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The Poetry of Ibn al-Rûmî

by

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A thesis submitted for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
to the University of Glasgow.

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The Poetry of Ibn al-Rûmî
For my Mother Faţimah,

My wife Hamīdah

And my sons:

Abdulmuttalib, Muhammad, Abdullah.
Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Professor John N. Mattock who has given me throughout my years of research friendly guidance and unfailing encouragement. He carefully read my material and made many suggestions.

I am also grateful to Dr. James E. Montgomery for his thorough reading of my work and for his insights and strict criticisms.
ABSTRACT

Early Arab writers have little to say about Ibn al-Rūmī and his poetry. His life and his poetry are, indeed, different from early Arabic poets and poetry in general. Those who have written on Ibn al-Rūmī have covered neither the whole of his life nor the whole of his works. There are, consequently, in my opinion, many aspects of his life and poetry which need to be studied.

I have approached Ibn al-Rūmī's life through his poetry and have used this as my primary source, attempting to see the relevance of his poetry to his life and hopefully, the relevance of his life to his poetry.

I have not devoted a separate chapter to the period during which Ibn al-Rūmī lived and wrote; I have attempted to study this period through Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry and life.

This thesis consists of an Abstract, a short introductory notice, three chapters and a brief summation. My main concern has been to
translate the poetry into English and to assist it to speak in its own voice, adding notes and comments only when strictly necessary.

In the first chapter (one) Ibn al-Rūmī’s ancestry, education and emotionally fraught life are studied, as well as his relationship with Caliphs and princes, his intellectual and physical malaise, his effeminacy and the milieu in which he lived.

In chapter two; I study Istiqā’ before Ibn al-Rūmī and his poetry, Tashkhis, his quotations from al-Qur’ān and from the Jahli and ‘Abbāsid poetry. His relationship with the other poets of his period and the role played by the realm of the senses in his Dīwān,

Chapter three is a study of the genres: panegyrics, lampoons, elegies and love poetry.

The work ends with a short summary of the principal findings of this study of Ibn al-Rūmī through his poetry.
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INTRODUCTORY NOTICE

1. Ibn al-Rūmī’s full name was ‘Ali Ibn al-‘Abbās Ibn Jūrayj. His father died when he was still a child and so he was unable to dedicate a lament to him as he did to most of the other members of his family when they died in the course of his life.

2. His education began at the Qur’ān school whence he progressed to the Mosques where the ‘ulama’ would deliver their lectures. He next studied at the Dār al-Hikma, then the largest library in existence.

3. His poetic career began at an early age.

4. He seems not to have got on well with the other poets of his age or with many of his patrons whom he was quick to attack when their largesse came to a halt.

5. Most of his life was spent in Baghdād.

6. He was a member of the Shi’at ‘Ali and was also influenced by the Mu’tazilah, an influence which he was reluctant to acknowledge.

7. Ibn al-Rūmī seems never to have been blessed with material wealth and financial well-being.

8. His Dīwān is a veritable social register of his times. Many personalities, some known, some not, turn up in his poems.

9. His poetry is a mirror of his life and period. His Dīwān contains many poems written in response to historical events: the attack of the Zanj on al-Basrah, the Yaḥyā Ibn ‘Umar against al-Musta‘īn.
10. Most of his lampoons are obscene, contrasting with the works of those poets who found an outlet for obscenity in their Ghazal poems.

11. Istiqsā' and Tashkhīs are two rhetorical figures which feature prominently in his poetry.

12. His work also contains quotations from the Qur'ān, from Jāhili verse and even from other 'Abbasid poems.
CHAPTER ONE
His Life

The early Arab biographers and writers on literary history have little to say about Ibn al-Rūmī compared with such poets as al-Buḥṭuri and Abū Tammām who enjoyed a similar reputation in poetry. He is a poet who reflects the life of Baghdad in his poetry, which he addressed to Amirs and Wazirs, but never - for reasons that will be discussed later - to the Caliph.

His full name was 'Ali Ibn al-'Abbās Ibn Juraj (sometimes Jurjis or Jurjis), and he was a mawla of 'Ubayd Allāh Ibn Ja'far al-Manṣūr.¹

Those writers who mention Ibn al-Rūmī agree that he was born in 221/835 in Baghdad.² He was not of Arab descent, as his name implies and it may be said that this is apparent in his poetry also.

He himself speaks of his ancestry:

البسيط

لاسيتي الروم توفيل و توفيل ولم يكن ربعي ولا شيخ

15 " My ancestors were Rūm, Tūfil and Tūfilus; Rabi

---

¹ Abū al- 'Abbās Ibn Khalīkān, Wafāyāt al-A'yān, Cairo, n.d., 3, 44
² Abū al-'Abbās Ibn Khalīkān, Wafāyāt al-A'yān, 3, 44
³ 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwan, Beirut, 1991, 1, 471
did not beget me nor did Shabath 

He also speaks of his mother's origins:

13. "How can I submit tamely to disgrace seeing that the Persians are my maternal uncles and the Rüm my parental uncles "

In these two lines he makes clear his descent on both sides. It was for this reason that he was known as Ibn al-Rūmī. Most writers accept this, with one or two claiming that he was given this name because of his good looks when a youth. al-'Aqqād rejects this notion, saying that it is an absurdity, derived simply from these writers' failure to read the whole of Ibn al-Rūmī's Diwan and the works of the early writers who mention him.

**His Education**

Perhaps because of his father's ambitions for him to attain office, he was sent to Qur'an School.

---

1. Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rūmī, London, 1944, 72
2. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwan. 6, 113
3. Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rūmī, 72
4. 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al- Rūmī, Beirut, 1983, 72
He quickly learnt to read and write and to memorise the Qur'an, but his father died without seeing his ambitions realised, which in fact, they never were. Ibn al-Rūmī never managed to rise above the level at which he eulogized Amirs and Wazirs for their patronage, and, at times, he was reduced to writing similar praise of members of the professional classes, asking for a loaf of bread, a sack of flour or something similar.

Ibn al-Rūmī’s education progressed from the Qur’an School, in the usual way, to the Mosque, where he would sit and listen to the teaching of the ‘ulama, either from their own works or from those of others. Among those he heard are:

(1) Abū al-'Abbās Tha'lab;²

(2) Muḥammad Ibn Habīb;³

(3) Qutayba Ibn Sa'id al-Thaqafi⁴

His early education enabled Ibn al-Rūmī to engage later in independent study in Dār al-Ḥikmah, the greatest library of that time. He was influenced by almost all of the fields of learning that he

---

¹ Shawqi Dayf, al-'Āṣr al-'Abbasi, Cairo, 1973, 2, 293

² Well-known for grammar and syntax

³ A famous narrator of Ḥadith and genealogist

⁴ A famous narrator of Ḥadith
encountered there: Philosophy, Astronomy, Adab-literature, poetry and logic, particularly by the last, which features in many of his 

His Family

Those writers who mention Ibn al-Rūmī's family agree that he lost them all, one by one. None, however, has established the chronological order of these calamities.

His Father

His father, al-ʿAbbās, died when Ibn al-Rūmī was still a child, and, in consequence, made little impression on him - much less, at any rate, than his mother. In his Diwān there are only a few references to his father, and those are indirect, speaking principally about his lineage:

الطويل

وكم من أب لي ماجد وابن ماجد له شرف يربي على الشرف العربي

1 Tīlīyā al-Hāwī, Ibn al-Rūmī, Beirut, 1980, 327

2 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 213
46. How many glorious ancestors have I, themselves of glorious fathers, who were noble to the highest degree.

28. My wall was constructed for me, after the laying of the foundations, by a father who said: "You are destined for nobility.

7. I am the one whose position you know well, and the son of he one whose help is still asked among you, and is praised.

In fact, we may doubt if he refers to his actual father at all in these lines. The mention of his pre-fathers is made in order to demonstrate that he could versify father as well as any native-born Arab poet.

---

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, , Dîwân, 4, 207
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 2, 254
The lines that we have so far quoted are typical of those produced by Arab poets of his period in commonplace Madh. They are verses rather than poetry. Many of the lines that he wrote in this genre fall into separate hemistichs, or have at least a significant pause at the end of the first hemistich, e.g.:

I am their slave, and their favour is my sustenance; when you trace my ancestry I am greck by origin.

He displays, in such lines, no very exceptional poetic talent.

His Mother

His mother was named Ḥasnah bint ‘Abdullāh al-Sajārī. She died when Ibn al-Rūmī was already middle-aged.

He composed a long elegy for her, which begins:

---

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 5, 145
2 Khalil Mardam, Ibn al-Rūmī, Beirut, 1988, 11
1. (O eyes) pour out blood. Losses have value. It is not much to ask that you should be generous to her with your blood.

11. I say as they have said "Do you weep like one who has lost his suckling". Who can but give? How can we compare the middle age of a man with that of one who sucks the teat.

12. She was a mother, O people, I have been made to swallow her loss. But he who weeps for a blameless mother will never be rebuked.

Ibn al-Rūmī’s use of the plural instead of the dual (or singular) is presumably the result of the exigencies of the metre.

1 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 64
The frequent use of unconnected hemistichs in this qasidah, in which the sense does not continue from one shatr to the next, may be taken as producing the effect of someone sobbing rhythmically. An example is:

His brother

His brother’s name was Muḥammad. We know only that he was older than Ibn al-Rūmī, that he predeceased him but outlived his mother, and that he was a katib to ‘Ubayd Allāh Ibn ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭāhir.

There are a number of elegies to his brother in the Dīwān, there are also other qasidahs that contain mention of him:

الطويل

ولا حزني كالشئ ينسي فيعزب

ولكن كفاني مسليا ومعزيا

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 153, 154
1. Time is causing me to forget you, not because my
grief and sadness are like something that can be
forgotten and but aside.

2. But because it is sufficient consolation that the
distance between us is getting less.

He also speaks of his brother in poems composed when the latter was
still alive:

الوافر

أبا أسحق لانضض فألرضي بعفرك دون مأمول الثواب١

* * *

علي أن الفتى لم يحن ذنيا إليك ولم يجز سنن الصواب

* * *

تجاوز عن أخي وشقيق نسبي فجني مذ عنيت عليه ناب

1. O Abu Isḥaq, do not be angry; for I will be content
with your forgiveness, without any reward but would
have been hoped for,

* * *

---

١ 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 381, 382
4. Considering that the man has not committed a sin against you and has not departed from the paths of righteousness.

* * *

9. Forgive my brother, my very dear brother, for I have been sleepless since you rebuked him.

His son

His family appears to have comprised a wife and three children.

Tragedy first struck with the death of his middle son, Muhammad, who died of a hemorrhage. The *aqsidah* in which Ibn al-Rūmī elegises him is generally considered the finest elegy in Arabic literature.¹ I shall discuss this *qasidah* and the analyses that have been made of it later:

الطويل

بِكَآؤِكَما يَشْلَىَّ وَأَنْ كَانَ لاَ يَجِدَ فَحُودٌ فَقَدْ أُدَىْ نَظِيرُ كَمَا عَنْدَى ²

* * *

توخَي حَمَامَ الموتِ أَوْسَطَ صَبِيبَيْنِ فَظَّاهَرَ كَفِ لِحَمَامِ قَلِيلٌ وَأَسْبَلَةَ العقد

---

¹ Ḫiyā al-Ḥāwī, Ibn al-Rūmī, 243-246. See also Ahmad Khālid, Ibn al-Rūmī, Tunisia, 1985, 141-144

² 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, ʿ, Dīwān, 2, 145
1. Your (his eyes) weeping is solace, even if it is useless; be generous, for he who was your equal has perished.

* * *

4. Death has chosen my middle child. For God’s sake how could he choose the best stone of the necklace?

It would seem that his elegy for his middle son drained him of creativity in further grief; when his eldest son, Hibaat Allah died, he was unable to produce an elegy that in any way matched the earlier one.

8. O my son yesterday you and consolation were both wrapped in a winding sheet.

* * *

19. O our children, you are our infatuation. But when you leave us you become our affliction.

---

1 Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 6, 258, 259
al-'Aqqād says about this qasidah that it was closer to sobbing than to weeping.

Ibn al-Rūmī also elegised his youngest son, without mentioning his name:

الطول
الطول
الطول

1. A care that travelled by night prevented him from sleeping and kept returning so he spent the night looking at the stars until they disappeared.

2. O my eyes, be generous with your abundant tears for me, because I have been generous to the earth with something greater that what you are denying me.

3. It was my son whom I gave as a gift to the earth yesterday. God knows how strong and still I kept my back.

Shortly after Ibn al-Rūmī had suffered the loss of all the children, he

---

1. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 263
was further afflicted by the death of his wife.¹

**Why the early Arab biographies omit Ibn al-Rûmî**

"I found that most of the earlier biographies that discussed Ibn al-Rûmî's life and work do not go deeply into his circumstances; they are not comprehensive and they do not arrange systematically what they have found. And how can a writer write in detail about him when all that has come down to us does not serve even to quench a part of one's thirst or to satisfy a part of one's need."²

He tries, he says, to be fair in his comparison of Ibn al-Rûmî with other Arab poets.

The man who suffered as much as Ibn al-Rûmî, does not exist, and the poet who suffered as much as he does not exist. Contemptuous of its great men or less inclined to honour its heroes? al-Mazini's comments on the lack of material of Ibn al-Rûmî's life are certainly true but what he says concerning the attitude of all Arabs to their great figures, particularly literary pilgrims, is disputable. If it were so, al-Mutanabbi, al-Ma'ârî, Abû Nuwâs, Bashshâr and others would not have received the attention that they did from the early biographers.³ al-'Aqqâd believes that Ibn al-Rûmî was a well-known

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² Ibrâhîm al-Mâzînî, Ibn al-Rûmî, Beirut, 1987, 15
³ `Abbâs al-'Aqqâd, Ibn al-Rûmî, 50
figure during his lifetime and that his poetry was learnt and enjoyed by all classes. He adds that although Caliphs are known to have been familiar with his work, they never instructed him to attend their courts. 

Muḥammad Sallām, on the other hand, thinks that his fame was more on account of his gloomy temper and of the bad luck that dogged him and seemed to be passed on by him to others.¹

‘Atawī says that the literary criteria of the early Arab critics and biographers could not be applied to the work of Ibn al-Rūmī and that it was consequently impossible to provide any professional study of his poetry until comparatively late.² The principal reason however, for the neglect of Ibn al-Rūmī is the fact that he was a Shi‘i and so opposed to the ‘Abbasid Caliphs.

For this reason, people were afraid to write seriously about him, and even to be friends with him. All the writers who speak of his being a Shi‘i, cite in evidence, the Jīmiyyah and the Nūniyyah.

Muḥammad Sallām divides the writers into two classes, those who think he was a Shi‘ite by conviction and those who believe that he was passionately attached to Ahl al-Bayt, as were many people at that time. Muḥammad Sallām argues for Ibn al-Rūmī belonging to the second category; Shi‘ism then was a rallying cry for those disaffected with the

---

¹ Muḥammad Sallām, Dirāsāt fī al-adab-al-‘Arabī, al-İsńandaría, n.d., 313
ruling 'Abbasids. He found a warm welcome from the Shi'i leaders, because he glorified them, and they in turn lavished gifts on him.\(^1\)

Jiddah approaches the matter in criticism of al-'Aqqād's view. He says that al-'Aqqād is relying on inadequate evidence in using only the Jimiyyah to prove that Ibn al-Rūmī was a Shi'i. He likewise criticises Guest for using only the Nuniyyah for the same purpose. Jidah does not believe that Ibn al-Rūmī was a Shi'i on the grounds that:

1. His father was a Mawla and so ought to have been a supporter of the pro-Mawali 'Abbasid faction.

2. When al-Musta'in fled from Samarra to hide in Baghdad and to gather support against al-Mu'tazz.

Ibn al-Rūmī stood by him, thus indicating that he was not particularly fanatical for the Shi'i cause.

Jidah then comes to the conclusion that Ibn al-Rūmī belongs to Muhammad Sallam's secret category, that is those who are sentimentally attached to the 'Alids and that this was the reason for his composing the two relevant qasidahs.\(^2\)

---

\(^1\) Muḥammad Sallām, Dirāsāt fi al-adab-al'Arabi, 315, 316

\(^2\) 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Jīdah al-Hija 'inda Ibn al-Rūmī, 59, 60
However, it is very difficult to accept that Ibn al-Rūmī was not a Shi‘ite in lines of panegyric such as this, from the Nuniyyah in praise of Yaḥyā Ibn ‘Umar.

36. Be patient. God will destroy them for you, just as

He destroyed the Kings of the Yemen.

---

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 272-273
39. Victory is at hand - do not be slow; Victory is surely at hand not merely imaginary.

40. It is dereliction of duty for me to keep my head safe, like those who have succumbed to much attachment to this world.

41. My blood is not shed for your aid, no and my honour is not tested for you.

42. Nevertheless, I offer myself in exchange, even if God disposes my blood as a worthy sacrifice.

43. I wish I were a target instead of you, either that or a coat mail or a shield to protect you.

44. I confront the archer with my forehead and the throater/pikeman with my throat and breast.

49. God bears witness and sincere sympathy of which the apparent gives evidence to the hidden.

50. To a true support for you, which works like a spirit in a body.

51. This will be my attire for as long as I live and when I die, it will be my shroud.
It is too difficult to believe, particularly in view of these last three lines, that Ibn al-Rūmī was not a Shi’i.

His warlike feelings on behalf of the Shi’ah are displayed in many of his qasidahs, even if he did not actively take part in these campaigns.

3. Is there to be in every age a pure descendent of the Prophet Muḥammad murdered and stained with blood.

---

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 2, 23-30
78. Is it right that they should go hungry while your (the 'Abbasids) brother almost burst with gluttony.

* * *

80. Their child is empty bellied whereas your child has soft bones and a plump body from easy living.

* * *

89. He spends the night, when the wine has soaked mind, talking with a coarse Byzantine infidel.

90. Who gives him such a thrust in his dishonorable ways that he gets up from under him bandy legged because of it.

91. It is for this that the like of you, O Banu I-'Abbas, display endurance while the brave armoured warrior displays endurance in the face of death.

* * *

111. Perhaps hearts, in which you have for a long time fostered hatred, will obtain a cure from you and be restored to health.

Concerning the reasons for Ibn al-Rûmî's lamenting Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn al-Ṭāhir who had murdered Yaḥya al-'Aqqād says that Ibn al-Rûmî was never particularly strong in either his enmity or his partnership for anybody, and adds that the Tāhirî's had always
protected in return for this, Ibn al-Rūmī lamented their deaths and praised them. al-‘Aqqād says that all the Tāhīrs were Shi‘ite at heart, demonstrating this by the feeble support given by Sulayman Ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Ṭāhir to the ‘Abbasids against Ḥasan Ibn Zayd.

1. I was told that the calvary of Ibn Zayd had approached on an occasion, making for us, in order to make us endure the two kinds (defeat and death).

2. O people, if the prophets are truthful, woe is me and are all the Tāhīrs.

3. As for me, when our squadrons are drawn up, I shall be the head of the allies among them.

4. My excuse is clear to the Apostle of God, since I would not spill the blood of the descendants of Fātimah.

---

1 Taken from ‘Abbās al-‘Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 184, who gives no further reference.
This seems a very plausible mask for his lamenting Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Ṭāhir and his praising others of the āhirids. Other authorities believe that this is also the reason why he did not praise most of the ‘Abbasid Caliphs: the few that he did praise were notably indulgent to ‘Ali’s descendants, for example al-Mu’tamid and al-Muntaṣir, who was like his father al-Mutawakkil, in his persecutions of them.¹

The reasons why Ibn al-Rūmī did not compose Madih on the Caliphs and the Leaders of the Turks

We have seen that one reason for Ibn al-Rūmī’s unwillingness to compose poems eulogising the ‘Abbasids, and indeed for his not coming to Court to solicit favours from them, was his distaste for those who persecuted the Alids.

Another possible reason for his behaviour is that he was very superstitious and travelling away from Baghdad - from his home even - made him extremely anxious. He did in fact travel on a number of occasions to other cities, hoping to improve the quality of his life. Once arrived, however, he invariably found that his destination was no better that the one he had just left. He would return home in great disappointment. On Baghdad, for instance, he writes:

64. Ba‘labakk and its people have rejected me, may the rest of the world even Baghdad is a place of exile.

On travel he writes:

8. Travelling made me taste that which made riches distasteful to me; it made wish to refuse any more to seek out what I desired.

9. I would have become the leader of those who abstain from wealth, even if I had been greediest person for it.

After his experiences of travelling, and because of his superstitions he kept to Baghdad, refusing to travel again, making his excuses to the princes and ministers who invited him; he would send

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1 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 5, 186
2 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 220
his poetry to them and request them to send any gifts for him to Baghdad.

He writes:

الطويل

ولما دعاني للمتعاوة سيد يرى المدد عارا قبل بذل المثواب١

* * *

فقدمت رجلاً رعية في رغيبة وأحرت رجلاً رعية للمعالب

* * *

لفقت من البر التاريخ بعد ما

لفقت من البحر ابيضاض النواهب

* * *

أبي أني يغيب الأرض حتى إذا ارتمت

برحلى اناها بالغيوث السواكب

* * *

لتعويق سيراً أو دخوَش مطليتى وأغضاب مزور عن المجد ناكب

* * *

ولم لا ول ألقيفت فيه واصغرة لواقيت منه القعر أول رأس

* * *

فأيسر مشفاقى من الماء أني أمر به في الكوز من المجانب

51 وأخشى الردى منه على كل شارب فكيف بعَليه على نفس راكب

52

1 'Ali ibn al-Rümî, Diwân, 1, 220-228
12. When a prince invited me for reward - a prince who thought that it was shameful to accept praise before lavishing recompense.

14. I would take one step forward, in desire for gifts and I would take one step back in fear of dangers.

19. I encountered misfortunes on land, after having had my hair turn white at sea.

23. The sea refused to water the earth until, when I was starting my journey, it poured a great torrent upon it.
25. In order to delay my journey or to make my camel slip, and to make rich the one who turns aside from glory.

* * *

49. And why not? when if a stone and I were thrown into the sea I should hit the bottom first.

* * *

51. The easiest way of soothing my fear of water is that I should pass by it in a jar like a hydrophobic.

52. I fear that everyone who drinks from it will die; How can I trust it with the life of someone who sails in it?

53. When the sun shines on it and a wind moves it in long billowing waves.

54. I seem to see among them brave horsemen brandishing their sharp swords against me.

* * *

86. O you who are noble of qualities, who are liberal of deeds, whose gifts compete with the gifts of the clouds.

* * *
88. Who dispatches his favours so that they visit me at ease at home, without having to endure the hardships of travel.

*  *  *

112. Will you seem to lack judgment if you reward me, safe at home, far from the worry of having to seek this.

The sentiments expressed by Ibn al-Rûmî in this qasidah certainly appear to indicate a morbid fear of water on his part, and perhaps of travel itself.

His principal reason for refraining from praise of the Turkish leaders may well have been that his mother was Persian. The influence exerted by Persians early on in the 'Abbasid period was subordinated to that exerted by Turks at precisely the time of al-Mutawakkil's accession.

Jidah says:

Ibn al-Rûmî had Persian links on his mother's side, and it may have been them that influenced him, causing him to support and eulogize the Persians, while opposing and lampooning the Turks, as he did in particular during the struggle between al-Musta'in and al-Mu'tazz, supported by these two factors respectively.¹ Another reason for his pro-Persian bias is likely to have been the superiority of the Persians in

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¹ 'Abd al-Ḥamid Jidah, al-Hija' 'ind Ibn al-Rûmî, 53
Arabic literary production, for example Muḥammad and Sulaymān Ibn ʿAbdullāh of the Ẓāhirid family.

As al-ʾAqqād says:–

The caliphs used to compose *Ghazal* and songs as did also Amirs and Wazirs, whether Persian or Arab.¹

The Persians then were more susceptible to Ibn al-Rūmī’s praise than the Turks, since the latter, being soldiers, understood little of literature and were not as culturally sophisticated as the former. Shawqi Ḍayf remarks that Ibn al-Rūmī did not praise the Turkish leaders, because he felt that they would not understand his poetry and consequently not reward him.²

**Temperament**

The books written about Ibn al-Rūmī have a good deal to say about his temperament. This is taken from his own poetry and the anecdotes told about him by his contemporaries and recorded in the biographies. Khalil Mardam gives two sources for his description of Ibn al-Rūmī, as:-

"a nervous person, dominated by melancholy, which if exaggerated, turned him into a different person. He was liable to talking to himself,

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¹ ʿAbbās al-ʾAqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 38
² Shawqi Ḍayf, al-ʿAṣr al-ʿAbbāsi, 2, 301
subject to illness, hypochondriac, lecherous, greedy for pleasure, susceptible for beauty, addicted to wine, greedy for food".\textsuperscript{1}

Jurj 'Abdu Ma'tuq has produced the same analysis as Khalil Mardam:

He was a highly sensitive, nervous, indecisive and superstitious person, who easily became angry, but was easily reconciled and indulgent towards people who propitiated him.\textsuperscript{2}

Most writers suggest that his temperament was formed by the calamities that he had suffered throughout his life. Others point to his odd physique as one of the reasons for his unstable temperament.

al-'Aqqâd says:-

"His head was small and he was pale and sometimes quite drained of any colour, his face was earnest and there appeared in it both sternness and behaviour. He was thin and clearly nervous, taller rather than shorter, thick-bearded and bald, having gone grey and then bald at an early age".\textsuperscript{3}

al-'Aqqâd's picture of Ibn al-Rûmî, was drawn from his poetry, and it suggests to him a sickly disposition. This appears to be a reasonable inference. However Jurj 'Abdu Ma'tuq gives a fuller picture, which is also taken from personal descriptions in his poetry, where he describes

\textsuperscript{1} Khalil Mardam, Ibn al-Rûmî, 13
\textsuperscript{2} Jurj 'Abd Ma'tuq, Ibn al Rûmî Beirut, 1984,9
\textsuperscript{3} 'Abbâs al-'Aqqâd, Ibn al-Rûmî, 93
himself as fair skinned, with a handsome face and fine black hair and a square brow.

This is clearly a contradiction in the two accounts. On the whole, one is inclined to follow al-‘Aqqād, for although Ma‘tuq claims to have based his description on a reading of Ibn al-Rūmī’s poetry he adduces no quotation to support it.

However, Ma‘tuq also quotes him as, saying that there were many anecdotes told about him, in particular about his premature baldness and grey hair, which he hated and felt ashamed of, to the extent that he would cover it with a turban. It seems most probable that Ma‘tuq indeed takes his descriptions from Ibn al-Rūmī’s poetry but has omitted to provide references for these. al-‘Aqqād’s descriptions then have to be accepted.¹

For example,

1. al-‘Aqqād’s description of Ibn al-Rūmī’s early greyness is taken from lines.

الخلاصة
اذ تقصنتى بصعلكة الرأس سفاها فأنعمت غير ذمم
ما تعلت أن وصفت خشاشا لوزعيا كا لحية المشهوم ²

¹ ‘Abbās al-‘Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 93-102
² ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 119
83. When you make fun of me, foolishly, because of my baldness, and you abuse me for what is not to be ashamed,

84. you are quite right but (don't forget) describing an intelligent, crafty man, like a snake would be the same.

That is to say that the snake which is held up as an example of intelligence has a small head without hair.

2. Ibn al-Rūmī’s paleness.

4. And with shining, pure skin, in which is brightness (like that of Yemeni blade).

3. Ib al-Rūmī’s stature

7. I see that my frame has persisted in being bowed;
Snappiness tends to persist in being easily bent

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 275
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 226
4. His Beard:

14. I am still generous and liberal person, even if I have became a man with a full beard.

5. His baldness:

3. I resolved to wear the turban as a ruse to conceal the baldness which had come to me.

‘Aṭawī suggests that past ideals that he had been eager to realise and the unfortunate reality that surrounded him may have been reasons for the mental and bodily disturbances that assailed him and made his views, his demeanour and his behaviour very odd.

The early biographies do not say a great deal about Ibn al-Rūmī, but they do include a large number of Comic anecdotes in which he figures. Being unanimously regarded as a laughing stock was perhaps one of the most difficult burdens that he had to bear. He was also induced to believe that he was a source of ill-fortune, both for himself and for

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1 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 471
2 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 105
anyone who consorted with him. This superstition still lingers, al-Māzīnī says "When I wrote some articles about Ibn al-Rūmī twenty years ago, my leg was broken in a very unusual manner. Also, when al-Shaykh al-Sharif completed his commentary on the first part of Ibn al-Rūmī's Dīwān he was pensioned off. The book-seller who published the work broke his leg, as well. So, when I write again about Ibn al-Rūmī, I hope I will not lose my head".¹

Kāmil Sa'fān says something similar "People say that al-ʿAqqād was imprisoned because of ill-fortune brought by Ibn al-Rūmī, and that Ḥūsayn Naṣṣār was dismissed from Akādimiyyat al Funûn because he worked on the manuscripts of Ibn al-Rūmī.²

al-Māzīnī and Sa'fān did not seriously believe themselves in the ill-fortune associated with Ibn al-Rūmī, but said such things to illustrate popular belief. They felt strongly that he had been despicably treated both when alive and after his death.

al-Māzīnī says "People had no mercy on his weakness or pity for it. They continually laughed at him and mocked him. Some made fun of him and found fault with his walk; others nearly claimed that he was impotent and taunted him of being effeminate; others enviously criticised his poetry, in order to provoke him, while actually wishing that

¹ Ibrahim al-Mazini, Ibn al-Rumi, 59-60
² Kāmil Sa'fān, Qira'ah fi, Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī, Cairo,1986, 17
they could compete with him." 1 The only source for our knowledge of Ibn al-Rūmī’s misfortunes is his documentation of them in his Diwān.

One of the persecutions that he suffered was at the hands of al-Akhfash. The latter would frequently arrange for someone to knock on Ibn al-Rūmī’s door and to reply, when asked who it was, "I am bitter the son of colocynth or similar sinister names. Ibn al-Rūmī in consequence used to restrict himself and his family to the house, for fear that some danger might arise if they went outside. Ibn al-Rūmī responded to this persecution by writing poems of invective against al Akhfash. The latter pretended not to be concerned about this and actually used to teach his students some of these poems. 2

al-'Aqqād tells us that al-Zubaydī gives us an example of the poems that he was taught by al-Akhfash. 3

المصرح

فولا ن취ونا الله حسن اين حسامي متي ضربت مضى

لايؤملي السفينه باترتي فإنني عارض لمن عرضذا

1 Ibrāhīm al-Māzīnī, Ibn al-Rūmī, 43, 44
2 Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Rashīq, al-'umdah, Beirut, 1972, 2, 168
3 Ḥabbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 178
4 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 55, 56
1. Tell our grammarian Abu Hasan that my sword is sharp and cuts when I strike.

19. The foolish man will not be safe from the edge of my sword, because I attack those who attack me.

20. I have a whip for him if he goes too slow, and I have a bridle if he goes too fast.

However, al-Akhfash could not reply to Ibn al-Rumi’s lampoons on him and sent him a gift begging him to desist. Ibn al-Rumi wrote a panegyric on him:

1. The older al-Akfash has been honourably mentioned, and I say that the younger al-Akhfash also possesses virtues.
5. Grammar had just began to grow, and the younger al-Akfash nourished so that it flowed gently.

* * *

14. He is a sea of fresh water; he is not salty and he is far from being shallow.

Returning to al-Mázini's remark concerning Ibn al-Rümi's method of walking and the jokes that people made about it, we find that Ibn al-Rümi himself acknowledged that his gait was abnormal.

3. 3، I have a gait like someone using a sieve. It is the only way that I can be sure of not falling down.

There are only a few poems in Ibn al-Rümi's Dīwān referring to those who claimed that he was effeminate:

1. `Ali Ibn al-Rümi, Dīwān, 4, 81
2. `Ali Ibn al-Rümi, Dīwān, 1, 477
1. May God punish everyone who says that I am effeminate
2. By my sleeping with his mother for one night - not for three.
3. If he were to see - watched man! - how her field is ploughed.
4. While she blazed and panted at the heat of my glans.
5. He would know whether it was a man or a woman who covered her.

These allegations of effeminism were not only made in mockery. He asked for the hand of the daughter of al Naḍīr al Junayd, whereupon the latter's brother, Abū Mundhir, advised him not to consent, on the grounds that Ibn al-Rūmī was effeminate.

Ibn al-Rūmī responded:

الطويل

أبا منفر بالله إلا صدقتي علام ولم خنتني يا أخا النضر
لئنت لقائي حزما لكل نكتتها فلم أقفها أم قمت ماقتلا بالحزر

ولو مس ثوبي ثوب أمك مسة لأولدها خمسين ملك في شهر

1'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 3, 161
1. O’ Abu Mundhir, brother of al-Naḍir, will you not, by God, tell me truly, just why you have called me effeminate.

2. Has a woman of your family whom I have fucked complained of my performance, since I have not satisfied her, or have you said what you said as a guess.

6. If my clothes were to touch your mother’s clothes just once, they would make her give birth to fifty like you in one month.

7. O’ Ibn Abi ‘Amr what indications have you seen in me to indicate that I am effeminate?

11. If you are in any doubt, and you have seen no indication that will clear up your doubts about me,

12. You may try out my virility on one of your daughters, whenever you like, trial is the best way of reassuring you.
13. If a virgin daughter of yours were to encounter me just once, she would not forget my penis until the end of time.

People accused him of effeminacy, because of his walk which he described in the following verse:

3. I have a gait like someone using a sieve. It is the only way that I can be sure of not falling down.

This caused al-Māzinī to remark on Ibn al-Rūmī’s method of walking.

Consequently, he mentions the male genitals a great deal in his poetry e.g.:

1. Ali ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 81
1. The penis is penis for women, who desire it and fear it.

3. They make it large / esteem it highly, and they call it a plentiful water supply; although they spell it back to front (i.e. ﺍوُرِ) 

4. If they could they would eat it or suck it, because of their great desire for it.

Again, addressing Ibn al-Khabbāzah:

1. There is a glans, which would satisfy the hands of the master builder,

2. A broad headed one, which would cure the agony of heart-ache.

9. Which I have inserted into the wide arms of al-Khabbazāh.

\[1\] Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwān, 3, 238-239
Sexual relations with both men and women (married and unmarried).

المقارب

1. Ḥufays has lampooned me, although I have not lampooned him but he is a disagreeable man.

2. He has wrongly denied my kindness to him, and I did not deserve to have it denied.

3. Has not my hand been a comb for him (i.e.: hit him around the head) and my penis a Kohl stick for his wife?

4. I rubbed her clitoris with its head and I applied kohl to the sore eyebrow of her arse.

Of an unmarried woman, he says:-

الوافر

1. يدت لى غادة لم تبت إلا توهماً هناك القدر بدرًا ٢

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmi, Dīwān, 2, 232

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmi, Dīwān, 3, 60-61
1. A young girl appeared to me, who had only to appear for the full moon to imagine that she was the full moon.

2. She walked flirtatiously wearing slippers that were fashioned as any woman would desire, in their shape and their value.

3. I said to her "How much do these cost?" She said "The price of bearing them on your shoulders for a month".

4. So I said "Is that with you in them?" She said "Yes". So I made lustful and appreciative noises time and time again.

5. She said, "What will you do when we meet (if you act like this now)? I said "fuck". She said "It is good to hear you say that aloud!"

6. So I led her to my saddle, and she was the most delightful mount from both front and back.

And of boys, he says:
1. Many a boy, whose face did not disgrace him,

4. Have I passed the night of the full moon buggering

5. Sometimes I make him kneel down,
Sometimes I lay him on his front

6. Sometimes I lay him on his back

7. Both curing him of his illness and wounding him.

8. With a full glans that pierces him like a weapon.

*Ibn al-Rûmî's Pride as a Poet*

A man asked Ibn al-Rûmî, "How do you come to have a great reputation in poetry when you are not an Arab? I think that you are either an Arab or an impostor in poetry. Ibn al-Rûmî said, "You are an"
imposter, since you have an Arab genealogy and you have no talent for poetry.

**المجتث**

إياك يا ابن بوب بن يستثار بوبب۷

قد تحسن الروم شعرًا ما أحسن الشء العربي

7. O Ibn Buwayb, take care lest Buwayb becomes overexcited.

**البيص**

عابوا قريضي وما عابوا بمرة۷

ولن ترى الشمس أصير الخفافيش

7. They have decried my poetry but they have not done so knowledgeably, the eyes of both of them could not see the sun.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 207
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 344
To Muḥammad Ibn al-Ṭāhir he says:

الواقف
أنتِ شاعراً فهجوت شعري وكانت هفة منى وغله،
لقد أذكرتني مثلًا قديماً جزاء مقابل الوجعاء ضرطره

1. I came to you as a poet and you lampooned my poetry: this was a mistake on my part.
2. You have reminded me of an old proverb: the reward of the arse-licker is a fart.

Daily life in Baghdad in Ibn al-Rūmī’s poetry

1. The upper class

The upper class consisted of only one family in any given period. Firstly, the tahirids occupied this position, they were later supplemented by the Banu Wahhab.

2. The middle class:

There were merchants, secretaries who worked for the ruling family and commanders of the police.

Ibn al-Rūmī says:-

الخفيف

\footnote{\textquoteleft{}Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, \textit{Dīwān}, 4, 65}
42. Do you think that I am lower than those policemen and Secretaries who have attained their ambitions.

43. And merchants like beasts who have achieved their desires for themselves and their lovers.

3. The lower classes

These formed the majority of the population and were mostly poor.

Aḥmad Khālid claims that: Ibn al-Rūmī was not one of the poor who complained of simple deprivation; he complained of unfairness, since he could not obtain everything that he desired - and his desires were unbounded.

However, Ibn al-Rūmī himself says of his situation, having asked Abū Sahl al-Nawbakhtī for some clothes for the winter.

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1 ʿAll Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 318

2 ʿAll Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 343
99. If you delay giving me what you have promised,

100. And the boiling summer begins;

101. The clothes when they arrive will be cold,

102. Adding to the cold of winter.

And again, when asking Abū Ja'far al-Nawbakhtī for clothes:

1. Abū Ja'far, you are continually receiving and giving, lavishing ample wealth and gaining it.

2. I ask you for clothes, since you are a governor of the village of al-Nu'man fulfilling his wishes.

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 2, 171
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 143
3. You have frequently refused them, which I hope you don't regret and for which you would now like to hear an excuse.

It seems likely that such verses represented the situation in which Ibn al-Rūmī found himself, as do the following verse.

1. Friends and acquaintances

Ibn al-Rūmī's Circles of Acquaintances in his Diwān

1. ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 2, 48

2. ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 68
Those who had a close relationship with him either for an unspecified length of time. Many of them gave him money or gifts, but he often broke with them, when they no longer continued their gifts.

2. People whom he met casually in the street

Sometimes there were people who provoked his dislike, as for instance, men with long beards.

الخفيف
إِنْ تَطَلَّ لَحِيَةً عَلَيْكَ وَتَعَرَّضُ فَالْمَخَالِي مَعَرَوْفَةً لِلْحَمِيرِ ١
   *   *   *
لمَّا عَدَّ حَكْمَهَا إِلَى لَطَارَتِ فِي مَهَبِ الْرِّيَاحِ كَلْ مَطْرِ ٣
   *   *   *
لَحِيَةٌ أُهْمَاتُ فُسَالَتْ وَفَقَادَتْ فَإِلَيْهَا تَشْيِرُ كَفَّ المُشْرِبٍ ٩

1. If you have a long, flowing beard, even donkeys wear nose-bags.
   *   *   *

3. If the decision were left to me, it would fly in all directions blown by the wind.
   *   *   *

9. A beard that is neglected and flows luxuriantly, so that everyone points at it.

Again:

١‘Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 3, 32, 33
1. A beard borne by a fool, like sails when they are loosened.

2. The wind led him helplessly along by it, violently, wearying his head.

3. If he tries to progress against the wind, he cannot move a finger length forward against it.

4. If he dives into the sea with it, he catches with it all the fish that are in the sea.

Ibn al-Rūmī loved beauty and felt that ugliness was a presage of some ill fortune. Consequently, he reacted aggressively towards things and people who gave him this impression:

أLocker}
1. His neck veins are shortened and the back of his head is lowered as though he were afraid of being struck.

2. It is as though he had been struck once and fears a second blow so that he cringes.

The Natural World and Material Culture

Again about an ugly beast that he was riding.

1. I rode along and they cried out, "Prayer, prayer", both middle aged and clean-shaven men.

2. It was as though they had seen a miracle that the prophets had revealed in a shrine.

4. Thus people marvel at anything, if they have never known it before.

About trees he says:

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 2, 256
أيا شجراً بين الرسمين فعالين منحتك دمي صادقاً غير كاذبٍ
نديت ولم تورق و لست بمرش فكن عرضاً مستهدفاً للتوانين
فما فيك من ظل لقلوظيرة وما فيك من جدوه لجان وحطب
و فيك على حرمانك الخير كله من الشوك ما لا وكن فيه لأثب
ولاحب ذلك الشوك لاشك به فإنه أفعلاً أسفي صوب السحائب

1. O trees between al-Rusays and 'Aqil I truly give you my blood

2. You are moist but with no leaves or fruit so intervene and be the target of the calamities

3. You have no shade for the afternoon's heat and you are no use to the gardener or the wood cutter

4. Although you look all goodness, you have thorns on which there are no nest for birds to return to.

5. I think that there are doubtless snakes among the thorns, so may you not be watered by the pouring of the clouds.

About clothes he says

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 333
1. A bastard asked me why, I wear a turban. Was it because I was ill, or was it to attract young women?

2. I answered him I do not wear it because of illness, nor to attract dirty whores.

3. But because ever since I was an infant, a child and an adolescent, I have loved to wear a hat *galansuwah*

4. I do not wish to wear a shift slit in the forepart *dari‘ah* or an over garment *qabā* for these are things that I do not enjoy wearing.

5. But you love wearing them and your heart is captivated by burnooses.

And he says:-

6. *وَما لِلَّمِلَسِ الصِّوْفِي مَعْنَى إِذَا طَبِ ارْتِدَّاءٍ وَاتِّرَاتَ*  

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1. ALI Ibn al- Rūmī, Diwān, 3,249-250

2. ALI Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwā, 3,199
6. The touch of wool has no meaning for me, since I enjoy wearing a rida' and an izār.

12. How can you keep me from clothes, when my love for you is my war-cry and my clothing

1. Al-Raqī appeared in his shashiyyah, wearing his sword and his girdle.

1. Gardens in which the earth preens itself, as a young girl preens herself in a burd

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwān, 4, 312

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwān, 2, 195

3 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwān, 1, 112 Also see 1, 87, 208, 390
2. It (March) dressed the nakedness of the hills in green shawls and it enfolded them in a ride.

Food

It seems that Ibn al-Rūmī was greedy as far as both his sexual and his comestible requirements were concerned. In his poetry, he even speaks enthusiastically of bread, which was far from being a luxury item of food:

البسيط

ما أُنسى لأُنسى خباراً مرت به يدحا الرفقة وشك اللحم بالبصرة 1
ما بين رويتها في كفة كرة وبين رويتها قرة كالقمر 2
الا بمقدار ما تنذا دائر في صفحة الماء يرمي فيه بالحجر 3

1. Whatever I forget, I shall not forget a baker whom I passed, rolling out the loaves as fast as the eye could see.

2. One moment they seemed like a ball in his hand and the next moment they were spread out like full moons.

3. A moment that was no greater than that of a circle extending itself in water when a stone is thrown into it.

الكامل

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 197, 198
1. A yellow fowl a golden dinar in colour and value brought by a young lad,

2. So big that it was almost a goose and so heavy that its skin would almost split.

6. We proceeded to peel off its skin from its flesh, and it was as though gold was picked away from silver.

7. Before it came dishes of Thārīd like meadows preceded by others like them.

9. And after it came delicate sweetmeats which pleased the palate and the throat.

And he says:

\[\text{\footnotesize 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 3, 56}\]
1. A weary man settled in his chair - I wish I could sacrifice myself for him to keep him from his tiring labour.

2. I saw at dawn, frying a zalābiyyat, with a thin crust and its interior (hollow) like a reel.

3. When his oil begins to bubble, it seems like alchemy, in which people believe but never experience,

4. The dough drops in like silver from two fingers and changes into a network of gold.

Fruit
1. The banana is without sin and has good qualities that cannot be counted or reckoned up.

2. A swallow pushes into men's hearts from its beloved places.

And he says

1. الرجز
2. ورارقى مخطط الخصور
3. كأنه مخازن البلور
4. لم يبق منه وهج الحروب
5. الا ضياء في ظروف نور
6. لو أنه يبقى على الدهور
7. قرط أذان النساء الحور
8. ياكرته والطير في الوكر
9. وعذر اللذات في البكور
10. بفتية من ولد المنصور
11. أملًا للعين من البذور
12. وكل ما فقضى من الأمور
13. تعلة عن يومنا المنظور

1. Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 386-88
1. Trim-waisted ṭāziqī grapes
2. Seem like treasures of crystal.

5. The blazing heat has left nothing of them
6. Except light in containers of light,
7. If they lasted for ever
8. They would adorn the ears of beautiful women.

14. I came to them when the birds were still in their nests
15. The purest of pleasure is to be heard in the morning.
16. In the company of fellows of the family of al-Manṣūr
17. Who were brighter to the eye than full moons.

35. All the affairs that we pursue
36. Are but a distraction from the expected last day.
37. And one of the enjoyments of delusion.

īliyā al-Ḥāwī includes these verses in his chapter on descriptive poetry (Wasf) and claims that, as always in his Wasf, Ibn al-Rūmī pursues his initial logical position to extravagant lengths.
It seems to me, however, both in this *Urjūzah* and in the others descriptive of food and drink, that Ibn al-Rūmī combines artistic perception with an actual longing for the food itself. He grades everything that he describes, women as well as food and drink. He was perpetually poor and could never supply his family with an adequate quantity of certain foods. When invited to a banquet by an upper class patron, he feels a deep sense of inferiority. This sense permeates his food and drink descriptions.

İlyâ al-Hāwī also claims that Ibn al-Rūmī is an existentialist, on the basis of the legal line already quoted (see verse 37 above). He asserts that there is a serious, silent element in this *wasf*, which, when exercising it closely, reviews inner turmoil and questioning, like that of Abû al 'Alâ and other existentialists, who see the skull through the face, the bone through the flesh and death through life.

While conceding that Ibn al-Rūmī, had a deep interest in philosophy and logic, so as to become a figure almost unique in Arabic poetry, I cannot accept that he was an existentialist, he is after all, a Muslim, and this is quite incompatible with existentialism.

The great extent to which his poetry is based on experience, like that of most other Arab poets, also precludes this, as does his own personal tragedy, the loss of kindred and family, the fact that he saw and experienced death at all points in his life, even while drinking and seeking enjoyment.
1. O you who criticise me so vigorously concerning wine, may your opinion of wine continue to be bad.

2. The smallest benefit from your not drinking wine is that there is plenty of wine available for us and that the glasses are clean.

3. You have kindly given me your share so that I profited more than you from it.

And he says

1. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 2, 63
2. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 2, 81, 82
1. Wine that makes the oil-lamp unnecessary, whose container turns evening into morning.

10. Take it and do not waste the pleasures of its taste and scent, o seeker of benefits.

11. A virgin, which restores youth to the old, so that he appears both passionate and cheerful.

12. A beautiful maiden, in whose beauties a man is clothed, so that he seems to be red, the brightest lamp (in the room).

13. From a vine that gives a man its noble qualities, so that he appears both brave and generous.

15. By God, I do not know why they call al-Rah al-Rah.

16. Is it because of its scent and its sensation in the belly, or because of the repose that it induces in the relaxed drinker?

Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry was sometimes recited at the Caliph's mailis al-Muktafi is reported, on hearing these four lines:
1. When you take the grapes and the juice (of the vine)
2. Then you beat it and macerate it.
3. Then keep it for a long time
4. You will drink Babylonian wine itself.

to have said

"How luxurious he is! He urges us to drink the wine of Dinshab today".

Ibn al-Rūmī was so fond of wine that he sought fatwas legitimizing the drinking of alcohol. For this reason, he was unpopular with the 'Ulamā'.

He believed, or pretended to believe, that different Madhahib had different views on the illegitimacy of wine.

الطول

أحل العراقي النبي وشريه وقال الحرامان المدامه والسكر.

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1 Abū al-Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī, Murūj al-Dhahab, Beirut, 1983, 4, 200
2 Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 82
1. The Iraqi (the Ḥanafi) permits the drinking of nabidh and says: what is forbidden is khamr and intoxication.

2. The Hijazi (the Maliki) says that the two drinks are the same, so khamr is permitted to us.

3. I shall take the extremes of what either says and drink it; may the sinner never be parted from his sin.

Flowers

Ibn al-Rūmī’s favourite flower is the narcissus.

1. The most beautiful feature of the face is the eyes, the thing that more resembles them is the narcissus.

and he says:

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 3, 321
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 63
1. I saw a fresh nosegay of narcissus in my love's hand;

2. Like a stalk of emerald which grew gold and silver.

Ibn al-Rūmī also compares the narcissus and the rose:-

1. You never find a narcissus compared with a rose when you require thought and coquettish glances.

2. But some roses are compared the narcissus although roses are lucky if this happens.

His preference for the narcissus leads him to satirise the rose.

1. Somebody asked me why did you determine to satirise the rose. I answered him because of my hatred for and my displeasure with it.

---

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 100
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 93
2. O you who praise the rose, persisting in your error, have you not seen it in the hand of the one who picked it up?

These lines caused Ibn al Mu’tazz to answer Ibn al-Rûmî as follows:

1. ヤ هاجي الورد لاحبيت من رجل غلطت و المرء قد يؤولى على غلطته
2. هل نبت الأرض شيئا من أرها إذا تجلت بجاكي الورد في نمطه
3. أبيه وأبهج من ورد له أرج كأنا السلك مذوري على وسطه

1. O you who satirise the rose, may you not be blessed, you are mistaken and a man may be attacked for his mistakes.
2. Does the earth produce any flowers which when in bloom can compare with the rose in form.
3. Is there anything brighter and shining than a scented rose, as though its centre were spiked with musk.

Among other flowers that Ibn al-Rûmî mentions are the pomegranate, the red anemone, the hyacinth, the lavender and the jasmine.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 4, 93
Money

السريع

1. I hold nothing to be more truly useful to a man than the dirham and the sword.

الطول

1. I have heard that you have stopped your allowance to me. Your well-known meanness provides your excuse for it.

2. Suppose that dinar were the auspice of my horoscope from the seven bright planets.

Musical Instruments

Among the other accompaniments of pleasure are musical instruments:

(Talking of a female slave ‘Awwādah, the property of Durayrah):

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 224
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 186
14. Pleasure of seeing accompanied by pleasure of hearing, when she plays the lute for you.

15. She has a face which seems to have been told:

"Be unique and marvellous, without equal, and it was.

10. If you were to prop a dead man against her throat or her lute, he would return from the grave.

11. She sang, and had no need of a piper. Does the sun need a candle?

About Shanṭaf

2. "Beating the drum and farting, she answers one kind of drumming with another.

---

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 217
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 137. See also 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 348; 2, 309; 3, 27, 231, 242; 4, 52, 37
3 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 5, 166
To 'Umar al-Qalṣṭabī

3. Have you ever enchanted with your singing anyone except those like you, even with the help of the tambourine and the lute?

92. There are singing girls like mothers, loving and affectionate to their sons;

96. Each child is called by different names: 'ud, Mizhar and Kirān.

Festivals

Ibn al-Rūmī is cynical about Ramaḍān

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 132
2 'Iī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 243
1. When you bless a fast for people you pray that their torture may be prolonged.

2. Why bless a long month, a day of which lasts as long as the Day of Judgment?

3. I wish that the night might extend to the length of the month, and that its day might pass as quickly as the clouds!

4. No welcome is that which prevents all that is good!

Welcome to food and drink.

1. The day of the 'īd al-Fitr came in the middle of the week, on which you coincided with an auspicious star.

---

1 'Ali ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 208

2 'Ali ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 128. See also 'Ali ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 34; 2, 181, 182, 188, 197
1. There are two festivals 'Id al-Adhā and Mahrajān, the likes of which are never celebrated on the same day.

3 God matched the Amir's Nairuz with it only so that all happiness might come to him.

**Conclusion**

In summary, it appears from the preceding survey that we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Ibn al-Rūmī was born, lived and died in Baghdad.

2. He was a hypochondriac, afraid of both sea and desert; this resulted in him passing his life in Baghdad, except for a few short journeys.

3. Socially he belonged to the lower classes.

4. He was proud to be of Byzantine origin.

5. He witnessed the death of both parents, family and relatives.

6. He was a renowned 'Jonah', both when alive and dead

7. He did not find favour at court, like Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturi.

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 195. See also 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 228; 6, 197

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 53
8. He was a follower of Mu'tazili thought, even though he was at pains to conceal this.

9. The poetry discussed in this chapter was generally considered easy to read, even though it contains some difficult lines.

10. Much of his poetry is somewhat pedestrian, as can be seen from some of the examples quoted in this chapter.
CHAPTER TWO
The differences between Ibn al-Rûmî's poetry and other Arabic poetry

Ibn al-Rûmî's poetry differs in a number of ways from other Arabic poetry.

*Istiqsâ’*

a) General Sense

To reach the maximum in everything.¹

b) In literary-critical terminology

To deal with all aspects of a concept (in a poem)

*Istiqsâ’* before Ibn al-Rûmî

The use of *Istiqsâ’* before Ibn al-Rûmî seems to have been spontaneous and unselfconscious.

For example, in Jâhilî poetry, Imru’ al-Qays uses *Istiqsâ’*

(a) in his description of a long night.

الطويل

و ليل كموج البحر أرخي سدوله على أنواع الهموم ليبتلي ⁴⁴

---


² Imru’ al-Qays al-Kindî, Dīwān, Beirut, n.d. 48, 49.
44. Oft night like a sea swarming has dropped its curtains over me, thick with multifarious cares, to try me,

45. And I said to the night, when it stretched its lazy loins followed by its fat buttocks, and heaved off its heavy breast,

46. 'Well now, you tedious night, won't you clear yourself off, and let dawn shine? yet dawn, when it comes, is no way better than you.

47. Oh, what a night of a night you are! It's as though the stars were tied to the Mount of Yadhbul with infinite hempen ropes; by stout flax cables to craggy slabs of granite.'

(b) in his description of a horse's speed.


2 Imru’ al-Qays al-Kindi , Diwān, 51-56
52. Often I've been off with the morn, the birds yet asleep in their nests,

53. My horse short-haired, outstripping the wild game, huge-bodied, charging, fleet-fleeing, head-foremost, headlong, all together the match of a rugged boulder hurled from on high by the torrent,

54. A gay bay, sliding the saddle-felt from his back's thwart just as a smooth pebble slides of the rain cascading,

55. Fiery he is, for all his leanness, and when his ardour boils in him, how he roars--a bubbling cauldren isn't in it!

56. Sweetly he flows, when the mares floundering wearily kicked up the dust where their hooves drag in the trampled track;
57. The lightweight lad slips landward from his smooth back, he flings off the burnous of the hard, heavy rider;

58. Very swift he is, like the toy spinner a boy will whirling it with his nimble hands by the knotted thread.

59. His flanks are the flanks of a fawn, his legs like an ostrich's; the springy trot of the wolf he has, the fox's gallop;

60. Sturdy his body - look from behind, and he bars his legs' gap with a full tail, not askew, reaching almost to the ground;

61. His back, as he stands beside the tent, seems the pounding-slab of a bride's perfumes, or the smooth stone a colocynth's broken on;

62. The blood of the herd's leaders spatters his thrusting neck like expressed tincture of henna reddening combed white locks.¹

al-Khansa also uses Istiqsā' in her elegies, for her brother Šakhr, for example:

البسيط

يقول صخر مقيم ثم في جهد لدى الضريح سريع بين أحجار ²

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¹ A. J. Arberry. The Seven odes, 64, 65.

² Tamādür al-Khansa', Dīwān, Beirut, n.d., 58
6. Saying Sakhr is dwelling there in the tomb, struck to the ground beside the grave, between the certain stones.

6. Depart then, and may God not keep you far (from him) being a man who eschewed injustice, and ever sought after blood wit.

7. You used to carry a heart that brooked no wrong, compounded in a nature that was never cowardly,

8. Like the spear-point whose (bright) shape lights up the night, (a man) bitter in resolution, free and the son of the free-man.”

In the Umayyad period, al-Farazdaq uses Istiqā' when discussing his thoughts his divorce.

2 Hammām al-Farazdaq, Diwān, Beirut, n.d., 1, 294
"1. I feel repentance like al Kusai'i"

Now that Nawar has been divorced by me.

2. She was my Paradise which I have lost,

Like Adam when the Lord's command he crossed.

3. I am one who wilfully puts out his eyes,

then dark to him the shining day doth rise."\(^1\)

**Istiqsā** in Ibn al-Rūmi's poetry

Ibn al-Rūmī employs *Istiqsā* very extensively in his Dīwān. This, in fact has the effect of lengthening many of his poems and his Dīwān is reputedly the largest in early Arabic literature.

Ibn Rashiq says that Ibn al-Rūmī clings tenaciously to every concept that he employs and examines it from every possible angle until he has killed it and knows that no one else can use it after him.\(^2\)

**Istiqsā** in Ibn al-Rūmī's short qaṣīdahs

*Istiqsā* is used in his thorough pursuit of (a) Hijā' in his lampooning of the intellect of the Mahju.

الواقع

Aleem al-Attin Qil ahlajin AQim fi Awaatnya Amin

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1. Reynold A. Nicholson, A Literary of the Arabs, Cambridge, 1930, 244
2. Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Rashīq, al-'Umdah, 2, 238
3. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 380, 381
1. Do you not see that I introduce my invective poems with love poetry?

2. So that they burn in the ears; then follows my hijà that burns and brands the hearts:

3. Like a bolt of lightning that after that comes after a shower, or the laughter of white ones that are followed by wailing.

4. I am surprised at him who, in his delusion, contends with me, exposes himself to an arrow that hits the mark.

5. I shall constrain him who thwarts me to a hard ascent and I shall "brand his sides" with my branding irons".¹

(b) Ghazal

الطويل

أعانقها و النفس بعد مشوقه إليها و هن بعد العناق تداي²


² Alì Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 6, 222
1. She is in my embrace but my soul desires her still.
Is there a closeness beyond embrace.

2. I kiss her mouth that my fever might end, but my mad thirst only grows.

3. The lovesickness in me is not of the kind healed by kisses.

4. Nothing, it seems, can cure my heart's thirst except to see our souls mingle.¹

Istiqṣāʾ in Ibn al-Rūmī's long qasidahs:
A good example is his qasidah on the attack of al-Basrah by the Zanj.


2. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 131-133
14. They entered her as though they were portions of night when it has become shrouded in darkness.

17. What terror they (the inhabitants) beheld by reason of them (the Zanj). What terror, fit to turn hoary the head of youth!

18. When they assailed them with their fire from right and left, from behind them and before,

19. How many a toper they choked with an (unexpected) draught!
How many a feaster they choked with (unpalatable) dish!

20. How many a man niggardly with his soul sought a way of escape, and they met his brow with the sword!

21. How many a brother beheld his brother felled to the ground, dusty of cheek, amongst (many) nobles (so) fallen!

22. How many a father beheld the dearest of his sons hoisted aloft on a trenchant blade!

23. How many a one most precious to his kinmen they betrayed, since there was not one there to protect him!

24. How many a suckling child they weaned with the edge of the sword before the time of weaning!

25. How many a young virgin with the seal of God (upon her) they violated openly without concealment!

26. How many a chaste maiden they carried into captivity, her face displayed without a veil!

27. They came upon them in the morning, and the people endured their cruelty through the length of a day that was as if a thousand years.

29. Who beheld them (the women) captives driven (like beast), bleeding from head to foot?
30. Who beheld them in the partitioning between the Zanj, being divided amongst them by lost?
31. Who beheld them being taken as bonds women, after themselves possessing bondswomen and servants.
32. I never recall what was perpetrated by Zanj without it kindles what a conflagration in my heart".¹

The reasons for Istiqsā' in Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry

1. al-'Aqqād claims that his Greek ancestry inclines him to follow a train of thought to its logical conclusion.² Muhammad Abd al-Ghani, however, disputes this.³
2. Since he found that he was generally misunderstood in his daily life, he assumed that people would also fail to understand his poetry, unless he explained his point exhaustively.⁴
3. People were jealous of his poetic ability and would continually refer disparagingly to his non-Arab origin and his status a maula, in order to

¹ A J Arberry, Arabic Poetry, 62-67
² From the introduction written by 'Abbās al-'Aqqād in 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān which is selected by Kamīl Kīlānī, Cairo, 1924, 1.
³ Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani, Ibn al-Rūmī, Cairo, 1960, 42
⁴ Tāhā Ḥusayn, Ḥadīth al shī'r wa al-Nathir, Cairo, 1957, 134
compensate for this. His use of Istiqsā' was therefore a symptom of his need to affirm his superiority in poetry.

4. He composed particularly long qasidah as a tribute to the mamduhin, who delighted in the frequent and lengthy references to themselves.¹

5. He had a natural inclination towards philosophy and logic (see 1 above), which he liked to deploy in his poetry.

The Effect of Istiqsā' on Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry

1. Istiqsā' makes most of his long qasidahs very clearly to artistic.²

2. Istiqsā' causes him to use unusual rhyme words in his poetry.³

3. His anxiety to push his images to the limit is pursued at the expense of the employment of Bayan.⁴

4. Because of the exhaustive treatment the nature of his images, these require no detailed explanation.⁵

5. Istiqsā' is responsible for a certain repetition of themes and expression in his poetry.⁶

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¹ 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 272
² Fawzī 'Atawi, Ibn al-Rūmī, 87.
³ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Halīm, al Istiqsā' fi-shīr Ibn al-Rūmī, Cairo, 1992, 73
⁴ Fawzī 'Atawi, Ibn al-Rūmī, 19
⁵ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Halīm, al Istiqsā' fi-shīr Ibn al-Rūmī, 72
⁶ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Halīm, al Istiqsā' fi-shīr Ibn al-Rūmī, 69-72
6. As a result of the conceptual unity generated by Ibn al-Rumi’s fondness for Istiqsā’, his qasidah tend to reveal greater coherence than earlier qasidahs. Consider for example the following lines by Zuhayr:

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47. I have grown weary of the troubles of life, and he who lives eighty years will, mayest thou have no father if thou doubt, grow weary.
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1 Zuhayr Ibn Abi Salmā, Diwān, Cairo, 1964, 29-31
49. And I know what has happened today and yesterday, before it, but verily, of the knowledge of what will happen tomorrow, I am ignorant.

48. I see death is like the blundering of a blind camel; him whom he meets he kills and he whom he misses, lives and will become cold."

* * *

50. And he who does not act with kindness in many affairs will be torn by teeth and trampled under foot.

* * *

52. And he, who makes benevolent acts intervene before honour, increases his honour; and he, who does not avoid abuse, will be abused."

51. He who is possessed of plenty, and is miserly with his great wealth towards his people, will be dispensed with, and abused.

* * *

56. He who keeps his word, will not be reviled, and he whose heart is guided to self-satisfying benevolence will not stammer".¹

These lines are only loosely connected with one another. This order could be altered, without any great damage to the sense for

example: 47, 49, 48, 50, 52, 51, 56. This order given here is equally meaningful as that given in the Dīwān version.

Istiqsā’ as a structural principle is not evident in Umayyad poetry, for example

الرمل
لبت هندا أنجزتنا ما نعد وشفت أنفسنا مما نجد١ و استبنت مرة واحدة إنما العاجر من لا يستن
زعمها سالت جاراتها و تعرت ذات يوم تبرد
أكما يدعني تصرني عمركن الله أم لا يقتصد
فتضحكن وقد قلن لها حسن في كل عين من تود
جسد حملته من أجلها و قدما كان في الناس الحسد
عادة يفتر عن أشدتها حين تجلوه أفاح أو برد

1. Would that Hind had fulfilled to us her promise, and healed our souls their sufferings.

2. Would that she had acted independently for once it is the weakling who does not act independently

3. They asserted that she asked our lady-neighbours, when she stripped herself one day to bathe,

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1 'Umar Ibn Abī Rabī‘ah, Dīwān, Beirut, n.d., 101
4. Do you see me to be as he describes me - in God's name answer truly! - or does he not observe moderation?

5. That they laughed together, saying to her Fair in every eye is the one you love.

6. (So they spoke) out of an envy with which they were charged because of her; and of old envy has existed amongst man.

7. A young maiden (is she) who, when she discloses her cool lips, there is revealed from them (teeth white as) Camomile-blossoms or hailstones

The ‘Abbasid qasidah also does not reveal Istiqṣā on a scale similar to that found in Ibn al-Rūmī’s Dīwān.

البسيط

السيف أصدوق أتياء من الكتب في حدو الحد بين الجد واللعب

بيض الصفائح لأسود الصحائف في متونين جلاء الشك والريب

والعلم في شبيب الأزماح لامعة بين الحماسين لا في السبعة الشهيبة

أين الرواية بل أين النجوم وما صاغوه من زخرف فيها ومن كتب تخرصا و أحاديثاً مليئة ليست ببيع إذا عدت ولا غريب

1 A. J. Arberry, Arabic Poetry, 41

2 Ḥābib Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Cairo, 1957, 1, 45-48
"1. The sword is truer in tidings than (any) writings: in its edge is the boundary between earnestness and sport.

2. (Swords) white as to their blades, not (books) black as to their pages - in their broad sides (texts) lies the removing of doubt and uncertainties;

3. And knowledge (resides) in the flames of the lances flashing between the two massed armies, not in the seven luminaries.

4. Where (now) is the recital (of the astrologers), indeed where are the stars, and the embroidery and that lie they fashioned concerning them?

5. (Mere) forgery and concocted stories, not to be reckoned either (firm-rooted) mountain tree or (even river-fringing: willow”.

The principal difference between the poets of the Jāhili, Umayyad and early ‘Abbasid period and Ibn al-Rūmī is the scale to which the desire for coherence is pursued. None of them follow a sustained train of thought in the way that Ibn al-Rūmī does.

\[\text{الخفيف} \]

\[\text{اعتقني أن أطيق أنك تستغرق عرضا للثنا مجد وطوله} \]

---

1 A J Arberry, Arabic Poetry, 50

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 5, 224
22. I am prevented from being lengthy because your eminence takes in the length and breadth of praise - is infinite,

23. And because of my fear of being turned out of a house where I love to dwell,

24. Where God Most High, cured me of malady and affliction cast off its fetters

25. After I had endured all kinds of trouble the burdens of which were more than I could bear

26. And a bereavement a fragment of myself which ensured illness and leanness to my body,

27. That my brother, nay my father, no my very self, would that I had been mourned myself before he went."¹

¹ Rhuvon Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rumi, 95

² 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmi, Diwân, 6, 134
43. Where are those palaces and mansions that were there? Where is that well built edifice?

44. Those palaces have been changed into rubbish-mounds of ashes and heaped dust;

45. Bugs and fire have been given authority over them, and their columns have crumbled down in utter destruction,

46. They have become empty of those that dwelt in them, and they are desolate, the eye descries nothing amongst those mounds

47. But hands and feet parted (from their bodies), flung aside amidst them skulls split asunder

48. And faces smeared with blood - may my father be a ransom for those bloody faces!
49. Trampled down perforce in contempt and humiliation, after they were so long magnified and revered.

50. So you may see them, the winds blowing upon them, scattering over them as they pass dark dust,

51. Lowly and humbled, as if they were weeping, displaying their teeth - but not a smile!”.¹

**Tashkhīṣ**

*Tashkhīṣ* is "A creative characteristic the potency of which derives sometimes from the extent of consciousness and sometimes from subtlety of consciousness".² *Tashkhīṣ*, which may be translated as "personification" is endowing inanimate objects with human attributes, so that they appear to speak, listen, see and discuss just like human beings.

**Tashkhīṣ in Ibn al-Rūmī’s poetry**

Literary historians have remarked on the extent to which Ibn al-Rūmī uses *Tashkhīṣ* in his poetry.³

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¹ A J Arberry, Arabic Poetry, 66-69
² 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 255
³ 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 258. See also Fawzī 'Aṭawi, Ibn al-Rūmī, 89.
The gazelle flies from you, oh one who has put on old age, as a gazelle flies from its hunter.

5. When greyness has taken you and you chase a gazelle you will not capture it.

6. At the chase you will not make it your quarry, rather at the chase you will be one of its quarries.

This example of Tashkhīs is, of course, quite common in Arabic poetry in general:

2 Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rumi, 103.
3 'Ali Ibn al-Rumi, Diwan, 6, 240.
37. Your enjoyment of the autumn festival has brought youth to the festival, so that it has become a noble youth.

38. And through you the spring festival also takes on the abundant bloom of youth.

* * *

40. They were for a time celebrated in Kisra’s faith, and now that he has gone, they are Muslims.

41. They were intended only to conform to the one faith chosen by the ruler.

* * *

44. And they love you as a grateful slave loves his master. They are fond of you, nay, they are passionately devoted.

In this poem, Ibn al-Rûmî gives the two festivals the human characteristics of age, of religion and of love.

* * *

Ibn al-Rûmî’s quotations from the Qur’an

الطويل

1 يقولون ما لا يفعلون مسية من الله مسوب بها الشعراء. 1

1 'Ali ibn al-Rûmî, Dīwān, 1, 52
Poets claim to do what they do not do, and this brings God's curse upon them.

And this is not the only thing; they also claim that rulers do what they not do.

The first line contains quotation from Surah (al-Shu’ara), 26

"224. And the poets - It is those straying in Evil, Who follow them.

225. Seest thou not that they wander distracted in very valley.

226. And that they say what they practice not?"
10. I am the fire that is fed by creation/mankind and that burns with stone and iron.

11. When people's skins are burnt in it, they get other skins in place of their burnt skins.

12. God asks "Are you full up? When all creation is in it, and it answers: "No, are there anymore?"

13. When they are thirsty I give them pus to drink; woe to the people who must drink pus!

Ibn al-Rūmī picks the ideas from al-Qur'an. Line 10 cites Surat al-Baqarah, 2

Fa'an lam tutwalaulun faqala walna famaaqala fanaqalna nara al-inn
wa quddthu al-nasa' wa al-hujara a'udh y LLC kai al-frain

"24. But if ye cannot - and of a surely ye cannot -
Then fear the fire whose fuel is men and stones -
which is prepared for those who reject faith."

And line 10 cites also Surat al-Tahreem, 66.

Ya allah bi-lladhi yina'mindona anvah laa al-sams w al-ahlitk nara
wa quddha al-nasa' wa al-hujara ala ylla malakit ghalat shad

"6. O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is Men and Stones over which Are (appointed) angels Stern (and) Severe, who
flinch not (from Executing) the commands they receive from God, But do (precisely) what they are commanded."


"56. Those who reject our Signs, we shall soon cast into the fire; As often as their skins are roasted through, we shall change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the penalty for God is exalted in power, wise."

Line 12 cites surah Qaf, 50.

"30. One day we will ask Hell", Art thou filled to the full? It will say "Are there anymore (to come)?"

Line 13 cites Surah Ibrahim

"16. In front of such a one is hell, and he is given, for drink, boiling fetid water."
10. We have kept the Sabbath. But there was a people to whom when they had no Sabath, {the fish} did not come”.

This line cites Surat al-A’raf, 7

"163. Ask them concerning the town standing close by the sea. Behold! they transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath. Their fish did come to them, openly holding up their heads,

But on the day they had no Sabbath, they came not!

Thus did we make a trial of them, for they were given to transgression"

1 'Ali ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 5, 300

2 'Ali ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 1, 51
1. A perfumed wine brought to us from the villages of Kūthā named “Umm al-Dahr (the mother of time) or al-Bint al-Kubra (Time’s eldest daughter)...

2. She - the wine saw Ibrahim’s fire in the days when it was ignited and it obtained from all possible properties its own beautiful properties.

Line 2 alludes to Surat al-Anbiya, 21

"69. We said O Fire! Be thou cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham"

7. The dizziness caused by it [wine] restores old age to youth; it is as though 'Isa had brought people to life.

This line echoes Sura al-'Imran, 3

\footnote{1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwan, 1, 122}
"49. And (appoint him) an apostle to the Children of Israel (with this message) I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it and it becomes a bird by God's leave; And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by God's leave; And I declare to you What ye eat, and what ye store in your houses, Surely therein is a sign for you if ye did believe;"

Ibn al-Rūmī also cites many other verses from the Qur'an.¹

**Colloquial usages and foreign words in Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry**

Although Ibn al-Rūmī was a ḥāfīz and was well educated, citing the Quran and early poetry frequently he nevertheless also employs colloquialisms and foreign words.

1. Colloquialisms

23. Women change their moods and mix one thing with another; they are unscrupulous, and they adopt any religion that suits them, at any time.

The standard forms of Niswan (نسوان) are Nisā (نساء) and Niswah (نسوة).

1. O you with the appearance of a barsatujah, I swear by God that you are not one with whom one would want to flirt.

Barsatujah is a Persian word which signifies a kind of fish found in the Indian Ocean.

16. She immorally causes entry and exit; she enjoys the ins and outs.

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 175
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 12
3 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 33.
Kharrājah and dakhkhālah are colloquialisms. The standard forms would be mukhrījah and mudkhīlah.

1. He is performing the Dastaband alone, even though he has something to distract him from the Dastaband.

The dastaband is a Persian dance in which people join hands: 
dast = hand, band = tie.

29. Even if he brings peas - Jalbana - or brings boiled meat or mentions the violet Binfasha - which comes after fruit - Halij.

Sakbaja - to bring - Sikbaj - it is a Persian word which means meat boiled in vinegar.

Binfasha, is a Persian word coming from شفiolet, and Halija is for Halilaj, a myrobalan.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 132
22. She has become ungovernable, so you continue to watch her closely, just as you would watch a money-changer on a dark day.

Shabruzi is Persian a combination of two words Shab = dark and Ruzi = day.

15. He greeted you at noon with sweet herbs and the scent of the drinking cup.

Shahsfaramm is a Persian word meaning sweet basil.

Jullasan is a Persian word meaning either Rose or Basil.

Ibn al-Rûmî’s quotations from other poets:

1. Quotations from Pre-Islamic poetry

1. 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dīwān, 3, 242

2. 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dīwān, 3, 294

3. 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dīwān, 1, 381
1. O Abu Ishaq do not be angry; I wish to be content with your forgiveness, without hoping for any reward.

2. I beg you not to allow the hopeful man to say to you I am content with return alone as my booty.

Ibn al-Rūmī quotes from Imru’ al-Qays.

9. I travelled much in many countries, until I was content with return alone as my booty.

8. You remind me of Imrauqlqais’s verse:— No defeat is worse than to be defeated by one who has been defeated.

Ibn al-Rūmī quotes from Imrauqlqais:

1 Imru’ al-Qays al-Kindi, Dīwān, 73.

2 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 173
14. No triumphing is worse than triumphising over you of a weak man; and no defeat is worse than to be defeated by one who has been defeated.

Ibn al-Rūmī sometimes quotes a complete line:

122. If benevolence did not include both clear and wholesome drinking and muddy drinking - and benevolence has many different watering holes,

123. Then the greatest of Nābighas would not have said to the spokesman of the white-haired King Ghassan.

124. I owe one kindness after another to ‘Amr and to his father, kindnesses with no strings in their tails.

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1 Imru’ al-Qays al-Kindl, Dīwān, 66.
2 ‘Ali Ibn al- Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 229-230
125. The scorpion is not more painful than separation, which has a sting that strikes you between your bowels and your chest.

126. It was because of the separation that he suffered that he said:

'Leave Me, Umaymah, to painful grief,

Ibn al-Rūmī quotes one whole line (124) from al-Nābighah's qasidah:

الطويل

على لعموم نعمة بعد نعمة لوالده ليست بذات عقارب

4. I owe one kindness after another to 'Amr and to his father, kindnesses with no strings in their tails.

And he also quotes:

كلئني لهم يا أميمة ناصب

from the same qasidah (line 1):

الطويل

كلئني لهم يا أميمة ناصب و ليل أقانيه بطيء الكواكب

1. O'Umayma, leave me to violent grief to a night of suffering with slow-moving stars.

He quotes all another half line from al-Nābighah:

النبع

1 al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, Dīwān, n.d., Beirut, 9

2 al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, Dīwān, 9
And he does not walk a span without there being above him flock of birds directing other flocks.

Ibn al-Rūmī quotes this half line from:

He is like a mountain that cannot ram anything, but which breaks heads trained to ramming.

al-A'şhā says:

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1. 'Ali ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 232
2. al-Nābīgah al-Dhubiyanī, Dīwān, 10
49. He is like one who rams a rock in order to break it; however he cannot harm it, and the antelope damages his horn.

From al-Mutalammis Ibn al-Rūmī quotes:

الطول

لذي الحلم قبل اليوم ما تترع العصا وقد قالها من قبل المنتم

12. "Before today, there was no knocking with a stick for the reasonable man" Al-Mutalammis said this before me.

الطول

لذي الحلم قبل اليوم ما تترع العصا

وما عام الأ insan آلا لتعلم

Before today the reasonable man did not require knocking with a stick. Men were taught only in order to learn.

(2). Borrowing from Umayyad poetry Ibn al-Rūmī says:

السيط

فأنا تعجب قوم قلت ممتئلا: قول الفرزدق فيما أدت السير

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 319
2 From, 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 319
3 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 110
If a group of people is surprised, I shall say, imitating what al-Farazdaq said on the authority of the biographers.

Are people surprised that I have made their lord, the Khalifah of Allah may he be watered by the rain, laugh?

Let the civilized man know that I am a man; whoever is the Akhtal of boorishness I shall be Jahhaf.

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1 Hammām al-Farazdaq, Dīwān, 1, 290
2 ʿAlī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 251
3 Ghīyāth al-Akhtal, Dīwān, 1979, Beirut, 2, 528
1. Have you not asked al-Jahāf if he will avenge the members of Salim and 'Amir who were killed?

al-Akhṭal and al-Jahāf met at a majlis of 'Abd al-Malik, and al-Akhṭal reminded al-Jahāf that his tribe (Taghlib) had killed a number of al-Jahāf's tribes (Salim and 'Amir) al-Jahāf left in anger and proceeded to keep a lookout for Taghlib, of whom he killed a large number.

This provoked al-Akhṭal's line:

الطول

أتم لوقع الجفاف بالبشر وقفة في الله منها المشتكي والمعلول

61 al-Jahāf has caused the death of my people. To God must those who complain and lament about this turn.

3. From 'Abbasid poetry Ibn al-Rûmî cites:

الطويل

أيا رب وجه في التراب عتيق ويا رب حسن في التراب رقيق

ويا رب حزم في التراب ونيدة ويا رب رأى في التراب زنبق

الأكل حي هالك وابن هالك وذو نسب في الهاكين عريق

فقل للغريب اليوم أنت راحل أي منزل دايم المحل سحيق

---

1 Ghiyāth al-Akhṭal, Dīwān, 1, 32
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dīwān, 4, 332-333
1. Many a noble old face is in the grave; and many a delicate beauty is in the grave too.

2. Many a resolution and effort are in the grave; and many a sound judgement is in the grave.

3. Every living thing will perish and is the offspring of some perishable thing; the man of lineage is noble only among those who perish.

4. Say to the stranger today: 'You will travel to a dwelling that is both new at hand and far away.

5. This base world will not despoil its people of the blaze or the smoke of fire.

6. In it the possessor is forced to swallow the loss of a perishable possession and one group of people is saddened by [the loss of] another group.

7. Do not think that this world, when you take up residence in it, is stable; your world is only a road [that leads elsewhere].

The first four lines are from Abù Nuwâs
1. Many a noble old face is in the grave; and many a delicate beauty is in the grave too.

2. Many a resolution and effort are in the grave; and many asound judgement is in the grave.

3. I see that every living thing will perish and is the offspring of some perishable thing the man of lineage is noble only among those who perish.

4. Say to your neighbour that you will travel on to a dwelling that is a great distance away.

There are a few differences between these lines of Abû Nuwâs and the way Ibn al-Rûmî quotes them in his poem: Ibn al-Rûmî reads a-lâ for arâ, qaribi l-dâr for al-gharibi l-yawma, za'în for ra'îl and nâ'i l-mahalli for dâni l-mahalli. These suggest that Ibn al-Rûmî was quoting Abû Nuwâs from memory.

\[\text{1 al-Hasân Abû Nuwâs, Diwân, Cairo, 1953, 621.}\]
Ibn al-Rûmî takes four lines of Di‘bil al-Khuza‘î and introduces them separately into a longer qasidah of his own, filling out the scenario sketched in Di‘bil’s poem.

This is the literary device known as mu‘aradah.

1. Khâlid and his guests captured the Muezzin [the cock] just as they would a hero - which flapped its wings while they wrung his neck.

2. They sent against him their sons and their daughters, some to pluck him and some to scald and roast him,

3. Snorting at one another as though they had shackled Khaqan or routed the squadrons of Na‘ît.

4. They ate him, and their teeth were pulled out by him and their backs were broken against the wall.

Ibn al-Rûmî says:

---

3. Having captured the Muezzin between them - It was as though they had routed the squadrons of Na’it.

4. They were left with the spoils of their slaughter and I saw some of them plucking feathers and others pulling.

19. They ate him and their teeth were pulled out by him, and their backs were broken against the wall.

29. They ate their Muezzin, and in the morning they were all treated to the punishment of an angry lord.

Ibn al-Rūmī uses lines of Di ‘bil elsewhere to similar effect.²

Ibn al-Rūmī adapts a line of Abū Tammām for his own purposes:

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¹ʿAlī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 87, 88.

²ʿAlī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 471-473
28. When self-esteem helps me against a man, I exact payment from him by not exacting payment.

Ibn al-Rūmī says

145. I have entrusted your self-esteem with repaying what you owe me and I am sure that it will act as it should in repaying.

(4) Contemporary Poets:

Ibn al-Musib says that Ibn al-Rūmī recited to him four lines of 'Ubayd Allāh Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn Ṭāhir and then six lines of his own in which he used 'Ubayd Allāh's lines:

1. تذكري من عسي و لعل نفسي و من أختيما حتى وسوفا
2. فكم علن قليما من قرون ألي أن شافها الحدثان شوفا
3. و لم نر قط أحد من زمن ولا بيذوره في الغدر لوفي
4. فأن قدمت خوفا جر أمان و أن فاتي خرب حوفا

1 Habīb Abū Tammām, Dīwān, 2, 316
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 160
3 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 219
1. It is myself that warns me against 'asa and la'alla (perhaps) and against their sisters hatta (until) and sawfa (will).

2. To how many centuries before me have they made their excuses until the present time shows them for what they were.

3. We have never seen a more treacherous time or one the treacherous vows of which are more readily fulfilled.

4. For when you presuppose dreadfulness, it brings security, and when you presuppose security, it brings dreadfulness.

Ibn al-Rūmī uses this as follows:

الوفاق

1. عسي و لعل طبيتنا حياتي و صاحبتهمها حتى و سوف 

2. تنشرني بروح الله بشري تشوف عن القلب الهم شوفا

3. ولأ أؤده لا لمستراح ظلت محالفًا حزنا و خوفا

4. و ذاقي لي القنوط لندي عيش يمر الصاب و النيفان نوفا

* * *

6. أرى للشيطان يوعدني شرورًا و وعد الله بالخيرات أوفي

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 219
1. 'asa and la'allahi are two sweetnesses of my life; and with them are hatta and sawfa.
2. They bring me goodness through the mercy of Allah; goodness that takes away grief from men's hearts.
3. If this were not a relief for me, I should still be an associate of grief and fear.
4. Despair has tainted the sweetness of my life with the bitterness of colocynth and poison.

* * *

6. I see Satan threatening me with evil, but Allah's promise of good is more reliable.

There were many poets in Ibn al-Rûmî's period but none of them had much influence on his poetry.

(1) al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk

Ibn al-Rûmî admired and transmitted the poetry of al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk but the latter seems to have had little effect on his own poetry, even though he quotes some of it. They never met; Ibn al-Rûmî was only 29 years old at the time of al-Ḥusayn's death.

Di' bil al-Khuza'î

Ibn al-Rûmî was still young when Di'bîl attained fame, and he admired and quoted two qasidah of his. One has already been mentioned. The other quotation runs:
I came to Ibn 'Amir and found him mentally sick and confused;

And my horses proceeded to drop their dung and to eat it at his door;

Famished, they complain to their Lord - al-Sabi 'i has prolonged their hunger.

Ibn al-Rūmī starts his qasdiah with these three lines. Then he proceeds

١. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, ١, ٤٧١
٢. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, ١, ٤٧١, ٤٧٢
4. I proceeded to curse him - asking that death would divided up their legacy among them.

5. They asked: What did he say? and I said to them, ‘Shit that he has produced.

*   *   *

7. I have searched through poetry and have extracted from it its filth for the slave (Ibn 'Amir)

*   *   *

11. How much destruction and how much harm has poetry done to him there?

When Di'bīl died, Ibn al-Rūmī was still only twenty five.

al-ṣuḥṭri (Abū 'Ubadah al-Walid b. 'Ubayd al-Ṭā'ī).¹

Ibn al-Rūmī met al-ṣuḥṭri at the house of 'Uthman al-Najim, a common friend and they became friends for a while. However, since al-ṣuḥṭuri was constantly boasting about his close relationship with the Caliph and the Emirs, al-'Alā Ibn Sa'id asked Ibn al Rūmī to lampoon at- Buḥturi, which he did.²

البيط

البختري ذنوب الوجه تعرفه وما رآينا ذنوب الوجه ذا لدب ³

¹ 'Abbās al-Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 209
² 'Abbās al- 'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 209
³ 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 301-303
9. al-Buhturi has a face with a long tail which you recognize; I have never found those whose faces have long tails to possess any culture.

14. I should feel sorry for a thousand razors working on his long beard, since he claims to descend form the chiefs of the Arabs.

16. Luck is blind. If it were not, you would not see it accruing to al-Buhturi, who has neither intellect nor lineage.

28. A slave who stirs up envy against the dead and so despoils them of what they say as free men with an army that makes no noise.
30. Poetry against which he stirs up envy as a gallant hero, and then recites it to people without shame.

31. Those who listen to him, without knowing who he is, say: "Well done! O greatest poet of those dead or alive!".

When he heard this long qasidah, al Buhturi sent Ibn al-Rûmî a present, at the same time warning him that this did not give him immunity from his anger. He was afraid of Ibn al-Rûmî's ability to lampoon his victims.

The relationship between Ibn al-Rûmî and other poets

Ibn al-Rûmî mentions more than twenty-six poets in his Dîwăn. He mentions four of them throughout his works.

a) Khâlîd al-Qahtubi

b) 'Ubayd Allâh Ibn 'Abdullâh b. Tâhir

c) Abû Ḥafṣ al Warrâq

d) Abû Bakr al Ḥuraythi

Khâlîd al-Qahtubi

1 Khâlîd al-Qahtubi: A poet at Ibn al-Rûmî's period
Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons him in more than ninety poems. Here is one example:

البسيط

لله خالد الطاني من رجل كم شهية من عرسي الفقه جالها!
أصرت زوجته يوما بحضرة و قد علت دون سقف البيت رجلاها
فقلت: هلا توارت عاك محسنة فقال تخشي عقاب الله مولاها
لو أنها كاشفتني بالزناء أمت أدى تنقيها بما لا تنقيه اللها

1. How excellent a man is al Tāī. How many obscurities of Fiqh has he made clear!

2. I saw his wife one day, in his presence, with her legs raised up until they almost touched the ceiling of the room.

3. I said would she not do better to hide herself from you?

He said: she is afraid of the punishment of God, her master.

4. Because she would be sinning if she concealed her adultery from me, since she would then fear me more than she feared God.

1 Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 120
'Ubayd Allāh Ibn Abd Allah\textsuperscript{1}

Ibn al-Rūmī praises and complains of him in more than forty seven poems.

1. May my soul be the ransom of a prince who is just to everyone except to me; in this I suffer injustice.

2. Procrastination and delay here interfered with his rewarding me, although my compact/agreement with him is that he would pay before being praised.

4. I did not suppose that I should have to wait for the rain of his gifts, seeing that others are given regular spring and autumn pasturage.

Also he says

\textsuperscript{1} A prince, poet and chief of Baghdad's police in Ibn al-Rūmī's time.

\textsuperscript{2} 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 258
10. I swear that if ever I can do without you, I shall be able to do without the water which I drink.

11. For how could anyone do without him through whose gifts comes wealth, and from him in whose hands are the abundant spring rains?

12. Even if I hold my praise aloof, it is lavish to you, and even if I turn my face away, it remains submissive to you.

16. I have never feared that my means would fail because of you, even if other people's means have done so.

---

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 142-143
17. Let me not be the only one whose portion in you is cut off; I am most anxious about this.

* * *

27. Live forever in happiness, health and safety, even if terrors terrify others.

28. You are to us a valley with fertile slopes; you are to us a lofty mountain of nobility.

Abū Ḥafṣ al-Warrāq

Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons him in more than thirty four poems.

المجتث
أبحفيس رويداً أمرك من بعض ميري 1
ما سالك الله نحوى فيما أظن لخيري 2
يا زوج تلك التي زوجها البرية غيري 3
أنت تشت عرضاً وأنت في طول أيري 4

1. O Abū Ḥufayṣ, gently. I cannot do without you. (I need you to provide some of my earnings - by lampooning you).

2. I think God has not sent you towards me for my advantage.

1 Abū Ḥafṣ al-Warrāq: A poet at Ibn al-Rūmī's period.

3. O husband of one whom is the wife of all mankind but me.

4. Do you insult my honour, when you are only as tall as my penis.

al-Ḥuraythi: Abū Bakr Alḥmad

Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons him in more than fifteen poems.

المصرح

لنا صديق كلا صديق غث علي أنه سمعين
من أفتي الناس لا أهما من كان منهم ومن يكون
إذا بدأ وجهه تقوم لذة بأجنفتها العيون

معترف مسر كفر بيدي ظهورا لها بطون

1. We have a friend who is not in fact a friend, he looks lean although he is fat.

2. He is one of the worst persons in the world, without excepting any that has lived or will live.

3. When people see his face, their eyes retreat behind their eyelids.

1 al-Ḥuraythi, A poet from al Mu'tazilah at Ibn al-Rūmī's period.

2 'All Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 236
7. He is a Mu'tazili who conceals his unbelief. He shows only their front, not their back.

'Ali Ibn Yaḥyā Ibn Abū Maṣṣūr

Ibn al-Rūmī praises and complains of him in more than twenty seven poems.

---

9. To the tribe of Yahya has my beast crossed the furthest reaches of a land, after which lie more,

10. And when my journey finally brought me to them I made my she camel knee down in the kneeling place

11. To a people to the like of whom the guest will never come by night - because of their generosity and extensive dwellings.

---

1 'Ali Ibn Yaḥyā. A Persian poet and writer who was a freind of al-Mutawakkil and the other Caliphs after him until al-Mu'tamid.

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 7, 8.
19. I made for one of them in order to praise him, about of whom my tongue is obedient even when it wants to disobey me.

21. Generous, whose gifts call out to those who run from him. Where are you running to from me? It is too late to escape.

Ibn al-Rūmī says:

الطويل
أبحسن طال المطال ولم يكن غرييك ممطولا و أني لصابر

فيا لبيت شعرى الحوادث جمعت تتجز الوعد الذي أنا ناظر

ليهنيء رجالا لانزال تجودهم محاذب من كلنا يديدك مواطر

منحتهم ماعا و جاءا كلاهما لهم منه حظ يملأ الفك و الور

و غادرتني خلف المقابل ضانعا و لله ماذا يا أين بدي تغادر؟

سيسألني الأقوم عما أثبتني به فيما أنت أياي أمير

1. Oh Abu Hasan, ('Ali Ibn Yahya is meant) a long time has passed, but nothing of your debt has been paid, even though I am patient.

* * *

4. I wish I knew, in the midst of life's vicissitudes, when you will fulfil your promise, which I am waiting for.

* * *

9. Happy are those men to whom rain clouds from both your hands are continually generous.

* * *

11. You have given them wealth and position; they have received of both an abundant portion that fills the hand.

* * *

14. You have left me lost, beyond your care. O Ibn Yahya for God's sake, [do you know] what [a great person] you are leaving?

* * *

35. People will ask me: What did he give you? So what answer would you like me to give?

36. Shall I tell them the truth? Is it a complaint or shall I tell a lie? If so Islam forbids telling lies.
Ibrahim Ibn al Mudabbir

Ibn al-Rûmî praises him and lampoons him in more than twenty poems.

كتاب
ما استشرقت منك العيون ضئيلة لكن عظما في الصدور جليلة
أقبلت في خلع الولاية طالعا الناس حولك يفضعون قبلا
فكأنك القدر المنير مكللا من طالعات سعوده أكيلة

لاحق منك بأن بهذا معشر رزقوك حظا في الحظوظ جزيلا
أصفتهم و أقمت عناك فيه ميزان قسط لابيل ممليا
فهدت عيونهم وأفرخ روعهم وآقام منهم من أراد رحيل

1. Men's eyes do not perceive you as insignificant, but as great and glorious in their hearts.
2. You advance in your robes of state, like a heavenly body and the people round you lay carpets before your feet as you advance.
3. Indeed you are like a bright full moon crowned with a crown of newly risen stars that are fortunate because of it.

١ Ibrahim Ibn al Mudabbir, A minister, writer and poet at Ibn al-Rûmî’s period.
٢ ‘Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 5, 152
9. People who have you with them have more right than you to be congratulated because of their great good fortune.

10. You have treated them fairly, and you have established your justice among them as an impartial balance that does not incline arbitrarily.

11. Their eyes have become calm, their fear has left them and those who intended to leave have remained.

Ibn al-Rûmî also says:

1. You have returned me my praises after keeping them for a long time and having sullied their new clothes,

2. You said, 'Praise anyone you like with them except me.' But who will accept second-hand praises.

3. Especially since you have steeped them in your shameful stains which will never disappear.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 2, 127.
4. A live man does not wear the shrouds of death after they are full of corruption.

**The Five Senses in Ibn al-Rûmî's poetry**

Ibn al-Rûmî employs all five senses when creating his images. He is particularly fond of colour images and metaphors suggesting colour, e.g. 'shyness' for red, and 'brightness' for white. The following are examples of pictures involving each of the five senses:

**Sight**

60. *A wine (daughter of a vine) is handed to us by an open-handed girl whose throat is covered by a necklace of gold [blazing on the throat like ripe grapes].*
62. On the breast of a pretty girl, who leaves passionate the man who is drained of all passion.

* * *

66. She bears both cup and jewels in such a way as to appear a temptation to those who watch and those who drink.

Ibn al-Rûmî wrote these two lines on an apple

المنسرح
أرسلني عاشق بحاجته فجئت بين الرجاء والوجل
لتيَتخليني بالرد حسبك ما ترى بعدي من حمرة الخجل

1. A lover sent me word of his desire, so I came in both hope and fear.

2. Don’t shame me by rebuking me; suffice it that you see the red flame of shame on my cheek.

Sound

الخفيف
تنغنى كأنها لا تغني من سكون الألوصال وهي تجيد
من هدز و ليس فيه انقطاع و شجو وما به تلي

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 5, 82.
14. She sang beautifully but seemed, because of the stiffness of her limbs, not to sing.

* * *

16. She sang softly without taking breath, and she sang with emotion with that in which there was no foolishness.

17. Her voice was pitched in long breath, enough to assemble the sighs of her lovers.

18. Coquetry and coyness attenuated it, and emotion rendered it almost inaudible.

19. You found it now dying, now living, pleasurable in both its complexity and its range.

In these last three lines, Ibn al-Rūmī changes the sensory medium of the picture from the language of the ear to the language of the eye.

Taste

الخيف

ومزاج الشراب أن حاولوا المزج وحمض ياطيب ذاك الرضاب

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 320.
73. When drinkers want to mix their wine they mix it with saliva - Oh, how sweet that saliva is!

Touch

3. How good are the nights of Aylul [September], when our beds are cool and the wind becomes calm.

4. And the cold then makes the hair stand up on the skin, so that the bellies of bed-fellows are closely entwined.

Scent

1. May a north wind greet you from me—a wind that circles round Paradise and brings ease and the scent of sweet basil.

Combined Senses

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1 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 29.
1. sight and sound

Ibn al-Rûmî on occasions combines the three senses of sight, taste and smell.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 6, 209.
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 6, 5.
3. A yellow wine the colour of which the bottle assumed and you would think that the contents of its skin were molten gold.

4. Sweet basil for its drinker, an antidote for those bitten by it, curing those who are sick because of it.

Sight, Sound and Smell

1. Abū Sulayman's methods are not acceptable, either in singing or in instructing children

* * *

3. When he sings it is like a drunk man's excrement pouring forth, the same colour as his force.

4. When he joyfully answers the drum [tunbur] each sound goes in different directions; his is in Egypt and the drum's in Khurasan.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 288.
5. The howling of a dog accompanying the string of a teasing bow, ugly as an ape and proud as Haman.

6. To the eye, his jaws seem, when they part as he sings, to be the jaws of a miller's mule.

al-'Aqqâd says concerning the rhyme word of the last line that Ibn al- Rumî dose not introduce the miller just for the sake of the rhyme but because the image would not be complete without it, because of the associations it conveys.¹

Smell, Sight, Taste and Touch

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¹ 'Abbâs al-'Aqqâd, Ibn al-Rûmî, 120.
² 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 3, 56
2. So big that it is almost a goose and so heavy its skin almost splits.

* * *

6. We proceeded to peel off its skin from its flesh and it was as thought as gold was picked away from silver.

7. Proceeded by Tarides like goodness proceeded by others.

* * *

9. And after it came delicate sweetmeats which pleased the palate and the throat.

The role of Perfection

Physical perfection

1. There is nothing of which the best does not appear in him, so that the eye moves only from him to him again.

2. The eye's enjoyment of him is always fresh, as thought its last look at him were its first.

Sensual Perfection

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 148
Ibn al-Rūmī frequently produces images that combine different kinds of sensory details.

Conclusions

(1) Istiqsā' before Ibn al-Rūmī was largely spontaneous.

(2) Ibn al-Rūmī employs Istiqsā' very extensively in his poetry, with the result that many of his qaṣidahs are too long.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 222

(3) His use of Tashkhīs exemplary.

(4) He avails himself of allusions to the Quran and to, Umayyad and Early 'Abbasid poetry in his Dīwān.

(5) His relationship with other poets of his period was not always good, he tended to use lampoon as extortion.

(6) His language is more colloquial and a less elevated style and vocabulary than other contemporary poets.
CHAPTER Three
The Exordium of Arabic poetry

The early Islamic poets tended to make their exordia (the first one or two lines) jazil and baligh because they believed that:

1. The poetry is locked, the exordium is its key;
2. The virtue of the contents of the exordium is to be judged by the first impression on the hearer;
3. Because of the critics judgement as to the superiority of the Jāhili qaṣīdah early Islamic poets made this their model, whether or not this way entirely germane to their own purposes.

Many poets such as, Bashshâr, Abû Tammam and al- Buṭluri like these critics, believed that the atlâl theme was the only suitable opening / exordium for the qaṣīdah.

Although, on the other hand, Muslim Ibn al-Walid, Abû Nuwâs and Ibn al-Rûmî include a few qaṣīdahs in their poetry which contains the atlâl motif, the majority of poems began quite differently.

In some cases, they even made fun of the atlâl motif, e.g. Muslim says

بالسيط

شغلي عن الدار أبكيها وأرتيها إذا خلت من حبيب لي مغانيها

دع الرواس تسد كلاما درجت ترابها ودع الأمطار تلبسها

1 Muslim Ibn al-Walîd, Diwân, Cairo 1970, 216
1. I am too busy to weep and elegise the traces now that my lover no longer has her dwelling there at any time.
2. let the winds raise the dust on them whenever they blow and let the rains efface them.
3. If my lover is staying there, I will stay there too, if she has moved on why should I not move on too?

We may compare this with Abû Nuwās, lines

الرمل
قل لمن يبكي على رسم درس واقفا ما ضر لو كان جلس
أترك الربع وسليما جالبا وأصطب كربمه مثل الفيس

1. Ask the one who is weeping standing at the traces that have been effaced, what harm would there be in his sitting down.
2. Leave Salma and the dwelling aside and drink a morning draught of wine of karkh, gleaming like a glowing coal.

And he says

الطول
لما باقي الأطلال غيرها البلي بكيت بين لايف بغير لحري

---

1 al-Ḥasan Abû Nuwās, Diwān, 134
2 al-Ḥasan Abû Nuwās, Diwān, 10
1. O' you who are weeping, over the ruins which have been changed by the effects of time may you weep with an eye whom flow and does not dry up.

2. Do you describe a dwelling place that has been altered and effaced? I am hostile to whatever you are content to describe it as.

1. Leave to the weeper his ruins and his traces and leave his camels and his litters to the one who drives them along singing.

2. And leave to the seducer both his foolishness and youthful folly and leave to the frivolous man his songs and his wine.

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1.‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 223

2.‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 235
1. The tears of an outpouring over the site of the camp
after it has empty of its dwellers

3. What right has it, by giving gifts and assistance to
its people, to have someone to look after it?

4. So leave off standing by it, it is one of the stopping-
places of error.

**Ibn al-Rūmī's new type of exordium**

Ibn al-Rūmī prefaces many of his poems with a new kind of
exordium

1. Praise of God

1. I praise God, like one who gives thank for a favour,
glad, -not refusing -to praise his lord

1. 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 314

2. 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 35
1. I praise God quite sincerely, in the morning, but also in the night and in the evening.

1. I praise God over and over again, one who returns to God again and again.

1. I should praise, after God in every shrine, Abū Hasān, I mean ‘Ali Ibn Al-admad.

1. We praise God when he bestows and gives life, after the star of the earth was almost overthrown.

2. Ibn al-Rūmī starts with gardens, flowers and fruits.

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1 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 250
2 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 194
3 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 286
Gardens in which the earth preens itself, as a young girl preens herself in abrād.

1. Birds sing, weep, complain of love and passion and converse in the garden.

1. I saw a fresh nosegay of narcissus in my love's hand.

1. Eyes are the most beautiful in face and the narcissus is more like them than anything else.

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1. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 2, 195
2. 'Ali bn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 2, 95
4. 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 3, 321
1. You never find a narcissus compared with roses when you require thought and looking.

3. Ibn-al Rūmī also begins several of his exordia with the Mahrajān.

1. I like the Mahrajān-autumn festival because brilliant kings feel happy because of it.

4. Ibn al-Rūmī weeps for youth.

1. I weep for my youth because of women’s need and I have in it other requirements for me that I weep for also.

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 100.
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 30.
3 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 381.
4 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 390.
1. Youth is slipping off you like a cloak, and nothing will last as long as day and night alternate with each other.

"1. My head is grey though it is not time for growing grey. The wonders of time are not strange i.e., one can not be surprised at what time does."²

The Revivification of Poetry in the ‘Abbasid Period

There are various features of ‘Abbasid poetry which are largely absent from earlier poetry. In the particular case of Ibn al-Rūmī one can mention three broad areas of intellectual and emotional endeavour which distinguish his versifying; philosophy, asceticism and logic. These are not, of course, wholly independent of developments within society and trends within scientific progres Zuhd³ is a reaction to mujun, and vice versa, while philosophy and logic owe their popularity

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¹ 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 125.
² Rhurun Guest, Life and Work of Ibn er Rūmī, 82.
to the translation movement and the amassing of books in the Bayt al-Hikmah.

**Philosophical Poetry**

By this I mean what the poets assimilate from the human experience and how they use it in their poetry, the best known example of this is Abù al-'Alà al-Ma'rî. Take this poem for example:

1. Souls stretching out their necks towards the resurrection and error standing upright in folly!

---

1 Abù al-'Alà al-Ma'arî, al-Luzûmiyyât, Cairo, 1891, 1, 88-89.
2. You refuse obstinately ever to do a good action, and (yet) you make ready for the day of forgiveness!

3. Be not deluded by a smile from a friend, for his thoughts are (all) hatred and guile.

4. And men, whether children or aged (the latter) grow grey in error or (the former) grow up (in it).

5. You foolishly love your worldly life, but it never bestowed on you what you desired.

6. Ever since your carnal soul become lusty as a young camel, you amble and shamble along in error.

7. Though the sleep of mortals shall be long, for the sleepers there must surely be an awakening.

11. Neither shall any power protect you from being carried into captivity not though the darkness be a veil over you.

15. Eloquence did not ward off death from Socrates, neither did any medicine protect Hippocrates against it. 

Ibn al-Rūmī says:

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1 A.Y. Arberry, Arabic Poetry, 112-115.
1. Your enemy gets information about you from your friend, so -for this reason-don't have too many friends,
2. Because usually you see illness occurring from food or drink.
3. When the friend turns away, then he has became a clear enemy and every thing is on the point of turning (for the worse)
4. If the majority were good, then it is fitting to be one of their companions.
5. But how rarely have you had many friends without falling in with wolves in (lambs) clothing.
6. So leave excess on one side; how often has excess been found to be despicable, and how often has paucity been approved.

\(^1\) 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî Diwân,1, 246-247.
7. The briny oceans cannot quench the thirst, that is to be found in sweet-tasting drops.

1. I have seen time advance every scoundrel and put down every man of honourable character.

2. Just as every living thing downs in the sea while a corpse continues to float on it.

3. or like the scales which do not tip in favour of every full measure but do tip in favour of every light weight.

4. Such is his way with us, but we, no matter how long he continues, are in lofty fortresses

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1 Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 231.

See also Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 160.3, 132.4, 212.5, 196.6, 31, 189.
5. Which were built by our forefather so we could protect ourselves there and in pure souls.

6. If his barbaric conduct increases despite us, then we will bear it with intelligent minds.

7. And we will protect ourselves repulse his tyranny with patience until we drive it away with subtle reasoning.

8. Until God in whom is placed all hope against his (i.e. Times) calamities shows pity to his pure (worshipper)

Zuhdiyyât (ascetic poetry)

Zuhd as a reaction against the shamelessness of Mujun and Lahû appears in the Abbasid period.

Zuhd is best characterised by the early 'Abbasid poet Abû al-'Atâhiyyah

He says

الواقرأ

إلهي لا تذرني فإني مترب متر بالتي قد كان متي

ومالي هيلة إلا رجالي وعفوك إن عفوت وحسن ظني

فقم من زلة لى في البلاء وأنت علي ذو فضل ومن

إذا فكرت في قدمي عليها عضست ألم لي وقرعت سنى

1 Ismâ'îl Abû al-'Atâhiyyah, Diwân, Beirut, n.d., 263.
1. My God don't chastise me because I agree with all what I have done.

2. I have no other contrivance but my hope of your forgiveness, if you will forgive me and my suspicions are correct.

3. How often have I slipped into error, though you are gracious and bounteous to me.

4. When I contemplate my regret for (having committed) them, I bite my fingers and gnash my teeth.

5. I am possessed by the splendour of the world and pass the whole of my life in desire.

6. If I were really Zähid then I would have turned the back of the shield to its people.

7. People think that I am a good person, but I am the worst of creation if you do not forgive me.

Ibn al-Rūmī himself composed Zuhd poetry, an indication that he was torn in two different directions- whether follow to Muijn and Lahū, or to be a good Muslim.

Ibn al-Rūmī says
الجز

1. The gardens of Eternity long for those who are Zuhhād in this world-
2. Worshippers who flee from their sins to the compassionate one
4. This world shows its attractions to them and tries to hinder them but they are not hindered.
5. When it encounters them, they must be tranquil, with downcast eyes.
9. They clamour to God while their tears stream forth.

\textsuperscript{1} Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 238-284.
15. We fear you, though you may forgive us, the heart of man is tremulous.

And he says

1. The arrows of Doom are aimed at you, so set limits on yourself before death.

2. There has been counted, before you, those whom you saw (die), and it will not be long before they count you also.

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\(^1\) 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 5, 59, 60-see also 1,394.2, 51, 86, 186.4, 122.
3. So leave foolishness and error aside- you must guide yourself aright.

4. In your case, it seems to me that your death has already been announced and that the mourners have already bemoaned your loss.

5. That you have left your well-constructed dwelling empty and have taken up residence in your grave.

6. That you are alone in the Abode of decay and the two Angels are all alone with you.

7. That all your people have been consoled for you and they have forgotten ever having known after some days.

8. Enjoying what you have amassed and seeing no need to praise you for it.

9. Comfortable, while you are under the ground, and the worms eat your flesh.

10. They have consigned you to the grave and have cushioned your cheek with earth.

Ibn al-Rūmī’s Use of Logic

Ibn al-Rūmī makes frequent use of logic in his poetry -al-Istiqsā’- and he is the best poet in this field for example he says:-
31. Because of the world's heralding of its vicissitudes, the child starts crying the moment he is delivered.

32. If not then why is he crying, because the world is more spacious luxurious than where he was.

33. As soon as he sees the world, he cries out, as if scared of the pains he will suffer there.

34. The soul has many conditions in which it seems to see what will happen to it in the future.

**Weeping the youth**

*Ibn al-Rûmî* says:

1. لا تتج من بيكي شبيته إلا إذا لم بيكي بدم
2. عيب الشبيبة غول سكرتها مقدار ما فيها من اللحم
3. لنسرنا رأيها حق رؤيتها إلا زمان الشيب و الهم
4. كالشمس لا تبدو فضيلتها حتى تغشي الأرض بالظلم

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2. *'Alî Ibn al-Rûmî*, *Diwân*, 6, 102, 103.
You should not blame a man who weeps his youth unless because he does not weep for it with blood.

2. The worst of youth is the ache that comes after its intoxication, a pain as intense as are its delights,

3. We can never see it clearly as it is until we have become old and worn out,

4. Just as the virtue of the sun does not appear until the earth is beset with darkness.

5. May a thing is not manifested by its existence until it has ceased to be.¹

An additional example of creating self-contained qasidahs from earlier topics and motifs is well exemplified in the following short piece which should, perhaps, be classed as a sort of epigram ², a characteristic of much of Ibn al-Rūmī's shorter verse. Indeed, in Ibn al-Rūmī's longer poems it would not be injudicious to say that his ruminations on such concerns as lost youth, while actuated by a desire to elicit the mamduh's sympathy (thereby opening his purse-Strings), often attain the status of self contained entities which could easily be extirpated from the rest of the qasidah and allowed to stand as

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¹ Rhurun Guest, Life and Work of Ibn er Rūmī, 68.

independent pieces. This is a trend which is, in general, typical of Abbasid poetry which strove for a greater unity and more effective cohesion, tending to avoid the excessive length of Ibn al-Rûmî's qasidahs.

There was no mention of grave images, of wine or of tribal factionalism. The lampoon was also strongly disapproved—witness al-Ḫutayyâh's punishment at the hands of 'Úmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭâb for his lampoon of al-Zibriqân Ibn Badr as he says

لكلام
دع المكارم لترحل لبعيتها وأعد فات الطاعم للناسي

1. Leave noble deeds alone! Do not travel in search for them, but sit at home as you will be fed and clothed (like a woman) there.¹

With the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate and its desire to use poetry as propaganda, Arabic verse enjoyed a resurgence. Urbanisation in many areas and lands of the Abbasid Empire, together with the use of Arabic as an artistic medium by non-Arabs, led to the wholesale regeneration of Arabic Poetry.

¹See the narrative of this escapade in Abû al-Faraj al-İṣfahâni, al-Ağhâni, Cairo, 1969, 2, 596-607.
The ‘Aims’ of Poetry (al-Aghrād al-Shī‘riyyah)

The ‘aims’ of Jāhili Poetry were panegyric (madh), elegy (rithā‘), love poetry (ghazal), lampoon (Hijā‘) and self-glorifying poetry (fakhr). When Islam appeared a new poetic intention was born to adapt poetry to the strictures of Islam and to defend the faith, consequently.

Panegyric

The majority of Abbāsid poetry is panegyric in form, which did not experience as much regeneration when compared with other Abbāsid genres because the poets largely followed the method of the Jāhili panegyrics although they did bring about a number of formal changes.

Shawqī Dayf says

The Abbāsid poets followed the pre-Islamic exordium - in panegyric poetry- because they felt that this exordium dealt with every feature, good and bad, in the human predicament and not because they wanted to prove any relationship with their ancestors.

In Jāhili panegyric poetry one finds nobility, bravery, pride and chivalry all of which are mentioned also in Islamic, Umayyad and

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1 I have deliberately excluded description (wasf) from these ‘aims’; the ‘aim’ of much pre-Islamic wasf is subjective, being concerned with the poet and not the object described.

2 Shawqī Dayf. al-‘Aṣr al-‘Abbāsi, 2, 206.
Abbasid poetry besides specific Islamic characteristics like Godliness, fear of God and justice.

Indications that the caliphs, princes and patrons of whatever social standing, were much concerned with their religious reputation.

Ibn al-Rūmī’s Panegyrics

Most of Ibn al-Rūmī’s poetry is panegyrical because his poetry was the only way for him to feed himself and his family.

It is not easily to say that any long qasidah by Ibn al-Rūmī can be characterised as having only one intention (gharad) because each long qasidah contains more than one intention. For example many of his panegyrical qasidahs contain ghazal, rebuke, description and gnomic wisdom, thereby rendering it difficult to class them under one intention. When I say for example that this is a panegyrical asqidah, it is only because this is how Ibn al-Rūmī mention it.

His panegyrical exordia follow two different pathways

One resembles the traditional, pre-Islamic exordium, the other is more in keeping with the Abbasid regenerated exordium.

Nazik Sāba Yarid says that Ibn al Rūmī does keep himself to the pre-Islamic exordia by starting with Nasib but sometimes in place of that he starts with bemoaning lost youth. ¹

Ibn al-Rūmī says

¹ Nazik Sāba Yārid, Ibn al-Rūmī, 48.
1. Is there a blazing coal between my ribs, for what is now past, or it is a sigh (constantly) renewed.

Or he can begin with argumentation

1. My companions said: Go and buy us some wine I said—hold on! I have a lot of wine,

2. For as long as Ibn Sa'id is alive and with me, then my standing is great.

Or by describing a journey by river

1. When one day a far off destination made me settle by the river of Abū al-Khasib.

Or he can begin directly

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 111.
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 76.
3 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 376.
Qāsim, with the beautiful face, you whose love comprises (all) desires.

Ibn al-Rūmī’s panegyric qasidah can-sometimes be very long.

Three hundred and thirty seven lines

1. Tears were shed and spilled on the traces after they had become empty of their inhabitants.

And sometimes become very short two lines:

1. He has no faults in his character, except that he makes empty promises of generosity.

Ibn al-Rūmī directs his praises towards three classes of people:

1. The Caliphs

Ibn al-Rūmī was contemporary with nine caliphs

1. al-Mu’tasim (r.218 AH - 227 AH)

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 57.


3 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 458.
2. al-Wâthiq (r.227 AH - 232 AH)
3. al-Mutawakkil (r.232 AH - 247 AH)
4. al-Muntaṣir (r.247 AH - 248 AH)
5. al-Musta’in (r.248 AH - 252 AH)
6. al-Mu’tazz (r.252 AH - 255 AH)
7. al-Muhtadî (r.255 AH - 256 AH)
8. al-Mu’tamid (r.256 AH - 279 AH)
9. al-Mu’taḍid (r.279 AH - 289 AH)

But he only praises four of them

1. al-Musta’in.
2. al-Mu’taḍid.
3. al-Muhtadî.
4. al-Mu’tamid.

Their caliphates coincide with Ibn al Rumi’s maturity

1. al-Musta’in

Ibn al-Rûmî praises him with one stanza

مجزوء الكامل
صبرا أمير المؤمنين فلا يجي الصبرينا١
كنا نبني بالخلاقة فبلك المنتمعينا
حتى إذا صارت إليك هدي الرشدينا
* * *

1. Amir al-Mu'minin be patient, God requites those who are patient.

2. Before we would congratulate those who enjoyed the Caliphate.

3. Until when you became Caliph, you guided (it) in the path of the Râshidûn (Rightly Guided Caliphs).

6. Be patient for it; those whom you approve as helpers will not cease to be your aides.

7. It is the trial of the God-fearing and the seduction of those devoted to luxury.

2. al-Muhtadî

Ibn al-Rûmî praises him with two lines:

1. Say to the Imam who is rightlyguided, like his name, and who is the same in secret and public.

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1 'Ali ibn al-Rûmî, Diwan, 3, 115.
2. You have established the right of some people against others, so establish the right of the people against time.

3. al-Mu'tamid

Ibn al-Rūmī praises him with two poems

1. There are two festivals- 'Id al-Adhā and Mahrajān, the like of which are never celebrated on the same day.

2. Is not one a festival of denial, the other a festival of joy?

They have been neighbours, How wondrous a time

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 15. 6, 195

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 195
4. May God keep the Imam so that he may (once more) witness a conjoining of their likes (on the same day)

5. Mu'tamid has not ceased to be a pillar—even eloquence speaks of his generosity.

6. In every land and among every race tongues speak in praise of his kindnesses.

4. al-Mu'taqid

Ibn al-Rūmī praises him with twenty six poems.¹

1. People claim that there is only one star of good fortune—no more— or that there are two.

¹ 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 50, 56, 396

₂ 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 209.
2. I said "steady on! The sun and the full moon will meet, and then how many pairs (of offspring) will come from two felicitous stars.

3. Shortly, the daughter of his client, the lord of the two Maghribs, will meet the Imàn.

4. And the Imàn will be given blessings from her, all of them a delight for the Imàn.

2. Dynasties

Ibn al-Rūmī praises:

1. The Tāhirids

2. The family of Wahb

This poem is praise of these dynasties will be exemplified in one poem devoted to each.

1. TĀHIRIDS

"The Tāhirid family, semi-independent vassals of the khalif, had established a hereditary right to govern Baghdad and some adjacent territory, as well as to rule over the provinces of Khurāsān and other dependencies of the califate in the east.

One of the family, Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbdallāh Ibn Ḫāhir, had been appointed governor of Baghdad by his brother the viceroy of Khurāsān when Ibn er-Rūmī was 16 years of age, and on the death of his overlord in 248 A.H kept this office, but was promoted to holding direct from the caliph ......... Ibn er-Rūmī would naturally have taken the first opportunity of endeavouring to obtain his support. He courted him, but
appears to have failed to gain his favour ....... Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdallāh may have abstained from rewarding Ibn al-Rūmī because he was not satisfied with his panegyric or simply because he was stingy .......

Never the less when Muḥammad died towards the end of 253 Ibn al-Rūmī mourned him in two elegies ....

............ Muḥammad Ibn’Abdallāh Ibn Ṭāhir, was succeeded by his brother ‘Ubaidallāh Ibn’Abdallāh, who had been his lieutenant, and of all the Ṭāhirids was the most distinguished for culture and literary achievement......Born at about the same time as Ibn er-Rūmī , he survived him for several years. Ibn er-Rūmī’s Dīwān contains more poetry addressed to him than to any other person, except one or two .....when ‘Ubaidallāh first became governor the signs of the decay of the Ṭāhirid kingdom had hardly become obvious although its weakness had been growing for some time one of the first manifest reverses of the Ṭāhirids was the loss of the province of Tabaristān to the ‘Aliyid El Ḥasan Ibn Zaid after a series of wars which were concluded by 255 A.H.

In that year Sulaimān Ibn ‘Abdallāh, who had been expelled from Ṭabaristān where he had been the Ṭāhirid governor was appointed governor of Baghdad in the place of his brother ‘Ubaidallāh Ibn ‘Abdallah.....Ibn er-Rūmī appears on the side of ‘Ubaidallāh.

At any rate, when Sulaiman was governor Ibn er-Rūmī tried to win his favour, It does not appear how long Sulaimān Ibn ‘Abdallah remained governor of Baghdad but by 259 A.H. he had been replaced
by 'Ubaidallāh Ibn 'Abdallāh,... 'Ubaidallāh remained in office till 262 A.H. when he was replaced by his nephew, Muḥammad Ibn Ṭāhir.... 'Ubaidallāh became governor in...266, but had given up the post in 271 A.H. "

Ibn al-Rūmī praises 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubaḍ Allah al-Ṭāhir with this qasidah which he begins with a lament for lost youth.

الطويل

بدأ الشباب ففي رأسي فلمي عما كان كشفت ريح غماما تلسطخش

وأحبت قماة الظهر قوس منتها وقد كان معدولا وإن عشت فخفا

وحدث نقصان القوي بين ناظري

وسمعي وبين الشخص والصوت برزخا

وأحبت إذا وقت للشخص لمحتي طوت دونه سهبا من الأرض سريعا

وأحبت إذا وقت للشخص لمحتي طوت دونه سهبا من الأرض سريعا وقلت إن جربت بل ما أملت من قبل إلا انتهست

وأصبحت عما للانفاذ موقرا وقد كنت أحب الشباب لها أخا

وأما عجب أن كان ذلك فإنه إذا أمره أمرته لرودة شيخا

ويا عجب أم أجزعت ولم أكن جزوعا إذا ما عضه الدهر الخدا

"1. Grey hair has appeared in my head to remove the blindness of my heart, as a wind clears away clouds that have assembled,

1 Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rūmī, 10-14.

2. For surely when the welcome signs of broad dawn are seen it will (soon) dispel the night;

3 & 4. My back is bent, the failure of my powers bars my vision and my hearing,

5. Time was my sight would cross a wide expanse of desert to its aim.

6. And my hearing cover a league to take in a moderate shout,

7. But now vicissitudes have blotted out my youthfulness which disappears protracted,

8. So that I have become a revered uncle to a maiden to whom once I have been a brother.

9. In this there is nothing strange, for as events buffet a man they make him old,

10. But what is strange is that it should disturb me, I am not one to be moved or to exclaim when fate afflicts him".¹

After ten lines Ibn al-Rūmī comes to his main point and starts his praise:

¹Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rümi, 61

له سيماء بين عيني مبارك

إذا ما احتلها روع ذي الروعة أفرخا

صريح لو استصرحته يابن طاهر على الدهر إذ خنّى عليك لأصرخا

من المصليين الذين تقرعوا شماريخ أطوال من المجد شمخا

إناس متى سالت نافس حظهم ياباحهم في الجود وياس بخبخا

إذا ما المساعي أجرت حلابتها

بدوا غرا في أوجه السبق شدخا

بهم جعل المجد التألع مصدرًا ليس بإنسى سواءً مورخا

بعد وأسرف في مدح ابن ظاهر قمت على الإسراف فيه موبخا

أبو أحمد ليث البلد وغيثها إذا حطمة لم تبق في العظم منفخا

فتي لم يزل في رأس علياء دونها بمرقبة باض الألوق وفرخا

إذا راح في رياحه حسبته هنالك بالمسي الذكي مضخما

ينيخ المطي الراغبون ببابه

ولو لم ينخوه إذن لنتوخا

تظل متى صافحت أسرار كفه

تحم عيونا من نداهن نضخا

إذا وعد اهتزت الأرض نضرة

وأتيت منها كل ما كان أسخا

إلا أوعذ ارتجت فإن تم سخطه

تهات جبال الأرض في الأرض سوها

ولست ثلاقي عالما ذا براعة بأربع منه في العلوم وأرسخا

ولم تزل أرا أوقدت مثل ناره لدى الحرب أنوى للأعداء وأطبخا

كفي زمنا أدى الأمير و أهله به وبهم إن حاول النذخ مبنخا

هو الطرف أجره الملوك ومسحت قدما له ويجها أغر مشخرها
11. Take comfort then and think of that, do not forget to praise a man, whose face is brilliant as the moon,

12. Who has between his eyes a sacred sign which dissipates the fear of one alarmed who sees it,

13. A succourer to whom should you appeal, Ibn Tahir for aid against time when it brings misfortune he would give you help.

14. One of the line of Muṣʿab who stands higher than summits of greatness,

15. People of whom men loath to give them their due readily commend the generosity and valour.

16. Conspicuous when the race of enterprise is run

17. By them the tale of eminence is headed and by no other will be concluded.

18. Pass every bound in praise of Ibn Tahir and exceed, you will not be reproached for excess concerning him.
19. Oh Abû Ahmad, lion of the land, its rain when a
year of dearth has left no marrow in the bone,
20. Who dwells forever in a mountain at a level higher
than the eyrie where the griffin lays its eggs and
brings forth its young!
21. When he goes in the odour of his good repute it
seems as if he was perfumed with fragrant musk.
22. At his door his suitors make their camels kneel
and if did they not, the camels would stop there by
themselves.
23. When you take him by the hand you will touch
gushing springs of liberality.
24. At his promise the earth is moved towards him and
salt regions produce herbage,
25. At a threat of his it quakes and if his displeasure is
full, mountains will fall in turn and sink into the ground.
26. You will not meet a learned man of note more
erudite in the various branches of science or sounder,
27. Nor will you see a fire like his in war, so deadly
and consuming to his enemies.
28. He is the horse that kings have made run in the
race and long have found victorious.
29. If an age wants a boast it is boast enough to have
produced him.
30. When he is the head of the sons of Mus'ab and they are captains of valiant youths,
31. Whatever land of the enemy he wishes he will tread, whatever land of the enemy he wishes he will subdue.
32. He is the Tàhir (pure) descendant of those Tàhirs who have gone before without any of them having worn honour impugned or sullied.
33. By him God strengthened the khalifate when its support had grown exceedingly weak and perished.
34. To one who seeks praise from me like the praise I have given him since my affection has been established and become the marrow of my bones.
35. I say, Away, I shall never see in your ash any spark that one like me can fan into flame.¹

Wahb’s family

¹This family belonged originally to Wàsit. They had been in government employment since Umayyad times and could boast of continuous service for more than a century and a half.

The members of the family whom Ibn er-Rûmî mentions in his poems are Sulaimàn Ibn Wahb, his three sons, Ahmäd, Wahb and 'Ubaidallâh, and the two sons of ‘Ubaidallâh, El Hasan and El Qâsim. Sulaiman Ibn

¹Rhorun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rûmî, 61, 62.
Wahb the head of the family in the middle of the 3rd century, began employment as a scribe of Mamûn at the age of 14. He held various offices and was vizier to El-Muhtadi also to El Mu'tamid for a short period.

Sulaiman's son, Aḥmad, was a poet and author, he held some high positions in the government service and died in 285. His son, Wahb was in the government service before 260 and appears to have been still living in about 280. Sulaiman's other son, 'Ubaidallâh Ibn Sulaiman, had important government employment early.

'Ubaidallâh's son, El Ḥasan, was given charge of several government offices, but his father made him appoint deputies to some of them by whom he was virtually superseded. He was learned and had written a commentary on Euclid. He died in 284.

His other son, El Qâsim was in the service of the government probably from the time that 'Ubaidallâh becomes Wazir...

Ibn er-Rûmî addresses several poems to the family of Wahb...

'Ubaidallâh's young son El Qâsim was Ibn er-Rûmî's principal patron. Ibn er-Rûmî addressed more poetry to him than to any one else.

At one period Ibn er-Rûmî was high in El Qâsim's favour, but ultimately he becomes estranged from him. And it is on record that El Qâsim treated Ibn er-Rûmî with rudeness in the autumn of 278 when the family had been back in authority for only a few months.”¹

¹ Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rûmî , 33-35.
Ibn al-Rûmî praises al-Qâsim:

أيها القاسم القسيم رواء والذي ضم وده الأهواء
والذي ساد غير مستنكر السوء في الناس، واعتكى كيف شاء

لم يزل يجعل النمس صباحا كلما بدل الصباح مساء

قال رأس الأوس لما رآه وصف القدر نفسه لخفاء

1. O al-Qâsim with the beautiful face, you whose love comprises (all) desires.

2. Who has become a leader without his leadership proving objectionable to the people and has become exalted at will.

4. He never ceases to turn evening into morning, when morning is turned into evening

7. The head of all heads said when he saw him, “The full moon has described itself—there’s no doubt!”

With the words: قمر بدر ضياء و سنا

which poets tend to use more often for women not for men.

\(^1\) 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 1, 57.
12. His justness has encompassed all his subject, but I have met with hostilities from him.

13. Is it pleasant that you cast me aside when I have already had hopes of your pleasant opinion (of me).

14. And when the bird of good omen, which heralded a beautiful kingdom, (had appeared) to me.

In verse 12 Ibn al-Rūmī uses the word ٦ ١ ٣ ١ ٥ ١ ٤ ٤ ٧ ٥ ٨ ١ ٥ ٨ ١ ٥ ٨ drawing on a stock of ethico-religious vocabulary to please al-Qāsim and to remind him of his debt, whereupon the poet can start to criticize him because of his failure in this respect.

16. And then you brought me closer, so may this increase your felicity from a helping emir (i.e. God),

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1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 58.

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 58.
17. And (if) you treated me with decency and propriety, so may the hand of God, wealthy and pure, do the same for you.

18. And similarly, whenever you intend to give more to your client, may you be given it, together with comfort!

In these last three lines Ibn al-Rûmî prays for al-Qâsim to get grace, good faith and whatever he is generous with himself.

19. I am your slave - you set me free when I had been fearing misfortune

20. So why do you turn your face from me and why do you forget my needs (thereby) rendering them null and void.
21. The messenger used to come to me and bring me joys as gifts, humbling my enemies.

22. But you stopped the messenger from coming to me, preventing me from using him as a source of pride and happiness,

* * *

30. I am naked and have nothing apart from your generosity. Do not cease to be my clothing and covering.

31. Treat me unjustly, I will be pleased but do not turn away from me.

32. Treat me unjustly, I shall accept unjustness with thanks but do not treat me with harshness.

In the last few lines quoted here Ibn al-Rūmī abandons all traces of nobility as he allows himself to say anything and promises to do anything for financial betterment.

In the remainder of this qasidah, Ibn al-Rūmī describes the majlis over which al-Qāsim presided which he used to attend, listening to and appreciating the music and dancing. He also describes the gardens of al-Qāsim’s residence, comparing its lush and fertile beauty with al-Qāsim’s beauty and generosity. Ibn al-Rūmī closes his qasidah with a resumption of direct eulogy addressed to al-Qāsim.
3. Ministers, princes and members of the professional classes.

(a) Ministers:

Ibn al-Rūmī devotes eulogies to the following ministers:

1. Abū al-'Abbās Ibn Thawāba
2. Sa'id Ibn Mukhlid
3. Ismā'īl Ibn Bulbul.
4. Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Mudabbir

In the following qasidah Ibn al-Rūmī begins with a direct apostrophe of an unnamed individual who is most likely to be Ibn Thawābah.

1. Ibn Thawābah:

الطول
دع للسّام إن اللوم عون النوايب ولا تتجاوز فيه حد المعاني
فما كل من حط الرحال بمخفق ولا كل من شد الرحال يكسب

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 155, 219. 2, 92, 103. 3, 117, 212

3, 38, 179, 270.
......4, 109, 177, 179, 226, 274.
......5, 16, 30, 174, 175, 252, 312.
6, 14, 26, 80, 147, 152, 173, 198, 237, 257, 303, 356.
4 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 88, 273. 2, 45, 90, 309. 3, 243, 205, 183. 5, 152. 6, 314.
5 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 219, 220
1. Do not blame, for that only adds to my misfortunes; nothing beyond a mild reproach is called for.

2. Not every one who stays in one place is a failure, nor is every one who travels successful.

3-4. Activity may be sensible, but only when one's life is not endangered by it.

5. You have spurred me on to put more wood on my fire; you should have warned me against the dangers too.

6. You have ignored my fears.

7. He who finds such thorns as I have found is not so eager to pluck the fruit.

8. Travels have made me averse from seeking riches.

9. Now I am more abstemious than anyone from wealth, even though I desire it more than anyone.
10-11. I am greedy and cowards; I desire and hold back;
which makes me a poor man."¹

After these eleven lines Ibn al-Rūmī introduces a reference to Ibn Thawābah, making it clear that he is the addressee.

"12. When a leading man invited me to be rewarded by him, a man who disdains praise before he has rewarded."³

After this line he begins to describe his terrors of travel by the land

² ‘Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 220.
³ Greet Jan van Gelder, The Terrifid Traveller, Ibn al-Rūmī’s Anti-Raḥīl, p. 2
⁴ ‘Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 220, 221.
19. On land I have experienced hardships, after I had experienced at sea a whitening of my locks.

20. A thousand hateful showers have drenched me, even though I had drunk my fill, to the point that I come to love dry desert.
21. I did not bring them; they were brought to entrap me by the pretended stupidity of a fare that playfully made me suffer.

22. I complain to God about my stupid fate, since it has played with me ever since I was born, although I did not wish it to do so.

23. Ironically, it began pouring with rain only the moment I set out.

24. It drenched the earth on my behalf, turning it into a muddy and slippery place, in which a sober man totters like a drunk.

25. In order to impede my journey or make my mount slip, or to fertilize a useless piece of land.

* * *

33. Thus the land scourges the traveller with two painful whips, a liquid and solid one;

34. Or if not by means of rain or snow, then with dust or hail.

35. So much for winter; summer is no better.

* * *

38. But speak no more of land, the worst refuge for him who fears the terrors of the sea.

39. summer or winter, both utterly undesirable;
40. Deadly thirst under a white-hot sun, or fatal drenching under a black cloud.

* * *

45. Until The Almighty saves me in the end,
46. And I escape from wolves, lions and robbers, the most repentant soul on earth.
47-48. As for a sea voyage, I would tell you of its terrors if I were not out of my wits, on account of its horror.
49. For if you threw me into the sea together with a rock, I would be the first to hit the bottom.
50. I cannot swim, only dive.
51. I am only a little afraid when walking past a jug of water, with averted face.
52. When someone drinks I fear that he will die; how could I feel safe in a boat!\(^1\)

Ibn al-Rûmî uses eighty-six lines to describe his travels, speaking only indirectly about Ibn Thawâbah, then he comes to the real point:

\(^1\) Greet Jan van Gelder, The Terrified Traveller, Ibn al-Rûmî’s Anti-Râjîl, 2, 3.

\(^2\) ‘Alî Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 1, 226, 234.
يضير نحو عرفه فیزورئی هنئا ولم اركب صعاب المراکب
588

يضير إلى ممتازا فيجوذه ويكفي أخا الإعمال زم الركاب
589

ومن بيك مثلا للحيا في علوه يكن مثله في جوهر بالمواهب
590

قال لأبي الحباش لقيت وجهه وحسيت منى تلك دعوة صاحب
598

أما حق حامي عرض مثلك ان يرى له الرقد والتروية أوجب واجب
599

ان بعد مالم ترع للعمال حرمة وأسلمه للجود غير مجان
600

 فأعطيت ذا سم وحرب ووصلة وذئب عطابا أدرك كل هارب
601

ولم يشحص الفائنين لكن أتقنهم الله جلبيات لأكرم جالب
1.02

علما بأن الظعن فيه مشقة وأن أمر الريح ريح للجلاين
1.03

ابرزب عنك الرأي في أن تكن مقيما مصوصا عن عناه المطالب
1.12

أذهب هذا عنك يا ابن محمد وانت معاد في الأمور الحوازب
1.15

لك الرأي والجود اللذان كلاهما
1.16

زعيما بكشف المطافع الكوارب
1.17

ومارلت ذا ضوء ونوه لمجدب وحيران حتى قبل بعض الكواكب
1.18

تهجت وتهدى عند حب وحيرة بمحظى ثر وأزهر ثاقب

أطم تربى أنتعت فكري محكما لك الشعر كي لا أبلع بالمتاعب
1.33

تحطط حليا من مديج كأنه هو كل صب من عنان الجباب
1.34

أنيبا حنيفا أن تكون حقا منن الدر لا بل من ثي الكواكب
1.35

وما قلت إلا الحق فيك ولم تزل على منهج من سن عت السجد لاحب
1.41
87. Someone like Abū al-'Abbās, whose favour hastens towards every seeker, like rain.

88. He sends his favour on a visit to me, while I do not have to make a difficult journey.

89. It travels to him who asks him, saving a poor man the trouble of travelling.

90. He who is high like the rain is like wise generous with gifts.

98. Say to Abū al-'Abbās (may you meet him face to face) [-and this should suffice you as a friend's prayer-]

99. Is it not right for someone like you to consider giving support [as] a duty?

100. You appear not to respect wealth.

101. And have given freely both to peaceful and war like people.

102. Not making anyone travel to you, on the contrary, your gifts came to them.

103. Since you knew that travelling is full of difficulties.

* * *
112. The right judgement will surely not desert you to reward me (root ThWB) while I stay safely at home.

* * *

115. This will surely not have escaped you, Ibn Muhammad, since you are a refuge in difficult time.

116. You are judicious and generous, guaranteed to dispel distress.

117. You are a light and rain for the barren and the lost [note the chiasmus]; one would say: a star!

118. You give rain and guidance like cloud and star.

* * *

133. I myself, have tired my thoughts to make well wrought poetry for you in order not to tire myself [by travelling to you].

134. I have adorned you with panegyric [like a beautiful necklace] to be coveted as lovers long to embrace their beloved!

135. graceful; Its beads (?) like pearls, or breasts of beautiful girls.

* * *

141. [If I should say these things] I would have said nothing but the truth about you; you would still be walking the clear path of glory.

* * *
155. Reward me (root ThWB), ease my life, give me rich reward (again ThWB), apply yourself to bestowing your favours upon me.

156. So that your gifts reach me safely in good order."

The notes about this qasidah

1. From the first line to the last line Ibn al-Rûmî speaks about himself more than he speaks about Ibn Thàwabà.

Critics have different opinions about this qasidah; is it just a jest from Ibn al-Rûmî to Ibn Thàwabà, to make an excuse not to visit him? Or is it the case that Ibn al-Rûmî suffers like an invalid from travelling both by land and by water.

Guest says "The effect of Ibn al-Rûmî’s defence of Ibn Thàwabà was an invitation from him to visit him at Sàmarrà, as can be seen from a long poem in which Ibn er Rûmî excuses himself from going, either by land or by water, setting out as a reason doubtless partly in joke."

And Van Gelder says
"...... But others seem to be nearer the mark, to my mind ...... by way of jest."
I however disagree with those who say that Ibn al-Rūmī composed this qasidah has an excuse or as a joke because Ibn al-Rūmī spent most of his life in Baghdad making just a few journeys and hated to visit any one who was ready to give him wealth but who was not in Baghdad.

2. Ibn al-Rūmī knew that if he went to Sāmarrā he would be better rewarded by the caliph court but he preferred to send his qasidah to them rather than to go himself.

3. He was a sick person in both body and soul.

Another poem in praise of Ibn Thawabā is:-

"I have always been helpful when one in distress calls on you, since you and those who are near you are protected."

1 Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 212, 213.
2. By God, no good deed which you have diffused towards me has gone astray, nor has any praise directed to you proved futile and worthless.

* * *

"17. You sent me a present which would have been great to me but for your position—truth must be disclosed.

18. To repeat is more commendable is a saying that has become a proverb and a present from one like you has the quality of repetition.

19. I am accustomed to the effects of your hands and what is well known is familiar”.

2. Sa‘id Ibn Mukhliid

In this qasidah, the poet begins with the lament for lost youth

الطول

أبين ضلوعي جمرة تتوقد على مامضي أم حسرة تتجدد 1
خليلى ما بعد الشباب زرية بجم لها ماء الشؤون ويعد
فلا تلحبا إن فاض دمع لقده قبل له بحر من الدمع يبتد
ولا تعجبنا للجلد بيكى فربما تطر من عين من الماء جلد
شباب الفتى مجلود وعزاوه كيف وأنى بعده يتجلد 5

1 Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er Rûmî, 81, 82.
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwan, 2, 111, 112.
1. Is there a blazing coal between my ribs, for what is now past, or is it a sigh (constantly) renewed.

2. My friends, after the loss of youth there is no other calamity on account of which the water of the tear ducts is collected and prepared.

3. So do not blame me if my tears flow for its loss: how little would an ocean of tears (shed and) exhausted for it be!

4. Nor wonder at a strong man weeping: a rock at times may split and yield a spring.
5. A man's youth is his courage and his strength, when it is gone, how can he still be firm.

6. The loss of youth is death tasted in full, whereas in death the taste of death is lost.

7. My youth was taken from me bit by bit and they are calamities which begin and recur.

8. The blackness of my cheeks has been stripped away from me as was their whiteness when I was a lad.

9. And for that whiteness fair I got instead a wretched white continually blackened.

10. How different were those different kinds of white, one pleasing and one ugly and odious to the sight.

11. This (white hair) smiles and laughs on my head and my beard- the ugliest smile is that of a toothless grey (beard)

12. The sight of me would once clear eyes of dust and now they ache to see me and are sore.

13. These are the wide-eyes of which you would complain when they rained (like blows) on your heart, when your head was black.

14. How is then you sorrow when you see that they have turned away to shoot at others.
15. You used to suffer when their arrows struck you, now you complain because they pass you by.

16. Thus are those shafts, those upon whom they fall and those from whom they turn alike are smitten.

17. They go aside and then we find their swerving is like their striking on the heart, indeed more wounding.

18. At times they are averted from us and it is as if they, when averted, are directed at us.

After this long introduction Ibn al-Rūmī commences the eulogy:

63. Yet what is to be expected from Sā’īd’s generosity is seemly consolation—indeed youth renewed.

\footnote{‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 115-117}
74. He is the man who shares most of his wealth but he is unique in goodness and praise.

* * *

100. It seems that his father knew when he named him Sā'īd how he would rise and ascend the heights.

* * *

110. And when he assumed command, all that was reprehensible was itself reprehended, all that was corrupt was made whole.

111. The people became united and joined, though I had known the people to be united in disarray.

4 Other Professional classes

(i) The men of learning (Udabâ’)

(a). al-Mubarrad¹

(b). al-Akhfash al-Šaghûr.²

(c). Ibn al-Barâ’³

(d). al-Murthaḏî.⁴

(e). Abû Şahl Ibn Nawbakht⁵

¹ 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 2, 256.


³ 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 1, 84.


⁵ 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 1, 140, 145, 314. 2, 137. 4, 45, 46, 53, 124, 309. 5, 79, 81, 139, 169, 208. 6, 33, 45.
(ii) Singers

(iii) Wealthy men.

(iv) Secretaries.

(l) (a) al-Mübarrad: One poem in praise of al-Mubarrad must suffice for category four.

al-Mübarrad:-

الرمل

طرقت أسماء والركب هجود والمطايا جنج الأوزار قود

1

ثم قالت وألصت عجبي من سراها حيث لا تسري الأسود

3

لا تعجب من سرانا فالسري عادة الأثمان والناس هجود

4

عجبي من بذلها ما بدلت وسراها وهي مشمس خرود

5

* * *

فأعتقنا والحشا وافق الحشا ونبا عن صدرها صدر ودود

10

ولعهدى قيل هاتيك بها وهي زوراء عن الوصول حيود

11

1. Asmā came at night when the riders were sleeping

and the riding-beasts inclined their chests and their

long necks.

* * *

______________________________

1 Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 256, 257.
3. And she said, when she perceived my surprise at her nocturnal journey at a time when lions do not even venture abroad.

4. Do not be surprised by my nocturnal visit, such visits are the custom of the full moon when people are asleep.

5. I was surprised at her giving me that which she did and at her nocturnal visit for she is a chaste and demure maiden.

* * *

10. We embraced one another, one stomach next to the other, and a loving chest pressed unsteadily on her chest.

11. And yet before that I had known her to turn away from and shun the congress of lovers.

After sixteen lines he begins his praise of al-Mūbarrad.

أثناء ابن يزيد بيتنا أم نسم بره روض مجد
* * *
لا كنعي ابن زيد إنها أبدا حيث يلاقيها للوجود
ما جد لم يستب قط بدا وهو إن أديت بالشآكر رصود
* * *

17. Is it the praise of Ibn Yazid which has come between us or is it a gentle breeze wafting from a luxuriant meadow.

21. No, it is not like the beneficence of Ibn Yazid, which is eternal and unchanging whenever encounters it.

22. He is a glorious (man) who has never asked for a favour back, on the look-out if you should be the first to give thanks.

56. I testify that you are a swollen sea which is fed by a torrent-no torrents- from your very own self.
58. But the ocean is salty and brackish, while you are cold, sweet platable (eater).

* * *

64. So give me a reason for drinking from your bottomless sea, may good fortune aid you!

65. Namely, to raise me up with regard to my needs, whereby the envious neighbour will be painfully cauterized.

* * *

69. Mine is praise which I have uttered for a lord to whom delegations have not ceased to give poetry to as gifts.

* * *

79. In praising him I have hopes and aims; in it he finds eternity.

5. Aristocracy

Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭāī

Ibn al-Rūmī praised him when he was a ruler of al-Kūfah.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 4, 238, 239.
1. The phantasm flitted- but it did not flit because I remembered you (i.e. because I had forgotten you so as to have to remember you) and it was the most generous phantasm which a nocturnal visit and alighted

15. The phantasm of the one who is never true to his word even though he comes to you, came to you when night had cast its mooring ropes.

19. O beautiful night and morning joined as one, when night had wrapped the horizon in its wings.

28. O you who ask me about passion for chaste women, ask about them for you have come to one who is accustomed to describe them.
29. They are those who when you meet them in the morning, you meet with rejection, hostility and curt silence.

(ishrâq here means literally “to cause someone to choke on his spittle”).

Before Ibn al-Rūmî begins his eulogy, he devotes a further forty-eight lines to a relationship with a woman whom he does not name. Thus he, in this qasidah, uses the traditional takhallus from exordium to panegyric, even though he has expanded it to great length.¹

¹ Abû al-Ḥasan Ibn Rashîq, Al-Umdah, 1, 239.

49. Leave aside your rhymes- they must satisfy you: they must now hurry and hasten to praise Ahmad (I'naq and ijaf are terms denoting the speed of a horse or a camel. It is quite likely that Ibn al-Rūmī is here alluding to the traditional takhallus with its Wasf section).

* * *

51. Abū Ja'far al-Tāī has become a destination and a protector those who hope (for reward) and those who are afraid.

* * *

59. He and the petitioners who throng around him are like the building of God when the pilgrims walk around it.

* * *

74. He has become the lord of a dwelling and the generous have become his servants, the earth has become his abode and the people (his) guests.

* * *

124. (There was) a raid against the Bedouins which made of their territories desert wastes, just like the Ahqaf (of the 'Ad).

(A reference to the destruction of the people of 'Ad in Sūrah 46).
126. Some were killed, some shackled, some fled.

The birds which hovered (in the sky) had decreed that he would overtake them.

Ibn al-Rumi’s objectives in praising some patron or other were not always purely financial. He quite often looked to receive gifts in natura, such as clothes, wine, fish, even a sack of wheat.¹

3. Nothing can save you from the reproach of one near save your fine, weighty gifts.

4. So seek protection in wheat from the stall, returning a fine favour as noble men do.

5. An oath, O Ibn Sâlih Ibn’Ali and Ibn’isâ Ibn Ja’far the mighty.

¹ 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 1, 143. 2, 255. 3, 199. 2, 211.

² 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 6, 79.
6. That my oath - if you reject my oath-is still recent and that my love increases.

* * *

10. I do not look down on your little gifts and I do not overestimate great gifts of base men.

When Ibn al-Rûmî was at his wit's end, he said

الطويل

Adu Alle Fausthumonin Lalatni Biwuton Ina Fazaronin Mu Al-Zamtta

1. Am I not the possessor of a gift? then treat me in accordance with my gift. Otherwise sustain me as you do the crippled!

In other words, pay me for my poetry as I am a poet.

Otherwise, treat me with generosity as you do the disabled.

Conclusion

Ibn al-Rûmî’s extant Dîwân is largely devoted to panegyric. Of these poems it can, in general, be said that the poet devotes too much poetic space to his introductions, which can be extremely prolix; that he made no secrets about trading his compositions for financial gain, even for such items as fish, wine or clothes; that immediately upon the cessation of such gifts, he would resort to upbraiding and criticism and

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 6, 93.
in the end would merely lampoon them; that the poetic quality of his panegyric is variable, with some much superior to others.

Ibn al-Rūmī's Lampoons

Like the rest of his verse, Ibn al-Rūmī's lampoons can occasionally be very long. Take for example the urjüzah of one hundred and forty lines:

الرجز
قال لابن بوران ولا تتألم 1
يا عربيا أعمئبا وأفهم 2

1. Say to Ibn Būrān and do not hold back:

2. "O non-Arab Arab, understand.

On the other hand, these invectives can be very short - even one verse in length, as when he lampoons someone called Ramaqān.

الوافق
رأيناك تدعى رمضان دعوى وأتت نظير يوم الشك فيه 2

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 104.
2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 379.
1. I see that you claim and allege that you are “Ramaḍān”, when you are in fact like the day of uncertainty (as to when Ramaḍān actually begins).

In the matter of his protracted invectives, Ibn al-Rūmī is different from most earlier poets, in that these invectives are in ḡasīdah from: Ibn Rashīq says:-

“Short lampoons are preferable and it is better to avoid obscenity. However, Jarir who said to his children you praise do not make the panegyric long but if you lampoon do the opposite, Only ‘Alī Ibn al-‘Abbās Ibn al-Rūmī followed his example.”¹

Ibn al-Rūmī sometimes begins his lampoons with Nasīb

الواقتر
المطر أنني قبل الأماني أقدم في أولئك النسيب

1. Have you not noticed that I, before the Hija, introduce a Nasīb into the beginnings (of a poem)

al-Mutanabbi, however, is of the belief that panegyrics should, by and large, begin with Nasīb.

Shaghlī, women of Salāma Ibn Sa‘īd, are also abused and so is Kunaīza in four coarse poems. Muḥīb, the mistress of one Aḥmad Ibn Sa‘īd is handled very rudely. Fahm who sang in the presence of ’Iṣa

¹ Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Rashīq, al-‘Umdah, 2, 172.
² ‘Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 380.
Ibn Hārūn is mocked and also Nuzha, a singer contrasted unfavourably with Duraira.

1. When it is a panegyric, the Nasīb should be the introduction. Has not every eloquent (author) uttered love poetry?

Ibn al-Rūmī's first foray into the field of poetic composition was a lampoon which he composed at the Qur'ān school:

1. O Ja'far, you have been given all faults, so that you have no praiseworthy characteristic.

In light of such beginnings, it came as no surprise that Ibn al-Rūmī attained fame as an invective poet.

According to al-'Aqqād, "The third century produced the two most famous lampoon poets.... Ibn al-Rūmī and Di'ībil al-Khuza‘ī."

---

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 91. See also 1, 442.
Ibn al-Rūmī’s Hijā’ poetry is second only to the panegyric within his Diwān, with regard to both length and number.¹

Many people fell victim of Ibn al-Rūmī in his Diwān:

. Ibn-al-Rūmī and the singers (male and female)

Ibn al-Rūmī makes mention of some 25 singing - girls qiyān most of whom he attacks, satirising their voices; their ugly faces and unattractive bodies; their skills and abilities;

Guest says “There were some women for whom Ibn al-Rūmī had a dislike Shuntaf “The low women Karra’ā” is a constant object of brutal ridicule, she was a vile singer Kunuz and a singer called Shaghil, women of Salama Ibn Sa’id, are also abused and so is Kunaiza in four coarse poem. Mulībīb, the mistress of one Aḥmad Ibn Sa’id is handled very rudely. fahm who sang in the presence of ‘īsa Ibn Harun is mocked and also Nuzha, a singer contrasted unfavourably with Duraira.”²

Shuntaf

Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons her with twenty poems.

1. نذريل سبأ ياريد، ابن الرمی، بيروت، 1969، 85.
2. رهريفن غاست، حياة وعمل ابن الرمی، 45.
3. علي ابن الرمی، دیوان، 3، 88.
1. Shunţaf, you charm of the heavens and the earth, O sun in the day and moon (at night).

2. If Iblīs ever created human beings, then you, in my opinion, are one of them.

3. The accused, rebellions one (i.e. the devil) formed you and his hands gave you the ugliest form.

1. Shunţaf’s foot slipped in her own faeces and she sought the help of a slap on her neck.

2. She wets herself during our meetings, so it is meet that the veins in her neck be rewarded with a slap!

3. A whore, a bitch, she snores and is patient when her kidneys receive the spear-thrusts of penises.

---

1 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 96.
4. Vile, dishonourable, with a hole for a vagina, one who faints on orgasm: the one who named her Shuntuf has proved to be correct.

Kunayzah

Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons her with four poems.

Ibn al-Rūmī concentrates his lampoon, on her professional qualifications (her voice and her ability) and not on her physical attributes as he did with Shuntaf.

البسيط

1. شاهدت في بعض ما شهدت مسمعة كأنما يومها يومان في يوم
2. تظل تلقى على من ضم مجلسها قولا تشجع على الأسماع كالأبلوم
3. لها غناء يثيب الله سامعه ضعفي ثواب صلاة الليل والصوم
4. ظللها تشرب بالأرطال لا طريبا عليه بل طلبا للسكر والتنوم

1. One of the things which I have seen with my own eyes is a singing-girl, whose day seems to be two days rolled into one.
2. She does not stop throwing at the ears of those whom her majlis includes heavy words, like reproaches.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 301.
3. God will surely reward him who listens to her song
double the rewards accrued by night prayers and
fasting.

4. I did not stop drinking gallons (lit. ratls), not through
rejoicing at it but in an attempt to get drunk and fall
asleep.

Durayrah

Ibn al-Rūmī devoted two panegyrics to her, at the request of his
friend Ibn Bishr al-Murthadi.

Guest says:

"A slave girl skilled in music whom they bought, Ibn Bishr al-Murthadi
fell in love with her and asked Ibn er-Rūmī to describe her"1

For some reason unbeknownst to us, Ibn al-Rūmī also decided
to lampoon her.

السربيع

وَيلكِ يَا قدَّ يبرَ ستوَجَه مَا أنتِ وَللهِ بِمِنْهُجَةٍ 2

* * *

وأنتِ اشْغَيْتُ مِنْهُجَةٍ وأنتِ اشْحَدَتْ مِنْهُجَةٍ 6

* * *

1 Rhurun Guest, Life and Works of Ibn er Rūmī, 63.

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 12, 13.
1. A curse upon you, you who have the appearance of a fish, by God, you are not one to be flirted with!

6. If you sing, you are stupid and cold, if you talk, you are paralysed.

10. Have you been stolen from those metamorphosed by God?

11. The boon-companions beaker is mixed with dragon’s blood and colocynth, for as long as you sing to them.

12. So that you are pelted with bottles and your head is wounded with plates.

13. Take yourself away, you whose mouth is waterskin and whose uncovered arse is an open pasture (or, one which is repeatedly and often split asunder).

Nuzhah

Ibn al-Rümi’s lampoon of her centers on a comparison of her ugly voice with Durayrah’s voice which he found to be pleasing, despite his subsequent attack on her.
He says

Durayrah brings happiness and Nuzha brings sadness.

While the former sings, sadness strays far and long from you.

While the latter howls, she makes you feel sadness and illness for a long time.

I say to him who has brought the two together: "you have provided us with something amazing".

Ibn al-Rûmî also lampoons (male) singers:-

Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 1, 176.

Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 6, 8-10.
1. There was a (male) singer—may I never not be separated from him, for that is one of the true blessings.

2. My day lasts forever; when I am tied to him, it is as if I were fasting though I was not fasting.

4. He opens his mouth in a yawn, through sleepiness, just as he opens his mouth for the biggest portion.

7. It is as if, for as long as I watch him, I were quaffing my cup mixed with blood.

23. Small children are frightened (by the mention of him) when one of them cries and will not sleep.

Literati and Poets

Ibn al-Rûmî attacks nearly forty members of this group men such as al-Buḥṭuri, al-Mubarrad, al-Akhfash al-Šaghir, al-Faḍl Ibn Salamah, Abū ‘Ali Ibn Abi Qurrah and Khâlid al- Qaḥṭubi.

al-Mubarrad:
Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons him with:

al-Mubarrad wished that God give him an anus in exchange for every part of his body.

So grant his wish, O God of the people, but do not allow him to have eyes or ears.

So that he can slake his reprehensible desires with every hard penis, on the glans of which you can see lumps.

Indeed, if he were to have twice the number of limbs (and exchange them for) many anuses, he would not slake one single desire thereby.

How impossible then is this burning thirst which can not be quenched, unless his whole body were to be made of anus and vagina.

al-Akhfash:

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 30.
It was customary with Ibn al-Rûmî to lampoon anyone who was in the habit of giving him gifts and who then stopped doing so. With al-Akhfash, the reverse is true- Ibn al-Rûmî began by lampooning him for his behaviour and then they became friends when al-Akhfash had sent Ibn al-Rûmî gifts, thereby ensuring his praise.¹

Ibn al-Rûmî says :-

المتقارب

أبا حسن إنى سائل فاعد جوابا ولا تدهش ²
البس أبوك بني آدم فأتى طمست ولم تنفض
ولم تأت أسود ذا حلكة ولم تأت كالحية الأرقص
لقد غش فيك آب غافل فم دمة فيك لم تنفض
اب ذو فراش ولدك لأي البرية لم يفرش
أما والقريض وأسواقه ونجشك فيه مع النجش
ودعواك عرفان نفاده بفضل النفي على الأمش
لدن جنت ذا بشر حالك لقد جنت ذا نسب ابرش
وما واعد جاء من امه بأعجب من ناقد أغش

* * *

أسود جاءت به قردة سويداء غارية المفرش
انتنا به في سوار أستها وأنانه في صفرة المشمش

¹'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 3, 334, 4, 55, 5, 107, 6, 370.
4. Abū Ḥasan, I am asking a question, so prepare an answer and do not be dumbfounded.

5. Is your father not the sons of Adam (i.e. all of mankind)? Then why are you thin and not fat?

6. Why then did you turn out to be as black as sin and did not turn out like the speckled snake?

7. An inadvertent father was deceived concerning you, so which blackness has not been deceived concerning you?

8. A father who had a bed, but for whom was this bed not spread out?

9. By poetry and its fairs, by your fraudulent trade in poetry,

10. And by your claim to the knowledge of its critics by preferring the immaculate to the sullied.

11. If you did turn out to have a black skin, you would (at least) have turned out to have a dubious ancestry.

12. But no-one has come from his mother more miraculously than Akhfash, the weak critic.

30. A little black boy produced by a little black monkey, seducing people into her bed.

31. She brought him to us from her black anus, though his ears are pale like an apricot.
al-Faḍl Ibn Salamah

الخليف

أو تلففت في كساء الكسائي وتثبيت رواة الفراء 1
وتخللت بالخليل وأضحى سبيبه ليديك ره سباء
وتكونت من سواد أبي الأسود شخصاً يكى أبا السواد
لأبي الله أن يعده أهل العلم إلا من جملة الأغنياء

1. If you were to clothe yourself in al-Kisāʾī’s clothes and were to dress in al-Farra’s furs.

2. If you were to clip them together with al-Khalīl’s clips and Sibawayhī were to become under your sway as a prisoner.

3. And if you were to become, having assumed the form of Abū al-Aswad, a person called Abū al-Sawdāʾ.

4. Then God would still refuse to allow the intelligentsia to consider you anything but of the species of dolts.

Abū ʿAli Ibn Abī Qurrah’

السيط

قل للأمير ادام الله دولته وزاده في علو الفكر والصبر 2
ماذا يقول أمرؤ قال الله له من احتيتي لتجديد المواقت


1. Ask the Emir whose kingdom God has allowed to continue and to whom he has given more power and a better reputation.

2. "What does a man whom God has asked "Whom have you chosen to renew the (fixed) times?" say?.

4. Are you pleased with viewing my rights as a man blinded in one eye would, when I have made you into a star for the Ifreets (to stone)?
8. Was it not the due of my rights that you should repay them (properly) not as a mean one eyed man who cannot find his way to an appointment?

* * *

10. What then would be the answer of that man? May God preserve you from ignominy and censure!

11. Keep your garments pure of those whom pious men do not think it appropriate to bless when they sneeze!

12. Keep your garments pure of those who have no garments, because of their sins, except rags and tatters.

* * *

15. Abū'Ali-unjustly were you given this Kunyah!-you have gone astray in bare featureless deserts.

16. How can you be saved when you are far-away with no-one to guide you and you have no experience (in crossing) the wide deserts?

17. You advanced towards me, to fight me, with one eye blinded with dust-but one-eyed men are not the equal of brave heroes!.

(This translation works on the assumption that 'awāwīr is a variant of 'ūr, the plural of a'war).

Khālid al-Qaḥṭībi
"1. Khalid you have been altogether wrong.
You did not try to win my love in the right way.

2. It was stupid of you to count it with banter.
You did not remember how many others were seeking it.

3. Had you approached it with compliment,
You would have been one of its most successful suitors,

4. Like your daughter when she engaged to have it.
And became the chief of those who enjoy it.

5. Fie on you, an elder of experience.
Trying for a thing and failing to obtain it.

6. While a tender novice of a girl

---

1 'AII Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 362.
When she wants it contrives to take the proper course.¹

al-Buḥṭuri

1. When slaughtered, sheep are not afraid of the pain of ritual killing or of being skinned.
2. Or of being jointed, on their back (on the butcher's slab), or of being grilled or cooked.
3. But it is afraid of a quality which strikes fire in its innards(?)
4. It is ashamed that your poetry should be written on its hide, you billy-goat!

Ibn al-Rūmī’s Political Lampoons

Against the Caliphs

¹ Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er Rūmī, 66.
² 'Ali ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 2, 97, 98.
Ibn al-Rūmī took the side of Abū al-Ḥusayn Yaḥyā Ibn ʿUmar against al-Mutawakkil and al-Mustaʿīn when Yaḥyā led a revolt against them. On the occasion of the killing of Abū al-Ḥusayn by Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Ṭāhir, upon the command of al-Mustaʿīn, Ibn al-Rūmī recited the following:

الطويل

أمامك فانظر أين نهجيك تنjej ؟ طريقان شتي : مستقيم وأعوجٌ

* * *

أكل أرائ السبعين زكي بالدماء مضرح

* * *

بني المصطفى : كم ياكل الناس شاوككم ؟ لبواكم عما قليل مفرح

* * *

أبعد المكنى بالحسن شهدكم تضيء مصابيح السماء فشجر؟

* * *

أجتنا بنايب من شاشكم

وأوكوا علينا ما في العبب وأضرحوا

وحلا وراء السوء منكم وغيرهم فأحر بهم أن ينفرجو حيث لجروا

* * *

غررتم إذا صدقت أن حالة تدوم لكم، والدهر لونان أحرج

* * *

أفي الحق أن بسوا خمصاسا ولنتم يكاد أخوككم بطنة يتتجن؟

---

1 Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 23-30. See also, 6, 270.
1. Before you there lie two different paths—one straight, the other crooked—think, which path shall you follow?

2. Is there to be, in every age, a pure descendant of the prophet Muḥammad, murdered and stained with blood.
6. O Banū al-Muṣṭafā, how often do people eat your limbs! Your trial will shortly end in relief!

* * *

10. Do the stars still light up and illuminate the skies after (the death) of your martyr, the one named al-Ḥusayn.

* * *

53. O children of al-ʿAbbas hide your hate and keep your anger in your heart,

54. And leave your bad rulers with their injustice it is more proper for them to drown when they are at sea.

* * *

58. You were beguiled when you believed that (this was) a situation which would last for you, when time has two colours.

* * *

78. Is it that they should become lean and emaciated while your brother's stomach almost bursts with satiety?

79. You walk haughtily through your apartments, heavy-footed, your shoulders aquiver.

80. Their offspring has an empty belly while your offspring have soft and tender bones and plump bodies, from easy living.
89. He spends the night, when the wine has soaked his mind, talking with a foreign Byzantine ass.

90. Who pokes and thrusts at him in his wicked way so violently that he gets up bandy-legged from under him.

91. It is for this that the like of you, O Banūl-Abbās display endurance, while the brave armoured warrior displays endurance in the face of death.

94. God has ordained that they should be good, you bad, that they should be pre-eminent in their good deeds and that you should be overcome.

97. Upon my life Ibn Ṭāhir has made the people's hearts hate you for as long as the wind makes voices.

108. Despite Islam, I fear, from you, many deluges the door of which is now closed.

111. Perhaps hearts, in which you have for a long time fostered hatred, will obtain a cure from you and be restored to health.

Against al-Mu'tazz
26. O Mu'tazz, give up the caliphate even though it is at hand, for God will not clothe you in something which he has stripped (you off).

27. Do you hope to don it once you have doffed it? It is Impossible and absurd! Milk can not return to the udder when it has been milked
28. By God, He who posses it was not pleased with you before you perpetrated that which you have perpetrated.

29. So that he has humbled and deprived you of it, and bestowed it upon a chosen one, (your) peer, pleasing into God's very self.

30. How can he be pleased with you after the atrocities (you have inflicted) on it? How? How? Except as a lie and a falsehood?

* * *

39. You who assassinated your father, then nourished a war against his avenger, you proved those who upbraided (you) to be true.

40. O'Crown princes of evil, take your time: he who tries to conquer God is conquered.

41. You have repaid your father, when he honoured you, with a bond which was the worst a son has ever requited his father with.

Against the rulers of Baghdad

The Ṭāhiridis

Ibn al-Rūmī mostly praises them but sometimes he became their opponent.
1. Though some peoples’ offspring are good, how badly, O family of Tāhir, have you succeeded your ancestors.

2. Their bequest to you was that, you should be praised, whereas your bequest to the dead among you is that they should be reviled in their graves.

And he says

1. I sought your generosity, O Bani Ṭāhir, but it was so difficult (to obtain) that I may as well have sought the marrow of the bones of ants.

2. My hope for gifts from your Sulaymān was like al-Mu’tazz’s hope for his support.

Banū Wahb


1. O Family of Wahb, a fart, which has become proverbial for Wahb, is now common knowledge.

3. Before it was let loose, you were spoken of, both east and west.

4. But now, truly, impudent tongues have expressed every impudence.

5. If you had been blameless with regard to your arses, they would not have loaded you with reproaches.

6. But you stuff them all the time, so that all of you have wide arseholes.

طويل
تسبتم فينا ملوكا وأنتم عبيد لما تحوي بطن المزارع

---

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 402.

2 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 265, see also 2, 225.
5. You have been named as kings over us, though you are slaves to what the hampers contain.

8. When, O family of Wahb, can the thirsty man hope to slake his thirst when you are the custodians of the paths to the watering-holes?

9. You have turned us away from abundant ponds, though you have drowned every ingrate in their depths.
10. You have revivified the religion of the cross and you have undertaken the erection of buildings and the destruction of mosques.

11. As well as the annulment of that which the caliph Ja'far chose as clothing for every rebel.

* * *

13. All the actions which you have brought to light are a sign of the truth of the abomination of your birth.

* * *

15. You gained an easy (life of wealth) but you have also acquired, through your parsimony, a bad name which will persist and never cease.

16. If you were to lose it, then loss of it would renew generosity to every honourable (man)

17. And even if Wahb infected your hands for eternity with parsimony from the beneficence of his arse.

18. Then your hands would continue to be more liberal and generous to petitioners than pouring rain, heralded by thunder and lighting.

**Social lampoon**

This type of lampoon was intended to criticise contemporary society. Several characteristics are highlighted: (1) Parsimony **Bukhl**; (2) Rancour **Hiqd**; (3) Social climbing.; (4) Injustice **Zulm**.
As we have seen from several other poems, Ibn al-Rūmī attacks parsimony. This is directed largely against individuals.

Parsimony:

المتقارب

1. يقترب عقيسي علي نفسه وليس بياق ولا خالد
2. فعل يستطيع لتقترب من نفس وارد
3. عذرناه أيام إعدامه فما عذر ذي بخل وارد؟
4. رضيت-لتفرق موالاته- بدي وارث ليس بالحاد

"1. 'Isā is mean unto himself, though he is neither lasting nor eternal.
2. He is so sparing that if he could, he would breathe through only one nostril.
3. We excused him when he had nothing, but what excuse has a miser who has all.
4. I am glad that some heir will scatter his wealth and not be grateful to him (for amassing it)."

And he says

الطويل

2. Rhurun Guest. Life and work of Ibn er Rūmī, Dīwān, p, 98.
1. When the miser drowns in money, you will find him even drier (than before) though he might be thought to be moist.

2. This is hardly surprising, for when stones are drenched in water they remain hard.

Rancour

Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons it thus:-

1. إذا غمر المال البخيل وجدته يزيد به بيسا وإن ظن برطب
2. وليس عجببا ذاك منه فإنه إذا غمر الماء الحجارة تصلب

1. You who praise rancour, trying to find something to compare it with, you have embarked upon a muddy and turbid course.

2. The one who wants to change wrong to right by trying to make it right will never do it unless he can make a young man into an old man.

3. You who bury rancour in your breast, how bad is that which is buried with your breast for its grave!

4. Rancour is a bad illness which cannot be cured; it burns the breast when its coals are stirred.

5. So cure yourself with forgiveness or with blame: spitting heals the man with a sore chest.

6. Seek revenge when this is important but do not fuss over insignificant affairs.

7. Forgiveness is nearer to godliness even if a criminal wound or harts your liver.
9. It is enough for you to know that God has praised forgiveness, in the Revelation to the best of those who have prayed and who were sent.

10. Believe that if you have done wrong, it will be bad for you to meet your brother (full of) rancour, his breast excoriated.

11. Then it will please you if he forgets about your wrongs altogether and if you find him to be meek and compliant.

12. So how can you praise something which you dislike. Think, may God guide you, (you know how) to analyse that which is confused.

13. Those things which are closest to good conduct cannot remain hidden, when someone searches for them.

* * *

20. I am not trying to make my wrong right so that I can make it more digestible to myself, nor am I uttering unseemly lies.

Ibn al-Rûmî, criticizes society for allowing a mean person to become great.
2. Some people have flown, because of their light weight [intellectually/socially] until they have reached the utmost height of the eagle.

3. Whereas the best amongst all people have remained, anchored/moored, just as the lofty mountains are anchored/moored.

4. And this is no boast of the mean, no, nor is it a shame to the noble.

---

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 314-322.
6. So let them fly and gain height, for I see them only at the very lowest level.

* * *

10. And men have succeeded in an age to which and to them— I am alien.

11. They have defeated me in it for every piece of good fortune, except for that good fortune the rises above those that can be seized by force.

* * *

42. Do you think that I am lower than those policemen and secretaries who have attained their ambition.

43. And merchants like beasts who have achieved their desires for themselves and their lovers?

* * *

46. They do not fight with the sword or with the pen, in a land full of the songs of flies.

Ibn al-Rûmî lampoons envy

مجزوؤ ئلأوؤت
ليكمل هاسدأ حمسد وام تسلي ئبي كنبدأ
فلو ئعمرته تارا لكانت دون ما يجده

* * *

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 2, 187, 188.
1. Leave the envier to his envy and to what heals his liver.
2. If you were to burn him with fire, it would be less than what he suffers already.

* * *

4. When he remembers me, he spends the night suffering the fever of Khaybar.
5. When he looks at me, he become sore-eyed, May this soreness remain in his eye!

Ibn al-Rūmī is always against injustice

1. The revenge of the wronged against his wronger is greater than his wrong-doing against the wronged.

---

1 Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 22.
2. The unjust person -if you think about it - is like the man who grazes in unhealthy pasture.

3. What he has done becomes clear to him and he knows that he has bought a night of pain for a night of sleep.

4. When he is alone, he suffers anguish and torture from his self-blame.

* * *

6. If his adversary disregards him and overlooks what he has done, he himself is a sufficient adversary.

Religious Lampoons

Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons Ramaḍan because Ramaḍan keeps him from food and drink,

الكامل

شهر الصيام مبارك للكنما جعلت لنا بركاته في طولهُ 1

* * *

إلى ليعيني تمام هلاله وأسر بعد تمامه بنحوله 4

شهر يصد المرء عن مشروبه مما يحل له ومن ماكتله 5

لا أستيب على قول صيامه حسبى تصرمه ثواب قبوله 6

_________________________

1 'Ali ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwan, 5, 222.
1. Ramaḍan is a blessed month but it is blessed only because it is long.

* * *

4. I really enjoy its full moon and I am pleased after its full moon by its waning.

5. A month which keeps a man away from his permitted drink and food.

6. I do not want a reward for my fasting. It is enough for me to have it finished.

والنافر

إذا بركت في صوم لقوم دعوت لهم بتطويل العذاب 1
وما التبرك في شهر طويل يطول يومه يوم الحساب
فليت الليل فيه كان شهراً ومر نهاره مر السحاب
فلا أهلاً بمانع كل خير وأهلا بالطعام وبالشراب 4

1. When you bless a fast for people you pray that their torture maybe prolonged.

2. Why bless a long month, a day of which lasts as long as the day of judgement?

3. I wish that the night might extend to the month, and that its day might pass as quickly as the clouds!

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 208.
4. No welcome to that which prevents all that is good

Welcome to food and drink.

And he says

البسيط

1. Even though I consider Ramadan very holy, is still a long month, which passes slowly.

2. It goes slowly, but when it seeks us out, neither al-Sulaik nor al-Sulaikah can rival it (for speed).

3. It is as though it were someone seeking revenge on a fast stallion, on the track of a quarry on a mare.

4. I revile it, except for one time, which I acclaims, for the night prayer until the cock crows at dawn.

5. How could I acclaim times that should be reviled, shared between continuous prayer and hunger.

6. He who calls it ‘Blessed days’ speaks truth, provided that blessing is understood to mean (longest!)

* * *

8. A month that when I find myself caught in it, I am so disturbed and anxious that I feel like a fish caught in a net.

9. If it were a lord and we were like its slaves it would be a miserly and bad lord.

Ibn al-Rūmī also attacks those who attribute corporeal attributes to God, an attribution anathema to the Mu'tazilah:

:\text{مجزوء الكامل}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>أبيها القائل بالجسم لأن الأثير جسم</td>
<td>لاق الله فقى قولك عدون ويلم</td>
<td>أمويت الأثير حتى قلت إن الله جرم؟</td>
<td>ضل حام لك أضحى يعد الأثير وعلم</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. You who discourse on “the body” (i.e. of God), because the penis is a body.

\[1 \text{ 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 136.}\]
2. Be afraid of God because your talk contains hostility and sin.

3. Do you love the penis so much that you maintain that God is body?

4. Your self control and your mind have gone astray and have begun to worship your penis.

Attacks on cities and city-life

Ibn al-Rûmî inveighs against Sâmarrâ (Surra-man Rā for Raā).

المنقرب

1 آلا إن منحا غدا حليه على سر من را وسكانها

2 لأضيع من ذهب ضبنت عجوزا به فلج أسنانها

3 بلاد أساس ترى كلبها يعاف خلاف إنسانها

1. Praise which has become an ornamentation of Surra man Rā and its dwellers

2. Is worth less than gold with which old woman has plugged the gaps in her teeth

3. A town filled with people, where the dog, as you can see, despises the manners of the people.

He also vents his spite against al-Kūfah:-

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwān, 6, 230, 231.
5. The people of al-Kufah the low are the lowest of the lowest of the low (Lit. The people of al-Kufah the despicable are the lowest of the lowest and most despicable).^2

^1 'Ali ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 1, 90, 91.

^2 An allusion to the Qur’an: see Sûrat Hûd (27), v. 11, Sûrat al-Shu’ârâ’ (26), v. 111.
6. Though everyone there is an individual, their sins are double (or all of them are unique and their pudenda are two fold).¹

7. You cannot pluck the fruit of the lowest branches and you cannot lower the highest branches (i.e. there is no good or benefit to be obtained from any of them).

8. The hearts (Lit. The ribs) of the whole of mankind are full of hatred for them

9. Nobodies, marginalised (from society), travelling towards the left instead of the right²

10. Their households are not founded on fear of God:

11. Their guest in al-Kūfah is entertained first with sodomy and then with adultery (i.e. he sleeps first with the husband, then with the wife).

12. So the fat ones are like the lean ones: how, after all, can they grow fat?

* * *

18. We have regarded them from of old with an eye which does not sleep.

¹ This line is possibly a double-entendre; Ibn al-Rūmī uses language appropriate to both the Mu'tazili discourse and to the physiological invective of Hijā'.

² A reference to a notion commonly encountered in the Qur'ān: see, for example, Sūrat al-kahf (18), v. 18, Sūrat al-Saba' (34), v. 15, Sūrat Qāf (50), v. 17.
19. They are not short of cuckolds (Lit. horns), and none of their buildings are tall.

20. When their abominations are reckoned, they can never be counted or numbered.

21. May God not keep them in good health! May he neither enrich them nor increase them!

Ibn al-Rūmī also casts his jaded eye on people suffering from bodily defects and lampoons them accordingly:

1. A man with a long nose

---

1 The second hemistich is a reference to the Qur’ān: Surat al-Najm (53), v. 48, where Allāh is the one who aqnah wa-aqnā.

15. Say to Dabas who is the worst man walking on the earth.

16. Damnation on an age in which you are appointed a leader and a chief!

27. When you sit down, your big nose injures all those present in the majlis.

30. Your nose is so big that it always drags your head down.

31. So that people think that you are a horse looking at the ground.

33. If your nose is like this, then the elephant, compared to you, is flat-nosed.

34. You on whose face a vault has been erected, fashioned like a church.

37. When someone wishes you both, "Peace be upon you!" you answer, but it (your nose) stays dumb.

2. An attack on a man with a long face
6. O.'Amr you have a long face and all dogs have long faces.

7. So where is your shame? Answer me, you dog, but dogs never talk.

9. You have all the ugly traits of the dog. But while it can get rid of them, you never do.

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 5, 187, 188.
10. And it has some good traits—may God and the Prophet keep them from you.

* * *

12. The dog is loyal but you are perfidious, therefore you are beneath even the dog.
13. The dog protects cattle but you, protect and assail no one.
14. You are from a bad people whose story is very long,
15. Their faces are sermons for the people, but the napes of their necks are drums (waiting to be beaten).

* * *

20. A long face with a mouth full of saliva—an urinating vagina is prettier than it!
21. You have a wound and a long muzzle—that’s the way bastards always are.

3. Ibn al-Rūmī attacks a man with halitosis:—

الطويل

تنفس في وجهي فكنت موتًا وأعرض على ساعة فحيتي 1
وانتهى حتى ظنتت باتنًا وحقهما يا صاحبى خريت 2
فإن لم أكن فشلت حفا غياثتي لأعمل عنها سلاحها فمعيت 3

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 448. see also 5, 136, 2, 243.
1. He breathed in my face and I almost died, but then he turned away from me for a while and I revived.

2. The stench he made me smell was so bad that I thought, my friends I swear, that I had relieved my bowels.

3. If truly I had not examined my own clothes to clean the filth from them, I would have gone blind.

4. A blind man

الخفيض

كيف يرجو الحياء منه صديق ومكان الحياء منه خراب

1. How can a friend expect modesty of him, when the seat of modesty (i.e. his eyes) is ruined.

In another lampoon, Ibn al-Rūmī somewhat offensively attacks blind people in general. It is not a particularly good piece of poetry:

المقترب

مجالسة العمي تُعدى العمي فلا تشهد لهم مشهدا
فإذا أنت شاهدهم مرة فكن منهم الأبعد الأبعدا
بِحِيَّة نَفْوُت إِلَّا ماكِن منْهُم خدا

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1, 408.

1. Keeping company with the blind leads to blindness, so do not keep company with them at all.

2. Even if you have kept company with them once-and no more- then get as far away from them as possible.

3. So that their gestures will pass (you) by. Otherwise, tomorrow you will become one of them.

* * *

5. They can turn anyone you want blind in an instant, even though he never expected to have sore-eyes.

6. Many's the eye which has come close to them. They have reached out for it constantly throughout the night.

7. And the next morning it sees everything around it, because of their wrong-doing, as a black mountain.

Such is his craze for lampooning at this period that Ibn al-Rûmî even lampoons himself for his untiring indulgence in this art-form:

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 2, 96 see also 4, 63.
1. I was asked, "Why do you criticize all mankind and lampoon them with ugly invective?"

2. I replied, "Suppose that I have lied about them. Let them show me someone who merits praise!"

What's more, Ibn al-Rūmī even lampoons himself.

1. If anyone has ever wept with grief for his youth, I do not weep with grief for my youth,

2. Because I have always had my face, with its ugly appearances such as its grey-hair and baldness.

3. My nonnage was my dotage—Praise be the Creator of Marvels!

1 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 111, 112.
5. My heart was pierced with love for chaste virgins, even though my face was only of use to the pious man.

6. That he might worship God alone in the desert and not attend crowded places.

THE ELEGY

Ibn al-Rūmī's Elegiac Poetry

Ibn al- Rūmī composed very little elegiac poetry. This is somewhat unusual in view of the size of his Dīwān and in the light of the disasters which struck him in his lifetime. These elegiac poems are sometimes too long, like the long qasidah (204 lines) in which he laments the death of his mother:

الطول

أَفْيَاضَةٌ دَمَاً إِنَّ الرُّزَايَا لَهَا قَيْمٌ فَلْيِسْ كُثِيراً أَنْ تَجَوَّدَ لَهَا بَدَمْ

"1. Let blood flow forth (oh eyes) each calamity has each own value, thus it is not too much to ask both of you to weep tears of blood for this calamity". 

___________________________

1 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 64-74.

At other times, they can be too short as with his elegy for Sayyār Ibn Makram.

1. Though Sayyār ibn Makram has passed away, you (i.e. his son) are the rose-water, even though the rose has perished.

2. He and his sons have gone and you alone have their excellent kindness: when we count to a thousand, we still have only one number.

All of Ibn al-Rūmī’s elegies go straight to the point and eschew the use of the nasib.

Elegies For His Relatives

These poems reveal most clearly his emotional responses, more than any other poems in his Dīwān.

His Aunt

All that we know about her is that she died before his mother and that he devoted an elegy to her.²

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¹ 'All Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 302.

² 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 75.
1. This world is not an abode of prosperity. Your eyes are filled with its victims, morning and evening.

3. I see that my mother and I, after the loss of her sister, even though we two live in ease and well being,

4. Are like the young of the desert sand-grouse when its mother has flown away from it so that it comes to a fortress, but with no mother.

We can see from line three that his aunt died before his mother.

His mother

She was of Persian birth and was called Ḥasna. To her Ibn al-Rūmī devoted an elegy, the longest elegy which he composed.

1 'Ali ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 69- also see 3, 215.

2 'Ali ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 64-67.
ولا تستريحا من بقاء إلى كرى فلا جهد مالم تعدادى على السام
* * *
خليلى هذا قبر أمى فورعا من الحق على واجبلا جابتي نعم
فما ذرفت عيني على رسم منزل ولا عكفت نفسى هناك على صنم
خليلى رقا لى أعينا أخاكما نشذكما من ترعين من الحر
* * *
غدا الدهر لى خصما وفى محكما كيف في خصم ضالع وهو الحكم؟
بجور فأثبط جوزه وهو دانى برى جوزه عدلا إذا الجور فيه عم
عذري من دهر غشوم لأظهر يرى أنه إذ عم بالغشما غشم
غدا يقسم الأسراء قسم سهبة وما عدل من سوي وسواه وما قسم
تعم بيلواه بدمه سلطنة بصولها ففلا إذا افتد الفهم.
ولست من الأيدي الحكمة بلزها يقدمت سوءا وإن سوت القدم
أمال عروشى ثم ثنى بهدرها وكم من عروف قد أمال وقد هدم
وأصبح يهدي للي الأسى منتصلا فمن سوقة أردى ومن ملك قسم
إلى وإن أهدي أسآ سالكى عليك ولكن هل من الدهر منقم؟
هو الدهر إما عابط ذا شبيبة بحادى الدنيا أوميت أخاه هو روم
* * *
الأكل حى ما خلا الله ميت وإن زعم التأمل ذو الأتك ما زعم
يروح ويبدو الشيء بيني فربما يرى وحيه الباتى وإن أغلب انتهى
* * *
ألاكم أتى الدهر من معزز وكيم زم من أنف حمى وكيم خطم
* * *
وك بم صال بالإملاك وسط جنوده
خغني على أهل النبوات والحكم
1. Let blood flow forth (oh eyes), each calamity has its own value, thus it is not too much to ask both of you to weep tears of blood for this calamity.

2. Do not cease your weeping in order to sleep, for there is no praise possible until both of you help me bewail the dreadful loss which has befallen me

* * *

19. Oh my two friends! This is the grave of my mother, keep your criticisms of me for another day, and take care that your answer to my request is "Yes"!

20. For my eye did not overflow because a girlfriend has gone on a journey, leaving only her traces behind, and my soul does not devote itself to the beauty of an idol.

21. Oh my two friends! Pity me, help your brother (Seil. Ibn al-Rumi is of course the brother).

* * *

28. The Dahr became simultaneously both an "opponent" against me and a judge above me but can I preserve myself against an opponent who acts unjustly but is also judge?
29. He is unjust. Thus I complain about unjustness, but as usual he considers his injustice to be justice......and that during a period in which his injustice is universal.

30. I offer an apology for a deceitful Dahr deceiving his own (i.e. Dahr's) contemporaries. When his deceit was universal he did not consider himself to be deceitful.

31. He came and divided misfortune into perfectly equal portions but where lies the justice in a person who divides equally but distributes that which is condemned?

32. His harsh hand dominates everything with misfortune: a brute who attacks with the hand in a violent way: whenever he is able he commits an injustice.

33. A hand that distributes misfortune does not belong to the hands that men have put to the test and praise, even if it makes the portions equal.

34. He -Dah- had my primitive venires sag, and even worse, destroyed!

35. He came to bring me comfort by pleading that he was free from sin but he had citizens killed and kings cut off.
36. Although he gave comfort, I am angry with him. But is the Dahr something on which one can take revenge?

37. That is the way the of Dahr: either he inflicts the fate of death on someone in the bloom of youth or he allows a brother to die of old age.

* * *

45. Each living creature expect for Allâh shall die, even though there are lying souls who will pretend that there is still hope for immortality.

46. In the evening and the morning the thing in the process of being erected is further built, but perhaps the builder makes a mistake with respect to the building’s weakness ... if that is not attended to the building will collapse.

* * *

58. How many indeed (kam) of the proud has the fate of time brought low, how often has it bridled and curbed an ambitious nose which was made to bite its bit.

* * *

65. How many kings it (scilifate) attacked in the midst of their soldiers and how many of those who own prophethood and wisdom ... ahlil-nubûwti wal-hikam.
66. How many a good thing has (the fate of time) wilted!
How many a good fortune has it rolled up. How many a support has it ruined and how many a handle has it broken.
67. How many a mountain with its oyertowering peaks has it crushed! How many a palace strongly built has it overthrown! How many, oh, how many!

Remarks on the first sixty-seven verses of this poem:
1. Ibn al-Rūmī was middle-aged when his mother died. See verse 11

11. I said, when they said "Do you weep like one who has lost his wet-nurse?", "How can we compare a mature man with one who suckles the teat?"

The point is that his behaviour is more in keeping with a child than with that of a mature man:

2. His brother was still alive at this time

1 Pieter Smoor, Elegies and other poems on death by Ibn al-Rūmī, 16-25.
18. My brother and I suffer every hardship because of it, hardships which wear away the strong and the sturdy, patient man.

3. Ibn al-Rūmī blames al-Dahr and enlarges upon its power in lines (22-25) and from (30-37) and (46, 58, 65, 66, 67).

4. Ibn al-Rūmī quotes the first shatr in line (45) from Labid who says:

"Indeed, each thing, Allah only exempted is vain" \(^1\)

After 135 lines devoted to al-Dahr and its power, Ibn al-Rūmī returns to his mother.

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\(^1\) Pieter Smoor, Elegies and other poems on death by Ibn al-Rūmī, 23.

\(^2\) 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 71-74.
135. Oh you who carried me! now you are carried to a grave, and you who if carried once dust never rises again.

136. Oh you who carried me! I will ask God to carry a refreshment for you as you are a sinless person.
137. Oh you who suckled me! I will ask the rain to water your graves if not I will ask the tears to be plentiful.

* * *

"153. O Mother, if your eyes could just once look at that part of me that is buried and hidden from you.

154. If only you could but once measure what you have experience against what I am now experiencing, then you could, with truth, have testified that my unhappiness was the heaviest.

155. How great is the gulf between something awful that one feels is going to happen and something else that one can neither bear nor accept.

156. The living dead feel the waste, but those who are dead amongst the dead feel no waste when they run away with everything.

* * *

176. The world became dark and, in the day time, her shine faded, while the sun of the awakening wavered on the peaks.

177. The earth, in which you were a garden, became barren and displayed a grimace after a laugh.

178. The mountains bent towards you as if their peaks were leaning against your face.
179. In the morning the clouds came up and wept for you, attempting to surpass everything with their generosity of spirit, after which they groaned with the groan of the hasty (came), but did not flow over.

180. Full of tears the wind lamented you, and, as soon as it missed your scent, it began to run because it could no longer smell it.

181. The Jinns and the humans organized a ceremony: they let the Night, Hunger and the Spirit of Emaciation all lament.

* * *

186. “As far as the highest heavens are concerned together they were delighted with your spirit. when that embrace embraced it (the spirit).

187. You were only a planet kawkab that was among us, then it departed and among its equals it became a star (najam).

188. It (the star) considered the highest place of residence more suitable for something like itself, therefore, it left us. May rain bring life to its place of residence that was, of old, well-known!

* * *
202. May you not miss the intimacy of this place, because for a long time, you have been devoted to, and familiar with, the darkness of prayer niches.

203. Let it be, that the radiant spring rains cover your grave with a white striped mantle, the cloth of which is a web of rain and mist.

204. A mantle which, on walking, has a wonderful aroma, as if revealing the good qualities that your posses".1

Remarks on the remainder of the qasidah

1. The tone of lines 135, 136 and 137 is plangent.

2. In line 148 he becomes very sad as he wants to sacrifice himself instead of his mother.

3. Even though Ibn al-Rûm elegizes his mother with his longest elegy he still promises her in line 150 to devote to her other laments, he apparently did not.

4. In lines 181, 198, 199 and 202 Ibn al-Rûmî describes his mother as a good and God-fearing person.

The number of poets who elegized their mothers is not great: Ibn al-Rûmî forms something of an exception.2

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1 Pieter Smoor, Elegies and other poems on death by Ibn al-Rûmî, 31-36.

His Brother

Ibn al-Rūmī elegizes him with two poems, each poem being two lines in length:

الطول

1. وتسليني الأيام لا أن لوعتي ولا حزني كالشيء ينسي فيعزعج
   ولكن كفاني مسليا ومعزيا بأن المدى بيني وبينك يقرب
   1. The days cause me to forget you, not because my grief and sadness are things which can be forgotten and dispelled
   2. But because I derive sufficient consolation and solace from the fact that the distance between me and you is getting less.

His second Son (Muḥammad)

Although this was the first child which Ibn al-Rūmī lost, he lavishes only one lament on him:

الطول

1. بكاؤكم ما شفي وإن كان لابندي فعودا فقد أودى نظيركم عندي
   بنى الذي أهدها كفء للثرى في عزة المهدي ويا حصرة المهدي
   1. Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 1,153-154
ألا قال الله للمنايا ورميها
من القوى حياً قلب على عمد
توخي حمام الموت أوسط صبيحي فلله كيف خاتم Vàسه العقد
على حين شمت الخبر من لمحاله وآرى من أفعاله آية الرشد

8

لقد بين المهد والوح لبيه فلم يمس عهد المهد إلا ضم في اللهد

ألح عليه النزف حتي أحلامه إلى صرة الجادي عن حمرة الورد
وهل على الأيدي ساقط نفسه ويدوى كما يذوي القضيب من الرند

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

18

19

20

21

26

28

بودى أي كنت قدمت قبله وإن المنايا دونه صمهد
ولكن ربى شاء غير مشتئتي ولرب إصماء المشتئته لا العبى
واما سرني أن بهبه يثوابه ولو أنه التحلي في جنة الخلدون

وإلى وإن منتبت باني بعده ذكره محبت النين في نجد
وأولادنا مثل الجوارح أيها فتدبى كأن الفانج البين الفند
لكل مكان لا بعد اختتاله مكان أخيه في جزوع ولا جاج
هل العين بعد السمع تكفي مكائه
أم السمع بعد العين يهدى كما تهدي

أعيني جودا لي فقد جدت للثرى بانفس مما تسألان من الرفد

غذرتكما لو تشعنان عن البكا بنوم وما نوم الشجي أخي الجهد؟
"1. Though it is vain your weeping giving some ease; be lavish then, my eyes, for one is lost as dear as you to me.

2. My son whom my hands to the earth consigned, noble the offering, miserable the giver.

3. Out on the fates how cruelly they shoot expressly at the very centre of the heart!

4. Stern death has singled out my midmost boy, oh why the central jewel of necklace choose?

5. Just when his promise let me auger well, and in his actions signs of virtue mark.

* * *

8. Little he tarried twixt the cradle and the grave, its rocking he had not forgot when he was tombed.

* * *

10. Bleeding persisted with him till it turned him saffron from the colour of the rose.
11. For all that could be done he drooped and
withered as a sprig of myrtle withers.

* * *

14. I would have prayed to have been sent before,
that death had sought me out instead of him.

15. Only my lord willed otherwise the master has his
will and not the slave.

16. I'd not have changed him gladly for God's
recompense, even perpetual life in paradise.

* * *

18. Though I am blessed with two more sons besides,
I will think of him so long as camels groan in Najd.

19. Children are like our powers, one we lose troubles
us always and is sorely missed.

20. Each has a place no other one can fill for any
man, if he be weak or firm.

21. Where, hearing goes, can the sight take its place?
or if the eye, can the ear guide as well?

* * *

26. Oh, eyes of mine help me, to earth I have granted
treasure more precious than I ask of you.

* * *

28. If sleep kept you from weeping, I'd excuse you, but
what sleep is there for one over whelmed with grief?
34. Muḥammad, there is nothing deemed relief that does not give me yet another stab.

35. I view your brothers who are left and they kindle my sorrow quicker than much,

36. For when they play some childish game of yours they see my heart not purposely, with fire.

37. I have no consolation from them then, the pain they stir I suffer by myself.

38. Whilst you are lonely in a desolate land, in one of cheer I dwell a solitary.

41. My greeting is, the peace of God be yours rain from clouds with lightning flash and thunder.  

Remarks on the poem

1. Line 34 reveals that his son was named Muḥammad.

2. He was his second child (line 4).

3. The child was between four or five years of age (lines 8, 11). Line 36 implies that his young son was old enough to play games, which suggests that his age should be set as between 2 to 3 years old.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{ Rhurun Guest, Life and Works of Ibn er Rūmī, 67, 68.}\]
4. Ibn al-Rūmī and Bashshār, were the earliest poets who used the image of red roses growing in a garden to capture the beauty of their dead sons and the speed of their demise and departure.

16. He lasted as long as a bride's sweet basil, which has wilted soon after budding on the branch and spreading its perfume.

Compare this with lines 10-11 of Ibn al-Rūmī's poem:

5. His son bled to death (line 10).

6. He compares his sons to the five senses, none of which can take the place of the other (lines 19-21).

7. His reference to the longing of the she-camel bereft of her young (line 18) declares that he still loves his son and suggests that Ibn al-Rūmī was not impervious to his surroundings.

8. The poem ends with istisqa' al-matar, the wish that rain will fall on his son's grave (line 41). This is a traditional feature of the marthiya, one which Ibn al-Rūmī also uses to close his elegy for his mother (line 203).

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1 Bashshār Ibn Burd, Dīwān Beirut, 1993, 115.
-His eldest son-His name was Hبات Allah, Ibn al-Rūmī: dedicates this one qasidah to him

- His eldest son-His name was Hبات Allah, Ibn al-Rūmī: dedicates this one qasidah to him

١'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 258, 259.
8. O my son yesterday you and consolation were both wrapped in a winding sheet.

* * *

10. O my son, if I grieve for you, I have a right to grieve, at any rate for a short time at having lost you.

* * *

12. I cannot imagine that such a soul and body could be deserted by your sorrow which used to inhabit them.

13. By God, you will not cease to be a source of grief to me, time will pass and you will remain a grief to me.

14. And now, when you have travelled away from my land, staying here has become unattractive and leaving has become attractive.

15. This world has become no home to me; rather, where you abode is my homeland.

16. Since I have lost you, I have had no society by day and no dwelling by night.

17. What a pity that you should have left me as a fresh shoot, before bearing fruit for me.

* * *

19. O, our children, you are our infatuation but when you leave us you become our affliction.
“21. “Oh my censurer in this calamity: You say the tears in my eye are suffering from exploitation.
22. But leave off with your criticism. For I am a man who is just and reliable when it comes to weeping.
23. I have only spent my tears on deserving occasions, and no unnecessary loss or fraud has come upon me.
24. My son made me lament, when he hurt me with such pain, but the atlāl and the other remains diman did not allow me to lament.
25. I remained dedicated to the grave which encircled his body, so excuse me, for there is no need of a stone or wooden idol here.”

Remarks

1. The tone of lamentation and grief in this qasidah is not quite so stringent as in his qasidah for his middle son.
2. In line (17) he says that his son died when he was still a child.
3. In lines (24 - 25) Ibn al-Rūmī rejects the emotional demands of the traditional encampments and remains (atlal and diman), conventionally considered to provoke a response of nostalgia and loss in the auditor, when compared with his dedication to his son’s grave and his grief at

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1 Pieter Smoor, Elies and other poems on death by Ibn al-Rūmī p, 14, 15.
his loss. Poetically, two conventions are involved, the atlâl derived from the traditional three part qasidah, and the mention of the deceased's grave (part of the Istisqa' al-matar). Ibn al-Rûmî asserts the incompatibility of the facile emotionality of the qasidah and the heart-felt despondency of the marthiyah.

His youngest son

This stanza does not seem to be dedicated to his eldest son but rather to that son who remained unnamed in his poetry:  

1. A care that travelled by night prevented him from sleeping and kept returning so he spent the night looking at the stars until they disappeared.

2. O my eyes be generous with your abundant tears for me, because I have been generous to the earth with something greater and sweeter than that which you deny me.

---

1 ‘Abbâs al-'Aqqâd, Ibn al-Rûmî, 80. See also ‘Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 1, 263.

2 ‘Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Dîwân, 1, 263.
3. It was my son whom I gave as a gift to the earth yesterday. God knows how strong and straight I keep my back.

Remarks
1. Ibn al-Rūmī uses the same themes in all three poems for his sons
   Line (2) in his middle qasidah.
   Line (8) in his eldest son's qasidah.
   Line (3) in his youngest son's qit'ah.

2. The brevity of this poem may reflect Ibn al-Rūmī's having become inured to the blows of fate, or it may reflect a spontaneous, improvised outburst.

His wife

Ibn al-Rūmī devotes four poems to his dead wife.¹

الطويل
أعوني جودا باللهمع لفقدها فما بعدها دخر من اللمع مدخور٢
فصبيكما منها الذي فات فيكك
فأما نقبي للقلب منها فموحور

¹ 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 57, 112. 3, 222. 5, 309.
² 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 222.
1. O my eyes be generous at the loss of her with tears for there is no reason for you to keep your tears after her.

2. Your share in her is that which has gone, so weep! My heart's share in her, however, is still considerable.

Remarks

Ibn al Rûmî's injunction to his eyes to be generous is a traditionally favoured theme which he employs often in his laments. Line 1 in the qasidah for his middle son; line 2 in the qit'ah for his youngest son; line 1 in his qasidah bewailing the death of his mother and line 1 in the present qit'ah.

This injunction is a Jâhili tradition. al-Khansâ, for example, employs it in twenty-seven poems.¹

Elegies for deceased or grieving patrons.

Ibn al-Rûmî elegizes some of those whom he used to praise, such as Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allâh al Ṭâhir (one qasidah), Sayyâr Ibn Makram (one stanza) and he consoles al-Qasim on his son's death with one qasidah.

Ibn al-Rûmî elegizes Muḥammad Ibn al-Ṭâhir...

البيط

1. Death does not allow anyone to survive and does not respect the great man or the multitude.

2. This the Emir to whom it has come while he was under the protection (of an army) like the night, as well armed and numerous as you will find.
17. O Abū al-'Abbās, do not go far as a king, even if you are distant and far away!

* * *

20. It was not you who died but all of the inhabitants of the earth, since you have left them, you who were the soul in their body.

21. Even though you are in the grave, you deserve to be lamented by all people, whether they live in the mountains or the plains.

* * *

25. You have lavished grief equally among the worlds just as you lavished luxury and well-being among them.

26. You spread longing for you among them, when you were lost, just as you spread your liberality among them, when you were not lost.

27. If they were weighed, your death and your life would be equal, neither would outweigh the other.

* * *

30. I am surprised that the corners of the earth are not split asunder and the mountains anchored thereto are not convulsed.
31. I am surprised that the sun has not become dark because of his death as he was the light without which it could not illuminate.

Female singer

Ibn al-Rūmī mourns a female singer called Būstān with one qasidah:

58. Bustān, alas for the beauty of your face and your skill which have both turned to dust.

59. Bustān, my heart has become filled with grief, O you whom it used to delight in leaving and seeing.

---

60. Bustàn, man will not find a substitute for you either as a garden or as a human.

61. Bustàn, you have been watered by our tears and not by the clouds or the rain of morning (lit, the clouds which travel through the night).

62. But it is fitting that you be watered by wine, by the wine of Hams or of Jader.

* * *

67. I find that every pleasure after you is, in my opinion, ridiculous foolery.

* * *

86. All the sins of time can be forgiven, but the sin which it committed upon you cannot be forgiven.

87. Upon the loss of you, the (strings of the) lute have been cut and pleasure has been totally scared away.

Ibn al-Rūmī devotes an elegy to al- Bāṣrah when this town was attacked by the Zanj.

الخفيف

ذاذ عن مقلتي نذيد المنام شغلا عنه بالدموع السجام 1

أي نوم من بعد ما حل بالبصرة من تلكم الهداث العظام؟ 2

أي نوم من بعد ما انتهك الزنجر جهارا محارم الإسلام؟ 3

1 Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Diwān, 6, 131-136.
لهف نفسك على أنكما البصرة لهفا كمثل لذهب الضرام
لهف نفسك على ياعدن الخبرات لهفا بعضني إيهامي
لهف نفسك يا قية الإسلام لهفا يطول منه غرامي
لهف نفسك على يا فرصة البلدان لهفا يبقى على الأعورام
لهف نفسك لجمعك النقاني لهف نفسك لعزوك المستضام
بينما أهلها ذاهن حال إذا رماهم عيدهم باصطلام

صطبعهم فكراك القوم منهم طول يوم كأنه ألف عام

ما تتذكرت ما أتي الزنج إلا أضرم القلب أيضا إضرام
ما تتذكرت ما أتي الزنج إلا أوجعتي مرارة الإرغام

عرجا صاحبي بالبصرة لزهراء تعريج مدنف ذي سقاء
فأسالها ولا جواب لديها أسئل ومن لها بالكلام
أين ضوضاء ذلك الخلق فيها أين أسواقها ذوات الرحم؟

بل ألما بساحة المسجد الجامع إن كنتما نوي إجمال
فأسالها ولا جواب لديه أين عباده الطوال القيام؟
أين عماره الألى عمروه دههم في ثلاثة وصيام

أي عذر لنا وأي جواب حين تدعى على رؤوس الأنام
با عبادي أما عضبتي لوجهي ذي الجلال العظيم والإكرام
"1. Sweet sleep has been barred from my eyes by their preoccupation with copious tears.

2. What sleep (is possible) after the great misfortunes that have befallen Basrah?

3. What sleep (is possible) after the Zanj have violated openly the sacred places of Islam?

     *     *     *

8. My soul cries alas for thee, O Basrah, with a sight like the blaze of a conflagration;

9. My soul cries alas for thee, O mine of excellencies, with a sight that makes me to bite my thumb;

10. My soul cries alas for thee, O tabernacle of Islam, with a sight whence my anguish is prolonged.

11. My soul cries alas for thee, O anchorage of the lands with a sigh that shall continue for long years.

12. My soul cries alas for thy concourse that has perished; my soul cries alas for thy grievously injured glory.

13. Even whilst her inhabitants were enjoying the fairest circumstances, their slaves assailed them with (sudden) destruction.

     *     *     *
27. They came upon them in the morning, and the people endured their cruelty through the length of a day that was as if a thousand years.

* * *

32. I never recall what was perpetrated by the Zanj without it kindles what a conflagration in my heart;

33. I never recall what was perpetrated by the Zanj without I am anguished by the bitterness of humiliation.

* * *

39. Turn aside, my two comrades, at Basrah the brilliant, as one wasted with sickness turns aside;

40. And enquire of her—but answer is not to be found in her to any question, and who is there to speak for her?

41. Where is the clamour of them that dwelt in her? Where are her jostling markets?

* * *

52. Rather, (my comrades), repair to the congregational mosque, if you be manapt to tarry,

53. And enquire of it—but answer is not to be found in it—Where are its worshippers, who stood long in prayer?
54. Where are its throngers who used to throng it, passing all their time in recitation and fasting?

60. What excuse shall we have to offer, what response to give, when we are summoned over the heads of mankind?

61. "O My servants, were you not angry on my behalf, on behalf of me, the majestic the splendid?"¹

Remarks

1. Ibn al-Rûmî is a one of the earliest poets to compose an elegy on a town.²

2. Ibn al-Rûmî mentions the destruction of the Zanj in lines 13, 32, 33.

3. Ibn al-Rûmî mentions how the Zanj killed children, women and the elderly and how they destroyed al-Baṣrah: lines 22, 24, 35, 47, 48, 49. He then reproaches the Muslims, reminding them that God will demand of them a reason for not having helped the people of al-Baṣrah (60, 61, 62). The razing of al-Baṣrah by the Zanj is referred to in lines 41-46, by which Ibn al-Rûmî hopes to incite the Muslims to take up arms against the Zanj.

4. A feature common to Ibn al-Rûmî’s elegies is his repetition of words for regret, grief and despondent ejaculation: See for example: lines 26-

¹ A. J. Arberry, Arabic poetry, p, 63-70.

² Shāwqī Ḏayf, al-Rithā’, 47.
30 of the *qasidah* for his middle son, lines 8-12, 19-26, 29-31, 34-37 of his lament for al-Baṣrah.

5. The majority of his *marāthī* are composed in the *Tawīl* metre.

6. He devotes one lament to each of his losses, rarely dedicating more than one to each occasion.

**THE GHAZAL**

The ghazal occupies a minor place in Ibn al-Rūmi's *Diwān* when compared with his panegyrical and invective poetry. There are two basic types of *ghazal* in his poetry. The one occurs within the introductions to his long *qasidahs* (the Nasib), as, for example, in the *qasidah* which begins with:

\[
\text{ناسب } \text{نوران سلوا نذره وواصل الطبي بعدما هجره}
\]

1. He returned to remembering her after he had found solace and he became reunited to the gazelle after he had abandoned her.

Ibn al-Rūmī devotes 62 lines to this *Nasib* before he reaches the *gharad* of the *qasidah*.

The other type occurs in a self-contained poem which is not polythematic (*ghazal* proper).

---

O my two companions, Wahid has enslaved me and my heart suffers great pain because of her.

Ibn al-Rumi dedicates his ghazal poetry to both men and women. Consider the following poem addressed to Sulayman Ibn al-Hasan Ibn Mukhrid, an interesting example of mujun, in its combination of ghazal and Hijâ' and its general withering criticisms.

1. 'Ali Ibn al-Rumi, Dīwān, 2, 265.
2. 'Ali Ibn al-Rumi, Dīwān, 4, 313.
1. O Sulayman who is still thirsty, for you have been cut off from the streams.

2. You are an old man, so be sure of parting and ready yourself for departure.

3. You have been removed from me by divorce, divorce, divorce.

6. We are a people among whom there is no share of happiness for him who has been spurned.

7. We eat the meat and throw away the fibrous, sinewy meat on the bones.

8. We do throw the jug away after we have drunk its wine.

19. How many beakers, brimming over, of your saliva did your mouth give me to drink!

20. And often by the morning our legs had become entwined, one with the other.
22. The beauty of your cheeks has gone, nothing lasts for ever.

* * *

41. We ate you when you were delicious, pleasant and sweet to taste.

42. And we tossed you aside when you were hateful, abandoning someone like you does not incur disapproval.

The following poem is dedicated to a female called Mažlûmah

السريع
يا غصنًا من تولز رطب فيه سرور العين والقلب؟
أحسن بي يوم أرانيكم وما على المحسن من عتب
لكنه اعتبني حسرة فدمعتي سكبه على سكبه
مظلمة ما أنت بمظلمة في حكم أهل الشرق والغرب
بل إنما المظلمة عبد لكم أصبح مقتولا بلا ذنب
غضبته جهرا على قلبي لا تثبت ما اعشت من الغصب
مالاب من عادك في راحة وما لم يلهك في كرب؟
سلامت أهل الحرب طويب لهم لكن أهل السلام في حرب
أصبحت من ودك بلا كلفة كالروح بين الجبه والجنوب
أعانني الله على غلتي بشرية من ريقك العذب
يا حب مظلمة لا تكتشف أزداد فما لي منك من حسب

1 Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 1, 268, 269.
1. Oh, spray of fresh pearls gladnessing to the eye and heart.

2. The day that showed you unto me was kind, and it is not right to cavil at a benefactor,

3. Still it did bring me a pang later, so that now my tears pour in showers.

4. Victim, it is not you who are the victim in the eyes of the people of the east and west,

5. Rather the victim is a slave of yours, doomed to die without having committed any crime,

6. Whose heart you have robbed him of openly. So long as you live, may you never cease to do such robbery!

7. How is it those hostile to you are at ease, while those friendly are in distress?

8. You have made peace with those at war with you, happy are they, but those at peace with you are at war.
9. Without an effort you have become to my spirit as it were another spirit lodged between its sides.

10. May God help me to endure my raging thirst by means of a draught of the sweet nectar of your mouth.

11. Love of the victim, do not pass away, but grow stronger, of you I shall never have enough!

12. Victim, you have made our hearts your booty and we are content at being plundered.

13. Your playing does not pass its measure with your singing nor does your voice go beyond your music.

14. The impression of both on the inner sense is that of rain in time of draught.

15. You surpass other singer as much as the Bani Wahab, those stars of the world,

16. Surpass all in grace and graciousness combined, having each in a degree by itself impossible to equal."¹

About another female called Waḥid Ibn al-Rūmī says

¹ Rhurun Guest, Life and Works of Ibn er Rūmī, 65.
1. O my two companions, Wahid has enslaved me and my heart suffers great pain because of her.

2. A maiden who has been adorned by the shape of the branch and the eyes and neck of the gazelle.

\[1 'Ali Ibn al-Rûmî, Diwân, 2, 265-267.\]
3. Her hair and her cheek, with their blackness and rouge, cause her to blossom

* * *

9. Someone who did not know her beauty said describe her' and I replied , ' she is both easy and difficult to describe'

10. It is easy to say "she is the most beautiful one of all" but difficult to set limits.

11. She is the sun on a cloudy day and both luminaries, the sun and the full moon, derive their light from her.

12. When she is uncovered and appears to those who look on her, one man is wretched because of her beauty, another is happy.

13. She is a gazelle who lives in and grazes on men's hearts and a cooing dove.

* * *

31. Beautiful women have showed themselves to me and I have said "Gently does it! (I shall never turn ) from Wahid, for she deserves the tawhid".

32. Her beauty in the eyes of men is the only beauty, (love) for her in the hearts of men is the only love.
33. A close friend and adviser reproaches me for (my) love for her; he has strayed far from success and right guidance.

* * *

37. She was created to be a seduction in her singing and her beauty, in both of which she is without equal.

38. She is a blessing at which the mature man feels giddy and a tribulation from which the young man grows old.

Remarks on the Ghazal.

1. Ibn al-Rūmī composes ghazal devoted to both men and women.

2. A large proportion of his ghazal is to be found in the nasibs of his qasidahs.

3. Occasionally, his ghazal, both male -and female- oriented, is unseemly and indecorous.¹

¹ 'All I bn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 406. 3, 60. 4, 135. 5, 316, 170. 6, 298, 191, 188, 16.
4. The objects of his love poetry, both male and female, generally remain unnamed and unidentified.¹

His death

Ibn Khallikān says that Ibn al-Rūmī died in (283-284 or 276 A.H.).² He was not sure about the exact date of Ibn al-Rūmī’s death but al-‘Aqqād gave an exact date based on his examination of these three dates

He chose 283 A.H. as the most likely.\(^1\)

The cause of death was apparently poison: Ibn al-Rūmī was given some poisoned food by al-Qāsim the Governor of Baghdad and died as a result of eating it.\(^2\)

---

\(^1\) 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 224.

\(^2\) Abū al-'Abbās Ibn Khallikān, Wafāyāt al A'yān, 3, 361
SUMMATION

1. The early ‘Arab biographers and writers on literary history have little to say about Ibn al-Rūmī.

2. Because of his poverty, and avarice, Ibn al-Rūmī composed panegyrics for any little thing, no matter how trifling.

3. His life was full of suffering.

4. He allowed his superstitions to determine his life.

5. His Diwān is the biggest Diwān of all early ‘Arab poets.

6. No-one, either ancient or modern, has composed a commentary on his Diwān although there do exist two different modern editions.

7. The majority of his long qasidahs begin with a Nasīb or another introduction.

8. He composed pieces in all the major genres, and in most of the metres.

9. The majority of his poetry is either panegyrical or invective.

10. His poetry is generally directed at a specific individual.

11. Iṣtiqsā‘ and Tashkhīs feature prominently in his compositional style.

12. He quotes from both the Qur‘ān and from Jāhilī poetry in some qasidahs.

13. The rhyme - word often reveals the poetic technique known as luzūm mā lam yulzam, later to be perfected by al-Ma‘ārī.
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