From *Jāhiliyyah* to *Badīʿiyyah*: Orality, Literacy, and the Transformations of Rhetoric in Arabic Poetry

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Introduction

This essay[1] offers a speculative exploration of the transformations in the form and function of rhetorical styles and devices at three distinctive points of Arabic literary history. It takes as its starting point the mnemonic imperative governing the use of rhetoric in pre- and early Islamic oral poetry and proposes that in the later literary periods rhetorical devices, now free of their mnemonic obligation, took on further communicative or expressive functions. It then turns to the effect of literacy on the "retooling" of the no longer mnemonically bound rhetorical devices to serve as what I term the "linguistic correlative" of Islamic hegemony as witnessed in the High ʿAbbāsid caliphal panegyrics of the rhetorically complex *badīʿ* style. Finally, it attempts to interpret what seems to modern sensibilities the rhetorical excess of the post-classical genre of *badīʿiyyah* (a poem to the Prophet Muḥammad in which each line must exhibit a particular rhetorical device) as a memorial structure typical of the medieval manuscript (as opposed to modern print) tradition.

Rhetoric as Ritual in the Early Arabic *Qaṣīdah*

The Arab-Islamic literary tradition is rooted in the pagan era that preceded the advent of Islam, termed the *Jāhiliyyah*, the Age of "Ignorance" or "Impetuousness." The preeminent literary form was the *qaṣīdah*, the formal mono-rhymed and mono-metered polythematic ode of praise, boast, invective, or elegy, as practiced by the warrior aristocracy of tribal Arabia and in the courts of the Arab client-kings to the Byzantine and Sasanian empires. Dating from around 500-620 CE, these odes, as the tradition tells us, were orally composed and transmitted, and were not put into writing until the massive *tadwīn* movement of collection and compilation of the second and third Islamic centuries—ca. 750-800 CE—based on the oral transmission of Bedouin

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informants. The oral-formulaic nature of these poems in terms of the Parry-Lord theory was definitively demonstrated by James Monroe (1972). Although Monroe is concerned primarily with identifying and quantifying verbal formulae rather than with issues of mnemonics as they affect transmission, he also addresses the need to modify elements of the Parry-Lord theory, especially in regard to the composition and memorization of the short lyrical, and therefore more textually stable, Arabic ode. The pre-Islamic Arabic *qaṣīdah* situation is not, as Monroe well realized, one of poets merely re-creating in performance a single "epic." He realized that a shorter lyric[-heroic] form like the Arabic ode may well have been memorized in a way that oral epic is not. As he notes, the role of the *rāwī* or "transmitter" of poetry, that is, a younger, usually would-be poet who memorizes the poems of his mentor, often in the service of his own poetic apprenticeship, certainly points to the idea of a poet having distinct poems each with its own individual identity; and to individual poets and tribes (or families of poets) sharing certain stylistic features (39-41).

My own work (1993, 1994, 2002), in which I have sought to establish the ritual structure and function of the Arabic ode in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, has accepted Monroe's conclusions and made some initial attempts to integrate further work on orality and literacy theory, notably the work of Walter J. Ong (1982) and Eric Havelock (1982, 1986), into the discussion of Arabic poetry.

I recapitulate here some of my earlier work, with a shift in emphasis from the ritual aspects of the structure of the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah* to the ritual dimension of its rhetorical devices. I take as my starting point Havelock's (1982:116-17) conclusion that virtually all the linguistic features that we classify as "poetic"—rhyme, meter, assonance, alliteration, antithesis, parallelism, "poetic diction"—and in particular those figures of speech that we term "rhetorical devices"—metaphor, simile, metonymy, antithesis—are originally and essentially mnemonic devices that serve to stabilize and preserve the oral "text" (Stetkevych 1993:chs. 5, 6). And, at the same time, I accept that the main features of oral poetries that Ong (1982:ch. 3, see below) enumerates apply quite precisely to pre-Islamic and early Arabic poetry, which we now generally accept as primarily oral in its composition and transmission up until around the second Islamic century.

What I would like to propose in particular in the present essay is the idea that within the oral context abstract concepts can be expressed only by means of metaphor or simile (or other rhetorical devices). Metaphors and similes are not intended to convey merely sensory similitude —that is, they are not primarily descriptive—but serve to convey an underlying semantic relationship, what I will term "the conceptual correlative." Nowhere is this more clear than in the rhetorical play between blood and food, killing and eating, that pervades the poetry of blood-vengeance and battle and conveys the concept that to kill the enemy is to revitalize or nourish one's own kin and vice-versa. Thus, as I have argued, slaying the enemy in battle is the conceptual correlative of blood sacrifice (1993:55-83). This concept is conveyed in many rhetorical forms: Using a simile, Zayd ibn Bishr al-Taghlibī boasts of killing his enemy (Stetkevych 1993:81; al-Jāḥiẓ 1965-69:vi, 331):

> On the day the ironclad warriors leapt around ᶜUmayr
> Like vultures hopping 'round the slaughter-camel.

In terms of the poetics of orality, what makes this simile effective is the graphic sensory comparison of the two scenes, but in the context of tribal warfare the essential message is the identification of the desecration of the enemy with the revitalization of the kin. In the Muᶜallaqah of ᶜAntarah we find a metaphor whereby the slaying of an enemy who becomes carrion for scavengers is again equated with its conceptual correlative or its ritual inversion: the slaughtering of a beast to feed one's kin (al-Anbārī 1969:347, v. 52):

> Then I left him slaughtered for the wild beasts
> To tear at him from head to wrist.

Another example of a compelling visual image that conveys an underlying ritual meaning is al-Aᶜshā's metaphor describing the opening of a wine skin (al-Maᶜarrī 1981:174):

> And when it runs low we raise our wineskin
> Open up its neck-vein, and it bleeds.

Clearly the shared sacrificial nature of wine and animal sacrifice is essential to the message the poet wishes to convey.

By rhetoric as ritual, then, I mean that if we follow Walter Burkert (1983:23) in defining ritual as "a behavioral pattern that has lost its primary function—present in its unritualized model—but which persists in a new function, that of communication," and if we understand "communication" in an oral society to include transmission and preservation, then we see that rhetorical devices are ritual. For example, in oral-mnemonic terms—what I am calling "ritual"—the point of a simile or metaphor is not to physically describe an object, but to imprint its conceptual correlative in the memory. It is not descriptive but rhetorical. This is why it is not the technical precision of a simile that makes it effective, but rather its affective and sensory (that is, rhetorical) aspects. In a pre-Islamic elegy for ᶜAmr Dhū Kalb, his sister Rayṭah concludes with a jolting simile to convey, through her description of the scavengers, the *Schadenfreude* of his slayers, with the rhetorical goal of stirring her kinsmen to take vengeance (Stetkevych 1993:189; al-Baghdādī 1984:x, 391):

> The vultures walk upon him in delight
> Frolicking like virgins clad in smocks.

I do not want to dwell here on the fairly well-established poetics of orality, but rather to offer these few examples and to make the point that in the context of oral poetry, the abstraction involved in the conceptual correlative can be successfully conveyed and preserved only through the use of palpable, sensory, and emotionally charged images. In effect, then, in addition to rhyme, meter, poetic diction, rhetorical figures, and so on, Ong's list of "further characteristics of orally based thought and expression" (1982:ch. 3 *passim*) (that is, in addition to oral-formulaic composition) are not, in an oral context, aesthetic choices, but rather requirements for successful performance, transmission, and preservation. In the context of rhetorical devices, the points of interest to us, clearly in evidence in the poetry cited above, are the last five characteristics on

Ong's list: 4) conservative or traditionalist; 5) close to the human lifeworld; 6) agonistically toned; 7) emphatic and participatory rather than objectively distanced; 9) situational rather than abstract.

The question that remains before us is: why are these mnemonic structures—poetry, and the Arabic *qaṣīdah* in particular—maintained even after the advent of writing? I would venture that the answer is twofold. First, in oral poetry, the mnemonic is also the rhetorical: the same elements that make poetry memorable and memorizable are precisely those that make it moving and effective: it is the most emotionally charged and sensory-based form of language. Therefore, even though the advent of writing makes the mnemonic aspects of oral poetry technically redundant, their rhetorical function remains in force. Second, its ritual, or communicative, functions remain operative even when its purely mnemonic functions are rendered obsolete. In brief, then, the very elements that make oral poetry memorable and memorizable are those that make it emotionally effective, which is precisely what we mean when we define rhetoric as the "art of persuasion" and understand ritual as essentially communicative.

Rhetoric of/as Islamic Hegemony in the Classical ᶜAbbāsid Panegyric

With the establishment and consolidation of literacy in Umayyad and ᶜAbbāsid times, we find in Arab cultural history much of the same sorts of shifts that Havelock describes as the result of the transition from orality to literacy in Greek culture. He writes that "all possible discourse became translatable into script, and that simultaneously the burden of memorization was lifted from the mind . . . the alphabet therewith made possible the production of novel or unexpected statement, previously unfamiliar and even 'unthought'" (1982:88). The spirit of cultural ferment of the second and third Islamic centuries (eighth and ninth centuries CE) and its concomitant linguistic inventions is captured in a passage quoted by al-Jāḥiẓ in *Al-Bayān wa-al-Tabyīn* (1968:i, 138-41; Stetkevych 1991:16-17):

> For the Mutakallimūn [speculative theologians] selected expressions for their concepts, deriving terminology for things for which the Arab language had no word. In doing so they have set the precedent in this for all who came after them and the model for all who follow. Thus they say accident (*ᶜaraḍ*) and essence (*jawhar*); to be (*aysa*) and not to be (*laysa*). They distinguish between nullity (*buṭlān*) and nihility (*talāshin*) and they use the terms "thisness" (*hādhiyyah*), identity (*huwiyyah*), and quiddity (*māhiyyah*). In the same way, al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad assigned names to the meters of the *qaṣīdah*s . . . whereas the [Bedouin] Arabs had not known the meters by those names. Similarly, the grammarians named and referred to the circumstantial accusative (*ḥāl*), the adverbial accusatives (*ẓurūf*), and such things . . . . Likewise, the mathematicians draw upon names which they have designated as signs in order to understand one another . . . . Someone preaching in the heart of the Caliph's palace said, "God brought him out of the door of non-being (*laysiyyah*) and let him enter the door of being (*aysiyyah*)." These expressions are permissible in the art of Kalām when existing words lack the requisite range of meaning. The expressions of the Mutakallimūn are also befitting to poetry . . . .

Above all, and quite broadly speaking, the establishment of writing frees literary composition from the mnemonic imperative and exigencies of oral preservation. It allows for the gathering, compilation, and stable setting forth of extensive materials that can then be systematically compared, analyzed, categorized, and so forth.

What most concerns us here is that at this period *language* itself, now "nailed down" through writing, is subjected to this very process of classification, analysis, and systematization. The linguistic sciences are born and flourish: syntax and morphology, lexicography and etymology. In brief, the code of language is cracked. For Arab Islamic culture, in which the creation of language was perceived as being as much a divine prerogative as the creation of the world and of mankind, this linguistic breakthrough was on a par with, for us, Einstein's discovery of relativity and the smashing of the atom, the discovery of the double helix, or our current cracking of the human genetic code in the human genome project. And in the ᶜAbbāsid case as well as ours, conservatives accused those who dared to act upon this newfound knowledge/power of "playing God."

The Arabs' sudden and astounding political, military, scientific, and cultural hegemony in the High ᶜAbbāsid period is expressed in what I have termed an ideology of "Islamic Manifest Destiny" (2002:145, 152, 169-70), which was formulated and propagated above all by the master panegyrists of the caliphal courts. It is my argument in the present essay that the rhetorically ornate and conceptually complex style of panegyric ode of the High ᶜAbbāsid caliphal court, termed *badīᶜ* ("new," "innovative"), that appeared in the third/ninth century is nothing other than the exercise of the poet's newfound power to generate new words and linguistic structures, never seen before.[2] This power derives from the cracking of the "linguistic code" through the newly developed linguistic sciences of syntax, morphology, and, especially, *ishtiqāq* (morphological derivation), and the crucial point in the context of the present essay is that this code could never have been cracked without the establishment of literacy, as explained above. Once this code was cracked, the poet could generate new words and new constructions, never experienced before.

But why would he want to do this? Here, I would like to connect the two sides of my argument, that is, to see them as closely related aspects of the establishment of Islamic imperial hegemony. First, the rise of Islam and the Islamic states entailed astounding political, military, cultural, and scientific growth, of which the establishment of literacy and the concomitant flourishing of analytical sciences was an organic part. With this vast and vertiginous accrual of imperial hegemony in all its aspects came an irresistible sense of power and mission: an "Islamic Manifest Destiny." Second, the job of formulating and propagating a new ideology of Arab Islamic hegemony fell to the court panegyrists. The power of their poetry had to match the might and dominion of their patron. In other words, just as the caliph exercised a God-given might and dominion far beyond that of the kinglets and tribal lords of the *Jāhiliyyah*, so were the court poets required to come up with a poetic idiom that could express this previously unimagined and God-given might.

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[2] It is worth noting here that the derivatives of this same root *b-d-ᶜ* ("to originate, to invent, to do something new, for the first time") include *al-Bādiᶜ* ("the Creator"), one of the names of Allāh, and *bid ᶜah* ("heresy") (Stetkevych 1991:5).

The transition from orality to literacy had several related consequences for the classical ᶜAbbāsid panegyrist. First, now that poems could be written down, compiled, and compared, there was increased pressure for originality and, related to this, more likelihood of accusations of plagiarism. Second, relieved of mnemonic imperatives, in terms of both composition and preservation, poets were free to abandon the oral formulae and to experiment in order to create expressions and images that, although they use largely the same "poetic diction," were too convoluted or abstract for oral composition and transmission (see Monroe 1972:37; Stetkevych 1991:18-19). Third, not only were poets liberated from the oral formulae of the poetic metalanguage, but they were empowered through the new linguistic sciences to derive new words and structures. In terms of rhetorical elements in particular, we find, as I have written elsewhere, that the ᶜAbbāsid poet has "re-tooled" them to create expressions that are—instead of affective and sensory—conceptually abstract and complex (1991:33-38). The final step in this argument is that the expression, by which I mean both formulation and propagation, of caliphal power became the goal to which this newfound linguistic might was directed. Along this line of argumentation, I would like to conclude, then, by proposing that *badīᶜ* poetry, whatever its roots in the lighter amorous, jocular, or even obscene verse of the age of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170-193/786-809), came to function, certainly in the hands of the panegyrists of al-Muᶜtaṣim (r. 218-227/833-842), as the "linguistic correlative" of caliphal power.

At this point, we can perceive quite clearly that the dramatic stylistic changes that appeared in the late Umayyad and the ᶜAbbāsid period can be linked directly to the transformation of Arabic culture from primary orality to literacy. Reading al-Marzūqī's (d. 431/1030) formulation of the traditional aesthetics termed *ᶜamūd al-shiᶜr* ("the pillar of poetry") that characterize what is *maṭbūᶜ* ("natural") as opposed to *maṣnūᶜ* ("artificial," "contrived"), and traditional as opposed to modern, we can now discern that this distinction is between the affective and sensory poetics rooted in the pre-Islamic oral tradition and the intellectual and conceptual poetics that literacy made possible. Al-Marzūqī (1967:i, 8-9; Stetkevych 1991:260) writes in his introduction to Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah*:

> It is necessary to clarify what the well-known *ᶜamūd al-shiᶜr* is among the Arabs, in order
> to distinguish inherited artistry from the new, and the ancient method of composing
> poetry from the modern . . . and to know the difference between *maṣnūᶜ* ("artificial") and
> *maṭbūᶜ* ("natural"), and the superiority of the easy and compliant to the difficult and
> intractable. Thus we say . . . that they were striving for nobility and soundness of
> meaning, for purity and correctness of expression, and for accuracy of description . . . for
> closeness of simile, for cohesion of the parts of the poem, and the suitable choice of a
> pleasing meter for them, for the appropriateness of the two terms of the metaphor, for the
> conformity of expression to meaning, and the strength of their demand for the rhyme-
> letter until there is no discrepancy between them.

The second-third/eighth-ninth century blossoming of the high classical rhetorical style, termed *badīᶜ*, of such ᶜAbbāsid masters as Bashshār ibn Burd, Muslim ibn al-Walīd, al-Buḥturī, and, above all, Abū Tammām, is celebrated, by both its supporters and detractors, as innovative and original in the dramatic intensity of its use of rhetorical devices such as *istiᶜārah* (metaphor),

tashbīh (simile), *jinās* (paronomasia, root-play), *ṭibāq* (antithesis), *radd al-ᶜajuz ᶜalá al-ṣadr* (repetition of an early word in a line in the rhyme-word), and especially *al-madhhab al-kalāmī* ("the manner of Kalām," that is, abstruse logical constructions, conceits that are abstract, conceptual, or far-fetched, in the manner of the speculative theologians [the Mutakallimūn], in other words, what in its High ᶜAbbāsid heyday constituted bold, even scandalous, innovation). The sciences and the analytical methods they involve give their practitioner a sense of control and mastery over his scientific domain. For the poet, for example, the sciences of *ishtiqāq, naḥw,* and *ṣarf* (derivation, syntax, and morphology) allow him to invent new words and constructs never before imagined.

Thus, much to the horror of conservative critics such as al-Āmidī (d. 370/981) in his *Al-Muwāzanah*, we see Abū Tammām (d. 231 or 232/845 or 846), the most celebrated (or notorious) proponent of *badīᶜ* poetry, coin new words, such as *tafarᶜana* ("to be despotic"), which he derived from *firᶜawn* ("pharaoh") (Stetkevych 1991:66; al-Āmidī 1972:i, 238-39):

> You appeared and death bared a brazen cheek,
> And death's appointed time was pharaonic (*tafarᶜana*) in its deeds.

He also devised, through a process of grammatical analogy to such Kalām postulates about the Divine as *huwa huwa* ("He is He"), unheard-of constructions such as *lā anta anta* ("you are not you") (Stetkevych 1991:36, 82, 144; al-Āmidī 1972:i, 511-12):

> You are not you, the abodes are not abodes,
> Passion has faded, destinations have changed.

It is worth noting, too, that the conservative critic al-Āmidī consistently takes Abū Tammām to task for constructions that, upon analysis, are metaphors or personifications involving concepts, particularly of time or fate, and that therefore require a process of abstraction and analysis to decipher (Stetkevych 1991:75; al-Āmidī 1972:i, 270):

> By you the sides of our days are polished
> And our nights are all the break of day.

Again (Stetkevych 1991:76; al-Āmidī 1972:i, 264):

> Then you clothed yourselves in the disgrace of a time
> Whose nights were, among the nights, menstruating.

We also find Abū Tammām's personification of time itself as "perishing"—a reflection perhaps of the disputes of the Mutakallimūn over whether time is finite or infinite—now subordinated to the poet's panegyric purpose of praise for his longtime friend and patron, the general Abū Saᶜīd Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Thaghrī (Stetkevych 1991:24; Ibn al-Muᶜtazz 1935:23):

When your fated time comes, you will not perish,
But time, that has destroyed [others] like you, will perish.

This period was the apex of ᶜAbbāsid politico-cultural hegemony and military might, and, I argue, the *badīᶜ* style evolved to express, celebrate, and immortalize that hegemony and that might. In other words, the transformation of Arab civilization in the first three centuries of Islam and the astounding political dominion and cultural florescence of the High ᶜAbbāsid Age demanded that the expressive capabilities of the Arabic language, and its poetic metalanguage in particular, be expanded to convey ideas and experiences hitherto unknown. More simply, the *badīᶜ* style in practice is precisely the dominant mode of expression of the High ᶜAbbāsid court panegyric, a body of poetry that celebrates Arab-Islamic political and cultural hegemony, military might, and religious authority as vested in the caliph himself or, in a subordinate manner, in lesser patrons of the court. The *badīᶜ* style became inseparable or indistinguishable from the ideology of Arab-Islamic hegemony and triumphalism. By this, I do not mean merely that the subject of particular lines and poems is caliphal power—although this is a, maybe *the*, major theme of such poems, but rather that this very style of poetry became in and of itself a projection or analogue of that power. Again, the *badīᶜ* style is what I term the "linguistic correlative" of caliphal might and Islamic hegemony, an ideology of "Islamic Manifest Destiny."

Above all, in the context of the transition from orality to literacy, this "retooling" of rhetoric to perform breathtaking feats of verbal "derring-do" is possible only because the establishment of literacy has, to a large degree, freed rhetoric of mnemonic exigencies or obligations. The successful ᶜAbbāsid panegyrist, while adhering to the conventional generic dictates of the *qaṣīdah*, had to navigate between the requirement of originality and the lure of *badīᶜ* on the one hand, and, on the other, the pull of a traditional, conservative aesthetic (*ᶜamūd al-shiᶜr*) still grounded in what we can now understand as the pragmatic exigencies of orality. In critical terms, this took the form of classifying poets who inclined toward abstract and conceptual formulations as *maṣnūᶜ* ("contrived," "artificial"), whereas those whose poetry was more in line with the traditional *ᶜamūd al-shiᶜr* were termed *maṭbūᶜ* ("naturally gifted," that is, spontaneous).

In this respect, al-Āmidī's judgment in *Al-Muwāzanah* between Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī (in favor of the latter) is a case in point, and this conservative critic's distaste for the rhetorical manipulation of abstractions and generative manipulation of syntax and morphology (Stetkevych 1991:49-89)—which we are considering here to be the essence of *badīᶜ* as the linguistic correlative of (God-like) caliphal power—is merely symptomatic of the conservative clinging to poetic techniques rendered obsolete by a new technology—writing. Nevertheless, in our zeal for the new and technologically advanced style of poetry, we must not forget that certain necessary requirements of oral poetry have an essential aesthetic component that goes beyond their oral-mnemonic functionality: images that are sensorily derived and emotionally charged have an "affective" pull that is, as al-Āmidī realized, however different his framework of reference and terminology, altogether distinct from the "mental" or "intellectual" appeal of *badīᶜ*.

It is noteworthy in the context of the present essay that the formulation of the doctrine of the miraculous inimitability of the Qurʾān (*iᶜjāz al-Qurʾān*), consisting above all of its unmatchable rhetorical power, took place only between the third and fifth Islamic centuries

(750-1000 CE) (von Grünebaum 1979). I would like to propose that this development is no accident, but rather, that only after the *badīᶜ* poets achieved their astounding heights of rhetorical power—in a way that very explicitly related rhetorical power to divine power through its employ in formulating and propagating the concept of a divinely appointed caliphate (that is, they expressly joined the notions of rhetorical beauty and Islamic might)—was the concept ratcheted up to the divine level: if rhetorical beauty equals power, then absolute rhetorical beauty equals absolute power. In more down-to-earth terms, this is the proposition arrived at by the scholars of *iᶜjāz al-Qur'ān*, such as ᶜAlī ibn ᶜĪsá al-Rummānī (d. 384/994) and ᶜAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 470/1078), that true faith can be achieved only through the thorough study of rhetoric: that is, that the truth of Muḥammad's prophecy is the divine nature of the Qur'ān, which resides in its unmatchable rhetorical beauty. Therefore, the believer who does not understand rhetoric cannot truly grasp the miraculousness of the Qur'ān, and the truth of Muḥammad's prophethood (*ṣiḥḥat al-nubuwwah*) (see below).

Rhetoric of/as Devotional Exercise: The *Badīᶜiyyah* and Manuscript and Memory in the Post-Classical Period

It is, I think, useful and reasonable to apply the terms Post-Classical and Medieval to the period of Arab-Islamic poetry and literature from about the sixth-thirteenth Islamic centuries (1100-1850 CE). The classical poetic tradition of the *qaṣīdah* reached its pinnacle in the unrivaled high heroics and high rhetorics of Aḥmad Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965), who, as his sobriquet "the would-be prophet" indicates, cast a pall of unmatchable poetic genius over all the poets who succeeded him, in a manner suggestive of the miraculous inimitability of the Qur'ān. This sense is nowhere better captured than in Abū al-ᶜAlā' al-Maᶜarrī's (d. 449/1058) title for his commentary on al-Mutanabbī's *dīwān*: *Muᶜjiz Aḥmad* ("the Miracle of Aḥmad")—an evident pun on the "miracle of Muḥammad," that is, the Qur'ān. Al-Maᶜarrī (Smoor 1986) himself is a pivotal figure who exemplifies in the trajectory from his first *dīwān*, the *qaṣīdah*-based *Saqṭ al-Zand*, to his second, the programmatic double-rhymed alphabetized series of epigrams of the *Luzūmiyyāt*, the transition from Classical to Post-Classical poetics and aesthetics.

Among the Arab critics and literary historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (the *Nahḍah* or Arab Renaissance and the Modern periods, comprising the Neo-Classical, Romantic, and Modern/Free Verse schools of poetry), the period between 1100 and about 1850 is normally referred to as the Age of Decline (*ᶜAṣr al-Inḥiṭāṭ*). On the one hand this was the age of great commentators, compendiarists, and lexicographers whom we can credit with the formulation of a classical period, that is, who conferred on their forebears the authority of classics. Yet on the other hand, in the twentieth century, among the Neo-Classicists, Romantics, and Modernists alike, the poetry of this period was largely dismissed as derivative and characterized by excessive rhetorical artifice and artificiality (see Cachia 1988:219-20). The Neo-Classical poets and critics of the Nahḍah used this period as a foil—an Age of Decline from the High ᶜAbbāsid Age whose master *badīᶜ* poets the Neo-Classicists took as their models and whose political and cultural hegemony they hoped to revive. The Romantics and Moderns, by contrast, threw out the entire Classical and Post-Classical *qaṣīdah* tradition as sclerotic, artificial,

and obsolete. All schools, however, shared the disdain for the Post-Classical period as one of particular artificiality and lack of originality. Within this context, the *badīᶜiyyah* was singled out for special vilification as the prime example of "decline"—of artifice run amok coupled with the paralysis of the creative impulse.

However, as we shall see, the creators and practitioners of the *badīᶜiyyah* did not see it this way. What I propose to do here, using the *badīᶜiyyah* as my prime example, is to explore the aesthetics and poetics of the Post-Classical age to see how they differ from those of the pre-Islamic and High ᶜAbbāsid ages respectively, and how the *badīᶜiyyah* is the consummate, and perhaps inevitable, poetic expression of the Post-Classical aesthetic. Just as the exigencies and opportunities of orality and literacy have allowed us to understand some aspects of the aesthetics of the *Jāhiliyyah* and the High ᶜAbbāsid age, and the differences between them, so too the exigencies and possibilities of the manuscript-memorial culture of the Middle Ages, especially as magisterially formulated by Mary Carruthers (1990) for the Christian Middle Ages, will help us arrive at a new aesthetic and an appreciation of the new role of rhetoric in this period.

Genesis of the *Badīᶜiyyah*

The *badīᶜiyyah* is a curiously hybrid poetic form that first appears in the eighth/fourteenth century. The *badīᶜiyyah*-proper is a subgenre of *madīḥ nabawī* (praise poem to the Prophet Muḥammad) that consists of a *muᶜāraḍah* (an imitation or contrafaction in the same rhyme and meter) of the preeminent medieval praise poem to the Prophet, Abū ᶜAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Saᶜīd al-Būṣīrī's (d. 694-96/1294-97) celebrated Burdah (Mantle Ode) (see Stetkevych 2006, 2007, and 2010), with the added requirement that each line exhibit a particular rhetorical device.[3] The poet most often credited with producing the first such poem, Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. 749/1348 or 750/1349) (Heinrichs 1995), offers an anecdote about its composition that is a key to its essential hybridity: having originally intended to compose a prose treatise on the figures of rhetoric and *badīᶜ*, al-Ḥillī (1982:54-55) tells us:

> I collected everything that I found in the books of the scholars and added to this other
> figures that I extracted from the poetry of the ancients, with the intention of composing a
> book that would cover most of them, since there was no way to cover them all. Then I
> was afflicted with a severe and protracted illness and it so happened that I saw in a dream
> a message from the Prophet (the greatest blessings and peace be upon him) demanding
> that I compose a praise poem to him and promising that I would be cured thereby of my
> ailment. So I turned from compiling the treatise to composing a *qaṣīdah* that gathered the
> various types of *badīᶜ* and was embroidered with the praise of [the Prophet's] glory. So I

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[3] There is some variation in definition, but this, to my mind, is the strictest and most accurate. Many scholars, although they mention the distinctive features of al-Būṣīrī's Burdah, that is, the meter *basīṭ* (- - ˘ - / - ˘ -) and the rhyme in the letter "m" that the *badīᶜiyyah* must exhibit, do not explicitly mention al-Būṣīrī's Burdah (although they must be well aware of the relationship). For an overview and discussion of this issue, see Abū Zayd 1983:40-51 and al-Jawharī 1990:26-34. An attempt to treat the aesthetic issues of the *badīᶜiyyah* is made by Pierre Cachia in his work on ᶜAbd al-Ghanī al-Nabulusī's (d. 1143/1731) *badīᶜiyyah* (see Cachia 1988 and 1998: Introduction)

composed 154 lines in the meter *basīṭ* containing 151 types of devices . . . and I made each verse an example illustrating a particular type.

The most striking feature of this anecdote to anyone familiar with the medieval Arabic tradition is that it is a clear reference to, or variation upon, the renowned story of al-Būṣīrī's Burdah, which he is said to have composed when afflicted with semi-paralysis, recited in a dream to the Prophet, only to awake the next day cured of his malady. By this means al-Ḥillī establishes a "mythic concordance," to use Paul Connerton's term (1989:43), a sort of spiritual as well as literary identification with the Master of the Burdah. This seems to serve as sufficient reference to al-Būṣīrī and the Burdah, and al-Ḥillī feels no need to mention explicitly that his new poem is a contrafaction (*muᶜāraḍah*) of al-Būṣīrī's—since it would have been immediately recognized from the opening line. Of further note is that the contractual obligation between poet and patron that the *qaṣīdah* entails is explicitly stated here: poem for cure. It is the same as al-Būṣīrī's contract, but with a twist: this time the contractual relation is initiated by the Prophet rather than the poet.

Further, we should note that, far from seeing his poetry as constrained or artificial, al-Ḥillī makes the claim, however curiously phrased, that he was striving for a fluid, limpid style, which he describes entirely along the lines of the Classical *ᶜamūd al-shiᶜr* (*idem*):

> And *I compelled myself in composing it to avoid constraint and forced language* but to follow what my soul led me to of delicacy and ease of expression, strength and soundness of meaning [emphasis mine].

Another key element in al-Ḥillī's sense of accomplishment is that his *badīᶜiyyah* is a condensed yet comprehensive rhetorical work based on seventy books (which he lists at the end of his commentary) of rhetoric, so that he concludes his introduction as follows (55):

> So, look, o littérateur-critic and wise scholar, at this rich collection that is delightful to the ear, for indeed it is the product of seventy books of which I did not skip a single chapter. So with it you can dispense with the excess stuffing of lengthy books and the arduousness of repetitive speech.

And finally, in what is to us an astounding claim for originality, he quotes a famous line by al-Mutanabbī (56):

> Leave off every voice but my voice, for I
> Am the voice that speaks, the others are [mere] echoes.

In this sense then, the title *Al-Kāfiyah* (the Sufficient) indicates that al-Ḥillī's *badīᶜiyyah* provides so sufficient an account of the rhetorical figures that the other seventy books are rendered superfluous. It is in terms of mnemonic technique what the iPod is to digital technology.

What is the logic behind the formal combination of rhetorical handbook and praise poem to the Prophet? That is, how and why do these two components of the *badīᶜiyyah* fit together? I

would like to suggest the following: as I have argued in my recent studies of al-Būṣīrī, the Burdah—and the *badīʿiyyah*s, which for the most part follow closely its thematic structure, motifs, and style—is essentially structured along the lines of a classical Arabic panegyric of the supplicatory type. What is distinctive is that the patron, the *mamdūḥ* (the one praised and supplicated), is now the Prophet Muḥammad and—this is essential—the object of supplication is, first and foremost, the intercession of the Prophet on the Day of Judgment (= salvation). That is, its performative role is a ritual exchange of the poet's praise for the Prophet's intercession. In this it embodies, or enacts, the essence of medieval Islamic belief: the guarantee that the Prophet will lead his Ummah to salvation on Judgment Day. The praise of the Prophet in this sense is not merely praise, but, as with all Arabic panegyric, the effectuation of a contractual obligation between poet and patron, an exchange of praise (self-abasement, submission, recognition of the Prophet's authority) for *shafāʿah*, the intercession of the Prophet on the Day of Judgment and inclusion in his Ummah, which he will conduct to salvation under his banner. The *badīʿiyyah* is in this respect a spiritual exercise, the performance of which is understood to produce a spiritual result or to confer a spiritual benefit.

This, then, brings us to rhetoric. The miraculously inimitable rhetorical beauty of the Qur'ān is not merely an article of faith but the essence of Islam, which, in the highly polemical religious atmosphere of the medieval period, distinguishes it from its main contenders of the time, Christianity and Judaism. Therefore, the Muslim has no true understanding of his faith until he understands rhetoric and can grasp for himself the unsurpassable beauty of the Qurān. Following the scholars of *iʿjāz al-Qur'ān*, such as al-Rummānī or ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, al-Ḥillī opens his introduction to *Sharḥ al-Kāfiyah* by stating (1982:51-52):

> The science most deserving of precedence and most worthy of being learned and taught, after the knowledge of God Almighty, is the knowledge of the verities of His Noble Speech [the Qur'ān] and the understanding of what He sent down in the Wise Remembrance [the Qur'ān], so that they might be safeguarded from the calamity of doubt and delusion . . . . And there is no way to [acquire this knowledge] except through the knowledge of the science of rhetoric, including the figures of *badīʿ*, through which the meaning of the inimitability of the Qur'ān and the veracity of the prophethood of Muḥammad (peace and blessings of God upon him) is known by evidence and proof.

To grasp through the study of rhetoric the unsurpassable beauty of the Qur'ān is to experience firsthand the evidentiary miracle of Muḥammad's prophethood. It is as if you witnessed *with your own eyes* Moses turning his rod into a serpent or Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead or Muḥammad splitting the moon in half—this is what *iʿjāz* scholars mean when they say that the Qur'ān is a permanent miracle, whereas Moses' or Jesus' are merely passing, ephemeral miracles. In this respect, then, to combine in a single poem a contractual guarantee of the Prophet's intercession on Judgment Day with the rhetorical knowledge requisite for witnessing the miracle of the Qur'ān and the truth of Muḥammad's prophethood is to consummate the Islamic faith.

The masters of the *badīʿiyyah*, as we see from al-Ḥillī's statement, do not see themselves as derivative epigones of an irretrievable Golden Age, but rather as poets of originality and

genius who have produced the consummate poetic, rhetorical, and religious devotional work. This serves as further explanation of the title that al-Ḥillī has given his *badīᶜiyyah*, that is, *Al-Kāfiyah*, "the Sufficient."

It should be noted, however, that al-Ḥillī's *badīᶜiyyah* as a poetic text is not entirely self-sufficient; it exemplifies the rhetorical and *badīᶜ* figures, but does not label or explain them (see Appendix: I). Thus, in the *Dīwān* printing, each verse requires a label to indicate which rhetorical figure it exemplifies (al-Ḥillī 1962:685-702). It is rather in his commentary upon it, *Sharḥ al-Kāfiyah*, where al-Ḥillī presents the poem together with his commentary—which typically offers an identification and definition of the figure treated, concise information on other scholars' opinions and definitions, plus a few examples from the Qur'ān and then from poetry—that the project is complete. It is as though the two together form a whole in which there is a symbiotic relationship between the poetic text and its commentary.

At this point we can introduce the idea that the *badīᶜiyyah* itself, as a poem exhibiting the eminently mnemonic characteristics associated with poetry, could serve as a memorial framework to which the scholarly material on the science of rhetoric is appended. We are no longer dealing with the primary orality of the *Jāhiliyyah*, but rather with the "memorial" culture of the medieval manuscript tradition, in which a written base text with marked mnemonic features (poetry, the Qur'ān, didactic poems such as the *Alfiyyah* of Ibn Malik) serves as a memorial framework for less memory-friendly material (rules and examples of grammar, philology, rhetoric, and so on). The "memorial" text, inasmuch as it does not need the radical mnemonics of the primary orality of the *Jāhiliyyah*, exhibits the poetics and aesthetics of the literary ᶜAbbāsid period and provides a written base text that the "student" can memorize by rote and against which he can check his memory.

Thus al-Ḥillī's *badīᶜiyyah* itself provides such a memorial framework, admirably fulfilling through its *qaṣīdah* or specifically *madīḥ nabawī* (praise poem to the Prophet Muḥammad) the genre characteristics of Carruthers' prescriptions for "memorization" and "recollection" (1990). That is to say, for the medieval Muslim, the *madīḥ nabawī* is deeply felt and emotionally intense. Not only does it express intimately felt love for and devotion to the Prophet, but, in its supplicatory form, so successful in al-Būṣīrī's hands, a spiritual drama of sin and repentance unfolds. The emotions of passion, regret, hope, and fear dominate the affective landscape and the psychological trajectory of the poem. Thus both the ritual-poetic structure and the emotionally intense spiritual transformation that it entails render the *madīḥ nabawī* an effective memorial framework admirably suited to Carruthers' requirements. She summarizes the chief features of a "memory image" (1990:59-60) as follows:

> Most importantly, it is "affective" in nature—that is, it is sensorily derived and emotionally charged . . . . Successful memory schemes all acknowledge the importance of tagging material emotionally as well as schematically, making each memory as much as possible into a personal occasion by imprinting emotional associations like desire and fear, pleasure or discomfort.

A second point that she emphasizes for successful memorization or recollection is that one must "use a set order with a clearly established beginning" (61), which, of course, is an apt description of the *qaṣīdah*-form in general, and the *madīḥ nabawī* in particular.

Although much of what Carruthers discusses is "memorial structures" devised by the memorizer to commit material to memory, my argument here is that the poetic work itself serves as a memorial structure, and further, perhaps more precisely, can be understood in terms of the medieval *catena*, or "chain," as she describes Thomas Aquinas's compilation in around 1263 of patristic texts on the Bible, the *Catena Aurea* (Carruthers 1990:6):

> The authorities are chained, or hooked, together by a Biblical phrase. Thus the commentary entirely follows the sequence of the main text, each chapter division of the Gospel book forming a division of the *Catena* and each verse . . . quoted separately with a string of relevant comments following it.

Of course, it seems to me the *madīḥ nabawī* as a *qaṣīdah* with mono-rhyme and mono-meter resembles a chain and its links more closely than the Biblical text.

We should not, however, let the purely scholarly and devotional aspects of the *badīʿiyyah* genre divert us from the highly charged competitive atmosphere in which it was spawned and spread. It is clear from his introduction to his commentary, *Sharḥ al-Kāfiyah,* that al-Ḥillī sees himself in competition with his predecessors in identifying and classifying rhetorical figures, chief among them Ibn Abī al-Iṣbaʿ (d. 654 H.). In this respect the "inspiration" to combine a rhetorical handbook with a *madīḥ nabawī* imitating al-Būṣīrī's Burdah is an attempt to trump his competition, both among scholars of rhetoric and among poets (remember, he was above all renowned as a poet of vast and varied oeuvre)—to kill two birds with one stone.

In terms of the history of rhetoric and *badīʿ*, it is important to note that since the High ʿAbbāsid period with its radically innovative linguistic and rhetorical developments, which in our argument we have linked to the establishment of literacy, there has occurred, under the influence of the third/ninth-century critic ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Kitāb al-Badīʿ* (see Stetkevych 1991:19-37), a homogenization of rhetorical figures to the point where the term *maḥāsin al-badīʿ* (adornments of *badīʿ*) includes any figure or stylistic trait that "adorns" language or poetry. The traditional oral-mnemonic-derived aesthetics of *ʿamūd al-shiʿr* (pillar of poetry) have been merged with even the most contrived and complicated rhetorical devices that a literacy-based poetry could produce. Further, we see that even these later have been identified in the Qurʾānic text. This produces a curious situation in which, at least as it seems to the modern reader, the proof of the Qurʾān's miraculousness is that it exhibits far-fetched rhetorical devices that no one thought up until centuries later.

Another noteworthy feature of al-Ḥillī's commentary, a phenomenon also apparent in al-Būṣīrī's Burdah, as I have demonstrated, but perhaps more obvious when given rhetorical labels, is that what I term the "ritual core" parts of the poem—the deeply spiritually affective sections expressing repentance, self-abasement, supplication, and pleas for intercession. These contain rhetorical "figures" that we associate with the smooth and harmonious *ʿamūd al-shiʿr* aesthetic, whereas the martial-heroic passages of the Prophet's raids and military expeditions exhibit the highly complex and jarring *badīʿ* figures of ʿAbbāsid panegyric (Stetkevych 2007).

Al-Ḥillī's *badīʿiyyah* spawned many imitators, or rather competitors, seeking to outdo him. We should remark that within the Arabic poetic tradition, the very composition of a *muʿāraḍah* (contrafaction), as both the Arabic and English terms etymologically indicate, constituted *nolens volens* a challenge or contest. Here we will look at just a few examples of the competitive spirit that drove later practitioners of the *badīʿiyyah*. The first such case is ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Mawṣilī (d. 789/1387) (al-Ḥamawī, al-Mawṣilī, et al. 1897:15-22; Abū Zayd 1983:79-80).[4] Dispensing with the necessity of a commentary to identify and define the figure exemplified in each line, he took it upon himself to compose a *badīʿiyyah* in which each line not only exemplified a device, but included its name (most often in the form of a pun) in the line itself (see Appendix: II). This then produces a freestanding independent poem in which the technical term and example of each device are fully fused in a fashion that is eminently mnemonic itself within a self-contained poem of prophetic praise. For al-Mawṣilī this was the consummate poetic work.

This, of course, did not preclude his composing a commentary, and, although it appears that he did not give his *badīʿiyyah* a title, it is commonly known by the quite perceptive title of its commentary: *Al-Tawaṣṣul bi-al-Badīʿ ilá al-Tawassul bi-al-Shafīʿ* (Abū Zayd 1983:77). This title, however charming, is not empty rhetoric. Through its wordplay it conveys the total fusion of *badīʿ* into *madīḥ nabawī* that al-Mawṣilī has achieved. It means something like "achieving by means of *badīʿ* supplication to [Muḥammad] the Intercessor." Inasmuch as the rite of supplication has at its heart a ritual exchange—praise for prize, or here praise for intercession—the rhetorical figures of the *badīʿiyyah* are not mere rhetorical examples, but rather they constitute the very gift that the poet is giving. Following through on this logic, *badīʿ*, because it is the means to acquiring the Prophet's intercession on Judgment Day, is therefore the means to salvation. This logic then comes full circle, because the understanding of *badīʿ*/rhetoric, as we saw above, is also the consummation of the Islamic faith, for it is equated with witnessing the miracle of the Qur'ān and, *ipso facto*, the truth of Muḥammad's prophethood. In addition, al-Mawṣilī's poem, as a memorial structure, is self-contained, not relying upon a commentary to name or explain the rhetorical figures it employs. The poem as a devotional exercise assumes as well an unusual performative quality. To compose, memorize, and/or recite the poem is to achieve, or make one's own, through its words and tropes, that very knowledge of rhetoric that constitutes witnessing Muḥammad's miracle (the Qur'ān) and, at the same time, to present those rhetorical "gems" as gifts of praise in a ritual of exchange and supplication for the Prophet's intercession on Judgment Day.

Finally, we will look at a further development that exemplifies the complex interplay of factors associated with both orality and literacy in medieval memorial culture, Abū Bakr Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī's (d. 837/1434) *Khizānat al-Adab wa-Ghāyat al-Arab* ("The Treasury of Literature and the Utmost Aim") (al-Ḥamawī 2006). It is his "commentary," composed in 826/1433 on his most celebrated poem, his *badīʿiyyah*. In his brief introduction, al-Ḥamawī clearly establishes his intent to outdo two of his predecessors in the *badīʿiyyah* genre, Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī and ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Mawṣilī, by combining the limpid style of the former with the word

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[4] All the lines of al-Mawṣilī's *badīʿiyyah* are also included in the commentary of al-Ḥamawī's *Khizānat al-Adab* (al-Ḥamawī 2006); see below.

play on the rhetorical terms of the latter (see Appendix: III). In addition, he points out that he has taken the opportunity to settle a religious score. Since his two predecessors, both Shiᶜites, as it appears, did not mention the precedence of Abū Bakr, the first Orthodox caliph, in their *badīᶜiyyah*s, he titles his *Taqdīm Abī Bakr* ("The Precedence of [the caliph] Abū Bakr" [over ᶜAlī]), but equally the superiority of his [Abū Bakr al-Ḥamawī's] *badīᶜiyyah* over theirs.[5]

But al-Ḥamawī does not leave his poem as a freestanding entity. Here I would like to suggest that, in general, in the classical and medieval periods, poems, especially of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period, at least in the realm of *paideia* or *adab* as cultural formation, had come to exist not so much as freestanding texts, but had begun to function as memorial structures—harking back to all the oral-mnemonic features of pre-Islamic poetry—from which, as in the medieval Christian *catena*, vast amounts of learning (grammatical, philological, cultural, rhetorical, and so on) were suspended. Take for example such classics as al-Anbārī's commentary on the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt,* al-Tibrīzī's or al-Zawzanī's commentaries on the *Muᶜallaqāt*, or al-Tibrīzī's commentary on Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah.* Following Carruthers' general line of thinking, we can note that 1) the commentator authorizes and authenticates the base text as a "classic" worthy of commentary; 2) the commentator not only explains the base text, but uses his commentary as a compendium of various sorts of information; and 3) in this respect, the base text becomes a memorial structure to which non-mnemonically formatted (that is, prose) information is appended.

In this light, the semiotics of al-Ḥamawī's title *Khizānat al-Adab wa-Ghāyat al-Arab* ("The Treasury of Literature and the Utmost Aim") is of interest. For the first part, Carruthers (1990:34-35) has noted that a storehouse or treasury is a common metaphor for the memory. For the second, we are to understand that this work has achieved the utmost aim or desire, presumably of human knowledge. By appending a storehouse or treasury of *adab*/*paideia* knowledge to his own composition of *madīḥ nabawī*, al-Ḥamawī is first of all validating and authorizing his own poem as a "foundational text"—a classic. In doing so, praise of the Prophet, of however recent vintage, displaces the pagan classics as the conceptual framework on which all *adab* learning "depends." I believe that this is indicative of a huge cultural shift from the classical to the medieval period. Some such idea appears belatedly in Yūsuf ibn Ismāᶜīl al-Nabhānī's (1996:i, 33-34) (d. 1350/1921) introduction to his renowned compendium of *madīḥ nabawī*, in which he declares that praise of the Prophet is the highest form of poetry and expresses his perplexity at the vexed issue as to why the master poets of the classical (Umayyad and especially ᶜAbbāsid) periods (the so-called *fuḥūl,* or "stallions," of the poets) did not compose in this genre.

As his title suggests, al-Ḥamawī (2006:ii, 478-81) goes far beyond the straightforward explanation of rhetorical figures such as we find in al-Ḥillī to produce an all-inclusive compendium of *adab,* including, for example, an entire *maqāmah* of al-Ḥarīrī. This (re)configuration of *adab* around an eminently religious and medieval text, his *badīᶜiyyah*, and furthermore around rhetorical figures embedded in a supplicatory ritual, should then be considered the consummate medieval or post-classical work. It embodies in its structure as well

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[5] Brockelman (1979) notes that al-Ḥamawī further strove to establish his superiority over al-Ḥillī and al-Mawṣilī in a work entitled *Thubūt al-Ḥujjah ʿalá al-Mawṣilī wa-al-Ḥillī li-Ibn Ḥijjah* (ms. Berlin).

as contents the essential beliefs and the epistemological hierarchy of the medieval Muslim literary scholar.[6]

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[6] It is entirely indicative of the transfer from the manuscript to the print tradition, and likewise from a religious to a secular approach to rhetorical knowledge, that Pierre Cachia (1998) has extracted and translated a handlist of rhetorical figures, definitions, and examples from ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī's (d. 1143 H.) commentary on his own *badīᶜiyyah*, entitled *Nafaḥāt al-Azhār ʿalá Nasamāt al-Asḥār*, while eliminating and/or dismantling the *badīᶜiyyah* itself that forms the structure of the original Arabic work.

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Appendix of *Badīʿiyyah* Examples

(<u>Underline</u> = rhetorical device; **bold** = play on rhetorical term.)

I: Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (1982:57, v. 1; 1962:685, v. 1)

> *in ji'ta <u>Salʿan</u> fa-<u>sal ʿan</u> jīrati l-ʿAlami*
> *w-aqrā l-<u>salāma</u> ʿalá ʿurbin bi-Dhī <u>Salami</u>*

> If you come to Salʿ then ask about the neighbors of ʿAlam,
> And recite a greeting to the Bedouin of Dhū Salam.

1. *barāʿat al-maṭlaʿ* (masterful opening): smooth, clear, and delicate
2. *jinās murakkab* (compound root-play): *Salʿan . . . . sal ʿan*
3. *jinās muṭlaq* (pure root-play): *salām . . . . Salam*

II: ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Mawṣilī (al-Ḥamawī, al-Mawṣilī et al. 1897:15, v. 1)

> *fa-ḥayyi <u>Salmá</u> wa-<u>sal mā</u> **rakkabat** bi-shadhan*
> *qad **aṭlaqat**hu <u>amāma</u> al-ḥayyi ʿan <u>amami</u>*

> Then greet Salmá and ask what has she mixed with the musk
> That she has released before the tribe from nearby.

1. *jinās **murakkab**:   Salmá . . . sal mā*
2. *jinās **muṭlaq**:   amāma . . . amami*

III: Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (al-Ḥamawī 2006:i, 57, v. 2)

> *bi-Llahi <u>sir bī</u> fa-<u>sirbī</u> **<u>ṭallaqū</u>** waṭanī*
> *wa-**rakkabū** fī ḍulūʿī **<u>muṭlaqa</u>** l-saqami*

> By God, take me away, for my people deserted my homeland,
> And have fixed in my heart an endless pain.

1. *jinās **murakkab**: sir bī . . . sirbī*
2. *jinās **muṭlaq**: ṭallaqū . . . / muṭlaqa*