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I. Adi Ibn Zayd, 6th cent..

ʿADĪ IBN ZAYD AL-ʿIBĀDĪ,
the Pre-Islamic Christian Poet of al-Ḥīrā
and his Poem Nr. 3 written in Jail

BY
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INTRODUCTION

ᶜAdī ibn Zayd is one of the best known pre-Islamic Christian poets and
also a person who lived a dialogue of cultures: a Christian Arab from al-Ḥīra
from a Christian family, educated at the Persian court and with contacts to
Beduins, sent to Byzantium by the Persian king, a person between the dy-
nasty of the Lakhmids and the Persian empire, Byzantium and the nomads.

The main source for ᶜAdī's biography is the chapter Aġānī II[2], 97-154[1].
Already Quatremère noted that all historians in the 4th century A.H. and af-
ter, writing on ᶜAdī or citing his verses, only took over literally the report
from Aġānī or shortened it[2]. Caussin de Perceval, too, in his «Essai sur
l'histoire des arabes avant l'islamisme» of 1847 based his presentation of the
story of ᶜAdī[3] on Aġānī. It seems, however, that all informations on ᶜAdī in
Aġānī and Ṭabarī depend on the Kitāb ᶜAdī b. Zayd of Ibn al-Kalbī[4] which
was known to Ibn al-Nadīm[5]. Presumably, Kufic scholars may have taken
care that the memory of ᶜAdī was not lost[6], as the Frankfurt Orientalist Josef
Horovitz wrote in 1930: «... it is principally Kufic learned men of the second
Islamic century whom we have to thank for collecting information concern-
ing the poet». In his thorough study on ᶜAdī ibn Zayd in 1930 in English[7],
Horovitz announced a second part on the poetry of ᶜAdī[8], a project which he

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1) GABRIELI, *ᶜAdī*, 81. The text from Aġānī, practically a Vita of ᶜAdī, was translated
into French by QUATREMÈRE and shortly after that, EWALD, 234-249, offered a summary of
the text from Aġānī on ᶜAdī with many critics of Quatremère's translation. Theodor Nöldeke
took into account the work of Quatremère and Ewald, when he published his German transla-
tion of Ṭabarī, cf. NÖLDEKE, p. 312, n. 1. - Horovitz and Gabrieli don't mention, if I am right,
the translations of Ewald and Quatremère.

2) QUATREMÈRE, p. 525, n. 2, mentioned: Nuwairī, History of the Kings of Ḥīra;
Masᶜūdī, *Murūǧ I*; Ibn Qutaiba; Zamakhšarī; Kaššāf; Suyūṭī; the author of the commentary on
the poem of Ibn ᶜAbdūn.

3) Armand Pierre CAUSSIN DE PERCEVAL, *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes avant
l'Islamisme, pendant l'époque de Mahomet et jusqu'à la réduction de toutes les tribus sous la
loi musulmane* II, Paris, 1847, 135-152.

4) Cf. W. ATALLAH, «Hishām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī, Abū l-Mundhir», in *EI*
4 (1978), 516-517; he lived around 120/737 till 204/819 or 206/821 in Kūfa.

5) Cf. SEZGIN, *GAS* II, 179. On Ibn an-Nadīm see J. W. FÜCK, in *EI* 3 (1971), 919-920,
with the information that he was born at the latest in 325/936-7 and died in 385/995 or
388/998.

6) HOROVITZ, 31.

7) According to Walter Joseph FISCHEL, *Bibliography of the Publications of Joseph
Horovitz* (Jerusalem, 1932), the German original was not published; I don't know whether it
still exists.

8) HOROVITZ, 69: «With those poems [scl. handed down in his family] I should like to
deal more fully in a second article». Joachim W. HIRSCHBERG, *Jüdische und christliche Le-
hren im vor- und frühislamischen Arabien*, Kraków, 1939, pp. 18-19, n. 1, suspected that this

could not realize any more since he died in the beginning of 1931[9]. This task was taken up by Francesco Gabrieli in his research of 1948[10], for which he chose, presumably with intention, the same title (but now in Italian) as Horovitz; still a further deepening was desirable for Gabrieli[11]. Horovitz, too, based his study on Aġānī, as can be seen in the references; in fact, he followed rather strictly Aġānī's presentation.

The poem nr. 3 of the Dīwān of ʿAdī ibn Zayd al-ʿIbādī[12] can be found partly in Aġānī II, 111,2-112,11[13], namely the verses 1-2, 10-15, 21-22, 24, 27-32, and these 16 verses are translated by Horovitz in his article.

First of all some remarks on the poet and his life, al-Ḥīra and the Lakhmids.

A. THE POET AND HIS SURROUNDINGS

1. THE POET

The year of ʿAdī's birth can be dated with Horovitz «about 555»[14]. The poet's place of birth was al-Ḥīra, three Arab miles to the South of Kūfa. His father Zayd was governor of Ḥīra, until al-Munḏir[15] became king in 576 A.D..

After the death of the Lakhmid king Qābūs, probably in 573/574, a Persian official, Suhrab[16], took over the rule for one year, then the Persian Shah Hormizd, son of Chosroes, installed Zayd «as temporary administrator»[17]; Zayd finally managed that Munḏir IV[18] was accepted as «king» by the people of Ḥīra, although at first they rejected him, perhaps because of

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second essay should «sich in den nachgelassenen Schriften des kurz darauf (Anfang 1931) verstorbenen Gelehrten befinden».

9) Cf. Gedenkreden gehalten an der Bahre von Josef Horovitz am 8. Februar 1931.

10) GABRIELI, ʿAdī; he also wrote: ID., «ʿAdī b. Zayd», in *EI* 1 (1960), 201-202; ID, *Poeti*, an overview on preislamic Christian poets.

11) GABRIELI, *Poeti*, 463: «ma meriterebbe un ulteriore approfondimento».

12) In the edition of MUḤAMMAD ĠABBĀR AL-MUʿAIBID, Baġdād, 1365/1965 (= Silsilat Kutub at-Turāṯ 2), 37-41.

13) There are also some explanations in Aġānī II about vv. 1-2 and 21a (on p. 151,6 and 151,19). In aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 1020, v. 1 is cited.

14) HOROVITZ, 34.

15) According to HOROVITZ, 36, n. 3, this must be Munḏir IV, ruling during 576-580.

16) Ṭabarī, 1038; BOSWORTH, 371; NÖLDEKE, 346.

17) ROTHSTEIN, *Dynastie*, 105-106, here: 106.

18) Cf. Irfan SHAHID, «al-Munḏhir IV», in *EI* 7 (1993), 569, dating the rule to ca. 575 till 580.

his cruelty[19]. Zayd kept the administration for the inner affairs.

When Zayd died, Mundir IV was still king; he died around 580[20]. One of his 12 or 13 sons, Nuʿmān[21], became his successor, but with the help of a cunning of ʿAdī, the son of Zayd[22]; it was also in ʿAdī's family, that Nuʿmān grew up[23].

Already by the Lakhmid king Qābūs, ʿAdī was sent to the Persian court, where he received an extraordinary formation: «he learnt to speak and to write Persian till he was among the best knowers of Persian and the most eloquent speakers of Arabic, and composed poems. Furthermore he learnt archery and distinguished himself among the horsemen and archers, also he became proficient in the Persian ball-game on horseback» – as is reported in Aġānī[24].

ʿAdī was the first at the Persian court who wrote Arabic[25]. He had access to the king as one of his confidents and was his secretary and translator for his conversation with Arabs[26].

When his father Zayd died ʿAdī happened to be in Damascus[27] and there he also composed his first poems[28]. The Persian King had sent him as an envoy to the Byzantine emperor with a present. He brought back a present from the emperor to the Shah and returned to al-Ḥīra.

By the Byzantine emperor, he was received with honours and even conducted on posthorses to different places in the empire. According to Shahid, who studied the whole journey, ʿAdī's family, the house of Ayyūb, was a family of diplomats for the Lakhmids during the whole 6th century, and ʿAdī might have been the most prominent one[29]. We don't know the rea-

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19) According to Aġānī II, 20, see ROTHSTEIN, Dynastie,105-106, here: 106; NÖLDEKE, p. 346, n. 1.

20) ROTHSTEIN, Dynastie, 107.

21) ROTHSTEIN, Dynastie, 109.

22) The story in Ṭabarī: 1016-1018; BOSWORTH, 340-343; NÖLDEKE, 313-316.

23) Ṭabarī, 1016; BOSWORTH, 340; NÖLDEKE, 313.

24) Aġānī II, 101,2-6; English transl.: HOROVITZ, 37. Cf. EWALD, 237 (German); QUATREMÈRE, 535 (French).

25) Aġānī 102,4; HOROVITZ, 38; QUATREMÈRE, 536.

26) Ṭabarī I, 1017,8 (BOSWORTH, 341; NÖLDEKE, 314) according to ROTHSTEIN, Dynastie, 110.

27) Cf. HOROVITZ, 39.

28) Aġānī II, 102,12-13. Cf. HOROVITZ, 38; QUATREMÈRE, 537.

29) Irfan SHAHID, Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century I, 1, Washington, D. C. 1995, 315-318 (family of diplomats); 478-482 (the journey to Byzantium).

son of the embassy[30].

ʿAdī was highly estimated by the people and his esteem grew more and more, even more than that of his father. It would have been easy for him to become king of al-Ḥira, had he wished[31]. But he preferred hunting, sports and game, he sojourned in the desert (with the Banu Yarbu, a subtribe of the Tamīm)[32]; he spent the winter in al-Ḥira and in between he did his service at the Persian court[33]. In this manner he lived his life until he married Hind bint Nuʿmān, a daughter of Nuʿmān III[34]. – His sojourn in the desert and his con-tacts with the nomads probably procured him the respective knowledge which was for the benefit of his poetic works (the note in Aġānī with the names of the tribes where he sojourned could hint intentionally at his compe-tence in Arabic).

The relationship with Nuʿmān grew worse from day to day by the in-trigues of ʿAdī b. Marina – (his foster-son Aswad did not become king by a cunning of ʿAdī b. Zayd); finally the enemies wrote a letter in the name of ʿAdī which was caught. Full of anger, Nuʿmān sent for the poet ʿAdī b. Zayd and immediately put him into jail (in the castle Ṣinnīn)[35]. Numerous poems took rise at this place; as Ewald put it: «he wrote, another Ovid, most of his poems in distress»[36]. When his full brother gained the Shah to free ʿAdī, this attempt too failed and ʿAdī's enemies persuaded Nuʿmān to kill him.

After ʿAdī's death one of his sons was sent by Nuʿmān – in remorse? – to the Persian Shah. This son got the job of his father and performed the duty for some years. But the poet's son did not forget what Nuʿmān had done to his father: he arranged cunningly that Nuʿmān fell into disgrace of the Shah and finally was put into jail.

According to several traditions ʿAdī had brought Nuʿmān III[37] to Chris-tianity[38], but there are some historical contradictions[39]; on the other hand,

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30) Shahid considered several possibilities, but took no decision.
31) Aġānī II, 104,14-15. Cf. HOROVITZ, 39; QUATREMÈRE, 542.
32) HOROVITZ, 40: His friends belonged to the Banu Jaʿfar; his camels pastured in the territory of the Banu Dabba and the Banu Saʿd.
33) Aġānī II, 105; HOROVITZ, 39; QUATREMÈRE, 542.
34) The story is told in Aġānī II, 128-133; QUATREMÈRE, 494-502; cf. HOROVITZ, 56-59.
35) So Ṭabarī, 1023; NÖLDEKE, 322; BOSWORTH, 350 with n. 835.
36) EWALD, 245.
37) See Irfan SHAHID, «al-Nuʿmān III», in EI 8 (1995), 121-122.
38) See the texts in HOROVITZ, 54-56, the interpretation and critic in ROTHSTEIN, Dy-nastie, 142-143. The circumstances of Nuʿmān's conversion are not clear and are transmitted differently. Cf. AIGRAIN, 1228-1230. According to Aġānī II, 31, Nuʿmān's daughter Hind,

Nuʿmān's upbringing in the Christian family of ʿAdī might not have been without influence, according to Rothstein and Horovitz.

Characteristic for ʿAdī is, that he is rooted in the milieu of «town», unlike the nomadic background of other pre-islamic poets. Besides this, al-Ḥīra was influenced by two cultures, the Arabic and the Persian one[40].

ʿAdī belonged to the confederation of the Tamīm[41], but especially to the Maʿadd, while most of the Arabs in Ḥīra belonged to Yemenite tribes[42].

ʿAdī's life and death appear to be interwoven very closely with the history of the Lakhmids and al-Ḥīra. His father as well as he himself seem to have helped the Lakhmid kings Mundhir and Nuʿmān to get the throne; the killing of ʿAdī, at the end, took the life of the last king of the Lakhmids Nuʿmān[43] and led to the extinction of the dynasty. So far according to the information available to us.

2. ESTEEM AS A POET

For the ancient critics ʿAdī was an outsider regarding the main stream of the pre-islamic poetry; he is a poet of the town (qarawī), not numbered among the fuḥūl[44].

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with whom ʿAdī fell in love, was a Christian. But the consequence must not be that the whole family was already Christian; possibly only mother and daughter had adopted Christianity. - Antichalcedonians (BARHEBRAEUS, *Chron. eccl.* II 105) as well as so-called Nestorians (ASSEMANI, *BO* III 1, 109) claim Nuʿmān for their own party; the account of Barhebraeus in this respect, however, seems to be rather improbable according to Aigrain's plausible judgement. TRIMINGHAM, *Christianity*, 199, reports that according to Arab sources Nuʿmān became Christian before his accession (Aġānī II 96, 134-135). But the accounts on date and circumstances are in conflict with one another. According to EVAGRIUS SCHOLASTICUS (HE VI 22: ed. Bidez-Parmentier, 238) the conversion should have happened in 592.

39) Cf. EWALD, 240 with n. 2; possibly the narrative on Nuʿmān's conversion originated in connection with some verses of ʿAdī.

40) For al-Ḥīra see Irfan SHAHID, in *EI* 3 (1971), 478-479.

41) See M. LECKER, «Tamīm b. Murr», in *EI* 10 (1998), 185-189.

42) NÖLDEKE, 318, n. 3.

43) Unambiguously it is said in Ṭabarī, 1016; NÖLDEKE, 312; BOSWORTH, 339: «The battle of Dhū Qār was the consequence of al-Nuʿmān b. al-Mundhir al-Lakhmī's killing of ʿAdī b. Zayd al-ʿIbādī». This is the description of Hišām b. Muḥammad, with reference to Isḥāq b. Ġaṣṣāṣ and Hammād ar-Rāwiya († 777). And at the end of the account it is said (Ṭabarī, 1029, NÖLDEKE, 331-332, BOSWORTH, 358): «al-Nuʿmān's fate was the cause of the battle of Dhū Qār». Similarly to Nöldeke, BOSWORTH, 358 with n. 855, takes this statement for true in an indirect way, because the Persian frontier after Nuʿmān's death was not well protected any more against Beduin tribes. The «day of Ḏū Qār», a big victory of the Arabs against the Persians, is dated by ROTHSTEIN, *Dynastie*, 123, to ± 604.

44) *Aġānī* II, 97,6.

Aġānī reports[45], that al-Aṣmaʿī and Abū ʿUbaida compared ʿAdī's ranking among the poets with those of Canopus among the stars: he tries to compete with them without matching them.

It seems that the reserve of Arab philologues concerns less the content of the poems nor the style of the poet from al-Ḥīra, but the «wording» of his poetic language, which differed from those of the beduins[46]. A judgment difficult to verify in our days, according to Gabrieli[47]; hardly can be said, that his language would depart excessively from those of other purely Arab poets like Imru l-Qais, al-Aʿša, Ǧarīr or even Ruʾba and al-ʿAǧǧāǧ; at best sometimes terms like ibrīq, ǧuʿdar, marzbān and similar ones occur or Persian names like Sābūr, Anūšarwān, Qubād.

Few verses of ʿAdī in Aġānī stem from a Nasīb; for these Ilse Lichtenstädter stated: «But even these verses can be classified into the general form of the Nasīb»[48].

3. THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN AL-ḤĪRA AND THE LAKHMIDS[49]

A seasonal settlement of nomads developped into a town, the center of the Lakhmid dynasty and the Tanūḫ tribes[50]. The place was situated in a fertile and healthy[51] area near the Euphrates in the frontier region between desert and cultivated land and became an important center for trade and caravans.

«It was composed of a series of strong-walled enclosures called quṣūr, each having one gate leading into a spacious courtyard around which the

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45) Aġānī II, 97,6-7.

46) Aġānī II, 97,11-12, cited the statement of al-ʿAǧǧāǧ on two other poets, who lived in the town and described what they had not seen, but he (ʿAǧǧāǧ) as a Beduin describes, what he has before his eyes and reproduces it faithfully. EWALD, 249, translated: «weil sie Städter sind, die beschreiben was sie nie gesehen haben und es darum unrichtig anbringen; ich aber, ein Beduine, beschreibe was ich gesehen und setze es an seine (rechten) Stellen». To this question cf. also SEZGIN, GAS, 168, with a sentence of al-Ǧurǧānī, that Muʿāwiya preferred the poet ʿAdī to all others poets. Obviously, there were controversial opinions.

47) GABRIELI, ʿAdī, 83.

48) I. LICHTENSTÄDTER, «Das Nasīb der altarabischen Qaṣīde», in Islamica 5 (1932), pp. 65-80, here p. 70.

49) Fundamental until now is ROTHSTEIN, Dynastie, 12-17. The name al-Ḥīra is Syriac, from ḥirtā [= a shepherd's camp; a mandra, convent according to Payne-Smith; only the first meaning is here relevant]; John of Ephesus used to write about the ḥirtā of Nuʿmān, situated in the territory of the Persians.

50) TRIMINGHAM, Christianity, 154.

51) See the testimonies in ROTHSTEIN, Dynastie, 14-15; Ṭabarī (851); BOSWORTH, 75; NÖLDEKE, 79.

dwelling houses were built up in series against the enclosing walls. In times of danger their horses and prize camels would be driven into the central court. Gardens and market-places filled the spaces between these clan settlements so that the whole town covered a wide area. The Lakhmid rulers when they came to the Euphrates did not live in Ḥira town itself but occupied *quṣūr*, of which Khawarnaq[52] and Sadir, situated a few miles from Ḥira, were the most famous»[53].

ᶜAdī's nisba is al-ᶜIbādī. ᶜIbād is the name of those different Arab tribes living in al-Ḥira (or its surroundings) and professing Christianity[54]. We don't know when the name came up; the later muslim writers tried to give several explanations – an indication that the real meaning was forgotten. There are some attempts to interpret the name al-ᶜibād (plural of ᶜbd = slave) with regard to a divinity, as a name for the religious worshippers (the «slaves» of a divinity); perhaps, the Christian people of al-Ḥira themselves took this name in order to be different from their pagan surrounding[55], eventually with an additional «of God»[56] or «of the Messiah». It seems that the East Syriac Christians (the so-called Nestorians) of al-Ḥira were called (or called themselves) al-ᶜibād.

At least since the beginning of the 5th century A.D. (or before) there have been Christians in al-Ḥira: Already at the Synod of 410 a bishop of al-Ḥira took part, and it is possible to infer a list of 8 bishops in the years between 410 and around 600 (mostly from the Synodicon Orientale)[57]. Fiey was able to continue this list; hence, the last known bishop of Ḥira is John of Nāzūk, who became Patriarch in 1012[58]. In al-Ḥira, six Nestorian Katholikoi

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52) Constructed by an-Nuᶜmān I on the orders of the Persian king Yazdgird I (399-420) in the East of al-Ḥira, the early Arabs regarded it as one of the wonders of the world (see BOSWORTH, 75, n. 200). The story of the killing of Sinnimar, the constructor, by Nuᶜmān became proverbial («reward of Sinnimar»). Additional Arabic litterature is offered by Jean-Maurice FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* III, 212, n. 4.

53) TRIMINGHAM, *Christianity*, 200-201.

54) See ROTHSTEIN, *Dynastie*, 19-22, here: 21.

55) ROTHSTEIN, *Dynastie*, 21: «Sie wissen sich als die wahren viri religiosi, weil sie den wahren Gott haben».

56) Cf. NÖLDEKE, Ṭabarī, p. 24, n. 4.

57) Cf. ROTHSTEIN, *Dynastie*, 23-24. FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* III, 204, listed (on the basis of the Synodicon Orientale and R. Aigrain and others): Hosea (410), Simeon (424), Simeon (486), Elias (497), Ephraem (around 560), Joseph (585), Simeon b. Ḡābir (before 593 and around 604). Giorgio FEDALTO, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis,* II. Patriarchatus Alexandrinus, Antiochenus, Hierosolymitanus, Padova, 1988, II, 79.5.14 took over Fiey's details.

58) FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* III, 204-206.

have been buried[59]. ʿAqūlā, the place where Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ built Kūfa in 15/16 A.H. was near Ḥira.

> According to Masʿūdī, with the foundation of Kūfa (636 or 638 A.D.) the decline of al-Ḥīra started and found its closing at the end of the 9th century. Ḥīra disappeared under his ruins during the first years of the rule of al-Muʿtamid, that is after 892. The connection of al-Ḥīra with Kūfa was so close that for Balāḏurī the two towns are identical with different names[60].

There must have been numerous churches in al-Ḥīra[61], partly built in the 6th century. The Oxford excavations in 1931 uncovered two churches; during archeological excavations (around 1974) churches were found also in the larger surroundings of Ḥīra[62]. There was a book on the monasteries of Ḥira by Hišām b. Muḥammad b. al-Ṣāʾib al-Kalbī, although not preserved. Yāqūt knows numerous monasteries in al-Ḥīra and surroundings[63]. After the death of the Katholikos Mar Aba in 552, one of his disciples, Cyrus (Qiyōrē) of Edessa, buried him in al-Ḥīra – the place where Mar Aba received his baptism – and established a monastery[64]; Cyrus founded also a (theological) school in al-Ḥīra[65].

The dominating position of al-Munḏir III (503-554) among the Arab tribes under the Persian king, caused the Roman Emperor Justinian I (at least according to the imperial chronicler Procop[66]) to bestow a similar position to

59) TRIMINGHAM, *Christianity,* p. 199, n. 124.

60) Cf. FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* III, 205 with n. 9.

61) Cf. the explanations of FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* III, 206-207.

62) To the findings of 1974 and later see Erica HUNTER, «Syriac Inscriptions from al Hira», in *Oriens Christianus* 80 (1996), 66-81; she refers to Y. OKADA, «Early Christian architecture in the Iraqi south-western desert», in *Al Rafidan* 12 (1991), 71-83, for an overview on the earlier discoveries.

63) See the presentation of FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* III, 211-225, compiling the respective informations.

64) *Hist. nest.* XXIX: PO 7, 170. The monastery still existed during the time when the chronicle of Séert was written (around 1036).

65) *Hist. nest.* XXX: PO 7, 171. FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne* III, 208, 211, named several teachers of the school; the monastery of the school was found near the town at that part leading to Naǧaf.

66) PROCOP. GAZ., *Perserkriege* I 17,45, ed. Otto VEH, p. 126: Mundhir (Greek Ἀλαμούνδαρος) «war der allerschwierigste und gefährlichste Feind der Römer. Der Grund aber lag darin, daß Alamundaros als König allein über sämtliche Sarazenen in Persien gebot und so mit dem ganzen Heer jederzeit jeden beliebigen Teil des römischen Reiches angreifen konnte... Aus diesem Grunde stellte Kaiser Justinian den Arethas, den Sohn des Gabalas und Herrscher über die Sarazenen in Arabien, an die Spitze möglichst vieler Stämme und verlieh ihm die Königswürde, eine Auszeichnung, die bei den Römern zuvor unbekannt war».

the Ghassanid Ḥāriṯ ('Αρέθας). With the captivity and death of Nuʿmān III, the dynasty of the Lakhmids came to an end after more than three centuries.

B. THE POEM

ʿAdī's Diwan was edited according to Ibn al-Nadīm[67] by al-Sukkarī[68] (212/827-828 - 275/888) and other philologists, that means, in the 9th century A.D.[69], about more than 250 years later.

1. CONTENT OF THE POEM

The structure of the poem, according to the content, might be characterized as follows.

1-4:   ʿAdī's situation (lamentation)
5-7:   description of rain (song)
8-9:   (unclear) transition, lament
10-11: ʿAdī's foes
12-13: ʿAdī's interceding for Nuʿmān
15-20: (in vv. 15-18 always introduced with wamā): reflection on his fate
        (in v. 20: answer: God's grace and his patience)
21-24: actual situtation
25-27: lament of the women (wailing?)
28-29: retrospect at his misfortune (general)
30-31: address to an-Nuʿmān
32:     trust in God.

ʿAdī starts with his statement that he is sleepless, caused by dark clouds (with lightnings?). Perhaps a symbol for his situation: dark clouds gathered around his head, (light comes only from a few lightnings, flashing up for a short moment).

vv. 3-4 put the lamenting women on the stage, imploring for protection for him (like an inclusion, it seems that they return in vv. 25-27). To my impression vv. 5-7 appear like an interpolation, a song on the rain. The theme «rain» is explained and elucidated, how the wādīs swell, and in thought the

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67) *K. al-Fihrist*, 158.
68) He also edited the Dīwān of some other poets, according to S. LEDER, «Al-Sukkarī», in *EI* 9 (1998), 840.
69) On the distribution and knowledge of ʿAdī's Dīwān in Baġdād and other places see the introduction to the edition of Muḥammad ĞABBĀR AL-MUʿAIBID, 21-22. Cf. SEZGIN, *GAS* II, 179.

poet roams over the regions now not accessible any more for him. – Besides their function as a description of the nature, these verses could also be a metaphor for all the disaster which has overtaken the poet and is overwhelming him.

vv. 8-9 function as transition verses and lead to the lamentation because of his foes (vv. 10-11), which are relentlessly and firmly resolved to do him harm (that is to destroy him, ʿAdī). I don't know the connotation of dog's teeth *(nīb)* and the flutist – perhaps they too are a symbol of the coming disaster, announcing it. I don't know either the (deeper) meaning of the Pleiades in this context and that of the downpours of rain of the south wind (v. 9). The foes of the poet wish to bring him into isolation and to eliminate him, for instance by throwing him into a well (or a cistern like Jeremia, see Jeremia 38,6). In vv. 12-14 the poet reminds what he has done for Nuʿmān in order to make him king; and at this point there is a change into the first person singular, for the first time since v. 1 (altogether, first person singular is used in the following verses 1.12-13.15.17-18.20-22.24-25.28-30.32; first person Plural «we»: v. 14.31): How ʿAdī put an obstacle to all evil plans of Nuʿmān's enemies and did not run away. How he acted in an open way and at the same time he was discreet. So Nuʿmān could gain his crown.

The next four verses vv. 15-18 attract attention with always the same introduction *wamā*. Structurally they remind to oaths of innocence in old-oriental literature. With v. 15 there starts an articulation of the incomprehensibility on all that has happened. He, the poet, did not expect something exorbitant, but now this is really astonishing (v. 15). Elegiac sounds evolve. In v. 20 a first positive reaction on all the calamities emerges: God's grace and his own patience.

With v. 21 the poet's interest turns again to very concrete desires: that Nuʿmān may get some notice from him. Is it really his lot that he, the prisoner, has to stay in his chains? He remembers his foes, waiting now for the king's reward, and the king, who obviously is not affected by his, the prisoner's, misfortune (v. 24). His thoughts turn to the women (perhaps those hired to lament over him?) deploring him and still holding his side against his enemies (vv. 25-27). Then he remembers the past how his faults were quickly punished, on the other hand, the injustice which he suffered simply became his destiny (vv. 28-29). In vv. 30-31 finally, he turns to the future, what will happen after his death: The king shall rejoice at his death, but in the battle he himself shall be left alone – and this in reality later happened!

Will he usurp also his possessions (v. 31)? The last verse v. 32 expresses a remarkable and impressive hope in God, the one who is close to him and hears his prayer. – This reminds me of Job 19,25 («I know that my redeemer lives»), but also some other motives of Job 19,23-29 can be found in a similar way in the verses of the poem starting from v. 21 and later.

ᶜAdī's destiny may recall also that of the philosopher Boethius († 524), who, at the beginning of the sixth century in the West, in Rome, likewise suffered a deep fall, from the close intimacy with the powerful as a Roman consul to the execution in jail. Boethius wrote his *Consolatio philosophiae,* perhaps, ᶜAdī found consolation in writing poetry or, at least, in this way he overcome his destiny.

2. A FEW REMARKS ON THE RHYME, THE METRE AND SOME PECULIARITIES

a) The rhyme

The word of the rhyme is šībī. The two hemistichs of the first verse show the rhyme: fīhi - šībī. This is a so-called loose (muṭlaqatun) rhyme (qāfiyatun)[70] with the letter bā' as rawī and with ī as al-maġrā; ridfun is yā' (Wright § 196b; 197a). If we go through the qaṣīda and check the rhyme, we get the result: the rhyme is kept and in 8 verses (vv. 4, 7, 9, 17, 19, 20, 27, 30) the *ridfun* is ū instead of ī which is legitimate according to the rules.

b) The metre

The metre is Wāfir (Wright § 207)[71], and it is kept always (except v. 7) and regularly (including the replacement of a length by two brevities). Only in v. 19 and v. 32 are feet without replacing a length by two brevities. (In correspondance to the content? In v. 32 an inner calmness is expressed, for v. 19 such an expression follows in v. 20).

c) Some peculiarities

Persian words can be found in v. 2: daḫdār[72], in v. 14: tāǧ[73] and v. 18: faiǧ.

70) WRIGHT, § 193, pp. 351-352.

71) Cf. Antoine Isaac SILVESTRE DE SACY, *Grammaire arabe* II, Paris, 1831, 632-633; Georg Heinrich August EWALD, *Grammatica critica linguae arabicae* II, Leipzig, 1833, 329.

72) KAZIMIRSKI: precious material on the throne of Persian Shah; gold. HOROVITZ translated: mantle.

73) Cf. ROTHSTEIN, *Dynastie,* 129.

A special problem is given with the formula of oath in v. 10: «by the Lord of Mekka and of the cross». Is this formula authentic or due to a later reworking in Islamic times? If authentic then the formula would be a remarkable testimony of broadmindedness within Christian circles – not totally impossible as such since it is reported that Christians took part in the pilgrimage to Mekka (though not at the ʿumra)[74]. If a revision, then it could make some contribution to the making of a national sanctuary (= Mekka) for the whole Arabian peninsula[75]. It is difficult to judge, and I don't know what kind of invocation could have been in the original verse.

More generally it is said that explicitly Christian formulations can be found only rarely in ʿAdī's poetry[76]. Whether this is a characteristic of his work or whether only those works with few Christian traits have been transmitted, is open to investigation. Whether this poem in its actual wording is original or whether it was revised later (in the 9th c. A.D.) is difficult to judge.

Nevertheless, it seems that this poem can be understood as an authentic expression of a person, a Christian in such a situation, coming at the end even to a remarkable formulation of his confidence in God. At least, this kind of religious feeling is also acceptable to muslim readers.

It is remarkable that the story of ʿAdī and his dīwān was preserved especially among Kufic scholars. Perhaps, they were proud of an Arab of their own region who became famous for his ʿarabiyya and made such an extraordinary career.

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74) See Julius WELLHAUSEN, *Reste altarabischen Heidentums,* Berlin, [2]1897, 87; LAMMENS, 41; p. 42 with n. 4; on the formula see p. 43.

75) See LAMMENS, 43.

76) Cf. GABRIELI, *ʿAdī,* 84; Ewald WAGNER, *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung* I, Darmstadt, 1987, 7-8 with n. 24; both of them cite v. 10.

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77) Remark: ibid. 23, line 3, misprint: the art. of Baumgartner, in *Stimmen aus Maria Laach* was published in volume XLVII (instead of: XLIV).