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A Reconsideration of Some Jāhili Poetic Paradigms.

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Submitted for the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

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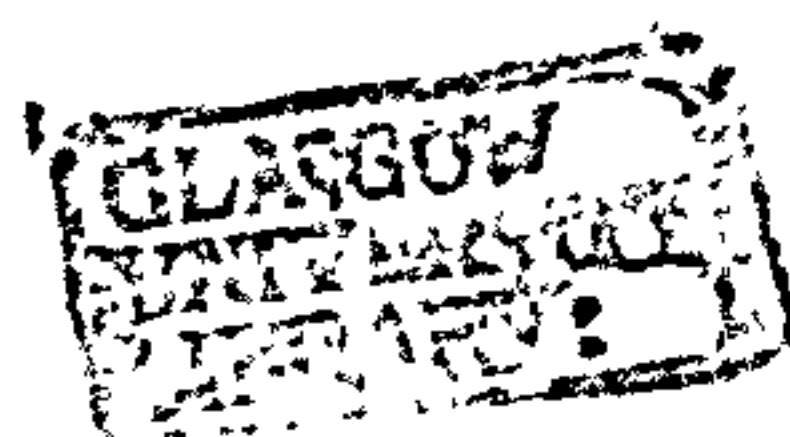


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Thy Mighty Scholiast, whose unweary'd pains
 Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains
 Turn what they will to Verse, their toil is vain,
 Critics like me shall make it Prose Again.
 Roman and Greek Grammarians! know your Better:
 Author of Something yet more great than Letter;
 While tow'ring o'er your Alphabet, like Saul,
 Stands our Digamma, and o'er-tops them all.
 'Tis true, on Words, is still our whole debate,
 Disputes of Me or Te, of aut or at,
 To sound or sink in cano, O or A,
 Or give up Cicero to C or K.
 Let Freind affect to speak as Terence spoke,
 And Alsop never but like Horace joke:
 For me, what Virgil, Pliny may deny,
 Manilius or Solinus shall supply:
 For Attic Phrase in Plato let them seek,
 I poach in Suidas for unlicens'd Greek.
 In ancient Sense if any needs will deal,
 Be sure I give them Fragments, not a Meal.

Alexander Pope, The Dunciad (Book IV, 211-230).

Philologie nämlich ist jene ehrwürdige Kunst, welche von ihrem Verehrer vor Allem Eins heischt, bei Seite gehn, sich Zeit lassen, still werden, langsam werden --, als eine Goldschmiedekunst und -kennerschaft des Wortes, die lauter feine vorsichtige Arbeit abzuthun hat und Nichts erreicht, wenn sie es nicht lento erreicht. Gerade damit aber ist sie heute nöthiger als je, gerade dadurch zieht sie und bezaubert sie uns am stärksten, mitten in einem Zeitalter der "Arbeit", will sagen: der Hast, der unanständigen und schwitzenden Eilfertigkeit, das mit Allem gleich "fertig werden" will, auch mit jedem alten und neuen Buche: -- sie selbst wird nicht so leicht irgend womit fertig, sie lehrt gut lesen, dass heisst langsam, tief, rück- und vorsichtig, mit Hintergedanken, mit offenen gelassenen Thüren, mit zarten Fingern und Augen lesen ...

F. Nietzsche, Morgenröthe (Vorrede 5).

ABSTRACT

The Jāhili poets esteemed verity as opposed to verisimilitude as their principal aesthetic criterion. I have long been convinced of this. This thesis represents an attempt to enucleate several features of their verse by drawing on various spheres of knowledge, acquaintance with which is fundamental to a proper appreciation of the pre-Islamic qaṣīdah as poetry. My concern has been with matters zoological, philological, literary and socio-historical.

It is a critical shibboleth (both occidental and oriental) that the ancients Arabs were unlettered; yet writing looms large in their verse. It is a modern datum that Jāhili verse is oral poetry; yet this is not the only explanation for the recurrence of conventional phraseology and expression. Chapter One is a preliminary incursus into an investigation of writing among the early Arabs. It is also a study of the literary development of a nexus of topical comparisons, viz. the deserted encampment. A socio-historical interpretation of the shift in emphasis perceptible in these comparisons is offered, conjoined with the suggestion that the phenomenon of the 'Bedouin' is an incremental paradigm, the presence of which is less distinct in early Jāhili verse than has been supposed. Extended similes in which a camel is compared with an oryx bull or doe or a wild ass have tended to be neglected by scholars, who 'rely on an, at times but poorly formed, subjective impression, referring to the stylized or mannered nature of the

tableaux. I have tried to demonstrate that, although in their several features narrative consuetude is discernible, a proper understanding of the vignettes depends largely on the given poetic context. The ethology and ecology of the ass and the oryx have been studied in order to shed light on their poetical manifestations: verse has proved to be consistent with science. Chapter 4 sets forth a comparison of the parodical style of Arkhilokhos of Paros and al-Nābighah of the tribe of Dhubyān, to which an instance of parody from the Middle English alliterative tradition has been appended. The Appendices deal severally with a hunting technique transformed, almost beyond recognition, into a striking literary image; with the 'capping challenge' as a device for the practise of versification; with a preliminary schematization of poems with a Wild Ass vignette taken from the corpus of the Mukhadramī Ka'b b. Zuhayr.

PREFATORY NOTE

This work grew out of a reading of poem 23 in Ahlwardt's edition of the diwan of al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, of which it was my original intention to provide a commentary. My deliberations on the wild ass and the oryx proved to be too voluminous and of wider application than such would allow. In a sense, the work offered here is incomplete: I had planned to preface Chapters 2 and 3 with a résumé of the zoological data which I had collected on these animals, and to conclude with a general summation of the findings of each chapter with their relevance to the wider Jāhili poetic context; I was also minded to include a full lexicographical discussion of writing and its associated paraphernalia, to examine the arguments concerning the scriptorial ability or inability of the early Arabs, to emphasize how vital the concept of anagnorisis is in the context of the dhikr al-aṭāl and to relate the findings to the psychological and physical restraints imposed upon the production of literature by an imperfectly developed writing system as expounded by E.A. Havelock. These intentions have been frustrated largely by considerations of space. Observations derived from an investigation of topography (a branch of what the Chadwicks call 'Antiquarian Learning') in the poetry of this period have been included where relevant: I hope soon to publish the wider study of which they are a part.

In the body of the text transliterations have, by and large, been

harmonized with my own system which is essentially standard: incipient hamzah and hamzat al-wasl are not represented. A double oblique (//) designates the hemistichal break; a single oblique (/) designates a break in verses when quoted consecutively and unformatted. The Bibliography contains exclusively works referred to in the text: original transliterations have been restored.

My thanks are due to Yvonne Montgomery and J.N. Mattock for their encouragement.

This thesis rests on a principle that some deem fallacious, viz. that our understanding of Jāhili verse can be enhanced by the study of poetry, both pre-literate and literate, of other cultures, that Pindar, for example, may tell us something about Zuhayr, that Orpingalik may tell us something about Imru' al-Qays. I have, however, tried to eschew interpreting the one in terms of the other. I should label this the 'Synthetic Fallacy'.

Chapter 1 -- The Deserted Encampment

The poet, after the manner of his countrymen, supposes himself attended on a journey by a company of friends; and, as they pass near a place, where his mistress had lately dwelled, but from which her tribe was then removed, he desires them to stop awhile, that he might indulge the painful pleasure of weeping over the deserted remains of her tent.

Sir William Jones, The Moállakát, 1782.

I' had rather, I,
Be like a Whet-stone, that an edge can put
On steele, though 't selfe be dull, and cannot cut.
I, writing nought my selfe, will teach them yet
Their Charge, and Office, whence their wealth to fet,
What nourisheth, what formèd, what begot
The Poët, what becometh, and what not:
Whether truth may, and whether error bring.

Horace, Of the Art of Poetrie,

Translated by Ben Jonson (vv. 432-439).

Your Poem finish'd, next your Care
Is needful, to transcribe it fair.
In modern Wit all printed Trash, is
Set off with num'rous Breaks--and Dashes--

To Statesmen wou'd you give a Wipe,
You print it in Italick Type.
When Letters are in vulgar Shapes,
'Tis ten to one the Wit escapes:
But when in CAPITALS exprest,
The dullest Reader smoaks the Jest:
Or else perhaps he may invent
A better than the Poet meant;
As learned Commentators view
In Homer more than Homer knew.

Jonathan Swift, On Poetry: A Rapsody,

(vv. 91-104). [1]

Descriptions of the vestiges of desolate and abandoned encampments constitute a dramatic feature of the dhikr al-atlāl movement. There are three basic types of similitude: comparisons with writing; with figured garments; with tattooing. This latter is perhaps of lesser antiquity than the others, while the first is both the oldest and the most frequent, occurring in the works of poets from all periods of the Jāhiliyyah. I have appended a fourth category, labelled 'Miscellaneous', for the sake of completeness. In the following catalogue, I have followed the example set by von Grunebaum [2] in attempting to discern poetical schools in early poetry, eliciting, where possible, a categorization on the basis of tribal descent or affiliation: there will always remain poets who lie beyond the pale of such confines. I do not, however, accept many of his 'family trees', nor do I believe that a reliable and viable chronological format can be constructed to function with any degree of exactitude. A tradition is a fluid phenomenon, in which poets can deliberately choose to compose in an 'old-fashioned' style, for example: innovations should not always be attributed to a chronologically earlier poet, by virtue of his supposed chronology, for the gifted poet is always responsive to creative innovations effected by new generations. It is largely for taxonometical reasons that I shall pursue such a schematization which affords one advantage, viz. the elucidation of local, 'tribal' predilections, although it obscures one vital aspect of this poetry, viz. that the majority of the poets discussed were, at one time, connected, in some capacity, with the court circles of Lakhmid

al-Ḥīrah and the Ghassanid phylarchy. This factor accounts for much of the homogeneity in the verse of poets of disparate tribes and regions.

In the following sections, the abbreviation E designates an early Jāhiliī floruit, M-J a middle Jāhiliī floruit, L a late Jāhiliī floruit and M represents Mukhadramī, the older and younger contemporaries of the prophet, elsewhere labelled "early Islamic".

[3] For the sake of regularity, I have treated the more unusual groupings first, appending the tribal divisions thereafter. Any groupings not represented in Section A, but relevant to other sections, will be conjoined to end of the tribal groupings.

A. Comparisons with Writing.

Group 1 -- The Inter-tribal Chain of Ruwāt.

1. Zuhayr (M-J/L) Ahl 11. 2 (= Qabāwah 20. 2, Tha'lab p.193, v.2).

2. Balīna wa-tahsibu āyati-hi

nna 'an farti hawlayni raqqan muḥīlan

2. (Remnants which) have fallen into decay -- you would imagine that their vestigial signs, after the passage of two years, were a year old parchment.

2. Zuhayr Ahl 15. 5 (= Qab 3. 5, Th p.124, v.5).

5. Li-man talalun ka-l-wahyi 'āfin manāzilu-h
'afa l-rassu min-hu fa-l-rusaysu fa-'āqilu-h

5. To whom belongs a remnant like writing, its dwellings effaced
-- effaced are al-Rass, al-Rusays and 'Āqil?

3. Zuhayr Ahl 17. 3 (= Qab 9. 3, Th p.145, v.3).

3. Darun li-asma'a bi-l-qhamrayni māthilatun
ka-l-wahyi laysa bi-hā min ahli-hā aramu [4]

3. An abode belonging to Asmā' in al-Ghamrān, evanishing, like
writing, uninhabited by its folk.

4. Zuhayr Ahl Frag. 4. 1 (= Qab 32. 1, Th p.268, v.1).

1. Li-mani l-diyāru qhashitu-hā bi-l-fadfadi
ka-l-wahyi fī hajari l-masīli l-mukhlidi

1. To whom belong the abodes which I chanced upon in the hard
ground, like the perdurable inscription upon the rock of
the torrent-bed?

Mukhlid may, of course, qualify hajar: 'the perdurable rock of the
torrent-bed': the reference is to epigraphy or a graffito.

5. Ka'b b. Zuhayr (L/M) Kowalski 4. 1 (= Cairo p.61, v.1).

1. A-ta'rifu rasman bayna rahmāna [*] fa-l-raqam
ilā dhī marāhītīn ka-mā khutṭa bi-l-qalam

1. Do you recognise a trace between Rahmān and al-Raqam as far as
 Dhū Marāhīt, like the writing of the reed-pen?

[*]. Kow: duhmāna.

6. Al-Ḥuṭay'ah (L/M) Goldziher 3. 1.

1. Li-mani l-diyāru ka-anna-hunna sutūru
bi-liwa zarūda safā 'alay-hā l-mūru

1. To whom belong the abodes, like lines, in the barchans of
 Zarud, covered with dust kicked up by the wind?

Group 2 -- The Two Individualists:

Imru' al-Qays and 'Alqamah.

7. Imru' al-Qays (E) Ahl 63. 1 (= Ibrāhīm 8. 1).

1. Li-man talalun absartu-hu fa-shāja-nī
ka-khatti zabūrin fī 'asibin yamāni

1. To whom belongs a remnant which I have espied and which has
 roused my yearning, like the writing of a writ on Yemeni
 phloem?

8. Imru' al-Qays 65. 2 (= Ibr 9. 2).

2. Atat hijajun ba'd-i 'aly-hi fa-asbahat
ka-khatti zaburin fi masahifi ruhbanī

2. Years have come upon it since last I was there and, in the morning, it was like the writing of a zabūr, contained in the codices of ascetics.

It has been suggested, by J. Horovitz "Zabūr" EI IV 1184, that Imru' al-Qays is here alluding to the Psalms of Dāwūd although I think it more likely that it denotes a holy writ, a revealed book (the sense which the plural zabur has in Qur'an 3. 184, 16. 44, 26. 196, 35. 25): cf. A. Jeffery, The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an, Baroda 1938, 148-149. It is Fraenkel's contention (Die Aramaïschen Fremdwörter im Arabischen, Leiden 1886, 248) that it was originally a South Arabian loan-word, and the poets associate it, almost exclusively, with the Yemen. Further proof is to be found in the occurrence of the related root dh-b-r in Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 7. 1 and Abū Ṣakhr Kos 3. 7 (= Farraj p. 254, v. 7), describing, respectively, the operations of a Himyarite scribe and a kitāb that is readily legible. That it signifies a legal document, "writ" is the translation proposed by Horovitz, is corroborated by Qur'an 54. 43, a-kuffāru-kum khayrun min ula'ikum am la-kum barā'atun fi l-zuburi, 'Are your Ingrates better than those, or have you an acquittal in the writs?', and 54. 52, wa-kullu shay'in fa'alū-hu fi l-zuburi, 'And all that they have done is in the writs'; in these instances zabur denotes the "heavenly writings, in which human deeds are recorded" (Horovitz op. cit.).

Group 3 -- The Oppidans.

(1) Al-Ḥīrah.

Although there is nowhere any explicit mention of a connection,

poetical or tribal, between Abū Du'ād and 'Adī b. Zayd, they have sufficient features in common to warrant the classification of them under a single rubric. Abū Du'ād is said, by al-Aṣma'ī, to have been "in charge of al-Mundhir's stable", although this is probably an aetiological anecdote, given his fame and penchant for describing horses. Von Grunebaum maintains that Abū Du'ād is a "nomad with strong ties to urban civilisation", presumably basing his views on the content of Abū Du'ād's extant fragments, whereas 'Adī b. Zayd "is a citizen of al-Ḥīrah with some experience of desert life". This is a somewhat artificial and unnecessary distinction. Both poets were associated with al-Ḥīrah [5] in the minds of later poets and authors to an extent that is not found of the poets who went to the metropolis in search of employment, to sell their poetical wares: thus al-Aswad b. Ya'fūr, a "boon-companion of al-Nu'mān Abū Qābūs, the last Lakhmite king of al-Ḥīrah" [6], of Abū Du'ād (Muf 44. 10);

44. ardan takhayyara-ha li-dari abī-him
 ka'bu bnu māmata wa-bnu ummi du'adi

44. A land selected for the abode of their father by Ka'b
 b. Māmah and Ibn Umm Du'ād.

Furthermore, the ties between the poet's tribe Iyād and the Lakhmid capital (cf. Lyall Muf 2 153) seem to have been not insubstantial before the decimation wrought upon Iyād by the Persians. One of Abū Du'ād's poems in the Aṣma'īyyāt, no. 66, was attributed by

Sībawayh to 'Adī b. Zayd and al-Jāhīz "quotes a certain Iyās al-Naṣrī, 'the best genealogist' ... as having said that some authorities were of opinion Abū Du'ād and 'Adī b. Zayd were the best poets". [7] In the domain of metrical technique, according to the figures which von Grunebaum quotes of instances of Ramal, Abū Du'ād seems to have composed at least 3 poems in it, 'Adī 7, and of Khafif, the former at least 15, the latter 7. Furthermore, the diction of both was deemed to be atypical, i.e. not that of the Najd. [8] I do not lend much credence to Ibn Rashīq's claim that Imru' al-Qays acted as Abū Du'ād's rawī, despite Ahlwardt's and Lyall's acceptance of it [9], and the former's discussion of the issue in Aechtheit 74 ff.: the misascriptions, especially concerning Imru' al-Qays Ahl 35 (= Ibr 5), seem to me to be due to misinterpretation of a conscious and literary adaption, by Imru' al-Qays, of what must have been some of the most celebrated horse descriptions, if not in fact poems, of the day. That he was influenced by Abū Du'ād seems likely and is worthy of further study: poetic influence or literary adaptation is quite distinct from apprenticeship and transmission of verse. Further influence is probably to be adduced from the use of Ramal as the metre of Imru' al-Qays Ahl 18 (= Ibr 27). It is not coincidental that this poem contains a storm description, a very traditional feature of early verse. This is totally different to the averred connection between Zuhayr and Tufayl b. 'Awf al-Ghanawī, whose rawī Zuhayr is said to have been [10]: there is precious little that is common to the extant dīwāns of both, an indication that the connection was not

postulated on the basis of homogeneity of style or content, but on some other fund of information.

9. Abū Du'ād (E) von Grunebaum 1948-1952 7. 1.

1. Li-man talalun ka-'unwani l-kitabi
bi-batni luwaqin aw batni l-dhuhabi

1. To whom belongs a remnant, like the frontispiece of a book, in
the vale of Luwaq or the vale of al-Dhuhab?

10. Abū Du'ād 69. 1.

2. Wa-nu'yun adarra bi-hi l-sāfiyā'
ka-darsin mina l-nūni hīna mmahā

2. And a trench damaged by the sand-spout like a
faded nūn when erased.

For immahā, cf. no. 44, verse 4 (maḥiyy) -- Abū Du'ād is probably referring to a palimpsest. If he is alluding to an inscription, however, I should offer the translation "when worn away". [11] Kazimirski 1373, however, gives nūn as also meaning an inkpot, in which case I should translate the second hemistich as 'like obliterated /ink/ from the inkpot when erased'. Al-Jāḥiẓ in the Kitāb al-Hayawān reads in verse 7 of Abū Du'ād Frag. 3 lām, 'a letter lām', for la'm, 'a well-fledged /arrow/' (cf. Chapter 2 no. 1 v. 47 and comment), in the poet's depiction of a horse when viewed from the front. With regard to this, von Grunebaum refers to the "inscription on Fīhr's tomb from Umm al-Jimāl, dated about A.D. 250", maintaining that "this letter had been given its form in

Nabataean times" (op. cit. 92).

11. 'Adī b. Zayd (M-J/L?) 12. 2.

2. Mā tabīnu l-'aynu min āyati-hā

ghayra nu'yin mithli khattin bi-l-qalamī

2. The eye can distinguish /little/ of its vestigial signs except
for a trench like writing /done/ with a reed-pen.

(11) Medina

12. Qays b. al-Khaṭīm (M-J/L) Kowalski 4. 1.

1. A-ta'rifu rasman ka-ttiradi l-madhahibi

li-'amrata wahshan ghayra mawqifi rakibi

1. Do you recognise a trace like the well-ruled lines of gilt
/leaves or characters/, belonging to 'Amrah, wild, save for
the halting of a rider?

In my translation, I have acquiesced in the traditional interpretation of this line. It is, however, quite possible that the participial adjective madhahib designates 'damascened scabbards', as in al-A'lam Kos 21. 15: cf. nos. 29 (Labīd 'Abbās 15. 3) and 36 (Bishr 7. 1, ittiradi l-mudhhabi).

13. Ḥassan b. Thābit (L/M) 13. 3.

3. Aqwa wa-'uttila min-humu fa-ka-anna-hu

ba'da l-bilā ayu l-kitābi l-mujmalī

3. It has become devoid and divested of them so that it resembles,
after /such/ decay, the verses of the /wondrously/ adorned
Book.

Mujmal could also be translated 'gathered together, bound': cf.
Blachère 1727. The phrase ayu l-kitābi seems to refer to the
Qur'an, as in no. 26 post.

14. Hassān b. Thābit 15. 1.

1. 'Arafta diyāra zaynaba bi-l-kathībi
ka-khatti l-wahyi fi l-raqqi l-qashibi

1. You recognised the abodes of Zaynab in al-Kathīb,
like writing on a threadbare /vellum/ parchment.

15. Hassān b. Thābit 157. 1.

1. Kam li-l-manazili min shahrin wa-ahwali
ka-ma taqadama 'ahdu l-muhraqi l-bali

1. How many years and months have the dwellings /been there/,
as old as the woven leaf worn thin?

Group 4 -- Bakr b. Wa'il.

(1) The Descendants of Qays b. Tha'labah.

16. Muraqqish al-Akbar (E) Muf 54. 2.

Cf. Lyall's arguments for the antiquity of the pieces ascribed to this poet in MuF 2 166-185 and Blachère's (typically astringent) comments on Muraqqish the Elder and Muraqqish the Younger in "Remarques sur deux Blégliaques Arabes du VI^e Siècle J.C.", Arabica 7 (1960), 30-40 = Analecta, Damascus 1975, 321-332. I must own to sympathy with Lyall's stance.

2. Al-dāru qafrun wa-l-rusumu ka-ma
raqqasha fī zahri l-adīmi qalam

2. The abode is desolate and the traces are like the decorative flourishes made by a reed-pen on the back of /a strip of/ tanned hide.

Adīm, 'tanned leather', is, of course, distinct from raqq, 'vellum'.

17. 'Amr b. Qamī'ah (E) 9. 1.

1. Hal 'arafta l-diyara 'an ahqabi
darisan ayu-ha ka-khatti l-kitabi

1. Have you recognised the abodes after /the passage of/ eons, their vestigial signs faded like writing in a book?

18. Tarafah b. al-'Abd (E/M-J) Ahl 19. 1-2 (= Seligsohn 3. 1-2).

1. A-shajā-ka l-rab'u am qidamu-h
am ramadun darisun humamu-h
2. Ka-suturi l-raqqi raqqasha-hu
bi-l-duha muraqqishun yashimu-h

1. Did the 'spring-encampment rouse your yearning, or was it its antiquity, or ashes, the charcoal faded,
2. Like lines /drawn on/ vellum which an embellisher, in the morning /light/, has embellished with a tattooer's flourishes?

19. Maymūn b. Qays al-A'shā (L/M) 64. 1.

1. Li-maytha'a darun 'afa rasmu-ha
fa-ma in tabayyanu astara-ha [12]

1. To Maytha' belongs an abode where the trace is effaced, indistinct as to its lines.

(11) Yashkur.

20. Al-Harith b. Hillizah (E/M-J) Muf 25. 1 (= Krenkow 3. 1).

1. Li-manī l-diyāru 'afawna bi-l-hubsi
āyātu-hā ka-mahāriqi l-fursi

1. To whom belong the abodes that are effaced in al-Hubs, their vestigial signs like the polished, woven leaves of the Persians?

Mahriq, or muhraq, is explained by Lyall Muf 2 91 as "pieces of silk or cotton stuff which, after being stiffened with size (ṣamgh), are polished with a shell; the surface thus obtained is used for writing on".

(iii) Shaybān.

21. Tha'labah b. 'Amr (M-J?) Muf 74. 1-31.

This poet is variously said to be of the 'Abd al-Qays, "of Ma'addic stock and nearly akin to the two great tribes descended from Wā'il, Bakr and Taghlib", or of "Shaybān, a subdivision of Bakr b. Wā'il, settled as a confederate (halīf) among the 'Abd al-Qays". [13] I have appended this poet to Group 4 because of these tribal affiliations and the dearth of precise information concerning him.

1. Li-man dimanun ka-anna-hunna saḥā'ifu
qifārun khalā min-hā l-kathību fa-wāḥifu
2. Fa-mā aḥdathat fī-hā l-'uhūdu ka-anna-mā
tala''aba bi-l-sammāni fī-hā l-zakhārifu
3. Akabba 'alay-hā katibun bi-dawāti-hi
yuqīmu yaday-hi taratan wa-yukhālifu
31. Rāna [*] sun'a-hu mā kāna yasna'u sājiyan [#]
wa-yarfa'u 'aynay-hi mina l-sun'i tarifu

Variant Readings

[*]. All MSS: rāja.

[#]. V: sājiyan, 'scraping away /at their surface/'.

1. To whom belong dung piles, like pages /covered with writing/, desolate (among them are al-Kathib and Wāḥif -- empty both!),

2. . Where, it seems, as a result of sequent rainfalls, ornamental designs /etched/ in vegetable dyes are always at play,
3. Over which a scribe has busily huddled with his ink-horn, now moving his hands with vertical strokes, now opposing them /with horizontal strokes/,
4. Motionless, staring intently while engaged in his work, then raising his eyes and blinking?

Group 5 -- Taghlīb.

22. Al-Akhnas b. Shihab (E/M-J) MuF 41. 1.

1. Li-bnatī hittāna bni 'awfin manazilu
ka-ma raqqasha l-'unwana fī l-raqqi kātībun

1. To Ibnat Hittān b. 'Awf belong dwellings, like a scribe's decorative flourishes on the vellumy frontispiece.

Group 6 -- Tamīm and al-Ribāb.

(1) Tamīm.

23. Salāmah b. Jandal (M-J/L) 2. 2.

2. Labisa l-rawamisu wa-l-jadīdu bilā-huma
fa-turikna mithla l-muhraqi l-akhlāqi

2. The decay /brought by/ sand-storms and severed /time (?)/ has sported /there/, and they (the dwellings) have been left

like threadbare parchments.

As the epithet suggests, muhraq is singular for plural.

24. Salāmah b. Jandal 3. 1-2 (= Aṣm 42. 1-2).

1. Li-man talalun mithlu l-kitabi l-munammaqi
khalā 'ahdu-hu bayna l-sulaybi fa-mutriqi
2. Akabba 'alay-hi katibun bi-dawati-hi
fa-hādithu-hu fī l-'ayni ḥiddatu muhraqi

1. To whom belongs a remnant, its time long since gone, between
al-Sulayb and Mutriq (like an embellished book
2. Over which a scribe has busily huddled with his inkhorn); to
the eye, its newest /area/ is like the line of a polished,
woven leaf?

Line 2a is identical to no. 21 (Tha'laba b. 'Amr Muf 74), v. 3a
ante.

(11) Al-Ribāb.

25. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Anamah (M) Muf 114. 5.

It is conceivable that this poet should be classified under Group 4
(iii) Shaybān (the tribe of his mother), as he appears to have
allied himself with them, as a ḥalīf, following a rupture with his
own tribe, Dabbah. He is said to have fought on the side of the

Muslims at al-Qādisiyyah in 16/637. [14]

5. Fa-lam yabqī illā dimnatun wa-manāzilu
ka-mā rudda fī khattī l-dawāti midādu-hā

5. So there remained nought but a dung pile and dwellings, like
ink from an inkhorn reapplied to writing.

I have construed the second hemistich as poetical syntax for ka-mā rudda midādu l-dawāti fī l-khattī. It is also possible to understand dawāh as metonymy; cf. no. 33 post.

For midād, cf. al-Mutalammis Vollers 3:

1. Fa-alqaytu-hā bi-l-thinyi min janbi kāfirin
ka-dhalika agnū kulla qittin mudallilin
2. Ramaytu bi-hā hattā ra'aytu midāda-hā
yatūfu bi-hā l-tayyāru fī kullī jadwalin

1. I cast it away at where the bank of the river Kāfir bends --
thus do I award every pernicious legal-deed!
2. I threw it away and watched the current cause its ink to flow
in whorls into every channel.

This probably occasioned the story of "the letter of al-Mutalammis" concerning the death of Tarafah [15], significantly parallel to the story of Bellerophon in the Iliad 6. 152-190, especially 168-169, where the writing is thought by modern scholars to be a "memory that has survived from the Mycenaean age". [16] Of course, the divine-born Bellerophon proves more than a match for Proitos and Iobates. It is interesting to note that "the saga of Bellerophon, with its weird attendant creatures Pegasus and the Chimaera, is perhaps not Greek but Lycian in origin, and may be very early" [17]: this would suggest a distinctly near-eastern provenance for the myth.

Group 7 -- Ja'far b. Kilāb of 'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'ah.

26. Mu'āwiyah b. Mālīk (L) Muf 105. 6-8. [18]

6. Fa-inna la-hā manāzila khāwiyātīn

'alā namāla waqaftu bi-hā l-rikābā

7. Mina l-ajzā'a asfala min numaylīn

ka-mā rajja'ta bi-l-qalami l-kitābā

8. Kitāba muhabbirin hājīn baṣīrin

yunammiqu-hu wa-hādhara an yu'abā

6. There are, however, barren dwellings belonging to her at
Namalā, where I halted the riding camels,

7. On the slopes at the bottom of Numayl, /scrutinising them/ just
as you /do when/ retracing, with the reed-pen, the text,

8. The text of an elegant, keen-sighted /inker/, pernickety over
the spelling, which he embellished, wary that he should be
reproved.

This last verse may refer not, as suggested, to an inker or a scribe but to an author polishing his style, ensuring that he meets with the approval of the public, in which case I should, of course, translate kitāb as 'book'. When the ink starts to fade the poet seems to suggest that the owner of this choice work refreshes the faded sections to enhance the longevity of his text.

27. Labīd (L/M) Mu'allaqah 1-2 (= 'Abbās 48. 1-2).

1. 'Afat l-diyāru mahallu-hā wa-muqāmu-hā

bi-minan ta'abbada ghawlu-hā fa-rijāmu-hā

2. Fa-madāfi'u l-rayyāni 'urriya rasmu-hā

khalagan ka-mā damina l-wuḥiyya silāmu-hā

1. The abodes, both the way-station and the /hiemal/ residence, in Mina have become effaced; wild are Ghawl and Rijām there,
2. As are the watercourses of al-Rayyān. Their trace has been stripped bare, worn thin, just as inscriptions are retained /albeit faintly/ by their slabs.

For a provocative discussion of the topography of Labīd's Mu'allaqah, cf. A. Miquel, "Le Désert dans la Poésie pré-Islamique: la Mu'allaqah de Labīd", CT 23 (1975), 191-211. [19]

28. Labīd Mu'allaqah 8 (= 'Abbas 48. 8).

8. Wa-ḡalā l-suyūlu 'anī l-tulūli ka-anna-hā

zuburun tujiddu mutūna-hā aqlāmu-hā

8. The torrents have swept the remnants clean and they shine as brightly as writs whose surfaces are restored by their reed-pens.

On zubur, cf. no. 8 (Imru' al-Qays Ahl 65) v. 2. [20]

29. Labīd 'Abbas 15. 3 (= al-Chalidī p.91, v.3, Brockelmann I 16. 3).

3. Aw mudhhabun judadun 'alā alwahi-hi

inna l-natiqu l-mabruzu wa-l-makhtumu

3. Or ruled, gilt /leaves/ on the covers of which is the title
written in relief and fitted with a seal.

Blachère 536 translates "on these writing-tablets is a text written in relief and half-effaced". The lawh is probably not a 'tablet' but a wooden cover: cf. R. Sellheim "Kitāb" EI2 IV 207. Sellheim also makes the interesting point that, by being bound in this manner, "the Qur'ān was distinguished by its material form, from profane writings in rolls made of papyrus and from the kitāb pure and simple". It is by no means impossible that Labīd is referring to an early collection of the Qur'ān: the details of the binding of the book which he describes and the terms used are distinct from the other types of writing material elsewhere alluded or referred to. In its construction, it is also unlike the Assyrian wax-coated tablets of wood, fitted with a hinge, which L. Jeffery describes. [21]

I construe mudhhab as singular for plural, and judad as an appositional substantive functioning as an epithet. 'Abbās's reading jadad gives the sense 'level, flat or smooth': the pronominal suffix hunna, of course, would then have no antecedent. A further possibility is the vocalisation judud, 'new', as in Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 3. 6 (muḡhalqhalatan//tabruqu fī-hā saḡa'ifu jududu): 'virgin, gilt leaves'.

In general, cf. H. Derenbourg, "al-Nābighah Inédit", JAs 13 (1899), 28-29 (poem 11, line 7):

7. wa-abdat siwāran 'an wushūmin ka-anna-hā
baqiyyatu alwāhin 'alay-hinna mudhhabu

7. And she revealed a braclet set against tattooing like the
/faded/ remains of covers /inlaid/ with gilt /lettering/.

As so often in ancient Arabic verse, the difficulty resides in establishing the referent. Mudhhab, it seems, is used of both gilt lettering and gilt pages, i.e. pages covered with characters executed in gold. A. Grohmann "Djild" EI2 II 540-541 mentions "a specially precious kind of parchment (which) was purple-coloured ... The collection of F. Martin contained a beautiful blue-coloured parchment with exquisite Kufic script in gold, belonging to a Qur'an manuscript from the Mosque at Mashhad". Labīd and various other poets, such as Qays b. al-Khaṭīm, seem to be alluding to a prototype of such a manuscript, whether it be Qur'ānic or not.

30. Labid 'Abbās 16. 1-3 (= Chāl p.61, v.1-3, Brock I 13. 1-3).

1. Darasa l-minā bi-mutālī'in fa-abānī
wa-taqādamat bi-l-hubsi fa-l-sūbānī
2. Fa-ni'āfi sārata fa-l-qanānī ka-anna-hā
zuburun yurajjī'u-hā walīdun yamānī
3. Muta'awwidun lahinun yu'īdī bi-kaffay-hi
qalaman 'alā 'usubin dhabulna wa-bānī

1. Al-Minā has become obliterated, together with Mutālī' and Abān; and /the abodes/ in al-Hubs and al-Sūbān,
2. On the fells of Sārah and then al-Qanān are of great antiquity: they resemble writs which a Yemeni slave retraces,
3. Accustomed /to the task/, proficient, with a reed-pen in his hand, moving it back and forth over dried palm-phloem and bān /leaves/. [22]

In line 1 'Abbās and al-Chālīdī both read al-manā and the sharh

interprets it as an apocopated form of al-manāzil. If, however, al-minā is read, identical with al-Minā of line 1 of the Mu'allaqah, then it becomes evident that the poet is speaking of two distinct migration-routes: (i) from al-Minā, in the vicinity of the Ḥimā Dāriyyah, to Mutālī', (Thilo's Mutālī' I is meant: cf. Ortsnamen 74) and Abān, (it is not clear whether al-Aswad or al-Abyad is meant); moving east, to the mountainous area lying to the west of al-Qaṣīm, (ii) al-Ḥubs and al-Sūbān, following the landmass of Sārah in a south-westerly direction, as far as al-Qanān. The syntax of the line is elliptical -- the bi seems to mean 'together, along with', whereas a substantive, such as al-diyār or al-tulūl, must be supplied for the verb taqādamat in the second hemistich: the ellipsis is not constrained given the formulaicity of the topos. [23]

31. Labīd 'Abbās 42. 1 (= Brock II 47. 1)

1. 'Afā l-rasmu am lā ba'da hawlin tajarramā
li-asmā'a rasmun ka-l-sahīfati a'jamā

1. Is the trace effaced or not, after a year has passed? /It is/
a trace belonging to Asmā', like the page, unclear.

For this type of question and answer in the atlāl movement, cf. no. 33 ('Abīd 12) vv. 1-3. The point of a'jam seems to be that the message transmitted to the poet by the trace, as to its origin, is in a form of 'language' that is difficult to comprehend, like faded ink on a page: cf. no. 40 post.

32. 'Amīr b. al-Ṭufayl (L/M) Frag. 23.

1. Tawaddahna fī 'alyā'i qafirin ka-anna-hā
mahāriqu fallūjin yu'aridna tāliyā

1. They glinted clearly on the elevation of a desolate waste, like polished, woven leaves of Fallūjah, set before an intoner.

I have adopted Nöldeke's suggestion, as reported by Lyall, in understanding fallūj as an apocopated form of Fallūjah, "the name of two villages in the cultivated plain of Baghdad, near 'Ayn Tamr" (Lyall 1980 128). The reference is presumably to the intonation of sacred scripture, although probably not the Qur'ān (this possibility may be thought to be excluded by the word mahāriq). Lyall's reasoning on this point is somewhat defective: "the use of tālīn in the sense of 'reader, cantillator,' in itself almost certainly excludes the possibility of our poet being the author; this sense, which the word does not possess in the old poetry, is borrowed from Aramaic liturgical language, and appears for the first time in the Qur'ān". Talā must have been familiar to the community of believers and pagans addressed through Muḥammad (its Aramaic provenance suggests Christian associations). If any occurrence of the word talā which should plausibly antedate the Qur'ān, or is perhaps contemporaneous with it, is rejected on the ground that the word first occurs in the Qur'ān, then this certainly does of course facilitate the claim that the Qur'ān registers the first appearance of the word! [24]

There are two elements, aural and visual, involved in the simile: the mahāriq are easily legible, with the writing upon the page clear; the finely modulated, properly enunciated tones of the chanter are clear and audible.

Group 8 -- Asad.

33. 'Abīd b. al-Abras (E) 12. 1-2.

1. Li-manī l-diyāru bi-sāhatīn fa-harūsi

darasat mina l-iqfāri ayya durūsi

2. illā awāriyyan ka-anna rusūma-hā

fi muhraqin khalaqi l-dawati labisi

1. To whom belong the abodes in Ṣāḥah and Ḥarūs, obliterated through desolation (what obliteration!)
2. -- Except for tethers -- where the traces seem /to be written/ on a polished, woven leaf, threadbare, its ink worn-out?

In line 2 dawāh is an instance of metonymy: inkhorn for ink.

34. 'Abīd 27. 1.

1. Li-mani l-dāru aqfarat bi-l-jinābi

ghayra nu'yin wa-dimnatin ka-l-kitābi

1. To whom belongs the abode that has become desolate in al-Jinab, apart from a trench and a dung pile, like a book?

35. 'Abīd 30. 1.

1. Li-man dimnatun aqwat bi-harrati darghadi

talūhu ka-'unwāni l-kitābi l-mujaddadi

1. To whom belongs a dung pile in the lava-ground of Darghad, as clear as the restored frontispiece of a book?

36. Bishr b. Abī Khāzim (M-J/L ?) 7. 1.

Bishr' b. Abī Khāzīm seems to have been born sometime between 535 and 560 A.D. and to have died circa 600 A.D. On occasion, his poetic style suggests that he belongs with the poets of the middle Jāhiliyyah; nevertheless, given the rather inconclusive chronological efforts of A. Hartigan [25], it is possible that stylistically a number of his poems belong to the late Jāhiliyyah (cf. further Lyall Muf 2 268-269).

1. Atlālu mayyata bi-l-tilā'i fa-mithqabi
adhat khala'an ka-ttiradi l-mudhhabi

1. Remnants belonging to Mayyah, at the Mountain Streams and the Defile, that have become deserted, like the well-ruled lines of gilt /leaves or characters/!

Mithqab is, according to al-Bakrī 507, a route linking al-Kūfah with the Yamāmah, and, according to Yāqūt 5. 54, it is both the road between Mecca and Medina and a route linking al-Kūfah with the Hījāz. The poet may be referring to the second, although it is equally likely that these are evocative toponyms, as my translation suggests: cf. however the migration route of 23. 1-2a (bi-rāmata fa-l-tilā'i//fa-kuthbāni l-hafīri ilā laqā'i/fa-janbi 'unayzatin fa-dhawāti khaymin).

The second hemistich is similar to that of no. 12 ante, and it too may refer to scabbards worked with gilt filigree.

37. Bishr (M-J/L) 28. 3.

3. Ka-anna-ha ba'da 'ahdi l-'ahidina bi-ha

bayna l-dhanūbī wa-hazmay wāḥifin suḥufu

3. As if it (the abode), after the passing of the period when the covenanters /dwelled/ there, between al-Dhanūb and the twin rugged uplands of Wāḥif, was pages /covered with writing/.

This line bears some similarity with no. 6, line 1 in the combined references to Wāḥif and to 'pages', ṣaḥā'if/ suḥuf. For the phrase 'ahd al-'āhidīn, cf. al-Shammākh 9. 1.

Group 9 -- Ṭayyī'.

38. Ḥatīm al-Ṭa'īyy (M-J) 47. 1

1. A-ta'rifu atlālan wa-nu'yan muhaddama
ka-khatti-ka fī raqqin kitāban munamnama

1. Do you recognise remnants and a collapsed trench,
like the writing, /ruled like/ striped /cloth/, which you
would trace on vellum?

39. Bishr b. 'Ulayq (?) al-Jubūrī p.187, v. 3.

3. Adhā'at bi-hi l-arwāhu hattā ka-anna-ma
hasibta baqāya-hu kitāban munamnama

3. The winds swept it away so that you imagined its remains to be
writing /ruled like/ striped /cloth/.

Group 10 -- Ghatafān.

(i) 'Abs.

40. 'Antarah b. Shaddād (M-J) Ahl 27. 2 (= Mawlawī 9. 2).

2. Ka-wahyi saḥā'ifin min 'ahdi kisrā
fa-ahdā-hā li-a'jama timtimiiyyi

2. Like the writing of pages from the era of Kisrā which he handed to a /Persian lector whose/ speech is barbarous and unintelligible.

'Ahd may, of course, mean 'treaty, compact'. It is not clear which Kisrā is referred to: either Khusraw Anūshīrwān (531-579 A.D.) may be meant (the allusion being to the antiquity of the document), or Khusraw Aparwīz (591-628 A.D.), the allusion being to the document's unintelligibility, is intended.

On a'jam, cf. F. Gabrieli "Ajam EI2 I 206: "although it preserved for the most part the original contemptuous force inspired by the haughty presumption of Arab superiority, it sometimes, and even at an early date, implied the desirability and allurements of the exotic, and the acknowledgment of a more civilized and refined culture". On timtimiiyy, cf. C. Rabin Ancient West-Arabian, London 1951, 49. [26]

(ii) Dhubyān.

41. Ma'qil b. Dirār al-Shammākh (M) 5. 2.

2. Ka-mā khatta 'ibrāniyyatan bi-yamīni-hi

bi-taymā'a habrun thumma 'arrada asturā

2. Just as a /Jewish/ scholar in Taymā' writes Hebrew with his right hand, and then draws horizontal lines /across the page/.

As F. Krenkow, "The Use of Writing for the Preservation of Ancient Arabic Poetry" (in T.W. Arnold and R.A. Nicholson (edd.), A Volume of Oriental Studies presented to E.G. Browne, Cambridge 1922), 265 suggests the lines are "for further writing".

Group 11 -- Azd.

42. 'Abīd b. 'Abd al-'Uzzā (L/M?) al-Jubūrī p.125, v. 6.

6. Rusūman ka-āyyatī l-kitābi mubīnatan

bi-hā li-l-hazīni l-sabbi mabkan wa-mawqifu

6. Traces, like the verses of the Book, clear and distinct,
where the dejected, ardent lover can halt and weep.

This poet is reckoned to have been a cousin of al-Shanfarā (cf. al-Jubūrī p.117, Sezgin 137. The first hemistich of verse 6 has distinct Qur'ānic overtones and I have presumed al-kitāb to designate the Qur'an: cf. no. 40 post.

43. 'Abd Allāh b. Salīmah (L/M) al-Jubūrī p.200, v.1-2.

1. Li manī l-diyāru talūhu bi-l-qhamri

darasat li-marri l-rīhi wa-l-qatri

2. Fa-bi-shatti busyāni l-riyāqhi ka-mā

kataba l-ghulamū l-wahya fī l-sakhri

1. To whom belong the abodes that are visible in al-Ghamr, faded
by the passing of the wind and the rain,

2. And on the lush bank of Busyān, like inscriptions written by a
slave on stone.

Al-Ghamr is shortened for al-Ghamrah [27]. Both places are approximately west of the Wādī 'Aqīq (north-east of Mecca), to the south of Ḥarrat Laylā I. It is possible that line 2b means 'like writing done by a youth on a stone', i.e. graffiti.

Group 12 -- Hudhayl.

44. Abū Dhu'ayb (M) Hell 7. 1-4

1. 'Araftu l-diyāra ka-raqmī l-dawā

ti yadhbiru-hā l-kātibu l-himyariyyu

2. Bi-raqmin wa-washmin ka-mā zakhrafat

bi-mīshami-hā l-muzdahātu l-hadiyyu

3. Adāna wa-anba'a-hu l-awwalūna

bi-anna l-mudāna maliyyun wafiyyu

4. Fa-namnama fī suḥufin ka-l-riyāti

fī-hinna irthu kitābin mahiyyu

1. I recognised the abodes, like the adornment of the inkhorn
which the Himyarī scribe limns

2. With adornment and tattooing like the ornamental designs traced
by an ebullient bride with her needle;
3. He was working on credit, for the ancients had told him that
'The debtor is solvent and pays in full!'
4. So he drew lines on pages, like white cloths, containing the
erased remains of a book.

It is interesting to note the use of dawāh, loosely translated by Lewin 136 as "writing materials", for 'ink' -- the third instance of this particular metonymy. Raḡm may mean 'dotting', in which case dhabara would mean 'to point', although the second line distinctly refers to ornate embellishments. I have understood line 3 to be proverbial. The use of mahīyy, 'erased by washing', in line 4 makes it clear that the poet is talking of a palimpsest: cf. the remark, "parchment from which the original text had been washed off and which then was written on again" (Grohmann 541).

In view of the use of namnama by the poets of Ṭayyī', nos. 21-22 ante (cf. also Salāma b. al-Ḥārith A'shā Jillān [28] ka-mā//namnama raqqan qalamu l-kātibī), -- Ṭayyī' having been "in early Arabia of Yamanite origin ... at home in that part of the South-Arabian jawf in which Ḥunaqah was situated, on the way between Ṣan'ā' and Mecca" (H.H. Bräun "Ṭayyī'" EI IV 623.) -- I have elected not to adopt Lewin's suggestion (440) "to enter (into a book), of a merchant", given also that the subject of the verb is the kātib and not his client! The use of the verb by the Ṭayyī' poets is evidently a dialectal inheritance from the time prior to the migration of the South Arabian tribes.

B. Comparisons with Figured Garments.

Group 1 -- The Inter-tribal Chain of Ruwāt.

1. Ka'b b. Zuhayr (L/M) Kow 14. 1 (= Cairo p.185, v.1).

1. Alimma 'alā rab'in bi-dhāti l-mazāhiri
muqimin ka-akhlāqi l-'abā'ati dāthiri

1. Halt at a spring-encampment in Dhāt al-Mazāhir, still there,
like shabby 'abā'ahs, covered with sand and dust!

Dhāt al-Mazāhir, literally 'the place of the lutes', is said by al-Bakrī 530, who ascribes the line to Zuhayr, to be in the territory of the Banū Faq'as, a subsect of the Banū Asad. [29] The 'āba'ah is "a type of short cloak open at the front, with no sleeves but apertures through which the arms are put. It is the characteristic habit of the Bedouin which they wear almost all the time". [30] It was coloured with large brown stripes (cf. Lane 1942). It is most distinctly not a luxury item (cf. A. Musil, The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins, New York 1928, 119), and is consonant with the poet's preference for what might be termed 'bedouin culture'. There is a pun in dāthir the root of which also signifies 'dirtiness', of garments.

2. Al-Ḥuṭay'ah (L/M) Goldziher 2. 3.

3. Ka-anna yahūda nashsharat fī-hi bazza-hā
burūdan wa-raqman fātaḳa l-bay'a tajiru-h

3. As if Jews had spread their stuff there -- burds and
/cloths/ embroidered /in many colours/, for which the

merchant had demanded exorbitant prices.

Goldziher al-Ḥuṭay'ah 66 discusses the mercatorial functions of Jews in Arabian society -- their business interests included wine and kohle. Raqm is probably a metonymy, and I have translated it accordingly.

3. Al-Ḥuṭay'ah Goldziher 33. 3.

3. Tarā-hā ba'da da'si l-hayyi fi-hā
ka-hāshiyati l-ridā'i l-himyarīyyi

3. You would compare it, after the tribe had trampled upon it,
with the selvage of a himyarī plaid.

The ridā' is, in general, a mantel made from a single piece of cloth; a particular style of wearing it, one apparently favoured by the Prophet Muḥammad, was as a wrapper, worn over the left shoulder and bound together under the right shoulder. [31] Like the 'abā'ah, it was commonly worn by the Bedouin and is frequently referred to in early verse, although the designation himyarī may mark this particular plaid as a special item.

4. Al-Ḥuṭay'ah Goldziher 89. 4.

4. Jarat 'alay-hā bi-adhyālin la-hā 'usufun
fa-asbahat mithla sahqī l-burdi 'afī-hā

4. Gales had swept the hems /of their gowns/ over it and, in the
morning, where it was effaced resembled a threadbare burd.

Group 3 -- The Oppidans.

(ii) Medina.

5. Ḥassān b. Thābit (L/M) 10. 1-3.

1. Li-man manzilun 'āfin ka-anna rusūma-hu

khayā'īlu raytin sābiriyyin murassamī

2. Khalā'u l-mabādī mā bi-hi qhayru rukkadīn

thalāthin ka-amthālī l-hamā'imi juththamī

3. Wa-qhayru shajījin māthilīn ḥalafa l-bilā

wa-qhayru baqāyā ka-l-sahīqi l-munamnamī

1. To whom belongs an effaced dwelling, its traces like girls'
shifts made from striated, Sabiritic cloth?

2. Empty are the pasture-lands, save for three firmly fixed
/supports/ like the silhouettes of nestling pigeons,

3. A jutting, cloven /tent-peg/, a sworn confederate of Decay, and
remains like a threadbare, streaked /cloth/.

Khay'al, glossed by Lewin 113 as 'a kind of women's garment', is used by al-Mutanakhkhil Hell 6. 6 where a ḥabīb is said to wear al-khay'alu l-fudulu -- obviously a costly garment with erotic overtones. Rayt (cf. Dozy Vêtements 191-193 and Lane 1200) can designate either the material itself (cf. Labīd 'Abbās 4. 17 [= Chāl p.136, v.17, Brock I 19. 17], Lewin 171) or the garment fabricated from the material (cf. G. Jacob, Altarabisches Beduinleben, Berlin 1897, 45). Its costliness is implicit in al-Nābighah Ahl 5. 30 and al-Marrār Muḥ 16. 82. There has been much discussion concerning the epithet sābirī, 'of or from Sābūr', also used by Abū Dhu'ayb, Hell 21. 3, of a leathern thong (sayr): cf. Fraenkel Fremdwörter

43-44 (who thinks it may be connected with the king of that name, Shāpūr) and Lyall Muf 2 343 ("so called ... from the name of some one of the towns in the Sasanian kingdom containing that monarch's name, where it was made"). As al-Bakrī 762 rightly indicates Sābūr is the name of a district in Persia; more precisely, the "name of the river of the district of Shāpūr Khūrā in Fars ... In antiquity there was on the Granis a royal residence ... the medieval Tawwaj (or Tawwaz) ... In early Muhammadan times it was an important trade-city, which also had a considerable textile industry: the stuffs named tawazziyyah were well known" (V.F. Büchner "Shāpūr" EI IV 316-318).

On the hamam as the common Arabic designation of the families of Columbidae and Pteroclididae, cf. F. Viré "Hamam" EI2 III 108-110. It is extremely difficult to discern which, if any, species of Columbidae is meant by any given poet in any given context. For the comparison with the blackened tripod: cf. Section C no. 5. Hālafa l-bilā, literally 'it swore a treaty with decay', is a striking and individual expression; on namnama, cf. Section A nos. 38, 39 and 44 (v. 4).

Group 4 -- Bakr b. Wā'il.

(1) The descendants of Qays b. Tha'labah.

6. Tarafah (E/M-J) Ahl 12. 2 (= Sel 4. 2).

2. Wa-bi-l-safhi āyātun ka-anna rusūma-hā
yamānin washat-hu raydatun wa-sahūlu

2. And at the foot of the mountain are vestigial signs whose traces are like a Yemeni /garment/ tattooed in Raydah and Sahūl.

Raydah and Saḥūl are towns in the Yemen: cf. al-Bakrī 433 and 767, respectively, Jacob Beduinleben 260.

Group 8 -- Asad.

7. 'Abīd b. al-Abraṣ (E) 5. 1.

1. Yā dāra Hindin 'afā-hā kullu hattāli
bi-l-jawwi mithli saḥiqi l-yumnati l-bālī

1. Abode of Hind, effaced by each soaking /cloudburst/ in its
turn, in al-Jaww, like a tattered, threadbare yumnah!

The yumnah was a (striped?) Yemeni garment: cf. Abū 'Umārah Well 237. 20 (washyi l-yumnati l-tarīfi).

8. 'Abīd 20. 2.

3. Mithla saḥqi l-burdi 'affā ba'da-ka l-
qatru maḡnā-hu wa-ta'wību l-shamālī

3. Like a threadbare burd, its (the dwelling's) message effaced
by the rain and the incessant blustering of the North Wind.

The burd is an outer garment made from "striped or floral-patterned woollen or silk cloth, also often embroidered" (Blachère 519). It was frequently of a dull reddish-brown colour (cf. Dozy Vêtements 59-64) and was "worn as a luxurious garment" (Lyall Muf 2 101).

Group 11 -- Azd.

9. 'Abīd b. 'Abd al-'Uzzā (L/M?) al-Jubūrī p. 129, v. 1.

1. A-ta'rifu rasman ka-l-ridā'i l-muḥabbari

bi-ramāta bayna l-hadbi wa-l-mutaḡhammarī

1. Do you recognise a trace, like a plaid woven like a hibārah, in
Rāmah between al-Hadḡ and al-Mutaḡhammar?

The phrase al-ridā' al-muḥabbar literally means "a cloak fashioned so as to be a hibārah". This latter is, strictly, a kind of burd, "made of thick wool woven in the Yemen in which the warp and the woof are contrasted in different tones of the same shade: pale grey/black or beige/dark brown". It can also designate a type of cloth which is decorated with ring-designs: cf. Blachère 2017 and Dozy Vêtements 133-136.

The last two toponyms are probably not place-names proper but evocative epithets. Rāmah is situated in the Najd, to the south-east of Abān al-Aswad; al-hadḡ may be translated 'the Braes', whereas al-mutaḡhammar may be evocative of abundance and fertility, perhaps designating 'overgrown with ghamīr', a kind of brome-grass: 'the Fecund /Terrain/'. This ambivalent use of topography is very much in the style of Labīd and may designate the verse as late Jāhilī, and possibly Mukhadramī.

Group 12 -- Hudhayl.

10. Abū Qilābah (E/M-J) Wellhausen 153. 1-2 (= Farrāj p.710, vv.1-2).

Al-Hārith, or Uwaymir, b. 'Amr Abū Qilābah seems to have been a

chief of the Liḥyan of Hudhayl and was the uncle of al-Mutanakhkhil: cf. Sezgin 253.

1. Yā dāru a'rifu-hā wahshan manāzilu-hā
bayna l-qawā'imi min rahtin fa-albāni
2. Fa-dimnatin bi-zukhayyāti l-aḥaththi ilā
dawjay dufāqin ka-sahqi l-malbasi l-fānī

1. Abode that I recognise, whose dwellings are wild, between the sheer /peeks/ of Raḥṭ, Lubn
2. And a dung plie in Zukhayyāt al-Aḥathth, as far as the slopes of Dufāq, like the threadbare garment, worn ragged!

The albān of the first line is plural for singular necessitated by the qāfiyyah, as in the line of Ta'abbata Sharran

hal-lā sa'lta umayran 'alā muṣāwalat-i
qawman manāzilu-hum bi-l-ṣayfi albānu

These lines are quoted by al-Bakrī 97, sub albān.

11. Al-Mutanakhkhil Hell 3. 1 (M-J) (= Farrāj p.1266, v.1).

1. 'Araftu bi-ajduthin fa-ni'āfi 'irqin
'alāmātin ka-tahbīri l-nimāti

1. I recognised, in Ajduth and the upper reaches of 'Irq, way-marks like mats woven in the style of the hibārah.

For the namat as an item of luxury, cf. 'Amr b. al-Ahtam Muf 123.

20, a verse describing his amorous dalliance with beautiful women.

Group 13 -- Madhḥij.

12. 'Amr b. Ma'dīkarīb (M) 21. 1.

1. Li-man talalun bi-taymātin fa-jundi
ka-anna 'irāsa-hu tawshīmu burdin

1. To whom belongs a remnant in Taymāt and Jund, its courts like
the tattooing of a burd?

13. 'Amr b. Ma'dīkarīb 62. 3.

3. Fa-ka-anna ma abqayna min āyati-hā
raqmun yunammaqu bi-l-akuffi yamānī

3. As if what /the gales/ had allowed to survive of their
vestigial signs was Yemeni embroidery on the cuffs.

For nammaqa, cf. Section A nos. 24 and 26, Section D nos. 1 and 3.

C. Comparisons with Tattooing.

Group 1 -- The Inter-tribal Chain of Ruwāt.

1. Tufayl b. 'Awf al-Ghanawī (E) 40. 1.

1. Li-man talalun bi-dhī khiyamin qadīmu
yalūhu ka-anna baqiya-hu wushūmu

1. To whom belongs an ancient, conspicuous remnant in Dhū Khiyam
the remains of which are like tattoos?

2. Zuhayr (M-J/L) Mu'allaqah 2 (= Ahl 16. 2, Qab 1. 2, Th p.1,
v.2).

2. Wa-dārun [*] la-hā bi-l-raqmatayni ka-anna-hā
marāji'u washmin fi nawāshiri mi'sami

2. And an abode belonging to her in al-Raqmatān, like repeated
tattoos on the tendons of a wrist.

[*]. Th: Diyārun.

Marāji' refers to the tattoos which appear when the dye is applied to the original design -- i.e. the tattooer first describes the patterns with the needle and then retraces those patterns with the dye, not to the repeated movements to and fro of the tattooer's needle: in this sense it is somewhat similar to the use of r-j- in Section A, (e.g. no. 35), although the characters in that context are literally 'repeated', having been previously written and then refreshed with a new application of ink (cf. no. 10 post). The root may mean 'renew' in this context, although I have found no unequivocal reference to the actual renewing of faded tattoos (it depends, of course, on the indelibility of the dye used): this may be implied in no. 7 (perhaps also in 8 and 9) post. Once the skin has been punctured and decorated with the patterns, the retracing of the designs would be no difficult matter.

3. Zuhayr 18. 3 (= Qab 12. 3, Th p.206, v.2).

3. Yaluhna ka-anna-hunna yadā fatātin [*]

turajji'u fī ma'āsīmi-hā l-wushūmu

3. (Traces) that are as conspicuous as the hands of a woman when the tattoos on her wrists /appear, the designs having been/ retraced /with dye/.

[*]. Th: Yalūhu ka-anna-hā kaffā fatātin.

4. Zuhayr Qab 48. 1, Th p.382, v.1.

4. Hāja l-fu'āda ma'ārifu l-rasmi

qafrun bi-dhī l-hadabāti ka-l-washmi

4. The heart was aroused by the features of the trace, desolate, in Dhu l-Hadabāt, like tattooing.

Group 3 -- The Oppidans.

(1) Al-Hīrah.

5. 'Adī b. Zayd (M-J) 12. 4.

4. Wa-thalāthin ka-l-ḥamamāti bi-hā

'inda majthā-hunna tawshīmu l-fahami

4. And (except for) three /supports/, like pigeons, there; where they stand, heaped up, is the tattooing of the charcoal.

In this instance the poet has applied the image of tattooing specifically to the charred tripod, thereby redefining an image

encountered elsewhere; cf. Section A no. 18 and Section B no. 5.

(iii) Mecca.

6. Abū l-Ṭamahān al-Qaynī (L) al-Jubūrī p.212, v.1.

1. Li-man talalun 'āfin bi-dhātī l-salāsīl

ka-raǰ'ī l-wushūmī fī zuhūrī l-anāmīlī

1. To whom belongs an effaced remnant in Dhāt al-Salāsīl, like
fresh tattoos on the back of the fingers?

Dhāt al-Salāsīl is literally 'the Place of the Catenal /Dunes/':
cf. al-Bakrī 779-780. I have simplified the translation of raǰ' to
avoid verbiose clumsiness.

Group 4 -- Bakr b. Wā'il.

(1) The Descendants of Qays b. Tha'labah.

7. Ṭarafah (E/M-J) Mu'allaqah 1 (= Ahl 4. 1, Sel 1. 1).

1. Li-khawlata atlālun bi-burqatī thahmadī

talūhu ka-bāqī l-washmī fī zāhīrī l-yadī

1. To Khawlah belong remnants on the rocky spur of Thahmad, as
conspicuous as the remains of tattooing on the back of the
hand.

Group 6 -- Tamīm and al-Ribāb.

(i) Tamim.

8. Al-Mukhabbal (M) Muf 21. 7.

7. Fa-ka-anna mā abqā l-bawārihu wa-l

amtāru min 'arasāti-hā l-washmu

7. So that it seems as if what the scorching /winds/ and the rains
have allowed to survive of its courts is tattooing.

(ii) al-Ribab.

9. Rabī'a b. Maqrūm (M) Muf 38. 2.

2. Takhālu ma'ārifa-hā ba'da-mā

atat sanatāni 'alay-hā l-wushūma

2. You would imagine that its features, after two years had passed
over it, were tattoos.

Group 7 -- Ja'far b. Kilāb of 'Āmir b. Ṣa'sa'ah.

10. Labīd (L/M) Mu'allaqah 9 (= 'Abbās 48. 9).

9. Aw raj'u wāshimah usiffa na'uru-hā

kifafan ta'arrada fawqa-hunna wishāmu-hā

9. Or the retracing done by a tattooer who applies na'ur to /the
designs/ in circles upon which her tattooing appears.

In this condensed description, so typical of the poet's style, he describes the appearance of the tattooed patterns when the dye is applied to those (barely visible) patterns, effected, in the first instance, by pricking with the tattooing needle. When the circles have been touched with the dye, then the tattooed designs appear: as the circles are already present on the skin, the tattooing can be said to appear above them. I presume na'ur to be a vegetable dye, most probably some form of indigo; cf. Nöldeke FM II 67-68 and Lane 2866: the explication 'smoke-black', whether it be of fat or of a wick, is probably the result of etymological analogy, connecting it radically with n-w-r. Musil Ruala Bedouins 118 proves instructive:

Nearly all women are tattooed on the lips, cheeks, nose, forehead, breast, around the breasts, and on the belly. This is always done by a gipsy women, nūrijje. First the gipsy pricks certain patterns into the skin, then dips the needle in indigo and transmits the dye into the holes. After this operation she binds the tattooed part of the body, and not until the seventh day is past are the bandages removed, when the spots are washed. The pictures thus produced ... generally circles and triangles, are supposed to enhance the maiden's beauty.

Thus Abū Khirāsh Hell 3. 15 bemoans the impoverishment of his bride who came to him unadorned with an ivory bracelet to set off her tattoos to their best effect. In all the examples of this motif which I have assembled, the implication is that the woman in question tattoos herself -- there is no explicit mention of a professional tattoo-artist or artiste; there is no mention of the swathing operation, allowing the skin time to heal and protecting it from infection; the tattoos are said to be on the hands or fingers, once on the heels (no. 15 post). As discussed above (no. 2), it is not clear whether the tattoos are refreshed, with fresh dye being applied to pre-existing patterns.

11. Labīd 'Abbās 12. 1 (= Chāl p.1, v.1, Brock I 1. 1).

1. Li-hindīn bi-a'lāmi l-aqharri rusūmu
ilā uḥudīn ka-anna-hunna wushūmu

1. To Hind at the Marks of the /wādī/ of the White Blaze belong traces, as far as Uḥud, like tattoos.

12. Labīd 'Abbās 15. 2 (= Chāl p.91 v.2, Brock I 16. 2).

2. Fa-ka-anna ma'rūfa l-diyāri bi-qādimin
fa-burāqi qhawlin fa-l-rijāmi wushūmu

2. So that what can be recognised of the abodes in qādim, the spurs of Ghawl and al-Rijām resembles tattoos.

Group 8 -- Asad.

13. Bishr b. Abī Khāzim (M-J/L) 18. 4.

4. Ramādun bayna az'ārin thalāthin
ka-mā wushima l-rawāhishu bi-l-na'ūrī

4. Ashes amid three /supports/, inclining /as the she-camel inclines over the tulchan/, like veins of the hand tattooed with na'ūr.

14. Bishr 39. 1-2.

1. Ghashīta li-laylā bi-sharqin muqāmā
fa-hāja la-ka l-rasmu min-hā saqāmā

2. Bi-siqṭi l-kathībi ilā 'as'asin

takhālu manāzila laylā wishāmā

1. You chanced upon a /hiemal/ residence belonging to Laylā in Sharq, and the trace that she left aroused illness in you,
2. Where the dune falls, as far as 'As'as -- you would imagine that Laylā's dwellings were tattooing.

Group 10 -- Ghatafān.

(1) 'Abs.

15. 'Antarah b. Shaddād (M-J) Ahl 27. 1 (= Mawlawī 9. 1).

1. A-lā yā dāra 'ablata bi-l-tawīyyi

ka-raj'i l-washmi fī rusqhi l-hadiyyi [32]

1. A-lā! Abode of 'Ablah at the /place of/ the Stone Well, like fresh tattooing on the ankle of a bride!

According to Kazimirski 859 rusqh can designate either the tarsus or the carpus.

Group 11 -- Azd.

16. 'Abd Allāh b. Salīmah (L/M) Muf 19. 2.

2. Amsat bi-mustanni l-riyāhi mufīlatan

ka-l-washmi rujjī'a fī l-yadi l-mankūsi

2. In the evening, with the passing of the winds, it became as

faint as the renewed tattoo, retraced on the hand.

The translation of this line is somewhat conjectural: the meanings of mufīlah and mankūs are rare; n.b. the oxymoronic litotes -- the traces seem, paradoxically, to become more distinct with the evening and the blowing of the winds, a reversal of the more standard motif, wherein the traces are rendered more indistinct under these circumstances.

Group 12 -- Hudhayl.

17. Abū Qilābah (E/M-J) Well 154. 1 (= Farrāj p.714, v.1).

1. A-mīna l-qatūli manāzilun wa-mu'arrasu

ka-l-washmi fī dāhī l-dhirā'i yukarrasu

1. Are dwellings and a night-lodging, like tattooing arranged in rows on a bare fore-arm, /those/ left by the Murderess?

18. Al-Mutanakhkhil (M-J) Hell 1. 1 (= Farrāj p.1249, v.1).

1. Hal [*] ta'rifu l-manzila bi-l-ahyalī

ka-l-washmi fī l-mi'sami lam yukhmali [#]

1. Do you recognise the dwelling in al-Ahyal, like tattooing on the wrist, not yet faded?

[*]. Hell: A.

[#]. Hell: lam yaḥmulī.

19. Al-Mutanakhkhil Hell 3. 2 (= Farrāj p.1266, v.2).

2. Ka-washmi l-mi'sami l-mughtāli 'ullat
nawāshiru-hu bi-washmin mustashātī

2. Like tattooing on a plump wrist, its sinews given a second
 drink /of the dye/, with irate tattoos.

The tattoos are said to be mustashāt, 'irate', because of the bright vehemence of their colour. The verb 'ullat may mean either that the dye is applied twice in succession or that it is reapplied, the original application having faded (cf. lam yukhmal in no. 18).

D. Miscellaneous Comparisons.

1. Tracery patterned on Leather.

Group 2 -- The Two Individualists.

1. 'Alqamah b. 'Abadah (E/M-J?) Qabāwah 18. 5-6.

5. Wa-dhakkara-nī-hā ba'da-mā qad nasaytu-hā
diyārun 'alā-hā wābilun mutaba' 'iqu

6. Bi-aknāfi shammātin ka-anna rusūma-hā
qadīmu sanā'in fī adīmin munammaqu

5. And I was reminded of her, after I had forgotten her, by abodes
 over which there had arisen a heavy, torrential deluge
6. In the environs of Shammāt; the traces resembled notched
 silver embellished upon /a strip of/ tanned hide by an

artisan.

It is conceivable that this comparison should be classified under Section A: cf. no. 16 (adīm) and nos. 24 and 27 (nammaqa). This latter recurs in Section B, no. 12 and Section C no. 3. The overwhelming similarity of phraseology and content shared by this and the following two similes have persuaded me to classify it under this rubric.

Qadīm, given in the lexica as "a white skin upon which one writes" (Lane 2989), seems, in the three contexts, to refer rather to the silver tracery figured on leather and used for decorative purposes. [33] It could only mean 'parchment' in the above usage if fī is understood as dialectal for min. It is natural that this series of comparisons should share much of its vocabulary with Sections A and B -- the styles and techniques of embellishment are presumably closely connected, whether figured on parchment, garments or leathern mats.

Group 8 -- Asad.

2. 'Abīd b. al-Abras̄ (E) 3. 5-6.

5. Ka-anna mā abqati l-rawāmisu min-
hu wa-l-sinūna l-dhawāhibu l-uwalu

6. Far'u qadīmīn qhalā sawānī'u-hu
fī yamaniyyi l-'iyābi aw khalalu

5. As if what the sand-storms and the passing years, now long
gone, had allowed to survive of it

6. Was branches of notched silver, meticulously prepared by the

craftswomen, on leathern Yemeni bags, or was /damascened/
scabbards.

For this meaning of far' and its juxtaposition with khilāl, cf. Chapter 2 no. 6 v. 12 and comment: it is most distinctly not a bland synonym for khayr as the sharh suggests. The 'iyāb are not, as Lyall translates, "picture boxes of al-Yaman", but leathern reticules: cf. Tha'labah b. Ṣu'ayr Muf 24. 9, where they are used as saddle-bags; Bishr 41. 23 (= Muf 97. 17), 'the reticules of amity', a metaphorical expression referring to surgent hostility between two tribes.

'Abīd and 'Alqamah are either drawing on the same tradition for the expression of this image or one poet has influenced the other and it is a question of literary allusion which can no longer be determined.

Group 10 -- Ghatafān.

(ii) Dhubyān.

3. Al-Nābighah (M-J/L) Ahl 17. 5-6 (= Derenbourg 2. 5-6).

5. Ka-anna majarra l-rāmisāti dhuyūla-hā
'alay-hi qadīmun nammaqat-hu l-sawāni'u

6. 'Alā zahri mibnātin jadīdin suyūru-hā
yatūfu bi-hā wasta l-latīmatī bā'i'u

5. As if the area where the sand-storms had dragged the hems /of
their gowns/ was emblazonment embellished by craftswomen,

6. On the surface of a leathern mat, its strips newly sewn
together, which a vendor carries with him round the

scent-caravan.

Both Ahlwardt and Derenbourg read hasīr, 'a mat woven from palm-leaves' [34], in which case this instance would be classified under the next following rubric (2: Weaving): the palm-leaf mat is placed on the top of the leathern mat to enable the vendor better to display it.

I have, however, opted to restore qadīm from the apparatus criticus, [35] (this is the suggestion of Lyall 1980 23), justifying its restoration by the conspicuous similarity of all three collocated examples of this similitude. The strips of leather are apparently sewn together to form a larger, composite mat, hence jadīdin suyūru-hā (jadīd may also imply that these strips are themselves newly cut and fashioned).

On latīmah, cf. latamiyyah: Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 11. 22 and his use of the phrase bālah latamiyyah, 'a scent-bottle', in 2. 7 and 11. 25; cf. further Jacob Beduinleben 148 and Fraenkel Fremdwörter 176-177. Al-Nābighah's phraseology is very reminiscent of 'Abīd's: rāmīsat = rawāmis, qadīm (?), sawānī'; al-Nābighah and 'Alqamah use the substantive qadīm (?) and the roots s-n- and n-m-q. 'Alqamah alone refers to rain, with 'Abīd and al-Nābighah referring to dust and sand kicked up by the wind.

2. Weaving.

Group 3 -- The Oppidans.

(iii) Mecca.

Abū l-Ṭamahān (M) al-Jubūrī p.212, v.3.

Abū l-Ṭamahān belonged to the Banū l-Qayn, a subsect of Qudā'ah. I

have classified him as Meccan, by virtue of his life-long association with al-Zubayr b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the uncle of the Prophet: cf. Sezgin 282.

3. Wa-ḵarra 'alay-hi l-saylu dhaylan ka-anna-hu
idhā ltaffa fī l-maythā'i isfāfu sāhili

3. And the torrent has dragged over it (i.e. a remnant) a hem /of its gown/, resembling, when it wraps itself in the soft ground, the plaiting of a weaver (who ensures his warp remains without a twist).

It is not clear whether the pronominal suffix and the second hemistich refer to sayl, dhayl or ṭalal: one would expect the latter to be the case, although the subject of ltaffa must be al-sayl. It is also not clear whether the weaver is fabricating a garment, a palm-fibre rope or a palm-leaf mat.

3. Damascened Scabbards.

Group 4 -- Bakr b. Wā'il.

(1) The Descendants of Qays b. Tha'labah.

1. Tarafah b. al-'Abd (E/M-J) Ahl 13. 1 (= Sel 16. 1).

1. A-ta'rifu rasma l-dārī qafran manāzilu-h
ka-ḵafni l-yamāniyyi zakhrafa l-washya māthilu-h

1. Do you recognise the trace of the abode where the dwellings are desolate, like the Yemeni scabbard which the patterner has decorated with ornamental designs?

For the construction of ka-jafni al-yamāniyyi, cf. Chapter 2 no. 7 v. 25, ka-karri l-andariyyi, and comment.

2. 'Abīd b. al-Abraṣ (E) 11. 3.

3. Dāru hayyīn asāba-hum sālifu l-dah
ri fa-adhat diyāru-hum ka-l-khilālī

3. The abode of a tribe who have been smitten by Time past and whose abodes have become like scabbards /worked in patterned filigree/.

4. The Sword.

Group 1 -- The Inter-tribal Chain of Ruwāt.

1. Tufayl b. 'Awf al-Ghanawī (E) 6. 2.

2. Tarā julla ma abqā l-sawārī ka-anna-hu
bu'ayda l-sawāfī athru sayfin mufallālī

2. You would imagine that the bulk of what the nocturnal /cloudbursts/ had allowed to remain was, just after the sand-spouts /had blown/, the lustre of a notched sword.

5. The Animal Kingdom.

Group 4 -- Bakr b. Wā'il.

(1) The Descendants of Qays b. Tha'labah.

Muraqqish al-Akbar (E) Muf 47. 1.

1. A-min āli asmā'a l-tulūlu l-dawārisu

yukhattitu fī-hā l-tayru qafrun basābisu

1. Are the faded remnants -- desolate, arid wastes -- where the birds draw lines, among /those/ left by Asmā's folk?

Group 8 -- Asad.

2. Bishr b. Abī Khāzim (M-J/L) 38. 1 (= Muf 99. 1).

1. Li-manī l-diyāru qhashītu-hā bi-l-an'ami

tabdū ma'ālimu-hā [*] ka-lawni l-argamī

1. To whom belong the abodes which I chanced upon in al-An'am, its cairn-stones conspicuous, like the colour of the speckled snake?

[*]. Muf: ma'ārifu-ha.

Cf. al-Bakrī 106 and Yāqūt 1. 271 for a discussion as to whether al-An'am or al-An'um should be read. Ma'ālim and 'alāmāt may designate piles of stones, perhaps even with an inscription of some sort, erected by a tribe, either for guidance, or as a sign whereby they could recognise the place, or as territorial markers. [36]

A general overview of Section A reveals that of the 43 comparisons with writing, 25 can be said approximately to belong to the Early/Middle Jāhiliyyah and 18 to the Late Jāhiliyyah -> Mukhadramī period (the catchment area for the Mukhadramī poets was,

for all sections somewhat more restricted than that of the Jāhiliyyah); of Section B, that of the 13 comparisons with figured garments, 5 belong to the Early/Middle Jāhiliyyah, 8 to the ensuing eras; of Section C, that of the 19 comparisons with tattooing, 1 belongs to the Early Jāhiliyyah, 11 to the Middle period and 7 to the ensuing eras. In Section B, the earliest poet to treat of the comparison is 'Abid, in Section C, Tufayl.

The popularity of the comparison with writing remains constant throughout all periods. There is discernible, however, by the Late Jāhiliyyah, a diminution of references to foreign cultures and foreign writing-materials, although they still occur from time to time. The comparison with figured garments does not attain to the level of popularity enjoyed by that of A and C, although it seems to be something of a favourite of Ka'b b. Zuhayr and al-Ḥuṭay'ah: it is markworthy that this topos does not occur in the dīwān of Zuhayr, their poetic mentor. This comparison also features the emergence of Bedouin cultural items, very much overshadowed, however, by the textile industry of the Yemen. Section C seems originally to have been the preserve of Group 1 -- The Inter-tribal Chain of Ruwāt, developing into a 'leitmotif' of sorts in Zuhayr's verse. Significantly, the comparison enjoyed a measure of popularity among the Hudhalī poets, whose tribal dīwān [37] contains what is, in effect, some of the most Bedouin poetry to have survived. The vogue of this topos is in evidence when it is remarked that the urban 'Adī b. Zayd treats of this distinctly Bedouin motif.

In a series of articles, M.J. Kister has investigated the "social, political, cultural and religious aspects of the life of the tribal groups in the Arabian peninsula during the period of transition from Jāhiliyyah to Islam", paying particular attention to their relations with Mecca and al-Ḥīrah. [38] His views on the political and military demise of al-Ḥīrah and the emergence of Mecca as an economic and religious centre provide an important insight into the social and political circumstances which may have actuated the burgeoning awareness, from the Middle Jāhiliyyah onwards, of Bedouin culture as viable poetic material:

The second half of the 6th century was a period of fundamental changes in the relations between the tribes of North-East Arabia and al-Ḥīrah. The defeat of the forces of al-Ḥīrah, who took part in the raids against tribes and fought in the inter-tribal encounters -- undermined the prestige of the rulers in the opinions of the tribes ... Discontented tribes rose in rebellion against al-Ḥīrah. Raids on caravans of the rulers occurred frequently ... the rulers of al-Ḥīrah began to lose control of the commercial roads and their prestige dwindled. The weakness of the rulers of al-Ḥīrah and their Persian masters was apparent; troops of the Persian garrisons who took part in some battles on the side of the loyal tribe were defeated. (Mecca and Tamīm 113-114.)

In addition to this, "al-Nu'mān, the last ruler of al-Ḥīrah, seems to have sympathised with the Arabs and it is plausible that he might have come in touch with some leaders of tribes, attempting to make common cause with the strong tribes ... (he) must have been aware of chaos in the Persian Empire and of the rise of the power of the Arab

tribes and might have planned a new line in his policy which did not accord with Persian interests ... it seems that the dynasty of Lakhm was abolished because it could not be trusted" (loc. cit. 114-115).

In Mecca, on the other hand, where the tribal chiefs "were welcomed ... and could enter ... without fear" (121), negotiating with the merchants as equals, Kister argues that Hāshim b. 'Abd Manāf adopted from the Bedouin the tribal ideal of "'mixing of the poor' (or inferior people) with rich and wealthy" and made of it a mercantile practice, involving both rich and poor in caravans which thereby became joint enterprises. Hashim seems also "to have expanded the tendency of the care for the needy into a social principle" (124-125).

These three factors seem to me, when taken in conjunction with the emergence of comparisons with tattoos and, to a lesser degree, Bedouin garments, to point to a waxing awareness of Bedouin self-identity which developed into and beyond a vogue for the Bedouin. If their cause was espoused, even clandestinely, by al-Nu'man, then this would be reflected in his court and in the poetry which was delivered at his court: there is some evidence of this. [39]

I do not mean to imply that poetry anterior to this is completely un-Bedouin in form and spirit. The abandoned encampment, the danger-fraught traversal of deadly wastes and storm

descriptions are a feature of the earliest pre-Islamic verse and I should signal them out as being distinctly bedouin in origin and character. What is significant is the shift, the development of emphasis, from fascination with foreign cultures and foreign luxuries to an awareness of and pride in the nobility of the desert. This is nowhere better exemplified than in the demise of the horse and the issuance of the camel within the confines of the qasīdah. The horse, so beloved of Abū Du'ād, Imru' al-Qays, 'Alqamah and Tufayl, lapses into comparative obscurity, featuring only sporadically as a descriptive topos in narratives of raids, until its cause is championed by the Mukhadramī al-Nābighah al-Ja'dī and, later, al-Kumayt b. Zayd. The substitution of horse with camel is further indicative of a change in the concept of 'the hero'. C.M. Bowra, Heroic Poetry, London 1952, 157, has observed of the horse and its role in the heroic epic that

no animal invites so technical or so discriminating a knowledge or excites stronger affection and admiration. Heroic poets know about horses and study them with professional appreciation. In heroic societies the horse has more than one function. It is in the first place an article of wealth. A man is known by the quantity and quality of his horses and is naturally proud of them. If raiding is still an honourable pursuit, horses are among the first objects of loot. In the second place, the horse is invaluable in war -- the hero's most trusted friend, which may often save him in dangerous situations and provide inestimable service in overcoming his enemies. When war gives place to games or other tests of prowess, horse-racing is one of the most favoured ways for heroes to compete against each other. In the third place, a knowledge of

horses is one of the most prized branches of knowledge. The man who really knows about them is respected as few other men are, and, conversely, ignorance of them invites contempt. These elements are constant in heroic poetry. [40]

Much of what Bowra says can of course be applied to the camel and its status as a fit mount for the hero. Pre-Islamic poetry, however, represents an anomalous situation in which the horse is replaced with the camel as the hero's riding beast par excellence. This, I should argue, is a symptom of the emergence of what can be termed the concept of the Poet as Bedouin Hero, itself allied to the growth of confidence and power of the Arab tribes in their relations with the regal dynasties which hemmed them in to the east and the west. [41]

NOTES

1. This is Sir William's introductory analysis of the argument of the Mu'allagah of Imru' al-Qays, quoted in A. Arberry The Seven Odes, London 1952, 49-50. For Jonson's translation of Horace's Ars Poetica, cf. Ben Jonson edited by C.H. Herford Percy and E. Simpson, Oxford 1947, 8 304-337. Swift's On Poetry: A Rhapsody was published in London "as a folio pamphlet, 31 Dec., 1733 (The Daily Journal)": The Poems of Jonathan Swift, edited by H. Williams, Oxford 1958, 2 639-659.

2. G.E. von Grunebaum, "Zur Chronologie der früh-arabischen Dichtung", Orientalia NS 8 (1939), 328-345; "Pre-Islamic Poetry", Muslim World 32 (1942), 147-153; "Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī: Collection of Fragments" WZKM 51 (1948-1952), 83-105, especially 100-105.

3. R. Jacobi "The Camel-Section of the Panegyric Ode", JAL 13 (1982), 1-22..

4. This substantive is vocalised by Blachère 88 as arim, by Bevan Muf 3 159 as iram; it properly signifies a 'cairn-stone'.

5. 'Adī was, of course, a native of al-Ḥīrah although belonging to "a branch of the Banū Imri' al-Qays b. Zayd Manāt, which counts as a branch of Tamīm": J. Horowitz, "'Adī b. Zayd, The Poet of Ḥīrah", IC 4 (1930), 31-69.

6. Lyall Muf 2 161.

7. Von Grunebaum 1948-52 98-99.

8. Cf. F. Gabrieli "'Adī b. Zayd" EI2 I 196: "Arab historico-literary tradition ... regards him (i.e. 'Adī) as being on the fringe of the mainstream of the poetry of the Jāhiliyyah, because of his 'un-Najdi' language". Von Grunebaum 1948-52 96-97,

dismisses the validity of this attitude as regards Abū Du'ād. This curious form of linguistic arrogance has entailed, more or less, the loss of two of the potentially most interesting pre-Islamic diwāns: cf. C. Pellat "Abū Du'ād" EI2 I 115-116.

9. Lyall, Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry, London 1930, xxxv-xxxvi: "Imru' al-Qays, man of al-Yaman and prince of Kindah, was the rāwī of Abū Du'ād of al-Ḥīrah and is believed to have gained from him his skill in describing the horse, in which he is reckoned a master".

10. Cf. Sezgin 211. Krenkow 1927 xvi and Von Grunebaum Chronologie 338 consider the tradition that Aws was the rāwī of Ṭufayl, now supposed to be a confusion of the connection between Zuhayr and both poets.

11. Comparisons made by European poets have not infrequently exploited points of resemblance between "the letters of the alphabet and natural phenomena. The Greek poet Aiskhron described the crescent moon as 'the sky's fair letter C'. Dante saw a man's eyebrows, eyes and nose, in the medieval lettering of the Italian word for a man, OMO, and identified an inverted M with the head and neck of an eagle. The French poet Alfred de Musset described the sight of a full moon over a church spire as 'like the dot over an i'. Paul Maurice grandiloquently apostrophized Victor Hugo in the celebrated alexandrine:

Les tours de Notre Dame étaient l'H de ton nom".

W.B. Stanford, The Enemies of Poetry, London 1980, 101-102.

12. Geyer mistakenly reads tabayyana.

13. Lyall Muf 2 104 and 196 respectively.

14. Sezgin 165.

15. For the narrative, cf. Arberry Seven Odes 67-68 and Seligsohn 14, who interprets the handing of the letter to another to read, not as an admission of illiteracy, but of an unwillingness to break the royal seal. A.F.L. Beeston, "Background Topics", CHALUP 22, deems it a "worldwide folk-tale theme".

16. M.M. Willcock, The Iliad of Homer: Books I-XII, London 1978, 245; cf. J.A. Davison, From Archilochus to Pindar, London 1968, 90.

17. L.H. Jeffery, "Writing", in A.J.B. Wace and F.H. Stubbings (edd.), A Companion to Homer, London 1962, 555.

18. He was an uncle of Labīd; cf. Lyall Muf 2 293 and Lyall (1980) 73.

19. This poem has been justly signaled out for its "overripe classicism" by J. Stetkevych, "Name and Epithet: the Philology and Semiotics of Animal Nomenclature in Early Arabic Poetry", JNES 45 (1986), 106. Scholars should be most cautious in using it as a starting-point on which to base their views of early verse. A distinct lack of caution in this respect is shown by K. Abu-Deeb, "Towards A Structural Analysis of Pre-Islamic Poetry", IJMES 6 (1975), 148-184, and G. Müller, Ich bin Labīd und das ist mein Ziel, Wiesbaden 1981. A. Hamori evinces a similar tendency with regard to this methodologically unsound principle: cf. especially his remarks concerning the Oryx Bull Vignette, in The Art of Medieval Arabic Literature, Princeton 1974, 19-20.

20. It may be of interest to compare the relevant lines of A.F.L. Beeston's 'experimental' translation of Labīd's Mu'allaqah ("An Experiment with Labīd, JAL 7 (1976), 1-6:

Vanished are the tenting-spots (places of but a week's or month's

stay) in Minā; the wilderness has reclaimed Ghawl and Rijam;
runnels of Rayyān, stripped of all trace (one may entrust writings
to unyielding rocks);

Now stand revealed by flood waters the camp sites, like books with
texts new traced by pens.

I have tried to retain the ambiguity of the pronominal suffix in the
phrase 'urriya rasmu-hā with can be construed as referring to the
toponyms of both lines 1 and 2.

21. Jeffery Writing 555.

22. The bān is said by Lyall Muf 2 47 to be the Moringa aptera.

23. On the meaning of walīd and the synonymous ghulām, cf. Zuhayr
Ahl 10. 18, Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 46, Mu'allaqah 57, Qur'ān 12. 19,
52. 24.

24. Many of those who have written on the relation of the Qur'ān
with the pre-Islamic epoch seem to suffer from what can be termed
the ante hoc ergo post hoc chain of reasoning. This is no more
clearly evident than in the traditional view of the Arabian
Peninsula in the Jāhiliyyah as barren terrain inhabited by the rude
Bedouin: the mission of Muḥammad brought the religion of Islam to
the heathen, therefore the heathen must have, prior to that, been
entirely irreligious! As R.B. Serjeant points out, "The Arabian
civilisation into which the Prophet Muḥammad was born had long been
a literate and highly organized society. For some time before
Islam Arabians were writing in the Arabic language ... very early
Arabic rock inscriptions or graffiti are to be found in many parts
of western Arabia. The people who scribbled on these rocks cannot
but have belonged to a society with a high degree of literacy"
("Early Arabic Prose", CHALUP, 114).

- 25., A. Hartigan, "Bishr b. Abī Khāzim", MFOB 1 (1906), 285-302.
26. Jeffery Vocabulary 193 translates this line as "Like a message on pages from the time of Chosroes, which I sent to a tongue-tied foreigner".
27. Cf. U. Thilo, Die Ortsnamen in der Altarabischen Poesie, Wiesbaden 1958, 49: Ghamrah (II).
28. The text is that of Geyer al-A'shā 275.
29. F. Wüstenfeld, Genealogischen Tabellen der arabischen Stämme und Familien, Göttingen 1852, Register zu den genealogischen Tabellen der arabischen Stämme und Familien, Göttingen 1853, 162.
30. R. Dozy Dictionnaire Détaillé des Noms des Vêtements chez les Arabes, Amsterdam 1843, 292-297.
31. Cf. Lane 1072 and also Jacob Beduinleben 44.
32. The metre, Wāfir, also permits the vocalisation rusughi.
33. Cf. Lyall 1980 23: "the word qadīm properly indicates the painting, or perhaps the embroidery, in the parchment, rather than the parchment itself". However the lexica also record the meaning 'silver' for qadīm, which may be a substantival epithet, with a signification akin to another meaning borne by the word, viz. 'notched' of a sword: the silver inlay, whether sewn onto the leather or punched in, resembles the dented edge of a sword-blade.
34. Cf. the description of the manufacture of a hasīr by al-Muzarrid Muf 17. 24.
35. It is the reading given in Ahlwardt's MSS s and z: cf. Ahlwardt The Six Divans 103-104.

36. This is the proposal of Beeston Labīd 2: "the rendering of a'lām as 'bound-marks' in preference to 'mountains' or 'pennants'".

37. On the tribal dīwāns in general, cf. I. Goldziher, "Some Notes on the Dīwāns of the Arabic Tribes", JRAS (1897), 325-334 and Sezgin 32-46. An interesting study of the poetry of the Taghlib was submitted as a Ph.D. thesis in the University of Edinburgh in 1984 by F.A.S. al-Ammāry ad-Dousary. Entitled The Poetry of Taghlib, the author's object "is to study the poetry of Taghlib from the earliest times until the end of the Umayyad period ... to establish what common features this work displays, and to discover how much continuity of themes and language there has been throughout the history of this tribe".

38. M.J. Kister, Studies in Jāhiliyya and Early Islam, London 1980. Especially relevant are "Mecca and Tamīm (Aspects of their Relations)", "Some Reports concerning Mecca. From Jāhiliyya to Islam" and "Al-Ḥīrah. Some Notes on its Relations with Arabia".

39. It would be beyond the parameters of this introductory study to examine in detail the phenomenon of "Bedouinisation" at the Lakhmid court. One of the progenitors of this culling of poetry from things Bedouin, 'Abīd b. al-Abrāṣ, it will be remembered, was associated with the metropolis long before al-Nu'mān. It is possible that the espousal of the Arab tribes, as a means of securing independence from Persia, of mustering military support and defence (in the form of 'buffer' territories) against the house of Jafnah, and of exploiting "intertribal feuds and hostilities" (Kister al-Ḥīrah 155), antedates al-Nu'man's reign and is reflected in 'Abīd's dīwān.

40. The concept of the Heroic Age formulated by W.P. Ker, Epic and Romance, London 1908, and H.M. Chadwick, The Heroic Age, Cambridge 1912, has subsequently undergone one fundamental qualification:

Chadwick ... believed that the ideals, way of life and material

surroundings envisaged in the early Teutonic epic had much in common with Homer, and also that the Norse sagas and the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic traditions revealed surprisingly similar characteristics. He concluded that social, material and political factors could coalesce in the development of separate cultures to produce for a time aristocratic and militaristic societies of remarkable consistency. An important by-product of these societies was the oral narrative poetry (or, occasionally, formalized prose saga) through which their memory had survived. Further reflection has suggested that the poetical picture is usually developed, in something like its surviving fullness, in a subsequent period of decline. Therefore certain heroic characteristics -- for example superhuman strength, exaggerated sense of honour, sublime resignation to fate -- may owe their prominence as much to the universal effects of nostalgic memory in an age of decay as to any precise and historical similarity of feelings in different martial epochs ... the idea of a Heroic Age may be to an important extent a 'literary' crystallization rather than a direct and lifelike reflection of an actual historical period" (G.S. Kirk, Homer and the Oral Tradition, Cambridge 1976, 45-46).

Cf. G.S. Kirk, The Songs of Homer, Cambridge 1962, 132-38. Scholars who wish primarily to reckon Jāhili verse as 'heroic' would do well to bear this fact in mind. Jāhili verse may represent the emergence of a society from this nostalgic, epic-oriented state, and shares more similarities with the Early Greek Lyric than it does with the Homeric Epics; its world is that of "the warrior poet whose medium is the shorter lyric poem. The archaic Greek lyric poet speaks almost invariably in the the first person .. his world of aristocratic pursuits ... suggests parallels with Arabic aristocratic, chivalrous and courtly poetry from pre-Islamic times to al-Mutanabbi" (J. Stetkevych, "The Arabic Lyrical Phenomenon in Context", JAL 6 [1975], 66). Cf. also M.V. McDonald, "Orally Transmitted Poetry in Pre-Islamic Arabia and other Pre-Literate Societies", JAL 9 (1978), 14-31.

41. Cf. further Appendix 1 post.

Chapter 2 -- The Wild Ass

Hear me, O elders [and give ear] unto me!

It is for Enkidu, my friend that I weep,

Moaning bitterly like a wailing woman.

The axe at my side, my hand's trust,

The dirk in my belt, the shield in front of me,

My festal robe, my richest trimming --

An evil demon rose up and robbed me!

O my younger friend, thou chasedst

The wild ass of the hills, the panther of the steppe!

Enkidu, my younger friend, thou who chasedst

The wild ass of the hills, the panther of the steppe!

We who [have conquered] all things, scaled the mountains,

Who seized the Bull [and slew him],

Brought affliction on Hubaba, who [dwelled] in the Cedar

Forest!

What, now, is this sleep that has laid hold on thee?

Gilgamesh's lament for Enkidu before the elders
of Uruk. [1]

Group One

1. Aws b. Ḥajar Geyer 23. 29-59; Fischer p. 100-108.

Translation: Geyer 56-66.

29. Ka-an-nī kasawtu l-rahla aḥqaba qāriban
la-hu bi-junūbi l-shayyitayni masāwifu
30. Yuqallibu qaydūdan ka-anna sarāta-hā
ṣafā mudhunin qad zahlafat-hu [1] l-zahālifu
31. Yusarrifu haqbā'a l-'aḥīzati samḥajan
bi-hā nadabun min zarri-hi wa-manāsifu
32. Wa-akhlaḥa-hu min kulli waqtin wa-mudhunin
nitāfun fa-mashrabun [2] yabābun wa-nāshifu
33. Wa-halla'a-hā hattā idhā hiya aḥnaqat
wa-ashrafa fawqa l-ḥalibayni l-sharāsifu
34. Wa-khabba safā quryāni-hi wa-tawaqqadat
'alay-hi mina l-sammanatayni l-asālifu
35. Fa-adhā bi-qārāti l-sitāri ka-anna-hu
rabī'atu jayshin fa-hwa zam'ānu [3] khā'ifu
36. Yaqūlu la-hu l-ra'ūna hadhāka rākibun
yu'abbīnu shakhsan fawqa 'alyā'a wāqifun
37. Idhā staqbalat-hu l-shamsu sadda bi-wajhi-hi
ka-ma sadda 'an nāri l-muhawwili ḥālifu
38. Tadhakkara 'aynan min ghumazata mā'u-hā
la-hu ḥababun tastannu fī-hi l-zakhārifu
39. La-hu tha'dun yahtazzu ja'dan ka-anna-hu
mukhālita [4] arjā'i l-'uyūni l-qarātifu

40. Fa-awrada-hā l-taqrība wa-l-shadda [5] manhalan
gata-hu mu'īdu karrati l-wirdi 'ātifu
41. Fa-lāqā 'alay-hi min subāha mudammiran
li-nāmusi-hi mina l-safīhi saqā'ifu
42. Ṣadin [6] qhā'iru l-'aynayni shaqqāqa lahma-hu
samā'imu qayzin fa-hwa aswadu shāsifu
43. Azabbu zuhūri l-sā'idayni 'izāmu-hu
'alā qadarin shatnu l-banāni junādifu
44. Akhū quturatīn qad tayaqqana anna-hu
idhā lam yusib laḥman mina l-wahshi khāsifu
45. Mu'āwīdu qatli l-hādiyāti shiwā'u-hu
mina l-laḥmi qusra rakhsatun wa-tafātifu
46. Qaṣiyyu mabīti l-layli li-l-saydi mut'amun
li-ashumi-hi qharin wa-bārin wa-rāsifu
47. Fa-yursilu sahman rāsha-hu bi-manākibin
zuhārin lu'āmin fa-hwa a'jafu shārifu
48. 'Alā dālatin far'in ka-anna nadhīra-hā
idhā lam tukhaffid-hu 'ani l-wahshi 'āzifu
49. Fa-amhala-hu [7] hattā idhā fa-ka-anna-hu
mu'ātī yadin min jammati l-mā'i qharifu
50. Wa-arsala-hu mustayqina l-zanni anna-hu
mukhālītu mā tahta l-sharāsīfi jā'ifu
51. Fa-marra l-nadiyyu li-l-dhira'i wa-nahri-hi
wa-la-l-hatfu ahyānan 'ani l-nafsi sādifu [8]
52. Fa-'adda bi-ibhāmi l-yamīni nadāmatan
wa-lahhafa sirran amma-hu wa-hwa lahifu

53. Wa-jāla wa-lam ya'kim wa-shayya'a ilfa-hu
bi-munqata'i l-qhadra'i shaddun mu'alifu
54. Fa-mā zāla yafrī l-bīda [9] hatta ka-anna-mā
gawā'imu-hu fī janibay-hi l-za'anifu [10]
55. Ka-anna bi-janbay-hi janābayni min ḥaṣā
jimārin 'alā-hā l-naq'u bahrun yuqādhifu
56. Tuwāhiqu rijlā-hā yadā-hu wa-ra'su-hu
la-hā qatabun khalfa l-haqībatī rādifu [11]
57. Yusarrifu li-l-aswāti wa-l-rīhi hādiyan
tamīmi [12] l-nadiyyi kaddahat-hu l-manāsifu
58. Wa-ra'san ka-danni l-tajri ja'ban ka-anna-mā
ramā hājibay-hi bi-l-hijāratī qādhifu
59. Kilā mankharay-hi sā'ifan [13] wa-mu'ashshiran
bimā nfadda min mā'i l-khayāshīmi rā'ifu

Variant Readings

- [1]. Muf 1 729: zallaqat-hu.
- [2]. Geyer: fa-mashrūbun.
- [3]. Geyer: tam'āna.
- [4]. Geyer: mukhālatu; Fischer: mukhālītu.
- [5]. Muf 1 218 & 521: al-taqrību wa-l-shaddu.
- [6]. Fischer: sadan.
- [7]. Muf I 866: fa-khāda ilay-hi l-mā'a.
- [8]. Geyer: wa-li-l-hatfi ahyānan 'ani l-nafsi sārifu.
- [9]. Geyer: yaqrī l-shadda.
- [10]. Geyer: za'anifu.
- [11]. Geyer: tuwāghidu rijlā-hā yaday-hi wa-ra'su-hu
la-hā qatadun fawqa l-haqībatī rādifu.

[12]. Geyer: namīmu.

[13]. Geyer: sā'iqan.

Translation

29. As if I had clothed my saddle upon a white-girded /ass/ on a
night-journey to water, having trails marked with his scent
on the slopes of al-Shayyitān,
30. Who turns this way and that a long-backed /female/, whose
back bone resembles the rocks in a torrent-channel which
smooth dunes have impelled downwards,
31. Pushing here and there a long-legged /female/, white-girded in
the rump, bearing scars and bites inflicted by his snapping;
32. Disappointed by /dried up/ puddles in every pool and
torrent-channel, and by a watering-hole, desolate and
drained,
33. He kept her away /from water/ until, when she had grown
meagre and the lower parts of her ribs had risen above her
mammas,
34. When the beards /of the grass growing in/ his channels had
grown tall and the hard earth of both /sides of/
al-Ṣammanatān had been set ablaze against him,
35. He rose in the morning heat upon the peaks of al-Sitar, like
the scout of an army, thirsty and afraid,
57. Turning this way and that, in response to noises and the sound
of the wind, a neck thoroughly emaciated, bitten by the
muzzles /of other asses/,

58. A bulky head, like the vintners' amphora, its the eyebrows
seem to have been pelted with stones,
59. Both of his nostrils sniffing and snorting incessantly, as if
bleeding with the water that streams from their ducts;
36. Onlookers would say "There is a rider, following someone's
trail, standing on an elevated outcrop!" --
37. When the sun stood opposite him, he averted his face, just as
a covenanter turns away from the fire of the terrifier:
38. He remembered a spring in Ghumāzah where the water bubbled and
/streaks like/ embroidery pranced on its surface,
39. Where the thick damp /moss/ quivered, like coarse, nappy
garatif, as it blended with the banks of the springs,
40. So he took her to drink, through speeding and galloping, at a
watering-hole where the waddling sand-grouse were on their
return journey to water,
41. And encountered there a destructive /hunter/ of Subah,
his den roofed over with broad stones,
42. Slender, with sunken eyes, his flesh withered by blistering
summer siroccos so that he was black and thin,
43. The backs of his forearms hairy, his bones well-proportioned,
his fingers thick and rough, squat (?),
44. The brother of wattlings, assured that he would starve in
disgrace if he did not hit on animal flesh,
45. /Though/ time after time he had killed the front-runners,
cooking, of the flesh, the soft, lowermost ribs and offal.
46. /A hunter who/ passed the night in a distant place, relying on

hunting for sustenance, glueing /feathers/ to the arrows
and fastening /their heads/ with ligaments, paring and
smoothing /their shafts/.

49. He allowed the ass time until, when he seemed to be stretching
forth his fore-leg to scoop water from the pool,
47. He shot an arrow which he had properly fletched with
secondaries taken from the dorsal side, so that it was
slender and long,
48. /Fitting it to/ a dāl branch -- its warning, when you do not
lower it /to escape the notice/ of the beasts, is like a
singing /jinn/ --
50. He fired it, certain in his thoughts that it would pierce the
abdomen, plunging into what lay under the ribs
51. But the arrowshaft swerved towards the leg and sternum.
Truly, sometimes death turns aside from the soul!
52. He bit his right thumb in anguished regret and, distraught,
secretly lamented his aim.
53. He wheeled without turning back. An appropriate gallop
escorted his companion through the isolated stretch of
fertile terrain
54. And he cut through the deserts so that his legs were like hems
attached to his sides:
55. As if on either side of him were two rows of small pebbles
covered with billowing dust -- a raging sea tossing its
waves,
56. His fore-legs vying with her hind-legs, his head like a
pack-saddle fixed upon her girth.

Commentary

29. Al-Shayyitān is a valley to the north of al-Baḥrayn, in the territory of the 'Abd al-Qays of 'Amīrah. As Thilo Ortsnamen 93 notes, it is used twice by al-Ḥuṭay'ah, 3. 12 (of a wild ass) and 16. 6 (of an ostrich) and also occurs in a wild ass vignette by Labīd 'Abbās 11. 31 (= Chāl p.108, v. 31, Brock I 17. 31).

The adjective ahqab is a common designation of the wild ass, referring to the white patch on its pelage where one would normally attach the hind-girth (haqab) to a camel; cf., for example, Bishr 7. 6, 39. 7, al-A'shā 15. 9, 30. 8.

Masāwif probably designates dung piles: "in both species (i.e. Equus africanus and Equus hemionus) the stallions defecate preferentially onto their own dung (or on the dung of conspecifics) thereby producing conspicuous dung piles. The function of dung piles (is) for orientation in territorial equids ... In these two species and especially in E. africanus the argument seems to be even stronger: in an area as uniform as parts of the Danakil desert, it is absolutely essential for a territorial individual to make his own marks in order to know and recognise the boundaries of his territory" (H. Klingel, "Observations on Social Organization and Behaviour of African and Asiatic Wild Asses [Equus africanus and E. hemionus]", ZT 44 [1977], 328).

30. Qaydūd is a rare word, usually explained as a synonym of samhaj, a somewhat more frequent appellation of the she ass meaning 'long' either in the legs or in the back; Al-Nābighah Ahl 21. 8 (= Der 24. 8), 'Adī 90. 1, al-A'shā 65. 31, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 17 (= Muf 126. 16), Mutammim Muf 9. 13, Rabī'ah Muf 39. 23. Al-Ṭirimmāh in a wild ass vignette (4. 59-79) imaginatively applies this adjective to the hunter's bow (72); this metaphor, when taken in conjunction with Ka'b Kow 13. 37 (= Cairo p.153, v.37), samhaji

l-qawā'imī, suggests that for these later poets the epithet samḥaj refers to the legs.

The second hemistich is an elaboration of an image used by other poets and it has been variously explained, as Lane's entry sub z-h-l-f attests (1220). The relevant passages (Imru' al-Qays Ahl 48. 48b [= Ibr 1. 50b, Mu'allaqah 53b], ka-julmūdī ṣakhrin ḥaṭṭa-hu l-saylu min 'alī, Imru' al-Qays Ahl 19. 28 [= Ibr 29. 30], la-hā 'ajuzun ka-safāti l-masī//lī abraza 'an-hā juḥāfun mudirr, 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 25 [= Qab 3. 25], wa-jawfun hawā'un taḥta matnin ka-anna-hu//mina l-hadḡbatī l-khalqā'ī zuḥlūqu mal'abī [or mul'ibī], 'Uqba b. Sābiq Aṣm 9. 12, wa-matnānī khazātānī//ka-zuḥlūfin mina l-hadḡbī) reveal that the rocks, lying in a mudhun, properly, according to Lane, "any place excavated by a torrent" [2], are swept along by the rush of the torrent and slide down the smooth, steep slopes of the dunes: the references to children playing in the commentaries and lexica presumably derive from 'Alqamah's casting of the trope, similar to Tufayl 1. 28 (ka-anna mutūna-hā//zahālifu wildānin 'afat ba'da mal'abī). [3]. The vertebrae and muscles of the mares's back are compared with rocks, tumbling down a steep incline, which is as smooth as the ass's pelage.

31. There is some uncertainty concerning the meaning of the rhyme-word manāsifu. It may be a plural of the Passive Participle, analogous to mazārīr as used by al-Ṭirimmāḥ 4. 66, meaning 'marks left by biting' (cf. nusūf: Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 18. 26), thereby balancing nadab. It recurs as the rhyme-word in line 57; in Bishr 31. 9 an ostrich is referred to as dhū manāsif, presumably referring to its beak. Furthermore Kazimirski 1251 gives minsaf as 'the muzzle of the ass', which reading would involve the prosodical faux pas of iqwā', altering the nominative manāsifu to the genitive manasifa [4] and understanding min zarri-hi wa-manāsifa as hendiadys, with manāsif as plural for singular: I should translate 'bearing scars inflicted by his snapping muzzle'.

32. Cf. Ka'b Cairo p. 99, v. 11, where wa-akhlaḥa-hunna thimādu l-qhimārī should be read.

33. For ḥalla'a, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 50. 4 (= Ibr 10. 4) (she ass), Imru' al-Qays Ibr 56. 2 (ass ?), Ka'b Cairo p.99, v. 10, Rabī'ah Muf 38. 9 (ass), 'Awf b. 'Aṭīyyah Muf 94. 3 (camel), Ḥājib b. Ḥabīb Muf 111. 4 (ass), Usāmah Hell 4. 20 & 24 (oryx bull): the stallion ass keeps the female away from water until he is absolutely certain that there is no danger.

Aḥnaqa is used of an emaciated she-camel by Labīd Mu'allaqah 22 (= 'Abbās 48. 22) (cf. Mulayḥ Well 270. 2, of a stallion camel); sharāsif: of the ribs of a man, A'shā Bāhilah Aṣm 24. 18 (= Geyer 4. 32) and 'Āmir 21. 9; of a horse: Imru' al-Qays Ibr 60. 14. I have adopted the immediately obvious signification of al-ḥālibayn, given that the she ass has two mammae located under the groin. However, ḥālib also refers to a vein of the inner thigh of a she-camel (al-Muthaqqib Muf 76. 25), and of a horse ('Amr b. Ma'dīkarīb Aṣm 61. 17 and Abū Du'ād Aṣm 66. 8), and this would fit Aws's rigorous use of 'technical' language on display in this poem.

34. On safā and the summer heat in a wild ass setting cf. Zuhayr (?) Qab 24. 17 post, Ka'b Cairo p.101, v.10 (wa-khabba l-safā). Aws 31. 31 likens the parings from a piece of wood, which is being fashioned into a bow, to safā l-buhmā. [5]

I construe the pronominal suffixes to refer to the wild ass -- 'his channels' [6], i.e. the places of browsing on which the ass has been relying for subsistence. Otherwise some such indeterminate referent as ma' has to be supplied, as Fischer does. It has, however, been observed of Equus hemionus khur ("the Indian wild ass or ghor-khar") that, during the dry season, "they can tolerate temperatures of up to 44°C, quenching their thirst by eating shrubby seablite Suaeda fruticosa, which contains plenty of saline water" (J.M. Smielowski and P.P. Raval, "The Indian Wild Ass -- Wild and

Captive Populations", Oryx 22 [1988], 86.). This has also been observed of the Oryx leucoryx: "it is independent of free water for months at a time , deriving all necessary moisture from succulent plants and occasionally from dew, but it will use free water when available ... One animal, tracked for about eighteen hours urinated at least twice during that period and again about an hour after capture; it is unlikely that this beast had any access to free water for many weeks" (D.L. Harrison, The Mammals of Arabia, London 1968, 2 348). The wild ass can derive sufficient moisture from herbage until, as this line suggests, the herbage is itself withered by the heat in the dry season: the visit to the watering-hole is the last resort. Clark notes of the African wild ass that "livestock, with their shepherds, concentrate at available watering areas, and the human presence in particular makes the area unsuitable for the prudently wary wild ass" (B. Clark, "African Wild Ass", Oryx 17 (1983), 29).

Khabba used of plant growth is rare; Zuhayr Qab 50. 15 (= Th p.116, v.15, Ahl Frag. 27), idhā//khabba l-safīru. It is a favourite of al-A'shā, who frequently applies it to a mirage: 1. 21 (khabba lami'ātu l-ālī), 2. 24a = 8. 27a = 21. 13a (idhā//khabba ray'ānu-hu), 33. 25 (idhā khabba ālun). Cf. Tarafah Ahl 4. 42 (= Mu'allaqah 43), Bishr 25. 11, 34. 7. This use is probably metaphorical, the streaks of the mirage being visualized as plants and grasses, if khabba is to be understood as 'to grow tall'. However, the topical references to buhmā and siroccos perhaps indicate that khabba l-safā refers to the beards being swept up by the wind, in which case khabba would mean 'to rise high in the air' and its radical designation of 'swift movement' would characterize the brome grass borne along by the wind.

Al-Ṣammanatān (more commonly al-Ṣammān) lies to the west of al-Shayyitān and is "a belt of steppe with rocky subsoil ... characterized in the north-western stretch by rocky crevices (duhūl) in which water is to be found" (Thilo Ortsnamen 98).

35, 57-58, 36. Lines 57-58 are somewhat inappropriate to the depiction of the escape of the asses narrated in 54-56 and seem to belong to the description of the stallion's 'sentry duty' in 35-36.

35. Al-Sitār, designated III by Thilo Ortsnamen 92, lies to the south of al-Shayyitān, on the eastern ridge of al-Ṣammān: the stallion leads his mate south. The wild ass has been observed frequently to keep such lookouts: E.P. Gee The Wild Life of India, London 1964, 81; cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 27b (= Ibr 3. 24b), wa-sahwatu 'ayrin qā'imīn fawqa marqabi, Mutammim Muf 9. 11, wa-yazallu murtabi'an 'alay-hā ḵādhilan//fī ra'si marqabatin wa-la'yan yarta'u.

57. The phrase li-l-aswati wa-l-rihi may be a hendiadys: 'in response to the sounds carried on the wind'; hādīn (of the neck of a mare: al-Mufaḍḍal al-Nukrī Aṣm 69. 36) is given by Lewin 451 as the "front part of the body, the breast" which is inaccurate as it means 'neck' in the places he cites: Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 3. 8 (hādiyi l-ṣadri wa-l-katadu, 'the neck /that lies above/ his chest and withers'), of a wild ass; Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 93. 14 (tahfu bi-hādīn la-hā mayla'in, 'a swift /she camel/, running and raising her neck') and 99. 5 (li-'ardi-hi//sanāmun wa-hādīn mutla'ibbun wa-kalkalu, its [i.e. a cloud's] breadth has a hump, a straight neck and a chest). [7] The n-d-w root means 'wearing away, emaciation': Mu'āwiyah Muf 105. 2 (clothes), Abū l-Faḍl Aṣm 20. 2 (ropes) and Bashāmah Muf 122. 7 (camels). For asses biting one another, cf. Zuhayr (?) Qab 24. 15 post.

58. The wild asses are known to employ three methods of fighting; biting, striking with the fore legs, and kicking with the hind legs (cf. R.M. Nowak and J.L. Paradiso, Walker's Mammals of the World, Baltimore 1983, 1157). The wounds were probably sustained during the contests for superiority among the herd engaged in by territorial stallions [8]; according to Klingel 1977 327, among the other adults, "there was no indication of the existence of a

dominance' order ... they all seemed to be of equal rank, but dominant with respect to the young. No indication of a regular leadership was observed, and any adult, male or female, could initiate a migration and be the leader for some time. No antagonism was observed when another individual took the lead". The poets also associate this behaviour with attempts to copulate with a mare which has already conceived. This behaviour seems not to have been observed, although the precopulatory behaviour of E. africanus does involve the oestrous mare kicking "in a ritualized manner" at the stallion (Klingel 1977 328).

The poet is presumably thinking of the shape of the ass's head when he compares it to an amphora; the ass often gives the impression of being 'top heavy' because of the preponderant size of its head.

36. I have followed Lyall's translation of this line (Muf 1 527) in not construing 'alyā' as a toponym: cf. the note to Zuhayr Ahl 1. 28 post.

37. Lane 2865 (sub nār) explains the phrase nār al-muhawwil as follows: "a fire which the Arabs used to kindle, in the time of ignorance, on the occasion of entering into a confederacy: they threw into it some salt, which crackled when the fire burned it: with this they frightened one another in confirmation of the swearing". I have found no other ancient poetic reference to this and no comparable use of hawwala, apart from the oath contained in the couplet attributed to al-A'shā quoted in the Kitāb al-Aqhānī 20 p.139: halaftu bi-l-milhi wa-l-ramādī wa-bi-l-'uzzā wa-bi-l-lātī, 'I swore by the salt and the ashes, by al-'Uzzā and al-Lāt'. Robertson Smith in his Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, London 1907, 479-480, as an additional note on the blood covenant, discusses the possible significance of this "covenant by fire, such as al-Jawhari and al-Nuwayri speak of under the head of nār al-hulah. It does not, however, seem that in (this) case the fire touched the parties; what we are told is that every tribe had a

sacred fire, and that, when two men (obviously two tribesmen) had a dispute, they were made to swear beside the fire, while the priests cast salt on it". Smith seems to have been disquieted by the above-mentioned verse of al-A'shā: "as the ashes of the cooking pot (ramād al-qidr) are a metonym for hospitality, there is perhaps nothing more in the oath by fire and salt than an appeal to the bond of common food that unites tribesmen. This does not indeed fully account for the fact that the fire is called "the fire of terror", and that the poetical references to it show the oath to have been a terrible one, i.e. dangerous to the man that perjured himself". When, however, Strabo's Geography 15. 3. 15 is consulted, where the geognost apprises of the Magians of Cappadocia, the following phrase looms large: bōmos en hōi polle te spodos kai pyr asbeston, 'an altar containing a great quantity of ashes and an unquenchable fire'. In view of this notice and of Smith's remark that the fire seems not to have touched the covenanters; in view of Aws b. Ḥajar's and al-A'shā's (that most Persianate of poets) connections with al-Ḥīrah, which, although the seat of a Nestorian bishopric [9], must have been heavily imbued with the religious practices of its Sasanid overlords (despite their extreme tolerance of religions other than that of the state); in view of the probable presence of majus [10] in al-'Irāq, al-Bahrayn and 'Umān [11], it is by no means implausible that Aws is alluding to a Zoroastrian, or, perhaps more correctly, a Mazdaean fire ritual, the cult of which operated on both a personal and a public level, the former involving "ceremonies at the hearth fire", the latter "food-offerings at fire temples, the veneration of sacred trees, and public seasonal feasts...and dances" (Moroni 1110). According to A.V. Williams Jackson, the priests, who cover their faces with linen masks [12], feed the fire "with clean wood, with incense...and with the evergreen sprout of the pomegranate tree", when performing their ritual observances. [13] I have, however, found no reference to Magian priests using salt for this purpose. Sprinkling salt on the flame would, of course, cause it to turn blue. I am by no means suggesting that Aws b. Ḥajar and al-A'shā were practising adherents of Mazdaeism -- both were

prominent examples of Christian poets in Cheikho's grandiose folly -- it is more relevant to infer that their audiences were aware of, if not connected with, this form of worship. Religious practice and membership of a sect are quite distinct phenomena, as W.C. Smith has so plausibly argued in The Meaning and End of Religion, London 1978, whose comments on Baptism are instructive in this context: "was there a time when one could participate in these ceremonies without abjuring 'membership' in other communities? The answer here is obviously 'yes', since the crowds mentioned in the New Testament who went to the Jordan to hear John and to be baptized by him clearly had no conception that to do this was to choose it as an alternative to membership in the Jewish community. Further, since Roman soldiers were also involved, 'being a Jew' or not being one was also irrelevant. We may ask further, was there a time when this was no longer true. Apparently the answer here is again 'yes', since by the seventh century in Central Asia, it seems that a man might be either a Christian or a Mandaean, but not both... At an earlier moment, however, these several elements are to be found in the area but they are not linked in (a) systematic way; so that some persons would observe some and others others" (283-284). If al-Jawhari and al-Nuwayri are veracious and are not basing their glosses purely on the strength of the poetic evidence, then some Arabian tribes may be understood at least as participating in this Mazdaean rite, if not actually worshipping in the manner of the Magians. That the allusion would have been understood by the poets' audiences is beyond dispute. The phrase nār al-muhawwil should perhaps be construed as a poeticism for al-nār al-muhawwilah, viz. 'the awe-inspiring fire'.

38. From al-Sitār the asses head in a north-easterly direction, Ghamazah being a watering-hole near Natā'i. There are two possible translations of the second hemistich: the one given above, which I prefer, and 'where the water bubbled and the flies flitted on its surface'. [14]

Istanna is used predominantly of liquid (al-ṭirimāh 4. 48, 5. 38,

5. 52, al-Mu'aṭṭal Kos 130. 3); it is used by 'Alqamah Ahl 7. 4 (= Qab 7. 4) and the Hudhalī poets of the mirage (Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 10. 20, Abū Ṣakhr Well 251. 7, Mulayḥ Well 276. 45) and of the wind (Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 99. 4), which usages seem predominantly to favour the translation of al-zakhārif ('lines of embroidery': Muraqqish al-Akbar Muf 50. 10, Tha'labah Muf 74. 2, Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh 90. 14) as 'streaks like embroidery'. In Bishr 24. 7, however, the verb is used of dafādi', 'frogs', and this may support the alternative meaning given in Lane 1223: "small flies, having four legs, that fly upon the water", although I can offer no parallel of any such meaning.

39. In the second hemistich mukhālita should be read. I understand tha'ad to refer to tuhlub, 'duckweed', on which cf. Zuhayr (?) Qab 24. 20; it can mean 'damp soil' (al-Nābighah Ahl 5. 4 = Der 1. 4), or, later, 'dew, moisture' (al-Ṭirimmāḥ 5. 56, Mulayḥ Well 272. 16); Muraqqish al-Akbar applies the adjective tha'id to vegetation (Muf 54. 4), Ka'b b. Zuhayr to the roots of the artā tree (Kow 13. 23 = Cairo p.153, v.23).

The qartaf seems to be a garment made of a kind of coarse, nappy material; Bishr 31. 10 (ḥabashiyyu ḥāziqatin 'alay-hi l-qartafu), Abū Kabīr 3. 21 (= Farrāj p.1084, v.21) (ka-jarri l-qartafi), Abū l-'Iyāl Kos 66. 13 (huddābu khamlati qartāfin mamhūni). It is not inconceivably identical with qurtaq, arabicised from Persian kurtah (with the middle Persian, i.e. Pahlavi pronunciation); Dozy Vêtements 362 and Steingass 1021, "a long loose-skirted under-gown or shirt". The point of the simile is presumably that the moss resembles the loose, coarse texture and the colour of the cloth, if dyed.

40. Lyall (Muf 1 218) translates the line as follows:

Gallop and strenuous running brought them to a watering-place (so far away that) the sandgrouse which repaired to it had to start twice over on their journey (i.e. had to halt on the way by night for a rest and make a second start), stretching out their necks (through weariness or eagerness to arrive).

I prefer to retain Geyer and Fischer's accusatives, thus preserving the emphasis, commonplace in these vignettes, on the leadership and mastery of the stallion ass.

On the qatā, cf. F. Viré in EI2 IV 743-745. The poet's depiction of the sandgrouse is problematic. Lyall's understanding of the second hemistich is not consonant with what the Arabic seems to imply, viz. that the birds are returning to water. It is not impossible that they return to the same watering-hole twice in the one night, at nightfall and just before dawn. "Their stop at the water source is very short and the birds hurry to get back to their own grounds" (Viré 744). For a description of sandgrouse watering their chicks in the manner described by Viré -- cf. Ka'b Kow 6. 14-16 (= Cairo p.89, vv.14-16). The line probably means that the sandgrouse have not visited the watering-hole since the previous night. There is also a problem posed by the participle 'atīf which should properly signify 'bending or inclining the neck' and so would not agree with the gait of the bird as described by Viré 745: "it walks, waddling along with measured step, head and tail erect and with its chest thrown out". I prefer to construe it as designating the waddle of the bird as it inclines from side to side, although it may be somewhat less precise than this, perhaps 'leaning /into the pace/'.

The asses arrive at this pool at night, when the birds are on their way to water there. It is difficult to decide whether the poet intends anything more by the second hemistich than a simple temporal designation. Perhaps the asses race with the sandgrouse, as al-Shanfarā does in the Lāmiyyat al-'Arab 36-42, or they may use the birds as a sort of camouflage or decoy whereby they can render their arrival more secure: the qatā "assemble in large flocks ... and reach the watering place in a great turmoil of cries in order to keep in contact" (Viré 744), although I do not think this very likely.

41. The Ṣubāḥ are said to be a subset of the tribe Ḍabbah which

itself is a member of Tamīm and part of the "confederacy called al-Ribāb". [15] The hunter described by al-Muzarrid (Muf 17. 63-74) belongs to the Ṣubāḥ. The nāmūs, an unusual word for a hunter's den, occurs in Mutammim Muf 9. 15, where, as is the norm, the hunter is unsuccessful as he shoots at the she ass.

I can offer no parallel use of dammara, which, it is claimed, represents the practice whereby the hunter conceals his scent by burning animal hair within his hut: cf., however, Ka'b Kow 13. 57 (= Cairo p.153, v.57), of a hunter, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 16. 14 (a storm), where the meaning can only conceivably be 'to destroy' -- there is no possible context in which Ka'b's hunter can be 'burning hair in his den'.

42. Geyer: thirsty. Tha'lab's commentary to Zuhayr (?) Qab 24. 22 gives shasib as a synonym of shazib: cf. post.

43. Azabb: Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 25. 7, Abū Muḥammad al-Faq'asī Aṣm 57. 1, Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 3. 3 (in which it has a somewhat pejorative connotation, denoting either old men or those in search of hospitality); shathn: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 48. 36 (= Ibr 1. 38, Mu'allaqah 39), Sā'idah Hell 1. 31 (a hunter's 'claws', barāthin), and 3. 2 (shathnu l-banāni, also of a hunter), Abū Ṣakhr Well 264. 5 (shuthnin barāthinu-hā: a lioness); cf. Ka'b Kowalski 7. 15 (= Cairo p.99, v.27) (gasīra l-banāni daqīqa l-shawā). The translation of junādif is conjectural, by comparison with jahnab, "short of stature" (Lewin 49, sub ja'nab), in Sā'idah Hell 1. 31.

44. Quturāt are wattlings constructed by hunters as opposed to natural coverts; Imru' al-Qays Ahl 10. 10 (no. 6 post), Ka'b Kow 12. 26 (= Cairo p.136, v.26), Usāmah Hell 4. 21, a poet of the Banū Khunā'ah Well 230. 2. Khasf among the early poets means 'ignominy' (e.g. Tufayl 1. 11, 'Amr b. Kulthūm Mu'allaqah 101, 'Adī 17. 12, al-Aswad Muf 125. 2) but by the time of Dhū l-Rummah it came also to mean 'hunger' (e.g. 24. 17). Both meanings are appropriate to the context.

45. Hādiyāt and the alternative plural hawādīn are commonly, though not exclusively, used of the she ass: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 48. 57 (= Ibr 1. 65, Mu'allaqah 62) (hādiyāt); 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 20 (= Qab 3. 20: cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 3. 21), al-A'shā 15. 17, 16. 30 and Rabī'ah Muf 39. 29 (hawādīn); 'Amr b. Ma'dīkarīb Aṣm 61. 16 (hādiyāh). In Imru' al-Qays Ahl 48. 60 (= Ibr 1. 61, Mu'allaqah 65) (hādiyāt) and Labīd Mu'allaqah 36 (= 'Abbās 48. 36) (hādiyāh) the reference is to the oryx doe, whereas in Imru' al-Qays Ahl 40. 37 (= Ibr 30. 37) it is indeterminate.

Within the context of the aristocratic hunt [16], the boasts of the ability of the horses to run down, unaided, the wild ass is a splendid piece of hyperbole as Gee's remarks indicate: "in the olden days, horsemen used to chase them and spear or capture them occasionally. But one horseman could not do this alone: they had to chase in relays of fresh horses, and thus tire out the speedier wild asses" (Gee 1964 80). [17]

Qusrā, 'the lowermost ribs': 'Uqbah Aṣm 9. 11 (stallion); for the dual cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 35. 16 (= Ibr 5. 15) (quṣrayā 'ayrīn), 'Alqamah Ahl 2. 15 (= Qab 1. 15, Muf 119. 12) (a she-camel), Salāma b. al-Khurshub Muf 6. 6 (mare). Tafāṭif, that part of the belly which lies next to the lowermost ribs, occurs in a similar context in Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 22. 2, as the food of an indigent honey-gatherer. Lane 1858 says that "the plural is used by Dhū l-Rummah in relation to the liver", whereas Geyer 63 assumes that these foodstuffs are the hunter's favourite dishes ("Lieblingsbraten"). In view of Abū Dhu'ayb 22. 2, I am not certain of this -- the line is more likely to imply that the hunter's family, which is proverbially large, eat the rest of the animal and leave these portions for him, or that this is all the food which he has left and which he has brought with him, as nourishment for the hunt.

46. The phrase mut'amun li-l-saydi occurs of a hunter in Imru'

al-Qays Ahl 29. 8 (= Ibr 17. 8): cf. also al-Dākhil Kos 124. 15.

The rasf, plural risāf/arsāf, is the ligament with which the arrowhead is bound to the shaft: Abū Kabīr 3. 6, al-Ṭirimmāḥ 4. 74, Rabī'ah Muf 38. 18, Dubay'ah b. al-Ḥārith in 'Āmir 34a. 4, Ḥassān b. Thābit Well 180. 6 (= 'Arafat Frag. 269). Cf. further Schwarzlose 308-309, J.D. Latham and W.F. Paterson, Saracen Archery, London 1970, 164-166. The paring of the arrow (barā can be applied to the paring of either the bow [Schwarzlose 269] or the arrow [295]) is discussed in N.A. Faris and R.P. Elmer, Arab Archery, Princeton 1945, 106-107.

For the glueing of the fletchlings to the shaftment, cf. Schwarzlose 300. "American Indians use sinew, which has a glue content, to bind their feathers, but no attempt is made to glue the rib of feather to the shaft. This unstable condition of the feather permits of greater irregularity in flight" (S.T. Pope, A Study of Bows and Arrows, Berkeley 1923, 46). [18] Latham speaks of glue being used to treat "bowstrings ... of vegetable fibre ... to hold the strands together and keep the moisture in the string" (xxix-xxxi) although wax is the more customary bonding agent. It is probable that Aws's hunter glues the fletchlings to the shaftment and then affixes them with the ligaments, thereby augmenting the trueness of their course. One would not expect the hunter in the field to glue his bow (Schwarzlose 279 records that when a bow shivered, it was glued together again -- a composite bow is meant) unless an accident had befallen it en route. The string would have been treated prior to departure.

49, 47-48, 50. The order of these lines as they stand in Geyer's text is clumsy. [19] The imperfective yursilu anticipates line 50 -- the hunter fires his arrow in 47 only to delay it in 49! It is possible to vocalise it fa-yursila and interpret 47-48 as representing the hunter's wish or ambition while carefully preparing his arrows (cf. Wright 2 30 [rem. d]), although the pronominal

suffixes of 49 remain problematical: the first would presumably refer to the arrow, the second to the ass. With the proposed transcription fa-yursilu becomes the apodosis of the idhā clause in 49 and the Imperfective is to be understood as dramatic, providing a sharp contrast with the string of perfectives in 49-54. Further, the antecedent of the pronominal suffixes of 49 is the wild ass, the subject of lāqā in 41, whereas the arrow of 47 becomes the antecedent of the pronouns of 50.

49. Muf: he waded through the water to him (the hunter) until, when he seemed to be scooping up water from the pool and offering him a handful. In this instance I have followed Bevan's rendering of the phrase mu'atī yadin. In the translation, however, I have construed yadin as an objective genitive, with the verb being used in a manner similar to Jābir b. al-Ḥunayy Muf 42. 19 (nu'atī l-mulūka l-silma) and to Form I in Imru' al-Qays Ahl 48. 36 (= Ibr 1. 38, Mu'allaqah 39) (ta'tū bi-rakhsin): cf., further, Bishr 29. 6, al-Ḥuṭay'ah 10. 4-5, al-Mutanakhkhil Hell 3. 9 (where it is a designation of the oryx-doe). In the text as offered in the Mufaddaliyyāt, the tension is heightened to the point that the ass comes within reach of the hunter.

47. There is some disagreement as to what the manākib are. Lane 2846 glosses: "the feathers of the wing of a vulture or an eagle that are next after the gawādim ... the strongest and most excellent of the feathers ... the four secondary feathers of the wing". According to al-Jawharī (Schwarzlose 302), there are four manākib, "die hinteren Oberfedern", followed by the khawāfī, "die Unterfedern, welche von den Oberfedern bedeckt werden". According to Lane's discussion, the Arabs reckoned there to be twenty feathers on the wing of a bird. Van Tyne and Berger's diagram of the "ventral view of the wing bones and flight feathers" [20] displays eleven Primaries and eighteen Secondaries. From this diagram it becomes apparent that, if Schwarzlose's paraphrase of al-Jawharī is correct, nos. 7-10 (the four uppermost Primaries, i.e. digits II and

III) are designated by manākib. This is the opinion of J.N. Mattock, whom I have consulted on this problem [21] and Schwarzlose 294 who reads and translates the verse as follows:

yuqallibu sahman rāsha-hu bi-manākibin
zuhārin lu'āmin fa-hwa a'jafu shārifu

Er dreht der Pfeil wohl hin und her, Der, mit Oberfedern
geschmückt, -- Die kurze Seite wohlgefügt, -- Durch
Schlankheit und Länge entzückt.

It is perhaps not very likely that Aws, whose technical expertise in the matter of bowery is quite considerable, should advocate that Primaries be used as the fletchings: his poetical scion Ka'b b. Zuhayr rejects the Primaries in Kow 12. 27. It is the view of later experts that "secondaries are better than tail-feathers because they are more pliable" (Latham & Paterson 26), and indeed in the poem of Jamīl Buthaynah discussed by Latham the poet specifies the quality arrow as fletched with the vulture's khawāfī, which are, beyond a doubt, Secondaries: cf. J.D. Latham, "The Interpretation of some Verses by Jamīl", JSS 15 (1970), 220 and 223. [22] In the translation I have acquiesced in acceptance of the meaning given in the lexica, being wary of imputing a technical fault to the poet. [23]

The la'm is, according to the WKAS, an "arrow with feathers fitted into one another, set on top of one another". It is not in the least clear what this definition actually means when the process of fletching an arrow is borne in mind. In fact, the word refers to arrows the fletchings of which are well trimmed and tightly fastened to the shaftment, the meaning recorded by Kazimirski 953, Schwarzlose 303, Faris & Elmer 111, Latham & Paterson 26 and 198: "see to it that fletchings are put belly to back. For when they clash and are belly to belly, the arrow is ruined"; "when the fletchings are back to back or belly to belly, the arrow is termed

in Arabic luḡḡab. If they are correctly arranged, it is termed lu'am: cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 51. 6 (= Ibr 16. 6, Aṣm 40. 1), al-A'shā 30. 19.

A'jaf (Schwarzlose 313) is used of an arrow by Rabi'ah Muf 38. 18; cf. Umayyah b. Abi 'A'idh Kos 92. 55, 'ijāfi l-nisāli. Shārif (Schwarzlose 294 and 295) means both slender and old, with perhaps the nuance that this particular arrow has long been kept safe by the hunter for an occasion such as this.

The precise designation of zuhār (Schwarzlose 294, 302-303, Latham & Paterson 194) is the uppermost part of a feather, that is the dorsal, i.e. outer side, the feathers of which are less likely to be damaged or ruffled: Ṭufayl 1. 59, kusīna zuhāra l-rīshi min kulli nāhidin, al-Mutanakhkhil Hell 3. 36, kusīna zuhāra ashara ka-l-khiyāti. zuhārān, a plural of zahr, when applied to feathers also carries this meaning: al-Marrār Muf 16. 24, hashsha-hu l-rāmī bi-zuhārānin hushur, al-Dākhil Kos 124. 13, 'alay-hi min abāhira layyinātin//yazīnnu l-qidḡa zuhārānun dumūju. What is clear from the above descriptions of these feathers is that they are particularly fine and slender. The hunter uses only the dorsal sides, which he has trimmed close, for his arrow, producing thereby the impression that the arrow thus fletched is long and slender. [24]

48. For self-bows constructed from dāl branches cf. Zuhayr (?) Qab 24. 26 post; for nadhīr of a bowstring, cf. Ka'b Kow 13. 56 (= Cairo p.153, v.56), Sā'idah Hell 10. 21. I have found no reference to the practice of muffling the resonating twang of the bowstring in any other early poem or indeed in any of the manuals on Arabic archery. Pope B&A 78 Plate 8 (fig. 2) is a "Northern Wintun bow ... (which) at the nocks ... is bound with fur, apparently weasel. This device is used to act as a damper to the string so that it makes no noise when the bow is shot. It is said that Geronimo could shoot an arrow with absolute silence. Probably some similar method was employed".

'Azif could conceivably be translated as "just as a singer strums the lute". For 'azafa referring to the noise made in the desert by the Jinn -- the noise is in fact caused by the release of heat from the sand: Bishr 41. 9 (= Muf 97. 9) [25], al-A'shā 4. 15, Asmā' b. Khārījāh Aṣm 11. 16, Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 99. 28, Mulayḥ Well 276. 57. On two occasions it refers to singing-girls; 'Abīd 2. 11 [26], Abū ṣakhr Well 265. 3 (ka-'azfi quyūni l-fārisiyyi ladā l-sharbi). Bishr 31. 15 applies the verb to their instruments (bi-aydī-hā l-mazāhiru ta'zifu) and 'Abīd 15. 3, perhaps metaphorically, in view of the topical comparison of women with gazelles, to the noise made by gazelles. Reference should also be made to I. Goldziher, Abhandlungen zur Arabischen Philologie, Leiden 1896, II 205-212, especially 210-212.

51. The nadī is the shaft, properly the foreshaft, of an arrow (Schwarzlose 308-309): Imru' al-Qays Ahl 40. 36 (= Ibr 30. 36) [27], Mutammim Muf 9. 16, al-A'shā 15. 21, fa-marra nadiyyu l-sahmi tahta labāni-hi (a Wild Ass Vignette), Sā'idah Hell 2. 16, Abū Khirāsh Hell 1. 18, Abū Shihāb Well 148. 12, Mulayḥ Well 277. 13 and 280. 12. It is also synonymous with the ṣadr of a spear (Schwarzlose 228-229, 293): 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 37 (= Qab 3. 37), bi-l-nadiyyi l-mu'allabi, viz. 'with a /spear/shaft, its handle bound with a tendon'. [27]

That Fischer's emendation of Geyer's text is correct is proved by the parallel hemistich in Ka'b Kow 12. 34 (Cairo p.136, v.34) (wa-la-l-hatfu ahyānan 'ani l-nafsi 'ājimu).

52. Similar lines by Ka'b (Kow 7. 25 = Cairo p.105, v.37, Kow 12. 35 = Cairo p.136, v.35) and Rabi'ah (Muf 39. 31) are vocalised by the editors wa-lahhafa umma-hu, viz. and he secretly lamented his mother, i.e. having been born, though amma-hu is perhaps more consonant with the context. Biting the fingers is indicative of fear (Ka'b Kow 6. 17 = Cairo p.89, v.17) or regret (Ka'b Kow 12. 35 = Cairo p.136, v.35, yu'iddu bi-ibhāmi l-yadayni).

53. Fischer correctly maintains that al-qhadra' is a descriptive epithet and not a toponym: cf. N. Groom, A Dictionary of Arabic Topography and Placenames, Beirut 1983, 91, "good fertile land or soil". Shayya'a, in addition to meaning 'to escort or accompany' ('Alqamah Ahl 13. 44 [= Qab 2. 44, Muf 120. 46], al-Jamūh Well 232. 6) can also mean 'to add fresh fuel to the fire' (Rabī'ah Muf 113. 10 [= Aṣm 84. 9]), whence derives the figurative use of the Passive Participle mushayya', 'inflamed', in Imru' al-Qays Ibr 78. 5 and Zuhayr Qab 34. 2 (= Th p.330, v.2): both connotations may be intended by Aws.

55. I should vocalise the second hemistich bahran yuqadhifu, an Accusative of Hal. The hyperbolic combination of hasa and jimar is interesting.

56. Geyer: her hind-legs race with his fore-legs and his head is like the rear saddle-arch fixed upon her girth. For wahaga cf. Tufayl l. 19, tawahagat (of horses).

59. Mu'ashshir is literally 'braying': 'Adī 4. 22, Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 35, al-Ṭirimmāh 62. [29] For a metaphorical application of khayshūm, "the upper part of the interior of the nose, the part that is above...the end, or tip, or flexible part of the nose" (Lane 744), to a troop of horse, cf. 'Āmir 8. 11. Rā'if: Mālik b. Ḥarīm Aṣm 15. 29.

Structure

29-31: The wild ass and his mate on the way to water.

32-34: The summer drought.

35, 57-58, 36-39: The quest for water.

40: The arrival at the watering-hole.

41-52: The encounter with the hunter (41); description of

the hunter (41-46); his weaponry: arrows (46b & 47); bow (48); his faulty aim (50-52).

53-56, 59: The escape of the asses.

Context and Interpretation

Context: This is by far the longest poem by Aws b. Hajar to have survived. It is a curious and somewhat unusual qasīdah which opens with a dhikr al-atlāl, constituted of the themes of the deserted encampments (1-4), the perfidy of the habīb and the departure of the womenfolk in their litters (5-8), the pernicious calumniators (9). Gnostic reflections on the inevitability of death follow in 10-12, leading abruptly -- there is no transition save a waw plus genitive construction -- to the wasf, which, structurally at least, occupies the body of the work (13-59); thematically, however, the wasf is bipartite: the wasf al-nāqah (13-28) and the Wild Ass Vignette (29-59), this latter being, in terms of verses, longer than the sum of the other three movements.

Interpretation: this poem seems to be a reflection on death and desolation, on the precarious vagaries of existence, and the theme of the inevitability of death provides an undercurrent to the whole poem; thus the poet dwells on the desolation of the abandoned encampments (1-3, 5), despite their rejuvenescence in the form of the gazelles and antelopes with their young, on the advent of decrepitude (6), on the inexorability of fate (10-11), the poet's experience of which seems to be unmitigated by his faith in Allah

(12), on hardship and the exigencies of life as represented by the indigent hunter, for whom this hunt means life or death (44), and on the unpredictability of death (51). This may further be witnessed in the theme of the transience of humanity when contrasted with the permanence of nature (i.e. the fauna of 3b and 4 and the wild ass and his mate): the hunter for all his skill and his adept fletching of arrows fails to kill the ass.

The other major theme of the piece is to be found in the repeated allusions to searching; the poet is implicitly searching for the tribe in lines 1-3 and the sequence of toponyms represents three distinct stages in his quest: (i) Birk, Tawlab, al-Makhālif [30], al-Sulay and al-Sikhāl are situated on the mountain range between Wādī Dabīl and Wādī Bayād in south eastern Najd and northern Yamāmah; in their enumeration the poet starts in the south and heads north; (ii) Ma'qūlah, Maṭārī, Wāḥif are to be found on the eastern slope of al-Ṣammān (cf. note to line 34 ante), with Maṭārī and Wāḥif lying to the south of Ma'qūlah: if the poet were to start from al-Sikhāl, his last port of call in sequence (i), then he would have to cross both Dahnā' and al-Ṣammān in order to reach Ma'qūlah; (iii) in the sequence Qaww, Rahbā, al-Salīl and 'Ādhib the first lies to the east of Ma'qūlah, and from Qaww the sequence proceeds south ending on the western slope of al-Ṣammān. In sequences (ii) and (iii), then, the poet takes his bearings from Ma'qūlah, first heading south, then due east, then south again. This search is unsuccessful and culminates in the nostalgic and despondent reminiscences of 8-9.

The theme of the quest recurs in 10-11 in the form of the tracker of Fate who would seek out the poet even if he were to hole himself up in the fortress of Raymān, guarded by squadrons of Abyssinian troops and a watchdog, and further in 29-35, 57-58, and 36, initially in the motif of the asses' search for water and expressly in the splendidly evocative comparison of the sentinel stallion ass with the reconnoiterer of an army. It is of course also present in the camel section of 14-28, the night journey of which presumably represents the poet's attempts to follow the tribe as outlined in 1-3, and in the hunter's desperate but doomed search for sustenance. The Wild Ass Vignette, therefore, represents conceptually the culmination and summation of the thematic concerns of 1-29.

This piece is also remarkable for the profusion of repetitions, both radical, i.e. acoustic, and semantic, sometimes within the space of one line, sometimes spanning its entire compass:

kh-l-f (1 & 15), s-kh-l (2 & 4), f-t-m (4), h-l-f (5 & 37), '-h-d (5 & 6), y-m-n (5 & 52), l-h-w (7, 8 & 20), n-h-y (7 & 24), a-l-f (10, 20 & 53), kh-b-b (11 & 34), h-d-w (11, 45 & 57), r-h-l (13, 16, 18, 21 & 29), q-dh-f (13, 19, 55 & 58), w-s-f (14), a-m-n (14 & 18), s-r-y (15 & 22), l-h-m (16, 44 & 45), '-l-w (16, 17, 23 & 55), sh-r-f (17 & 47), r-d-f (18 & 56), sh-y-' (19 & 53), q-w-m (19 & 54), r-'-s (21, 23, 58, 56), d-h-w (24 & 35), kh-l-t (25, 39 & 50), h-w-l (24 & 28), m-w-h (28, 49 & 59), j-n-b (29, 54 & 55), h-q-b (29 & 31), q-r-b (29 & 40), d-h-n (30 & 32), s-r-f (31 & 57), n-s-f (31 & 57), sh-r-s-f (33 & 50), '-y-n (38,

39 & 42), w-r-d (40), sh-d-d (40 & 53), w-h-sh (44 & 48),
r-s-l (47 & 50), n-d-y (51 & 57).

Some of these are repetitions of words, many of which occupy identical metrical positions, some of jīnās, especially those which occur within one line, and some extend no further than the acoustic, although perhaps on a closer reading some of these would be seen to be semantic: the sound of the poem is almost on a par with its thematic concerns.

Repetition as a Jāhilī poetic device is the subject of M.C. Bateson's Structural Continuity in Poetry, Paris 1970 [31], who is primarily interested in "the passage as a possible frame for the meshing of the external relationships, including those of sense, with the internal relationships traced in the linguistic forms" (15). There is another possible function of repetition, which, to my knowledge, has not been commented upon in the context of pre-Islamic verse, viz. repetition as a structural principle. This is a device which features prominently in primitive, oral song [32]: "repetition, in one form or another, is common to primitive song. Indeed it is more than common, it is fundamental. The theme is thought to be of such importance that it is stressed by repetition in a way that might seem to us to be unnecessary" (C.M. Bowra, Primitive Song, London 1962, 77). Bowra discusses various stages of repetition, such as are to be discerned in a communal song of the Bushmen, addressed to the constellation Canopus (77), the Aranda "song of the season when the blood-wood trees are in blossom

and ringneck and shell-parrots circle above them and pick the flowers" (78-79), and the Dama ostrich hunting song (79), stressing throughout that "once repetition and variation have found a place in composition they can be developed in more than one way to bind various elements together and almost imperceptibly to move from one effect to another" (78). A systematic discussion of the forms of repetition is given by R. Finnegan, Oral Poetry, Cambridge 1977, 88-133, and especially 102-109, who speaks of "the repetition -- familiar in written poetry -- of one or more key words throughout a poem" (102). Furthermore, "patterns of repetition can provide structure and coherence to an oral poem -- a necessary aspect in a medium as ephemeral as the spoken or sung word -- but need not lead to monotony. Repetition in itself can lead to variation both in the intervening non-repeated units, and -- very effectively -- in strategic variation within the repeated element itself. This variation and development through the use of repetition is a widely used device in oral poetry" (103). "Repetition ... has great literary and aesthetic effect" (131). It is my contention that the phenomenon of repetition as evinced in this poem by Aws b. Hajar is to be explained as one of the means at the poet's disposal of interlacing the disparate strands of his gasīdah, functioning as an organizational device, and possibly deriving from an earlier stage of Arabian song. [33]

2. Zuhayr (?) Qab 24. 13-28; Th p.368, v.13-28.

13. Wa-ka-anna-hā saḥīlu l-shahīji mutarradun
akhlā la-hu huqbu [1] l-sawāri wa-midhnabu
14. Akala l-rabī'a bi-hā yufazzi'u sam'a-hu
bi-makāni-hi haziḥu l-'ashīyyati aḥabu
15. Wahadan ka-miqlā'i l-walīdi mukaddamun
ja'bun atā'a la-hu l-jamīmu muḥannabu
16. Sulbu l-nusūri 'alā l-sukhūri murājimun
ja'bun ḥazābiyatun aqabbu mu'aqrabu
17. Hattā idhā lawhu l-kawākibi shaffa-hu
min-hu l-harā'iru wa-l-safā l-mutanassibu
18. Irtā'a yadhkuru mashraban bi-thimādi-hi
min dūni-hi khushūun danawna wa-anqubu
19. 'Azama l-wurūda fa-āba 'adhban bāridan
min fawqi-hi suddun [2] yasīlu wa-alhubu
20. Jufarun tafīdu wa-lā taqhīdu tawāmiyan
yazkharna fawqa jimāmi-hinna l-tuḥlubu
21. Fa-'tāma-hu 'inda l-zalāmi fa-sāma-hu
thumma ntahā ḥadhara l-maniyyati yarqubu
22. Wa-'alā l-sharī'ati rābi'un mutahallisun
rāmin bi-'aynay-hi l-ḥazīrata shāyzabu
23. Ma'a-hu mutābi'atun idhā huwa shadda-hā
bi-l-shir'i yastashzī la-hu wa-taḥaddabu
24. Malsā'u muḥdalatun ka-anna 'atāda-hā [3]
nawwāhatun na'ati l-kirāma mushabbibu

25. Qanwā'u ḥaṣṣā'u [4] l-muqawwasi nab'atun
mithlu l-sabīkati idhā tumallu wa-tushsabu [5]
26. 'Urshun ka-ḥaṣhiyati l-izāri sharījatin
safrā'u lā sidrun wa-lā hiya ta'labu
27. Wa-muthaqqafun mim-mā barā mutamālikun
bi-l-sayri dhū uturin 'alay-hi wa-mankibu
28. Fa-ramā fa-akhta'a-hu wa-jāla ka-anna-hu
alimun 'alā barzi l-amā'izi yalhabu

Variant Readings

- [1]. Th: hiqbu.
[2]. Th: saddun.
[3]. Th: 'idāda-hā. [34]
[4]. Th: ka-āqwā'i khalṣā'i.
[5]. Th: tashsabu/tashsubu.

Translation

13. And she is like a banished /wild ass/, hoarse in his braying
-- the knolls and torrent-bed of al-Sawār are desolate save
for him;
14. He ate the spring herbage there, scared, his hearing alerted
by a tawny /cat/ in his territory, screeching in the
evening,
15. Alone; like a boy's bat, well bitten, vigorous, his
legs curved and well spaced. He found the lush vegetation
ripe and compliant --

16. Hard were the frogs of his hooves as he pelted /them/ against
the rocks ; bulky, thick-set, lean-bellied, compact and
strong --
17. Until, when the shining of the constellations emaciated
him, as did the attendant siroccos, raising the beards /of
buhma/ into the air,
18. He returned to thinking of a drinking place with its
pools before which lay hummocks and defiles.
19. He resolved on drinking there and so set out by night to
return to fresh, cold /water/ above which rose a natural
dam and its clefts, all awash --
20. Wide overflowing wells, abundant, never running dry, swollen
and seething; over their plentiful depths spread tuhlub --
21. He tended and sped there in the darkness and arrived, watchful
and cautious, fearing fate,
22. While looking down on the way to water was a lean, destitute,
scout who did not budge, conning the enclosure,
23. Accompanied by a constant companion; when he braced it with
the string, it would rise towards him and become
hump-backed --
24. Smooth and free from cracks, curved and bulky /at the necks/,
its twang like a wailing woman heralding the death of
magnanimous /heroes/, exciting thereby the fire of yearning;
25. /Shaped like a/ hooked-nose; barkless is the limb where it
curves, of nab', like a gold ingot when it was scorched and
dried,

26. Long, like the hem of a waist-wrapper, pale yellow,
a partner -- not sidr or ta'lab;
27. And by a straightened /arrow/, one pared by his own hands,
reinforced with the leathern thong, /its nock wound/ with
sinews and /fletched/ with a secondary.
28. He shot and missed him and he wheeled, as if in pain,
speeding over the open, rocky highland.

Commentary

13. Huqb is something of a surprise in this context: one would expect it to refer to 'white-girded asses' (cf. Aws 23. 29 and 31 ante). A topographical designation is needed to balance midhnab, since al-Sawār is a part of the territory of the 'Abd al-Qays of 'Amīrah in the vicinity of al-Bahrayn (cf. Yāqūt 3 180). I have found no other mention of al-Sawār in the ancient poets. Two reasons militate against adopting the suggestion proposed by al-'Adawī here, viz. that instead of huqb hiqf should be read: hiqf, "a curving or winding tract of sand, a large, round or high oblong of sand, the lowest part of a tract of sand or a mountain" (Groom Topography 112), is, for whatever reason, confined largely to descriptions of the oryx; Lane 611, on the authority of the Qāmūs and the Tāj al-'Arūs, records that haqbā' designates "a small isolated mountain" of a variety of types. [35]

If al-Sawār is to be situated in the vicinity of al-Bahrayn, then this description is unlike the other wild ass similes to be found in the dīwān of Zuhayr, which are all to be located in the Najd.

14. Bi-makāni-hi, "in his territory", refers of course to the wild

ass. The last three words of this line pose a problem to which I can only offer a tentative solution. The substantive is, as so often, omitted and Qabāwah and al-‘Adawī presume the referent to be 'insects', apparently deriving this from the word haziḡ: this suggestion seems ultimately to derive from al-Aṣma‘ī who, in a comment on al-Muthaqqib Muf 76. 28, compares al-Muthaqqib's line with an image from the Mu‘allaqah of ‘Antarah (Ahl 21. 23-24 = Mawlawī 23-24). They are, respectively:

28. Wa-tasma‘u li-l-dhubābi idhā taqhannā

ka-taqhrīdi l-hamāmi ‘alā l-wukūni

28. And you may hear the insects, when they hum, /produce a noise/
like the cooing of pigeons in their nests.

23. Fa-tarā l-dhubāba bi-hā yuḡhannī wahda-hu

haziḡan ka-fi‘li l-shāribi l-mutarannimi

24. Gharīdan yasunnu dhira‘a-hu bi-dhira‘i-hi

fi‘li l-mukibbi ‘alā l-zinādi l-ajdhami

23. And you may hear the insect there singing on its own, humming
like a crooning reveller,

24. Trilling, cleaning one leg upon the other, like a one-armed
man bent over the fire-sticks. [36]

It is, I think, clear that the poet intends comparison with the cicada. [37] Whatever the value of al-Aṣma‘ī's explanations (cf. further Muf 2 232), it is clear that one of the possible sounds that the h-z-j root may designate is of the 'humming, or 'chirruping' of the cicada. Other designations are recorded by Nöldeke FM II 29: a neighing horse, (Imru' al-Qays Ahl 20. 47 [= Ibr 4. 41, where jal‘ad is read]), a braying ass (al-Akhtal), a whistling wind and the falling rain. [38] It seems principally to denote a loud, high-pitched noise.

There exists an alternative to lines 34-35 of ‘Antarah's Mu‘allaqah which suggests a referent, quite different from the foregoing, for

Zuhayr's usage:

The standard reading is as follows (Ahl 21. 34-35 = Mawlawī 1. 34-35)

34. Wa-ka-anna-mā yan'ā bi-jānibi daffi-hā
l-wahshiyyi ba'da makhīlatin wa-taraqhqhumi [39]

35. Hirrun jānībun kulla-mā 'atafat la-hu
ghadbā ttaqā-hā bi-l-yadayni wa-bi-l-fami

34. And it is as though there distances itself by her savage side,
after /her/ haughtiness and reluctance,

35. A cat, led by her side: whenever she leans toward it in
anger, it defends itself against her with paws and mouth.

The alternative given in the recensions of al-Anbārī, al-Tibrīzī, al-Zawzanī and Arnold as lines 29-30, and read by Nöldeke FM II, Arberry Seven Odes 180, and recorded in the commentary of Muf 1 423, is:

29. Wa-ka-anna-mā tan'ā bi-jānibi daffi-hā l-
wahshiyyi min haziḡi l-'ashiyyi mu'awwami

30. Hirrin jānībin kulla-mā 'atafat la-hu
ghadbā ttaqā-hā bi-l-yadayni wa-bi-l-fami

29. And it is as though she distances herself, on her savage side,
from a thick-set, evening-screeching

30. Cat, led by her side; whenever she leans toward it in anger,
it defends itself against her with paws and mouth.

The similarity in the phraseology, haziḡu l-'ashiyyati = haziḡi l-'ashiyyi, in addition to the occurrence in Imru' al-Qays Ibr 76. 43 of ashab as an epithet for the lion, suggests that the undesignated referent in this line is not the cicada but a big cat. If, however, the cicada is intended, and I do not discount this possibility, then I should offer the following translation:

14. He ate the spring herbage there, scared, his hearing alerted

by a light brown /insect/ in his territory, chirruping in the evening,

Moreover the poet al-Ṭirimmāḥ (18. 11) describes janādib as suhb. The extreme caution and alertness of the wild ass which this line implies would be suitably enhanced by taking dhubāb as the implied substantive.

15. It is possible to understand the phrase ka-miqlā'i l-walīdī in two ways: that the ass is as lean and as hard as such a stick; Imru' al-Qays Ahl 34. 23 (= Ibr 31. 23), aqabbu ka-miqlā'i l-walīdī, and the similar comparison with a spear in v.171 of no.3 post; that it anticipates and is explained by the passive participle mukaddam, i.e. it is bitten and scarred like the notchings and markings on one of these sticks. The miqlā' is a 'bat', or perhaps even a mallet, with which the gulah, a small stick, is struck: cf. 'Amr b. Kulthūm Mu'allagah 89, Nöldeke FM I 47.

mukaddam refers to the bites inflicted upon a territorial male by other stallions in their bouts of fighting for supremacy of the herd or harem, or upon a stallion rejected by females which are pregnant and uninclined; cf. no.1, v.31 ante, Ṭufayl 7. 19 and 9. 12, where mukdam refers to bites inflicted upon the stallion camel by the females which reject his advances. It is not synonymous with qhalīz, as suggested in the sharḥ to Ṭufayl 7. 19 and as glossed by de Goeje in his glossary to Ibn Qutaybah's Kitāb al-Shi'r wa-l-Shu'arā', Leiden 1902, xlii. [40]

jamīm -- I presume that the reading al-hamīmu given in the text of Th is a misprint -- is used twice in the context of wild asses in the Hudhalī dīwān: Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 17 and Abū Kabīr Bajraktarević 4. 5 (= Farrāj p.1090, v.5).

muḥannab is an epithet more commonly associated with stallions: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 23 and 46 (= Ibr 3. 37), Ṭufayl 1. 36, Ṭarafah

Ahl 4. 58 (= Mu'allaqah 60): cf. Geiger WZKM 20 53. Ḥājib b. Ḥabīb Muf 111. 6 applies it to a she ass.

16. Hazābiyatun is a rare adjective apparently peculiar in early verse to the wild ass: al-Nābighah Ahl 21. 7 (= Der 24. 7), Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 27, as is mu'aqrab: al-Nābighah Ahl Frag. 8. 1b (misakkun yubārī l-jawna ja'bun mu'aqrabun).

17. I take the referent in min-hu to be lawh in the preceding hemistich. This latter is explained by the commentators as 'thirst', a meaning of the root recorded by Lane, in which case the line would read "the thirst brought by the constellations"; cf. Ka'b Kow 13. 18 (= Cairo p.153, v.18) (yawma ḥarūrin yulawwihu l-ya'fūrā). The line is similar to the following verse of al-Farazdaq (Naqā'id 58. 12) which Blachère 2389 partially cites;

11. Tahayyara dhawī-hā idhā ttarada l-safā
wa-hājat li-ayyāmī l-thurayyā harūru-hā

11. Its scorched /herbage/ is whirled /by the wind/ when the beard /of the brome-grass/ is driven away and the sirocco is aroused by the advent of the days of al-Thurayya.

On safā and the summer winds in a wild ass setting cf. no.1, v.34 and Labīd Mu'allaqah 30 (= 'Abbās 48. 30) with Nöldeke's comments thereon (FM II 75).

18. Thimād, 'pool or water-hole' [41] occurs in a wild ass context in Ka'b Cairo p.99, v.11, al-Marrār Muf 16. 31. There is a curious correspondence between the latter context and the use of the singular thamad by al-Nābighah Ahl 5. 32 and Bishr 41. 38 (= Muf 97. 32), in reference to sand-grouse (hamam) going to water: cf. also 'Abīd 14. 7. [42]

19. Sadd, or sudd, means a "valley with stones and rocks which temporarily hold back flood-water" (Groom Topography 278).

20. Tuhlub is probably, as Lewin 259 suggests, duckweed, i.e. plants of the genus Lemna, lying on the surface of water as in Tufayl l. 70, Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah l. 22: cf. Mulayh Well 277. 3, Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 46.

21. For i'tāma compare Tarafah Ahl 4. 65 (= Mu'allaqah 66) (arā l-mawta ya'tāmu l-kirāma); sāma: cf. T. Seidensticker Das Verbum sawwama. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Homonymenscheidung im Arabischen, Munich 1986, 45-47.

22. I have found no parallel use of either shayzab, which I take to be a rare poeticism for shāzib, or of tahallasa. The use of hazīrah, properly a cattle enclosure or sheep pen, is imaginative, heightening the auditors' sense of foreboding by suggesting that the wild ass is as good as penned in.

23. As al-'Adawī points out, one should read tashtazī in place of yashtazī, a somewhat unusual word: tahaddabu certainly refers to the limb of the bow and not to the string -- I presume that shir' is a poetic plural for singular although the application of amlas, 'smooth', to a bow-string by Abū Qilābah or al-Mu'aṭṭal Well 154. 9 is apparently to be understood as implying that it has no knots, i.e. that it has been fashioned as one continuous string. This is also the meaning of the epithet maḥiṣ found in Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh 92. 58. Hence, the plural would imply that the string was formed of various strands of sinew.

The verbs of the second hemistich suggest that the bow is reflexed, i.e. that the limb has a "curvature in the opposite direction to that to which the bow is flexed for bracing. It is seen in the unstrung bow" (Latham & Paterson 176). A. Boudot-Lamotte "Qaws" EI2 IV 799 observes, concerning the nomenclature of the composite bow, that "the sources frequently liken the composite bow to the human body, and most parts of it take their name from parts of this last". It is a curious feature of this bow description that several

of the epithets employed compare the bow to physical deformities or peculiarities: cf. muhdalah (24) and the restored ganwā' (25).

The shir'ah is "a bow string which is taken from the dorsal sinews" (Schwarzlose 271). "The idea ... that strings of dorsal sinew are stronger and give better cast cannot be discounted. Such material is acceptable, but camel hide is likely to have first choice. Sinew seems not to have been thought suitable for either hot climates or strong bows" (Latham Jamīl 225). Furthermore, "sinew strings do not hold their length under tension, but stretch perceptibly, and are very susceptible to moisture" (Pope B&A 35-37).

24. Kātim (Schwarzlose 258, and, for example, Abū l-Muthallam Kos 9. 4) and far' (Schwarzlose 254 and 256, Aws 23. 48 ante, al-Mutanakhkhil Hell 3. 33 = al-Dākhil b. Ḥarām Kos 124. 18 = Abū Qilābah Well 157. 3) refer to self-bows fabricated from limbs which have no cracks. [43] Amlas also designates a smooth bow, i.e. the bark has been removed from the limb and the wood has no knots or burls: cf. Schwarzlose 269.

24. Parallels from the Hudhalī poets show that 'idāda-hā (cf. Schwarzlose 277) should most definitely be read for 'atāda-hā, which is meaningless in the context. The comparison of the twanging of a bow with a grieving woman is to be found in al-Dākhil Kos 124. 16 (ka-anna 'idāda-hā irnānu thaklā//khilāla dulū'i-hā waḍḍun wahījun); cf. Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 3. 13-14, 'idādu-hā gharidu, and Ṣā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 7. 14 where it is likened to the noise that is produced by a violent gale that whips away one's clothes.

I am unable satisfactorily to explain mushabbibu. It may be synonymous with the metaphorical use of shabba, 'to kindle the flames of war' and the like. In later usage, shabbaba comes to mean 'to compose love poetry', but it is unlikely that its use here has this developed sense which would then have to be interpreted as metaphorical, i.e. that the grieving woman expressed her love for

those who have died, presumably in a rithā', a threnody.

Muḥdalah is 'a term of frequent occurrence among the Hudhali poets, concerning which there is a variety of theories and much (unavowed) incertitude; Schwarzlose 268-269:

Was das Verhältniss der beiden Hälften der Bogenwölbung anbelangt, so durften dieselben einander nicht völlig entsprechen. Es musste eine der beiden Ausschweifungen (abharān oder mankibān) vollkommener sein, d.h. höher stehen (ashrāf), so dass der Bogen nach einer Seite geneigt war und das eine Horn tiefer stand. Aus diesem Grunde heisst der Bogen auch mu'awwajāt al-tarfayn, 'dessen Seiten schief sind'. Tropisch wurde er dann schiefschultrig, d.h. dessen Horn schief ist, muḥdalah oder ḥudāl oder ḥadlā' genannt, eig. Bez. des schiefschultrigen Mannes aḥdal, pl. ḥudl.

This is the explanation of al-Jawhari and I know of no other authority who advocates that one of the necks of the bow be fuller than the other. By a curious coincidence, al-Jawharī's description seems to depict a bow which, in several features, is not dissimilar from the Andamanese S-shaped bow. [44]

Lewin 78 proffers the somewhat vague gloss "having one end longer than the other", whereas Blachère 2274 (sub ḥudāl) favours a "bow that is incurved at one of the two ends" or (2275 sub muḥdalah) "at both ends". I can make very little sense of these explications. The epithet aḥdal, as al-Jawharī notes, means "lopsided, with shoulders of unequal height, neck awry, curved spine" (Blachère 2273). The poet presumably has a clear picture in his mind which he means to convey by this epithet, and it is, I think, a case of examining the possible shapes of the reflexed bow to see which might best fit this picture: (1) Pope B&A 70 Plate 4 (Fig. 13) is an "Apache bow, hickory, backed with sinew" which is reflexed at the grip-handle, having the "classic cupid shape ... apparently meant

for killing only rabbits and small game" (16-17); (ii) Pope 68 Plate 3 (Fig. 8) is a "Yurok bow, made of yew wood" -- "thick sinew covers the back and extends up over the nocks which are bent in a reverse position ... in action this bow is soft, springy, bends in the hand, is flabby in cast, and kicks" (12-13); (iii) Pope 68 Plate 3 (Fig. 9), a "powerful Alaskan bow, probably Eskimo, made of fir, backed with bone and open sinew lashing. A weapon suitable for killing big game", it is "a well made, powerful bow of the elementary composite type ... it is well balanced, rigid in its draw, is exceedingly strong, and has a musical twang to the plucked string. The action is sharp and there is no kick in the hand ... When not braced the bow is practically straight; when braced ... (it) is what archers would term a low-strung bow ... (which) is better for hunting because it strains the bow less during the long hours of anticipation" (13-14); (iv) the Indo-Persian composite bow.

The three instances of this epithet recorded by Lewin offer little further insight: Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah 2. 12, rāmin bi-muḥdalatin//ḡash'in [45], Abū l-Muthallam Kos 9. 10, la-hu bi-l-kaffi muḥdalatun, Mālik b. Khālid Kos 77. 7 rāmin bi-muḥdalatin, 'Amr Dhū l-Kalb Kos 107. 19, wa-qad abtantu muḥdalatan shīmāl-ī. [46] This latter might be construed as implying that the shape of the grip-handle is described by muḥdalah, i.e. that it is of the hour-glass figure (cf. Latham & Paterson 9, Fig. 6), although I do not suppose this to be very probable.

The synonymous ḡudāl occurs twice in conjunction with the substantive wark, which is itself problematic. In a verse by Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh, Kos 92. 58 (idhā mutyā ḡanna bi-warkin ḡudālī, 'when it [i.e. the bow-string] is drawn, it produces a sigh from a lop-sided limb'), wark probably designates the siyah (Latham & Paterson 191: "of the limb of a bow, the relatively inflexible extremity which serves as a lever during the draw") and the nock: cf. Schwarzlose 270 and Kazimirski 1524. In a verse by 'Amr Dhū l-Kalb, Kos 107. 18 (wa-safrā'a l-burāyati 'ūda nab'in//ka-waqfi

l-‘āji fi warkin hudāli), it probably indicates a "bow made of the thick part of a branch" (Lewin 468: cf. Schwarzlose 256 and Aws b. Hajar 31. 17a, wa-mabdū‘atin min ra’si far’in shāziyyatin) although I am unclear as to the precise significance of the preposition fi. [47]

It is particularly interesting concerning Zuhayr's use of this epithet that I have been able to find no other attestation of its use by early poets outwith the tribe of Hudhayl.

25. The first two words of this line are unintelligible and I have adopted Qabāwah's emendation. Qabāwah's ganwā‘u would be a continuation of the application to the bow of roots denoting physical peculiarities. Al-‘Adawī suggests kabdā‘u, (Schwarzlose 264: "the grip-handle was not larger than the hand would allow"). A further possibility is zawrā‘u, 'curved' (cf. Schwarzlose 247): "the reference is not to the strung or unstrung weapon, but to the fully drawn bow" (Latham Jamīl 225).

According to the information given by Schwarzlose 159 and 227, ahass, 'hair-less', is used of either a sword or a lance, as 'Antarah Ahl ll. 6, but not a bow, although this would be a natural extension. Al-‘Adawī suggests khalsā‘u, 'reddish white with black intermixed', which may contradict safrā‘u in verse 26. The colour of a bow is also likened to a gold ingot by Abū l-Muthallam Kos 9. 4. Seasoning of the wood is of extreme importance: "all bow woods must be well seasoned (usually for not less than three years), otherwise the wood will 'quickly follow the string', i.e. take a set that will diminish resilience and efficiency" (Latham Jamīl 225). Schwarzlose's translation of shasīb and shisb as a "thin bow" (261) may be inaccurate: "dried, with the sap removed" would be more apposite.

26. ‘Ursh seems to be a hapax legomenon. Sa‘idah b. Ju‘ayyah Hell 7. 14-15 also compares a bow made of nab‘ wood to the border of

a waist-wrapper. [48]

On sharījah (Schwarzlose 292: "wood split into two parts"), cf. Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 11. 34 and Abū Qilābah or al-Mu'attal Well 154. 9: "probably the sharīj is a bow made of two half-filqs spliced at the grip, although we advance that hypothesis with diffidence because of the fact that the text gives no suggestion of transverse discontinuity ... it might mean a laminated wooden bow, which is a bow of at least three layers glued together. Such bows are common in many countries, notably Japan, Belgium, France and America, and they may be so constructed as to have many of the characteristics of the composite bow" (Faris & Elmer 11).

Nab', Grewia poplifolia (cf. Latham & Paterson 188, idem Jamīl 224-225, "a tough, resilient, semi-hardwood found in several varieties from the Mediterranean to the Himalayas"), is a wood that was commonly used in the manufacture of bows and arrows and it is interesting that it should here be distinctly preferred to the sidr (Zizyphus spina Christi), which seems to be prized in verses of Muraqqish al-Aṣghar (Muf 56. 2), ramat-ka bnātu l-bakriyyi 'an far'i dālatin, (if, as Lyall Muf 2 190 claims, the dāl is a type of sidr), and in Aws 31. 17-36 [49] and to the ta'lab (cf. Schwarzlose 255). Lewin hesitantly identifies the ta'lab as the Tamarix articulata, described by Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 1. 36 as growing beside water in a mountainous area. The same poet (Hell 5. 1) likens a woman to a bow made of ta'lab and a hunter is pictured by Imru' al-Qays (Ibr 40. 3) as firing an arrow from one such bow.

In the light of the preceding, it is obvious that the poet is not describing a genuine composite bow, but a modified version of the self-bow. The point is that the latter is "made by reducing the size of a stave of wood by shaving down its sides", whereas the former is "built up of substances of various origin" (Faris & Elmer 10); in other words, the old Arab bow described by Zuhayr is essentially a self-bow which has been modified, presumably by the

addition of one or more staves of wood.

27. The syntax of this line presents some difficulties and the use of the participle mutamālik is individual and rare. The problem lies with the phrase mim-mā barā, in that its subject has not been expressed for the space of two lines, in effect since lines 23 and 24, although the problem could easily have been obviated through the delivery and pausal intonation of the reciter. It is perhaps poetically a more satisfactory postulate than reading the rather trite mim-mā buriya, 'such as has been pared'.

Utur (Schwarzlose 298, Latham 165) are gut or sinews "wrapped round the nock of an arrow" (Blachère 145), as in Tufayl l. 58. On the manākib, cf. no.1, v.47. The mention of the sāyr is unusual: I can find no reference to it in the relevant authorities. It is unlikely that the shaft is fortified with the leather thong. Perhaps it is used to reinforce the utur or even in the stead of the ligaments (riṣāf) used to secure the arrow-head.

'Antarah Ahl 15. 8b (= Mawlawī 3. 8b), wa-sahmin ka-sayri l-himyariyyi l-mu'annafi, 'and an arrow like the evenly cut thong of Himyarite leather', and Rāshid b. Shihāb Muf 86. 6 liken arrows (nabl) with leathern thongs (suyūr) as does Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 21. 3b, bi-sahmin ka-sayri l-sābirīyyati laḥwaqī, 'a sharp arrow like a thong of Sabiritic leather'.

28. Barz is quite a rare word (cf. Abū Khirāsh Hell l. 9 = 6. 5), as is the verb lahaba, which is used by Tufayl 3. 21 of a wolf and by Dhū l-Rummaḥ l. 94 of wild she-asses.

Structure

13-16: Introductory description: the solitary wild ass, driven from the herd (13); the spring grazing-ground (14-16).

- 17: the summer drought.
- 18-21: the search for water and cautious arrival.
- 22: the encounter with the hunter; his pertinacity (22a) and destitution (22b); 23-27: his weaponry; the bow (23-26) and the arrow (27).
- 28: the hunter's failure and the ass's escape.

Context and Interpretation

Context: This difficult poem, included by both Sa'ūdā' and Tha'lab on the authority of Abū 'Ubaydah, is comprised of a nasīb (1-4), introduced by a departure motif (1) which is followed by a visit of the khayāl (3-4) [50], and of a camel description (5-33) which falls into three distinct sections: the camel itself (5-12) and two extended similes -- the wild ass and the hunter (13-28) and the oryx bull and the hunter and hounds.

Interpretation: this Wild Ass Vignette does not present any grave problems of structural or contextual interpretation -- its problems are almost exclusively philological. As intimated above, if Yāqūt is correct in locating al-Sawār in the territory of al-Baḥrayn, the scene of the action is unusual for Zuhayr. The emphasis on the hunter's weaponry -- I am unable to explain why the elucidation of the technical terms used of the bow should be so heavily dependent on parallels from the Hudhalī poets, unless it be simply that there is such a volume of extant Hudhalī poetry -- and the solitariness of the stallion ass concomitant with the absence of his mate or harem also mark this passage as distinct from Zuhayr's other

descriptions. If Jacobi's analysis of the development of the khayāl motif is valid, then this poem should be designated as occurring in the first half of the Jāhiliyyah (Early/Middle), at which stage the khayāl is an external, negative apparition, or at least as an imitation of such an early poetic style. Although the poetry of Aws b. Ḥajar is much disputed of authorship and is textually in a deplorable condition, it seems at least most probable that Zuhayr was his rāwī. Ibn Qutaybah, in his Kitāb al-Shi'r wa-l-Shu'arā' 99-101, describes Aws as being very fond of describing asses and bows. What there is recoverable of his verse points to his fondness for bow descriptions, although there is sadly little concerning the wild ass. Aws belonged to the tribe of Tamīm b. Murr which, together with the 'Abd al-Qays and Ka'b b. Rabī'ah, inhabited the area around al-Baḥrayn on the eastern seaboard (cf. Geyer 2-3, S.A. Bonebakker "Aws b. Ḥajar" EI2 I 772). His date of birth is generally given as circa 530, and this points to the dating of the poem as approximately middle Jāhili, i.e. approximately 550-570 A.D. It is a very tenuous link, and one in which, on methodological and theoretical grounds, I do not place much confidence, but it is just conceivable that this poem is to be ascribed to Aws, having been transmitted by Zuhayr, although it may even represent an essay by Zuhayr in the style of his mentor, a style which he did not overmuch espouse or find appropriate to his professional demands. The poem is, again primarily on the basis of topographical considerations, unlikely to be the work of Ka'b b. Zuhayr.

I am not in agreement with von Grunebaum Chronologie 337 ff. in his classification of Aws b. Hajar as exclusively early -- a portion of his verse represents the codification and conglutination of developments, and indeed on occasion a sophisticated toying with these developments, effected by the earlier poets, such as 'Amr b. Qamī'ah and 'Abīd, Muraqqish al-Akbar and al-Aṣghar.

3. Zuhayr Ahl l. 17-30; Qab ll. 17-30; Th p.55, v.17-31.

17. A-dhalika am shatīmu l-wajhi ja'bun [1]

'alay-hi min 'aqīqati-hi 'ifā'u

18. [2] Tarabba'a sāratan hattā idhā-mā

fanā l-duhlānu 'an-hu wa-l-idā'u

19. Taraffa'a li-l-qanāni [3] wa-kulli fajjin

tabā-hu l-ri'yu [4] min-hu wa-l-khalā'u

20. Fa-awrada-hā hiyāda sunaybi'ātin

fa-alfā-hunna laysa bi-hinna mā'u

21. Fa-shajja bi-hā l-amā'iza fa-hya tahwī

huwiyya l-dalwi aslama-hā l-rishā'u

22. Fa-laysa lahāqu-hu ka-lahāqi ilfin

wa-lā ka-najā'i-hā min-hu najā'u

23. Wa-in māla li-wa'thin khāzamat-hu [5]

bi-alwāhin mafāsilu-hā zimā'u

24. Yakhirru nabīdhu-hā [6] 'an hājibay-hi

fa-laysa li-wajhi-hi min-hu qhitā'u

25. Yuqharridu bayna khurmin mufdiyatīn [7]

sawafin lam tukaddir-hā [8] l-dilā'u

26. Yufaddilu-hu idhā tahadā [9] 'alay-hi

tamāmu l-sinni min-hu wa-l-dhakā'u

27. Ka-anna sahīla-hu fī kulli fajrin

'alā ahsā'i yam'ūdin du'a'u

28. Fa-āda ka-anna-hu rajulun salībun

'alā 'alyā'a laysa la-hu ridā'u

29. Ka-anna barīqa-hu baraqānu sahlīn
jalā 'an matni-hi hurudun wa-mā'u
30. Fa-laysa bi-ghāfilīn 'an-hā mudī'in
ra'īyyata-hu idhā ghafala l-rī'a'u

Variant Readings

- [1]. Th: aqabbu l-batni.
- [2]. At this point Th has the following line:
- 171 Aqabbu ka-sadri asmara dhī ku'ūbin
la-hu min kullī mulmi'atīn ibā'u.

I refer to this as Th 171 and retain the numbering of Ahl and Qab.

- [3]. Th: Tarabba'a bi-l-qanāni.
- [4]. Th: l-ra'yu.
- [5]. Qab and Th: khādhamat-hu.
- [6]. Th: nabīthu-hā.
- [7]. Th: mufratātīn.
- [8]. Th: mā tukaddīru-hā
- [9]. Th: ītahadat.

Translation

17. Is it that or an ugly-faced, bulky /wild ass/,
covered with abundant tufts of his natal pelage,
18. Which in, the spring, pastured on Ṣarah until
when the crevices and pools had dried up
19. He climbed to al-Qanān and every mountain way where the
pasturage and the solitude summoned him,
20. And he brought her down to the troughs of Ṣunaybi'āt which

- he found to contain no water --
21. So he crossed the pebbly plains with her and she sped as quickly as falls a bucket betrayed by the well-rope.
22. His persistence was not like the persistence of a friend and no flight was like her flight from him:
23. Even if they turned into a sandy basin she would swerve away from him with limbs, whose joints were dry and withered;
24. The soil which she cast up would fall from his eyebrows and his face had no covering protection against it --
26. He would prove superior to her, when they struggled through it, by virtue of fulness of age and shrewdness.
25. He groans amid overflowing water-pockets, pure, unsullied by any buckets,
27. As if his braying, at every daybreak, on the marshy sands of Yam'ūd is a shout,
28. And he repeats it, like a naked man on 'Alyā', wearing no garment:
29. His lustre resembles the fulgence of white Yemeni sahl as hurud and water gleam on its surface.
30. He is not unmindful of her so as to lose his charge when the Herdsmen are unmindful.

Commentary

17. Th: lean of belly. Shatīm: Labīd 'Abbās 38. 4 (= Brock II 44. 4). The meaning of the second hemistich is that the wild ass has not yet come of age so as to shed the pelage of nonage.

'Aqīqah' designates 'the fledgeling feathers' of an owl, (Imru' al-Qays Ahl 3. 1 [= Ibr 18. 1), of an ostrich, (al-Jamūh Well 232. 9). 'Adī uses the root twice of a wild ass; 4. 22 (nāsilun 'iqqata-hu) and 117. 1 (fa-njābat 'aqīqatu-hu), Ru'bah of a camel (40. 51). 'Ifā', 'feathers': al-Ṭirimmāh 1. 4, of a cockerel; 'pelage': al-Mukhabbal Muf 21. 37, of a moulting camel; Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 4. 16, of a hyena; 'hair': al-Shammākh 5. 8, of a man. 'Ifā' is used of the hair of moulting she asses by Imru' al-Qays Ahl 34. 17, q.v. post. I have found no reference among the relevant authorities as to whether the wild ass colt moults and sheds its coat when it attains adulthood at the age of 3 to 4 years.

171. Lean, like the fore-part of a brown, knotted /spear/, rejected by every pregnant female

On asmar, cf. Boudot-Lamotte LPG 33.

18. Sārah is, according to Thilo Ortsnamen 98, a landmass interlaced with rocky ridges to the south of al-Qanān. On duhlān, cf. Thilo Ortsnamen 22 and Groom Topography 68: "hollow or cavity in the ground wider in the lower part ... a rock crevice which retains rain water".

19. Th: It pastured during the spring on al-Qanān and every mountain way where pasturing and solitude summoned it.

In his commentary Th records the variant taqayyaza, 'it passed the summer', in place of tarabba'a. This reading helps to clarify the temporal sequence of the description. Al-Qanān is, according to Thilo Ortsnamen 79, a low-lying mountainous plateau to the north-west of Abān al-Aswad. It is said to have been in the territory of the Banū Asad and it is not very far from Sārah. The two place-names are, on occasion, juxtaposed, as in Ṭufayl 1. 43 (fa-lamma badā hazmu l-qanāni wa-sāratin) and Labīd 'Abbās 16. 2 (= Chāl p.61, v.2, Brock I 13. 2) (fa-ni'āfu sārata fa-l-qanāni),

frequently being mentioned in conjunction: Zuhayr Ahl 15. 6-7, Aws 17. 9 & 13, Labīd 'Abbās 35. 14, 18 (= Brock II 40. 14 & 18). In this last instance, they occur in a wild ass description, as does al-Qanān in a poem composed by Ka'b b. Zuhayr 13. 35 (cf. post).

20. The she-ass is introduced by a simple pronominal suffix, a technique which is occasionally used in the Oryx Bull Vignette, to introduce the gazehounds. I have been unable to find any other reference to Ṣunaybi'āt (al-Bakrī 606, Yāqūt 3 43) except for some lines attributed to a certain 'Usum b. al-Nu'mān known as Abū Ḥanash, the brother of Kulayb and Muḥalhil, given as part of an account of the First Day of al-Kilāb in the commentary to Jābir b. Ḥunayy Muf 42. 22: cf. Muf 1 431.

23. Th: she competed with him in pace. I have translated alwāh as 'limbs' although strictly it means 'broad and wide bones' -- the joints, it is implied, have lost their lubricants by reason of the summer heat and the dearth of water.

24. Th: The soil which she dug up. As he explains in his commentary, Tha'lab interprets the verse as depicting the arrival of the asses at a watering hole. In the texts of Ahl and Qab, the substantive nabīdh refers to the pebbly soil cast up by the she-ass as she flees from the male.

26. Th: when she struggled against him. In Ahl and Qab the pronominal suffix in 'alay-hi refers to wa'th (line 23), whereas Th by reading the feminine singular clarifies this: the pronoun, given the context, should strictly refer to the male ass.

25. This verse refers to the successful arrival of the ass at water and makes little sense between 24 and 26, both of which lines are full of motion, detailing the progress of the ass and his mate through 'the pebbly plains' and the 'sandy basin'. This verse has been rendered by the present tense: it represents a break with

the narrative of lines 17-26: the poet portrays the wild ass's triumph over adversity in the form of its arrival at water.

27. Yam'ūd (al-Bakrī 856, Yāqūt 4 1038) occurs in an opening verse of al-Shammākh 4 (tāla l-thawā'u 'alā rasmin bi-yam'ūdīn) and Yāqūt designates it as a wādī in the territory of Ghatafān, to the north of Medina. The asses seem, then, to travel in an approximately north-easterly direction and the sequence of place-names is, insofar as I have been able to chart them, consistent.

28. Salīb could also mean 'crazed', a signification which would fit the context well and would avoid the tautology in the second hemistich. 'Alyā' is an elevated area in the same region as the other places mentioned in the foregoing lines. I follow Thilo Ortsnamen 10 and 28, in construing it in this context as a toponym and not an epithet, which latter remains, however, a distinct possibility. This image, which echoes Abū Du'ād 5. 6 and 8. 12 and occurs twice in the dīwān of Ka'b b. Zuhayr (Kow 12. 11 & 39 = Cairo p.136, vv. 11 & 39), finds a striking corroboration in the photograph of a "group of Equus africanus retreating along the lava slope of Mt. Kurup" in the central Danakil desert of Ethiopia, reproduced in Klingel 1977 327.

29. As al-Shantamarī and Tha'lab both make clear in their commentaries the wild ass has shed the hair that is a sign of immaturity and is resplendent in his adulthood.

Sahl is a white garment manufactured in the Yemen; cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 100. 4 ('alā lāhibin ya'lū l-ahizzata ka-l-sahlī) and al-Ṭirimmāh 4. 58 (wa-madā tahsibu agrāna-hu//thawba sahlīn fawqa a'wādī qām).

Hurud is "salt-wort, glass-wort, salsola (grass or shrub which grows in saline ground and which one burns in order to extract the soda,

qily, from its ash)" (Blachère 2451). It was used for washing clothes and Lane (548 sub hurd) appends the following comment of an Abū Ziyād "we have not seen any hurd purer or whiter than some which grows in El-Yamamah".

30. The Commentators are somewhat unclear at this point, in that they interpret the pronominal suffix in 'an-hā', inconsistently with the previous feminine singular pronouns, as plural, without any further explanation. It is possible that the pronoun anticipates the noun ra'iyah, which can also have a plural referent: I have, however, translated the noun as singular -- the wild ass is faithful and mindful of his mate at all times.

Structure

17 (+ 17i): The introductory description; the ass is vigorous and bulky, but immature.

18-26: The quest for water; the contest with the she-ass (20-26).

25-27: The arrival at water and lush grazing ground.

28-30: The coming of age of the ass and his execution of his duties.

Context and Interpretation

Context: a long minatory gasīdah concerning perfidy and inhospitality. The description is preceded by a rihlah of the exhortative type (13-14) [51] and a comparison of the camel with an ostrich (15-16). It is immediately followed by a wine drinking scene (31-34) and then by vituperation (35-39), gnomic wisdom (40-43), narration of the injustice of the poet's addressees in the

form of a rhetorical question and apostrophe (44-50), further narration and comment (51-58), concluding with tribal and personal vaunting and admonishment (59-63).

Interpretation: as intimated above, I understand this vignette to represent a paradigm of the triumph over adversity and of the observance of one's duties to those who are in one's charge.

The ass undergoes the trial that every summer poses -- except that in this case, the ass has also to pass from unfledged to fledged, from immature to mature. It is quite possible that the variant readings of Th 17 and 171 represent an over-emphasis of this feature, the result of a misunderstanding of the temporal sequence of the section. [52] The ass is not emaciated before the onset of the summer, having passed the spring grazing, hence it is ja'b, 'bulky and vigorous', but hardly aqabbu l-batn, if this epithetical phrase actually has a precise 'temporal' reference, and does not merely mean 'in prime condition'.

The uncertainty of the precise meaning of line 30 may perhaps be intentional on the part of the poet, the extension of the reference to include other asses, now part of the ass's herd, serving to point the contrast with the neglectful 'Herdsmen', whose presence comes as something of a surprise in that they are unheralded: they are, of course, the clan of Ḥiṣn addressed in line 35, viz. the Banū 'Ulaym b. Janab, a subsect of Kalb [53], of whom

the poem as a whole is a harangue. The wild ass description, and its attendant notion of fidelity, is, then, in this poem, used as an antithetical foil, an anticipatory moral and didactic exemplar.

4. Zuhayr Qab 32. 5-11; Th p.268, v.5-11. [54]

5. Da'-hā wa-salli l-hamma 'an-ka bi-jasratin

tanjū najā'a l-akhdariyyi l-mufradi

6. Ka-musalsilin ya'dū 'alā baydānatin

haqbā'a min humuri l-qanāni musharradi

7. Sāfā yatūfu bi-hā 'ala qulali l-suwā

wa-shatā ka-dhalqi l-zujji qhayra muqahhadi

8. Khāfā 'amīrata an yusādifa wirda-hā

wa-bnu l-bulaydati qā'idun bi-l-marsadi

9. Fa-ajāza-hā tanfī sanābiku-hu l-hasā

mutahalliba l-washalayni qariba darqhadi

10. Bāta wa-bātat laylatun sammāratun

hattā idhā tala'a l-nahāru mina l-ghadi

11. Wa-ra'ā l-'uyūna wa-qad wanā taqrību-hā

zama'an fa-khashsha bi-hā khilāla l-gharqadi

Translation

5. Leave her and dispel care from yourself with a sturdy

/she-camel/ which speeds with the pace of a solitary, dusky

/wild ass/,

6. Like an /ass/ which grumbles repeatedly as he runs and attacks

a fat, white-girded /she ass/, having been driven away from
the asses of al-Qanān;

7. In the summer he roamed with her over the crests of the

rugged uplands where the cairns stand and in the winter he became like the edge of the spear's iron foot -- lean and emaciated.

8. They dreaded lest 'Amīrah should chance upon her when she went to water, though Ibn al-Bulaydah was lurking in his look-out,
9. So he took her past, his hooves scattering the pebbles, drops of water falling from his nostrils, seeking by night the water of Darghad:
10. All night they continued -- it was a sleepless night -- until the morrow's day rose
11. And he saw the wells; her gallop had waned through thirst, and so he led her into the midst of the ghargad trees.

Commentary

5. It is possible to construe the phrase wa-salli l-hamma 'an-ka as 'render care unmindful of you', involving a personification quite common in cases of such abstractions as folly, infatuation, desire and anxiety.

The epithet akhdarī is usually explained as signifying 'one who claims descent from Akhdar', presumably a wild ass, although some authorities assert that it was a "horse, belonging to Ardasheer, that became wild" (Lane 708). The fact that this epithet is used by al-Ṭirimmāḥ 4. 39 ('ansalin tulwī idhā absharat//bi-khawāfī akhdariyyin sukhām) of an eagle and that the epithet khudāriyyatun is also used of an eagle (Salāmah b. al-Khurshub Muf 5. 9 and al-Ḥārith b. Wa'lah Muf 32. 3) with the meaning of 'dusky, dark', suggests that a more likely explanation of akhdarī is that it

refers to the dusky hue of the wild asses before they moult: cf. Labīd 'Abbās 38. 4 (= Brock II 44. 4) and the representation of the Indian wild ass in Smielowski & Raval 88 and B. Clark, "Israel restores Asiatic Wild Ass", Oryx 17 (1983) 113. Unfortunately, for the purposes of identification, it is not possible to conclude that, whenever moulting is mentioned, Equus hemionus onager is meant, for the pelage of the mare of the species Equus africanus together with its new-born foal, as represented in Clark 1983 i 30, also appears to show signs of moulting.

6. Musalsil: cf. salsal in Labīd 'Abbās 38. 4 (= Brock II 44. 4). I have translated the phrase ya'dū 'alā as 'runs and attacks': both meanings are indispensable here. It is also possible that it also implies the notion of 'leaping upon an adversary' -- so intense are the attentions of the stallion ass for his mate that he treats her with hostility. Baydānah is a common designation of the she-ass, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 69 (wa-yawman 'alā baydānatin ummi tawlabi). If akhdarī means 'dark, dusky' then the white patch described by the epithet haqbā' would be all the more remarkable.

In Zuhayr Ahl 1. 18 & 19 the asses start on their journey from Sārah, in the vicinity of al-Qanān, whereas this latter is the point of departure in this instance. For suwwah, cf. Groom Topography 281: "stones set up to guide the way ... rugged elevated ground". Musharrad is synonymous with mutarrad.

7. The iron foot of the spear was pointed: cf. Abū Du'ād 23. 5, 'abli l-shawā 'atidin ka-dahl//qī l-zujjī, of a horse. Mugahhad is a rare word apparently meaning 'fattened'. It is strange that the ass should receive no sustenance during the winter season: the poet is presumably referring to a year of drought.

8. The commentators are in dispute over the identity of the hunters named. Al-Aṣma'ī, cf. Th p.271, understood al-Bulaydah to

be the name of the hunter's mother and to refer to a hunter other than that designated by the name 'Amīrah. The consensus of opinion seems to be that Ibn al-Bulaydah is a phrase which designates 'Amīrah's acquaintance with the lay of the land: this is quite in keeping with the fondness poets evince for giving 'nicknames' to hunters. Whatever the solution, marsad does not refer to the lair of the asses but to the hunter's covert; cf. Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 52. (marsadan hāfīzan//bi-hi bnu l-dujā lāti'an ka-l-tihāli). The asses make a false conjecture at this stage in their search for water which almost proves fatal for the female, believing the hunter to be where he is not.

9. Darghad is presumably identical with the watering-hole known as Dhū Darghad referred to by Thilo Ortsnamen 42. Darghad itself lies to the east of the Harrat Layla in the territory of Ghatafān. The Harrat Laylā is situated to the west of al-Qanān.

11. Gharqad (Jacob Beduinleben 14) is a species of thorny tree that gives off a thick smoke when burned: cf. Zuhayr Ahl 3. 26 (= Qab 19. 26, Th p.219, v.27), fa-alqat bayna-hunna wa-bayna-ha//qhubāran ka-mā fārat dawākhinu qharqadi. The asses presumably use these copses as a lair. Smielowski & Raval 86 observe of the Equus hemionus khur that "after dark they gather in clumps of mesquite bushes, or on stony hills".

Structure

5-11: The quest for water and the safe arrival: the stallion ass, driven from al-Qanan and accompanied by his mate, goes in search of water (6); the summer and winter hardship (7); fear of the hunter keeps them from the nearest watering-hole (8); the punishing journey through the night (9-10); the exhaustion of the mare (11).

Context and Interpretation

Context: This Vignette is part of a panegyric dedicated to the glory of Sinān b. Abī Ḥārithah al-Murri. It is preceded by a one line dhikr al-atlāl movement, by a brief nasīb in which the unfairness of the poet's beloved Salma is featured (2). In lines 12-17 the poet likens the pace of his camel to that of a panic-stricken oryx-doe which has lost its young one. The laudation ensues in lines 18-27, in which the patron's generosity and affability (19-21), his virtuous piety to his people and to Allah (22-23 & 25b) and his martial prowess (24-27) are praised.

Interpretation: the poet presents his audience with the wild asses as it were in medias res, having undertaken their quest for water (5-6), under great stress as represented by the male's relentless and ruthless treatment of the female (6). The poet then turns to the sequence of events which lead to the quest (7-8), emphasizing their mistaken appraisal of the situation (8) which causes the exhaustion of the female and necessitates their night-journey (10a). The quest is successful, however, and the ass leads the female into a place of safety and repose (10b-11).

As is customary in some panegyrics, the beloved in the nasīb is represented as the antithesis of the patron -- she has forsworn her promise (2) whereas the mamdūh is mindful of the needs of his people (20 & 22). The wild ass description represents a triumph over adversity: in time of hardship the male does not spare the female to bring her to safety. However Zuhayr introduces an unusual

element into his depiction -- the hardship caused to the female by their fear of the hunter, a fear which, presumably, perverts their ability to assess the situation correctly. It is not, therefore, an anticipatory simile, providing from the animal kingdom a transcendent paradigm parallel to the patron's magnificence, but rather represents a stage on the way to the embodiment of this magnificence: Sinān's wisdom and experience surpasses that of the male ass. Similarly the oryx-doe brings catastrophe upon herself through her negligent care of her fawn -- this simile ends in disaster and functions as an antithetical foil to Sinān. In terms of the dramatic demands of the panegyric, the juxtaposition of catastrophe in lines 12-17 and majestic splendour in lines 19-27 heightens the impact of the eulogy, rendering it more sharply limned. The Wild Ass tableau functions as a complement to this encomiastic purpose.

5. Ka'b b. Zuhayr, Kōwalski 13. 33-57; Cairo p.153, v.33-57.

33. Fa-ka-ann-ī kasawtu dhalika rahl-ī
aw mumarra l-sarāti ja'ban darīrā
34. Aw aqabban [1] tasayyafa l-baqla hattā
tāra 'an-hu l-nasīlu yar'ā qarīrā
35. [2] †Yarta'ī bi-l-qanāni yaqrū arīdan
fa-ntahā atunan jadā'ida nūrā†
36. Alsaqa l-'adhma wa-l-'adhāba bi-qabbā
'a tarā fī sarāti-hā tahsīrā
37. Samhatin samhaji l-qawā'imi haqbā
'a mina l-jūni tummirat tatmīrā [3]
38. Fawqa 'ūjin mulsi l-qawā'imi un'il
na jalamīdā aw hudhīna sukhūrā [4]
39. Da'ba shahrayni thumma nisfan damīkan
bi-arīkayni yakdumāni ghamīrā
40. Fa-hya malsā'u ka-l-'asībi wa-qad bā
na nasīlun 'an matni-hā li-yatīrā
41. Qad nahā-hā bi shirratin [5] dūna tis'in
kāna mā rāma 'inda-hunna 'asīra [6]
42. Ka-l-qisiyyi l-a'tālī afrada 'an-hā
atunan qurrahan [7] wa-wahshan dhukūrā [8]
43. Murtijātin 'alā da'amīsa qharqā
shumusīn qad tawayna 'an-hu l-hujūra
44. Taraka l-darbu bi-l-sanābiki min-hu
nna bi-dāhī jabīni-hi tawqīrā

45. 'Aliqat mukhlifan janānan wa-kānat
muniḥat qabla-hu l-hiyāla nazūrā
46. Mithla dirsi l-yarbū'i lam yarbu 'an-hū
qharigan fī suwāni-hi [9] maqhmūrā
47. Fa-idhā mā dāna la-hā manahat-hu
mudmaran [10] yafriṣu [11] l-safiha [12] dhakīrā
48. Dhakara l-wirda fa-stamarra ilay-hi
bi-'ashiyyin muhajjiran tahjīrā
49. Ja'ala l-sa'da wa-l-qanāna yamīnan
wa-l-marawrāta sha'matan wa-hafīrā
50. 'Āmidan li-l-qanāni yandū riyādan
wa-tirādan [13] mina l-dhinābi wa-dūrā
51. Wa-yakhāfāni 'amīran 'amīra l-khud
ri wa-kāna l-dhinābu min-hu masīrā
52. Rāmiyan akhshana l-manākibi la yush
khisu [14] qad harra-hu l-hawādī harīrā
53. Thāwiyan māthilan yuqallibu zurqan
ramma-hā l-qaynu bi-l-'uyūni hushūrā
54. Shariqatin bi-l-sammi min sullabiyyin
wa-rakūdan mina l-sarā'i tahūrā
55. Dhata hinwin [15] malsā'a [16] tasma'u min-hā
tahta mā taqbīdu [17] l-shimālu zafīrā
56. Yab'athu l-'azfa wa-l-tarannuma [18] min-hā
wa-nadhīran ilā l-hamīri [19] nadhīrā
57. Lāsiqun yakla'u l-sharī'ata lā yuḡh
fī fuwāqan mudammiran tadmīrā

Variant Readings

- [1]. Sharḥ: akhdariyyan; dhā kudūmin.
- [2]. Sharḥ: Yantahī bi-l-qanāni yaqrū riyādan
alifan atunan jadā'ida nūrā
- [3]. Cairo (Editor): dummirat tadmīrā.
- [4]. Kow, Cairo: nusūrā.
- [5]. Kow, Cairo: bi-sharri-hi.
- [6]. Kow: man; Kow, Cairo: yasīrā.
- [7]. Sharḥ: gazaman.
- [8]. Al-Aḥwal: nakūrā.
- [9]. Al-Aṣma'ī: siyāni-hi.
- [10]. Cairo (Editor): muṣmadan.
- [11]. Sharḥ: mudmajan yaqrīdu.
- [12]. Sharḥ: al-ṣalīkhā.
- [13]. Al-Aṣma'ī: wa-simādan.
- [14]. Al-Aḥwal: yashkhaṣu.
- [15]. Sharḥ: jarsin.
- [16]. Sharḥ: kabda'u.
- [17]. Cairo: tanbidu.
- [18]. Cairo: yab'athu l-'azfu wa-l-tarannumu.
- [19]. Cairo: wa-nadhīrun ilā l-khamīsi.

Translation

33. Thus it is as if I have clothed my saddle upon an /oryx such
as/ that or a bulky, swift /wild ass/, its back a tightly
twisted rope,
34. Or a lean-bellied /wild ass/ that has passed the summer among
vegetation until the pelage fell from him as he grazed at
ease;

35. Grazing on al-Qanān, speeding through luxuriant terrain.
†He attacked timid females, devoid of milk,†
36. He fastened with biting chastisement on a lean-bellied
female -- the hair on her back was clearly falling off in
clumps;
37. Compliant, long-legged, white-girded, sandy-brown, fashioned
like a scroll,
38. Above curved, smooth legs, shod with boulders or shoed with
rocks.
39. For two and a half months continually, in Arīkān they had been
browsing on dried brome-grass,
40. So that she was smooth like palm-phloem and her dorsal pelage
was on the point of moulting.
41. He, in his vehement lust, had turned her away from nine others
-- what he wanted from them was difficult to obtain,
42. Like unstrung bows. He separated her from pregnant females
and ferocious stallions,
43. Females that closed their wombs upon submerged, gnat-like
embryos, recalcitrantly opposed to being covered, having
folded their ostia against him:
44. Kicking with their hooves had left gashes on his forehead.
45. Though past her prime she conceived a foetus -- previously
she, in her barrenness, had been given up as sterile,
46. A foetus like the young of a jerboa, no larger, drowning and
submerged in its strongbox.
47. So whenever he drew close to her she bestowed on him a compact

- /hoof/ as hard as a male's, a shatterer of rocks.
48. He bethought himself of going to water and he proceeded
thereto one evening, travelling through the midday heat.
49. He placed al-Sa'd and tal-Qanān† to his right, al-Marawrah and
Hafir to his left,
50. Heading for al-Qanān, passing through meadows, through
watering-holes and sandy tracts at al-Dhināb,
51. They both feared 'Amīr, 'Amīr of al-Khudr, for al-Dhināb was
one of his haunts,
57. Persistently sticking to the spot, watching intently the
water-trail, without closing his eyes for any length of
time, a inflictor of much destruction.
52. A firer of an /arrow/ roughly fletched with secondaries, never
missing the target -- the front-runners shrink from him in
terror --
53. Stationary, motionless, turning round and round blue-grey,
streamlined /arrows/ which the smith had mended in his
presence,
54. Saturated with poison, sharpened on a whetstone, /readying/ a
spurring swift-shooter made of sarā',
55. Curved, smooth, you hear it souging at the point where the
left hand grips it;
56. From it he sends forth a thrumming and a trilling together
with a warning that alerts the asses.

Commentary

33. This line echoes the celebrated comparison of a horse's speed with a spinning-top in Imru' al-Qays's Mu'allaqah 58 (= Ahl 48. 53, Ibr 1. 55):

58. darīrin ka-khudhrūfi l-walīdi amarra-hu
 tatābu'u [55] kaffay-hi bi-khaytin muwassali

Darīr, 'swift', is by no means a common word: Mulayh Well 276. 21, of a whip. The comparison of an animal whose muscles and sinews are well-knit with a tightly twisted rope is a commonplace (see no. 7 v. 25 post), mumarr being of frequent occurrence; e.g. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 18. 8 (= Ibr 27. 8), 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 23 (= Qab 3. 23) (of horses).

34. Sharh: dusky; the bearer of bite-marks. For gharīr, cf. Ka'b Kow 6. 8 (= Cairo p.89, v.8) (wa-'ayshu-nā gharīrun); for moulting, cf. nos. 3 v. 17 and 7. 17.

35. For reasons given below, cf. the notes to 39 and 49-50, I should like to remove the second hemistich of this verse from the poem. If the line is retained entire, the hemistichs of this line must refer temporally to two distinct stages in the Vignette. The first hemistich completes the introductory description of the wild ass browsing on what remains of the spring herbage. The second hemistich and the subsequent narrative will then have taken place in the course of the previous year. If the verse is removed, the Vignette begins with the passage of summer and continues with the topic of the stallion ass electing his mate, verses 34-47. Line 34 and the first hemistich of 35 represent the conclusion of the Vignette. The reference to the summer season makes this construction of events somewhat unlikely. A further problem consists in harmonizing the reference to al-Qanān (cf. no. 3 v. 19)

with the following itinerary. If, however, the variant of the line ([2] above) is read, "Persistently attacking, in al-Qanān, as he speeds to meadows, females, devoid of milk and barren", the sharp temporal disjunction is removed and the mares represent the harem from which he elects a compliant mate as they scatter and flee from him.

For arīd, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 5. 5 (Ahl 35. 5 reads yarīd); nawār, the name given to the habīb in Labīd's Mu'allaqah 16 & 55 (= 'Abbās 48. 16 & 55) and Ka'b Kow 27. 1 (= Cairo p.233, v.1), is used epithetically of a girl ('Adī 17. 16, Abū l-Hannān Well 244. 9), of a camel (Imru' al-Qays Ibr 41. 1) and of an oryx-doe ('Awf Muf 124. 35, Abū Du'ād Aṣm 66. 13).

36. I have found no parallels for the meaning of tahsīr attested by the Commentaries which al-Aḥwal qualifies, by adding that the ass's pelage has been torn off by the assiduous snapping of the male. Al-Aṣma'ī's explanation, however, proves to be more cautious and quite plausible, viz. that she is lean through exhaustion; cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 60. 4, 'Urwah b. al-Ward Aṣm 10. 17 and Labīd Mu'allaqah 23 (= 'Abbās 48. 23). I should offer the following: 'you could plainly see the signs of exhaustion on her back'.

37. Samh, 'compliant, affable', used of human beings: 'Antarah Mu'allaqah 41 (= Ahl 21. 35, Mawlawī 1. 41), Labīd Mu'allaqah 80 (= 'Abbās 48. 80), Su'dā bint al-Shamardal Aṣm 27. 27, Abū Khirāsh Hell 15. 8; used of the bow, a linguistic peculiarity of the Hudhalī poets, Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 3. 13, Abū l-Muthallam Kos 9. 4, 'Amr Dhū l-Kalb Kos 109. 8 (this latter is an urjūzah and the verse is numbered 4 by Kos). A she-camel is described by the phrase samhatu l-mashī in 'Awf Muf 125. 10. The first and the last applications are appropriate. [56]

The phrase tummirat tatmīran is explained by Lane 1879 as: "she was, or they were, rendered compact in make, or rolled up like as

are tawāmīr, or scrolls". [57] The poet is obviously punning on the common equestrial epithet timirr, 'prancing, curveting', which conveys a conjoined notion of slenderness; 'Alqamah Ahl 2. 35 (= Qab 1. 35), al-A'shā 55. 38 (cf. Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 45, where it is used of a she-ass). I have approximated Lane's rendering in the absence of a sufficiently viable alternative -- the variant, 'thoroughly emaciated', is somewhat feeble when compared with this striking phrase.

38. Nusūr, 'frogs (of the hooves)', gives no sense in the context of this, ultimately, rather pleonastic verse. Julmūd denotes an especially large rock, with which a horse (Tha'labah Muf 24. 21) and camels (al-Muzarrid Muf 15. 9) are compared.

39. The Arīkān are two mountains, one designated al-Aswad, the other al-Abyad, lying to the south-west of al-Qanān and north-east of Medina (Thilo Ortsnamen 31).

Ghamīr, cf. Zuhayr Ahl 15. 15 (= Qab 3. 15, Th p.124, v.15), lassi l-ghamīri, and al-Muzarrid Muf 15. 38, lassu l-ghamīri, [58], is variously explained. If Bevan's suggestion is right, "grass wetted by rain (?)" (Muf 3 287), then the interpretation of these lines as the antecedent of lines 34 and 35a is corroborated -- the asses graze at Arīk during the rainy season. If a rendering offered by Lane 2293 is adopted, "the grain of the buhmā that falls from the ears thereof when it dries", then temporally the line refers to the beginning of the dry season, echoing line 34a, in which case line 35b is difficult to adapt to the narrative: it anticipates 41-47 and distorts the narrative context of the tenses of the verbs in 34 and 36. I am almost certain that line 35 should be removed from the text, thereby rendering the course of the narrative less contrived; it also poses an insoluble problem with respect to the geographical setting of the Vignette, on which cf. 49-50.

40. The 'asīb is palm-phloem, a common writing material: cf. 'Adī 3. 13, al-A'shā 21. 5, Chapter 1, passim. The point of the comparison is made clear when reference is had to the following: Muraqqish al-Aṣghar Muf 55. 12, bi-sāfin ka-l-'asībi, 'with a /horse/ as pure in colour as palm-phloem'; 'Abd al-Masīh Muf 83. 7, ajrada ka-l-'asībi mushadhdhabā, 'a short-haired /steed/, like the palm-phloem, excoriated'. The female is as smooth and of the same hue as palm-phloem; cf. Tarafah's celebrated image, wa-khaddun ka-qirtāsi l-sha'āmī, 'and a cheek like Shāmī papyrus' (Mu'allaqah 31 = Ahl 4. 32). There is a slight anacolouthon with what follows, when it becomes clear that the ass is at the incipient stage of moulting: perhaps bāna is to be translated as 'begun to'.

41. Kow, Cairo: in his malice; Cairo: what he wanted from them had /in the past/ been easy; Kow; the one that he wanted from among them was yielding. The phrase min sharri-hi occurs in Ka'b Cairo p.99, v.18b (fa-bi-l-shaddi min sharri-hi yattaqīna), despite which I have opted for bi-sharratin. The two contexts are quite different; the context in question is pre-copulatory, whereas the other occurs in the topic of the passage of asses to water. The variant 'asir provides the best sense, as verse 43 indicates, and it also reiterates the notion of compliance expressed in samhah (37), anticipating the explication contained in 45 -- the other females are pregnant and therefore resist the stallion's advances.

42. Sharh: short, bad tempered. The comparison of females with unbraced bows ('utl: cf. Abū l-Muthallam Kos 9. 4) involves the following notions; the smoothness and hardness of the bow corresponding to the moulted pelage under which the muscles and bones are evident; the colour, although not referred to, of the bow, viz. pale yellow, if it has been seasoned, corresponding to the sandy-brown hue of the pelage; the slenderness of the bows corresponding to the leanness of the females; the limbs of the bows corresponding to the legs of the mares.

For qārīh, 'having cut the tooth of the sixth year', applied to the stallion ass, cf. no. 7, v. 25; note also qurrah of horses in Imru' al-Qays Ibr 21. 6. In Ka'b Kow 29. 20, idhā stāfa min-hā qārīhan, it is also used of a pregnant she ass, which must be the designation intended in this context. The variant gazam, 'stunted and mean', would spoil the sense somewhat: the poet emphasizes the pregnancy of the other females, not their niggardliness with respect to the dominant male.

Wahsh is a collective singular; dhukūr designates wild asses in Mulayh Well 271. 6 and 279. 40, in which latter context the Hudhalī poet describes the ostracism of a stallion ass by 'squadrons of full-grown stallions' (afrada-hu 'an-hā wa-qad kāna alifan//la-hunna mina l-qurhī l-dhukūri ganābilu). In my translation I have reversed the syntax of the original, rendering the indirect object as the object.

43. Compare al-Ṭirimmāh 4. 62 for a similar sentiment (aghlaqat min dūni aghrāsī-hā//halaqan urtiḥna ba'da 'tiqām). Shamūs, when used of a horse, means 'restive' (e.g. Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 11. 9), when used of a woman it means 'obstinate, coy', implying that she is unwilling to have sexual intercourse (e.g. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 45. 10 [= Ibr 50. 10]). Lane 883 explains du'mūs as "the embryo in the belly of a mare until the fortieth day: then its make becomes apparent, and it is called dūdah, until three months old: when it is called salīl". This is not its primary signification, which is metaphorical: da'āmīs, 'gnats', is a metaphor for the embryos which are gharqā, 'submerged'; for a literal use of the primary signification of da'āmīs, cf. al-A'shā 19. 13.

44. The syntax of this line is far from clear and the meaning of mukhlif has occasioned much comment. I construe mukhlif as masculine for feminine, being an Accusative of Hāl referring to the now pregnant female; for the meaning of akhlaḥa, cf. 'Abīd 1. 29 (of a she-camel in its ninth year) and 13. 6 (of the decrepit poet).

Hiyāl may be a plural, as in no. 6 v. 7 post, and Bishr 39. 8 (fī 'ānatīn hiyālīn), or a Gerund, as in Imru' al-Qays Ahl 55. 11 (= Ibr 33. 11), al-A'shā 1. 19, al-Ḥārith b. 'Ubad Aṣm 17. 1.

Nazūr: 'Adī 9. 6 (of water); cf. al-Ṭirimmāh 12. 16 (nazr, dearth of children).

46. This line is a distinct allusion to Imru' al-Qays Ahl 34. 12, on which see post. The aural homophony in al-yarbū' and yarbu 'an-hu may be paronomasial. For suwān -- its metaphorical use here is quite unparalleled -- cf. 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 22 (= Qab 3. 22), kumaytin ka-lawni l-urjuwāni nasharta-hu//li-bay'i l-ridā'i fī l-suwāni l-muka'abi, Abū Qilābah Well 154. 3, raytun itāqun fī l-suwāni.

47. Sharḥ: a well rounded /hoof/, sealed over, that cuts through stones; that cuts through the flesh /of the ear/; Cairo (Editor): hard as rock. As the editor of the Cairene dīwān indicates, there is a slight problem with mudmar, which can only imply that the hoof is 'concealed' by hair, which is not the case with the feral ass. [59] Mudmaj, the variant offered in the Commentary, is not perhaps wholly applicable, although it is superior to mudmar. The epithet is applied to a stallion ('Adī 125. 3, when compared with a qidh, an unfeathered arrow), a mare (al-Jumayh Muf 109. 10), a she-camel (Abū Ṣakhr Well 256. 52), the back of a camel (Mulayh Well 274. 14 and 45), designating a solid, compact and smooth physique; it is used to describe a well-sealed amphora by 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 40 (= Qab 3. 40, Muf 120. 42) and al-Musayyab Muf 11. 5 (= Geyer 11. 5), and a smooth, balanced, well-rounded maysir arrow by al-Ḥārith b. Ḥillizah Muf 62. 10 (= Krenkow 9. 10). [60] The emendation proposed by the Editor of the Cairene dīwān, musmad, can perhaps be paralleled by Ṭarafah Ahl 4. 35, ka-mirdāti ṣakhrīn min ṣafīhīn musammadi; cf. also Imru' al-Qays Ibr 12. 10, 'alā l-samdi. [61].

Dhakīr indicates both that it is as large and as hard as a male's, but also, perhaps, that it is, like iron, "of the toughest and best

quality and strongest" (Lane 970, sub dhakar). If al-salikh, a rare word, is adopted for al-safih, then yaqrīdu would seem to be more germane to the context than yafrisū.

49-50: Al-Aṣma'ī: and flinty tracts. The geography of these lines is confused and obscure -- there is not much evidence for some of the places. Al-Qanān (49) does not accord with the location of the other toponyms mentioned. The asses pass by al-Sa'd (al-Bakrī 602 [sub al-sarā'im] and 787, Yāqūt 3 91: it is three miles distant from Medina), which is to the north of their passage, and Marawrah (al-Bakrī 520, Yāqūt 4 505-506) and Ḥafīr, to the south: this means that they travel directly south from Arīk (39). The Editor of the Cairene dīwān suggests that Ḥafīr (Yāqūt 2 187 and 5 732) is situated between Mecca and Medina, but this is scarcely informative. The migration route contained in Abū Du'ād 34. 1-3 is instructive:

1. Awhashat min surūbi qawm-ī ti'āru
fa-arūmun fa-shābatun fa-l-sitāru
2. Ba'da mā kāna sirbun qawm-ī hīnan
la-humu l-nakhlū kullu-hā wa-l-bihāru
3. Fa-ilā l-dūri fa-l-marawrāti min-hum
fa-hafīrun fa-na'imun fa-l-diyāru

Al-Dhināb, cf. Sinān b. Abī Hārithah Muf 100. 4 and 5, lying in the territory of Ghatafān, is in the vicinity of Ḥarrat Laylā to the north of Khaybar. Al-Qanān (50) is due east from the Ḥarrat Laylā. Even for such territorial, magnificent running machines as the feral asses, this is an extraordinary route. It does not, however, defy credence: the developmental stage of the tradition at which Ka'b composed his poems is to be conceived of as more prone to hyperbole than that of his predecessors, and he endows this Vignette with a majestic sweep, displaying the depth of his antiquarian learning. By the time the asses reach al-Dhināb, where the hunter is firmly esconsed, awaiting the arrival of his prey, they are

nearing a state of exhaustion. In order to reach al-Qanān, it is imperative for them to go to water there. If al-Qanān in verse 35 signals the depiction of the ass, safe and secure after the harrowing journey narrated here, then the sophistication of the poet's structuring of the vignette is admirable.

In terms of the inner logic of the poem, introduced as it is by the topic of the shrewish wife whose reproaches of her husband are unfounded but deeply injurious all the same, then this tableau resembles the description of the master stallion in Imru' al-Qays Ahl 10, no. 6 post.

I have found no parallel for tirād: mā' tarid is "water in which beasts have waded and in which they have voided their urine and dung" (Lane 1839).

51. For the name 'Amīr, cf. no. 4 v. 8 ante. It is interesting to note the recurrence of a similar phenomenon with regard to a famous hunter in a Zulu panegyric extolling Senzangakhona, one of the most celebrated Zulu ancestors:

Buffalo that goes overlooking the fords,
He is like Mzingeli of the Mfekana people.

Senzangakhona is said always to be on the move, like the famous hunter Mzingeli. [62]

It is possible to construe al-khudr as an epithet, similar to ibnu l-bulaydah in the above-mentioned poem of Zuhayr, designating the hunter as someone well acquainted with the lay of the land, although al-Khudr is a well-attested proper name, being a fractional group of the Muḥarib b. Khasafah, a sub-sect of the Qays 'Aylān, a subdivision of Muḍar. [63] This appellation of a hunter recurs in al-Shammākh 8. 18 (= H.H. Bräu, "Die Bogen-Qasidah von al-Shammākh", WZKM 33 (1926), v.17: p.79 & 88) [64]; cf. also al-Shammākh 1. 16,

'Āmirī of a hunter, and Rabi'ah Muf 38. 16, where the hunter is identified as Qays Abū 'Āmir.

57. This line is devoid of any sense as a conclusion to the poem and is of no relevance to the depiction of the hunter after he has fired his arrow. Line 56, with its repetition of nadhīr implies that the asses escape, as comparison with no. 1 v. 48 ante reveals, whereas line 57 is more appropriate to the picture of the anticipant hunter, in which the topos of his prowess in killing animals is common (e.g. no. 1 vv. 41 & 45) as is the expectant scouring of the trail to water (e.g. no. 2 v. 22): compare further Ka'b Kow 7. 14-25, discussed in Appendix Three. Accordingly, I have transposed this verse to between 51 and 52, in order not to disrupt Ka'b's description of the hunter's bow and arrows.

lāsiq, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 40. 20 (= Ibr 30. 20), tarā l-turba min-hu lāsiqan kulla malsaqi (of the soil through which a scout crawls to espy a herd of wild asses); Ka'b Kowalski 7. 14 (= Cairo p.99, v.26), lāsiqan lusūqa l-burāmi, (a hunter) 'persistently sticking /to his spot/ like a tick'.

kala'a, 'to watch closely, guard': cf. Zuhayr Ahl 18. 15 (= Qab 12. 15, Th p.206, v.10), Qab 21. 5 (= Th 338, v. 5), makla', Abū Kabīr Bajraktarević 1. 46 (= Farrāj p.1069, v.44), al-Mutanakhkhil Hell 6. 6, kālī', al-Mu'attal Kos 129. 7, kilā'. [66] By extension the root comes to mean 'pasture-ground' (as in Zuhayr Mu'allaqah 41 [= Ahl 16. 40]). As with the use of hazīrah in no.2 v. 22, the verb kala'a bears various nuances in this context: the hunter watches the trail as closely as he would if he were guarding a much valued possession; the trail is the hunter's 'pasture' which he guards carefully; the hunter's wakeful scrutiny is akin to the tormented, sleepless lover beset by anxiety: as Muraqqish al-Aṣghar's use of the verb, discussed in note 66, suggests, there may be a semantic connection with the phrase yughfī fuwāqan.

It is difficult to determine whether the temporal designator fuwāq,

'the time between two milkings of a camel' (cf. al-A'shā 32. 14, al-Ṭirimmāh 34. 21, of an oryx doe feeding her calf) indicates a long or a short period of time, in view of the fact that "some camel owning people milk six times a day, some only once every 2-3 days" (Wilson Camel 155), depending on the lactational yield of the camel. Musil Rwala Bedouin 88, although he does not explicitly state the frequency of the milkings, seems to suggest that the Rwala milk their camels at least once a day, milk being their chief form of nourishment: "from one female camel the amount of milk which can be obtained each day is from one to seven liters". Fuwāq, then, may designate a duration of two to three days or, if the camel is milked six times a day, approximately two to three hours. If aqhfā means to close the eyes in sleep, then it is natural to assume that the hunter has gone for a long period without any sleep -- the phrase would be nonsensical otherwise. However, aqhfā may also mean simply 'to close the eyes' and Lane 2463 profers a somewhat more scientific definition of fuwāq, viz. "the time between the opening of one's hand and the grasping with it the udder of the camel: or when the milker grasps the udder and then lets it go, in milking". The phrase would then mean that the hunter does not close his eyes, not even to blink, which would then accord with the intensity of his gaze, as expressed in yakla'u.

52. Al-Aḥwal: though he never shows himself. Akhshan is unusual, the fletched feathers elsewhere being commended for their sleekness (cf. hushūr in 53); it seems to imply that they are ruffled, perhaps indicating that the arrow has been used often. If the poet intends to suggest that the arrow is of inferior craftsmanship, it is difficult to reconcile with the reading of Cairo and Kowalski, viz. 'never missing the target', unless the hunter's aim is so true that he always hits the mark, despite the limitations imposed upon him by inferior equipment. Al-Aḥwal's vocalisation renders this unnecessary: cf. Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 16. 9, where the hunter is described as khafiyyu l-shakhsi.

Harra is common in an armigerous context: Zuhayr Ahl 14. 16 (= Qab 2. 16, Th p.96, v.16), 'Āmir 5. 7, al-A'shā 15. 33 (of vituperation). It describes the master stallion's fear of the sirocco (samūm) in Rabī'ah Muf 38. 10.

53. For the description of the hunter's nervous fingering of his arrows, compare Ka'b 12. 27, yugallibu hashrātin wa-yakhtāru nābilun//mina l-rīshi mā ltaffat 'alay-hi l-qawādīmu. For azraq of an arrow or spear-head, cf. Schwarzlose 313, 'Antarah Ahl Frag 18. 3 (= Mawlawī 30. 3).

Māhil: al-Ṭirimmāh 4. 15, of the dead fawn of a gazelle; bi-l-'uyūni: Imru' al-Qays Mu'allaqah 69 (= Ahl 48. 64, Ibr 1. 58), bi-'ayn-i, al-Ḥārith Mu'allaqah 6, bi-'aynay-ka; ramma: 'Adī 125. 4, ramma-hu l-bārī, of an unfeathered arrow; Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 24. 10, the mending of a well and, metaphorically, ramm in 'Abdah Muf 26. 48.

On hashr, 'slender', 'evenly, closely trimmed feathers' [67], cf. Schwarzlose 183 & 304, Ka'b 12. 27 (= Cairo p.136, v.27) (hashrāt), Dhū l-Isba' Muf 29. 8 (maḥshūrah), Abū Kabīr Bajraktarević 1. 43 (= Farrāj p.1069, v.43) (ḥasri l-qawādīmi), Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 93. 43, Mulayh Well 275. 5.

The activities of the gayn are multifarious, as is amply attested in the dīwān of Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah: the forging of spear-heads (1. 57), the vending of iron spear-heads and feet (5. 2), the burnishing of blades (10. 21); cf. Schwarzlose 157 and further Abū Shihāb Kos 21. 15, the replacement of frayed damascened scabbards. It is clear that the smith has repaired, i.e. restored, the arrows by sharpening them on a whetstone (sullabī, 54): one might perhaps have expected the hunter to mend his own equipment, as is described in no. 1, vv. 46 & 47 and no. 2, v. 27. As Ka'b 12. 37 (= Cairo p.136, v.37) (wa-asbaḥa yabqhi naṣla-hu wa-nadiyya-hu//fariqayni shattā wa-hwa asfānu wājimu) illustrates, the shaft would need

mending more often than the head.

54. This line should be compared with Ka'b Kow 12. 28 (= Cairo p.136, v.28): ṣadarna riwā'an 'an asinnati sullabin//yaqī'na wa-yaqtūrna l-simāma salājimu. Shariq ('saturated, overflowing': Abū Khirāsh Hell 10. 2, of the eyes): as is clear from 'Awf b. 'Aṭiyyah Aṣm 60. 8, of raw camel flesh dripping with blood, and al-Abahḥ b. Murrah Kos 137. 5, (idhā shariqa l-maqātilu bi-l-kulūmi), the root is often used in conjunction with its concomitant notion of 'vivid redness': it may be that the poison on the arrowheads is red, or that the iron, soaked in it, gleams as if it were red.

Poisoned arrows are used by hunting peoples because they enable them "to shoot relatively large and swift arrows at short range with small, weak bows, and reduces the distance the hunter has to walk in following the animal until it drops" (Coon HP 80). [68] As the second hemistich shows, this is probably not the case here: the poet alludes to no defect in the bow, although the arrows may themselves be suspect, as 52 and 53b seem to suggest. I know of no earlier reference to poisoned arrows than those contained in the dīwān of Ka'b: cf. Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 16. 9, where simam is a metonymy for poisoned arrows and not a metaphorical prolepsis as Lewin 200 claims ("met. of piercing points, deadly wounds") -- it is, furthermore, quite possible that the heads of the yazani spears (cf. Schwarzlose 220) of line 22 of this poem, also claimed by Lewin to be a metaphorical usage, have actually been daubed with poison. [69] The most common form of poison used by hunting peoples is vegetable, although the Maidu of Central California, "poison their deer-arrows with rattlesnake venom" (Coon HP 80). The hunter described in Ka'b Kow 12 19-20, 25-38, (= Cairo p.136, v.19-20, 25-38) delays firing until the asses have entered the watering-hole: cf. no. 1, vv. 41-52.

sullabī, or sullab: cf. Tufayl 1. 58, Imru' al-Qays Ahl 35. 13 (=

Ibr 5. 12), Schwarzlose 233, 239 & 312; rakūd, 'spurring on': cf. Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 5. 35 (wa-ta'nin ka-rakdi l-khayli), Schwarzlose 275; a bow is designated tahūr because it "shoots the arrow far" (Schwarzlose 275), and a similar usage of the adjective is to be found in Tarafah Mu'allagah 33 (= Ahl 4. 31), of the eyes of his camel. However, it also denotes swiftness: Bishr 18. 10, of a mare, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 4. 13, of a cloud, and I have given this signification priority, given that Schwarzlose's gloss is based on a late explanation afforded by al-Tha'ālibī. The sarā', a type of wood commonly used for bows, is often singled out as being curved or bent, hence suitable for reflexed bows: Tufayl 1. 17, 'Awf b. al-Aḥwaṣ Muf 35. 8, Abū Ṣakhr Well 257. 25. Cf. further Zuhayr Ahl 15. 15 (= Qab 3. 15, Th p.124, v.15), al-A'shā 2. 72, Abū Ṣakhr Well 252. 21, Schwarzlose 255.

55. Sharh: /resounding like/ a bell; wide in the grip (so that it fills the hand). Hinw, 'the arc of a bow': Tufayl 1. 17, further suggesting that the bow is reflexed.

The second hemistich is somewhat obscure. I have translated Kowalski's reading which has also been restored from al-Aḥwal's corrupt tagnisu. The reading given in the MS and offered in Cairo is tanbidu. Nabada, according to Schwarzlose 250, means to gauge the resilience of a bow from the creaking of the wood; Kazimirski 1185 glosses it as meaning "to cause a bow to groan by forcefully drawing the string and suddenly letting it go"; anbada is, according to Bevan Muf 3 325, "to let an arrow fly", as in Aws 31. 35: this is also Bräü's rendering of the verb in al-Shammākh 8. 37 (BQ p.82 and 92, v.36); according to Kazimirski 1185 it means the same as Form I; Schwarzlose 250 translates the proverbial inbādun bi-qhayri tawtīrin as "er lässt den gespannten Bogen los, ohne dass er mit einer Sehne versehen ist".

There seem to be two possibilities: (1) the bow is so tightly braced that when grasped with the left hand the wood creaks

(taqbīdu); (ii) as the drawn bow-string is released, it twangs and the wood, held by the left hand, creaks upon the release of the pressure (tanbīdu/tunbīdu).

Aws 31. 35, idha-mā ta'āṭaw-hā sami'ta li-sawṭi-hā//idhā anbaḍu 'an-hā na'īman wa-azmalā, and al-Shammākh 8. 37, idhā anbaḍa l-ramūna 'an-hā tarannamat//taranumma thaklā awja'at-hā l-janā'izu, seem to support (ii). A factor against the likelihood of this is that, unless the hunter is left-handed he would draw the bow-string with his right hand, holding the grip in his left. Moreover tahta would have to be construed as meaning ba'da or 'inda and this as far as I am aware would be unparalleled.

If taqbīdu is read (with the left-hand grasping the grip-handle of the bow), then several rajaz couplets from a poem by the Hudhalī 'Amr Dhū l-Kalb (Kos 109. 4b-8 = Farrāj p.575, vv.8-12) may be adduced in support of (i):

8. wa fī l-shimālī samḥatun mina l-nasham

9. safrā'u min aqwāsi shaybāna l-quḍum

10. ta'ijju fī l-kaffi idhā l-rāmī 'tazam

11. tarannuma l-shārifi fī ukhrā l-na'ami

12. fa-qultu khudh-hā lā shawan wa-lā sharam

9. And in my left hand I held a compliant /bow/ made of nasham,

10. Pale-yellow, of the superior, seasoned bows of Shayban,

11. Yelping in the hand when the archer strains /with the string/,

12. Like the faucial quavering of the aged she-camel among other beasts.

13. Then I said "Take that! It's neither a scratch nor a prick!".

The poet is addressing a wolf (dhi'b).

Option (ii) is attractive, though perhaps its attractiveness is

diminished by the consequently tautologous 56a. The tautology may, of course, be intentional, further implying that the noise made by the bow alerts the asses and warns them of the presence of the hunter.

56. Cairo: the five-fold array. The emendation of al-Aḥwal, al-ḥamīr, for al-khamīs, I take to be a poetic plural for dual. In light of the preceding discussions as to the development of the narrative, it is unlikely that more than two asses are involved at this stage. Al-khamīs would imply that the asses were deployed around the watering hole so as to resemble a five-part army.

The noise produced by the bow in the previous line and the thrumming of the string in this warn the asses in time for them to make good their escape. On 'azf and nadhīr, cf. no. 1 v. 48; for tarannum of a bow-string, cf. Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 22. 10 (tarannuma naqhmi dhī l-shira'i l-'atīqī). The root designates a high-pitched sound made by a number of animals: 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 28 (= Qab 2. 28, Muf 120. 30), a female ostrich, Zuhayr Qab 51. 15 (= Th p.346, v. 15), the grinding of a camel's molars is said to be like the trilling of two striped birds (if Tha'lab is correct in identifying the referent of akhtabān as the surad) [70] --, and 'Amr Dhū l-Kalb 109. 11; by musical instruments: 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 37 (= Qab 2. 37, Muf 120. 39), the mizhar, al-A'shā 55. 11, the sanj; by the human voice: Abū Kabīr Bajraktarević 4. 8 (= Farrāj p.1090, v.8), the buzzing of insects compared with a group of riders chanting in the desert wastes.

Structure

33-†35†: Introductory description; the swift, compact stallion ass grazing at the onset of summer (33 & †35†); his moulting (33).

36-47: The selection of a mate; the exhausted she-ass is driven relentlessly onward (36); description of the female (37-38); the grazing of the pair (39); her moulting

(40); the separation of the female from the herd -- the other she-asses are pregnant and are vigorous in their rejection of his advances (41-44); the impregnation of the female (45-46); her consequent rejection of his advances (47).

48-51: The journey to water; travelling by night and at midday (48); the itinerary (49-50); fear of the hunter (51).

57, 52-56: Description of the hunter; his dogged vigilance (57, 53); hunting prowess (57, 52); the weaponry -- arrows (53-54a); bow (54b-56).

56b: The escape of the asses.

Context and Interpretation

Context: The poem opens with the poet's railing wife and the declaration of her intention to be parted from the poet. He ponders her motives (1-2) and proceeds to impart to her some sage advice, exhorting her to fortitude, but she remains adamant (6-7a). In 7b-10 there follows a delineation of a hen-pecked carouser, whose wife, in the haughtiness of her temper, is described as walking like a hocked camel. A spirited injunction ordering his wife to cease in her reproof brings the section to a close (11a). In the second hemistich of this line, the poet essays self-vaunting by depicting his boldspirited sorties in a rihlah section comprising a description of the terrain traversed by his camel (11b-15) and a somewhat cursory description of it: the emphasis is on its imperviousness to the rigours of travelling (16-19). In line 19 an original transition is effected: the incipient Oryx Bull Vignette is not introduced by a standard formula of similitude, but rather, the poet portrays his camel, at sunrise -- presumably they have been

journeying throughout the night -- as startling the oryx, of which he next proceeds to treat (20-32). In line 33, however, the poet reverts to a formulaic and conventional introduction for the Wild Ass Vignette, which concludes the piece.

Interpretation: This qaṣīdah is of an experimental type which is increasingly encountered among poets of the second half of the Jāhiliyyah. The poet toys with the constellation of various themes, juxtaposing some in a manner which is intended to surprise, in view of their apparently irreconcilable subject matter -- such as, for example, nasīb and hijā' [71] --, treating others in a traditional manner, but with greater attention paid to the transitions, with an added emphasis on the transitional section, and a marked increase in allusions to earlier verse. Thus, the Oryx Buck Vignette is introduced in the novel manner outlined above, whereas the Wild Ass Vignette commences in a stereotypical fashion. However, Ka'b extends his experimentation with this qaṣīdah form further. The Wild Ass tableau is itself original in its combination of themes. I have found only one other treatment of the stallion ass's selection of a mate, viz. al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī's threnody for the Ghassanid king al-Nu'mān b. al-Hārith b. Abī Shammir (Ahl 21), q.v. post. Given the late date of this poem, composed at some time in the first decade of the seventh century, it is quite conceivable that these two poems are contemporaneous or even that Ka'b's poem antedates al-Nābighah's. It is significant that Ka'b lived amongst the Dhubyān: the topic of

the ass's selection of a mate may represent a tribal poetic idiosyncrasy. The encounter with the hunter is also somewhat unusual: the escape of the asses is implied in the final verse of the poem (as I have restored it), drawing on the traditional development of the simile -- it is quite standard practice for the poet to describe the faulty flight-path of the arrow and the hasty retreat of the asses.

In lines 1-11 of this poem, the poet depicts a wife whom he can no longer influence or control, stubborn in her resistance to his advice. In the wasf al-nāqah, the she-camel is lauded for its fortitude and endurance. In the Wild Ass Vignette, the poet depicts the stallion ass's choice of a suitable mate who complies with his desires until she conceives a foal; she is led by the stallion to water, whence they are fortunate to escape. It is difficult to deny that the latter should be understood in terms of the former and that Ka'b attempts a comprehensive reworking of these traditional components, playing one off against the other, subordinating the Oryx Bull Vignette to the rihlah, only to turn, in retrospect, his earlier transition on its head by means of a blatant contradiction, pointing up its 'artificiality'. [72]

Group Two

6. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 10. 6-12; Ibr 6. 6-12; de Slane p.29, v.6-12; Cheikho p.38, v.6-12.

Translation: de Slane 45-46.

6. Ka-ann-ī wa-rahl-ī [1] wa-l-qirāba wa-numruq-ī
'alā zahri 'ayrin wāridi l-khabirāti
7. Aranna 'alā huqbin hiyalin tarūqatin
ka-dhawdi l-ajīri l-arba'i l-na'irāti [2]
8. 'Anīfin bi-tajmī'i l-darā'iri fāhishin
shatīmin ka-dhalqi l-zujji dhī dhamarāti
9. Wa-ya'kulna buhmā qhaddatan [3] habashiyyatan
wa-yashrabna barda l-mā'i fī l-sabarāti
10. Fa-awrada-hā mā'an qalīlan anīsu-hu
yuhādhirna 'amran sāhiba l-quturāti
11. Yaluttu [4] l-ḥasā lattan bi-sumrin razīnatin
mawārīna la kuzmin wa-la ma'irāti
12. Wa-yurkhīna adhnāban ka-anna furū'a-hā
'urā khilalin mashhūratin dafirāti [5]

Variant Readings

- [1]. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: wa-ridf-ī.
[2]. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: l-ashirāti.
[3]. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: ja'datan.
[4]. Ahl, Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: taluttu.
[5]. Ahl: safirāti.

Translation

6. As if I, my saddle, my scabbard and my saddle-pad were
/mounted/ on the back of a wild ass going to water in the
stone reservoirs;
7. Loudly he cried to white-girded, barren /females/ of an age to
be covered, like a group of four spiritedly frisky
she-camels under the care of a hireling --
8. Brutal in the mustering of his consorts, grossly foul,
ugly-faced, like the edge of the spear's iron foot, full of
braying threats --
9. Though they were eating sappy buhmā, as dark as an Abyssinian,
and drinking cold water in the chilly mornings.
10. So he brought them to water, scarcely visited by people, on
their guard against 'Amr, the master of the wattlings;
11. He crushed the pebbles vigorously with heavy brown /hooves/
worn smooth, hard and resilient, neither short nor hairless,
12. And they let fly tails, the branches of which resembled the
coils of celebrated scabbards, interwoven and braided.

Commentary

6. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: and my postern pack. I have not
found any other early use of the noun khabraḥ, which, according to
Groom Topography 138, means "a stone reservoir"; khavar is soft
ground, with stony patches, where the going is arduous; 'Antarah
Mu'allaqah 71 (= Ahl 21. 77, Mawlawī 1. 77), 'Amr b al-Aswad Aṣm 21.
12, al-Ḥuṣayn b. al-Humām Muf 12. 13, used graphically of a

battle-field strewn with corpses and shattered lances.

7. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: nimble. Tarūqah is used of she-camels that are old enough and of good enough quality to be used for breeding: 'Amīrah b. Ju'al Muf 63. 2. Similarly, the plural of the Active Participle turrāq is used by al-Tirimmāh 4. 38, of stud stallion-camels. It may be used here as a transferred epithet, semantically anticipating the simile in the second hemistich, just as hiyāl is more commonly, though not exclusively, used of camels than any other animal.

Ashir is used of a nimble oryx by al-Marrār b. Munqidh Muf 16. 21. A cognate, ashrā', occurs in the Mu'allaqah of al-Hārith b. Hillizah, 45, of umniyyah, 'desire'. The simile expresses two basic notions: the maturity of the mares and the colour of their pelage; the male is likened to the drover, calling the camels together.

8. Some of the qualities ascribed to the asses in this line are generally associated with humans; 'anīf: Imru' al-Qays Mu'allaqah 57 (= Ahl 48. 52, Ibr 1. 54), of an unskilful, heavy-handed rider; Subay' b. al-Khatīm Muf 112. 3, of a wealthy man's treatment of a pauper; al-Burayq Well 169. 6, of a brave's treatment of his opponent; Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 18. 15, of a speech; fāhish: Ṭarafah Mu'allaqah 66 (= Ahl 4. 65), of a niggard; Imru' al-Qays Mu'allaqah 34 (= Ahl 48. 31, Ibr 1. 34), of the neck of a beloved; Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 5. 24, of women's envy (tafāhasha); Muraqqish al-Akbar Muf 50. 15, of cursing and swearing during a maysir game; darā'ir: a rare word in early verse -- cf. Abū Dhu'ayb 5. 24, of the envious wives of a haramī, and a verse ascribed to a certain Khidāsh (presumably b. Zuhayr al-'Āmirī) quoted in Muf 1 403, of the envy of women, very similar in tone to Abū Dhu'ayb's line.

The root dh-m-r occurs (in the sixth form) in an oft-quoted verse of 'Antarah's Mu'allaqah (65 = Ahl 21. 72, Mawlawī 1. 72), of two

advancing forces hurling abuse and threats at one another, and of a thundering cloud bank in Abū Ṣakhr Well 250. 48 (dhamirāt). Fāḥish and dhī dhamarāt refer primarily to the ass's braying, with an added tone of moral disapproval. For the sentiment, cf. Qur'ān 31. 19: wa-qṣid fī mashyi-ka wa-qhdud min sawti-ka inna ankara l-aswāti la-sawtu l-hamīri, 'be direct in your walk and restrain your voice, for surely the most abhorrent of voices is the voice of the ass'.
[73]

9. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: 'thick, curly-haired', which reading I prefer, given its metaphorical consonance with the epithet habashiyyah. Ja'd is occasionally used of vegetation (Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 51 (= Ibr 3. 38), al-Ṭirimmāḥ 19. 1, Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 90. 17. Imru' al-Qays's image is quite individual and picturesque.

10. Quturāt, cf. no. 1, v. 44 ante.

11. Ahl, Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: they crushed. I have emended the text to read yaluttu with Ahlwardt's MS 'G' (Cod. Goth. 547) [74], for reasons which will become apparent in my interpretation of the piece.

Imru' al-Qays endows the adjectives in this verse with a semantic resonance that is consonant with other notions prevalent in the description; razīn, used of hilm by Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 7. 13 and of dall, 'coquetry', by Iyās b. Saḥm Kos 102. 4, is a residual of the personification of line 8, as is, more tenuously, mawār, the masculine singular of which is used of the persevering man, ṣabūr, who is flexible in the face of adversity: Mālik b. Khālīd Kos 78. 17. This epithet, however, has, for the context, two other important significations: marn, used of the smearing of a camel's pads to render them more supple and durable 'Abdah b. al-Ṭabīb Muf 26. 52 (cf. Yazīd b. al-Ṣa'iq Aṣm 45. 1 [tamrin] and Sā'ida b. Ju'ayyah Hell 10. 28 [mārin], of whips and leather sandals,

respectively, which have been so treated); mārīn and its plural murrān are designations of the shaft of a spear ('Abīd 12. 19, Ḥājib b. Ḥabīb Muf 110. 7). This latter application continues the metaphor contained in sumr, wherein the ass's legs, in their colour and slenderness, are said to be lances, fashioned from brown reeds.

12. Ahl: empty /of their swords/. The 'urā are the coiled arabesques of the filigree embroidered upon a leather scabbard [75].

Dafirāt ostensibly refers to the braided scabbards but is also connected semantically with the hair -- the furū', 'branches', of this line -- of the asses' tails, as the use of dafā'ir, 'plaits of a woman's hair', in Tufayl 6. 5 indicates.

Structure

6-9: Introductory description; the wild ass and his harem grazing in a fertile region of luxuriant vegetation (6b & 9); his brutal dominance (7b-8).

10-12: The journey to water; its remoteness (10a); their fear of the hunter (10b); the itinerary described (11-12).

Context and Interpretation

Context: A 15 line poem in which the Wild Ass Vignette predominates. The dhikr al-atlāl is conspicuous for being devoid of any explicit association with a beloved or a tribe. Instead the poet's devastating grief (3-5) is emphasized and solace is sought by further pursuance of the desert journey: the stark juxtaposition of these two movements renders the abruptness of the poet's resolve extremely dramatic, pointing up the nihilism of the last five lines. The Tableau is capped with a two line camel description --

the poet's journey is at an end, hence the emaciation of the she-camel is brought to the fore -- and with the topic of the poet's martial prowess as represented by his notched and dented sword, the consequence of much hewing of limbs.

Interpretation: This condensed poem is a masterpiece of semantic polysemy in which the picture drawn of the asses is vital to any appreciation of the work. As Thilo Ortsnamen 34, remarks, the catalogue of place-names given in lines 1-2 is forced slightly out of sequence by the constraints of the rhyme-word, since the Hard Plain of the Wild Asses (Burqat al-'Iyarāt) lies before 'Ārimah if one is travelling from the south, as the poet indubitably is. From al-Bakarāt, he moves north to al-'Iyarāt and thence to 'Ārimah, whence further north to Ghawl, south-east to Ḥillīt and then continuing north as far as 'Āqil and the Lowland Where the Waymarks Stand (khabt dhī l-amarāt) [76]. It is clear however that burqat al-'iyarāt anticipates 'ayr in line 6 and the ensuing description, in which al-ḥaṣā (11) connects with al-ḥaṣā (3). These connectors are off-set by the antithesis implicit in the contents of the desolate camp-side movement and the Wild Ass vignette. In this latter the stallion is not portrayed as losing control for a single instant of his harem or of their destiny (represented by the hunter 'Amr), as he drives his four mates from lush pastures to a watering hole. This is unusual, given that the quest for water is generally portrayed as beginning in the summer season, when the asses can no longer subsist on the withered vegetation: unlike the first movement, this movement is full of lush fertility.

The syntactic structure of the episode is markworthy: the master stallion is first described and his harem follow his lead -- he calls to them and musters them (7-8); they have been pasturing (9) but he leads them to water (10a); they fear the hunter -- but the male does not; he, in the lead, crushes the rocks with his hooves (11), whereas they run behind him, their tails streaming. This alternation, syntactically giving precedence to the master stallion throughout, is quite rigorous and for that reason I should prefer to read yaluttu for taluttu. The male is personified to an exceptional extent and the images used of his physique and behaviour also derive from the martial domain.

The initial description refers to the ass on the way to water (6b), after which the poet turns to the events preparatory to their departure in search of water (7-8). The master stallion functions as an antithetical foil to the disconsolate poet of lines 1-5; the poet is unlike the stallion ass in that he has, it transpires, been unsuccessful in the management of his relations with a beloved, or in his attempts to locate a tribe. The poet, rather feebly perhaps, tries to derive comfort from the fact that he has successfully completed his journey and has proved indomitable in combat. The extended simile is a paradigm, emblematic of male domination, perhaps an instance of wishful thinking on the part of a poet not renowned for his respect for women.

7. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 34. 12-25; Ibr 31. 12-25; de Slane p.46, v.12-25.

Translation: de Slane p. 67-68.

12. A-dhalika am jawnun [1] yutāridu ātunan
hamalna fa-adnā [2] hamli-hinna durūsu
13. Tawā-hu dtimāru l-shaddi fa-l-batnu shāzibun
mu'alan ilā [3] l-matnayni fa-hwa khamīsu
14. Bi-hājibi-hi kadhun mina l-darbi jālibun
wa-hāriku-hu mina l-kidāmi hasīsu
15. Ka-anna sarāta-hu wa-juddata zahri-hi
kanā'inu yajri fawqa-hunna [4] dalīsu
16. Wa-ya'kulna min qawwin lu'ā'an wa-ribbatan
tajabbara ba'da l-akli fa-hwa namīsu
17. Tutīru [5] 'ifā'an min nasilin ka-anna-hu
sudusun atārat-hu l-riyāhu wa-khūsu
18. Tasayyafa-hā hattā idhā lam yasugh la-hu [6]
nasiyyun [7] bi-a'lā hā'ilin wa-qasīsu
19. Yughālīna [8] fī-hi l-jaz'a law lā hawājirun
janādibu-hā sar'ā la-hunna nasīsu [9]
20. Aranna 'alay-hā qarīban wa-ntahat la-hu
tuwālatu arsāqhi l-yadayni nahūsu
21. Fa-awrada-hā min akhiri l-layli mashraban
bi-lāthiqa khudran mā'u-hunna qalīsu
22. Fa-yashrabna anfāsan wa-hunna khawā'ifun
wa-tur'adu min-hunna l-kulā wa-l-farīsu
23. Fa-asdara-hā ta'lū l-nijāda 'ashiyyatan

aqabbu ka-miqḷā'ī l-walīdi khamīsu [10]

24. Fa-jahshun 'alā āthāri-hinna [11] mukhallafun

wa-jahshun ladā makrūhi-hinna [12] waqīsu

25. Wa-asdara-hā bādī l-nawā'idhi qarīhun

aqabbu ka-karri l-andariyyi mahīsu

Variant Readings

- [1]. Ibr (the sharḥ): ja'bun.
- [2]. Ibr, de Slane: fa-arba.
- [3]. Ibr: 'alā.
- [4]. Ibr, de Slane: bayna-hunna.
- [5]. Ibr: yutīru.
- [6]. Ibr, de Slane: la-hā.
- [7]. Ibr, de Slane: halliyyun.
- [8]. Ibr: taghālabna; de Slane: taghālayna.
- [9]. Ibr, de Slane: fasīsu.
- [10]. Ibr, de Slane: shakhīsu.
- [11]. Ibr, de Slane: adbāri-hinna.
- [12]. Ibr, de Slane: makarri-hinna.

Translation

- 12. Is it that or a sandy-brown /ass/, driving on females who have conceived (small /foetuses/ are the nearest /to parturition/ of their pregnancies)?
- 13. Rendered lean by the emaciation of galloping, so that his belly is spare, is raised high on his sides and and is hungering;
- 14. On his brow is a scratch, forming a scab, from a blow /with

the hooves/ and the fur on his withers has been torn out
through biting,

15. His back and its dorsal stripe resemble quivers on
which flows shimmering /metal/.
18. He passed the summer with them until when the dried nasī in
the upper reaches of Ḥā'il and gasīs became difficult for
him to swallow --
16. They were browsing on fresh, tender greenery in Qaww (when
browsed it sprouted afresh only to be torn up again)
19. And would have continued competing there for the succulent
roots, were it not for blazing noontides when the droning
cicadas were prostrated --
20. He called to them on his night journey to water and they
turned to him, long in the pastern, without offspring,
17. Moulting, their pelage flew from them, like a sadūs /hood/
tossed by the wind and /woven/ leaves.
21. So he brought them to a watering hole at the end of the night
-- plentiful green springs, their waters swollen.
22. And they drunk in draughts, in a state of fear, their kidneys
and the muscles below their shoulder-blades /heaving/,
stricken with terror.
23. He brought them out climbing the Najd --, lean like a boy's
bat, large and bulky.
24. An /aborted/ foal was left behind in their tracks and another,
in their affliction, its neck broken and twisted.
25. He brought them out, displaying his molars, in his sixth year,
lean, like a twisted andarī rope, smooth.

Commentary

12. C, de Slane: the most developed of their pregnancies. Durūs is a difficult word. The commentary as edited by Ibrāhīm suggests that it is a metaphorical use of diṛs, normal plural adrās, 'a young jerboa' -- cf. al-Ṭirimmāh 41, Abū Dharrah Kos 125. 4 [77]. The fetuses are as small as jerboas, resembling them in appearance. This is corroborated by Ka'b Kowalski 12. 46, where the occurrence of yarbū' supports the reading of Ibr and de Slane.

13. Shadd denotes a particularly vehement pace and, like shāzib and idtāmara, is commonly used in the context of a horse. For khimās, plural of khamīs, of she-asses cf. 'Uqba b. Sābiq Asm 9. 20.

14. The wounds were presumably incurred during the mating alluded to in line 12.

15. Ibr, de Slane: between which. Juddah, 'a streak, stripe', refers to the ass's dark chestnut dorsal stripe. Dalīs I construe as an adjectival substantive describing the shimmering metal-work with which the quivers are adorned.

16-19. I have rearranged the order of these verses: the temporal and narrative sequence of the text, although well established in the MSS, is confused. I have used the structural sequence of Imru' al-Qays Ahl 10, discussed above, as a model, and have paid particular attention to Rabī'ah b. Maqrūm Muf 39. 20-31, a passage which, in several of its aspects, may have been modelled on the vignette under discussion.

Lines 16 & 19 treat of the reluctance of the mares to move from their grazing ground because it is a place of safety. The summer drought primarily affects the stallion but not the females -- theirs is the fresh herbage and they fight for it -- and it is his decision

to take the risk of going to water, necessitated by his surfeit of herbage to the exclusion of water: line 19 suggests that the blazing midday sun proves too much even for the females. Line 17 should be transposed to after line 20, by analogy with line 23 of Rabi'ah's poem.

18. Ibr, de Slane: for them. The toponyms Ḥā'il and Qaww are problematic. The most plausible identification of Qaww is as Thilo Qaww (I) (Ortsnamen 53, 80-81): this is supported by the contiguity of 'Unayzah (line 3) to Uthal and Nibaj, both peaks in the vicinity of Qaww (I). Contrary to Thilo who asserts that the Qaww (II) which occurs in a wild ass context in the aforementioned poem of Rabi'ah b. Maqrūm, line 25, lies to the east of Ma'qūlah in the vicinity of al-Baḥrayn, I should be inclined, on the basis of Rabi'ah's juxtaposition of Qaww and Uthāl, to identify it as Qaww (I). Thilo's Ḥā'il (I) and (II) are more or less equidistant from Qaww, although I should favour the northernmost of the two, Ḥā'il (I), in view of Doughty's remarks on the type of vegetation known as naṣī referred to below. There is still some difficulty, however, in that Qaww, in the region of Qaṣīm, is no small distance from Ḥā'il, situated to the south of Ajā' [78], and this is arguably unlike Jāhilī poetic practice. Ḥā'il may, however, be used primarily as a descriptive toponym, chosen for its semantic resonance -- the notion of 'barrenness' which it would then convey is consonant with the references to pregnancy, child bearing and abortion of lines 12, 20 and 24 respectively (it is probably not over imaginative to bring into this context the affinity between Qaww and the notion of desolation expressed by the root q-w-y). I am inclined to suspect that the poet has chosen Ḥā'il for this reason, despite the implausibility involved in the geographical context of the panel. The possible word-play between this noun and the variant halī (Ibr, de Slane), which, according to Lane, is "what has become dry and white of the plant called naṣī", tends to corroborate this suggestion.

Nasī, a grass of the Aristida species (used as camel fodder: al-Khaṣafī Muf 91. 14; the down of sand-grouse compared therewith: al-Ṭirimmāḥ 1. 48; its heads compared to the colour of an oryx kid: al-Ṭirimmāḥ 4. 16), is "mentioned by Doughty under this name as abundant on the high plateaus of Najd bordering on the Hijaz on the east" (Lyall Muf 2 260). [79] 'Adī 11. 3 furnishes some information concerning qasis, associating it with the kam' which is said to grow at its roots.

16. For lu'ā', "tender, sprouting plants, fresh succulent greenery" (WKAS), cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 3. 18, Ḍābi' b. al-Ḥārith Asm 63. 23. I understand tajabbara as metaphorical, the sprouting shoot imagined as a bone which has been set after breaking; I can find no ancient parallel for namīs but it is clear that the herbage is grazed immediately after sprouting. Appropriate too is ribbah which Lane 1005 explains as "a number of plants which do not dry up in the summer, remaining green in the winter and the summer". This is, then, admirable browsing land which should render a visit to the water-hole unnecessary.

19. Ahl: and would have continued delaying there (over the succulent roots); de Slane: and would have delayed there. As the application of the participle jāzi' to animals by Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 90. 22 (an antelope) and Dhu l-Rumma 16. 13 (of wild beasts) suggests, browsing on jaz' should in itself provide sufficient moisture.

20. I have presumed the singular adjectives of the second hemistich to have a plural signification. However, with a slight modification nahūs can become the plural nuhus with the second dammah lengthened on account of the metre. The more usual form of the plural is nahā'is (cf. al-A'shā 34. 15; al-Ḥuṭay'ah 84. 4) although nuhus is encountered in 'Uqbah b. Sābiq Asm 9. 20. Nahūs is a common designation of the she ass (al-Nābighah Ahl 23. 18, Chapter 4 post, Bishr 39. 7, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 31, al-A'shā 4. 43

& 31. 9) and is glossed as "animal that has not recently conceived" (Bevan Muf 3 327), a gloss which is incompatible with line 12 of this poem and which is further contradicted by 'Adī 90. 1b, wa-nahūsan samḥajan fī-hā 'aqaq, 'a long-legged she ass with a foetus in her womb'. It is likely, therefore, that the epithet designates an animal that has not recently given birth: the mare conceives every two years.

17. The sadūs is a Persian hood dyed with indigo (Dozy Vêtements 201), whereas khūs, as in 'Adī 11. 15, are leaves, of palm trees and the like, woven to form baskets and mats. The two elements of the simile capture two aspects of the moulting hair -- its colour is compared with a sadūs, and its texture and shape with the palm-leaves.

21. Qalīs: used of sweat by Mulayḥ Well 271. 20; qallās: of rising water by an anonymous rajaz poet, quoted in Muf 1 283. I have found no other occurrences of balthaq. The pools are green because they are covered with tuhlub, 'duckweed'.

22. The farā'is (singular farīṣah) are the muscles and cartilages that lie just below the shoulder-blades of an animal or a man (cf. Abū Du'ād 26. 8). They are singled out as especially vulnerable to attack, being the target for a hunter's arrows and a warrior's spear-thrust: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 29. 4 (= Ibr 17. 4), 'Antarah Mu'allaqah 41 (= Ahl 21. 47, Mawlawī 1. 47), al-Nābighah Ahl 5. 15, q.v. Chapter 3 post, of an oryx piercing a dog with its horn, al-A'shā 19. 19, Umayyah b. Abī 'A'idh Kos 92. 60. It is also, mostly among somewhat later poets, regularly associated with terror, often in a rather formulaic combination with tur'adu: Tarafah Mu'allaqah 101 (= Ahl 4. 100) (al-farā'isu tur'adu), al-A'shā 80. 7 (lam tudh'ar farā'isu-hā), Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 8. 20 (farā'isu-hu min khīfati l-mawti tur'adu), al-Tirimmāḥ 18. 14 (bi-hā l-farā'isu tur'adu), Abū Dabb Well 151. 5 (wa-l-farā'isu tur'ad). The reference to the the kidneys is exceptional.

23. It is difficult to reconcile the temporal sequence of this line with that of line 21 -- it would seem that the asses depart from the watering hole before they have even entered it! 'Ashiyyatan can only mean "in the evening" and this is wholly incompatible with min akhiri l-layli (21). It is possible that this word has been used as a filler, a stop-gap, by a transmitter or that it has ousted some epithet applicable to the master stallion or the pace at which he leads them to safety. The formular nature of the second hemistich (aqabbu ka-miqḷā'i l-walīdi) may confirm the suspicion of the presence of padding, although this is by no means a necessary assumption. The rather inappropriate repetition of khamīs -- I have elected to translate the variant shakhīs given by Ibrāhīm and de Slane (used of a stallion by Imru' al-Qays Ibr 79. 21) --, taken in conjunction with the identical syntax and similar wording of line 25, further suggests corruption. I do not favour obelizing the line: the somewhat repetitious nature of 23 and 25 can be justified in terms of the dramatic impact of the sequence.

24. Ibr, de Slane: at their rear; Ibr, de Slane: where they returned. W-q-s means 'to snap, crush, break': 'Amr b. Kulthūm Mu'allaqah 66, 'Antarah Mu'allaqah 24 (= Ahl 21. 29, Mawlawī 1. 29) (the camel-borne poet 'crushes' the hummocks), Muraqqish al-Akbar Muf 51. 8 (the eyelids of a horse crushes the flies that alight there), 'Abīd 10. 20, of a slain warrior, al-A'shā 19. 10, of strangulated animals. I understand jahsh to mean the developed foetus which, when aborted, can be identified as a foal. It seems that the terror and arduousness of the journey cause them to miscarry. It does not mean that a foal was left behind or that one fell and broke its neck.

25. The nawājīdh are the pre-molars and the molars of the ass. The dental formula for recent equids is, with respect to these teeth, (pre-molar 3-4/3, molar 3/3) x 2, i.e. 24-26 teeth, over half of the total number of teeth, viz. 40-42. (cf. Nowak & Paradiso 1157).

Qārīh is a designation used mostly of the horse, referring to one that has entered its sixth year, i.e. is fully developed. Imru' al-Qays uses it again of the stallion ass in Ahl 31. 3 (= Ibr 12. 3). Markworthy are Ka'b Kow 29. 18 (= Cairo p.239, v.18) where the poet applies the epithet to the ass's tooth: badā qārīhun min-hu wa-lam yabdu qārīhu, 'one of his sexennial /teeth/ has appeared, the other has not', and Ka'b Kow 7. 8 (= Cairo p.99, v.8), quwayriha 'amayni, the meaning of which seems to be '/a stallion/ ass which has recently entered upon his eighth year'.

Karr al-andarī and its synonym 'aqd al-andarī are quite commonplace, whether of the ass or the horse: al-Nābighah Ahl 21. 7 (= no. 9 post, 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 23 (= Qab 3. 23), Labīd 'Abbās 12. 9 (= Chāl p.1, v.9, Brock I 1. 9), Ka'b Kow 29. 18 (= Cairo p.239, v.18). The combination of the comparison with an Andarī rope and the identification of the stallion as in his sixth year in this last line is reminiscent of the line under discussion.

The similarity between the above-mentioned verse of Labīd (fa-rawwaha-hā yaqlū l-nijāda 'ashiyyatan//aqabbu ka-karri l-andariyyi shatīmu) and lines 23a and 25b of Imru' al-Qays's poem is indicative of the probable provenance of the corruption contained in line 23; the formulaic, traditional phraseology has ousted a substantive denoting pace or a more appropriate temporal designator, or has been negligently transmitted.

Contrary to the commentators and to the reworking of this simile by Rabī'ah b. Maqrūm Muf 39. 22, fa-āda muhamlajan ka-l-karri lammat//tafawuta-hu sha'amiyyatun sanā'u, I understand the Idāfah to be a poeticism for al-karr al-andarī.

Imru' al-Qays twice uses the root m-h-s of the legs of a horse (Ibr 60. 20, maḥiṣāt, Ibr 72. 18, mamḥuṣi l-shawā) and the meaning is akin to the application of maḥiṣ by Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 58 to a bow-string, 'smooth and slender': Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 5. 39 uses

the Masdar, maḥs, of a particularly strenuous pace. I have conflated these notions in my translation.

Structure

12: The journey to water; the stallion drives his pregnant harem.

13-15: Introductory description; the male is lean, bitten and scarred.

18, 16 & 19: The summer pasture; the restlessness of the master stallion, the reluctance of the harem.

20 & 17: The journey to water.

21-22: The arrival at the watering-hole; the terror of the females.

23-25: The safe departure; the aborted fetuses.

Context and Interpretation

Context: A bipartite poem consisting of a nasīb (1-5) and wasf al-nāqah (6-25). The topics of the nasīb are: the perilous quest for the beloved who has gone a great distance away (1-2); the day of departure (3) when she smiles to the poet, displaying her hair (4a) and flashing her teeth (4b-5). The transition in Ahlwardt's verse 6 is of the abrupt, assertive type, introduced by the imperative da', a traditional mark of the poet's renewed resolve, whereas in Ibrahim and de Slane 6 it takes the form of a question, hence accentuating the doubts and worries expressed in line 2 concerning the journey to the beloved. The camel description falls into three distinct segments: the camel (6-8); ostriches (9-11);

asses (12-25).

Interpretation: as this poem was not transmitted by al-Asma'i but only by Abū 'Amr al-Shaybānī and the MSS contain a wide variety of variants, it would appear possible that Ahlwardt 34 represents an imperfectly remembered or transmitted version of the original. The variants, however, do not affect the structure of the work and a case can be made for both forms of the transition of line 6. As to the integrity of the piece, the poet deploys several devices to weld his disparate strands, the most immediately apparent being semantic repetition: gulus (3) and warid (4), of the beloved's hair, echoed acoustically, though not semantically by awrada and galis (21); nasīs (8) and nasīs (Ahl 19) (a point in favour of preferring this reading to fasīs), rihlah (3) and rahl (9), a'ūb (8) and awb (11) and the repetition of sadus (5 & 17).

As noted in the discussion of line 16, the topography of the nasib and the Wild Ass Vignette is complimentary -- the asses seem to be grazing in the vicinity of the erstwhile dwelling of the beloved. The chronometry of lines 6-26 is unisonous: the poet travels at night (8b & 9b), the ostriches return to their eggs at night (11), the stallion master leads his harem to and from water at night (21).

The most striking complement is the structural deployment of the ostrich and ass insets as metaphors for the poet's quest for the beloved: the ostriches are not said to reach their goal safely,

although this is manifestly the implication; the asses, despite the loss of their unborn young, are not ambushed by a hunter and are successful in their journey to water. In this ass description the master stallion is, as in Imru' al-Qays Ahl 10, associated with weaponry (notably the quivers of line 15) and his absolute domination is attested, underscored by an alternation between the master and his mates, similar to that discussed in no. 6 (if my restoration of the textual order of the poems is valid). Although the narrative sequence of the Wild Ass Vignette tends quintessentially to be formalised, given the similar structural function common to both these poems and Imru' al-Qays's use of phrases which are at least potentially formulaic -- as the metre of both poems is the tawīl, there are syntactical correspondences dictated thereby -- in a manner and for a purpose distinct from no. 6, it would seem to be foolhardy to deem this particular panel autonomous. The ostrich and ass descriptions are projected paradigms of the poet's hazardous journey to the beloved as intimated in lines 1-2 and 8b & 9b.

8. Imru' al-Qays' Ahl 4. 20-22; Ibr 3. 16-19; de Slane p.23, v.16-19; Cheikho, p.23, v.8-11.

Translation: de Slane p. 56-40.

20/16. Bi-mujfaratin harfin [1] ka-anna qutudā-hā

'alā ablaqi l-kashhayni laysa bi-mughrabi

21/17. Yuqharridu bi-l-ashāri fī kullī marta'in [2]

taqharruda mirrihi [3] l-nadāma l-mutarribi

22/18. Yuwaridu majhūlati kullī khamīlatin [4]

yamujju lufāza [5] l-baqli fī kullī mashrabi

[19. Bi-mahniyatīn qad āzara l-dālu nabta-hā

majarra juyūshin qhānimīna wa-khuyyabi [6]]

Variant Readings

[1]. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: bi-admā'a hurjūjin.

[2]. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: sudfatin.

[3]. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: mayyāhi.

[4]. Ibr: aqabbu rabā'un min hamīri 'amāyatin; de Slane, Cheikho: aqabba rabā'in min hamīri 'amāyatin.

[5]. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: lu'ā'a

[6]. de Slane, Cheikho: l-dāla nabtu-hā; juyūshi l-qhānimīna.

Translation

20/16. Upon a rock-hard, large-flanked /she-camel/ whose
saddle-arches seem to be /mounted/ on a /wild ass/,
skewbald in his flanks though not white-girded,

- 21/17. Which, at dawn, sings in every pasturage, like an
ebulliently lively reveller bawling out his song,
- 22/18. Watering at uncharted /springs/ in every copse,
spitting out particles of greenery in every watering
hole.
- [19. In the bend /of a valley/ where the dāl is decked in
a waist-wrapper of plants, /as dense/ as armies, both
the looters and the empty-handed, dragging /their
impedimenta/].

Commentary

20/16. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: upon a slender, lively, beige /she-camel/. In the phrase ablaqi l-kashhayni there is a precise reference to the Equus asinus to the exclusion of the Equus hemionus. I have not seen an Equus hemionus with parti-coloured stockings: this seems specific to the Equus asinus, and the epithetical phrase designates a wild ass whose stockings extend the length of his legs.

Mughrab is used by Tufayl 3. 12 as an epithet of choice thoroughbred mares in a phrase which bears some resemblance to this: laysa fī-hinna mughrabu. The lexica specify that the groin is intended and I consequently understand laysa bi-mughrabi as equivalent to laysa bi-ahqabi. I am unsure as to the actual significance of the epithet. It is variously applied to the dawn (Suwayd Muf 40. 15) and to a cloudbank: Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 99. 7, Abū Ṣakhr Well 255. 9.

21/17: Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: which, with his lungs, sings every dawn, like a swaying reveller bawling out his song. The reading

bi-sudfatīn may derive from the ambiguity inherent in the phrase bi-l-ashārī which can, according to the lexica, mean 'with his lungs' [80]: a temporal fixer is then supplied in the variant. The word sudfah designates the matutinal twilight in Abū Du'ād Aṣm 66. 7, as does its cognate sadaf in al-Muthaqqib Muf 76. 29 and al-Burayq Well 169. 5 [81]; however, sadaf probably refers to the vespertine twilight in Qays b. al-Khaṭīm Aṣm 68. 6 -- a reworking of the topos that the beloved's face dispels the darkness. On analogy with no. 3, v. 27 ante and Ka'b Kow 7. 29 (= Cairo p.99, v.41), I should prefer Ahlwardt's text.

That the second hemistich refers to the sāqī, the wine-pourer (hence the reading mayyāh, 'drawing forth /wine from a crater/') contains a latent implausibility. The point of the comparison is surely similar to 'Antarah Mu'allaqah 18 (= Ahl 21. 23, Mawlawī 1. 23) -- the braying of the ass, like the humming of the cicada, is as jarring on the ear as is the 'singing' of a drunken reveller. The chanting of the wine-pourer, on the other hand, is generally referred to in terms of approbation. Further corroboration for this interpretation is to be found in the illuminating use of tarraba as a designation of the shouting of warriors by Salmā b. al-Maq'ad Well 189. 7.

If mayyāh is adopted, it would best be rendered as 'swaying to and fro', as glossed in the sharḥ and as in Abū l-'Iyāl Kos 74. 30, yamīhu (although the cognate mā'ih is encountered as a designation of the sāqī).

22/18. Ibr, de Slane, Cheikho: Lean-bellied, his canines cut, of the asses of 'Amāyah; succulent greenery. The static nature of the rest of this description is somewhat distorted by the first hemistich as read by Ahlwardt. The aggregation of epithets in the verse as given by the other editors seems to me to be more germane to the context, although there is precious little evidence in favour of one to the detriment of the other. Rabā' designates an ass

which has cut its canine teeth: Ka'b Kow 12. 9 (= Cairo p. 136, v.9), 'Adī 12. 13, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 3. 1, Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 18. 26, where it is conjoined with aqabb; 'Amr b. Ma'dīkarīb Aṣm 61. 16 applies rabā'īyyah to she asses, among whom the canines are generally absent or at the most vestigial.

'Amāyah is a mountain range to the south of Yadhbul, the highest peak in the Najd (Thilo Ortsnamen 28). [82] In view of no.7, v.16 discussed above, it is perhaps better, although not imperative, to read lu'a' for lufāz.

19. De Slane, Cheikho: where the plants equal the dāl trees in height. The reading of Ibrāhīm, which is eminently preferable, requires that the verb āzara be understood metaphorically, as in the translation: it is nonsensical to say that the dal trees are the same height as the plant growth! The picture drawn is of trees and shrubs set in the midst of lush vegetation. It is probable that there is a hyperbole involved -- the plant growth reaches to the middle of the trees, i.e. where the waist-wrapper would sit if they were to don one. The conventional interpretation of the second hemistich, that the valley is deserted through fear of these armies, seems implausible. The hemistich is not at all clear, however, and I am inclined to suspect that two separate hemistichs have somehow been confounded. The translation, which is tentative to the extreme, construes majarr as a Maṣdar, and understands the participles to mean 'divided among those with spoil and those without', as opposed to distinguishing between two distinct forces. The resultant image is that the plants and dal are as numerous and lie as thick on the ground and obscure it from view, as do heavily laden armies returning from an offensive.

Context and Interpretation

This is one of Imru' al-Qays's most celebrated and indeed most

important odes, which, like 'Alqamah Ahl 13, with which it is generally associated, has not hitherto been accorded the attention it demands. The two versions recorded of the ode are much at variance, with Ahlwardt's recension comprising 69 lines, that of Ibrahim and de Slane 55 (Cheikho's text is hopelessly confused): in the camel and horse descriptions variant readings are legion. It is outwith the scope of this inquiry to provide an analysis and an interpretation which would be comprehensively satisfactory. Structurally, the Wild Ass Vignette follows the dhikr al-atlāl movement [83]; in Ahlwardt's text it comes after four lines (16-19) depicting desert wastes through which the poet rides, in the other version as a variation of the standard exhortative transition. In this instance the poet locates his momentous deeds, which are to stand as a foil to his current despondency, firmly in the past. In both recensions the vignette is followed by a lengthy hunting scene, which primarily consists of a description of the poet's horse. The aggregational paratactic structure of the work has indubitably led to the variation in length.

Group Ten

9. Al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī Ahl 21. 6-10; Derenbourg 24. 6-10.

Translation: Derenbourg p.339-342.

6. Ka-an-nī shadattu l-rahla hīna tashadhdharat
'alā qārihin mim-mā tadammana 'āqilu
7. Aqabba ka-'aqdi l-andariyyi musahhajin
hazābiyatīn qad kaddamat-hu l-masāhilu
8. Adarra bi-jardā'i l-nusālati samhajin
yuqallibu-hā idhā 'wazāt-hu l-halā'ilu
9. Idhā jāhadat-hu l-shadda jadda wa-in wanat
tasāqata lā wānin wa-lā mutakhādhilu
10. Wa-in habatā sahlān athārā 'ajājatan
wa-in 'alawā haznan tashazzat janādilu

Translation

6. As if I had fastened my saddle, when she (i.e. the she-camel)
switches her tail in angry agitation, upon a /wild ass/ in
his sixth year, of those which 'Āqil had fostered,
7. Lean-bellied, like the knot of an Andarī /rope/, scratched,
thick-set, bitten by braying /asses/;
8. He inflicted damage upon a long-legged /female/, whose pelage,
after moulting, was sleek, turning her this way and that,
since his wives had proved impossible to him:

9. If she vied with him at a gallop, he exerted himself; if she wearied, he fell upon /her/, neither wearied nor flagging.
10. If they descended into a soft plain, they kicked up a dust-cloud; if they climbed to hard ground, boulders were shattered.

Variant Reading

6. Yāqūt 2 432: shadaddtu l-kūra haythu shadaddtu-hu.

Commentary

6. Yaqut: I fastened the saddle where I fastened it.

tashadhdharat: al-Nābighah Ahl App 26. 28 (idhā l-rikābu wanat 'an-hā rakā'ibu-ha//tashadhdharat bi-ba'īdi l-fitri khattāri, 'when the riding camels weary, she agitatedly switches a lashing /tail/ of long span'), 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 17 (= Qab 3. 17) (ka-anna bi-hādhay-hā idhā mā tashadhdharat//'athākīla 'idhqin min sumayhata murtibi, 'as if on her rear-thighs, when she switches her tail, were clusters of ripe dates from Sumayhah') [84]. Labīd Mu'allaqah 71 (= 'Abbās 48. 71) uses this verb of raving warriors, thirsting for vengeance, a usage which Nöldeke FM II 88-89 suspects as inappropriate. The camel's switching of her tail is reckoned to be an indication of her restive disobedience: cf. Musil Rwala Bedouin 583, "camels which have been ridden only for a short time ... are very fast and very disobedient". Disobedience is therefore, in this context, a laudable trait, as it implies that when other camels weary, and consequently become more compliant, the poet's she-camel continues as she started, with her strength undiminished, her pace unabated. The warriors depicted by Labid are agitated in their motions and their speech, and their anger is unlikely to be mollified by

anything other than the exacting of vengeance.

'Aqil is in the Najd, on the northern rim of the Ḥimā Dāriyyah (Thilo Ortsnamen 29): cf. Ka'b Kow 6. 25 (= Cairo p.89, v.25), a Wild Ass Vignette in which it functions as a qāfiyyah for a qasīdah in Tawīl.

tadammana: cf. Ka'b Kow 12. 9 (= Cairo p.136, v. 9) (tadammana-hu wādī l-jabā wa-l-sarā'imu) and 29. 17 (= Cairo p.239, v.17) (tadammana-hu wādī l-raja fa-l-afa'ihu), (of a stallion ass).

7. Musahhaj: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 69, Labīd Mu'allagah 26 (= 'Abbās 48. 26) [85], Labīd 'Abbās 38. 4 (= Brock II 44. 4).

masāhil: cf. Zuhayr Ahl 15. 15 (= Qab 3. 15, Th p.124, v.15), al-A'shā 4. 43, Ka'b Kow 6. 25 (= Cairo p.89, v.25) and al-Tirimmah 4. 65 (mishal, of a stallion ass). It is used metaphorically by 'Abīd 10. 15, of his tongue [86] and his example is followed by al-A'sha who styles his shaytān, his genius, mishal: 15. 43, 20. 27, 33. 32.

8. The stallion's harem, having been impregnated, reject his advances with the kicking and biting referred to in verse 7.

Precopulatory driving is a feature of the mating habits of Equus africanus. "The estrous mare can be detected from her typical posture: hindlegs apart and tail held out obliquely. The encounters consisted of the following sequences: the stallion approaches and sniffs the female's genitalia; she kicks in a ritualized manner at him, moves forward in a slow canter, he follows and drives her over a distance of approx. 20 m. They then come to a halt (four observations) , or she stays put and presses backward against the stallion. He mounts, they move a few steps forward, usually in a circle, while she displays the estrous face ... However, in natural or semi-natural situations it was never observed

that ass and/or donkey stallions drove their females until these were completely exhausted and then forcefully copulated with them ... This extraordinary behaviour can only be explained as being caused by long isolation and/or deprivation, and can by no means be regarded as typical" (Klingel 1977 328-329). The principal authority for the description of this behavioural pattern is H. Heck, quoted in O. Antonius, "Über Herdenbildung und Paarungseigentümlichkeiten der Einhufer", ZT 1 (1937), 268 & 272. With respect to this last contention, given the emphasis placed by the Jahili poets on the ruthlessly cruel treatment of the female by the stallion ass, two contingencies are possible: (i) that Klingel has underestimated the validity of the observations of Heck and Antonius, having witnessed no more than five copulations, only one of which was complete; (ii) that al-Nabighah and the relevant poets have chosen to emphasize the stallion's harsh treatment, adapting the development of the vignette to suit their purpose -- this does, of course, imply that the poet was well acquainted with the copulatory behaviour of the ass, perhaps even that he had studied such behaviour closely.

9. I have supplied 'alay-hā to complete the sense of tasāqata: cf. Lane's "he threw himself upon the thing" (1381). This meaning is consonant with the semantically resonant mutakhādhil, the primary significance of which is 'flagging': Ka'b Kow 6. 24 (= Cairo p.89, v.24), wa-lā mutakhādhilu, of a she-camel -- this phrase occupies the same metrical position in Tawīl as it does in al-Nābighah 21. 9 --, al-Muzarrid Muf 17. 32 (the Gerund applied to the pace of a stallion); cf. further 'Awf b. 'al-Aḥwaṣ Muf 108. 8, where it is used of a tribe 'retreating from the fray' -- the military connotation fits the belligerent context of the Vignette well.

Structure

6-7: Introductory description; the ostracized stallion ass.

8-10: The selection of a mate; the traversed terrain.

Context and Interpretation

Context: a majestic threnody lamenting the death of the Ghassanid al-Nu'mān b. al-Ḥārith b. Abī Shamir [87], performed before the overlords of the house of Jafnah. The marthiyyah opens with a dhikr al-atlāl, comprising the motifs of the decayed remains (1a, 2), of the juvenile infatuation and decrepitude of the poet (1b), of the quizzing of the unrecognisable vestiges and the passage of time (seven full years have passed) (3). The transition to the wasf al-nāqah (4-5) is effected by the consolation topos (fa-sallaytu mā 'ind-i). The Wild Ass Vignette ensues in verses 6-10. The rithā' is introduced by an apostrophe of the Banū l-Barshā', Dhuhl, Qays (b. Tha'labah) and Shaybān, subdivisions of Bakr b. Wā'il (11); the physical and emotional devastation of the poet (sc. upon learning of the calamity, an allusion to the na'i, the 'Todesbotschafter') and the Schadenfreude of the foe, Tamīm and Wā'il, are next treated, conjoined to a wish for their continued subservience to the regal might of the deceased (12-13). [88] The panegyric topic of the mamdūh on a raid (rib'iyyatan: 14) comes in lines 14-16 [89], followed by the topic of the Dedicator and the Dedicatee (17-20) in the last verse of which the poet addresses the deceased, thereby prefacing the apostrophe in verses 21-24, with the traditional plea lā tab'adan coming in verse 22 [90]. The dependence of the phylarch's subjects upon his continued safety is treated in 23 [91], and the poet's asseration that life is profitless after the death

of the King in 24. Contextually, this is a dramatisation of the psychological state of the poet and his audience prior to the arrival of the messengers who herald the death of the King (25). Al-Nu'mān has been left unburied. The wish that his resting-place remain fertile comes in 26-27a and the poet alludes to the deceased's right to a threnody in 27b (sa-utbi'u-hu min khayri mā qāla qā'ilu).

[92] The ode concludes with a magnificent sweep of universal despondency, ranging from the palaces at Jawlān and Hawrān [93], to the Turks, the Persians (rahtu l-a'jamīna) and Kābul!

Interpretation: it is a striking feature of the Wild Ass Vignette in this poem that it, alone of the other pre-Islamic poems which I have collated, is devoted exclusively to the phenomenon of pre-copulatory driving, as has been observed of Equus asinus by Klingel. In the poem by Ka'b b. Zuhayr discussed ante, this theme was conjoined with that of the quest for water. Among the earlier poets, it seems that precopulatory driving was confused with, or rather interpreted as, a quest for water. This feature alone marks the Vignette as exceptional. Within the wider context of the threnody, however, it is even more conspicuous: one wonders what bearing this paradigm has on the lament for the Ghassanid phylarch, if it is in fact paradigmatic at all. I am unable satisfactorily to answer this question. I can only suggest that it may be emblematic of the deceased's virility, this being a laudable trait in both chieftains and kings of most nations and ages, or that it may be an idealization of al-Nu'mān in his function as king.

In the late Jāhiliyyah and Early Islamic Period, the nasīb was logically integrated into the threnodic gasīdah. This process is discussed by Wagner Grundzüge I 129-131 with regard to the threnodic nasīb in the dīwān of Abū Dhu'ayb. Al-Nābighah's poem is the earliest extant example of a professional tripartite threnody: Zuhayr's marthiyyah for Harim b. Sinān b. Abī Hārithah al-Murrī (Qab 48 = Th pp. 382-386), conspicuous for the simple dignity of its style and the lucidity of its diction, is essentially a bipartite, antithetical panegyric in which the topos of Time the Destroyer looms large. The connection between the Wild Ass Vignette, the dhikr al-atlāl movement and the threnody proper is, however, somewhat more elusive and less obvious in this gasīdah than Zuhayr's sober contrapuntalism. The significance of the Vignette must have been obvious to the poet's audience. It is possible that this type of Vignette represents current poetic taste, that it is consonant with contemporary aesthetic standards. It may be indicative of a tribal style peculiar to Ghatafān: the fact that Ka'b, whose poem discussed ante treats of the same behavioral pattern, is reputed to have lived among the Dhubyān lends support to this.

NOTES

1. Lines 1-13 of Tablet VIII (ii) of the Epic of Gilgamesh, translated by E.A. Speiser in J.B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, Princeton 1969, 87.

2. Lane 927 also gives "a small hollow or cavity in a mountain, in which water remains and collects" as an explanation; this would, for example, fit al-Tirimmah 47. 18 (waqa'na thnatayni wa-thnatayni wa-fardatan//yubādirna taqlīsan simāla l-madāhini) but not poem 52 (yatimmāni fī mā'in aḥālat-hu muznatun//bu'ayda l-karā fī mudhunin bayna atluhi) where a "place excavated by a torrent" is obviously intended.

3. The variation of fā' and qāf in these verses is almost certainly a scribal error and not as the Lisān al-'Arab sub zuhluf claims, a dialectal variation, with the qāf being Tamīmī, the fā' Najdī. The variation is also found in al-Tirimmah 2. 12, fa-hya qawdā'u nuffijat a'dudā-hā//an zahālīqi safsafin dhī diḥādī, where the Jamharah reads zahālīfī. "In the Tamīm dialect q was sounded intermediate between qāf and kāf, articulated against the uvula and 'thick' (taqlīzu)" (Rabin West-Arabian 125).

4. If however, the fathah is changed to a kasrah, the iqwā' would be palliated: "though this fault is considered a serious one, the older poets not unfrequently allow themselves the interchange of kasra and dammah" (Wright 2 357). "The final vowel was indistinctly enunciated in simple recital, but prolonged in singing" (De Goeje, ibid.).

5. It is probably wrong to translate al-safā in al-Tirimmah 1. 22 as "dust", in view of the fact that in al-Tirimmah 3. 4, 5. 27 & 18. 12 it refers to the stubble of the buhmā -- the meaning of 1. 22 is that the beard is raised by the wind at the hottest time of the year: this is when the poet imagines his body as lying unburied,

hence being most susceptible to decay. The phrase bi-sāfin munfajir in al-Marrār Muf 16. 55 can be translated as a 'wind that raises the stubble, blowing it down /upon the traces/ from every side' as well as "dust swept up by the wind" (Bevan Muf 3 234): in Aws 12. 8 the root refers to dust swirling and swept by the wind (yasfī ... l-mūru).

6. For quryān, cf. Zuhayr Ahl 15. 14 (= Qab 3. 14, Th p.124, v.14), Imru' al-Qays Ahl 55. 10 (= Ibr 33. 10) and Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 90. 16.

7. For the comparison of clouds with camels, cf. Chapter 4, al-Nābighah 23. 9-10 and comment.

8. It has been observed of the Indian wild ass that the herd is larger during the wet season, dispersing into smaller bands at the onset of the dry season (Smielowski & Raval 85-86). The wet season is also the time for mating.

9. J.S. Trimingham, Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times, London 1979, 188-201.

10. On the Magi and Zoroastrianism, cf. G Gnoli "Magi" ER 9 79-81.

11. Muḥammad is said to have collected jizyah from the majūs of Hajar, the ancient capital of the area today known as al-Ḥaṣā; cf. M. Morony "Majūs" EI2 V 1110-1118. Jeffery Vocabulary 14: "we even hear of Arabs in that region (i.e. al-Ḥīrah) becoming Zoroastrians", and Kister al-Ḥīrah 145: "when Qubādh embraced the faith of Mazdak and deposed the Banū Naṣr who refused to accept it, al-Ḥārith al-Kindī followed suit. Qubādh, the story relates, ordered al-Ḥārith to impose this faith on the Arabs of Najd and Tihāmah. When these tidings reached Mecca some people embraced the faith of Mazdak (fa-min-hum man tazandaga) and when Islam appeared there was a group (scil. in Mecca) of people who were indicated as

former Mazdakites".

12. Cf. Strabo 15. 3. 15.

13. A.V. Williams Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies. The Iranian Religion and Various Monographs, New York 1928, 194. Cf. further G. Gnoli "Zoroastrianism" ER 9 579-591. For South Arabian incense burners, cf. J.B. Pritchard, The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament, Princeton 1954, 193 & 319 (plates 579 & 581). Aws b. Hajar Geyer 12, discussed in Chapter 3, contains many examples of Persian influence.

14. This is the translation adopted by Jacob Beduinleben 26 and Thilo Ortsnamen 50.

15. W. Caskel "Ḍabbah" EI2 II 71-72, who does not, however, mention Subah: cf. F. Wüstenfeld, Genealogische Tabellen der Arabischen Stämme und Familien, Göttingen 1852, J, line 17.

16. I prefer this term to J. Stetkevych's "the chivalrous chase on horseback" (Stetkevych Nomenclature 100). For an interesting discussion of the royal hunt, cf. J.K. Anderson, Hunting in the Ancient World, Berkeley 1985, 57-81. It is odd that pre-Islamic poetry contains no instances of the heroic hunt.

17. Clark 1983 i describes the difficulty of capturing the African wild ass: "the 1970 Hunt expedition for International Animal Exchange ... took nearly four months, employed 25 men, six trucks and landrovers, two aircraft 'plus great supplies of food and miscellaneous items' to catch five African wild asses. The chase led them over extremely rugged terrain, where the animals galloped upwards of 70 km per hr -- twice the speed of chased zebras".

18. If the text as given by Schwarzlose 294 is adopted, then the arguments for reordering would be of diminished urgency. The verse

should be compared with Ka'b Kow 12. 27 (= Cairo p.136, v.27), a poem which bears many similarities with Aws 23:

27. Yugallibu hashrātin wa-yakhtāru nābilun
mina l-rīshī mā ltaffat 'alay-hi l-qawādīmu

and with no. 5, v. 53, yugallibu zurqan.

19. Feathers were occasionally glued without any additional ligament reinforcement, even among sophisticated bowyer peoples: Pope B&A 86 Plate 12, Fig. 1 (a Chinese or Tartar war arrow). None of the aboriginal arrows displayed on p.84 Plate 11 shows signs of the feathers having been glued; some, such as the Yaqui arrow (Fig. 4) seem not to have been fletched at all.

20. Reprinted in R.I.C. Spearman and J.A. Hardy, "Integument", in A.S. King and J. McLelland (edd.), Form and Function in Birds, London 1985, 3 39.

21. Mattock also adduces an etymological argument: when the bird's wing is folded, the first four Primaries are those which appear to lie next the mankib, the shoulder.

22. "The best and most serviceable are vulture feathers, after which come those of the eagle" (Latham 26).

23. I do not wish to be guilty of 'factualism', or to be numbered among those "who believe that a poem should be scientifically accurate and are prepared to emend poems to achieve that ideal" (Stanford Enemies 33): it is much more plausible that there is a flaw in my comprehension of the data.

24. The preparation of the fletchings is important. "The centre portion of a feather gives a better fletching than either of its two extremities" (Latham & Patterson 26 and 31). "The shipped feather,

or that whose rib is scraped very thin, is not so good as that which has been carefully cut with a knife. The latter stands up straighter and endures the rough usage" (Pope B&A 47). It is important not only to have feathers of the same hand, i.e. that they be either right-handed or left-handed (cf. Latham & Paterson 31-32, Latham Jamil 224), but that they also derive from the same wing of a bird: "In testing many aboriginal arrows, the irregularity of their rotation and flight is a striking exposé of the crudity of their construction. Arrows having feathers all from one wing of the bird and properly placed on the shaft always rotate toward the convex side of the feathers. A single feather from the opposite wing may prevent this rotation" (Pope B&A 50).

25. Lyall Muf 2 276: "The phenomenon here mentioned, the sound heard at night in the desert sands resembling the continuous beating of distant drums, was ascribed by the Arabs to the Jinn. The physical explanation of it, given of it in more critical times by al-Asma'i, is that it is caused by the friction, or falling, of particles of sand driven by the wind over the wrinkled surface of the Desert". In view of my collocation of the uses of 'azafa I disagree with Lyall concerning the identification of the noise solely as "drumming".

26. This is a grim piece of irony: the wailing women, mourning the death of the victims who have fallen at the hands of the poet's tribe, are metaphorically spoken of as singing-girls who provide entertainment at a symposium.

27. I understand ka-qidhi l-nadiyyi to be a poeticism for ka-nadiyyi l-qidhi. The poet is referring to a gaming arrow: cf. Schwarzlose 293.

28. Socin 'Alqamah 12 translates the phrase as "with an arrowhead tightly bound with sinew" and Schwarzlose 309 agrees. While this is not impossible, it seems to me to be very unlikely: in the

context of the aristocratic hunt, the animals were run down with spears whereas hunting on horseback with bows and arrows appears not to be featured.

29. This fragment may equally refer to the wild ass as to the ghurāb al-bayn, 'the raven of the morning of separation', the identification favoured by Krenkow.

30. Cf., however, Thilo Ortsnamen 37 who would obelize the verse.

31. "Pattern is a fashionable word and by its hints of intricacy it makes the idea of dissecting and describing poetry less offensive than would the term 'regularity'. Both are primarily concerned with relationships between objects or events and a great many of the possible relationships can be described, on the simplest level, as different kinds of repetition, occurring along some dimension which may or may not be temporal. Regularity is a more abstract concept than repetition, since it refers to the repetition of a relationship -- or to a relationship between two repetitions". For an qualification of Bateson's approach, cf. E. Wagner, "War die kontinuierliche Vokalfrequenzabweichung ein Stilmittel der altarabischen Dichter?", ZDMG 124 (1974), 15-32.

32. I use 'primitive' in the sense advocated by C.R. Hallpike, The Foundations of Primitive Thought, Oxford 1979, v-ix: "'primitive' ... means ... 'of or belonging to the first age, period, or stage', and as such has no derogatory implications whatsoever". There is more than a fleeting impression that, sporadically, Bowra unwittingly uses 'primitive' in this retrogressive manner. Take, for example, the following statement: "Repetition leads naturally to parallelism ... By the time that it reaches parallelism, primitive song begins to connect with the songs of more highly developed peoples" (81). It would be unfair to castigate so sympathetic a critic as Bowra for being guilty of the fallacy of 'Primitive Stupidity' (Stanford Enemies 116-117: "believing that

subtle thought did not exist in 'primitive societies' ... as Lévi-Strauss ... puts it ... 'Pre-history is nobody's childhood') but he does on occasion approach perilously close to it.

33. A hesitancy similar to that which obtains among those interested in pre-Islamic verse concerning the question of the structure of the qasīdah (cf., for sober, considered discussions, G.J.H. van Gelder, "The Abstracted Self in Arabic Poetry", JAL 14 (1982), 22-31, idem, Beyond the Line. Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem, Leiden 1982, passim, and especially 14-22, and Wagner Grundzüge I 145-160), has tended in the past to prevail among students of the Early Greek Lyric. Indeed, by some critics the Early Lyricists have been portrayed as bearing the mentality of helpless children, easily distracted from more logical concerns by impulse and the delight of the moment. This attitude has been taken to task by R. Fowler, The Nature of Early Greek Lyric. Three Preliminary Studies, Toronto 1987, an example of whose argumentation it is worth quoting at some little length:

Organisational devices ... argue for a certain degree of logical ability in early poets, and show that, rather than having mental operations which are of a fundamentally different order from those of later Greeks, they have fundamentally the same ways of thinking, only in a simpler, less developed form ... Fränkel cannot fail to notice that Sappho Frag 1, for example, is a powerful piece of writing. The repetition of the prayer at the end is rendered extremely effective by the intervening description of the epiphany, whose function is to show the extraordinary nature of Sappho's relation to Aphrodite. Fränkel says that the cohesion and unity of this poem do not arise from the poet's own art. It is the traditional prayer-form, demanding as it does the repetition of the prayer, which gives the poem such unity as it has; Sappho herself, if unconstrained by the demands of the tradition, would have been content to dwell on her memory of the epiphany, getting farther and farther away from the original point. But to give all the credit to the tradition and none to the author, is surely no satisfactory account of the poem. The picture of Sappho becoming hopelessly sidetracked, and wrenching herself back to the main argument by a sudden recollection of the demands of the tradition, is thoroughly implausible. We may ask, moreover,

who it was that invented and perfected the traditional forms of hymns and prayers, if not the poets (56).

Especially illuminating is Chapter 2, "The Organization of a Lyric Poem" (63-85). Cf. also C.J. Rowe, "'Archaic Thought' in Hesiod", JHS 103 (1983), 124-135.

34. This variant is recorded in Tha'lab's commentary.

35. Groom Topography 103: "a small, high, slender, isolated mountain which rises out of the heat haze or dust haze".

36. The text of al-Anbārī, al-Tibrīzī, al-Zawzanī and Arnold, verses 18-19, is:

18. Wa-khalā l-dhubābu bi-hā fa-laysa bi-bārihin
gharidan ka-fi'li l-shāribi l-mutarannimi

19. Hazijan yahukku dhirā'a-hu bi-dhirā'i-hi
gadha l-mukibbi 'alā l-zinādi l-ajdhami

18. And the insect is alone there, incessantly trilling, like a crooning reveller,

19. Humming, rubbing one leg against the other, as a one-armed man, bent low, strikes the fire-sticks.

37. The jundub features in a Wild Ass Vignette in al-Marrār 16. 34.

38. I have been unable to check the validity of these last three references.

39. Mawlawī reads tazaghghumi, 'repeated groaning'.

40. Cf. Krenkow 1927 17, it "should probably mean 'bitten by other stallions'" and Lyall Muf 2 285. The line discussed by Lyall from a poem by Bishr b. Abī Khāzim (Muf 99. 6 = Hasan 38. 6) may contain an allusion to the Mu'allaqah of 'Antarah: Mu'allaqah 33 (= Ahl 21. 39, Mawlawī 1. 39) jasratin//zayyāfatin mithli l-fanīqi l-mukdami is

modified by Bishr to become jasratin//'ayrānatin mithlī l-fanīqī l-mukdamī The variant rāwī l-muqramī is given for both lines: Abel's glossary, 137, translates mukdam as if muqram was read.

41. Abū Ṣakhr Well 256. 51 implies that the pool is meagre, contrasting athmād with fayḍ al-khalīj, 'the overflowing of the canal'.

42. F. Viré "Hamam" EI2 III 108-110: "the family of the Columbidae, with which the mediaeval Muslim naturalists incorporated that of the Pteroclididae, the sand-grouse, morphologically very closely related to the pigeons". The following list ("the faraway water hole with its brackish floods, strewn with pigeon [i.e. gaṭā] feathers") is given by von Grunebaum, "The Response to Nature in Arabic Poetry", JNES 4 (1945), 138 (= idem, Themes in Medieval Arabic Literature, London 1981): 'Abīd 1. 25-27 (hamam), Aws 34. 1 ('alājīm, 'frogs') = Ṭufayl 8. 14, al-A'shā 1.9 (rīsh, unspecified), 'Abdah b. al-Ṭabīb Muf 26. 45-46 (ba'ar, "dung of the camel family, of Equidae, of the oryx, droppings of sheep and goats, not cow-dung" [Blachère 715]), Rabī'ah Muf 39. 16 (frequented by feral carnivores, sibā'), Subay' b. al-Khaṭīm Muf 112. 19-21.

43. Boudot-Lamotte Qaws 798 records an implicit distinction between far' and katūm, the latter being "a bow made from a single stave, hence it does not vibrate when loosed". The two seem to me to be synonymous, with the gloss being etymologically inspired.

44. Cf. C.S. Coon, The Hunting Peoples, London 1972: "It takes a man about four days to make one. First he selects ... a branch, about four inches in diameter, with a bend in it of 160°. The bend is the critical feature. He cuts out a piece of this wood about four and a half feet long, with the bend located at about two-thirds of the way down from what is to be the upper end of the bow. ... The stave of the bow is round in section at the grip, but it widens out above and below, like an hourglass, narrowing again at each end.

The broad upper and lower parts of the stave are planed quite thin, and the lower part thinner than the upper. When the bow is strung, the lower third of the stave points downward and forward, as it did in the first place, but when the archer draws the string, the stave becomes a single arc, as in an ordinary bow. When the arrow is released, the string slaps against the shaft with a sharp noise ... Owing to its shape, the bow has one special merit. It does not have to be kept unstrung when not in use, because the bowstring can be slipped past the lower arm and the tension on the stave relieved. Thus the bow is always ready at a moment's notice.

45. The radical j-sh- means 'to vomit or to belch' (Blachère 1531), and is obviously descriptive of the casting of the arrow. In the scholion to the Hudhali diwan, seconded by Schwarzlose 279 and Lewin 57, it is glossed with the innocuous khafif, 'light'.

46. For the use of the left-hand to grasp the bow, standard practice among right-handed archers, cf. Ka'b Kow 13. 55 post.

47. Ibn al-Sukkārī in his commentary to this verse records that according to Ibn Ḥabīb, the wark is the bow-string, whereas al-Aṣma'ī thought that it was the strongest section of the bow, by which he probably meant the least flexible section, i.e. the grip-handle, in which case the meaning of ḥudāl would be the same as that tentatively suggested for muḥdalah in 'Amr Dhū l-Kalb's poem.

48. These lines provide an instructive parallel to the description in question:

14. Wa-safrā'a min nab'in ka-anna 'idāda-hā
 muza'zi'atun tulqī l-thiyāba ḥatūmu
 15. Ka-ḥāshiyati l-mahdhūfi zayyana līta-hā
 mina l-nabī' azrun ḥāshikun wa-katūmu

14. A pale-yellow /bow/ of nab', its twang like a blustery,
 violent /gale/ which casts the clothes aside,

15. Like the selvage of a short-shorn /garment/; he (the archer or bowyer) has embellished its colour, stout, of nab', /its release/ unquenchable, silent.

I understand zayyana līta-hā to refer to decorative patterns figured on the surface of the bow by the bowyer. The basic signification of h-sh-k is 'abundance of milk or water': cf. Blachère 2787-2789.

49. Lyall's note (Muf 2 190) helps to place Aws 31. 17-36 in context: "the dālah ... (is) explained as that kind of sidrah or lote-tree which grows wild in the mountains, without artificial irrigation" (cf. Musil *Rwala Bedouin* 707: "a species of acacia with long lean boughs". The dal is further qualified by Lyall Muf 2 385 as the "Rhamnus nabeca"). The picture drawn by Aws is of a man who risks life and limb to acquire what is presumably sidr/dāl wood for a bow and in several respects is similar to the descriptions of the gathering of wild honey which are to be found in the Hudhālī diwan. Rāshid b. Shihāb Muf 86. 6b is interesting: wa-far'un hatūfun lā saqiyyun wa-lā nashamu, 'and a souging limb, neither irrigated nor of nasham'. The poet seems to prize the dāl, perhaps implied in the phrase far' hatūfun, to the wood of a tree which has been irrigated (saqī) and of the nasham, the Grewia velutina (?). For bows fashioned from this latter, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 29. 2 (= Ibr 17. 2), 'Amr Dhū l-Kalb Kos 109. 8 (4b): according to Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 2. 9 it grows on remote mountainous areas.

50. This is of the apparitional type, external and negative -- cf. Jacobi Khayāl, before 500 A.D. to early Jahili. Note the heavy irony in the use of the root n-w-l. The poet, it seems, is visited every night by this phantasm.

51. Designated A1 by Jacobi Camel 5.

52. Further support is given to the rejection of these lines by the thesis proposed by R. Jacobi, "Ibn al-Mu'tazz: Dair 'Abdūn. A

Structural Analysis", JAL 6 (1975), 37-38:

there are others (viz. variant readings) which tend to exaggerate poetic devices used unobtrusively in a different version, and one variant which renders a subtle allusion less obscure. This, in my opinion, is strong evidence against their genuineness ... It is ... unlikely that in the process of transmission a significant or striking expression is replaced by an insignificant one, whereas it may sometimes happen that a poetic effect or allusion subconsciously noticed by the transmitter is exaggerated in his rendering of the text. If we accept this hypothesis, we obtain a working principle with regard to poetic texts not unlike the generally applied rule of the lectio difficilior, although its application will demand the utmost care. For, whereas the rule of lectio difficilior is based on the natural human tendency to take the easier road, the above mentioned principle presupposes some degree of sensibility to the aesthetic qualities of language. However I do believe that such an assumption is justified regarding medieval Arab literati.

I should add that, on occasion, I have entertained the distinct impression that Tha'lab has 'edited' the text of Zuhayr and that al-Tibrizi has 'edited' the text of the Mu'allagāt in a manner that is not generally expected of the medieval literati.

53. Cf. J.W. Fück "Kalb b. Wabara" EI2 IV 492: "they were famous camel-breeders" and "the grazing grounds of the Kalb ... were in the steppe between Syria and al-'Irāq".

54. Ahl Fr. 4 & Cheikho p.591: 1=1, 2=18, 3=19, 4=26.

55. Ibrāhīm reads taqallubu.

56. The reading given in the Lisān, samhājīn samhātī l-qawā'imi, vitiates the ambivalency of the epithet which foreshadows verses 41-47; cf. Jacobi's principle quoted in note 52 ante.

57. Cf. Fraenkel Fremdwörter 251.

58. The verse is one of a series appended to poem 15 but which seem

to bear little or no relation to it.

59. The other possible meaning of mudmar, 'lean', as in 'Adī 77. 1 (mudmar al-kashh, of a stallion ass) is not quite applicable unless, with a stretch of the imagination, one presumes it to mean 'sharp-edged'.

60. Lyall's note is instructive: "the word mudmaj for the gaming arrow indicates that the stem is well-rounded, smooth and compact" (Muf 2 199).

61. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 31. 10 reads 'alā l-qūri.

62. Quoted from T. Cope, Izibongo, Oxford 1968, by R. Finnegan, The Penguin Book of Oral Poetry, Harmondsworth 1982, 129.

63. Cf. the sharh, followed by the Cairene Editor; Muḍar and Rabī'ah were "reckoned as constituting the sons of 'Adnān, the so-called Northern Arabs" (W. Montgomery-Watt "Qays 'Aylān" EI2 IV, 833-834). Rabī'ah is the wider tribal affiliation of the hunter of Ṣubāh in Aws 23. 41.

64. Al-Hādī in his edition of al-Shammākh's dīwān 183 explains al-Khuḍr as the designation of "the children of Mālīk b. Ṭarīf b. Khalaf b. Muḥārīb b. Khasafah b. Qays 'Aylān, so called because they are extremely swarthy": cf. further al-Ḥusayn Muf 12. 21, which Lyall translates as "the Blacks".

65. A member of the Banū 'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'ah, on whom cf. W. Caskel "'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'ah" EI2 I 441-442 and Lyall 1980 73-77.

66. The use of akla'u by Muraqqish al-Aṣghar Muf 57. 12 does not mean, as Bevan Muf 3 glosses, "to remain awake at night", but rather 'I watch it, i.e. the progress of it stars, carefully': cf. WKAS.

67. As Schwarzlose remarks, hashr can be either substantival or adjectival.

68. "The possession of poison bears with it a sobering responsibility. Its use requires both great caution and firm self-discipline. A poisoned arrow must not be discharged until the Bowman knows where his companions are. He must handle the arrows with great care, even in the excitement of sighting an animal" (Coon 83). In a chapter entitled "War among Savages" in Archery: A Military History, London 1980, E.G. Heath discusses the belligerent use of poisoned arrows, stressing that the "bad repute of the deadly nature of the arrow-heads" was at least as important as the poison itself in effecting the victim's death: "the traditional beliefs associated with the use of 'poisoned' arrows among the natives are strong enough to provide a substantial psychological weapon amongst these primitive people" (193). Generally, however, poisoned arrows are intended for hunting.

69. Cf. the verse by Khālīd b. Zuhayr (Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 27b. 17), bi-khamtatin//mina l-sammi madhrūrin 'aly-hā dharūru-hā, 'with an acidic /poem/ doubly sprinkled with poison'.

70. Lewin 237 hesitantly identifies the surad as the Lanius excubitor, the Great grey shrike: cf. F. Hüe and R.D. Etchecopar, Les Oiseaux du Proche et Moyen Orient, Paris 1970, 781-83.

71. Cf. G.J.H. van Gelder, "Genres in Collision", JAL 21. 1 (March 1990).

72. Cf. Appendix 3.

73. By a curious coincidence, the Greeks listed the donkey among the animals whose high-spirits led them to act hybristically: cf. Herodotos 4. 129., where the father of history tells how the donkeys of the Persian army led by Dareios threw the Skythian cavalry into

great disarray by, it seems braying (hybrizontes ōn hoi onoī etarasson tēn hippon tōv Skytheōn); Aristophanes, Wasps 1300-1325, (ed. by D.M. MacDowell, Oxford 1971), where Xanthias, one of Bdelykleon's slaves, describes a party at which Bdelykleon's father, Philokleon, drunk too much and of all the guests "was by far the most hybristic", comparing the old man with a barley-stuffed donkey; D.M. MacDowell, "Hybris in Athens", Greece and Rome 23. 1 (April 1976), 14-31.

74. Cf. pages 59 & 104.

75. For khillah, cf. Abū Shihāb Well 148. 12, 'Abīd 3. 6 & 11. 3 where, as Imru' al-Qays's image shows, the meaning is not "sword-sheaths painted with patterns" (Lyall 1980 13) but rather 'worked with patterned filigree'. Cf. also madhāhib, 'gilt', as a designation of scabbards: al-A'lam Kos 21. 15.

76. I construe this phrase, as with burgat al-'iyarāt, as a descriptive toponym and not as a toponym proper. Khabt itself is an oasis on the north edge of Ramlat 'Ālij -- this may be too far north, given the precision of the situational context of these lines. On a hyperbolic level, however, it is possible to argue that the poet, in his despondency, deliberately exaggerates the extent of the desolation in a magnificent topographical sweep.

77. Kosegarten has numbered the lines of this urjūzah as hemistichs. Therefore his line 2 should in fact be line 4: cf. Farraj p. 628.

78. Although Thilo does not mention other places designated as Qaww, his map (A) contains a Qaww to the west of Harrat Laylā and north of Khaybar which is perhaps a possible candidate, without, however, minimalising in any respect the problems under discussion.

79. Cf. further Lyall 1980 76 (quoting from Doughty's description

of his journey through the territory of the 'Amir b. Sa'sa'ah):
"This high wilderness is the best wild pasture land that I have
seen in Arabia: the bushes are few, but it is a 'white country',
overgrown with the desert-grass, nussy". It is also one of the
food-stuffs of the oryx: cf. Harrison Mammals 2 348.

80. I have found this root as referring only to the dawn: Zuhayr
Mu'allaqah 10 (= Ahl 16. 10, Qab 1. 10, Th p.1, v.10), Labīd
Mu'allaqah 61 (= 'Abbās 48. 61), 'Adī 28. 2, Ka'b b. Sa'd al-Ghanawī
Aṣm 19. 16.

81. Pace Lewin 135, the epithet adham cannot refer to nightfall,
but rather to the crepuscular diffusion of the first rays of light.

82. It is conceivable that min carries the force of 'driven from'
in this context.

83. It is typical of the poet's genius that this movement, while
containing the features common to it -- the exhortation of the two
companions, the departure of the beloved's tribe, the poet's
incertitude as to her continued fidelity --, does not explicitly
mention the desolate vestiges, thereby confounding a topic of the
dhikr al-atlāl movement with a (nocturnal) visit of the inamorata by
means of the preposition 'alā. The tone and content of these two
lines may be fashioned after 'Amr b. Qamī'ah 1. 1-3, rather than
being a version of a less specific, 'traditional' topos.

84. Ahlwardt reads qinwin for 'idhqin. The hādh is strictly that
part of the rear leg which extends from the hip-bone and descends,
through the femur to the tibia, above the hock. Sumayḥah (al-Bakrī
783-784) is an oasis in the vicinity of Medina: cf. Ḥassān b.
Thābit 4. 23 & 5. 8. The poet compares the bushy extremity of the
tail with the date-clusters, the hairless caudal extension with the
supporting branch.

85. Cf. Nöldeke FM II 73-74.

86. Lyall is imprecise when he translates wa-u'tītu mishalan husāman as "for I was given a tongue sharp as a sword" (33); rather, 'for I was endowed with a braying, keen-edged /tongue/'.

87. For a discussion of the chronology of the Ghassanid phylarchs and the Lakhmid princes, cf. Lyall Translations 97-102. Sezgin 111 mentions a rithā' for al-Nu'mān IV, who is, according to Lyall's table, al-Nu'mān III and is in fact the Lakhmid al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir Abū Qābūs, who died between circa 602 and 612. The only other poem in al-Nābighah's dīwān, apart from Ahlwardt 23, that could be described as such is the curious piece, Ahlwardt 18, which is manifestly cognate with Ahlwardt 8, supposedly composed on learning that al-Nu'mān was ill. The problem with trying to date Ahlwardt 23 resides principally with the dearth of reliable historical detail concerning the chronology of the house of Jafnah. It is further augmented by the incertitude concerning the exact designations of the phylarchs. The object of the poet's lament (the al-Nu'mān of verse 15) seems to be the seventh Ghassanid ruler, al-Nu'mān b. al-Ḥārith al-A'raj b. Jabalah Abī Shamir, the fifth and sixth kings respectively; al-Nu'mān's demise is to be dated no later than 570, although I advance this hypothesis with tempered confidence, given the distinct possibility that al-Nu'mān ("the Beatified") was a regal title and not a proper name. M. Chemouī "Nābighah al-Dhubyānī" EI III 804-805 seems to identify the prince as the successor of 'Amr b. al-Ḥārith, who was the ninth king, and whose successor was, according to Lyall's genealogical tree, al-Ḥārith b. al-Ḥārith, who was himself succeeded circa 629.

88. Cf. N. Rhodokanakis, "Al-Khansā' und ihre Trauerlieder", SBWA 147 (1904), 56-58 ("die Fiktion des Na'ī") and 68-71 ("der Trost"), for Schadenfreude as a threnodic theme. The aged decrepitude of the poet in verse 1 may be an allusion to the "Altersmotiv, auch sonst aus Qasidenanfängen außerhalb des Rithā' wohlbekannt" (73).

A. Bloch, "Qaṣīdah", Asiatische Studien 2 (1948), 106-132, advances the hypothesis that the marthiyyah was originally a response to the na'ī: cf. Wagner Grundzüge 68-69, 116-134.

89. The phrase khadkhatat mā'a l-samā'i l-qabā'ilu needs some clarification. It is taken by Ahlwardt Aechtheit 116 as a proverbial reference to the practice of scooping up rain water with buckets at a time when it is scarce; this is seconded by Jacobi Studien 194. Abū l-Muthallam Kos 9. 14 (yā ṣakhrū khadkhada bi-l-sufni l-sabīkha ka-mā//khāda l-qidāha qamīrun tāmī'un khaṣilun) and Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 18. 22 (fa-khadkhatu sufni-ya fī jammi-hi//khiyāda l-mudābirī qidhan 'atūfan) provide analogous uses of the verb and the image. In the context of a threnody for a Ghassanid phylarch whose enemies are explicitly specified as Tamīm and Bakr b. Wā'il, the phrase mā'a l-samā'i is of obvious semantic resonance, being the Arabic sobriquet of al-Mundhir III b. Imri' al-Qays, known to the Greeks as Alamoundaros ho Sakikēs. This is of course anachronistic, al-Mundhir having been killed by al-Hārith al-A'raj in the year 554. The proverb becomes a metaphor for the petitioning of the Lakhmid kings by the Arab tribes in the Euphrates valley and the east of the Arabian Peninsula, and on a laudatory level, it also associates the military successes of the deceased with his father's greatest triumph on the field of battle.

The significance of the phrase banī l-barshā'i in verse 11 is also relevant, designating their fertile territory, the plenitude of which has rendered its inhabitants independent of foreign dominion (which tends to contradict Ahlwardt and Jacobi's abovementioned explanation). I presume that the phrase haythu stabhalat-hā l-manāhilu to be ironic: despite their 'independence' he is still their king (malki-him: 14) and they still stand in awe of al-Nu'mān's predatory expeditions (wa-kānat la-hum rib'iyyatan yahdharūna-hā). Of course, the poet is purposefully confusing fiction with reality, hyperbole with sober fact. M.J. Kister has argued in some detail for the political prominence of the Tamīm at

this time: cf. Chapter 1 ante.

90. For a discussion of this phrase cf. Rhodokanakis 1904 60-62, Wagner Grundzüge I 120-121. I have been unable to consult T. Kowlaski, "Lā tab'ad", Ungarische Jahrbücher 15 (1935), 488-494.

91. This is an allusion to the traditional theme of nights of grief without sleep: Rhodokanakis 1904 72-73.

92. The occurrence in threnody of the verb ghādara is extremely common. Cf. I. Goldziher, "Bemerkungen zur arabischen Trauerpoesie", WZKM 16 (1902), 307-309, for the niyāḥah as "Uebung einer religiösen Pflicht (luctus religio)", and Jacobi Studien 198-199 for comments on verse 27: it is presumably the style of the traditional ritha' and the threnodic function of the listing principle that have induced al-Nābighah to this so-called 'anomaly'.

93. Ḥawrān was built in 578 by Flavios Seōs: cf. I. Shahīd "Ghassān" EI2 II 1020-1021. Verse 29b is an interestingly early example of what S. Sperl, "Islamic Kingship and Arabic Panegyric Poetry", JAL 8 (1977), 23-24, calls "Mythic Power": "when the King, as secular and religious pivot of society, is killed or harmed the whole world order may collapse, diseases and catastrophe may afflict the land ... it is clear from panegyric poetry that the Caliph was held to possess a power not unlike the mythic reviving power of the ancient kings. Often the prosperity of the realm is directly attributed to the divinely inspired righteousness of the Caliph".

Chapter 3 -- The Oryx Bull

I dwell on the misty steppe.
I belong to Manakhan, the Lord of the Beasts.
In the deep cold of winter,
In the blinding snow-storms,
I went of my own accord
To gentler, warmer pastures.
With the changing season
I went frolicking along
With my myriad companions,
To return to our old pastures.
Through the power of former deeds
I was caught in a snare.
My twenty myriad companions,
Forming a wedge, vanished from sight,
And I, bereft of my heel-tendons,
Fell behind, gazing after them.
My many myriad companions
Went off, straight in line,
And I, caught in the toils,
Fell behind to await death.
To be hunted
Is the way of the world.
May I find a peaceful new birth,
Transcending the state of the wild beast.

Sandag's Uge of an Antelope [1].

Group One

1. Aws b. Hajar Geyer 2. 3-10; Fischer p. 86.

Translation: Geyer 24-25.

3. Wa-ka-anna aqtād-ī ramaytu bi-hā
ba'da l-kalālī mulamma'an shababā
4. Hattā utīha la-hu akhū qanasin
shahmun yutirru dāwariyan kuthabā
5. Fa-dha'awna-hu sharafan wa-kunna la-hu
hattā tufādila bayna-hā jalabā
6. Hattā idhā l-kallābu qāla la-hā
ka-l-yawmi matlūban wa-lā talabā
7. Fa-nahā bi-shirrati-hi li-sābiqi-hā
hattā idhā mā rawqu-hu khtadabā
8. Karihat dāwārī-hā l-lahāqa bi-hi
mutabā'idan min-hā wa-muqtaribā
9. Fa-nqadda ka-l-dirri'i yatba'u-hu
naq'un yathūru takhālu-hu tunubā
10. Yakhfī wa-ahyānan yalūhu ka-mā
rafa'a l-munīru bi-kaffi-hi lahabā

Translation

3. And it is as if I have thrown my saddle-arches, /even/ after
fatigue, upon a full grown, dazzlingly variegated /oryx
bull/

4. Until it was fated to encounter a canny, masterful /hunter/
urging on numerous /dogs/ trained to the chase;
5. They drove him on in a vigorous heat and they were /so keen to
catch/ him that they even competed among themselves with
shouts,
6. Until, when the hunter shouted to them, "Never before has
there been a chase like this!",
7. He turned, in his wrath, to the leader, with the result that,
when his horn was dyed /with blood/,
8. The /hounds/, despite being trained to the chase, were
unwilling to catch up with him, whether he distanced
himself from them or drew near,
9. And he darted away like a scintillant /star/, followed by a
billowing dust-cloud -- you would imagine it /to be tied
to/ a tent-rope --,
10. Hidden /by it/, on occasion blazing forth, just like a flame
raised aloft in the hand of the caravan-guide.

Commentary

3. Mulamma': synonymous with muwalla' (on which cf. no. 3 v. 29 post); Zuhayr Qab 48. 2 (= Th p.382, v.2), Bishr 25. 11, Ka'b Kow 20. 21 (= Cairo p.213, v.21), mulamma'an//min-hu l-qawā'imu -- on the striation of the legs, cf. the note to al-Nābighah Ahl 5. 10, no. 4 post --, Kharāshah Muf 121. 3 (of oryx does). Shabab: 'Abīd 1. 31, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 36 (= Muf 126. 35); cf. its synonyms shabūb: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 55. 6 (= Ibr 33. 6), 'Abīd 19. 9 (v.1.), 'Alqamah Ahl 2. 13 (= Qab 1. 13, Muf 119. 14) (of an oryx doe) [2],

Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 3. 9, and mushibb: (vocalised by Hell and Lewin as mishabb: Zuhayr Th p.33, v.19 (= Ahl 9, Qab 4) [3], Abū Khirāsh Hell 6. 4 & 7. 2.

4. I have paraphrased akhū ganas as 'masterful', interpreting it as designating the hunter's success in running down his prey (ganas of the prey of a falcon: Abū Khirāsh Hell 4. 5). Shahm: al-Hārith b. Hillizah Muf 25. 9 (= Krenkow 3. 9) (malikin//shahmī l-maqādatī), al-Mukhabbal Muf 21. 29 (of the heart of a she-camel, the heart being considered as the seat of intelligence). Kuthab, which Geyer translates "gekoppelte", 'on a leash', -- on what authority he does not say --, seems rather to be a shortened form of kuthāb (cf. Kazimirski 866).

5. This line can also be translated "they drove him up onto an outcrop and were /so keen to catch/ him that they competed among themselves to drive him". Sharaf is standard for an 'eminence' (cf. Zuhayr Qab 30. 3 [= Th p.279, v.3], 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 42 [= Qab 2. 42, Muf 120. 44]), al-A'shā 62. 2, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 28 [= Muf 126. 27]) and the plural occurs in a depiction of the oryx's escape by Bishr (21. 20); jalab, a Gerund, echoes the notion of dha'awna, viz. the vigorous driving of camels: cf. Uhbān b. Lu't Well 159. 5, ka-mā anhā 'alā l-jalabi l-ajīru. I was influenced, however, in my translation by the following passage, Mutammim Muf 9. 22b-23: tammāhu ashrafīn idhā mā yunza'u/wa-ka-anna-hu fawta l-jawālibi jānī'an//ri'mun tadāyafu-hu kilābun akhdā'u, where ashraf designates 'heats in a race' (cf. Usāmah b. al-Hārith Hell 2. 10) and jawālib the supporters who urge on their favourite with shouting (cf. Blachère 1594, sub jalab, "yelling, hallooing to excite, to frighten a horse, in a race"). Tufādila may also be vocalised tafadala, the apocopated Subjunctive of Form VI. The poet represents the dogs and the oryx as running a race in which, owing to their keen excitement, the barking of the dogs resembles the yells of competing factions at a horse-race.

9. Inqadda (cf. al-Khaṣafī Muf 91. 24, kulla-ma inqadda kawkabun) has the meaning of rapid descent from a height and may support the translation of sharaf as 'outcrop' in line 5; dirri', used of the oryx: 'Abīd 19. 12, Rabī'ah Muf 38. 15 (darārī'u) [4]; naq', often found in conjunction with the root th-w-r, can designate either the dust raised by raiding horses (Bishr 10.11, 'Āmir 15. 1) or the dust kicked up in the mêlée of two clashing forces (Bishr 5. 10, 36. 7, 'Āmir 5. 8, 27. 5) and occurs in a description of a fleeing oryx by Bishr (25. 14).

Tunub: for the bold image intended by the poet, cf. Rabī'ah Aṣm 84. 17 (= Muf 113. 18), wa-in ashalat adhrat qhubāran mutannabā, 'and if she (my mare) comes to level terrain, she kicks up a dust-cloud fitted with tent-ropes' (cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 56 [= Ibr 3. 40], burdin mutannabi, = 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 40 [= Qab 3. 46]), i.e. the swirling dust-cloud resembles the sheet of a tent, affixed in place with tent-ropes, blown about by a strong wind.

10. The meaning of al-munir is unclear: in my translation I have relied upon a meaning recorded in Dozy 2 744. In 'Awf b. al-Aḥwaṣ Muf 36. 4 = al-A'shā Ḥusayn 82. 7, the verb refers to a servant-girl kindling a fire under a cooking-pot: al-Muhalhil (Aṣm 53. 1) and 'Adī (16. 34) use it in its more familiar, intransitive sense. Munir is occasionally applied to a highway that is clear and visible, (Zuhayr Qab 42. 4 [= Th p.256, v.4], munirun hudā-hu, Abū Ṣakhr Well 263. 22, Mulayḥ Well 270. 17,) and it may not be too fanciful to see in this usage reference to a practice of lighting beacons as way-marks during the night, particularly for the later poets Abū Ṣakhr and Mulayḥ, although it is not clear if they are describing these roads at night. The point of origin of the simile as coined by Aws is obviously the contrast between the brilliant pelage of the oryx and the opaqueness of the dust (light and dark) and I have chosen the meaning which I think best captures this sense.

Structure

3: Introductory description; the solitary oryx buck.

4-6: The encounter with the hunter and the chase.

7-8: The battle with the hounds; the slaughter of one of the hounds.

9-10: The escape of the oryx; blazing like a shooting star.

Context and Interpretation

Context: a short invective, attributed by al-Jāhiz to Aws b. Ḥajr's son Shurayh (cf. Geyer p.24), against the Banū Lubaynah, who, according to Geyer, were a clan of Asad b. Wā'ilah. This hiḡā' contains an adumbrated nasīb -- the departure of an (unspecified) beloved and her residence in hostile territory -- (1-2), a wasf, predominantly an Oryx Bull Vignette (the she-camel description as a structural requirement is but alluded to in the introductory formula), and the vituperation itself (11-13).

Interpretation: it is interesting to quote Geyer's remarks on this poem: "in the form in which we have it, the poem contains, leaving aside the absence of a beginning (only one or two verses) and of a conclusion, a substantial lacuna: between v. 2 and 3 the camel description is wanting. Perhaps several verses are missing between v. 3 and 4" (loc. cit.). This represents what might be termed the 'orthodox view', viz. that if a poem seems in any way defective or incomplete, then faulty transmission must be blamed and fragmentariness postulated -- a useful philological method to have at one's disposal. Unlike Geyer, I do not think that this poem is

incomplete. Rather, the traditional gasīdah structure of nasīb, wasf and gharad is present, albeit sketchily at times and there is no hard evidence that the poem is lacunose. As a piece of invective, the poem is very effective, and its vituperative technique is similar to that of Zuhayr Ahl l and Ka'b b. Zuhayr Kowalski 16 -- the vignette functions as a moral exemplar. There is an air of breathless excitement about the piece, as if it were impelled onward by the urgency of the poet's anger, and this may be reflected in the absence of any obscure or difficult lexical items and of involved syntax: the whole piece is an admirable example of an asyndetic, paratactic composition. Although the narration of the chase and the battle occupies five lines of the text, the Oryx Bull Vignette is dominated by the contrast of light and darkness which the poet points as the capping motif of the panel. The invective is introduced as set against a background of brilliance (there are four words in lines 9-10 which express the notion of light) and the moral and physical worthlessness of the Banu Lubaynah stand out in marked contrast with what has preceded. There is no evidence of anticipatory techniques, no inklings or foreshadowings of the hijā' movement in either the nasīb or the wasf: opposition of disparate elements effects expression.

In essence, these features, when taken together with the length of the piece, mark this poem, in my opinion, as an extempore composition. The (adumbrated) tripartite structure of the gasīdah provides the poet with a traditional framework within which his

improvised vituperation operates, his language is spontaneous -- perhaps even colloquial in line 6 --, the images are unforced yet forceful in their directness, the invective succinct and lucid. It is significant that the elements of the vituperation, viz. ignobleness of descent, physical deformity, military insignificance, are traditional and universal in their abstraction and that there is a marked lack of reference to any particular event or bone of contention which may have provided occasion for the attack.

In a discussion of Tatar poetry, H.M. Chadwick and N.K. Chadwick, The Growth of Literature, Cambridge 1986, 3 213 make the following statement on the nature of improvised verse, which, to a certain extent, provides an instructive analogy:

The entire performance (of a Shaman or a baksha), while following a traditional outline, or a traditional channel of thought and traditional artistic style, is nevertheless extempore ... the shaman, within a framework prescribed by traditional theology, extemporises his dramatic songs, varying his motifs, and drawing from experience, personal or borrowed. This diction is identical with that of the heroic poems. Phrases and descriptions and groups of lines, and much of the imagery, are familiar to us from the narrative poems. But the actual composition takes place during the recital.

It is the poet's ability to utilise tradition that I should like to stress as of particular relevance to early Arabic verse: the tripartite qasīdah format is ideal for the facilitation of extemporaneous composition. Aws's poem is one such ephemeral poem,

which may belong to the type of flyting which was customary in poetry competitions: the tribal nature of the invective perhaps militates against the supposition of a 'personal' competition. Improvisation, fecundity of wit and celerity of response are the criteria by which such flytings tend, in other societies, to be judged. One example from Polynesia will suffice:

We are told of a form of extempore dialogue known as the u'i, which consisted of the matching of wits of two tohungas (not necessarily priests), held in the form of a dialogue during which a judge would sit between them while they 'cross-questioned and recriminated each other'. The contestants were tuhuna o'ono, 'masters of myth, legend and genealogies'. The one outwitted was considered as 'defeated and overthrown by the victor' and it is even said that 'formerly a tuhuna was defeated and killed' (Chadwick & Chadwick GL 3 462).

This does not exactly match the context which I have posited for Aws's qasīdah (the Arabic contest seems to have involved the interchange of qasīdahs or qit'ahs as well as the 'capping challenge'), but it is an interesting example of how such competitions were conducted. It may come as something of a surprise that such dialogues are attested for the Jāhiliyyah; two interesting examples are 'Abīd's contest with Imru' al-Qays, recorded in the former's dīwān (Fragment 10), and Imru' al-Qays's contest with al-Taw'am al-Yashkurī (Ahl 22). Whether these are mere exercises of ingenuity with "no pretensions to be ancient", as Lyall 1980 67 claims, or not, it is significant that this is what later writers expected of the Jāhili poets.

2. Aws b. Hajar Geyer 12. 17-26; Fischer 92-95 = al-Nābighah
al-Dhubyānī Ahl 14. 10-13; Derenbourg 31. 10-13.

Translations: Geyer 37-44; Derenbourg 358-359.

17/10. Ka-anna-hā dhu wushūmin bayna ma'fiqatin
wa-l-qutqutānati wa-l-bur'ūmi madh'ūru [1]

18. Ahassa dhikra qanīsin min banī asadin
fa-nsā'a mustawliyan wa-l-khatwu maqsūru

19/11. Asākha min nab'atin asqhā la-hā udhunan
simākhu-hā bi-dakhīsi l-rawqi mastūru

20/12. Min hissi atlasa tas'ā tahta-hu shira'un
ka-anna ahnāka-hā l-suflā ma'āshīru

21/13. Yaqūlu rākibu-hā l-jiniyyu murtafiqan
hadhā la-kunna wa-lahmu l-shātī mahjūru

22. Fa-fāta-hunna wa-azma'na l-lahāqa bi-hi
ka-anna-hunna bi-janbay-hi l-zanābīru

23. Hattā idhā qulta nālat-hu awā'ilu-hā
wa-law yashā'u la-najjat-hu †l-mathā'īru†

24. Karra 'alay-hā wa-lam yafshal yumārisu-hā
ka-anna-hu bi-tawālī-hinna masrūru

25. Wa-shalla-hā bi-dhalīqin haddu-hu salibun
ka-anna-hu marzubānun fāza mahbūru

Variant Readings

[1]. Al-Nābighah Ahl & Derenbourg 10;

10. Ka-anna-hā khādibun azlāfu-hu lahiqun
gahru [*] l-ihābi tarabbat-hu l-zanānīru

[*]. Der: qāhdu.

Translation

- 17/10. As if she was a tattooed /oryx bull/, on the alert, between
Ma'fiqah, al-Qutqutānah and al-Bur'ūm,
19/11. Which had perceived a sound, pricking up an ear, his earhole
concealed by the compact /base/ of his horn,
20/12. Sensing a squalid /hunter/ beneath whom run /hounds as thin
as/ bow-strings, their lower jaws like saws,
21/13. Whose manic rider says to them coaxingly, "This one is for
you, though the flesh of the oryx is /usually/ forbidden!"
18. He perceived the memory of a hunter of the Banu Asad, turned
around, surpassing /them/, though his steps were /still/
short,
22. And outstripped them -- they had resolved upon overtaking
him, swarming around him like wasps --
23. Until when finally you would have said, "The front-runners
have caught him!" (yet if he had wanted, his legs (?) would
have taken him to safety),
24. He wheeled against them and was not feeble in his struggle
with them, seemingly overjoyed to meet them, as they
followed on, one after another,
25. And scattered them with a razor-sharp /horn/, its edge quick

and active, like a braced /bow/ when it tosses them on high.
 26. Then he continued on his way, racing with his shadow, his head
 uplifted, like an exultant satrap who has escaped /from the
 fray/.

Commentary

17/10. Al-Nābighah: as if she was a white /oryx bull/ with dark
 hooves and an albescent pelage, reared in al-Zanānīr.

17. This may be the earliest occurrence of the phrase dhū wushūm
 (cf. Ka'b Kow 13. 20 [= Cairo p.153, v.20], dhā wushūm) which is not
 particularly common in early poetry. It refers, as do the
 synonymous mulamma' (cf. no. 1, v. 3), muwalla', (cf. no. 3, v. 29),
 and the cognate mawshūm ('Alqamah Ahl 13. 16 [= Qab 2. 16, Muf 120.
 17]), primarily to the markings on the oryx's legs, as well as to
 the brown facial and ventral markings, the intensity of which varies
 from individual to individual: cf. al-Nābighah Ahl Frag. 26. 32b,
wa-fī l-qawā'imi mithlu l-washmi bi-l-qārī, and Tha'labah b. 'Amr
 Muf 74. 4, lam tūsham (of the stockinged forelegs of a mare).

Thilo Ortsnamen 83 obelizes this passage because of the difficulty
 of reconciling the localities of the toponyms. Al-Qutqutānah is an
 oasis to the west of al-Kūfah. In a distich of al-Kumayt's quoted
 by al-Bakrī 130, al-Qutqutānah is conjoined with al-Awdah, in the
 territory of Kalb. Al-Bur'ūm, on the other hand, is in the
 territory of Asad: cf. Labīd 'Abbās 35. 25 (al-barā'im); al-Bakrī
 150. The location of Ma'fiqah is not specified. It is difficult
 to make sense of these toponyms and they may simply have been chosen
 for their acoustic resonances -- in the context of hija' the element
 of rhetorical bombast is often amplified considerably. It is
 significant that al-Qutqutānah is not far from al-Ḥīrah; al-Bur'ūm,
 being in the territory of the Banu Asad, is contextually resumed in

line 18, qanīsin min banī asadin. The noble oryx is emblematic of the poet, or is, at least, a moral exemplar and there is discernible an opposition between the poet's connections with al-Ḥīrah and the pastoral lifestyle of the victims of his assault, the Banū Burd. Al-Qutqutānah may suggest that the oryx/poet, by virtue of the vicinage of the poet's patron (al-humām of line 12), is safe from attack. I offer this, however, as only a partial explanation -- there is barely enough information to rely on.

10. Khādīb is an adjective more commonly found as a designation of the male ostrich: Zuhayr Qab 38. 1 (= Th p.316, v.1), Qab 43. 7 (= Th p.245, v.7), 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 17 (= Qab 2. 17, Muf 120. 18), Imru' al-Qays Ahl 40. 29 (= Ibr 30. 29), Murrah b. Hammām Muf 82. 4, 'Uqbah b. Sābiq Aṣm 9. 10. It is also used, by Group 8 -- Asad, of the ostrich hen: 'Abīd 11. 6, Bishr 7. 14, 31. 8; and once of the juvenile: Bishr 7. 14. It is variously glossed: Lyall Muf 2 338 notes that "'a male ostrich with legs coloured red', is explained by some as meaning 'coloured green by the herbage'" and that "the legs, thighs and necks of the male ostrich are said to take on a red tinge when he desires the female"; A. Benhamouda "L'Autruche dans la Poésie de Dhū l-Rummah", in Mélanges Louis Massignon, Damsacus 1956, 1 200 suggests that it designates a male ostrich "of which the skin of the hairless parts, thighs and neck, is red" and Lewin "tinged with red of the male ostrich". In the adult male "the skin of the head, neck, flanks and thighs (is) pink-flesh ... (the) neck in breeding season (is) fiery red and rest of bare skin brighter" whereas the adult female has "bare skin of head, neck, flanks, and thighs (that is) pale-brown" (Cramp and Simmons, Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa: The Birds of the Western Palearctic, Oxford 1977, I 41). This lexical peculiarity of Asad is difficult to account for, unless one presumes that it is a somewhat imprecise epithetical extension. In context of the oryx description, the phrase khādibun azlāfu-hu may refer to the distinctive patterning of the legs (azlāf; 'hooves' being metonymical for legs) although the outer rim of the hoof of the oryx

is overtopped by a white pastern which contrasts with the darker marking of the metapodials, and the phrase may refer to this.

Lahiq (Usamah b. al-Harith Hell 1. 7) and qahd al-ihab (Labid Mu'allaqah 38 [= 'Abbas 48. 38], Zuhayr Qab 32. 17 [= Th p.268, v.17, aqhad of a cloud]) are pleonastic, with the latter explicating the former. Al-Zanānir is in the vicinity of al-Ta'if, due east from the township: cf. Labid 'Abbas 12. 3 (= Chāl p.1, v.3, Brock I 1. 3).

19/11. Nab'ah is frequently associated with the hunter and his gazehounds: Tufayl 1. 26, al-Harith b. Hillizah Mu'allaqah 11, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 3. 15). The second hemistich is rather obscure: the simākh is the ear-hole (cf. Dhū l-Rummah 42. 3); dakhīs seems to refer to anything that is compact and hard (cf. al-Nabighah Ahl 5. 8 [= Der 1. 8], dakhīsi l-naḥḍi, the compact flesh of the hump) or to the foundation of a building, as in al-A'shā 15. 37b (banā l-Lāhu bayt-ī fī l-dakhīsi l-'aramrami): the dakhīs al-rawq is presumably the gristle and bone at the horn core. It is not quite clear how the base of the oryx's horn and the flesh surrounding the cores can be said to cover or conceal its ear, unless the poet is describing the ear as being tucked tightly against the beast's neck; when viewed from the front, the uppermost cranial margins, where the horn cores are located, might conceivably be said to conceal the ears, if they are so tucked back. The singular is difficult to reconcile with viewing the animal from the front, given that it is when viewed from the side that it appears only to have one horn. I do not know whether the oryx tucks its ears back in this manner.

20. Atlas: Muraqqish al-Akbar Muf 47. 12, atlasu l-lawni, of a wolf (cf. 'Abdah b. al-Tabib Muf 26. 30, ash'atha ka-l-sirḥāni, of a hunter); the metaphor, of bow-strings for lean saluqi hounds, is noteworthy: cf. the comparison of the hounds with javelins (mazajīl) in 'Abdah Muf 26. 33. The comparison of jaws, with their rows of sharp teeth, with the serrated edges of saws is similar to

the comparison of the jaws of wolves with splintered sticks found in al-Shanfarā Lāmiyyat al-ʿArab 31. Ḥanak also signifies 'beak': cf. Zuhayr Th p.164, v.19, Dubayʿah al-ʿAbsī in ʿĀmir 34a. 3 (mutaqāribu l-ḥanakayni).

21. The demented 'rider' of the hounds is, of course, the hunter.

18. This line is obviously the culmination of the preceding four verses: it represents the moment when the oryx comprehends the significance of the sound that has alerted him. The stealthy hunter and his hounds have almost come upon their prey unawares. Inṣāʿa is used of the oryx wheeling and escaping from the attacking hounds: al-Aʿshā 52. 39 & 79. 18, Abū Dhuʿayb Hell 1. 41 (= Muf 126. 40, as a v.l.), ʿAbdah b. al-Ṭabīb Muf 26. 33, of the parallel movements of the oryx and the hounds, analogous to Imruʿ al-Qays application of it to the hounds swerving aside from the oryx (Ibr 74. 44) (cf. Rabīʿah b. Maqrūm Muf 39. 31: a wild ass's reaction to the botched shot of a hunter). For the phrase wa-l-khatwu maqsūru, cf. Abū Ṣakhr Well 250. 6, qisārī l-khuṭā, of a herd of oryx; in other words, the oryx is not running at full tilt, but is reserving his strength.

23. As Fischer 93-94 points out, there is a textual crux in al-mathāʾīru, which could only mean, 'then the dead would have allowed him to escape', and not Geyer's improbable "and if he had wanted to flee further, then the murderers would have caught him".

24. I have adopted Fischer's gloss of bi-tawālī-hinna. The following also is possible: 'seemingly overjoyed to meet their rearguard'. The use of yumārisu-hā (cf., for example, Dhū l-Khiraq Aṣm 36. 4, Abū Dhuʿayb 13. 12, Rabīʿah b. al-Jaḥdar Kos 131. 21) points to the personification frequently encountered in the battle of oryx and salūqī.

25. For salīb, cf. al-Aʿshā 52. 40, naḥā salīban of the oryx. It

is used of a tall woman by the early Islamic Mulayh Well 273. 20. This suggests the vocalisation salibin, the adjective qualifying the substantive 'horn', implied by the context: cf. Schwarzlose 234 for its meaning when applied to a lance. The second hemistich is a remarkable case of guttatim style: it resumes the metaphor of verse 20, where the hounds are said to be 'bow-strings' -- the oryx's horn becomes a bow braced with the corpses of the hounds at the point of piercing and tossing them (construing ya'lū-hunna as poetic for ya'lū bi-hinna).

26. The comparison of the exultant oryx with a satrap (cf. 'Adī 5. 16, marāzib) who rejoices in his good fortune on escaping from the battlefield occurs only in this context, as far as I am aware. It continues the association of the Persians with triumphal nobility, a constant theme pervading the whole qaṣīdah.

Structure

17/10: Introductory description; the alarmed buck.

19-21/11-13, 18a: The encounter with the hunter and the hounds.

18b, 22-23: The chase.

24-25: The battle with the hounds; the slaughter.

26: The escape of the buck.

Context and Interpretation

Context: an obscure, difficult and, indeed, rather baffling jeremiad directed against the Banū Burd, a subsect of the Iyād, addressed to the Tamīm. The basic structure of the poem can be schematized as follows:

Nasīb: 1, 5, 2-4.

Rihlah: 6-12.

Wasf al-nāqah: 13-26 (Oryx Bull Vignette: 17-26).

Hijā': 27-34, 36-37, 35; narration of the affront offered to the poet (27-30), lampooning proper (31-34 & 36-37); peroration (?) (35).

Interpretation: in verses 1 and 5 of this poem (verse 5, a possible variation on verse 2 of 'Alqamah Ahl 13, has been transposed to between 1 and 2) the poet sets forth the quandry which is to occupy his attention until line 13. Within the framing motif of the departure of the habīb, the poet poses three questions; was her departure expected?, is he to follow her or avoid her, having perhaps been repudiated by her in the form of an unannounced departure?, should he not cease his unpardonable weeping? He and his beloved had arranged a tryst in al-Numārah, in the vicinity of al-Ḥīrah (cf. W. Caskel "Asad" EI2 I 684), but it was his good fortune only to catch the merest fleeting glimpse of her, no more. Lines 3 and 4 are a variation of the nostalgic yearning for former days of happiness topos. Structurally and semantically, the toponyms enumerated in these lines fulfil a prospective function: the poet catalogues the possible migration routes which the beloved's tribe might follow, basing his conjectures on his past experience (he had passed idyllic days of pleasure in these places, in good favour with his lady friend). These places are not well documented and some appear to be peculiar to this poem. As far as

I can determine, there are three possible routes: Firtāj in line 3a (al-Bakrī 711) and al-Khalṣā' (Thilo Ortsnamen 58) are in the vicinity of Shaqīq and Dahnā'; Ḥanbal (al-Bakrī 288) seems to be in the general area of Shīḥah, with Sarra' (Yāqūt 3 62) being near the Wādī Salma; al-Unay'im (the diminutive of al-An'am), Khazāz and Kīr (al-Bakrī 106, Thilo Ortsnamen 59 and 63 respectively) lie to the south-east of the chain of peaks adjacent to Abān al-Aswad and Abān al-Abyad. The tribe's destination lies to the south (dūna) of Thahlān (Thilo Ortsnamen 103) and al-Nīr (Thilo Ortsnamen 77), i.e. effectively due south to the southernmost members of the toponyms catalogued in line 4. The return (al-quful) of line 6 is both that of the poet and that of the beloved's tribe, Aws having determined, by means of a review of the migration routes, their destination.

The transition from nasīb to riḥlah, (hal tubalighghu-nī-him), Jacobi's A2 -- this is "an allusion to the motif of separation ... the poet either reflects on the bitterness of separation and on the fact that the tribe of his beloved is camping far away, or he is actually watching her litter disappear in the distance" [5] -- heralds a most distinctive and individual treatment of this segment. Retrospectively, it now becomes apparent that the enumeration of the topographical catalogues is, in traditional terms, a reworking of the consuetude referred to by Jacobi, viz. the poet's description of the route followed by his beloved's tribe as he watches them depart. [6] Aws's conjectural migration routes are, then, structurally ambivalent and this topographical catalogue

derives stylistically and topically from the dhikr al-atlal movement: they are, on the one hand, reminiscences of time past, a convention germane to the reflection on the bitterness of separation and, on the other, they represent musings on their departure route.

With this transition, in which traditionally the poet poses the rhetorical question as to his camel's ability to complete the journey, Aws b. Hajar treats the rhetorical demand seriously, by referring to the inactivity of his camel -- left in the stable, surrounded by geese, a prey to the mange (8, 9, 11) -- and to his own inactivity -- he is now unaccustomed to the rigours of the desert, inebriated and in attendance on a princeling (10, 12). I am aware of but a few other pre-Islamic instances of such a 'personal' intrusion. In terms of its function within the tirade, the purpose of this motif is not immediately obvious, and the result of this motival excursus is that the wasf al-nāqah and Oryx Vignette are introduced after the fashion of the 'days of former glory' technique; the poet, who portrays himself as now old and much enfeebled, vaunts his erstwhile prowess, whether it be on the field of battle, in the bedchamber or in the tavern -- a structural and emotional technique much in vogue among the early Jāhili poets, particularly 'Abīd and Imru' al-Qays -- and Aws, having cast doubt on both his and his camel's ability to make the journey (7-11), contrasts his present inactivity with past success:

12. Law-lā l-humāmu l-ladhī turjā nawafīlu-hu
la-qāla rākibu-hā fī 'usbatin sirū

13. Wa-qad tulāqī bi-ya l-hājata nājiyatun
wajnā'u lāhiqatu l-riḡlayni 'abūru

12. Were it not for the princeling whose benefactions are
expectantly awaited, then her rider would say to a troop,
"Advance!"

13. Yet often a swift /she-camel/, with prominent cheeks, with
securely jointed legs, a great traverser /of desert
wastes/, has assisted me in encountering my needs --

Both the might and stamina of the she-camel (again, curiously,
'domesticated' in line 16) and the exultant, noble oryx are, by
implication, framed structurally by the poet's present state of
ineptitude.

The biparous hijā' movement is introduced abruptly by an
apostrophe of the Tamīm, which is somewhat unusual: in abrupt
transitions to hijā' it is customarily the victim of the poet's
invenctive who is apostrophized -- in this instance, the Banū
Burd. One can perhaps account for this in terms of the
circumstances attendant upon the incident which the poet limns in
verses 27-30; the poet tells how at Baṣwah in the oasis of Dhū Qār
(in the vicinity of al-Ḥīrah), the poet's camel was hindered from
drinking by the Banū Burd, whom he labels suhb al-sibāl, 'red of
mustaches', (presumably Byzantine sympathizers or perhaps
mercenaries in their employ: cf. Lane 1737), holding beetles in
their hands (bayāzīr, cf. Fraenkel Fremdwörter 259), an allusion
perhaps to their being in the employ of others, or a derogatory

metaphor for their weapons. The social worthlessness and depraved iniquity of the Banu Burd are then detailed in less particularised terms: they are militarily ineffective as their spears are used for tent-poles and they are never generous (31); other men effect their business on their behalf, for they are dishonest, untrustworthy and bastards to a man (32); they brandish Hindī [7] swords above their heads, while, from below their jock-straps (daqārīr [8]), silent farts are expelled (33); they bray like asses when their lands become fertile (34a); their womenfolk are sordid and vexatious, kept in a pen (34b), dressed in fine clothes; they are of different racial types (i.e. some are slave-born) but they are in fact gazelles (36) [9] -- therefore, being animals, one cannot talk to them nor can they gossip (37). In line 35, the text of which shows signs of some corruption [10], Aws seeks to conclude his qasīdah with the declaration that rumours (concerning the incident ?) have brought his tribe, the 'Abd al-Qays, into disrepute: presumably the poem represents an attempt to vindicate the reputation of the poet and his tribe.

There remain several anomalies to be accounted for, the first being the tribal context of the poem. Why should the hijā' movement be addressed to the Tamīm? It is possible that Dhū Qār at this time was in the territory of the Tamīm, although one would have thought it more likely to belong to the Bakr b. Wā'il. It was certainly the site of a battle between Bakr and Tamīm [11] and they may have been in constant conflict over its proprietorship. The

Banū Burd may have been under the tutelage of the Tamīm but the claim that the Banū Burd are pro-Byzantine (if, of course, that is what suhb l-sibāl means: it may be no more than an indeterminate expression of derogation) would seem to gainsay this. Aws throughout this poem associates himself with al-Ḥīrah and an urban lifestyle (2, 8-11, 16), contrasting himself by implication with the rude Bedouin of 31-37.

If the oryx is symbolic of the poet, one may, with reason, wonder why the disappointed hunter should be said to be a member of the Banū Asad; i.e. why should the poet wish to allude to failure on the part of the Banū Asad? [12] The "Asad had emigrated to the Euphrates line before the middle of the third century. They appear in the inscription on the grave of the second Lakhmid of al-Ḥīrah (in al-Numārah, 328 A.D.), together with the Tanūkh, as al-Asadayn ... It is not known for how long the Asad were under the Lakhm" (Caskel EI2 I 684). Moreover, their "relationship both with their immediate and their more distant neighbours, the Tamīm and the tribes beyond the Wādī, varied" (H. Kindermann "Asad" EI2 I 683-684). It will be remembered that the Iyād, of which the Banū Burd were a clan, "went to al-Baḥrayn, where they formed with other tribes the confederation of al-Tanūkh. They then moved into al-ʿIrāq (and) some Iyād settled at al-Ḥīrah" (J.W. Fück "Iyād" EI2 IV 289), and the survivors of the tribe, pursuant to their diaspora when militarily crushed by the Persians, went variously into the desert, into Syria, and even into Byzantine territory. There is, therefore, historical evidence of connections between the Asad and

Iyād. The Iyād seem also to have been divided in their loyalties: some pro-Lakhmid, some pro-Ghassanid. Yet the Asad were also traditionally associated with al-Ḥīrah. It is conceivable, then, that the Asad and the Iyād were politically at odds with the Tamīm, under whose tutelage the poet was travelling, although it is difficult, perhaps impossible, given the lack of precise information concerning both the context of the poem and the then prevalent tribal allegiances and political manoeuvrings, to untangle this complicated skein of contingencies. I have tried merely to suggest possible constructs. What does emerge, however, is that the poet appeals to tribal loyalties within a wide political spectrum: an incident at a watering-hole was no trifling matter. [13]

In the context of the dramatic demands of the hiḵā' as a poetic type, the poet, by representing himself as somewhat ineffectual, either through age (line 5) or through his exalted social position of attendance upon a princeling, presumably as a panegyrist in his employ, (12), surely enhances the effectiveness of his appeal to the Tamīm: he is a venerable and exalted traveller who should be accorded with more respect than was shown to him at Baṣwah. This may account for the structure of the riḵlah and wasf movements. His uncertainty as to whether he should follow his beloved and as to which route she has taken perhaps casts this in sharper focus: if the poet's relationship with his beloved is an anticipatory deliniation of his standing with the Tamīm (the ḥabīb is, perhaps significantly, unnamed), then the quandry of lines 1 and 5 may be

indicative of the delicacy and political volatility of the poet's appeal for redress. As for the poetic ingenuity of the nasīb and rihlah sections, if an explanation is necessary for such a virtuoso display, I have elsewhere argued that poetic flamboyance is integral to the more bombastic types of invective, thereby enhancing the justness of the poet's claims for recompense and vindicating his denunciations, drawing upon the respect and awe felt for the poet when functioning in his capacity as either tribal spokesman or as the descendant of an erstwhile shamanistic caste.

3. Zuhayr (?) Qab 24. 29-33; Th p.368, v.29-33.

29. A-fa-dhaka am dhū juddatayni muwalla'un
lahaqun turā'ī-hi bi-hawmala rabrabu
30. Bayna yudāhiku ramlatan wa-jīwā'a-hā
yawman utīha la-hu uqaydiru ja'nabu
31. Qasdan ilay-hi fa-jāla thummata radda-hu
'izzun wa-mushtaddu l-nisāli mujarrabu
32. Fa-tarakna-hu khadila l-jabīni ka-anna-hu
garmun bi-hi kadmu [1] l-bikāratī mus'abu
33. Fa-btazza-hunna hutufa-hunna fa-fā'izun
'atibun wa-kābin li-l-jabīni mutarrabu

Variant Readings

- [1]. Deest in MS mīm: kadmu proposed by Qab.

Translation

29. Is it that or an /oryx bull/ with two flank stripes,
parti-coloured, white, grazing in Hawmal together with a
herd?
30. While he, one day, gleamed on a sand-bank and its hollows, he
was fated to encounter a squat, stunted /hunter/
31. Making straight for him. He wheeled but then the proud might
and oft-tested strength of /his horns, as sharp as/

spearheads brought him back /to the fray/:

32. They left his forehead reeking -- he was like an indomitable stallion camel /bleeding from/ the bites of young camels --
33. He despoiled them of their destinies -- one perished, exhausted, another fell prostrate on its brow, covered in dust.

Commentary

29. Juddah: the flank stripes of the oryx lie above the belly at the lowest extremities of either side and appear to meet at the base of the pectus, although the "dark chocolate brown markings" vary "in intensity from one individual to another" (Harrison Mammals 2 345): cf. Zuhayr Qab 28. 5 (= Th p.321, v.5) ('ala haddi matnay-hā mina l-khalqi juddatun), describing an oryx doe, and Lyall Muf 2 361, "the oryx has a long dark-brown streak (turrah) parallel with the spine about half-way down each side, the back being white". The oryx does have a mid-dorsal ridge (cf. juddah of the wild ass in Imru' al-Qays Ahl 34. 15 and al-A'shā 34. 15) which is in fact a thin line of hair, extending from the rump to the occiput. It is unlikely that this is referred to here; cf. further al-A'shā 65. 25 (dhū judad), Salamah b. Jandal Aṣm 42. 3 (dhū juddah: the habīb is likened to an oryx bull!).

muwalla': the variegation refers to the colouring of the oryx's legs and perhaps the facial markings; Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 43 (= Muf 126. 41), 'Alqamah Ahl 2. 13 (= Qab 1. 13, Muf 119. 14).

lahaq: Zuhayr Th p.33, v.19, Imru' al-Qays Ibr 74. 40, no. 2 v. 17/10 ante, Ka'b Kow 20. 21 (= Cairo p.213, v.21) (lahaqa l-sarati); cf. Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 24 (luhaqin tala'lu'u-hu ka-l-hilālī). The epithet is used by 'Abīd of lightning

(23. 6), by Bishr of a highway (10. 15).

Ḥawmal, a stretch of land in the upper Ḥazn (cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 48. 1 [= Ibr 1. 1, Mu'allaqah 1. 1]), is commonly associated with the oryx or the gazelle: Ṭarafah Ahl 4. 34 (= Mu'allaqah 35) (shātin bi-hawmala mufradi) [14], Rabī'a b. Maqrūm Muf 43. 2, Kharāshah b. 'Amr Muf 121. 2 [15], Dabī' b. al-Ḥārith Aṣm 63. 22. H. Jungius, "Plan to Restore Arabian Oryx in Oman", Oryx 14 (1977-78), 330, observes that "the oryx habitat consisted of flat and undulating gravel plains intersected by shallow wadis and depressions and the dunes edging the sand deserts, with a diverse vegetation of trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses. Oryx seem never to have occurred in mountainous country, and pure sand deserts". This accords with the references to habitat contained in the poems. [16] The Ḥazn of the Banū Yarbū' is a gravelly table-land used in the spring as pasturage for camels. The oryx are gregarious, the group normally numbering ten or less, although there are reports of herds perhaps a hundred strong (Nowak & Paradiso 1265).

30. The use of dahāka in this verse is exceptional. The commentators and editors understand it to be similar in tone to Ka'b Kow 13. 34 (= Cairo p. 153, v.34) (yar'ā qharīrā, of the wild ass). Dahk in Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 6. 27 is used as the tertium comparationis of honey -- it is as bright as a smile -- and Lane 1771 records the proverb al-nawru yudāhiku l-shamsa, rendering it as "the flowers vie in brightness with the sun". I have assumed some such meaning here, with perhaps the implication that the hide of the oryx and the sand of the dune vie with each other in brilliance.

jiwā': for this plural, cf. Qays b. 'Ayzārah Kos 116. 12b (bagarun bi-nāsifati l-jiwa'i rukūdu). Jaww, properly a torrent-bed, i.e. the wide, depressed part of a wādī [18], is often associated with the oryx or gazelle: Muraqqish al-Aṣghar Muf 55. 2, Rabī'ah b. Maqrūm Muf 43. 2 (min hawmalin talā'atu l-jawwi), al-Mutanakhkhil Hell 6. 14 (na'am), Abū Ṣakhr Well 252. 24 (oryx does).

uqaydir: Abū Khirāsh Hell 1. 13, Usāmah b. al-Ḥārith Hell 4. 28 (an epithet of a hunter of wild asses), Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 16. 8 (utīḥa la-hā uqaydiru), in which context ibex or tahrs are destined to encounter the hunter.

ja'nab: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 4 (= Ibr 3. 4), of khalq, physique; Hudhayfah b. Anas Kos 104. 1, as a vituperative adjective.

31. For the sentiment expressed by mujarrab in this context, a term which usually designates a warrior or brave who has witnessed much combat, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 74. 40 (ālifun li-l-qawdi mujtadhibun). I have construed 'izz in the second hemistich as dependent on a referent for horns to be supplied from the context: it may however be more abstract, viz. 'his proud might' -- the syntax is somewhat laconic.

mushtadd: the horn is tightly twisted or securely fastened, as in mushtaddi l-nawāshiri (a v.l. of mamsūdi l-nawāshiri), Zuhayr Ahl 15. 9.

32. Qarm: a refractory bull-camel, often during the rut. The comparison is always positive: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 31. 13 (= Ibr 12. 13), an oryx compared with a qarm, Ibr 77. 1, al-A'shā 29. 14, al-Mukhabbal Muf 21. 24, Mulayḥ Well 270. 30.

mus'ab: Imru' al-Qays Ibr 54. 7 (a metaphor for the poet), Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 1. 16 (thunder compared with a bull-camel's bellowing). The bites may be inflicted by young stallions or young females (bikarah may mean both: cf. Blachère 768), although the fact that the forcing by the male of the female to the "couched position ... is not difficult since most oestrous females are not unwilling" (Wilson Camel 93) may render the latter unlikely. If the females are virginal when they are approached by a rutting male, their reactions may be more extreme than those of other females, although I have found no corroboration for this. "The

manifestation of rut in the male is accompanied by many of the signs which would be normally considered masculine: fighting instincts are aroused, control is difficult or impossible, bulls in rut at the same time are hostile to each other and noisy". Furthermore, "the hierarchical structure among males" which leads to "suppression of the rut in weaker and younger males" (Wilson Camel 93 & 94) may sufficiently account for the bites: cf. Chapter 2, no.2 v. 15.

33. The phrase fa-btazza-hunna hutūfa-hunna is striking -- one might have expected nufūsa-hunna, 'he stripped them of their souls' (ibtazza in an erotic context: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 52. 16 [= Ibr 2. 17]), although the emphasis on the death of the hounds is very expressive.

Fā'iz (cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 98. 2 [fayz], a man of Ghani Aṣm 12. 32 [fāza]) and 'atīb are rare words. Kabā is common in a martial context and in descriptions of the killing of the oryx: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 55 (= Ibr 3. 45) and Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 48 (= Muf 126. 48); of the wild ass: Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 3. 17 and of hounds transpierced by the oryx: Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 64.

Structure

29: Introductory description: the oryx grazing with a herd.

30-31: The encounter with the hunter and the chase.

31-33: The battle with the hounds; the slaughter of the hounds (33).

Context and Interpretation

Context: cf. Chapter 2, no. 2 ante.

Interpretation: the attribution of this poem has already been

discussed. It is markworthy that, as with the hunter's accoutrements in the Wild Ass Vignette of this poem, the description of the hunter in this vignette displays a use of vocabulary that can amply be paralleled from the Hudhālī dīwān.

This qasīdah is an example of a type that can be designated the 'poem of conglutination'; it represents the resultant composition of a poet who, having taken stock of the poetic tradition and recent developments therein, essays a rigorous systematization of the themes of his poem and the way in which they relate to one another. The transition is of consummate importance and the poem represents both a manifesto of poetic artistry and a definition of the current state of the art, traditional in that it consolidates prior experiments with the qasīdah structure and thematic and motival developments, experimental in its deployment of such features. Thus, the irony of the nasīb: Umaymah, the beloved, avoids the poet and departs, only, finally, to lavish her bounty upon him in the form of a withering phantasm; in verses 4-5, the distance so fantastically traversed by this ethereal figure becomes the distance which the poet has to cross to be with her. The phantasm is, for the poet, a harbinger heralding a renewal in Umaymah's interest in the poet as her lover, although, ironically, this inflicts pain and hardship upon him. The remainder of the poem is a depiction of the poet's means of attaining his beloved, viz. his she-camel. In both of its manifestations -- the wild ass and the oryx bull -- it proves to be triumphant: its endurance and

speed, its ability to cross great stretches of desert waste, are enlarged upon, and, in terms of structure, the poet thus delineates his successful arrival at the camp of his inamorata. Yet, the oxymoronic antithesis of the pleasures and pains of love strikes a hollow note: will Umaymah's favour be as physically and emotionally ravaging as the benefactions bestowed by her phantasm?

Within the context of the camel description proper, 5b-12, there is evidence of internal systematization; the camel is fat after feeding on the lush vegetation of Fayd (to the south-east of Mt Salma [18]) (6-7 & 9), it outpaces and outlasts much younger camels on the journey (verse 12 should be transposed to between 10 and 11: in gutattim style it picks up and, with precision, enlarges upon the epithet khūs of line 10) and in line 13 it is emaciated, its refractoriness having been broken. In addition to the transition of 4-5, line 8 provides a link with lines 2-3 -- the she-camel is said to be a refuge from anxieties, a means of escape and a source of solace in times of danger or anxiety. There is, as far as I can discern, no explicit anticipations of the later themes of the poem of the type that are found, for example, in several of the more progressive panegyrics of Zuhayr and al-Nābighah, such as Zuhayr Ahl 4 & 18, al-Nābighah Ahl 6 & 17, i.e. at the next developmental stage of the Jāhili tradition, a stage which witnessed the burgeoning of the professional panegyric as a fully-fledged poetic type. Rather, the poet's technique is one of explicating the logical connections between the two thematic blocks of nasīb and

wasf, subordinating, at least in terms of structural function, the latter to the first, even though the Wild Ass Vignette threatens in its vivid immediacy to burst through the lamina imposed upon it. It is also interesting to speculate whether this vignette appealed to the poet's aesthetic sense more than did the oryx panel, which latter is, in terms of detail, somewhat pithy and trenchant, although the picture it paints is one of great speed, with the narrative units rapidly following one upon another and with the image of the dead hounds (33) balancing the depiction of the grazing oryx (29). Lines 30-33 represent an episode in the oryx's existence prior to the secure tranquility implied in line 29: the poet commences with the victorious oryx and moves retrogressively thence to the narration of an earlier adventure. In the Wild Ass tableau, the poet describes the stallion ass prior to the onset of summer and the attendant disappearance of vegetation, next proceeding to the narration of its journey to water and the encounter with the hunter, thus producing narrative variation and avoiding precise parallelism between the two vignettes.

Group 10 (ii).

4. Al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī Ahl 5. 9-19; Derenbourg l. 9-19; De Sacy 9-19; al-Tibrizī (Lyall and Qabawah) 9-19.

Translations: De Sacy 405-409; Wolff, "Ein Gedicht Nabīga's", ZDMG 13 (1859) 701-704; Derenbourg 301-306; Jacobi Studien 58-59 (lines 11-19); Wagner Grundzüge I 107.

9. Ka-anna rahl-ī wa-qad zāla l-nahāru bi-nā
yawma l-jalīlī [1] 'alā musta'nisin [2] wahadī
10. Min wahshī wajrata mawshiyyin akārī'u-hu
tāwī l-masīri ka-sayfi l-sayqalī l-faradī [3]
11. Asrat [4] 'alay-hi mina l-jawzā'i sariyatun [5]
tuzjī l-shamālu 'alay-hi jamīda l-baradī
12. Fa-rtā'a min sawti kallābin fa-bāta la-hu
taw'a [6] l-shawāmiti min khawfin wa-min saradī
13. Fa-baththa-hunna 'alay-hi wa-stamarra bi-hi
sum'u l-ku'ūbi bariyyatun [7] mina l-haradī
14. Wa-kāna [8] dumrānu min-hu haythu yūzī'u-hu
ta'na [9] l-mu'ariki 'inda l-muhjari [10] l-najudi [11]
15. Shakka l-farīsata bi-l-midrā fa-anfadha-hā
shakka [12] l-mubaytirī idh yashfī mina l-'adadī
16. Ka-anna-hu khārijan min janbi safhati-hi
saffūdu sharbin nasū-hu 'inda mufta'adī
17. Fa-zalla ya'jumu a'lā l-rawqi munqabidan
fī haliki l-lawni sadqin ghayri dhī awadī

18. Lammā ra'a washiqun iq'asa sāhibi-hi
wa-lā sabīla ilā 'aqlin wa-lā qawadi
19. Qalat la-hu l-nafsu inn-ī lā arā tama'an
wa-inna mawlā-ka lam yaslam wa-lam yasidi

Variant Readings

- [1]. Al-Tibrizī, Yāqūt 2 111: bi-dhī l-jalīli; al-Bakrī 778: bi-dhī l-salīli.
- [2]. Al-Tibrizī (in the sharh): mustawjisin.
- [3]. Ahlwardt: l-faridi.
- [4]. De Sacy, al-Tibrizī: sarat.
- [5]. Ahlwardt: sāriyatan.
- [6]. Al-Tibrizi: taw'u.
- [7]. Al-Tibrizi: bārī'ātun.
- [8]. De Sacy, al-Tibrizī: fa-hāba.
- [9]. De Sacy, Derenbourg, Al-Tibrizī: ta'nu.
- [10]. Blachère: al-mahjari; al-Tibrizī (Lyall [cf. Muf 1 70, 319, 872]): l-mujhari.
- [11]. Al-Tibrizī: l-najidi.
- [12]. Ahlwardt, Derenbourg: ta'na.

Translation

9. As if my saddle, when the day quitted us at al-Jalīl, was
 /bound/ upon a solitary /oryx buck/ on the look-out, alert,
10. One of the wild of Wajrah, his shanks striated, his gut tucked
 in, /as bright/ as the burnisher's peerless sword;
11. A nocturnal /rain-cloud, brought on/ by al-Jawzā', remained
 above him all night, the urgent North Wind lashing him with

frozen hail --

12. He had been affrighted by the sound of a hunter /calling his dogs/, and so passed the night in subservience to /those/ spiteful /forces/, fear and cold.
13. He set them upon him, but he persevered, carried on by /his legs/, slender-jointed, supple, devoid of malformation:
14. Dumrān, /running/ where /his master/ urged him to, /snapped at him as/ the combatant thrusts at the doughty /warrior/ who has been routed.
15. He jabbed and rent the dog's shoulder-muscle with his horn, jabbing like the farrier, when treating /a limb/ for 'adad,
16. And, as it emerged from the other side, it resembled a spit which a group of drinkers had forgotten by the fire --
17. /Dumrān/, impaled on the pitch-black, true, unbending horn, gnawed repeatedly at its tip.
18. When Wathīq saw the instantaneous slaughter of his companion, and the impossibility of blood-mulct and vendetta,
19. His soul said to him "I feel no desire /to give chase any further/ -- for your kinsman is neither safe, nor has he /even/ caught the prey".

Commentary

9. Al-Tibrīzī, Yāqūt: at Dhū l-Jalīl; al-Bakrī 778: at Dhū l-Salīl. Contrary to the commentaries which explain wa-qad zāla l-nahāru as intaṣafa, viz. when it was midday, I have rendered it "when the day quitted us", seeing therein a continuation of a temporal sequence, from evening to night, established in the dhikr

al-atlāl by uṣaylānan (2) and amsat/amsā (6), thereby perpetuating the belowmentioned narrative fiction.

The jalīl is a type of thumām, a "fairly tall graminaceous plant of the Arabian Steppe" (Blachère 1656): cf. 'Abd Manāf Well 143. 6 (jalā'il). [19] It is conceivable that originally al-Jalīl was a descriptive toponym, i.e. the place where jalīl grows in abundance, and later became established as a toponym proper. Yāqūt (1 344, 2 111, 4 193) gives two possible locations of Dhū l-Jalīl: in the mountain range of Ajā', on the southern lip of 'Ālij (Thilo Ortsnamen 26); a wādī in the vicinity of Mecca. This latter is more suited to the context of the poem, both its topography (cf. Wajrah in line 10) and its emphasis on religious worship at Mecca (cf. 37-38). If bi-dhī l-salīlī is read with al-Bakrī, then a wādī adjacent to 'Āqil (Thilo Ortsnamen 29) near the Hīmā Dāriyyah is meant: cf. Zuhayr Ahl 17. 8 (= Qab 9. 8, Th p.145, v.6). This is contextually a less satisfactory reading than bi-dhī l-jalīlī. Ahlwardt's interpretation of the phrase yawma l-jalīlī as "the Day of al-Jalīl" (Aechtheit 92-93), i.e. designating a battle, to the occurrence of which no other reference is made, or at least a day on which something outstanding took place, is ingenious but hardly tenable, for he is hoist with his own petard in his reversion to the interpretation of al-A'lam rejected only a few lines before, viz. "on the day when we found ourselves in a place where this plant grows in great quantities". It also dissipates the structural significance of Dhū l-Jalīl, important in terms of the poem's narrative fiction (cf. Jacobi Camel 5-6); the poet represents himself as travelling from Mecca to al-Ḥīrah, presumably having performed the pilgrimage, as delineated in 37-38.

Al-Tibrīzī (in the sharḥ): mustawjisin, straining to hear. The verb ista'nasa has very little to do with fear, pace Lane 113, "he (a wild animal) became sensible of the presence or awareness of a human being" (hence the translation "menschenscheu" in Ahlwardt loc. cit. and Wagner Grundzüge 107). The root often refers to either

auditory or ocular perception: Zuhayr Qab 35. 14 (= Th p.260, v.10) (Form X), Usāma b. al-Ḥārith Hell 4. 27 (Form X: a wild ass in search of water), Bishr 39. 15, (Form IV: mares vying with one another), (ocular); al-Ḥārith b. Ḥillizah Mu'allaqah 11 (Form IV: an ostrich hen affrighted by a hunter), 'Adī 5. 9, al-Muzarrid Muf 17. 22 (Form III) (auditory).

I have been unable to find another instance of form X of the root w-j-s, which refers exclusively to auditory perception (cf. Lane 2926), being frequently associated with the oryx: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 31. 3 (= Ibr 12. 3) (mūjis of an oryx bull), Bishr 21. 8 (mūjis of an oryx bull), Abū Du'ād 43. 1 (Form V: the ear of a horse), 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 16 (= Qab 2. 16, Muf 120. 17) (ka-mā tawajjasa tawī l-kashhī mawshūmu), Tarafah Ahl 4. 33 (= Mu'allaqah 34) (Form V: the ears of a camel), Bishr 16. 14 (Form V: oryx bull), al-Dākhil b. Ḥarām Kos 124. 4 (Form V: oryx doe). There is, given the frequent use of this root with reference to the oryx, a plausible, though not compelling, argument for the restoration of mustawjisin. It is interesting to note that in Yāqūt 2 111 the second hemistich is given as bi-dhī l-jalīlī 'alā musta'nisin ujūdī, i.e. on an alert, strong /she-camel/. For wahad of the oryx bull, cf. al-Aswad b. Ya'fūr Muf 44. 32.

10. Wajrah (Thilo Ortsnamen 111) lies, significantly, on the Baṣra to Mecca pilgrim route, on the southern rim of Ḥarrat Laylā (II). It is frequently associated with the zaby (Gazella dorcas saudīya): Labīd Mu'allaqah 14 (= 'Abbās 48. 14), al-A'shā 1. 12, 65. 17, al-Ḥuṭa'yah 5. 3, Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 1. 4 (wahshī wajrata).

mawshī: washy properly denotes the striation of a cloth, whence its application to the legs of the oryx, and in particular to the pasterns: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 52. 50 (= Ibr 2. 45) (wa-akru'u-hu washyu l-burūdī mina l-khālī); for mawshī of the oryx, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 60. 22 (mawshiyya l-qawā'imi), Bishr 11. 11, 12. 6 (mawshiyyu l-shawā), 16. 7, 41. 12 (as a v.l.) (= Muf 97. 12).

Wagner's "stickereigleich" is somewhat inaccurate.

Akārī' and akru' are plurals of kurā', "the shank, shin-bone or leg" (WKAS 131-134); akārī': 'Adī (?) 157. 1, al-Ḥuṭay'ah 78. 2 (gazelle), Ka'b Kow 7. 18 (= Cairo p.99, v.30) & 12. 23 (= Cairo p.136, v.23) (wild ass); akru': Imru' al-Qays Ahl 52. 50 (= Ibr 2. 45) (oryx), 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 31 (=Qab 3. 31) (horse), 'Adī 87. 1 (wild ass), Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 27 (= Muf 126. 26); kurā': Umayya b. al-Askar Well 225. 2 (oryx doe).

For the phrase tāwī l-masīri, cf. al-A'shā Bahilah Aṣm 24. 20 (= Geyer 4. 29), where it is applied to the dead brother of the poet, as a laudatory epithet. The masīr is the 'gut' not the 'flanks', as Jacobi Studien 120 ("mit schmalen Flanken") translates.

Farad/farid is used of both the oryx (Bishr 12. 6 -- cf. also mufrad of the oryx: Ṭarafah Ahl 4 34 [= Mu'allaqah 35], shātin bi-hawmala mufradi, Ka'b Kow 1. 16 [= Cairo p.6, v.16], mufradin lahaqin) and of a sword; de Sacy 437 explains it as both 'peerless' and 'unsheathed', Schwarzlose 159 and Ahlwardt Aechtheit 93 as 'well-polished'. The transference of the epithet is doubtless intentional on the part of the poet.

11. If Ahlwardt's text is retained, then the subject of asrat must be al-shamālu and the line translated as follows: The urgent North Wind drew upon him a night-cloud /brought on/ by al-Jawza', lashing him with frozen hail. De Sacy 437 records a gloss to the following effect: anna saḥābatan marrat 'alya-hi laylan wa-anna anwā'a l-jawzā'i asrat bi-hā 'alay-hi: in which case, The /asterisms of/ al-Jawza' drew upon him a night-cloud, the urgent North Wind lashing him with frozen hail. This is contrary to the normally intransitive use of asrā (cf., for example, al-A'shā 33. 48, Labīd 'Abbās 11. 37 (= Chāl p.108, v.37, Brock I 17. 37), Abū Ṣakhr Well 250. 38, asrat muznatun hadramiyyatun).

For sāriyah as a designation of a nocturnal rain-cloud, cf. Bishr 15. 9 (= Muf 98. 8), Labīd Mu'allaqah 5 (= 'Abbās 48. 5), al-Ḥādirah Muf 8. 6, al-Aswad Muf 44. 29 (plural), Dābi' b. al-Ḥārith Aṣm 63. 27 (an Oryx Bull Vignette). Barad, hail [20] recurs in verse 31.

This line seems to contain an inconsistency which, to my knowledge, has not been noticed by any of the poem's commentators or translators. Al-Jawzā' is "the third constellation of the Zodiac known as Gemini ... the Sun's entry in this sign coincides with the beginning of the torrid season" (Blachère 1915); so too Lyall Muf 2 55, "the heat is said to come from the constellation Gemini ... because the period coincided with the heliacal rising of these stars". The advent of al-Jawza' accompanied with blazing heat is referred to in 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 45 (= Qab 2. 45, Muf 120. 50) (yawmun taji'u bi-hi l-jawzā'u masmumu), al-Marrār Muf 16. 33 (min yadi l-jawzā'i yawmun musmaqrir), Ka'b b. Sa'd Aṣm 19. 17 (wa-qad shālati l-jawzā'u); on the paucity of rain therein, cf. Abū Ṣakhr Well 259. 25 (humu ... qhaythun idhā l-jawzā'u qallat rihamu-hā). Al-Burayq's line, saqā l-raḥmānu ḥazma nubā'i'ātin/mina l-jawzā'i anwā'an qhizāran, 'May al-Raḥmān give the hard ground of Nubā'i'āt plentiful rainfalls to quaff!' (Well 165. 6), is probably oxymoronic: the poet, in a lament for his brother, asks that the field where he was felled be watered even during the hot season. In the category of Oryx Vignette in which the animal is blasted by the elements -- either the rain or the freezing cold or both are specified -- (Type 1), the autumnal or hiemal season is usually referred to: thus, 'Abīd 16. 3 (shunānah rajabiyyah), 19. 10 (laylah rajabiyyah), Bishr 41. 12 (= Muf 97. 12) (laylatun fī-hā jahāmu), al-Nābighah Ahl 23. 20 (fī laylatin min jumādā), al-Ṭirimmāh 4. 46 (laylatun hājat jumādiyyatun/dhātu sirrin jirbiyā'u l-nisām). [21] For rain and fresh herbage during Jumādā, cf. Abū Khirāsh Hell 3. 17 (wa-laylati dajnin min jumādā), Ma'qil b. Khuwaylid Kos 56. 3 (hayrā jumādiyyah), Rīṭah bint 'Āṣiyah Well 227. 7 (hayrā jumādiyyah), Labīd Mu'allaqah 28 (= 'Abbās 48. 28) (Wild Ass Vignette: hattā idhā salakhā jumādā sittatin) [22]

Occasionally a winter drought is mentioned or envisaged: Abū Khirāsh Hell 16. 3 (idhā qahimat jumādā), a woman of the Banū Ḥabīb Well 177. 2 (idhā qahatat jumādā), a woman of the Banū l-Qayn Well 211. 1 (idhā dannat jumādā bi-l-qitārī).

Musil Rwala Bedouin 7-8 outlines divisions of the year of the northern Bedouins:

The year of the Bedouins begins with the first heavy rain following the appearance of the star Canopus, shejl, in the first days of October. Canopus reigns for forty nights, after which the Pleiades, trajja, take the helm for twenty-five nights, trūwī, to be followed by Gemini, ḡawzā', for an equal period. Thus the reign of Canopus, the Pleiades, and Gemini lasts ninety days in all -- three months -- and this season of the year is called as-sferī, corresponding approximately to October, November and December ... al-wasm ... includes ... the rains of Canopus, the Pleiades, and Gemini, or the as-sferī or autumnal rains ... A copious rain of Gemini extending over wide areas assures the growth of both the grasses and the woody plants and banishes the dread of hunger.

It seems, then, for the Rwala at least, that when al-Jawzā' is in the ascendant, it heralds the end of the autumnal period and its rain is of the utmost importance for the growth of vegetation. One possible interpretation of line 11, then, is that al-Nabighah is using the Bedouin form of seasonal notation, perhaps thus to render the context of the Oryx Vignette more vivid or more authentic.

There remains to be considered the possibility that by al-Jawzā' al-Jabbār, 'Orion', is meant: this is the interpretation offered by all the translators, from de Sacy to Wagner. The traditional view of the development of the nomenclature of this constellation is given by H. Suter "Al-Jabbār" EI I 987: "the older name of this constellation (viz. al-Jabbār) among the Arabs before they became

acquainted with Greek astronomy, was al-Jawzā'". That the identification of al-Jawzā' with al-Jabbār antedates acquaintance with Greek astronomy, or that acquaintance with Greek astronomy is to be dated earlier than has hitherto been acknowledged, is perhaps suggested by the following lines from a poem by the Hudhalī Abū Ṣakhr (Well 255 = Farraj p.936):

1. Alamma khayālun tārīqun muta'awwibu
li-ummi hakīmīn ba'da mā nimtu mūsibu
2. Hudū'an wa-ashāb-ī bi-nakhlata ba'da mā
badā l-ī simāku l-najmī aw kāda yaqhrubu
3. Wa-qad danatī l-jawzā'u wa-hya ka-anna-hā
wa-mirzāmu-hā bi-l-qhawri thawrun wa-rabrabu

1. A harrowing phantasm belonging to Umm Hakīm arrived during the night, when I had fallen asleep,
2. Quietly; my comrades were in Nakhlah and /it was/ after Simāk had /either/ appeared or was on the point of setting,
3. And al-Jawzā' had drawn near -- they and Mirzām seemed, upon their descent, /to pass like/ a bull /driving/ a herd.

Mirzām is Bellatrix, a star in Orion, and this is the earliest explicit connection between Gemini and Orion that I have been able to trace: Abū Ṣakhr's floruit is circa 680-692 A.D. (cf. Sezgin 405). If by al-Jawzā' al-Nābighah does intend al-Jabbār, and it is by no means certain that he does, then various interpretations are possible. Al-Jabbār "is represented in the form of a crowned king upon the throne" (Lane 375), (cf. Qur'an 28. 19, where jabbār probably signifies 'a tyrant, an absolute ruler'), the relevance of which to the regal might of al-Nu'mān is obvious; that Orion was a great hunter in Greek mythology may also be relevant, in which case the victorious oryx is a moral exemplar and the disappointed hunter is an antithetical foil, contrasting with the implied prowess of al-Nu'mān, who, as a mighty and royal hunter, would assuredly have snared his prey. In Qur'an 26. 130, jabbārīna means 'transported in a paroxysm of anger': this would refer to the King's disfavour

with the poet. The notion of the setting of a fracture would then also be of significance for the poet's appeal for clemency in 39-43. Of course, firmer evidence for the equation of Gemini with Orion by this early period is required before the relevance of these nuances can properly be evaluated. The rain of this line is connected with the torrent of line 5 (if such be the meaning of atī) and it prefigures the mighty Euphrates in spate in 44-46 ('prefigurative' ring-composition), where the association of fertility with the mamdūh is rendered syntactically and semantically explicit.

12. As the commentaries note, this line can be construed in a variety of ways: problematic are the referent in la-hu, the vocalisation of taw' and the precise signification of al-shawāmit; Ahlwardt Aechtheit 93 stresses that the force of this adjectival participle is epithetical, not substantival, a notice to which neither Jacobi nor Wagner have adequately responded.

The pronominal suffix in la-hu can refer either to the oryx bull, in which case taw'u is to be read, or to sawt/kallāb, grammatically the proper antecedent, and taw'a must be adopted, as the khavar of kāna. With the first reading, the line can be rendered as Lane 1594-1595 does: "and passed the night, having, of fear and of cold, what was agreeable with the desire of such as would rejoice at his affliction". The real problem in the verse, however, is the meaning of al-shawāmit [23] concerning which there are two principal theories of interpretation: that it designates the oryx's (imaginary?) enemies or, specifically, the hunter and the hounds, who would augur well of the oryx's discomfort; 'in compliance with the spiteful /wishes/ of those who rejoice in his discomfort'. This is the explanation offered by al-A'lam, followed, with some modification, by Derenbourg and Jacobi. It is rightly rejected by Ahlwardt Aechtheit 93 (although I do not lend much credence to the arguments for rejection which he adduces) -- the shāmit seems mostly to rejoice after the event, and the supply of some such notion as

'spiteful wishes' is rather awkward. With the second theory the postulate is offered that al-shawāmit designates the oryx's legs. Those who support this seem -- with one notable exception -- not to have bothered to wonder as to the meaning of the word, i.e. to have accepted it as a poetic substantive and not as an epithet. As stated above, Ahlwardt is the notable exception. He stresses that the buck's legs rejoice in vanquishing the hounds and the hunter: 'and so passed the night, through fear and cold, in obedience to /his legs/ which were wont to exult in the disappointment of his foes' (the hunter and his dogs); i.e. upright, without resting, through fear and cold. Ahlwardt pursues his interpretation further and argues that taw'a l-shawāmiti cannot imply that the oryx stands still throughout the night, but that he must be on the move, fleeing from the hunter who is also on the move with his gazehounds. [24] I am in complete accord with Ahlwardt on this point and it is precisely for this reason that I cannot accept al-shawāmit as a designation of the oryx's legs. It is a feature of the descriptions of the oryx assaulted by the elements that the oryx tries to burrow a hide for itself and remain there till the advent of dawn. [25] Harrison Mammals 2 349 provides an interesting parallel: "two oryx in captivity in Riyadh habitually dug a shallow pit in the earth or sand, in which to settle themselves for the night, rendering them almost invisible, even at a short distance". It is likely, then, that the oryx seeks thus to camouflage itself at night. Furthermore "the whole instinct of the salūqī -- and indeed of all gazehounds -- is to course the moving quarry" [26] -- in other words, a gazehound cannot hunt by night, except by moonlight. The evidence seems, then, to be against Wolff and Ahlwardt. The translation I have offered is based on a gloss of Abū 'Ubaydah recorded by de Sacy 438, which he explains as "Il a passé la nuit, au gré des desirs malins de ses ennemis, qui sont la crainte et la froidure". De Sacy is inclined to reject this interpretation, because the poet should have used the Sound Masculine Plural, al-shāmitūna, -- the dual would surely be more regular! Such grammatical strictures must be applied to poetry

with scrupulous care. The min of this line I should construe as explicative, 'consisting of fear and cold'. It is also possible to understand it as meaning 'sent by, caused by' -- 'spiteful /elements, forces, brought on/ by the wind and the cold'. The oryx bull is at the mercy of the elements who are personified as taking spiteful pleasure in inflicting hardship on the animal.

This adumbration of 'Schadenfreude' is of course relevant to the apologetic context of the poem. Traditionally, the triumphant oryx symbolizes the mamdūh vanquishing his opponents. In this i'tidhār, however, the oryx is also emblematic of the poet who will be successful in his suit and overcome the malice of his foes who have misrepresented his words to the King -- wa-in ta'aththafa-ka l-a'dā'u bi-l-rifadi, 'even if my enemies have surrounded you in cohorts, like stones around a fire' (43). The oryx perseveres, submits to the hostility of the elements and outruns the hounds: the poet perseveres despite the slanderous scandal-mongering of his enemies and makes his appeal for clemency before al-Nu'mān -- like the oryx, he expects to be victorious.

13. The reference to the hounds by means of the pronominal suffix bereft of any explicit antecedent in descriptions of the chase is somewhat unusual.

Asma' is an adjective proper to the martial domain, being applicable to a sword (Schwarzlose 179), an arrow (Abū l-Muthallam Kos 9. 10, wa-asma'un naslu-hu fī l-qidhi mu'tadilu: cf. Schwarzlose 305-306), and of a lance (Schwarzlose 179, sum'u l-ku'ūbi, "with small, thin knots"). Al-Muthaqqib applies it to a man's heart (qalbun ḥadīdun asma'u).

Ka'b, when applied to the human anatomy, designates the ankle (as in Bishr 15. 20 = Muf 98. 20; cf. also Musil Rwala Bedouin 115); when applied to the anatomy of the horse, oryx, or some such beast, it designates the joints of the leg, especially the knee-joints ('Abd

b. Ḥabīb Well 176. 9, qawā'imu mujmaratu l-ku'ūbi, of a horse; Abū Ṣakhr Well 259. 32, ka'bi l-shātī) which were also used as dice (Ḍamrah b. Ḍamrah Muf 93. 9, al-Ajda' b. Mālik Aṣm 16. 11). However, in a poem by Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī (Bajraktarević l. 23 = Farraj p.1069, v.23), the phrase ka-rutūbi ka'bi l-sāqī seems to mean 'like the straightness of the shin of the leg' -- it is not clear whether a bestial or human leg is intended. The picture drawn is of an ankle or knee so little prominent that the leg appears to be straight and thin. When applied to a reed-lance, the ka'b designates the knots, the nodes of the shaft; it also frequently refers to the internodes between such knots, which are properly referred to as the anābīb (cf. Schwarzlose 222, Boudot-Lamotte LPG 45). There are two types of reed-lance: the lance which has naturally firm nodes and straight internodes is said to be muttarid al-ku'ūb (Rāshid b. Shihāb Muf 86. 7, 'Antarah Ahl 11. 6 [= Mawlawī 4. 6], Mawlawī 31. 2); whereas the lance which has had to be straightened in the thiqāf is called muthaqqaf ('Antarah Mu'allaqah 48 [= Ahl 21. 54, Mawlawī l. 54, al-qanāti is read], wa-muthaqqafin ṣadqī l-ku'ūbi). The comparison of the horn of the oryx with a lance is a common one and ka'b can be used in this context, by means of a quite natural extension of the scope of reference: Zuhayr Ahl 3. 14 (= Qab 19. 14, Th p.219, v.15), madlūki l-ku'ūbi, 'smooth of nodes', i.e. the annular ridges of the horn.

The image drawn by al-Nābighah is also found in Imru' al-Qays Ibr 29. 29, wa-saqāni ka'bā-humā asma'āni, of the legs of his steed, and 'Adī 87. 2, asma'i l-ka'bayni, of the legs of a wild ass: there is a metaphorical topos common to all three instances of the image, viz. that the legs, in their slenderness, are like lances.

The translation given by Blachère 2377 of this phrase, "with delicate feet", is quite inaccurate. Harad is a disorder, presumably a form either of arthritis or muscular paralysis, associated, in particular, with the forearms of the camel (cf. Blachère 2377): in Somalia, for example, such arthritic diseases,

collectively known as barrak, are "manifested by an inability to kneel down, stiffness and lameness" (Wilson Camel 128). Musil *Rwala Bedouin* 368-370 gives a list of diseases to which camels are prone. The arthritic disorders are subsumed under the rubric zal', inflammation of the joints.

'Adad in verse 15 is also a camel disorder affecting the forearms which, as al-Nābighah's simile suggests, is treated by piercing: of the diseases listed by Musil as treated in this manner, mowah ("inflamed and swollen legs; treated by peircing the swollen places with a small sharp peg, hlāl"), tifen ("inflammation of the lower thigh accompanied by swelling; treated like mowah") or rekab ("swelling of the knee; treated by piercing") are relevant. Among the *Rwala*, most of the camel disorders as are curable are treated by the application of heat.

14. The naming of the salūqīs is a common but by no means universal feature of the Oryx Vignette [27]: cf. Labīd Mu'allaqah 52 (= 'Abbās 48. 52), where they are called Kasābī, 'Catch!' [28], and Sukhām, 'Blackey'; in al-Muzarrid *Muf* 17. 66 six gazehounds are named:

66. suḥāmūn wa-miqlā'u l-qanīṣi wa-salḥabūn
wa-ḡadlā'u wa-l-sirḥānu wa-l-mutanāwīlu

66. "Blackey, the Hunter's Tip-cat, Long-body, Slim, Wolf, and the Gripper" [29]

Dumrān could be rendered as 'Scraggy' or 'Sleek', Washīq as 'Snapper' or 'Speedy': cf. Kazimirski 1543.

The syntax of this line is singularly unclear. Before listing the possibilities of vocalisation and construction, I shall offer a detailed discussion of the vocabulary.

The root w-z- has the basic meaning of 'restraint' and is used with

reference to two distinct spheres, the military and the emotional; in the first, it has the technical meaning of restraining a troop of cavalry before the order is given to charge: Imru' al-Qays Ibr 79. 19a = 'Abīd 9. 11a, Zuhayr Ahl 11. 13 (= Qab 20. 13, Th p.193, v.13), al-A'shā 21. 40, Labīd Mu'allaqah 62 (= 'Abbās 48. 62), Tha'labah b. Ṣu'ayr Muf 24. 20, 'Abd Yaghūth Muf 30. 18, Subay' b. al-Khaṭīm Muf 112. 21 (= Aṣm 83. 20) (metaphorical, of the wind), Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 13. 7, Abū Khirāsh Hell 3. 24, al-Mutanakhkhil Hell 3. 21; in the emotional sphere, it refers to the keeping in check of wayward passions, especially infatuation: Imru' al-Qays Ibr 63. 1, 'Abīd 30. 18, Zuhayr Qab 28. 2 (= Th p.321, v.2), 'Adī 23. 10, 73. 1, Suwayd Muf 40. 11. It is as an extension of the military meaning that Lyall Muf 2 358 and Lewin 468-469 interpret Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 40 (= Muf 126. 39), fa-badā la-hu//ūlā sawābiqī-hā qarīban tūza'u, construing the verb tūza'u as the third person feminine singular of the Passive Imperfective, i.e. the hunter restrains the pack of hounds as does the commander of an attacking troop of horse. Lyall translates "there close at hand break forth the first of the hounds, held back till their fellows join". On the contrary, it seems to me that Abū Dhu'ayb's usage is parallel to yūzi'u in al-Nābighah 5. 14, i.e. the hunter urges on his hounds who do not attack en masse but as each reaches the prey: the gazehounds race with one another as they chase the prey (sawābiq). This is also evident in the two Oryx tableaux by Aws b. Ḥajar discussed above. I should translate Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 40 as 'there appeared to him the first of the racing /hounds/, close, urged on'. For this meaning of the Passive of Form IV, cf. al-A'shā 11. 22 (of a patron, urged to lavish a beneficence upon the poet), Mālik b. Ḥarīm Aṣm 15. 8 (of the poet, encouraged in his courtship by his beloved), Ma'qil Kos 65. 6b = al-Mu'aṭṭal 128. 6b (of the poet, constrained to exact revenge). The lexical evidence is in favour, then, of supplying al-kallāb as the subject of yūzi'u and translating "where the hunter urged him to run"; this is the interpretation favoured by de Sacy, Derenbourg, Ahlwardt and Jacobi.

'Arāka: cf. Ṭarafah Ahl 4. 99 (= Mu'allaqah 100) ('irāk); for najud/najid, cf. Bishr 12. 13 (thumma karra la-hā//hāmī l-ḥaqīqati yahmī lahma-hu najidu) and Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 3. 18 (kāna hīna'idhin//hurran sabūran fa-ni'ma l-sābiru l-najudu), an epithet describing the oryx bull stoutly repelling and slaying the attacking hounds.

Muhjār is not a common word. In Bishr 10. 17 the following phrase occurs: wa-muhjarin naffastu 'an-hu//ra'a'a l-khayli tanhitu fi l-siyāhi. The editor, 'Izzah Ḥasan, glosses muhjarin as munhazim min al-'adū. I have found no corroboration for this. Ahlwardt Aechtheit 93-94 claims that it means "well-protected by his armour". I can find no other instance of this meaning. The Passive Participle occurs as a variant reading in Zuhayr Ahl 14. 12 (= Qab 2. 12, Th p.96, v.12) where tārū ilā muhjari-himu is a variant for tārū ilā mustaghīthi-him: it can only mean 'those from whom they seek protection'. Blachère 2137 reads al-mahjar and translates the second hemistich as "like the combat of a valiant defender on (his) sacred territory". This gives good sense but alters the image: if kāna is read, then ta'na l-mu'āriki becomes an Objective Genitive clause, 'thrusting at the combatant', and the oryx bull is depicted as having turned to retaliate. Blachère's reading works better if hāba is read in place of kāna.

The variant reading given by Lyall, al-muhjari, gives, in my opinion, excellent sense. Ajhara is given by Blachère 1327 as "to bring (an animal) to lay, to force it (to go to earth), to compel (an enemy to entrench himself); cf. 'Amr b. Kulthūm Mu'allaqah 26, wa-sayyidi ma'sharin ... yahmī l-muhjarīna, Abū Jundab Kos 38. 2, A'shā Bāhilah Aṣm 24. 8 (= Geyer 4. 13). Imru' l-Qays uses the root of foxes (Ahl 52. 55 = Ibr 2. 50, Mu'allaqah 65, jaharat [a v.1.]) and of oryx (Ahl 48. 60 = Ibr 1. 61, jawāhir). On the basis of this reading, then, 'inda l-muhjari l-najidi refers, as Ahlwardt Aechtheit 94 proposes for 'inda l-muhjari l-najidi, to the oryx: 'the doughty /warrior/ who has been put to flight'.

In accordance with the preceding, I should read the line as follows:

14. wa-kāna dumrānu min-hu haythu yūzi'u-hu
ta'na l-mu'āriki 'inda l-mujhari l-najudi

14. Dumrān, /running/ where /his master/ urged him to, /snapped at
the buck as/ the combatant thrusts at the doughty /warrior/
who has been routed

The line is, then, together with the preceding verse, a graphic description of the oryx fleeing from the hounds as they give chase. In line 15 -- the asyndetic abruptness expresses the celerity of the oryx's retaliation -- the bull gives battle when it realises that the dog is too quick for it. I should agree, however, that the force of ta'n al-mu'ārik better accords with the retaliatory thrusts of the oryx, in which case I should adopt the reading of Blachère discussed above.

The following are some of the ways of construing the line that have been proposed:

- (i). wa-kāna dumrānu min-hu haythu yūzi'u-hu
ta'nu l-mu'āriki 'inda l-muhjari l-najudi

Wagner loc. cit. translates: "Dumrān befand sich (jetzt) an der Stelle (des Wildstiers) wohin ihn das Stoßen des starken Kämpfers (d.h. des Wildstiers) in die verwünbare Stelle getrieben hatte (d.h. er befand sich auf dem Horn)". This is the construction supported by al-Aṣma'ī and al-Tibrīzī.

- (ii). wa-hāba dumrānu min-hu haythu yūzi'u-hu
ta'nu l-mu'āriki 'inda l-muhjari l-najudi

De Sacy 405: "En vain Dhomrān est excité par le chasseur; il est saisi d'épouvante aux coups que lui porte l'animal, semblables à ceux qu'un guerrier porte à un adversaire forcé dans son dernier

asyle et qui déploie tout ce qui lui reste de son courage". I should translate: Dumrān was afraid of him, /running/ where the thrusts of the doughty combatant, fighting with the well-decked warrior (?), impelled him to run.

(iv). wa-kāna dumrānu min-hu haythu yūzi'u-hu
ta'na l-mu'āriki 'inda l-muhjari l-najudi

This is the construction proposed by Abū 'Ubaydah. Jacobi Studien 58 translates: "Und Dumrān befand sich vor ihm, wohin ihn sein Herr gehetzt hat, wie ein Kämpfer einen wohlgedeckten, tapferen Feind angreift". This is in keeping with the gloss of Ahlwardt Aechtheit 93-94: "der Hund is gehetzt; er ist in Betreff des Stiers an der Stelle, wo der Jäger ihn hetzt, ebenso seine Stösse ausführend, wie der Krieger sie führt an und bei dem Gegner der gutgedeckt und tapfer ist, d.h. der Angriff ist fruchtlos".

(v). wa-kāna dumrānu min-hu haythu yūzi'u-hu
ta'na l-mu'āriki 'inda l-mahjari l-najudi

Dumrān, /running/ where his master urged him /to run/, was "like the combat of a valiant defender on (his) sacred territory" (Blachère 2137).

(vi). wa-hāba dumrānu min-hu haythu yūzi'u-hu
ta'na l-mu'āriki 'inda l-mahjari l-najudi

Dumrān, /running/ where his master urged him to, feared the thrusts of the doughty combatant, fighting on his inviolable soil.

15. Ahlwardt and Derenbourg: thrusting. For farīṣah, cf. Chapter 2, no. 7 v. 22. The mubaytir (cf. Fraenkel Fremdwörter 265) is, properly, a 'horse-doctor', as in al-Tirmāh 47. 44 (biyatr). It is quite probable that midrā when applied to the horns of the oryx was originally of metaphorical force. The midrā,

contrary to those who translate 'comb' (cf. Fraenkel Fremdwörter 226, Jacob Beduinleben 47), is a "tiring-pin" (Bevan Muf 3 207), used for fastening back the hair: Tufayl 6. 5 and 6. 14, Imru' al-Qays Ibr 1. 36 (= Ahl 48. 33, Mu'allaqah 36, where l-'iqāsu is read), al-Marrār Muf 16. 64, al-Mukhabbal Muf 21. 20. The oryx horn is like the tiring-pin in its slender, tapering appearance.

For midrā of the horns, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 55 (= Ibr 3. 45), midriyyah, 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 38 (= Qab 3. 38), midrah, Bishr 41. 7 (= Muf 97. 7), midrā, Labīd Mu'allaqah 50 (= 'Abbās 48. 50), madriyyah; the dual, madriyy, is found in 'Abdah b. al-Ṭabīb Muf 26. 34 and Ḍabī' b. al-Ḥārith Aṣm 63. 37. It should be remarked that the oryx fights with one horn only: this is why the poets so often use the singular when describing the oryx in combat -- bi-l-midrā should not, therefore, be translated by the plural, as Jacobi and Wagner do ("den Hörnern").

16. For saffūd (Fraenkel Fremdwörter 90, Jacob Beduinleben 94), cf. 'Abdah b. al-Ṭabīb Muf 26. 76. It occurs as tertium comparationis in a description of a fleeing wild ass: Ḥājib b. Ḥabīb Muf 111. 5. In Abū Dhu'ayb's celebrated threnody (Hell 1 = Muf 126), the oryx's horns are likened to two spits in a difficult line which is distinctly reminiscent of al-Nābighah's verse:

45/43. Fa-ka-anna saffūdayni lam-mā yuqtirā
'ajilā la-hu bi-shiwa'i sharbin yunza'u [30]

Mufta'ad is either a Passive Participle used as a Gerund (cf. ifti'ād: 'Abd Allāh b. 'Anamah Muf 114. 14 [= Aṣm 85. 15]) or is equivalent to maf'ad (al-Ḥuṭay'ah 7. 34), a place where roasting is done. Imru' al-Qays refers to wood used for spits: Ibr 32. 10 wa-l-hatabi l-muf'adi, although Ahlwardt 14. 10 reads l-muqadi. [31] The point of the simile is that the horn as it pierces the side of the dog is like a spit on which meat has been skewered. The second hemsitich may imply either that the meat has been cooked

too long and has been burned black, in which case this is consonant with the epithetical phrase hālik al-lawn in line 18, or that the toppers have not cooked it at all, but have abandoned it beside the fire -- the red, uncooked meat, as it lies on the spit, is like Dumran's flesh, impaled on the horn. I favour the latter.

17. The root '-j-m, to bite into something hard and unyielding, is used literally by 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 49 (= Qab 2. 49, Muf 120. 54), ma'jūm of a date-stone, Jubayhā' l-Ashja'ī Muf 33. 8, mu'ajjam of the stump of a tree (zīnb), Abū Dhu'ayb 19. 3, ka-'azmi l-'ajimati. The Hudhalī poet Mulayh endows it with a graphically metaphorical stamp: wajadti mumarrasan bi-l-surmi jalda//l-'azimati hīna ta'jumu-hu l-umūru (Well 271. 39).

Rawq is standard for the horn of the oryx: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 52. 52 (= Ibr 2. 47), singular and dual, Bishr 16. 9, singular, al-A'shā 55. 20, dual, 55. 24 and 26, singular, 79. 21, singular, 'Abdah b. al-Ṭabīb Muf 26. 24, dual, and 38, singular, Ḍabī' b. al-Ḥārith Aṣm 63. 35, singular, Abū Kabīr Bajraktarević 1. 38 (= Farrāj p.1069, v.38), singular. The horn is said to be hālik al-lawn as a result of the spilling of Dumrān's blood: cf., for examples of the blood-smeared horn, 'Abdah b. al-Ṭabīb Muf 26. 38 (wa-rawqu-hu min dami l-ajwāfi ma'lūlu) and Ḍabī' b. al-Ḥārith Aṣm 63. 35 (hattā idhā hmarra rawqu-hu//wa-qad 'ulla min ajwāfi-hinna wa-unhilā) and Abū Dhua'yb Hell 1. 42 (= Muf 126. 42) (fa-nahā la-hā bi-mudhallaqayni ka-anna-mā//bi-himā mina l-nadhī l-mujaddahī ayda'u). Hālik is used of blood by Abū Khirāsh Hell 3. 5 (bi-l-hāliki l-fadmi), and of the night by Imru' al-Qays Ibr 70. 2 (hālikati l-sawādī).

As the adjective sadq [32] indicates, the poet is alluding to the topical comparison of the horn with a lance. The martial context may be further adumbrated by the substantive awad, awid being used by Zuhayr Qab 51. 32 (= Th p.346, v.32) of a coward in battle.

18. The root q-'-s is used by Imru' al-Qays Ibr 74. 44 of the thrust of the oryx (qa'sā'): cf. the poem attributed to Imru'

al-Qays in Muf 1 436, verse 12 (=, partially, Ahl 66, Ibr 7),
aq'asa, and 'Āmir 4. 4 (aq'asna), 'Adī 126. 2 (fī qa'aṣin),
al-Tirimmāh 35. 9 (fa-uqtala qa'san).

In the second hemistich lā sabīla ilā 'aqlin wa-la-qawad, 'the impossibility of blood-mulct and vendetta', means that Washiq is unable either to slaughter the oryx ('aql) or to inflict a retaliatory wound (qawad): the two concepts are not, of course, mutually exclusive. [33] The personification of the gazehound in this and the subsequent verse -- tama' is another concept found exclusively in the human domain -- is markworthy. I have presumed that mawlā in 19 indicates that Dumrān and Wāshiq have been bred from the same litter.

Structure

9-10: Introductory description: the solitary oryx on the alert.

11-12: The nocturnal ordeal: the elements (11); the preapprehension of the hunter (12).

13-14: The chase.

15-17: The battle with the salūqīs: the death of Dumrān (15-17); Wāshiq balks the attack (18-19).

Context and Interpretation

Context: this celebrated panegyrical i'tidhār (apologia) composed by al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī for al-Nu'mān, the last monarch of al-Ḥīrah, and numbered among the Ten Mu'allaqāt, is, in my estimation, one of the true masterpieces of the pre-Islamic epoch. In the following analysis, I have relied on the numbering of the text as published by Ahlwardt: the qasidah as edited by al-Tibrīzī

needs be evaluated in a separate study.

The Oryx Bull Vignette is the second of five outstanding exemplars which the poet has woven into the context of his poem, the others being the slave-girl and the trench (3-5), God's advice unto Sulaymān (21-26), the maiden and the sand-grouse (32-36), the raging Euphrates (44-46). These are primary paradigms; secondary -- but by no means less significant -- paradigms are: decay wrought by the passage of time (1), Luqmān and Lubad (6), the Pilgrimage (37-38) and the poet's journey from Mecca to al-Ḥīrah. [35] I am unsure whether al-Jawza' should be reckoned a secondary paradigm. The poem warrants schematization:

Dhikr al-Atlāl (1-6): desolation and the (paradoxical) passage of eternity (1); the topos of the unanswered inquiry (2); anagnorisis: the stalls and the trench (3); the slave-girl and the trench (3b-5); the departure of the tribe (6a); the death of the encampment and the death of Lubad (6b).

Wasf al-Nāqah (7-19): transition A [34]; wasf proper (7b-8); the oryx bull vignette (9-19).

Madh (20-49): the journey to the mamduḥ, al-Nu'mān (20a) (transition B [36]); the topic of unparagoned incomparability (20b-21); God's advice unto Sulaymān (22-26); unbounded generosity (27-31); the maiden and the sand-grouse (32-36); the sacred oath topos (37-38); the apologia (39-40); Abū Qābūs's ire and the ransoming topos (41-43); unbounded generosity -- the Euphrates in spate is less generous than the patron (44-47); the proffer of the eulogy (48-49).

The exquisitely harmonized balance of the structure of the Madh movement amply repays delineation with a view to the interplay of its panegyrical concerns:

A: The Poet and the Dedicatee; the journey to the mamdūh (20a).

B: The Eulogizing of the Dedicatee; unparagoned incomparability (20b-21).

A1: The Poet and the Dedicatee; paraenesis in the form of an parable -- the God-sent wisdom of Sulaymān (22-26).

B1: The Eulogizing of the Dedicatee; unbounded generosity (27-31).

A1: The Poet and the Dedicatee; paraenesis in the form of an parable -- the maiden's unerring computation of a flock of sand-grouse (32-36). [37]

A2: The Poet and the Dedicatee; the poet's strenuous rejection of the allegations (37-40); the request for leniency (41-43).

B2: The Eulogizing of the Dedicatee; military might cast in the form of the request for leniency (41-43).

B1: The Eulogizing of the Dedicatee; unbounded generosity (44-47).

A: The Poet and the Dedicatee; the journey to the mamdūh is completed with the proffer of the encomium (48-49).

Thus it is evident that the movement is structured with 'narrative' ring-composition [38], A (20a) being complemented by A (48-49), and with 'formal' ring-composition, B1 (27-31) being balanced by B1

(44-47). A2 (37-40) functions as an axis on which the other topics turn, a hiatus in an otherwise rigorous contrapuntal system of the conceptual fields of the Poet and the Dedicatee (A) and the Eulogizing of the Dedicatee (B), in which B (20b-21) and B1 (27-31) provide encomiastic backdrops to the sententious and heavily moralising parables presented in A1 (22-26) and (32-36); B2 (41-43) and B1 (44-47) are eulogistic foils to the poet's pursuit of the practical business of the i'tidhar.

Interpretation: this Oryx Bull Vignette is susceptible of biparous interpretation, its inherent ambiguity being symptomatic of the poet's dilemma -- how to present his apologia successfully without thereby compromising his dignity. In the traditional panegyric style, the oryx bull is emblematic of the patron: in its endurance of the nocturnal ordeal, its vanquishing of the hounds and escape from the hunter it is a paradigm of virtuousness and excellence. In tribal or self-vaunting verse, the noble oryx is emblematic of the poet and his tribe. In this poem, however, there is discernible in the oryx bull panel an emblematic amphibology. The poet, through his incurrence of al-Nu'mān's wrath, endures the tribulation of disfavour at court but, like the oryx, expects to vanquish his malevolent, gloating foes who have surrounded the Dedicatee with their minions, perverting his judgement with their slanders (40 and 43). The Patron, by giving ear to these rumours, has perverted the soundness of his judgement, the perspicacity of his vision; he will triumph, however, like the oryx, by favourably

hearkening to al-Nābighah's poem. The poet, in his time-honoured role as tribal adviser and spokesman, can guarantee the monarch's reacquisition of honour and virtue. Furthermore, the slaughter of Dumrān acts as a warning to his fellow, Wāshiq, who, in a memorable instance of personification, reasons with himself as to the inadvisability of further attack; the King's triumph over other opponents -- among whom disgruntled poets are presumably to be reckoned -- is a deterrent sufficient to dissuade al-Nābighah from lampooning him as a retaliation for his alienation. Thus, the poet implies that he would assuredly fail if he were to launch a vituperative attack against the King, without, however, denigrating his own satiric prowess. By so applying the paradigmatic nature of this vignette to both the Dedicator and the Dedicatee, the poet commences an association between the two personae, in which any distinction between them can scarcely be maintained, thereby suggesting that the traditional relationship of panegyrist and patron is inapplicable to them, that in this instance their relationship is, in fact, symbiotic: the ostracism of the Eulogist entails the denigration of the Eulogized. This is an ideological development of the Jāhili conception of the encomiastic relationship, viz. that the patron stands in need of the poet to render his deeds immortal, to complete his majd (kudos) by the composition of an appropriate encomium. Al-Nābighah is unwilling to attempt to solve the poetical dilemma with which he is faced -- this would entail the diminishment of the efficacy of his apologia: the apologetic purpose is as manifest as the panegyric.

Notes

1. Sandaq was a Mongolian minstrel who "lived in the first half of the nineteenth century" (Finnegan PBOP 68-69). C.R. Bawden explains the Uqe (the 'Word') as "essentially an improvisation upon a theme, in which the subject -- person, beast, or thing -- comments upon the fate that has overtaken it. The 'word' gives the impression of a sophisticated art form rather than of folk poetry" (eadem, 41).
2. This epithet is also applied to a tays, here apparently a male gazelle, in 'Alqamah Ahl 1. 39 (= Qab 3. 39).
3. This is the third of sixteen verses which Sa'ūdā' recorded on the authority of Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah, inserting them between Ahl 9. 16 and 17.
4. Cf. Lyall Muf 2 134.
5. Jacobi Camel 6 = Studien 49-53.
6. Cf. von Grunebaum Chronologie 335: "the younger Muraqqish was, in all probability, the first to append as it were a second nasīb, dealing with the departure of the lady in question, to the bewailing of separation and depiction of the relationship".
7. Jeffery Vocabulary 18 makes an interesting case for interpreting hind as referring to South Arabia: "in the writings of Dionysius of Tell Mahre, and Michael the Syrian, we find the South Arabian and Abyssinian area called India. It was not only the Syriac writers, however, who made this confusion. Epiphanius in the fourth century details the nine kingdoms of India, and his mention among them of the Homeritae and Azumitae makes it obvious that he is referring to the Ethiopian kingdom. Sozomen and Socrates, in their accounts of the mission of Frumentius to convert

the people of this kingdom, speak of them as tōn Indōn tōn endoterō (i.e. the lower Indians), and so the term passed to the Latin writers and from them to the geographers of the Middle Ages". It is not clear, however, whether the Arabs would themselves refer to South Arabia as Hind, as Jeffery himself admits.

8. Cf. Dozy Vêtements sub tubban 93-94.

9. This is a satirical inversion of the topical comparison of the habīb with a zaby, of frequent occurrence in the nasīb.

10. Cf. Fischer 95, whose reading I have adopted.

11. Cf. L. Veccia Vaglieri "Dhū Qār" EI2 II 241.

12. I am, of course, presuming that this feature is more resonant in the context of the poem than being simply a traditional element of the oryx hunting scene, in essence similar to the naming of the hunter as a motif in the Wild Ass Vignette.

13. T.E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, Harmondsworth 1982, 81-83 provides an interesting narration of what may be a similar incident at the well: "quite close to the north bank of the Masturah ... Some Harb came up, driving a large herd of brood camels ... We watched them, without intercourse: for these were Masruh and we Beni Salem; and while the two clans were now at peace, and might pass through each other's districts, this was only a temporary accomodation ... As we watched, two riders, trotting light and fast on thoroughbred camels, drew towards us from the north ... They halted beside the well; and the more splendid one slipped gracefully to the ground without kneeling his camel, and threw his halter to his companion, saying, carelessly, 'Water them while I go over there and rest' ... the other rider stood by, vacantly holding the halters, waiting perhaps for the Harb to finish watering their herd before taking his turn. The young lord cried, 'What is it

Mustafa? Water them at once' ... and hit the unfortunate Mustafa three or four sharp blows ... The Harb, shocked, in pity made a place for him, and let his two camels drink from their water-trough ... I heard a chuckle from old Tafas ... 'My Lord, you saw those two riders at the well? ... they were Sherif Ali ibn el Hussein ... (and) Sherif Mohsin, lords of the Harith, who are blood enemies of the Masruh. They feared they would be delayed or driven off the water if the Arabs knew them. So they pretended to be master and servant from Mecca".

14. As Geiger WZKM 19 369 rightly argues, the oryx bull is meant here and not the wild ass, as argued by Jacob Beduinleben 88-89.

15. Lyall's note on Ḥawmal in Muf 2 343, viz. that al-Dakhūl and Ḥawmal "were in upper Qaṣīm, among the pasture grounds of Asad", is inaccurate: cf. Thilo Ortsnamen 55 and 56 sub Hazn, which lies further north than Qaṣīm. Curiously, Lyall's note on page 160 on the location of Ḥawmal is in fact accurate.

16. An unusual fragment attributed to Bishr (App 10. 2-3) seems to sound a dissonant note:

2. Anta haṭaṭṭa min dhurā muqanna'i
3. Kulla shabūbin lahaqin mūla'i

One is immediately reminded of the myths surrounding Orpheus.

17. Cf. Lyall Muf 2 160 for a discussion of the meaning of jaww.

18. Cf. Thilo Ortsnamen 43.

19. Blachère's notice, that it produces "fodder which cattle will not touch", contradicts the notice given by Ahlwardt Aechtheit 92, "a plant ... which camels willingly devour ... which grows without cultivation".

20. For hail in a variety of comparisons, cf. Ṭufayl 1. 34, shattered stones compared with hail, Imru' al-Qays Ibr 29. 25, metaphorical for the teeth of the beloved, as also 'Amr b. Ma'dīkarīb Aṣm 61. 8, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 3. 11, the hides of a herd of oryx compared with hail, Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 42, a wild ass and his harem running as quickly as the onset of a hail-shower.

21. No rain is mentioned in this particular Oryx Vignette. The constellation most frequently associated with the beneficial properties of rainfall is, of course, al-Thurayyā, the Pleiades (Lane 272, Blachère 1168-1169): cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 48. 23 (= Ibr 1. 24, Mu'allaqah 25) (heralding the poet's advance to his mistress's tent), Bishr 3. 11 (= Muf 96. 11) (the raiding squadron is as fulgent as the clouds brought by al-Thurayyā and, by implication, the booty they take will be as fructiferous as the rain therefrom), Bishr 15. 17 and al-A'shā 65. 14 (the disconsolate poet as star-gazing lover: not even the auroral rising of al-Thurayyā, so auspicious for Imru' al-Qays, is felicitous for the rejected poet), 'Adī 3. 9 (a storm description: the rain is as heavy as that brought by al-Thurayyā).

22. cf. Nöldeke FM II 74.

23. That the shāmit was a potent force is evident from the references to this emotion in, for example, 'Alqamah Ahl 9. 1 (= Qab 9.1) and Abū Dhu'ayb, for whom the display of forbearance as a means of staving off the gloating of the shāmit is something of a leitmotif: Hell 1. 13 (= Muf 126. 12), 9. 27, 11. 31. This theme also occurs in some poems of 'Adī b. Zayd: 16. 19, 17. 13 = 127. 1, 154. 1. It is interesting to note that in the Hudhalī dīwān there are passages where Schadenfreude is positively discouraged as an undesirable emotion to display: cf. Ma'qil b. Khuwaylid Kos 51. 1, al-A'lam Kos 25. 5 = Ma'qil Kos 48. 5, Umayyah b. al-Askar Well 225. 3. This is in sharp contradistinction to the belligerent Abū Ṣakhr who seems positively to relish Schadenfreude (Well 259. 28) and

for whom it is a distinct threat (Well 258. 25).

24. Ahlwardt is anticipated by Wolff in this:

Der aufschrickt, wenn die Meute bellt und heult,
der frierend und in Angst von dannen eilt

25. Cf. Bishr 41. 12-14 (= Muf 97. 12-14), al-Nābighah Ahl 23. 20-22.

26. G.R. Smith, "The Arabian Hound, The Salūqī", BSOAS 43. 3 (1980), 465.

27. Pace Wagner Grundzüge 107. In the diwān of Labīd, the naming of the salūqīs is a not uncommon motif: 'Abbās 11. 22 (= Chāl p.108, v.22, Brock I 17. 22); Muḥam and Ṭihāl: 'Abbās 35. 28 (= Brock II 40. 28): Rakāḥ and Sā'il.

28. Jacob Beduinleben 84 refers to Lagarde Nominalbildung p.23, who notes that this name is an Imperative.

29. Lyall's translation, Muf 2 61.

30. Hell 13 translates: "Und es war, als ob zwei Bratspieße, die nie noch angefaßt haben (d.h. ganz neue?) ihm rasch den Braten für eine Zechgesellschaft, der herausgenommen wird, heranholt"; Lyall's rendering (Muf 2 358): "Two spits they seem, fresh cut to skewer the feasters' meat, drawn off before it is thoroughly cooked, as he thrusts them quick". Lewin 342-343 offers: "It seemed as if to him a pair of spits not yet producing the smell of roast meat had been too quickly (removed from the fire) with feasters' meat drawn off", of which I can make little sense.

31. For fā'id, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 61. 13, 'Albā' b. Arqam Aṣm

55. 13.

32. It is also found as an epithet of a staunch brave (Mutammim b. Nuwayrah Muf 67. 8), a sword (Abū Qays b. al-Aslat Muf 75. 9), a coat of mail (Zuhayr Qab 32. 27 = Th p.268, v.27), as well as of a lance (Mālik b. Nuwayrah Aṣm 67. 17).

33. These two concepts, 'aql and qawad, are used almost exclusively of the human domain; cf. Jābir b. Ḥunayy Muf 42. 15, 'Awf b. al-Aḥwaṣ Muf 35. 18, 'Awf b. 'Aṭiyyah Aṣm 59. 3 ('aql) and Ṣakhr al-Ghayy Kos 3. 23, Ḥusayb al-Ḍamrī Kos 28. 1 (Lewin 362 mistakenly refers to this as Kos 27. 1.). The verb 'aqala means, of course, to pay the blood-mulct: Zuhayr Ahl 16. 43 (= Qab 1. 43, Th p.1, v.43, Mu'allaqah 44), al-A'shā 77. 29, Dhū l-Iṣba' Muf 29. 4, Mu'awiyah b. Mālik Muf 105. 19.

34. Jacobi Studien 49-53 = Camel 5-6.

35. This is the only Jāhilī poem in which "'heavy' figures", as Ong styles them, figure prominently: "oral memory works effectively with 'heavy' characters, persons whose deeds are monumental, memorable and commonly public. Thus the noetic economy of its nature generates outsize figures ... to organize experience in some sort of permanently memorable form ... The same mnemonic or noetic economy enforces itself still where oral settings persist in literate cultures" (W.J. Ong 1984 69-70). The latter statement is, I think, applicable to the poem in question.

36. Jacobi Studien 61-65 = Camel 6.

37. For numerical reckoning in Arabic poetry, cf. I. Goldziher, "Ueber umschreibende Zahlenbeszeichnung im Arabischen", ZDMG 49 (1895), 210-217, especially 216. Al-Tibrīzī explains the computation as follows: the maiden sees 66 grouse, to which she

adds half of this number, 33, and her own grouse thereby rounding the total off to 100.

38. This is narrative in the sense used by Jacobi Camel 6-7: "the wording (of the transition) implies that nasīb and wasf form one continuous narrative. The poet on his desert-journey discovers an abandoned campside. He stops there, remembers his lost beloved, and finally resolves to continue his journey. As Transition B states his destination, we receive the impression that nasīb, wasf and madih form a narrative sequence, interrupted by descriptive passages".

Chapter 4 -- Arkhilokhos, al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī
and A Complaint Against Blacksmiths -- or, A funny thing
happened to me ... *

In a period of rapid transition very few works of art or
literature are pure in style. T.B.L. Webster. [1]

The 'test of consistency' (is) the possibility of
classifying the whole of an image within a possible
category of experience There is a limit to what
pictures can represent without differentiating between what
belongs to the picture and what belongs to the intended
reality. E.H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion. [2]

The first thing we have to do ... is to discard the idea
that poetry has only an aesthetic function or can only be
explained in terms of aesthetics ... in archaic cultures,
poetry has a vital function that is both social and
liturgical. All antique poetry is at one and the same
time ritual, entertainment, artistry, riddle-making,
doctrine, persuasion, sorcery, soothsaying, prophecy and
competition. J. Huizinga, Homo Ludens. [3]

Mousa moi Eurymedontiadea tēn pontokharybdin
tēn engastrimakhairan hos esthiei ou kata kosmon
enneph' hopos psephidi /kakos/ kakon oiton olētai
bouleī demosiei para thin' halos atrygetoio

Muse -- the Eurymontiad, the maelstrom,
The dirk-in-the belly, who eats beyond measure
-- Speak unto me how, with a pebble, /this miscreant/ will die a
miscreant's death,
In accordance with the public will, by the shore of the
ungleaned mere. [4]

This invective of Hipponax -- composed, appropriately, in dactylic hexameters -- is couched in the most deliberate and obvious of parodic language. All four of the line-endings are to be found in the Homeric epics (1 = Odyssey 12. 113, kharybdin, 2 = Odyssey 20. 181, 3 = Iliad 3. 417, oiton olētai = kakon oiton olēai, 4 = Iliad 1. 316, para thin' halos atrygetoio) and the opening formula is a comic variant of the opening lines of both the Iliad and the Odyssey. The compound adjectives, representing epic-style stock epithets, and the mock patronymic are also parodic. Finally, the 'public will' has ousted the 'will of Zeus' (Iliad 1.5) in determining the Eurymontiad's fate.

Parody enjoys a symbiotic relationship with a sophisticated and learned audience. Of course, not much erudition is required to appreciate Hipponax's buffoonery, yet not all parodical verse is quite so obvious and the 'ridiculous' does not always provide the axis on which parody rotates: it can itself be a most sophisticated

verse form with serious didactic and paraenetic intent. [5] In some instances, the more sophisticated the parody, the more elusive and less obvious it can become. It is an important feature of the type of parody under discussion that the parodist can compose in a deliberately vague, indeed obfuscating, manner -- the 'literary' parodist is often at pains to avoid explication.

Parody lies at the heart of much Archaic Greek poetry and art. [6] This statement rarely admits of easy proof and, in many cases, given the fragmentary and exiguous remains of the works of poets the volume of which was reputed to be originally quite considerable, it refuses to budge from the realm of conjecture. Essentially, literary parody, -- and this includes the parody of 'oral' and 'primitive' poetry --, essays the recasting of a phrase and its context, of a traditionally accepted poetic structure (such as the priamel or the homiletic exhortation), of an attitude or thought as expressed by an earlier author, sometimes even, some scholars would argue, of a word and its context. In this respect J.A. Davison's stricture is apposite:

We can no longer be sure that even where there is a close similarity, or even identity, between the words of a lyric poet and those of Homer the later poet is necessarily quoting the earlier; such a phrase is part of the inherited stock-in-trade of the professional poet's vocabulary, and one would require a great many cross-references to justify one in arguing that there may be a direct connection between the work of one early poet and that of another. [7]

Davison rightly enjoins caution in the quest for allusion and parody, but in cases where an allusion, or indeed a quotation, whether parodic or otherwise, can be shown to enhance, semantically or structurally, the new poetic context in which it is cast, it may be safe to assume that it is at least unconscious or indirect and hence of interest in an attempt to understand the poem in question.

Arkhilokhos stands as one of the most consummate and gifted of early Greek parodists. [8] His debt to Homer and the Homeric epics has been postulated and expounded in many studies, but the content of his poetry is more multifarious than this would suggest, being not merely parodic but embracing many other 'types' as well: it would be fallacious and misrepresentative to classify him solely as a 'parodist'. Yet it is the very question of the parodic nature of his verse which has remained, by and large, the most frequently discussed. His possible debt to contemporary trends in vase-painting and sculpture has been suggested by J. Pouilloux [9] for the animal motifs in his poetry. The full picture, however, is not quite so simple. K.J. Dover, in a most important and illuminating article [10], maintains that some of the poetry of Arkhilokhos must be considered in the light of primitive songs from other pre-literate communities. In his category number 7 he states that "the song may refer to animals, birds or insects, either as possessing personalities of their own, or as constituent elements in an event with strong emotional associations, or as symbolic of actual persons or categories of people. The sung fable, in which the conversation or interaction of two animals is related, is a

special aspect of this general phenomenon". These characteristics are much in evidence in West 172-181 and 185-7. [11] Furthermore, his debt to the tradition represented by Hesiod in respect of the fable should not be overlooked. Arkhilokhos's paraenetic verse also belongs to the Hesiodic tradition [12], but it is primarily with East Ionia and Homer that Arkhilokhos is associated. N.M. Kontoleon stresses the creative role which East Ionia assumed in shaping the milieu and the poetry of Arkhilokhos. [13] This tradition, which includes the Homeric epics and the epics which have not survived, constitutes, then, probably the most important and decisive, but by no means the only, influence upon Arkhilokhian verse.

The interrelatedness of obscenity and parodical allusion are fundamental to the understanding of the recently discovered and much discussed Cologne Fragment. The questions of the authenticity of the Fragment and of the importance of Homeric parody in the interpretation of this piece are still most controversial. Suffice it to say, however, that there seem to be some epic reminiscences in its language [14] and that it may owe much to the episode in Iliad 14 where Juno seduces Zeus, the so-called Dios Apate episode. [15] It is fully in keeping with Arkhilokhos's elusive allusiveness that he should portray the male protagonist as Juno and the girl as Zeus. He may also wish to endow this scenario with the detached sexuality of the Homeric gods and to appropriate, for the narrator, the disinterestedness of the epic narrator. [16]

ou phlieō megan stratēgon oude diapepliomenon
oude bostrykhoisi gauron oud' upexyremenon
alla moi smikros tis eie kai peri knemas idein
rhoikos asphaleos bebekos possi kardies pleos

I am not fond of a mighty commander, whether he takes gaping
 strides (or, is long in the shank)
Is haughty in his ringlets or is part-shaven!
Rather, give me a small man with bandy-legs (or, knock-knees)
-- plain for all to see -- safely set on his feet, full of heart.

This fragment (Tarditi 96) resembles the descriptions of Tydeus (Iliad 5. 801), Thersites (Iliad 2. 212-219) and Odysseus himself (Iliad 3. 193-198) but "the short, knock-kneed commander of Archilochus' choice cuts a very unhomeric figure". [17] I am unable to concur with either Page or Kirkwood in their assessments of this portrait [18]: the composite picture, while perhaps deriving from the various elements in Homer, is un-Homeric precisely because it extols the physical characteristics of two minor figures -- one of whom, Thersites, is described as insubordinate and most hateful to Akhilles and Odysseus -- and of Odysseus, with whom Arkhilokhos seems often to identify himself [19] and whose physique is markedly different from that of the other Achaean war-lords; it rejects the grace and beauty with which Homer endows his heroes. The vain posturings of the foppish commander are no longer balanced by the stout resolution and determination of the Homeric heroes -- it is anti-Homeric, after all, in that the dandy is most distinctly not "full of heart". It is, however, more likely that the object of Arkhilokhos's parody is not the epic, Homeric or otherwise, but

rather contemporary martial poetry, as exemplified by Kallinos and Tyrtaios, which draws extensively from the epic corpus [20]: it is the interpretation of epic values espoused by this type of poetry that Arkhilokhos takes issue with.

all' age syn kothōnī thoēs dia selmata vēos
phoita kai koilon pōmat' apheleke kadōn
agrei d' oinon erythron apo trygos oude gar hēmeis
nephein en phulakei teide dyvesomētha

Come now, bring the gourd and pass through the benches of the
Swift ship! Scoop the cups from the hollow jars
And drive the red wine from its lees!, for we shall be unable
To stay sober on this watch.

Opinions vary as to the precise circumstance being described in Tarditi Fragment 7: Fränkel [21] claims that the ship is beached; Page suggests that Arkhilokhos and his companions are "at sea on a troublesome mission" and thinks that these lines refer to a personal experience which "is being described in detail" [22] and Burnett concedes that the context is a storm at sea but understands the poetic impulse as deriving from the imagination [23]. Whatever the context, the fragment is fascinating. The stock epithets (thoēs and koilon) and the Homeric oinon erythron are redolent of bombast and a vivid sense of urgent, dynamic movement (expressed in the imperatives) is set against the surface appearance of sonority and monumentality which the epithets convey. Upon closer inspection, however, the epithets seem not to be too appropriate: thoēs, if Fränkel is right in supposing that the ship is beached, is the

opposite of what the audience would expect of a motionless ship and the casks most certainly are not "hollow", although they will be hollow when Arkhilokhos and his comrades have finished drinking -- the prolepsis is surely intentional. Furthermore, koilos is standard epic terminology for ships and the transference of the epithet to the casks is, in the context, witty. The alliteration in the phrase koilon ... kadon together with the word kothoni in the previous lines accentuate the violence inherent in all the imperatives: the swiftness of movement which they imply perhaps corroborates, paradoxically, Fränkel's suggestion, in that all this activity takes place upon a beached ship, which is, nevertheless, swift!

The next two fragments which I wish to discuss (Tarditi 2 & Diehl 6) [24] are among the most celebrated, and hence the most notorious, of Arkhilokhos's poems.

en dori men moi maza memaqmenē en dori d' oinos
Ismarikos pinō d' en dori keklimenos

In a spear is my kneaded barley-bread, in a spear is wine
 Of Ismaros -- I drink, propped upon a spear.

This fragment defies translation and I have chosen as literal a rendition as I could manage without doing an injustice to the original. The basic problem centers around the meaning of the preposition en plus the substantive in the dative, dori: Bowra sets the 'rule' when he postulates that all three meanings must be

similar, and his proselytes -- Webster, Davison, Pocock, Ehrenberg, Giangrande and, recently, Arnould [25] -- follow suit with a variety of suggestions, all of which diminish the polyvalency and witty sophistication which Arkhilokhos seems to be aiming at. Campbell, Rankin, F.N. Rubin and Burnett recognise that there is a change in the semantic significance of the phrase. [26] Several elements seem to me to be parodied in this "polished conceit": there is the famous vase-painting of the Mycenean soldiers, reproduced in H.L. Lorimer, Homer and the Monuments, London 1950, Plate III, fig. 1b, who carry their rations in knap-sacks slung from spears; there is the parodical, and iconoclastic, juxtaposition of maza memagmene, which appears to be a most primitive form of bread [27] and the Ismaric wine of Odyssey 9. 196 ff. and 345 ff., with which Odysseus incapacitated the Cyclops, having been presented with it by the priest of Apollo at Ismaros -- a grand cru, despite Campbell's rather pedestrian remarks to the contrary [28], of the most potent distillation if ever there was one [29]; there is the ambiguity of keklimenos, which "has a double sense, since it suggests both the joys of the banquet and the pain of being bent by an exhaustive burden" [30] as well as being reminiscent of the symposiast's kline (couch); there is the double anaphora of en dori which is offset by the strong verb pino; the prepositional use of en is toyed with in the final phrase in the form of epic tmesis, since the participle keklimenos may be construed with the preposition as a derivative of the verb enklino -- both keklimenos and enklino can, of course, in appropriate meanings, be paralleled from Homer (Iliad 3. 135 [aspidi

keklimenoi], Odyssey 6. 307 [kioni keklimenē] & Iliad 6. 77-8 [ponnos ummi eqkeklitai]); the meaning of en, 'in the company of', its locative meaning, 'at' or 'by' and also the extended signification 'by means of'. These parodic strands are woven together into a couplet which displays Arkhilokhos's wit at its most scintillating and densely compacted. It is no admission of defeat to avow that the couplet is beyond all attempts at translation. Arkhilokhos wants to create for his audience the illusion that all three instances of en dori share the same meaning [31], only to laugh up his sleeve when he has lulled them into a false sense of security and left them guessing as to the minutiae. [32]

aspidi men Saion tis agalletai hen para thamnoi
entos amometon kallipon ouk ethelon
auton d' exesaosa ti moi melel aspis ekeine;
erreto exautis ktesomai ou kakio

In a shield one of the Saioi rejoices, which by a bush
 -- (it was such) a blameless armament! -- I left behind:
 not willingly.
 Yet I did save myself. What is that shield to me?
 To hell with it! I'll immediately acquire one that's no
 worse.

The essential sentiment expressed in these lines is consonant with Iliad 9. 408-409:

andros de psykhe palin elthein oute leiste
outh' elete epei ar kev ameipsetai herkos odonton

But the soul of a man, to bring it back, can neither be

seized as plunder,
Nor caught in a snare, when it has crossed the barrier of the
teeth.

Akhilles voices these feelings as justification for his unwillingness to rejoin the fray and the Homeric epic is obviously opposed to the ideas which they represent -- they are the verbal justification of a sulky reluctance which culminates in the death of Patroklos. Arkhilokhos, as he does in Tarditi Fragment 96, immortalises an un-epic, and indeed anti-epic [33], sentiment by means of a poetic sophistication that is easily the equal to Tarditi Fragment 2. The question, which has been debated almost ad infinitum and will, I have no doubt, continue to be debated ad infinitum, is whether or not the locutor of the piece did in fact throw away his shield. Antiquity certainly thought so, to the point that three reputable poets turned the issue into a poetic topos [34] and a large number of scholars today would probably admit that this was the case. It is not stating the obvious to point out that Arkhilokhos nowhere declares that he did throw away the shield -- his serio-comic technique leaves his auditors puzzled as to whether or not the locutor did do so and, perhaps, as to whether the locutor is the poet himself. Some of the words are found in the epic: agalletai = Iliad 17. 472-3 & 18. 131-2, amōmeton, a hapax legomenon in Iliad 12. 109, ouk ethelōn = Iliad 4. 300, exesaōsa = Iliad 4. 12 & Odyssey 4. 501, erretō, coming at the beginning of Iliad 9. 377 & 20. 349 (cf. also Odyssey 5. 139). However, the use of epic diction is not too important as aspect of the poet's parodic

panoply (apart from the pseudo-epic phrase entos amōmeton, used to "heighten the suspense and aggravate the shame if Archilochus has indeed done this" [35]) as deployed in this piece. His main weapons are word-order and understatement. In the first instance, given the doubt which Dover casts on the first-person persona in Arkhilokhos's verse [36] it is safe only to assume that the locutor of the poem -- who may or may not be Arkhilokhos -- is involved in the incident. Secondly, the poet employs the somewhat tame verb kataleipein to designate the act and this has left centuries of listeners and readers guessing. The whole piece is constructed on the principle of suspense; aspidi, which in poetic Greek may mean 'a shield', 'the shield' or 'my shield' -- I would argue that the vagueness is deliberate -- comes first: it is the subject of the poem and is therefore emphatic. The following phrase saion tis agalletai dispenses no valuable information as to the shield and its relation to the locutor. By the end of the line the auditor is still no better informed as to what has happened -- although suspicions are aroused: what was the shield doing beside a bush? It is a "blameless armament", a lofty-sounding expression verging on the braggadocio, and the fact that it is beside a bush prompts a repetition of the question, why is it there? Kallipon still affords no clues as to the person of the locutor, for, as Adkins rightly points out "kallipon might be third person plural". [37] Ouk ethelōn dispells all doubts -- the locutor is speaking in the first-person persona, albeit that the admission is somewhat feeble in the face of the use of auton (as opposed to the first-person

reflexive pronoun) in the next line. Having managed to fudge the issue of whether the shield was thrown away in haste or not, Arkhilokhos then has his locutor proceed with vehement defiance in a succession of rapid fire staccato phrases. The emphatic exautis and ou kakio frame the glibness of ktesomai nicely.

It is impossible to tell, on the basis of Diehl Fragment 6 alone, whether the locutor actually threw away his shield or not, precisely because Arkhilokhos does not want to convey this information. Once again, the joke is on the audience as their expectations are frustrated and the barb of irony bites deep.

This intentional frustration of audience expectations is, in many fragments, the corner-stone of Arkhilokhian style. The poet wilfully withholds a vital piece of information or expresses himself in such polyvalent terms that certitude is not possible. I do not wish to enter into any consideration of the so-called 'sociological' revolution which is reputed to have brought this relentless parody and, in fact, the whole corpus of Greek lyric poetry into existence, for I am sceptical of the comprehensive validity of this particular postulate: the impulse to parody need not be actuated by changes in society. Individual genius endows this autonomous literary development with its own particular mode of perception, but in essence the purpose remains the same -- the inherited poetic, or literary, tradition is deemed to have outlived its usefulness: this realisation can be sufficient to necessitate the parodic impulse.

It is in the light of these generalisations -- for such they remain -- that I should like to examine a poem taken from the early Arabic poetic tradition in which the parodic feature of the frustration of audience expectation as encountered in the oeuvre of Arkhilokhos may be witnessed.

The following qasīdah from the corpus of al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī has proved to be something of a mystery. Hartwig Derenbourg believed it to be the earliest extant poem by al-Nabighah, and in his reconstruction of the poet's life, in the classic 'historical-biographical' manner [38], waxes lyrical on the poet's "inspiration prime-sautière et desintéressée". [39] Wilhelm Ahlwardt, with his customary scepticism and rigorously attentive reading of the poetry, recognised that the poem is problematic:

Ged. 23 macht einen anderen Eindruck auf mich als die anderen, die ich für ächt halte; auch sind zu viel Worte, zu wenig Inhalt, die Vergleiche sind zu gehäuft darin, und v. 6b und 7b sind mir bedenklich. Nun gibt es ein Gedicht von Khalaf al-Aḥmar, desselben Metrums und Reimes, dass derselbe dem al-Nābighah untergelegt hat: eine Notiz, die Abū Hātim b. al-Aṣma'ī selbst erhalten hat: sollte es nicht dies Gedicht sein? Der daraus angeführte Vers is Append. 47; er wurde sehrfüglich nach v. 7 stehen können (dann aber zu lesen khaylin siyāmin etc.). [40]

In my opinion the poem's authenticity need not be questioned.

Al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī Ahlwardt 23, Derenbourg 6. .

Translations: Derenbourg 318-321, A. El Tayib, "Pre-Islamic Poetry", CHALUP, 57-58 (vv. 2-8, 14-15).

1. Bānat su'adu wa-amsa hablu-ha njadhama
wa-htallati l-shir'a [1] fa-l-ajza'a min idama
2. Ihda baliyyin [2] wa-ma hama l-fu'adu bi-ha
illa l-safaha wa-illa dhikratan huluma
3. Laysat mina l-sudi a'qaban idha nsarafat
wa-la tabi'u bi-janbay nakhlata l-burama
4. Gharra'u akmalu man yamshi 'ala qadamin
husnan wa-amlahu man hawarta-hu l-kalima
5. Qalat ara-ka akha rahlin wa-rahilatin
taqhsa matalifa lan yunzirna-ka l-harama
6. Hayya-ki rabb-i fa-inn-na la yahillu la-na
lahwu l-nisa'i wa-inna l-dina qad 'azama
7. Mushammirina 'ala khusin muzammamatin
narju l-ilaha wa-narju l-birra wa-l-tu'ama
8. Hal-la sa'alti bani dhubyana ma hasab-i
idha l-dukhanu taqhashsha l-ashmata l-barama
9. Wa-habbati l-rihu min tilqa'i dhi urukin [3]
tuzji ma'a l-layli min surradi-ha sirama
10. Suhba l-zilali atayna l-tina 'an 'urudin
yuzjina qhayman qalilan ma'u-hu shabima
11. Yunbi'-ki dhu 'irdi-him 'an-ni wa-'alimu-hum
wa-laysa jahilu shay'in mithla man 'alima
12. In-ni utammimu aysar-i wa-amnihu-hum

- mathnā l-ayādī wa-aksū l-jafnata l-udumā
13. Wa-aqta'u l-kharqa bi-l-kharqā'i qad ja'alat
ba'da l-kilālī tashakkā l-ayna wa-l-sā'amā
14. Kadat tusaqitu-nī rahī-ī wa-mītharat-ī
bi-dhī l-majāzī wa-lam tuhsis bi-hī na'amā
15. Min qawli hirmīyyatin qalat wa-qad za'anū
hal fī mukhiffī-kumu man yashtarī adama
16. Qultu la-ha wa-hya tas'a tahta labbati-ha
la tahtimanna-ki inna l-bay'a qad zarimā
17. Bātat thalātha layālin thumma wāhidatin
bi-dhī l-majāzī tura'ī manzilan ziyamā
18. Fa-nshaqqa 'an-hā 'amūdu l-subhī jāfilatan
'adwa l-nahūsi takhāfu l-qānisa l-lahimā
19. Tahīdu 'an astanin sūdin asāfilu-hu
mashya l-ima'ī l-qhawādī tahmilu l-huzamā
20. Aw dhī wushūmin [4] bi-hawda bāta munkarisan
fī laylatin min jumādā akhdalat diyamā
21. Bāta bi-hiqfin mina l-baqqārī yahfiru-hu [5]
idha stakaffa qalīlan turbu-hu nhadamā
22. Muwalliya l-rīhi rawqay-hi wa-jabnata-hu
ka-l-hibraqiyyi tanahhā yanfukhu l-fahama
23. Hattā qhadā mithla nasli l-sayfi munsalitan
yaqrū l-amā'iza min lubnayni [6] wa-l-akama

Variant Readings

- [1]. Ahl: bi-l-shar'i.
- [2]. Der: yaliyyin.
- [3]. Ahl, Der: dhī urulīn.
- [4]. Der: dhū wushūmin.
- [5]. Ahl, Der: yahfizu-hā.
- [6]. Ahl, Der: lubnāna.

Translation

- 1. Su'ād has departed and her rope has been sundered;
 she has alighted in al-Shir' and the slopes of Idam --
- 2. A woman of Balī. The heart's ardour for her
 is but impetuous folly, a memory in dreams!
- 3. She was not one of those whose heels are black, when she
 departed, nor did she sell pots in the twin slopes of
 Nakhlah,
- 4. Of fulgent and noble brow; the most perfectly beautiful
 creature of all who walk the earth, the wittiest companion
 with whom you might banter --
- 5. She said "I see that you are the brother of a saddle and a
 mount, that you plunge into feral wastes which will not let
 you see old age!"
- 6. God keep you! Dalliance with women is not allowed us -- so
 religion has determined --
- 7. As we hasten and strive on bridled /camels/ with sunken eyes,
 looking forward to God, to piety and to the ritual foods.
- 8. Have you not asked the Banū Dhubyān what my worth is,

when smoke envelopes the white-haired onlooker

9. And the wind howls, having come into contact with Dhu Uruk,
as it drives herds from its waterless cloud-banks along
with the night,
10. (Herds) that cast pale russet shadows when they come to al-Tīn
from one side, driving on a scud -- its water sparse and
cold.
11. The keeper of their honour and their savant will apprise
you -- he who is ignorant of something is not like him who
knows! --
12. That I assume the contribution for my fellow gamblers,
that I heap it upon them with full hands (or, I lavish upon
them the remaining shares) and clothe the porringer in
savoury bread and meat,
13. That I cut across barren lands with the heavy-footed
(or, wind-swift) /camel/ that begins, after weariness, to
complain of exhaustion and disgust --
14. It almost threw me from my saddle and padding in Dhū l-Majāz,
although it had scented no other beast there,
15. But because of what a haramiyyah said, when the company had
set off; "Will any of your sprightly riders buy a hide?"
16. I said to her as she ran under my camel's breast "Take care
lest she crush you! Trading has ceased".
17. It passed three nights and then one more in Dhū al-Majāz,
pasturing together with /other/ groups (or, silent ones) --
18. The pillar of morning split asunder to reveal it (or, them)

speeding, running as the barren /she-ass/ runs, in fear of
the carnivorous hunter,

19. Turning aside from an astan /tree/ with black roots, stepping
like the slave-girls in the morning carrying their bundles;
20. Or like a tattooed /oryx buck/ in Ḥawḍā, which sought shelter,
crouched low during a night in Jumādā which rained without
cease,
21. By digging up a tract of sand in al-Baqqār -- whenever he
let up for a little, the soil collapsed --
22. Turning his horns and his forehead from the wind just as the
smith turns to blow on the coals:
23. In the dawn he was like the blade of a sword as he sped
towards the rocky terrain of Lubnān and their hills.

Commentary [40]

1. The exact location of Shir', according to Thilo Ortsnamen 94, is between Khaybar and Idam: al-Nābighah Ahl Frag. 55, Labīd 'Abbās 36. 47 (= Brock II 41. 47), and Bashāmah b. al-Ghadīr Muf 122. 1. The occurrence of Shir' and the name Su'dā in al-Nābighah Frag. 55 suggests that it should be read in this line also, as Derenbourg 276 and Thilo loc. cit. do. The verse of Bashāmah b. al-Ghadīr, a maternal uncle of Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā, referred to above, in conjunction with al-Nābighah Fragment 55, provides the clearest indication of the location of Shir': li-mani l-diyāru 'afawna bi-l-jaz'i//bi-l-dawmi bayna buhāra fa-l-shir'i. The Wādī Dawm stretches from Khaybar and branches into Idam (according to Lyall Muf 2 345 it is in the territory of Murrah).

Idam, today known as Wādī l-Ḥamd, is a "seasonal watercourse in

north-western Arabia ... the Damascus-Medina pilgrim track ... enter(s) Wādī al-Hamd ... 165 km. from Medina, and follow(s) its course nearly all the way to the Holy City" (J. Mandaville "Hamd, Wādī l-" GI2 III 121-122): Tarafah Ahl 11. 1, Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt 1. 1 (abā'u-na dammanū tihāmata fī l-//dahri wa-salat bi-jayshi-him idamu) [41], Salāmah b. Jandal Frag. 5 (yā dāra asma'a bi-l-'alyā'i min idamin//bayna l-dakādiki min qawwin fa-ma'sūbu).

injadhama: the root meaning of j-dh-m is 'to mutilate', presumably by amputation (cf. Blachère 1390-1392). The seventh form, 'to be severed', is often associated with the sundering of the love-bond: Bishr 35. 2 (fa-njadhama l-wisālu), al-A'shā 4. 1 (ami l-hablu wahin bi-hā munjadhīm), Abū l-Hannān Well 244. 19 (wa-kullu wisāli-hinna ilā njidhāmin). In al-A'shā 36. 29 (wa-la-qad ajdhimu habl-i 'āmidan) the first form is, somewhat unusually, used in a similar context. For a literal usage of the seventh form, cf. 'Adī 12. 19 (fa-hwa ka-l-dalwi bi-kaffi l-mustaqī//khudhilat min-hu l-'araqī fa-njadhama).

al-ajzā': jiz' is a standard word for the 'winding, meandering of a valley' or for 'the bottom of a valley, ravine (overgrown with thick vegetation)' (Blachère 1497). For the singular, cf. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 74. 39, 'Abīd 22. 8, Zuhayr Ahl 14. 10 (= Qab 2. 10, Th p.96, v.10), al-Nābighah Ahl 29. 1 (= Der 25. 1), Bishr 1. 8, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 23; for the plural, cf. Bishr 10. 2, Tarafah Ahl 11. 1 (li-khawlata bi-l-ajzā'i min idamin talal) -- a significant expression in this context --, al-A'shā 6. 26, Abū Qays b. al-Aslat Muf 75. 14, Mu'āwiya b. Mālik 105. 7, 'Āmir b. Sadūs al-Khunā'ī Well 204. 2.

The phrasing used in the opening line of this poem is somewhat formulaic among certain later poets and indeed becomes a cliché, having been immortalised for Muslims by Ka'b b. Zuhayr. It is not so common as one might expect among the Jāhili poets, although its sundry elements are topical in early poetry. This topical quality

of the line may provide an important indication of a temporal provenance of the poem:

Imru' al-Qays Ahl 37 (= Ibr 44) (la-'amr-ī la-qad bānat bi-hājati dhī l-hawā//su'ādu wa-rā'at bi-l-firāqi murawwa'an) [42], al-Hārith b. Hillizah Krenkow 8 (a-lā bāna bi-l-rahnī l-qhadātī l-habā'ibu//ka-anna-ka ma'tūbun 'alay-ka wa-'atibu), Bishr 26 (amsā Sumayrun gad bāna wa-nqata'a//yā lahfa nafs-ī li-bayni-hi jazī'a) [43], Qays b. al-Khaṭīm Kowalski 1 (tadhakkara laylā husna-hā wa-safā'a-hā//wa-bānat fa-amsā mā yanālu liqā'a-hā), Ka'b b. Zuhayr Kow 1 (= Cairo p.6) (bānat su'ādu fa-qalb-ī l-yawma matbūlu//mutayyamun ithra-hā lam yujza makbūlu), Ḥassān b. Thābit 150 (bānat lamīsu bi-hablin min-ka aqtā'i//wa-htallati l-qhamra tar'a dhāta ashra'i), Rabī'ah b. Maqrūm Muf 43 (bānat su'ādu fa-amsā l-qalbu ma'mudā//wa-akhlafat-ka bnatu l-hurri l-māwa'idā) [44], Subay' b. al-Khaṭīm Muf 112 (bānat sadūfu fa-qalbu-hu makhtūfu//wa-na'at bi-jānibi-ha 'alay-ka sadūfu), al-Shammakh 14 (bānat su'ādu fa-nawmu l-'ayni mamlūlu//wa-kāna min qisarin min 'ahdi-hā tūlu) 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'ah 302 (bānat sulaymā fa-l-fu'ādu qarihu//wa-dumū'u 'ayn-ī fī l-ridā'i sufūhu). [45]

In the poetry of al-A'shā Maymūn b. Qays the combination of all four elements (bānat, Su'ād, the reference to the habl and the present residence) assumes the phrasing which it bears in al-Nābighah Ahl 23: two opening lines in his dīwān (poems 13 and 79) are relevant, both composed, significantly, in Basīt --

bānat su'ādu wa-amsā hablu-hā nqata'a//wa-htallati l-qhamra
fa-l-juddayni fa-l-fara'a

bānat su'ādu wa-amsā hablu-hā rāba//wa-ahdatha l-na'yu l-ī
shawqan wa-awsābā

The first example is particularly apposite. If poem 23 is genuinely the work of al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, then this poem is

manifestly the source of al-A'shā's allusions, for the 'formula' finds its earliest, most crystalline expression in poem 23. But if it is the work of a later poet, then it is most likely, in view of the lines quoted, that the poet belongs either to the Ghatafān poetic tradition or to the so-called school of al-A'shā [46], if it is not in fact the work of al-A'shā himself.

2: Balī, and not Yalī as in Derenbourg 391, is a subsect of Qudā'ah, properly Balī b. 'Amr b. al-Ḥaf b. Qudā'ah: cf. the sharh to al-Kalḥabah Muf 3 and the verse of Khufaf b. Nadbah quoted in Muf 1 117. The usual habitation of Balī was, in fact, the Wādī Idam and they were, at times, a not inconsiderable force in Medina. [47]

For the expression ihdā baliyyin, cf. Labīd 'Abbās 4. 2 (= Chāl p.136, v.2, Brock I 19. 2), ihdā bani ja'farin and 'Umar b. Abī Rabi'ah 356. 5, ihdā buniyyati 'amm-i, and, for the syntactical position of the tribal affiliation of the habīb, Imru' al-Qays Ahl 20. 2 (= Ibr 4. 2), kināniyyatun banat wa-fī l-sadri wuddu-hā, Labīd Mu'allaqah 17 (= 'Abbās 48. 17), muriyyatun hallat bi-fayda, al-Ḥuṭay'ah 10. 3, kināniyyatun dāru-hā gharbatun.

hāma: this is a strong word for madness, huyām being the term for the disease of camels maddened with thirst, as, for example, by 'Amir 9. 1 (tahīmu). It is, for the most part, used metaphorically; 'Abīd 21. 5 (fī-hinna hindu l-latī hāma l-fu'ādu bi-hā) -- the metre of this poem is Basīt and the syntax is parallel to al-Nābighah 23 --, al-A'shā 9. 16 and 'Adī b. Zayd 5. 20 (of the imbiber of a particularly potent red wine!) The same metaphor, now virtually a dead metaphor, recurs regularly, as, for example, 'Umar b. Abī Rabi'ah 1. 3 and Dhū l-Rummaḥ 7. 8 (hayūman bi-dhikri-hā).

Jacobi Khayāl suggests that the appearance of the khayāl as a bad dream perceived internally, i.e. in the poet's mind, belongs to the Jāhili -> Mukhadramī phase: cf. Bishr 41. 1 (= Muf 97. 1), a-ḥaqqun mā ra'aytu ami htilāmu//ami l-ahwālu idh sahb-i niyāmu, where the

poet's confusion is symptomatic of the developing tradition. On the beloved as a recurrent memory inflamed by love, cf. Ka'b Kow 9. 1 (= Cairo p.113, v.1), anna alamma bi-ka l-khayālu yutīfu//wa-matāfu-hu la-ka dhikratun wa-shu'ufu.

3: I have been unable to find any other assertion that the ḥabīb is not black of heel. That she is of independent means is a topos. For blackness, compare 'Amir 35. 1 (wa-anta li-sawdā'i l-ma'asimi ja'datin//wa-aq'asa min nasli l-imā'i l-'awārik) [48]; for her non-professional status, Imru' al-Qays Ibr 61. 13 (hattā akhadhtu bi-kaffin zāna mi'sama-hā//raj'u l-wushūmi wa-lam tukhlaq li-fa'ādī), Bishr 34. 5 (hadīmu l-kashshi mā ghudhiyat bi-bu'sin//wa-lā maddat bi-nāhiyati l-ribaqi).

idhā nṣarafat: the same phrase is found in the same metrical position in the same structural context (the nasīb) in the Mu'allaqah of al-A'shā, 4 (tasma' li-l-halyi waswāsan idhā nṣarafat). Lyall, "The Mu'allaqah of Maymūn al-A'shā" (in T.W. Arnold & R.A. Nicholson), 286, translates "whenas she turns" but I prefer to use the more exact translation 'when she departed', perhaps giving the conjunction an unwonted precision: cf. further Bishr 29. 11 (idhā hamma l-qarīnatu bi-nṣirāfi) and Bishr 35. 1 (a-niyyatun l-qhadāta ami ntiqālu//li-munṣarifi l-za'a'ini am dalālu), in both which instances the meaning is, distinctly, 'departure'.

Metrical positions of words in the Mu'allaqah of al-A'shā parallel to al-Nābighah 23 are; gharā'u (line 2) = 23. 4 (the description of the beloved in al-A'shā's line stresses the same topos as that contained in 23. 4, although it is couched in positive terms and not expressed through litotes); laysat (line 5) = 23. 3; ajzā' (line 26a) = 23. 1b.

burmah: according to Blachère 581, this is a 'cooking-pot (made of serpentine stone)'. Its connotations seem not, for the most part,

to be favourable: cf. 'Antarah Ahl 22. 4 (= Mawlawī 12. 4), laysū ka-aqwāmin 'alimtu-humu//sūdi l-wujūhi ka-ma'adini l-burmi, Tarafah Ahl 17. 9, alqaw ilay-ka bi-kulli armalatin//sha'thā'i tahmilu minqa'a l-burmi [51], al-A'lam Kos 24. 1, za'amat khanāzi bi-anna burmata-nā//taqlī bi-lahmin ghayrī dhi shahmi. In Labīd 'Abbās 27. 25 (= Chal p.129, v.25, Brock I 18. 25), a panegyric, the connotation is favourable (idhā qusira l-sutūru 'alā l-birāmi).

Nakhlah: one of two settlements to the north-east of Mecca, with which it was connected, occupied by the Hudhayl. A distinction between Nakhlah al-Sha'āmiyyah and Nakhlah al-Yamāniyyah is but rarely made by the poets: cf. Thilo Ortsnamen 75. An annual poetry competition is said to have been held there.

4: Gharra'u contrasts with mina l-sūdu a'qāban in verse 3. For the metrical position of man yamshī 'alā qadamin in a verse of Basīt tetrameter, cf. the line attributed to Aws b. Maghrā', quoted by M.J. Kister, "The Seven Odes. Some Notes on the Compilation of the Mu'allaqāt", RSO 44 (1970), 30: muhammadun khayru man yamshī 'alā qadamin//wa-sāhibā-hu wa-'uthmānu bnu 'affānā. [49] For a variation of the sentiment, cf. Bishr 46. 14, fa-mā watī'a l-ḥasā mithlu bnu su'dā//wa-lā labisa l-ni'ala wa-lā htadha-hā, of the mamdūh, and Abū Khirāsh Hell 14. 2.

amlah: for this epithet and a discussion of its signification when used of the beloved, cf. J.E. Montgomery and J.N. Mattock, "The Metaphysical 'Umar?", JAL 20. 1 (March 1989), 18, in which context it is used with reference to a letter and not to flirtatious banter, as here. cf. further Aws b. Hajar 3. 6, najīhun malīhun akhū māqitin//niqābun yuhaddithu bi-l-ghā'ibi, of the deceased chieftain Faḍalah, and 'Umar 6. 1, qul li-l-malīhatī, 271. 5, mā fī-hā li-man yabtaqlī l-malāhata 'atbu.

For conversation with the beloved before it was transformed into the tart and witty banter of 'Umar's high-born lady-friends, cf. Zuhayr

Qab 28. 8 (= Th p.321, v.8), wa-tuṣbī l-halīma bi-l-hadīthi yaladhdhu-hu. It is a distinct possibility that the witty ripost of al-Nābighah 23 draw on the Meccan tradition of ghazal verse. Unfortunately it is impossible to determine how much of 'Umar's ghazal is traditional, how much innovatory, but it is surely unlikely that he is to be held entirely responsible for a new poetic form -- a high percentage of his dīwān is light entertainment in song format. I should be inclined to consider al-Nābighah Ahl 23. 4-6 as indication of a sort for the existence of such a Meccan ghazal style. An unusually early example of conversation between poet and beloved is 'Adī b. Wadā' al-A'mā al-Jubūrī p.51, v.6-8.

5: matalīf, 'dangerous deserts': cf. Bishr 21. 22 (atī l-matalīfa wāhidan), Tha'labah b. 'Amr Muf 74. 12 (wa-ayyatu ardīn laysa fi-hā matalīfu), Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 10. 17 and 'Abīd 8. 6, where it is used metaphorically of storm-tossed waves.

haram, 'senectitude': Muraqqish al-Akbar Muf 54. 13 (yahram), Aws 23. 6, 'Adī 12. 14 (of a wild ass), Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 2. 1 (a-lā manja mina l-harami).

6: dīn, with the meaning of 'religion' is almost unparalleled in pre-Islamic poetry. Cf., however, 'Amr b. Qamī'ah 2. 9 (wa-ann-ī arā dīn-ī yuwāfiqū dīna-hum//idhā nasakū afra'u-hā wa-dhabīhu-hā), Aws 11. 2 (wa-bi-l-lāti wa-l-'uzza wa-man dāna dīna-hā//wa-bi-l-lāhi inna l-lāha min-hunna akbaru). On the greeting hayyā-ki, cf. al-Huṭay'ah 7. 13 (fa-hayyā-ki waddun) with Goldziher's note (p.87), who suggests that this verse is a borrowing from al-Nābighah 23. 6, and 'Umar 1. 28 (fa-hayyaytu).

7: shammara, "he raised, tucked up, or contracted his garment" (Lane 1595): al-Aswad b. Ya'fūr Muf 44. 23 (mushammir, of a cup-bearer). It is usually used of strenuous activity as in 'Alqamah Ahl 9. 3 (= Qab 9. 3), inn-ī mru'un fi-yya 'inda l-jaddi tashmīru, and is commonly employed as a metaphor, especially when

used of harb ('war'); Bishr 4. 20, 10. 10, 46. 22, 'Adī 6. 29 and al-A'shā 40. 6. Any of these meanings would be apposite here. However, mushammir is applied to a horse (Muf 44. 31) and to the amīr of a departing tribe ('Abīd 22. 14), as is the participle of Form VIII ('Amr b. Qamī'ah 15. 5) and it is this signification, of vigorous travelling, which the poet primarily intends.

khūs, 'with sunken eyes', is an epithet the plural of which is generally applied to camels, the feminine singular to mares: 'Abīd 2. 14, Imru' al-Qays Ibr 3. 48, Ibr 4. 19, Ibr 62. 2, Muraqqish al-Aṣghar Muf 56. 2, al-A'shā 15. 31, 21. 38, 22. 16 (she-camels); Salāmah b. al-Khurshub Muf 5. 14, Subay' Muf 112. 14 (bi-muqlatin//khawṣā'i), Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 51 (= Muf 126. 51) (mares). In al-A'shā it is also found applied to men as a term of vituperation (19. 21).

birr: two significations, not mutually exclusive, are possible; the more general meaning of 'piety', as in Zuhayr Ahl 16. 56 (= Qab 1. 56, Th p.1, v.56), Qab 36. 9 (= Th p.313, v.9) and al-Samaw'al Asm 23. 5, and, more precisely, 'the pious pilgrimage', a meaning natural in the context, although unparalleled. It is used to indicate 'proper treatment of one's proteges' by Bishr 16. 30 and 26. 8, in which case it occurs in an enumeration of excellences -- murū'ah (manliness, agonistic virtue), naḥdah (courage in battle), tuḡā (fear of God) -- and probably signifies the performance of one's religious duties.

tu'am: cf. Zuhayr Ahl 17. 34 (= Qab 9. 34, Th p.145, v.34), a poem composed in the Basīt, where this word occupies an identical metrical position. I take the reference to be to the foods of the sacrifices, as mentioned in the line of 'Amr b. Qamī'ah (2. 9) quoted above.

On the pilgrimage in early Arabic poetry, cf. line 10 of poem 2 by 'Amr b. Qamī'ah (wa-manzilatīn bi-l-hajjī ukhrā 'araftu-hā//la-hā

nuf'atun la yustatā'u burūhu-hā), al-Shanfarā Muf 20. 27 (qatalnā qatīlan muhdiyan bi-mulabbidin//jimāra minan wasta l-hajīji l-musawwiti), al-Nābighah Ahl 5. 37-38 (= Der 1. 37-38) (fa-lā la-'amru l-ladhī massahtu ka'bata-hu//wa-mā huriqa 'alā l-anṣabi min jasadī/wa-l-mu'mini l-'ā'idhāti l-tayra tamsahu-hā//rukbanu makkata bayn l-qhīli wa-l-sa'adi), 'Awf b. al-Aḥwaṣ Muf 35. 4-5 (wa-inn-ī wa-l-ladhī hajjat gurayshun//mahārima-hu wa-mā jama'at hira'u/wa-shahri banī umayyata wa-l-hadāyā//idhā hubisat mudarrija-hā l-dimā'u), Sā'ida b. Ju'ayyah Hell 8. 6 (la-hunna bi-mā bayna l-asāqhi wa-mansahin//ta'āwin ka-mā 'ajja l-hajīju l-mulabbidu).

8: For the phrase hal-la sa'alti see 'Āmir 10. 1 and 'Urwah 14. 1 (hal-la sa'alti banī 'aylāna kulla-hum//'inda l-sinīna idhā mā habbatī l-rīhu), this latter being composed in Basit. The reference to the Banū Dhubyān in this verse would of course ensure that the poem be ascribed to al-Nābighah, if it is not his composition.

ashmat, 'grey-haired', an adjective much favoured in the feminine by the Hudhalī poets: Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 7. 4 (shamtā'u l-qadhālī), Abū Shihāb Well 148. 16 (shamtā'u ḥasīru), Abū Ṣakhr Well 261. 4 (shamtā'i l-'awāridī), as also 'Amr b. Kulthūm Mu'allaqah 20. The general sense is of an old woman who experiences wajd, 'grief at love which is not or cannot be returned', upon the death of her sons. See further Salamah b. Jandal Frag 5. 6, where it is used as an epithet for a beard, and al-A'shā 40. 6 (wa-qad shammarat bi-l-nāsi shamtā'u laqihun//'awānun), an epithet for war. The plural shumt is found in Uḥbān b. Lu't Well 159. 6 (la-ḥarbun//tuziffu l-shumta) and in the verses, in certain respects corrupt, added in the margin of two of the MSS of the Mufaḍḍaliyyāt to Muraqqish al-Akbar Muf 47. 16.

The masculine singular occurs in Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 28. 4 (hattā anta ashmatu 'ānisu), al-'Abbās b. Mirdās Asm 70. 8 and Ḥassān b. Thābit

20. 4. Its use does not appear to be of too obvious antiquity, and its occurrence in this poem may be deemed, then, to be rather unusual.

baram [50] signifies a man who is unwilling to enter into the game of maysir and is therefore deemed a niggard: Zuhayr Ahl 17. 30 (= Qab 9. 30, Th p.145, v. 30), lā fāhishin baramin, Mutammim Muf 67. 3, wa-lā baraman tuhdī l-nisā'u li-'irsi-hi//idhā l-qash'u min hassi l-shitā'i taqa'qa'a, Abū l-'Iyāl Kos 74. 3, wa-lā kahkāhatun baramun//idhā ma shtaddati l-hiqabu, Iyās b. Sahm Kos 102. 12, tawīla l-bā'i lā baraman jahūlan//wa-lā naziqa l-maqālī wa-lā harūnā, Durayd b. al-Ṣimmah Aṣm 28. 12, wa-lā baraman idhā l-riyāhu tanāwahat//bi-ratbi l-'idāhi wa-l-darī'i l-mu'addadi. In this particular context, however, the implication may be that he is unable to enter into the game because of his age and, consequently, his dependent status, or that the magnanimously profligate poet supports even rich misers at this time of hardship. [51]

Gambling with one's property as a means of supporting the less fortunate members of the tribe is, of course, a topos in Jāhilī poetry, as exemplified in, for instance, 'Abīd 16. 5, wa-la-ni'ma aysāru l-jazūri idhā zahat//rihu l-shitā'i wa-ma'lafu l-jīrāni; cf. the reference to smoke in 'Amr b. Qamī'ah Frag. 7. 1-2 and 8. 3, the first of which is particularly apposite:

1. wa-idhā l-'adhārā bi-l-dukhanī taqanna'at
wa-sta'jalat nasba l-quḍuri fa-mallati
2. darrat bi-arzāqi l-'iyālī maqhālīqun
bi-yada-yya min qama'i l-'ishāri l-jillati

9-10: the image encountered in these lines (the wind driving on the clouds is represented as a camel-drover urging on his herds) is not infrequent in old poetry: cf. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 2. 3 (= Ibr 81. 3), abassat bi-hi rīhu l-sabā, Imru' al-Qays Ibr 54. 15, abassat bi-hi l-rīhu fa-stāqa-hā//wa-hallat 'azāliya-hu wa-l-julūdā, Imru' al-Qays Ibr 69. 4, tubārī tawālī-hi awā'ila muzni-hi//ka-mā siqa

mankūbu l-nusūri lajūnu, 'Antarah Ahl Frag. 9. 3, idhā l-rīhu ja'at bi-l-jahāmi tashullu-hu//hadhālīlu-hu mithlu l-qilāsi l-tarā'idi, Labīd 'Abbās 2. 37-39 (= Chāl p.30, vv.37-39, Brock I 9. 37-39) and Labīd 'Abbās 4. 17 (= Chāl p.136, v.17, Brock I 19. 17). In al-Akhnas Muf 41. 10, tatāyaru 'alā a'jazī hūshin ka-anna-hā//jahāmun arāqa mā'a-hu fa-hwa ā'ibu, there is an interesting inversion of the image [52] and it is paralleled by Labīd Mu'allaqah 24 (= 'Abbās 48. 24), fa-la-hā hibābun fī l-zimāmi ka-anna-hā//sahbā'u khaffa mā'a l-janūbi jamāmu-hā [53]

9: Thilo Ortsnamen 108 would rather read uruk for urul, in view of the verse of Artāh b. Suhayyah quoted by al-Bakrī 641, where, however, it is given as Dhū Urul, as also by Yāqūt 3 825 (sub al-ghūtah). It is, according to Abū 'Ubaydah, a mountain in the territory of Ghatafān, to the north-east of Medina. Yāqūt 1 210 also mentions a Mount Uruk in the territory of Tayyī', in the vicinity of Salmā: cf. further 3 63 (sub sarra'). I have found no reference to it in the ancient poets other than the verse referred to above: al-Nābighah's poem is the only authority cited by Yāqūt sub urul. Cf., further, the entries sub al-'Āh (Thilo Ortsnamen 27, al-Bakrī 641, Yāqūt 1 210).

surrād, waterless clouds: Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 4. 12 (wa-surrādu ghaymin lā yazālu ka-anna-hu//mulā'un bi-ashrafī l-jibāli makūru), al-Musayyab b. 'Alas Muf 11. 18 (= Geyer 11. 18) (wa-idhā tahīju l-rīhu min surrādi-hā). It can also designate, however, a cold wind, as in Sinān b. Abī Hārithah Muf 101. 3 (wa-qad yasartu idhā l-shawlu rawwaha-hā//bardu l-'ashiyyi bi-shaffānin wa-surrādi) and al-A'shā 16. 29 (wa-idhā l-liqāhu tarawwahat bi-asīlatin//rataka l-na'āmi 'ashiyyata l-surrādi).

siram, the plural of sirmah, a small herd of camels: 'Abīd 11. 22, Zuhayr Qab 37. 2 (= Th p.337, v.2), al-Jumayh Muf 4. 9, Murrah b. Hammām Muf 82. 5, Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 26. 3, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 5. 22, al-A'shā 33. 39.

10: ashab; 'golden red, reddish brown', is an adjective used, in the feminine singular, predominantly of wine -- 'Abīd 21. 7, Zuhayr Qab 25. 7 (= Th p.265, v.7), 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 37 (= Qab 2. 37, Muf 120. 39), Rabī'ah Muf 113. 11, 'Awf b. 'Atīyyah Muf 124. 5, al-Aswad b. Ya'fūr Muf 125. 9, al-A'shā 4. 10, 16. 7, 21. 9, 33. 22. For a fuller discussion, cf. R. Geyer, "Zwei Gedichte von al-A'sha: I. Mā buka'u", SBWA 149. 6 (1905), 202-213. It is also applied to a she-camel: 'Abīd 9. 13, Zuhayr Qab 52. 3 (= Th p.358, v.3), al-A'shā 28. 5.

The masculine singular is used of the tail of a stallion (Imru' al-Qays Ahl 4. 39 [= Ibr 3. 55]), of a lion (Imru' al-Qays Ibr 76. 43, Zuhayr (?) Qab. 24. 12 [= Th p.368, v.12], of a Jewish wine-merchant ('Abīd 21. 8) [54], and of death (al-Husayn b. al-Humam Muf 90. 8).

Ashab is used of a dust-cloud by Rabī'ah Muf 113. 8 and sahbā'u is used by Labīd Mu'allaqah 24 (= 'Abbās 48. 24) of a cloud. [55] The phrase suhba l-zilālī may be a variation on jawnu l-zilālī, of a storm-cloud: Imru' al-Qays Ibr 69. 3.

Al-Tīn is, according to one report given by Yāqūt 1 911, a mountainous ravine near Mecca. Thilo Ortsnamen 101 locates it to the south-east of Samīrah, a station on the al-Kūfah to Mecca pilgrim-road: cf. al-Bakrī 210, Derenbourg 392. In the dual, it signifies a mountain belonging to the Banū Asad (Yāqūt 2 500-501, sub khaww). As with Dhū Uruk, I have been unable to find another reference to this area in the early Arabic poets: vide, however, the comment on hibriqī in verse 22 post.

The alliterative and assonantal word-play in the phrase atayna l-tīna is similar to that which occurs in Abū Du'ād 61. 1, min diyārīn ka-anna-hunna rusūmun//li-sulayma bi-ramata tarīmu, echoed by Zuhayr Ahl 18. 1 (= Qab 12. 1, Th p.206, v.1), li-man talalun bi-ramata la yarīmu//afā wa-khalā la-hu huqbun qadīmu, and the

punning in 'Adī b. Zayd 9. 1 (tāla layl-ī urāqibu l-tanwīra//arqubu l-subḥa bi-l-sabāhi basīra).

For the metrical position of 'an 'urudīn, closing the first hemistich of a line in Basīt, cf. 'Abīd 5. 8.

shabīm is a rare adjective: in Zuhayr Ahl 9. 7 (= Qab 4. 7, Th p.33, v.7) (shajja l-suqātu 'alā najūdī-hā shabīman//min mā'i līnata lā tarqan wa-lā raniqā) [56] and al-A'shā 65. 10 (tabṣīmu 'an mahan shabīmīn qhariyyīn) it is used of water and means 'cold'. Consequently, although the adjective in line 10 is in the accusative case and should be construed as referring to the substantive ghayman, I have understood it as qualifying mā'u-hu, the attraction into the accusative being readily explained by the constraints of the rhyme-word.

12: mathnā l-ayādī has been variously explained: Derenbourg 392-393 and Lane 360 explain it as referring to that which remains of the slaughtered camel when each of the maysir players has won their portion, and which is then purchased and lavished upon others as a gift. Blachère 1246, however, states that it simply signifies "with the two hands full, in handfuls". The phrase occurs as a variant reading for verse 16 of Mutammim b. Nuwayrah Muf 67, where this verse of al-Nābighah is quoted. It is also found in Labīd 'Abbās 2. 39 (= Chāl p.30 v.39, Brock I 9. 39) (dha'artu qilāsa l-thalji tahta zilālī-hi//bi-mathnā l-ayādī wa-l-manīhi l-mu'aqqabi). [57] The maysir context supports the more detailed, and more technical, explanation of the medieval authorities. [58]

jafnah is a "large cauldron made of earthen ware; its dimensions are the symbol of generous hospitality" (Blachère 1581): cf. Muraqqish al-Akbar Muf 50. 14, al-A'shā 33. 57-59..

udum: the singular, idām, is used as the -- playful? -- sobriquet of the ḥabīb by Bishr 41. 2 (= Muf 97. 2).

13: the combination of the substantive kharq and the verb qata'a followed by an epithet describing a she-camel is a common formula in the rihlah section of the early gasidah: 'Alqamah 5. 3 (= Qab 14. 3) (wa-qad aqta'u l-kharqa l-makhūfa fī-hi l-radā//bi-'ansin ka-jafni l-fārisī l-musarradi), 'Abīd 9. 12-13 (wa-kharqin ... //makhūfin ... /qata'tu bi-sahbā'i l-sarāti), Bishr 10. 14 (wa-kharqin qad qata'tu bi-dhātī lawthin), al-A'shā 11. 8 = 33. 25 (wa-kharqin makhūfin qad qata'tu bi-jasratin) and 36. 30 (taqta'u l-kharqa), Abū Qays b. l-Aslat Muf 75. 19 (wa-aqta'u l-kharqa yukhāfu l-radā//fī-hi 'alā adma'a hilwā'i). Note the alliteration and assonance in al-kharqa bi-kharqā'a.

akhraq: 'clumsy', of a slave-woman: 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 27 (= Qab 2. 27, Muf 120. 29). However, as Lyall points out [59], "Socin and Ahlwardt prefer to take the word in the alternative sense of 'a violent wind' ('round which a violent wind sweeps'), which blows the tent down". This interpretation is supported by 'Awf b. 'Aṭiyyah Aṣm 60. 4 (fa-la-qad zajartu l-qidha idh habbat saban//kharqā'u taqdhiḥu bi-l-hizārī l-musnadi). [60] Al-A'shā endows it with a pejorative sense, similar to that advocated by Lyall, in 38. 34, when he asserts that his shayṭān is not akhraq.

tashakkā: that the she-camel complains of exhaustion and disgust is a well-established topos: 'Amr b. Qamī'ah 15. 16, Muraqqish al-Akbar Muf 48. 10, Bishr 10. 14, Rabī'ah Muf 43. 8.

14: mītharah, 'padding placed under a camel's saddle': cf. Zuhayr Th p.33, v.19 (= Ahl 9, Qab 4) (ka-anna kūr-ī wa-ansā'-ī wa-mītharat-ī) and al-A'shā 79. 11 (ka-anna kūr-ī wa-mīsad-ī wa-mītharat-ī), a possible allusion to the former (which is, however, included in the poem only on the authority of Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah's recension). Both poems are composed in Basīṭ and the metrical position of the phrase wa-mītharat-ī is identical in all three lines.

Dhū l-Majāz (cf. Bishr 41. 20 [bi-abṭahī dhī l-majāzī]) "was the site of one of the fairs held by the Arabs during the sacred months. The fair lasted eight days, from the first to the eighth of Dhu-l-Hijjah, and its place was behind the sacred mountain called 'Arafat near Mecca ... Apparently the celebrations there ... were of a religious character". [61] Cf. also al-Ḥārith b. Ḥillizah Mu'allaqah 41. Being thus situated, it was the preserve of Hudhayl: G. Rentz "Hudhayl" EI2 III 540-541.

na'am is a word which generally designates livestock taken as booty during a raid and seems, for the most part, to refer to camels: Zuhayr Ahl 17. 27 (= Qab 9. 27, Th p.145, v.27), al-Munakhkhal al-Yashkurī Aṣm 14. 8, al-A'shā 56. 13 and 76. 8.

15: hirmī, an inhabitant of the haram of Mecca: cf. Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 5. 24 (la-hunna nashījun bi-l-nashīlī ka-anna-hā//darā'iru hirmiyyin tafāhasha qhāru-hā). For the brisk business that took place in the religious centres during the pilgrimage, cf. 'Amir Frag 16. 1-2 (a-nāzilatun asmā'u am qhayru nāzilah//abīni la-nā yā asma mā anti fā'ilah/fa-in tanzilī anzil wa-lā atī mawsiman//wa-law rahalat li-l-bay'i jasrun wa-bāhilah).

mukhiff: Tha'lab in his commentary to Zuhayr p.164, v.8 (= Ahl 10. 8, Qab 5. 8), explains the second hemistich (illā l-qutū'u 'alā l-akwārī wa-l-wuruku) with 'because our comrades are expedite' (li-anna aṣhāba-nā mukhiffūna). It should be noted, however, that the verb khaffa is sometimes used to mean 'to start on a journey' ('Amr b. Qamī'ah 2. 1, Muraqqish al-Aṣghar Muf 57. 19 and 'Adī 14. 1) -- a combination of both significations is obviously intended.

16: labbah in the plural is one of the usual words for a camel's pectus (Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 13. 19, Sā'idah b. Ju'ayyah Hell 4. 22) and it is also used of a woman's breasts by Qays b. al-Khaṭīm Aṣm 68. 12, al-Ḥuṭay'ah 19. 6, al-A'shā 9. 4 and 'Umar 154. 6. The singular here is slightly unusual (al-Nābighah Ahl Frag. 56. 5 [wild

ass], 'Umar 256. 3): cf. T. Seidensticker, Die Gedichte des Shamardal b. Sharīk, Wiesbaden 1983, 36-38.

hatama is a violent word, associated with the shivering of lances on a day of battle ('Āmir 15. 8, Iyās b. Sahm Kos 97. 16) or the smashing of a foe (Abū Buthaynah Farrāj p.725, v.2). Zuhayr (Qab 43. 10 = Th p.245, v.10) uses it of an ostrich hen breaking free of a snare, and in his Mu'allaqah 12 (= Ahl 16. 13, Qab 1. 13, Th p.1, v.14) the Passive of the Form II occurs with reference to crushed berries of the fana tree. There may be an added nuance intended by the poet: the root h-t-m is used by 'Amr b. Qamī'ah (l. 10) of the crush of clients (mawāl) around the tent of a patron and by a Hudhalī poet, the Mukhadramī Mulayḥ b. al-Ḥakīm, to signify the crush of pilgrims around the Ka'bah (fa-hum yaḥṭimūna l-bayta min-hum mukabbirun/wa-mustalimun arkāna-hu mutatawwifu).

zarimā: I have been unable to find another instance of this verb: cf. the adjective zarim, used of tears by 'Adī b. Zayd 9. 6. Its full signification is not likely to be complimentary, if the definition given in Lane 1228 is anything to go by: "said of one's urine, and of his flow of tears, and of his speech, and of his oath ... and so of a sale. And, said of a dog, and of a cat, His dung, or dry dung, stopped in his rectum".

17: ziyam poses a problem to which I have been unable to find a completely satisfactory solution. Contrary to Derenbourg who conjectures that "ziyam s'applique à des morceaux de viande jete de côte et d'autre, puis aux hommes qui se séparent en plusieurs bandes" and Ahlwardt, who wants to understand ziyam as "die gleichmässige Vertheilung" [62] -- the word must, I think, refer to other camels, as implied in the third form turā'ī. However, I have been unable to discover an instance of zīmah or ziyam with anything other than its technical sense when applied to the muscular distribution of the physiques of animals: Zuhayr Ahl 17. 16 (= Qab 9. 16, Th p.145, v.16) (horses legs), 'Adī 12. 12 (wild ass),

Salāmah b. Jandal Frag. 3, Sahm b. Ḥanzalah Aṣm 12. 5 (stallion), Mālik b. Khālīd Kos 82. 4 (ostrich). It is used (metaphorically?) of a road by Ka'b b. Zuhayr Kow 1. 25a (= Cairo p.1, v.25a) (sumru l-'ujāyātī yatrūkna l-ḥasā ziyaman) and Mulayḥ Well 275. 29 (wa-hunna 'alā maslū'atīn ziyamī l-ḥasā). [63]

I have derived my very speculative translation from Kazimirski 1034: zīmah, "troop, band of camels (three at the least, five at the most)"; azyam, "taciturn (said of a camel which never grumbles)". In the case of the latter, I should adduce the demands of the qāfiyah as the justification for the fathah added to the regular plural form, zīm. This phenomenon is to be observed in Bishr 28. 16 and 32. 14, where kushufu is used as the rhyme-word in the place of the more standard kushfu -- the metre is, interestingly, the Basīt tetrameter.

18: 'amūd al-subḥī: this striking phrase finds a parallel in Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 9. 26, ilā an yudī'a 'amūdu l-saharī. It bears the same image as ra'd al-duḥā, 'the supple branch of forenoon', (Imru' al-Qays Ibr 78. 1, al-A'shā 36. 12), and is explained by Lane 2153 as follows: "the bright gleam of dawn; the dawn that rises and spreads, filling the horizon with its whiteness ... (app. thus called as being likened to a tent, or long tent).

jāfilah: the original meaning of the root j-f-l, according to Blachère 1578, is "flight (in fear)". It seems, however, among the early poets to have been used primarily to designate swift and violent movement: Imru' al-Qays Ahl 44. 9 (= Ibr 21. 8) (jawāfil, of raiding horses), Imru' al-Qays Ibr 55. 12 (= Ahl 51) (jāfil, of a bashām tree [64] being blown violently by the wind), 'Amr b. Qamī'ah 10. 11 (injafala, of a cloud blown along by the wind), Bashāmah b. 'Amr Muf 10. 21 (jafūla, of the sails of a ship [65]). Cf. also Mulayḥ Well 271. 22 (jawāfil of the departing camels of the tribe shimmering in the mirage), Mulayḥ Farrāj p.1027, v.49 (jāfil of a camel) [66], Mulayḥ Well 279. 36 (jāfil of a ship).

However, it is also used predominantly by Jāhili and Mukhadrami poets with the meaning accorded it by Blachère: al-A'shā 76. 12 (ostriches) and 76. 14 (routed opponent), al-Ḥuṭay'ah 16. 6 (ḵafūl of an ostrich), Mulayḥ Well 273. 55 (ostrich), Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 41 (ḵawāfil of wild she-asses running away from a male), 93. 19 (ḵawāfil of frisky she-asses).

The ambivalence generated by the transference of this word from a later nuance to an earlier referent is crucial for the appreciation of the qasīdah.

For nahūs, an epithet frequently applied to the wild she-ass, cf. Chapter 2, no. 7 v. 20 and comment.

lahim, of the hunter of an oryx-buck: al-Nābighah Ahl Frag. 26. 37; used metaphorically of a spear-head: al-Jumayḥ Muf 7. 4. Cf. Chapter 2, no. 1 vv. 44 & 45.

19: hāda: cf. Rabī'ah Muf 39. 25 where it is used metaphorically: wa-hāda bi-hā 'anī l-sabqī l-kurā'u, 'al-Kurā' turned it (the she-ass) away from (i.e. deprived it of) the prime position'; Qays b. 'Ayzārah Kos 116. 10 uses this verb to describe a lioness: ṣabḥā'u tahmī shibla-hā wa-tahīdu.

astan: according to the commentary contained in the MS designated 'B' by Derenbourg 198 this is a black-rooted shrub or tree. [67] I have been unable to find any other reference to it. The wild ass seeks nocturnal shelter by screening itself with thickets. If the poet is describing the mare as it begins its departure in the morning, then this is consonant with the topics of the speeding camel and the slave-girls, for both of which the morning is specified.

The women or the slave-girls (al-imā') gather the tribe's firewood in the morning and the evening: Aws b. Hajar 2. 2 (tamshī bi-hā

rubdu l-na'ami ka-ma//tamshi ima'un surbilat jubaba, describing ostriches), Salamah b. al-Khurshub Muf 5. 5, al-Marrar Muf 16. 12, al-Akhnas Muf 41. 3, ima'un turajja bi-l-'ashiyyi hawatibu. Cf. Musil Rwala Bedouin 231: "a careful husband often loads two or three camels with fuel, often dry branches and small stumps of raza or arta -- all this to save his beloved wife labor".

20: dhi wushum: cf. Chapter 3 no. 2 v. 10 and comment.

hawda: according to Thilo Ortsnamen 55, "a group of mountains to the south of Dhiqan, separated from one another by desert-wastes in the West" (Dhiqan lies to the west of the massif 'Amayah [Thilo Ortsnamen 41]): cf. Bishr 24. 1, Labid 'Abbas 35. 66 (= Brock II 40. 66), Abu Dhu'ayb Hell 3. 10, these latter instances occurring in Oryx Bull Vignettes. Yaqt 2 363-364 locates it in the territory of the Banu Tahman b. 'Amr, claiming that the Hudhali poets frequently make mention of it (cf. Abu Khirash Hell 14. 2, where Yaqt reads hawda for Hell's qusa).

Thilo 54-55 lists the occurrences of a second Hawda, situated on the eastern rim of Dahna' towards al-Bahrayn, in the diwan of Dhu l-Rumma, two of which, 14. 59 and 24. 7-8 (an Oryx Bull Vignette and a description of a zaby respectively), I should tend to identify as the Hawda referred to here.

inkarasa (WKAS 126) is a word associated with the oryx bull: Bishr 12. 9, al-A'sha 52. 33.

fi laylatin min jumada: cf. Chapter 2, no. 4 (al-Nabighah 5), v. 11 and comment.

akhdala: that the oryx has to undergo heavy rain is topical in vignettes of Type 1. For a variation, a lion protecting its cubs, cf. Abu l-Fadl al-Kinani Asm 20. 4.

Dīmah, plural diyam, is a regular word for 'torrential downpour' (as in Imru' al-Qays Ahl 18. 1 [= Ibr 27. 1]).

bāta and hiqf (a sand dune) occur repeatedly in variations of a germinally formulaic cluster, in the context of extended oryx tableaux of Type 1: Imru' al-Qays 31. 7 (= Ibr 12. 7) (wa-bāta ilā artāti hiqfin), Bishr 11. 12 (ilā artātin hiqfin), Bishr 12. 8 (fa-bāta fī hiqfi artātin), Bishr 16. 9 (wa-artāti hiqfin), al-A'shā 55. 19 (ilā artāti hiqfin), Dābi' b. al-Ḥārith Aṣm 63. 25 (fa-bāta ilā artāti hiqfin). For the oryx taking shelter at night in this manner, cf. Chapter 3 no. 4 vv. 11-12 ante.

For hiqf, see further Imru' al-Qays Mu'allaqah 29 (= Ahl 48. 27, Ibr 1. 28), Ahl 52. 17 (= Ibr 2. 15), Ta'abbata Sharraṇ. Muf 1. 15, 'Adī 13. 22. The arta is, according to Blachère 85, the Ephedra alata, according to Musil Rwala Bedouin 688 it is the Calligonum comosum, a "nearly leafless shrub with scaled branches, clusters of small flowers, and nut-shaped hairy fruit", used by the Rwala as camel fodder (idem, 337-338).

Al-Baqqār (al-Bakrī 397, Yāqūt 1 698-699) is an area in the 'Ālij, to the north west of Ajā'. This is impossible to reconcile with the two other toponyms in this description, Ḥawḍā (20) and Lubnān (23), which lie somewhat to the east of Mecca, hard by the territory of the Hudhayl. Al-Baqqār occurs in Oryx Bull Vignettes in Labīd 'Abbās 11. 53, fa-bāta l-saylu yarkabu jānibay-hi//mina l-baqqāri ka-l-'amidi l-thafāli, and al-A'shā 65. 26, tadayyafa ramlata l-baqqāri yawman//fa-bāta bi-tilka yadribu-hu l-jalīdu. Al-Ḥazimī, as reported by Yāqūt, seems to have noticed this discrepancy concerning the irreconciliability of al-Baqqār, for he says that it is a dune in the Najd or in the vicinity of al-Yamāmah. As the previous line (20) of this poem would suggest, it must be close to Ḥawḍā.

hafaza: this verb, which means 'to push, urge on' is used of an

oryx's trotters beating the ground as it runs (Imru' al-Qays Ahl 55. 8 [= Ibr 33. 8] and of gazelles (Labīd Mu'allaqah 15 [= 'Abbās 48. 15]). However, there is another, very plausible reading, and perhaps more appropriate to the context -- although it is not recorded in any of the MSS --, viz., yahfiru-hu, which occurs in Bishr 16. 9 and al-A'shā 55. 20, both in the context of an oryx buck digging a shelter. I have emended the text accordingly.

22: hibriqī: Tha'lab in his commentary to Zuhayr p. 242 gives hibrizī as a variant reading. I have been unable to track down any other use of this Persianate word in early verse. In verse 9 of a poem ascribed to Shubaym b. Khuwaylid al-Fazārī, recorded in the commentary of the Naqā'id (= A.A. Bevan, The Nakā'id of Jarīr and al-Farazdak, Leiden 1905-1907, 1 106), the following description occurs:

9. Kunnā bi-hā ba'da mā thīkat 'urūdu-humu
ka-l-hibraqiyyāti yanfī lītu-hā l-dasmā

This is glossed by Ibn al-A'rābī as gold coins, although it is more likely to mean 'well-burnished /swords/': cf.. Bevan Nakā'id 3 588. Curiously, the toponyms al-Tīn and Idam occur in verses 1 and 2 of this poem.

Kazimirski 1381 glosses hibriqī as a smith. The comparison of an oryx buck with a sayqal (burnisher/swordsmith) in these tableaux, obviously the point of departure for the lexiphanic epithet, is topical and the details of the description indicate that a smith of some sort is required.

23: munsalit: the comparison of the oryx running at full speed with the blade of a sword is a topos: Bishr 11. 22 (wa-asbaha nā'iban min-hā ba'idan//ka-nasli l-sayfi jarrada-hā l-mulīhu) and Dābi' b. al-Ḥārith Aṣm 63. 38 (wa-rāha ka-sayfi l-himyarīyyi bi-kaffi-hi//nadā ghimda-hu 'an-hu wa-a'tā-hu sayqalā). For

munsalit of an oryx, cf. al-A'shā 52. 39.

On the metrical position of the indefinite munsalit as an end-stopper of the first heimstich in poems composed in Basīṭ, cf. Zuhayr Qab 40. 6 (= Th p.237, v.6) (of a hawk), 'Abdah Muf 26. 30 (of the hunter of the oryx bull!) & 61 (stallion), al-A'shā Bahīlah Aṣm 23. 20 (= Geyer 4. 28) (of the poet's brother, in a maysir context).

yaqrū, applied to an oryx, ostrich or gazelle: 'Amr b. Qamī'ah 11. 11 & 15. 10 (gazelle), Zuhayr Qab 32. 4 (= Th p.268, v.3) (gazelle), al-Mukhabbal Muf 21. 8 (oryxes), al-A'shā 34. 22 (ostrich) and 79. 4 (gazelle), 'Umar 269. 1 (gazelle).

amā'iz: a very common word in old poetry for 'hard, stony ground' (cf. Groom 39 & 192), in both the singular and the plural: Imrū' al-Qays Ibr 60. 24, Tarafah, Mu'allaqah 42 (= Ahl 4. 42), Bishr 40. 16, al-A'shā 1. 26 (am'āz); Bishr 29. 18, 'Abdah Muf 26. 44, al-Muthaqqib Muf 28. 12 & 30, al-Mumazzaq Aṣm 58. 5, 'Abd b. Ḥabīb Well 176. 10 (ma'zā'); Zuhayr (?) Qab 24. 28 (= Th p.368, v.28) (Chapter 2, no. 1 ante), 'Amr b. Kulthūm Mu'allaqah 33, Ḥajīb b. Ḥabīb Muf 111. 5 (wild ass) (amā'iz).

Al-Lubnān are, according to Yāqūt 4 348, two mountains close to Mecca, in the territory of the Banū 'Amr b. Kilāb, whereas Lubnān (a diptote) is a mountain range which extends from the Ḥijāz to al-Shām (Yāqūt 4 347). I have emended the text accordingly.

akam, as the plural of akamah (cf. Groom Topography 36: "hill or mound, especially a stony one, but not one of solid rock") in Zuhayr Ahl 17. 20 (= Qab 9. 20, Th p.145, v.22), al-A'shā 56. 9, 'Adī 12. 15, 'Ablā' b. Arqam Aṣm 55. 10.

Interpretation

Topography: the topography of this poem falls into four distinct areas: (i) the beloved's residence in the Wādī Idam to the north of Medina (1); (ii) the uplands of the Najd (9-10); (iii) Mecca, the trading-centres of Nakhlah (2) and Dhū l-Majāz (14); (iv) the mountainous and desert terrain to the east of Mecca and Dhū l-Majāz. There is no evidence of the toponyms being used in the manner of migration routes, a common feature of early and middle Jāhili verse, and their selection bears the hallmarks of conscious artistry: thus, (ii) is a fit locale for the poet's boasts of his Bedouin generosity; (iii) suggests that Su'ād was not in Nakhlah as part of a mercantile venture and this, in conjunction with the mention of Dhū l-Majāz, implies that the poet and his beloved had met while he was on the way to perform the pilgrimage in Mecca and she was on her way back from Mecca via Nakhlah to Idam. [68]

Diction and Motifs: the language of the poem is, by and large, traditional. Certain of the motival and linguistic usages suggest a late Jāhili -> Mukhadrami dating (lines 1, 2, 3, 4-6, 8 [ashmat], 10 [shabimā], 12, 18 [jāfilatan]); certain features can be paralleled from al-Nābighah's own dīwān (lines 1 and 18) and from the Hudhali dīwān. The results of such an investigation will remain somewhat inconclusive, until a practicable concordance of early Arabic verse is produced. The general indication is, however, of a late Jāhili provenance, with perhaps several of the linguistic features being subsequently adopted by Mukhadrami poets. The motival similarities with 'Umar b. Abi Rabī'ah in

verses 4-6 are probably to be explained as allusions to a Meccan style of ghazal of which fond banter was a feature: this would be consonant with the situational context of the poem, viz. the narrative of a pilgrimage. The most traditional sections of the poem, in terms of lexis and topoi, are the vaunting passage of lines 8-13 and the Oryx Bull Vignette (20-23). The Persianate substantive hibriqī (22) and the distinctive use of ziyamā (17) are hapax legomena in pre-Islamic verse. The former is reminiscent of al-A'sha's lexicographical praxis as described by W. Caskel: "the poet was educated at al-Ḥīrah, where the tradition of legend and poetry was broader than that of any other individual tribe. His style is rhetorical and at times (especially in I), artificial. Connected with this is his preference for sound effects and for sonorous (Persian) foreign words, as well as for effective endings. He occasionally treats the traditional themes of the qasidah with a high-handed indifference. He likes many types of allusion" ("Al-A'shā" EI2 I 690).

In the Commentary, I have highlighted the linguistic and motivational similarities between poem 23 and the poems of al-A'shā. That he would have come into contact with al-Nābighah in al-Ḥīrah is by no means unlikely. Jacobi Camel 8-13 has detailed points of resemblance between al-A'shā and al-Ḥuṭay'ah. There is evidence of points of resemblance between al-Nābighah and both Ka'b b. Zuhayr and al-Ḥuṭay'ah, and I should like to see in poem 23 points of resemblance between al-Nābighah and al-A'shā.

Structure: the structure of this poem, nasīb, rihlah, Wild Ass and Oryx Bull Vignettes is formally that of the 'poem of conglutination', discussed in Chapter 3. It is remarkable for the content of the rihlah and for the almost total absence of a wasf section. The rihlah does not appear to have a conclusion, and internally it is subordinate to the apostrophe of Su'ād in line 8.

Of the 98 poems featuring either an Oryx Bull (or Oryx Doe) or a Wild Ass Vignette which I have collated, 12 contain a combination of the two tableaux:

1. Zuhayr (?) Qab 24. 13-28 (oryx); 29-33 (ass).
2. Zuhayr Qab 32. 6-11 (ass); 12-17 (oryx doe).
3. Ka'b b. Zuhayr Kow 13. 19-32 (oryx); 33-57 (ass).
4. Al-Huṭay'ah 3. 12-16 (ass); 17-23 (oryx).
5. Imru' al-Qays Ibr 74. 27-36 (ass); 40-44 (oryx).
6. 'Abīd 1. 30 (ass); 31 (oryx).
7. Labīd 'Abbās 11. 15-27 (oryx); 28-43 (ass).
8. Labīd 'Abbās 35. 13-24 (ass); 25-35 (oryx doe).
9. Labīd 'Abbās 48. 25-35 (ass); 36-52 (oryx doe).
10. Al-A'shā 32. 26 (ass); 27-31 (oryx).
11. Al-A'shā 65. 23-27 (oryx); 28-31 (ass).
12. Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 16-36 (ass); 36-48 (oryx).

Of the above, 7 have the order Wild Ass Vignette followed by the Oryx Bull or Doe (2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12), 6 of which are from the

Late Jāhili -> Mukhadramī period. This would tend to confirm the tentative conclusions of the analysis of diction and motival development in the matter of fixing the poem's temporal provenance.

A traditional interpretation of the poem would start from the assumption that, devoid of a gharaḍ, the qasīdah is incomplete and fragmentary and that the Wild Ass and Oryx Bull Vignettes depict the fleet pace of the she-camel as the poet departs from Dhū l-Majāz on some purpose which may become apparent in the the final passage of the poem, or which may be abandoned in preference for some invective or minatory apostrophe. The poem can, however, be read otherwise, as a parody of 'heroic' verse, of the conventional depiction of the Bedouin hero mounted on a camel, fearlessly undergoing hardship and deprivation. The poet comes close to being unceremoniously dumped from his saddle in line 14 and loses his camel in verse 18. The topography of lines 19-23 delineate the direction which the wayward camel takes: the fleeing she-camel is consonant with the oryx speeding towards the stony terrain of Lubnān. The poem is as incomplete as the poet's return from the Pilgrimage.

The irony of the ḥabīb's words in line 5, 'I see that you are the brother of a saddle and a mount, that you plunge into feral wastes which will not let you see old age!', rings true: the 'feral wastes' are nothing more than the pilgrim stations on the way to Mecca; the poet almost meets his end by falling from his mount. The bragadoccio of lines 8-13 rings false: the poet, famed for his

Bedouin magnanimity, the traverser of desolate wastes, has lost the most indispensable item of Bedouin paraphernalia, the she-camel. The poet also exploits an ambiguity inherent in the syntactic structure of 8 ff., in that his recounting of a most unheroic exploit is grammatically subordinate to the apostrophe of his beloved, a feature common in pieces in which the poets boast of a feat of valour on the battle-field. The rejection of the ḥabīb as a result of the poet's willingness to observe the dictates and ordinances of religion may also be a reversal of the topos of the Ḥājj as an opportunity for sexual misconduct.

Ultimately, the question of whether this poem is parodical or not remains open, since its interpretation depends on the meaning of one word -- jaḥīlātān (18). In the light of the other examples of parodic verse discussed in this chapter, I should argue that this is an intentional feature, the frustration of audience expectation through obfuscation. I should further argue that al-Nābighah is parodying the formal structure of the 'poem of conglutination', by sending up its essential redundancy, its dearth of 'aim or purpose', its exclusively aesthetic purpose.

Poem 7 in the diwān of al-Ḥuṭay'ah is an encomium dedicated to the glory of Ibn al-Shammās, the structure of which is that of the Bedouin panegyric, riḥlah/waṣf and maḍīḥ (cf. Appendix 2). Lines 1-35 are a description of the she-camel and the deserts crossed by the poet to reach his Dedicatee. In line 30, the following motif

occurs:

30. Wa-kādat 'alā l-atwā'i atwā'i dārijin
tusāqitu-nī wa-l-rahla min sawtī hudhudi

30. And it almost, at the stone wells, the stone wells of Darij,
threw me and the saddle, because of the cooing of a hudhud!

That there can be no parodical intent in this gasīdah is excluded by the demands of the panegyric. Al-Ḥuṭay'ah, who is surely alluding to al-Nābighah 23, has incorporated this striking piece of mock-heroism into a gasīdah in the true heroic mold. It is a striking coincidence that such too was the fate of Arkhilokhos's 'discarding' of his shield.

Parody of this type -- the toying with audience expectation -- in the Middle English poetic tradition can be exemplified by, among others, the east English alliterative 'invective', A Complaint Against Blacksmiths. It exists solely in a manuscript of Norwich Cathedral Priory, now known as British Library MS Arundel 292 [69]:

Swarte smekyd smeþes smateryd wyth smoke .) dryue me to
deth wyth den of here dyntes .) Swech noys on nyghtes ne
herd men neuer .) what knauene cry & clateryng of knockes .)
þe cammede kongons cryen after col col .) & blowen here
bellewys þat al here brayn brestes.) huf puf seyth þat on haf
paf þat oþer .) þei spyttyn & spraulyn & spellyn many
spelles .) þei gnauen & gnacchen þei gronys to gyder .)
and holdyn hem hote wyth here hard hamers .) of a bole hyde

ben here barm fellys .) her schankes ben schakeled for þe
 fere flunderys .) heuy hamerys þei han þat hard ben handled .)
 stark strokes þei stryken on a stelyd stokke .) lus. bus. las.
 das. rowtyn be rowe .) sweche dolful a dreame þe deuyt it to
 dryue .) þe mayster longith a lityl & lascheth a lesse .)
 twyneth hem tweyn and towchith a treble .) tik. tak. hic.
 hac. tiket. taket. tyk. tak .) lus. bus. lus. das. swych lyf
 þei ledyn .) Alle cloye merys cryst hem gyue sorwe .) may
 no man for brenwaterys on nyght han hys rest.

Linguistically, this piece has little in common with the alliterative tradition that produced works such as *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*, *Pearl* and *Piers Plowman* -- indeed it is possible that the author of the Complaint strives consciously to avoid any reminiscences or echoes of these works: "the 'excessive alliteration'...owes little or nothing to the set formulae of 'classical' alliterative verse...Standard collocations are rare, and the most inventive alliterative usages -- 'cammede kongons', 'gnauen and gnacchen', 'spyttyn and spraulyn' -- are not constructed out of vocabulary with a special alliterative range". [70] 'Kongon' is characteristic only of *Piers Plowman* and *Mum and the Sothsegger*, 'gnauen' occurs "only twice in fully alliterative works -- *Piers Plowman* and *The Parliament of the Three Ages*" [71] and 'gnacchen' and 'cammede' are hapax legomena in the alliterative tradition. The author is evidently concerned to prune his language of words that would be overtly redolent of the alliterative verse works. There is one instance, however, in which the author may perhaps intend an allusion to *Piers Plowman*: the phrase 'cryst hem gyve sorwe' is paralleled in the B text, Passus xvii 331, a passage

dealing with the kindling of a fire and its smoke.

As is the case with the allusive parodic style of Arkhilokhos and al-Nabighah, there are many elements of the literary heritage that are exploited and burlesqued in the Complaint. Salter compares its "more boisterous alliterative modes" with "the vernacular religious drama of the north-east of England: þou bes lassched, lusschyd and lapped...rowted, russhed and rapped (York Plays, 'Second Trial Before Pilate, ll.154-5)". [72] Indeed, Arkhilokhian parody often relies heavily on the vernacular, and Salter's comparison seems most apposite.

One aspect of this heritage may be the Craft Ordinances of London and other medieval cities, which are often concerned with legislation, couched on occasion in the language of moral outrage, to prevent the practice of night-forging, principally as a means to maintain quality and standards. The Complaint resembles the Ordinances in "their apparent sense of social responsibility and their marshalling of vivid and pejorative detail". [73] There is the further possibility that the author is indirectly drawing upon a topos of Latin Augustan Poetry, viz. the disturbance, especially at night, caused in the city by tradesmen. This topos finds its medieval English analogue in the literary complaints of noise and disturbance at court. [74] That the author is learned is obvious and the generic polyvalency of the Complaint, enhanced by these allusions, is in keeping with its "brilliant improvisation upon

commonplaces of alliterative style". [75]

The Complaint's generic parody extends further, to another common medieval tradition -- the genre of instruction in the arts of composition: "it is interesting to find in the Poetria Nova of Geoffrey of Vinsauf ... a fifteen line 'exercise' upon the activities of blacksmiths engaged in the making of armour". [76] It is part of the Complaint's parodic intent that it should, as it were, 'celebrate' the activities of the blacksmiths through the medium of English alliterative verse and not elegant, free-flowing Latin hexameters -- "the wit of the Complaint may reside most exactly in an appreciation of the distance between its ostensible theme -- a common nuisance, of some social and moral resonance -- and the dignified framework of Latin rhetorical exercise into which it is so neatly and divertingly set". [77]

The coup de gras of the anonymous author's parody is to be found in the physical domain, that is to say in the position which it occupies in the erstwhile Norwich Cathedral Priory manuscript. The folio on which it was written is succeeded by a copy of the Purgatorium Patricii, an "immensely popular vision of hell as a vast smelting-furnace under the direction of yelling demon-smiths, in which the damned endure torture by molten metals and hammered nails" [78] -- the witty flourish is deliciously sophisticated.

The functional and occasional nature of pre-literate and

archaic verse has long been established as an axiomatic dictum:

When we begin to study the literature of pre-literate societies, one of the first things that strikes us is how much of it is functional; in other words, it is not produced for entertainment or amusement, but rather serves a definite social purpose, and is in many cases itself an essential part of the social system, to the extent that the society could scarcely function without it. This seems obvious enough in the case of such things as ritual or magical incantations or work-songs ... but in fact this functional nature is to be found throughout the whole range of the literature of such a society, so that a poem becomes a tool as essential as a spear or a diggingstick, and the ability to compose it a skill as essential as the ability to handle a bow or ride a camel. When we consider the poetry of pre-Islamic Arabia, this observation seems to be as valid here as it is for the poetry of, for example, Rwanda or the Zulus.

[79]

I have elsewhere argued against the tendency to neglect other, equally fruitful approaches to pre-Islamic poetry which the 'functional' critics fall foul of. I am unable to suggest a societal function for al-Nabighah 23 -- ritual it most certainly is not. The corpus of Jāhili verse contains poetry that is functional, ritual, entertaining, aesthetically motivated, emotional and personal. This is true of other diverse types of oral song,

such as the Yoruba hunting Ijala and the terse Malay Pantun, of Polynesian Creation poems and the Australian Aboriginal Djanggawul Cycle. As R. Mastromattei has remarked, "the variations both of form and content which are encountered in the ritual narratives and recited myths of illiterate nations are not in any sense the result of an inability to adhere to some optimal, canonical original -- of whose existence, for good reason there is never any trace -- but rather to a conscious reworking on the part of the mythmaker which does not exclude -- and often entails -- glaring inconsistencies and even reversals of genealogical, circumstantial, and factual relationships". [80] For over a century, scholars of Arabic have sought, each in their various ways, for the Eldorado of Ibn Qutaybah's qasīdah: it is one tessera of the mosaic:

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the term 'parodic mass' in the critical terminology of music, although decried by some, to refer to a seventeenth century mass in which pre-existing material is combined with new material, without any 'parodic' intent but rather in order to revitalise and adapt the extant material to contemporary requirements, is enlightening. A similar situation obtains in the case of the Minnelied poetry of Neidhart von Reuenthal who "used the forms and vocabulary of the Minnelied in order to mock at its conventions. His use of these forms is not strictly parody, since in many poems it would be impossible to say of numerous strophes that they were not genuine examples of Minnesang -- if they were read in isolation ... The shock comes when it is realized that forms and terms of Minnesang are being used of the wrong social class, of peasants, not knights, and that vocabulary is being used which is entirely inappropriate to the genre. The most significant point, however, is that Neidhart uses a poet-persona who purports to be entirely in tune with the chivalric ideals of the Minnesang, to believe in them, and to be persecuted by peasants because he tries to apply them within peasant society. The peasants also attempt to follow the conventions but succeed only in aping them with grotesque results. So effective is Neidhart's pose that many critics, even some writing comparatively recently, have attempted to construct a biography of the poet Neidhart from the details supplied by the poet-persona he created" (W.T.H. Jackson (ed.), The Interpretation of Medieval Lyric Poetry, Columbia 1980, 15). Cf. also O. Sayce, The Medieval German Lyric 1150-1300, Oxford 1982, 217-233 and M. Titzmann, "Die Umstrukturierung des Minnesan-Sprachsystems zum 'offenen' System bei Neidhart", DVJL 1971.

6. E.H. Gombrich, op. cit., 115, has some illuminating remarks concerning "the so-called Busiris vase in Vienna, of the sixth century B.C. There is little doubt that this humorous account of Herakles' exploits among the Egyptians was inspired by Egyptian renderings of some victorious campaign. We are familiar with the type of pictorial chronicle that shows the gigantic figure of

Pharaoh confronting an enemy stronghold with its diminutive defenders begging for mercy. Within the conventions of Egyptian art the difference in scale marks the difference in importance. To the Greek who looked at pictures as evocations of a possible event, the type must have suggested the story of a giant among pygmies. And so he turns the Pharaoh into Herakles wreaking havoc among the puny Egyptians. The pictograph for a whole city becomes a real altar onto which two of the victims have climbed, and climbed in vain, stretching out their hands in comic despair. Many of the gestures of this vase could be matched in Egyptian reliefs, and yet their meaning is transformed: these men are no longer the anonymous tokens for a defeated tribe, they are individual people -- laughable, to be sure, in their helpless confusion, but our very laughter presupposes an imaginative effort to see the scene enacted in front of us, to think not only of the 'what' but also of the 'how'. Cf. also Webster, op. cit., 12, for a discussion of the inquisitive erudition displayed by the Busiris vase-painter.

7. Davison AP 84. Fowler Greek Lyric displays a salubrious scepticism in his discussion of such references to the Epic that are to be found in Greek Lyric poetry. His contention, "the poems take their models and work them into the single, primary level of meaning. The existence of the imitation is signalled at once, and its whole purpose can be grasped as the poem proceeds in oral performance" (29), obtains for most of the fragments he discusses, but not, I maintain, for the fragments of Arkhilokhos that I intend to discuss. In general, he tends to underestimate the role of parody.

8. His floruit is conservatively placed between 680 and 640 B.C. Cf. F. Jacoby, "The Date of Archilochus", Classical Quarterly 35 (1941), 97-109, and Burnett 1983 15-32.

9. "Archiloque et Thasos: Histoire et Poesie" (in Archiloque), 24: "mais n'est-ce pas auprès d'eux (les maîtres ouvriers de son

temps) qu'Archiloque a pris le goût de ces allegories, de ces comparaisons où l'animal se substitue à l'homme?"

10. "The Poetry of Archilochus" (in Archiloque), 204.

11. M.L. West, Iambi et Elegi Graeci, Oxford 1971, 65-72.

12. Cf. further T. Breitenstein, Hésiode et Archiloque, Odense 1971, for an interesting discussion of the full ramifications of this debt.

13. "Archilochos und Paros" (in Archiloque), 73: "Archilochos aber gehört ... derselben Welt wie Homer an, der Welt Ostioniens, zu der Paros zählte ... Homerikos ist er nicht nur, wo er homerisiert, sondern vielleicht sogar mehr da, wo er als Antipode Homers erscheint, denn es zeigt sich doch in diesen Fällen, die fast sein ganzes Werk ausmachen, dass diese ionische Welt noch wach und schöpferisch war.

14. D.A. Campbell, "The Language of the New Archilochos", Arethusa 9 (1976), 151-157; Fowler Greek Lyric 28-19, 41-42.

15. J. van Sickle, "The New Erotic Fragment of Archilochus", Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica 20 (1975), 123-156; J. Henderson, "The Cologne Epode and the Conventions of Early Greek Poetry", Arethusa 9 (1976), 159-180.

16. Cf. M. Markovich, "A New Poem of Archilochus: P.Colon. inv. 7511", Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 16 (1975), 5-14, H.D. Rankin, Archilochus of Paros, New Jersey 1977, 72, Burnett 1983 84-97.

17. Campbell, Greek Lyric Poetry, 152.

18. D. Page, "Archilochus and the Oral Tradition" (in Archiloque),

159: "There is nothing novel in the theme itself ... Such expansion of Homeric themes is highly characteristic of Archilochus ... All that Archilochus says is implicit in such Homeric passages. The only novelty is the application of the traditional theme to a living person"; G.M. Kirkwood, Early Greek Monody, Ithaca 1974, 33: "Archilochus exaggerates the contrast. There is nothing wrong ... with a handsome general, provided he is 'full of heart'". That "there really was such a general, who was the butt of iambic lampoonery" (Fowler Greek Lyric 7) does not affect the point under discussion -- Arkhilokhos may be lampooning him for his travesty of heroic values. The humour of the poem's situational context may be enhanced by the suggestion that the strategos is Glaukos and his foil is Arkhilokhos: Burnett 1983 43. The espousal of the physical finds a witty reversal in the "sudden transference from the physical to the metaphysical plane" -- J. Russo, "The Inner Man in Archilochus and the Odyssey", GRBS 15 (1974), 143.

19. Cf. J. Russo, op. cit., 139-152, B. Seidensticker, "Archilochus and Odysseus", GRBS 19 (1978) 5-22, Rankin, op. cit., passim.

20. D.A. Campbell GLP 161-183, B. Snell, Tyrtaios und die Sprache des Epos, Gottingen 1969, R.L. Fowler Greek Lyric 31-32, 45-46. I do not mean to suggest that Arkhilokhos parodies specifically the work of these poets, but rather the poetic type (the militray exhortation) to which their fragments belong.

21. H. Fränkel, Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy, Oxford 1975, 145.

22. Page, op. cit., 129.

23. Burnett 1983 39.

24. For this fragment I have elected to use the text given in E. Diehl, Anthologia Lyrica Graeca, Leipzig 1949-52.

25. C.M. Bowra, "A Couplet of Archilochus", Anales de Filologia Clasica 6 (1954), 37; T.B.L. Webster, Greek Art and Literature 700-530 B.C., London 1959, 30; Davison AP 141-145; L.G. Pocock, "Archilochus Fragment 2", Classical Review 75 (1961), 179-180; V. Ehrenberg, "Archilochus, Frag. 2D", Classical Philology 57 (1962), 239-240, G. Giangrande, "Archiloque au pilori", QUCC 14 (1972), 37-40, D. Arnould, "Archiloque et le vin d'Ismaros", Révue de Philologie 54 (1980), 284-294.

26. Campbell GLP 142-143, Rankin, "Archilochus Fg. 2. D, Fg. 7. (L-B)", Emerita 40 (1972), 463-474, F.N. Rubin, "Radical Semantic Shifts in Archilochus", Classical Journal 77 (1981), 6-7, Burnett 1983 39.

27. Dover, op. cit., 185.

28. Page's remark, op. cit., 133, "maza memaqmene may be new to literature, but is wholly within the Epic style: maza is a word dignified enough for Aeschylus, and memaqmene helps to create a phrase of potential formula-quality", is enlightening with regard to this unusual and rodomantade coinage.

29. Campbell GLP 143.

30. One should also note that Arkhilokhos may in this context intend "to compare himself with Odysseus, for at Od.9.451 that hero is on the coast of Thrace, plundering and drinking wine" -- Burnett 1983 39.

31. Eadem, 39, in support of a comment of Giangrande.

32. Rankin, op. cit., 471 "Archilochus wants his audience first of all to be deceived into thinking that all three occurrences are precisely the same in meaning, and subsequently to realize, with amusement, that they are not all the same".

33. That Odysseus may be guilty of a similar action, as argued by Seidensticker, op. cit., 11, does not of course mean that the practice is endorsed by Homer or by the epic tradition -- the correspondence between the spurious biography which Odysseus alleges to be his own is bafflingly similar to that recorded of Arkhilokhos on the Mnesippes stone and has not been adequately explained, unless it is assumed that this section of the Odyssey is based on the biography of the Parian cult and hero-worship of Arkhilokhos.

34. Alkaïos (E. Lobel & D. Page, Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta, Oxford 1955, Frag. 428), Anakreon (B. Gentili, Anacreon, Rome 1958, Frag. 85) and Horace (Odes 2. 7, 9-10).

35. A.W.H. Adkins, Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists, Chicago 1985, 52.

36. Dover, op. cit., 209.

37. Adkins, op. cit., 53.

38. For a witty ripost to the 'historical biographers' cf. F.N. Cherniss, "Me Ex Versiculis Meis Parum Pudicum" in J.P. Sullivan (ed.), Critical Essays in Roman Literature: Elegy and Lyric, London 1962.

39. Derenbourg 211.

40. Ahlwardt Aechtheit 43. If the notorious philologist Khalaf al-Ahmar did in fact pen this poem, and I do not deem this even a remote likelihood, then it is a sorry loss for posterity that a poet of his calibre -- he is supposed also to be the creator of al-Shanfarā's Lāmiyyat al-'Arab! -- did not come out of the closet.

41. The commentary is an attempt to investigate, within a limited compass, the uses of diction in early Arabic poetry, a topic inextricably connected with the interpretation of this qasīdah. I

have attempted to discern whether or not the themes and language used in this piece have been deliberately and consciously selected by the poet with a view ostensibly to create the impression that it is integral to the Jāhili tradition and that it unequivocally espouses its poetic praxis.

41. Al-Anbārī in his commentary on line 17 of Zuhayr's Mu'allaqah (255) reads wa-jurhumu dammanū tihamāta fī l-//dahri fa-salat bi-jam'i-him idamu. Cf. also Lyall Muf 1 448 for yawm Idam.

42. This line may be the earliest extant combination of bāna and su'ad.

43. The combination of amsā and bāna in this threnody for the poet's brother Sumayr may be the earliest example extant.

44. Rabi'ah was a Mukhadramī poet whose floruit is probably to be placed in the early seventh century, perhaps circa 610: cf. Lyall Muf 2, introductions to nos. 30 and 43, and Sezgin 220-221. It is noteworthy that the metre of this poem is Basīṭ: the poet has amplified upon the combination of the departure of the ḥabīb and the poet's grief-stricken heart, as expressed succinctly, for example, with paronomasia in the twofold repetition of sadūfu and makhtūfu, by his contemporary Ṣubay' b. al-Khaṭīm al-Taymī.

45. On opening lines in general, cf. the discussions of I. Lichtenstädter, "Das Nasīb der altarabischen Qasīde", *Islamica* 5 (1932), 61-62, and Müller Labid 31-41. Jacobi Studien 13-49 remains definitive.

46. W. Caskel "al-A'shā" EI2 I 689-690.

47. Cf. M.J. Kister "Qudā'a" EI2 V 314-318.

48. For the phrase sawdā'u l-ma'āsīmi, cf. 'Urwah b. al-Ward Aṣm 10. 11; cf. further Zuhayr Qab 28. 19b (= Th p.321, v.19b), wa-lam uḥtamal fī hijri sawdā'a dam'ajī, 'and I was not borne in the womb of a squat negress'.

49. Aws b. Maghrā' seems to have been active before Islam but is mostly associated with a nūniyyah in praise of the Prophet: cf. Sezgin 381-382.

50. According to 'Izzah Ḥasan, the editor of Bishr's dīwān, in a comment on 7. 17, page 38, the rā' can be vocalised with a kasrah, i.e. barīm.

51. I find Ahlwardt's comments, Aechtheit 100-101, difficult to understand. He seems to be unusually, and unnecessarily, imaginative in his reading of the verse -- the smoke surely emanates from the poet's own fire, not from the old man's fire.

52. Next to nothing is known about this poet. His floruit is to be dated to the beginning of the second half of the sixth century and he may be one of the oldest poets whose work has come down to us: cf. Lyall Muf 2 149. For the reading given above, cf. Lyall Muf 2 151-152. As a consequence of al-Akhnas's dating, the line may not represent an inversion, but rather the image in its most pristine form.

53. I am in agreement with Thilo Ortsnamen 13-14; who argues that verses 18-19 should also be read as part of this cloud description.

54. Cf. the plural used of Jewish sailors in 'Abīd 8. 6.

55. Al-Anbārī's commentary to this verse quotes line 11 as reading suhban zimā'an, 'thirsty dun /herds/.

56. Note the hemistich closing position of the adjective in this verse, composed in Basīṭ.

57. This line may conceivably be an allusion to al-Nābighah 23. 12 and could then be used as attesting to the authenticity of the poem.

58. Cf. Wagner Grundzüge 34-35 for a discussion of the social virtues extolled in line 12 of this poem, and Lyall Muf 2 20, for a discussion of the name Mutammim.

59. Muf 2 339: cf. Socin 'Alqamah 6 and Ahlwardt Aechtheit 150.

60. Al-A'shā uses the Gerund of habba of the running of a she-camel in 36. 40.

61. Lyall Muf 2 277.

62. Derenbourg 393; Ahlwardt Aechtheit 101.

63. Of the first five parallels cited here, the metre of four is basīt (the only exception is 'Adī b. Zayd where ziyam is used as the rhyme-word for the Ramal trimeter catalectic). The substantive is used as the qāfiyah in the verses of Mālik and Zuhayr and as the end-stopper of the first hemistich by Ka'b and Sahm b. Ḥanzalah. Salāmah uses it to form the second metron of the second hemistich.

In most instances, the substantive constitutes a formula in conjunction with lahm qualified by a pronominal suffix; the similar metrical location of three of the four examples is markworthy. The substantive as used by Ka'b and Mulayḥ to describe a rocky thoroughfare may represent its original signification, with the phrase lahmu-hu ziyamun being a dead metaphor in which the knots of muscles are likened to the jutting stones of a road. This is, of course, pure conjecture: the reverse may be the case, as I tentatively suggest in the Commentary.

The formula appears to be of well-established antiquity and its

precise signification may have been forgotten by the time of the poets cited, although I do not find this too convincing.

64. Identified by Lyall Muf 2 146 as "'balsam of Mecca', Commiphora opobalsamum".

65. cf. Lyall Muf 2 28: "the rather singular construction of the second hemistich apparently implies that the sail is as it were the slave or beast of burden of the ship: when filled by the wind it speeds along the bulk".

66. This is a variant given in the commentary for the reading qafil, i.e. 'returning home'. The adjective ḵafil does not mean "running away" in these last two contexts as Lewin 58 asserts, but rather 'speeding', 'moving swiftly'.

67. Derenbourg 391: the commentator seems to be thinking of the zaqūm tree of Qur'an 37. 62.

68. The Hājj as an opportunity for sexual adventure is developed into a leitmotif in 'Umar's verse: cf., for example, 147, 157, 214, 215, 238, 251, 263, 293, 342, and S.K. Jayyusi, "Umayyad Poetry", CHALUP, 387-432.

69. The text that I give and my comments on it are heavily indebted to the article by Elizabeth Salter, "A Complaint Against Blacksmiths", Literature and History 5 (1979), 194-215. The social context posited for the Arkhilokhos fragments and al-Nābighah's poem are somewhat different from those of the literate scribe who seems to have composed 'The Complaint' for his own delectation and that of the readers of the manuscript which he was copying. Some would argue that it is erroneous to draw comparisons between the artistic products of societies which are widely disparate in their cultural developments and social contexts. This is a valid criticism, provided that it does not blind the attention to the contingencies

which such a comparison might suggest: there is, for example, no historically verifiable information which might suggest that al-Nabighah al-Dhubyani, or, at least, the composer of Ahlwardt 23, was not such a copyist working in the record-vaults of al-Nu'mān in al-Hīrah. Though it is not a parody of the heroic literary heritage, such as Chaucer's *The Rhyme of Sir Thopas* is for the chivalric romance, the *Complaint* is ultimately, though not exclusively, a parody of the religious heritage, which was, for the Latin Middle Ages, arguably more important than the heroic: as such it approaches the iconoclastic spirit of the parodies of Arkhilokhos and al-Nābighah.

70. Eadem, 204.

71. Eadem, 212-213.

72. Eadem, 212-213.

73. Eadem, 200.

74. Cf. C. Uhlig, Hofkritik im England des Mittelalters und der Renaissance, Berlin 1973.

75. Eadem, 204.

76. Eadem, 207.

77. Eadem, 208-209.

78. Eadem, 209.

79. McDonald 1978 15.

80. Quoted by B. Gentili, Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece: From Homer to the Fifth Century, (translated by T. Cole), Baltimore, 1988, 10.

Appendices

Appendix One.

The Cat and the Camel -- A Literary Motif.

The reference to the hirr spurring on the camel has not yet, despite several valiant attempts, received adequate enucleation. I should like to highlight various features of this oft-discussed image which have either passed unnoticed or have not been hitherto realised as being significant.

The principal loci classici are as follows; Imru' al-Qays Ahl 20. 30 (= Ibr 4. 27), Imru' al-Qays Ahl 40. 10 (= Ibr 30. 10), al-Muthaqqib al-'Abdī Muf 28. 10-11, al-Muthaqqib al-'Abdī Muf 76. 20, Aws b. Ḥajar 12. 16, al-Mumazzaq al-'Abdī Aṣm 58. 4 (= Geyer 3. 4), Jābir b. Ḥunayy Muf 42. 7, 'Antarah Ahl 21. 34-35 (= Mawlawī 1. 34-35), al-A'shā 3. 13, al-Shammākh 5. 22 (= Muf 1 p.306), and Dābi' b. al-Ḥārith Aṣm 63. 16. The texts of al-Kumayt b. Zayd and al-Numayrī have been quoted from Geyer, "Die Katze auf dem Kamel", (cf. post).

1. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 20. 29-30:

29. Tuḡatti'u ghītanān ka-anna mutūna-hā
idhā azharat tukṣā mulā'an munashsharā
30. Ba'idati bayni l-mankibayni ka-anna-mā
tarā 'inda majrā l-dafri hirran mushajjara

29. Cutting across the hollow lands -- their backs at midday seem
to be clothed in white shifts outspread --,

30. Wide between the withers; it is as if you can see a cat tied
where the saddle-girth stretches.

2. Imru' al-Qays Ahl 40. 9-10:

9. Tarūhu idhā rāhat rawāha jahāmatin
bi-ithri jahāmin rā'ihin mutafarriqi

10. Ka-anna bi-hā hirran janīban tajurru-hu
bi-kulli tarīqin sādafat-hu wa-ma'ziqi

9. At night she returns like an empty cloud, following the tracks
of other empty clouds advancing at night in scattered
groups,

10. As if a cat is led by her side -- she drags it through
every road and narrow pass she encounters.

3. Al-Muthaqqib al-'Abdī Muf 28. 10-11:

10. Ka-anna janīban 'inda ma'qidi qharzi-hā
tuzāwīlu-hu 'an nafsi-ha wa-yurīdu-hā

11. Tahāliku min-hu fī l-rakhā'i tahālukan
tahāluḳa ihdā l-jūni hāna wurūdu-hā

10. As if a /cat/ is led where her girth is tied; she
tries to entice it away from her but it makes her its aim,

11. Hastening from it at a gallop, as hastens one of the black

/sand-grouse/ when it is time to go down to the water-hole.

The translation follows al-Ṭūsī who reads fī l-najā'i instead of fī l-rakhā'i, 'at an easy pace': cf. Lyall Muf 2 108. The explanation of gharz as "stirrup" (Lane 2246) is mistaken: Geyer 1906 60 correctly points out that the camel-saddle does not have a stirrup, and he suggests that the leather-pad on which the rider's right foot rests might be intended. The phrase ma'qidi gharzi-hā suggests the saddle-girth, as Geyer in fact translates it.

4. Al-Muthaqqib al-'Abdī Muf 76. 20:

20. Bi-sādiqati l-wajīfi ka-anna hirran
yubārī-hā wa-ya'khudhu bi-l-wadīni

20. With a /she-camel/ true at a swift pace; a cat seems to vie
with her and to take hold of the leathern breast-girth.

5. Aws 12. 15-16:

15. Abqā l-tahajjuru min-hā ba'da kidnati-hā
mina l-mahālati ma yashghā bi-hā l-kūru

16. Ka-anna hirran janīban tahta ghurdati-hā
wa-ltaffa dīkun bi-haqway-hā wa-khinzīru

15. Midday running had left the middle of her back, after it had
had a fat, fleshy hump, an uneven rest for the saddle,

16. As if a cat was at her side, under her breast-girth, and
a cock and a pig wrapped themselves around her flanks (or,
the straps which lie there).

The sharh to Muf 1 306 reads the second hemistich of 16 as follows:
wa-stakka dīkun bi-rijlay-hi wa-khinzīru -- and a cock and a pig
collided against her legs.

6. Al-Mumazzaq al-'Abdī Aṣm 58. 4 = Geyer WZKM 18, no. 4. 3:

3. Tarā aw tarā'ā [1] 'inda ma'gidi qharzi-hā
 . tahāwīla min ajlādi hirrin mu'allaqi

3. You can see, or you can imagine (?), where her girth is tied,
 the terrors /inflicted by/ the limbs of a cat, suspended
 /therefrom/.

Geyer: tarā'ā wa-tar'ā.

7. Jābir b. Ḥunayy Muf 42. 7:

7. 'Anāfat wa-zāfat fī-l-zimāmi ka-anna-hā
 ilā qhardi-hā ajlādu hirrin mu'awwami

7. She towers and waddles in the rein as if at her breast-girth
 there /ran/ the strong limbs of a thick-headed cat.

8. 'Antarah Ahl 21. 34-35 (= Mawlawī 1. 34-35)

34. Wa-ka-anna-mā yan'ā bi-jānibi daffi-hā
 l-wahshiyi ba'da makhīlatin wa-taraqhghumi [39]

35. Hirrun jānibun kulla-mā 'atafat la-hu
 qhadbā ttaqā-hā bi-l-yadayni wa-bi-l-fami

34. And it is as though there distances itself by her savage side,
after /her/ haughtiness and reluctance,

35. A cat, led by her side: whenever she leans toward it in
anger, it defends itself against her with paws and mouth.

The alternative given in the recensions of al-Anbārī, al-Tibrīzī,
al-Zawzanī and Arnold as lines 29-30, and read by Nöldeke FM II,
Arberry Seven Odes 180, and recorded in the commentary of Muf 1 423,
is:

29. Wa-ka-anna-mā tan'ā bi-janībi daffi-hā l-
wahshiyyi min haziḡi l-'ashiyyi mu'awwami

30. Hirrin janībin kulla-mā 'atafat la-hu
ghadbā ttaqā-hā bi-l-yadayni wa-bi-l-fami

29. And it is as though she distances herself, on her savage side,
from a thick-set, evening-screeching

30. Cat, led by her side; whenever she leans toward it in anger,
it defends itself against her with paws and mouth.

9. Al-A'shā 3. 13:

3. Bi-julālatin suruhin ka-anna bi-qharzi-hā
hirran idhā nta'ala l-matiyyu zilāla-hā

3. On an enormous, easy-paced /she-camel/ as if there were a cat
at her girth, when the mounts are shod with her shadow.

10. Al-Shammākh 5. 22 (= Muf 1 306):

22. Ka-anna bna āwā mūthaqun tahta qhardi-hā [1]

idhā huwa lam yaklim [2] bi-nabay-hi zaffara

22. As if a jackal is tied under her girth; when it does not wound
with its teeth, it scratches.

[1]. Muf: 'inda qharzi-hā; al-Anbārī Mu'allaqāt 326: tahta
nahri-hā; idem 327: tahta qharzi-hā.

[2]. Al-Anbārī Mu'allaqāt 326: lam yakhdish; idem 327: lam
yakdim.

I cannot agree with Lyall that ibn āwā is a circumlocutory designation of hirr in this line. He is correct in pointing out the absurdity of the line, given that "the (jackal) has no claws". If the absurdity is intentional, then it is indicative of the bombast and hyperbole often indulged in by later poets in their urge to improve upon the fancies of their predecessors. The absurdity may, however, be unintentional, if the poet is imagined as ignorant of the anatomical anomaly indicated by Lyall, that is if his image is to be understood primarily as a reworking of a literary trope, not as a statement of fact.

11. Dābi' b. al-Ḥārith Aṣm 63. 16:

16. Bi-admā'a hurjūjin ka-anna bi-daffi-hā

tahāwīla hirrin aw tahāwīla akhyalā

16. On a dun, slender and strong /she-camel/, as if, on her side,
were terrors /inflicted by/ a cat, or the terrors
/inflicted by/ a dappled /bird/.

Akhyal is problematic: it is used by Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī (Bajraktarević l. 19 = Farrāj p. 1069, v.19), yanzū li-waq'ati-hā tumūra l-akhyali. Lewin 123 thinks that it may designate a falcon; it is also applied to a shāhīn (cf. Lane 836), i.e. the Falco peregrinus, the Peregrine Falcon, whose long power dive may be intended by Abū Kabīr. If such is the referent, then the tahawīl are gashes inflicted by the cat and the bird; the camel being imagined as their prey.

If it designates a bird of ill-omen, the designation favoured by the lexica and the commentaries, then it is difficult to understand why the camel should be depicted as affrighted. The ghurāb, 'raven', is a bird associated with ill-omen at the onset of a journey, featuring prominently in the nasīb as the topical ghurāb al-bayn. It has been observed to "accompany the camels far into the desert and from them they pick ticks and the larvae of the gadfly ... but they also gnaw at the blisters under the saddle, and for this reason the herdsmen drive them away" (Musil *Rwala Bedouin* 36). The weals caused by the girth may be likened to the gashes inflicted by a cat, or to the wounds caused by the pecking of a raven. If tahawīl, 'terrors', does not mean 'terrible wounds', then the camel is to be understood as terrified by the appearance of these animals.

12. Al-Kumayt b. Zayd:

Ka-anna bna āwā mūthaqun tahta zawri-hā

yuzaffiru-hā tawran wa-tawran yunayyibu

As if a jackal is tied under her chest, now scratching her, now
biting.

14. Abū Ḥayyah al-Numayrī:

Wa-tazāwarat 'an-hu ka-anna bi-daffi-hā

hirran tanashshaba dab'a-hā bi-l-azfurī

And she swerved from it, as if, on her side, there was a cat
digging its claws into her forearm.

Nöldeke FM II 34 discusses this phenomenon but his discussion is hampered by his interpretation of the image as static -- he seems to underestimate the importance of the fact that the she-camel is always on the move. Fischer, "Verbesserungen und Nachträge zu R. Geyer's Aus b. Hagar", ZDMG 49 (1895), 93, following the Arab commentators, makes this amply clear. Yet Nöldeke's conclusion remains a valid explanation of the movements which the camel makes: "the picture does not refer specifically to the impression made by the whip, but rather to the pulling in and pushing out of the camel's muscles and flesh which occur when it runs, and which are perhaps aggravated by the pressure of the saddle-strap". To this I should like to add that several of the instances imply that the camel runs faster in her attempts to escape from the cat -- that the cat acts as a goad or spur: the competition between the cat and the camel features in nos. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9.

Geyer proffered a 'supernatural' interpretation of these passages in 1906 in a contribution to the Nöldeke-Festschrift (C. Bezold, Orientalische Studien Th. Nöldeke gewidmet, Gießen 1906, 1 57-70) where he argues that these animals -- the hirr is only one of their number -- were conceived of by the Bedouin as manifestations of the jinn. These superstitions which the Bedouin entertain

concerning the jinn have been amply documented: Goldziher *Abhandlungen* 205-212, Musil *Rwala Bedouin* 411-417, H.R.P. Dickson, The Arab of the Desert, London 1949, 537-539. Geyer fails, however, to explain why the hirr should be the most frequent beast mentioned in these contexts, and his argument is unsound on several counts, not least of which is his persistent desire to emend all instances of janīb to janīn. His thesis is, nevertheless, illuminating for the later, post-Islamic examples of the image.

Lyall Muf 2 107-108 was the next to enter the lists, discounting Geyer's somewhat elaborate hypothesis and pointing to the "observed antipathy between the camel, a beast of the Desert, and the animals of the settled country (ḥadar). Cats, I have been informed, are very rarely to be found in Beduin encampments, while they are common in the villages of the Fallāḥīn".

The whole issue depends, I think, upon what is meant by hirr: Lyall presumes that it is a domestic cat whereas Nöldeke understands it to be a type of wild cat.

An analysis of the salient features of the eight instances will help to clarify certain details of the image.

(1). In all thirteen instances, the topos is introduced as a simile, as a poetic image, in two of which (nos. 1 and 6) the visual (and perhaps imaginary) quality of the image is referred to.

ii. All passages (for which a context is extant) are preceded or followed by some reference to the she-camel's speed: in some, other camels are mentioned (nos. 1 and 9), in others, the she-camel is herself wearied (5 & 8).

iii. The adjective janīb occurs in four of the usages (1, 3, 5, 8). The participles mushajjar (2) and mūthaq (10 & 12) imply that the cat is tied to, if not under, one of the camel's saddle-girths: it is, then, either tied to the camel's girth or led by its side. In other examples, the cat attacks the camel at the girth (nos. 4, 5, 7, 9, 13).

iv. The cat, thus attached, arouses the camel's aversion and the two are said to compete in pace (nos. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9). The implication throughout may be that the camel outpaces the cat, but, being tied to it, cannot be free from it.

v. The displays of hostility seem to be a development of the original image (nos. 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13) and the emphasis on the cat's attack of the camel is further developed into an emphasis on the terrible wounds inflicted by the cat or peregrine (?) in nos. 6 and 12. These wounds are then compared with the weals and the galls that the saddle-girth produces on the camel after extensive journeying.

vi. In two cases (7 & 8) the unusual epithet mu'awwam,

'thick-headed' is used. This meaning is merely conjectural: Nöldeke FM II 35 notes that the male cat, like the lion, has a wider cranium than the female and that this is the signification.

These are the main features of this topos, common, either explicitly or implicitly, to all instances. As a possible explication of the origin of the image, I should like to refer to the following comment taken from Nowak and Paradiso 1094:

People have tamed the cheetah and used it to run down game for at least 4,300 years. It was employed in ancient Egypt, Sumeria, and Assyria, and more recently by the royalty of Europe and India. It is usually hooded, like a falcon, when taken out for the chase, and freed when the game is in sight.

The Caracal (Felis caracal) was also used, by the Indians and Iranians, for hunting in a similar manner.

It is tempting to see in this hunting technique the origin of the image painted so vividly by the poets. There are, however, two features which remain to be explained. As G.R. Smith "Hunting Poetry (Tardiyyāt)", CHALAB, 180 notes "the cheetah ... lacks stamina and is invariably carried to the hunt, either by cart, or ... on the crupper of the horse behind the rider". It would seem then that the original force of janīb in this context may not be 'led by the side', but 'carried at the side, or on the back', the

translation of Imru al-Qays 20. 30 offered by Rückert and rejected by Geyer 1906 59, viz. "hinten aufgehockt". The substitution of the camel for the horse as a mount is perhaps unusual, given that horses are usually specified in the context of the Aristocratic Hunt. Nevertheless, the explanation of the image on the basis of this hunting technique would then serve to elucidate the adjective mu'awwam, which would refer to the use of the hood -- it would not cover the cheetah's snout and hence is still consonant with no. 8.

It is clear from the conventional nature of the figure that the question is, for the most part, literary. It is tempting to speculate that this hunting technique was observed by a poet at some early stage and that his image, by virtue of its striking coinage, was taken up by others on a literary basis, that is to say by poets who may not actually have observed the phenomenon, and the bizarre use of this topos by Aws b. Hajar is, I think, also indicative of a literary embellishment: there is little doubt, in view of the pig and the cock, that this poet intends a domestic cat. The entry of the jackal into the figure could also be thus accounted for. It may be added that the poets themselves would have misunderstood the purport of the prototype image, interpreting the cat as a manifestation of the jinn.

The increased prominence accorded to the jinn and Bedouin superstition in poems of the middle to late Jāhiliyyah was a consequence of the political surgence of the Arab tribes in the

middle of the sixth century and the resultant substitution of Bedouin for foreign culture (whether it be Persian or South Arabian) as poetic material for the qasīdah. Thus the horse is supplanted by the camel, vestigial remains are compared with tattooing and raiment as often as with writing, on occasion, the shrewish wife is seen to occupy the structural position enjoyed by the beloved, viz. at the onset of the qasīdah, and the political role of poetry, which seems to have waned somewhat during the early and middle Jāhiliyyah, regains its position as a weapon to be used for the furtherance of the aims and glorification of the tribe. This is not to imply that poetry had lost this function, but merely to observe that the social context of much early Arabian verse, being the product of court poets in attendance upon a princeling, chieftain or king, dictated the content of that verse. The vogue of the Bedouin was rendered real by the establishment and promulgation of Islam.

Appendix Two.

A Precocious Talent.

I have included the following piece for several reasons, the principal being the reuse of these lines by Ka'b b. Zuhayr in Kow 6 (= Cairo p.89) and their obvious relevance to any observations that are to be made on the rawī system of poetic apprenticeship. The challenge posed by the qualified poet, Zuhayr, viz. to cap his two line description, probably represents one of the methods in which apprentices were instructed in the art of versifying: significantly, the third verse, that produced by the apprentice, in this instance his daughter, can be interpreted to represent the conclusion of a condensed vignette, the development of which is merely adumbrated, whereby prior acquaintance, on the part of the apprentice, with the developments of this poetic theme must be presumed. Another famous poet, Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī, has this anecdote told of him:

An anecdote related by al-Asma'ī shows Abū Du'ād with his first wife, his son Du'ād and his daughter Du'adah ... in a poetical contest. Abū Du'ād is improvising three verses to describe a wild bull and the others repeat them with changed and supposedly better rhyme-words. The critical acumen of the daughter is stressed in the account. [von Grunebaum 1948-1952 94.]

The technique employed, the emphasis on repetition with alteration,

is different from the anecdote related concerning Zuhayr but the two agree in spirit. The 'capping challenge' is a common feature of unwritten song, finding frequent expression in, for example, a penchant for verse riddles.

Zuhayr Qab 46. 1-3; Th p.345, v.1-3 = Ka'b Kow 6. 27, 29 & 30.

- 1/29. Arādat jawāzan [1] bi-l-rusaysi fa-sadda-hā
riḡālun qu'ūdun fī l-duḡā bi-l-ma'ābīlī
- 2/31. Ka-anna madaḡda [2] hanḡalin haythu sawwafat
bi-a'tāni-hā min jazzi-hā [3] bi-l-ḡahāfīlī
- 3/27. Jadūdun falat bi-l-sayfi 'an-hā ḡihāsha-hā
fa-qad ḡharrazat atbā'u-hā ka-l-makāhīlī

Variant Readings

1. All MSS except alīf (cf. Th p.345): ḡiwāran.
2. Th: mudaḡda.
3. Th: ḡarri-hā.

Translation

1. She sought a crossing at al-Rusays but was turned away by men sitting in the darkness, /armed/ with broad-headed arrows,
2. As if scattered hanḡal lay where she smelled her coverts, having cropped the herbage with her lips.
3. Her milk was exhausted; in the summer she had weaned her foals and so her teats had dried and were like eye-pencils.

Commentary

1. Al-Rusays is in the Najd to the south-east of Abān al-Aswad and the south-west of al-Qanān; it is mentioned in Zuhayr Ahl 15. 5, erroneously assumed by Thilo Ortsnamen .88 to be spurious and al-Ḥuṭay'ah 77. 7, the latter being a wild ass description.

dujyah is said by Tha'lab and the lexicographers to denote the lair of a hunter. I have only found one unequivocal instance of this -- a variant reading of rujbah, a snare to which meat is attached to lure carnivores, in al-Ṭirimmāḥ 4. 73. Umayyah b. Abī 'Ā'idh Kos 92. 52, refers to a hunter as ibnu l-dujā, but this need mean no more than 'the son of the darkness', the time when asses come to water, and in the absence of more substantial proof I have adopted the more common meaning.

The mi'balah is an arrow with a broad head: cf. Schwarzlose 312; Imru' al-Qays Ahl 46. 3 (= Ibr 40. 3), where they are said to be the colour of the spleen (tuhl), Sā'idah b. al-'Ajlān Kos 30. 2, where they shine like bald pates (sul'); al-Musayyab b. 'Alas Muf 11. 25 (= Geyer 11. 25). In 'Antarah Ahl 14. 4 (= Mawlawī 16. 4), contrary to Schwarzlose, mi'balah probably refers to a broad spear-head.

2. The verb dahda is used by 'Amr b. Kulthūm Mu'allaqah 93, in a comparison of swords decapitating the enemy with adolescents playing a sort of cricket in the sand (cf. Nöldeke FM I 48) and by the Hudhalī poetess Rīṭah bint 'Āṣiyah (Well 227. 6) to denote the winding of spun yarn. The word a'tān is quite rare, and is specifically attested of camels by the lexicographers: the root s-w-f is also associated with camels (Ṭufayl 7. 21; Imru' al-Qays Ibr 69. 19).

The point of simile expressed in the line is elucidated by a comparison with Salāmah Muf 22. 13: yuhādīru l-jūna mukhaddaran

jahāfilu-hā, 'he (a horse) runs down sandy-brown /asses/, their lips stained dark'. Lyall Muf 2 82 comments: "the wild asses are pictured with lips green from eating the lush herbage to indicate that they are in the height of their strength and swiftness". The ass's lairs seem to be scattered with colocynth pods because her slaver, stained by the vegetation, lies dotted therein. It should be remarked that there is no mention of this phenomenon in any of the zoological works, and it may be a fancy. The colocynth is said to be 'striped' (khutbān) in 'Alqamah Ahl 13. 18 (= Qab 2. 18, Muf 120. 19). The slavers are, therefore, of a light colour intermingled with a dark colour -- the images used by the poets are frequently consistent to the point of precision.

3. This line is, according to the commentators, composed by Zuhayr's daughter Wabarah. Jadūd -- the plural jadā'id is more common -- designates a she-ass which has exhausted her store of milk: al-A'shā 34. 15, Abū Dhu'ayb Hell 1. 15 (= Muf 126. 14), Abū Khirāsh Hell 1. 7, Usāmah b. al-Hārith Hell 4. 14. It is also used of pregnant she-camels in a lampoon by Qays b. 'Azārah (Kos 116. 8) and Tarafah describes his she-camel as mujaddad (Ahl 4. 17 = Mu'allaqah 18).

Gharrazat: ghawāriz is used, in a sense similar to jadūd, of pregnant she-camels by Abū Jundab Kos 38. 10 and of the tearless eyes of gazelles by al-Ṭirimmaḥ 34. 8. It is somewhat rare with the signification of 'dryness' among earlier poets. For makāhil cf. WKAS. Klingel 1977 324-325 notes that "young and subadults up to the age of 2-3 years were regularly seen in company of an adult mare who could be considered to be the mother, and such associations are obviously the only lasting ones".

Structure

- 1a. The quest for water.
- 1b. The fear of the hunters.
2. The safe arrival at the lair.
3. The ass's lack of milk after rearing her foals.

Interpretation

The point at issue in this syncopated vignette must obviously be its genuineness, which the anecdote, such as it is, may call into question. However all the MSS record the verses and the anecdote is of negligible importance for the determination of authenticity. As indicated above, several phrases recur, having been recast, in Ka'b Kow 6, viz. 1 = Ka'b 29, 2 = Ka'b 31, 3 = Ka'b 27. The depiction is condensed but intelligible although the fact that the she-ass is without a mate is markworthy in terms of tradition.

Appendix Three

The Wild Ass Vignette in the Dīwān of Ka'b b. Zuhayr:

Some Preliminary Observations.

In addition to Kowalski 13 discussed above, the dīwān of Ka'b b. Zuhayr contains six qasā'id in which a wild ass vignette is to be found. They are: (I) Kowalski 6 (= Cairo p.89), (II) Kowalski 7 (= Cairo p.99 and p.105), (III) Kowalski 9 (= Cairo p.113), (IV) Kowalski 12 (= Cairo p.137), (V) Kowalski 16 (= Cairo p.200) and (VI) Kowalski 29 (= Cairo p.239). These poems demand a study devoted entirely to them. I intend merely to schematize their structure and to append such rudimentary remarks as seem necessary.

(I).

1-2: Dhikr al-Atlāl; decay and the passage of time.

3-13: Nasīb; description of Umm Shaddād, likening her to a gazelle (3-4), her eyes to an oryx-doe (5), her legs to papyrus reeds (6), her teeth to camomile (7); reminiscence of blissful love (8); the poet as blameless lover (9-10); reciprocal separation (11-12).

13-18: Rihlah; the dangerous water-trail frequented by the sandgrouse (13-16); the feral waste (17-18).

18b-24: Wasf: the she-camel; endurance and obedience (19); emaciation (20); back, ribs and legs (21); grumbling (22); speed when saddled (23); steadiness of tread (24);

25-31: Wild Ass Vignettes; vignette i (25-26, 28-29): the stallion master and his harem; the mustering of the harem (26); sentinel duty on the eminence of al-Bahha' [1] (28); the hunters deter him from watering at al-Rusays (29); vignette ii (27, 30-31): the solitary she-ass; her foals have been weaned (27); the arrival at water (30); safe return to the lair (31).

As the schematization indicates, I have thought it necessary to transpose line 27, situating it after 29 and before 30. This is to facilitate the development of the narration of vignette i, to which line 27 can hardly belong. This poem is, to my knowledge, unparalleled among early verse, in that it contains two wild ass vignettes. One could of course argue for a case of faulty transmission, but, as I have elsewhere averred, I think that very strong evidence is needed before a lacuna or corruption should be posited for any early Arabic poem. In the light of Ka'b's experiments with the wild ass vignette elsewhere, I see no difficulty in deeming this to be the case with this poem also. Its thematic development is traditional and, perhaps, uninspired (although the depiction of the sandgrouse feeding their young is

vivid and colourful), but not all experimental verse needs to depend heavily upon technical or linguistic virtuosity for it to be successful. It may be too fanciful, however, to assume that the stallion carefully guarding his harem symbolizes the poet in his role as repudiated lover and that the she-ass, alone and afraid, symbolizes Umm Shaddād, the inamorata, having been abandoned and rejected by her lover as intimated in lines 11-12. The concept of the experimentation with the gasīdah form and its components satisfactorily accounts for the expansion of the wild ass simile as found in this poem.

(II).

1-6: Dhikr al-Atlāl; disconsolate lover (1); decay (2); the phantasm (3); folly of weeping over vanished dung-piles (4); the disconsolate lover's quest for solace through action (5-6).

6b-7: Wasf: the she-camel; strength, sure-footedness, compliance.

8-42 (= Kowalski 30): Wild Ass Vignette; introductory description -- the stallion ass (8b); the journey to water (9-21); the driving of his pregnant harem (9); the onset of heat and the thirst of the females (10); the itinerary (11-13); the stallion described (14-15); ruthless

treatment of his harem as he drives them on to water (16-21); the arrival at water (22-25); their cautious draughts (24) disturb the frogs (25); the encounter with the hunter (26-29); his dogged persistence and sanguine conjectures (26, 27b); stature (27a); deadly aim (28); the arrival at water (29-31); their confused fear (29); the entry into the pool (30); the longed-for draughts of water (30b-31); the firing of the arrow (32-37a); the timing of the shot (32); the bow (33) and arrow (34); the shot -- the asses are on the way out of the watering-hole (35); the (uncustomary) miss (36); his bitter regret (37a); the escape (37b-42); the dust-cloud (37) and scattered stones (38); their speed (39); his biting (40a); braying at dawn (41); their untroubled tranquility in the morning (42).

Kowalski's MS is lacunose after line 8, a folio having been torn out. The restitution is based on al-Ahwal's commentary on the poem: cf. Cairo p. 101. The wild ass vignette of this poem is markworthy for its narrative technique, in which parallelism is used to heighten the tension inherent in the encounter of the asses and the hunter; the topic of the arrival of the asses at the watering-hole is repeated within the space of ten lines and receives a different formulation and emphasis on both occasions. Ka'b successfully sunders the description of the hunter and his equipment, wherein the hunter's deadly aim looms large, punctuating

his scene with the timidity and thirst of the animals -- their arrival at the abundant and fecund pools in line 22 is the narrative conclusion of the journey of 8-21, whereas the arrival of line 29 is the logical dénouement of the hunter's avid conjectures and hopes in lines 26-28. This is a technique of narrative that is quite common in, for example, the Homeric epics and some early Greek lyric poetry, and may be labelled 'the diachronistic narrative style'. Ka'b's integration of the parallelism into the narrative context, whereby both instances of the topic are portrayed as the consequence of that which precedes, belies a sophisticated and deft touch.

(III).

1-3: The nasīb; the visit of the phantasm and the lover's reaction (1-3); solace (4-5); her restorative charms heal the melancholic despondent (6); an ibex (or perhaps an Arabian tahr [Hemitragus jayakari]) on an inaccessible mountain top (i.e. the poet) [2] would be coaxed down by the favours of a gazelle such as Khawlah (7-8).

9-14: Wasf: the she-camel; bulk and speed (9); travel-worn hardness (10); her loins are as sharp as a dagger encased in a frayed scabbard (11); or as withered as the cantle of an old pack-saddle (12); the riding-stick (13); grumbling (14).

15-16: The Wild Ass Vignette; the she-ass has been emaciated through the attentions of the male (15); she is as thin as an unstrung bow up for sale or a straightened spear.

17-22: The Ostrich Vignette; introductory description; the hen (17-18); the search for fodder (19-22); the male (20-21); comparison with a Nubian and her husband (22).

(IV).

1-4: Rihlah; the midday heat (1-2); the well-trodden highway (3-4).

5-8: Wasf: the she-camel.

9-42: The Wild Ass Vignette; introductory description -- the stallion ass (9); the journey to water (10-17); the itinerary (10-11); sentinel duty (12-16); his harem await his decision (17); the hunters (18-30); a skilful hunter, a 'creeper' (dabbāb), lies to the side of the watering-hole (18); another, just as skilful, lurks in his wattling, concealed at the back of the pond (19); his wakeful vigilance ensures that his ambushes are successful (20); he is emaciated and febrile (24, 25a); his resolution ensures that his look-outs are successful (25); his grief

when unsuccessful (26); his equipment (27-30); arrows (27-28); the bow (29-30); the arrival at water (21, 31, 22-23); nightfall (21); the stallion guides his harem to the water's edge; his cowardly trepidation (22); his thirst (23); the firing of the arrow (32-37); the shot is misdirected by a jinn (32) and it passes by the asses (33-34); they wheel, unimpeded by the muddy soil (33); his bitter regret (35-36); the retrieval of the broken arrow (37); the escape (38, 40-43, 39); the rounding up of the harem with a neigh; hardness of the hooves (38); his unflagging pace; comparison of stallion leading the harem with a drover driving his camels at night (40); the itinerary (41-42); reiteration of the comparison with the drover (43); sentinel duty atop al-Sitar (39).

I have been compelled to rearrange the order of the lines of the wild ass vignette in this qasīdah for a variety of reasons. The order proposed is the one I prefer although it is not the only one possible and it may even be possible to make a, in my view somewhat unconvincing, case for the retention of the MS sequence of lines 18-31. I should like to begin with the topic of the asses escape, the MS sequence of which is unacceptable and nonsensical. The basic difficulty with the text is the temporal indicators; it is morning in line 39 (adhā), night in line 40 (al-laylā -- admittedly this indicator occurs in a simile) and twilight in line 42 (wa-nqadda l-nujūmu l-'awātimu); further, that the stallion

should be posted as a sentinel is found also, for example, in line 41-42 of poem (II) -- it would be most unusual for the topic of the asses' escape to have the sequence of motion - motionlessness - motion and I can offer no instance of such a sequence. The following is a possible rearrangement: 38, 40, 43, 41-42, 39, i.e. the gallop, the comparison, the itinerary, sentinel duty. This may, however, be too precious and I should instead advocate retaining the MS sequence insofar as that is possible.

The topics of the arrival at water and the descriptions of the hunters present difficulties that are not so readily soluble. It is strange that two hunters are referred to in lines 18-20. I understand the first to be hidden in the undergrowth, being a hunter who employs nets and snares, rather than bowery, to catch his prey (cf. Ka'b Kowalski 6. 30 [= Cairo p.89, v.30], makhāfata ḥābīlī). The second hunter is the traditional huntsman, esconsed in his den, armed with a bow and poisoned arrows. The first hunter receives no other mention or allusion in the rest of the poem. The transitions from the hunter of line 20 to the stallion ass in 21 and from the stallion in 23 to the hunter in 24 are abrupt and agrammatical, by which I mean that the subjects of 21-23 and 24 ff. are not expressed as being distinct from the subjects of the preceding sections. This is not, however, in itself a conclusive argument for rearrangement, a similar phenomenon being encountered in Aws 23. 52-53 (Chapter 2 no. 1 ante). The parallelism in lines 20 and 25 may be considered as a factor that militates against my

transposition of the text as it renders the tautology all the more glaring. Yet the parallelism has an obvious dramatic function, reinforcing the portrayal of the hunter as vigilant and a deadly shot. It is again temporal considerations that have urged me to move lines 21-23, interposing line 31 between 21 and 22 -- it is the darkness of the night that causes the hunter to misfire, graphically dramatized by the poet as being effected by some malevolent spirit, and hence the repeated references to the night and darkness. In line 32 ashra'at (al-Aḥwal reads sharra'at) refers to the she-asses on the way out of the watering-hole (cf. Kowalski 7. 23 = Cairo p.99, v.35, wa-mā hunna shawāri'u mā yattaqīna). Two emendations to the first hemistich of this line are necessary: Kowalski's al-sawna and Cairo's al-sawta should become al-Aḥwal's al-sayda; the obscure, if not nonsensical, yawman of all MSS should be emended to laylan -- the verbal padding remains, and the word is still somewhat imprecise, although laylan does agree more with the context. From a narrative point of view, the adumbration of the topic of the asses' escape in line 33, is technically a masterstroke: it allows the poet to continue with his depiction of the hunter by anticipating the conclusion to the vignette. The MS sequence is clumsy and somewhat ineffectual, and although this is not a sufficient condition, being largely impressionistic and based on the perhaps somewhat outmoded editorial principle of 'style', it has been a prominent feature in my deliberations on this piece.

Finally, the question of the fragmentariness of the qasidah,

commencing as it does with a rihlah, devoid of a nasīb or dhikr al-atlāl, must briefly be considered. If I am correct in interpreting the poetry of Ka'b b. Zuhayr as essentially experimental, then there is no need to posit a lost 'introduction'. One does not need to rely on this principle of experimentalism, however -- knowledge of the poetry of this period is to a large measure fortuitous; it is also the result of a process of selection, if one presumes that either the transmitters (in an oral tradition only the best poems are supposed to survive) or the medieval Arab literati operated on principles of selective editing. I find it impossible therefore to assert that one poem is fragmented, another not -- there is not sufficient data extant (it is not known with any acceptable degree of certitude whether or not there exists a complete diwan of any early poet) to justify this assumption and critics should be wary of viewing the early tradition from the vantage of how later poets transformed that tradition.

The exact measure of Ka'b's 'experimentalism' is limned by the following observation made by Sawayan on the Nabatī panegyric:

A panegyrist may confine himself to one patron, or he may be an itinerant poet who wanders from camp to camp or from town to town in order to deliver his odes himself and receive the rewards for them. He journeys to the court of the amir or the tent of the chief and asks his permission to deliver his poem. After his permission is granted he declaims his verses in a loud

voice or, if he has a pleasant voice, he may chant them. In the opening verses, the poet describes his jaded camel, the difficult journey, and the vast, waterless desert wastes that he had to traverse to come to the patron. He does this in order to arouse the sympathies of the patron and evoke his generosity. The poet concludes with a line or two in which he asks his patron for a gift. [3]

There are, in the dīwān of Zuhayr, two poems which conform to this pattern: one is a panegyric (Qab 38 = Th p.316), the other is a curious piece, combining a rihlah of seven lines and a brief winebibbing scene of four lines. The Nabaṭī eulogistic practise may be a residuum of the pre-Islamic poetic style, although one would perhaps expect more panegyrics with an inceptive rihlah and bereft of nasīb to have survived. Alternatively, the panegyric example found in the dīwān of Zuhayr may reflect Bedouin panegyric practice, as opposed to the courtly styles favoured in al-Ḥīrah and in the Ghassanid phylarchy: one recent scholar has typified Zuhayr as the panegyrist of chieftains and al-Nābighah as "the favourite of princelings" ("Günstling an Fürstenhofen", Jacobi Studien 95). Zuhayr's panegyrics were intended for Bedouin chiefs, in fact most of his extant eulogies are dedicated to one chieftain. Although, as Jacobi Studien 91-94 rightly emphasizes, the content of his praise poems are appropriate to the noble character traits of the nomadic Dedicatee, one might perhaps expect, if I am correct in considering the Nabaṭī panegyric as indicative of a genuine Jāhili

poetic form (one which would have doubtless continued among the Bedouin as distinct from the more artistic gasīdah form), more examples of this riḥlah -- madīh structure. It should not, however, be too readily assumed that Bedouin chieftains would be insensitive to the fine modulations and wistful languishment of nasīb or dhikr al-atlāl. Indeed that this latter was of great emotional appeal to a nomadic audience is perhaps attested to by the Safaitic inscription mentioned by Wagner Grundzüge 38 ("Sehnsucht beim Auffinden von Spuren nahestehender Personen"). [4] Ka'b, following his father's lead in adapting this biparous structure to themes other than laudatory, also seeks further to develop this encomiastic structure, loading it with a non-encomiastic substance. In its aesthetic concerns, his gasīdah is not dissimilar to Zuhayr (?) Qab 24, an ode which I have designated 'the poem of conglutination' (Chapter 3 ante).

(V).

1-5a: Nasīb; Asmā''s severing of the bonds of love (1); her ungracious and dishonourable conduct (2); the calumniators (3-4); the quset for solace (5a).

5b-6: Wasf: the she-camel; haughtiness (5b); sure-footedness and compliance (6).

7-10: The Wild Ass Vignette; the journey to water

.(7-10); the stallion drives the harem (7); the females were reared to the south of Ir; their feet are like shoes of leather (8); their hooves are as sharp as spear-heads with which they strike his forehead (i.e. he runs so close behind them that their hooves gash his head) (9); he is as hoarse as a badly galled camel (?) (10).

11-14: Hijā' -- Abū l-Mamlūh (11); the ridiculous nature of his threats causes the women of his tribe to abort (12-14); his rain is short-lived (he has not shed a drop of moisture) -- hence his arrogance is all the more ridiculous.

Asmā's dishonourable perfidy in the nasīb prefigures Abū l-Mamlūh's treachery in the hijā', whereas the wild ass vignette functions as a pivotal moral exemplar -- the stallion protects and guides his harem. The structure of this qasīdah should be compared with Aws 2 and Zuhayr Ahl 1.

(VI).

1: Dhikr al-Atlāl; decayed vestiges.

2-11a: Nasīb; perfidy of Su'dā (2a); advent of senectitude (2b-4); profitless business transactions (5); reminiscence -- Salma, now unattainable, expresses the

sincerity of her love (6-8); the enmity of her family (9-10); the departure of the litters (11a).

11b-16: Rihlah; the poet in the bloom of youth, pursues the litters (as they go to perform the pilgrimage) (11b); the departure from Minā (12-14); the return journey (15-16).

16: Wasf: the she-camel (16).

17-21: The Wild Ass Vignette; introductory description; the stallion ass (17-19); the protection of his mate (20-21); the pregnant mate; his reaction (20); avoidance of 'Āmir's watering-holes, despite the withering siroccos brought by the Dog Star (21).

This remarkable poem has been attributed to various poets, in particular to 'Uqbah b. Ka'b b. Zuhayr, although Kuthayyir 'Azzah (cf. F. Mehren, Die Rhetorik der Araber, Vienna 1853 35) has also been suggested. If the poem is the work of Ka'b, I can offer only three parallels from what is, relatively speaking, early verse, viz. Aws b. Hajar Geyer 12, Bishr b. Abī Khāzim 10 and al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī Ahl 23. I have discussed the first and last of these poems in Chapters 3 and 4 -- the narration of the event in the 'personal' life of the poet is less obviously a poetic device in this poem than in Aws 12 and al-Nābighah 23. The poem is

interesting for the way in which the poet renders the riḥlah and wasf movements logically subsidiary to his reminiscences contained in lines 7-11 of the nasīb, using the topos of the departure of the beloved as a means of connecting the remainder of the poem to that which precedes. [5]

Notes

1. Al-Baḥḥā', according to the scholion, is in the territory of the Banū Abān b. Kulayb al-ʿĀmirī; al-Bakrī 141 avowedly conjectures that it may be located in the territory of Muzaynah. I think that the scholiast is probably more accurate in his (unavowed) conjecture -- given the common designation of a hunter as being an ʿĀmirī -- than al-Bakrī who, quite sensibly, supplies the territory of Ka'b's tribe as the locale.
2. The emblematicization of the poet as an ibex is reminiscent of al-Shanfara's image of himself: Lāmiyyat al-ʿArab 66-68.
3. S.A. Sowayan, Nabatī Poetry. The Oral Poetry of Arabia, Berkeley 1985, 108.
4. I have been unable to consult M. Höfner, "Die Beduinen in den vorislamischen arabischen Inschriften", L'antica Societa Beduina, Rome 1959, 53-68.
5. Cf. the discussion of the term 'narrative' in the Interpretation of al-Nābighah Ahl 5.

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1. Abbreviations.

<u>BSOAS</u>	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Languages.
<u>CHALUP</u>	A.F.L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant and G.R. Smith (edd.), <u>The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period</u> , Cambridge 1983.
<u>CHALAB</u>	J. Ashtiany, T.M. Johnstone, J.D. Latham, R.B. Serjeant and G.R. Smith (edd.), <u>The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: 'Abbāsid Belles Lettres</u> , Cambridge 1990.
<u>CHCLEGP</u>	<u>The Cambridge History of Classical Literature: Early Greek Poetry</u> , Cambridge 1989.
<u>CT</u>	<u>Les Cahiers de Tunisie</u> .
<u>DVJL</u>	<u>Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturgeschichte</u> .
<u>EI1</u>	<u>The Encyclopaedia of Islam</u> .
<u>EI2</u>	<u>The Encyclopaedia of Islam -- New Edition</u> .
<u>ER</u>	M. Eliade (ed.), <u>The Encyclopedia of Religion</u> , New York 1987.
<u>GRBS</u>	<u>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</u> .
<u>IC</u>	<u>Islamic Culture</u> .
<u>IJMES</u>	<u>International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</u> .
<u>JAL</u>	<u>Journal of Arabic Literature</u> .

<u>JAS</u>	<u>Journal Asiatique.</u>
<u>JESHO</u>	<u>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.</u>
<u>JHS</u>	<u>Journal of Hellenic Studies.</u>
<u>JNES</u>	<u>Journal of Near Eastern Studies.</u>
<u>JRAS</u>	<u>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.</u>
<u>JSS</u>	<u>Journal of Semitic Studies.</u>
<u>MFOB</u>	<u>Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale</u> (de l'Université de Saint-Joseph).
<u>PEPP</u>	A. Preminger, F.J. Warnke, O.B. Hardison, <u>Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics</u> , London 1986.
<u>QUCC</u>	<u>Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica.</u>
<u>RIMA:</u>	<u>Révue de l'Institut des Manuscrits Arabes.</u>
<u>SBKWA</u>	<u>Sitzungsberichte der köniq. Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften</u> (Philosophisch-philologisch und historische Klasse).
<u>SBWA</u>	<u>Sitzungsberichte der kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien</u> (Philosophisch-Historische Klasse).
<u>WKAS</u>	M. Ullmann, <u>Wörterbuch des Klassischen Arabischen Sprache</u> , Wiesbaden 1970-.
<u>WZKM</u>	<u>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes.</u>
<u>ZDMG</u>	<u>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.</u>
<u>ZT</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Tierpsychologie.</u>

2. In the following sections, abbreviations are given in square brackets at the beginning of each entry.

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