ‘Amr b. Kulthūm its hump, ‘Abīd b. al-‘Abras its thigh, al-‘A’shā its rump, Zuhayr its withers, Tarafa its calloused belly, and the two Nābīghas its two sides. When al-Farazdaq and his peers arrived they found nothing but the fore-leg, the shank and the stomach, which they divided between them.  

Al-Farazdaq remarked on the figure of tāsīm in the poetry of Imru’ al-Qays, when he admired the line:

له أبطال نقي، وساقنا نعمة، وارخاء سرحان، وقرب تقل.

He said: "It is the most comprehensive line". For him, Imru’ al-Qays excelled all poets in fakhr, hikma, sensitive nasīb and tashbīh. He quoted from him the two following lines as the best poetry of fakhr:

فَلَوَّاهُ مَا أَسْمَعْتُ أَزْدَنَ مَعَشَنَى كَفَانًا وَمَمْ أَتْبَعْتُ قَليَّةً مِنْ الْمَالِ

واللهُ أَسْمَيْنَ أَجْدَ مَنْتَي، وَقَوْدَ بَرَكَ الَّذِي أَلَّهُ المَؤْنَى أَسْمَيْنَ.

the following line as the best one of hikma:

اللهُ أَسْمَيْنَا ما طَلَبْتْنا بِهِ، والبرَّ حَبَّ حَقِيَّةَ الرجلِ

the following as the best line of nasīb (because of its sensitiveness):

وَمَا دَرَّجَتْ عَبَانَا إِلَّا لِلْعَفَرِينَ يِسَمِعُونَكَ فِي أَحسَاَىَ قَلْبِي مَصْطَلُ.
and this last as the best line of tashbīh:

لا نُنَصِبُ الطَّبِيْبَ رَجْبَا وَبِئِسْا لَدَى وَقُرُّها الْمَسْتُّبَاءُ وَالْعَفْشُ البَالِي

Al-Farazdaq also noticed the "different levels of excellence" in the poetry of al-Nābigha al-Jaḍī whom he likened to a man who sells new and old clothes and with whom one may find a beautiful silk garment that costs a thousand dirhams and beside it a veil worth only one dirham. 75

Though al-Farazdaq admired the nasīb of ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa, as we have seen, on another occasion he told ʿUmar, when the latter recited to him one of his poems, that "it is a Ḥijāzī poetry that will shiver if it goes to Najī". 76 It is not clear what he meant by his remark about Ḥijāzī poetry that would suffer from cold, but a similar remark was made by al-Akhtar, on listening to a poem of Kuthayyir; he described it as "a Ḥijāzī poetry which is suffering from cold and if it is oppressed by the cold of Syria it will dwindle away". 77 The same view was taken by ʿAdī b. al-Riqāḥ of the poetry of Kuthayyir; he too said that the poetry of Kuthayyir was "a Ḥijāzī poetry which is suffering from cold and if it is hit by the Syrian cold it will freeze and perish". 78

As I say, it is not clear precisely what was meant by these remarks. However, it may indicate that the poets were aware of the influence of environment on poetry and that poetry differed according to the differences in places. It seems to me that the poets who described the poetry of ʿUmar and Kuthayyir in this way may have meant to say that the poetry which emerged in the Ḥijāz was different from that of Syria and Iraq. It was different because it was concerned only with nasīb, while Iraqi and Syrian poetry was concerned with Ḥijāz, nasīb, and fakhr, and the poets were engaged in tribal and political strife.
Therefore their poems were more similar to Jāhilī poetry, in both words and in content, than Ḥijāzī masīḥa-poetry, which was characterised by riqāʿ and delicacy. The Iraqi-Syrian poets rejected it, as it appears, on the grounds that Ḥijāzī poetry was not suitable for, and not accepted in, Iraq or Syria because it neglected the genres which had satisfied the tastes and needs of the public in Iraq and Caliphs in Syria. The demand for these genres, and their importance, are evident from the remark of Jarīr about al-Ṯānī al-Numayrī cited before. It is also evident from the remark made by al-Ḥarazdaq, and repeated by him on several occasions, about the poet Dhū al-Rumma. For al-Ḥarazdaq, a poet, in order to become a master-poet, had to write poetry in the genres demanded in his time. When al-Ḥarazdaq was asked by Dhū al-Rumma: "Why should not I be counted among the fuhūl?" he replied: "What prevents you from reaching the standard of the fuhūl is that you have busied yourself with weeping over deserted dwellings, describing the resting places of camels and their urine, and describing deserts and sandgrouse, and have neglected madīḥ and hijāʿ." On another occasion, he said to him: "What kept you back from the ranks of the fuhūl is that you have persistently avoided madīḥ and hijāʿ and restricted yourself to the traces of deserted dwellings". The Bedouin topics discussed by Dhū al-Rumma seemed not to suit the taste of people at that time in Iraq and Syria.

For al-Ḥarazdaq, poetry should consist of a combination of two things, firmness and delicacy, as appears from his remark on Jarīr's poetry. The combination of his poetry and that of Jarīr would make that of an ideal poet. Comparing himself with Jarīr, on hearing certain lines by the latter, such as:

\[
\text{ثَنَّى إِذْ نُورَتَنا سُلْبَيْنَ بَعْدَ شَامَة سُلْبَيْنَ البَسَامُ}
\]

and:

\[
\text{إِنَّ اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ عَلِيّينَ عُمِّرُوا وَاسْتَلََا بِهِنَّ كَمْيِزَالَ عُمِّيْنَا}
\]

\[
\text{مَعَةِنَ مِنَ الحَرَائِتِينَ وَقَلَّ لَيْ مَا ذَا لَبِثْتُ مِنَ الْمَوِيدَ وَلْيَنًَا}
\]
al-Farazdaq commented: "How much he - with his decency - is in need of the firmness of my poetry, and how much I - with my indelicacy and desires - am in need of the delicacy and gentleness of his poetry". He thought that there was a similarity between himself and Jarir in that both of them had the same poetic power, but that Jarir had less ability to dive deep in search of poetic concepts or to prolong his poems. Their styles of poetry were not very different from each other, but Jarir could not compete with him, and his poetic power let him down half-way along the road. He is reported as saying: "Both of us take our poetry from one sea, but his bucket shakes on the long way (from the well)".

He claimed that he had surpassed Jarir in four unique lines, to which he gave the names al-munaffi, al-mu'anni, al-mu'tabbi and al-khārifat. All of these are of fakhr, a genre in which al-Farazdaq excelled Jarir, as the latter admitted. In them the poet is boasting of his ancestors, such as Darim, Mujāshi, Zurāra and Nahshāl. He told Jarir that he could not claim to have such great ancestors and that all his attempts to do so would be in vain. The names of these lines are collected in the following:

The lines in question are:

Nevertheless, he admitted that he admired some poetry by Jarir, such as
Whenever al-Farazdaq listened to it, he used to say that Jarîr ought always to write poetry like that. Concerning this line of fakhr written by Jarîr:

al-Farazdaq used to say that if he himself had written it, it would be dearer to him than the whole earth. He also remarked that Jarîr wrote excellent poetry on the rhyme ُؤُلُ، and he said: "I have found that ُؤُلُ is the mother and father of Jarîr".

According to Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, the poets and the Bedouins preferred Jarîr to al-Farazdaq. When he asked Bashshār about the poets of Islam, the latter replied that the best of them were Jarîr and al-Farazdaq and that al-Akhtal was not equal to them, but that his tribe, Rabīʿa, had an exaggerated admiration for him, and in order to compete with Muṣar in poetry, they claimed al-Akhtal as an equal to the two of them. Of Jarîr and al-Farazdaq Bashshār preferred the former, because "he had composed in poetic genres unknown to al-Farazdaq", such as rithāʿ; "when al-Nawwār, the wife of al-Farazdaq, died, women found no poetry in which they could mourn her except the poem of Jarîr in which he had elegized his own wife:

Those who considered Jarîr to be the best poet believed that his position in poetry had been harmed by the humbleness of his family in comparison with that of al-Farazdaq. As the latter claimed that excellence of poetry was associated with the nobility of the poet, so we find the same opinion adopted by other poets, who used it as a standard of comparison.
Though the poet al-Sallatān al-Abī admitted that Jarīr was better than al-Farazdaq, he stated that the latter had overcome the former in poetry because of the greater nobility of his rank. Al-Sallatān expressed this in verse:

![Verse in Arabic]

The poet Marwān Ibn Abī Hafṣa seems to have adopted a similar view of the two poets. He reported that, after consulting the Naṣāʾid of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, he had concluded that the former had been overcome by the latter. Though Marwān claimed that Jarīr had been unable to resist al-Farazdaq in the Naṣāʾid, he stated that he had surpassed him in both "sweet and bitter poetry", while al-Farazdaq excelled him in fakhr.

Comparing the two poets and al-Akhtal with one another, Marwān gave his judgement concerning them in three rather vague lines:

![Verse in Arabic]

By "sweet and bitter poetry", Marwān probably meant the poetry of nasīb and madīnah, and of hijā' and ritha'.

According to al-Buḫturī, al-Farazdaq was better than Jarīr, because he had invented many concepts in hijā' with which he satirized Jarīr, who, in replying to him, merely repeated four points. Nevertheless, Jarīr had excelled him in nasīb.90 Al-Marzūbānī, who agreed with al-Buḫturī in preferring al-Farazdaq, claimed that al-Buḫturī did so because his own style of poetry was not dissimilar from that of
al-Farazdaq, in spite of the fact that he had a style similar to that of Jarîr, as he himself had declared. The similarity between al-Buhturi and al-Farazdaq lay in their use of tibāq, mumāthala, tajnis and isti'âra, according to al-Marzubâni, who added that this style of poetry was admired by al-Buhturi because it agreed with his own.\(^1\)

However, it seems likely that tribalism had some influence on the opinion of those poets who preferred al-Farazdaq to Jarîr, as appears from what Ibn Sallām al-Jumahî said concerning Dhū al-Rumma, who supported al-Farazdaq in his war of hijâ' with Jarîr.\(^2\) Even al-Akhtal himself was influenced by this tribalism in his views concerning the two poets. While Jarîr and al-Farazdaq were struggling against each other in Iraq, al-Akhtal sent his son, Malik, to listen to their poems. When his son came back, he asked him his opinion. Malik said that "he found Jarîr taking his poetry from a sea and al-Farazdaq hewing his poetry from a rock". In view of this, al-Akhtal declared for Jarîr, and said: "the one who takes from the sea is better than the other". He thereupon recited the following two lines:

However, when Bishr b. Marwān came to Kūfa, he gave al-Akhtal money and other presents and asked him "to write a poem giving superiority to al-Farazdaq, because he is our poet". al-Akhtal is said to have accepted the offer and to have done what he was requested to do.\(^3\)

Other poets were also paid to declare al-Farazdaq superior to Jarîr. According to Abî Ubayda, Muhammad b. 'Umayra offered four hundred dirhams and a horse to any poet who was ready to write a poem to this effect. It is said that no poet dared to do so for fear of Jarîr, but
Comparing himself with the other two poets, al-Akhtal stated that Jarîr was the best in nasîb and tâshbih, al-Farazdaq in fâkhîr and he himself in the madih of kings, description of wine and 'the red ones' humr (women). However, he told al-Farazdaq that both of them were better than Jarîr, but that the latter was fortunate in having his poetry more widespread and recited than their poetry.

Al-Akhtal was confident in himself and his ability to write madih, hija', and nasîb. He claimed that he had surpassed all poets in these genres in the following lines of nasîb:

```
آلا يا أسلي يا صرح يد بن بدر
وإن كان حزناً عداً آخر الريش
فيبرني وأنا القلب منها ولا يبرني
فهربت المهنين مسرت العطر
```

the following lines of madih:

```
أبدى النواجر يوماً عامٍ فذكر
خليفة الله يتسقى به المطر
```

and the following lines of hija':

```
كنت إذا ألقيت عبد الله
وليت القلبي فين كعب
وسبىما ومن رفعوا مسورة
```

Al-Akhtal admitted that many of his lines were plagiarized from the poetry of others, and he used to say "the poet has no religion", meaning that there is nothing to prevent him from stealing other poets' thoughts. He was also reported as saying: "We poets are better thieves than the goldsmiths", thus apparently implying a lack of originality in the
works of his contemporaries (and perhaps predecessors), as well as in his own.

From Jarīr’s description of him, Dhū al-Rumma would seem to have had a different style of poetry from other poets, though Jarīr did not state in what sense this was so, except in that he wrote a large quantity of unfamiliar poetry with strange kinds of tashbih. Ibn Rashīd stated that most of his poetry did not contain tashbih in the opening lines. According to him, this tendency of Dhū al-Rumma is that of the fuḥūl, although he was not counted among them because of his lack of variety in poetic subjects. Anyhow, Dhū al-Rumma himself was aware of this difference, and though he considered al-Rāfiʿ al-Numayrī as his teacher and leader in the path of poetry, as we are informed by Muntajī b. Nabāhīn, he believed that he had a distinguished and individual style. When he wrote his line:

\[
\text{والقرط في صرة النزرى معلقة} \\
\text{تاباع العبل منها فهرب يفقرُ}
\]

he was criticised for using the word dhifra in describing his she-camel, on the grounds that the word was only used of a male camel. Defending himself, Dhū al-Rumma cited a line of al-Rāfiʿ al-Numayrī in which he had used the same term describing his she-camel. Dhū al-Rumma is said to have been the transmitter of al-Rāfiʿ’s poetry, and when asked about his master, he used to say, comparing himself with him: "My relationship with him is like that of a young man who followed an old one, and was guided by him, along various roads, and then left him and travelled over mountains and valleys on paths unknown to the old man." What these paths were that were followed by Dhū al-Rumma and unknown to al-Rāfiʿ, it is not easy to tell. What we can say is that both poets were occupied in writing poetry on Bedouin topics such as descriptions
of deserted dwellings, camels and their urine, deserts and sandstorms, as Jarîr and al-Farazdaq had already remarked. Probably Dhū al-Rumma differed from his master al-Râ‘î in the strange kinds of tashbîh that he became famous for writing. However, it seems that Jarîr felt that his poetry and that of other poets lacked some other qualities that were present in that of Dhū al-Rumma. It is not clear what Jarîr meant by saying that Dhū al-Rumma wrote poetry "which no one among us is able to imitate". As Jarîr expressed admiration for the "hûshî poetry written by Muzâhir al-‘Uyaylî which no-one could imitate", as well as for the "unfamiliar poetry and strange tashbîh" written by Dhū al-Rumma, it may be that he was merely referring again to this element in Dhū al-Rumma's poetry in different terms; however, I still feel that Jarîr meant that there was something more in the poetry of Dhū al-Rumma, something which the latter and his peers lacked in their own poetry. The answer to this problem may perhaps be sought in a remark made by Abû ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlâ‘ about Dhū al-Rumma, when he "sealed" poets with him. This means that Dhū al-Rumma's poetry was accepted by Abû ʿAmr as a hujja. Perhaps this was due to the fact that his poetry was closer to the Jāhiliyya style, with its Bedouin topics, than those of his contemporaries. The fact that Abû ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlâ‘ refused to quote other Islamic poets (including Jarîr and al-Farazdaq) as a hujja, as we are informed by al-ʿAsma‘î, while he accepted Dhū al-Rumma from among them, may throw some light on the "distinguished style" of Dhū al-Rumma noticed by Jarîr and by the poet himself.

Speaking about his own poetry, Dhū al-Rumma wrote:

\[
\text{وشعر قفز أرقص له طريفي} \\
\text{أصنتي المسانير والموار}
\]

The line indicates the effort made by the poet to avoid poetical defects such as sinâd. It seems that the Bedouin style of Dhū al-Rumma was admired by other poets contemporary with him, who tried to
imitate it. The two poets al-Kumayt b. Sayd and al-Dīrīnāh b. Ḥakīm are the best examples of this. Al-Kumayt said that he tried to imitate Dhū al-Rumma in his poem beginning:

ما بال عينك منها الماد ينسكب

He wrote a poem starting:

هل أنت عن طلب الديقاق منقلبٌ أم كيف يحسن من ذي الشيبة للعبٌ

When he recited this poem to Dhū al-Rumma, the latter told him that he described things in such a way that it was not easy to tell whether he was right or wrong, because "when you describe something you neither describe it as it should be described nor do you go far from the truth". Al-Kumayt ascribed his failure to produce correct descriptions to the fact that he was a townsman describing Bedouin items which he had not seen but only been told about, while Dhū al-Rumma had seen them with his own eyes.\footnote{104} What al-Kumayt said about himself indicates that his poetry lacked naturalness and sincerity, and that it was divorced from reality.  

Ḥammād al-Rāwiya's account affirms that al-Kumayt wrote second-hand poetry. He stated that al-Kumayt had gained his knowledge of poetry from his two grandmothers, who had lived for some time in the Jāhiliyya. They used to tell him about life in this period and describe to him the desert and the Bedouin way of life.\footnote{105}

Al-Tirimmāh, who was an intimate friend of al-Kumayt, followed him in using in his poetry what had been described to him, as al-ʿAjjāj pointed out. Talking about the two poets, the latter reported that: "They used to ask me concerning rare expressions in the language of poetry, and I informed them, but afterwards I found the same expressions wrongly used in their poems, the reason being that they were townspeople who described what they had not seen and misapplied it, whereas I who am a Bedouin describe what I have seen and apply it properly".\footnote{106}

The same thing is reported by Ruʻba b. al-ʿAjjāj, who said that both
posts used to ask him concerning unfamiliar words and when he told them
they used those words in their poems. 107

When al-'Ajjāj and his son Ru'ba disputed about their own merits, Ru'ba
claimed that he was a better poet than his father, because he was "a poet
and the son of a poet", while his father was only "a poet born of a non-
poet father". Ru'ba seems to have accepted the idea of inherited poetry
which we have mentioned before. His father believed that a poet should
be judged according to his own inventions and discoveries in poetic
ma'āni. From his reply to his son, al-'Ajjāj seems to have known of
tajnās or jinās, which he considered a figure to be proud of. He asked
his son: "How can you be a better poet than I, when I am the one who
taught you 'atf al-rajāz'"? Ru'ab asked him what this was, and his father
replied by reciting his line:

\[
\text{أعجم بآبا قصار لعاشعه}
\]

Al-'Ajjāj did not call it jinās but instead used the word 'atf, which may also
indicate, as Ibn Rashīq suggested, iltīfāt. 109

At all events, what al-'Ajjāj said about al-Kumayt and al-Tirimmān, and
the latter's acknowledging that his own poetry lacked reality and sincerity,
may well have influenced and guided Abū Nuwas when he criticised those who
started their poems by weeping over deserted dwellings. Abū Nuwas
believed that a poet should not talk about things that he had not really
seen, and that if a muhdath poet started his poem with atlāl he would not
succeed. He called for innovation in the introduction to the poem and
suggested that, instead of weeping over atlāl, the poet should do as he,
Abū Nuwas, did when he wrote:

\[
\text{لا نبأ لبأ ولا نتقرب إلا عيني وأشرب على الزور من حجرة كالثور}
\]

He gave his opinion on the subject in a number of his poems, repeating
the warning given by al-'Ajjāj and al-Kumayt. For example, he wrote:
Abū Nuwās' own opinion of himself is that he fell below those poets who had preceded him but that he was above those who came after him; therefore he thought that he was unique of his kind. He told his friend al-Ḥusayn b. al-Dāhāk that he had excelled him and all other poets in the poetry of wine. Ibn Munādhir called Abū Nuwās the best poet among jinn and ins on the strength of the following lines:

Ibn Munādhir's justification for this remark was that "he wrote poetry naturally". Ibn Rashīq agreed with Ibn Munādhir and accepted the latter's judgement on Abū Nuwās' naturalness. He said that it appeared in his language (lafz), when, for instance, he used the word al-durr where he could have used al-talā in order to produce a more harmonious effect. To have done so, however, would have suggested takalluf and tasnīf, which Abū Nuwās disliked. Ibn Rashīq admired the second line and quoted it as an example of poetry in which the poet combined several tashbīḥāt in one line without using the particle ka. Ibn Rashīq described the line as malīn jiddan.

The admiration of Abū Nuwās for a poem of ghazal by Abū al-ʿAtāhiya, and his comment on that poem, may throw some light on the sort of poetry looked for by Abū Nuwās and other poets of his time. It is said that one day Abū al-ʿAtāhiya, Abū Nuwās and al-Ḥusayn b. al-Dāhāk al-Khālīf met together, and Abū Nuwās suggested that each of them should recite one of his subjective poems but not of malīn or hijā. Abū al-ʿAtāhiya was
the first to recite his poem:

\[
\text{يا أحنى، إن الهوى قاتل،}
\]

\[
\text{ولا تلوموا في اتباع الهوى}
\]

\[
\text{عينين على عنيدة محيلة}
\]

\[
\text{يا من رأى قفتنا تقييداً يأكل}
\]

\[
\text{بصدن كأس خيم السائل}
\]

\[
\text{ان لم نتباهوه فقولوا له}
\]

\[
\text{أو كتبتم العام على عصره}
\]

When he finished his recitation, Abū Nuwaṣ and al-Ḥusayn are said to have submitted, and to have seen no point in reciting their poems, saying to Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya: "In the face of such facility (suhūla) of words, beauty of object (rasād), and excellence of emphasis, we are not going to recite anything". Ibn Rashīq said that those who require facility (suhūla) of expression (lafz) would admire such a poem by Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya, and the poems of those who are like him, such as al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ahnaf. Such critics would regard this poem of Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya's as the extreme limit of excellence.

This poem is a good example of rigga in ghazal poetry; the ideas of complete submission, humility, servility, the unavenged murdered lover, contentment with little and with promises from the beloved, and gentleness in addressing the beloved, are all expressed in it. The admiration of poets and others for the poem seems to indicate that rigga was still desired in ghazal poetry in the Abbasid period. The fact that Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya and al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ahnaf, who were great poets of ghazal at that time, were compared with ʿUmar b. Abī Razīq, as we have mentioned before, confirms this. Some critics, admittedly, denied the existence of rigga in much of ʿUmar's poetry, as we have also seen, but most were agreed about the rigga of his ghazal. Desire for rigga in ghazal poetry may be seen clearly in the remarks made by Bashshār b. Burd, comparing
himself with Kuthayyir, whom he criticised for his lines:

\[ \text{If He claims that she is like a stick of marrow (mukhkh) or of butter, she will still be rough and coarse as long as he uses the word 'stick' in describing her.} \]

Bashšār is reported to have said: "By Allah, even if he claims that she is like a stick of marrow (mukhkh) or of butter, she will still be rough and coarse as long as he uses the word 'stick' in describing her."

Why does he not say as I have said:

\[ \text{If she is like a stick of marrow or of butter, she will still be rough and coarse as long as he uses the word 'stick' in describing her.} \]

When Bashšār recited his own line:

\[ \text{a man suggested to him that instead of saying kharṣat bi-il-samt, it would be better to say: kharṣat bi-il-samt. Bashšār said to him:} \]

"In that case it would mean that I wished her to be dumb, which is a bad thing". Shawqi Dayf attributed this sophisticated manner of Bashšār's of selecting his words and his sensitiveness in his ghazal poetry to the fact that he had a delicate Persian nature and taste in dealing with women. It seems more probable that Bashšār is simply following the tendency that we noticed previously of men like Ibn Abī Ṭātīq, who criticised al-Ḥarīth b. Khālid al-Makhzūmī for wishing that unpleasant things might come to the deserted dwelling of his beloved, and, indeed, the general desire for ṭīqa in earlier ghazal poetry, which we have associated with traditional Arab manners. There is no particular need to postulate a Persian temperament.

There are also indications that some of the muḥiṣṭūn favoured a kind of poetry in which the poet could write both seriously and with ḥazl in the same poem. When Ibn Munādhīr was asked by Ibn Bishr al-Ḳazīnī who was the best poet in Islam, his answer was that it was the one who could be
both serious and the opposite, such as Jarīr who wrote in ḥālāh:

إن الذين تجوّلوا بليّة غامرة
ماذا ليّش من الحلى واللى

and then became serious and wrote:

إن الذي جمعه المكرّر تقليباً
جعل الوجه والبلادة فيها

Ibn Munādhīr further said that, as far as the muḥdathūn were concerned, the best poet was "that wicked one who takes his poetry from his sleeve". Ibn Bishr asked him who that was, and Ibn Munādhīr replied that it was Abū al-ʿAtāhiya. Ibn Bishr asked for an example from the latter's poetry and Ibn Munādhīr recited the following lines:

الله بين وبين موثقين
أين لي الغدر والملل؟

Ibn Munādhīr then recited the following two lines from the same poem as an example of the poet's becoming serious:

ومثبّة فرّت قطعان لؤسّه
قفر على المولى والخادمة

It seems that Ibn Munādhīr, in describing the first two lines of Jarīr's and the first two of Abū al-ʿAtāhiya's as ḥālāh, did not mean that they were jocular or amusing, but rather that they were of a delicate nature. This desire for a combination of seriousness and ḥālāh is not very different from what al-Farazdaq had already said about himself and Jarīr. The concept will meet us again in al-ʿAsmaʾī and Ibn al-Maʿtazz. The delicate nature of some of the poetry of Abū al-ʿAtāhiya seems to be one reason for regarding him as the best of the muḥdathūn. This at least one can sense in the answer of Bashshār, when asked "who is the best poet of our time?" He said: "The effeminate (mukhannath) of the people of Baghdad", meaning Abū al-ʿAtāhiya. The combination of madīn and hijā'i in one
poem is also regarded as a sign of excellence, and accordingly the poet Marān b. Abī Hafsā, when asked by the poet Dībil b. ‘Alī: "Who is the best poet among you, O muhdathūn?", answered: "He is the one who has the most famous line. That is Rāfīʿa al-Raqqī, who says:

The poem in which this line occurs was quoted later by Ibn al-Mu’tazz, as we shall see. It contains madīn and hijā’ and can be regarded either as hijā’ mundhi c or as madīn bi-‘l-tafdīl. This last is the best kind of madīn, according to Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī, who quoted the following lines of Laylā al-Akhyaliyya on Tawba:

It is not easy to give one definite answer to the question concerning the kind of poetry admired by the muhdathūn. Answers will differ according to the differences in styles of poetry and the tastes of poets. The comments and remarks made by some of them, as quoted above, may give us some idea about their views concerning good poetry. The differences we have spoken of make it difficult to grasp any consistent criteria on which the muhdathūn based their judgements. For instance, we find that the style of poetry followed by al-Buhtūrī, as a muhdath poet who is more influenced by Āmūd al-Shīrī, plays a part in his judgements about the muhdathūn. He favoured Dībil b. ‘Alī as against Muslim b. al-Walīd, the reason, as given by al-Buhtūrī, being that Dībil’s discourse was closer to the discourse of the early Arabs than was that of Muslim. The madhhab of Dībil was also similar to that of the early Arabs. As we have seen, al-Buhtūrī favoured the poet whose style of poetry most agreed with his own, which was the style of the early poets, the style of Āmūd al-Shīrī. Muslim al-Walīd is more famous for the badī’ style.
Nevertheless, elsewhere, al-Buhūrī is also said to have admired Ābu Tammām, to have imitated his style of hādīṣ, and even to have preferred him to himself, declaring that the excellent poetry of Ābu Tammām was better than his own excellent poetry, but his medium and bad poetry were better than the medium and bad poetry of Ābu Tammām.\textsuperscript{123} Ābu al-Ṭāḥiyya's remark on poetry, especially the poetry of zuhd, will be the last quoted in order to give an idea of the kind of poetry admired in the period of the muḥdathūn and its characteristics. Ibn Abī al-Abayd reported that he once visited Ābu al-Ṭāḥiyya and said to him: "I am a writer of zuhd poetry, and I have written many poems on that subject. I like this type of poetry; I hope that I shall not commit sins since I write zuhd. I have heard your poetry on this subject, and I admire it, so I should like you to recite me some of the best of it". Ābu al-Ṭāḥiyya told him what he had written was not excellent and when Ibn Abī al-Abayd asked why, with surprise, Ābu al-Ṭāḥiyya replied: "Because poetry should be like that written by the earlier fuḥūl, or like the poetry of Bashshār and Ibn Harmā; if it is not like that, it is better to write it in words that can be understood by the public (jumhūr), as is the case with my poetry, especially the poetry of zuhd because the way of zuhd is not the way of kings or the transmitters of poetry (ruwāt), nor is it the way of those who are looking for sharī'ah. The way of zuhd is more admired by the zuhhād, the people of the hadīth, the fuḥūhā, the people of hypocrisy (riyā'), and the commons ('amma), all of whom admire very much what they can actually understand". Ibn Abī al-Abayd agreed with Ābu al-Ṭāḥiyya and said: "You have spoken the truth".\textsuperscript{124}
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Old School of Critics
(Ruwāt, Philologists, and Grammarians)

This school of critics consisted mainly of the grammarians, philologists, and ruwāt (transmitters of poetry) of Basra, Kūfa, and Baghdad, among whom we find the most distinguished group of 'ulama', like Ḥabib b. al-ʿAlā', al-ʿAsmaʿī, Hammād al-Rāwiya, Khāleq al-Abmar, Mufāḍdāl al-Dabbi, Ḥabib b. al-Muthanna and Ibn al-ʿArāḥī. Besides this group of ruwāt-ʿulama', we find others who were mainly grammarians and philologists, although they had some literary views on poetic comparison. These were men like Ḥabib b. ʿUmar, Yūnus b. Ḥabīb, al-Khalīl b. Ahmad, ʿAbd al-Kātim al-Sijistānī who was a student of al-ʿAsmaʿī, ʿAbād al-Bayḥāqī, the student of al-Khalīl, and al-Akhfāshā. The school of Baghdad was formed from a combination of the two schools of Basra and Kūfa, and from it we have al-Ḥarrūbānī.¹

The ruwāt, in order to collect poetry, travelled and wandered among the tribes; many tribesmen also came to Basra and Kūfa, where the scholars met them. As I have mentioned, Ibn ʿAbbās may be the origin of this school of critics, one of whose main interests was the use of ancient Arabic poetry in interpretation of the Qurʾān; Ibn ʿAbbās was certainly one of the first to do this. In the course of this activity Arabic grammar was established, and interest in ancient poetry increased for other reasons, such as the gathering of akhbār (information concerning historical figures).

Apart from their interest in ancient poetry from a linguistic and grammatical point of view, the members of the two schools, Basra and
Kūfi, had some critical views concerning the ancient, the Islamic and the ḥusaynī poets. They widely differed about the Jāhili poets Ḥru' al-Ḳays, al-Nāṣir, al-Ṭahāna, al-Muʿāth, besides others like Labī, Tārafa and ʿAmr b. Kulthūm. Generally, it is reported that the people of Basra preferred Ḥru' al-Ḳays to his Jāhili peers, and, according to them he was a pioneer for all poets in many poetical matters. It seems that the people of Basra admired him because of his inventiveness, principally in the field of similes. They pointed out that he excelled the poets "not because he had said what they had not but because he invented certain poetic maʿānī in which other poets followed him". Some of these innovations are concerned with the mūqaddima of the gāside, in which Ḥru' al-Ḳays seems to have inserted certain subjects for the first time. According to the Basrans, he was the first poet to request his companions to stop with him in front of a deserted dwelling and to weep for those who had departed from it long ago; he also set the scene in its geographical location in the same line:

"فَقَامَ نَبِلٌ مِنْ ذَرَيَّةِ خَيْبِي وَنَزَوْنَ بِسْقَطِ اللَّوَى بَيْنَ الْجَرْحِ حُذُوْلِ"

Besides being attracted by the theme of the poet's companions stopping with him and weeping over the deserted dwelling, as introduced by him, the Basrans seem also to have appreciated the conciseness by which the poet combined several elements of this in one line.

The second innovation of Ḥru' al-Ḳays was the introduction of certain similes into poetry. These similes are divided into two sections, horse description and tashbīḥ. Those who championed him claimed that "he is the first poet who likened horses to sticks, eagles, lions, deer and birds. He is the first to liken women to gazelles, wild cows, and ostrich eggs. All poets then followed him in this". A third innovation concerned the subject of nasīb. The Basrans said that "his
nasiḥ was excellent and sensitive (najm), and that he separated nasiḥ and maṣāniʿ. Though they did not give examples of his sensitive nasiḥ poetry, they were probably referring to certain of his lines in which he implies that humility and submission to the beloved that we have so frequently encountered before, such as the line:

When they described him as the first poet to separate nasiḥ from maṣāniʿ, by which they meant poetic themes in the body of the nasiḥa, they probably meant to say that his poetic themes are introduced in order, and not confused with one another. Thus, nasiḥ is separated from lines of rahil, camel or horse descriptions and other items; perhaps, again, he was the first to make a transition from nasiḥ to other parts of the poem, as in the following line:

The claim that he was the first to introduce the concept of stopping and weeping over a deserted camp and requesting his companions to join him in doing so may be challenged with a line of his own, in which he stated that he followed the poet Ibn Hizam in this theme:

Ibn Sallam al-Jumahl mentioned that Ibn Hizam belonged to the tribe of Tayʿ, and that he had never heard of poetry of his in which he had wept over deserted dwellings, or, indeed, of any other poetry of his.

Al-Suyūṭī mentioned that the Basrans admired Imruʿ al-Ḥays because, in addition to this, he wrote excellent istiʿara and tashbīḥ.²

The people of Kufa preferred al-ʿAshā, for the reason that "he wrote many long and excellent poems, and he wrote poetry in all poetic genres, nadiḥ, hijāʿ, nasiḥ, and others. No other poet did the same". Other
critic of Kūfa said that "al-Ā'isha is the best at writing poetry in praise of kings, and at describing wine; he wrote a great deal of poetry with deep maṭāni, and his mu'allaza is the best of all, besides his superiority over all other poets in other poetic genres". Al-Asma'ī added that the people of Kūfa preferred al-Ā'isha because he wrote poetry in all metres and in many different rhymes.3

The length of al-Ā'isha's poems, which was one of the factors in their championing of him, of course implies that he included many themes in them: nasīb, rahīl, wasf and madīh. This, together with his multiplicity of poetic topics and metres, indicates his powerful ṭafṣir and poetic ability. The standard of multiplicity (tafannun) of poetic topics was also used by al-Asma'ī and Ibn al-Mu'tazz. The latter called such a poet mutafannin or muftann, as we shall see later. The point that al-Ā'isha was the best at praising kings and describing wine show that these genres, madīh and khamriyyāt, were the principle ones in his poetry. The fact that he wrote long excellent poems, besides indicating the inclusion of various themes and topics, may be linked in particular with madīh; if we keep in mind that al-Ā'isha may have been the first poet "to beg by his poetry", as stated in the Īmāda of Ibn Rashīq,4 we shall probably be correct in assuming that these long poems for which he won approbation were essentially poems of madīh, since such a poem must necessarily be long if it is to include all the elements that, at that period at any rate, were considered appropriate as preludes to the madīh itself. If al-Ā'isha was "the first to beg by his poetry", does this imply that he was the first to write madīh and to arrange the various themes within the qaṣīda of madīh? Ibn Rashīq, however, stated that al-Nabīgha al-Dhubyānī, and not al-Ā'isha, was the first to "beg by his poetry".5
Opposed to the schools of Basra and Kufa stood that of the Hijaz and the badiya, though this was not a school of grammar or philology. These people championed Luhayr and al-Nabigha al-Dhubyanî. "Those who put Luhayr at the top", said Ibn Sallam "argue that his poetry surpassed that of all others in beauty, in its freedom from sakhf, in having an abundance of matani in the fewest words, in effective praise and in quantity of aphorisms". Others said: "Luhayr is the best of poets in praise and his poetry has more firmness of composition (ashadduhum asr_shi`r)".

The quality of "beauty" admired by these people in the poetry of Luhayr, though not explained, may refer to Luhayr's poetry being particularly polished and composed with carefully selected words. The fact that they described his poetry as being free from sakhf confirms what has been mentioned above concerning constantly re-examined and polished poetry. Conciseness and sincerity were also admired in his poetry, despite the point mentioned by Ibn Sallam, that Luhayr produced the most effective praise. It does not mean "exaggerated madih", as Ibn Rashiq understood, but rather refers to praise by means of telling details and the covering of all the themes of that topic. 'Umar b. al-Khattab's opinion, that Luhayr did not exaggerate in his madih, has already been cited.

"Al-Nabigha", said those who admired him among the people of the Hijaz and the badiya, "has the best poetic style (diba`), has most beauty of discourse, writes the purest verses, and produces poetry that appears to be speech, without affectation". Others said: "his discourse is the clearest, and there is little hashw/sakhf (in his words). He has more excellent phrases and openings (than any other poet). His style makes his poetry look as though it were not rhymed verse, because it is too delicate and womanly. At the same time, his style is as firm as a
rock with which one could strike mountains and demolish them. His mat'ani are the clearest, his ideas are the deepest, and his poetry is the most profitable". All this would seem to indicate that al-Nābigha was accustomed to polish his poetry to purge it of worthless words and expressions. Although it implies that he practised a sort of san'ū, he is nonetheless described as a poet without affectation. As well as combining san'ū and tab'ū in this way, he was also described as combining delicacy and firmness of discourse, a combination thought desirable, as we have seen, by al-Parazdaq, when comparing himself with Jarīr.

The delicacy of style which made the poetry of al-Nābigha appear as though it were "speech and not rhymed verse" may be taken to be a sign of tab'ū. The quality of femininity (unūtha) which was noticed in it may refer to lines like:

سَفِعُ الْفَمِّ غَمِظْتُهُ فِيَّ إِسْفَاطَةَ حَضْرَوْنَٰمِهِ رَاسِفَةَ بَلْدَيُ

The same quality was found in the poetry of al-A‘āshā, in lines like:

قَالَ الْمُنْفَرِدُ ۗ إِنَّا جَنَّتُ زَارُّمَا وَلَيْسَكَ عَبْدُ وَقَيْلُكَ مَنْدَ بَيْنَ اِلْأَرْجُلِ

The "clarity of his mat'ani" and the "depth of his ideas" might seem to be in contradiction to one another, but this is not necessarily so; presumably what is intended is penetrating images lucidly articulated. Al-A‘āshā was also credited with these virtues. "Profitable" as applied to al-Nābigha's poetry almost certainly implies "full of hikma, akhār, moral advice", and so on.

The preference of the people of the Hijāz and the bādiya for Zuhayr and al-Nābigha may well have been influenced by the admiration of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and other such early critics for them.

These then were the four Jāhilī poets who formed the first class, and,
though critics generally agreed about this, they differed widely as to who was the best poet of the four. However, other poets, too, with lesser reputations did not lack for critics who admired them and preferred them to the great four. Poets like Labīd, ʿAmr b. Kulthūm and Tarafa replaced them, in the opinion of some of the critics of Basra and Kūfa. They tended to assess poets mainly on the basis of qualities that they admired in their characters, rather than on poetic grounds; nevertheless, they did apply some artistic standards, however vague, as can be seen from their assessment of Labīd: "he is the (morally) best of the poets in the Jahiliya and in Islam. He knows most about the eloquent and fluent men among the Arabs. His poetry contains very little sakhr in its language".\textsuperscript{12}

Those who admired Tarafa did so because "though he was very young when he died, he was able to compete with other poets older than himself and to arrive at what they had arrived at only in the course of long lives".

ʿAmr b. Kulthūm was put first by those who admired him because, according to them, "he was one of the ancient poets; he was the most powerful among them and the one who had the best muʿallāqa". This muʿallāqa ḥṣā b. ʿUmar considered superior to all other Arab poetry and not only to the muʿallaqat.\textsuperscript{13}

It is interesting to see Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlāʾ and al-Asmacī later picking up the moralistic standards of Labīd's earlier champions, in that they too used the term ṣāliḥ in their judgements on his work. Clearly, as might be expected, there was often a degree of (probably unconscious) dependence on traditional attitudes among critics, even when these were largely irrelevant to their immediate purposes.
Tarafa's being described as having achieved all that other poets older than he had achieved, in spite of his early death, may refer merely to the wide scope of mutanāf present in his musāllaha, with its greatly admired description of the she-camel. If, however, we are to take literally al-A'āsha's interpretation, that he had covered all poetic genres, we must agree with Ibn Sallām's assertion that most of Tarafa's poetry is lost.14

The criteria of those who favoured ‘Amr b. Kulthūm on account of his "ancientness" and "power" was taken up later by Ibn Sallām, who spoke of ʿAbīd Ibn al-Abras as an ancient and powerful poet (qadīm al-dhikr, azīm al-nadr) and of ‘Amr b. Sha's as being noble among his people, as we shall see.

It seems likely that the presence of the Azd tribe in Basra at that time had some connection with the admiration expressed for Imru' al-Qays, who, like the Azd, belonged to the Yemen. The Banū Tamīm were also settled near Basra and they too were related to the Azd. As we have seen before, al-Farazdaq, the great poet of Tamīm, favoured Imru' al-Qays and even claimed that he had inherited poetry from him. Besides that, it also seems probable that the opinion of ʿAlī b. Abī Taʿlīb, who stayed in Iraq to the end of his life, probably influenced people there in favour of the poet.

Those who admired al-A'āsha were the people of Kūfa, as we have mentioned, and this was perhaps because of the fact that his tribe Rabī'a was settled near there. As for Zubayr and al-Nabigha, they were championed by the people of the Hijāz and the bādiya because they were their own poets, and besides, as we have seen, Abī Bakr and ʿUmar admired them.
What has been said above gives us a general idea of the opinions of the Basran and Kūfīan schools, and of the people of the Ḥijāz and the bāṭiya about the Jāhilī poets, principally the four who formed the first class among them. We shall now examine, in more detail, the views of some of the ruwat and ʿulamāʾ from Basra and Kūfa concerning not only the Jāhilī poets but also the mukhadramun, the Islamic poets and the muḥdathūn. It is not particularly easy to form a theory of literary criticism from the scattered views of these early critics, but it may be useful to quote them, bearing in mind that these views were the bases on which later critics founded their literary criticism. We have already given, at the beginning of the chapter, the names of the principal critics of the old school. Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī represents the last stage of this school, but, as one of its major figures, we have chosen to discuss his views later in a separate chapter; his book, Ṭabaqāt fuhūl al-shuʿārāʾ may be considered the first in the field of Arabic literary criticism. With the exception of al-ʿAsmaʾī, in some instances, the other ʿulamāʾ and ruwat with whom we are dealing, did not record their remarks concerning poetic comparison; these were - in most cases - reported by their pupils or other scholars.

We begin with Ḥammād al-Ḥāwiya, who was known as the first collector of the muʿallagāt and was famous for his knowledge of Jāhilī poetry. Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī spoke of him as "The first man who collected Jāhilī poetry and transmitted its texts". Ibn Sallām accused him of being a falsifier of early Arabic poetry and of adding to it his own verses. Al-Mufaddal al-Dabbi accused him of corrupting the poetry, and described him as an expert in the language and poetry of the Arabs, and the styles and ideas of the poets.
In his collection of Jāhili poetry Hammād seems to have used the standard of length very largely, since the seven or ten poems are very long compared with others by the same poets or with the poems of other poets. Other factors which may have influenced Hammād in selecting the mu'allalaţ are the diverse poetic topics and themes dealt with in them. The openings of the poems may also have attracted him, especially that of Imru' al-ţays, which was widely praised. The description of the life of pleasure led by the poet may also have appealed to Hammād, since he himself was described as a mājin and a lover of drink and lahw. The mu'allalaţ is also full of similes and metaphors, describing a night, a horse, women, clouds and rain. In general the mu'allalaţ consists of wasf, in which the poet shows his skill at tashbih and kināya; it contains no mādhūr, hijār or rithā'. Fākhr is restricted to the poet's adventures with women.

The mu'allalaţ of Tarafa is the longest. Besides the muqaddima talāliyya and the nasīb, the main topics are wasf (of his she-camel), qitâb (of his cousin), fakhr and aphoristic hikma. Hammād, like earlier critics, admired lines of hikma and aphorisms, of which he found a great deal in Tarafa's mu'allalaţ and also in the one by Zuhayr. The description of the she-camel, with its unfamiliar words, satisfied Hammād's desire for ghārib, as a rawiya of the ancient poetry of the Arabs.

The mu'allalaţ of Ṭāmīr b. Kulthūm is distinguished by its muqaddima khamriyya, for which it is probably unique among Jāhili poems. It seems that, as the main theme of the poem is fakhr, the poet began with the subject of wine as a part of this; the Jāhili poets used frequently to boast of their drinking feats. In his book, al-Hayāt al-adabiyya fi al-ţar al-jāhilī, Muhammad ʻAbd al-Mun'im Khāfajī referred the muqaddima khamriyya in Ṭāmīr's mu'allalaţ to the fact that wine was widespread among his tribe, Taghlib, who were Christian. 
besides the probability that Hamadi was struck by this muqaddima, he seems to have been particularly interested in the main topic of the joza, which he selected as a masterpiece and an excellent example of the poetry of Sakh. The muqallada of al-Harith b. Hilliza may have been selected for the same reason. That of Antara contains a number of similes admired by earlier critics; it also contains some fine concise lines, which passed into general currency, such as:

ينبكل من شهيد الوقعة أنتي أغصي النجل واعي عند المطر

and:

وإذا شرنت فإنني مستدلك مال ورضى وأشر لم يلم

The poem also contains a section describing war, beginning:

ولقد دكرتم ديارناوهل من وبيب الفن نظر من دم

The description of his she-camel also employs unfamiliar words, like that of Tarafa. The same thing could be said about the corresponding section of the muqallada of Labid. This fascination with shari'ah, hikma, aphorisms and tashbih is also evident in his views concerning other poets. As a representative of the Kufan school of critics, Hammad placed al-A'ashâ at the head of the Jâhili poets, on the strength of the following line of wine description:

ناعثهم فعَّضَب النبيان مثنئاً وفَقَمَةَ مَرْطَة راَوَفَها خَفَيل

His liking for conciseness and aphorisms appears in his judgement about al-Nabigha al-Dhubyâni, and he alleged that he was the best poet because one could satisfy oneself with one line of his poetry, with a half-line, or even with a quarter-line. Such a line is the following one:

خلتَ قلَبٌ أدرك لنفسك ربيّة، وليس وراء الله العمر مذهبٌ

Either half of this line can be recited separately and have a meaning. Sometimes, even a part of one half can be quoted and give sense, as for instance:
His liking for ħikma and aphorisms can also be observed in his admiration for the mukhaddram poet al-Nawz b. Tawlab, whom he spoke of as having "many aphorisms in his poetry"; he quoted several lines in illustration, such as:

دا نَفْتَّبَنَّ على أمريٰ خُو مَالهٰ وَعِلَّ كَرَامَ مُنْبِعَ مَالِهٰ خَا مَعْتِب

وَإِذَا تُبّكَ صَمَدْةٌ فَخَلُّو إِلَّهٍ وَإِلَّا الَّذِي يَلْهَبُ الرَّجُلْ فَأَضْعِب

and:

تَمْسَحُ لِهِذِهِ أَنَّا أَخْرَبُهُ عَلَى يَتْبَغْ النَّاسُ مَا هَامُهُ

The fact that he also quoted lines from the poetry of advice (masaya) of the same poet, such as:

وَأَخْبَرَ جِبَالٌ حْيَمًا رَوْيًا خَيْنَسَ يَخْوُلَكَ أَنْ تَفْتَرِي

وَأَلْفَ يَفْيِفَكَ بُعْنَا رَوْىَا إِذَا أَنَّا حَاَوَلْتَ أَنْ نَبْنِي

may indicate a moral tendency in his criticism, like that of most earlier critics, who looked on poetry as a source of moral teaching.

His interest in tashbīh and in istikara may be guessed from his admiration for the following lines by al-Akhtal, which he regarded as "the best describing drunkenness":

ٍرَأَى الْرَّجَاحُ وَطَيَاءٌ يُطَعِفُ به عَلَّهُ مِنْ دَمِ الأَجْوَابِ مُقُمُهُ

كَيْنَ يَدَأَ أَخْفَقَ مَاءُ الْمَرْتَنَ عَذَتُهَا رَأَى الْرَّجَاحُ وَفِي أَلوُاهِهِ

كَيْنَ يَدَأَ أَخْفَقَ مَاءُ الْمَرْتَنَ عَذَتُهَا رَأَى الْرَّجَاحُ وَفِي أَلوُاهِهِ

كَيْنَ يَدَأَ أَخْفَقَ مَاءُ الْمَرْتَنَ عَذَتُهَا رَأَى الْرَّجَاحُ وَفِي أَلوُاهِهِ

Rahwa وهم بحسون آنَّ الْبَرَكَةُ مِنْ ذَلَّلٍ إِنْ صَرَعُوا وَقِنْ الْرَّجَاحُ وَالْرَّفْحُ

Hammād admired Imru' al-‘ays and Dhu al-Rumma for their skill in writing excellent tashbīh, and declared that each of them was the best in his class (tabarg) in that respect. He believed that Dhu al-Rumma was a great poet and would have been ranked with the famous poets, had it not been that he was young and that people envied him. What most attracted him in the poet was that "he is the most eloquent poet and the most knowledgeable about gharīb, besides being skilled in tashbīh". 22
The second man whose views concerning poets and poetic comparison we shall discuss is Khalaf al-‘Almar, who was a pupil of Hammād al-Khāniya but belonged to the Bahrān school. His great knowledge of Arabic poetry was acknowledged by contemporary critics as we shall see from Ibn Sallān’s remarks concerning him. Al-Suyūṭī spoke of him as the one who knew most about ancient Arabic poetry and, being a poet himself, the best able to imitate it and attribute his own poems to earlier poets. It is said that Khalaf admitted to being the author of Lāmiyyat al-Shanfara and the other lāmiyya attributed to Ta’abbata Sharran, beginning:

Nevertheless, Ibn Sallān al-Jumāhī spoke of Khalaf as a trustworthy transmitter and a skilful critic of poetry. Ibn Rashīq even placed him above Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Alā‘ and his peers in the art of poetic criticism.

It seems that Khalaf paid great attention to words and their role in creating the correct maṣmūʿa in poetry. When al-Asma‘ī recited to him the following lines of Jarir:

he criticised the poet for the first half of his third line and said: “What is the use of a day that starts with good and ends with evil?” He then told al-Asma‘ī to change the line to:

instead of

He justified his action by saying that the ancient transmitters used to amend the poetry of the early poets. The poet Tamīm b. Abī Muqbil is reported as saying: “We write false rhymes and later the transmitters correct them.”
Related to the words and form of poetry is the idea of *girān*, which we have discussed before. Khalaf seems also to have admired poetry in which the lines are connected with one another. He criticised the kind of poetry that was written in affected language, contained strained *maˈānī*, and had no connection between its parts. The words, he said, looked uneasy in their places, and the incongruity between the lines was like that between brothers from one father but different mothers. Khalaf quoted the following line to express his opinion of such poetry:

When Khalaf was asked to say who was the best poet of all, he replied that it was not possible to say who was the best poet, just as it was not possible to say who was the bravest man, the most eloquent orator or the most beautiful person. People would never agree about such matters. The same view was adopted by the grammarian Yūnūs b. Ḥabīb, who said: "Poetry is like nobility, courage and beauty. It is not possible to say who is the best of all in these things". When asked: "Whom do you find the most admirable among poets?" he replied that it was al-ʾAṣhā, "because he was the one who combined all poetic genres, rhymes and metres". This is the same argument adduced by the Kūfan school for championing al-ʾAṣhā.

Like other critics, Khalaf sought for *tashbīḥ* and conciseness in words. As Ḥamād before him had placed Imru ʾal-Qays first for his excellent similes, so Khalaf, too, indicated his admiration for the poet's similes, and for his ability to put an abundance of *maˈānī* into a few words, as in the following line:

which Khalaf described as "the most comprehensive (ṣama) line". This
remark, besides meaning that the line contained a number of similes, and that it was concise, may also mean that the line is admirable for its 

tagaṣsa. Qudāna b. Ja'far quoted the line as an example of poetry that contained a variety of similes gathered in one line and in a few words. Ibn Rashīq quoted it as an example of poetry in which there were four similes without the particle kāf, and he pointed out that Imru' al-Qays was the first to produce similes in this way.

Khalaf also cited the following line of Imru' al-Qays for its conciseness, describing it in the same terms as the one above, namely "the most comprehensive line":

أفاد وقاد وقاد وقاد وقاد وقاد فأفضل

The line is quoted by Ibn Rashīq with slight differences:

أفاد قياام وشاام فزاد فزاد فأفضل

He observed that it consisted entirely of tagaṣsa, and that it was the original of a number of similar lines written by Abū al-Tayyib and others of the muhdisthun.

In madīnah, Khalaf quoted these lines of Zuhayr as "the most realistic and most flattering praise":

ذىتاه إذا ما جئته طبللاً 
لا دعو للذي أنت سايلة
أ بو أ جو لتهلك الهم بالله 
ولله كفر يدخل المال سائلة
عذوه على عذوبة فجريه 
فورد له بالمرهم موادله
بدرت له طفر وطفر له 
و أعي ما يبرين بين طفرته
فآثرت منه من العروى مراً 
عزم على الأمر الذي هو عامله

These lines were also admired by Ibn Tabatabā, who quoted them as an example of lines that "fascinate because of the elegance of the discourse".

Khalaf declared that he would have proclaimed the superiority of Ka'b
over his father Zuhayr, "had it not been for a poem of the latter's very
much admired by people", starting:

ًالدنور ِبُنَنَ ِالكرُّ أُترَتَ فيَنِبَجُ ومِن ٌكور

in which he says:

ولذَنَت أَسْتَبَعَت ِمن ٌراِها ِفَدِرْنَ السَّرَر َوُلُّيَ ٌدِرٌّ

Concerning hijā' poetry, Khalaf took the traditional view of what was
the most harmful sort of hija', namely that it was hijā' munābi' or
hijā' bi-'l-taṣdīl. Khalaf added that "the severest hijā' is that which
is most decent and most sincere. On another occasion, Khalaf indicated
what he meant by decency and sincerity in hijā', giving an example from
a poem, already quoted, by al-Hutay'ā:

وَأَنْتَ عِنْدنَاءِ ِإِلَى ْسَهْيِ ٌ أَمْ ٌشَعْرٌ ٌفَطَالِي ٌإِلَّا ٌإِنْنُ أَ

His admiration for "beautiful and suitable words" caused him on one
occasion to prefer the muwallad poet Marwān b. Abī Haṣfa to al-'Aṣha',
even though he had regarded the latter as the best of poets, as we have
seen. When Marwān recited to Khalaf his poem that starts:

لَمْ َلْقَتْ ِرَاعِةِ ٌفَيْنَ َجِمَالِ ٌبي ٌأَنْنُ أَبِيِّلَمْ دَلَُّهَا

Khalaf told him that in that particular poem he was better than al-'Aṣha'in his poem written in the same rhyme, starting:

ُرَحْطُتْ ِسَمِيْنَةٌ ٌمَرْرَةٌ ٌجِمَالِ ٌأَجِلَّا

because al-'Aṣha' had used an unpleasant word in the following line:

فَذَهَبْتً ِجَبَةٍ ٌغَلِبِهِ وَلُسَا بَا

This poem was marred by the word tihāl, whereas Marwān's poem was free
from any such blemishes. This attitude, of considering certain words
unsuitable for poetry, is also taken by al-Asma'ī, as we shall see later.
Decency in hijā' is also required by Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', and we have
already seen al-Akhtal expressing the same view. Khalaf's standards,
variety in poetic genres, rhymes and metres, the use of pleasant and
suitable words, and decency and sincerity in hijā' were adopted by some
of those who followed him. Although we do not have many of his critical views, we are inclined to regard him as the best critic of his group, judging by the accounts given by Ibn Sallām al-Jumāḥī and Ibn Rāshīd.

The third critic of the old school, and a very good representative of it, is Abū 'Amr b. al-‘Alā', a Basran scholar who, according to al-Marzubānī, was born during 'Abd al-Malik's caliphate and died in the year 155 A.H., at the age of ninety. Though he belonged to the Basran school, who preferred Imru' al-Qays to all other poets, Abū 'Amr b. al-‘Alā', like his peer, Khalaf al-Ahrār, considered no poet to be superior to al-Aṭṣhā, about whom he is reported as saying: "Learn the poetry of al-Aṭṣhā; I liken him to the hawk which is able to prey upon all birds, from the nightingale to the crane". According to him, again; "Al-Aṭṣhā was the best of poets, but ignorance and his persistent begging (ilḥāf) had caused him to be under-valued". What Abū 'Amr meant by his first observation is either, as Khalaf also remarked, that al-Aṭṣhā had written poetry in all genres, or that his poetry contained both excellent poems and bad ones. His opinion that "his persistent begging" had reduced al-Aṭṣhā's standing as a poet, was possibly influenced by al-Huṭay'a's belief that "persistent begging and self-abasement (ilḥāf wa-darā'ī'a)" had spoilt al-Nābigha and himself as poets. These early critics are often, as reported, completely contradictory in their views; Abū 'Amr also is said to have declared that "The best poets of all are four, and these are Imru' al-Qays, al-Nābigha, Ṭarafa, and Muḥalhil". Later, we shall see the influence of such remarks on Ibn Sallām al-Jumāḥī; for now, it is sufficient to remark that Imru' al-Qays was once more placed first, which may simply be a reflection of the general view of the Basran school; Muḥalhil was added to the list, for no very clear reason, except that he appears to have been admired by a number of critics in Iraq at that time; Ṭarafa was probably, once again, included for his mu'allama; al-Nābigha.
seems to have been very much admired by Abu'Amr, who proclaimed his superiority to Zuhayr in extravagant terms. Comparing Aws b. Hajar with al-Nabigha, he stated that the former remained the master-poet of the tribe of Mudar until al-Nabigha appeared and reduced him to being a poet of his tribe Tamīm. He alleged that al-Nabigha was so much better than Zuhayr that Zuhayr was not worthy to be al-Nabigha's hireling. He claimed that "if Zuhayr were to stamp his feet on the ground one hundred times he would not be able to write a similar line to the following one (of tashbīḥ) by al-Nabigha:

فَخَبَّ رَأْيُ الْمَلِئِ الْوَالِدَةِ هُمْ يُعْطَاهُنَّ وَيَزَالُ الْمَنِيْنُ أَنَّ الْمَنِيْنَ عَنْكَ وَاسْعَ

What cannot be imitated by Zuhayr cannot be imitated by others." There appears to be some inconsistency here, if the report is correct. AbūAmr b. al-'Alā' noticed similarities between certain Jāhilī poets, and also between certain Islamic poets and Jāhilī ones. He compared al-Namr b. Tawlab with Ḥātim al-Tā'ī and pointed out that they had the same madhhab of poetry. He admired the former and used to call him "the skilful one" (al-kayyis). AbūAmr did not indicate in what sense the madhhab of the two poets were similar, but it seems that the similarity between them was that both were famous for being generous men and they talked about generosity (karam) in their poems in lines of ḥikma. This suggests a liking on the part of AbūAmr for poetry that teaches good manners and noble deeds, a liking shared by earlier critics.

"No poetry is more admirable to me than that of Labīd", said AbūAmr elsewhere, "for he mentioned Allāh, he was a Muslim, and he spoke of religion and good; but his poetry is a corn-mill". On another occasion, he compared him with Khidāsh b. Zuhayr, preferring the latter to Labīd, whom he described as "a man of qualities (sāhib sifāt)". What Abū Amr appears to mean is that Labīd was admirable as a man, and that his poetry
dealt with the most elevated subjects, but that it did not contain 
excellent mu'¥ahf, and consisted of harsh and grating words and expressions. 
Hence his description of it as a corn-mill; the grammarian al-Farra' 
gives a similar description of it.50 The opinion of Ibn Sallâm al-
Jumâhî concerning him was that he had "a sweet manner of discourse and 
elegant words", as we shall see later. This must refer to his poetry 
other than the mu'¥alâqa. For instance, the language of his elegies on 
his half-brother Arbad is much simpler than that of his mu'¥alâqa, as is 
that of his well-known lines on his old age, as M.M. Badawi has pointed 
out.51

Abû 'Anr demonstrated his interest in fasâha in poetry by his remark on 
the poet 'Adî b. Zayd, whom he likened to Canopus in comparison with 
other poets. Though he was a poet, he could not reach the standard of 
other poets, to take Ibn Qutayba's explanation of this comparison. 
Because of the fact that many of his words were not from the language of 
Najd, his poetry was not recited by the šulama'. According to 
al-Ma'¥ûbânî 'Adî's language was influenced and softened by his stay in 
al-Hâra. Al-Mufâddal al-Dabbi added that during his stay at the Hîran 
court, 'Adî used to listen to the different delegations who visited the 
kings, and he made use of their words in his poetry.52

Comparing the Islamic poets with Ja'âli poets, Abû 'Anr likened Jarîr to 
al-A'¥âshâ and said that they were "two hawks who prey upon all birds from 
the crane to the nightingale". (We have already come across this 
metaphor in connection with al-A'¥âshâ). He likened al-Farazdaq to Zuhayr 
in "firmness of composition and facility of poetry", and al-Akhtal to 
al-Nâbigha in the correctness of their poetic language.53 Of these 
Islamic poets, al-Akhtal was the one whom Abû 'Anr admired most, and he 
even claimed that, if al-Akhtal had lived a single day in the Ja'âliyya,
he would have preferred no-one at all to him. When al-Asma说到这里 recited to Abu Amr some excellent poetry, he said: "No-one of the Islamic poets could write poetry equal to this, not even al-Akhtal himself." Along with other early critics, he particularly admired certain poems of al-Akhtal; the five poems that begin:

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عَمَا وَاسِطَ ۗ مِن أَلَّا رَبَّ مَّجِيَ قَبْلَ
ۜتَأَذَّرَ الْفُلُّ ۗ مِن سَأْيَرِ بِمَّثَاقِلِ
ۜخَفَّ الْفُلُّ ۗ فَرَاهُوا مَتَٰعًا وَأَنَّ شَدَٰرًا
ۜكُرْبُّ ۗ عَشَّٰرُ ۗ أَمَّ رَآيَتِهِ بِوَسَٰلٍ
ۜكُبْعَ ۗ المَعْمِرُ ۗ رَكَّٰبَٰهُ ۗ بِمُؤَرِّعٍ
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were especially praised for their excellence, which manifested itself in their length, their purity, their polish, and their correctness of style. It was also said that a further five of his poems were of a similar quality to those specified above. On the other hand, Abu Amr declared that Jarir surpassed all other poets in lines of boasting, praise, satire and nasih, and quoted the lines quoted earlier by the two qatib who championed Jarir.

In spite of this admiration for al-Akhtal and Jarir, Abu Amr did not recognise their poetry as a hujja and apparently counted them among the muhdatun or the muwalladun, to judge from the account of Ibn Rashid. Al-Asma mentioned that he had never heard Abu Amr cite any verse of the Islamic poets as a hujja. When asked to give his opinion concerning the muhdatun, he replied that the ancients had preceded the muhdatun in creating all excellent marafi, and so the latter were just imitating the former. If they made mistakes, it was their responsibility and had nothing to do with the ancients. The poetry of the muhdatun was not written in one consistent style but had different levels of excellence. Some of it was written in a style like a piece of silk, some of it like a rough piece of cloth and some of it like a piece of leather.
As we have mentioned before, Abu 'Amr "sealed" poets with Dhu al-Rummā́; he perhaps accepted him because of his Bedouin style, which, however, seems to have been affected later on by town life, as may be gathered from al-Asmá́'s attack on him. Sometimes Abu 'Amr softened his hard line against the muḥḍaṭhūn but he never really altered it at all. Once he is reported as saying: "This muḥḍaṭh poetry has increased and became so good that I have almost wished to cite it". However, one cannot always trust information from different sources concerning Abu 'Amr's hostility to muḥḍaṭh poetry. When we look at his selected lines we find that they actually include some muḥḍaṭh poetry, as well as the Jahili and early Islamic poetry that is to be expected. Like other early critics, he did not state reasons for admiring some of the lines that he quoted. In Jahili poetry, he expressed a high opinion of the poem of al-Muthaqqib al-‘Abdī that starts:

\[\text{افاعم قبل تبليد تحييني وتنسك ما سالت لأن بيني} \]

and, in particular, of the line:

\[\text{رودت نبيهة وقلت أخرى ونقيب الحساب للعرين} \]

About this poem he said: "If poetry is written like this poem, people should learn it". It seems probable that he was attracted by the facility of the poem and by the two lines of ḥikma with which it ended.

Like many earlier critics, Abu 'Amr appreciated moral poetry and he looked for sincerity in it. For this quality he preferred the line of al-Hutay'á:

\[\text{من فعل الامير راهم ذو زيمة نزلت الغري بن الله والناس} \]

to that of Tarafa:

\[\text{مستبّرنا قد الزم مقت الطارية ويتاني بالاضرار من لم شروه} \]

He thought that Tarafa's line was less perfect than that of al-Hutay'á, in that he said concerning it: "him whom you provide will bring you more information than he whom you do not". He also said that every line written by the Arabs contained a defect, except the one by al-Hutay'á.
His interest in moral poetry is also to be seen in his admiration for the poem of Durayd b. al-Simma which starts:

Abū 'Amr cited the poem as: "the best poetry ever written advocating patience in time of misfortunes". He also expressed his admiration for the following two lines on the same subject:

He also appreciated conciseness, and this may be seen in his admiration for certain lines of rithā'. He cited this as "the best line of rithā'":

and these lines of Aws b. Hajar as the best opening of a marthiya:

The conciseness of the lines is remarked on by Qudama, who described them as lines that had gathered together all the good qualities and virtues that can be mentioned in rithā'.

In madīn poetry, he quoted the same line of Zuhayr's poem that was also admired by Khalaf. He said that it was "the best line written by the Arabs in madīn":

His opinion of hījā' poetry is similar to that of al-Khtāl, who required hījā' which was free from obscenity. According to Abū 'Amr: "the best hījā' poetry is that which a virgin can recite in her khīdhr (private section of a tent for women) without feeling ashamed, like the lines of
From among the poetry of the muhdathūn, Abū ‘Amr expressed admiration for the following lines of ghazal by Bāshshār:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{لَا بُنِيَ حَلَّوَةُ الشَّهْرُ دِينَ مَدِينَةٌ} \\
\text{أَبَاهُ شُرِّكَ بِهِ حَمَالٌ بِبَلَابِيَّةٍ}
\end{align*}
\]

He described the lines as abī‘ayn, but, as so often, it is not clear whether he meant "the most amazing" or "wonderful" lines, or was referring to the presence in them of bādī’ itself. Like most earlier critics, he was interested in the ma‘ānī more than in other poetic elements or "beauties". The poetry that he liked had plain and simple ma‘ānī, and, naturally enough with a grammarian, correct language. His concern for perfection in the ma‘ānī appears from the preference he expressed for al-Hutay’a’s line to Tarafa’s. Like so many others, he required conciseness, variety in poetic genres, firmness of composition, facility of expression and length of poem. Hikma and moral sentiments also pleased him.

The fourth critic of the old school chosen for discussion is Abū ‘Ubayda Ma‘mar b. al-Muthanna, who, like Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Alā’, belonged to the Basran school. It seems that he was the first to classify poets into a number of jātāqāt Jāhilīs, early Islamic and muhdathūn. The mukhadramūn were mixed in with either the Jāhilīs or the Islamic poets. Perhaps Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī was inspired by what Abū ‘Ubayda had done in his own classification of poets. According to Abū ‘Ubayda, Imru’ al-Qays leads the poets of the mufallaqāt, and after him in order come Zuhayr and al-‘Alā’. In the second class are al-‘A‘shā, Labīd and Tarafa. In the third class are al-Muraqqiah, Ka‘b b. Zuhayr, al-Hutay’a, Khidāsh b. Zuhayr,
Durayd b. al-Simma, 'Antara, Urwa b. al-Ward, al-Nâmr b. Tawlah, al-Shamâkh and Amr b. 'Abd al-Rab'ah. Al-Mufaddal al-Dabî described these poets as "the poets of Najî who wrote hijâr and madih and went into all the fields of poetry. As for the people of the Hijâz, they are people of cattle, and the majority of their poetry is ghazal". The comment made by al-Mufaddal may give us an indication of the criteria used by Abu 'Ubayda in making his classification, namely variety of poetic genres.

We notice that in the first class he placed three poets, in the second one three also, and in the third class ten. One may also guess that the Hijâz had been famous for ghazal poetry since the time of the Jahiliyya, as al-Mufaddal implied, and this may throw some light on the development of ghazal poetry in the Umayyad period. His words may also explain to us the attitude of Ibn Sallûm in neglecting the ghazal poets, among whom 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Rab'ah was a leading figure but received only a brief mention from Ibn Sallûm. The widely accepted criteria for excellence at that time were ability in hijâr and madih, and versatility in genre.

Although Abu 'Ubayda mentioned Tarafa in the second class of Jahili poets, he also classified him in a fourth class with al- al-Mufaddal b. Hilliza, 'Amr b. Kulthûm and Suwayd b. Abî Kâhil. He declared that in his mu'allaga, Tarafa was the best of all but he would not allow him a place among those poets whom he called the bûhûr, meaning the great ones like Imru' al-Jays, Zuhayr and al-Nabigha. Al-Asrâhâ is better than Tarafa, he said, "because he has a greater number of long and excellent poems than Tarafa. He is also more excellent in describing wine and women (humr), and he is more excellent in madih and hijâr". The criteria of length and variety are once again used here in comparing the two poets.

Abû 'Ubayda added Aws b. Hajar and al-Nabigha al-Jâ'dî to the third class of Jahili poets, and again he put al-Jâ'dî with poets of horse description,
Tufayl al-Chanawi and Abū Du‘ād al-Iyāḍī. Among the third class, al-Kutay'a was reprehended by Abū Ḥubayda for his "bad manners" but praised for his excellent poetry with its firm composition and absence of defects. This separation of poetry from morals was followed by other critics, among whom were al-Asma’I and Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, as we shall see later.

Among the Islamic poets, Hassan b. Thabit was put at the head, because, according to Abū Ḥubayda, he excelled other poets in three respects. First, he was the poet of the Ansār in the Jahiliyya, second, he was the poet of the Prophet, and third, he was the poet of whole Yemen in Islam. His position as the poet of the Prophet gave him special standing in the eyes of Abū Ḥubayda. When speaking of Jarīr, al-Fazzaq and al-Akhtal as the poets of Islam who stood next to Hassan, he said: "no poet is like the poet of the Prophet, may peace be upon him."

Jarīr, Farazdaq and al-Akhtal had no other poets equal to them because "they wrote effective praise and satire". They had also overcome those who exchanged satire with them. On the other hand, Abū Ḥubayda also claimed that Kuthayyir was the best poet of Islam, although lacking the sincerity of Jamāl in nasīb.

This desire for sincerity may be one of the reasons behind the admiration of Abū Ḥubayda for the poetry of the Kharijite poets, especially the poet Qatari b. al-Fuja’a, as for instance in the poem starting:

When he cited Kharijite poetry, Abū Ḥubayda used to say: "This is (real) poetry and not that with which you entertain yourselves, from the works of effeminate poets (mukhannathīn)." Abū Ḥubayda himself was said to be
a Kharijite, belonging to the Sufriyya sect, but he used to hide this and not reveal it except to those whom he trusted. According to Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistani, he used to recite the poetry of ‘Umar b. Hitān, one of the Kharijite leaders. One of these poems is the elegy for Bilāl b. Mīrād, another of their leaders:

According to al-Tawwāzī, Abū ‘Ubayda called Qatārī b. al-Fu‘ā‘īd the Commander of the Faithful. The lines recited by him from Kharijite verse are from poems concerned with holy war, containing description of fighting, courage, weapons and death. One of the poems of Qatārī that he recited was:

Another was the poem starting:

Describing the Kharijites with admiration, Abū ‘Ubayda used to quote the following line of al-Hutay‘a:

Those who were interested in the poetry of the Kharijites were reported to come to him and listen to him. Some, like al-Tawwāzī, wrote down what he recited for them.

Though Abū ‘Ubayda "sealed" poets with Ibn Harmān, he expressed admiration for some of the muhdtath poets. He even preferred the poem of Bashshār rhyming in mīm to those by Jarīr and al-Qaṣīdah in the same rhyme. Bashshār's starts:

It is said that originally the poem was hijāj for Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr,
but that the poet feared him and re-addressed it to the Abbasid leader Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī, who was killed by the Caliph. As a statement of revolt against the Abbasid caliphate, it appealed to Abū 'Ubayda's Kharijite leanings. It also ended with lines of hikma, aphorisms and advice, such as:

The spirit of the poem, calling for war in the last line quoted, suited the character of Abū 'Ubayda as a Kharijite, and his liking for hikma and moral poetry in general was in line with the widespread interest of early critics in such topics. It is said that he used to cite the two following lines of Abū Nuwās:

He admired Abū Nuwās and described him as "among the muhdathūn like Imru' al-‘ays among the ancients", and he claimed that he had never learned by heart any lines of the muhdathūn except the following ones by Abū Nuwās:

Another poet among the muhdathūn whose poetry he admired was al-‘Uṣayn b. Matīr. What attracted him in this poet's poetry was the abundance of
When al-Tawwazī asked him to give his opinion of Ibn Katīr, he said: "He can write excellently from time to time and I wonder at his abundant badā'ī. If you meet him, please tell him that his poetry is the most admirable to me". 87

Though Abū 'Ubayda admired some of the muhdiath poets, he was still a typical critic of the old school, since he considered Jahili poetry to be the standard for judging poetry in general. One of his reasons for preferring al-Akhtal to Jarīr and al-Parazdaq was that he was more like the Jahili poets. He accepted what Yūnus b. Ḥabīb had said in preferring al-Akhtal to his peers, that he had written "more long excellent poems, which contain no obscenity or saqāt". Abū 'Ubayda said that al-Akhtal had written ten poems with the qualities mentioned and had another ten no less excellent than the first ten. Jarīr had only three of such a kind. 88

Abū 'Ubayda's critical leanings are illustrated by his comment on two ancient lines recited to him by Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawsili, who admired them. Abū 'Ubayda was not attracted by the lines and asked Iṣḥāq: "Do you find any aphorism or maḥā in these lines?" When Iṣḥāq replied that he did not, Abū 'Ubayda criticised him for reciting such poetry and compared him to a donkey carrying books that does not know what is written inside them.89

Abū 'Ubayda differed from Abū 'Amr in some aspects of his poetic selections. For instance, the poems of rithā' quoted admiringly by Abū 'Amr differed widely from those quoted by Abū 'Ubayda. The first resembled Jahili poetry and the main idea which they expressed was that of consolation and patience in enduring the misfortunes of time and in facing the reality of death. Even the tone of fakhr is different in the selections of the two critics, as can be seen in the quotation by Abū 'Amr
from the marthiya of Dureyd b. al-Simma for his brother 'Abd Allāh and others of his people. When we look at the quotations of Abū 'Ubeyda from the rithā' poems of the Kharijites, instead of finding the themes of consolation and patience, we find the poet expressing his longing for death in holy war exactly as his companion had died. Lines like:

بُعِيْبَ الْجَهَّاَلِيَّةَ وَهَمَّمَهُ يَأْبَىَيْرَدُّادٍ إِجْلَانَ كَرْدَادٍ

(by 'Imrān b. Hittān, and lines like:

لاَجِبَ الْخَلَّاغِ، مَا شَاءَ أَضْنَيْتِهِ، أَوَّلَ عَفْقَةِ المُسْتَشْهَرِ الشَّافِرِ من مَّاءِ كَنْتُ أَسْفَلَى مَعَايِسَةً فِي نَطَاعٍ دَارَ بِأَحْلَاءِ عِلْقَةِ الدَّارِ

A hadith tells us Arḍī and other men of the family of Allah. The most important is to be saved, and to be saved, you can wear clothes, you can wear clothes, you can wear clothes, and you can wear clothes, and you can wear clothes.

by a Kharijite from Tay', and other lines not quoted here, are all good examples of this. While the Jāhili poet confines himself in his rithā' to his own family, own tribe, and his mā'amā, as can be seen in the quotations by Abū 'Amr, the Kharijite poet in his poems of rithā' extended his passions over a wider circle of people related to him through religion and the Kharijite belief. We do not want to go beyond the aim of this thesis and discuss the differences between Jāhili and Kharijite poetry, but what should be made clear here is that, despite the fact that Abū 'Ubeyda seems to be similar to Abū 'Amr and other early critics in accepting Jāhili poetry as the standard by which to judge contemporary poetry, and in accepting other common standards, he requires a different approach from his peers. He seems to have lost interest in Jāhili poetry because, as it appears, it was irrelevant to him as a Kharijite. A story told by al-Tawwāzī about him may have some significance in this respect. Al-Tawwāzī reported that he went to see Abū 'Ubeyda and took with him the poetry of Urwa b. al-Ward. When Abū 'Ubeyda realised this, he said to him: "an idle man who carried the poetry of an idle man in order to recite it to a poor man"; al-Tawwāzī regretted that he had no other poetry with him to recite and asked him to recite to him what he liked.
Abū 'Ubayda recited the poem of the Kharijite poet Qatari, the first line of which we have already quoted:

\[
\text{بَأْرُ الْفِجَرَةُ فَيْرُ وَقَيْتُ بِهِ}
\]

As we have mentioned before, Abū 'Ubayda said of this poem: "this is real poetry and not that with which you entertain yourselves, from the works of the mukhannathīn."\(^91\) It seems that he did not mean the poetry of Qurwa b. al-Ward by "the works of the mukhannathīn", but rather mḥdath and Islamic poetry other than Kharijite poetry. We cannot allow ourselves to claim that Abū 'Ubayda was influenced by Islam in his liking for poetry that had a more universal outlook, and found this in the poetry of the Kharijites. This may be true to some extent, but we think that he was interested in the Kharijites' poetry mainly because he was himself a secret member of their sect. In a sense, a wider outlook, beyond the boundaries of the tribe, is evident in the line of Ṭabaqd, elegizing Qays b. ʿĀsim, as quoted by Abū ʿAmr:

\[
\text{وَمَا لَمْ يَأْسِسْ مَلِكِهِ بَعْضُ وُهْدُهُ وَاحِدُ وَلَنَّهُ بَنِيَانَ تَفْنَى تَفْنَى}
\]

The admiration for this line of Abū ʿAmr and other earlier critics, and their regarding it as the best opening line of a mārthīa, may be attributed to the influence of Islam in creating this wider outlook. Nevertheless, Abū ʿAmr was still more attached to Jahili poetic concepts, while Abū ʿUbayda found release in the Kharijites' poetry; perhaps it is significant that he was most interested in the Jahili poetry that contained ʿakhbār and genealogies (ansāb), according to al-Jāḥīz.

The fifth figure in this group of earlier critics is Ibn al-ʿAṣābī Muhammad b. Ziyād, a Kūfān scholar, who is said to have more resembled the Basrans.\(^92\) He was widely known for his anti-muhdathīn attitude and examples are given to confirm this. Although he had a few quotations from Bashshār and Abū Nuwās, he was an admirer of ancient poetry, in which he seems to be most fond of similes (tashbihāt) in the genre of
wasf. In this field he indicated a group of poets who constituted a series of models for the various topics of wasf. He expressed his opinion as follows: "Anyone who attempts descriptions of horses will be in need of Abū Du‘ād al-Iyādī, and he who attempts descriptions of wild asses will be in need of Aws b. Ḥajar, and he who attempts descriptions of ostriches will be in need of Alqama Ibn ‘Abāda', and lastly, "he who aspires to compose ittihād (apology) poetry will be in need of al-Nabigha al-Dhubyanī". This may stand as a certification or a sort of indirect preference for these poets in these different topics of wasf.

The three types of wasf, namely horses, ostriches and wild asses, are all Bedouin subjects. His admiration for Jāhili poetry appears in his judgements that certain lines of, for instance, hijâ', were the best, such as:

\[ ... \]

which he regarded as "the most effective line of hijâ'", and also the following one, by Jarīr:

\[ ... \]

These two lines do not go beyond the Jāhili values in fakhr, madiḥ and hijâ'. It also appears in his admiration for the following lines of wasf in which two Islamic poets describe the severity of hot weather.

Al-Qutānī wrote:

\[ ... \]

and Jarīr wrote:

\[ ... \]

Ibn al-ʿArabī summed up his opinion of the Jāhili and muḥdath poetry as follows: "the poems of these muḥdathūn - Abū Nuwās and others - are like aromatic plants, which people gather in order to enjoy their pleasant smell for only one day; when they fade they are thrown on the dunghill. The poems of the ancients, on the other hand, are like musk and perfumes,
which, whenever shaken or moved, will give out a sweet and pleasant
smell". This remark on Jāhilī and muhdath poetry reminds us of the one
made by Jarīr about the poetry of Dhū al-Rumma. Ibn al-ʿArabī rejected
the poetry of Abū Tamām on the grounds that the poet did not follow the
ancients, and when he listened to one of the poet's poems in which he used
a great deal of ṣadīr, he commented: "If this be poetry, then the
composition of the Arabs is false". He was sincere when, on listening to
a poem of Abū Nuwās which was said to be excellent, he admitted that it
was indeed "a very excellent poem but what is ancient (ṣadīm) is more
admirable to me". For him, poets were "sealed" by Ibn Harmī, and later
by Marwān b. Abī Hafṣa, who was said to be the last poet whom he quoted.

In spite of all he said about the muḥdathūn, Ibn al-ʿArabī, with the same
dualistic attitude as most of his peers, expressed his admiration for
certain lines of Bashshār and Abū Nuwās. It is strange that these two
were almost the only two muḥdath poets who were admired and quoted by
both Abū ʿAmr, Abū ʿUbaydā and Ibn al-ʿArabī. The last was said to be
fond of the following lines by Bashshār, describing the length and the
cares of a night.

The following lines of wine description by Abū Nuwās he regarded as the
best on the subject:

Apart from the fact that Ibn al-ʿArabī may have been attracted by certain
elements of badi' like isti'ara and tashbih in the lines (of wasf), and
apart from his dualistic attitude to Jahili and muddath poetry, his
admiration for these two poets, and the admiration of the others for
them, was probably due to two factors. Firstly, they recited these lines
and others similar to them as a sort of relaxation from long recitation of
the ancient poems. Secondly, these two poets were moderate, especially
Bashshar, in their use of badi' and rhetorical elements, unlike Abu Tamam,
who used them extravagantly. One may not, at any rate, find it easy to
accept what al-Suli said about Ibn al-Arabi and his book Kitab al-
Nawadir, that he collected in it a lot of muddath poems "without knowing
that they belonged to the muddathun, and if he had known that he would not
have collected them". 100 It seems much more probable that his motives
were such as we have suggested, even if he would scarcely have acknow-
ledged them, and that he was well aware of what he was doing.

Perhaps the best representative of the group of earlier critics of the
old school is Abu Sa'id 'Abd al-Malik b. Quayyib al-Pahlif, known as
Al-Asma'i, a pupil of Abu 'Amr b. al-'Ala', Khalaf al-Ahmar, Sibawayhi,
Hammad b. Salama and others, but closest to Abu 'Amr b. al-'Ala', from
whom he inherited his views concerning poetry, criticism and language.
His vast knowledge of poetry was proverbial, as we are informed by Ishaaq
b. Ibrahim al-Mawsili, and according to his pupil Abu Hatim, al-Asma'i
could recite from memory fourteen thousand poems of rajaz. 101 His
Ruhulat al-shu'ara is regarded by some scholars as the first book of
Arabic literary criticism. 102

Apart from his great knowledge of poetry, he was known for his reluctance
to cite or transmit any sort of poetry in which stars (anwari) were
mentioned, or any poetry that interpreted a Qur'anic verse; he also did not
like to listen to hijji poetry, as al-Mubarrad reported. 103
Al-Aṣma’ī was influenced, in his poetic comparison and literary criticism, by many of his predecessors, poets, grammarians, philologists, transmitters and men of letters, whom we have already mentioned; this will become clear during our discussion of his views.

The best source for these is his book *Fuhūlat al-shu'arā*¹, taken down by his pupil Abū Hātim al-Sijistānī. The term *fahl* (master-poet) used by al-Aṣma’ī in this book was used for the first time, as far as I know, by al-Hūtay’a who talked of himself and Ka‘b b. Zuhayr as the last *fuhul*. Kuthayyir, Azza, Dhū al-Rumma, and Ru‘ba b. al-As‘fājāj had also used the term, and it appears that it was widely known by the time of al-Aṣma’ī.

From the title of his book, it seems that *fahl* was used to distinguish a class of poets whom he considered particularly good. As he explained it, "*fahl* means the one who has a marked superiority over his fellows, like the superiority of a thoroughbred stallion over mere colts; it is the same thing which is expressed by the line of Jarīr:

واكب اللبسو إذ ما رأى ضاكرٍ ّانَّم بِسَفِعُ حَمْلَةُ النَّبِيلِ الجَمَّـىِـسِ

The definition given by al-Mubarrad in his *Kāmil* is different from the one mentioned above, in that it deals only with poets of *hijāj*. He says that any poet who overcame another in *hijāj* was called a *fahl*.² On another occasion, al-Aṣma’ī defined the *fahl* thus: "A poet will not become a master in the craft of poetry until he has quenched his thirst with reciting the poetic compositions of the Arabs, has heard the stories and learned the poetic conceits, and their words resound in his ears. First of all, he should learn prosody to the extent that it becomes a rule for all his discourse; grammar to improve his language and ensure his proper use of inflection (i‘rāb); then also the Arab genealogies and events in the life of men".³

Ibn Rashīq himself said more about the importance of the function of
recitation (riwāya) in making a poet a fahl. He stated that "the poet by nature (matbuṭ) among those who have passed away had superiority over his peers because he recited others' poems, knew the stories (akhbār) and became a pupil of a senior poet. People used to say: this one is a poet and a reciter (rāwiya), meaning that if he is a reciter he will know the ways (manāsid) of poetry, and that discourse will be easy for him and he will not be forced to follow a narrow way in poetry; and if the poet by nature (matbuṭ) has no knowledge or experiences of recitation (riwāya), he will follow the wrong way of poetry unaware of that; perhaps he may try to write a certain poetic maṣḥā but will not find it even if it is before his eyes, and this is because his tool of poetry is weak".107 Ruʿba b. ʿAlī ʿAjjāj, when asked about "the fahl among poets", replied that "he is the rāyiya-poet", meaning that when a poet becomes the rāyiya of another poet, this will help him to develop into a fahl; to his own excellent lines he will add the knowledge of the other excellent lines of those poets whose poems he recites; thus he will not be misled in the ways of poetry, as the grammarian Yūnus b. Hādīb explained.108 Sometimes the term khindhīdīh was used instead of fahl, meaning a poet who wrote good poetry as well as reciting others' poems. In the second class was the poet who was muflīq, the one who had his own excellent poetry but did not transmit others' poems. In the third class was the one who was simply called "poet", and he was a degree above the bad poet, the shuʿayrī, who was nothing. Some critics mentioned the shuʿayrī who was said to be above the shuʿayrī. As we have mentioned before, this classification of poets, or at least part of it, had been known since the Jahiliyya; Imruʿ al-Qays called the post Ibn Himrān a shuʿayrī.109

According to what has been said, fahl may mean a good poet who is the transmitter of another poet, or poets, senior to him. Critics gave examples of such poet-transmitters (Shāʿīr Rāwiya) like Imruʿ al-Qays, who
is said to have been the ṭawiya of Abū Du‘ād al-Iyāsī, al-Yarazīq, who was the ṭawiya of al-Huṭay‘a, who was, in turn, the ṭawiya of Ṣuhayr.

The last was himself a ṭawiya, of Awa b. Ḥajar and Ṣufayl al-Chanawī.¹¹⁰

The main theme of Ṣuhulat al-shu‘ārā’ is, of course, the Ṣuhula or non-Ṣuhula of poets: those who deserved the title Ṣah and those who did not. Certain poets were mentioned as Ṣurūn rather than Ṣuhula, although among them there were some who deserved the title. Some poets were not a Ṣuhūja, and others were. Fabrication and plagiarism in poetry are touched on but not thoroughly discussed. Comparisons are made between the Jāhili, muḥadram and Islamic poets and also between different tribes. Like earlier critics, al-Asma‘ī gave comparative views concerning single lines and, sometimes, whole poems.

Those who were classified as Ṣuhula numbered twenty-four¹¹¹ They included the four Jāhili poets who formed the first class, as mentioned, but al-Asma‘ī omitted al-A‘shā the Great, as we shall see. In his place he put Awa b. Ḥajar.¹¹² Sometimes al-Asma‘ī was not sure whether a poet was a Ṣah or not, like Ka‘b b. Ṣu‘ayl, about whom he said: "I think that he is of the Ṣuhula, but do not feel certain of it".¹¹³

It seems that among al-Asma‘ī’s criteria for judging poets as to Ṣuhulah were general excellence, variety of production, quantity of composition, and some other moral and religious factors. The first three of these we have frequently encountered before, especially when we spoke about al-A‘shā’s being favoured by the Kūfīan school. Al-Asma‘ī did not specify the poems through which the masters had become so, but he stated that those who were non-Ṣuhula needed to produce more excellent poems - in addition to what they had already written - in order to be regarded as Ṣuhula. Such poets were: al-Ṣuwaydīra, who, according to al-Asma‘ī "if he had composed five ḍasidas like the one which we have,
would have been a fahl"; Muhalhil, who "if he had produced other poems like that one of his:

أَلْيَا بَنُّ يَحْـمَـيْنِ إِبْـنِي

would have been the foremost fahl of them all"; Ma'qiqir al-Bariq, who "if he had composed five or six gasidas, would have been a fahl";

Tha'laba b. Su'ayr al-Masini, who "if he had written five poems like his nasida, would have been a fahl"; Aws b. Ghalib, who "if he had composed twenty gasidas would have joined the fuhul, but he fell short of that";

and Salama b. Jandal, who "if he had accomplished somewhat more, would have been a fahl".

Again, al-Aasma'i did not specify the poems that he admired by these poets, with the exception of that by Muhalhil in which the poet elegized his brother Kulayb and boasted of his avenging him. The poem, which seems to have lost some lines, consists of about thirty-six lines of simple, plain verse, though it employs some exaggerated ideas, such as:

فَلَاتِ الرايِ أَسْعَى مِنْ سَحْرِ صَيْلَ الْبَيْنِ تَنْقَحُ الْبَلْدَةِ

It contains a group of similes, in one section of nine lines, most of which are about night and its stars. The poet begins by an address to a night:

أَلْيَا بَنُّ يَحْـمَـيْنِ إِبْـنِي، إِذَا أَنْتِ الْقَعْـمِ فَلا تَيْـكُوْيِ

فَإِنَّ يَدُ بَيْنَ النَّبَارِيَّاتِ لَبَيْـيَ

فَأْقِدَ أَكَأَيْ عَلَى الْيَمِينِ الْعَصِيِّرِ

فَأَقِدُ اقْتَلَ مِنْ شَرِّ كِبْرِ

and then turns to his series of similes:

بَلْ عَلَى رَوْاْلِ الْبَيْـنِ غَـرْـيَّةٌ

فَلَا مَخْبَأَةٌ عَلَى نَّفْعِ كِبْرِي

بَلْ عَلَى رَأْيٍ مَّطَرِيْنِ

وَقَدْ أَكَأَيْ عَلَى الْيَمِينِ الْعَصِيِّرِ

and:

بَلْ عَلَى الْبَيْـنِ فَلَا مَخْبَأَةٌ

وَلَا مَخْبَأَةٌ عَلَى إِقْيَاضِهِ مَّطَرِيْنِ

بَلْ عَلَى الْبَيْـنِ فَلَا مَخْبَأَةٌ

وَلَا مَخْبَأَةٌ عَلَى إِقْيَاضِهِ مَّطَرِيْنِ

He also repeats the same half-line:

عَلَى أَنَّ يُلسَ عَلَّرَ حَيَّ التَّأْلِيْبِ إِذَا...
eleven times (Abū Hilāl al-Askārī, quoted by Chaiqho, mentioned that it was repeated twenty times, and it would appear that the rest of these lines are lost). Al-Asma‘ī was uncertain who was the best of the fuhūl. Influenced by Abū ‘Amr, and perhaps by al-Khalil b. Ahmad, he decided for al-Nābigha, but he was also reported as saying: “the first of them all in excellence is Imru’ al-Qays; his was the highest honour and the precedence, and they all drew upon his poetry and followed his canons”. He remarked on the difference in levels of excellence in the poetry of Imru’ al-Qays, and said that he was surpassed by Tufayl al-Ghanawi in some of his poetry. He tried to excuse Imru’ al-Qays for his bad lines: “it is said that most of Imru’ al-Qays’ poetry was not his at all, but was by some of the sa‘ālīk who accompanied him”. Even al-Nābigha was surpassed by Durayd in some of his poetry and "indeed Durayd came near to vanquishing al-Dhubyanī".119

In preferring al-Nābigha to Zuhayr and Aws b. Hajar he repeated the opinion of Abū ‘Amr: "Aws was the fahl of Mudar but al-Nābigha took away from him some of his glory", although both he and Zuhayr borrowed from him. Because of the conciseness of al-Nābigha in one line borrowed from Aws, al-Asma‘ī preferred him to the latter. Aws wrote:

\[
\text{جيشَ يتَأْمَلُ بِهِ الفضائلَ مُضَعَّلُ}
\]

Al-Nābigha, in adapting this conceit, contrived to add to it:

\[
\text{جيشَ يتَأْمَلُ بِهِ الفضائلَ مُضَعَّلُ بَنَحِيَّةِ}
\]

Some poets were admitted into the class of fuhūl on the strength of only one excellent poem, such as Ka‘b b. Sa‘d al-Ghanawi, "who was a fahl only in his marthiya, to which there is no equal in the world", and Bishr b. Abī Khāzim "of whom I heard Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Alā’ say: his qaṣīda..."
In his poem, Ka'b concentrates on enumerating the virtues and good qualities of his brother, whom he is elegizing. The idea of consolation is to be found indirectly in the lines in which he does this:

\[
\text{أُرَيِّئُ لَيْنَ إِنَّ لَيْسَ مُأْتِيَةً}
\]

Direct consolation occurs in a few lines, like:

\[
\text{كَفَّوَ كَانَ الطَّلَّابَ كَبِيرًا}\\
\text{بِهِ لمَا كَتَبَهُهُ قَدْرَمُ}
\]

The poem is a long one and, according to some sources, amounted to sixty-two lines. 122

Among those who were classed among non-fuhūl were al-ʿAshā the Great, Labīd and ʿAdī b. Zayd. The last was harshly described as "neither a fahl nor a female". 123 Al-Asma'ī's opinion of Labīd was influenced by Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlāʾ's describing him as a man of good qualities. When he was asked about Labīd by Abū Ḥātim, he replied that "he was a good man"; Abū Ḥātim commented that "it was as if al-Asma'ī intended to deny him any great merit as a poet". He once described his poetry as being like a mantle from Tabaristān, meaning that it was well-woven but without elegance; it was good-looking but lacking grace and sweetness. 124 Al-ʿAskarī described the poetry of Labīd as "consisting of correct words with correct māṭanī but having no beauty (rawnaq) or freshness". 125
Ibn Abmar, though not a fahl, "stood above his own class"; al-Aswad "resembled the fuhul though himself not a fahl"; Jarāda b. "Umayla "had some poems which resembled those of the fuhul, but his were short". Al-Asma'I did not give us any indication of the nature of the similarity between these poets and the fuhul, not even of how some of Jarāda's poems resembled theirs. At any rate, it is clear that the length of his poems had a considerable function in making a poet a fahl. His judgement on Muzarrid b. Dirar reflects his moral tendency and his hatred of hizā', for he said that he was not inferior to the fuhul but had spoilt his poetry by much satire.126

Though the term fuhula gives the sense of "strength", al-Asma'I separated the knight-poets (fursān) from the fuhul. With the exception of Durayd b. al-Simma, who is mentioned among both fuhul and fursān, there is no other of the knight-poets allowed into the class of the fuhul, not even Antar.127 It seems that among al-Asma'I's criteria for fuhula in poets was that their predominant occupation should be poetry, rather than, for example, knight-errantry. The exclusion of poets like Ḥātim al-Tā'ī and ‘Urwa b. al-Ward, whom he described as generous men but not fuhul, was also due to the fact that their predominant quality was generosity rather than poetry.128 This being so, we can also understand the attitude of al-Asma'I in excluding "those who made incursions on foot" such as Ta'abbata Sharran and al-Shanfarā al-‘Azī among the sa’ālik poets, from the class of fuhul.129

Although al-Asma'I conferred the title of fahl on Zuhayr, al-Hutay'a and those "who were like them" in their styles of poetry, he was not enthusiastic about their work, calling them "slaves of poetry" because they used to review and polish their poems and did not follow the way of the natural poets (matbū‘un).130 Speaking of al-Hutay'a, whom he
described in harsh terms, calling him "a slave of his poetry", he made this quite clear when he stated that in al-Ḫutay'ā's poetry "you will never find a defect". This statement was an echo of that made by Abū 'Amr b. al-`Alā' about a line he quoted from al-Ḫutay'ā, as we have seen. The fact that poetry, owing to its constant revision, contained no defect was in itself a defect. Al-Jāḥiẓ, explaining al-Asma'ī's attitude, said that it was a sign of takalluf.\textsuperscript{131}

Al-Asma'ī defined the "slave of poetry" as the poet who "puts great effort into presenting excellent poetry; he stops for a long time beside every line in his poem, correcting and revising it, in order to produce a poem complete and excellent in all its parts".\textsuperscript{132} It should be noted that the artificiality which al-Asma'ī disliked in the poems of the "slaves of poetry" is not the same as that for which Abū Tammān was condemned later. The artificiality rejected by al-Asma'ī is connected with the selection of words and the careful maintenance of "one level of excellence" throughout the poem, while the artificiality of Abū Tammān consists mainly in exaggerated use of ḍā'dī. His admiration for poetry that contains "different levels of excellence" (tajarūt fī al-ḥawa) is reflected in his praise of al-Nabīgha al-Jā'fī and Ruʿba, when he described their poetry as "commendable poetry". Al-Jā'fī was described by b. Sallām al-Jumāhī as having "different levels in his poetry", which al-Asma'ī praised and took as a sign of naturalness. Al-Asma'ī used similar words to those of al-Farazdaq when speaking of al-Jā'fī, saying that "he has in his poetry a veil worth one dirham and a shawl worth thousands". In admiring such poetry, al-Asma'ī stood alone among critics, as al-Jāḥiẓ claimed.\textsuperscript{133}

Concerning the "difference of levels" in the poetry of al-Jā'fī, al-Asma'ī was reported as saying: "while al-Nabīgha (al-Jā'fī) is writing a speech (poetry) which is smoother (āshal) than sweet water
and firmer than a rock, he suddenly dilutes (his language) and continues in a manner very different from his first. Such poetry is the following:

After these lines of firm composition comes this line:

After these lines of firm composition comes this line:

Here his poetry becomes thin; even if Abu al-Shamqmaq was the writer of that line, it would be regarded as bad and weak." It seems that al-Asma\textsuperscript{1} only admired the early poetry of al-Ja\textsuperscript{2}d\textsuperscript{i}. He said that al-Ja\textsuperscript{2}d\textsuperscript{i} was silent for thirty years after having written poetry; then he again began to write, but while his earlier poetry was good, his later poetry looked as if it were stolen (ma\textsuperscript{3}ra\textsuperscript{4}q), and it is not good.\textsuperscript{135}

Though al-Asma\textsuperscript{1} criticised the line of al-Ja\textsuperscript{2}d\textsuperscript{i}'s on the grounds that it was thin and weak, he contradicted himself by selecting other verse which has the same thin quality. Ibn Qutayba reported that al-Asma\textsuperscript{1} used to admire and recite the following qita\textsuperscript{a}:

Al-Asma\textsuperscript{1} justified his admiration for it by claiming that "it has a light rhyme (khiffat al-raw\textsuperscript{i})".\textsuperscript{136}

Al-\textsuperscript{a}skar\textsuperscript{1} criticised al-Asma\textsuperscript{1} for selecting lines of "low and base
words", such as the following:

\[
\text{ولَوْ أُسَلَّنَ مِن حَيْثْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ إِلَى الْمَسِيحِ}
\]

\[
\text{لَوْ فَيَكُنَّ قَبْلَ الْكَلِبِ أَوْ حِينَ تَصَلِّينَ}
\]

It seems likely that al-Asma'ī, in admiring such poetry as quoted above, was no different from others of the critics of the old school, who used such lines and some of the muḥdath poetry as a sofa on which to recline and relax from the heavy burden of ancient poetry which they studied and transmitted for various purposes. This desire for relaxation from the ancient poems is one of the reasons behind the attitude of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mu'tazz in limiting himself to muḥdath poets in his Ṭabaqat al-shu'ara', as we shall see later. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily mean that the early critics were not attracted by other things in the lines of this kind that they selected. They were, in fact, attracted by certain qualities and mahāsin in them, as we shall see shortly. However, the combination of delicacy and firmness in poetic style that al-Farazdaq spoke of when comparing himself with Jarīr, and that some critics found in al-Nabīgha, describing his style as extremely delicate and extremely firm at the same time, was still sought by al-Asma'ī even in the poetry of the muḥdathūn. Talking about Abū Nuwās with al-Fādil b. Yahyā al-Barmakī, and encouraging the latter to choose Abū Nuwās as his poet, despite his bad reputation for muṣṭun and khalaqa (for which al-Fādil rejected him), al-Asma'ī praised him for his knowledge of the various kinds of literature (funūn al-adab) and for his high level in poetry. "Is he not the one" he asked, "who says:

\[
\text{كَذَٰلِكَ مِنَ الْمَرَّاحِلِ بَرَاءًا قَفًا}
\]

\[
\text{فَلَوْ قَدْ تَعَلَّمَتْ مَعَ الْمَوْلَايَةِ بِمَعَاسِبَةِ}
\]

\[
\text{سَكَبَّرَهُ خَزَانًا فَوَلَدْ خَزَانًاْ}
\]

\[
\text{مَنْ سَتَّحَ فَلَوْلَاٰ بِمَحْرَمَةَ}
\]

\[
\text{جَعُونَ قَبْصَرَ الْبَلَدُ قَدْ رَتَّلَتْ عَنْهَا}
\]

\[
\text{فَنَاََٰنِزُ عَلِيًّا أَنْ أَقْبِرُ أَوْ أُنَا}
\]

\[
\text{يَفْتَولُونَ: لَوْلَأَمْ أَلْقَتْ بِالْبَيْنِ فَكَيْنَ}
\]

\[
\text{فَذٰلِكَ مِنَ أَميَافَا أَعْجَبَ مِنَا}
\]
In this poem of Abu Nuwas one readily feels the presence of the two qualities, firmness and delicacy. The first nine lines, finishing:

\[
\text{سا سله إلى الفعال بنطبع بن خالد، هو الآخر الفعال جميع بيننا}
\]

are clearly of a delicate nature. The rest of the poem is firm, both in words and in meaning, especially the line:

\[
\text{والفعال احرا مغيدا من ضيام، إذا ليس الرفع المعينة وتلقا}
\]

and yet, there is still a delicacy in the last lines, for instance in the second half of the thirteenth line:

\[
\text{عليها امنعينا الفعالين الممسا}
\]

and also in the last line itself. Apart from these qualities in the style, al-Asma'i may also have been pleased by the conception in the last two lines by which the poet says that he had made the mab午 to his mawdūh on foot and not on his she-camel. 139

There are indications that al-Asma'i admired some elements of ḥadīr, or poetic "beauties" in general. Though on many occasions he praised poets for following the path of the ancients, he favoured others for following a new path never trodden before. This new path seems to be nothing else but the path of ḥadīr. One has to bear in mind that though al-Asma'i rejected the "slaves of poetry" and those like them because of their
he believed that a poet who was celebrated for his "\text{\textit{bad\textcircled{C}}}" could still be a natural poet. This indicates that al-Asma\textsuperscript{I} differentiated between "\text{\textit{bad\textcircled{C}}}" and takalluf. The latter quality could be found even in the poetry of those who followed the path of the ancients among the muhdath\textsuperscript{\textcircled{U}}n themselves. Confirmation of what we have claimed is to be found in the reply of al-Asma\textsuperscript{I} when asked to compare Bashsh\textsuperscript{\textcircled{R}}r with Marw\textsuperscript{n} and say which was the better poet. He said "Bashsh\textsuperscript{\textcircled{R}}r is a very natural poet (\text{\textit{math\textcircled{C}}} \text{\textit{middan}}) and does not seek out difficult or impossible ma\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}n\textsuperscript{\textcircled{I}}}r. He is not like that poet (meaning Marw\textsuperscript{n}) who writes a line of poetry and spends many days polishing and correcting it. Bashsh\textsuperscript{\textcircled{R}}r is like al-\text{\textcircled{A}}sh\textsuperscript{\textcircled{R}} and al-\text{\textcircled{K}}\text{\textsuperscript{U}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{H}}}h\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{G}}}h\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}h\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{D}}}h\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{U}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{B}}}y\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{N}}}n, and Marw\textsuperscript{n} is like Zuhayr and al-\text{\textcircled{K}}\text{\textsuperscript{U}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{Y}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{C}}}t\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{H}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{U}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{V}}}; he is an affected poet (\text{\textit{mutakallif}}).... Marw\textsuperscript{n} has taken a road that many others have taken before and has not overtaken those who preceded him; the same is true of his contemporaries. But Bashsh\textsuperscript{\textcircled{R}}r has taken an untravelled road, has excelled in it, and is unequalled in it; he is the greater in versatility and in all the genres of poetry, and he has a greater abundance and broader scope of "\text{\textit{bad\textcircled{C}}}", whereas Marw\textsuperscript{n} has never gone beyond the manner followed by the ancients".\textsuperscript{140} On another occasion, al-Asma\textsuperscript{I} showed his admiration for the similes of Bashsh\textsuperscript{\textcircled{R}}r and his new style of poetry. "He was born blind", he said, "and could not see the world. In his poems he compares things with one another and attains such a vision as those who can see are unable to attain. He opens paths on which nobody before him has walked".\textsuperscript{141} According to al-Asma\textsuperscript{I} Bashsh\textsuperscript{\textcircled{R}}r is the "seal" of poets and "had his days not come late in time, he would have preferred him to many poets". He criticised the ru\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{W}}}t\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}} of K\text{\textsuperscript{U}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{F}}}a because "they 'sealed' poets with Marw\textsuperscript{n} instead of Bashsh\textsuperscript{\textcircled{R}}r". This was not acceptable "because Marw\textsuperscript{n} was associated with Salm al-\text{\textcircled{K}}\text{\textsuperscript{H}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{A}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{S}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\textcircled{I}}}r; they competed in praising caliphs, and they received the same rewards. Salm himself was a pupil of Bashsh\textsuperscript{\textcircled{R}}r, and the latter used to correct the poetry of Marw\textsuperscript{n} himself who never divulged a poem before reciting it to
Al-Asma‘i did not greatly exaggerate when he described Marwan as an affected poet and likened him to Zuhayr and al-Hutay’a. Marwan himself admitted that he would take a full year to complete a poem; he would spend four months writing it, four months checking and revising it, and lastly he would take four months to present it.  

What has been said has given us a general idea about the interest of al-Asma‘i in badr and/or the poetic "beauties" in general. We shall now consider some examples of badr and mahasin admired by him. He is reported to have spoken about mutābaga, which he explained as follows: "Its origin (literal meaning) is putting the back foot in the place of the fore-foot, and it refers to the manner in which quadrupeds walk". Al-Nabigha al-Jahili says:

\[
\text{لْبُنُتُ يَكْسَرُ يِشْقَادُ الرِّجَالَ إِذَا ما الْبَرْدُ لْدُبَّ عَن أَفْرَانِهِ صَدِّيقَةً}
\]

He then recited the following line of Zuhayr as "the best line of mutābaga":

He is also said to have admired tasdir, which is known to some people as radd al-kalâm ala sudūrihi. It means that a poet uses a certain word at the beginning of a line and then repeats it at the beginning or the end of the second half of the same line. If poetry is written like this it is easy to guess the rhyme-word in advance. Al-Asma‘i said: "The most beautiful tasdir is the following line by Amr b. al-Tufayl:

\[
\text{فَلَمْ بُنَتْ سَناَّةً فَضَرَّةً نَامِلاً فَوَّضَنَّ كُلّ صِرّاً ذَرُّةً وَسَنَامَ }
\]

In a passage quoted by Ibn Rashiq, Al-Asma‘i displayed his knowledge of iltifat in a poem of Jarir. Ishaq al-Mawsili reported that al-Asma‘i asked him: "Do you know the iltifat of Jarir?" Ishaq asked: "What is
Then al-Asma'ī said: "Don't you see him concerning himself with his poetry (muğbilan ʿalā shī'rihi), and suddenly turning to the bāšāma (a kind of tree) and blessing it?" Jarīr suddenly breaks off the sequence of his poem in order to pronounce a blessing on the tree, a branch of which was in the hand of his beloved when she bade him farewell. The same example is to be found in Kitāb al-badiʿ of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, where he defines ittīfāt as the poet's changing from the second to the third or from the third to the second person.

Al-Asma'ī praised the poet who used Išāl, the one who could elevate a low ma'na and lower an elevated ma'na, and the one who "after completing the ma'na before the rhyme, adds to it by writing the rhyme-word, like al-A'shā, who says:

but it is clear, is a means of exaggeration, and in praising the poet who has the ability to demean a great ma'na or to glorify a low one by his words, al-Asma'ī may be revealing a taste for exaggeration and a tendency to give more importance to words than to ma'na. On another occasion, however, he is reported to have demanded truth and integrity of ma'na.
he said to the man who had recited the lines: "Do not admire them, because they are worth nothing; the most excellent poetry is that in which you find truth and a full ظن، as in the following line of Imru' al-Qays:

He probably wanted ظن that were 'realistic' and not precious, and although he could admire exaggeration, it had to be sensible, and in moderation.

One needs to be careful in using the term "truth" (سید) when discussing the views of al-Asmaٍ concerning poetic comparison. سید should not be understood as the opposite of "lie" but rather as meaning "reality", as just suggested. In its religious sense, سید was not to be recommended in poetry, in al-Asmaٍ's view. Good (خیر) and truth (سید) are not suitable for poetry, and in fact they reduce the rank of the poet if he pursues them. Talking about Hassan b. Thabit, al-Asmaٍ declared that he was a فحٌ in his Jahili poetry but not in his Islamic poetry. He is reported as saying: "Poetry is نکید and its way is evil (شراط); if it is composed on matters of good (خیر) it will become weak and soft. Hassan b. Thabit was one of the Jahili fuhul, but when Islam came, his poetry declined". On another occasion, he said: "The poetry of Hassan written in the Jahiliyya is some of the most excellent poetry, but its firmness was cut back (نکا matnuٌ) in Islam, and that was because of the حال of the Prophet...". He gave as examples of Hassan's weak and soft poetry in Islam his elegies on the Prophet and his companions, Hamza, Jaffar, and others. Real poetry, he said, was that of the Jahili fuhul, like Imru' al-Qays, Zuhayr, al-Nabigha, in which they discussed topics
like descriptions of deserted dwellings, ḫadīr, madīb, tashīf, vine, horse descriptions, wars and mufākhara. These were suitable subjects for poetry; if it was written on subjects connected with khawār, it would not be excellent.\textsuperscript{152}

It is somewhat strange that al-Asma\textsuperscript{i} should have rejected poetry that dealt with religious subjects, particularly that of Hassān, in view of the Prophet's approval of his poet. The reasons that he gives for this rejection appear even stranger. If he had argued that, since poetry is evil (or even simply concerned with worldly matters, which is probably what he meant by sharr in this context), it would defile or debase religious themes, this would be immediately comprehensible. To say, however, that religious themes make poetry weak and soft might be thought to be sacrilegious. I suspect that what he said was connected with the doctrine of iḥlāl al-Qur'ān; given the inimitability of the Qur'ān, any attempt to render in poetry any part of the divine revelation could only result in a weakening and softening of it. The lān of which he spoke was thus to be understood as a softening of the maqām (if one can use the term in this connection), in comparison with their presentation in the Qur'ān. This would detract both from the majesty of God's words and from the secular standing of the medium in which an attempt was made to paraphrase them.

It was probably for similar reasons that he did not care for the later poetry of al-Nabīgha al-Jaḍī, who was also a mukhadram, like Hassān. His remark that this poetry "looks as if it were stolen" may refer to the effect of Islam on al-Jaḍī's poetic production.

We find that most of his selections relate to the topics that he listed
as suitable for poetry, but despite the fact that he did not include rithāʾ among these, he nevertheless admired a number of famous rithāʾ poems and declared them to be the best in the genre.

As an example of the way in which he criticised poets' treatment of these topics, let us take horse descriptions. Those whom he singled out as being excellent describers of horses were Abū Duʿād al-Iyāḍī, Tufayl al-Chanawi and al-Nābihga al-Jaʿāḍī. The first two of these had been associated with horses for a great part of their lives and so they were able to describe them very well. As for al-Jaʿāḍī, he lacked originality, since he had learned to describe them merely by listening to other poets' descriptions of them, but he was still excellent. In these descriptions al-Asmaʿī looked for factual expertise concerning horses, rather than for other artistic qualities; they should conform with reality. Thus, he criticised Imruʿ al-Qays for describing his mare as follows:

"because if hair covers the face, a horse will not be regarded as noble (karīm), it is best for it to have little hair over the face, as in the following line of Abī d:

It is immediately evident that the lines constitute a simple physical description, which depicts the ideal model of a horse, and correctly describes its various members; it seems likely that al-Asmaʿī was right
in assuming that al-Ja'fā'ī had learned to describe horses by listening to others' descriptions of them in their poetry. What concerned al-Asma'ī was the correctness of the description in relation to the traditional data. The same applied to the lines describing camels that he selected from a poem of 'Umar b. Laja' that begins:

The poets who were famous for describing camels were 'Uyayna b. Mirdās, who was the best at describing a riding-camel (markūb min al-ibl), al-Rā'ī al-Kumayrī, who was the best at describing a milking-animal (maḥlūb) in ḥaṣād, and 'Umar b. Laja' al-Taymī, who was the best at describing it in ṭajāž. 158

In spite of al-Asma'ī's obvious attachment to topics connected with the desert and Bedouin life, and his use of Jāhili poetry as a standard by which to judge later poetry, he did, on occasion, express a preference for Islamic poets to Jāhili ones. It is reported that he criticised to al-Rashīd the following line of al-Rabī'ī al-Dhubyānī:

Admitting that the simile in the line was incomparable and unique, he deprecated the poet's use of the word saṣām and stated that it was not acceptable to liken the beloved to a sick person. He preferred the two lines by the Islamic poet 'Aḍī b. al-Riqa'ī in which he used a pleasanter simile, describing the eyes of his beloved as the sleepy eyes of a wild cow:

Ibn Rashīq said that al-Asma'ī was aware that "the madhhab of the ancients
has to be abandoned in many respects for other styles that suit people better with the passing of time. His attitude was similar to that of Khalaf al-Ahmar, who preferred Harwān to al-‘Ashā for using pleasant words in his poetry, as we have seen. Nevertheless, al-Asma‘ī was still a great admirer of the ancients, whom he regarded as standards for poets of his own time. When asked whether the three Umayyad poets, Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akhtal were ṣuhūl or not, he replied that since they belonged to Islam, he would say nothing about them, but that “if they had belonged to the Jahiliyya, they would have had a distinguished place (in that ranking)”. However, al-Akhtal excelled even the ancients in his poem in which he wrote:

أَلْهَنَّ لَقَدْ أَسَدَّ اللِّيْلَ عَلَىِّ يَضَاهِيَهَا النَّشِئَ طَوْيِّهَةَ الْقُرْبِ

In comparing al-Rā‘ī with Ibn Ḥuqīl, he did not indicate a preference, but his words implied that he admired al-Rā‘ī, because "his poetry is more similar to the poetry of the ancients".

Those poets of Islam whom he called the saḥat al-shu‘arā‘ or the "rear-guard of the poets" are al-Rammāh b. Mayyāda, Ibn Harma, Ru‘ba, Hākan al-Xudrī, and Mākin al-‘Umhrī. Of these, Ibn Harma wrote the best line:

لاَ أُمْحَبِّي الْعَزْوَةَ بِالْفَقْصَالْ كَرَّرَ اسْتَبَعَ رَأْيَ تُرْبَةَ الأَجْلِ

Al-Asma‘ī still declared that "had Ibn Harma not come so long after the time of the ancients, he would have been considered a faḥl, but since he is a mutalakhkhīr he does not deserve the title. When he expressed a preference for Ibn Harma to the others on the strength of this line, he was actually most impressed by the poet's nobility and generosity as demonstrated in it. He claimed that even Ḥātim al-Na‘ī could not have said more than Ibn Harma had said from the point of view of generosity. He praised a group of both Jahili and Islamic poets for their distinction
in certain poetic topics, even though he did not appreciate all of these. For instance, he spoke of 'Umayya b. Abī al-Salt as the best poet at writing about the hereafter, a subject which, as we have seen, he considered unsuitable for poetry. 'Antara was the best at describing war, and 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a at writing about youth (dhikr al-shabīb).

Like Ibn al-'Arabi before him, al-'Asma mentioned lines written by certain poets as models for those who wished to write on the same subjects. They ought to follow and imitate those lines if they wanted to succeed. He said that "any poet who wishes to describe the mouth (thakhr) of a woman needs to look at the following line by Hishr b. Abī Khāzim:

\[
\text{يُفَلَّتُ السَّفَاءُ عَنَّا أَفْخَوْنَا}
\]

Those who wish to describe a woman's eyes need to look at the lines of 'Adī b. al-Riqā (quoted before). The following lines of 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a are the best example for those who wish to describe a woman's colour:

\[
\text{فَوْقَ مَكْنُونَةَ تَقُونَ مَنْ خَيْلَتُ الْزَّينَ مَعَ الشَّيْبَ}
\text{فَمَنْ مَخَّطَتْ جَنْدُكَ فَحُكْمَكَ فِي النَّسَبِ}
\]

The line of 'Alqama al-Fahl describing a male ostrich is a model for those who wish to write on the same subject:

\[
\text{هَمْنَٰٰئَ كَانَ جَناَحِهِ وَمُخْمُوَٰٰرُ}
\text{يَبْنُ أَطَافَتْ بِحَرَاصٍ نُصْبُهُ}
\]

And lastly, al-Nabigha al-Dhubyanī is to be followed on the topic of itidār, especially in this line:

\[
\text{فَإِنَّا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ الَّذِي هُوَ مَعْدُونٌ فَإِنَّا خُطِّتْ أَنَّ الْمَسَأَلَيْنَ وَاسِعَ}
\]

Some poems he declared the best on their subjects, such as that by al-Shammākh b. Dirrār in which he described a bow, rhyming in ٢١١. It was better than another poem, in the same rhyme, written by al-Mutanakhkhil, because the one by al-Shammākh was longer. Al-Mutanakhkhil, on the other hand, wrote the best poem rhyming in ٢٣٠, in which he said:
Abū Dhuʿayb al-Mudhali wrote the best poem rhyming in ḥim, starting:

The two poems of rithāʿ by Kaʿb b. Saʿd al-Chanawi and al-ʿAṣhā al-Fāhilī had no equal in the world.¹⁶⁶

Like earlier critics, in most of their judgements, al-ʿAsmaʿī did not state any criteria when judging those poems. One can guess at some of those that he applied in certain poetic genres, such as maddīn and ḥiṣāʿ. It seems that he was looking for poetry in which the poet combined an abundance of maṭanī with great conciseness. An example of this is in the following two lines of maddīn by Kaʿb b. Zuhayr on the Prophet:

The conciseness is in the second half of the last line. Al-ʿAsmaʿī cited the lines as the best ones in praise of the Prophet.¹⁶⁷ Similar to these lines is the one by al-ʿAṣṣajj:

Al-ʿAsmaʿī stated that the origin of the lines by Kaʿb and al-ʿAṣṣajj was the following line of al-Ḥarith b. Hilliza:

in the first half of which he had condensed a number of maṭanī. Al-ʿAsmaʿī then stated that no poet had produced better maṭanī than those of Kaʿb in the two lines quoted above.¹⁶⁸

Conciseness and abundance of maṭanī in the poetry of ḥiṣāʿ was to be found in the following line by al-Akhtal:

He said: "This is the most satirical line ever written by the Arabs,
because it combines various kinds of ħizā'. The poet implies that these people are misers, since they put out their fire for fear that a guest may see it and come to them at night; they are misers also because they do not use water but urine to put it out; they are misers also because their fire is so small that a little urine can put it out, the urine of an old woman, at that—denoting very little indeed. He also represents them as having no respect for their mother and as having no servants in their tent. 169

In ṣahāṣal, al-Asmaṣī again required riqa. This may be seen in his criticism of al-Nābihī al-Dhibyānī for likening his beloved to a sick person. Al-Asmaṣī's view of riqa appears equally clearly in his criticism of Tarafa who "did not know how to love passionately" because, after writing excellent lines in which he expressed his great passion for his beloved, claiming that he could not sleep when he remembered her:

\[\text{اَعْتُبَرَ الْبَقَّاءَ اِمَّ سَافِكَةَ هْرَ} \\
\text{اَشْهَدَ الْعَيْنََّ خَيْلَ مَا بَقَرَ طَافَ وَالْكَرْبُ لَبَدْرُل يَسْتَرُّ}
\]

he then spoilt the effect by writing:

\[\text{مَا رَأَيْنَّ الْلَّهَ بِنْتَيْنَ} \\
\text{أَسْتَيْنَّ مُسْلِمَيْنَ أَشْهَبَ الْبَلْدَ وَلَيْسَ الْأَفْرُ}
\]

According to the dictates of riqa, the poet should not boast of himself to his beloved, and should not make himself equal to her; he should not be harsh with her if she angers him, but rather be soft and gentle. Also, the true lover should be content with little from his beloved, as we have seen before. This is why al-Asmaṣī admired the following lines of Ỉshāq al-Mawsī, in which the poet seemed to be content with every small token of recognition from his beloved and to consider it to be something great:

\[\text{مَّلَأٌ إِلَيْهِ بَرَاءٌ} \\
\text{مَّلَأٌ إِلَيْهِ بَرَاءٌ} \\
\text{مَّلَأٌ إِلَيْهِ بَرَاءٌ} \\
\text{مَّلَأٌ إِلَيْهِ بَرَاءٌ}
\]
Hearing the poet recite those lines, al-Asma'ī described them admiringly as "al-ḥārij al-khusrauī wa-al-washy al-iskandarī". The fact that he rejected the lines when he knew that they were by Ishāq himself, on the grounds that they were written with affectation, does not alter the fact that he first admired them for the reasons that we have given.

To sum up, we may say that although al-Asma'ī was one of the old school of criticism, and the most important figure of the group whose views we have discussed, and although he was greatly influenced by those who preceded him, he differed from them in that he had some of his views concerning poetic criticism recorded by his pupil Abū Hātim in Fuhūlat al-shu'arā'. He tried to make a classification of poets based on the quality of fuhūla, and he divided them into fuhūl and non-fuhūl. The influence of the ḕedouin environment appears in his using the term fahl itself, which was originally used for a camel-stallion, according to his own definition. Among his criteria for fuhūla was transmission (riwāya) of the work of senior poets, excellence of production, variety of poetic genres, quantity of composition, and sometimes religious and moral considerations, although he actually separated religion from poetry. Other standards that he used in comparing different poets, poems and lines are tabī, varying levels of excellence, writing at length, conciseness and abundance of mašā of compressed into a few words, especially in madīn and hijā, though he was not interested in the latter; he also required ṭingga in ghazal poetry. He rejected affectation, and, like many of the earlier critics, he recited Islamic and muhḍath poetry as a means of relaxation. He sometimes praised a combination of firmness and delicacy in poetic style and form. He accepted, and appreciated, the new path of poetry by Bashshār, and he even admired some kinds of badī and māhāsin. Nevertheless, he still considered Jāhilī poetry as the model to be
followed as the standard for judging later poets, despite the fact that he was moderate in his judgements on them and even preferred some of them to Jâhilî poets. Those considered by him as the "seal" of poets were fewer than they might have been because some who were otherwise qualified appeared only in Islamic times. His most interesting and original view was that of the relationship between khayr and sharr and poetry, which led him to advance a more or less logical justification for regarding the topics treated by the Jâhilî fuhûl as the most suitable for poetry.

The old school of critics and the muhdathûn:

The members of this school were generally interested in ancient poetry for various reasons; as Ibn Rashîq said, they were principally looking for shawâhid for eloquent language. As we have mentioned, the origin of the school can be traced back to Ibn ʿAbbâs, who used poetry in interpreting the Qurʾān. When these critics appeared they based their studies on this idea and extended them to cover other areas of linguistic and grammatical learning. Besides this, some of them were interested in poetry that contained sharīh, akhār and other items of knowledge. They felt a responsibility to preserve the language and the ancient poetry, and this resulted in collections such as the Mufallaqāt, Asmāʾīyyāt, Mufaddaliyyāt and Jamhurat Ashʿar al-ʿArab, despite the fact that some of these contain Islamic poetry as well. Although there may have been some artistic criteria behind these collections, the main reason for their existence is that the collectors saw it as their duty to make them. Some of them were even requested by the caliphs to do so, as was the case with the Mufaddaliyyāt. This activity displayed the official side of the characters of these early critics, ruwat, grammarians and philologists, who seem to have lived a kind of double life. Aside from their jobs as defenders of the language, occupied with their taxing studies of ancient poetry, they tended to seek relaxation as we have mentioned before, in reciting what they thought to be excellent of Islamic and muhdath poetry.
We have seen how al-Asma'ī was interested in certain lines that displayed a delicacy of touch and were composed in short metres with "light" rhymes (khiffat al-rawi). He was frequently heard to quote, with great admiration, lines like:

سَمِعَ الْحَمَدَ لَنَا ثُمَّ رَبِّيَّةٍ حَمِيدًا
لَيْلَيْلَيْ أَعْظَبُ الْبَلَاءَ مُعْظُودًا
كُرُّ شَيْبَـاَبِيَّةَ وَالْشَّهْوُرُ وَالْأَمْرَ

In admiring and reciting such lines, and others of muhdath poetry, these critics of the old school were truly and sincerely expressing themselves as men of letters who appreciated poetry. It is true that men like Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', Khalaf al-Ahmar, Ibn al-Ḥabīb, Abū 'Ubayda and even al-Asma'ī, expressed some views hostile to the modern, and even the early Islamic, poets. But their selections from the two groups' poems, and al-Asma'ī's praise for the originality of Bashshār and admiration for some kinds of badi' and mahāsin, should prevent us exaggerating their hostility towards the muhdathūn, despite the fact that they took antiquity as a standard against which to judge early Islamic and muhdath poets, and even those whom they called sābat al-shufara'.

However, the hostile views expressed by these critics towards the muhdathūn caused a reaction from the latter against the former and resulted in the emergence of a group of critics who represented a new trend in Arabic literary criticism, regarding poetic comparison in particular. This group of critics demanded an equal judgement for ancient and muhdath poets alike, based not on antiquity but on excellence. This will be discussed later, but in the following pages we shall see some aspects of the reaction of the muhdathūn against the earlier critics. In fact, the defence of the muhdathūn started with the poets themselves; Ibn Munāḏhir was perhaps the pioneer in this. Hammad al-Argat reported that he once met Ibn Munāḏhir, who said to him: "Pass my greetings to Abū 'Ubayda, and tell him that Ibn Munāḏhir says to him: "Fear Allāh, and
Judge between my poetry and the poetry of 'Adī b. Layd. Do not say that one is a Jāhili poet and one is an Islamic poet; that one is saddīn and one is muhdath, so that you judge between the two epochs; but rather judge between the two poems and forego partisanship". He then recited to Hammad al-Arqat the rithā' poem he wished to be judged:

Ibn Munadhir regarded himself as no lower in poetic rank than the great Jāhili poets. When he met al-Asma'ī and Khalaf al-Ahmar at a dinner party, he said to the latter: "Even if Imru' al-Qays, al-Nābigha and Luhayr are dead, their poems are still alive, so I ask you to compare my poetry with theirs". Khalaf took a plate full of soup and threw it in Ibn Munadhir's face.174

Instead of submitting to the critics, he fought them, boasted of his capabilities, and showed his independence of them. He satirized Abū 'Utayda, and when al-Khalīl b. Ahmad claimed that all poets submitted to him, and that if he praised them their poetry was marketable, otherwise not, he challenged him and said; "By Allāh, I will praise the Caliph in a poem with which I shall need neither your help nor that of anyone else".175

Other poets among the muhdathūn are reported to have opposed the earlier critics. It is said that Bashshār was able to force al-Akhfash or Sībawayhi to quote his verse as a grammatical hujja, probably for fear of his satire after they had criticised him.176 The muhdathūn expressed their views about the earlier critics among the ruwat in their verses. Marwān b. Abī Hafsa accused them of ignorance, likening them to camels that carried books and knew nothing about what they contained. He wrote:

Note: (~~JJ .-J~jJJ cr~:!

L~'V-.-/.J.!.

Lo .07
Ibn al-Rūmī told a certain Abū Ja'far that he was not qualified to criticise poetry because it was more difficult to recognise excellent poetry than to distinguish true coin from false. He wrote:

When Abū Nuwās was asked to judge between Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, he preferred the former; and when they told him that Abū ʿUbayda did not agree with him, he replied: "This is not something known to Abū ʿUbayda; it is known only by those who are pushed into the narrow (ways) of poetry".178

A similar reply was given by al-Buhturī, who preferred Abū Nuwās to Muslim b. al-Walīd because the former had written poetry in all poetic genres and was excellent in all its aspects. He wrote poetry according to his wish, serious and jocular (jīd wa-hazl), while Muslim limited himself to one style and never went beyond it. When al-Buhturī was told that Abū al-ʿAbbās Thaʿlab did not agree with him in this judgement, he replied: "This is not something known to Thaʿlab and those like him, who get poetry by heart but do not write it. Poetry is known only by those who are pushed into its narrow ways".179

However, while the muhdathūn were engaged in their struggle with the earlier critics, the field of criticism began to be dominated by another group of critics, who formed a new school and represented a compromise between the two warring factions. These new critics were men like al-Jāhiz, Ibn Qutayba, al-Mubarrad and Ibn al-Muʿtazz. Nevertheless, they made use of the views of the old school, even though they differed from them in their approach to the muhdathūn. The conflict continued in another way and reached its peak with the appearance of Abū Tamamm,
backed by al-Sūlī, and al-Butturi, backed by the school of al-Āmidī. These last stood for 'amūd al-shīr, whereas Abū Tamān stood for the style of ṣadīr. Al-Butturi himself did in fact use ṣadīr in his poetry, but he clung more firmly to 'amūd al-shīr and the style of the ancients, as may be seen from Kitāb al-muwazzana of al-Āmidī.

The old school of criticism resembled a bridge between the scattered views of literary men that we have already discussed and the views of those who recorded their opinions in systematic works of literary criticism. The first representative of these was Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, with his book Tabaqat fuḥūl al-shuʾarāʾ. Although he was really a typical critic of the old school, we have chosen, as we have said, to deal with him separately, since his book is considered to be the first work of Arabic literary criticism, putting aside Al-Asmaʾī's Fuhūlat al-shuʾarāʾ.
Ibn Sallām was a Basran scholar, who, with his book Taḥaqat fuhūl al-shu'ara', represented the second stage of the old school of literary criticism and poetic comparison. Being a pupil of al-Asma'I, Khalaf al-Ahwār, Yūnus b. Ḥabīb and Abū Ubayda, among others, he was deeply influenced by their views concerning poets, and by other groups of 'ulamā', as well as by men of letters, and poets; he had, however, a number of views of his own, in which he seems to have been original. The title of his book indicates the possible influence of al-Asma'I, in using the term fuhūl, though Ibn Sallān's concept of fuhūla was more open than that held by al-Asma'I. This will be apparent from the fact that, while al-Asma'I was very grudging in conferring the title fahl on his poets, Ibn Sallān, on the contrary, admitted many of them into this category.

One of the main problems discussed by Ibn Sallān in the introduction to his Taḥaqat is the authenticity of the Arabic poetry available at his time and in particular Jāhili poetry. The authenticity of the poetry attributed to any poet was important to Ibn Sallān in his grading, since quantity of production was one of the standards he used for this. His negative description of the falsified poetry gives us a general idea about the characteristics of the authentic poetry and shows us the qualities of poetry in which he was interested. The fabricated verse did not contain evidences for eloquent language, as he described it; and this indicates his similarity with those grammarian critics who were looking for poetry which could be quoted as a ḥuji'a. Poetry should contain edifying matter (ma'ānī and adab) and aphorisms, apart from the principal poetic genres, which were, as far as he was concerned, wonderful praise (madā'īn mā'īn),
He did not mention rithā' and wasf, although he gave the poets of naraṭhī a separate section in his study. The sort of hijā' singled out by Ibn Sallām is hijā' musāḥī, and on this point he seems to have been in full agreement with those of his own time, like Yūnūs b. Ḥabīb, and his distant predecessors, such as ‘Umar b. al-Khattāb, in their views concerning the most harmful hijā'. One may also expect the quotations of Ibn Sallām to be relevant to what he said about the characteristics lacked by the falsified poetry.

The most authentic poetry was that transmitted by the Bedouins and accepted by the ‘ulamā'. He gave great consideration to riwaya, and therefore rejected those poems recited by the suhāfiyyūn, those who learned poetry from written sources and did not hear it recited by the Bedouins. Some of the poetry transmitted by Ibn Ishaq in the Sīra, the poetry which the different tribes had attributed to their poets after the early Islamic conquest, that transmitted by untruthful transmitters, by the muwalladūn, and even by some Bedouins—all of this was totally rejected by Ibn Sallām. He described the poetry transmitted by Ibn Ishaq as kalām wāhin khabīth and ḍaff al-asr gailī al-tulāwā.

While discussing the Authenticity of Jahili poetry and rejecting that transmitted in the Sīra by Ibn Ishaq, who attributed some poems to Ād and Thamūd, Ibn Sallām stated that qasīd and long poems began to be written at the time of Hashim Ibn ‘Abd Manāf and ‘Abd al-Muttalib, the Prophet's grandfather. Again, he mentioned that "the first one who wrote qasīd and mentioned events (waṣāli') was al-Muhalhil Ibn Rabī’al-Taghlibī, when his brother Kulayb was killed by the Banū Shaybān."
When he talked about urban poets of Mecca, Medina, Oman and Taif, he stated that production of poetry increased with wars, such as the wars which took place between Aws and Khazraj. There was not much poetry among the Quraysh or in Oman, because there were not many wars, disputes or mutual raids. Also, when he talked about poetry in different tribes and its transfer from one tribe to another, he reported that it originated in the tribe of Rabia, among whom there were al-Muhalhil and Sa'd Ibn Malik, who says:

Such remarks seem to indicate that he linked poetry with war, where we expect poems of _mufakharah_ (tribal or personal), _ritha_', and narrative of events (_wasaila_') and battles (_ayam_ of the Arabs. Such poetry contains a great deal of _akhbar_ and genealogical facts, as do poems of _hija_'. He considered poetry as both a sort of science (_ilm_) and a craft (_sina ra_). He quoted 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab as speaking of poetry as _ilm_, and he himself described poetry as the _diwan_ of the Arabs. Interest in poetry as a source of _akhbar_, and records of genealogies, is also attributed to other Basran scholars like Abū 'Ubayda. Ibn Sallām did not differ from his _shuyūkh_ in that respect. The main point, however, is that his remarks concerning the relation of wars with poetry and the use of poetry as a source of various kinds of knowledge may cast some light on his quotations in the _Tabaqat_, and may serve as a guide in our attempt to discover the criteria he used in his selection and in his grading of poets. The other point to be mentioned here is that there is a similarity between al-Asma', with his notion of poetry and evil, and Ibn Sallām, with his notion of the relation between poetry and wars. Both critics also talked about the quality of _in_, as we have seen in the case of al-Asma', and as we shall see in the case of Ibn Sallām. Discussion of Ibn Sallām's criteria will occur later, when we talk about
the grades of poets and the quotations from their poems.

Following his concept of poetry as a craft, (sīnā'a), Ibn Sallām stated that the authenticity of poetry and its excellence could only be judged by an expert and qualified critic with good taste. He believed that only prolonged study of poetry and continuous recitation would result in expert knowledge of it and help the critic to make accurate judgements.

A similarity may be noticed between Ibn Sallām and the Greek Longinus who pointed out that an accurate judgement in literature resulted only from long experience. Only those with this experience could distinguish between the true and the false. According to Ibn Rashīq, Ibn Sallām believed that excellence in poetry was something to be sensed and felt, but that there was no certain definition of it, just as it is not easy to define beauty of face.

In his grading of poets Ibn Sallām seems to have been guided by two basic factors, the quality of fuhūlā and the similarity (tashābuh) between poets. The application of the term fahl, though not explained by him, was considerably enlarged, and Ibn Sallām selected forty fuhūl from the Jāhili poets and forty from the Islamic poets, including a group of mukhadramūn. Besides these, there were the urban Arab poets, shufārā' al-marāthī and the Jewish poets. In dealing with the forty famous fuhūl, he said that those who were similar to one another in their verse were divided into ten classes (tabāqāt), in each of which there were four, equal to one another. Out of all these tabāqāt, he said that, in accordance with what the learned people had said and with his own estimation, the first Jāhili tabāq was already settled, having its four poets, who were commonly regarded as the best among the Arabs, despite the fact that people disagreed about who was the best of the four. He did
not indicate any aspect of the "similarity" on which he based his classification, and we shall try to discover to what extent he applied that criterion. The fact that he graded some of the muḥāfaẓūn with both the Islamic poets and the Jāhilī ones, and that he included some of the latter with the Islamic poets, may well have had something to do with this "similarity". We can guess that he felt a similarity among the poets of the towns, among the poets of marāthī (one poetic subject), and among the Jewish poets (religion). In dealing with the first Jāhilī tabaqā, consisting of Ḫmuʿ al-Qays, Zuhayr, al-Nābigha, and al-‘Aṣhā, which he regarded as already established, he avoided giving his opinion about which was the best of them, and he limited himself to mentioning the views of critics from Kūfa and Baṣra, leaving the reader to decide for himself. His differences from al-Asma’ī in the concept of ṣubḥa appeared in his inclusion of al-‘Aṣhā in the first tabaqā of ṣubḥa, since al-Asma’ī had excluded him from that rank.

In the second Jāhilī tabaqā, Ibn Sallān was faced with a problem of his own making in limiting the number of poets in each tabaqā to four. According to him, Aws ibn Ḥajar deserved to be in the first tabaqā but, since the number was completed by the four poets, there was no room for him and thus he was transferred to the second class. Though Ibn Sallān quoted Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlāʾ's view that Aws was the fahl of Ḥajar who was relegated by al-Nābigha and Zuhayr, he still regarded him as worthy of the first tabaqā, which included the latter two poets.

But before we discuss the criteria used by Ibn Sallān in grading Aws and his peers in the second tabaqā, and try to guess the "similarity" between its members, we should try to arrive at a solution of the problem of the number four, since it had its influence on the inclusion of Aws in the second class and his exclusion from the first, and indeed
on the whole system of the book. First, Ibn Sallān was not the first to use this number in the classification of poets. The division of poets into four grades had a long history in Arabic criticism, and we have already mentioned that Imru’ al-‘ayl, perhaps following the classification used in his time, called the poet Ibn Hanzān a shā’ir. Moreover, we have also quoted the lines attributed to al-Husayn that start:

We have also quoted a line of a poet addressing another:

The line indicates a possible grading of poets into four classes, the fourth of which was probably the shā’ir. The other three were the khindīḥ, the nūlīq, and the shā’ir. One cannot deny the possible influence of this on Ibn Sallān with regard to the number four. But, in all probability, Ibn Sallān was directly influenced by the words attributed to Ibn Abī Ṭārāfa, according to al-‘Āṣma’ (also to Nusayb and Kuthayyir), which we have quoted before: “You may be satisfied with four poets: Imru’ al-‘ayl when he rides; Zuhayr when he desires; al-Nabīgha when he fears; and al-‘Ashā when he feels delight”. We have suggested that this idea was in itself an echo of what was said by ‘Abī b. Abī Ṭālib about Imru’ al-‘ayl, when he described him as having written his poetry neither for desire nor for fear. We have also said that this view of ‘Abī’s developed into the notion of motives for poetry, and we have referred to Artāt b. Suhayya’s reply to “Abī al-Malik b. Marwān when the latter asked him about poetry. He spoke of desire, anger and delight and their relation with poetry. This notion of the motives for poetry reached its final form in the idea that referred the pillars of poetry to four emotions: desire; fear; anger; and delight. Similar to it was the idea of the four elements of poetry, namely, nādīḥ, hīdā’, nasīb, and rīthā’/fakhr. Even when the two a‘rāb championed Jarīr in front of ‘Abī al-Malik, they mentioned four elements or pillars of poetry; and when the poet
al-Bitryn was asked to judge Dhu al-Rumma, he said that the latter
equaled only one-quarter of a poet, because he was excellent only in one
of the four elements of poetry.

Now, the one who seems to have been most influenced by this before Ibn
Sallān was Abū 'Amr b. al-Ṭālā', being reported as saying: "The best
poets of all are four: Ḥuwār al-Ṭays; al-Mābigha; Tārafa; and Muhalhil".17
When we come to Ibn Sallān, we can see that he might have found himself
encircled by the number four. The four poets he included in his first
tabaqa were already said to be the four best in particular emotional
circumstances, according to the notion of the motives for poetry and to
what Ibn Abī Ṭarafa had said about them. There was no possibility of
Ibn Sallān's putting five poets in one tabaqa, because he was forced to
establish his first on the already given data. This was why Aws Ibn
Hajar was excluded from the first tabaqa, even though he was the equal
of those who were included. The solution to the problem of the number
four or the magic number, as Hilary Kilpatrick called it18, is probably
to be found in what we have suggested above. The fact that Ibn Sallān
himself avoided giving his own opinion about which was the best poet in
the first Jāhili tabaqa was probably due to the critical situation in
which he found himself. Earlier critics, following the idea of the
motives for poetry, had credited each of the four with especial merit in
a particular topic, which corresponded with one of these motives; this
made it impossible for Ibn Sallān to give superiority to one of the four
poets over his peers in all poetic topics.19

If we return to the classification in the second tabaqa to investigate the
criteria used by Ibn Sallān in grading its members, we find that there is
some relation between it and the first. The first aspect of this relation
has been covered by what we have said about Aws b. Hajar. The second
aspect is of prosodic nature, namely that two poets, al-Nāhibīgha from the first tabāna, and Bishr Ibn Abī Khāzīm from the second, were criticised for commiting ḵawāʾ in their verses. ḵawāʾ (change of the vowel following the rhyme-letter) was committed by al-Nāhibīgha in these lines:

اَمْنِ اَلْلَّهِ الْمَرْحُولِ الْجَهْرِ
وَدِينُ الْخَلَالِ الْفَرَقَانَ الْأَسْمَى

and:

سَعِيرُ النَّضْرِ وَمُبْرَأٌ اَلْسَفَالَّة
يَضْعَبُ رَضْقُهُ وَافْتَنُنا بِالْهَبِب

I ḵawāʾ was committed by Bishr b. Abī Khāzīm in these lines:

آَمْمُ شُجُوْعُ ٌ دُلْعِ الْفَرْقَانِ الْجَرْحِ
وَكَانَتْ قَوْرَانًا قَوْرَانًا قَوْمًا قَوْمًا
فِى اَلْبَرِّ وَالْشَّامِ

Ibn Sallām, through association of ideas, when mentioning that al-Nāhibīgha had committed ḵawāʾ, immediately thought of Bishr, who was the only other poet among the ḵuḥul to do so.21

The most probable criterion used by Ibn Sallām in grading Aws, ḫaʾb b. Zuhayr and al-Hutasayʿa in the second class, a criterion which also may give us an idea about the similarity between those three poets, is something concerned with ṭawāya, which can also be considered as a link between these poets and Zuhayr from the first tabāna. Ibn Sallām mentioned that Zuhayr was the ṭawāya of Aws b. Ḥajar. Zuhayr himself had his poetry transmitted by his son ḫaʾb and by al-Hutasayʿa, who was also a ṭawāya of ḫaʾb himself. This chain of ṭawāya suggests a relation of pupil and master between these poets, at whose head stood Aws b. Ḥajar. In fact the three others, namely Zuhayr, his son ḫaʾb and al-Hutasayʿa, formed what the earlier critics called ṭāḥīd al-shiʿr (slaves of poetry). Ibn Sallām was possibly aware of that, and this may cast some light on his grading of the poets together. Another possibility concerning the ranking of Aws with ḫaʾb, and the link between the two poets and Zuhayr
from the first taba'a, is that Ibn Sallām was interested in the notion of "poetical houses". Talking about Aws, he mentioned that he was the stepfather of Zuhayr, and he stated that there was none of the Jāhili fuhūl in whose family house there was a continued tradition of poetry as there was with Zuhayr, and with Jarīr in Islam. Ibn Qutayba mentioned those who were poets among the family of Zuhayr, such as his father, Abū Sulma, Zuhayr himself, his sons Ka'b and Bujayr, Uqba b. Ka'b and al-ʿAwwām Ibn Uqba. As for al-ʿUtay'a, he was included in the "house of Zuhayr" because he was the ṣāwiya of the family, beside other factors common to them, which have been discussed above.

The tribal adherence suggested by Bräunlich as a criterion used by Ibn Sallām in his classification and in his quotations, namely that he was drawing on a tribal dīwān, agrees with what I have noticed concerning Ibn Sallām and the notion of the transfer of poetry from one tribe to another. Al-Asmaī mentioned that poetry flourished in the Jāhiliyya for the first time in the tribe of Rabī'a, then it moved to Qays, and finally it went over to Tamīm in Islam and remained there. Al-ʿAshā, al-Musayyab b. ʿAlā and al-Muraqqish were mentioned as among the best poets of those tribes.

Ibn Sallām followed a similar course concerning poetry and tribes. In his introduction, he talked generally about "the Arabs and their poetry, their famous poet horse-men (fursān) and noblemen (ashraf), and the battles (ayyām) of the Arabs". Then he stated that it was not possible to know all about the poets of every tribe of Arabs, and that was why he limited himself to the famous fuhūl. In another place, he spoke about poetry being with the tribe of Rabī'a in the Jāhiliyya, its first poet being al-Muhalhil, then the two Muraqqish, Sa'd b. ʿAlī, ʿAlī, the second Muraqqish, Sa'd b. ʿAlī, ʿAlī, the second Muraqqish, Sa'd b. ʿAlī, ʿAlī, the second Muraqqish, Sa'd b. ʿAlī, ʿAlī, the second Muraqqish, Sa'd b. ʿAlī, ʿAlī, the second Muraqqish, Sa'd b. ʿAlī, ʿAlī, the second Muraqqish, Sa'd b. ʿAlī.
al-}'usayyab b. 'Ala`. After that, poetry moved to Quya, among whom there were al-Nabiga al-Dhuwayl, - Zuhayr and his son Ka'b are counted among Chatafin - Labid, al-Nabiga al-Jafid, al-Mutay'a, al-Shamakh, his brother Muzarrid, and Khidash Ibn Zuhayr. Eventually, poetry moved to Tamim and remained there. Ibn Sallam then spoke about tribes and families who, on reviewing their poems, found that they were few, and therefore started to fabricate poems and attribute them to their poets of the Jahiliyya.

Such remarks and comments by Ibn Sallam indicate his interest in a tribal classification of poetry, but it does not mean that the different classes in his book were all necessarily classified on those lines. Nevertheless, his description of Ans b. Miqar as "the poet of Muddar" and al-Ash` as "the poet of Rabia" may support the claim that he was sometimes guided by this criterion of tribal adherence. More examples will be given to make it clearer. However, the most important links between the three poets of the second class, and Zuhayr himself, are those of riwa`a and similarity of poetic styles (revised and refined poetry), or al-hawl al-muhakkak, as al-Mutay'a described it. He himself was described by Ibn Sallam as a poet who had "firmly composed poetry and famous rhymes" matin al-shi'r sharud al-safiya. The perfection and firmness of composition of al-Mutay'a's verse described here is no different from what was said by those who preceded Ibn Sallam, such as Abu `Amr Ibn al-'Ala`, al-Asma`I and Abu Ubayda, who described his poetry as containing not a single defect. The same point is mentioned by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani in the Ashani.

The last two points concerning this tabaga are, first that Ibn Sallam differed from al-Asma`I in including Ka'b Ibn Zuhayr in the second tabaga of the fuhul; al-Asma`I excluded him. As we have seen, Khalaf al-
Ibn Sallām may have classified Ka'b in the second taba'a just to keep him near his father. Ka'b's qasīda, Barat Suḥād, in praise of the Prophet, gained him a religious and poetic reputation which should be kept in mind when we try to understand Ibn Sallām's, and perhaps Khalaf's, high opinion of him. The second point about the second taba'a is that, although it is one of the Jāhilī taba'a, two of the mukhadramūn, namely Ka'b and al-Hutay'a, were included in it, a fact which may suggest that Ibn Sallām was not attempting a chronological classification of his poets, but was rather guided by their "similarity", as he understood it.

Two mukhadram poets, namely al-Zibrīqān b. Badr and al-Mukhabbal al-Sa'dī, were incidentally mentioned with the poets of the second taba'a. Both of them were from Medina and belonged to the clan of Ḥišām from the same tribe. Later, al-Mukhabbal was mentioned in the fifth Jāhilī taba'a and was described as a fahl, whereas, when he was mentioned with al-Zibrīqān, both of them were described as poets who were mufīlā.39 Besides being guided by the criterion of tribal adherence in mentioning these poets together, Ibn Sallām was also guided by his concept of poetry as connected with the wars and ayyām of the Arabs, which were rich subjects for mufākhara and hijā'. When al-Hutay'a came to stay with al-Zibrīqān for a short time at Medina, he was angered by signs of hostility in the latter's wife. He satirised al-Zibrīqān and moved to stay with Baghīqa b. Ṣā'īr, the cousin of al-Zibrīqān, who competed with him in matters of nobility and generosity and who had his other cousin, al-Mukhabbal, on his side. The latter defeated al-Zibrīqān in hijā' mixed with lines of mufākhara, such as in the poem that starts:

"لَمْ يَرُبَّ إِلَّا قُرْنَا وَضَرَّاً فَغَتَّىٰ عَلَى النَّاسِ يَعُدُّ نُولَىٰ وَقَبَأَهُمَا."

Therefore it seems likely that Ibn Sallām had hijā' in mind when linking
al-`abiqā'ī and al-mukhabbat with al-Hutay'ā, who was a poet of the second tabaga. When we come to discuss the quotations of Ibn Sallān, we shall see his interest in these kinds of poetic topics.

The criterion of tribal adherence is also used in the classification of the third tabaga, where we find al-Nabigha al-Ja'fā, al-Shammākh b. Dirār and Labīd b. Rabī'ā, all of whom belonged to the large tribe of Jāyys. Besides that, al-Ja'fā and Labīd both belonged to the clan of ʿAmīr b. Saʿaʿa. The selection of ʿAbd Dhu'ayb al-Hudhayl was also made on tribal grounds. Ibn Sallān pointed out that, according to Ḥasan b. Thabit, the tribe of Hudhayl were the best in poetry, and that, according to ʿAbd Amr b. al-ʿAlā', ʿAbd Dhu'ayb was the best poet of that tribe. These judgements he accepted.24

All poets of this tabaga were muḥadramūn, though it should be noted that Ibn Sallān only once used that term, in his introductory section.25 When he talked about al-Hutay'ā, he simply stated that he had lived for a long time in the Jahiliyya and for some time in Islam.26 He said that al-Nabigha al-Ja'fā was an ancient poet who lived for a long time in the Jahiliyya and in Islam.27

The judgements passed by Ibn Sallān on the third tabaga are that al-Ja'fā was a muḥāṣr poet, who wrote in different styles, or levels (muḥtalif al-shīr), and a muḥallab poet (one who is defeated in hijā'); ʿAbd Dhu'ayb was described as a faḥl without a defect or a weakness; al-Shammākh, who was compared with Labīd, was said to be shāfīd muṭīn al-shīr, ashadd asr kālām min Labīd, wa-ṣīhi kazaṣa, wa-Labīd ashal minhu mantiqan. Labīd was described elsewhere as ʾadḥb al-mantiq, raʾī ḥawāshi al-kālām.28

It is strange that, although Ibn Sallān regarded al-Ja'fā as a
Naghallab poet (vanquished, beaten) and mentioned those poets who had defeated him in their exchanges of hijā', he still counted him among the fuhūl and called him muflaq. When we discussed the views of al-Asma'I about the term fahl, we quoted al-Mubarrad who once defined the fuhūl as those who had beaten others in hijā'. This attitude of Ibn Sallān, in regarding even those beaten in hijā' as fuhūl, is one reason for considering him a moderate critic, who conferred the title of fahl to many poets, some of whom were rejected by earlier critics. More examples of such poets will be given later on in this chapter.

With the exception of the distant relationship between Labīd and al-Shammākh as poets of Qays, it is difficult to find a similarity between them, since al-Shammākh was described as a poet of firmly composed poetry, which is more compact than that of Labīd and contains the quality of dryness (kāzāa). Labīd has an easier and less austere discourse, with sweetness and amiability. Al-Jaʿī himself did not fit with al-Shammākh, because his discourse sometimes lacked firmness and became soft (layyin) as al-Asma'I described it. The member of this tabaqa who came closest to al-Shammākh was Abū Dhu'ayb, whose poetry was also firmly composed; al-Shammākh, however, had the additional quality of "dryness".

The idea of poetic families appears again with the mention of the two brothers of al-Shammākh, Muzarrid and Jaz', both of whom were poets, and fuhūl, although al-Shammākh was the foremost fahl of the three. Muzarrid was the more similar to him, and he was also a famous poet. Ibn Sallān differed with Abū ʿAmr Ibn al-ʿAlā' and al-Asma'I, both of whom respected Labīd for his piety but did not regard him as a good poet or a fahl. Ibn Sallān described Labīd as a good and true Muslin, and at the same time ranked him with the fuhūl. The three critics agreed about the beauty
and sweetness of his discourse, and Ibn Sallām, in particular, emphasised that point in his remarks about the discourse of al-Shāmmākh. It may be that we can discern in his observation on these two poets, and on others elsewhere, a greater concern with the form and words in poetry than displayed by his predecessors.

In the same way as Ibn Sallām talked about Abī Dhu'ayb al-Huihali from a tribal point of view, describing him as the best poet of his tribe, so too he considered Labīd from this point of view, pointing out that he was the best poet of his tribe in the Jahiliyya. He used to praise and eulogise them, and mention their avyām, wars and horsemen. The notion of the relationship between war and poetry, which perhaps guided him in this study, appears again here. The fact that Ibn Sallām talked about Labīd as a poet who stopped writing poetry in Islam, and what he said about the genres of his poetry written in the Jahiliyya, reminds us of the view of al-Asmaī about suitable genres for poetry, and his assertion that Hassan was not a fahl of Islam because he wrote poems connected with khayr rather than with sharī.

The criterion of quantity, which was used by al-Asmaī, who only allowed those who had produced a large amount of poetry into his class of fuhīl, was also used by Ibn Sallām in speaking about his fourth and seventh tabāgas. While it was essential for a poet to have many excellent poems in order to be a fahl, according to al-Asmaī, Ibn Sallām differed from him in that he regarded those who had written a small number of excellent poems as fuhūl, but of an inferior standard of fuhūla. With regard to the fourth tabaga, he described its four poets as fuhūl who deserved to be mentioned together with the earlier tabāgas but, because they had few poems known to the transmitters, were mentioned later. The same applied
Another difference between Ibn Sallām and al-Asma'ī is that, while the latter rejected the poet 'Adī b. Zayd and described him as "neither a fahl nor a female" as we have seen, Ibn Sallām mentioned him among the fourth class, although he described his language as "softened" and delicate, for which reason the grammarians did not quote his poetry, as we are told by Ibn Qutayba42; this seems to indicate that Ibn Sallām did not link fasāba and fuhulā, as may also be inferred from the case of Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī. It also provides evidence that Ibn Sallām did not collect his Taba'yāt for philological and grammatical purposes. The most important fact concerning 'Adī b. Zayd is that he was described by earlier critics, like Abū 'Amr b. al-'Āla', as a poet who followed a different path from that of other poets. This was mentioned when we discussed the views of Abū 'Amr. Now, Ibn Sallām classified him with the other poets in this tabāga, on the basis of "similarity" between them; what the other critics had said makes it difficult to see what the nature of the "similarity" was.

The tribal criterion is employed again in the fourth tabāga, as well as in others to come; 'Alqama and 'Adī b. Zayd belonged to Tamīm.44 It was also employed in the fifth tabāga, where we find Khidāsh b. Zuhayr and Tamīm b. Ubayy b. Muqbil belonging to 'Amr b. Sa'īda.45 Al-Aswād b. Ya'fūr from that tabāga was not regarded as a fahl by al-Asma'ī because he had only one excellent poem; if he had written more similar poems he would have been a fahl. Ibn Sallām, however, regarded him as a fahl merely for that one excellent poem, adding that if he had written another similar poem, he would have been graded in one of the earlier tabāgas of fuhul.46
In the fifth tabaga, a comparison was also made between Khidāsh and Labīd b. Rabī'ā; according to Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlāʾ Khidāsh was a better poet. The comparison was made because the two poets again belonged to the same clan, ʿAmr b. Saʿāda.⁴⁷

In the sixth tabaga, three poets belonged to Rabī'ā, namely, ʿAmr b. Kulthūm, al-Ḥarīth b. Hillīzah of Bakr b. Wā'il and Suwayd b. Abī Kāhil of the same clan. With ʿAntara, they were graded in one class as "poets of one poem (ḥashāb al-wahīda)".⁴⁸ With the exception of Suwayd, each of them had his muṭallagāt singled out as the best poem of his poetry.⁴⁹ Ibn Sallām also described Ṭarafa, from the fourth tabaga, in the same terms.⁵⁰ What is interesting here is that Ibn Sallām did not call them "the poets of the muṭallagāt" but "poets of one poem", a fact which may indicate that the term muṭallagāt was not in general use at that time, at any rate by him; he did state that Ḥammād al-Rawīya was the first to collect "the poems of the Arabs" (ḥashār al-Arab)⁵¹, and it was, of course, Ḥammād to whom the collection of the muṭallagāt was attributed.

Two of the poems of the seventh class, which we mentioned with the fourth, as containing those who had written rather few poems, were also classified together on tribal grounds, al-Ḥutalāwīs and al-Musayyab, both of whom belonged to Rabī'ā.⁵² The first is mentioned as being the maternal uncle of Ṭarafa, while the second is said to be the maternal uncle of al-Aṭšā.⁵³ The tribal criterion is also used in the eighth class, where we find al-Namr b. Ṭawlab and ʿAww b. Ṣuwayd belonging to Abī Manāṣir b. Ṣuwayd. Although Ibn Sallām allotted ʿAww the fourth place in this tabaga he discussed his poetry immediately after that of al-Namr, a fact that indicates his awareness of the relationship between the two poets.⁵⁴ The poems selected from the poetry of ʿAww, and from that of ʿAww b. Ṣuwayd, in the same class, are poems of tribal muṣākha and ḥizār.⁵⁵
One of the four poets in this class, al-Namr b. Tabbah, was praised for his fasāna, his generosity, and he was described as:

{الشاعر ضياءٌ جريماً على الألومة.

Ibn Sallām sometimes spoke with enthusiasm about the nobility (sharāf) of a poet, his reputation, and his antiquity, as we have seen in the case of ʿAbīd and shall see in the case of others; he also often enthused about the generosity of a poet (e.g. Labīd). These good qualities in a poet seem to have played some role in his ranking, and this is reflected in the lines quoted from the poetry of al-ʿNamr in which he expressed his opinions about generosity. This will be discussed when we come to the quotations in the Tabarāt. The immediate point concerning al-ʿNamr is that it is not clear what Ibn Sallām meant by jārīʾān al-ʿala al-mantiq and whether it had something to do with the poet's poetry or not. He used the word mantiq when speaking about Labīd and when quoting ʿUmar b. al-Khattāb on Zuhayr. Mantiq there meant "words in poetry". As used here, in the case of al-ʿNamr, it seems to be part of, and related to, his fasāna. He was jārīʾān al-ʿala al-mantiq because he was a fasāh. Later, we shall see Ibn al-Muʾtazz using the word mantiq with reference to eloquence and rhetoric.

In the ninth tabaga, the criterion of nobility (sharāf) is applied in the case of Suwayd b. Ṣuwayd from the Quraysh, who was related to al-ʿNamr. Both of them belonged to Ḥudaylī. Suwayd, who was described as a skilled poet (mukhīm), was also said to be "the man of the Banū Ḥudaylī", and he was one of their leading wise men.

The term mukhīm by which Suwayd was described, as were also the poets of the seventh class, indicates a particular degree of rank in poetry. The common term used by Ibn Sallām was faḥl, which is applied to all of his
poets, who differed in their degree of Subūlā. A poet who is a fahl may also be described as nufliq (al-Mukkattal, and al-Ja’al), mujīd or invid al-shīr (Tanīm b. Muqbil, and ‘Awf b. al-Khir), or he may be described just as shā’ir (al-Huwaydira and Khidāsh b. Luhsyr). The last term, shā’ir, indicates an inferior rank of poetry to mujīd and nufliq, which is the highest of all, according to the information given by Ibn Rashīq. Inferior to shā’ir are two other types of poets, the muhān and the thuya’il (two further terms used for camels, to which should be added hāzial, mustāhkim and ḍawd, which are also used for poets).

Al-Askāf borrowed the term fahl from the camel and Ibn Sallām did the same, as well as adopting a number of different terms from the same source. It appears that even the term muhkīm may have something to do with mustāhkim, a strong and mature male-camel.

The fourth poet of this ninth tabaga, Suhaym ‘Abd Banī al-Hashās, who is described as: ḥulw al-shīr raqāḥ hawāshī al-kalām, terms similar to those in which Labīd was described earlier.

In the last tabaga, the tenth, the criteria both of nobility (sharaf) and of tribal adherence were applied. Talking about Umayya b. Hurthān, Ibn Sallām described him as a poet who was a sayyid. Also, when he talked about ‘Amr b. Sha’s, he said that he had high status and nobility among his people: وَكَانَ ذَاتُ قَطْرُ وَقَطْرُ وَقَطْرٍ فِي قُوَّةٍ. Both of them were mukhādramūn and had written poetry in both the Jahiliyya and Islam. ‘Amr b. Sha’s was said to have produced much poetry and to have excelled the rest of his tabaga in this respect. Al-Kumayt b. Ma’rūf, who was an Islamic poet, was placed in this Jahili tabaga, and this may be due to his relationship with ‘Amr b. Sha’s, both of them belonging to the Banū Asad. The other two Kumayts, al-Kumayt b. 
The Ḳaḍa and al-Kumayt b. Zayd, were compared with al-Kumayt b. Yaʿrūf (the middle Kumayt). He was said to be the best of them in the quality of his poetry, but al-Kumayt b. Zayd had produced more. The inclusion of the two other Kumayts was due to their tribal or family relationship: al-Kumayt b. Ḳaḍa was the grandfather of the middle Kumayt.

In his quotations from Jāhilī poetry, Ibn Sallān was guided by his views on the connection between its authenticity and the length of the poems, as he mentioned in his introduction. This is reflected in his citation of short poems from the most authentic and ancient poetry by Duwayd b. Zayd, Aʿṣur b. Saʿd, al-Mustawqir b. Rabīʿa, Zuhayr b. Janāb and Jadhīma al-Abresh. These short poems were cited as evidence that the very early Arabs of the Jāhilīyya did not compose long poems, and that these were, in fact, first composed by Muhalhil, at the time of Ḥāshim b. 'Abī Janāb. This helped Ibn Sallān to reject the long poems transmitted by Ibn Ishaq and attributed to poets who lived at the time of 'Ad and Ṭhamūd.

The citation of lines that contain taḥḥur and faḥḥish by Imruʿ al-ʿays and al-Aʿsha, and by al-Parazdaq, implies that Ibn Sallān was a continuation of the earlier group of critics who separated poetry and morality, in that they saw no objection to citing such poetry from a religious or moral point of view.

In the first Jāhilī ṭabaqa, Ibn Sallān seems to have been interested principally in tashbīḥ, and for that reason he favoured Imruʿ al-ʿays, declaring him the best poet of his ṭabaqa in this field, and comparing him with Thī al-Rumma, as the best corresponding poet of the Islamic classes. From the poem of Imruʿ al-ʿays starting:

آور يوم صبلاً لبناً الفهلك البالغ، فكأن كتبناه من كان في العصر الثاني
he selected only lines of tashbih. Some of these lines contain more
than one simile, such as a line that we have encountered before:

\[ \text{فَأَتَّمَّ عِدَّةَ الفَجْرِ رِبَاءٍ وَما بَاََََّلِيَّ } \]

From his mu'allaga, the lines quoted are also of tashbih, and most of
them are of horse description.\(^71\)

In accordance with what we have taken to be Ibn Sallān's concept
of poetry, his quotations, although in some cases introduced by nasib, are
concerned with fighting, hija' (tribal hija' and exchanges), mufākhara,
and the mention of ayyān and akhīr.

In the second Jahili taba'a, some lines of the qasīda Banāt Su'ād are
quoted, such as:

\[ \text{"..."} \]

These lines are in praise of the Prophet's companions from Quraysh for
their fighting and courage. A line in which the poet praises the muhājirūn
and satirises the Ansār (because they were not friendly to him) is
quoted:

\[ \text{..."} \]

When the muhājirūn became angry at his satirising the Ansār, he composed
some lines in praise of the latter, describing them as good fighters who
fought bravely on the day of Badr. These lines, which are also quoted,
start:

\[ \text{..."} \]

Personal and tribal hija' and mufākhara are to be found in the poems of
exchanged his between Musarrid b. Māhr and Kāf b. Mukayy. The lines also contain genealogical data on tribal origins. These poems lead the author to quote a poem by al-Kābīgha, also of hida', with references to genealogy and tribal origins:

A similar subject is found in the lines of al-Libīgil b. Fair.74

Poems of munāfara, which is associated with tribal mufakhara and contains midh and hida', are quoted from the poetry of al-Ḥutay'a, such as his poem on the munāfara that took place between 'Alqama b. 'Uthayth and ʿAmir b. al-Tufayl:

Another poem of his, on the munāfara between 'Uayna b. Ḥisn and Zabban b. Sayyār (both of whom belonged to Fazara) is also quoted. He favoured 'Uayna and satirised Zabban, addressing him in the first lines:

The mention of war in these three lines, in which the poet referred to three men killed by different tribes in battle, is one of the reasons for quoting them.

As we mentioned in connection with the second Jāhili tabara, Ibn Sallām was interested in hida' poetry, especially hida' bi-'l-taflil, as cited from the poem of al-Ḥutay'a in which he praised the Banū Qurayc and satirised al-Libīgil, and also from the poem of al-Mukhābāl to which we have referred before.76
When Ibn Sallām spoke about the third Jāhili class, he referred to the exchanges of hijā' between Aus b. Māghārā and al-Nābihga al-Jā'dī, citing the poem of the former which contains hijā' on the tribe of the latter. In this poem one particular line gave the poet superiority over al-Jā'dī in hijā':

Poetry of ḥikāb was quoted from this tabāqa, such as the lines of al-Jā'dī quoted to support the claim of Ibn Sallām that he was earlier than al-Nābihga al-Dhubyānī, who was contemporary with the king of Hira, al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir, while al-Jā'dī lived at the time of al-Mundhir himself. In one of his poems he wrote:

In another of his lines he is more specific in establishing his date:

In dealing with the poetry of the fourth Jāhili tabāqa, Ibn Sallām takes a more integral approach, in that he gives his judgements on whole poems rather than on qitā'as or individual lines. Two poems of Tarafa are praised, among them his mu'allaga, which is said to be the best of the mu'allagat. Ibn Sallām again did not use the term mu'allaga, but instead said:

In his judgement on Alqama's three poems he may have been influenced by the judgements of Quraysh on the same poems. He described them as excellent, wonderful poems which could be excelled by no other poetry.79 A third poet from that tabāqa to receive an integral judgement on his poetry was Adī b. Zayd whom Ibn Sallām praised greatly for several poems.80 Since he mentioned that little of the poetry in this tabāqa
was known to the transmitter, he may have intended to make a sort of 

dīwān of it; this would explain his integral approach to its poetry, 

which he adopted with no other tabaga.

His interest in tribal hijāʾ, and poetry associated with war, appears 

again in the fifth tabaga, where we find Khidāsh b. Zuhayr quoted as a 

poet who satirised Quraysh, who had killed his father on the day of 

al-Fujjar. His poem:

أبى خالسُ الغَلِيْب، مَرَضَ بِهِ عَامِرَ، أَنَّ الْزَمَّ وَاحْضَرَ الْوَظَاءَ عَلَى الْفَرْجِ 

his hijāʾ on Quraysh:

بَشَرْتُهُ ما سَرَّدَنَا غَلِيْبَةً عَلَى سَحِيْحَةَ لَوْرَةِ الْبَلِّ وَالْرَّمُّ 

and the poem called al-munsifa (a poem in which a poet praises his 

enemies and their bravery in battle against his own people):

فَاعِلَ إِنَّ عَرَضْتُ بِنَا حُمْاَةَ وَعَبَدَنِي أَحْلَىَ وَالْوَلِيدَانَ 

are quoted.81

His judgement on al-Aswad b. Yaʾṣīr was similar to that of al-Asmaʾī, but 

he differed from him in conferring the title faḥl to al-Aswad for only 

one poem, wishing that he had composed another similar to it so that he 
could have been placed in a higher class.82

Poems of tribal and exchanged hijāʾ dominate in the eighth tabaga. The 

poems of Awd b. al-Khaṭiḥ in which he replied to Laqīt b. Zurāra in a 
sort of exchange of tribal hijāʾ, and the poem of Aws b. Ghalfāʾ, in 

which he exchanged tribal hijāʾ with Yazīd b. al-Sūq, are quoted.83

A poem full of obscenity is quoted from the hijāʾ poetry of Dādī b. 

al-Ḥarīth of the ninth tabaga, whom Ibn Sallām described as an obscene 

and very evil man. His poem is hijāʾ on the people of Qurḥān of the 

Banū Nahshal, and in it he accuses their mother of making love with a
In the akhbar of the poet Suwayd b. Kurra of this tabaga, two poems about tribal conflict, containing tribal hada', are quoted. One is by Khalid b. Alqama and the other is a reply to it by Suwayd. A third poem, of tribal nufakhara, on the subject of tribal conflict, is quoted from the poetry of al-Farazdaq, even though he is not in this tabaga. His poem is quoted because its subject is relevant to the subject of the other two poems. Moreover, the tribes involved in the conflict are all related to one another. One is Banu al-Said of Dabba, to which al-Farazdaq's mother belonged. His poem starts:

A relevant poem of Jarir is also quoted. The poet addresses the tribes of Tha'lab and Bakr b. Sa'd of Dabba, the maternal uncles of al-Farazdaq. The poem contains tribal nufakhara and mention of ayman such as Yawm al-Naqi' and Yawm al-Chabir. In the tenth tabaga, lines from a poem of Kurayth b. Muhaffiz are quoted, starting:

Another poem of nufakhara by the same poet is quoted, starting:

and a further poem, in which he says:

Sons lines from a poem of tribal nufakhara are quoted from the poetry of Amr b. Sha's, starting with nasib:

Another two lines, which are associated with akhbar and tribal conflict, are also quoted from his poetry:
Although Ibn Sallān classified the poets of Ṣaʿīdī in a separate tabaga from the ten Jāhili ones, one may feel that he still regarded them as belonging to these. It is true that he classified the Ṣaʿīdī poets in one tabaga on the strength of their similarity in subject matter, but the fact that the poems that he quoted from them have the same characteristics as the Jāhili marathi, and that they do not seem to be influenced by Islam even though their poets were mukhadramūn, may explain why he placed this tabaga immediately after the Jāhili ones. The Ṣaʿīdī poems by Kaʿb b. Saʿd are all about brothers who had died, and not been killed, but the other poems of Ṣithā, by Mutammīn b. Nuwayra, al-Khansaʿ and Aʿsha Bāhila are all about brothers who had been killed. The two brothers of al-Khansaʿ were killed by the Banū Asad and Banū Murra b. Ghāṣafān; the half-brother of Aʿsha Bāhila (al-Muntashir b. Wāḥib) was killed by the Banū al-Ḥarith b. Kaʿb; and the brother of Mutammīn (Mālik) was killed by Khālid b. al-Walīd. Such information is useful to us, since we have suggested that Ibn Sallān's concept of poetry is somehow related to war, and we have already quoted him as saying that Mūhalhil was the first who wrote gasīd (passada al-gasā'ida), when his brother Kulaib was killed by the Banū Shaybān. This connection between poetry and war is similar to al-Asmāʾī's connection between poetry and sharīʿ, as we have mentioned before. Concerning Ṣithā poetry, we have seen that al-Asmāʾī rejected the Ṣithā poems written by Hassān on the Prophet and his companions, in accordance with his theory of khayr and sharīʿ and their relation with poetry; however, when he considered the two Ṣithā poems by Aʿsha Bāhila and Kaʿb b. Saʿd, he praised them as having no equal in the whole world. His admiration for those two poems and his rejection of the marathi written by Hassān, were presumably due to the fact that while the marathi of Hassān were connected with khayr (religious matters), the other two had Jāhili characteristics and were connected with sharīʿ (worldly affairs
Ibn Sallām probably preferred Mutammin because his production was greater; the other two poets were famous only for one rithā' poem each.

Shu'ara' al-Qurā al-Arabiyya, quantity of production, tribal adherence, and the concept of poetry in relation to war and the ayyām of the Arabs.

In his classification of the poets of the Arab towns, especially those of Medina and Mecca, and to some extent those of Taif and Bahrain, Ibn Sallām was guided by three factors, tribal origin, quantity of production, and his notion of the connection between poetry and war (which was related to the use of poetry as a source of information concerning the ayyām of the Arabs). He stated that Medina was the best town in poetry; this perhaps was due to the great quantity of poetry produced by its poets, as a result of the wars between its two main tribes, Aws and Khazraj. According to him, Mecca, Taif and Qman produced comparatively little poetry, because there were fewer civil wars in those places than in Medina.95

He made his division of the poets of Medina according to tribal origin, selecting five fuḥūl, three from Khazraj and two from Aws, and declared that Hassān was the best of them, despite the fact that some people preferred Qays b. al-Khāṭib.96 Quantity and general excellence were the criteria applied here in favour of Hassān, besides the fact that he excelled the other two poets of the Prophet in his hijā' against Quraysh.97 Probably Ibn Sallām was influenced by the opinion of the Prophet concerning Hassān, as well as by that of Abū 'Ubayda, and indeed
by the generally accepted opinion that Hassan was the best poet of al-
al-madar. Although he employed the criteria of sharaf and siyâda when
talking about Abî Allah b. Rawâha, stating that he was the foremost
sayîâ in his taba'a, the most respected among his people and by the
Prophet, and lastly the one who had witnessed the battle of Badr,99 he
still preferred Hassan to him in poetry. Ka'b Ibî Kâlik and Abî Qays b.
al-Kalât were both described as mujîd, but Qays b. al-Wathîn was said
only to be shâ'ir.99 When talking of Hassan, Ibn Sallân said a great
deal about his hijâ poetry against Quraish. This was Islamic poetry,
in that it was written in Islam, but its characteristics were those of
Jâhili poetry. Although Ibn Sallân did not give examples, we may presume
that it had Jâhili characteristics from the fact that Hassan made
considerable use of what Abî Bakr (who knew a great deal about the affairs
of Quraish in the Jâhiliyya) told him about their defects (mâsâlî).100
In addition, as we have seen, regarded Hassan as a Jâhili fahl only. Ibn
Sallân also classified him as a Jâhili fahl, but considered that his
fûhûla extended into the Islamic period also. He selected two of his
Jâhili poems in praise of the family of Jafna, the Ghassanide of Syria,
first the poem starting:

 Volunteer, wa-ramad an-nîm

and secondly the fakhra poem:

 Jâhili poetry, the presence of which he acknowledged,

He disregarded his Islamic marathî, and concentrated on the hijâ' that he
wrote during this period, this being similar to Jâhili hijâ', and also,
of course, a genre that Ibn Sallân considered appropriate to poetry. The
quality of ilm in Hassan's poetry, the presence of which he acknowledged,
Hassan quoted the poetry about it:

The criteria he used in classifying the poets of Mecca (the Qurayshites) are similar to those he used in the case of the Medinan poets, in that tribal origin had its role to play and that his quotations were connected with āyām, akhbār and wars in general, granted that Quraysh had not a great deal of poetry in any case, owing to a paucity of civil wars. The concept of poetry as a source of knowledge for tribal genealogies is also found. The tabara included nine poets, all of whom belonged to Quraysh. Ibn Sallām gave first place to ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zibāʾa, although he said that ʿAbd Tālib was a poet of excellent discourse. Though ʿAbū Sufyān b. al-Ḥārith was a mukhadram poet, Ibn Sallām regarded him only as a faḥl of Islam, since he rejected his Jāhili poetry. His remark on Ḥubayra b. ʿAbd Wahb, who was one of the leading men of Quraysh:
the poem of Abu Talib in praise of the Prophet:

that it was "the best poem ever written by Abu Talib". He also quoted two poems of Ibn al-Ziba'ra composed after his accepting Islam, both of which are of nadih on the Prophet.

Concerning war and poetry, Ibn Sallam quoted the poem of Ibn al-Ziba'ra on the day of Uhud:

in which he talked about the defeat of the Muslims at that battle. He also quoted the poem in which Ibn al-Ziba'ra praised the family of al-Mughira al-Yakhzumi for their good fighting on the day of al-Fujjar:

The poem also contains useful genealogical information. From the poetry of Abu Sufyan b. al-Karith, Ibn Sallam selected the poem written on the day of Uhud in reply to Hassan. The latter's poem was also quoted; its subject is the attack on the caravan of Quraysh after the battle of Badr. From the poetry of Hubayra, the author again selected the poem on the day of Uhud:

The poets of Taif shared both a local and a tribal (Thaqif) origin; the idea of the poetic family or house also appears, since Abu al-Salt and his son Umayya were mentioned among the first poets of the group. The idea of war's influence on poetry also appears here, in the remark of Ibn Sallam that not much poetry came from Taif because there were few wars or raids there. Even so, when it came to making a selection from their poetry, we notice that Ibn Sallam quoted the poem of Abu al-Salt b. Rabia "in which he praised the Persians when they killed the Abyssinians":

1. "اللهِ دُرُّمَ جَنََّةَ عُضُمَّةٍ مَّا أَنَاَ أَمْضِيَ"
and also that by his son Umayya in "which he wept over the loss of those who were killed (from Quraysh) on the day of Fadhr". From the poetry of Abū Mihjān al-Thaqāfī, he quoted a qita written on the day of al-jadisiyya between the Muslims and the Persians:

Both Abū Mihjān and Ghaylān b. Salama were described by Ibn Sallān as shari', and as we have mentioned, the nobility of the poet was among Ibn Sallān's criteria for grading his poets. More examples of this will be given from time to time in this chapter.

Like other groups of shu'ārā' al-ṣura, the poets of Bahrein belonged to one tribe ("Abī al-ʿayyās). The criteria of quantity and fasaha were again applied to this group. The use of poetry as a source of information appears here, since we find Ibn Sallān quoting lines which give an explanation of a poet's name, in this case al-Muthaqqīb, who is so called because of his line:

The last group of shu'ārā' al-ṣura are the Jewish poets of Medina and places nearby, whose poetry was praised for its excellence. The obvious similarity between these poets is their religion, although they were of different tribes, for instance, al-Samaw'āl belonged to Ghassān, al-Rābi' b. al-Ḥugayy to the Banū al-Nadīr and Ka'b b. al-ʿAṣhrāf to Tay'. The tone of Ibn Sallān's quotations changes with shu'ārā' al-Bahrāyn and the Jewish poets. In the quotation from the first group, tribal mufākhara and the poetry of war and ayyām completely disappear, and instead we find four lines of masād by al-Muthaqqīb al-ʿAbdī from his gasida, quoted also in the Mufaddalīyyāt. The poem opens:
What should be noticed here is that Ibn Sallān seems to differ from perhaps all other critics concerning the riqaṣ in nasīḥ, about which we have often spoken before. The poet here (al-Kuthaqqī) makes himself equal to his beloved and demands that she should treat him on equal terms and should fulfil her promises; otherwise he will break off relations with her. He says:

The other lines quoted from the same poem are four in which the poet makes his she-camel talk and complain of continuous travelling. Ibn Sallān did not quote the full description of the she-camel but started from the line:

These eight lines he said were the best lines of the whole poem. Both giyās are subjective poetry, since in the first the poet talks of himself directly, and in the second indirectly, through his she-camel:

The second poem, quoted from the poetry of Yazīd b. Khadhīḥaṭ (attributed also to al-Nuṣayṣīṣ al-Abīṣī), also has a subjective theme:

The poet is writing a maṭhīwa on himself. The same theme is to be found in a poem by the Jewish poet Sā'īya b. al-Ḫrīṣī:

Ibn Sallān's contention, that a large poetic output is connected with wars, is not borne out by the poetry of Bahrein, of which, he said, there was a great deal.
As for the second group, the Jewish poets, it is not absolutely clear from Ibn Sallān's quotations what criteria he applied that enabled him to separate them from the other Medinan poets. Obviously, the difference in religion is one possibility, but this is hardly reflected in the quotations that he presented from their poetry. The very fact that he labeled them as Jewish indicates that their religion played some part in his classification, but differences of them from the non-Jews, some of whom even belonged to the same tribe (Aws) are also apparent, and it is likely that these were also taken into consideration. In general, the themes of the Jewish poets are Jahili ones. No religious influence appears, and with the exception of the poems by al-Shamaw'al, al-Rabī b. al-Muqayy and Shurayh b. "Irān, which display a moral tendency, all consist of mufākhara, with some nasīb. The mufākhara is both personal and tribal. What we do not find in these poems, however, is any mention of ayār, or any exchanges of hāl', in stark contrast to the other Medinan poems, which were concerned with the conflicts between Aws and Khazraj, and between the Ansār and Quraysh in Islam. It is possible that Ibn Sallān was led to create his separate category by this correspondence of non-warlike themes with religious difference.

The Islamic tabānas

This title is somewhat misleading, since although the majority of poets listed under it are Islamic, some of them are nukhadramūn and some belonged to the Jahiliyya. This may indicate, as we have suggested before, that Ibn Sallān made his classification according to the similarity between the poets of each tabāna, as he understood it, and not according to any chronological criterion. It seems possible, in view of this, that he regarded the whole of poetry, Jahili, nukhadram and Islamic, as one unity. Earlier critics (men like Abū 'Amr b. al-ʿAlā and al-Marrūf), did
not give their opinions about the Islamic poets in the same way as they did about the Jähilī ones. Ibn Sallān differed from them in producing a classification of Islamic poets and mixing with them Jähilī and mukhādram poets, as though he regarded Islamic poetry as a continuation of Jähilī. This should be seen in the context of his concept of poetry as the diwān of the Arabs, recording their akhbar and ayyām, that is to say poetry of mufākhara (tribal or personal), exchanged hijā', and informative poetry (for genealogical facts, historical events, explanations of names or nicknames and linguistic usage), and perhaps also of his idea of the relationship of war with increased production of poetry. His quotations, with few exceptions, are to do with these topics, and their similarity, whether they come from Jähilī, mukhādram or Islamic poetry, may support the view that he looked on Jähilī and Islamic poetry as one whole. An important additional point in this regard is that Ibrāhīm b. Abī Rabī‘a, who was a mukhādram poet classified in the Jähilī tabagāh, was judged by Ibn Sallān according to his Jähilī poetry only, since he is said to have stopped writing poetry in Islam. We have also seen that Hassān b. Thābit was judged according to his Jähilī poetry or semi-Jähilī poetry written in Islam (exchanges of hijā' with Qurashī poets and mention of ayyān). In addition, Ibn Sallān quoted māraḍhī (with their Jähilī concepts) in conjunction with the Jähilī tabagāh, even though their poets were mukhādramūn and Muslims. If this point is viewed together with the others, that he did not quote the māraḍhī of Hassān (written in Islam) and that most of his quotations are of Jähilī concepts and do not show an Islamic influence, one may perhaps suggest that, although different from earlier critics in considering Islamic poetry, in the depths of his soul, he was principally an admirer of Jähilī poetry and used it as a criterion by which to judge Islamic poets. Through his concept of poetry and its relation to war, his idea of the transfer of
Poetry between tribes, his criterion of tribal adherence and, lastly, his concept of poetry as the din of the Arabs, he was able to establish a similarity between his three groups and to regard them as one unity. This similarity and unity expressed themselves in the sameness of his quotations and in his mixing the three groups in the different tabaqa, especially the Islamic ones.

In his first Islamic tabaqa, Ibn Sallām is much concerned with the exchanges of hijā'a (with mufakhamah) between its members and with their akhbār. The criterion of tribal adherence is applied here as well as in many other Islamic tabaqa. The key-word for this first Islamic tabaqa is the subject of hijā'a and its poets are Jarīr, al-Parazdaq, al-Akhtal and al-Ra'f al-Numayrī. The first two poets belonged to the tribe of Tamīm and it seems that Ibn Sallām's recognition of them is at least partly connected with his notion of the transfer of poetry between tribes, for, as we have seen, according to him, poetry reached its final destination when it arrived at Tamīm, and it remained there with them.

Jarīr and al-Parazdaq were the leading poets of Tamīm. Though al-Akhtal belonged to a different tribe, his inclusion in this tabaqa is due to the conflict between him, al-Parazdaq and Jarīr, of whom he backed the former against the latter. The inclusion of al-Ra'f comes from a wider tribal point of view and also from the conflict between him and Jarīr. He is said to have been the fahl of Mardar, until he was vanquished by Jarīr. Ibn Sallām regarded him as the last of his tabaqa; however, he remarked on his originality and his difference from other poets, not imitating or following any of them:

As we have said, hijā'a is the key-word, and Ibn Sallām, when speaking of Jarīr and al-Parazdaq, mentioned that "the two poets continued to exchange
hidā', for forty years, without either of them being vanquished by the other. No other two poets, of the Jahiliyya or of Islam, ever exchanged hidā' in such a way". He then stated that their poems on that subject were so numerous that it was impossible to quote all of them, and so he would only select the best of them. He also mentioned that al-Raḍī used to favour al-Farazdaq, which was the reason for Jarīr's satirising him. Other poets were mentioned within this tabaga, because they participated in the war of hidā' between Jarīr and al-Parazdaq. Most of them backed the latter against the former. Such poets were al-Dīnī, Jarīr b. Kharaṣṣ (Abū al-ʿAttāf), ʿAdī b. al-Riqāʾ, al-Isāmī al-Kinārī, and al-Sallatān al-ʿAbdī.

In his quotations from the poetry of this tabaga, Ibn Sallām was concerned with informative poetry and lines of naqāʿīd of Jarīr, al-Parazdaq and al-Akhtal, together with semi-naqāʿīd poems of other poets mentioned with them. Mutual hidā', together with tribal mufākhara, and occasional mention of ayām, are the general characteristics of the poetry that he quoted in this tabaga. Concerning the three principal poets, he stated that no decisive answer could be given as to which was the best. In spite of that, he appeared to favour al-Parazdaq indirectly, which may have been due to the influence of the grammarian Yūnus b. Ḥabīb. Tribal considerations may have had some role to play in the attitude of Yūnus towards al-Parazdaq, because he belonged to the tribe of Dabba, to which the mother of al-Parazdaq also belonged. This may also have been the reason for al-Mufaddal al-Dabbi's favouring al-Parazdaq. The other reason for Yūnus' admiration of al-Parazdaq is concerned with grammar.

Ibn Sallām mentioned that the grammarians admired him because he used to complicate his discourse. On the question of muṣalladāt (memorable lines complete in themselves and quoted as proverbs), Ibn Sallām stated that al-Parazdaq had more of these than the others. The influence of Yūnus on the judgements of
Ibn Sallān, concerning the three poets appears also in his quoting some lines of al-Akhtal as mu'alladāt; in these the poet praised the family of al-Farazdaq and satirised Jarīr. 142

A sign of the importance of hijā' in this first Islamic tabaqa is the use of taqhlīb and the titles mushallab and masghūb, which are intimately associated with exchanges of hijā'. The one who is defeated is masghūb, the victor is said to have shullīta or to have been recognised as superior. 143 According to Hilary Kilpatrick, the meaning of mushallab seems to have been established by Ibn Sallān, 144 but since the term is used by the mukhādram poet al-Nabīgha al-Jā'fī 145, what she suggests may not be the case. When speaking about the third Jāhilī tabaqa, Ibn Sallān mentioned al-Ja'fī as a mushallab, who had been defeated in hijā' by Laylā al-Akhylāyya, Aws b. Maqrīzī', 'Iqāl b. Khālid and others. 146 In the fifth Jāhilī tabaqa, Tamīn b. Mu'ābil was also regarded as a mushallab, who had been beaten in hijā' by al-Najashi. 147 In this first Islamic tabaqa, al-Sa'īdīth was regarded as a masghūb, who was defeated by Jarīr and sought the assistance of al-Farazdaq against him. 148 There were other poets beaten by Jarīr in hijā', such as 'Umar b. Laja', Suraqa al-Fariqī, and al-'Abbās b. Yāsīd al-Kindī (said to have died of sorrow after being beaten); the most important was al-Raʾī al-Numayrī. 149

The akhār of al-Farazdaq are filled with tribal mufakhara and exchanges of hijā' with other poets; for instance, his mufakhara with al-Ashhab b. Rumayla is prominent. 150 We also find contests of the same kind with poets such as al-Bakri (Jarīr b. Khārqī al-Ǧīlī) and Miskīn al-Jāramī, as well as a good deal of madīn on both individuals and tribes. 151

In the second Islamic tabaqa, two poets were related to one another, al-Sa'īdīth and Dhu al-Rumma, both of whom belonged to Udd b. Tābikha b. ʿIlīs b. Mudar. 152 The other two poets in the tabaqa were al-Quṭānī and
Kuthayyr. The title mushallab is applied to al-Ba‘ith and Dhū al-Rumma. The criteria that Ibn Sallān used in grading this taba‘an were those of tribal adherence, poetic subject (hijā’, tashbih and tashbīḥ) and linguistic usage. Al-Qutānī, who belonged to Taghlib, was compared with al-Akhtal of the first Islamic taba‘a. The reason for the comparison was that they belonged to the same tribe. Al-Qutānī was described thus:

\[
\text{ذان القدامي شاعر، رقيب الدوامي، خلقو الشعر.}
\]

while al-Akhtal was said to be:

\[
\text{ابن هذين دكرًا، وأصمعن الشعر.}
\]

The lines quoted from the poetry of al-Qutānī are connected with the war that took place between his tribe and Qays, lead by Zu‘far b. al-Harith, who captured al-Qutānī but released him; he praised him for this and also spoke about the war itself.  

Dhū al-Rumma was compared with Jarīr and al-Parazdaq, who were his cousins (all of them belonged to Ubd of Midar). He equalled them in some of his poetry but fell below them in the rest. Owing to his close relationship with ‘Umar b. Laja’, he supported him against Jarīr in their war of hijā’. He also supported al-Parazdaq against Jarīr. For this reason Jarīr supported Hishān al-Ma‘ra‘ī, who was exchanging tribal hijā’ with Dhū al-Rumma. Hishān was another cousin. This war of hijā’ was documented by Ibn Sallān, who quoted many of the poems with which they presented it. Like al-Ba‘ith, Dhū al-Rumma was described as mushallab, and was said not to be good in hijā’. Once again, Ibn Sallān’s concern with hijā’, particularly tribal hijā’, and mufākhara, is abundantly evident. The mention of Jarīr, al-Parazdaq, ‘Umar b. Laja’ and Hishān al-Ma‘ra‘ī in connection with al-Ba‘ith and Dhū al-Rumma is due mainly to their tribal relationship.

Dhū al-Rumma was also compared with Imru’ al-Qays in his tashbih, in which both excelled the other poets of their respective times.
In just the same way, Kuthayyir, also of this second taqabqa, was compared with Jamil, of the sixth, in his tashbih and nasib. Although Jamil excelled Kuthayyir and all other poets of nasib, and although Kuthayyir was a ḥawīya of Jamil's, and was not sincere in his nasib as his master was, he was still ranked before Jamil. The reason for this was that Ibn Sallān applied the criterion of variety of poetic genres, a criterion which had already been used by earlier critics in judging Dhu al-Rumma, as we have seen; he said that Kuthayyir "has poetic arts not to be found in Jamil. The most important of these poetic arts was that of madīḥ, for which he was praised by the poet Marwān b. Abī Hafṣa. Nevertheless, Ibn Sallān criticised Kuthayyir for some lines of madīḥ such as:

\[
\text{هَلَّونَ أَمْبِيرُ الْمُهْدَنَ} \\
\text{هُوَ الَّذِي} \\
\text{كَمِّرَ كَأَسْانِيَ الْعَلَامَ} \\
\text{مِنْ خَالِقِهِ.}
\]

and quoted lines of madīḥ and nasib for which he had been criticized by others, which does not suggest that he had a very high opinion of him. Somewhat unusually, Ibn Sallān quoted Dhu al-Rumma in this taqabqa on a point of linguistic usage. The line concerned is:

\[
\text{أَعْنَ رَسَمْتُ مِنْ خَرَاجِ مَرْحَة} \\
\text{مِنْ عَبْدَةٌ مَّسْجِمُ؟}
\]

and the point is that he uses a-ān in place of a-ān. The hamza is changed to 'ayn, and this is called 'anāfīm Tamīn, since it was a peculiarity of this tribe; the Banū Asad used also to do the same. Dhu al-Rumma belonged to 'Abd Yarāt b. Udd, and Tamīn were also descended from Udd. Ibn Sallān also quoted the dispute between Dhu al-Rumma and Bilāl b. Abī Burda over the reading of two lines by Hātim al-Ta'ā. Bilāl read the lines as:

\[
\text{مَنَّاَلَ رَيْسَهَا} \\
\text{يَبْيَبُ قَلْبَهُ} \\
\text{مِنْ خِلَّةِ الْعُمَّ مَبْعَثًا}
\]

Dhu al-Rumma considered that the reading of the second word in the first half of the second line should be al-khams and not al-khams. When they submitted the case to Abū Āmir Ibn al-‘Alāʾ he accepted both readings, and said that Dhu al-Rumma was a fāṣih. Ibn Sallān probably had in mind Abū Āmir's view that Dhu al-Rumma was the "seal" of the poets.
In the third Islamic idade, the criterion of tribal adherence was applied when Ka'b b. Ju'ayl, who belonged to Taqlib, was compared with al-Akhtal and al-Qutam of the same tribe. Al-Akhtal was ranked in the first tabaq of the Islamiyyun and al-Qutam in the second. Ka'b was said to have lived at the beginning of Islam, thus being earlier than the other two. Two other poets of the third tabaq, Suha') b. Wathil and Aws b. Man'ar, belonged to Sayd Hanat. The criteria of sharaf and antiquity were applied in the case of Suha') b. Wathil; Ibn Sallam described him as a noble famous man in the Jahiliyya and in Islam and respected among his people. This tabaq contains three mukhadram poets among whom is 'Amr b. Ahmar who was praised by Ibn Sallam for his correct language (kalim) and abundant sharib. Once again there is an indication that Ibn Sallam, in spite of his mixing the groups, was essentially a traditionalist; his emphasis on antiquity, fasaha and sharib suggests both a predilection for Jahili poetry and the influence of grammarians and philologists, such as Yunus b. Habib, Abu 'Amr b. al-'Ala' and Abu 'Ubayda. The influence of the last is clearly seen in Ibn Sallam's interest in the akhbar of poets. The lines quoted from the poetry of this tabaq are of personal fakhr, sometimes mixed with nasib, like those by Ka'b b. Ju'ayl:

The other quotations from Ka'b's poetry are individual subjective lines, but one can sense some tribal fakhr, as in the line:

and:

The longest citation quoted from Ka'b's poetry is one in which he eulogized 'Ubayd Allah b. Umar b. al-Khattab 'who was killed in the battle of Siffin by the Banu Shayban'. This again illustrates Ibn Sallam's interest in the poetry of war and records of ayya and ahhir. The
influence of earlier critics on him may also be seen in his interest in 
hiṣaṣa and moral poetry in general, like the poem of 'Amr b. ʿAmr, 
starting:

In the fourth Islamic tabara, the criteria of tribal adherence and shariʿa, 
and the idea of poetic families, are widely used. Two poets from this 
tabara, Mahshal b. ʿArrī and al-ʿAshhab b. Ṣumayla belonged to Ḥārin of 
Tāmīn, and both of them were related to ʿUmar b. Lajaʿ of Taym al-Ribāh, 
who were cousins of Tāmīn.175 Mahshal b. ʿArrī was spoken of as 
belonging to a poetic family. Ibn Sallān mentioned six members of this 
family, starting with Mahshal himself: his father, his grandfather, and 
so on back. All were said to be noble, of high status among their people, 
and very famous men. He spoke of them with enthusiasm and stated that no 
other family of the tribe of Tāmīn had a comparable number of poets.176 

His quotations from the poetry of Mahshal reflect his opinion of his 
nobility. In one citāta the poet offers moral precepts, while boasting of 
the power and greatness of his people:

Ibn Sallān's interest in tribal hiṣaṣa and muṣḥabāt, and exchanges of 
hijaṣa, appears in what he said about al-ʿAshhab b. Ṣumayla, of this fourth 
tabara, who exchanged hijaṣa with al-Farazdaq. It appears also in his 
account of the exchange of hijaṣa between Jarir and ʿUmar b. Lajaʿ.173
Even the long poem of Shalal quoted from the poetry of 'Umar b. Jafar, starting:

was most likely quoted because it was replied to by Jarir in his poem:

In the fifth Islamic tabara, we have the nukhadram Abu Zubayd al-Ta'i, who is graded with three other poets, two of whom, al-6Ijayr and 'Abd Allah b. Ham'man, belonged to the tribe of Salu.' Abu Zubayd al-Ta'i is described as a noble man, of high-aiming ambition, and respected by kings. Abu Zubayd al-Ta'i is also described as a visitor of kings, especially the Persians, and as greatly respected by 'Uthm'an b. Aff'an. The fourth poet, Nuwayf'i b. Laqit, is also described as distinguished among the Arabs as a poet and a warrior. Such remarks indicate that Ibn Sallam gave consideration to the character and status of the poet, as we have seen in some cases before.

The quotations from these poets are related to their akbhar. When 'Uthm'an asked Abu Zubayd to tell his story about a lion, Ibn Sallam, after relating the story, quoted a poem of lion description by Abu Zubayd. Also, when he spoke of him as a visitor of kings, he quoted the poem in which he expressed his sorrow for al-Walid b. Uqba, the governor of al-Kufa, on his being discharged by 'Uthm'an, his half-brother.

Ibn Sallam displayed an interest in tracing tribal conflicts, citing the poems of mufakhras associated with them, such as the qit'a of Abu Zubayd concerning a conflict between his tribe Tay' and Shayb'an. The lines start:
Another such event related by Ibn Sallām is a war between Zaghilāk, to whom the mother of Abū Zubayd belonged, and Bahra'. He quoted Abū Zubayd's poem on the subject. Another poem by Abū Zubayd concerns a tribal conflict between Azd of 'Umayn and Tay', occasioned by the killing of a man from the latter tribe. Abū Zubayd's poem on this begins:

The poetry quoted from al-ʻUjayr is also connected with his akhār, and tribal and personal muṭākhara. Ibn Sallām spoke about ʻAbd Allāh b. Hammān al-Salūlī as an ambitious man and as one who was greatly respected by Muğwīya and his son Yazīd. This piece of akhār is followed by two poems, in both of which the poet urged Yazīd to appoint his son, Muğwīya the second, his heir as caliph. Yazīd accepted this advice. Ibn Sallām's point, in quoting these two poems, was to substantiate what the statement in the poet's akhār suggested, that he was respected by the family of Muğwīya. The poem in which ʻAbd Allāh mentioned the revolt of al-Mukhtar and the tribes which supported him in his wars, was quoted in full by Ibn Sallām, even though it was a long one. This is another illustration of his interest in the poetry of war and ayām.

Lastly the poetry quoted from Nuwayfī b. Ṭaqī is also connected with his akhār; Ibn Sallām described him as a fighting-man, who sometimes terrorized travellers. This was why he was wanted by al-ʻAjjāj, and this is reflected in the poems in which he requested al-ʻAjjāj to forgive him, such as:

Other poems are also associated with this piece of akhār. Poems of tribal muṭākhara and tribal hijā' which are so common among Ibn Sallām's quotations, are also quoted here.
The sixth Islamic tabaca is called the Hijazi tabaca, and it contains 'Abd Allah b. Qays al-Ruqayyāt, al-Ahwās, Jamīl b. Na'man, and Nuṣayb. Besides having a common local origin, these were all poets of ghazal, which may have been the reason for classifying them together. Al-Ruqayyāt was compared with 'Abd Allah b. al-Zibāra, after whom he was said to be the second poet in Quraysh for firmness of poetic composition:

أَنْفَقَ ْمَآفَخَ أَعْشَرُ شَعْرًا فِي الإِسْلَامَ بَعْدُ أَبِي الْمُنْطَقِ

He was also compared with 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a in ghazal poetry:

وَلَانَ نَرَآَى وَأنْزَلَ مِنْ شَعْرِهِ شَعْرَ مَمَانُ بِأَبٍ رِبِيَّةٍ.

The difference between them was that 'Umar wrote plain ghazal, and that he did not write hijā' or madīh. The reason that these three poets were compared was that all of them belonged to Quraysh. We have seen before that Ibn Sallām graded Kuthayyir in the second Islamic tabaca and described him as the poet of the Hijaz. Although he placed Jamīl above him in nasīb, he actually classified Jamīl here in the sixth tabaca, applying the criterion of variety of genres. He seems to have applied this criterion here also with regard to 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a, whom he otherwise neglected, classifying him in any tabaca, and, in fact, never mentioning him except in comparison with al-Ruqayyāt. The fact that he pointed out the difference between the two poets concerning madīh and hijā' may support this; 'Umar's absence from the Islamic classes is probably due to his having written poetry only in ghazal. Ibn Sallām, in accordance with his concept of poetry, required variety in poetic genres, and he was interested principally in hijā', mufākhara, madīh and poetry in which akhār and ayān were mentioned. This may also explain his lack of enthusiasm for Jamīl and his limited selections from his lines of nasīb. His interest in tribal mufākhara appears in his quotation of such poetry by Jamīl as:

وَمَا إِذَا ذُكِرَ مَعَنِّي ٍ فَبَلْ ٍ وَقَيِّمَ ٍ جِوَاحِي فَطُورَهُ وَبَيَّنَاهَا

Moreover, this poem contains mention of ayān, for instance:

وَقَيَّمَ أَصْبَحَ ٍ جَمِيعَ ٍ وَأَصْبَحَ ٍ وَأَصْبَحَ ٍ.
Although Ibn Rashīq mentioned that Jamīl never wrote madīh except on his own relatives, Ibn Sallān quoted a poem of his in praise of ʿAbd al-Azīz b. Marwān, the governor of Egypt.

In his akhbār of al-Ruṣayyāt Ibn Sallān said that he restricted himself in his madīh to the family of al-ʿUbayr; he used to praise ʿAbd Allāh and his brother ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿUbayr and to satirise ʿAbd al-Walīk b. Marwān. Eventually, he also wrote madīh on the Umayyad caliphs. Although he was described as a ḥabīl poet, no quotations were given from his poetry on that genre, except two lines of nasīb from his poem in praise of the Umayyads:

\[
\text{مَحَبَّتُ هُمُّ لَهُ مِنْ كَبِيرَةَ الْمَرْضَب}
\]

Even with the poetry of al-Aḥwās, about whom Ibn Sallān quoted Harmād al-Rāviya declaring him the best poet of nasīb, the quotations in which nasīb occurs are taken from poems of madīh such as that on ʿAbd al-Azīz b. Marwān:

\[
\text{أَفْتَلَّ الْبَيْنَيَّةَ حَتَّى فَقَلَ مَرَّيْ بِهِ إِلَى أَهْلِ هَالِبِ إِذَا تَسْوَىْ أَمَْْ}
\]

A cita of personal fākhr is also quoted from al-Aḥwās' poetry. From the poetry of Nussayb two poems of nasīb are quoted, two concerning shayb, and one of madīh on al-Hakam, the grandson of ʿAbd al-Azīz b. Marwān.

In the seventh Islamic tabqa Ibn Sallān's interest in subjective and moral poetry, and in hija' poetry, appears clearly. Al-Mutanākīl al-Laythī has no similarity with the other poets of his tabqa, and the quotations from his poetry may explain the reason for his inclusion there. In his poems
he talks about himself and offers moral morals, as in his poem:

\[
\text{نَّمَيُوُنَّ اَلْقُلُوبَ لِلَّهِ ـَلَّهُ ـَلَّهُ ـَلَّهُ}
\]

Such poetry is probably what Ibn Sallān meant by "useful poetry", when he criticised that narrated by Ibn Ishaq in the Sīra.

Two other poets of this tabaqa are Yazīd b. Mufarriq al-Ŷimārī, described as an evil man who wrote a great deal of hijā' against various people, and Ziyād al-’Ajam, who was also said to have written a great deal of hijā'. He exchanged hijā' with Ka'b al-Shaqīfī. Ibn Sallān, as was his custom with hijā' poets, quoted a lot from the works of these two poets. Moreover, the hijā' by Yazīd is connected with his akhbār, another subject of interest to Ibn Sallān. These akhbār are linked with ʿAbbās b. Ziyād b. Abīhi, the governor of Sijistān, and his brother ʿUbayd Allāh, the governor of al-Hasa. Yazīd's poems of hijā' were mostly directed against the family of Ziyād b. Abīhi. Some of them contain hijā' musāḥiḥ or hijā' bi-‘l-taṣāfi, such as the poem:

\[
\text{أَتَرَنَّ مِنْ أَلْقَابِ الْبَحْمَانَ} \\
\text{وَقَدْ بَعْدَ الْإِنْسَانِ الْبَابُ}
\]

in which he wrote (hijā' musāḥiḥ):

\[
\text{أَتَأْتِي الْشَّاهِدَ مِنْ سَبْدَا} \\
\text{وَسِيِّدَ الْمَوْزَنِ نَابِ} \\
\text{مَأْ بَعْدَ مِشْبَعَا لَدْيَهُ}
\]

In another poem he wrote:

\[
\text{أَمْرَىٰ هَلَكَ مِنْ أَمْرَةٍ} \\
\text{نَشَتْ عُرَقَةٌ نَزَادَةٌ} \\
\text{وَلِبَيْتُ سَهِيدٌ ذَا الْذَكَّ} \\
\text{يَمْلُؤُ مَغَرتَانُ الْقَيْماَةُ}
\]

Tribal hijā' also was quoted from his poetry. The quotations from the hijā' poetry of Ziyād al-’Ajam also contain tribal hijā' such as that against the Banū Yashkur:

\[
\text{أَلَمْ يَسْأَلُ الْأَلْقَامَ حَلَّ مِنْ أَمْامَةٍ} \\
\text{عَلَى بَلْدَةَ الْفُهيَّةِ الْفَرَطِ السَّوَائِفَ}
\]

and that against Jarm:
The hijā' poems sometimes incorporate genealogical facts, in which Ibn Sallām was also interested. Another qitā' of hijā' by Liyāḍ on the Banū Yashkur is an example of this:

लो अन ब्रह्मा रा द लाखाता क्षण बिनकर मना मोदि ये दिन

More genealogical facts are to be found in a poem quoted from the poetry of 'Adī b. al-Riqa' in which the poet stated his tribal origin.209 Lines of hikma and tashbīh were also quoted from his poetry.210

In the eighth Islamic tabaqa, the criterion of tribal adherence was widely applied, since we find that all four poets of this tabaqa belonged to the Banū Murra. Two of them, Bashāmā b. al-Chādir and Qurād b. Hanāsh, were Jāhilī poets.211 The akhbar of the first poet of this tabaqa, 'Aqīl b. Qullafa, were narrated together with those of his children. In dealing with him, Ibn Sallām appears to have been guided by his idea of poetic families, because he also quoted some poems by his sons, such as Jattāma and Qullafa, and by his daughter, al-Jarba'. The lines quoted from his poetry and those of his children are of different genre but related to the same events. The interest of Ibn Sallām was in the poet's akhbar rather than in his poetry. Nevertheless, some lines of tribal hijā' and others in which the poet challenged other tribes were also quoted.212

The poems quoted from the poetry of Bashāmā are longer and their subjects are of a tribal nature. In three poems he addresses his people and advises them, as, for instance:

या भोज्नाय, ना से समा निकालंि
यः ब्राह्मण या जो ब्राह्मण निकाला मां ब्राह्मण एको एचा

and:

इं अन वोटोल जान जान चाहिदा गना जाने जाने नामा जाने जाने नामा
Poems containing mention of qāma and muqāshara are also quoted, such as:

Poems of tribal and personal fakhr were quoted from Shāhib b. al-Barazī, for instance:

and certain lines from his poem:

Unusually, Ibn Sallān displayed a certain interest in nasīb, quoting both from the same poems by these poets and individual lines from other poems. A poem by Qurād b. Hanash contains genealogical facts:

The quotations in this tabaga are either of a tribal nature or comprise akhbar in general. The similarity between its poets seems mostly to lie in their common tribal origin and in the nature of their verse.

In the ninth Islamic tabaga, Ibn Sallān graded the rajaz poets. Besides having the obvious similarity of writing in the same bahār, the poets in this tabaga were chosen from two different tribes. Al-Aghlab and Abū al-Najm belonged to Ṣifl (Bakr b. Wā'il), and al-Ajjāj and his son Ru'ba to Tāmīn. Two poems, one by al-Aghlab, satirising Sājah when she was married to Musaylima al-Kadhāb, and the other by Abū al-Najm describing a naked woman and his impotence when she was ready for him, are full of obscene words and ideas concerned with sexual intercourse. Both poems were quoted in full; as we have seen before, Ibn Sallān was one of the critics who separated poetry from morality, even though he quoted, with approval, a number of lines of a moral nature.

Poems of tribal muqāshara were also quoted from these two poets, such as
Abū al-Najṭ is said to have surpassed al-ʿAjjaḥ in description. Ibn Sallām mentioned the akhūr of al-ʿAjjaḥ and the poem in which he addressed ʿUmar b. ʿAbayd Allāh on his way to fight some of the Kharijīṭs. Two poems of tribal musāḥhara were also quoted from al-ʿAjjaḥ, in which he spoke about war with other tribes. The poem in which Ruʿba praisė Salām b. Qutayba is about the war between his mādhūḥ and the Banū al-Muhallab. The poem also contains tribal nādiḥ on Qays and Khindīf.

In the tenth Islamic tabāra, which is the last, the criterion of tribal adherence is not neglected. The four poets in this tabāra, Muzāḥim al-ʿUqaylī, Yaḥyā b. al-Tāthariyya, Abū Duʿād al-Ruṣūfī and al-ʿUqaylī al-ʿUqaylī all belonged to ʿAmīr b. Ṣaṣṣaṣa. Two poets of this tabāra were perhaps classified together because of their similarity in poetic genre; one of them, Muzāḥim al-ʿUqaylī, was described as a ḍāḥal poet, the other, Yaḥyā b. al-Tāthariyya was similarly described: as a poet of ḍāḥal and a lover of conversation with women.

Muzāḥim al-ʿUqaylī, however, was also known for his ability in description and ḍāḥal. Ibn Sallām praised him for combining delicacy and sweetness
of poetry with firmness and hardness in description and hidū'ī:

This reminds us of what al-Yaṣrūḏī said about his own obscene poetry, which lacked delicacy, and the decent poetry of Jarīr, which lacked firmness. Ibn Sallān quoted two ghazal poems by Muzāḥim, one of which contained a description of his she-camel. Three poems by Yazīd b. al-Tathāriyya were quoted by Ibn Sallān, all illustrating what he had said about his ghazal and conversation with women; they were also, however, related to his ākharāt.

Ibn Sallān's interest in poetry containing ākharāt and mention of ayyān is once more demonstrated clearly in this tabaṣṣa. He narrated the story of Yawm al-Nakhīl on which a battle was fought between the clans of Nadhīj, Hamadān and Šamir b. Saʿṣṣa'a, and he quoted the poem of Muzāḥim about that day. He also spoke about the fighting among the clans of Šamir b. Saʿṣṣa'a themselves, and quoted the poem of Abū Duʿāḍ al-Ruʿāšī. He also quoted his poem written on Yawm Fayf al-Riḥ (sometimes called Yawm Baqī' or Yawm al-Ājshar) in which he spoke of the defeat of the clans of Nadhīj by Šamir b. Saʿṣṣa'a. The poem starts:

آتَرْ َهُنَّ أَسْلَأَكَ مَا لَيْقَاكَ سَقاَ Header error

A third poem by the poet was quoted, the subject of which was also the mention of ayyān, war with other tribes, and tribal muṣāhārāt. From the poetry of the fourth poet, al-Qaḥayf al-Qaylī, poems on the ayyān of Šamir b. Saʿṣṣa'a against other tribes were also quoted, for example, the poem on the day of al-Falaj, on which they fought against the Banū Ḥigl of the Banū Hanīfah, starting:

 dibār اَلْمُلْيَ ُتُفْرِيِّحاً الْقَلَّلَ ُمِنَ الْأَلْخَيْنِ بِهَا أَحْلَ وَمَالُ

Ibn Sallān did not quote many lines from the nasīḥ, but quickly turned to the lines on war, starting:
The quotations from this taba'a, which consists entirely of members of one tribe, are mostly associated with akhbar, awān, and tribal mufakhara. Another similarity between two of its members is that they both wrote qasal. Ibn Sallān's reference to hiw in connection with Muzāhim, and the nature of his quotations, both strongly suggest that here again he applied, to a considerable extent, his criterion of tribal adherence and his idea of the relationship of poetry with war and awān.
The last critic with whom we dealt from the old school was Ibn Sallām al-Jurāhī, whom we regarded as a good representative of that school and the "real" of it. Though some critics of his type, like al-Aṣma'ī, quoted among their selections some of the muhdathūn, Ibn Sallām did not go beyond the Islamic poets, and we have seen that he in fact chiefly admired ancient poetry, of which he regarded Islamic poetry as a continuation. Despite signs of a moderate attitude on the part of some critics of the old school towards the muhdathūn, the general view of these critics was in favour of the ancients.

The appearance of al-Jāḥiz may perhaps be regarded as the first stage of the new school, which tried to reach a compromise in the conflict concerning the ancients and the muhdathūn. He did not say much on this point, and he was largely interested in poetry from the racial point of view, as we shall see. However, the most important of his views concerning the muhdathūn and the ancient poets and poetic criticism, even though he did not write a separate study on the subject and merely expressed opinions incidentally in various of his works, like al-Ḥayawān and al-Bayān wa-al-Tabyīn, was that a critic should judge poetry according to elements of excellence and not as to whether the poet was an ancient or a muhdath. This will be clear when we come to his judgement on Abū Nuwās compared with Muḥalhil, and his discussion of the ḥāfif and the mawalladūn, which leads to his concept of poetry in relation to racial groups and sharī'a (nature or instinct). His criticism of the approach of many of the muwāt contemporary with him to poetic citation, and his praise for the muwāt among the kuttāb and men of letters, reveal to us his theory of words and
Concerning the critics of the old school, al-Jahiz wrote: "I have noticed that the grammarians are only interested in the kind of poetry that contains īrāb; the ruwaṭ are interested in every kind of poetry that contains ĥarīb and obscure mafrīfi which need to be explained; the ruwaṭ al-akhbār are interested in every kind of poetry that contains evidences."

Elsewhere, he is reported as saying: "I went to al-Asma searching for the knowledge of poetry but I found that he only knew its ĥarīb; I turned back to al-Akhfash but I found that he only knew its īrāb; then I turned to Abū ʿUbayda but I found that he only cited poetry that was connected with akhbār, aywām and genealogies. I have never found what I was looking for except from men of letters among the kutṭāb, such as al-Ḥasan b. Wahb and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Zayyāt. Speaking about the most important subjects of poetry cited by ruwaṭ al-masjidiyyīn and those of al-Mirbad, he mentioned that they "would not accept any ṣarif unless he could recite the poems of the madmen, the poems of the akrab robbers, the nasīb and the short majāz poems written by the akrab, the poems of the Jews, and the munṣīfat (poems in which poets praise their enemies and their bravery in fighting). Then I noticed that they lost interest in all this and just limited themselves to short speeches, short qasīdas, fragments and extracts. At one time, they were very interested in the nasīb poetry of al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ahnaf, as soon as Khalaf al-Āhmar recited to them the nasīb of the akrab they liked it very much and neglected that of al-ʿAbbās. After some years, they gave up all this, and there was no-one who liked to recite the nasīb of the akrab except a young beginner.
or a man of sharaf (mutakhassil)." Neither al-Asma'ī, Abu 'Maysar, nor the ruwāt of Baghdad were ever heard by al-Jahiz to recite našīḥ. The only one who did, together with other different poetic genres, was Khalaf al-Ahmār, as al-Jahiz mentioned. 2

What was al-Jahiz looking for, what did he obtain from the ruwāt among the kuttāb and men of letters, and what did he fail to find with the other ruwāt, grammarians and philologists, whom he severely criticised? In fact, he did make use of the views of these last groups concerning poetic criticism, but he was looking for something more, something disregarded by then. He was looking for a combination of appropriate words and mafrū, soundness of metre and skill in poetic craftsmanship. Concerning the reciters of poetry among the secretaries (kuttāb), he wrote: "Having observed them over a long period, I have found that most of them concern themselves only with choice methods of expression (al-fāz mu'takhaba) and selected concepts (mafrū muntakhaba), with sweet words (al-fāz ṣadab), easy transitions (or: harmonious sounds?) (makhārij sahla) and noble texture (dīrija karīma), with innate ability (ṭab mutamakkin) and skilled workmanship (sabk jayyid), with such discourses as has a fresh sparkle (mā' wa-ramaj), and with thoughts that, on entering men's hearts, educate them and amend their previous ignorance ('amrathā wa-ṣalihathā min al-fasād al-qadi'ī), and open the gate of eloquence for the tongue, guide the pen to the buried treasure of words (māḏāfin al-alfāz), and point the way to beautiful concepts (nisān al-mafru'). I have found that insight into this essence (jewel?) of discourse (al-jawhar min al-kalām) is more common among those secretaries (kuttāb) who have trained as reciters (ruwāt) and more evident among those poets who are more skilled (bushāhā).”

On the other hand, al-Jahiz criticised one of these ruwāt, Abu 'Amr al-
Shaybānī, for admiring the following two lines:

لا كُنْنَ اللَّهِ مَوْتَيْنَ الْيَلَىٰ وَإِيَّاٰ الْمُوْن سُؤَالُ الرَّجَالِ
لا تَفْعَلُونَ وَكَانَ ذِٰلِكَ أَفسَدًا مِّن دَائِلٍ لِّذِٰلِكَ السُّؤَالِ

It would seem, from the lines, that al-Shaybānī was attracted by their theme (of hikma), and was not interested in any poetic qualities. Al-Jāhiz, for whom poetry was a form of craftsmanship, criticised al-Shaybānī for admiring the ma‘nā only because: "concepts (ma‘nā) are displayed by the roadside and may be observed by a non-Arab, an Arab, a Bedouin, or a town dweller; so all that one has to do is establish the metre (iqāmat al-wazn), choose the words, make the transitions easy (or: the sounds harmonious) (suhūlat al-makhraj), instill freshness (kathrat al-ma‘nā), and apply sound instinct and skilled workmanship (sibbat al-tabī‘ wa-jawdat al-sakh); for poetry is a craft, a form of weaving and a kind of painting".5 Though al-Jāhiz attacked al-Shaybānī for admiring the lines quoted above, he himself quoted them, among other lines of hikma.6

To achieve a high degree of excellent poetic craft, "weaving" and "painting", al-Jāhiz required poets to contrive harmony in words and letters (hirān), avoiding tanāfur. He also pointed out that the poet should use appropriate words for each type of ma‘nā. Concerning incongruity of words (tanāfur al-alfāz), he quoted al-Asma‘ī, who pointed out that some Arabic words are incompatible with one another and, if they are used together in a verse of poetry, it will be difficult to recite it. Such is the line:

وعَفَّرَ خَزْبُ عُمَّانَ قَفَّ ذَلِكَ قَرَبَ قَرَبٍ قَرُبٌ قَرُبٍ

Al-Jāhiz stated that no-one could recite that line three times without difficulty. He quoted as another example of poetry in which one finds tanāfur al-alfāz the following line of Muhammad b. Yāsīr:

لم يَفِيهَا نَفْسِ ذَهْوُلٍ وَانْشَتْ فُو عَكْرَ قُرُبْ قُرُبٍ قُرُبٍ.
He described the words of the second half of the line as being incompatible with one another (بَيْدَ الْفَالِسِيَّةِ يَتَابَعُونَ مِن بَنٍّ). According to him, it is such poetry that is referred to in the following line cited by Khalaf al-Ahmar:

دَبْضُ قَرْيَةِ الْقَمِّ أَوْالْدُ عَلَّمُهُ يُبْدِئُ لِسَانَ النَّافِئِ المَتَهْفَثِ

And also in the line cited by Abū al-Daydā' al-Riyāḥī:

ويَشْعُرُ كَبْرِ الْبَيْتِ فَرَّقَ دِيَّةَ لِسَانِ دُعْيَءِ فِي الْقَرْيَةِ دَخَيلٌ

The first line means that, if poetry is artificial (mutakallaf), the words in its lines will not be in harmony with one another, which makes it difficult for the tongue to recite it. The second line refers to the same idea of tanfūr al-alfāz. It compares such poetry with the dung of the ram which falls scattered on the ground. The poetry which is characterized by tanfūr in its words is similar to that scattered dung.

In the other kind of poetry, in which the words are in full agreement with one another and easy to pronounce in conjunction, and in which the letters are also in agreement and harmony with one another, each line will seem to be one word and each word will seem to be one letter. The parts of this poetry will be well connected and its transitions very easy (or: it will produce harmonious sounds), it will look as if it were woven in one piece, and it will be recited as easily and smoothly as oil (dīhān) runs off the tongue. An example of this is the lines of al-Ajrād al-Thaqāfī:

مَنْ كَانَ ذا عَمَدَ يُبَدِّيَ مَلَامَتَهُ إِنَّ الْذِّئَلَ الْبَيْتِ لَهُ عَقْرُ

And another is the lines of Abū Hayyā al-Numayrī:

كَسَى وَهَيْسُ الْهَيْبَةِ بِهِ بُيْنَ النَّاسِ كَرَمُ

It was the concept of āhirān that influenced al-Jāhiz in requiring harmony between the words of the lines and the letters of the words, or talahum al-āṣim, as he called it. He quoted Al-'Ansāfī describing his son's ṭajāz
Poetry as having no girān (connection). We have also quoted al-Jāhiz in the first chapter on this subject. He also cited Ibn al-ʿAṣwābi:

> وَبَيْنَ يُبَيِّسُ شَفْرَ لَيْسَ لَهُ فَرْقٌ كَانَ نَسُكُهُ كَوْلًا فَأَذَا

These examples are concerned with girān and harmony between the words of a line and between the lines of a poem. As far as iqṭirān of the letters was concerned, al-Jāhiz stated that ṣin does not harmonise with ẓāʾ, ẓāf, ẓâʾ or ẓayn, or ẓay with ẓāʾ, sin, dād or dhal. The idea of girān and talahum al-kalam, which may have been known to the Jāhilis, as we have seen before, was taken up by later critics, such as al-Mubarrad in his kāmil, where he quoted the lines quoted above by al-Jāhiz from the poetry of Abū Hayya al-Numayrī. Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskari pointed out that al-Samaw'al was criticised for his line:

> خَطَّ بَيْنَ الْمَزُنَاءِ الْمَزُنَاءِ ْوَلا فَنَا بُعْدُ مَظْبُولٍ

There was no connection between maʾ al-muzn, nisāb and kaham. If the poet had written:

> خَتْنَا أَوْلِياءِ الْمَرْيَمَ، الْبَيْنَىِّ مَافِى نُصُبِّنَا كَامَٔ

or:

> خَتْنَا بِكَأِدِ الْمُزُنَاءَ مَفَاءِ الْخَلْقَ مَبْنِيَّ مَثَلٍٔ

the discourse would have been excellent and harmonious.

The idea of girān, which indicates a sort of unity in a poem, seems to be connected with what al-Jāhiz said concerning poems of hikma: "If the poems of Ṣalih b. Abd al-Quddūs and Sābiq al-Barbarī were distributed among the poems of a number of other poets, they would gain greater recognition and attain a higher degree of excellence than they really have now. If the whole subject of a poem is anṭāḥal, the poem will not gain renown and will not be very much admired. If the audience has to listen to one thing without a change, it will not be delighted."

Al-Jāhiz seems to have been misinterpreted by some scholars with regard to
his view of words and ;">māfānī. To support his theory of ;">māfānī, ibold al-
Qūhir al-Jurjānī mentioned that al-Jāhiz did not care much for ;">māfānī, as he talked of them as being "displayed by the road-side", when
criticising Abū ʿAmr al-Shaybānī for admiring the two lines quoted above.
The fact that al-Jāhiz claimed that the lines could not be regarded as
poetry and that the sons of the poet who wrote them would be unable to
write excellent poetry because they were descended from him, was taken
by ʿabd al-Qūhir as unequivocal championing of words and as a declaration
for the superiority of ʿalfāz over ;">māfānī.10 Abū Ḥilāl al-ʿAskarī also
quoted the remark concerning ;">māfānī being "displayed by the road-side"
in order to support his own views about the beauty of words.11

Even some modern scholars believe that al-Jāhiz was more interested in
words than in concepts.12 As ʿIbrahīm k. Jirays noticed, Ḥilāl
contradicted himself in the same book, concerning al-Jāhiz's position on
this subject.13

If we investigate al-Jāhiz's views further, we find that he required a
combination of words and concept, believing that both were equal in
importance for completing the poetic image. In his kitāb al-muʿāllimīn,
he criticised, in both writing and teaching, the artificial way of using
words that involved forcing them to fit a certain concept. Using words
artificially would not produce clear and comprehensive concepts, and
they would thus remain functionless. The best kind of discourse,
according to him, was that in which the words did not go beyond the
concepts, so that it could easily be understood by the listener. Those
who chose their words before creating their concepts did so only for the
sake of the words, which might not fit those concepts, which was not the
right way. Moreover, one read the books of wise men in order to make
use of their concepts, but not their words, because one might compose these words and use them in the wrong place. Al-Jahiz advised poets who wished to express their concepts in a perfect form to read and listen as much as they could so that words would stick to their ears and be absorbed by their hearts. In their hearts, words would be married with one another, become impregnated, and give birth to noble fruits which would be original, far removed from imitation and plagiarism. Elsewhere, he stated that eloquent discourse is that in which the words and concepts compete with one another in entering men's hearts and ears. Its words should not reach the ears before the concepts reach the hearts. In another piece of advice to those who wished to be skilled poets and writers, he quoted a religious man of letters who advised his pupils to seek out beautiful words and harmonious sounds, because if the mana was beautifully and harmoniously expressed, it would be sweeter to the hearts of the audience. If concepts are dressed in noble words, with beautiful and elevated descriptions, they would be more beautiful in men's eyes, and the more they were embellished, the more they would be admired. Words would thus serve as showrooms where beautiful girls were exhibited. From all that has been said, it seems that al-Jahiz considered words and concepts from an integral point of view. In his eyes, both were equal in creating a perfect and beautiful poetic image. Suitable words should be used for particular concepts. He believed that a noble mana should be expressed in noble words and a mean mana in mean words. If the mana is serious, serious words should be used and if the mana is jocular, jocular words should be used, otherwise the mana would not be clear and complete. Since there are different classes of people, there are also different kinds of discourse. The poet or the speaker should not use darit or wahsh unless he is a Bedouin, because a wahshi discourse is comprehensible only to the wahshi man. Also the lafl should not be common or mean unless
Al-Jahiz expressed his attitude to words and concepts even more clearly and directly when he advised writers to avoid surūf and wahshet words (common, vulgar words and wild ones) and warned them not to spend too much time polishing words and searching out strange concepts (charā'ib al-μaṣāfiʿ). One should be economical and follow the middle way so as to avoid difficulties. A good discourse is that which comes between the two states of falling-short and excess. This recommendation of the intermediate and of moderation appears to be an extension of the Muṭaṣa‘ilite idea of the "position between the two positions" (al-manṣila bāyna al-manṣīlatayn), a doctrine deriving from Wāṣil b. ʿAta’, the founder of the Muṭaṣa‘ilite sect. The same idea also seems to be behind al-Jahiz’s position in rejecting muḥālāḥa (exaggeration). He criticised the muwalladūn for exaggerating in their descriptions, and he quoted ʿAbū Nuwās describing the speed of a dog as an example of this:

ما إنّ يَفْعَلُ النَّدْرَى إِلَّا فَرُطًا

Another muwallad, quoted by al-Jahiz, wrote:

كَيْنَ يَفْعَلُ مَا رَمَى

Even in his attitude towards the ancients and the muḥdathūn, he adopted a moderate position, standing mid-way between the two groups and judging them according to excellence, regardless of their period. Here again, we may perhaps see the influence of the doctrine of al-manṣila bāyna al-manṣīlatayn. The influence of Muṭaṣa‘ilite thought did not stop here, but went even further to connect with ṣawā‘. In her article "Toward a redefinition of ṣawā‘ poetry", Suzanne P. Stetkevych has tried to establish a link between ṣawā‘ and Muṭaṣa‘ilite thought. Quoting a poem of Ṣafwān al-Anṣārī, in which the poet, who was a Muṭaṣa‘ilite, replies
to Bashshār, who attempted to prove the superiority of fire over earth in his line:

Stetkevych argues that the poem of Safwān starting:

and the poem of Bashshār, in which he satirised ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbī al-
ʿAwjā (after he had been crucified), starting:

support the proposition that the Muʿtaṣilite Basran circle produced the first bāḥī or proto-bāḥī poetry. She also refers to the statement of Ibn al-Muʿtazz about his fifth category of bāḥī called al-madhhab al-
kalāmī, which he attributed to al-Ḥāsīz. She also quotes al-Ḥāsīz himself speaking about bāḥī and citing some lines that contain it. From a Muʿtaṣilite point of view, bāḥī for al-Ḥāsīz would mean "not only an outstanding stylistic device found in the Qurʾān and Hadith" and early Arabic poetry, "but also a method of interpretation, a way of thinking, that was obligatory upon the faithful for the proper understanding of those religious scriptures". When al-Ḥāsīz gave those examples of bāḥī in his al-Bayān, he meant by bāḥī the use of metonymy or metaphor, or more explicitly, the personification of the abstract as he understood it by analogy to the Muʿtaṣilite exegetical use of taʾmīn. 19

What concerns us most in what has been said above about bāḥī and its link with Muʿtaṣilite thought, is the concept of it as a way of thinking, for it seems that some such concept is behind the domination of the art of bāḥī and the idea of dualism that expressed themselves widely in the way of life and the poetry of the muḥdathān, as we shall see in taʾmīn al-shuʿārāʾ al-muḥdathān of Ibn al-Muʿtazz.
Whatever the concept of ḥadīf for al-Jāhiz might be, he praised Bashshār for his powerful ḥadīf and excellence in ḥadīf. Comparing him with other modern poets, he wrote: "Those naturally gifted in poetry among the moderns are Bashshār al-ʿUqaylī, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, Abū al-ʿAtūhiya and Ibn Abī Ḫayna". Bashshār and Ibn Ḥarun were the best in ḥadīf among the modern poets. The most important point in what he said, is that there was no contradiction between a poet being naturally gifted (mathābī) and writing in the ḥadīf style; he found Bashshār the best in both respects.\

Even those who were called by al-ʿArmaṭ "the slaves of poetry", such as Zuhayr and al-Ḥutay'ā, seem to have been admired by al-Jāhiz, as appears from his remarks about the type of poets who wrote al-shārīr al-ḥawlī al-muhakkak. He pointed out that this method of re-examining and revising his work was adopted by a poet because he hoped to be a fāhl, a khindhīdhan, and a muflīq poet. Quoting various critics, he stated that the classes of poets are four: al-fāhl al-khindhīdhan, the muflīq poet, the poet shārīr, and the shufūrūr (poetaster). Among poets that were ḥawlī muhakkak, he counted those called ḥawliyyat, muqalladat, munāqqahat, and mukkammat. In the poem itself there are lines which are called athīl (aphorisms) and awābīd (wonderful and unfamiliar lines); there are also shawāhid, and shawārid (famous and widely-circulating lines). He excused the poets who were called "slaves of poetry" and those who followed their method, and he said that if a poet used his poetry as a means of earning money and seeking rewards from noble and prominent men, he had no option but to follow the path of sawāda trodden by Zuhayr, al-Ḥutay'ā and those similar to them.

In the dispute concerning the ancients and the moderns, al-Jāhiz followed a middle way, not favouring ancient poetry at the expense of muhdath poetry. He criticised those who did so and accused them of ignorance. He wrote: "I have seen some of them (ruwāt, grammarians and philologists) reject the poems of the muwalladūn and drop the ṭāhiz who recite them. Such is
the "jewel" of poetry who does not know the essence (jewel) of what he is reciting; if he had insight, he would recognise the excellent regardless of who wrote it or at what time it was written. Though he was more of a theoretical critic, al-Jāhiz sometimes applied his critical views when he judged the ancient and the muhdath poets. An example of his fair attitude is his comparison of Muhalhil and Abū Nuwās, in which he preferred the latter to the former. Muhalhil, describing the silence of the people at the mailis of his brother Kulayb, wrote in one of his poems:

أودى النياب من الغنائم للعم
وستَتب بذك بالنصب الملبس
وستَتب السناعوا في كَرَات أنب عميقة
لَو شهدَماهم لم ينسوا

Al-Jāhiz claimed that the lines of Abū Nuwās concerning the food of Ismā'īl were far better in describing the silence of the people at the mailis of Kulayb than the above lines of Muhalhil:

على خُبر إسحاق وقافية الغني
فَقَطَ حَلِ في ذاكر الأزمان من الأزلي
وما مَحِبَّةُ رَكَّةً اهْبَتَ إبنه
وَفَقَّرَ في ذَكَرُ الْامكَانِ وَلا سَهْل
وما مَحِبَّتُ لَكَمَا تَصِيرُ مغْرِبُ
وَفَقَّرَ في ذَكَرُ الملوك فَيَمَانِ
بَرَتْلَتَهُم النَّاسُ عَن لِبْرَتْلَتِهِم
سَوسَة مَرَّةً ماً أَمَّا نَيُّر وَلَا حَيْلًا
وما مَحِبَّتُ الأَكْلِبَيْنِ بَيَانًا فَتَأْتي
وُمَنْ لَهُ مَا ذُيِّنَ فَبِهِ نَسِيَ الْبَيْنَاء
وَإِذْ هَوَّا رَبَّتْكَ مَثْلًا على
وَلَمْ يَكُونَ مَفْعُولُ بِبَيْنِ الْمَنِعَة
فَأَنْحَدَرَ إِسْحَاقِي حَلَّ هَلَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أَمَّا كُلْبَيْنَ لَمْ يَكُنْ ذَكَرَ هَلَهُ
وَكَّنَّ قَفَازَةً لَّيْسَ بِمَسْطَالُ رَبَعٍ
14

Elsewhere, when al-Jāhiz was talking about dogs, he quoted one of Abū Nuwās' rajaz poems describing the speed of a dog as follows:

قَفَّتُ الدَّرْعَامَ لَلْزُّلَّ في اخْتَرَارٍ
لَقَفَّتُ المَشْرَيعُ مَهَّنَةً بَنَائِهَا
نِشُأً أَيَّاءَكُي فِي اخْتَرَارِهِ
أَنْفُقَ أَيّاءَكُي فِي اخْتَرَارِهِ

Citing the whole urjūza, he wrote: "And I have quoted to you his rajaz in this chapter because he was a learned man ḫalim and a ṭakīva. He had played with dogs over a long period, and he knew more about them than the ṣārab did. This can be clearly seen in his poetry, where dogs are fully
described in his rajaz poems. This description is written with fine tafṣīl, in an excellent form, and with skilled art. If you consider his poetry, you will prefer it, unless you are guided by partisanship (قَاسِبَيْنَ), or you think that the Bedouins are, in all cases, better poets than the muwalladūn. If you think like that, you will never be able to differentiate between right (الْحَقّ) and wrong (الْبَاطِل).25

Al-Jahiz did not use the term muhdathūn, but rather muwalladūn. This attitude of his is very important because it leads us to his concept of poetry in relation to race. Instead of participating with the earlier critics among the ruwāt and ʿulamāʾ in the dispute concerning the merits of the ancient poets and the muhdathūn, al-Jahiz transferred the matter to a racial field and compared the Arabs (of both towns and ḍādiya) with the muwalladūn, stating that "the majority of Arabs, the aṭrāb, both Bedouins and town-dwellers, are better poets than the majority of the muwalladūn (those who are not of pure Arab blood), but this is not valid for all of what they have written ... . The difference between the muwallad (poet) and the aṭrāb is that the muwallad, if he works with all his effort and concentration of mind, will be able to write excellent lines, equal to those written by a Bedouin, but when the muwallad writes at length, his strength will fail and his discourse will become confused".26

According to al-Jahiz, the main factors required in a group of people for writing poetry are three. These are: ʿḥarīza (instinct or tabṣīl), ḍalad (country or environment), and ʿirām (race).27 As has been remarked by certain scholars28 in adopting this position concerning poetry, he disagrees with Ibn Sallān, who linked increase in poetic production with war. Al-Jahiz noticed that, although the Bani Hanīfa were very numerous, very brave and good fighters, fought many wars, lived in a territory surrounded by enemies, and were envied by other Arabs, they composed the
least amount of poetry of all tribes. He also noticed that, although the tribe of 'Abd al-Jays had very fertile territory, they also did not compose much poetry. The same applied to Thaqif, but their poetry was very natural. Al-Jahiz, however, took a different direction, in developing a theory that contrasted all the Arabs with the muwalladun. It seems to me that, although he followed a middle way in judging the ancients and the muhadthun he did in fact, in the depths of his soul, have a slight bias towards the ancients, who resembled, to some extent, the Arabs (especially the a外形) whom he compared with the muwalladun. As we have said, he was not very much interested in the dispute concerning the ancients and the muhadthun, and much more interested in poetic comparison from a racial point of view. However, he favoured the Arabs on this point and regarded the muwalladun (who were generally muhadthun) as having less poetic ability and tabә. If we take the "Arabs" as a continuation of the ancients and the muwalladun as the muhadthun themselves, we may discern in him a distinct bias towards the ancients.

As well as speaking about shariza or tabә (instinct for writing poetry) from a general point of view, al-Jahiz also went into the matter in some detail, with regard to different poets and different poetic genres. Poets differed according to the differences in their poetic ability and the strength of their tabә. Some of them were not excellent in himә; others had no ability in writing nasib even though they were famous for their long association with women, for instance al-Farazdaq, who was a zir шаван, but did not write one single excellent nasib, while Jarir, who was a virtuous man and had never loved a woman, was the best of sharal poets; some rajaz poets could not write qasid, while others could, such as 'Umar b. Laja', Abu al-Najm, Humayd al-Argat and al-Umari; some have an ability in oratory and some have not; and a poet's poetic ability and
and that its rhymes poured easily into his mind, but then he tried for many days to write an urūz even of less excellence, but failed. The same phenomenon was observed by Ibn Qutayba, who borrowed the words of al-Jahiz in speaking about the differences in poetic tabē and ability. The difference between him and al-Jahiz is that Ibn Qutayba tried to find an explanation for the phenomenon, as we shall see later.

Al-Jahiz seems also to have inspired Ibn Qutayba and Qudama b. Ja'far in their views concerning the combination of lafz and ma'na. Qudama followed him in describing poetry as a craft and kind of "painting", although in fact, both may have derived this independently from Ibn Sallān.

Qudama and a number of later critics, such as Ibn al-Mu'tazz, al-ʿAḍīfī and Ibn Rashīq, all seem to have been in agreement with al-Jahiz concerning the point that every category of men should be praised with a particular kind of madīḥ poetry. Al-Jahiz criticised al-Kumayt b. Zayd for the following lines in praise of the Prophet:

Al-Jahiz believed that al-Kumayt had followed the wrong path of madīḥ.
in those lines, because there was no-one who would have blamed him for praising the Prophet, and no-one who would be angered by the Prophet's being praised.\textsuperscript{34} Ibn Rashīq mentioned that some critics found an excuse for al-Kurayt, alleging that he was actually praising 'Ali b. Abī Tālib, but that he feared the Umayyads and therefore addressed his poem to the Prophet, without changing the terms in which he expressed it.\textsuperscript{35}

Al-Kurayt was also criticised by al-Jahiz for falling short in his rithā' on the Prophet:

\begin{aligned}
\text{وَبَرَّرَ فِيْ نَفْسِهِ وَمُؤْمِنَهُ بِهَِّ أَلِلَّ أَهْلُ بَلَادِیَنُ}
\text{لَقَدْ كَيْبَىٰ بِهِ وَحْرَماً وَقَانِيَتَا مَيْتَهَا وَأَهْلُ الْمَهْمُ}
\end{aligned}

Ibn Rashīq thought that the first line was excellent but that the second was not. He wondered why al-Kurayt should have written such a line of rithā' on the Prophet, while 'Abdād b. al-Talib wrote these excellent lines of rithā' on Qays b. 'Asim:

\begin{aligned}
\text{عَلَّبَكَ سَلَامُ الْعِلَمِ فِيٰ مَعَامِم}
\text{وَقَدْ عَلَّبَكَ مَا شَاءَ أَنْ بَنِي مَعَامِم}
\text{إِذَا نَارَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ نَِّلْدُ لَهَا سَلَا}
\text{فَا كَانَ فِيّ بِضَعَ فَيْلُكُ وَأَرَاحَ}
\text{وَكَانَ بَنِيَّ فَيْلُكُ وَأَرَاحَ}
\end{aligned}

He also wondered if al-Kurayt had written lines similar to those by Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, about her father:

\begin{aligned}
\text{_standُ بِجِبَالِ أَقْرَعُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَوَّرتُ}
\text{فَالْرَّمَُٰلُ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْبَيْنِ لَنَبْلُغَ}
\text{فَأَنْ لَعَلَّكَ الْبَيْنُ بَيْنَ الْبَيْنِ}
\text{فَالْيَمِينُ ذَوِّ الأُسْتَسِارِ وَالْأَرَابِينِ}
\text{يَا خَالِدَ الرَّسْلِ الْمَبَارِكِ الصَّغُوحُ}
\end{aligned}

Ibn Rashīq clearly considered that al-Jahiz's criticism of al-Kurayt was for failing to express an intense feeling of sadness and of great loss at the death of the Prophet, while other poets, like 'Abada, had succeeded, when elegizing men of less importance.
It should be emphasized that, as we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, al-Jāhiz's views on poetry do not represent any coherent and organized theory. In fact, he had comparatively little to say on the subject, and most of such comments as he did make were connected with his views on rhetoric and eloquence in, Kitāb al-bayān wa-al-taḥrīn, or with the literary aspects of natural history, in Kitāb al-hayātān.
The second figure in this new school of critics, and of more importance than al-Jāhiz for poetic criticism is Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba. His book ʿal-shiṭr wa-al-shuʿārā' reflects the influence of Ibn Sallām and al-Jāhiz, and also that of other critics of the old school and of the scattered views of men of letters with which we have already dealt. His most important opinion is that ancient and modern poets should be judged on equal terms, according to their merits, regardless of their period, whether of the Jāhiliyya or not. From the practical point of view, he included some of the muḥdathūn in his book, with selections from their poems. In the introduction he wrote: "In citing extracts from the works of the poets I have been guided by my own choice and have refused to admire anything merely because others thought it admirable. I have not regarded any ancient with veneration on account of his antiquity nor any modern with contempt on account of his being modern, but I have taken an impartial view of both sides, giving everyone his due and amply acknowledging his merit. Some of our scholars, as I am aware, pronounce a feeble poem to be good, because its author was an ancient, and induce it among their chosen pieces, while they call a perfect poem bad though its only fault is that it was composed in their own time or that they have seen its author. God, however, did not restrict learning and poetry and rhetoric to a particular age nor appropriate them to a particular class, but has always distributed them in common amongst His servants, and has caused everything old to be new in its own day and every classic work to be an upstart on its first appearance." \(^1\) Jarīr, al-Parazdaq, al-Akhtal and those like them, had
been regarded as modern in their time and now they were regarded as ancient poets. Thus the muhdath poets, such as Abū Nuwās, al-Khuraymī, al-‘Attābī, and others, who were now regarded as modern would be ancient in time to come. Thus, "whoever writes excellent poetry, we shall mention it and praise him for it, whether he is a modern or an ancient; at the same time we shall not profess to care for bad poetry even if it is composed by a noble ancient poet." Nevertheless, owing to the influence of the critics of the ruwat and of the old school in general, he called on the muhdathūn to follow the themes of the ancient qasīda, starting with the aṭṭāl section then proceeding to nasiḥ, rahīl, and then to the main subject of the qasīda, which is madīḥ. He added that the excellent poet was the one who followed these themes in order. The muhdath poet had no right to change what the ancients had initiated; for instance, the muhdath ought to stop at the aṭṭāl because the ancients had done so, and he ought not to address an occupied house. He ought not to make his rahīl on a donkey or a mule, because the ancients had used camels. Indeed the muhdath should do nothing but follow the ancients in the manner of writing his qasīda, except in using gharīb and wahshī. The muhdath poet should also avoid using certain words in which a letter was replaced by another, such as ʿayn by jīm. He should avoid those styles that did not suit particular metres and thus offended the ear, as in the poem of al-Muraqqish:

قَلْ بِالرَّيْبِ إِنْ تَخْبِبَ وَسْمُكَ إِنْ تَخْبِبَ وَسْمُكَ

The best kind of poetry, he said, was that which used a good rawāʿ (rhyming letter), and simple language (alfāz) which should be devoid of complication and affectation and should be accessible to the minds of the common people. The most famous poetry is muṭmīn (apparently easy but impossible to imitate). The combination of words (alfāz) and concepts (maṣāni) is one of the major ideas of Ibn Qutayba concerning poetry. Like al-‘Aţāhī before him, Ibn Qutayba saw words and maṣāni as equal.
elements in completing the poetic image. This is clear in his division of poetry into four categories, according to excellence in word and in ma'na. In this division, the first kind of poetry was that in which both words and concepts are excellent. From the examples that he quoted, it would seem that by excellent ma'na he meant hikma and mathal, as in lines like:

و النفس راغبة إذا سمعتها وإذا سربَ إلى قولٍ تعُعَ

and:

أَنَّ الْفِرْيقَ قَدْ رَأَيْنِي بَعْدَ مَيْتٍ وَهُمْ سَكَناً دَا، أَنَّكَ لَعَلَّكَ وَتَسْلَمَ

The second kind of poetry, which he did not much admire, was that which was of a high quality in form but not in content. Among such poetry were lines by Jarīr which had been admired by earlier critics as excellent lines of nasīb; Ibn Qutayba saw no good in them except for their words:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عَرَفَوا يَلِدَكَ غَادِرًا وَشَلَّى يَعْبُدُكَ مَا يَزَالُ مَعَنَا عَوْبِسَ مِنْ عُبْدَيْنِ وَتَعَلَّنَّ لِمَا ذَا أَقْبَثَ مَنِ الْهُوَاءِ وَقَرْبَانَا

The third kind of poetry was rejected by Ibn Qutayba because, although its content was of a high quality, its form was not excellent, as with the following line by Labīd:

مَعَاذٍ الْمُرْدَ الْأَلَّامُ لِفَسِحَةِ وَالْمُرْدَ يُبَشِّرُ الْبَيْسَ الْعَالِمُ

Ibn Qutayba described it as a line of "excellent ma'na but of little freshness and beauty".

The last kind of poetry was that in which both form and content lacked any excellence. The best examples of this were the poems of the 'ulamā', which were written with affectation and bad craftsmanship, and which lacked naturalness and facility. The poem of al-Khalīl b. Ahmad, starting:

لِبَيْلٍ تَضَعَّ رَفِيْقٍ فَلِحُ بِذَا يَدَكَ أوُلَقَّ
was a good example of such poetry.5

His desire for naturalness (tabīt) in poetry and his disapproval of affectation (takalluf) may be clearly seen in his discussion of the affected poet (mutakallif) and the natural and gifted one (matbuṭ). Al-Asma’ī’s description of Zuhayr, al-Hutay’a, and those who were similar to them, as "slaves of poetry", meaning that they wrote it with affectation, seems to have influenced Ibn Qutayba, who quoted it to support his views on affectation in poetry. However, excellent and perfect artificial poetry might be, the eyes of the learned could not miss the long reflection of its author, the effort and the sweat of his brow that he had expended, the numerous poetic licenses that he had used, and the unnecessary additions that he had made.6 Artificial poetry also lacked gīrān, as was the case with many lines of al-Farazdaq, no matter how excellent they might be. The influence of al-Jahiz concerning gīrān appears in Ibn Qutayba’s quoting his words, the remarks of ʿUmar b. Laja’ concerning "writing a line and its brother", and those of Ruʿba about the poetry of his son that contained no gīrān.7 Opposite to the affected poet stood the matbuṭ, for whom poetry came easily and who mastered the rhymes to the extent that one could guess the beginning of a line of his from consulting its end, and one could guess its rhyme-word by looking at its beginning. In his compositions one could clearly perceive the splendour of his naturalness. If he was put to the test he would never stammer or appear under stress.8 From this, and from the examples he gave, quoting al-Shammākh b. Dirār, al-Husayn b. Matīr and al-Farazdaq, from certain of their poems composed on the spot, it seems that the matbuṭ, in his view, was one who, besides avoiding being a slave of his poetry, could produce poetry extempore.9 Poets differ in the degree of their naturalness (tabīt), and this is why some are excellent in madīth but not hījā’, and others find it easy to write rithā’ but not ghazal,
for instance. The poets of different poetic abilities who were cited by al-Jahiz are also cited here by Ibn Qutayba. He seems also to have accepted the idea of the motives of poetry being desire, delight, fear and anger. We have quoted 'Ali b. Abi Talib, al-Hutay'a, Kuthayyir/ Nusayb, Artāt b. Suhayya and Ibn Abī 'Tārafa on this idea. Ibn Qutayba quoted some of these, and he used the idea to explain the variations in excellence in the poems of 

The poems of madīh on the Umayyads and on the family of 'Ali b. Abī Talib written by al-Kumayt b. Zayd are also very different in quality. The reason, according to Ibn Qutayba, was his desire for reward from the Umayyad Caliphs. Ibn Qutayba also spoke about the variations in the gharīza (poetic instinct) of a poet, just as al-Jahiz had done. He attributed the difficulty that sometimes faced a poet in writing poetry to disturbances that affect the gharīza, caused by bad food or a sudden sorrow. However, there were some times suitable for writing poetry, and a poet might evoke poetry by sitting alone, by wandering in grassy places and gardens, or by travelling. Ibn Rashīq thought that, in his discussion concerning suitable times for writing poetry, Ibn Qutayba was influenced by Abu Tammām, who held the same view.

Besides these qualities required by Ibn Qutayba in poetry, he found that there were some excellent kinds of poetry which were not included in what he had said. Poetry was admired if it contained accurate tashbih, and short and light rawṭs, as in the following lines:

which had already been singled out by al-Asma'ī. Poetry was also admired if it contained an unusual concept (ma'na gharīb), as in the line:

leiṣṣ [al-faṭiḥa] bain la-ḥima lū bī biʿl-bākūn lū ṣaḥāfa lā hadā al-adhe fa'ala.
Abū Hilāl al-Askarī mentioned the "unusual concept" in poetry in connection with madīh. He quoted Ahmad b. Ibrahīm who said: "The best kind of madīh is the sharīb which nothing else resembles". Then he quoted:

Ibn Qutayba is also interested in rare poetry; "either its author did not write other lines or his poetry is not known to many". He quoted a poem by Hishām, the brother of Dhū al-Rumma, and said that it was not an excellent one, but he had quoted it because he did not know any other poem by that poet.16 The nobility of a poet was also a criterion that he used in selecting poetry. He quoted some lines by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdī, a line by al-Rashīd, and three lines by the Abbasid Governor 'Abd Allāh b. Tahir, which run:

These lines and the one by al-Rashīd are of a moral nature; this is a genre of poetry which Ibn Qutayba appreciated, as can be seen from many of his quotations. His use of the criterion of the sharaf (nobility) of the poet is perhaps due to the influence of Ibn Sallām, from whom he seems to have taken the whole idea of compiling his book. There is an apparent difference between the two scholars, in that they belonged to different groups of critics, but, in fact, Ibn Qutayba, in his introduction, displays a marked similarity to Ibn Sallām in his introduction to Tabaqāt fuhūl al-sha'ārā'. The latter regretted that he could not mention all the Arab poets but had to limit himself to the famous ones. He talked about spurious poetry that could not be regarded as a hujja. He mentioned three categories of poets, the Jāhilīs, the Islamic poets, and the
mukhadramūn, and he repeated what the 'ulama' had said about each of the poets. He criticised those who recited poetry from books and learned it from the suhāfiyyūn, and he talked about the authentic ancient poetry, quoting some of it. He pointed out the importance of riwāya. He also spoke about defects of poetry, such as igwā', and about expert critics of poetry. He mixed the Jāhili with the mukhadram and Islamic poets in some of his classes and he used tribal adherence as a criterion in classifying some of his poets. Ibn Qutayba said that he limited himself to the famous poets whose poetry was cited as a hujja, and he also regretted that no-one could mention all the Arab poets because their number was so large. He too stated that he had quoted what the 'ulama' had said about each poet in his book. Again, like Ibn Sallām, he did not follow a chronological method in speaking about his poets, and some of the mukhadramūn are mentioned with the Jāhili and Islamic poets. He also talked about the importance of riwāya and the necessity for knowledge of poetry in the critic. He criticised those who learned poetry from books and other written sources, he referred to the loss of much Arabic poetry and he spoke about the authentic ancient poetry, quoting the same poems quoted by Ibn Sallām before. He was interested in the nobility of the poet, and he seems to have followed the criterion of tribal adherence in mentioning some poets.

The number of poets mentioned in his book is over two hundred, with two poetesses, al-Khansa' and Laylā al-Akhyaliyya. The Jāhili poets came first, then the Islamic poets (including the muhdathūn); the mukhadramūn are distributed between the other two groups. The first poet mentioned was Imru' al-Qays; next to him came Zuhayr, who was followed immediately by his son Ka'b. Ibn Qutayba had in mind the idea of poetic families; he
gave the examples of the house of Zuhayr in the Jāhiliyya and that of Jarīr in Islam, since in both cases the sons and grandsons also wrote poetry. This is the same idea as that of Ibn Sallām as we have seen. Those who came after Ka'b b. Zuhayr were earlier poets, such as Tarafa, al-Ḥarīth b. Hillīza and ʿAmr b. Kulthūm, who were all famous poets. Ka'b was mentioned before them either because of his relationship with Zuhayr or because of his famous gasīda, Bānāt Suʿād.

Tribal adherence was widely applied by Ibn Qutayba, as in the case of the poets of Hudhayl, whom he mentioned under this common title; there were twelve of them listed, one after another. When he came to Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Āghtall, he mentioned them as one class, in that order. Perhaps he was guided by the fact that the three of them were already regarded as the first Islamic class of poets, or because they had participated in a battle of ḥijāb against one another, as we know from the nāgaʿid. Again, in speaking about al-ʿAjjāj, he was guided by the criterion of the same poetic genre, in this case rajaz, and also by that of relationship between a number of the rajaz poets. Ruʿba was mentioned immediately after his father, al-ʿAjjāj. They were followed by other poets of rajaz, like Abū Nukhayla, Abū al-Najm and al-Aghlab, all of whom belonged to ʿIjl. Other poets were mentioned together because of some event that linked them, or because of any sort of relationship. For instance, Tawba b. al-Humayyir was followed by his beloved, Laylā b. al-Akhyaliyya. Al-Āhwas was mentioned next to Kuthayyir, al-ʿArajā next to Majnūn Laylā, and Qays b. Dhurayh next to ʿUrwa b. Hazām. Ibn Qutayba's reason for mentioning these poets in this order was perhaps that he was thinking of a rough classification for poets of the ghazal genre, even though they were different in their styles of ghazal.
Another sort of relationship between poets which he seems to have followed in mentioning them together was friendship, for instance, that between al-Kumayt and al-Tirimmāh, since the latter was put next to the former although there were many differences between them.20

The idea of compiling tribal dīwāns, which we encountered with Ibn Sallām, is also perhaps to be found in al-shīr wa-al-shu‘arā‘, as in the case of the poets of Hudhayl. We also find it with the poets of Bakr b. Wā’il, who are listed together. Such poets are al-Musayyab b. ‘Alas, who is described as a distinguished poet of his tribe and the maternal uncle of al-A‘ṣāh, al-Mutalammis of the Banū Dubay‘a, Tarafa, and al-Ḥārith b. Hillīza.21 Then we have two poets who were related to them, namely the two Muraqqishes, who belonged to Qays b. Tha‘lab.22 We also find two poets from the Banū Asad listed together, ‘Abīd b. al-Abras and Fisḥr b. Abī Khāzim.23

When we come to the poetry selected by Ibn Qutayba, we do not find any criterion on which he based his admiration for the lines that he quoted, with the exception of what he said in his introduction concerning certain characteristics of excellent poetry. Whenever he wished to quote a line or a poem which he admired, he would simply introduce it by saying that it was excellent and admirable. He was also interested in plagiarism, and he would praise the poet who initiated a ma‘nā and then mention those who borrowed it, stating whether or not they had added anything to the original idea. Generally, Ibn Qutayba, like many Arab critics and men of letters before him, was interested in the poems of a moral nature, such as hikma, mathal, precepts, and zuhd poetry. He described Aws b. Hājar as "a wise man in his poetry, who used to point out noble virtues, and the first poet to write deep ma‘nā and a large number of
aphorisms". There are more than sixteen poets whose lines were quoted as having been cited as aphorisms (amthāl). In quoting such lines, Ibn Qutayba reveals a distinctly moral and educational concept of poetry.

Examples are the line of al-Nābigha:


and those by al-Nāmīr b. Tawlab:


Further examples are the poem of Ḥammad ‘Ajrad, about friendship, starting:


and also the end of the mu‘allaqa of Tārāfa and the poems of ‘Adī b. Zayd. In the poems of rithā’ that he selected we also notice a moral tendency and a liking for hikma, as in the poem of Abū Zubayd:


and the one by Labīd:


He also quoted poems of a religious tendency, like that by al-Nābigha al-Ja‘fārī, starting:


The poems of zhūd that he selected are akin to moral and religious poetry. They contain reflections on life and death and fit in well with a moral and educational concept of poetry. This kind of poetry started early in the Jahiliyya; according to Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Alā’, the first poet to write poetry in dispraise of this life (dhamm al-dunyā) was Yazīd b. Ḥadhīḥāq. A poem of his was quoted by Ibn Qutayba:
This poem and others similar to it are subjective poems, in some of which the poets elegized themselves. That of Yazīd b. Ḥadhdhaq is a good example, as is also that of Abū Dhu'ayb al-Mudhailī, starting:

In the poetry of Abū al-ʿAtāhiya, Ibn Qutayba found a great many poems of zuhd which he described as "excellent, sensitive and fluent". Examples of such poems that he admired are that starting:

Ibn Qutayba's interest in subjective poetry may be clearly seen in his many selections from poems on longevity and those in which the poet weeps over the loss of his youth. These poems are generally characterised by simplicity, plainness and facility. Examples of such poetry are to be found in the poem of ʿAmr b. Qamī'a on his old age, starting:

in the poem of al-Mukhbaṭal, also on his old age:

and in the lines of al-Musāwir b. Hind, on the same subject:

Further examples are the lines of al-Mustawghīr b. Rabīʿa complaining of old age:

and also the poem of Zuhayr b. Janāb, on the same subject:

Examples of poems in which poets weep over the loss of their youth are that by al-Muraqqīsh al-Akbar, starting:

that by al-Akhtal, starting:
that by Tamim b. Abi Muqbil, starting:

And that by Abu Nuwas, starting:

In spite of the fact that Ibn Qutayba did not give any reasons for admiring those lines that he quoted and indicated no criteria by which he judged them, it may be possible to guess at some of these. We find that among his quotations there is poetry of wasf, madīḥ, hijā', rīthā', khamriyyāt, and ghazal, and there is also a good deal of tashbīḥ. If we examine some lines from each of the genres mentioned above, we may be able to form some idea about what constituted excellent poetry, in his view. Concerning wasf, he singled out poets who were excellent in particular aspects of the genre. For instance, Aws b. Hajar was said to be the best at describing wild asses, weapons, especially bows, clouds and rain. Al-Shammākh b. Dirār was associated with Aws in describing wild asses and bows. Lines were quoted from each poet without the points of excellence in them being specified.35 Aws was favoured for his line describing a she-camel:

Other poets did not go beyond describing the she-camel as having a cat or a jackal tied to its side; Aws initiated a new maṣna when he mentioned a pig and a cock as well.36 Ibn Qutayba also listed those who were good at describing horses, and he mentioned Abū Zubayd al-Tāʾī as the best at describing lions.37 A poem by Humayd b. Thawr was quoted as containing an excellent description of a wolf.38 Other lines, describing various things, are praised and quoted by Ibn Qutayba, without referring to any specific quality in them. Nevertheless, some grounds
were indicated for the praise bestowed on certain lines of tashbīh, especially those of Imru’ al-Qays and Zuhayr. The line of Imru’ al-Qays:

was admired because it was comprehensive tashbīh, in which the poet likened two things to two other things. Another line of his:

contained four similes. Qudāma b. Ja‘far was among those who praised this second line of tashbīh, because it compressed four similes into a few words. Ibn Rashīq praised the first line for the same reason as Ibn Qutayba. He also admired the second line because, in addition to including four similes, the poet did not use the particle ka; Imru’ al-Qays was credited, as we have seen before, with being the first poet to compose tashbīh in this way. The first line was also quoted by Ibn Tahātah in Gīyār al-shīrī and by Ibn al-Mu’tazz in Kitāb al-badī. A third line of tashbīh by Imru’ al-Qays was also quoted:

The same line was quoted by Qudāma as an excellent line of ḥabīl, one of the “poetic beauties”, as has been explained. In this line, the tashbīh is complete before the rhyme-word is supplied, but when it is, it adds to the maqāna. The line was also quoted by Ibn Rashīq for the same purpose.

Interest in such “poetic beauties” is found elsewhere in the quotations of Ibn Qutayba. Three lines were quoted from Zuhayr, who contrived to produce three tashbihat for a woman in one line; in the second and third lines he gave details (tafsīl):

A fourth line of Zuhayr’s was admired because in it the poet managed to
condense various kinds of fighting:

The same line of Zuhayr's was highly praised by Ibn Rashiq, who quoted it as the best line of taqsim and the most difficult to achieve. He said that it had no equal.\(^4\) Three lines of apology were quoted from al-Nabigha and admired for the excellent muqayasa he produced in them, addressing al-Nu'man b. al-Mundhir:

In Ibn Qutayba's quotations from rithā' poetry, there were three lines by al-Nabigha al-Ja'dī. Two of them contained the figures of muğabala and istithnā', as Ibn Rashiq pointed out:

Ibn al-Mu'tazz quoted the first line as an example of ta'kid al-madh bi-ma yushbih al-dhamm.\(^5\) These maḥasin were, of course, incorporated into the art of baḍā', and they indicate a degree of interest in this art, on the part of Ibn Qutayba, as do also his quotations from Muslim b. al-Walīd, and other poets. He praised Muslim for his fine maʃā'ni and sensitive discourse in both of which Abu Nuwas and Abu Tamām had followed him.

The latter borrowed from Muslim some of his baḍā' lines such as:

Ibn Qutayba quoted examples of baḍā' from other poets as well as Muslim, but mostly from him.\(^5\) In some of his lines of baḍā', Muslim is fond of repeating certain letters, like sin, as in the line:

There are other examples, in which hā' and qāf are repeated. There are also repetitions of certain verbs in the same line.\(^5\)
Among Ibn Qutayba's quotations from madīh poetry there are lines that indicate an admiration for madīh bi-'l-tafālī, which was regarded by some critics as the best kind of madīh, as we have pointed out. The poem of ritha' by Layla al-Akhyaliyya on Tawba b. al-Humayyir, some of the lines of which were quoted by Abū Hilal al-'Askari as an excellent example of madīh bi-'l-tafālī, was quoted also by Ibn Qutayba. The relevant lines are:

madīh bi-'l-tafālī is also to be found in these lines, quoted from the poetry of al-Musayyab b. 'Alas:

and in these two lines, by the same poet:

In his quotations from hijāʾ poetry, Ibn Qutayba seems to have favoured amusing hijāʾ which could be regarded as hazl. This possibly reflects the influence of al-Jahiz, who used to follow his quotations of serious hijāʾ by those of hazl, in order to afford the reader some relaxation. This was also done by al-Mubarrad in his al-Kāmil and also by Ibn al-Muṭṭazz in his tabaqāt, as we shall see. In Ibn Qutayba's quotations from hijāʾ poetry as well as in those of Ibn al-Muṭṭazz on the same subject, we find that this genre was gradually losing its position as a serious one. Ibn Qutayba found hazl in poems of hijāʾ written by poets against themselves, in which they ridiculed and presented themselves in an amusing light. He also found it to a great extent in poems of hijāʾ.
associated with hospitality, from which he quoted a great deal. Examples of the first kind of poetry, that in which the poet satirises himself, are the following lines by Suhaym 'Abd Banī al-Hashās:

\[
\text{"..."}
\]

those of al-Hutay'ā about himself:

\[
\text{"..."}
\]

and those written against his parents. 57

The mocking type of hijā' associated with hospitality was written either against individuals or against tribes. In the latter case, it may be thought to represent a development of the kind of tribal hijā' quoted by Ibn Sallān, which is concerned with muḥakama, the mention of ayām, and other serious matters. This serious element is noticeably lacking in the quotations of Ibn Qutayba, and this may well indicate, as we have suggested, that the importance of hijā' was declining.

An example of this mocking tribal hijā' is the following lines by Bilāl b. Jarīr against the Banū Nashīra of the tribe of Fuqaym:

\[
\text{"..."}
\]

In another poem he wrote:

\[
\text{"..."}
\]
Ziyad al-‘Ajam mockingly satirised the tribe of Ashāqir as follows:

Humorous mockery is also to be found in two lines quoted from Bilāl b. Jarīr on Ḥammād al-Minqarī:

Ḥammād ‘Ajrad wrote a number of similar hijā painting poems, also associated with hospitality. One of the lines quoted from Bashshar in a similar vein contains the figure of istitāk, according to Ibn Rashīq, who cited the passage as an excellent example of this figure:

Among the quotations from hijā painting poetry there are also poems containing obscene ideas and words, such as that by Dāhī b. al-Harith al-Burjumī, already mentioned, against the Banū Jarwāl of the tribe of Qurāhā. In it the poet accused their mother of having sexual relations with a dog.

The poem starts:

Two lines from the hijā painting poetry of Zuhayr were also quoted, in which he accused the women of a certain tribe of having sexual relations with a camel.

The significance of the quoting of such hijā painting poetry is that it may indicate a change of opinion concerning the most wounding kind of hijā painting. Earlier critics, such as Abu ‘Amr b. al-‘Alâ‘, Khalaf al-Ahmar and
al-Akhtal, admired decent hijā' that contained no obscenity either in words or content. Ibn Qutayba, in spite of the fact that he criticised Imru' al-Qays and Adī b. Zayd for proclaiming their adultery in their poems, instead of hiding it, was nonetheless prepared to cite obscene poems of hijā'. Later, we shall see more examples of this, in the quotations of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

Although Ibn Qutayba criticised poets who told lies in their poetry, through exaggeration, such as Muhalhil, in his line:

\[ \text{جَوَّاءُ الرَّبِّ} \quad \text{أَسْمَعُ أَهْلَ جَيْرٍ} \quad \text{سَيِّدَ الْبَيْنَ} \quad \text{تُرَى} \quad \text{بِالْزُّورِ} \]

and al-Namr b. Tawlab, in his line (about his sword):

\[ 
\text{تَنَّمُّ خَيْرَةً} \quad 
\text{عُنْحَيْ يَأْتِي} \quad 
\text{يُنْمُّ إِلَى} \quad 
\text{الْزَّرَعِينَ} \quad 
\text{وَالسَّاقِينَ} \quad 
\text{وَالدَّائِرِينَ} 
\]

and although he also criticised al-Nābigha for his ifrāt (excessive exaggeration) in the line:

\[ 
\text{إِذَا أَرْتَضَى} 
\quad \text{خَافَ الْبَيْنَ} \quad 
\text{رَيْتُهَا} 
\quad \text{وَمَنْ بَعْلَ} 
\quad \text{كَيْنُ كُلُّ غَيْرِ} 
\quad \text{يَغَيِّرُ} 
\]

he still admired a line of ghazal by Majnūn Laylā, describing his thinness:

\[ 
\text{أَنْ ارْتَدَّيْ غَاَدِرْنِي} 
\quad \text{بَا} \quad 
\text{أَمْ مَالِكٌ} 
\quad \text{مَدٍّ} \quad 
\text{أَيْمَا} \quad 
\text{نَقِبُ} 
\quad \text{بِهِ} 
\quad \text{الرِّيْب} \quad 
\quad \text{بُذَهْبُ} 
\]

In fact, he preferred this line to two others by ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa, on the same subject:

\[ 
\text{فَمَنْ يَزْهَبُ} 
\quad \text{كَيْنُ} 
\quad \text{فَمَنْ} 
\quad \text{أَمَا} 
\quad \text{يَكُن} 
\quad \text{عَلَّوْتُ} 
\]

This acceptance of, and admiration for, exaggeration in ghazal poetry, whereby a poet expresses his intense love, is related to the demand for rigga in ghazal. Ibn Qutayba appears to have shared the common view concerning the various ways, which we have frequently referred to before, in which rigga might appropriately be expressed. When speaking of Jamīl and other poets of ghazal, he mentioned the former as "one of those who were content with little in love", and cited a line of his:

\[ 
\text{فَأَحْلُبُ طَرْسَيْنِ} 
\quad \text{فِي الْسَّهَاءِ} 
\quad \text{لَعَلْهُ} 
\quad \text{يُبْقَوْنَ} 
\quad \text{فِي} 
\quad \text{كِمْرِهَا} 
\quad \text{جِبَاحُ سَبْرُ} 
\]
All of this may throw some light on the supposed criteria used by Ibn Qutayba in making his selections. However, even in those cases where he did give an opinion about poetry that he considered good, it is not easy to tell whether he was actually applying the standards that he indicated to the poems that he quoted. For instance, he wondered why al-Asma' had selected the poem of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar that starts:

He described this poem as an example of poetry in an inappropriate metre and rhyme, the words of which had not been carefully chosen and the concepts of which were commonplace. He said that the only good lines in it were:

and:

He did not explain how these two lines were admirable, but judging from his interest in tashbih and his moral and educational tendency, it seems likely that he admired the first line because it contained three kinds of tashbih, without the particle ka, and the second as being a line of hikma.

Ibn Qutayba often quoted lines for which his poets had been criticised by critics before him. In some cases he accepted their criticism; for instance, Ka'b b. Zuhayr was criticised for his line:
because he had described the neck of his she-camel as "big" (dakhm), whereas it would have been correct to describe it as thin, using the word digga, as Ibn Qutayba maintained, quoting al-Asma'i. Another example of this is the line of Dhu al-Rumma describing dogs:

\[
\text{Latin: He was criticised for his wrong use of the verb dawwam, which was applied to a bird flying, not to a dog running. Such criticism was connected with facts and reality, and it was to a great extent based on what earlier poets had said on subjects similar to those written about by the poets being criticised. This use, even at second hand, of the ancient poets as standards against which to judge later poets, appears to indicate an unacknowledged bias, on Ibn Qutayba's part as well, in favour of the ancients.}
\]

Although he took up a moderate position in the dispute concerning the merits of the ancients and the muhdathun, we have already seen, in his insistence on the perpetuation of the sections of the gasida, his predilection, if not for the ancient poets themselves, at any rate for the traditional themes and methods of composition associated with the Jahiliyya. It is not, therefore, altogether surprising to find him using the conservative judgements and criticisms of the ruwat and 'ulama' whom he quoted. In addition to this, however, we find him actually articulating something that we may suspect to have been behind much of the apparently arbitrary judgements expressed by early critics, namely the possibility of being provoked into making an instinctive judgement by the immediate impression produced by a poem on first hearing. The following remark is revealing in this respect: "How excellent (Li-Lilahi darr) is the man who said: The best poet is the one whose poetry you are actually reciting - until you have finished it". He also told the story
of how, when the poet Marwān b. ʿAbī Hafsa heard some poetry of Zuhayr, he was highly moved and said: "Zuhayr is the best poet of all". Then some poetry by al-ʿAṣhā was recited to him, and he was again moved by it and said: "Nay, this one is the best poet of all". Finally, he heard some poetry by Imruʿ al-Qays, and he was greatly delighted and said: "By Allāh, Imruʿ al-Qays is the best poet of all".71
CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Modern School

3. Al-Mubarrad

The third figure, after al-Jahiz and Ibn Qutayba, in the modern school of critics, is Abu al-'Abbās Muhammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad. He was one of the great 'ulamā' of the third century of the Hijra and was famous as a grammarian, (he was known as al-Nahwī), and a philologist. His interest in poetry is shown in his books like al-Kāmil, al-Fādil and al-Rawda, the last containing quotations only from the muhaddithūn. Citations of poetry as a witness for language is to be found here and there in al-Kāmil, together with examples of what he thought to be good and admirable poetry. Al-Mubarrad was an important figure among those critics who followed a middle way in the dispute about the ancients and the muhaddithūn. Besides his quotations from these poets in al-Rawda, there is a considerable number of quotations from them in al-Kāmil. Nevertheless, al-Rawda was severely criticised by Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi in al-Iqd al-farīd. He claimed that the poetry of the muhaddithūn selected by al-Mubarrad in this book was the coldest poetry ever written by them, especially those poems selected from the poetry of Abū Nuwās. As for those selected from Abū al-Atāhiya, they could kill with their coldness. He thought that Abū al-'Abbās was called al-Mubarrad (rather than al-Mubarrid) because of this coldness that appeared in his selections. Whether or not Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi was right, Abū al-'Abbās was also known as al-Mubarrid; he was called so by al-Māzinī, as Yaqūt mentioned in Mu'jam al-udām. Anyhow, whether he was al-Mubarrad or al-Mubarrid, the important thing is his interest in the muhaddith poetry, which he used to teach to his students, such as Ibn al-Mu'tazz, to whom he explained
the meaning of the poem of Abu Nuwas starting:

Those critics who favoured al-Buhturī and rejected Abu Tammām supported their views by quoting al-Mubarrad who praised al-Buhturī and called him "the poet of his time and the unique one of his kind". However, it is not easy to tell which of the two he actually admired more. Despite his declaration in favour of al-Buhturī, on another occasion, according to Ibn al-Mu'tazz, when he asked him about the two poets, he replied:

"Abū Tammām has..." to which al-Buhturī has nothing similar in his poetry. He (Abū Tammām) is... and al-Buhturī is... (more excellent in consistency); in this he is different from Abū Tammām, who writes an unique line and a weak one:

This style of poetry was preferred by al-Asmatī (who took it as a sign of naturalness). I liken Abū Tammām to a pearl-diver who brings up (from the bottom of the sea) pearls together with makhshalaba (?). By Allah, Abū Tammām and al-Buhturī have so many beauties which cannot be found in most of the poetry written by the ancients". These last words display a great enthusiasm for the muhdathūn. He demanded that both ancient and the muhdath poets should be judged according to their excellence, regardless of their period, or as he wrote: "The ancient poet is not favoured because of his antiquity and the muhdath one is not disapproved of (if he is excellent) because of his modernity, but each of them should be given what he really deserves". Although he was a grammarian, in his selections from muhdath poetry, he sometimes ignored his grammar and showed admiration for lines written by a poet who was not a hujja, as we shall see in an example later.
Despite what appear to be his moderate views on the question of ancients and the muhdamūn, al-Mubarrad seems to have been a critic who was much influenced by his investigation of the elements of rhetoric and 'eloquence' in the poetry that he quoted from the two groups of poets. This led him to consult the ancient Arab heritage and the Qur'ān and the Hadīth in order to support his views concerning what he thought to be good or 'eloquent' poetry in different genres. So, while he rejected the antiquity of a poet as a reason for necessarily preferring him to a muhdath, on the other hand, he judged the ancients themselves, together with the muhdamūn, against the criteria which he had established by consulting the ancient Arab heritage (poetry and prose), the Qur'ān and the Hadīth. In other words, the muhdamūn were in fact judged by the standards of the ancients, as we have found with a number of critics before. The rhetorical figure that al-Mubarrad most admired was conciseness (ijāz), to which he referred, from time to time, as one of the most important qualities of excellent poetry and speech. He supported his views concerning the merits of conciseness by quoting the Prophet as saying to one of his companions: "O, Jarīr, when you say (anything), say it with conciseness, and when you attain your object, do not be affected!"

Al-Mubarrad explained the hadīth as meaning that the Prophet desired sincerity of speech and of intention and that he was advocating the avoidance of what was not needed in one's discourse. He then gave examples of what he considered to be eloquent speeches which were free from affectation and complexity, with magnificent ma'na and firmness (jazāla) of words. He also quoted the Arabs' view about the best kind of discourse, it is that which satisfies with its conciseness and does not require exaggeration.
Conciseness should be comprehensible, and by means of allusion or gesture (Imā'), which would easily be understood by the intelligent, one could achieve conciseness that did not need to be explained or elaborated. A good example of this was this line by al-Hutay'a (madīh):

\[
وجدقفيَّ بِعَصَمِّ منْ شَهيَّةٍ أَنتُ يُنَّى الْوَصُّ وَأَيْضَُ بِالْحُكْمِ
\]

and this one by 'Antara (fakhr):

\[
َيُبْرِكُوهُ بِمْ نَشْهُرَ الْوَقْتِ أَنتُ إِنْ يُنَّى الْوَصُّ وَأَيْضَُ عِنْدَ الْحُكْمِ
\]

The two lines were "a plain, easily understood kind of poetry, with beautiful descriptions and composition", and although they were expressed in a few words, they contained complete concepts. Similar to them were the following lines, one by Zuhayr (madīh):

\[
عَلَى مُشْرِكِهِمْ خُطْتَ مِنْ يَعِترَمْمُ وَعَنْ عَلَيْكُمْ السَّيَاهَةَ وَالْبُذْلِ
\]

and one by al-Farazdaq (hiżr' on Jarīr):

\[
َبَرِّبْ عَلَيْكُمْ لَبَتْ العَلَمِ بِنَسْيَهَا وَقَضَى عَلَيْكُمْ بِهِ الْأَسَابِعُ الْمَنْزِلُ
\]

The line describes the house of Jarīr, comparing it with a spider’s web. Instead of saying directly that it is very weak, al-Farazdaq made an allusion (Imā') in the second half of the line to the Qur'ānic verse:

\[
"وَإِذَا كَلَّمْتُ الَّذِينَ لَبَتْ الْعَلَمِ كَانُوا بَـيِّنَاءً.
"

Conciseness is achieved by omitting words or by compressing a number of concepts into a few words. As we have said, al-Mubarrad supported his views by citing the Qur'an, the hadīth and ancient Arabic poetry and prose. Here he quoted some Qur'ānic verses in which words were omitted. In the following verse:

\[
eِذَا كَلَّمْتُ الَّذِينَ لَبَتْ الْعَلَمِ كَانُوا بَـيِّنَاءً.
\]

the meaning, according to al-Mubarrad, was:

\[
eِذَا كَلَّمْتُ الَّذِينَ لَبَتْ الْعَلَمِ كَانُوا بَـيِّنَاءً.
\]

And in this:

\[
واَخْتَارَ مُوسى قُومَهُ سِبَعَينَ رَجُلًا لِبَيَاتِنَا.
\]

the preposition min was omitted, and one might expect:

\[
واَخْتَارَ مُوسى مِنْ قُومَهُ.
\]
The following two lines were admired by al-Mubarrad for similar conciseness and omission; the first one was by A'isha Tarud:

امثلك النبّر فاعمل ما أمرت به فكتب سرتك ذا مال قذف أنسبه

amartuka al-khayra stands for amartuka bi-al-khayri. The second line was by al-Farazdaq, who wrote:

حثّا الذي اختبر الرجال ساحة وجد أذا كتيب الرياح الزعري

Min is suppressed before al-rijal. Such elipses are a sign of 'eloquence' according to al-Mubarrad. Further examples were in a poem of tribal mufakhara by a poet of Tay'. Al-Mubarrad quoted the whole poem and pointed out some lines which he particularly admired for their conciseness. One was:

لهم عمّر بالزي فالتقى فالمودى وقذ جاوزت حبيبي جنس رحلها

One would expect the poet to mention the name of the other tribe, which is Tas'am, but he did not. There is also an elipse in the line:

دعوا لغزرا والنسبياً لنبي بإسرى السير لإقدامها ونصالها

In the second half, one would expect:

13 لا قدم أسر السير لإقدامها.

According to al-Mubarrad, the poet who is skillful in discourse is the one who can compress many thoughts into a few words and still express himself clearly. Ibn 'Uyayna wrote:

ما راح يبوع على حي ورآها إلا رأى عرّا فيها فإن الاعترا

لا انت ساعة في الديف فاستمر كأنه تويز في تؤمر في قوم لها أتراك

إن البالي والضياء أنفسها عن غير أنسبيها لم سليم البحرا

Abū Tammām borrowed the ma'na and was able to condense it into a single line:

لا يتصدى لمن أنتفعت الزمان وانه لين العباد نامع لا ينشف

Besides expressing the ma'na more concisely, Abū Tammām had added to the original idea with: nāshūn la yashfaqu. Another excellent example
was the lines of Mukhayyis b. Aṭa al-ʿAjral, who wrote:

The lines were admired by al-Mubarrad because, as he described them, they belonged to the kind of beautiful poetry which could easily be understood and approached. He also praised them as "a kind of discourse which has no excess over its meaning", which implies conciseness of expression, and skill on the part of the poet in employing suitable words for his concepts. The most admirable line was the last, because in it the poet expressed several concepts in his words: *inna al-hurra hurru*, by which he meant: "a noble man behaves according to the manners of noble men". This expression of several *māʾānī* in a concise way was to be found also in a line by Abū al-Najm al-Ijli:

The poet was boasting of his poetry and his line meant: "My poetry is such as you have heard and known". Al-Mubarrad claimed that the conciseness and 'eloquence' of the line would disappear if the poet had explained his words: for instance, if he had said: "You have already heard of the great eloquence and excellence of my poetry". To support his view concerning the conciseness of the line, al-Mubarrad quoted the Qur'ānic verse:

which referred to the punishment received by Pharaoh, who was drowned in the sea. Instead of specifying the extent of that punishment, the verse gave an exaggerated impression in describing the punishment suffered by Pharaoh and his people who were drowned with him".
A poet, besides being concise, should avoid affectation (takalluf) and isti‘ana (seeking help). Al-Mubarrad explained isti‘ana to mean a poet or a speaker's adding to his discourse something which was not really needed and was not useful to his audience. This sort of addition was made by the poet in order to achieve correctness of rhyme or metre, and by the speaker in order to have a chance to think for a moment and remember or prepare what was to be said next. The common people, in their conversation, used isti‘ana in saying, for instance: "don't you hear?"; "did you understand me?" and similar things. The one who cannot express himself may use isti‘ana in twisting his finger or touching his beard and other parts of his body.  

Al-Mubarrad then quoted from two poems, as examples of poetry that he admired because it was free from affectation, unnecessary additions (tazayyud), and isti‘ana. The first example was some lines by Abū Hayya al-Numayrī:

The second example was by an akrab of the Banū Kilāb:

The lines were also praised for their "beauty of words and strangeness of concepts". The poet was said to have succeeded in presenting his ideas beautifully "because of his eloquence and his knowledge of the pearls (essence?) of discourse". This appeared clearly in the concise expression embodied in the last word of the last line, where la-qadānī stood for la-qadā ‘alayya al-mawt. Al-Mubarrad quoted the Qur’ān in commenting on la-qadānī:
Conciseness should be accompanied by correctness of *ma'na*, otherwise the poet would be regarded as unsuccessful. Al-Shammākh, although praised for his conciseness in this line:

إذا بلغت ثلثين رجل عرابة فاضتين بدم العينين

was criticised for being unkind to his she-camel, when he declared that if she carried him to his *mamduh*, he wished her then to be slaughtered; he had no further use for her, since he did not need to travel to anyone other than ʿArabah (the *mamduh*). Dhu al-Rumah also followed the wrong path when he wrote the following line, addressing his she-camel:

إذا ابن أبي موسى بلغت بلغت فقامج يقاس يبن وضمأيك جازر

The one who followed the right path was ʿAbd Allāh b. Rawāha, in these two lines:

إذا بلغت قلبي وقلبي رحل مسيرة أنت بعذ النساك
فسانك فان قلبي وزلابك دم ولا ارجع إلى أهل ورائي

and al-ʿAṣḥāb, in:

فأنت لا أشتر لى من كليلة ورأين حما حتى بلقي جنَّا
معة ما نناض يدَّبvang ابن فاين تفرؤي ونبقى من فواحله يدا

Al-Farazdaq, who rightly followed al-ʿAṣḥāb, wrote:

عليهم تلثيمين أيني *قَلْبَك* وَذَرَّ النَّاسَ كِلَّهم أصام
من صردمت الرصافخ تسريكم من النَّاسِ والْجُرَّ الدوامِ

Concerning *maʿani*, al-Mubarrad rejected exaggeration (*ifrāt*), criticising certain poets who departed too far from reality and sincerity in some of their lines. An *aṭrab* was criticised by him for exaggerating, in describing his thinness as follows:

ولو أنما أبتقي مني مغلق بُعُورْ يُوفى نُمام ما أتُود عْودُها

Another poet similarly exaggerated in describing the speed of his she-camel:

بِمَعَامِنَ مِنْ أَنْ نَتَلْبِر رَمَاهَا.
According to al-Mubarrad, "the best kind of poetry is that in which the poet produces apposite similes (tashbih muqārib); better still is that in which the poet tells the truth (ḥaṣiga), points out what is hidden from others, and uses firm composition and comprehensible conciseness". The following lines by Qays b. Ma'ad were a good example of such poetry, with plain and clear concepts:

A ma'na should be clear, uncomplicated and free from constraint of discourse. The following line by al-Farazdaq:

was said to have "the ugliest constraint, the lowest words and the most odd and incomprehensible ma'na". The poet complicated it by using taqdim and ta'khīr. Al-Mubarrad wondered how this complicated line could have been written by the same poet who wrote:

and:

Such lines were described as poetry of "the clearest ma'na, most fluent words and closest ma'khadh (easily comprehended)". Just as the first line of al-Farazdaq's was rejected because of its complicated composition and odd ma'na, so the following lines of Ibn Mayyāda were admired because of their correctness of ma'na and firmness of words, and because this kind
of poetry was frequently written and poets were very familiar with it:

Poetry was written by the people and poets were very familiar with it:

Al-Mubarrad also required qiran between the lines, and he accepted Nusayb's criticism of al-Kumayt b. Zayd, who wrote:

وَفَرَّ رُيَا بَعْدَ حُبَّ مَنْ مَنْهُ

Bewitch me with a man of your doing.

Nusayb said that al-Kumayt had gone too far when he said:

كُنْ يَا فِيْنَ حَلَّ وَالشَّنَبَ

and wondered why he had not produced something similar to Dhu al-Rumma's line:

لِيُبَأِنِ شَنْبَ حَوَّةَ لَعَيْنَ دُحَّ اللَّانَ وَقَينَ أَنْبَابُهَا شَنْبَ

Al-Mubarrad believed that the second half-line of al-Kumayt's was very ugly, because the discourse in it was not harmonious or well-arranged, and the words used did not match one another. The most important thing in any discourse was that it should be arranged in an orderly way and composed of elements that possessed some congruity (mushakala).

Al-Mubarrad then quoted 'Umar b. Laja', who had already been quoted by many critics as claiming that he was a better poet than one of his peers because he used to write a line and its brother, while the others wrote a line and its cousin. Al-Mubarrad, concerning the idea of qiran, seems to have been influenced by al-Jahiz, who said much the same thing and quoted 'Umar b. Laja', Ru'ba b. al-'Ajja and al-A'asha on the subject. Al-Mubarrad supported his views on qiran by quoting al-Jahiz's citation of the following line:

قَرَنَ أَبْنُ نَبْسَةَ غَرَّ بِبيْتَهُ لِيُسَبَّحُ لَمْ يَقْرِبَ غَرَّٰيِ ذَٰلِكَ

Concerned as he was with his investigation of 'eloquence' and rhetoric in poetry, al-Mubarrad also sought out mahasin. He cited the following
al-Mubarrad was attracted by the figures of kināya and ishāra in the third line. The first half of the line contains kināya:

Literally, the poet described his drinking-companion as "having his garment excessively long and dragging behind him". This, metaphorically, implied that he was proud and walked haughtily. Al-Mubarrad believed that this line by al-Ahwās had a similar implication:

as did this by Zuhayr:

The ishāra consisted in the poet's likening his drinking companion who is faddād al-qamīs to a fanīq, in the second half of the line:

Fanīq means a camel stallion. The point of the comparison, al-Mubarrad said, was the resemblance of the haughtiness (khuyala') of the deportment of the poet's companion, when drunk and happy, to that of a fanīq, which, when feeling happy and energetic, moves its tail to right and left, and up and down, and proceeds in a particularly haughty manner.

Al-Mubarrad also appreciated the kināya in the following lines, which he admired and cited. The poet said of his son:
Al-Mubarrad explained that the first half of the first line was a
*kināya* for cleverness and liveliness. 25

He mentioned that there were three kinds of statement. The first was
the direct statement; the second was the statement by means of *kināya*,
in which words are not used in their obvious sense, but in an oblique
sense; and lastly, the third, which was the most 'eloquent', was the
statement by means of *mathal*. *Kināya* itself was also divided into three
kinds. The first was called *ta'fmiya* or *taghtiya* (obscuring or covering),
as in the following line by al-Nābigha al-Ja'dī:

\[
اللهُ سَيِّمَ وَدْرَسَ عَلَىَّ ﷲُ مُّلْتَمَّ
\]

According to al-Akhfash, al-Ja'dī was the first poet to use *kināya* for
the name of his beloved in poetry. Another example of this was the line
by Dhu al-Rumma:

\[
أَجْبِرُ الْمَلَّانِ الْعَفْرِ مِنْ أَجْرِ أَنَّىُّ بِهِ أَعْصِيَّ بَسِيُّ كَبْرَ مُعَجَّمَ
\]

Al-Mubarrad admired *kināya* and appreciated it in *ghazal* poetry. He
quoted the following lines by Muhammad b. Namīr al-Thaqafi, who wrote
*ghazal* on Zaynab, sister of al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf:

\[
النَّبِيُّ وَشَافَاهُ المَنَاءُ مِنْ جَفْنِ أَنَّىُّ بِهَا يَنادِيُّ الْسُّوْقُ بِالمَرْتَنَّ إِلَىْ إِطْعَانِ زَيْبِ الْعَلْوِيَّ فَأَعْثَرَتْهَا لِعَلَاكَ إِنَّهاَ بِفَوْاءِهِ لَا أَسْلَكُ يَزَيْبُ مَكَّةَ مُهْلِرَةً وَرَغَِّبَ شَيْأً عَلَىْ عَلَىْ
\]

Al-Mubarrad then singled out, in particular, this line from the same

\[
وَقَرْأَتْ رَسُلُ الْسَّرُّ أَنَّىُّ قَتَصَّيْنَ وَقَدْ كَتَبَ بَاسِيُّ فِي النَّسَبِ وَفِي الْأَناَّلُ
\]

The second kind of *kināya* was the best, according to al-Mubarrad. This
kind was used to replace "low and obscene words". An example of it was
the following Qur'ānic verse:

آَذَّنَ لَنَا لِبَلَدَةَ الْجَمِيعِ الْمَرْفَعِ لِلَّذِينَ نَسَأَلُكَ

The word ṭuṭāth was used here as a ḥiṣāya for sexual intercourse (jimāʿ).

Another example of ḥiṣāya in the Qur'ān was in the following verse:

وَقَالَ ابْنُ وَلَدِهِمْ إِنَّ وَلَدَهُمَّ مَعْلُوْبًا

The word ḥuṣūd (skins) was used here as a ḥiṣāya for sexual organs. An example of this second kind of ḥiṣāya in the ordinary speech of the Arabs was that when they spoke about "relieving nature" they would say: "he came from the gha'īt", which literally meant "valley". 'Amr b. Maʿdī Karīb al-Zubaydī used the word literally to mean "valley":

وَجَاءَ مَنْ خَلَفَ اَبْنَ سَهْمِيَّةٍ فِي نَزْلِ الْأَرْضِ لَيْسَ بِكُلِّ بَعْضٍ

The third kind of ḥiṣāya is called tafkhīm and tafṣīm, and it is from this sense that the word kunya comes. The kunya is used in place of the real name of a man in order to honour him.27

Al-Mubarrad cited further poetry that he admired for its ḥiṣāya, such as the following lines by an aʿrābī (many of al-Mubarrad's quotations are attributed to aʿrābī):

شَيْبَةٌ وَلَوَأَسِ عَشَرَينَ نَسَأَلاً
اِبْتَلَيْتِ هُدَيْتِيْ فَغَيِّرَتْهَا
َنَفُولَ الْقَعْذَةُ وَالْعَيُّونَ لَفِيْلَا

The ḥiṣāya comes in the first two words of the first line wa-huḥqāti miskin, a small pot in which musk is preserved. It is used here as a ḥiṣāya for a woman. The poet likened his woman to an ivory pot full of musk to mean that she had a pleasant smell. The line also contained tashbīh, in that the poet likened his woman to a dress, saying labistah shababī, meaning that he had enjoyed his youth with her. The Arabs used often to liken a woman to a dress (libās) as al-Nabigha al-Jaʿfī did in
the following line:

لَا أَنَا مَا أَلْجَعُ نَشَاةٌ عَلَىٰ لاِبَسَا

The lines of the *ṣārīf* quoted above contained another *tashbīh*, in the second line, where the poet likened his woman to "a papyrus cane": *ka-ānnahu aḥā'atu bardī*. The similarity between the two is in their purity and beauty of colour.28

Al-Mubarrad pointed out that *tashbīh* was very much used by the Arabs in their discourse, and he divided it into four categories, some of them which he did not admire. They are: *tashbīh mufrit* (exaggerated); *tashbīh musīb* (correct); *tashbīh muqārib* (apposite); and *tashbīh maṣīd* (improbable). The last is the kind of simile needing to be explained, which could not stand by itself. According to al-Mubarrad it was the harshest type of *tashbīh*. In the exaggerated simile (*tashbīh mufrit*) they would liken a generous man to the sea and a brave man to a lion. If they described a man's nobility, they would say that he rose high till he reached the stars and went beyond that. An example of exaggerated simile was the lines by Bakr b. al-Nattāḥ in which he praised Abū Dulaf al-

Qāsim b. ʿIsā:

له وَهْنَـةُ السَّمَّرَةِ أَنَـبِلٌ مِنَ الْمَرْخَةِ

له راَحَةُ بَـوْانُ وَفَضْصَارَ عَنْهَا عَلَى الْبَـيْرُ مَـسَّارُ الْمَرْحُ أَنَـبِلٌ مِنَ الْمَرْخَةِ

29 ولَوْ أَنَّهُ خَلَفَ الْمَـسْسَارُ نَارِسَ وَرَزَهُ كَأَنَّ النَّبَجَانَ مِنَ الْعَفْرِ

Al-Mubarrad only liked the exaggerated simile "if it is used by a great poet, in excellent discourse, with excellent words, beautiful description, regularity and order of form; if it is used like that it will be admired, even though it is an improbable simile. The best of such similes is in the following lines written by al-Nabigha al-Dhubyānī elegizing Hisn b. Hudhayfa:

بِرَّوْنِ رَفْضَ مِمْضَانِ يُفْسِدُهُمْ

وَلَمْ يَضْفَقَ الْمَوَّتِي الْقَبُورَ وَلَمْ يَنْزِرَ

فَعَّلَ الْخَبْرَيْنِ لُمْيَ جَاهِلَ لِيَكَعْبِيْةَ

وَهَوَّيْنِيْ
The first line meant that the people found it very hard to say that Hisn had died. The poet wondered why, if Hisn had really died, the mountains were still in their places, why the graves had not cast forth the dead, why the stars had not disappeared, and why the earth had not been thrown into turmoil by grief. Another example of an exaggerated simile admired for its "excellent form" was this line by al-Tamhan al-Qaynî:

One of the most exaggerated similes (tashbîh mufrit mutajiwîz) was this one of al-Khansa':

Al-Mubarrad rejected the improbable or remote simile (tashbîh ba'îd) because, as he mentioned, it could not stand by itself and needed to be explained in order for one to discover what the poet meant by it. He quoted the following line by an unnamed poet as an example of it:

The poet meant to say that he was healthy, but his audience could not guess that unless it was explained to them. The simile was remote and could not stand by itself.

Al-Mubarrad quoted the following Qur'anic verse as containing a correct and direct simile:

Another example of a correct simile is in the lines of al-Nabigha al-Dhubyanî in which he described himself as "a frightened and worried man". The lines were admired because they constituted a tashbîh qâsid sahîh (direct, straight and correct):
The best example of a correct simile (tashbih musīb) ever written was by Imru' al-Qays, who contrived to liken one thing in two different conditions to two other different things in one line:

Dhū al-Rumman had a considerable number of his similes quoted by al-Mubarrad. His line:

was described as a sweet, apposite and plain simile (tashbih muqarrab).

What most attracted him in this line is that instead of likening the hips of the virgins to the sand, the poet did the opposite. 35

Al-Mubarrad also admired the tashbih ʿamm (comprehensive or collective simile), in which a poet "gathers two things together". An excellent example of this was these two lines by Bashshār:

Similar to those lines "in gathering two things together" was this line by Muslim b. al-Walīd:

We notice that the line of Muslim's contains maddīn by contrasted qualities in a sort of dualism, whereby we find the maddīn described as both a moon and a lion. A full range of examples of this dualism will be given in the next chapter.

A tashbih might also be admired for being concisely expressed. According to al-Mubarrad the Arabs would condense a tashbih, and would sometimes
do so to excess. One excellent and admirable line of concise *tashbih* is the second of these two lines by one of the *rajaz* poets:

The poet is describing, mockingly, some milk which was given to him by his host Hassan. It was butter-milk, and it was dust-coloured like a wolf. The condensed nature of the following line of *tashbih* by Imru' al-Qays is likely to have been the main reason why al-Mubarrad admired and praised it:

He said that it "excelled all other lines on the same subject. Many poets (who have tried) have failed to write a similar one, or even to approach it, either in *ma'na* or in simplicity of words."

A poet could excel another if he borrowed a simile from him and presented it elaborated and better arranged. For instance, Abu al-Atahiya wrote the following "excellent lines containing a simile" in praise of al-Rashid:

'Ali b. Jabala borrowed the *ma'na* and used it to praise Humayd b. 'Abi al-Hamid al-Tusi, presenting it with "elaborated and well arranged" in his lines:

Although al-Mubarrad rejected exaggerated similes, as we have seen, he admired two lines of *tashbih* that contained *Iqbal*, which is a kind of exaggeration. The first is by Imru' al-Qays:
Al-Mubarrad described this line as "ajjab. The second line is by Zuhayr:

Both Qudima b. Ja'far and Ibn Rashid quoted these two lines as excellent examples of Ighil.

Although al-Mubarrad was a grammarian, he was sometimes willing to overlook grammatical mistakes for the sake of a beautiful simile. The following simile by al-Umaini is a good example:

The line describes a horse. The poet recited it in the presence of al-Rashid and it was said that those who were there felt that he had made a mistake somewhere in the line, but they could not spot it. Al-Rashid saw what was wrong and asked the poet to change the first half of the line as follows:

Al-Mubarrad's comment was that, although the poet had made a grammatical mistake, his tashbih was excellent.

According to al-Mubarrad, tashbih had a definite limit beyond which it should not go; for instance when a man was likened to the sun, the similarity between the two should be understood to lie in light and beauty, not in heat. The best kind of tashbih in poetry is that which had its origin in the speech of the Arabs. In their prose they would liken the eyes of a woman to the eyes of a gazelle or of a wild cow; they likened her nose to the edge of a sword, her mouth to a ring, her hair to a branch, her neck to a silver jug, and her leg to a palm frond. They would also liken a woman to the sun, the moon, a pearl, a white cloud, or an ostrich egg. By each simile they meant a certain thing. These
Similes were transferred to poetry, as in the following lines, in which poets likened the eyes of their beloved ones to the eyes of gazelles and wild cows. Majnūn Bani ‘Amir spoke to a gazelle about his beloved as follows:

Dhū al-Rumma spoke to another gazelle about his beloved in similar terms:

Hudba b. Khashram described some women as follows:

In another poem of his, Dhū al-Rumma wrote:

The most admirable line, to al-Mubarrad, was the last, in which the poet likened his beloved to the sun which was sometimes hidden by the clouds, but then broke through. He also admired ‘Umar b. Abī Rabī‘a for his simile in the following two lines:

He said that the similes quoted from Dhū al-Rumma, and the one in this line:

In four lines, ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-‘Atawi (a muhdath) likened his beloved to many different things and claimed that she had surpassed them all because she combined the beauty of each one of them. He wrote:
The point of comparing a woman with an ostrich egg was to emphasise her pure, clear complexion. Al-Radi al-Numayrī wrote:

但不限于 نعمة في ملحمها إذ أطلقت في فتيل النعمة

Comparison with a cloud implied a leisurely, gentle walk, as in al-Aʾsha:

لا أكن مشينة من بنت جارية مثرب السماحة رتين ولا خول

A common kind of tashbih used by the Arabs concerned the gait of the she-camel, its speed and the movement of its feet. It was likened to a woman by many poets. One of the rajaz poets wrote:

كأنها ليلة النذر وقفر مرهنا بعها السواري

الشامخة had these lines:

لا أكن دارين يدرسها مدارك التي السباب حاول أن تجاوز

In which the she-camel was likened to a woman who was abused by a son of her husband from another wife. Its movements were considered similar to the violent gestures that she made in her angry rebuttal.

A she-camel might also be likened to a woman who was mourning the death
of someone dear to her, usually her son. A poet (unnamed) described his she-camel as:

\[
\text{لا ساها ناها، تَسْقَبُ، سَيْبُسُبُها وسَيْبُسُبُها المُوْجُ}
\]

The point again was the violent gestures associated with unrestrained grief. Another poet wrote:

\[
\text{أَنَّه يَدَاءُ ذَرَا بُطُورُ}
\]

Al-Mubarrad regarded these two lines as the best describing a she-camel. 51

Another way of describing the movement and speed of a she-camel was to be found in two lines of Imru' al-Qays:

\[
\text{إِذَا بَلَغَهَا كَرَطُ فَأَسْرَأ}
\]

He likened the way the she-camel threw up small stones with her feet to the way a left-handed man threw stones. He also likened the sound of the stones when thrown up to that of very strong winds (\textit{zayf}, \textit{zuyuf}) blowing in the valley of 'Abqar.

Another poet described the action of his she-camel's legs as follows:

\[
\text{لا يَبَطِعُ بِدَمَانِيِّ أَنْ يَبِعُ لِعَبَّ زُؤُودا}
\]

He compared it with the rapid arm movements of a herdsman drawing water for his camels from a well at a place called Zarū. He was hurrying for fear of punishment if late, and he knew that he would not be able to return for water for a long time. 52 Poets had written a great deal of poetry describing the speed of animals and some had exaggerated, as Dhu al-Rumma did when he wrote about a wild bull:

\[
\text{إِنَّهُ كَوْلَ يُبَثُّ فِي فَيْسَرَةَ مَسْمُوَيْنُ مَسْمُوَيْنُ فِ سَيْوَرَ اللِّبْلِ مَنْقَضِبُ}
\]

Al-Hutay'a exaggerated in describing the speed of his she-camel when he wrote:

\[
	ext{وَذَا تَطْرَقَ بَيْسَمَاءَ مُهْجُورٌ عَيْنَهَا، رَأَى عَمَّ بِالْغَوْرِ قَالَهُ لَهُ أَبُور}
\]
and:

A line which we have already mentioned as rejected by al-Mubarrad on the grounds of exaggeration was also cited in this list:

Al-Shammākh had a similar line:

The most excellent and amusing line on the subject of speed, according to al-Mubarrad, was that of Imru' al-Qays describing his horse as a fetter for wild animals (it could easily catch them):

Besides conciseness, kināya, Ighāl, ishāra, and tashbīh, there were other mahāsīn for which al-Mubarrad implied his admiration in his citations. Among these was the figure of īltifāt. In this line:

al-ʿAshā changes from talking about his māndūḥ, Hawdh b. ʿAli, to direct address in the second half of the line. This was a figure very commonly used by the Arabs. It also occurred in the Qurʾān, as in the following verse:

The same Qurʾānic verse was quoted later by Ibn al-Muʿtazz in Kitāb al-badīʿ, in the same context, as we shall see.

As an example of īltifāt from Jahili poetry, a line by ʿAntara was quoted:

and for Islamic poetry, a line by Jarīr:
Another figure was that of istitrad, as exemplified in the lines of Bashshar:

\[
\text{خليبائ من كلنا إنيا بأخالا على خلق إنا التسم مبينا
ورأي جمعنا نحن ابن فرحنا رضى خلفنا أين بسنا زواز حربه}
\]

Another was that of mathal, which is the most eloquent kind of discourse in al-Mubarrad's view. He quoted many examples of it, such as this line by Zuhayr:

\[
\text{وَمَعْهَا لَعَنَتِ ابْنَيَّ امْرِيَانَ مِن خَلْقِي}
\]

and this one by Imru' al-Qays:

\[
\text{رَذَآ الْمَاءِ مَلَئَّ عَلَى سِلَاهُ كَلِبَّتَ عَلِى شَيْءِ سَيْوَةَ يَشَرَّأنِ}
\]

The two following lines by Humayd b. Thawr:

\[
\text{أَرَى لُكَيْدَيْنِ خَاتَمَيْنَ بَعْدِي نَصْبَيْنَ}
\]

\[
\text{وَخَبِيَّةُ دَأَآَبُ وَيْمُنُّنا}
\]

\[
\text{وَرَبِّيَّةُ العَصْـرَانِ يَٰبَرَّٰٰلَةُ وَلَبِّـهَا إِذَا طَلَّبَ آنَ نَّبِيًا كَثِيرٌ}
\]

he said were "of the greatest wisdom and value as preaching, and they are to be recommended for citation by noble men and for quotation in books". The theme of the two lines is similar to a hadith of the Prophet (kafā bi-al-salāmati dā'an). 57

This admiration for mathal in poetry implies a moral tendency in al-Mubarrad's criticism, which is also suggested by his quotations from poems of hikma written by ahdath poets. These poems he described as "wise and admirable and to be cited (as aphorisms) because they are most suitable for this time. The sentiments in them may be borrowed for use in all different kinds of discourse, oratory and books". 58 He stated that wise and noble poetry was the best thing by which a man could educate and instruct his young son. 59 Most of his quotations were from the poetry of Mahmūd b. Hasan al-Warrāq, most of whose poetry consisted of wisdom (hikma), advice (wasaya) and preaching (mawaiz). 60 He also quoted several of Abū al-Atāhiya's poems on the same topics, besides his
poems on zuhd. He pointed out that he had made use of some of the wise sayings of the Greek philosophers and other ancient wise men. 61

Al-Mubarrad, as we have said, used the ancient Arabs' traditions of discourse as a source for the criteria by which to judge all poetry, whether Jāhili, Islamic or muhdath, and he admired some muhdath poetry because it contained ancient Arabic mathal, such as the following lines by Abū 'Ali al-Basîr:

He said that he quoted these lines, in spite of the fact that the poet was not a hujja, because they were excellent. The last line contained two ancient Arabic mathals:

and:

There was a third mathal associated with the two quoted, namely:

The three of them were quoted in order to imply that something or someone was good, but that this or that was better. 62 Another example of lines that contained ancient mathal was those by 'Umar b. 'Aqîl:

The last line was praised by al-Mubarrad because it contained a mathal in its second half:

He traced the origin of the mathal and attributed it with two others to Khidâsh b. Hâbis al-Taymi. The three of them run as follows:

The other main genres in which al-Mubarrad was interested were madîn, hijâ', and rithâ'. On each of these he consulted the Arab heritage, and his quotations were selected on the basis of what he found there. For
instance, in *madīh*, the Arabs used to praise men for their height, and poets would allude to this by speaking about the length of their sword belts (*hamā'il*). He cited the following line from Marwān b. Abī Hafsā in praise of al-Mahdī the Caliph:

\[
\text{كُوَّنَوْنَاءَ رَجُلَهُ عَلَيْهِ فَطَقَرَتْ وَلَمْ تُنَافِقْ قُرْبَتَهُ فَطَلَهُ}
\]

He cited another line from Abū Nuwās, who described the height of his *mamlūk*, al-Amin, as follows:

\[
\text{نَبَأَ الْبَيْتَ اِذَا اخْتَبَى نَبَاءَ عُمَّرُ الْبَيْتَمُ وَالبَيْتِ نَبَاءَ}
\]

Two lines of Jarīr were quoted, in which, addressing al-Farazdaq, he referred to the height of the Banū Hāshim:

\[
\text{نَعَّلَانَا فَقَالُوا فِي الْكَلَْمِ مَعْرَضَةَ إِلَى الْغَرَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ الْبَيْنَمُ}
\]

Fāban lā ṭarīfī Abī Shamsī wa fāqīrīn wa ṭarīfīn wa ṭabūl al-baylān min al-ḥāmīm

The importance of being a tall man was again emphasised in these two lines, in which a poet spoke of war:

\[
\text{lَمَا النَّفَّارَ عِنْفُ الْخَضَافِ وَأَصْلَفَ الْعَنَاَ نِهَالَُا}
\]

\[
\text{وَأَبَاً النَّفَّارَ بِرَبَّ الْخَضَافِ وَأَبَاً الْبَيْتَ يَخْلَأُ}
\]

The Arabs also used to praise a man for being *khamīṣ al-bāṭn* (slim of stomach); a warrior (*faris*) was praised as *muhafaf al-khirrayn* (slim of waist) with burning eyes and slender arms (*hamsh al-dhirayn*), as in this line quoted by al-Asma'ī:

\[
\text{لاَمَا سَيِّدَا سَيِّدَاء نِيِّبٍ}
\]

He was also praised for having little flesh on his backside (*ajuz*) and thighs because of his continuous riding in war. On the other hand, a noble leader (*al-ra'is al-sayyid*) was described as being fleshy, with a big stomach, a big head, and slightly deaf. He was further described as having a loud voice, and large strides and being respected in men's eyes. If he was seen, he satisfied the sight, and if he spoke, he satisfied the hearing. Di'bīl b. 'Alī was quoted as describing such a *sayyid* as
follows:

Al-Mubarrad, appreciating conciseness, as we have mentioned, praised Jarir for achieving the same *manna* in one line:

65 يَسِرُّ أَبُو مُحَاوَنَ إِنْ عَسْرَهُ عَسْرٌ عِندَ بِسَارِهِ مِن سَوْرٍ

In his view, the best kind of *madīn* was that in which praiseworthy attributes were summed up without prolixity. A good example was a poem by al-Hutay'a, who compressed many aspects of *madīn* into a few lines and then summarised them in his last line. In the first few lines he wrote:

which he summed up:

Similar to this are these lines of al-Shammakh:

66 إذَا مَا رَأَيْتُ بَيْنَ لَفَّّهَا عَرَايَةً بَلْ يَمِين

Al-Mubarrad seems to have liked the *madīn* poetry of al-Hutay'a, from which he quoted several examples, with admiration. The reason for this, apparently, was that his poetry satisfied al-Mubarrad's desire for
conciseness, and other aspects of rhetoric. The following lines of madīh by al-Hutay'a exemplify this. They are in praise of Baghid:

The comment of al-Mubarrad shows that his reason for selecting them was their conciseness. The poet meant that "the madīh's noble qualities and generosity have become famous and are now so great that if someone dispraises him, he will be regarded as a liar; the madīh, therefore does not need to be excessively praised, because it is certain that the one who satirises him will not be believed". Al-Mubarrad then added: "If you consider this discourse, you will find it most distinguished in its topic". 67 Concise madīh was to be found also in the following line by an aqrabī in praise of Sawwār b. Ṭabī' Allāh al-Qādī:

The poet was said to have "gathered together the aspects of madīh with firmness of resolution and the accomplishment of decision (rakānat al-ḥazm wa-imdā' al-ażm)". A similar line was this one by al-Nābīgha al-Jā'dī:

Al-Mubarrad seems to have admired these lines because, besides being concise, they were associated with a wise saying used by the Arabs:

According to al-Mubarrad, the concept of madīh was associated with that of hijā', in that the maṣāni of hijā' contained their opposites, which were the maṣāni of madīh. This idea of "opposites" seems to have guided him in his quotations from the two genres. It was also connected with hijā' mughī, or hijā' bi-l-taftīl and hijā' bi-l-tafrīd (indication) or indirect hijā'. If we look at some of his quotations this may become clearer. He said that the following lines by an aqrabī were "the most
harmful kind of hijā'". The aqrabi was satirising some of the Tay':

ولّا أَنْ يَتَهِّبْ بِهِ حُكْمَةٌ جِبْلِيْسٍ لِيَسْ بِتِينِمِ جِبَلِيْسٍ

بَيَّنَتُ نَا أَنْ تُقَلِّلُ الْبَنْتَ فِي جُبُورُ الْبَنْتَ

إِذَا مَا أَفَقَتْ أَيُّهِمْ رَأْيِ

This literally meant that they used their cooking butter for themselves only, i.e. that they were misers. The lines of the aqrabi meant that the people about whom he was talking had no stranger among them, and thus that they were not visited by guests, since they were misers. With this in mind, al-Mubarrad considered that the best kind of madīḥ was that which contained the idea opposite to that found in this hijā' and accorded with the aphorism of the "wise men" (hukama'):

هُوَ كَرَرٌ حَيَّرَ كَرَرٌ نَارَ مَرَّ.

He consequently regarded the following line of Zuhayr in praise of Harim b. Sinan as one of the best lines of madīḥ because it agreed with this sentiment:

وَقَ جَعَلَ الْبَلَائِيْنَ الْأَيْبَرَ فِي غَرَمْ

والسَّلَّامُ إِلَى أَبْوَابِهِ مُرًَّا.

A similar idea was to be found in the following rajaz line by Abū Nukhayla al-Rājiz:

يَنَّ النَّزَرُ حَيْنَ تَرِكَ الْفَنْعَاطُ

A third line with the same idea was also quoted by al-Mubarrad in order to support his view about excellent madīḥ. The line (unattributed) is:

۶۹َ يَدْخِلُ النَّاسُ عَلَى بَابِهِ وَالْمَسْرِيْنَ الْعَذَبُ لَبِيْرَ الرَّحْامُ

These lines of hijā' and madīḥ achieved their objects in an indirect way. In admiring indirect madīḥ and hijā', al-Mubarrad was probably guided by his interest in rhetoric and 'eloquence', as when he spoke about imā'.
From these traditional sayings and lines of *hija' and madīn* arose the idea of "opposites" in each of the genres. Al-Mubarrad's taste for this kind of *madīn* and *hija'*, as is to be found in other quotations. The following line of praise by Abū Qays b. al-Aslat was said to be "poetry worthy to be selected":

"..." (translated as)

This line, as explained by al-Mubarrad, indicated the importance of the people being praised by stating that when they visited kings they would be admitted at once and not be kept at the door. Its opposite was to be found in a line by Jarīr satirising some of the Tamīm:

A poem by al-Mutay'a provided a good example of poetry in which Al-Mubarrad found the combination of *madīn* and *hija'*, and the idea of "opposites" which he thought effective. It might also be regarded as *hija'* *mudhī* or *hija' bi-'l-tāfīl*. Some of the lines quoted are:

"..." (translated as)

The poet then turned to indirect *hija' of al-Zibriqān b. Badr and his people, as follows:

"..." (translated as)

Another good example of poetry that contained a combination of *madīn* and *hija'" were the two lines of Ibn Abī 'Uayna, satirising Khalīd b. Yazīd"
al-Muhallabī and praising his father. Al-Mubarrad regarded these lines as the best of their kind, that is, in stating the difference between those who were closely related to each other:

A third example was by al-Āṣhā on al-Marīth b. Wâlî who was satirised, and Hawdh b. 'Alî who was praised:

The idea of the "opposites" might also be found in the kind of hijā' in which a poet stated that he would not answer this or that poet who had satirised him, because he was not even worthy to be answered. Those who were worthy to be answered in hijā' were those who were the poet's equals. This kind of hijā', although not like hijā' bi-'l-tafālī', nevertheless contains a similar idea. An extension of this was that some poets who refused to answer the one who had satirised them, on the grounds that he was not worthy to be answered, used to satirise instead a noble man or a chief of the tribe of the poet who had satirised them. This means that they put themselves on a level with the noble men and chiefs of the other's tribe. The Jâhilîs used to do something similar in connection with revenge, in that, instead of killing a killer of low rank, they would kill a noble man from his tribe. It is in the light of all this that we should view al-Mubarrad's selection of lines of this kind of hijā', such as the
following, by a rajaz poet:

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
.Ibn al-Suwayf al-Qadi\textsuperscript{a} al-Tayyib, \textsuperscript{b} al-Thawri\textsuperscript{c} al-Suhayli\textsuperscript{d} al-\textit{\textasciitilde{a}z}\textsuperscript{e}in al-\textit{\textasciitilde{a}z}\textsuperscript{f} or \textit{hija} bi-\textit{t}af\textit{a}\textit{dil}, especially the second line. Another example of this kind of \textit{hija} was quoted from Di\textasciitilde{b}il b. \textasciitilde{d}\textasciitilde{b}\textasciitilde{d}.

\begin{quote}
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In a third example, a poet stated that his opponent in \textit{hija} is nothing and therefore was not worthy to be answered. The poet claimed that those who were equal to him were few and that that was why he was unwilling to answer others in \textit{hija}. The lines were (unattributed):

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\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
\begin{align*}
\text{The last two lines illustrated \textit{hija} in which \textit{taf\textit{a}\textit{dil}} was used, especially the last.}
\end{align*}
\end{center}
\end{quote}

Some poems on various subjects were quoted, as a kind of amusement (\textit{hazl}), to relax the reader after so many chapters of serious matter (\textit{jidd}), al-Mubarrad claimed. Among these amusing poems are these lines of \textit{hija} by Ab\textasciitilde{b} al-Shamaqmaq:

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
and some lines of the \textit{rajiz} of Ab\textasciitilde{b} al-Najm al-\textit{\textasciitilde{I}j\textasciitilde{l}}, in which he advised his daughter, Barra, after she had been married, how to treat her mother-in-law:

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\end{align*}
\end{center}
\end{quote}
He further advised her:

His description of his own younger daughter was quoted by al-Mubarrad, also, apparently for the sake of amusement:

The last citations to be discussed here are those of ritha', on which al-Mubarrad said a great deal. From his criticism of some poems of ritha' and his praise of others, it may be possible to form some idea of his tastes in this sphere.

The first poem quoted was one by Abu Sa‘id b. Ishāq b. Khalaf, about his sister's daughter, whom he had adopted:

This marthiya was said to be "not one of those marṭāthi which express clear concern (jaza‘) and extended sadness but one of those which contain deep concern expressed with moderation (husn al-iqṭisa‘), inclination to complaint (al-mayl li-al-tashakkī) and reliance on consolation (al-ruku‘u ilā al-ta‘azzī). It is in the style of one who exhorts himself and who has a hard and stern nature'. Al-Mubarrad then recited two lines from a marthiya by someone on his brother:
These lines were said to be excellent, because the poet expressed a heavy loss. He had the right to intensify his loss as much as he liked. It would seem that the main idea that al-Mubarrad required in rithā' poetry was that of consolation. He said that one should keep in mind that this world was full of misfortunes, and that everyone would weep over someone who had passed away, or he himself would be wept over when he died. Man had to be patient and endure the misfortunes of time, and he should realise that this world was a temporary place for him. With regard to misfortunes and loss, people differed, some being better than others in showing understanding, taking consolation and accepting what happened to them, in order to gain their reward in the hereafter and to be of blessed memory (jamīl al-dhikr) in this world. An example of rithā' poetry that conformed with this was the two lines of Abū Khirash al-Hudhali, one of the wise men of the Arabs, on his brother Urwa b. Murra:

\[\text{نَسْرُ أَرَاهُ بَعْدَ غُرُورَةَ عَرَبَيْاً} \]
\[\text{وَذَلِكْ رَأَيْتُ نِعْمَتَيْنِ جَيْلٍ} \]
\[\text{فَلا تَحْسَبِينَ أَنَّكَ نَاسِثَ بُعْرَةً} \]
\[\text{وَكَلْنَ أَصْرَرْتُ بِأَفْجَامَيْنِ جَيْلٍ} \]

Another good example was the two lines of 'Amr b. Ma'dī Yakrib:

\[\text{بَوَلَةَ بِمَخْيَاءِ} \]
\[\text{وَلَيْسَ مِنَ الْخَيْرَاتِ} \]
\[\text{أَمْرَتُكَ عِنْدَ رَكَابِرِ} \]
\[\text{وَخُلُقْتُ بِنَمَّ خُلُقَتْ جَلَّ أَ} \]

Al-Mubarrad concentrated on the idea of consolation. As was his habit when dealing with other genres, he supported his views on consolation in rithā' by quoting from early Arab prose and poetry. "It is said", he pointed out, "that the one who hopes to live for ever and does not adjust himself to misfortunes is ājīz al-ra'y". It was reported that a man once consoled another for the death of his son and asked him: "Used he sometimes to be absent and far away?" The father replied: "He used to be absent more than he was with us". The man then said to him: "Regard him as absent, and although he will not come back to you, you will go (some day) to him". This idea was expressed by Ibrahim b.
al-Mahdī, who, in one of his rithā', poems about his son, wrote these two lines:

وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ وَانَ

According to al-Mubarrad, hopelessness was the best consolation; as a poet once wrote:

According to al-Mubarrad, poems of rithā' are extremely numerous (and perhaps poetry was written on no subject more than on rithā' because men were always associated with misfortunes). "What we select are the choice, rare, proverbial and famous poems", he said. Such was a poem by Ibrahim b. al-Mahdī, elegizing his son, starting:

Two lines had already been quoted from this poem, as an example of poetry that contained wise consolation. Such also was a poem by 'Abd Allāh b. Arāka, elegizing his brother 'Amr, in which the poet "followed the wise path of consolation":

81

82

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84
The last line is about the Prophet.

The poet consoled his brother by telling him that there was no reason to weep over somebody after realising that the Prophet himself had died and that no loss could be greater than his death.

Two lines which were recited by 'Ali b. Abi Talib at the grave of his wife Fatima were also quoted by al-Mubarrad for their wise consolation:

\[
\text{كَلَّٰ لَمْ يَدْعُوَّ بَعْضُهُمُّ بِغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ} \\
\text{وَإِنَّ الَّذِى دُونَ الْفَرْقِ فَلَبِّ} \\
\text{فَإِنَّ ابْتَدَأَ وَعِدَّ وَعَادٍ دِلْبَلْ عَلَى أَنَّ لاَ بُدُّ مِنْ خُلُقلٍ}
\]

Some poems were criticised by al-Mubarrad, such as this one by an ahrabī:

\[
\text{أَيَّرَ لَهُ نِفْسُ الأَرْزَالِ وَالبِتَانَى} \\
\text{لَمْ يَمِّنَهُ لَوْ قَدْ قَدَرُ ۖ} \\
\text{ضَرَّ عِنْيَةُ بَيْنَيْ بَيْنَ وَهْلِي} \\
\text{وَلَكَ سُبْحَانَ ہۚ} \\
\text{قَبْسُ الْفَرْقِ وُجِّلَ وَجِيرُ} \\
\text{هَما بِأَمْرِ الْمَالِ وَأَمَامُ رَدْ} \\
\text{88}
\]

He described it as the harshest poetry, because the poet wished that the dead man whom he elegized had not died a natural death (hatfa anfihi) but had been killed. He also criticised him for praising the dead man as one who incited others to do good and evil. Similar to it was a line by Labīd, elegizing his brother Arbad, who was struck by lightning:

\[
88
\]

According to al-Mubarrad, misfortunes were of two kinds. Some of them could be reduced or controlled by human action. The other kind could not be avoided at all, and in that case one should be wise and console oneself. He quoted 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, who remained
calm when his son died. When he was asked why this was, he replied that: "This is something which we were expecting and when it happened we were not surprised". He also quoted the Arab saying:


A wise man was reported to have said that one might be worried and agitated while expecting something bad to happen, but when it actually happened, he could do nothing but accept it. A good poem of rithā' was one that expressed such a concept. An excellent example is one by Aws b. Hajar, elegizing Ṣadālā b. Kalada. It starts:


Other examples were given from Laylā al-Akhyaliyya, elegizing Tawba, such as her poem starting:


In this poem, the idea of accepting what has happened is expressed in these lines:


Al-Mubarrad praised al-Khansa’ and Laylā for their marāṭiḥ, in which they had excelled some of the fuhūl. Two poems were quoted from al-Khansa’, elegizing her brother Sakhr. One of them starts:


and the other:


It contains this line:


The line was admired because of its kināya in tawīl al-nījād, a conceit we have encountered before.91
The marāthī of Ibn Munādhir are described by al-Mubarraz as "sweet" and of "beautiful commemoration" (ta'bfīn), because Ibn Munādhir was a fālim, a leading and skilful poet (muflīq), and also a very eloquent orator (khatīb misqāf). In his poetry there was the firmness of the discourse of the (early) Arabs, because of his culture and his extensive recitation of poetry; and there was the sweetness of the discourse of the muhdathūn, owing to the influence of his period. From time to time his poetry would contain a famous māthāl, a fine concept, splendid and noble words, and harmonious discourse. His long poem elegizing ʿAbd al-Majīd b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Thaqafī was a choice one (mukhtārā). It starts:

Al-Mubarrad quoted the poem, singling out the lines he most admired, beginning:

In these lines the poet spoke of the great kings who had passed away and could not escape the inevitable fate of death. He claimed that, if there was anyone who was allowed to live for ever, it should be ʿAbd al-Majīd:

This line was intended as consolation. He then expressed his great sadness for his heavy loss which he intensified:

These two lines were also admired for their conciseness in madīn of a dead man.⁹²

Some marāthī were greatly admired by the Arabs, and considered superior to all other poems of rithā'. One such poem was that by ʿAlīhālīfma on al-Muntashir b. Wahb al-Baḥrī, starting:
A half-line was singled out by al-Mubarrad from this poem as a noble piece of madīn, namely the second half of this line:

\[ \text{لايَشِبُ فيِهِ إِذَا قَوْاَلَهُ رَهَفٍ، وَلَيْسَ فِيِهِ إِذَا عُسِرَتْ عَسْرٍ.} \]

It expressed the same idea as the wise saying:

\[ 
\text{إِذَا عَسَرَ احْكُمْ.} 
\]

A second selected marthiya was that by Mutammim b. Nuwayra on his brother Malik, in which the poet consoled himself:

\[ 
\text{وَلَنَا لِنَقَمَى جَزِيعَةَ حَقَّبَةٍ مِّن الدُّخَرٍ، حَتَّى قَبِلْنَ لَنَ يُصَمَّرَ.}
\]

\[ 
\text{فَكَلِّمَنا أَفْتَرَقْنا كَأَنْ وَمَا يَا لَيْسَ إِلَّا أَنْ نُحْصِبَ.}
\]

\[ 
\text{فَأَمَرْتَ مَنْ يَبْتَغُ لَبَلَةَ مَعَا}
\]

\[ 
\text{وَعَيْسَانَا أَكْبَرَ ضَحْيَ الْحَيَاةِ وَقُولَنا}}
\]

\[ 
\text{أَصَابَ الْبَيْحَا رَفَطْ كَسَرَ وَنَبِّعَا.}
\]

Other lines of consolation and the expression of patience and acceptance in the same poem were:

\[ 
\text{وَلَسْتُ إِذَا مَرَّ دُخُرٌ أَحْرَنَ بَيْتَنا}
\]

\[ 
\text{وَرَأَى بِرْزُوَارِ القَرَاءِ أَخْفَفَنا}
\]

\[ 
\text{وَلَبِّهَنَّ إِنَّ كُنْتَ يَوْمَ يُقْتَلُنَا} 
\]

\[ 
\text{وَلَسْتُ أَمُسَىٰ عَلَى ذَلِكَ مَقْرَباً} 
\]

\[ 
\text{إِذَا بَعَشَ مِنْ رَأْيِ الْلَّمَعِ نَغْلِفَنا.} 
\]

The poems of rithā' cited by al-Mubarrad were almost all in accordance with his concept of inevitable misfortunes and his belief that, in a poem of rithā', the poet, after setting out his great loss and expressing his great sadness in an intensified way, should after all seek wise consolation and demonstrate patience, endurance and acceptance of what had happened with understanding and serenity.
Although we have included him in this school of critics which assumed a moderate attitude towards the dispute concerning the ancients and the mudhathūn, Ibn al-Mu'tazz differed from al-Jahiz, Ibn Qutayba and al-Mubarrad, in that his Tabaqāt was about the mudhathūn only, while the other three did not restrict themselves to them and quoted from both groups.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz himself was one of the great poets of the mudhathūn and a leader in the art of bādi'. Abu al-Faraj wrote in his Aghānī, describing the characteristics of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry: "Although in his poetry there are the delicacy of royalty, the eroticism of the 'elegant' and the gossamer-like quality of the mudhathūn, there are also in it many elements that follow the style of the classic poets and do not fall short of the scope of his predecessors, as well as elegancies characteristic of the poetry of kings, in which he could not be expected to resemble the great poets of the Jāhiliyya. It is impossible for one who describes a morning-draught in a variegated and elegant assembly, among drinking-companions and singing-girls, amid fields of flowers, violets and narcissi, and similar trappings - not to mention other kinds of assembly, rich carpets, selected instruments and delicate servants - to turn his verse aside from fine, flowing discourse which is understood by all those who are present, to matted, unkempt discourse and to the description of wild deserts, antelopes, ostriches, camels male and female, camping-grounds, wildernesses and abandoned dwellings; if he does turn aside from
these last, however, and writes well, he should not be criticised, and if he writes well for the most part, moderately to some extent, and less than adequately in some small degree, his deserts should not be totally denied, and he should not be considered to have fallen short completely, in order to publish his faults and conceal his merits.  

From what was said in the Aghānī, it would seem that the characteristics of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's poetry were those of a combination of the two styles of the ancient and the muḥdath poetry, although it was more similar to the latter. The poetry of a poet like him, who was a Caliph, ought to reflect the courtly nature of his own way of life. His descriptions ought not to be of Bedouin items, and he was not obliged to follow the ancients in themes which did not apply to his life. From this point of view it would seem that Abū al-Faraj was speaking about "sincerity and reality" in the poetry of Ibn al-Muʿtazz. He rejected blind imitation of the ancients but still believed that a muḥdath poet could reach the standard of the excellent ancient fuhūl. Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself, when discussing a poem by Abū al-Khattāb al-Bahdālī, a muḥdath poet, in praise of the Caliph Musā al-Ḥāfīz, described the poet as one who was "able to combine both the maʿānī of the ancients and the beauties of the muḥdathūn". This sort of style is very much the same as that adopted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself, as can be seen from the words of al-Isfahānī.

Ibn Rashīq stated that he had never seen a poet with more perfect and wonderful tasnīf than Ibn al-Muʿtazz "because his craftsmanship (ṣanʿa) is concealed (khafīyya) and fine (lāṭīfā), and sometimes it can hardly be detected except by one who is expert in the secret details of poetry (daqāʿiq al-shiʿr). In comparison with his peers, as it appears to me, he has more elegant poetry and more bāḍī and variety (iftīnān)". Ibn
Rashīq believed that ḏāʾiḍ and craftsmanship had reached their peak in Ibn al-Muʿtazz and had been 'sealed' by him. He added that Ibn al-Muʿtazz was also one of those who were excellent in wine-description, in which he compared with al-ʿAshārī, al-Akhtal and Abū Nuwās. He also compared with the last in hunting-poetry and ṭārīf. Tāhā Husayn agreed with what Abū al-Paraj al-Isfahānī said about the poetry of Ibn al-Muʿtazz, describing him as a natural poet (māḥat) who had no affectation (takāğūf) in his poetry and one who preferred facility and plainness to ḏāʾin. He was careful to observe firmness (jazāla) in his words and maintained that as far as he could. He was interested in luxurious maṭānī that accorded with his life and his environment and much concerned with descriptive themes. In this genre he excelled other poets with his numerous beautiful tāshbīḥāt.

In his selections from the poems of the muḥdathūn in his Taḥqīq al-shuʿārāʾ al-muḥdathīn, Ibn al-Muʿtazz was perhaps guided by his own stylistic tendency. The poems that he quoted did not contain ḏāʾin, description of deserts, camels, or other Bedouin themes, with the exception of the introductory tāshbīḥ and ṭālāl in poems of ṭāmīn, the lion-description in the qaṣīda of Abū al-Khattāb al-Bahdālī in praise of the Caliph Mūsā al-Ḥāḍī, which is full of ḏāʾīn, and one or two lines of camel and horse-description. In his own poetry he himself used ṭālāl and tāshbīḥ. Anyhow, he seems to have had a great admiration for the ancients and to have been unable to free himself entirely from their influence. This should be seen as complementing his theory of ḏāʾīḍ, in which he referred to it as something started by the earlier poets and not invented by the muḥdathūn. It may also be seen as connected with his admiration for al-Khalīl b. ʿĀḥmad and Khalaf al-ʿAḥmar, whom he mentioned among the muḥdathūn, even though they belonged to the ʿulamāʾ.
and ruwāt who favoured the earlier poets.

One of the reasons for his compiling his Tabaqāt al-shu'arāʾ al-muhdathīn was that the people of his time were tired of continual repetition of the poetry of the ancients and of akhbar concerning them, and that they were anxious for a change. This need was satisfied by the poetry of the muhdathīn, as Ibn al-Mu'tazz mentioned in connection with the poet Abu al-Shays. Another reason seems to have been a political one, and it was associated with the poetry of madīh on the Abbasid Caliphs. In his quotations he concentrated on such poetry, in order to affirm the right of the Abbasids to the caliphate. When talking about the poet Abu al-'Irar, he made it clear that his main concern in his book was to mention every poet who had written madīh on the Abbasid caliphs. He was also interested in rare poems (nādir) which were generally unknown. He said for instance that the poems of Sālih b. 'Abd al-Quddūs were well-known and that therefore there was no need to quote more of them. The same thing applied to Ahmad b. Abu Tāhir, whose poems were said to be known to the khassa and famma alike. Some of the best poems of poets like Marwān b. Abu Ḥafsa and Abu Nuwas, on the other hand, were unknown except to the elite. These rare poems, such as the kafiyya of Marwān, and other similar poems of his, and Abu Nuwas' mimiyaa, starting:

were all excellent poems, which ought to be introduced to the famma. Some of Rabīʿa al-Raqqī's poems were also known only to the elite, like the one starting:

He selected some poems for the instructional benefits that they contained, as appears from his remark on a poem by Salm al-Khāsir in praise of Yahyā al-Barmakī the Abbasid vizier, starting:

He said about it: "It is said that he who behaves according to what is
laid down in this poem will be qualified to be a vizier". A final reason, perhaps, for his compiling his *Tabaqat* was to present, in parts of it, a practical application of his theory of *badī‘*, as set out in *Kitāb al-badī‘*. In his selections from *muhdath* poetry in the *Tabaqat*, there are many examples of *mahāsin* and different kinds of *badī‘*, as we shall see.

**Criteria of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz in his quotations:**

Like earlier critics, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz did not mention the criteria he used in judging poets and selecting poetry in his *Tabaqat*. The fact that people at his time desired a change from the citation of ancient poetry caused him to limit himself to quotations from *muhdath* poetry, and although this may indicate in him an admiration for this poetry from a general point of view, it does not indicate a standard for good and bad poetry. A study of some of his remarks on poets and their verse may throw some light on his criteria.

The first quality that he required was that of *tab*‘, together with facility of poetry (*suhūla*). Many of his poets were classified as *matbū‘īn*, and the most important poets in this group were Bashshār, Abu al-‘Atāhiya, al-Sayyid al-Himyārī and Abū ‘Uayna who were said to be the most *matbū‘* of all poets. Of these four, Bashshār seems to have been his favourite poet, since he praised him as being very richly endowed with *tab*‘, and as having no takalluf at all in his poetry. Abū al-‘Atāhiya was also praised for his rich *tab*‘ and for the facility of his poetry; he could play with poetry and write it whenever he liked. Most of his discourse was poetry, and sometimes he wrote in metres other than the well known ones. Ibn al-Mu‘tazz describes most of his citations from his poetry as "the most natural poetry and the easiest discourse".
The connection between tabī and facility of poetry was exemplified by the poetry of Abū al-ʿAtāhiya. Tabī is also connected with spontaneity, as in the cases of Abū al-ʿAtāhiya, again, and Abū al-Shays, for whom writing poetry was said to be easier than drinking water; this was what made him the best poet of all.  

Ibn al-Muʿtazz differed from al-Asmaʿī concerning tabī, in that, while al-Asmaʿī linked it with tawāwut (variety of levels of excellence in poetic production as a whole or in one poem), as we have seen with al-Nābigha al-Jādī, Ibn al-Muʿtazz admired consistency of levels of excellence both in the whole of a poet's poetry and in his individual poems. He described the poetry of Abū ʿUyayna as "purer than the palm of the hand and containing not a single inferior line". This is probably the same as unity of ṭamam, about which Ibn al-Muʿtazz sometimes spoke.  

As a leading poet of badīʿ, Ibn al-Muʿtazz might be expected to quote passages from the muḥdathūn full of badīʿ elements. In fact, like others, he used the term badīʿ somewhat ambiguously in describing poems that he admired; it is not always easy to tell whether he meant that they were wonderful poems or that they really contained elements of badīʿ itself. Expressions like: "and this maʿna is badīʿ, and no-one wrote anything similar to it" continually face us in the book. An example is this line by Bashshār:  

"يا تفوق أَمَّكَ لِبَعْلِي الْعَمّ عَالِشَةٍ والْأَذْنَ تَصَعُّرَ قَبْلَ الْعَمّ أَحْيَاً"  

Another is his maṣāʾība, starting:  

"وَأَنْتُ ظَلَّاتُ جَمَالٌ نَسَأْلُ أَنْ تُقَدِّمَ بِهِ بَعْدَ مَاسِعَ الْبَالَ"  

which was described as an admirable poem "because of its maʿnāi badīʿa and its high standard of composition and form". The figure of badīʿ that Ibn al-Muʿtazz admired most was tashbīh. Ibn Bashīq reported that he preferred Dhū al-Rumma to all other poets for his excellent istīʿara and
tashbih, especially in the following line:

The expression wa-al-shamsu hayyatun pertained to hadīf, being isti'ara; the rest of the line was a wonderful tashbih. Ibn al-Mu'tazz also pointed out Bashshār's skill in writing excellent tashbih, and said that his similes - even though he was blind - were better than those of all other poets, such as in his line:

Bashshār himself was proud of that line, because in it he was able to combine more than one tashbih, following Imru' al-Qays, who had done the same, in the line that we have quoted before. Ibn Rashīq praised Bashshār for his correct and excellent tartīb in this line.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz was also concerned with excellence of words and maṣāra, and perfection of composition, which was what he meant by "ihkām al-rasf". He claimed these characteristics for a poem of Bashshār, starting:

A line from this poem was quoted by Ibn Tabītabā as an example of poetry that "comes close to reality":

This line was quoted beside a line of 'Antara's describing his horse, and it was admired for the same reason:

Two further lines by al-Muṭḥaqīb al-ʿĀbdī on his she-camel:

were criticised by Ibn Tabītabā on the grounds that the metaphor used in them was very far removed from reality; the two lines quoted from Bashshār and 'Antara were therefore better.
Another poem admired by Ibn al-Mu'tazz for its excellent ma'nā was one of madīh on Maslama b. 'Abi al-Malik, by Abū Nukhayla.23

Some poems by other poets were described in terms such as: "And this, as you can see, is a kind of poetry that looks like silk brocade, nay, it is like a string of pearls, with excellence in description and perfection in form and structure (rasf)."24 Concerning other poetry he said: "and these words - as you have heard - have the sweetness of fresh water, and the ma'nā are more delicate (aragga) than permissible magic".25 Of the poet 'Umarā b. 'Āqīl, a grandson of Jarīr, he said that "when he starts writing poetry in a certain ma'nā he will not leave it until he has gone deeply into it and finally completed it; he has clear poetry, perfect form and excellent description".26

The ma'nā was an important factor in the fame of poetry, according to Ibn al-Mu'tazz, who described the two following lines by Darast al-Mu'allim as having "travelled widely on earth" because of their good ma'nā:

The twin measures of excellence of ma'nā and of words are related to what Ibn Qutayba said in his book al-Shī'r wa-al-shu'ārā', where he divided poetry into four types, according to excellence of ma'nā and of words. Qudāma b. Ja'far in his Naqd al-shī'r, appeared to have been influenced by both Ibn Qutayba and Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his theory of the combination of the four elements of poetry, metre, rhyme, words and concept.28

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also spoke about the two qualities of fasāha and suhūla. Some of the poems he selected were credited with these qualities. The poet Mut'a b. Iyās praised Ma'n b. Za'ida in a gasīda which was said to
be fahla jayyida. 29 The marthiya of Ibn Munadhir on 'Abd al-Majid al-Thaqafi was described as a perfect, fluent masterpiece of poetry and said to be: fahla muhkama fahla jiddan. 30 Ibn al-Mu'tazz linked suhula with fasaha just as he did with tab'a. These were the two qualities characteristic of the urjuza of Di'bil b. 'Ali in praise of the Caliph al-Mamun:

He said that people desired fasaha in poetry together with excellence, and "they have unanimously agreed that the gasida of Abu Firtawm al-Sasi in praise of al-Hasan b. Sahl combines the two". It opens:

After a masib occupying four lines, the poet enters on his madih:

The rest of the poem is an amusing description of the poet's family, their donkey and their dog, starting:

This description, besides the 'eloquence' found in the poem by Ibn al-Mu'tazz, may have been a reason why people admired it. The third line of the madih, incidentally, contains the figure of ruju', which is listed as one of the mahasin in Kitab al-badi'.

Another of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's criteria is that good poetry should have one namat, or consistency in style, form, structure and excellence in all parts. It should also have the qualities of suhula and salasa (fluency), and should be free of defects. Such poetry was written by Bashshar, about whom Ibn al-Mu'tazz wrote: "I do not know anyone among people of knowledge
and understanding who denies his superiority or dislikes his poetry, which is purer than the palm of the hand, clearer than a glass, and smoother than sweet water on the tongue. The foregoing *gasīda* rhyming in ٌٌٌٌ he described as a poem that belongs to "the silk brocade of poetry that contains no variation of *namat*". Beauty of poetic *namat* was to be found in the poetry of al-Sayyid al-Himyari, and also in the *gasīda* of Bakr b. al-Nattāh, in praise of Abū Dulaf. "It is all written in one *namat*, which silk brocade falls short of." Other poems, like that of Muhammad b. Yasīr, in which he says:

> تَقَلُّبُ بِهِمْ فِي الْفُواوِدِ دَخْبِي، وَأَخْلَقُ عَرْمَ الْبُوْعُ بِرَحْيِلٍ

were described thus: "and this *namat* - as you see - is but permissible magic." One poem by Rabiʿa al-Raqī was described: "and this - as you see - is more fluent than water and sweeter than honey".

Ibn al-Muʿtazz was also interested in poetry written in short metres. He commented on the following lines by Abū al-Yanbaghī:

> آلّا يا ملک الناسِ وفَضْرِ الناسِ لِلْناسِ وَأَغْنِيَانِي عَنِ النَّاسِ وَإِلا فَنُقِّي النَّاسِ وَذَعَنِي أَسَالِ النَّاسِ فَهَلَ سَيْحِنِ فِي النَّاسِ بِشَعْرِ اللَّهِ النَّاسِ

"these lines have travelled widely on earth and are recited by everyone because they are very light in men's mouths." The same quality was to be found in the second example, by Abū al-ʿĀmaythil:

> فَمَدَّ جَارَ واللَّهُ عَلَيْ جَارِهَ وَهَلَقَ أَوَّمَهَ بِالْيَارِ حِيْنَ مَتَى يَا سَبِّيْلِ أَنتِ لِي تَنْزِحُ إِقْبَالِ بِإِبْدَارِ يَا مَرْضِيْنَ رَفَعَ فِيْنَ فِيْنَ فِيْنَ فِيْنَ فِيْنَ فِيْنَ فِيْنَ فِيْنَ فِيْنَ فِيْنَ

A third example, again by Abū al-Yanbaghī:
Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s comment on the second line was that it "has flown to the remotest parts of the earth, and people recite it admiringly in every majlis, assembly, market and street. A verse of poetry is vouchsafed such fame only if it consists of an excellent ma‘na and sweet words, and if it is light in the mouth." 41

Sweetness and excellence of words was also connected with fasaha and brevity. The criterion of brevity was much talked about by al-Mubarrad, as we have seen. When Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, too, compared the line of Bashshār:

\[\text{he preferred Salm's line because the poet had expressed the idea in "more excellent words with more eloquence and more brevity". Bashshār himself admitted that Salm had surpassed him in that line because he had presented the ma‘na in more beautiful words.}\]

We still find critics inclined to give enthusiastic judgements about single verses and declaring a poet to be the best on the strength of a single line that occurs in his poetry. Ibn al-Mu‘tazz had the habit of giving such judgements with regard to excellence of ma‘na. Quoting the qasida of Bakr Ibn al-Nattah in praise of Abū Dulaf, he commented on the following line:

\[
\text{"It is acknowledged by all poets that there is no other line to compare with it in beauty and excellence of ma‘na." 43 The poet used isti‘ara (ناً عَمَّم العَرْب حَسْوَ عَةَم إِذَا لَبَقَ الْرَّماَق بالرِّماَبِتْ) to describe the generosity of the family of Abū Dulaf, likening their hands to clouds which shower rain everywhere. It was also said that when the poet 'Alī b. al-Jahm was put in prison, he wrote a poem addressing the Caliph al-Mutawakkil, one of the}\
\]
lines of which was:

When he was crucified he recited:

On hearing these two lines, people "judged that he was the best poet of all; poets submitted to him and princes feared him". The poet likened himself when he was put in prison to a sword being put into its scabbard. In the second line he likened himself when he was naked and crucified to a sword being drawn or unsheathed. Ibn Rashīq quoted the second line, together with the two that preceded it:

as an example of extempore poetry (irtijāl), saying that it demonstrated the poetic power and tabṣir of the poet even at a time when he was terrified and in pain. He gave other examples of poetry written in irtijāl by poets who were at the point of death, like Hudba b. Khushram Tarafa b. al-ʿAbī and Murra b. Mahkan. According to him, the poetry that they produced in these circumstances had the same degree of excellence as the poetry that they wrote at happier moments. He described the lines of ʿAlī Ibn al-Jahm as having the quality of jazāla, and this may throw some light on Ibn al-Muʿtazz's views on them.

Ibn al-Muʿtazz was also concerned with ḥusn al-takhallus or excellent transition from nasīb to mādīḥ and from nasīb to ḥijā. He also connected this with excellence of maʿnā. In the qasīda of ʿAlī b. Jabala in praise of Humayd al-Tūsī, the nasīb began:
The poet then proceeded to his rahil, beginning:

"Qabha A'massif al-basasad."i

This continued for twelve lines, and then he switched to madih:

"Binnajrār

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's comment was: "I have never heard a transition from nasib to madih more beautiful than this, not to mention the excellence of these ma'ānī."\textsuperscript{46}

The poem of Abū Nuwās in praise of al-Fadl b. Yahyā al-Barmakī was quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. It started with a nasib:

"Dārūrār

It appears that this gasīda was also admired for the itrād that the poet introduced in mentioning a series of names successively without hashw or takalluf, in the line of transition from nasib to madih. This itrād was a sign of the powerful tabī' of the poet, as Ibn Rashīq said, giving examples of it, such as the line of al-A'ṣāhā:

Ibn Rashīq preferred the line of Abū Nuwās to those of al-Mutanabbi:

because here the poet made his mamduh a pandar, while Abū Nuwās requested his mamduh to unite him with his beloved by helping him with money.\textsuperscript{49}

The third reason for Ibn al-Mu'tazz's selecting this poem, besides the
beauty of its transition and its ittād was the fact, referred to before, that the poet made his rahl on foot instead of on his she-camel:

إليك أنا الابتسام من بين من ضيحي عليها العطشان النسيي الرسنين
فَلَا نتَّفِقَ لَنْ تتناقَ على أعلاه، ولن نرّد ما قَطْعَ السَنِيقِ ولا الهنا

The second line Ibn Rashiq described as a riddle, because the poet said that the camels that carried them to the madīnah were their own shoes.51

A good example of husn al-khurūj from one maṣma to another were these three lines by Bashshār:

قَلْتُ لِعَمْلِي أَهْمَيْنا عَلَى دَرَيٍّ إن الأَجْوَامَ مُعَرَجِينَ
ولَا يَخَالُ بِجُلُّ اْنْ قَبِلَةٍ إِنَّ ذِي قَرْنٍ زَيْهُ حَزْبٍ
إِذَا جَنَّهُ فِي الْجَبَلِ أَعْقِلَ بَابُهُ فَلَمْ يَلْفُهُ إِلَّا وَأَنتَ كَلِبُنَّ 52

Another example of excellent transition, this time from nasīb to hijā', was the two lines quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz from the poetry of Muslim Ibn al-Walīd. Although he did not say anything about them except that they were choice, it seems likely that he selected them for their husn al-takhallus:

وَكَبِبْتُ مِن هُجَابٍ الْبَالْغِيِّينَ حَتَّى وَقَبِبَتْ اْبْن سَلَمَ سُهْيَةٌ
إِذَا سِبِلَ عَرْقُهَا كَسَا وَقُحَةٌ شَيْاً مِن اللَّوْمِ مُهْرُرَ وَمُسْوَدَا
يَعْفِرُ عَلَى الْهَالِ فَقْلَ الْبَعْدَ وَتَابَ خَلَائِقُهُ مِنْ يَبْنَوُا

In Kitāb al-badī the lines are attributed to Abū al-'Atāhiyya under the heading husn al-khurūj.54

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also spoke about husn al-ibtīḍā', or beautiful openings to poems.55 We find that in some of the gasīdas and poems that he selected the first line consists of tasrij, as in the gasīda of Bashshār, starting:

ٍجَفَا حَبْقَةٌ فَاوَزَرَٰٓ إِذَا مَلَّ صاحِبَٰٓٓ
وَاذَّرَيْتُ يَهِئَ أَنْ لَا يَزَالُ صاحِبَٰٓٓ

and:

أَهْيَنُ بَنْيَ حَبِيبٍ رَاحِ عَمْيَاَٰ ثُمَّ سَكَرَتْ عَمْيَآَٰٓ
Other examples came from the poetry of Sudayf:

and:

Other examples came from the poetry of Sudayf:

and from this poem of Marwān Ibn Abī Hafṣa:

and:

and from this poem of Abū al-Shays:

and:

and:

and from this poem of Abū al-Shays:

and:

and his gasīda, beginning:

and:

and:

and many others.

As we have mentioned before, Ibn al-Mu'tazz was influenced by his own style of hādī poetry in making his selection from the poetry of the muhdathūn. So far, we have dealt with istitrad, itrād and tasrīj; other kinds also made their appearance in the lines he quoted. For instance, he expressed admiration for these lines of Abū Hayya al-Numayrī:
He quoted the first line in Kitāb al-badī‘ as an example of husn al-ibtīda‘. This figure, in which the poet repeats a certain word in the same line, is called tardīd, and it occurs in the poetry of the muhdathūn more than in the poetry of the ancients. The two lines quoted above were said to be the best lines of tardīd; those who understood poetry well agreed on this.

Some of the poetry quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz contained what critics called iltīfāt, i'tirād or istīdārāk. This involved a poet starting one ṭūn, then leaving it for another, and then again returning to the first.

An example of this quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz was the poem of ʿAwf b. Muḥallim in which this line occurs:

The words: are said to be iltīfāt. Ibn al-Mu'tazz defined iltīfāt as: "The changing of the course of speech from indirect discourse to direct (addressing the listener), and from direct to indirect (reporting or giving information)." He gave an example from the Qur'ān:

He also gave an example from the poetry of Jarīr, with the line:

and:

He also quoted an example of istīdārāk from the poetry of Bashshār:

The last line, quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz, and Ibn Rashīq under the heading istīdārāk, was again quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his Kitāb al-badī‘, where
it was classified as a line of ruju'. Another example was taken from rajaz by Abū Nuwās:

قَالَ الْمَلِكُ الْمُعْتَمِدُ الْأَمِينُ
إِلَى هَارُونَ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ

Ruju' is defined by Ibn al-Mu'tazz as follows: "a poet starts to say something and then refrains from it." Later, in his quotations from the muhdathūn in madīn poetry, we shall find several similar examples.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also appreciated Ḥiḍr, which some critics called tablígh, and he used it in his poetry. An example was this line of his:

When we come to his selections of madīn we find him quoting lines like the following one of Marwān Ibn Abī Hafṣa:

Ibn al-Mu'tazz seems to have considered the length of the tashbih or nasib that introduced a gasīda to be an important element in the poem of madīn, since he quoted those which contained very long introductions, like those of Abū al-Shayyān. Sometimes he only quoted the tashbih, and sometimes he quoted two or three lines of madīn as well. He seems to have liked best the tashbih that wept over departed youth and described grey hair.

The best of this was that which aroused men's emotions when recited, such as the lines selected from the madīn poem of Mansūr al-Namrī on Harūn al-Rashīd. The lines of tashbih are as follows:

Descrying the emotional effect that these lines had on people, he
commented that the poet "caused the doomsday to arrive with this tashbih" (agāma al-giyāma).73

Like earlier critics, Ibn al-Muʿtazz thought that a good poet was the one who was able to write excellent madīḥ, ghazal, hijā, and wasf. An example was Nusayb al-Asqar, who "does not fall short in any of these topics".74 Al-Husayn Ibn al-Dahḥak was also an example of this kind of poet, being described as one of the muftannīn, or those who had variety in their poetry. Besides his excellent poetry in the above mentioned genres, he was also "excellent in muḥfin, and a man of both seriousness and jocularity (ṣāhib jidd wa-hazl). Critics usually classify him in the seas (levels?) of Abū Nuwas, but he has more pure poetry, and less confusing takhlīt than Abū Nuwas."75 Tafannun, or variety in poetry, was also to be found in the work of Abū al-ʿAtāhiya, who "has been able to compete with poets in all fields of poetry, and, in addition to that, he is distinguished from them by his ability to describe drinks and garden (riyaḍ) and to write poetry on other subjects in which other poets cannot compete with him. He is known as an excellent writer of madīḥ on kings".76

The criteria of tafannun and jidd wa-hazl were mentioned by al-Buhturī before, when he compared Muslim b. al-Walīd with Abū Nuwas and preferred the latter because of his ability in jidd wa-hazl. Al-Jāḥiz and al-Mubarrad also shared this liking for the combination of seriousness and lightheartedness. Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself quoted many poems and lines which either he specifically described as mulah and nawādir or contained lighthearted elements, without being particularly designated as such. In addition, he reported a number of amusing anecdotes and incidents, such as that concerning Bashshar and Ibn Harma77, and that concerning al-Sayyid al-Himyarī and Abū Dulāma.78 An example of the comic poetry of the latter was the piece following in which he satirised himself:
and another poem:

Similar lighthearted lines were cited by Ibn al-Mu'tazz here and there in his Tabagat; the reason for his doing so was almost certainly the same as that adduced by his predecessors, namely that of providing his readers with diversion from more serious poetry. This may well also explain the nature of his quotations from the poetry of hijāj and mujūn, as we shall see. It seems that the combination of jidd and hazl was taken as a sign of a powerful poetic ability and tab in some cases. Similar to this criterion is that which considers a poet's standing to depend on his ability to combine the style of the ancients with that of the muhdathūn. Abū al-Khattāb al-Bahdālī was a good example of this. In his poem of madīh on the Caliph Mūsā al-Ḥādī, starting:

he is described by Ibn al-Mu'tazz as one who "has mastered discourse, is excellent in wasf, constructs well (husn al-rasf), and has been able to combine, in addition to powerful discourse, the beauties of the muhdathūn with the ma'ānī of the ancients."

Ibn al-Mu'tazz used several critical words in his otherwise rather unspecific judgements about poetry. He often used, when describing a particular poem, terms like māliha to mean either "beautiful" or "having amusing ma'ānī", and nādira to mean "unique". Al-Dīfībīlī was said to be
"malîh al-shīr jīdān". When he described a piece of poetry as malîhā sā'irā, he may have meant "famous and recited everywhere", or "witty and therefore famous". An example of this is the following lines by Ḥammād ʿAjrad:

These two lines were also quoted by Ibn Qutayba in his al-shīr wāl-shufārā', as was mentioned before. Probably by malāha Ibn al-Muṭṭazz meant "joking" or "humour". The many remarks that he made about it demonstrated his interest in the subject. Sometimes he called a poet like Mutḥ b. Iyās, who wrote a great deal of poetry on all topics, that is to say that he was a muṭṭann, "a man of jokes", sāḥib nawādir. Like al-Husayn Ibn al-Dahhāk, he was also described as a khali ḍ and a mājīn, a description that indicates a tendency to hazl. Some qaṣidas were described as "long and famous", or "excellent, long and wonderful (ṣajīn). From such comments, it would seem that Ibn al-Muṭṭazz gave special consideration to the length of a poem as well as its excellence, and he may have wished to imply that the best poet was tawīl al-nafas. However, other remarks seem to indicate that Ibn al-Muṭṭazz used the standards of multiplicity and excellence, which had already been used by Ibn Sallām, as we have seen.

Nevertheless, we find that Ibn al-Muṭṭazz very often made favourable judgements and comments on poems or poets without giving any reason to justify those judgements. One of the poems of Abu al-Shays had "travelled far away". Another one was described as "far-travelling and widely approved", (min al-sā'ir al-muḥāṣ). A third one was "one of his exquisite poems which has been wide-reaching and far-travelling on earth". This was the one that starts:
One nasīda of Abū Dulāra was "far-travelling and excellent"; a line of Nusayyīb had "travelled widely on the earth". Another poem had "travelled like the sun and the wind. The poet received much money for it". This was the poem known as al-sharrī (the one with a blaze like a horse), which "travelled widely among both "Arab and "Ajam", written by 'Alī b. Jabala in praise of Abū Dulār.89

The Lamiyya of Muslim Ibn al-Walīd was "a famous, far-travelling and wonderful nasīda". A poem by Rabī'ā al-Raqqī had "travelled to the remote parts of the earth and become like a mithal". Also the Lamiyya of Mansūr al-Namri in praise of al-Ma'mūn was "a wonderful poem and it became a mithal among men".92

His comments on poets themselves are similar to those on their poetry. It seems that he preferred Bashshār to all other muhdaθūn. He described him as muftann bāri, and said that his position in poetry had been achieved by no-one else. Bashshār was the master of the muhdaθūn, no-one was superior to him and no-one could run with him in the field of poetry. Although Hammad b. Ajrad was a muflīq and an excellent poet, he was not worthy to be compared with Bashshār and could never approach his position in poetry. Poets used to gather round Bashshār and recite their poems, and they accepted his judgements on them. For that reason he was the master of the poets of his time.93

It seems that for Ibn al-Mu'tazz excellent poets were expected to have mastered fasāha, balāsba and khitāba. Bashshār was counted among those who possessed those faculties. Sudayf b. Maymūn was said to be a man of letters, a muflīq poet and an eloquent orator "khatīb misqa". His tanb and his remarkable ability to write poetry on any subject he liked had made him the best poet of his time.95 The three contemporary poets
and friends known as the three Hammāds, Hammād 'Aljad, Hammād b. al-Zibriqīn and Hammād al-Rawīya, were all "muflīq poets and famous orators".96

The quality of tabī was associated with excellence in poetry, rhetoric and fasāha. A poet possessing these qualities should also be a master of mantiq (here, probably, the expression of ma‘ānī). Ibrāhīm b. Sayyāba was described as being "one of the most eloquent and fluent poets and one of the matbūṭūn. He was also a master of mantiq".97 Al-‘Abbās b. al-Ahnaf, again one of the matbūṭūn, was said to be mufawwah mantiqī, an eloquent poet who either had the ability to express ma‘ānī or who had a mastery of logic.98 There were other poets, too, who were described as men of letters and knowledgeable, with tabī and mantiq. Some of them were excellent in writing rasa’il, an example being the poet Abīn b. ‘Abd al-Hamīd.99

It was very difficult, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz believed, to find a poet who was excellent in both poetry and rasa’il. Two who had both abilities were al-‘Attābī and Abī ‘Alī al-Basīr.100 However, fasāha and tabī were the two important factors used by Ibn al-Mu‘tazz in comparing poets with one another. Many of those who were declared by him to be the best in their periods were described as possessing these two things.101 The poet who was matbī was in most cases described as muṭadīr (able); he could create (muḥdīc), had a rich source of poetry, and could write poetry in various genres.

Madīh and wasf.

Ibn al-Mu‘tazz was primarily interested in madīh poetry. The way in which he spoke about madīh poets indicated his high opinion of them, even if they were not matbīn. This in itself may suggest that the art of madīh had developed into a kind of sinā‘a, with certain established methods to be followed.
The measure of the success of the madīḥ poet was the amount of money he received from his mamliḥa and how widely his poetry was disseminated. It was said that no poet received so much money for his poetry as Marwān b. Abī Hafṣa. In spite of that he was not a mathīf.103 Muslim b. al-Walīd was said to have had his poetry written in gold by Hārūn al-Rashīd.104 Another poet who had his poetry written in gold was ‘Abi al-Rahīm al-Hārithī (p. 275). These stories of poetry being written in gold in the Abbasid era remind us of the story of the mu‘allaqāt. The importance of the genre of madīḥ as a measure for a poet’s status may also be seen in the comments made about Rabī‘a al-Raqqī and ‘Allī b. ‘Asīm. The former was described as a poet of much excellent poetry but little renown; he fell below his tabaqa for the reason that he lived far from Iraq and did not come to serve the caliphs and mix with other poets. This implies that, by not competing with other poets in writing madīḥ, he could not attain the position of a master poet. In spite of that, there were some critics who favoured him.105 Those who favoured him probably did so because of his ghazal poetry. ‘Allī b. ‘Asīm was one of the most excellent poets and he had in his poetry more mahāsin than even Muslim b. al-Walīd, Abī al-Shays and others of their class, but like Rabī‘a al-Raqqī he lived far away from Iraq, although he did once come there and recited madīḥ on the Caliph. If he had stayed in Iraq, “the necks of the poets would have submitted to him”.106 This ‘submission’ is simply being surpassed in the art of madīḥ. Although Ibn al-Mu‘tazz quoted only a few lines of wasf, he pointed out a number of poets who were famous for their poetry in that genre. Muhammad b. Yāṣīr was said to be the best of all at describing animals and birds, in particular goats.107 Birds and goats were not very common subjects in early Arabic poetry. Those who described clouds and rain were all surpassed by al-Husayn b. Matīr.108 The same poem of Ibn Matīr describing clouds and rain that was quoted by Ibn Qutayba was also
quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his Tabagat. 109

A line of horse-description by al-'Umanī was quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. It contained the image apparently created by Aws b. Hajr in describing his she-camel. The line of al-'Umanī, which is rajaz, runs:

This image is rare in the muhdath poetry quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

Al-Buhturi and Abu Tammām:

It is strange that, although Ibn al-Mu'tazz admired very much the "beautiful descriptions" of al-Buhturi, as al-Suli reported, he did not select any of these descriptions in his Tabagat. He thought that "the siniyya of al-Buhturi in which he described the Iwān Kisra, and which was unparallelled in Arabic poetry, the poem in which he described the lake of al-Mutawakkil, starting:

his poem on Ibn Dīnār (the Abbasid admiral), in which he described ships and a sea-battle more fully than any poet had attempted before, addressing the admiral thus:

all made him the best poet of his time".111

Al-Buhturi was also favoured for his poetry of ī'dīhār written to al-Fath b. Khaqān. There was nothing similar to it in Arabic poetry with the exception of what was written by al-Nabīgha al-Dhubyanī to al-Mu'mān b. al-Mundhir.112 Abū Hilāl al-'Askari claimed that there was no muhdath poet who could attain the position of al-Nabīgha in that genre except al-Buhturi who had arrived at a standard that no other poet could surpass. Because of his excellence in that art al-Buhturi was called the second Nabīgha.
AI-Suli agreed with b. al-Mu'tazz and al-Askari about his excellence in this sphere and quoted a number of his poems on the subject. One of the most admirable poems was that in which he addressed al-Fath b. Khaqan:

Other critics also greatly admired the gasida.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz did not quote any lines of itidhar by al-Buhturi, either, except for four in which he begged Abu al-Fadl b. al-Hasan b. Sahl to return a slave of his whom Abu al-Fadl had bought from him.

Of Abu Tammam's poems, on the other hand, thirteen were mentioned as excellent examples of good poetry. According to Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Abu Tammam wrote between six and eight hundred poems, and most of this poetry was excellent. That part of it that appeared bad did so only because its words were complicated and incomprehensible. One could not deny the elegant ma'ani, the mahasin and the many innovations in Abu Tammam's poetry. When al-Buhturi was asked to compare himself with him his judgement was that "his excellent (poetry) is better than mine, and my bad poetry is better than his". Ibn al-Mu'tazz accepted this and championed Abu Tammam; this is clear from his comments on what al-Buhturi had said. He believed that al-Buhturi never used coarse expressions and that his words were as sweet as honey, but that he would never be able to emulate Abu Tammam in ma'ani and mahasin; he would simply be drowned in the sea of Abu Tammam. Although he had a rich source of ma'ani, most of them were borrowed from the poetry of Abu Tammam. Daud Sallum believes that Ibn al-Mu'tazz disliked Abu Tammam, envied him, and aimed to destroy his fame, which was based on his skill in badi'. This is why, he thinks, Ibn al-Mu'tazz wrote his book al-Badi', in which he proved that badi' was not invented by Abu Tammam and his peers among the
The muhdathūn, but that it was already present in the Qurʾān, the Hadīth, and early and Islamic poetry. The muhdathūn used it a great deal, especially Abū Tammām, who was so extravagant that he spoilt his poetry, as Ibn al-Muʿtazz wrote.\(^{119}\) Another piece of evidence for Sallūm is the treatise written by Ibn al-Muʿtazz on "The beauties and defects of Abū Tammām's poetry". Part of this treatise was quoted by al-Marzubānī in his al-
Mawashshah.\(^{120}\) Ibn al-Muʿtazz here displayed a moderate and almost neutral attitude to Abū Tammām. He said that those who preferred him to all poets were exaggerating as well as those who rejected any merit of his. His opinion was that he had reached the ultimate level of both excellence and badness.\(^{121}\) When discussing his defects (masāʿī') he criticised him for using ḍhāḥrīb and the language and style of the ṭāmma. He also attacked him for the bad openings of some of his poems, such as:

\[
\text{ غَلَبَتْ عَلَى أُمَّتِي بِكَشْـيَّـي} \]

Ibn al-Muʿtazz believed that this was not the right way to address women in ghazal and that the line seemed more like hijā' than ghazal. He thought that he had made such a mistake because of his anxiety to produce taʿmīs.\(^{122}\) However, Ābd al-ʿAzīz al-Jurjānī preferred al-Buḥtūrī to Abū Tammām and al-Mutanabbī for their excellent openings (ibtidaʿāt), although he preferred them to al-Buḥtūrī for their beautiful transitions (khurūjāt) and their excellent endings (niḥayāt). Ibn Rashīq agreed with al-Jurjānī about the excellent ibtidaʿāt of al-Buḥtūrī, although he believed that he did not always write excellent ones. He usually opened "easily", without any takalluf, and then proceeded excellently.\(^{123}\) Ibn Rashīq described the "openings" of Abū Tammām as magnificent, having beauty, charm and splendour (fakhr al-ibtidaʿāt, lahu rawḍa maʿalayhi ubbaha), like:

\[
\text{الَّذِي أَصَابَ الْبَيْنَ رَقُونُ عَوَارِ:} \quad \text{فَزَارَ مِن أَسْرِ الْفَرَْينِ صَدَا} \]

and:

\[
\text{السَّمَيقُ أَصَابَتْ إِنْبَادَ مَنَ اللَّبِّ} \quad \text{خَيْراً أَلْبَرَ بَيْنَ الْبَيْنَ وَالْلُّبِبِ} \]

His ibtidaʿāt were characterised by the sculpturing of words (naḥt al-lafẓ),
and they were of a loud and audible nature. When al-ʿĀmidī compared al-Buhturi and Abu Tammām on the subject he preferred the former and greatly admired his ibtidaʿat very much. Examples of al-Buhturi's ibtidaʿat quoted as excellent were:

- ʿاَسَنَا أُبُسْلَ حُلَالَ الرَّسُلِ ُحَيْبَ أَضْعَفَ الإِقْوَانَ الْأَنْسِبِ
- ُجَرَ عِلْمَ الْإِجْزَاءِ مُسْلِمَ الْبَيْانِ

and:

- ُجَرَ عِلْمَ الْإِجْزَاءِ مُسْلِمَ الْبَيْانِ
- ُجَرَ عِلْمَ الْإِجْزَاءِ مُسْلِمَ الْبَيْانِ

However, Ibn al-Muʿtazz also criticised Abu Tammām for his failure to write good ghazal, madīh and hijā'. He also accused him of plagiarism and claimed that Abu Tammām compiled his hamasa and wahshiyat in such a way as to conceal his plagiarism from other poets. "When I looked in his book of poetic selections known as al-Hamasa, I found that he neglected most of the excellent poetry; the reason behind that was that he had stolen some of it and so did not like to mention it in his selections. Other (excellent poetry unquoted by him in the hamasa) was hidden by him and kept for himself to use when he was in need ... " He also criticised his bad istiʿara, such as the following:

- ُشَّابِ رَأْسِي وَرَأَيْتُ مَنْ شَدَّ الْرَّأْسِ إِلَّا مَنْ فَضَّلَ الْفُتُوْار

He quoted some lines in which Abu Tammām used gharib that would not even fit in the poetry of al-ʿAjjaʿ and Ruʿba. Ibn al-Muʿtazz thought that gharib was not suitable for the poetry of the muhdathun because it would seem incongruous beside more familiar words.

It seems that these remarks of Ibn al-Muʿtazz in his kitāb al-badīʿ and in his treatise on the poetry of Abu Tammām have inspired those scholars who have accused Ibn al-Muʿtazz of holding a bad opinion of Abu Tammām and of envying him because of his excellent badīʿ. This view, however, does not
seem to be correct. In his introduction to his *kitāb al-badīʿ*, he mentioned Abū Tammām, among other poets like Bashshār, Muslim b. al-Walīd, and Abū Nuwas, in order to make it clear that although *badīʿ* was not invented by them it was much used in their poetry and came to be known by that name in their time. There would be no point in his being envious only of Abū Tammām and not of Bashshār and the others mentioned with him. Moreover it seems that the treatise on the beauties and defects of Abū Tammām's poetry was written at an earlier stage of his life than the *Tabagāt*, in which we find him a great admirer of Abū Tammām and actually preferring him to al-Buhtūrī. Indeed the line of Abū Tammām:

*خَشْيَةٌ عَلَيْهِ أَحْتَ بِنَيْ خَشْيَةٍ*

which he criticised in his treatise on the poet's poetry, he quoted in the *Tabagāt* as the opening of one of Abū Tammām's excellent poems.\(^{127}\) Moreover, it should be noticed that we do not have the complete text of the treatise. Al-Maʿrūshī in his *Muwashshāh* quoted only that part which discussed the *masāwī* of Abū Tammām, because he himself was concerned in this book only with the defects of poets and not their merits, and therefore omitted that part which discussed this aspect of his poetry. If we had the complete text we might discover Ibn al-Muʿtazz's criteria for good poetry and how he regarded Abū Tammām in that respect. Since we have not the complete text, it is not easy to form a balanced view, and to claim that he disliked him on the strength of the excerpt in *al-Muwashshāh* is unreasonable. All that we can say here, on the basis of what he wrote in his *Tabagāt* about Abū Tammām and of other remarks he made elsewhere, is that Ibn al-Muʿtazz seems at any rate to have become an admirer of his. It is quite likely that the relationship between Ibn al-Muʿtazz and al-Sūfī, who was a great admirer and supporter of Abū Tammām, influenced Ibn al-Muʿtazz and made him attached to his poetry. Besides that, both Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Abū Tammām were fond of the art of *badīʿ*, and further, Ibn al-Muʿtazz defended him and his poetry against Ibrāhīm.
b. al-Mudabbir, who disliked him and always criticised him. Ibn al-Mu'tazz reported that one day Ibn al-Mudabbir argued with him about Abū Tamām and attacked his poetry. Ibn al-Mu'tazz said to him "Do you speak like that about the man who says:

سُلِيْلَ الْرُّدُّ مِنْهَا يَفْوُدُ كَلَّة
وَذُو الْأَرْبَعِينَ يَبْقَى وَالْبَرْزُ يَقْبَى
وَلَهَّنَّ في القَلْبِ أَسْوَرُ أَسْفُعُ

and:

فَإِنَّ لَمْ تَرَمْ عَنِّي نَزْلًا بِهِ النَّهَرَ
فَهُدَا لَكَ الْيَدَ السَّيِّدَ لَقَ نِعْمَة

Ibn al-Mu'tazz said that he recited more lines to Ibn al-Mudabbir from Abū Tamām's poetry and he was "silenced as if I had pushed a stone into his mouth". The first three lines, describing grey hair, were also quoted by al-'Amidi in his al-Muwazana, and described as poetry that contained excellent, correct and straight muqaddam. The second example, consisting of two lines, was taken from a poem of rithā' on Muhammad Ibn Humayd. The opening line was much admired by Ibn Rashīq, who considered it to be the best opening of a marthiya in muwallad poetry:

The two lines quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz occur at the end of the marthiya, and Ibn Rashīq quoted them too and commented that Abū Tamām was counted among those who were excellent in rithā'.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz is said to have been an impressionistic critic because he expressed admiration for almost all the poets who were quoted and the poems which were cited by him. This may be so, or it may be that he
was naturally able to appreciate the poetry of many different poets, writing in different styles and following different poetic madhāhib. In either case, he was certainly very generous with his praise and his favourable judgements. Whenever he quoted a line of poetry he would praise it and say that the whole of the poetry of that poet was most excellent and deserving of selection. When quoting Bashshār, he wrote: "here is an admirable poem of his - though all his poetry is admirable".

About Marwān Ibn Abī Hafṣa he said: "the poems of Marwān are numerous and if we start to recite the gems of his poetry our book will become too big, because he has nothing but gems". He said that all the poetry of Abū al-Hindī, who was famous for his khamriyyāt, was beautiful and excellent.

All of Rabīʿa al-Raqqī's poetry was "elegant, sweet, mathūt, excellent and easy". When he quoted Awf Ibn Muhallīm he wrote: "here is a poem selected from the poetry of Awf, although all his poetry is worthy to be selected and contains no worthless or incomplete line".

He also thought that the whole of the poetry of Muslim b. al-Walīd was "a beautiful brocade, and no-one can deny that". He also said that the whole of the poetry of Abū Tammām was beautiful. He described the poems of al-Attābī as "all gems containing no worthless line". When he quoted the following line by Abū al-Rahīm al-Hārithī:

he commented: "this line is sajdat al-shuʿārāʾ (the prostration of poets), and if we had quoted nothing in our book but the poetry of al-Hārithī, it would be a great thing". The expression sajdat al-shuʿārāʾ meant that the line was so excellent that if poets heard it they would prostrate themselves before it as a sign of admiration. A similar judgement was made on two lines of rithāʾ by Muslim b. al-Walīd:
Ibn al-Mu'tazz was fascinated by the macra and judged that "no poet will be able to write a similar macra for a thousand years". Ibn Tabitabai quoted the two lines as an example of "a correct, outstanding and beautiful macra which has the best presentation, the most beautiful dress (kiswa) and the most delicate words".

Ibn al-Mu'tazz, as has been mentioned, differed widely from al-Asma'i because the latter had rejected the kind of poetry that had one level of excellence with no defect in a single verse. When a poet's poetry was like that, free of defects, it meant that he was not a mathuq, and that he revised his verse again and again. Al-Asma'i admired the poetry of al-Nabigha al-Ja'di because his poetry had varying levels of excellence. When Ibn al-Mu'tazz, on the other hand, wanted to praise a poet's work, he would say that it contained no single worthless line. He even associated this consistency with tabīq, as is clear from his comments on the poetry of Bashshar and Rabī'a al-Raqqi. The poetry of Ibn Abī 'Uayna, one of the four famous mathuqūn, as Ibn al-Mu'tazz described him, was said to be: "clearer than the palm of the hand, with no defects and no worthless lines". The impressionistic criticism which may be found in the views of Ibn al-Mu'tazz was perhaps inherited by him from the early period of literary criticism. Marwān Ibn Abī Hafsa displayed the same tendency in commenting on various Jahili poets when their lines were recited to him. His remarks and his enthusiastic judgements were mentioned earlier, in connection with the views of Ibn Qutayba in al-shi'i wa-al-shu'ara'. Whenever he heard some poetry recited, he declared its author the best poet of all. Ibn al-Mu'tazz often gave similar judgements, without giving any reason, as for instance, on Mānū al-Majnūn and K'isha al-'Uthmaniyya. He also spoke of Muhammad b. 'Arūs as one "all of whose poetry is excellent, and he is now the best poet of his time".
Perhaps, as Ihsan 'Abbās has suggested, the position of Ibn al-Mu'tazz as a crown prince of the Abbasid Caliphate, and his social status, made of him a kind of moral protector of all the poets of the Caliphate, so that he expressed admiration for them and showed them kindness. This attitude resulted in a lack of objectivity in some of his critical judgements.

What may be said about him is that, although he made use of the critics before him, he sometimes differed from them and followed his own standards. The impressionistic criticism which was current throughout the history of poetic criticism before him may have influenced him, as we have seen, but in spite of that we can form some idea of the criteria that he applied in judging his poets. Among these we have pointed out tabr, hadīt, tafannun, multiplicity, length, beauty of words and correctness of ma'nā, the use of short metres, mantiq, fluency and rhetoric, perfection of structure and composition (husn al-rasf), facility and plainness, purity and clarity of poetry and consistency of levels, without a single worthless line, exaggeration in the maṣānīf of madīh, ghazal and fakhr, riqqa, beauty of openings (ibtida'at), and beauty of khurūj (husn al-takhallus) from nasīb to madīh or hijār; there is also his interest in the namat of the aṭfāb. Poetic genres and quotations
The most important genre to him was madīh quotations which dominate his Tabaqāt al-shu'ārā' al-muhdathīn. As has been mentioned, one of his reasons for compiling this book was to collect the poetry of madīh in which the Abbasid Caliphs were praised. Therefore most consideration will be given to quotation from this genre. Other genres covered were ghazal, the poetry of "foolish poets" (al-hanqa), mujūn and hijār poetry and wine-description. There were a few quotations from Shu'ubiyya and Zanādiga.
poets and from Shi'ite poetry and some lines in which Qur'anic verses were inserted. Quotations from mujān, foolish poetry and hijā' will be discussed together, because it seems that the reason for selecting lines from such topics was a desire for amusement, and that such poetry was introduced as a change from jidd. Wine-description was quoted mainly from ABū al-Hindī, and it was the principal subject that he quoted under the heading of wasf. This may support al-Isfahānī's contention that he was most interested in those genres that fitted in with his own mode of life.

Although his quotations are from muhdath poetry, b. al-Mu'ātazz is not hostile to the ancients. On the contrary, he seems to have accorded them a certain superiority over the muhdathūn, at least in connection with the art of bādi', which he said had been initiated by them. On the other hand, a count of his quotations in the Kitāb al-bādi' reveals that ancient and muhdath poets are almost equally represented with a slight preponderance of the latter, as Kratchkovsky observes in his introduction. Moreover, as has been mentioned, IBn al-Mu'ātazz praised the poet who was able to combine in his poetry the maṭāni of the earlier poets and the mahāsin of the muhdathūn. This combination he achieved in his own poetry; it was described by al-Isfahānī as containing the qualities of the earlier fuḥūl and the delicacy of the muhdath poets. This attitude of his towards the two groups makes him a critic who represents what may be called the dualist stage of Arabic poetic criticism. He is a good example of those critics who made an attempt to reach a compromise concerning the ancients and the muhdathūn, and he may even be regarded as the seal of that group of critics; those who appeared after him, such as his own pupil ABū Bakr al-Sūlī, renewed the bitter dispute, and the battle began again between the supporters of the ancient and the modern poets. This stage of poetic criticism was exemplified by the dispute between ABū Tammām and his
supporters on the one hand and al-Buhturī and his supporters on the other. The former represented the new style (badī'), and those who backed him were headed by al-Sūlī with his two books, Akhbar al-Buhturī and Akhbar Abī Tammām. The former represented the old style (‘amīd al-shi‘r), and those who backed him had al-Āmidī at their head, with his book al-Muwāzana, in which he collected the views of the supporters of both poets. Since this marks a new stage in the history of Arabic poetic criticism, we have preferred to end this discussion with Ibn al-Mūtazz, as the last representative of the moderate school that started with al-Jāhiz and included Ibn Qutayba and al-Mubarrad.
b. The quotations in Tabaqāt al-shu'ara' al-muhdathīn

The first group of quotations to be discussed, in brief, consists of those related to religious and political matters, and those in which Quranic verses are inserted. Although madīth poetry on the Abbasid Caliphs was quoted by him mainly for its political significance, as we shall see, it will be discussed later, with the exception of those lines which talk about the right of the Abbasids to the Caliphate. The quotations to be discussed here are those related to a poet's political and religious beliefs, whether he was a zindīq, a Shi'ite or a shu'ubī, the poetry in which the Talibids (Ahl al-Bayt) were praised is also prominent here, and is a part of Shi'ite poetry. The interest of Ibn al-Mu'tazz in these different subjects was associated with his position as an Abbasid Crown Prince, who was concerned with religious and political thought in his state.

The first poet whose religious thought Ibn al-Mu'tazz discussed is Bashshār b. Burd, who was accused of being a zindīq and was executed by the Caliph al-Mahdī. Ibn al-Mu'tazz, who was fond of Bashshār tried his best to prove his innocence by consulting his poetry. He believed that he was put to death for political reasons, such as writing the following lines of hijā' on al-Mahdī and his vizier, Ya'qūb, and calling on the Umayyads to seize power:

بن أبي نافع نافع بن داود
يمن المدينة يعفون بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
صاغت خلافهم بأيام فالتسموا

Other reasons were also given for his execution. Ibn al-Mu'tazz mentioned a number of indications that Bashshār was a true believer and not a zindīq, for example two lines expressing his belief in the Day of Judgement:

كيف تأتي نافع بن داود
من تسبكي لجسبي بمثباث
عن وقوعي برسوم داود تجبل

1
These two lines are perhaps the first criticism of the *atlāl* theme from a religious point of view. Bashshār believed that a poet should not waste time weeping over *atlāl* but rather prepare himself for long waiting and weeping on the Day of Judgement. Abū Nuwās later transferred the idea to the field of literary criticism, in his *khamsīyyāt* and in his poetry that bears signs of Shu′ubiyā, to which we shall refer.

A second poet who was executed as a *zindīq* was Sālīh b. 'Abd al-Quddūs, whose poetry was famous for *hikma* and *amthal*. Ibn al-Muṭṭazz defended him and argued that his poetry was full of allusions to *zuhd*, death and the grave, and heaven, and exhortations to obedience and worship, good deeds and noble behaviour. His poem that starts:

> َنَأْلِبَيْنِ ٌفِيْمُ ُقَبْٖٓتْ أَخَاطِيَّةٌ َوَيْتِٖٓ أَرَاضِيَّ الْيَمِينِ ُسُنَّٖٓ أَرَايِيِّهِ

was quoted by Ibn al-Muṭṭazz because it contained many lines which indicated that he was not a *zindīq*. Quoting the following lines from the same poem:

> وَلَا بِيْدَبٗٓتْ أَرَابِكَ الْمَالِ بِسُبُّهٗ وَالْمُمْلِكَةِ ُقَبْٖٓتْ الْإِلَهِ ُفَٖٓسَيَّةٗ إِذَا أَلِينَ الْرَّجُلَ الْمَرْجِعَ عَلَّٖٓهٗ

Ibn al-Muṭṭazz commented: "I wonder how a *zindīq* could have written such poetry? How can we believe that the author of that poetry is a *zindīq*?"

The third poet whose beliefs were put to the test was Abū al-'Atāhiya, who was also accused of being a *zindīq* in spite of the extent of his poetry on *zuhd*, *mawāṣīz*, and the hereafter. Ibn al-Muṭṭazz described him as *khabīth al-dīn*. He believed that, although in appearance Abū al-'Atāhiya was an ascetic, he was, in reality, a dualist (*thanawī*) who believed in two gods, the god of good (*khayr*) and the god of evil (*sharr*).

The poets who were regarded as *zanādīqa* seem to have lived a double life, as may have been the case with Abū al-'Atāhiya. Sālīh b. 'Abd al-Quddūs...
and other poets who were called *zarādīgā* wrote two sorts of poetry. One sort indicated that they were true believers and sincere Muslims, the other indicated that they were not. This phenomenon of dualism in the characters of some *muhdath* poets, and in their poetic *maṭāni*, fascinated Ibn al-Muʿtazz. In fact, he traced this dualism, in various aspects, in *madīh* poetry and in other genres written by pro-Abbasid and Shiʿite poets. Almost every poet from each group led a double life. While he wrote *madīh* on the Caliphs he did the same for the Talibids, whom the Abbasids treated as a major political threat. He also found dualism in the characters of other poets.

One of these was Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī "who claims in his poetry that he is of high rank, but in fact he was of unknown and obscure origin. He also claims that he is a brave man and in fact he was a coward".4 Another poet was Muhammad b. Ḥazim al-Bihili whom Ibn al-Muʿtazz described as "one of the worst of those who persist in demanding (ilḥāf), although he always talks about contentment (ganaʿa) in his poetry. He is one of those who describe themselves in their poems as the opposite of what they really are, and they become notorious for this. Abū Nuwas belonged to that group of poets. He used to talk in his poetry about pederasty, pretending to admire it, but in fact he liked fornication more than a monkey does. Abū Hākima described himself as impotent and incapable of *nikāh*, although it was said that he surpassed a billy-goat in sexual prowess. The poet Jahshawī used to claim in his poetry to be addicted to *ubna* (passive sodomy), although in fact he used to mount donkeys, not to mention other things. The poet Ibn Ḥazim (mentioned above) described himself as a contented, honourable man and one who refrained from dishonourable deeds, while in fact he was greedier than a dog. He was ready to travel the length of the Nile for the sake of one *dirham".5 Ibn al-Muʿtazz also found this dualism in the characters of poets who had the ability to write poetry on both *jidd* and *hazīl*. Examples of these were al-Ḥusayn b. al-Dahhāk and Abu Firʿawwāl al-Sānī.6
Concerning poetry that had indications of Shu'ubiyah he quoted only a few examples, the best of which are two poems by Abu Nuwas. One contains a comparison between the Arabs' way of life and that of the Persians; he favoured the latter and he severely criticised and mocked the Bedouins.

The poem starts:

The second poem is a famous long gasida, in which he praised the tribes of Yemen and satirised those of 'Adnān, starting:

Ibn al-Mu'tazz commented that Abu Nuwas was said to have been a Kharijī and to have been an enthusiastic supporter of the tribes of Qahtān, on whom he wrote a great deal of madīḥ poetry, and whose rival tribes he satirised. It is unlikely that the political aspects of these two poems were the sole reason for his quoting them. The apparent revolt against the atfal convention in both probably interested him much more, coupled as it was in one of them with a repudiation of the rahil theme as well:

This is virtually a rejection of the theory of the Arabic gasida and its themes, as stated by Ibn Qutayba in al-shīr wa al-shu'arā'. The same rejection is found in two short poems quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. The first is by 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Umayya:

The second one is by Abū Hayyān al-Mawsūs:

The second poem is a famous long gasida, in which he praised the tribes of Yemen and satirised those of 'Adnān, starting:
Ibn al-Mu'tazz was not against the themes of the old gasīda; indeed, almost all his quotations contain atlāl introductions, with nasīb and rabīl. He seems to have quoted these exceptional poems that revolted against those themes as a means of diversion. They are more related to the hāzl than to jidd.

The insertion of Qur'ānic verses into poetry was admired by people at the time of the muhdathūn and poets competed with one another in writing such poetry spontaneously, to advertise their tab'a. Abū Nuwās was distinguished and famous among the muhdathūn for doing this. The practice may be seen against the background of bādiʿ in general. For instance, the following two lines by Bakr b. al-Nattāh, in praise of Abū Dulaf:

 waren described by Ibn al-Mu'tazz as "bādiʿ and tarīf poetry". The poet borrowed the maʿna from the following Qur'ānic verse:

The two lines contain tajnis in the two words nādā and nādāka.

Quotations from poetry relating to politics are partly those in which poets advocated support for the Abbasids in their claim to the Caliphate. They frequently quoted the Qur'ān in order to affirm their views. On the other hand there were also poems in praise of the Talibids, supporting them as the only rightful claimants to the Caliphate. There were some poets who pretended to be pro-Abbasid but were secret supporters of the Talibids. This attitude may be regarded as a sort of dualism. In their poetry there was maddīḥ for both the Abbasids and their political opponents, as we shall see in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's quotations. There are men like Sudayf b. Maymūn, who attacked the Umayyads in his speeches and his poems, and
fomented revolt. When the Abbasids seized power he congratulated the first Caliph al-Saffah in a poem of a dualistic nature, in which he praised the Abbasids and elegised the Talibids and Abbasids killed by the Umayyads. The poem starts:

His dualistic character also appears in the poem in which he addresses one of the Talibids, Ibrahim b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan thus:

Many lines which affirm the right of the Abbasids to rule are quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. Caliphs were urged to appoint their sons as their successors, as in al-'Umari's urjuza on al-Mahdi, starting:

The poem contains lines like:

In one of his madih poems on al-Mutanabbi, Abu Nuwas claimed that the right of the Abbasids was confirmed by the Qur'an:

Marwan b. Abi Hafsa stated that the Abbasids, and not the Talibids, were the ones who were entitled to the Caliphate, because they were descended from al-'Abbās, the Prophet's paternal uncle, who had the right of inheritance, while the Talibids had no such right, being descended from the Prophet's daughter. Marwan wrote:

Mansur al-Namri followed the same line as Marwan; he wrote in one of his madih poems on al-Rashid:
In another poem he wrote:

He was referring to the Qur'anic verse:

In spite of the quantity of *madīh* that he wrote on al-Rashīd and his support for the Abbasids, al-Namrī lived a double life and was said to be a secret member of the Shi'a Imamiyya. He used to write *madīh* on the Talibids and criticise the *salaf*. This *madīh* was the best poetry ever written in their praise, as Ibn al-Mu'tazz described it, quoting several examples. 19

Another poet who wrote *madīh* poetry on the Talibids was Di'bil b. 'Alī, who wrote the famous *ta'īyya* starting:

This poem was highly praised by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. Di'bil also wrote *madīh* on al-Ma'mūn as well as on the Talibids. 20

The best example of a Shi'ite poet is al-Sayyid al-Himyārī, most of whose poetry is about 'Alī b. Abī Talib. Some of his poems were quoted and his long *gāzīda* known as *al-mudhhabah* was praised by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. 21

In quoting the poetry in which the Talibids were praised, Ibn al-Mu'tazz seems to have contradicted himself, since he belonged to the Abbasid ruling class and he was concerned with affirming the Abbasids' right to
the Caliphate. His attitude in this reminds us of the dualistic character of the poets who praised both the Abbasids and the Talibids. By quoting the poems that praised the latter, he pleased both the Talibids and the ordinary people, who very much respected ahl al-bayt, while by quoting poetry that praised the Abbasids he intended to affirm that they had the right to rule. Through this dualistic approach, he attempted to achieve his political goal, and at the same time to please his opponents, the Talibids. He took the same approach in his own poetry as we shall see.

Quotations from madīḥ on the Abbasids

The poetry of madīḥ quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his Tabaqāt has particular characteristics. He seems to have been most interested in the content, apart from the elements of bāṭī that were present. One of these characteristics is the dualism to be found in some of the poems. This dualism expressed itself in different ways. A poet might write combined madīḥ on two persons in one gasīda, or he might write madīḥ on one and ritha' on another. Sometimes there might be a combination of hijā' and madīḥ on two different persons. Dualism can also be found in the mātānī of the madīḥ, where bāṭī is used, and the dominant elements of this are tajnis, muqābala, isti'ara and muṭābaga. A māmdūḥ might be characterised with two qualities, each contrasting with the other or contradicting it, such as being a good man in this life and in the hereafter, or as being good for his people and bad for his enemies. Sometimes the poet mentioned "light" in one half of a line and "darkness" in the other half. The māmdūḥ might also be likened to both the sun and the moon. The poetry of madīḥ that he quoted is also characterised by muṭalagha and ghulū in describing the māmdūḥ. He differed from all earlier critics in accepting ghulū, and we shall try later to explain his attitude. The main idea in the poetry of madīḥ— that he quoted was the description of the māmdūḥ as a means of security, and stability, for the earth and a protector of Islam and the
state. This idea is to be found in the madīh on viziers and governors. We shall also notice poets' assiduity in linking the mamlūk (especially the Caliph) with the Prophet and Islam, and in describing him as an ideal Muslim, a man of the state and a man of religion. He was presented as a man who combined the good qualities of the mamlūk in early Arabic poetry and the qualities of a good Muslim. This combination can also be seen as a sort of dualism. The description of the mamlūk as a means of stability, security and protection for the earth, Islam and the state reflects Ibn al-Mu'tazz's feelings about the situation of disorder, revolt and lack of security in the Abbasid Caliphate at his time. He himself was a victim of such a situation when he was killed after ruling as a Caliph for only one day.

The use of mubālagha or ghulū by poets in describing a mamlūk and in declaring him superior to everyone else had a long history in Arab society and was reflected in personal and tribal mufakhara. It was also reflected in poetic criticism, where we have seen people nominating the best poet or the best poetry of all. Later, every Caliph or vizier wished to be known as the best. The poets of madīh extended the limits of this attitude in declaring their mamlūk superior to all others. From that point of view, mubālagha or ghulū became a political and social necessity.

As for the interest of Ibn al-Mu'tazz in the phenomenon of dualism in poetry, the reason may lie in its connection with madīh, besides the fact that most poets had a dualism in their characters, which found expression in their madīh on both the Abbasids and the Talibids. The age of Ibn al-Mu'tazz seems to have been essentially an age of dualism, and he seems to have mirrored this.
The first example of *madīḥ* poetry in which we see dualistic *ma'nī* is the *gasīda* called *al-pharrā'ī* by Marwān b. Abī Hafsa in praise of Zā'īda b. Ma'īn, in which the father of the *randūh* was praised as well. Dualism can be seen in the very first line:

\[ \text{ول عمر العلما ما أصلفا} \]

The *gasīda* continues:

\[ \text{أبى لم يثبت مثل زانده} \]
\[ \text{بين إلا أبوه} \]
\[ \text{ربان ما أبدى} \]
\[ \text{فان ضيعنا كيس الشعر} \]
\[ \text{وعلما في العلما} \]
\[ \text{وأنت كلما} \]
\[ \text{دعا الهندي أبالك} \]
\[ \text{ربان رجع يبتدي الاجتناب} \]
\[ \text{وزد كن أباً من الناس لمولا} \]
\[ \text{صأب له لدى الأزهر أباه} \]
\[ \text{قد نقي الناس والذين لا بالغير} \]
\[ \text{كما قد وقفت إذ حالفنا} \]
\[ \text{ وإن سمعنا كما كساه أباه} \]
\[ \text{عتر الساقين الوزادى ساها} \]
\[ \text{كم بهارفا يقال إيانه} \]
\[ \text{عليها إذ الحاولا} \]
\[ \text{لك من قائل يصبه} \]
\[ \text{فرح البأ سه} \]
\[ \text{كم من نزاه} \]
\[ \text{قفت ندآ} \]
\[ \text{كم من قد رآه بقير} \]
\[ \text{منه نسيم الدير} \]
\[ \text{ففلك حين براها} \]
\[ \text{سبه الناس إذ جرهم صلبته} \]
\[ \text{كما من أبى جاء كاذبا} \]
\[ \text{دانيا من مدي أبيه ضاح} \]
\[ \text{ميل ماون مزارة أمست مزلا} \]
\[ \text{كل ذي طاعة من الناس} \]
\[ \text{رجع ان كا كل فجيم يحسنا} \]

In the second line the poet compared the *randūh* with his father. Both had the same praiseworthy qualities. Dualism can be seen in the third line where the two are both praised for two qualities which stand in contrast to each other, namely that both of them protect the frontiers of the state, while on the other hand they spend their money generously in search of nobility. He continued to describe them in the same terms and claimed that it was difficult for people to differentiate between them:

\[ \text{كم بهارفا جاليد صبا} \]
\[ \text{قفا غازم يبلغان إيا} \]

In the last line he portrayed the *randūh* from two contrasting directions:

\[ \text{كل ذي طاعة من الناس} \]
\[ \text{برتو لا كما كا كل فيجيم يحسنا} \]

This continued the idea expressed in the sixth and ninth lines, where
ba's and nādā were juxtaposed. The gasīda can be considered as an excellent example of multiple dualism.

The combination or contrast of nādā and ba's is to be found in other poems and in other lines in which two persons are praised. Bakr b. al-Nattāh attributed to both Abū Dulaf and his father 'īsā the contrasted qualities of ba's and nādā in his gasīda:

The first line contains two isti'aras, in its mention of the houses of nobility (buyūt al-majd).

In the line already quoted from Abū al-'Amaythil, praising the two brothers al-Fadl and al-Hasan sons of Sahl, we find the contrast achieved by describing one of them as the sun, facing the other, who is described as the moon:

Another distinct sort of dualism is found in the poem of Rabī'a al-Raqī which is a combination of madīh on one man and hijā' on another; both of them were called Yazīd. Ibn al-Mu'tazz described the poem as "poetry that has travelled widely in all parts of the earth and has become a mathal for people":

The poem is full of contrasts. First of all there are the two genres, madīh and hijā'. There are contrasts in salama al-māla and in li-al-amwāl ghayru musālimī; also in itlāfu mālihi and in jamʿu al-darahimi. There is also
tajnis in Sulaym and sâlama. This poem was also cited by Ibn Rashîq as an example of hijā', mugdhi'.

A similar poem is one by Abû 'Uyayna in madîn on one man and hijâ' on his brother:

The first line contains badî in the contrast between mahmûdun and mudhamamun.

One of the earliest poems which contain dualism in its themes and is full of badî expressed in contrasts is a poem by Abû Dulâma, the genres of which are madîn and rithâ'. He so combined the two genres as to include both in every line. He wrote the poem when the Caliph Abû Ja'far al-Mansûr died and his son al-Mahdî succeeded him, as rithâ' on al-Mansûr and congratulatory madîn on al-Mahdî. In the first line we see dualism in the word āynân, and it continues throughout the poem:

The badî resides in the continual contrasts in the poem. Of the two eyes, one is happy and the other is sad; takî is opposed to tadhaku, vasî'uhâ to
A similar poem is one by Abū al-Shayṣ in which he wrote ṭīrathī' on al-Rashīd and congratulatory madīḥ on his successor, al-ʿAmin. Again, in each line of the poem the poet introduces both genres:

The badi' appears in the contrasts and in tajnis. The first two words jarat and jawarin constitute tajnis. Saḥī is contrasted with naḥṣ, wahsha with uns, tabkhū with dahlīka, maʿtam with ʿurs, and yudhikūna with yubkīna. In the last line we have two moons, one of which is seen in Baghdād and the other is buried at Tūs. The line contains tashbīḥ, in comparing the two men with moons. This combination of ṭīrathī' and madīḥ, or congratulation, in one poem is a difficult task for a poet, as Ibn Rashīq remarked.29 The first to attempt it was ʿUbayd Allāh b. Humām al-Salūlī who visited Yazīd b. Muʿawiya when Muʿawiya died. He gave a short speech in which he consoled Yazīd for his father's death and congratulated him on becoming Caliph. Then he recited the following lines:

After this, poets followed his example in combining madīḥ and ṭīrathī' in one poem.30

Dualism is not only to be found in a poem of dual genre, but also in the maṣānī of one genre, as in madīḥ where the madīḥ is credited with two contrasting qualities. The most common version is to describe the madīḥ as a man of religion and of worldly life, of ḍīn and dunyā. This kind of
madīḥ was much admired by caliphs, viziers, governors and princes. When poets gathered at the door of al-Rashīd awaiting his permission to recite their poems of madīḥ, he ordered his doorman to tell them: "Whoever feels himself able to praise us for dīn and dūnā, in concise terms, let him enter and do so". When ʿUmar b. ʿAbī al-Saʿlāt entered to do as al-Rashīd had required, he asked him to recite his poem:

Ibn al-Saʿlāt was the only poet to be rewarded by al-Rashīd that day. 31

The first line quoted above contains the figure tāshakkuk, in which the poet expressed doubt as to whether the she-camel was carrying Harūn or rain (ghayth). In the second line there is another tāshakkuk, as to whether it was carrying the sun, the moon, the world or the faith.

The dualism of dūnā and dīn in madīḥ is known from early times. The caliph Abū Jaʿfar al-Mansūr is reported to have asked Abū Dulāma about the best line ever written by the Arabs. Abū Dulāma's answer was that "it is a verse to which lads play:

This is perhaps one of the earliest references to the dualism of dūnā and dīn, although we cannot date it. It also occurs in a line of Jarīr, on ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz:

which, if not the source of the maʿna, was at any rate recommended as an example to ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Samt b. Marwān, who had displeased al-Maʿmūn with his line:

Al-Maʿmūn's objection was, apparently, to the way in which the maʿna was expressed, rather than to the maʿna itself, for someone else commented that the poet had represented the caliph as if he was "an old woman busy
with her spindle".  

The ability to produce ma‘āni such as those in the lines of Ibn Abī al-Sa‘lāt was considered a sign of poetic skill and excellence. This is clear from the predilection of poets for these ma‘āni in their madīnā. An example is the poem by Salm al-Khāsir in praise of Yahyā b. Khālid al-Ba‘makh, in which he claimed that both dīn and dunyā relied on the madīnū. The poem opens:

بقاء الدين والدنيا جمعاً
ذا حقت المليئة والوزير

In two other lines we find the same contrast, together with galil and kathīr:

قليل من دين ودنيا
وما إن نال من دين ودنيا
حنّت حال وعباد غنّا
من الإسلام إن نشكر الشكور

In the second line the madīnū was described as a protector of Islam and an insurance for his people against misfortunes. This continued the idea of the first line. These concepts are almost always connected with the abstract ma‘āni of light and brightness, signifying guidance, as in the following line of the same poem:

نفرجت الأمور بحمايك
فُنِيْ له المنابر والسرير

Presenting the madīnū as a man of dīn and dunyā, as a protector of Islam and of the state, and as an insurance for his people through his generosity was widespread in the poetry and other writings of the muhdathūn quoted by Ibn al-Mu‘tazz. In his message of congratulation to Abū Bakr al-Fatā who had been appointed vizier, Muhammad b. ‘Arūs employed these concepts. He wrote to him that his appointment as a vizier "is a victory for dīn and a protection for the ministry; dīn is - thanks to Allāh - protected by you, and dunyā is made green (by your generosity)". He then wrote a poem, from which Ibn al-Mu‘tazz quoted the following:
Dualism and contrast are to be found in the first line where the poet mentioned his father and mother in the first half; in the second half he mentioned his maternal and paternal uncles. He produced takafu' by speaking of his halayn.

Sometimes a poet would liken a mamduh to four different persons, each of whom was famous for a noble quality. The mamduh was a combination of these four. The poet's main idea was to praise the mamduh for din and dunya, and in order to do so, he presented as two of the four persons famous men of noble worldly qualities, such as generosity and courage (ba's), and as the other two men famous for religious virtues such as sincerity and nusk (asceticism). Abu al-Allâf al-Nahrawâni is quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz as writing on his mamduh:

The dualism is apparent in the poet's apportioning two qualities to din and two to dunya. The lines also contain taqsim.

Some poets, when using din and dunya, would introduce contrasting ideas and ascribe to the mamduh qualities that seem to contradict one another. This produces a kind of takafu', in a wide sense. The first example is from the poetry of 'Ali b. Jabala in praise of Humayd al-Tusi:

This takafu' occurs in the second line where the mamduh was described as a generous man, in the first half, and as a fighter who kills those who are disloyal, in the second. Thus we have generosity, which gives life, on the one hand, and fighting, which causes death, on the other hand.
Similar to this are the lines of Ibn Munadhir praising the Bara'mika, in which he described them as making two journeys every year, one to fight the enemies of the Caliphate and the other one to perform the pilgrimage in Mecca. He also used the abstract matan of light and brightness:

Sometimes the dualism was effected by describing the two hands of the madūh, one as giving life through generosity and the other as causing death in war. This is to be found in these two lines of Abū al-Shayṣ praising ʿUqba b. Jaʿfar al-Khuṣṣāṣ:

The same idea is expressed in three lines of Salm al-Khāṣir praising al-Mahdī:

There is also contrast in 'afw (forgiveness) and intiqām (revenge).

Another method was for the poet to speak of the two days of the madūh, one for good and the other harm to his enemies. An example of this is from the poem of Salm al-Khāṣir in praise of Yahya b. Khalid al-Barmakī:

The poem contains other lines of dualistic ideas and of contrasts:

What will be the fate of the person who is generous?
If he is enriched, he will inherit
But if he is impoverished, he will die

What is the outcome of knowledge and wisdom?
Whether good or evil is inflicted on him, it is a punishment
Ibn Jabala spoke of the two days of his māmūn; one of them wasbashīr or the bringer of glad tidings and the other was nadhir or the warner. Besides the dualism, we have the contrast between bashīr and nadhir. The same idea was continued in other lines:

The second line described the māmūn as being both generous and a brave fighter. This was expanded in the third line, in which the poet specified the two functions of the hand of the māmūn, to give life through generosity and to give death by the sword. We also have the contrast between fa-tuḥyi and wa-tubīr in the second half of this line.

Other poets expressed the idea of dualism and produced contrasts by describing the māmūn as having two faces; one face for generosity and the other for fighting, as Abū al-ʿAllāf al-Nahrawānī wrote:
We have the contrast between hāyiyn in the first half of the first line and waqāhi in the second half. We also have that between al-jiddi and al-muzāhi in the second half of the second line. In the same line we have a repetition of ḥakadha.

Yet another way of expressing this dualism was to describe the mamlūh as having two clouds; one of ghayth, or abundant rain which gives life to the earth, and the other of torrential rain that causes catastrophes. Again, the mamlūh could be compared with time (dahr), which sometimes brought good luck and sometimes misfortune. An example of this is the two lines by ʿĀlī b. Jatāla praising Ḥumayd al-Tuṣāf:

Contrasts were produced by akma and wāḥd in the second half of the first line, by tughnil and tumīl in the first half of the second line, and by yādū and yūdī, which also contain tajnīs, in the second half.

However, all these different expressions of dualism in which the mamlūh was described in contrasting terms were in fact an extension of the dualism which we met in the characters of the mamlūhun and the poets who described themselves in their poems with descriptions contrary to their real characters. We also noticed the dualistic approach in the theory of jidd and hāzl and in the combination of the maˈāni of the ancients and the mahāsin of the moderns. Ibn al-Muˈtaṣazz himself, as we have observed, was influenced by this dualism in his quotations. Dualism seems to have been part of the theory of badīʾ, in a wide sense. The fact that most of the examples quoted contain contrasts and tajnīs, together with other elements of badīʾ and mahāsin, appears to indicate this relationship, and Ibn al-Muˈtaṣazz was chiefly influenced by the theory of badīʾ in selecting his
Ibn al-Mu'tazz paid considerable attention to the abstract *maṣāni* in which the *mandūh* was invested with the attributes of light, brightness and beauty. Most of his quotations from the genre of *madīn* contain these *maṣāni* as we shall see. The idea of endowing Caliphs, kings, and noble men with these attributes was discussed by al-ʿAṣmī in his *al-Muwāzana*, as one of the points of comparison between Abu Tammām and al-Buhtūrī. He thought that this method of praising Caliphs and noble men was very good and that it was necessary. A Caliph or a king should be given the attribute of *hayba* (awe-inspiring appearance) and also that of beauty of face, because a beautiful face increases respect for the Caliph. The Arabs considered a beautiful face as a good omen, because it was a sign of good qualities, while an ugly face was a sign of bad qualities. Al-ʿAṣmī criticised Qūzāma, who claimed in his *Naqd al-shīr* that the attribution of beauty was not recommended in *madīn*. He considered that Qūzāma was at odds with all nations, Arabs and non-Arabs, all of whom accepted and recommended attribution of beauty in *madīn* and the attribution of ugliness in *ḥijār*. He then quoted many relevant lines from al-Buhtūrī's poetry. However, Qūzāma's view is supported by ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān's criticism of ʿAbd Allāh b. Qays al-Ruqayyāt for referring to physical attributes in his *madīn* on him, as for instance:

\[
\text{بِتَلِيقِ الْسَّمَّاءِ ضُرِّقَ مَفْرَقَهُ عَلَى جَبِينِ لَّأَنَّ الزَّهْبِ}
\]

rather than the spiritual virtues (*fadaʿ il nafsiyya*) to which he had referred in his *madīn* on Musʿab b. al-Zubayr:

\[
\text{إِنَّمَا مَعَنَّ بِشَهَابٍ مِنَ اللهِ نُبُوَّتُ عَنَّ وَجْهِهِ الْخَلِّيَّاهُ}
\]

The muḥdathūn were, in general, fond of these *maṣāni* in *madīn*, and they repeated them in their poems. Another point to be mentioned here is that most of the examples given by Ibn al-Mu'tazz described the *mandūh* as a protector of Islam and as a pious man, and linked him with the Prophet -
if he happened to be a Caliph. Al-Anidi said that a Caliph should be praised as pious and devout even if he was not so. This explains why a poet should describe a Caliph as the light of religion while he was drinking wine with him. It may also explain why poets so frequently credit their ṣamdūhūn with religious virtues.

In bestowing the qualities of beauty, light and brightness, poets would compare the ṣamdūhūn with the sun and the full moon. Harūn al-Rashīd was always among those to whom such qualities were attributed. Ibn Abī al-Safīa wrote of him:

Hadārun bāzur bāhār zahīr

and:

Am umr المؤمنین

The second line of the second example contains tashakkuk.

When Nussayb al-Asghar praised Iṣḥāq b. al-Sabbāh al-Kindī, he compared him with the full moon and those who were sitting with him with stars:

Lā ana biḥaḥa wa kāna ḥawla raḍma bi ʾalār ʾal-nawṣa. 

The second line contains tājnis, in the words tamaamun and tamaamama in the second half. It also contains what critics called tattām or tamam, another type of which was called ihtiras or ihtiyāt. A very good example of this is the line by Tarafa:

Mas′īn dīnār kī ṣafira ṣaḥara ʿsmaʿr al-tūb al-wāriyya. 

The tattām was produced by the words: ghayra mufsidā. 46

In the line of Nussayb al-Asghar, the "precaution" was: ʾalā anna fī al-bedri al-mahāqa. The full moon becomes smaller and smaller and eventually disappears, but the ṣamdūhūn, although like the full moon, becomes more
perfect and complete.

A mandūḥ may be described as a hilāl (new moon); others are likened to stars, as by Rabī‘a al-Raqqī:  

وَإِذَا الْمَلَكُ تَسْاَبِقُوا فِي بَلَدِّ يَكُونُوا كَآُوْلَابِهِ وَلَنْتَ يِلْهَلَهَا

‘Alī b. Jabala, in his poem in praise of Humayd al-Tūsī, connected the transition from the rahīl - which took place at night - with the mandūḥ, who filled the earth with light, like the moon which drove away the darkness of the night while the poet was travelling. Ibn al-Mu‘tazz said "I have never heard a better takhallus from nasīb to madīn than this". The relevant lines are:

وَقَطَّبَ نَازِعَةُ الْجَهَرِ وَالْبِلَّاءُ لَفُور
لَمْ يَيْلَّ فِي نَوَادِهِ الْبَيْاءُ لَفُور
بِنَوَاءِ حُرَّى مَسْتَسْتَبِبُ
لُحْبِيرِ قَحِيدٌ تُضِيِّرُ الأَرْضَ الْمُنِيرِ

In another line he addressed the mandūḥ thus:

أَنِّي الصَّمَعُ عَيْبُكَ لَيْسَ اللَّيْثُ تَكْبِير

The description of the mandūḥ as a light that drives away the darkness and a light that acts as a guide for men is to be found in other poetry, like the following lines by the poetess Ānān in praise of Yahyā al-Barmakī:

مَهْمِلُ بَيْنَانِينِ وَطَيُّوهُمُ مَعَادِبُ يَلِيْنُ تُورُا مَلِكٌ وَرَيْبٌ
عَلَى وَجْهِ كَمِينٍ مَرْأَةٌ بِكَاءٌ كَمَا ثَقَوَّرَ سَارِيُّ الرَّجُلِ بِالفَرَائِفِ

In another line she addressed him thus:

وَفَعَلَ كَمِهْرُ وَلْدَكَ رَحْيَةٌ وَقَبَّاهَا نُورُ منْوَةٌ غَيْرَ خَلاَفِ

As has been mentioned, one of the elements of excellent madīn was to credit the Caliph with piety and other religious virtues, even if these were not appropriate. An example of this kind of madīn, in which the poet - who was drinking wine with the mandūḥ - described him as the light of religion, is
these lines of Abū Nuwas:

Bistibbad 'asān, fi al-qalīn
Ladīnīn, na'an, 'asān
Wajîr sa'dam, 'asān
Walsīf, yinjel, 'asān

Here we have *tasrīf* in the first line, with *na'as* at the end of the first half and *al-galas* at the rhyme. In the third line we have *tajnis* in the two words *sadisihim sadas*. We also have contrasts in the last line, in the words *tabki* and *yadhak*, and in *dihkhi* and *'abas*.

In another poem he described him as the light of the Caliphate and the rejuvenating power of Islam:

The *ra'jaz* poem of al-Umāni in praise of al-Rashīd also illustrated *madīh* by attribution of the piety and devoutness demanded by critics. The lines selected by Ibn al-Mu'tazz are the following:

Another element of *madīh* recommended by critics was reference to particular
characteristics and qualities restricted to the Abbasid Caliphs, since they were related to the Prophet and considered to belong to Ahl al-Bayt. A poet should show obedience to them, love them and admit that they have a special status and right among Muslims, according to al-Amidī in his Muwazana. The examples he quoted made it clear that disobedience to the Caliphs was disobedience to God. Al-Buhūrī wrote addressing al-Mutawakkil:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{جَسَدُ الْلَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِکَةَ}, \\
\text{فَلَا تَرَى مِنْهُمْ نِعَامًا}, \\
\text{تَرَى مِنْهُمْ نَكَبَةً}, \\
\text{فَلَا تَرَى مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا}, \\
\text{فَلَا تَرَى مِنْهُمْ إِمَامًا.}
\end{align*}
\]

and:

\[
\text{نَعْمَلِي وَنَعْمَلِمُهُمُ الْمَلَائِکَةَ اِعْتِدَاً,} \\
\text{بَنَآةٍ عِندَ اللهِ ذَٰلِكَ إِمَامًا.}
\]

Another recommended element of madiḥ on Abbasid Caliphs was to mention that they had inherited various belongings of the Prophet, such as his clothes, his turban, his sword, his ring, his stick and his bed. The poet should also mention that the Caliphs were related to the Prophet, that they behaved and acted according to his teachings, and that they inherited his blessings. Al-Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muttalib, who was the paternal uncle of the Prophet and from whom the Abbasid Caliphs were descended, should be mentioned, with his virtues and his good deeds. Again examples were quoted from al-Buhūrī’s poetry:

\[
\text{عَلَدَكُمُ ثَنَاءٌ الْمَعْلُومَ وَقَلَأَرُ,} \\
\text{وَأَنتُ بِهَا أَوَّلُ إِذَا خَلَقَ الْآمَر} \\
\text{كَانَتْهَا،} \\
\text{وَسَيِّيْهَا،} \\
\text{وَرَأْوُهَا،} \\
\text{وَهَلْزَرُ الْمُسْلِكٍ،} \\
\text{وَالْجُرُّ.}
\]

In another poem he addressed the Caliph al-Mutazz as follows:

\[
\text{وَقَدْ تَرَكَ الْعِبَاسُ عِندَكَ وَأَنْتَ صِيَامُ الْبَلَدِ مَثَلَّ صَيَامِ الْمَشْرِقِ،} \\
\text{الْمَشْرِقِ الْقَسِيدِ وَالْمَشْرِقِ الْعُثُمُّ,} \\
\text{وَأَوْلَى بِهِ مَنْ لَيْلَةِ الأَنْعَامَ،} \\
\text{وَأَنْتُ بِهِ مِنْ آسِئَتِ الْجُدُوِّ عَلَى الْلَّهِ وَبَشَرِّي فِي الْحُسْنَ الْمَشْرِقَ، أَمَّا أَضَرُّ أَنْتُ.}
\]

The last line referred to al-'Abbas.

A variation on this was to describe their nobility, honour and glory by stressing their connection with al-Ka'ba and the well of Zamzam, with
reference to the noble deeds of al-Abbas such as watering the pilgrims, and performing the prayer for rain at the time of 'Umar. Examples were quoted by al-Amidi from the poetry of al-Buhturi. He wrote, addressing the Caliph al-Mu'tazz:

Another example was his lines on al-Mutawakkil:

The Caliph should be presented as superior to all others, and the poet should be careful not to praise a vizier, a governor or a noble man in the same terms as the Caliph. Examples were again taken from al-Buhturi, who addressed al-Mutawakkil thus:

Such a line ought to be written only on an Abbasid Caliph or a member of the Prophet's family, according to al-Amidi. All the examples quoted contain the same idea of exclusivity.

A similar idea was propounded by Ibn Rashiq who stated that if the masduh was a king, the poet might exaggerate in his mara'i, without any limits, but if the masduh was an ordinary man, he ought not to. Ibn Rashiq and Qudama both thought that every class of men ought to be praised in terms exclusive to it.

The themes in the lines of madīn quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz were those that these successors of his considered appropriate. In the two following lines by Ashja' al-Sulami of madīn on al-Rashid, we find a reference to the relationship of the masduh with the Prophet and the effect of this in the destruction of his enemies:
Al-Rashīd was so pleased that he said: "By Alḥāh, this is excellent ṭabīḥ and correct muḥdā". The contrasts are to be seen in ḍaw' and al-izālā, and in tanabbāha and ḥadā. Al-Rashīd was further delighted when the poet recited two other lines in which he described him and his parents as having drunk the water of the Prophethood and as being related to the Prophet:

In other lines, too, his relationship with the Prophet was mentioned, and he was described as a protection for the Caliphate:

The idea of praising the ṭamdūḥ as a protector of Islam and the Caliphate was transferred to the ṭabīḥ of viziers and governors. Ibn al-Muṭṭazz stated that one of the ways in which a poet could best praise a ṭamdūḥ of this rank was to say that he gave stability and protection to the Caliphate by his long stand under the shade of swords. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, known as al-Sīnī, praised ʿAḥār b. al-Ḥusayn in this way:

Another governor, ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥilāl was praised by ʿAlī b. ʿAsim thus:
Some poets not only described their *maddūn* as a protector of the Caliphate but also as a means of security and protection for the whole earth. These *maddūn* are to be found in various lines quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz from different poets. The best examples are the poems of 'Ali b. Jabala in praise of Humayd al-Tusi and Abū Dulaf al-Khazrajī. About the former he wrote:

He described him as a guardian of the earth:

About Abū Dulaf he wrote:

"Awf b. Muhallim addressed his *maddūn* 'Abd Allah b. Tahir thus:

He described him and his family as the ornaments of the Caliphate in time of peace and its sword in time of war:

The poems of *maddīn* quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz were characterised by references to the revolts which had taken place against the Abbasid Caliphate and their suppression by the *maddūn*. The reiteration of this
there suggests that it was considered particularly apposite for madīh on viziers and governors of provinces at that time, in view of the lack of security and stability in the Abbasid Caliphate. In his own poetry Ibn al-Mu'tazz also referred to the same subject, and he gave as an example of a good vizier one who could suppress revolts and secure the state.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz approved of poems of madīh with exaggerated ma'ṣūfī. Earlier critics had rejected exaggeration, possibly under the influence of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, both of which call for sincerity and truth and condemn takalluf and exaggeration. With the exception of al-Nābigha al-Dhubyanī, in his criticism of Ḥassān b. Thabit, and 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān in his criticism of Kuthayyīr, there was perhaps no-one who advocated exaggeration in the ma'ṣūfī of madīh. Ibn al-Mu'tazz's quotations from this genre may have influenced Qudāma, al-Amīdī and Ibn Rashīq, all of whom accepted exaggerated madīh, and believed that levels of madīh should differ according to the differences in rank of the mamdūhīn. Qudāma made it clear that in his opinion description by way of hyperbole was preferable to "staying within limits which mark the middle (between two extremes)". He said that those who had knowledge of poetry, either ancient or modern, held the same opinion. He quoted the tag: "the best poetry is the most lying (ahsan al-shīr akdhabuḥu)" and remarked that a poet was not expected to be sincere but excellent, whether in madīh or hijā'. He could contradict himself in different poems, provided that he displayed sufficient poetic ability. He also attributed the same views to the Greek philosophers. 65 Recent scholars have believed that Qudāma was influenced by Aristotle in his views concerning hyperbole in poetry. 66 In all probability, however, Qudāma was influenced by Ibn al-Mu'tazz's quotations and by other hyperbolic lines from Jāhilī poetry, such as those by Muḥalhill and al-Namr b. Tawlab, and from mubdath poetry, such as those of Abū Nuwas. The influence of Imru' al-Qays' father, who also believed that ahsan al-shīr akdhabuḥu,
and of 'Abd al-Malik, al-Nabigha, and al-A'şā may be suggested. 67

Hyperbole may be regarded as a part of Arab life, for we find it in mufâkhara and munâfara, in poetry and in speeches. In the field of poetic criticism, we find that critics themselves gave exaggerated opinions about a poem, a line or about a poet himself, in describing it or him as the best of all. The muhdathun became fond of hyperbole, in māḏih, as we shall see from Ibn al-Mu'tazz's quotations. By their time, it had become a social and political necessity, since the mamluḏ had to be accorded superiority to all, especially if he was a Caliph. This superiority gave him the right to rule his subjects. It even became a religious necessity in the opinion of some poets, such as Salm al-Khasir, who believed that al-Mahdī, the Abbasid Caliph, was really the awaited Mahdī (al-Mahdī al-muntazar). In one of his poems he made him superior to all, likening him to ḥalāl and other kings to ḥarām:

He wrote another poem in praise of the Caliph Mūsā al-Hadī, to whom he ascribed divine attributes:

A mamlūḏ may be likened to al-Ka'ba, as by Muslim b. al-Walīd:

and by Ahmad b. al-Hajjāj:

A mamlūḏ may be likened to al-Ka'ba, as by Muslim b. al-Walīd:
Ibn al-Mu'tazz was interested in such poetry from a political, as well as an artistic, point of view. He was one of the Abbasid ruling family and he liked the Caliphs to have their right to the Caliphate affirmed in such poetry as this, by Mansur al-Namri:

\[
\text{بَعْرُوْهَاَرُونَ مَنْ إِمَامٍ بِطَاعَةِ اللّهِ ذَوَّ اِئْتِهَا مَثَّلَبُ عَلَى أَمَانَّ مَسَّ إِنَّ لَوْتَقَيْهِ مَنْ إِمَامٍ لَوْ اسْطَعَّا عَلَى أَمَانَّ أَيَا رَهَبَةَ السَّهَامِ بِإِيّا مَيْلٍ مَّا إِيّا بِعَدَدِ النَّبِيِّينَ فِي الأَيَامِ}
\]

'Ali b. Jabala addressed al-Mutawakkil thus:

\[
	ext{فِي بِينَ يَّلِدِ جَلِيلٍ أَسْهَمَ وَقَتَدَ الَّذِينَ بَيِّنَ النَّبِيَّ الْخَرَّ}
\]

Two lines from the poem of Abū al-Khattāb al-Bahdali in praise of Mūsā al-Hādi described him as the best man of Mudar. No-one was better than him except the Prophet:

\[
	ext{بَا خَلَّتِ مِنْ عَقْدَتِكَ لَفَاجَ أَوْرَهُ مَعَرُ فُلَانِ دَاءَ وَأَنْتُ بِذَالِكَ الْفَقْلِ تَفَقَّرُ}
\]

Abū Nuwās described al-Amīn as the best man who ever trod on earth:

\[
	ext{وَلَوْ احْتَلَّ الْوَلِيُّ بَلْغُعُ مُكَرَّرًا فَظَوْرُهُنَّ عَلَى الرَّجَالِ كَرَامٌ قَرَبَتِهَا وَمَنْ كَبِيرٌ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ إِلَّا قَدَّرَهُ مَا كَبرْتُ يَدَهُمُ وَذَمَّمُ}
\]

and exaggerated further:

\[
	ext{بَا نَافَعَ لَا سَامِعٍ ؛ أُوْلَى الْمَعْلُومِ مِثْلُهُ تَقْصِيلُ رَاحْتِهِ وَالْزَّرْعُ بَيْسَانِ مِثْلُهُ بَيْسَانٌ عَلَى عُفُوِّ مِنْ نَافَعٍ مِنْ عَلَى مَنْ جَانِ عِنْدَ الْعَالِمِ الْعَزِيزِ إِلَّا كَبِيرٌ لَعَنَّهُ نَافَعُ لَعَنَّهُ ذَمَّمُ}
\]

\[
	ext{وَهُوَ الَّذِي احْتَلَّ الْوَلَىُّ الْعَلَّمُ بِهِ كَمَا كَبِيرُ مِنْ لَغُرُبٍ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ}
\]

'Ali b. al-Jahm employed even greater hyperbole in ascribing to his mamlūn

Abū Dulaf al-Khazrajī - who was not even a Caliph - divine power:

\[
	ext{كَأَنَّ الْذَّکَرَ نُزِّرَ الْبَيْنَ مَنْ لَهَا وَقَطَّعَ الْأَذْكَرَ مِنْ حَالِ الْأَذْكَرِ وَلا تَقْطَعَ بِذَكَرِهِ وَآجَالِ}
\]

\[
	ext{وَمَا مَرَّتُ عِنْدَ طَرْفٍ إِلَى أَحَدٍ رَكَّتُ بَيْنَ بَيْنِ رَكَّتِينِ وَآجَالِ}
\]
It is said that al-Ma'mūn threatened him with execution for "describing a man as equal to God". 74 'Alī b. Jabala was fond of such exaggeration and incorporated a similar idea in his lines in praise of Husayd al-

Although the lines are said to have been "rejected by the āmma, who accused the poet of ignorance in crediting his maddīh with the power of God", Ibn al-Mu'tazz admired them, defending them on the grounds that it had already been stated in the first line that the maddīh had achieved such power by obedience to God. 75 The fact that these poems by 'Alī b. Jabala were much admired and recited by people, as Ibn al-Mu'tazz mentioned, implies that they enjoyed hyperbole in maddīh poetry. The examples quoted above from Abū Nuwas, 'Alī b. Jabala and others described the maddīh as pious and obedient to God, even if the poet knew that this was not true. This practice was commended by al-Āmidī, as we have mentioned. Ibn al-Mu'tazz had the same view, judging from his quotations, but he differed with al-Āmidī in that he sometimes accepted the transference of maddīh appropriate to Caliphs to viziers and other men of the state. Al-Āmidī considered that "a major defect in a poet is to praise a non-Caliph for qualities only possessed by Caliphs". 76

Sometimes hyperbole is ridiculously presented, as in the poem of Abū al-

Khattāb al-Bahdālī in praise of the Caliph Mūsā al-Hādi, whose courage and physical strength he described with great exaggeration. The Caliph whom Ibn al-Mu'tazz reported as "busying himself with drink and listening to songs" was compared with a lion which was described as very strong, brave and fierce, but not possessed of one hundredth of his courage and
The poem, as we have mentioned before, was said to have combined the *māna* of the earlier poets and the *māhasin* of the *muhdathūn*. As has been suggested, hyperbole in *madīḥ*, especially on Caliphs, had become a necessity from a political, religious and social point of view. Poets were not expected to be sincere but to exaggerate and please their *mandūḥ*, who was represented as superior to everyone else. Thus, al-Ḥa Checklist was very pleased when al-Ḥusayn b. al-Dahhak praised him thus:

and is reported to have said to the poet: "O, Husayn, you know that this is the best *madīḥ* I have ever been praised with in my kingdom". On the other hand, a Caliph would become angry if any of his subjects was praised and placed above him. When al-Ṭar al-Jatala wrote his poem of *madīḥ* on al-Dulaf, describing him thus:

al-Ḥa Checklist was furious, because a poet who was praising a subject of the Caliph claimed that everyone - including the Caliph himself - borrowed noble deeds from his *mandūḥ*. At the very beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate, al-Ḥasan threatened al-Dulam with reprisals if he again recited his *ritāh* poem on al-Saffah, his predecessor. The reason seems to have been that the poem was so impressive that when the public heard it they wept over the dead Caliph, who, the poet claimed, had taken generosity with him to his grave and left behind only misers. The poet expressed a wish to die and follow his master quickly. The lines that seem to have angered al-Ḥasan are:
Al-Rashīd is said once to have doubted the prize of al-‘Umānī, first
because of his poem and secondly because of his speech in which he declared
al-Rashīd superior to all other Caliphs from the Umayyad period onwards.
The poet claimed that he had praised all Caliphs but that he had never
seen among them a man with a more beautiful face and appearance, and with
more generous hands, than al-Rashīd.81 This competition between mamdūhūn
was widespread at all levels and not confined to Caliphs. For instance,
when ʿAlī b. Jabala wished to recite to Ḥumayd al-Ṭusī a poem in his
praise, he asked him: "What are you going to say about us? Is there any-
thing left to be said after you have said about Abu Dulaf:

The poet replied that what he had written on Ḥumayd was better than that,
and then he recited:

Humayd was pleased and rewarded the poet, but the lines are said to have
been less famous than those on Abu Dulaf, which were recited by Khāṣṣa, and
ʿamma alike, while those on Ḥumayd were known only to the Khāṣṣa and to men
of letters. It is said that they were composed extempore and that this was
why Ḥumayd was so pleased with them.82

Both mamdūhūn and poets knew that these poems of madīḥ lacked sincerity,
but the former accepted them with pleasure and admiration because they
liked to be praised in this way and accorded superiority. The more a poet
exaggerated in his madīḥ, the greater the rewards he received. When al-
Ramāmah b. Mayyāda was criticised for praising al-Walīd b. Yazīd, who was a
dissolute man, he replied that he did not care about his dissoluteness,
since he had rewarded him with four hundred she-camels. Al-Ramāmah told
his critic whose name was Jaʿfar b. Sulayman from the Abbasid family and
who was a governor of Basra, that mad\text{\textit{dh}} depended on how great the reward was. Ja\text{\textcyr{c}}far b. Sulaym\text{\textcyr{a}}n then gave him four hundred she-camels and asked for a poem of mad\text{\textit{dh}} like that on al-Walid.\textsuperscript{83} This attitude may well explain the dualistic behaviour of those poets among the Shi\text{\textcyr{a}} who wrote mad\text{\textit{dh}} on the Umayyads and the Abbasids; their object was simply to earn money. Their mad\text{\textit{dh}} poems on these Caliphs are said to have been more excellent than those on the Ahl al-bayt. This was remarked on in the poetry of al-Kumayt b. Zayd whose behaviour was attributed by Ibn Qutayba to greed for material reward from the Umayyads and the Abbasids in this world; he preferred this to the reward that he might have had in the hereafter if he had limited himself to Ahl al-bayt.\textsuperscript{84}

In quoting these mad\text{\textit{dh}} poems in which poets exaggerated, Ibn al-Mu\text{\textcyr{t}}azz was influenced by the criteria of his own time, in which hyperbole was admired; besides, he was a member of the ruling house and therefore accepted this hyperbole because it represented the Abbasid Caliphs as superior to everyone else and the only ones entitled to the Caliphate. In his own poetry, we find mad\text{\textit{dh}} on the Abbasids mainly concerned with their right to the Caliphate. At the same time, following a dualistic path, he wrote mad\text{\textit{dh}} on Ahl al-bayt, expressing his love and respect for them but criticising them for claiming the Caliphate. As T\text{\textcyr{a}}h\text{\textcyr{e}} Husayn said, Ibn al-Mu\text{\textcyr{t}}azz was a pure Abbasid in his political views and very severe in his opposition to the Talibids. In his political arguments he always cited the following line of Marw\text{\textae}n b. Ab\text{\textcyr{r}} Hafsa:

\begin{quote}
آتي بكون، قولين دال بناش،
لبن البنات وراثة الأمام.
\end{quote}

Ibn al-Mu\text{\textcyr{t}}azz wrote a great deal of poetry based on the idea in this line. His political poetry was also characterised by the mention of the frequent revolts by the Talibids against the Abbasid Caliphate.\textsuperscript{85}

Concerning his own poetry discussion will be limited to mad\text{\textit{dh}} poems on
Abbasid Caliphs, and on their viziers, in which we find some of the qualities that he admired in his quotations from the Muhaddithun. The poems in which he spoke about his political views and his opposition to the Talibids will be singled out. One of his most important poems on this is that in which he praised ‘Ali b. Abi Talib:

and defended himself against the accusation that he disliked ‘Ali and his descendants. 86

In one of his poems, which starts:

he called on the Talibids to reach a compromise and reminded them of the relationship that linked them with the Abbasids. His political views appear in those lines in which he requested the Talibids to give up their claim to the Caliphate. 87 In another poem he repeated the same request, arguing that the Abbasids were the ones who had terminated the Umayyad Caliphate, and so they had the right to inherit it. Besides, the Abbasids had inherited the garments of the Prophet and the Talibids had no reason to claim them. They had also inherited the Caliphate, through their ancestor al-‘Abbás, the paternal uncle of the Prophet. Although the Talibids were descended from the Prophet's daughter, they had no right to inherit. Moreover, al-‘Abbás had many virtues and had done much good for Islam such as being the Prophet's uncle, standing firm with him at the battle of Hunayn, and leading the prayer for rain at the time of ‘Umar. Ibn al-Mu’tazz claimed that the Caliphate was a gift from God to the Abbasids and that the Talibids should realise that it would not become settled and stable except in their hands. This poem starts:

The lines that contain these ideas start:

88
These political ideas were also presented in a fourth poem, in which he wrote mufakhara about his noble descent and mentioned the virtues of al-ʿAbbās. He also stated again that the Abbasids had inherited the Caliphate from the Prophet. The poem starts:

As has been mentioned, mention of the relationship between the Prophet and the Caliph was recommended. We have seen examples in the quotations from the muhdathūn. Ibn al-Muʿtazz made use of this theme in his own poems which had a political nature. In a fifth poem he complained of the hostility of the Talibids towards the Abbasids. He boasted that he was descended from al-ʿAbbās and his son ʿAbd Allāh, both of whom had defended the Talibids against Umayyad oppression; they should be grateful to the Abbasids and not hostile. The virtues and deeds of al-ʿAbbās were again rehearsed and put forward as a justification for his descendants' tenure of the Caliphate. The poem starts:

In a sixth poem, starting:

he again addressed the Talibids, wondering how long they would continue to claim the Caliphate. He then compared al-ʿAbbās with his brother Abu Ṭalib, giving him superiority because he was a Muslim and because of his virtues and good deeds in Islam. He repeated the theme of the inheritance of the Caliphate, and he warned the Talibids not to dispute it. He tried to produce evidence to support the Abbasids' claim. In a seventh poem, he told the Talibids that God did not will that they should rule, that the people would not accept them, and that they had no reason to force their will on the people. The Caliphate, he claimed, was a gift from God to the Abbasids, who were able to seize power from the Umayyads. The Talibids
should be grateful to the Abbasids, because they had protected them against oppression. The poem starts:

Ibn al-Mu'tazz wrote a very long urjūza starting:

The poem consists of four hundred and twenty-one lines and in it he expressed his opinions about the Umayyad Caliphate, accusing them of corruption and tyranny. He repeated the idea of inherited right to the Caliphate at the beginning of the poem. He spoke of the life and rule of al-Saffah, the first Abbasid Caliph, who saved men from the terrible conditions prevailing at the end of the Umayyad era. He also complained of the evil actions of the Qaramita against the Muslims. He then moved to the main theme of his poem, which was the superiority of al-Abbas; he produced the same arguments as in his other poems, and he called on the Talibids to renounce their claim to the Caliphate. In one of his short poems, starting:

he advised the Abbasids to protect their Caliphate, in lines such as:

He offered the same advice to the Caliph al-Muktafi:

In his quotations from the mubdathūn we have seen his interest in abstract mānā in mādīn, such as the attribution of light, piety and justice, and the representation of the mādīn as a protector of Islam and the Caliphate and as a source of stability and security for the country. These characteristics are to be found also in his own mādīn poetry, such as his short poem on al-Muktafi, starting:
It continues:

The attributes of light and beauty appear in many lines, such as:

Hayfa and ‘beha’

The Caliph as a guide to the right path and as a light that fills earth with truth and justice appears in this line:

He was also described, in another poem, as a moon who turned the darkness of night into light, as the best man to whom camels had ever travelled, and as a king by whom the kingdom had been settled:

The kingdom had been settled and secured by a generous and a just Caliph:

The theme of protecting and securing the kingdom occurs again elsewhere:
The Caliph is again praised for spreading security and justice on earth, in lines such as:

```
هَنَذَاكَ أَمْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَلَالَةً
وَلَيْتَ أَنْ تُنَبِّئِنَّ يَدَاكَ
لَقَدْ رَفَعَهَا حَليَّةً رَأْسٍ قَاسِمٍ
وَلِيَ يَلِيَ الْقُبُولَ الْقَبْلَ.
```

This theme of security and protection recurs in several other poems in the Diwan. Protection and support for Islam, recommended as themes in madḥ poetry on Caliphs, also figure in his poetry, for instance:

```
باَّنَعَيْرُ الْإِلَيْلَةِ يَسْـنُ
وَسْنُحَايَاتَ الْلَّهَـيْنِ
```

and:

```
دَعْوَانِهُ فَايَسْـتَهْـيَ وَخَانَثَا
لَبْيَنِهِ وَسَعْيَانِ مَهْلِيْسَا
```

The characteristics of madḥ poetry on Caliphs that emerge in his quotations from the muḥdathūn and in his own poetry are similar to those recommended later by al-Āmīdī. The latter stated that there were certain things that ought to be mentioned when writing such poetry. The examples he quoted from al-Ḥūṭuṭī demonstrate the similarity of his approach to that of Ibn al-Muʿtazz, for instance:

```
الْيَمَّ أَلْحَلَّةِ الْيَلَىَّةِ سَعِيْرَةَ
وَاصِفَ فِيهَا بَذْرُها المَلَائِلُ
```

and:

```
الْيَمَّ أَلْحَلَّةِ الْيَلَىَّةِ جَفِّرَةً
وَرَايَتْ ناَحَيِّيَةُ الَّذِي لَجُدْلُ
```

Concerning the Caliph al-Nāṣirī, al-Ḥūṭuṭī wrote:

```
رَأَيُ فِي نَهَيْيِ الْيَلَىَّةِ نَرَأْيُ
فَعْلَهُ شَهَيْسُ النَّاسِ وَهُوَ بَيْنُ
وَأجْرُ الْآدِمِيْنِ مِنَ النَّافِيَ وَالْأَنْفُ
```

Addressing the Caliph al-Muṭawakkil, he spoke of the Caliphate as an
In his madîh poetry on viziers, Ibn al-Mu'tazz used the themes to be found in his quotations from the muhâdhîn on the same subject. The protection, security and stability of the kingdom were predominant. He also employed hyperbole from time to time. The following madîh on one of the Abbassid viziers is a good example:

The last line is hyperbolical in equating the power of the madîh with the divine power; it reminds us of the lines by ʿAlî b. Jabala on Humayd al-Tusi and Abu Dulaf. In three other lines, Ibn al-Mu'tazz employed a kind of dualism, in praising two viziers in the same poem, just as Marwân b. Abî Hafsa had done. He represented the two viziers as protectors of the kingdom and loyal assistants to the Caliph in times of difficulty:

The themes of settlement and stability, which we find in madîh on the Caliphs, were transferred to madîh on viziers and the office of wizâra,
The characteristics of madīth poetry on viziers, as represented by the quotations of Ibn al-Mu'tazz and by his own poetry, are the same as those commended by Qudāma b. Ja'far and Ibn Rāshīq. They agreed that a vizier should be praised as a good adviser to the Caliph and as an intelligent and determined man who was always ready to help the Caliph in times of difficulty. While agreeing with these later critics on this point, Ibn al-Mu'tazz differed with them and with al-Ḥādī concerning the propriety of praising a mandūh only in terms appropriate to his rank and status and not overstepping certain limits. Al-Ḥādī stated that neither a vizier, an army leader nor the governor of a province expected to be praised in the same terms in which a Caliph was praised. Ibn al-Mu'tazz was prepared to extend those limits, as we have seen.

Quotations from poets of hijā', mujūn and hamāqa

When describing al-Ḥusayn b. al-Dahhāk as a mustann, Ibn al-Mu'tazz mentioned hijā' as one of the genres that such a poet was expected to master. He described several of the poets whom he quoted as excellent in hijā'. His comments on some of them may give us an idea about the kind of hijā' poetry that he favoured. For instance, Abū al-Yanbaghī was said to be "very quick to harm and defame people's honour (aṭrād) with his hijā', very fond of obscenity in poetry, very good at extemporising, and evil-tongued (khābīth al-lisan)". Ibn al-Mu'tazz cited an obscene line of hijā' extemporised by Abū al-Yanbaghī in answer to another poet who had attacked him in this line:

Besides obscenity both of words and content, Abū al-Yanbadhī used in his hijā' "foolish words (lafz sakhīf), in order to attract the āmāma and boys.
to his poetry". Ibn al-Mu'tazz cited his lines that start:

\[ وَرَجَأَ الْبَرْزَازَانِ لَعَمَّ دَرَكَ مَا حَمَسَ رَاسِنَ \]

and described them as "amusing and interesting". 108

Although this kind of hijā' was both obscene and effective, Ibn al-Mu'tazz appeared to regard the citation of these lines as more in the nature of hazl. Another good example of such poetry is the lines by Di'bīl b. ʿAlī in reply to Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī's obscene hijā' on him, starting:

\[ لَدَعَبْ نِعَةً نُمَّتْ بِهَا كَبِيرَتْ لَهُ صَبِيبُ أَسْمَااٰ \]

Di'bīl was angered by the lines and replied extemporaneously with another obscene poem:

\[ يا أُبا سُفَرَ فَقَصَرَ رَأسَ الْأَحَزَّةِ وَالْأَمْرَةٌ \]

To make his poem more effective Di'bīl gathered together some boys, presented them with fruit, and told them to recite it loudly whenever they saw Abū Saʿd. The latter found it hard to stay in Baghdād and soon left for good. 109 Other poets famous for hijā' were Abū al-Khattāb al-Bahdālī and ʿAlī b. al-Jahm. The latter was described as one who "puts his tongue where he likes" which may have meant either that writing hijā' was easy for him or that he wrote it on all classes of people, high and low alike. Mansūr al-Isfahānī was also regarded as an excellent hijā' poet. 110

Besides hijā' of this nature, Ibn al-Mu'tazz also cited from the muhdathūn a certain amount of hijā' poetry that dealt with physical appearances, ugliness, dirtiness, etc., and some that depicted its victims in an amusing and a mocking fashion. This kind of poetry he also regarded as an aspect of hazl, and he quoted it as a change from serious poetry. Here too, we find obscene subjects, such as pederasty and adultery, discussed in plain terms. Hyperbole was also used in this sort of hijā' poetry in order to give the worst possible picture of the satirised one. Ibn al-
Mu'tazz's attitude to this kind of hijā' differed widely from that of early critics like Abū 'Amr b. al-Ālā', Khalaf al-Ahmard and al-Akhtal, all of whom demanded decent and sincere hijā', as we have seen. Another kind of hijā' admired by earlier critics was that called iqdāhā. Ibn al-Mu'tazz was also interested in it, to judge from his quotations, such as the poem that starts:

داوءَ ذْهَبَتْ وَأَنَّ عَنْ عَوْرٍ

and:

لاَّ تَقَاءَ مَا بَيْنَ الْبَيْنَيْنِ فِي الْبَيْنِ يِبْرِرُ سُلْطَانُ وَالْأَؤْمَرُ ابْنِ حَارِمٍ

Both of these poems were mentioned when we spoke about quotations from madīh.

In his quotations from hijā' poetry we find certain mahāsin, notably istitrad, which was much used. The first to use it was al-Samaw'āl:

إِذَا مَرَّتُ عُنْوَانَ وَسُلْتُ

Al-Farazdaq followed him:

كَأَنْ فَقَاهُ الأَسْدَ حَوَلَ ابْنِ مَسِيحَ

The istitrad in the first example consists in the fact that while al-Samaw'āl was writing fakhr on his people he changed course and satirised Āmīr and Salūl. In the second example, al-Farazdaq produced istitrad by beginning a description of fināh al-usd and then switched to hijā' on Bakr b. Wa'il.

Jarīr, in one of his lines, produced multiple istitrad:

لَا وَضَعْتُ عَلَى الْفَزِيرِ مِيْسِي

He began with hijā' on al-Farazdaq, left him for al-Ba'ith and then left the latter for al-Akhtal. 111

A poem by Bashshār that contains istitrad, an excellent one according to Ibn Rashīq 112, was quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz, probably for this reason.
The first two lines of the poem contain the istitrai:


dhllbin min kuttun amran 'amin
un darho, run alarim 'umina
walla shallu 'abdi ibn fara'ka 'asma
hadatuna ran sanadu harim

"Abd al-'Aziz al-Jurjanî stated that the best kind of hijâ' was that which was written in a jocular and mocking way and was a compromise between taṣrîh and tasrîh. The ma'âni should be easily understood so that the poetry could be learnt by heart. He disapproved of obscenity, abuse and defamation in hijâ'. Ibn Rashîq agreed with him concerning taṣrîh and tasrîh in hijâ' and said that taṣrîh was admired because it left things unsaid and made the audience think. Both Qudâma and Ibn Rashîq agreed that the best hijâ' could be achieved by disparaging men's moral attributes; Ibn Rashîq added that hijâ' of men's physical defects, for instance ugliness, was less good. Qudâma made it clear that he totally disapproved of hijâ' by means of physical description, or by means of satirising a man's parents or ancestors, if it happened that they were bad and he was good. In most respects, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's views on hijâ' coincided with those of these later critics. For example, he appreciated hijâ' by taṣrîh, as we can see from his comments on the following lines by Ibn 'Âisha al-Qurashi:

قَفَفِيَأْنَأَفْيَبِيِّدَارُ الْفَيَّاق
بِشَبَّيْهِ السَّلاَجُ وَبِالسَّلاَح

The poet appears to be satirising himself, but actually his lines are taṣrîh against someone else. Ibn al-Mu'tazz praised the lines as excellent hijâ'. The principal points on which he disagreed with them were those of obscenity and mockery of physical peculiarities, in both of which he seems to have taken a rather childish pleasure. The lines that he quoted from the hijâ' poems of Hammâd 'Âjrad on Bashshâr are good examples of this kind of hijâ':

وَكَأَفَّيْكَ مِنْ غَرَبٍ
إِذَا هَيَّئَتَ الْقُرُوبُ
Although Hammad 'Ajjad wrote a quantity of hijā' on Bashshār, the latter regarded these lines as the most effective and harmful. Another example is provided by a poem of Muhammad b. al-Dawraqi, described by Ibn al-Mu'tazz as faḥisha. He quoted the following line:

The same tendency is evident in his own hijā' poetry, for instance, in this line about a singer:

and in the following lines:

The interest of Ibn al-Mu'tazz in quoting and writing hijā' of this kind may be seen in relation to his notion of hazl and diversion. It may also support our earlier suggestion, that serious kinds of hijā' had lost their importance to some extent. The examples quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz all appear intended to present the satirised one in the most grotesque light, like in the following lines by Mansūr al-Isfahānī:

and:
The same is true of some of his own hijā', such as these lines on a singer named bid'a:

\[\text{حدثنا عن بيعة، فابسط} \]
\[\text{فقل في البيت، بائع} \]
\[\text{ورأى سوءة، نفسه بيضا} \]
\[\text{فوضع座位 فأرست فارس} \]

and the poem that starts:

\[\text{نا رتب لا تستقبل سلالة مقابلة} \]

Almost all the hijā' poetry quoted or written by him consists either of very short poems or of single lines. He agreed with most of the poets whom we have mentioned, in admiring brevity in hijā'. It would seem that the obscene and apparently savage abuse dispensed in hijā' poetry was not always resented, and indeed was sometimes actually relished, by the victims; some poets, in fact, asked others to satirise them. Abu al-Shamaqqa paid an aраби to do so, and the latter extemporised an obscene poem starting:

\[\text{ورأى سوءة الباباء لاحب الملوحظ} \]

Salm al-Khâsîr asked Abu Muhammad al-Yazîdî to satirise him in a poem with the same rhyme as Imrû' al-Qays' poem starting:

\[\text{ربن نام من بن المعل} \]
\[\text{فخيل كالغيب من ستره} \]

Al-Yazîdî extemporised an obscene poem in which he accused Salm of sodomy.

The poem opens:

\[\text{نلب مطموع بعافية} \]
\[\text{عمال النعاء من آشره} \]

The connection of hijā', as it had developed, or degenerated, in the hands of the muhdathûn, with poetry of muţţûn and hamâqa, both genres of fairly recent growth, is obvious; sometimes, indeed, it is difficult to distinguish between them.

**Muţţûn poetry**

Ibn al-Muţţazz seems to have been the first critic of importance to
recognise poetry of mujūn, and he quoted it extensively in his selections from the muhdathūn. Critics before him, al-Mubarrad, Ibn Qutayba and others, were more interested in the moral side of poetry, as represented by lines of hikma, mithal, wasiyya, zuhd, and malā'īj. Poets like Imru' al-Qays and 'Adī b. Zayd were criticised, as we have seen, for "confessing to adultery" and "creeping to the prohibited wives of men". "Poets used to hide such deeds", critics said, "and not reveal them in their poetry". At the time of Ibn al-Mu'tazz there were still some critics who desired a moralistic tone in poetry, such as Muhammad b. al-Qasim al-Anbarī, who wrote a letter to Ibn al-Mu'tazz objecting to the citation of mujūn poetry by Abū Nuwās. He said that this poetry should not be cited, recorded in books, or transmitted to the next generation. In his reply, Ibn al-Mu'tazz stated that poetry was not based on sincerity or decency, and if it was, then the best poets would be Umayya b. Abī al-Salt and 'Adī b. Zayd because in their poems there was more exhortation than in those of Imru' al-Qays and al-Nābigha. He added that from early times people had recited the poems of the great poets, Imru' al-Qays, al-Abshā, al-Parazdaq, 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a, Bashshār and Abū Nuwās, in spite of their immorality; they also recited openly the hijā' poems of Jarīr and al-Parazdaq against one another, even recite in the mosques. Such poems and others similar to them were recited by pious 'ulama'; and indeed, there was no-one among the salaf who prohibited the recitation of obscene and shameful poetry. This last claim may not have been entirely accurate, because, as we have seen in earlier chapters, the early critics like 'Umar b. al-Khattāb, Mu'tawiya and 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, besides the critics of the old school, all encouraged a moral tendency in poetry. We have also singled out some of the Prophet's ahādīth concerning good poetry. Ibn Sallām and Ibn Qutayba, although in general they followed these critics, were really the first to quote obscene lines by Imru' al-Qays, Suhaym 'Abd Banī al-Hashās and Dābi' b. al-Harīth al-Burjumī. Al-Mubarrad, as we have seen, advocated the use of
מרחפת, in order to avoid obscene words (lafz fāhiš). The attitude of Ibn al-Mu'tazz to ma'ṣūma and obscenity in poetry seems to have influenced other critics like al-Ṣālīh, Quṣūma b. Jaḥṣar and al-Qāḍī al-Dirr al-Jurjānī. Quṣūma believed that a poet had the right to employ any ma'ṣūma, regardless of its obscenity; what was required from him was simply that he should attain the highest point of poetic excellence. He therefore criticised those who rejected the following lines by Imru' al-Qays on the grounds that the ma'ṣūma was obscene:

\[
\text{ماكعنا عيناً نرى نراق ذهب }
\]

According to him, obscenity of ma'ṣūma did not prevent poetry being excellent, because a poetic ma'ṣūma was material for the poet just as wood was material for the carpenter. If a piece of wood was of bad quality, it did not necessarily follow that the carpenter was not a skilled one. Abī al-'Azīz al-Jurjānī stated that if a poet was not religious, this should not be regarded as a defect in his poetry or as an obstacle to his being excellent from a poetic point of view. If it was so regarded, then the name of Abū Nuwās, and especially the names of the Jahili poets should be stricken from the list of poets. Al-Jurjānī believed that this was not the case, because religion and poetry were quite separate from one another.

According to Abū Nuwās, the first poet who openly talked of mujūn was al-Kharīkī. Previously poets had concealed such matters, but when Abū Nuwās became associated with al-Kharīkī he proclaimed his mujūn, and so did those who followed their way. The subjects discussed in mujūn poetry are detailed in a famous rājaż poem by al-Fadl b. Abī al-Sā'īd al-Raqīshi, of which this is the opening line:

\[
\text{أوّل الرقاشي إلى ذلالكَ وصيةُ المومَر إلى إخوانيَّه}
\]
In this poem he advocated sodomy, wine drinking, gambling, cock-fighting and dog-fighting. One of the famous poets of *mujun* was Wālība b. al-Hubab who also influenced Abū Nuwās, to the extent that "the foolish commons (al-‘āmma al-hamāriyya)", as Ibn al-Mu'tazz described them, attributed every *mujun* poem, by Wālība or any other poet, to Abū Nuwās. Three poems by Wālība on the subject of *mujun* were quoted, all of which talk about wine drinking and sodomy. Other poets of *mujun* such as al-Musayn b. al-Dāhkhāl al-Khalīf, Jahshawīhi and Abū Nifāma are quoted for their poems on sodomy.

*Mujun* poetry was clearly very popular, as one might expect, and Ibn al-Mu'tazz said that the extensive poetry by Abū Hakīma "elegising his penis (rithā' al-matāt)" was widely recited. Abū Hakīma claimed that he had no equal in this somewhat specialised genre, and poets used to bring him their poems on it for judgement. One such poet was Ahmad b. Abī Tahir who composed a poem beginning:

Ibn al-Mu'tazz quoted some of Abū Hakīma's poems, including the famous one, in which he described his impotence:

"Foolish" and poor poets

Ibn al-Mu'tazz quoted from the poets of these two groups also for the sake of amusement; their common characteristic was that their poems were full of mockery and fun. They made fun of themselves and of their families in order to amuse people and earn money. Some of them dressed and behaved foolishly, even though they were not really foolish. The main reason for their emergence appears to have been poverty, to judge from what Ibn al-Mu'tazz had to say about some of them.
The examples that we shall take are Abū al-'Ibar and Abū al-'Ijl as "foolish" poets and Abū al-Shamaqrāq and Abū Fir'awn al-Sāi as poor poets. The "foolish" poets were also called poets of ṭaṭāza and raqā'a, meaning "stupidity", "folly", or "nonsense". Although Ibn al-Mu'tazz described their poetry as "useless", he quoted a great deal of it. Abū al-'Ibar himself, who was the master of the "foolish" poets, described his own poetry as "cold" and "laughable". Ibn al-Mu'tazz described him as "one who was cultured and a man of letters, but when he realised that foolishness and fun were easily marketable he used them and gave up rationality. He then became a leader in raqā'a".123 "Other poets of foolishness, like Abū al-Sawāq, Abū al-Chu'l, Abū al-Sayyāra and those of their tabāqa made him their chief and adviser".124 He was once asked: "Why is the Tigris wider than the Euphrates, and why is cotton whiter than kam'a (truffles)?" His answer was: "Because the sheep has no beak and because the tail of the peacock is four spans".

"With such ignorant utterances (jahālat) he used to praise Caliphs and satirise kings", said Ibn al-Mu'tazz.135 The following poem provides a good example of his poetic method and demonstrated his approach to amusing people:

In this poem the foolish poet was making publicity for his poetry. He exhibited his irrationality in the first line where he introduced himself as "I am I" and "I am you". In the second line he admitted that his
foolishness had made him rich. The rest of the poem is about his poetry and he calls on people to come and listen to it, so as to be amused. Ibn al-Mu'tazz's account of the other foolish poet, Abū al-'Ijl, tells us that poverty was the main reason for the appearance of these poets. He described him as "one of the most cultured of men of letters and of wise men and one of the best poets and the zurafa'. He knows grammar and gharib very well and he knows the ayyām and the akhbar of people. He has some knowledge of philosophy. Nevertheless he was always in financial difficulties. When he realised this, he assumed the guise of foolishness and in one year he gained a lot of money". Here again we find the kind of dualism that we have found in others. Abū al-‘Ijl himself in one of his poems addressing the Caliph al-Mutawakkil, mentioned that poverty was the cause of his becoming a "foolish" poet. When al-Mutawakkil visited Damascus, Abū al-'Ijl met him, riding on a cane, wearing a khuff on one foot and a shoe on the other. A boy servant, wearing a loose outer garment with sleeves and a tall head-dress, was walking in front of him. When al-Mutawakkil saw this he smiled and called Abū al-'Ijl a madman. The latter recited the following:

Al-Mutawakkil laughed, rewarded the poet very generously, and inscribed in his ring: "hamuada fa-nabulta".137

The best examples of poor poets are Abū al-Shamaqmaq and Abū Fir'awn al-Sāsī, both of whom wrote a good deal of poetry full of mockery of themselves.
and their families. Some of the poets of both these classes, whose function was rather similar to that of the western jester, that is to provide amusement for the wealthy and leisured, were regarded as zurafa'. There are many poets in the Tabaqat of Ibn al-Mufazzz mentioned as being zurafa', such as Bashshār, Abūn b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Abū Dulāma, whose poetry was said to be full of jokes and naṣadīr, ‘Awf b. Muhallim, and Abū Nuwās, about whom Ibn al-Mufazzz wrote: "Although a great man of letters and knowledge, he was khalīf an mājinān wa-fatan shāīrān. However, he was a sweet man and a zarif ... People were charmed by his zarf and sweetness and by his many jokes ... He had good relations with viziers and noble men, with whom he used to sit on friendly terms. From them he learnt zarf and refinement, and he became a model for everyone, khāṣṣa wa-ṣamma, and was very much admired ...". 138

It is difficult to give a definite meaning for zarif because the word zarf itself is a rather vague word. In his book Akhṭār al-ṣirāf wa-al-Mutamājinīn, Abū al-Ṭaraj 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Jawzī (d. 597) gave several definitions of zarf. According to him "zarf may lie in the beauty and grace of the face, in the shapeliness of the stature, in the eloquence of the tongue, in the sweetness of the manner of speaking (mantic), in smelling sweet and in feeling disgust with dirtiness and disapproved deeds; it may also lie in nimbleness, in the power of the mind, and in elegance of joking; it may also lie in generosity and openhandedness, in forgiveness and in other fine qualities (khīṣāl latīfa). It is "as though zarif were derived from zarf, meaning "a container", and the person who is zarif were a container of every fine thing. Anyone who has only some of those qualities can also be called zarif ...". He then quoted other views on zarf and zarif. Al-Ḥasan al-Hasrī said: "If a thief happened to be a zarif he could escape punishment". That meant that he would defend himself with eloquent arguments, Ibn al-Jawzī explained. Ibn al-Afbarī and
al-Asma’ī defined zarf as: "excellence and eloquence of discourse". Al-Kisa’ī said: "a zarf is one who is beautiful of face and tongue". Others said "zarf resides in dress", meaning the selection of beautiful and suitable dress. Others explained zarf as: "the enduring of difficulties". There are further definitions that we need not quote here. 139

In the following two poems by Abū al-Shamaqmaq we find him mockingly describing the miserable condition in which his family lived. The first is an eulogy of al-Mansūr and it starts:

In the madīḥ section he wrote:

The second poem contains the lines:
Abū Fir'awn al-Sāfī, who was one of the mukaddim, described his poverty in many poems full of mockery and jokes. In one he described himself and his family as follows:

In another poem he mocked his house which contained nothing to be stolen but was always locked because the poet did not want people to see its miserable condition:

In a third poem he called himself the "father and mother of poverty". He mocked his children and compared them, with their black faces, to small ants. While he wandered the streets begging, they clung to various parts of his body:

Quotations from ghazal poetry

In his selections from the poetry of ghazal, Ibn al-Mu'tazz quoted only a
few poets, like Rashshūr, Abū al-ʿAtāhiya, al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ahnaf and Rabīʿa al-Raqqī, whom he preferred to all other ghazal poets, quoting a large amount of his poetry. He said of him: "His ghazal poetry excels most of the poems of earlier poets. I have not found anyone who has more tabiʿ and more correct ghazal than Rabīʿa". On another occasion, he compared him with Abū Nuwās and considered him superior in ghazal. He wrote: "Rabīʿa was better than Abū Nuwās in the poetry of ghazal, because that of Abū Nuwās was full of coldness, while that of Rabīʿa was perfect, sweet and easy". The qualities that he appreciated are more or less self-explanatory, apart from "correctness of ghazal", the precise sense of which we can perhaps determine from the quotations of Rabīʿa’s poems. We find there the traditional physical descriptions of women, such as likening them to branches of the ṣaʿr tree, to sandhills (kathīb and naqū), to the sun, and to deer. We also find descriptions of their mouths and their scents, which were likened to those of wine, ginger and cloves. All these descriptions had been used by poets from the earliest times, and although Ibn al-Muʿtazz clearly enjoyed them, since he quoted them frequently, it does not seem that they were his principal consideration in favouring the ghazal of Rabīʿa. What was more important was the quality of ṛīqa which he also found in the ghazal of ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa, Abū al-ʿAtāhiya and al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ahnaf. By ṛīqa he meant the same as the other critics in whose pronouncements we have so often encountered the term before.

The critics who followed Ibn al-Muʿtazz also held similar views, as may be seen from the statements of Qudāma b. Jaʾfar and Ibn Rashīq. The former differentiated between ghazal and nasīb, defining ghazal as the actual loving of women, with the associated activities of pursuit and wooing. Nasīb, on the other hand, was the poetry that mentioned the manners of women, their love affairs with the poet, and his adventures with them.
This meant that nasīb was the expression of ghazal. In spite of this distinction, however, Qudāma’s view of excellent nasīb was similar to that of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz of excellent ghazal, even though the latter did not explain his view, and we can only infer it from his quotations. According to Qudāma, excellent nasīb is that which is full of evidence of great love and suffering on the part of the poet, clearly showing his longing. It should demonstrate submission, obedience and humility, and be free from hardness and dignity. There should be no limitation to the expression of the feelings of love or the demonstration of delicacy and weakness. 145 Ibn Rashīq followed Qudāma in differentiating between nasīb and ghazal. He regarded nasīb, taghazzul and tasbīb as one thing. 146 However, both were concerned with the nasīb or tasbīb with which a poet opened his poem, while Ibn al-Mu‘tazz was talking about ghazal as a separate genre of poetry. This is why he quoted poems which deal only with ghazal, as well as quoting lines of nasīb as part of poems of madīḥ. Because he regarded ghazal as a separate genre, he linked ‘Umar b. Abī Rabī‘a, al-‘Abbās b. al-Ahnaf and Rabī‘a al-Raqqī, who (with some exceptions in the case of the latter) had written poetry only in ghazal and no other genres. He is distinguished from most other critics before and after him by his interest in the poetry of ghazal as a separate poetic genre. Other critics mostly speak of nasīb and/or tasbīb.

In his selections from ghazal poetry, taken mainly from the poetry of Rabī‘a al-Raqqī, we find the traditional physical descriptions of women, as in the following lines:

يا رخاصا يا رخاصا النّّسمة
والنَّسمة الأقرع الأكبر
في تلال في البَيْنَ مي
ثمُّ رَذَفَ في كَنَقَا الرَّطْب
لِبِّ وَاحِشَةٍ جَبَامِئٍ

and:

لَقَدْ أَعَظَّتِ وَأَعَظَّتِ أَرَافَةَ نَبَلُر
وَقَدْ سَمَّيْتُ مَالِ تَجَابِيَنَا
These descriptions recur frequently in al-Raqī's poetry, and are to be found in the quotations from other poets. Al-Yazīdī wrote:

"شَطِبَ الْبَيْنِ قَامَتَهُ وَخَطَّوَ قِيَامٌ ثُمَّ أَصْبَحَتْ مَليَّةً وَحَصِنَتْ بَيْنَ الْأَرْضِ"

Isā b. Zaynāt wrote:

"يَبْتَرُ الْفِینِ فِي عِضَارِيّ نَيْبَةٌ بَالْحَرْقِ مَقْنِرٌ وَقَلْبَيْنِ قَرَنَتْ وَالْأَسْفَالَ الصَّمْرَةَ أَعلاهُ"

Similar descriptions were given by Darast al-Mu'allim:

"وَقَدْ أَسْأَلْتُ يَكْبِيَتْ عَلَى عَشْرِيّ من الْيَرْقِ الْفَقيْلِ"

and Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Salām:

"بَدْرُ يَلْحَ عَلَى عَشْرِيّ يَجْذَبْهُ فُرْقُ وَمُعْرُ رَأْسَهُ إِذَا ما اهْتَرَ رُدْتُنَا"

Exaggeration was used in ghazal, as was the case in other types of poetry quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. One of the poets he quoted was Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, who described the thinness of his beloved's waist as thinner than the breeze or a glance of the eye:

"مِنْ جَلَّ حَبْسِكَ وَذَقَّ كَنَّا دَقَّةَ عَنْ الْأَلْفِ وَالْهَرْمِ"

The beloved is incomparable, as al-Raqī wrote:

"كَلِفتَ مِنْ نَسَيَّةِ وَالْأَسْدُ خَلَقْتُمُ من لَّزَعَ الْحَبْسِ مِن سَلِيْمِ اللَّهِ"

and as Muḥammad b. Yaṣīr wrote:

"عَلَى بَعْضِيّ لِيَ بَرِيّ اللَّهِ خَلَقْتُ فُرْقَةً بِعَيْرِ مَثْلِ"
Muhammad al-Yazidi was prostrated by his love:

Ishaq b. Khalaf had humbled himself and begged for mercy or death:

Humility and acceptance of the injustice were expressed by al-Abbas b. al-Ahnaf:

The ghazal poetry of Rabî'a al-Raqqî, most of which was quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz, is full of the riqa which the latter demanded:

Ibn al-Mu'tazz described the following lines of his as "the most natural poetry and the easiest speech":

His submission, his servility and his longing are all expressed in these lines:
Abū al-Nawāl al-Khiryārī described his suffering from love:

\[
\text{بِأَنْفِيَةِ هَذَا الْجَسَمَ مَعِيَّ،} \\
\text{يُقَدُّ بِِهِلِّيَنَّ بِيْنَ الْبَيْلَِ} \\
\text{لَوْ جَلَّاْلُ اَلْبَيْلُ غَيْسُ الْعَ يَبُوَّانَ.}
\]

Abū al-Asad al-Thālabī spoke of the leanness of his body as a result of his intense love:

\[
\text{روشُ مَطْعُمٍ بَيْنَ اَئِمَاءٍ} \\
\text{مَسْطُورٌ عِنْ جَسَدِ نَابِ} \\
\text{حَتَّى مَا بَلََّ مَسْطُورٍ} \\
\text{مَتَّى الْحَرَاهِٰلَ الْعُوْيِ} \\
\text{مِنْ وَكَيْلٍ ذَانِ سَكَبَاً} \\
\text{مِنْ بَيْنَيْ مَعْبَسَنَ مَ،} \\
\text{أَرْيَتُهُ شَيْءٍ مُهْرَابٍ} \\
\text{أَيْ سُقَمَ وَهُوَ فَاحِحٌ} \\
\text{وَأَيْ ضَرَّٰهُ دِلَّ اَنْتَوَأَ} \\
\text{لَا وَيَلَسُّونَ مَلِكٌ أَدْيِمُ،} \\
\text{لَمْ يَرْأَوا غَيْرَ اَنْتَوَأَ.}
\]

Ismā‘īl b. al-Fattāk also described his leanness, with some exaggeration, and begged his beloved to listen to him and have mercy on him:

\[
\text{
بَشَكِيُّ فَهَا يَلَّنِهِ رَأْمُ إِلَيْكَ أَمَّ اَنْتَ بِعَالِمٍ} \\
\text{مَتَّى يُعَرُّ النَّيْبُ عَنْ جَسَدِهِ قَلِيسَ الْرَّشْعِ قَامَ.
}
\]

The poet Ibn Shāda exaggerated rather more when he likened himself to a line (khatt) in thinness:

\[
\text{بَا أَفْقَرُ النَّاسِ عَلَيْهِ} \\
\text{مَا أَيُّ النَّاسِ بَإِنِّا} \\
\text{قَدْ عَرَأْتُمُ نِعْمَتَا} \\
\text{خَوْفٍ وَرَسِيَ الْحَمِيْنَ} \\
\text{كَلَّا تَنَٰمُ دَفَّيَّينَ خَطُّ.}
\]

In two other lines, very much admired by Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, Ibn Shāda went too far, in describing himself as thinner than a wire:

\[
\text{مَا اَنْذَا يُطَسَّلُ الْعَيْنِ} \\
\text{عَنْ فِرْعَيْنِ أَفْاسٍ عَرَايِ} \\
\text{لَمْ يَحْسَبَ السَّلَمَ عَلَيْهِ} \\
\text{خَفْقَاً لَّا أَمَسَىُ بَعْقَانَ حَبَّاَيِّ.}
\]

All of this displayed various aspects of the rijqa that was considered indispensable for good ghazal. The spirit of 'ulūfī ghazal, which Ibn al-Mu‘tazz appears to have considered acceptable, is to be found in some of al-Raqqī's lines, such as:
Ibn al-Mu'tazz perhaps considered the linking of love and religion (regarding love as a kind of religion for the poet) that was part of the 'udhrī tradition as an indication of the extent of the poet's love and thus as an expression of riqa. This is clearly illustrated by al-Qisāfī, who claimed that his beloved was his dīn and dīnawā:

A similar sentiment was expressed by Abū Hīlāl al-Aḥdab, who wrote, linking his beloved with religion:

Both poets claimed that they continuously mentioned their beloved women as proof of their great love and suffering.

Another much admired expression of riqa was the poet's declaration that he would be content with very little from his beloved. This was regarded as a sign of great sincerity in love. Ibn al-Mu'tazz was among those who liked this conceit. He quoted a number of lines in which poets expressed it. Al-Abbas b. al-Ahnaf, in one of his lines, begged his beloved for a "false promise":

\( \text{ raw text } \)}
Abū Hilāl al-Aḥsāb claimed that he would be content with a promise from his beloved if there is no possibility of union:

Ibn al-Muʿtazz quoted the following lines by Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya as an example of excellent ghazal:

"This poetry", he said, "because it is so delicate, has an effect on the hearts of women like the effect of sweet cold water on a thirsty man". 166

He described the ghazal of Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya as "very soft, similar to the discourse of women and in accord with their natures, as is the poetry of ʿUmar b. ʿAbī Rabīʿa and al-ʿAbbās b. al-ʿĀhnaf". He quoted a further poem by Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya, as having the same admirable characteristics:

"It is said that men of letters agreed that they had never heard a rhyme more suitable in its place than that of Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya (in his last line): fa-sultu kullu". 167 Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī made a similar comment on this line and said that the word kull fitted nowhere in poetry except in that line of Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya. He quoted a line by Ibn Ṭabāṭaba, in which the poet used kull and said that the word was "uneasy" in its place and that it was artificially used:

Ibn al-Muʿtazz did not agree with the strictures of earlier critics on ʿUmar b. ʿAbī Rabīʿa, that he had written nasīb on himself, rather than on
his beloved. He was prepared to accept this somewhat cynical approach on the part of 'Umar, perhaps because it was also evident in the poetry of Rabī‘a al-Raqqī, whom he so much admired. Similarity between 'Umar and al-Raqqī is not confined to this manifestation of arrogance however. We find further similarity in descriptions of the adventures of the poet when he goes at night to meet his beloved, and of his adventures with women at the time of pilgrimage. Ibn al-Mu'tazz was aware of the tendency of al-Raqqī to imitate 'Umar b. Abi Rabī‘a, and he quoted the following lines as an example:

Similarity between 'Umar and al-Raqqī can again be seen in the following lines by the latter, in which he told of his adventure with a woman whom he met during the pilgrimage. The poem contains dialogue similar to that used by 'Umar in his poetry. In it al-Raqqī describes himself as the "allurement of all nations" and the "Satan of his own nation":

\[\text{(Arabic text here)}\]
In the same poem he told of another adventure with a woman. As the woman of 'Umar b. Abi Rabî'a did, she sent a message to him by her maid. She revealed her intense love for him and asked him to visit her. He spoke of his visit to her at night in the same terms in which 'Umar did in many poems. Again, as in many of 'Umar's poems, the woman was the lover who pursued the poet:

In 'Umar's beloved often complained that he was disloyal to her and left her for another; we find the same idea in the ghazal of al-Raqqî. 'Umar wrote in one of his poems:

Al-Raqqî wrote:
Al-Raqiq did not write a great deal of poetry in this vein, but the same idea is apparent in these lines:

```
فلت شعرًا يبرِلُ الرُجل صم من رأس الصياحِ
والغوانى مُرفوِنٌ معناهان باختناصٍ
قد نواضيحَ جمعه بين وليله بارْضي من صَم.
```

Ibn al-Mu'tazz was perhaps somewhat confused concerning the criteria by which he judged ghazal poetry, because, while he clearly admired the riqa to be found in the ghazal of 'Umar, Abu al-Kāthiyya, al-Abbas b. al-Ahnaf and al-Raqiq, at the same time he accepted the less submissive line sometimes taken by 'Umar and al-Raqiq. In addition to this, he contradicted himself in taking riqa as a standard for judging ghazal and also accepting what other critics rejected, namely what they called al-mujārah fi al-mahābbah. In this the poet treated his beloved in accordance with her treatment of him. If she was kind to him he would be kind to her. This meant that the poet put himself on equal terms with his beloved, and, instead of displaying riqa displayed dignity and hardness, as al-Ahwas did:

```
فإن تعلَّمَتْ أصيلٌ فإن تَخْتِيَبُ بغييرٌ بعد وليلٍ لرَأبَالي
```

This approach had a long tradition. We have mentioned that Labid expressed the same view in ghazal when he wrote:

```
فأطمَع بُنَانِهِ من تَمْرَانِ وَنَهَيْهِ وَتَسْرُّ وَأَصِيلٌ خَلَّةً صَرَمُهُ
```

as did al-Nabigha al-Taghlibi:

```
بَنْيَا ِبِلْيَكَ لِلْفَلَقَْيِبَ لَقَّيَّكَ بِنْيَلَ بَيْنَكَ َبَنِيَالا
```

Even Jamil Buthayna sometimes abandoned his riqa:
However, critics, especially Quḍāma, rejected ṣulṭān fī al-mahābba and demanded ṣimma; some indeed, as we have seen, even complained about poets' wishing for bad fortune for their hard-hearted mistresses.

Ibn al-Muʿtazz actually quoted lines by al-Raqī and others in which they threatened their beloveds. Al-Raqī threatened her that if she killed him (through unrequited love) his tribe would take revenge:

وَقَدْ رَجَعَتْ فِي أَحَدَاهَا عَلَى كِباَرِهَا أَنْ تُقَتِّلْنَا بِذَلِكَ الْقُلُوبٍ

and again:

فَانْتَقَلَتْ فَيَنَا وَأَحَدَى بِعَمَّ الْفِيَا مُشَهَّرًا بِفُحُصَّ الْأَلْبَانِ

Abū Hilāl al-Aḥdab was quoted as saying:

با سَادَتِي ضَيْمِي قَاتلِ

Al-ʿAbbas b. al-Ahnaf was hardly submissive:

فَلَسَنَّ يَتَّخِذُونَ لِبَعُوتَاهُ يَهْجُيُ

Bashshār was mildly censorious, but warned others:

حَبْيًا صَافِحًا أُمَّ الْعَالَمَةِ وَأَخِيًا طَرَقَ عِينَهَا الْفَرَاءِ

Al-Qisāfī was minded to kill his beloved:

وَلَوْ قُلْتُمْ لَهُمْ تُنْفِيْنَ جَيْبَهَا لَيَكُنْ خَيْبَتُي فِي المُسَلِّمُ

When we come to Ibn al-Muʿtazz's own poems of ghazal, we find that, as Karam al-Bustānī observed in his introduction to the Diwān, he was strongly influenced by ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa in poetry describing night visits to his
beloved. In the poem that starts:

he described his visit to her as follows:

In another poem he wrote:

in a third one:

and in a fourth:

He described women in the same conventional terms that are found in the ghazal of al-Raqqī and other poets whom he quoted. He compared his beloved with a branch of the Ban tree and with a sandhill:

and:

He observed the convention of "being content with little" from his beloved, and that of showing complete submission to her:

and:
In most of his ghazal poetry he took this recommended approach, eschewing al-rajarah fi al-mashaab, which was supposed to indicate a less than total commitment to the beloved. Nevertheless, although he normally followed the correct path and proclaimed his submission, on one occasion, at any rate, he permitted himself a flicker of revolt, by almost threatening his beloved:

Further similarity between him, Umar b. Abi Rab' al-Raqqi is to be found in the following poem, in which he used dialogue, and represented the woman as the lover and himself as the beloved:

and:

and:

and:
Conclusion

The most striking feature of the criticism to which Arabic poetry was subjected from all quarters throughout the period under discussion is, of course, its concentration on single lines, or short passages, at the expense of complete poems, or even sections of poems, to say nothing of the whole ديوان of a poet. It is true that some people, e.g. al-Jahiz, made more generous gestures than others in the direction of a more comprehensive appreciation of poets' works, but in most cases this is little more than lip-service to the concept of ديوان, which, like so many terms employed by the critics and practitioners of poetry at this time, had a somewhat imprecise significance. Not infrequently, too, complete poems appear to have been cited for a purpose other than strictly critical: either in order to assemble a ديوان, often a tribal or a regional one, or in order to present poems that were unfamiliar and not easily available elsewhere. This may itself suggest one reason for the tendency of critics to cite single lines, or short extracts. Clearly, the very nature of Arabic poetry, with its largely end-stopped and independent lines would facilitate this practice, given that the line was the unit of interest, but also, in an age when quotation was preponderantly from memory - owing to the difficulty of looking up and citing references when the pagination of different copies of the same work was inconsistent -, if a poem was at all familiar, there would be little need to cite more than one or two lines in order to bring to the mind of the reader or listener associated lines from the same passage, if not the whole poem. It is not impossible, then, that in some cases the citation of a single line, or two or three, particularly when this is unspecifically commendatory or deprecatory, may be a short-hand method of referring to a rather longer passage, and that the praise or dispraise may not be confined to the one or two lines actually cited. While this does not necessarily help us to understand for
what qualifies the passage is being praised or dispraised, it does some-
what diminishes the bafflement that we sometimes experience when confronted
with fulsome, but undefined, praise for one line. The fact remains, how-
ever, that on a large number of occasions criticism is directed only at
the more limited target, and it is clear that no wider context is involved.

The habit of making apparently extravagant judgements on the ability of a
poet on the basis of one line is also prevalent. We are frequently told
of someone's declaring a particular poet, often a rather unlikely
candidate, to be the best poet of all, on account of a particular line of
his, and sometimes, by implication, on account of a particular image or
figure - even a particular usage - within that line. It is perhaps
significant that such judgements are always given at second hand, that is
to say that they are always reported, never made by the author of a work.
It seems probable that they were not, in most cases, intended to be taken
too seriously; they were perhaps of the same kind as the hyperbole in
madīh-poetry, and the underlying conventions were perfectly well understood.
Sometimes they may represent a momentary enthusiasm, a temporary
concentration on the work of one poet to the exclusion of all others;
sometimes they may be the expression of politeness towards a poet who is
present or, in the case of a dead or absent poet, whose tribe or supporters
the speaker wishes to please. In the majority of instances, however, I
suspect that they are simply a particularly lavish way of saying: "I like
this line (or poem)." This would go some way towards explaining apparent
contradictions or changes of mind concerning these absolute judgements as
to who was the best poet.

Much of the criticism that we have encountered in the course of this study
has been explicitly concerned with superficialities; very little has
touched on the deeper aspects of poetry. The critics' instincts seem to
have been sound, allowing for certain prejudices and differences in personal taste that are inevitable, but they lacked the means to rationalise these instincts. They were thus compelled, in expressing the judgements to which these instincts led them, to fall back on a whole range of comparatively unimportant-seeming details, discussion of which served as a substitute for a more penetrating examination of the poetry. This attitude was no doubt encouraged by the fairly general view of poetry as a craft, in which the technical details were of great importance. The nature and purpose of the product tended to be taken for granted, or perhaps disregarded. There is, generally, in Arabic literature, a tendency for writers to be preoccupied with lists and classifications, often of the most trivial things; sometimes this has a hagiographical purpose, such as with the lists of the first people in Islam to do such and such; sometimes it has an antiquarian or archival purpose; sometimes it has perhaps a lexicographical purpose, but more probably simply that of being somewhat indecorous, such as with al-Jāhiz' catalogue of the names for the excrement of various animals and birds. Connected with this preoccupation are, I think, the increasingly complicated and detailed lists of figures of speech, types of ma'āni, and so on, that appear in works on poetry and ḥallāq. One also has the impression that this excessive concern with the superficial details of poetry, which distracted the critics from examining and explaining what the poets were attempting to do, fed back to some extent to the poets themselves and produced in them too a similar excessive concern. Nowhere do we really find a statement, even in fragmentary form, of the rationale and aesthetics of poetry. There is some development in this direction, with al-Jāhiz, for example, but it is scarcely followed up. It is remarkable how similar the critics and the poets are to one another in the way in which they talk about poetry, even if they differ somewhat in what they say. They also, in the manner that is so familiar to us in
many areas of Arabic literature, follow one another to a very considerable extent, freely borrowing each other's opinions and even each other's citations, without always feeling obliged to acknowledge these borrowings.

When we try to see behind this facade of details, the terms of which at least have the merit of being not too difficult to grasp - allowing for changes of usage, and, particularly in the earlier period, uncertainty as to whether they are being used in a technical sense or not - we find ourselves faced with a considerable degree of vagueness. Terms like *jazāla*, *suhūla*, *sīn*, and even *fāṣāha*, no doubt conveyed more or less precise meanings to those who used them, but it is difficult to tell from the contexts in which they are used just what those meanings were. Critics have an irritating habit of attributing a quality absolutely to a line or passage, without indicating the elements that bestow on it that quality, and without (which would be equally, or even more, helpful) giving examples of the opposite quality. To some extent, no doubt - since we must always bear in mind that poetry was intended to be recited rather than read - effects of sound are involved, such as a preponderance of liquids, gutturals or dentals, and probably subtle dissonances and assonances, such as we have found occasional references to, and it would perhaps be possible, if laborious, to analyse a sufficient number of lines and passages that are credited with particular qualities, in order to arrive at an idea of what they connoted in this respect. This would be made more difficult by inevitable variations in taste between individual critics. It seems likely, however, that these qualities also refer to the use of words from the point of view of 'register', that is to say, the appropriateness or otherwise of certain lexical items to the context in which they are used. There are a number of instances of poets' being criticised for using one word rather than another in a particular place or context, and such examples, if sufficient could be found, might again suggest to us what the criteria for these qualities were. There are, however, two obvious
difficulties: first, it is quite likely that in any given instance the critic is merely displaying an idiosyncratic preference and that others would not necessarily agree with his judgement (although it is possible that here one is underestimating the force of tradition and conformity in linguistic matters among the Arabs of the period); secondly, where the use of a word or phrase is simply criticised, without a preference for an alternative being expressed, we are not sufficiently aware of the options open to the poet to appreciate the basis on which he made his choice or that on which his choice was criticised. In any case, disregarding the further difficulty of differentiating on grounds of 'register' between different words for a particular period, it is likely that the qualities referred to were perceived almost instinctively, as the result of the combination of a number of factors, which the critics themselves would have been hard put to it to analyse. We shall probably never be in a position fully to define these qualities, except in the broadest terms, along the lines indicated.

Another striking feature of classical Arabic criticism is its prescriptive nature, particularly as regards the ma'anî. Critics are extraordinarily dogmatic on the correctness or otherwise of certain ma'anî. There is a certain inconsistency in this, in that a number of critics consider that the lafîz is of paramount importance, and that the embellishment of another poet's ma'na by a novel means of expression is the principal indication of poetic talent. Some, like Ibn al-Mu'tazz, say that poetry is not concerned with honesty or decency, thus implying that 'correctness' of ma'na is unimportant. Others, on the other hand, declare that they prefer a 'correct' ma'na indifferently expressed to an 'incorrect' ma'na expressed in the most brilliant fashion. Prescriptiveness with regard to ma'anî is evident in some critics in all genres of poetry, but nowhere is there such a consensus on the point as in nasîh and ghazal. The riqqa
that has so frequently appeared in this study as being regarded as desirable in these genres appears to be most inflexible, and poets are most frequently criticised for introducing 'incorrect' or 'inappropriate' 

meqānī into their poetry in this genre. No doubt, as has been suggested, traditional etiquette has something to do with this, but I suspect that a more important factor is the conventional response, either verbal or mental, to a given situation that has always played such an important role in Arab society. Failure to observe these conventions amounts to a breach of good taste, and this is what provokes the outraged reaction that we so frequently observe. In fact, the indignation showered on such breaches of taste appears often to indicate a literal-mindedness on the part of the critic, since it is fairly clear that, for instance, threats that vengeance will be taken for the poet killed by love, or a cavalier dismissal of the unkind beloved, are essentially light-hearted conceits introduced to vary the abject servility and solemn protestations of the conventional love-poem. It would seem, however, that critics did not, in general, appreciate the intrusion of humour into a basically serious genre. Humour was not objectional in itself, but its place was in 

hiṣab', to some extent, and in the types of poetry specifically designated as 

haṣl. It was sometimes considered praiseworthy to be able to compose poetry in both a serious and a jocular vein (jidd wa-haṣl), but the two apparently had to be kept separate. It is perhaps surprising that Imru' al-Ḳays continued to command almost universal approbation, seeing that much of his poetry, including his Mu'allaga, incorporates substantial elements of cynical humour, particularly in the amatory passages. In this, however, as in so much else, Imru' al-Ḳays was perhaps a law to himself; alternatively, the critics may not have appreciated that he was so often composing in a playful mood, for they contented themselves with deploring his immorality. We find the same literal-mindedness in connection with the figures of tatmil and ihtirās, although it is not clear whether this is to be attributed to the poets
themselves or to those who identified and classified the figures. Wishing that rain may fall on a place, provided that it does no harm, may also be an indication of an ironic sense of humour.

Another sphere in which prescriptiveness in the matter of mašāni is particularly evident, although this appears comparatively late in the development of the genre, is madīḥ. The critics lay down firm rules as to the kinds of eulogy that may be appropriately lavished on madīḥūn of different ranks, and they criticise deviations from these rules. Even Ibn al-Mu'tazz, who is not greatly concerned, on the whole, with the 'correctness' or otherwise of mašāni, joins in here. In this genre, although it may be possible to see such prescriptiveness as an attempt by self-appointed arbiters to regulate the canons of poetry, the situation is probably more complex. It is obvious from remarks by various madīḥūn that they themselves took a keen interest in the eulogies that were composed on them and were swift to complain about any inadequacies of the level and manner of flattery. Al-M'amūn's complaint about the use of the word mushtaghil to describe him (mashghul seems to be acceptable) indicates a fairly subtle awareness of the use of false 'register'. A number of these comments depict the madīḥūn as demanding the use of certain mašāni in madīḥ composed on them. The Abbasid caliphs' requiring to be praised for their religious and secular merits, for example, presumably indicates their appreciation of the value of such madīḥ as political propaganda. Ibn al-Mu'tazz was concerned to publicise the legitimacy of the Abbasid claim to the caliphate; this, once would imagine, lay behind his inconsistent interest in 'correct' mašāni in this genre. It is only to be expected that, while demanding the most fulsome, but not ridiculously extravagant, acknowledgement of their own merits, the caliphs should attempt to restrict the level of flattery lavished on their subordinates, in an understandable desire to prevent a debasement of the currency, and
that these subordinates should, in their turn, do the same. Thus it may be that the canons laid down by the critics merely reflect the actual situation that they found, which had been regulated either by the maddhun themselves or by the poets in intelligent anticipation of requirements.

The position of maddh as by far the most important genre of poetry - no poet could seriously be considered such if he did not engage in it, or even if he lived so remote from a centre of power that his maddh-poems could not command wide circulation - presumably reflects both the economic status of the poet and the use of poetry just mentioned as the principal medium of political, and other, propaganda. Maddh first emerges as a dominant theme when, with the loosening of the bonds of purely tribal society, the poet ceases to be maintained by his tribe as their propagandist, and ceases also to be able to wander freely in the desert, accepting the hospitality of other tribes, in return, perhaps, for the diversion of his poetry, and becomes dependent on patrons for his livelihood. That the 'correct' maddh for maddh should have quickly become established and should have remained more or less constant, with refinements on the lines indicated above, is not particularly surprising; there are, after all, a limited number of virtues for which a man can be praised, and the continuity maintained by linking these with the ancient Arab virtues was of obvious advantage to caliphs and governors who were anxious to emphasise the antiquity and legitimacy of their dynasties. It is more surprising that the conventional introduction to the maddh, the atlāl, nasīḥ and rahīḥ, and their variants, should also have persisted. We are still far from understanding the objects of the poets of the tribal gasīda: why precisely they should have confined themselves to the immensely stylised representation of certain narrowly circumscribed aspects of Bedouin life, couched in terms that might almost be called
cliches at the third or fourth repetition, let alone the hundredth. Many of the themes of early poetry are straightforward: battle poetry, takhr, personal or tribal, regrets for one's lost youth, rithā' - all these have a perfectly clear object. What may be called the gasīda proper, however, which is a combination of a number of different themes, ātlāl, nasīh, ṭabīl, wasf, hunting scenes, the watching of a far-off storm, appears to have no particular object in itself, even though one can see that the individual sections fall into certain recognisable and poetically effective genres. The Mu'allaqa of Imru' al-ʿays is the classic example of this kind of gasīda, but there are many more. It is possible to suggest that the earliest such poems were exercises in nostalgia and that the sequence of motifs represented a loose train of thought within this basic theme but why so few variations were attempted on this remains a mystery. Just as much of a mystery is why certain elements, and these principally those that traditionally served as an introduction to the tribal ode, should have been so conscientiously retained when the main object of the poem became the eulogy of the patron. Ibn Qutayba's celebrated rationalisation, which appears to refer to this later development, will scarcely serve; it is surely a further example of the literal-mindedness with which critics accepted poetic themes at their face-value. It is difficult not to feel that the persistence of such motifs reflects the excessive veneration that the Arabs have always shown for something once successfully done - a kind of instant manufacturing of an invariable tradition, coupled perhaps with the desire to demonstrate the continuity with their past of a present that was rapidly altering out of all recognition. This, however, scarcely explains why these particular motifs should have been singled out for perpetuation, and indeed it amounts rather to a statement of the nature of the phenomenon than of the reason for it.

It is noticeable that many of the lines cited by the critics and anthologists - the distinction is often a small, if not negligible, one - are of
a gnomic or aphoristic nature; indeed they are frequently referred to as nahdûl, although the generic term hikma is perhaps more appropriate. Encapsulation of a point in a line of poetry has always been popular, particularly with those whose appreciation of poetry is limited. Structuralism has been described as the literary criticism of those who hate literature; the aphorism, epigram or gnome might perhaps be characterised as the verse of those who distrust, or are embarrassed by, poetry. Some early works of criticism rely so heavily for their citations on such lines that they almost give the impression of having been designed more as dictionaries of quotations than analyses of poetry. They may be taken as representing popular educated taste, and, no doubt, as being sources for further quotation for the would-be adîb. The apt quotation has again always been a feature of Arabic rhetoric, and the ability to produce one was indispensable for those aspiring to consideration in learned circles.

That a moralistic or admonitory tone in poetry was approved of in early Islam by men such as 'Umar b. al-Khattâb is also hardly surprising. This amounted to hikma in a religious setting. Although such sentiments continued to be appreciated, however, critical opinion was by no means unanimous on the merits of religious themes in poetry. The Islamic poetry of Hassân b. Thâbit was generally approved of, and Abû 'Ubayda, principally for pious reasons, it would seem, gave him the highest rank among Islamic poets. (He also, however, elsewhere classed Kuthayyir as the best poet of Islam, so such a ranking is hardly definitive). Al-'Asmafi, on the other hand, enunciated a theory of khayr and sharr, maintaining that sharr, by which he seems to have meant worldly matters, was the proper concern of poetry, and that khayr, meaning such topics as the hereafter and the rewards and punishments associated therewith, made for poor poetry. He specifically said that the Islamic poetry of Hassân b. Thâbit, whose Jahili poetry he admired, became layvin, perhaps meaning that the robust qualities of poetry
concerned with pagan life could not be transferred to poetry concerned with matters of vital, but less immediate and palpable, importance. Perhaps Abū Nuwās' mocking, and blasphemous, use of religious themes is a reflection of this view. The considerable popularity enjoyed by the ascetic poetry (zuhdiyyat) of poets like Abū al-Šāhīya should not necessarily be taken as contradicting this kind of feeling, which was shared by many critics; this poetry, while incorporating a good deal of moralising and exhortation, is far more concerned with the transitory nature of man and this world than with the life to come, and is, in a sense, an off-shoot of the nostalgic poetry of the atlāl. The "ubi sunt?" theme has a perennial appeal. The only kind of specifically religious poetry of the earlier period to command almost universal acclaim was that of the Khāwārij. This is much concerned with the next life and rewards and punishments, but it was probably admired more for its other characteristics. It has a great deal in common with Jahilī poetry in the motifs that it employs, particularly with regard to battle-scenes, which are comparable with those of 'Antara and similar poets, but also with regard to wasf. It is also a kind of tribal poetry, except that the focus of loyalty has shifted from the tribe proper to the sect (one might almost say the umma), and we find in it the fakhr and esprit de corps that we associate with this. We also find a motif of longing, in this case longing for martyrdom in battle, or at least longing to join with the rest of the Khāwārij in fighting the infidel caliphs; a good deal of it is also concerned with rītha' for fallen relatives or comrades. Its language, however, is much simpler than that of the Jahilī poems, although there are frequent reminiscences of this; and, on the whole, it is stark and unadorned. I suspect that this poetry, if any did exemplify for critics the quality of jazāla; certainly very many of them, and probably many of the educated public at large, appreciated it, even those who, as far as we know, utterly rejected the politics, and the uncompromising religious fervour, of the Khāwārij. It is an interesting example of
poetry that was appreciated for its own sake, regardless of the ideas that inspired it. The poetry written in praise of the Talibids also attracted a similar admiration from those who were their political and religious adversaries.

The whole controversy concerning the respective merits of the muhdathūn and their predecessors is a complex and somewhat confused one. No poet or critic appears to have been exclusively on one side or the other; those who were most firmly entrenched in their championship of the ancients did, occasionally, admit that there was something to be said for some of the muhdathūn, and those who favoured the latter nevertheless constantly harked back to ancient poetry in their judgements, comparing, for example, Bashshār with Ḥaṭmūn, al-Qays and Abū Nuwās with al-Nābigha al-Dhuhaylī. This reference to the ancients as standards by which to judge any poetry was more or less involuntary; even those who proclaimed their independence in the matter were bound to do so, given the overwhelmingly important part that the ancient poetry had played in literature, and indeed life in general, up to this period. The dispute seems to have arisen largely as a result of the muhdathūn's irritation with the carping of the philologists concerning their usages and grammar, even if not all of them were uncompromisingly hostile to the new style of poetry. The question of ḏāʾī is also bound up with this controversy and is, if anything, more difficult to resolve, not so much from the point of view of which poets were considered to use ḏāʾī extravagantly, as from the rather more fundamental point of view of what ḏāʾī actually was and how it arose. As so often in questions concerning Arabic poetry, we find ourselves in the tiresome situation of not really knowing what it is that we are investigating. ḏāʾī is always explained as a system of tropes and figures of speech that became progressively more elaborate and more painstakingly codified, and clearly this tangible system played a large part in it; there is also, however, a more abstract element present, which receives
little or no attention, largely because neither its practitioners nor its critics were altogether aware of its presence, and thus concentrated on the symptoms to the neglect of the condition itself. S.P. Stetkevych has recently suggested that hadīth was in some way connected with Mu'tazilism, and this suggestion has some plausibility. It seems almost indisputable that underlying the verbal and figurative manifestations there was an attitude of mind, and approach to the art, or craft, of poetry that distinguished its adherents, to a greater or less degree, from their predecessors, and from their contemporaries who did not subscribe to it. The actual system of tropes and figures would scarcely have been sufficient by itself to provoke such a furor; when hadīth is discussed by the critics, one always has the feeling that one is in some way missing the point, and this is almost certainly because the critics were subconsciously aware that something lay behind it. This 'something' may well be an attitude of mind associated with Mu'tazilism, but this connection may be too restrictive; it is just as likely that it was an attitude induced by the general expansion of mental horizons that was the result of contact with the conquered peoples of the Arab empire. It is outside the scope of this study to pursue this question very far, but it would be surprising if the foreign stimuli that had such a profound effect on other aspects of Arab intellectual activity had not also to some extent affected poetry, especially since a large number of poets were of foreign birth or parentage. The kind of effect that these stimuli are likely to have had is the instilling of a more sophisticated attitude to literature, which, with the exposure of the Arabs to a considerable expanse of the Near and Middle East, and with the recruitment to the ranks of the literary those with experience of other literatures, was no longer confined to the narrow, if admirable, range of the Qur'an, the hadīth and early Arabic poetry; at the same time they would almost certainly have instilled an increased awareness of the possibilities of the manipulation of
language. Non-native speakers, or those who had some knowledge of another language, might well have been more conscious than the Arabs themselves, proud as they were of their linguistic heritage, of the way in which Arabic, as a formally patterned language, lent itself to play on words and roots. They would have availed themselves of such opportunities to compensate for this lack of acquaintance with the full resources of the vocabulary that their predecessors had used to embellish their poetry, a vocabulary that was, in any case, becoming unfamiliar to many native Arabs themselves. Of course, the poetry of the ancients was not devoid of these rhetorical devices; Ibn al-Mu'tazz pointed out that badi' was to be found in it, and the remarks of a number of early poets and critics indicate some awareness of various figures. It is unlikely, however, that they employed them as anything except occasional felicities; it is the consciousness with which the muḥāthūn manipulate them that distinguishes their style. They themselves were inclined to credit Bashšār with the initiation of badi'; this may or may not be justified, but it must have been at about that time that the conscious, or even self-conscious, exploitation of Arabic began. It is not difficult to see why this should have provoked such an outcry. In the first place, many would have regarded the practice of badi' as a prostitution of the language, not to say the art, of the revered earlier poets; the muḥāthūn would have been accused of not taking these things seriously. In the second place, the attitude behind this irresponsibility, associated as it was with Greek falsafa, Persian zandagā, and who knows what other foreign and infidel undesirabilities, would have alienated orthodox Muslims. The muḥāthūn, for their part, would have had little patience with the obscurantism and anti-intellectualism of these, particularly when they purported to be judging their work from a literary standpoint. It is obvious that, in some cases, it was at the actual figures of badi', or rather at the excessive use of these, that criticism was levelled, as in the case of
Abū Zayd, who clearly sometimes forces his poetry into the framework of ḫalīf to the detriment of his imagery and indeed his intelligibility. Abū Nuwas, on the other hand, is frequently referred to as being a great exponent of ḫalīf, but in fact his poetry appears to be reasonably free from the devices that we normally associate with the term. In his case, it seems probable that it was his attitude, questioning, mocking and joking, in which foreign influences can be plainly seen, that earned him this reputation.

The question of plagiarism occurs frequently. In view of the very large number of lines, half-lines and phrases that are common to the poetry of various poets, particularly in earlier times, one might expect many accusations of direct verbal plagiarism, and it is true that, for instance, Tarafa was accused of plagiarising a line from Imru' al-Qays' Mu'allafa for his own. This, however, would have been such a shameless and obvious theft, that it is scarcely conceivable, whatever the anecdotal literature may say, that it could have been anything but a quotation, intended as a compliment to Imru' al-Qays rather than as an act of larceny against him. Strangely enough, however, critics are generally, it would seem, far more concerned with the borrowing of maṣūna than with that of lines, and it is often difficult to see why the use of a maṣūna, which sometimes does not appear to be very close to the supposed original, should occasion this kind of accusation. It must, in any case, have been almost impossible to produce an entirely original maṣūna on any, let alone every, occasion, and it is quite clear that poets did not, on the whole, even attempt to do so. The critical attitude appears to have been that a maṣūna might be borrowed only for purposes of improvement; failure to achieve this was construed as straight plagiarism. However, there are so many maṣūna, as well as lines and phrases, that are common to a number of poets, that it is hard to resist the suspicion that most critics were simply striking out at
random against poets whom they happened, for some other reason, to dislike or to disapprove of, and that they were perfectly prepared to disregard similar, or more blatant, borrowings when it suited them. The accusations of plagiarism, which do not in fact appear to have been taken very seriously, do at all events emphasise the importance accorded to the *ma'nā* as opposed to the *lafz*.

In early times, *hijā'i* occupied a position second only to that of *madḫūn* in the repertoire of the seriously considered poet, and critics discussed it at some length. It was generally agreed that it should be both sincere and decent in order to be counted as a creditable part of a major poet's production, and there was a further consensus on the superiority of *hijā'i* *bi-al-tafḍīl*, as being the most effective and satisfactory variety. Humour, as in *hijā'i* *musḫūṭ*, was not considered out of place, but the mocking of physical ugliness or disability was regarded as tasteless. *Hijā'i*, in fact, was clearly an important weapon in the armoury of the tribal poet, and was taken very seriously as a poetic genre. It probably reached its peak, in notoriety, if not in quality, with Jarīr and al-Farazdaq; after this period it appears to have degenerated, both in nature and in status, to the extent that Ibn al-Yuttazz classes it with *hazl*. The reasons for this are not made clear, but it is not difficult to see why it should have happened. In the first place, there seems to have been a distinct tendency in many of the early Abbasid poets to indulge in obscenity and scurrility for its own sake; this appears in the rise of the new genres of *mujūn* and *khāla'qa* and inevitably had its effect on the *hijā'i* of the period. At the same time, the increased authority and dignity of the caliphate, and the greater remoteness of the caliphs and their officials from the people, must have meant that *hijā'i* could no longer with relative impunity be composed on men with any pretensions to high office; it declined into abuse of unimportant personal enemies, and indeed
sometimes simply became a type of self-mocking that the indigent used to divert wealthy patrons, after the fashion of European jesters.

One of the most prized characteristics in a poet, from the earliest times, was \( \text{tab} \); this implies both naturalness of language and imagery and what we now somewhat uninformatively style "talent". \( \text{Tab} \) is almost as unspecific a term as "talent", and its connotations can best be grasped from its opposite, \( \text{takalluf} \). Again, it would be helpful if the critics gave firmly contrasting instances of poems in which these two characteristics were apparent, and indicated precisely how they were to be discerned; as so often, we are hindered by our lack of knowledge of the options open to the poet in the process of composition, and our inability to see what he might have achieved had he possessed the opposite characteristic to that with which he is credited. \( \text{Takalluf} \), at any rate, it would seem, generally involved considerable reworking of the original draft of a poem, but it is also implied that it was the loss of spontaneity involved in this process that was the object of disapproval. There is some inconsistency in the fact that, while deploring \( \text{takalluf} \), many critics considered one of the signs of excellence in poetry to be an evenness of style that could only be achieved by means of \( \text{takalluf} \). Al-Asma\(^{\text{I}}\) was almost alone in preferring a variable quality of style; in this he was faithful to his professed admiration for \( \text{tab} \).

These, it seems to me, are the principal points that emerge from this examination of the remarks made, in various circumstances, by the poets and critics of the classical period of Arabic concerning the subject with which they were more or less intimately involved. There is not a great deal of individuality to be found in these remarks; there are differences of opinion and of emphasis between different writers, and some of them have to consider phenomena that have not had to be considered before, but,
in the main, there is a large degree of dependence on those who have gone before, particularly in the way that the subject is approached. Arabic criticism is, in many respects, as conventional as the poetry with which it deals. In spite of this homogeneity of tone, however, and in spite of the fact that the critics were tolerably vocal on the subject, it is disappointingly difficult to derive any very great benefit from what they said. The problem is that we have really so little understanding of their terms of reference, and they scarcely ever felt called upon to explain these. Every so often one feels that a true insight may in fact be attainable, but the prospect always recedes again. It may be possible to extract more solid data from a really detailed examination of lines quoted as instances of particular virtues or faults, but I suspect that much of what we are eventually able to say about the classical criteria for good and bad poetry will always remain speculative.
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