

JĀHILĪ POETRY BEFORE IMRU' AL-QAIS

By

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Abstract

Classical Arab critics held conflicting and blurred views regarding the history of Jāhilī poetry. They believed that Imru'al-Qais was the father of Jāhilī poetry and the creator of most, if not all, of the Jāhilī poetic conventions, but at the same time they referred to a host of distinguished poets who either lived before Imru'al-Qais or were his older contemporaries, and whose works embody most of the conventions attributed to Imru'al-Qais. The discrepancy of the classical critics seems to have been overlooked by the scholars of the last two hundred years who, instead of examining the inherited opinions and the work of individual poets, postulated a series of cul de sac theories on the origins of Jāhilī poetry, thereby adding more confusion to an already confused situation. The reason for this confusion is that the basic ground-work has not been done.

The aim of this thesis is three fold: to investigate the validity of the classical critics' assumptions; to trace the history of Jāhilī poetry before Imru'al-Qais; to study the work of over thirty poets, so as to prove that Imru'al-Qais drew on a well-established poetic tradition.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first

chapter deals with the source material and the language of Jāhiliyya; the second chapter covers the historical and religious background; the third chapter, which makes up more than half the thesis, discusses the work of over thirty poets. The thesis ends with a conclusion that highlights certain aspects of the Jāhili poetic experience before Imru'al-Qais.

Transliteration Table

ء	*	آ	ض	d
ا		ā	ط	t
ب		b	ظ	z
ت		t	ع	c
ث		th	غ	gh
ج		j	ف	f
ح		ḥ	ق	q
خ		kh	ك	k
د		d	ل	l
ذ		dh	م	m
ر		r	ن	n
ز		z	ه	h
س		s	و	w (ū, aw)
ش		sh	ي	y(ī, ai, ay, ya)
ص		ṣ		

* The same sign is also used as an apostrophe.

Note: The titles of the books used in the footnotes have been shortened to either the first word of the title or the word by which the book is known. For example: Tabarī's Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk appears as Tārīkh, and Abū al-Faraj's Kitāb al-Aghānī as Aghānī.

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Contents

Abstract

Transliteration Table

Acknowledgements

Introduction	i-iii
Chapter I The Sources And The Language	1-41
a. Are the Arab Sources Realiabile?	1
b. Are the Jahili Poems Authentic?	4
c. What Was the Language of the Jāhilīs?	24
Chapter II The Jāhiliyya	42-88
a. The Arabs	42
b. Religious Beliefs	70
Chapter III Jāhili Poetry	89-273
a. The Poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations	91
b. The Poetry of the Ancient Jāhiliyya	93
c. The Poetry of the Late Jāhiliyya: The	114

Pre-Imru' al-Qais Period

Conclusion	274
Bibliography	292

Introduction

When Sir William Jones first introduced the seven Mu^callaqāt to the English reader in the second half of the eighteenth century, he generated an interest in Arab poetry in general and Jāhilī poetry in particular. But unfortunately the scholars who followed Sir William Jones have made no real attempt to map out the landscape of Jāhilī poetry. Instead, they concentrated on the Mu^callaqa poets, and considered them as being the product of one mould rather than poets representing the various stages of development in Jāhilī poetry. For example, there is hardly any study of the generation of poets before Imru' al-Qais, or of Imru' al-Qais's generation, or of the generations who came after Imru' al-Qais. Scholars seem to have overlooked the fact that each succeeding generation has its own distinct poetic qualities.

The only scholar to take a broader perspective of Jāhilī poetry is the Arab Jesuit Louis Cheikho. Although Cheikho went overboard in baptising the major Jāhilī poets in Shu^carā' al-Nasrāniyya Qabl al-Islām, his method enabled him to shift the emphasis from the Mu^callaqa poets to the poets of each tribe, and in consequence threw light on the history of each tribe as seen through the eyes of its contemporary poets.

Like Shu^carā' al-Nasrāniyya Qabl al-Islām, our study Jāhiliī Poetry Before Imru' al-Qais shifts the emphasis from the Mu^callaqa poets to other neglected areas of Jāhiliī poetry but, unlike Cheikho's work, traces the history of Jāhiliī poetry from the earliest known Jāhiliī poet Mudād b. ^cAmr al-Jurhumī to the Mu^callaqa poet ^cAbīd b. al-Abras.

In order to study this extensive period within a historical framework we have divided the Jāhiliyya into three main periods: the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations, Ancient Jāhiliyya and Late Jāhiliyya. And since the output of Late Jāhiliī poetry is richer and more varied than that of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations and Ancient Jāhiliyya, we have divided the Late Jāhiliyya into the pre-Imru' al-Qais period, which is the end-point of the present study, the Imru' al-Qais period and the post-Imru' al-Qais period. The surviving poems of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations and Ancient Jāhiliyya have been studied in chronological order, while the pre-Imru' al-Qais poets of the Late Jāhiliyya have been divided into four groups. The first group of poets includes al-Barrāq b. Rawhān, Laīlā bint Lukaiz and Uhaiha b. al-Julāh, and they have been studied as individual poets. The second group of poets have been studied within a historical context. The third group of poets includes al-Muraqqish al-Akbar and al-Muraqqish

al-Asghar whose work centres around the theme of love. The fourth group of poets includes ^cAmr b. Qamī'a, Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī and ^cAbīd b. al-Abras who have been left to the end because of their relevance to Imru'al-Qais who represents the second stage of development in Late Jāhili poetry.

Like Shu^carā' al-Nasrāniyya Qabl al-Islām, Jāhili Poetry Before Imru'al-Qais reconstructs the textual history of Jāhili poetry by drawing on mainly classical Arab sources. It is only by examining the classical Arab sources will we be able to appreciate and understand Arab poetry in general and Jāhili poetry in particular.

Chapter I

The Sources And The Language

Are the Arab Sources Reliable?

One of the problems in tracing the origins of Jāhilī poetry is the lack of sufficient, corroborated data relating to the political and cultural history of the Jāhilī Arabs. Most of the data we have on the Jāhilī Arabs come from Arab sources, like Ayyām al-^cArab, Akhbār al-Yaman, Kitāb al-Tijān, Jāhilī poetry, the Qur'ān, Hadīth and Amthāl literature, which were based on both oral and written traditions. Although no significant Jāhilī documents have surfaced to verify the Arab historians' accounts, nevertheless the excavations of Thamūdī and Musnad ruins together with the discovery of Syriac and Aramaic texts as well as the reassessment of Greek and Roman work support the accounts of the Arab historians.

The Arab historians, like Tabarī, took great pains in collecting, collating and sifting the historical data about the Jāhilī Arabs and their Byzantine, Hebrew, Greek, Roman and Persian neighbours. The Arab historians did not take the information about the history of the above peoples at face value; they consulted the various

available sources and then tried to draw up a plausible and logical history. For example, Ṭabarī's reference to Alexander the Great and the Persian king Darius,¹ to Constantine the Great who built Constantinople and who adopted Christianity as the state religion and divided his kingdom between his three sons,² as well as to Julian the Apostate's two-year reign during which he tried to put a stop to Christian influence and restore the old Roman religion,³ is in line with Greek and Roman records. In addition, Ṭabarī's accounts of the Arab conquest of Persia and the founding of Kūfa by Sa'īd b. Abī Waqqāṣ,⁴ and Khālīd b. al-Walīd's conquest of Syria,⁵ are corroborated by an anonymous Syriac text written c.670-680.⁶ The same Syriac text also endorses Ṭabarī's reference to Mundhir I as being the sixth Lakhmid king of Hīra.⁷

If Ṭabarī's reference to the Greeks, Romans and Byzantines has a ring of truth, this would mean he took great care in ascertaining the facts about these civilisations. As these civilisations flourished much earlier or were contemporaneous with the Arab kingdoms he described, and although the sources were in languages he did not speak, Ṭabarī was able to give credible sequential accounts of the non-Arab civilisations with approximate dating. If Ṭabarī's reference to the above civilisations is correct,

is it not reasonable to assume that he must have applied the same meticulous method in vetting his Arab sources, both oral and written, before he wrote about the Arab kingdoms before Islam?

Ṭabari's handling of the sources and the sequential presentation of events and his grouping of related incidents and civilisations show he had a clear mind in seeing things and a definite approach in reading history. In quoting different versions relating to a particular event, Ṭabari tells us how different historians saw that event. Ṭabari, like most if not all Arab historians, always quotes his sources, be they books or chains of authorities. If we take the view that his chains of authorities are unreliable, then the whole approach to Arab history and culture is wrongly based and the sources should as a result be disregarded and everything that has been written about the Arabs since the nineteenth century is null and void. Should one rely on Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Hebrew or Syriac accounts of the Arabs? Are the non-Arab sources more reliable than the Arab sources or are they not biased since they reflect a one-sided view of the Arabs? If the non-Arab sources are considered reliable, what are the criteria used to ascertain their reliability? Since the non-Arab accounts of the Arabs have not been corroborated by contemporary Arab sources, what makes them more reliable than the Arab sources?

Further, the non-Arab sources made incidental references to the Arabs only when the Arab presence had a bearing on their respective regions. Therefore if we treat the non-Arab sources in the same way the doubting Thomases treat the Arab sources, then the non-Arab sources should also be discredited. This would result in the impossibility of writing a credible history of the Arabs or of any nation for that matter.

We are therefore left with two options: either to accept the Arab and non-Arab sources as genuine or to reject both of them. If we take the first option and take a critically balanced view of the accounts, we may be able to come up with a reasonable history of the peoples concerned. But if we take the second option then there is no point in writing anything based on discredited sources.

Are the Jāhilī Poems Authentic?

The question regarding the authenticity of Jāhilī poetry was first raised and resolved by the Umayyad and early Abbasid scholars like Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlā' (d. 154/771), Abū ʿUbaida (d. 209/824), Asmaʿī (d. 216/831) al-Mufaddal al-Dabbi (d. 168/784) and Ibn al-Sikkit (d. 244/858).¹ As these scholars were themselves rāwīs and editors of Jāhilī poetry and at home with the language and the

world of the Jāhiliī poems, they worked out guidelines to distinguish a genuine Jāhiliī poem from a forged one. The guidelines involved the study of the poem's style, language, imagery, metre, syntactical structure, rhyme schemes, themes, tone and terms of reference. The soundness of this approach is borne out by the extant Jāhiliī dīwāns which show that no two poems, let alone two dīwāns, by two different poets, could have been written by one poet. Each Jāhiliī dīwān bears the unmistakable imprint of its author, as can be gauged from the work of Imru al-Qais which is distinct from that of Muhalhil, °Abīd b. al-Abras, °Antara, al-Nābigha al-Dhubyanī and Zuhair.

In his critical work Islāh mā Ghalat fīh Abū °Abdillāh al-Nimrī fī Ma°ānī Abyāt al-Hamāsa, Abu al-Aswad al-Ghundiyanī gives us a clear idea of the way classical scholars vetted the poetry texts in order to determine their authenticity. In this instance, Abū al-Aswad al-Ghundiyanī examines Nimrī's edition and interpretation of Abū Tammām's Hamāsa and points out the textual, syntactical and semantic inaccuracies that pervade the text.

Poets and scholars regarded Hammād al-Rāwī (d. 155/722) as one of the best, if not the best authority on Jāhiliī poetry. His knowledge of Jāhiliī poetry is acknowledged

by the Umayyad poet Dhū al-Rumma (d. 117/735), whose poems have more affinities with Jāhilī poetry than the poetry of any of his contemporaries. Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 356/967) says on one occasion Hammād read a poem to a patron in the presence of Dhū al-Rumma. After the patron had rewarded Hammād, he asked Dhū al-Rumma: "What do you think of the poem?" Dhū al-Rumma said: "It's a fine poem, but it's not by him." When the patron asked Hammād if he was the author of the poem, Hammād replied the poem was by a Jāhilī poet and he was the only one who had a copy of that poem. Then the patron said: "How did Dhū al-Rumma know it was not your poem?" Hammād said: "Dhū al-Rumma recognised the Jāhilī idiom and terms of reference."¹ In another instance Abū al-Faraj relates that once Farazdaq (d. 110 / 728) read one of his poems in the presence of Hammād who remarked that one of the verses in the poem was by a Yemeni poet. Farazdaq, unconcerned by Hammād's remark, said: "Who knows about it other than you? Do you expect me to leave the verse out when people attribute it to me, just because you're the only one who knows about it?"²

Hammād's reputation as a leading authority on Jāhilī poetry is attested by the following stories. The first story goes, one day the Umayyad Caliph Hishām (d. 125/743) was unable to remember the author of the verse: (Khafīf)

فَدَعُوا بِالصَّبُوحِ يَوْمًا بَخَاءَتِ قَيْنَةٌ فِي يَمِينِهَا إِبْرِيْقُ

and so he sent for Hammād who was in Kūfa. On hearing the verse Hammād told the Caliph that the verse was by the Jāhiliī poet ¹Adī b. Zaid. The Caliph was pleased and rewarded Hammād generously. In the second story, the Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd II (d. 126/744), who was one of the finest poets of his time, sent for Hammād to test his knowledge of Jāhiliī poetry.² On that occasion Hammād recited 2800 Jāhiliī poems. It is worth mentioning that the Umayyad caliphs were well-versed in Jāhiliī poetry which they had been taught from an early age.³ The caliphs also held regular literary sessions in which scholars, poets and critics took part. Some of the poems quoted at these meetings were by Jāhiliī poets.⁴ The Caliph Mu^cāwiya (d. 60/680) was steeped in Jāhiliī poetry. In one of the regular literary sessions he held at his court, the acknowledged rāwī and historian of Jāhiliyya ⁵Ubaid b. Shariyya al-Jurhumī (d. 67/665), who was well over one hundred years old, recited a poem by Imru'al-Qais, at the end of which Mu^cāwiya said: "We thought the poem was by Dhū Nuwās." But ⁶Ubaid assured Mu^cāwiya that the poem was by Imru'al-Qais, which was the case.⁶

What made Hammād become a rāwī of Jāhiliī poetry? Abū al-Faraj says before Hammād got involved in poetry he was a robber. One day Hammād raided a house, and among the loot he found a bundle of papers which contained

Ansārī poetry. Hammād was so impressed by the Ansārī poems that he decided to become a rāwī¹.

Ibn Sallām (d. 232/846) credits Hammād for being the first rāwī to collect Jāhilī poetry, but at the same time he accuses Hammād of being unreliable because he sometimes attributed certain poems to the wrong poets.² In his view Khalaf al-Ahmar (d. 180/796) was more reliable as a rāwī than Hammād.³ It seems Ibn Sallām does not question the authenticity of Hammād's Jāhilī poems, but the wrong attribution. In spite of Ibn Sallām's reservations, none of the classical scholars doubted the authenticity of the Mu^callaqāt Hammād edited.⁴ This is confirmed by the extant editions of the Mu^callaqāt made by Abū Zaid al-Qurashī, Anbārī (d. 304/917), Ibn al-Nahhās (d. 338/950), Zawzanī (d. 486/1093) and Tibrīzī (d. 502/1109). If we compare these editions we will find that a poem in one edition may have a few verses more or less than the same poem in another edition, or minor verbal differences. But the essence of the poems as well as the rhyme and rhythmic structure remain basically the same.

The question is where did Hammād find the Jāhilī poems? Was he the first rāwī to discover the Mu^callaqāt and to point out their importance? Were the poets of the Mu^callaqāt unknown to the Umayyads?

According to Hammād, the Lakhmid king Nu^cmān gave instructions to keep written records of Jāhilī poems, and the books containing the poems were stored in the king's white palace. When the anti-Umayyad rebel leader al-Mukhtār b. Abī ¹U^cbaid (d. 67/687) was told there was a treasure buried under the palace he dug up the treasure and found the poems. In Ṭabaqāt al-Shu^carā' Ibn Sallām says al-Nu^cmān b. al-Mundhir kept a diwān which contained the poems of the major Jāhilī poets and the poems written in his praise and in praise of his family. This collection or part of it fell into the hands of the Umayyad caliphs of the Marwānid branch.² It is possible the Lakhmid anthologies might have been some of Hammād's sources.

It can be deduced from Kitāb al-Aghānī that the Mu^callaqāt and many Jāhilī poems were already popular before Hammād appeared on the scene. Chunks of the Mu^callaqāt of Imru'al-Qais, ^cAntara, Zuhair, al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī, Labīd and A^cshā were set to music and sung by the famous Umayyad composer-singers.³ One of the early Umayyad composer-singers, Sā'ib Khāthir (d. 63/682), who died during the reign of Yazīd b. Mu^cawiya (d. 64/683),⁴ set sections from Imru'al-Qais's Mu^callaqa to music.⁵ Other sections from the same Mu^callaqa were set to music by the following Umayyad musicians: Tuwaṣ (d. 92/711), Ibn Misjah (d. 85/704), Ibn Suraih (d. 98/716),

°Azza al-Mailā' (d. 115/733), Jamīla, Ma°bad (d. 126/743) and Ibn Muhriz (d. 137/755)¹. Also many poems by Jāhilī poets like al-Munakhkhal al-Yashkurī, Muhalhil, Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt and Hātīm al-Tā'ī² were set to music by the Umayyad musicians. All these musicians died before Hammād was born or before they were aware of his presence.

Poems by well-known Jāhilī poets were set to music and sung in Jāhiliyya. In fact, there were poets who had their own musicians who set the poems of their patrons and of other poets to music and sang them. For example, A°shā, was known in Jāhiliyya as "صنّاجة العرب" because most of his poems were set to music and became popular songs.³ Another Jāhilī poet Uhaiḥa b. al-Julāh had a slave-girl who was a composer-singer and who set his poems to music and sang them.⁴ Imru'al-Qais's poems were also sung in Jāhiliyya,⁵ and so were the poems of al-Nābigha al-Dhubyanī.⁶

Classical scholars held that the poet Abū al-Aswad al-Du'ālī (d. 69/688), who under the instruction of the Islamic Caliph °Alī (d. 41/661), worked out the earliest rules of grammar,⁷ was one of the founders of the School of Basra.⁸ Abū al-Aswad was prompted to hammer out grammatical rules after he realised that the new generation of urban people, irrespective of their status, were speaking malhūn Arabic.⁹ His concern for the language

might have induced him to write down Jāhilī and Mukhadram poems and use them as examples to illustrate his grammatical points. Abū al-Aswad was followed by Yahyā b. Ya^cmar, who was a rāwī of Hadīth and was respected for his learning by Ḥajjāj. Ibn Ya^cmar was followed by the grammarian ¹Abdullāh b. Ishāq al-Ḥadramī and by Abū ²Amr b. al-³Alā' whose vast knowledge of the Arab language and tradition was unparalleled. The school of Kūfa was founded by scholars as illustrious as those of Basra. As these two schools were the major centres of learning, and since some of the scholars associated with them like Asma^cī and al-Mufaddal al-Dabbī were very important rāwīs, it is reasonable to assume that poetry was one of the main topics they dealt with, especially Jāhilī poetry, which was considered the unsurpassed art form. Indeed, the scholar Abū ⁴Amr b. al-⁵Alā' declined to write down the poetry of the Umayyad poet Jarīr (d. 110/728) and his contemporaries on account of being muhdath. Because of their attachment to Jāhilī poetry, the Basran and Kūfan scholars kept records of Jāhilī poems, not only for teaching purposes, but to emphasise their perfect qualities. This explains why there are textual discrepancies. Some of the above scholars lived before Hammād and some were his older contemporaries.

There were other rāwīs of Jāhilī poetry who were just as important as Hammād. One of these rāwīs was

Khalaf al-Ahmar who was highly respected by classical scholars and critics.¹ Khalaf was a minor poet and, like Hammād, was accused of fabricating poems and attributing them to Jāhilī poets. According to the Abbasid poet Di^cbil al-Khuzā^cī (d. 246/860), Khalaf told him before he died that he was the author of the epitaph poem attributed to the Jāhilī Sa^clūk poet Ta'abbata Sharran.² Apart from one or two discrepancies, the poem has more affinities with Ta'abbata's poetry than with Khalaf's. The poem is also attributed to Ta'abbata's nephew and to the Jāhilī Sa^clūk poet Shanfarā.³ Ta'abbata and Shanfarā were contemporaries of Imru'al-Qais who died c.540.

It should be noted that Labīd (d. 41/661), who was regarded as a major Jāhilī poet and one of the authors of the Mu^callaqāt, lived for 145 years.⁴ His life spanned the reigns of al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī's patron, the last Lakhmid king Nu^cmān, and Mu^cāwiya. Labīd, who was conversant with the art of writing, was also familiar with Jāhilī poetry.⁵ Ibn Sallām says Labīd was once asked in Kūfa who was the greatest poet of Jāhiliyya,⁶ and his answer was: Imru'al-Qais followed by Tarafa. Although Labīd stopped writing poetry after his conversion to Islam,⁷ that does not mean he stopped taking an interest in poetry. It is evident from Ibn Sallām's story that even after his conversion Labīd

still had definite critical views about Jāhili poetry.

ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbbās (d. 68/687), the cousin of the Prophet, had an inexhaustable knowledge of Jāhili poetry and was the first mufassir to draw attention to the relevance of Jāhili poetry to the study of the Qur'ān. Tanasī says whenever Ibn ʿAbbās was asked about the meaning of a word in the Qur'ān or in the Hadīth, he invariably backed up his interpretation with a quotation from Jāhili poetry.¹ Ibn ʿAbbās advised people: "If you fail to understand the language of the Qur'ān, resort to poetry, for it is the register of the Arabs."² The fact that Ibn ʿAbbās stressed the importance of Jāhili poetry in relation to the elucidation of the Qur'ān would have pushed people to collect and study Jāhili poetry for the sake of understanding the Qur'ān. And this in itself would have prompted poets like Labīd, ʿAmr b. Maʿdī Karib (d. 21/642), Hassān b. Thābit and Huṭai'ah (d. 45/665) to write down their own poems and the work of other Jāhili poets. Further, the tribes among whose members were distinguished Jāhili poets³ most probably wrote down their own poetry-lore for the same purpose. For this reason the tafsīr works and the Qur'ān dictionaries abound in quotations from Jāhili poetry.

Abū al-Faraj relates that ʿUmar advised people to

forget the poetry of polemics that raged between the Muslims and the Mushrikūn in the early days of Islam. °Umar also intimated that if both sides insisted on remembering that kind of poetry then they should "write it down and treasure it." And "they wrote it down."¹

Anbārī says that °Umar wrote to Abū Mūsā al-Ash°arī (d. 44/665) urging him to encourage people to read poetry, because poetry formed the base of the Arab language and also engendered the noble spirit in people.² And for this reason °Umar suggested to Abū al-Aswad al-Du'ālī to write a manual of Arab grammar, so as to preserve the language and enhance the understanding of the Qur'ān and poetry.³

According to the critic Ibn Taifūr (d. 280/894) Hirmāzī, an A°rābī rāwī and a friend of Abū °Ubaida,⁴ said that it was the Caliph °Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (d. 86/705) who collected seven poems, six of which were Jāhilī poems which were highly prized in Jāhiliyya, and the seventh poem was by the Mukhadram poet Aws b. Maghrā' (d. 55/675) who was already an established poet in Jāhiliyya.⁵ Hirmāzī said that °Abd al-Malik first collected six poems, and while he was thinking of including a seventh poem, his son Sulaimān (d. 99/717), who was a small boy at the time, entered the majlis

and recited the poem of Ibn Maghrā' in which the poet mentioned favourably the Caliph ¹Uthmān (d. 35/656): (Basit)

محمدٌ خيرٌ مَنْ يثني على قدمي. وصاحباہ وعثمان بن عفاناً

²Abd al-Malik was taken by the poem and decided to include it in his seven-poem anthology. The other six poems were the Mu^callaqāt of ³Amr b. Kulthūm, al-Hārith b. Hilliza, ³Antara and ³Abīd b. al-Abras, the poems of the Mukhadram poets Suwaid b. Abī Kāhil (d. 60/680): (Ramal)⁴

بَسَطْتُ رَابِعَةَ الْجَبَلِ لَنَا فَوَصَلْنَا الْجَبَلَ مِنْهَا مَا اتَّسَعُ

and Abū Dhu'aib al-Hudhalī (d. 27/648): (Kāmil)⁵

أَمِنَ الْمُنُونِ وَرَيْبِهَا تَوَجَّعُ؟ وَالدهرُ لَيْسَ بِمُعْتَبِرٍ مِنْ يَجْزَعُ

Hirmāzī also says the Caliph Mu^cāwiya instructed the rāwīs to select poems for his son to read. The rāwīs chose twelve poems eleven of which were: the Mu^callaqāt of Imru'al-Qais, Zuhair, Tarafa, al-Hārith b. Hilliza, Labīd, ⁶Amr b. Kulthūm, ⁶Abīd b. al-Abras, ⁶Antara, A^cshā, and the poem of Suwaid b. Abī Kāhil quoted above, and the poem of ⁷Hassān b. Thābit: (Kāmil)

أَسَأَلْتَ رَسْمَ الدَّارِ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْأَلِ بَيْنَ الْجَوَابِي فَالْبُضَيْعِ فَحَوْمَلِ

Ibn Ṭaifūr stresses that the rāwīs were unanimous in regarding the "Seven Long Poems" as the finest samples of Jāhili poetry. The "Seven Long Poems" are the⁸

Mu^callaqāt of Imrū al-Qais, Zuhair, al-Hārith b. Hilliza, Tarafa, ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, ^cAntara and Labīd. He also says some rāwīs added to the "Seven Long Poems" the Mu^callaqāt of ^cAbīd b. al-Abras, ^cAshā and al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī.¹ Ibn Taifūr and Ibn Dā'ūd (d. 297/910) state that the Mu^callaqāt were taught in schools in the ninth century and were very popular with children.²

In discussing Jāhili poetry Ibn Sallām says the critics and scholars of Basra rated highly Imru' al-Qais, while the Kūfans were more inclined to ^cAshā and the Hijāzīs preferred Zuhair.³ The fact that these Jāhili poets were highly regarded by the Umayyad caliphs, the rāwīs and the much-respected scholars of the three centres of learning established during the early Umayyad period, confirms the genuineness of their poems and proves that the poems were already known long before Hammād made an impact as a rāwī. Further, in I^cjāz al-Qur'ān, Bāqillānī emphasises the significance of Imru' al-Qais's Mu^callaqa and how highly the critics regarded it. If the Mu^callaqa had not been genuine, Bāqillānī would not have chosen it as the finest specimen of Jāhili poetry in order to compare it with the Qur'ān and prove that its fine literary qualities did not stand up to the Qur'ān's inimitable style.⁴

Another source of Jāhili poetry was the Christian

monasteries. In Kitāb al-Aghānī Abū al-Faraj relates that once there was a group of people who were discussing the poems of the early Umayyad poet Abū Dahbal and other poets. When they could not agree as to who was the best poet they asked a Christian priest for his view. The priest responded: "Stay where you are until I consult my book of poems." The priest went through an old parchment and gave his verdict in favour of Abū Dahbal.¹ This episode supports the idea that Christian priests took an interest in poetry to the point of writing down poems by Muslim poets, and confirms Ibn al-Kalbī's claim that the Lakhmid kings kept records of their reign in their churches.² Ibn al-Kalbī says that when he wrote the history of the Lakhmid kingdom he consulted the church records of the Lakhmid kings.³

One of the important sources of Jāhilī poetry must have been the school syllabus taught in the Jāhiliyya Islamic and early Umayyad periods. What did the Jāhilī, Islamic and early Umayyad children learn at school? It appears from classical sources that children were taught Jāhilī and contemporary poetry among other things.

It was the policy of the Umayyad caliphs to urge their mu'addibs to teach their children poetry. Mu^cāwiya told his children to teach their children poetry because the Umayyad dynasty he established owed its existence to

a poem by the Jāhiliī poet ^cAmr b. al-Iṭnāba. Mu^cāwīya admitted that when he felt he was going to be defeated at the Battle of Siffīn he mounted his horse and as he was about to run away, he remembered ^cAmr b. al-Iṭnāba's poem, which made him change his mind and hold his ground and ultimately win the war: ¹ (Wāfir)

أَبْتُ لِي هِمَّتِي وَأَبَى بِلَانِي وَأَخَذِي الْحَمْدَ بِالثَّمَنِ الرِّيحِ
وَأَفْحَامِي عَلَى الْمَكْرُوهِ نَفْسِي وَضَرَبِي هَامَةَ الْبَطْلِ الْمُشِيحِ
وَقَوْلِي كُلَّمَا جَشَّتْ وَجَشَّاتُ رُوَيْدَكَ تُحَمِّدِي أَوْ تَسْتَرْجِي
لِأَدْفَعُ عَنْ مَاتَرِ صَالِحَاتٍ وَأَحْمِي بَعْدُ عَن عَرُوضٍ صَحِيحِ

In Amāli al-Murtadā, Murtadā (d. 436/1044) recounts story in which children were taught to read poetry in the Islamic and early Umayyad periods. The story goes that the Jāhiliī poet Rubai^c b. Duba^c al-Fazārī, who fought in the Dāhis - al-Ghabrā' war, went to visit ^cAbd al-Malik before he became caliph. ^cAbd al-Malik asked Rubai^c what he had experienced in his long life. Rubai^c recited a poem in which he said he was already around at the time of Imru' al-Qais's father king Hujr: (Munsariḥ)

هَذَا أَنَلُ الْخُلُودِ وَقَدْ أُذْرِكَ عَتَلِي وَمَوْلِدِي حُجْرًا

^cAbd al-Malik said: "I read this poem when I was a small boy." Rubai^c recited another poem about the devastating effect old age has on people: (Wāfir)

إِذَا عَاشَ الْفَتَى مِائَتَيْنِ عَامًا فَقَدْ ذَهَبَ اللَّذَائِدَةُ وَالْفَتَاةُ

°Abd al-Malik said: "I read this poem when I was a small boy."¹

°Abd al-Malik employed Sha°bī (d. 103/721), rāwī mahaddith, mufassir and historian of the Jāhiliyya his children the Qur'ān, Hadīth and poetry among other things.² As °Abd al-Malik was an avid reader of Jāhili poetry and Sha°bī a rāwī of Jāhili poetry, Jāhili poetry must have been one of the principal subjects Sha°bī taught °Abd al-Malik's children.

The teaching of Jāhili poetry in schools was widespread in the Umayyad period. The patron of poets and musicians °Abdullāh b. Ja°far b. Abī Tālib (d. 80/700), the nephew of the Caliph °Alī, suggested to the mu'addib of his children not to teach them the poems of the Jāhili poet °Urwa b. al-Ward on ghurba, in case they might be tempted to emigrate.³

Classical scholars were in agreement that the Umayyad poet Kumait (d. 126/744), a friend of Hammād, had a strong Jāhili background and a deeper understanding of Jāhili poetry than Hammād. Kumait drew his knowledge of the Jāhiliyya from his two grand-mothers, born and brought up in Jāhiliyya, and whenever he was in doubt about the terms of reference of certain Jāhili poems he consulted his grand-mothers.⁴ Kumait was a schoolteacher in a Kūfan

1
mosque where in all probability he taught children Jāhiliī
poetry.

The Umayyad poets were familiar with Jāhiliī poetry,
and many of the Jāhiliī poets lived right up to the
Umayyad period and frequented the courts of the Umayyad
caliphs and governors.² Some of the Jāhiliī poets became
friends of some of the Umayyad poets. For instance,
Farazdaq says he was a friend of the poet Musāwir b. Hind
al-^cAbsī (d. 69/688) who was born during the Dāhis -
al-Ghabrā' war, about fifty years before Islam.³ Farazdaq,
who emerged as a satirist during the reign of ^cUthmān,⁴
boasts that he knew a great deal of pre-Umayyad poetry,
and considered himself the "heir" of the major Jāhiliī,
Mukhadram and Islamic poets, whose work he read in
" book form".⁵ In one of his naqā'id poems Farazdaq
states that his extensive reading included the poetry
of Muhalhil, ^cAbīd b. al-Abras, Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī,
Muraqqish, Imru al-Qais, ^cAlqama, Tarafa, al-Mukhabbal
al-Sa^cdī, Bishr b. Abī Khāzim, Aws b. Hajar, al-Nābigha
al-Dhubyānī, Zuhair, A^cshā Qais, A^cshā Bāhilla, Labīd,
Ka^cb b. Zuhair, Hassān b. Thābit, Hutai'a, Abū al-Tamhān
al-Qainī (d. 30/650) and al-Najāshī al-Hārithī (d. 40/660):⁶

(Kāmil)

وَهَبَ الْقَصَائِدَ لِي التَّوَابِعُ، إِذْ مَضَوْا، وَأَبُو يَزِيدَ وَذُو الْقُرُوحِ وَجَرُولُ
وَالْفَحْلُ عَلَقَمَةُ الَّذِي كَانَتْ لَهُ حُلَلُ الْمُلُوكِ كَلَامُهُ لَا يُنْحَلُ
وَأَخُو بَنِي قَيْسٍ، وَهَنْ قَتَلْتُهُ، وَمُهَنْهَلُ الشَّعْرَاءِ ذَاكَ الْأَوَّلُ

والأغشيان، كلاهما، ومرفش، وأخو قضاة قوله يتمثل
 وأخو بني أسد عبيد، إذ مضى، وأبو دؤاد قوله يتنحل
 وإننا أبي سلمى زهير وإنه، وابن الفريرة حين جد المقول
 والجعفري، وكان بشر قبله، لي من قصائده الكتاب المجلد
 ولقد ورثت لآل أوس منطوقاً كالسم خالط جانبيه الحنظل
 والحارثي، أخو الجاس، ورثته صدعاً، كما صدع الصفاة المعول
 يصدعن صاحبة الصفا عن متنها، ولهن من جبلي عمية أنقل
 دفعوا إلي كتابهن وصية، فورنهن كأنهن الجندل
 فيهن شاركني المساور بعدهم، وأخو هوازن والشامي الأخطل

Farazdaq's reference to the poetry of his predecessors being available in "book form", which he probably read either at school or early in his poetic career, proves that Jāhili, Mukhadram and Islamic poetry was in circulation in written form in the Islamic and early Umayyad periods. It is worth noting that Farazdaq is responsible for perpetuating the story of Dārat Juljul which he heard from his grand-father and which is mentioned cryptically in Imru'al-Qais's Mu^callaqa.²

It was the custom of the Jāhili poets to have rāwīs to publicise their work. In most cases the rāwīs became poets in their own right. For example, the Jāhili poet Imru'al-Qais was the rāwī of Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī³ and Aws b. Hajar's rāwī was his step-son Zuhair b. Abī Sulmā⁴, whose rāwīs were his son, the Mukhadram poet Ka^cb (d. 26/646) and the Islamic poet Hūtai'a, whose rāwī was Hudba b. Khashasram

(d. 50/670), whose rāwī was the Umayyad poet Jamīl Buthaina (d. 82/701), whose rāwī was Kuthayyir ^cAzza (d. 105/723).¹

One of the great achievements of the Prophet Muhammad (572-632) and his successors, the four Islamic caliphs, is their success in preserving Jāhilī culture. The Prophet's preoccupation with the Jāhilī civilisations is reflected in the Qur'ān and Hadīth, which embody a wealth of information on every aspect of Jāhilī life. The Prophet regularly met historians of the Jāhiliyya, rawis of Jāhilī poetry and Jāhilī and Mukhadram poets.² The Prophet encouraged poetry recitals and installed in his own mosque a minbar from which the poet Ḥassān b. Thābit could read his poems.³ The first Islamic Caliph Abū Bakr al-Siddiq (d. 13/634) was a merchant, renowned orator, genealogist, historian and rāwī of Jāhilī poetry, and, like the Prophet, was favourably disposed to poetry.⁴ It was Abū Bakr who, at the instigation of the Prophet, taught Ḥassān b. Thābit the vulnerable spots in the Qurashī Mushrikūn history and genealogy.⁵ The second Islamic Caliph ^cUmar, a critic of Jāhilī poetry, was always in the company of historians, rāwis of Jāhilī poetry and Jāhilī and Mukhadram poets discussing Jāhilī poetry.⁶ The third Islamic Caliph ^cUthmān was the first caliph to turn his majlis into a caliphal court where historians, rāwis of Jāhilī poetry and Jāhilī and Mukhadram poets talked about Jāhilī poetry and history.

The Jāhiliī Christian poet Ḥarmala b. al-Mundhir b. Ma^cdī Karib, a celebrated historian and rāwī of Jāhiliī poetry, frequented ¹ Uthmān's court. The fourth Caliph ^cAlī was a poet, critic, grammarian, mufassir, and historian of the Jāhiliyya, and his critical judgements of Jāhiliī poetry were highly regarded.² Mu^cāwiya maintained the Jāhiliī and Islamic traditions of literary discussions at court and his predecessors' zeal for keeping records of Jāhiliī literature and history.³

It is evident from the above study that there was an uninterrupted interest in the Jāhiliyya and in Jāhiliī poetry throughout the Islamic, Umayyad and Abbasid periods, and that Jāhiliī literature was available in book form in the Jāhiliyya, and subsequent periods. Therefore, the notion that Jāhiliī poetry was rediscovered by Ḥammād, or by the Umayyad and Abbasid scholars, no longer holds water.⁴

The key to the authenticity of Jāhiliī poetry lies in the reappraisal of Jāhiliī poetry in general and the poems of individual poets in particular. Each Jāhiliī poet is distinguished by his individual style, and the poems of each poet have nothing in common with the poems of other poets other than the fact that they were all written in the Jāhiliyya. The distinguishing features of each poet will be discussed when we deal with the poetry of the poets who lived

before Imru'al-Qais.

What Was the Language of the Jāhilīs?

The Arab tradition relates that the Jāhilīs spoke¹ one common language, with minor tribal idiosyncrasies. The same tradition traces this common language back to the times of Ismā^cīl b. Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl, and makes a distinction between the language spoken by the Arabs before Ismā^cīl and the language spoken since Ismā^cīl.² The pre-Ismā^cīl language is called العربية الأولى³ which emphasises the purity of the language, and the post-Ismā^cīl language is called العربية⁴, العربية المبينة and العربية الفصيحة which stress the blended character of the new language.

According to Arab tradition Ismā^cīl, who had an Egyptian and Fertile-Crescent background, grew up among the Jurhumīs of Mecca and adopted their language.⁵ Ismā^cīl also married Ra^cla, the daughter of the Jurhumī king Mudād b. ^cAmr al-Jurhumī.⁶ The same tradition says that all the migrating Yemeni tribes spoke Arabic or a form of Arabic.⁷ This implies that the Jurhumīs, who originally came from Yemen, spoke Arabic which became the language of the Banū Ismā^cīl. If we assume that this tradition has a certain degree of validity, then the poems of Mudād b. ^cAmr b. al-Ḥārith b. Mudād b. ^cAmr al-Jurhumī, who was a

descendant of Ismā^cīl's father-in-law,¹ may be taken as authentic poems or as poems embodying a genuine sentiment which reflects the tragic sense of loss and despair the Jurhumīs experienced after they lost Mecca. Further, the poems attributed to Mudād add up to no more than three or four poems centred on the unhappy fate of the Jurhumīs.² The paucity of the poems and the limitation of the theme, as well as one poem being an ancient Meccan song, enhance the authenticity of the poems. In addition, Abū al-Faraj states that Mudād and his family left Mecca because they did not want to get involved in the war between the Jurhumīs and the Khuza^cīs, and settled in Qanawnā where they lived up to the time of Abū al-Faraj.³ It is possible that these poems were perpetuated by the descendants of the Jurhumīs who kept their tradition alive.

It is still uncertain whether the Yemenis spoke Arabic or a variation of Arabic, or a totally different language from Arabic. It is true that the Yemenis have a distinct script, but because of our inability to read it correctly and intelligently since there are no guidelines telling us how to read it, it may seem different from Arabic. But is it really different from Arabic?⁴ The fact remains that our knowledge of Musnad grammar is incomplete. The range of Musnad vocabulary and some aspects of the Musnad grammar reflect the

strong similarities that exist between Arabic and the Musnad language. Indeed, one of the key factors in working out the Musnad language has been Arabic. Had it not been for this factor our knowledge of the Musnad language would be poorer.

There are other indications which suggest that the Yemenis spoke Arabic. Firstly, the Caliph ^CUmar remarked that Imru'al-Qais was the first major Yemeni poet,¹ which implies that the Yemenis spoke Arabic. ^CUmar's statement is confirmed by the Arab sources which quote a number of Yemeni poets preceeding Imru'al-Qais, but none of them sustain comparison with Imru'al-Qais.² The Arab sources were able to retrieve only a limited number of poems by Yemeni poets from the pre-Imru'al-Qais period, and, apart from one or two relatively long poems, most of the retrieved poems are in snippet form. This raises several questions: why should the Arab sources want to forge snippets of poems that refer to certain events in the distant past, and what would the sources gain by quoting the snippets and attributing them to people who had no bearing on their times? If these poems were not genuine why were they not of the length and quality of the poems of Imru'al-Qais or ^CAntara? The reason is that Imru'al-Qais and ^CAntara lived closer in time to the Prophet Muhammad than the earlier poets of the snippets.

Secondly, Tabarī says the Yemeni tribes Ṭasm and Jadīs spoke Arabic.¹ Tabarī also says when one of the Persian governors of Yemen died he was succeeded by his son Khurra Khusra who, like his father, was born and brought up in Yemen. Khurra was conversant with the Arab language and poetry and was a rāwī of Arab poetry. When the Persian king heard of the new governor's Arab lifestyle he replaced him with another governor.² From this episode we can deduce that Arabic was the language of Yemen, and this lends credibility to the story that Arabic was spoken at the court of Saif b. Dhī Yazan, who received the Arab notables among whom were ^cAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the grand-father of the Prophet Muhammad, and the poet Abū al-Salt, who flocked to his court to congratulate him on freeing his country from the Abyssinians.³ The sources do not refer to the presence of interpreters when Saif b. Dhī Yazan met the Arab notables; but when ^cAbd al-Muṭṭalib communicated with Abraha al-Habashī, the new Abyssinian ruler of Yemen,⁴ he did so via an interpreter.

Thirdly, before the rise of Islam, Mecca was essentially a Qurashī city whereas Medina was Yemeni. When the Prophet Muhammad, a Qurashī, sought refuge in Medina he had no problem in communicating with its Yemeni inhabitants. The sources do not mention that the Prophet engaged interpreters in Medina. As a matter of fact, the

Medinans supported the Prophet and helped him take over Mecca from the Qurashīs. The Prophet also appointed the Medinan poet Hassān b. Thābit as the poet of Islam whose role was to hit back at the Meccan Qurashīs and other Mushrikūn detractors of Islam. Moreover, the Arab armies were composed of Yemenis and Ma^Caddīs and wherever these armies settled the related tribes established themselves in separate quarters. In none of the sources do we get a hint that the Yemenis and the Ma^Caddīs spoke any language other than Arabic. Also the sources do not refer to the Ma^Caddī or the Medinan tribes settling in Yemen.

If Arabic was not the language spoken in Yemen how did it find its way to Yemen? It may be easy to disseminate religion by a handful of missionaries, but it would be impossible for a few settlers to establish a language among people who spoke a totally different language. Had it not been for the fact that Arabic was the language of Yemen, Yemen would not have produced poets like Waddāh al-Yaman (d. 91/709) who was born and brought up in Yemen where he wrote his famous love poem: (Sarī^C)

فالت ألا لا تلجى دارنا إنا أبانا رجل غائر

which was set to Yemeni hazaj music.³ Furthermore, had the Yemenis spoken any language other than Arabic, the old language would have re-emerged in one form or another, in the same way as the Persian language evolved; or it would

have affected the basic structure of the Arab language spoken in Yemen. But the poem of Waddāḥ proves that was not the case.

On the other hand, Ibn Sallām quotes Abū ^cAmr b. al-^cAlā' as saying: "the tongue of Ḥimyar and the remote parts of Yemen is not like our tongue, and their ^cArabiyya is not like our ^cArabiyya."¹ Abū ^cAmr b. al-^cAlā', who was notorious for teasing the Yemenis,² was probably referring to an incident in which an Arab was hurt during his visit to Yemen. The story goes that an Arab visitor went to see the king of Ḥimyar. The king said to the visitor ^{ثَبِّ}, which, in the Yemeni idiom, meant "sit down". The visitor jumped and hurt himself, because the same word meant "jump" in the visitor's regional idiom. So the king said to the visitor: "Your ^cArabiyya is not like our ^cArabiyya."³

If we apply the principle of Abū ^cAmr b. al-^cAlā' to the regional idioms of the Mudarī tribes, we will find that the ^cArabiyya of one Mudarī tribe is different from the ^cArabiyya of another Mudarī tribe, as illustrated in the following example.⁴ When the Mudarī poet Mālik b. Nuwaira was imprisoned on a cold night, Khālīd b. al-Walīd (a Mudarī) said to the Kinānī (a Mudarī) jailer ^{أَدْفُوا أَسْرَاكُم}, meaning in the Qurashī (Mudarī) idiom "keep your prisoners warm". But as the word ^{أَدْفُوا} meant "kill" in the Kinānī idiom, the Kinānī

jailer executed Mālik. Classical Arab critics were aware of these tribo-regional idiosyncracies and called this aspect of the language Addād, and wrote extensively about it.

Throughout the centuries the Arabian Peninsula has experienced intermittent movements of population due to wars and economic and environmental factors. The population movement factor was probably responsible for breaking down the regional and cultural barriers out of which the Arabiyya of Jāhilī poetry evolved.¹

The Arab language has survived the ancient languages like Akkadian, Aramaic, Greek and Latin. Why should this be the case? The answer to this question lies in the fact that the Arabian Peninsula is the home of the Arabs and of the Arab language. The fact that the Arabian Peninsula has never experienced invasions or waves of foreign migrations helped it preserve its language and its way of life.

Another important factor lies in the flexibility of the Arab language's basic semantic, grammatical and syntactical structure which has remained intact since Muhalhil and Imru' al-Qais. If Arabic could survive as a rich and dynamic language for sixteen centuries, then there is no reason why it could not have survived from the time of Ismā^cīl to the time of Muhalhil and Imru' al-Qais which spans eighteen or nineteen centuries.

FootnotesPage 1

1. Classical Arab writers called the Jāhilī Yemeni script Musnad, possibly a Jāhilī Yemeni term. In this work the term Musnad refers to the people, language and script of Yemen before Islam.

Page 2

1. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 574-577; Encyclopaedia Britannica, I, pp. 571-3.
2. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, II, p. 58; Encyclopaedia Britannica, VI, pp. 385-6.
3. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, II, p. 58; Encyclopaedia Britannica, XIII, pp. 129-30.
4. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, III, pp. 578-9.
5. Ibid., pp. 434-5.
6. Anonymous, al-Tārīkh al-Saghīr, pp. 8, 101, 103.
7. Ibid., p. 106; Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, II, p. 65.

Page 4

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 21; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XII, pp. 294-6.

Page 5

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 21; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī,

IX, p. 97; Abū Hilāl, Masūn, pp. 191-2; Abū Hilāl, Sharḥ, pp. 213-5, 225-6. Most of Abū Hilāl's Sharḥ is devoted to this issue.

2. See pages 47-8.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, pp. 70, 73; Yāqūt, Udabā', VI, iv, p. 137.

Page 6

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, p. 88.
2. Ibid., p. 73.

Page 7

1. Ibid., pp. 75-9; Ibn Hījja, Thamarāt, pp. 90-2.
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, p. 93.
3. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, p. 274.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XII, p. 60, VIII, p. 199; Qālī, Amālī, II, pp. 101-3, 157-8; Qālī, Dhail, pp. 29-30; Murṭadā, Amālī, I, p. 278.
5. ^cUbaid, Akhbār, pp. 418-20.
6. Dīwān, pp. 308-311.

Page 8

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, p. 87.
2. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, pp. 40-1.
3. Ibid., p. 21.
4. Yāqūt, Udabā', VI, iv, p. 140.

Page 9

1. Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, II, p. 317; Ibn Jinnī, Khasā'is, I, p. 393.
2. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 23.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, IX, pp. 75, 221-2, X, pp. 302-3, 313, XI, pp. 11-12, 36, XV, p. 36, VIII, p. 218.
4. Ibid., VIII, p. 325.
5. Ibid., p. 322.

Page 10

1. Ibid., IX, p. 75. Ibn Qutaiba says that Imru'al-Qais's Mu^callaqa was a popular song (Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 113).
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XI, pp. 14-5, V, pp. 57, 50-60, IV, p. 119, VIII, pp. 204-6.
3. Ibid., IX, pp. 109-10; Jawālīqī, Mu^carrab, p. 262.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, pp. 39-40.
5. Ibid., XVII, p. 190; Abū ^cUbaida, Naqā'id, I, p. 78; Mufaddal, Amthāl, p. 83.
6. Dīwān, p. 29.
7. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XII, p. 299.
8. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 12.
9. Ibid.; Suyūtī, Wasā'il, pp. 120-1.

Page 11

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, pp. 12-3.

2. Ibid., p. 14.
3. al-Mufaddal al-Dabbī was a Kūfan scholar (Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 21).
4. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 63.

Page 12

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 21; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, pp. 306-7.
2. Ibn al-Mu^ctazz, Tabaqāt, pp. 147-8; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, p. 307.
3. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, p. 307; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXI, pp. 185-6; Abū ^cUbaid, Simt, II, p. 919; Maimanī, Tarā'if, p. 39.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, pp. 361-2.
5. Ibid., p. 362.
6. Ibid., XVII, pp. 58-9.
7. Ibid., XV, pp. 368-9; Qurashī, Jamhara, I, p. 88.

Page 13

1. Ibn Rashīq, ^cUmda, I, p. 30; Tanasī, Nazm, p. 101.
2. Ibn Rashīq, ^cUmda, I, p. 30; Tanasī, Nazm, p. 101
Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, p. 281.
3. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 34.

Page 14

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, IV, p. 141.
2. Anbārī, Idāh, I, pp. 30-1.

3. Ibid., p. 39.
4. Marzubānī, Nūr, p. 208.
5. Ibn Ṭaifūr, Qasā'id, pp. 39-40.

Page 15

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 39; Mufaddal, Mufaddaliyyāt, pp. 191-202.
The poem was known in Jāhiliyya as the yatīma (Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIII, p. 102).
5. Ibn Ṭaifūr, Qasā'id, p. 39; Dīwān al-Hudhaliyyīn, pp. 1-4.
6. Ibn Ṭaifūr, Qasā'id, pp. 40-41.
7. Ibid., p. 41; Dīwān, I, pp. 74-5.
8. Ibn Ṭaifūr, Qasā'id, pp. 35, 41.

Page 16

1. Ibid., p. 40.
2. Ibid., p. 37; Ibn Dā'ūd, Zahra, II, pp. 779-780.
3. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 44.
4. P. 238; Baqillānī, Tamhīd, pp. 133-4.

Page 17

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VII, p. 115.
2. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 627-8.
3. Ibid.

Page 18

1. Ibn Wahb, Burhān, pp. 134-5; Ibn Rashīq, Umda, I, p. 29; Tanasī, Nazm, p. 100.

Page 19

1. I, pp. 253-4; Wahb, Tijān, p. 128.
2. Marzubānī, Nūr, p. 250; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, Iqd, V, p. 275; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 158; Murtadā, Amālī, II, pp. 15-19.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, III, p. 75.
4. Ibid., XVII, pp. 2-3.

Page 20

1. Ibid., p. 2.
2. Ibid., XXI, pp. 268-9; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, Iqd, V, p. 274.
3. Abū ^cUbaida, Naqā'id, I, p. 188; Baghdādī, Khizāna, XI, p. 419; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, pp. 348-9.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXI, pp. 283, 395. Farazdaq was over ninety years old when he died (Ibid., p. 395).
5. Abū ^cUbaida, Naqā'id, I, pp. 186-8.
6. Ibid.; Abū Hilāl, Sharh, p. 426.

Page 21

1. Qurashī, Jamhara, I, pp. 119-21; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, pp. 122-5; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXI,

pp. 340-2. Farazdaq's grand-father Sa^cs^ca b. Nājiya was a Jāhiliī philanthropist and poet (Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXI, pp. 276-81).

3. Ibn Rashīq, ^cUmda, I, p. 198.
4. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt, p. 81.

Page 22

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXI, pp. 254, 273; Ibn Rashīq, ^cUmda, I, p. 198.
2. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, pp. 270-1, 275-80, 291; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, pp. 126, 154-6; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, IV, pp. 146-51.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, IV, p. 146; Ibn Rashīq, ^cUmda, I, p. 27.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, IV, pp. 139-40; Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, III, pp. 65-6.
5. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, IV, pp. 139-40.
6. Ibn Rashīq, ^cUmda, I, p. 98; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, pp. 270, 281.

Page 23

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XII, p. 127; Yāqūt, Udabā', VI, iv, p. 109; Safadī, Nasrat, pp. 139-40.
2. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, pp. 274, 283, 287; Ibn Rashīq, ^cUmda, I, pp. 34, 41-2; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XVI, pp. 376-7; Suyūtī, Wasā'il, pp. 119-20, 122-3.
3. ^cUbaid, Akhbār, pp. 325-6.

4. The authenticity issue was raised again in the nineteenth century, first by Theodor Nöldeke (1861) and then by Wilhelm Ahlwardt (1872), who, like Ibn Sallām before them, cast doubt on the genuineness of Jāhilī poetry. Nöldeke and Ahlwardt argued that as the bulk of Jāhilī poetry was written down in the 2/8 and 3/9 centuries, the poems must have undergone editorial changes, through the hands of the rāwīs of the poets, and through the hands of the rāwīs who wrote them down. The editorial changes involved the substitution of accessible words or expressions for difficult or archaic ones, and Islamic terms of reference for pagan ones, as well as the shuffling of sections or lines either within the same poem or in poems that had the same meter and rhyme. Margoliouth (1925) and Tāha Husain (1926) amplified the ideas of their predecessors and went so far as to say that most, if not all, of Jāhilī poetry was a forgery. A number of Arab and Western scholars, like Charles Lyall, Erich Braūnlich, Giorgio Levi Della Vida, A.J. Arberry and Nāsir al-Dīn al-Asad, disagreed with the conjectures of Margoliouth and Tāha Husain and presented a far more convincing argument in defence of the genuineness of Jāhilī poetry, which resolved the authenticity issue once and for all. For the differing views on the authenticity question see: D.S. Margoliouth, "The Origins of Arabic Poetry", JARS, July 1925, pp. 417-449; C. Lyall, Mufaddaliyyāt, II, pp. xx-xxi; C. Lyall, The Dīwāns of ^cAbīd Ibn al-Abras and ^cAmir Ibn al-Tufail, pp. 11-13; A.J. Arberry,

The Seven Odes, Allen and Unwin, 1957; ^cAbd Raḥmān Badawī, Dirāsāt al-Mustashriqīn ḥawl Ṣiḥḥat al-Shi^cr al-Jāhiliī, Beirut, 1979, pp. 17-142; Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Asad, Masādir al-Shi^cr al-Jāhiliī, Cairo, 1956, (f.e.), pp. 352-428.

Page 24

1. Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, I, p. 587.
2. Ibid., p. 588; Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt, p. 10.
3. Ibn ^cAbd al-Barr, Qasḍ, pp. 20-1.
4. Ibid., pp. 20, 24.
5. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, p. 12; Balkhī, Bad', III, p. 60, IV, p. 105; Ibn Hishām, Sīra, I, pp. 5-8; Balādhurī, Ansāb, I, p. 6.
6. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, p. 12.
7. Ibid.

Page 25

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., pp. 13-4, 18-9.
3. Ibid., p. 17.
4. Abū al-Faraj's account of the Yemeni king Qaisaba b. Kulthūm al-Sakūnī endorses the view that the Yemenis spoke Arabic but wrote in the Musnad script (Aghānī, XIII, pp. 3-6). Beeston holds that the pre-Christian "Sabaic" language had characteristics distinct from Arabic, but the post-Christian "Sabaic" language "shows an increasing degree of approximation in vocabulary to Arabic." Beeston

also says that the lack of guidelines to read the consonantal, Arabian Semitic scripts "imposes great limitations on the linguistic analysis, it also makes even the understanding of the semantic content of the inscriptions often extremely speculative" (Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period, ed. Beeston and others, C.U.P. 1983, pp. 1-2).

Page 26

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VIII, p. 199.
2. See pages 99-101, 160-70.

Page 27

1. Tabarī, Tārīkh, I, p. 613.
2. Ibid., II, p. 215.
3. Mas^cūdī, Murūj, II, p. 206.
4. Tabarī, Tārīkh, II, pp. 133-4; Ibn al-Azraqī, Akhbār, I, pp. 144, 149-51.

Page 28

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, pp. 209-10.
2. Ibid., pp. 211-16.
3. Ibid., p. 216. There were other poets who, like Waddāh, were born and brought up in Yemen. An example is the contemporary of Waddāh Jahdar from the Banū Jusham b. Bakr, whose poems have the simplicity and clarity of Waddāh's poetry (Yāqūt, Buldān, II, pp. 210-11).

Page 29

1. Ṭabaqāt, p. 11. Ṭāha Ḥusain re-phrased the last part of the statement "and their language is not like our language", so as to emphasise that the Yemenis and the Ma^caddīs spoke two different languages. In so doing Ṭāha Ḥusain undermined his own argument (N. Asad, Masādir al-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī, p. 384).
2. To illustrate this point see Zajjājī, Majālis, p. 233.
3. Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, I, p. 792.
4. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, III, p. 278.

Page 30

1. Wellhausen suggests that the Arab language was developed by the Christians of Ḥīra (Encyclopaedia of Islam, I, (n.e.), p. 565). Most Western scholars presume that the Arab language originated in Najd (Ibid.). Chaim Rabin maintains that the Arab language was based on one or several dialects of Najd, where Arab poetry came into being (Ancient West Arabian, Taylor's Foreign Press, London, 1951, p. 3). Lyall says "it is tolerably certain that there were wide differences of dialect and pronunciation in the Arabia of classical times, as there are in the Arabic spoken to-day in different parts of the Peninsula and adjacent regions. The immense vocabulary of the old poetry, and the great number of synonyms, must have grown up by the absorption, into one language of poetic convention, of the tribal word-stocks" (Mufaddaliyyāt, II, pp. xxv-xxvi).

Chapter II

The Jāhiliyya

The Arabs

The Arab tradition divides the Arabs into two groups. The first group was called al-^CArab al-^CĀriba, the original Arabs who were the descendants of Ya^Crub b. Qaḥṭān, the grandson of the ^CĀdite prophet Hūd, who moved out of Iraq soon after the Winds of Bābil incident, and were already speaking the heavenly language al-^CArabiyya which they had been taught by the angel Jibrīl. The second group was called al-^CArab al-Musta^Criba, the mixed Arabs, who were the descendants of the prophet Ismā^Cīl, the son of the Akkadian prophet Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl and of the Egyptian Hājar. It is unclear how the Arabs acquired their name. Some classical scholars believe that the Arabs were named after their progenitor Ya^Crub b. Qaḥṭān, while others think they were called after the Tihāma town ^CAraba where Ismā^Cīl's children grew up. The urban and country Arabs were called ^CArab, and the Arabs of the bādiya were called A^Crāb. The term ^CArab denotes urban and bādiya Arabs and A^Crāb refers only to the bādiya Arabs.¹

The earliest known reference to the Arabs is in an Assyrian victory cuneiform inscription which mentions

an Arab leader by the name of Gindibu who, in an alliance with the kings of Syria and Palestine, commanded a force of one thousand cameliers against the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III at the Battle of Qarqara in 854 B.C.¹ The names of Arab kings, queens and shaikhs crop up frequently in cuneiform texts from the time of the Assyrian king Tiglathpileser III (745-727) to that of the neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus (555-539).² These texts invariably allude to flourishing Arab kingdoms and shaikhdoms in Hijāz and in the regions between North Arabia and Egypt.³ The Old Testament as well as the classical writers like Herodotus, Pliny, Josephus, Strabo and Ptolemy referred extensively to the Arabs, especially the Musnads, Thamūdīs and Nabataeans, whose political and economic influence had a bearing on the regional issues of the day.

The classical Arab historians were aware of the existence of the Musnad, Thamūdī and Nabataean civilisations. Maḥbūb b. Qusṭantīn and Ibn Khaldūn mention the Musnads and Thamūdīs by name, and refer to the Nabataeans as Arabs who were ruled by king Aritah (Hārith).⁴ Ibn Khaldūn says he obtained his information on the Nabataeans and their contemporaries from the writings of Yūsuf b. Kariyyūn, who was in all probability Flavius Josephus.⁵ Ibn Khaldūn also says he found the work of Yūsuf b. Kariyyūn in Egypt,⁶ and boasts that he is the

first historian to use it.¹

By the time of the Prophet Muhammad the Arabs might not have had a clearly detailed knowledge of their distant past, but out of the limited knowledge they had, they painted their own comprehensive picture of their ancient world. The Late Jāhilī and Islamic traditions abound in factual data which have been corroborated by Greek, Roman, Syriac and archeological material, and there may be other data which one day will be authenticated. In any case, even if some of the data were found to be imaginatively conceived, still they could not be dismissed because they form part of the cultural heritage of the Late Jāhilī and Islamic Arabs. Therefore, in order to appreciate the Late Jāhilī and Islamic traditions, it is important to see the past as the Late Jāhilī and Islamic Arabs saw it, irrespective of whether their view of their heritage was lucid or blurred, since they developed their culture upon their understanding of their heritage. For this reason a survey of the Late Jāhilī and Islamic Arabs' conception of their distant past is relevant to the understanding of Jāhiliyya and the Islamic period.

The period covering the history of the Arabs from the earliest times to the rise of Islam is called the Jāhiliyya. The precise meaning of the term is unclear.

The traditional definition of Jāhiliyya as "the age of spiritual darkness" reflects a religious bias based on the unqualified interpretation of certain Qur'ānic āyas in which the Jāhilīs were taken to task for not seeing Allāh in monotheistic perspective.¹ This unfavourable view, which gained currency soon after the establishment of Islam, has over the centuries blurred our appreciation and understanding of the immensely rich and varied Jāhilī civilisations out of which Islam was born. The Qur'ān, Hadīth and Jāhilī literature show that the Jāhiliyya was far from being a spiritual and cultural desert; on the contrary, it was a spiritually and culturally fertile period whose achievements left an indelible mark on the imagination of the peoples who came under the influence of Islam.

As there is no historical justification for the current meaning of Jāhiliyya as "the age of spiritual darkness", it is possible that the intended subtle nuances of the term had either been lost by the time it became necessary to define it, or they were deliberately overlooked because they clashed with the established view that glorified Islam. A likely explanation of Jāhiliyya is that, since the Jāhilīs were divided along tribal lines, they failed to project a vision capable of creating a political cohesive force that could have channelled their resources towards a

clearly defined goal similar to that of Islam. Another likely explanation is that the term Jāhiliyya could simply mean "the preceding period" or "the past"¹. This interpretation is endorsed by the Qur'ān,² the Prophet's sermons,³ remarks by the Sahābīs⁴ and by the Jāhilī poet ^cAmr b. Ma^cdī Karib.⁵ According to Arab tradition the term Jāhiliyya was first used by a woman who asked the Prophet about some camels she had in Jāhiliyya:

يا رسول الله ! إن إبلاً لي أصيبت في الجاهلية ⁶.

Zamakhsharī says the term Jāhiliyya reflects two different ways of life covering the Jāhilī and the Islamic periods. Jāhiliyya in the Jāhilī sense denotes a polytheistic and sybaritic way of life; and in the Islamic sense it denotes only a sybaritic way of life.⁷ On the other hand, the term was probably coined to convey an ambivalent attitude resulting from an insufficient and confused knowledge of the period concerned.

The Jāhiliyya can be divided into three distinct but related periods, namely:

1. The Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations

(ca. 3000 B.C.- A.D. 400) جاهلية الحضارات البائدة

2. Ancient Jāhiliyya

(3000 B.C.-A.D. 400) الجاهلية الجهلاء

3. Late Jāhiliyya

(A.D. 400-A.D. 622)

الجاهلية المتأخرة

It is almost impossible to fix the dates of each period due to the lack of reliable data, and also to the fact that some periods overlap. For example, the first two periods thrived simultaneously and the only difference between them is that the peoples of the first period became extinct, whereas the descendants of the peoples of the second period flourished in the third period.

1. The Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations

The early history of most civilisations is in the main preserved in the oral tradition written down many centuries after the events described had occurred. This is true of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs. Just as the epics of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans embody the memory of their respective early history, Jāhili poetry, Ayyām al-^cArab, The Qur'ān, The Hadīth, the sīras, Akhbār al-Yaman and Kitāb al-Tijān have kept the memory of the ancient Arabs alive for posterity. Moreover, the Arab works present a view of history which reflects the predicaments and the aspirations of the age in which they were written. The stories of ^cĀd, Thamūd and Ayyām al-^cArab, for example, were probably used to

emphasise the following points. First, those who reject the Oneness of Allāh will suffer the same fate of destruction as the ʿĀdites and Thamūdīs. Second, tribal and factional wars will lead to the annihilation of the tribes as it happened to ʿĀsm and Jadīs. Third, disunity will result in the subjugation of the Arabs by foreign powers as in the case of the Lakhmids and the Ghassanids, or in the extermination of the tribes as it happened to the Ḥadrans who were wiped out by the Persians. Fourth, unity will lead to victory, as when the united forces of the Arabs defeated the Persians at the Battle of Dhū Qār. Fifth, the Arab language draws on a long and uninterrupted cultural tradition.

The lost civilisations are divided into two groups. The first group flourished in the distant periods of Jāhiliyya, and includes the peoples of ʿĀd and Thamūd who perished as a result of Divine Will. The second group which thrived in the period close to the Late Jāhiliyya includes ʿĀsm and Jadīs, the late ʿAmālikites and the Ḥadrans who were decimated by wars.

The ʿĀdites

According to Arab tradition the ʿĀdites were the descendants of Iram b. Sām b. Nūh who came from Babylon and settled in Yemen. The polytheist ʿĀdites developed

an advanced civilisation at the height of which Allāh sent them His message through the prophet Hūd in which He urged them to give up idol worship and believe only in one God.¹ Hūd, who was a merchant before he became a prophet, was scorned by the ²Ādites who carried on worshipping their own gods. The prophet cast the curse of drought on the ²Ādites. Rain stopped falling and the ²Ādite land was ruined, the cattle died and the people suffered hardship. In the end the desperate ²Ādites sent a delegation to their holy city Mecca to pray for rain. In Mecca the delegation was warmly received by the brother-in-law of one of the members of the delegation. After a month's feasting, during which the members of the delegation forgot the purpose of their visit, the brother-in-law host and his son asked two women singers to sing a song which would remind their guests of their mission. On hearing the song the guests sobered up and went to the Ka^cba to pray for rain. **In** the Ka^cba they heard a voice asking them to choose from the white, red and black clouds a cloud which would be sent to their homeland. They chose the black cloud thinking it was full of rain. No sooner had they chosen the cloud than they heard a voice telling them they had chosen the cloud of fire and destruction. The black cloud sailed to the land of ³Ād and burnt the land and the people. Only the prophet Hūd and his followers were saved.



The Late ^CĀdites were the followers of the prophet Hūd. Among the Late ^CĀdites there was a man known as Luqmān who was a merchant, a follower of Hūd and a member of the ^CĀdite delegation sent to the Ka^Cba to pray for rain. While Luqmān was with the delegation in the Ka^Cba he heard a voice calling him to make a wish, and so Luqmān wished he could live forever. The voice said that immortal life could not be granted to man, but Luqmān's life could be prolonged by letting him live the life-span of either seven successive apexes or seven successive eagles. Luqmān chose the life-span of seven eagles, for it was believed that eagles live a very long life. Luqmān lived the lives of the first six eagles, which came to six hundred years, and another eight hundred years being the life-span of the seventh eagle called Lubad.¹ The tragic story of the ^CĀdites and the longevity of Lubad and its failure to fly on the last day of its life, which signalled the doom of Luqmān, captured the imagination of the Jāhiliī poets, notably al-Afwah al-Awdī,² ^CAbīd b. al-Abras,³ al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī,⁴ A^Cshā,⁵ al-Mukhabbal al-Sa^Cdī⁶ and Labīd.⁷

The Thamūdīs

The Thamūdīs came after the ^CĀdites and lived in North West Arabia. Archeological finds, the earliest of which is an Assyrian tablet dated 717 B.C.,⁸ as well as

Greek and Latin sources, have confirmed the Qur'ān's and the Arab tradition's claim of the existence of the Thamūdīs. The story goes that the Thamūdīs led a prosperous life and lived in houses in the plains in the summer and spent their winters on the mountains in houses hewn into the mountains like those of Petra. As they were idol worshippers, Allāh sent them the prophet Sālih to show them the right path. First the Thamūdīs mocked Sālih, then they told him that if he could produce a she-camel out of a rock they would abandon their seventy gods and worship Allāh instead. Sālih took up their challenge and prayed. In response to Sālih's prayer Allāh sent a shiver through the mountain, and the mountain gave birth to a pregnant she-camel. Sālih told the Thamūdīs to let the she-camel graze freely, and that she would drink water for one day from their water basin and would provide them with milk on the following day. Sālih also warned them not to harm the she-camel lest they incur the wrath of Allāh.

The she-camel gave birth to a baby camel. The Thamūdīs let the two camels graze freely on their land, but the sight of the two camels frightened their cattle, and so the Thamūdīs killed the two camels. When Sālih heard of the killing of the two camels he was outraged and he informed the Thamūdīs they had only three days to live, during which their faces would turn yellow

on the first day, red on the second day and black on the third day, then they would all die. The Thamūdīs did not take Ṣālih seriously. But when they saw their faces changing colour they knew they were doomed. And on the third day their faces turned black and they were struck by thunder and lightning and they all died except Ṣālih and his followers.¹

Tasm and Jadīs

Tasm and Jadīs were two Yemeni tribes that settled in Yamāma, famous for its tall palaces, gardens and lush vegetation. The two tribes lived in harmony until Tasm gained the upperhand, under its despotic king °Imlīq.² Tradition relates that one day a Jadīsī divorced couple approached °Imlīq in order to decide the custody of their child. °Imlīq's verdict was that the couple's son should become his slave and that the couple should be sold as slaves and that the man be given one fifth of the woman's price and the woman be given one tenth of the man's price. °Imlīq's decision enraged the Jadīsī couple to the extent that the woman retorted indignantly:³

(Tawīl)

أتينا أبا طم ليحكم بيننا فابرم حكماً في هزيمة ظلالا
 لعمرى لقد حكمت لا متورعاً ولا كنت فيما يبرم الحكم عالما
 ندمت ولم أندم واني لفسرة وأصبح بعلي في الحكومة نادما

The woman's remark angered °Imlīq who decreed that when

a Jadīsī woman gets married, the bride should spend the first night with him. This went on for a while, because Jadīs was politically and militarily weak, until one day the poet ^cAfīra, the sister of a Jadīsī leader, got married to her cousin. On her wedding night ^cAfīra was taken to ^cImlīq accompanied by the women singing:¹ (Rajaz)

إِبدَى بِعَمَلِيْقٍ وَفَسُوْمِي فَاَرْكَبِي وَبَادِرِي الصُّبْحَ لِأَمْرٍ مُعْجِبِ
فَسَوْفَ تَلْقَيْنَ الَّذِي لَمْ تَطْلُبِي وَمَا لِيكِ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ مَهْرَبِ

The following morning ^cAfīra left ^cImlīq's palace in her wedding dress stained with the virginal blood and with the front and back of the dress ripped open, leaving her blood-stained body exposed. ^cAfīra, upset by what had happened to her and by the indifference of her people, burst out:² (Rajaz)

لَا أَحَدٌ أَذَلَّ مِنْ جَدِيْسٍ أَهْكَذَا يُفْعَلُ بِالْعُرُوْسِ
يَرْضَى بِهَذَا يَا قَسُوْمِي حُرٌّ أَهْدَى وَقَدْ أَعْطَى وَسِيْقَ الْمَهْرِ
لِأَخِذَةِ الْمَوْتِ كَذَا لِنَفْسِهِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَنْ يُفْعَلَ ذَا بَعْرِسِهِ

^cAfīra's outburst stirred Jadīs to take action; and so ^cAfīra's brother and the Jadīsī leaders met to work out a plan to get rid of Tasm. The Jadīsī leaders invited ^cImlīq and his shaikhs to lunch. As the Tasmī nobles sat down to have their meal, the Jadīsīs fell on them and killed them all with the exception of the Tasmī poet Riyāh who escaped to Yemen to seek the help of the Yemeni king Hassān b. Tubba^c. Hassān marched on Jadīs, and when he was about a three-day journey from

Yamāma Riyāḥ told Ḥassān that in Yamāma he had a sister known as Zarqā' al-Yamāma who was married to a Jadīsī and who could see as far as a three-day journey. Riyāḥ advised Ḥassān to cut down trees and bushes and use them to camouflage their advance on Yamāma. Zarqā' al-Yamāma saw the trees and bushes approaching Yamāma and warned the Jadīsīs of the impending attack. No one believed her. In the morning Ḥassān stormed Yamāma, killed every one and destroyed the palaces and the forts. As for Zarqā' al-Yamāma, Ḥassān had her eyes gouged out.¹

The ḶAmālikites

The last ḶAmālikite kingdom stretched from the Jazīra in Iraq to the borders of Syria and flourished around the third century A.D. The penultimate king, ḶAmr b. Zarīb al-ḶImliqī, a descendant of the ancient ḶAmālikites, was threatened by Jadhīma al-Abrash al-Azdī, the ruler of the newly-established Azdī kingdom in Ḥīra. Jadhīma marched on ḶAmr and in the heat of battle ḶAmr was killed. The victorious Jadhīma was later lured into a trap by the new ḶAmālikite queen Zabbā' who subsequently killed him.

One of Jadhīma's advisers known as Qasīr escaped and returned to Ḥīra and incited Jadhīma's nephew and successor ḶAmr b. ḶAdī b. Naṣr al-Lakhmī to avenge the death of his maternal uncle. ḶAmr gathered the Lakhmid

and Azdī people and prepared for war. Qasīr then suggested to ʿAmr that as the city of Zabbā' was impregnable, they should devise a scheme which would enable them to take the city with a minimum loss of life. The scheme was that ʿAmr should cut off part of Qasīr's nose and cause him other bodily harm, then Qasīr would go to the queen and make her believe that he had escaped from Hīra on account of the humiliations and injuries he sustained.

Qasīr was welcomed by queen Zabbā' and gradually gained her confidence to the extent that she told him of her secret escape-tunnel. In the meantime Zabbā' had been told by a kāhina that her kingdom would be destroyed by king ʿAmr, and she would take her own life. Zabbā', who had never seen ʿAmr, sent an artist in disguise to Hīra to paint an accurate portrait of ʿAmr. The artist stayed for a while in Hīra and after having seen ʿAmr a few times he painted his picture, then returned to Zabbā' with the portrait of ʿAmr with which she never parted.

After a while Qasīr told Zabbā' he would like to go to Hīra to get his belongings and he would also buy clothing, perfumes and other goods and trade them on her behalf. Zabbā' consented. Qasīr travelled to Hīra incognito and met ʿAmr secretly. Qasīr advised ʿAmr to provide him with the merchandise he would trade on behalf

of Zabbā'. Qasīr returned to Zabbā' loaded with goods which she was pleased to receive. The response of Zabbā' encouraged Qasīr to go on other trading ventures. On his third trip to Hīra, Qasīr asked ^CAmr to provide him with a thousand trusted men and load each camel with two jars, each containing a well-armed man. ^CAmr agreed to Qasīr's request and they all went to the city of Zabbā'. Once inside the city all the men got out of the jars and surprised the inhabitants and killed them. In the meantime Qasīr took ^CAmr to the escape-tunnel of Zabbā' and waited for her. When Zabbā' reached the tunnel she saw Qasīr and ^CAmr whom she recognised from the portrait, so she sucked her poisoned ring and died.¹

Hadr

The city-state of Hadr, situated along the Tigris and Euphrates, was ruled by Sātarūn, commonly known by the Arabs as Daizan, who had strong links with the Romans. Tradition has it that when the second Sassanid king Sābūr b. Ardashīr, known as Sābūr al-Junūd, was in Khurasān on some business, Daizan attacked Sawād al-^CIrāq which had recently come under the Sassanid sphere of influence. Sābūr returned to Iraq and marched on Daizan who had retreated to his fortified city of Hadr. In his city, Daizan sustained Sābūr's attacks for two years. Then one day Daizan's daughter Nadīra left the city to spend her

period of menstruation outside the city, as it was the custom of the Ḥadran women. On that occasion she met Sābūr and they fell in love with each other. Nadīra asked Sābūr what would he give her if she helped him to conquer the city. Sābūr said he would marry her and make her his favourite wife. She asked him to get a ringed dove and stain one of its legs with the menstrual blood of a blue-eyed virgin, then let the dove fly and the dove would alight on the city's wall. For the Ḥadrans believed in a legend that said that their city would collapse when a ringed dove which had one of its legs stained with the menstrual blood of a blue-eyed virgin alighted on their city's wall. Sābūr followed Nadīra's advice. When the Ḥadrans saw the dove alighting on their city's wall they knew they were doomed. Sābūr conquered the city, destroyed it and killed its inhabitants in A.D. 327.

Sābūr kept his promise to Nadīra and married her in ḤAin al-Tamr. On the wedding night Nadīra kept tossing and turning in her bed and could not sleep because of the roughness of the mattress, even though the mattress was made of silk and filled with raw silk. While Sābūr was pondering the cause of Nadīra's restlessness, he noticed a myrtle leaf stuck between the folds of her body which was the source of her discomfort. As Sābūr was watching Nadīra's head he saw her brains through

her fine transparent skin and asked her what she was fed on. Nadīra said her diet consisted of cream, brains, the honey of virgin bees and the nectar of grapes. Sābūr was disturbed by Nadīra's confession and told her that although she had known him for a short time, yet she betrayed her father who took great care of her. Sābūr called one of his men and ordered him to tie Nadīra's hair to the tail of a horse and make the horse run until her body was torn to pieces.¹

The Ancient Jāhiliyya

Like the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations, the Ancient Jāhiliyya covers a similar time-span, but since it overflows into the Late Jāhiliyya, its history, both mythical and factual, is better preserved than the history of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations. Classical Arab scholars saw the Ancient Jāhiliyya in terms of dynasties and tribes: the dynasties being those of the Himyarites of Yemen and of the Lakhmids of Hīra, and the tribes being those of the Jurhumīs, the Khuzā^cīs, the Qudā^cīs and the ^cAdnānīs.

The Himyarites

The Himyarite kingdom is traced back to the time when the patriarch Qaḥṭān, son of the ^cAdite prophet Hūd,

migrated with his people from Babylon to Yemen.¹ In their new abode Qaḥṭān and his son Ya^crub established the Himyarite kingdom which survived right up to the death of the son of Saif b. Dhī Yazan in the last quarter of the sixth century.² The most famous of all the Himyarite monarchs was Bilqīs, queen of Sheba, whose mother was a genie.³ During that long span the Himyarites developed a civilisation which was the envy of the ancient world. They invented the Musnad script and their greatest agricultural achievement was the construction of the Mārib Dam, which was to play a central role in their economic prosperity. The bursting of the Mārib Dam led to waves of migration to various parts of the Arabian Peninsula including Syria and Iraq, as in the case of the Khuzā^cīs who settled in Mecca, the Lakhmids in Iraq and the Ghassānids in Syria.⁴

The Lakhmids

In the third century A.D. the Lakhmid kingdom was established in Ḥīra by Jadhīma al-Abrash, the king of the Yemeni tribe recently settled in Ḥīra.⁵ After his death at the hand of the ^cAmālikite queen Zabbā', Jadhīma was succeeded by his maternal nephew ^cAmr b. ^cAdī b. Naṣr whose son Imru' al-Qais (d.328) extended his influence to Syria, Hijāz, Najd and up to the borders of Najrān, and at the same time acted as governor for

the Romans and Persians.¹ Imru' al-Qais's descendants continued to rule from Hīra as governors for the Persians until the last king Nu^cmān b. al-Mundhir was killed by the Persians at the beginning of the seventh century.² The Lakhmid kings were known for running commercial enterprises.³

The Jurhumīs

The origin of the Jurhumīs is partly mythological and partly earthly. The myth says that an angel expelled from paradise married a Yemeni woman who bore him a son named Jurhum who became the father of the Jurhumī tribe. Some time later the Jurhumīs moved from Yemen to Mecca which was ruled by the ^cAmālikites. In their attempt to keep the Jurhumīs out of Mecca the ^cAmālikites were overpowered and banished from Mecca by the Jurhumīs.⁴

Ismā^cīl and his mother Hājar arrived in Mecca and were kindly received by the Jurhumīs. Ismā^cīl married Ra^cla the daughter of the Jurhumī king and had twelve sons. When Ismā^cīl died his eldest son Nābit succeeded him as the guardian of the Holy Ka^cba which was first built by Adam and later rebuilt by Ibrāhīm and Ismā^cīl.⁵ Nābit was succeeded by his grand-father Mudād al-Jurhumī as custodian of the Ka^cba.⁶ As time went by the Jurhumīs' lust for power engulfed them in wars against one another.⁷

In the meantime the bursting of the Mārib Dam forced many Yemeni tribes to migrate to various parts of the Arabian Peninsula. The Lakhmids made their home in Iraq and the Khuzā^cīs in Syria and Mecca. When the Khuzā^cīs reached Mecca the Jurhumīs refused to have them as neighbours. War broke out between the two tribes in which the Khuzā^cīs gained the upperhand and subsequently threw the Jurhumīs out of Mecca.¹ A group of Jurhumīs who disapproved of the political excesses of their compatriots retreated to a place called Qanawnā before the coming of the Khuzā^cīs.² After the Khuzā^cīs took control of Mecca, the Banū Ismā^cīl who left Mecca before the war were allowed back to Mecca, but not the Jurhumīs of Qanawnā whose leader was the poet Mudād b. ^cAmr b. al-Hārith b. Mudād al-Jurhumī.³ The Khuzā^cīs' refusal to let the Jurhumīs back to Mecca so upset the poet Mudād that he expressed his grief at the loss of Mecca in a series of moving poems.⁴

The Qudā^cīs

The Qudā^cī tribe is a Yemeni tribe whose sphere of influence included Iraq, Najrān and Syria. Ibn Hazm and Ibn Khaldūn say the Qudā^cīs were mentioned by Greek writers like Ptolemy, but they are not certain whether the Qudā^cīs of Ptolemy were the ancient Qudā^cīs or the Qudā^cīs of the Arab tradition.⁵ Ibn Khaldūn intimates

that the Qudā^cīs might not have been of Yemeni origin, and were the allies of the Romans and the Byzantines until they were overthrown from Syria by the Ghassānids and from Najrān by the Banū al-Hārith b. Ka^cb.¹

Tradition relates that the Qudā^cīs descended from Qudā^ca b. Mālik b. Hīmyar. Mālik b. Hīmyar divorced Qudā^ca's mother who was already pregnant with Qudā^ca. Qudā^ca's mother remarried Ma^cadd b. ^cAdnān, and when Qudā^ca was born, Ma^cadd adopted him and treated him like his own son. Ma^cadd was known as Abū Qudā^ca.²

An important incident in the Qudā^cī tradition is that of Yawm al-Qārīz al-Awwal. Ibn Qutaiba and Abū al-Faraj recount that the poet Khuzaima b. Nahd, an eight-generation Qudā^cī, was in love with the daughter of Yadhkur b. ^cAnaza, a sixth-generation Ma^caddī. One day Khuzaima and Yadhkur went about looking for qārīz leaves used for dyeing clothes, and on their way they found a well full of bees. Khuzaima suggested to Yadhkur that one of them should go down the well to get the honey, but since he was fat, if he went down the well it would be difficult for Yadhkur to lift him up, but as Yadhkur was slimmer it would be easy for Khuzaima to lift him up. Yadhkur agreed and climbed down the well, gathered all the honey and gave it to Khuzaima. While Yadhkur was still in the well, Khuzaima asked him if

he could marry his daughter Fāṭima. Yadhkur refused, so Khuzaima left him in the well. When Khuzaima was asked about Yadhkur he said he knew nothing about him. After a while, Khuzaima boasted in a poem addressed to Yadhkur's daughter Fāṭima that he killed her father. On hearing the poem Yadhkur's tribe attacked Khuzaima and his tribe, killed Khuzaima and decimated his tribe.¹ The story of Khuzaima and Yadhkur has passed into the proverb-lore and is crystallised in the proverb

إِذَا مَا الْقَارِظُ الْعَمَزِيُّ أَبَا which is used in a poem by the Jāhiliī poet Bishr b. Abī Khāzim:² (Wāfir)

فَرَجَّى الْخَيْرَ وَانْتَظِرِي إِيَّابِي إِذَا مَا الْقَارِظُ الْعَمَزِيُّ أَبَا

The °Adnānīs

The °Adnānīs trace their origin to Ma°add b. °Adnān, a descendant of Qaidār b. Ismā°il.³ The legend has it that the prophets Jeremiah and Barkhiya saved and took care of the twelve-year old boy Ma°add when Nebuchadnezzar's armies swept across North Arabia and wiped out °Adnān and his Arab forces. After the war Jeremiah and Barkhiya took Ma°add back to Mecca where he grew up.⁴ Ma°add had many children, the most famous being Nizār, whose four sons Iyād, Rabi°a, Anmār and Mudar became the patriarchs of the major Arab tribes like Shaibān, Tamīm, Rabi°a, °Abs, Taghlib, Bakr, Asad and Quraish, that dominated the

political scene of the Late Jāhiliyya. With the exception of the Mudarīs, the descendants of Iyād, Rabī^ca and Anmār moved out of Mecca and found new homes in various parts of the Arabian Peninsula.¹ Fihr, an eighth-generation Mudarī, became the father of the Qurashīs.² Qusayy b. Kilāb, a seventh-generation Qurashī, married a Khuzā^cī woman and re-established his ancestors' rights to the custodianship of the Ka^cba which had been under the control of the Khuzā^cīs since the Jurhumīs were banished from Mecca.³ Qusayy had four sons, ^cAbd al-Dār, ^cAbd al-^cUzzā, ^cAbd Munāf and ^cAbd Qusayy, whose descendants included the Prophet Muḥammad, Mu^cāwiya and the Abbasid Caliph Abū al-^cAbbās al-Saffāḥ (d. 136/754).⁴ ^cAbd Manāf lived in the second half of the fifth century and had four sons who set up commercial enterprises which traded with Persia, Byzantium, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Abyssinia.⁵

Mecca was a thriving commercial town, and most of the Meccan Qurashī nobles were engaged in one form of trade or another. Ibn Qutaiba gives an indication of the kind of trade in which some of the Meccan nobles were involved just before the rise of Islam:⁶ Abū Tālib, the uncle of the Prophet and the father of the Caliph ^cAlī, was a wheat and perfume merchant, Abū Bakr al-Siddīq was a cloth merchant, ^cUthmān b. ^cAffān was a cloth merchant, Sa^cd b. Abī Waqqās made and sold spears and arrows, al-^cAwwām was a tailor, al-Zubair b.

al-Awām was a butcher, ^CAmr b. al-^CĀs was a butcher, al-^CĀs b. Hishām, the uncle of the Prophet, was a blacksmith, ^CUqba b. Abī Mu^Cīt was a wine merchant, Abū Sufiān b. Ḥarb, the father of the Caliph Mu^Cāwiya, was an oil and hide merchant, al-^CĀs b. Wā'il, the father of ^CAmr b. al-^CĀs, was a vet who treated horses and camels, Mālik b. Dīnār was a scribe and publisher, al-Nadr b. al-Ḥārith b. Kalada was a singer, lute player and composer, and so were al-Ḥakam b. Abī al-^CĀs, the father of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, Qais al-Fihri, the father of al-Dahhāk b. Qais, Mu^Cammar b. ^CUthmān, the grand-father of ^CAmr b. ^CUbaid Allāh b. Mu^Cammar, and Sīrīn, the father of Muhammad b. Sīrīn.

The Qurashīs were known in Jāhiliyya as العالية on account of their learning, their prominent position as custodians of the Ka^Cba and their successful commercial ventures.¹

The Late Jāhiliyya

Most of the detailed history of the Jāhiliyya concentrates on the Late Jāhiliyya, which covers the last two hundred or so years before Islam. During this period the kingdom of Kinda was founded in Central Arabia by Ākil al-Murār, the great-grand-father of the poet Imru' al-Qais, in the second half of the fifth century.² The

Ghassānid kingdom came into being in the fifth century in Syria and was closely associated with the Byzantines,¹ though its influence on the Arabs was less extensive than that of its Lakhmid rival. But the best part of the history of the Late Jāhiliyya is depicted in Ayyām al-^cArab which revolves around the tribal wars, like Harb al-Basūs and Dāhis - al-Ghabrā', each of which lasted forty years, and the wars of the Arabs with the Persians like the Yawm Dhī Qār, which was a turning point in the history of the Arabs.

The Yawm Dhī Qār's story goes that the Lakhmid kingdom was abolished when the last Lakhmid king of Hīra al-Nu^cmān b. al-Mundhir was killed by the Persians who replaced him with an Arab leader who did not have the support of the Arab tribes. Before Nu^cmān was killed he had entrusted his belongings with some of his Arab allies. The Persian king tried to obtain the belongings of Nu^cmān but without success. When the Persian king threatened to annihilate the Arabs for defying his orders, the Arabs took up the challenge and the two forces met at Dhū Qar in which the united forces of the Arab tribes devastated the Persian armies for the first time since the foundation of the Sassanid kingdom in the third century A.D.²

Before the Battle of Yawm Dhī Qār the Persians dealt

with the Arabs via the Lakhmids, because the Arabs preferred to conduct their political affairs with the Persians through a recognised Arab representative. But when the Persians chose to deal directly with the Arabs, especially after the murder of Nu^cmān, the Arabs felt their political identity was being threatened, and the only way to overcome the Persian threat was to bury their tribal differences and rally together against their enemies. It seems the Persians did not take this vital factor into consideration, nor were they prepared for the old Arab war-strategy adopted at the Battle of Yawm Dhī Qār which relied on organising the Arab tribes into an army of five divisions called Khamīs, consisting of the vanguard, the centre, the right, the left and the rear divisions. ¹ Such tactics surprised the Persians and wrecked havoc among their forces.

The Yawm Dhī Qār was not the first time in which the Arabs resisted the interference of outside powers in their own affairs, particularly when that interference affected their independence. The Lakhmids joined forces with the Persians in their fight against the Byzantines, for example, because they needed the Persians to help them fight their Ghassānid rivals who were the allies of the Byzantines. The Battle of Yawm Halīma in which the Ghassānids defeated the Lakhmids and killed their king ² illustrates this point.

On the other hand, if an Arab ruler had no axe to grind against another Arab ruler, there was no way a foreign power could use one Arab against another. This is evident in the following example. The Persian king Qubādh adopted the Mazdakī religion which allowed a man to marry his mother, his daughters and his sisters. Qubādh tried to convert the Lakhmid king to Mazdakism but to no avail. Qubādh also approached the king of Kinda and obtained a positive response. Then Qubādh requested the king of Kinda to write to °Abd Manāf, the custodian of the Ka°ba, asking him to adopt the Mazdakī creed. °Abd Munāf declined the invitation. On hearing of °Abd Munāf's refusal Qubādh ordered the king of Kinda to attack Mecca and kill °Abd Munāf and the Meccans who refused to be converted to Mazdakism. The king of Kinda ignored Qubādh's orders because he was overtaken by a sense of "Arab brotherhood" and therefore would not fight a fellow Arab for the sake of an outsider.

The following incident is another example which shows that the Arabs preferred to deal with outside powers through an Arab king. When the Lakhmid king Qābūs b. Hind died in 582, the Persian king Anūshirwān appointed a Persian Mazrab as governor of the Arabs instead of a Lakhmid prince. The Arabs did not acknowledge the authority of the Persian Mazrab. Fearing the consequences of the Arabs' ultimate rejection of his power, Anūshirwān

dismissed the Mazrab and installed the Lakhmid prince al-Mundhir b. al-Mundhir b. Mā' al-Samā' as king of the Arabs.¹ Mundhir was later killed by the Ghassānid king al-Hārith al-A^craj at the Battle of Yawm Abāgh.²

In the first quarter of the sixth century the Yemeni king Dhū Nuwās, a Jewish convert, marched to Najrān in an attempt to convert the Najrānī Christians to Judaism. The Najrānī Christians who resisted conversion were thrown into a ditch and burnt alive. A Christian survivor escaped to Byzantium and urged the Byzantine emperor to save his fellow Najrānī Christians from Jewish persecution. The Byzantine emperor instructed the Abyssinian Christian king to go to Najrān and help the Najrānī Christians. The Abyssinian king and his army landed in Najrān, routed Dhū Nuwās and his forces and occupied Yemen. The deputy commander of the Abyssinian army Abraha killed his commander, took charge of the Abyssinian army and asserted his authority over the Yemeni provinces under Abyssinian control.³

Abraha built a church in Ṣan^cā' to outshine the Ka^cba, the Arabs' holiest centre of worship. The Arabs were not impressed by the church and took Abraha's challenge lightly. Consequently, Abraha mustered his troops and headed towards Mecca, determined to demolish the Ka^cba. Before reaching the Ka^cba, the legend says, a flock of

birds flew over the Abyssinians and pelted them with flint stones and decimated them. Abraha returned to Ṣan^{cā}' where he died shortly afterwards and was succeeded by his son as king of the Yemeni provinces under Abyssinian control.¹

Yemeni resistance to the Abyssinians gathered momentum when Saif b. Dhī Yazan succeeded his father as king of Yemen. Saif sought the help of the Byzantine emperor in order to get the Abyssinians out of Yemen. When Saif realised the Byzantine emperor was reluctant to help him, he turned to the Persians who provided him with eight hundred Persian convicts. Saif and the Persian convicts sailed to Yemen and by the time they reached the shores of Yemen only six hundred of the convicts had survived the sea voyage. The arrival of Saif in Yemen boosted the morale of the Yemenis who had already taken up arms against the Abyssinians. Saif led the Yemeni resistance forces, defeated the Abyssinians and threw them out of Yemen.² To mark this occasion Arabs from all over the Arabian Peninsula sent delegations to the court of Saif to celebrate his victory over the Abyssinians and the re-establishment of the Himyarite kingdom. Among the delegations were the Prophet Muhammad's grand-father ^cAbd al-Muttalib and the poets Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt and his father.³

Religious Beliefs

The diversity of the Jāhiliī civilisations produced various religious beliefs, with each tribe having its own god or gods or other forms of worship through which it communicated with Allāh, the supreme God of Jāhiliyya.¹ First, there were those who believed in one God, in the resurrection and the hereafter and in the reward for the pious and the punishment for the sinner.² Second, there were those who believed in one God, the resurrection and the hereafter but not in the prophets.³ Third, there were those who believed in one God but not in the resurrection nor in the prophets; they believed in the concept of time which would eventually destroy mankind.⁴ Fourth, there were those who believed in angels whom they regarded as the daughters of Allāh from his marriage to the genii.⁵ Fifth, there were those who believed in the genii.⁶ Sixth, there were those who rejected the concept of the Creator and the resurrection.⁷ Seventh, there were those who believed in the Christian faith.⁸ Eighth, there were those who believed in the Jewish faith.⁹ Ninth, there were those who believed in the Persian Mazdakī creed.¹⁰ Tenth, there were those who worshipped Venus, the sun, the moon, Jupiter, Sirius, Canopus, Mercury and Taurus.¹¹

Some of the rituals associated with the sun, which was known as Ilāha,¹² have lingered on up to the present times. In Yemen, for instance, whenever a child loses one of his milk teeth, he is told at sunrise to hold his

tooth between his forefinger and his thumb, face the sun and throw the tooth in the direction of the sun saying: "O sun, replace my tooth with a better one." By doing so,¹ it is hoped the new tooth would grow strong and straight.

Tradition relates that Allāh was the One and Only God worshipped in the Ka^cba. The prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismā^cīl introduced the monotheistic Hanīf religion based on the Oneness of Allāh. The Hanīf religion continued to thrive up to the time ^cAmr b. Luhayyset up idol worship in the Ka^cba.² The introduction of idol worship curtailed the influence of the Hanīf religion which re-emerged before the rise of Islam as an alternative to polytheism. The Hanīf followers were ruthlessly persecuted by the Qurashī polytheists. The most prominent Hanīf followers were Khālīd b. Sinān who extinguished the Fire of al-Harratain with his stick,³ Zaid b. Nufail, the cousin of the Caliph ^cUmar,⁴ the poet Umayya b. Abī al-Salt⁵ and Qus b. Sā^cida whose sermons in ^cUkaz⁶ impressed the Prophet before his prophethood. The Prophet held the Hanīfs in high esteem, and their teachings are echoed in the early Meccan sūras. This is apparent in "Sūrat al-Ikhlās" which crystallises the essence of Qus b. Sā^cida's and Khālīd b. Sinān's concept of Allāh:⁷

بل هو الله إله واحد، ليس بمولود ولا والد، أعاد وأبدى، وإليه المآدُ عدا

When Khālīd b. Sinān's daughter heard the Prophet reciting "Sūrat al-Ikhlās" she said: "O Messenger of Allāh, this is

what my father used to say." The Prophet did not contradict her and praised her father.¹

In Akhbār Makka Ibn al-Azraqī states that when the Prophet took Mecca he went straight to the Ka^cba, the pantheon of the Jāhili gods, and destroyed the statues of three hundred and sixty gods.² The names of some of the gods like Hubal, Wadd, Manāt, al-Lāt and al-^cUzzā have survived,³ but unfortunately there is a dearth of information on the origin, mythological background and function of each god and goddess. Arab tradition relates that idol worship was introduced to Mecca from Syria by ^cAmr b. Luhayy.⁴

According to one Arab tradition, when ^cAmr b. Luhayy fell ill he was advised to visit a health spa in Syria. ^cAmr went to the spa and was cured. While ^cAmr was in Syria he noticed people worshipping idols and asked them what it was all about, and they told him they were praying to their gods for rain and for help against their enemies. He asked them to give him some of their images, and they gave him the images of Manāt, al-Lāt and al-^cUzzā which he took to Mecca and put around the Ka^cba.⁵ These goddesses were worshipped by the Thamūdīs, Nabataeans and Lihyanites.⁶ In Nabataean mythology al-Lāt was the consort of the god Dhū Sharā⁷ who was worshipped as Dhū al-Sharā by the Banū al-Hārith b. Yashkur b. Mubashshir of the Azd tribe.⁸ It is

possible that the people ^CAmr met in Syria might have been Thamūdīs, Nabataeans or Lihyanites.

The goddesses Manāt, al-Lāt and al-^CUzzā grew in importance in Jāhilī idol worship to the extent that the Jāhilīs assumed they were the daughters of Allāh.¹ Manāt was placed in Qudaid, between Medina and Mecca. She was worshipped by all the Arabs such as the Aws, Khazraj, Hudhail and Khuzā^Cī tribes and the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina, until the Prophet sent his cousin ^CAlī b. Abī Tālīb to destroy her four or five days after he took Mecca.² al-Lāt was placed in Tā'if. Her image, like the Nabataean al-Lāt, was in the shape of a square rock, and her priests were from the Thaqīf tribe. She was worshipped by all the Arabs including the Quraishīs until the Prophet sent al-Mughīra b. Shu^Cba to destroy her.³ al-^CUzzā was placed in Wādī Nakhla. She was a shaitāna who resided in three samura trees in Wādī Nakhla. The Prophet sent Khālīd b. Walīd who cut down the three samura trees, forced al-^CUzzā out of the trees and then killed her.⁴

Ibn al-Kalbī says the Qurashīs worshipped a number of gods in the Ka^Cba, and Hubal was the most important of them all. He was made of red cornelian in the shape of a man, and his broken right hand had been replaced with a gold hand by the Qurashīs. He was introduced to the Ka^Cba by

Khuzaima b. Mudrika b. al-Ya's b. Mudar, an ancestor of the Prophet. The idol was known as Hubal¹ Khuzaima.

In Kitāb al-Asnām Ibn al-Kalbī traces the origins of five of the major Jāhilī gods: Wadd, Siwā^c, Yaghūth, Ya^cūq and Nasr. In the distant past there were five virtuous men called Wadd, Siwā^c, Yaghūth, Ya^cūq and Nasr. When they died their families were grief-stricken. A man from the Banū Qābil tribe approached the aggrieved families and offered to make statues resembling the five deceased. The families agreed. The man carved five statues out of stone which looked like the deceased and exhibited them. When the relatives saw the statues of their dead they were so taken by them that they addressed them respectfully while going round them. This ritual was performed for a century, and in the following century the statues were held in higher esteem than in the previous century. In the third century people thought their predecessors venerated the statues in the belief that the statues were intermediaries between themselves and Allāh. As a result the statues acquired greater importance. This idol worship displeased Allāh and He sent the prophet Idrīs to show the people the right path. But the people ignored Idrīs's message and continued to worship the five idols until the time of the prophet Nūh who was then four hundred years old. For one hundred and twenty years Nūh entreated his people to worship Allāh as the only God. But when Allāh saw that Nūh was not making

any progress He instructed him to build the Ark. By the time he finished building the Ark Nūh̄ was six hundred years old. Then Allāh flooded the earth. After the flood Nūh̄ lived for another three hundred years. In the flood the five statues drifted about until they were swept ashore in Jeddah and the wind buried them in the sand.

^cAmr b. Luhayy was a priest who lived in Tihāma and was in touch with a genie who was his seer. One day the genie urged ^cAmr to go to Jeddah where he would find the statues of Wadd, Siwā^c, Yaghūth, Ya^cūq and Nasr and bring them to Tihāma, then call on all the Arabs to worship them. ^cAmr travelled to the river of Jeddah, dug up the five buried statues and brought them to Tihāma. During the pilgrim season ^cAmr took the five statues to Mecca and called on all the Arabs to worship them, and all the Arabs responded to his call. The statue of Wadd was of gigantic proportions and wore two garments, one was wrapped round his waist and the other covered the rest of his body. He wore a sword, had a bow on his shoulder, a twisted spear in one hand and a pouch full of arrows in the other hand. The appearance of Wadd suggests he might have been a warrior god. The five idols were worshipped until the advent of Islam.¹

In Kitāb al-Asnām Ibn al-Kalbī lists a number of gods and goddesses and the tribes that worshipped them, but says nothing about their mythological background.²

Every family in Mecca had a family god whose image was kept in the house. Members of the family who intended to travel sought the blessing of the house god by touching its image, and the same ritual was repeated on their return.¹

The Ka^cba was the centre of worship where the Jāhilīs prayed and went round it seven times. The Jāhilīs went on pilgrimage to the Ka^cba once a year in Dhū al-Hijja for a week, and they also performed the waqfa on Mount ²Arafāt.

Some of the Jāhilīs believed that the blood and the soul are one and the same. This is illustrated in Ta'abbata Sharran's remark to his maternal uncle Shanfarā who asked him about the man he had killed:³

أَلْحَمَّتُهُ عَضْبًا فَسَالَتْ نَفْسَهُ سَكْبًا

The expression ^{سَالَتْ نَفْسَهُ} is still in use in current speech. Other Jāhilīs believed that the soul is a bird residing in the body, and when a man is killed, the bird comes out of his head as an owl called hāma and hovers above the grave of the deceased crying: "Give me a drink", until the death of the deceased is avenged.⁴ When a man dies of natural causes, the hāma lives with the family of the deceased and reports news about the family to the deceased, as can be seen in Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt's verse:⁵

(Khafīf)

سُلِّطَ الطَّيْرُ وَالْمَنُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَلَهُمْ فِي صَدَى الْقَابِرِ هَامٌ

The hāma belief survived into the Umayyad period as illustrated in the poem of Tawba addressed to his love Lailā al-Akhyaliyya: (Tawīl)

ولو أن لَيْلَى الأَخْيَلِيَّةَ سَلَّمْتُ على ودوني تُرْبَةً وَصَفَائِحُ
 لَسَلَّمْتُ تَسْلِيمَ البَشَاشَةِ أو زَقَا إليها صدى من جانب القبرِ صَائِحُ^(٣)
 ولو أن لَيْلَى في السَّمَاءِ لَأَضَعَدْتُ بطرفي إلى لَيْلَى العُيُونِ اللُّوَامِحُ

Jāhiliī poetry flourished against this culturally rich and varied urban background.

Page 42

1. Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, I, pp. 586-7; Wahb, Tijān, pp. 37-40; Asmā^cī, Tārīkh, pp. 3-5, 7-8; Balādhurī, Ansāb, I, pp. 4-5.

Page 43

1. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 279.
2. Ibid., pp. 283, 286, 291-2, 297-301.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibn Qustantīn, Unwān, XI, Fasc. i, pp. 122-3; Ibn Khaldūn, Ibar, II, pp. 246, 257-8, 260, 277-8, 404.
5. Ibn Khaldūn, Ibar, II, pp. 222-3, 278. Ibn Khaldūn's biographical data of Yūsuf b. Kariyyūn concur with what is known of the life of Josephus.
6. Ibid., p. 222.

Page 44

1. Ibn Khaldūn is wrong in assuming he was the first Arab historian to consult the work of Josephus. For Josephus's work had been used before Ibn Khaldūn by Ibn Qustantīn (Unwān, VII, Fasc. i, p. 497), whose work was read and praised by Mas^cūdī (Tanbih, p. 132). Josephus's work was also used by Ibn al-^cIbrī (Tārīkh, p. 117).

Page 45

1. Qur'an: ^cImrān: 154, Mā'ida: 50, Fāth: 26.

Page 46

1. Ibn Duraid's usage of the term "Jāhiliyya" in Wasf al-Matar wa al-Sahāb (p. 3), confirms this point of view.
2. Qur'an: Ahzāb: 33.
3. Baqillānī, I^cjāz, pp. 199, 201.
4. Nuwairī, Nihāya, XV, p. 338.
5. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, p. 219.
6. Abū Hilāl, Awā'il, I, p. 80.
7. Zamakhsharī, Kashshāf, III, p. 260.

Page 49

1. Wahb, Tījān, pp. 38-42.
2. Ibid.; Ibn Qutaiba, Ma^cārif, p. 28; Tabarī, Tārīkh, I, p. 216.
3. Tabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 216-22.

Page 50

1. ^cUбайд, Akhbār, pp. 369-70, 378-81; Wahb, Tījān, pp. 79, 84-7.
2. al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Ikhtiyārāin, pp. 74-8.
3. Diwān, pp. 88-9.
4. Diwān, p. 78; ^cUбайд, Akhbār, pp. 380-1; Wahb, Tījān, p. 85.
5. Wahb, Tījān, pp. 86-7; Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, Tārīkh,

p. 85.

6. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIII, p. 194.
7. °Ubaid, Akhbār, p. 380; Wahb, Tijān, p. 85.
8. Winnett, A Study Of The Lihyanite And Thamudic Inscriptions, p. 51; Khāzin, Min al-Sāmiyya, pp. 154-5.

Page 52

1. Tabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 226-32. Tabarī says that the Torah scholars state that there was no mention of °Ād and Thamūd in the Torah. Tabarī also says that the story of the °Ādites and Thamūdīs was as popular in Jāhiliyya as that of Ibrāhīm and Ismā°īl, and there was a corpus of Jāhili poetry that dealt with °Ād and Thamūd (Ibid., p. 232).
2. Ibid., p. 629.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XI, pp. 164-66.

Page 53

1. Ibid., p. 165.
2. Ibid., pp. 165-6.

Page 54

1. Ibid., pp. 166-7; °Ubaid, Akhbār, pp. 498; A°shā, Dīwān, pp. 78-82; Tabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 629-30; Yāqūt, Buldān, IV, pp. 1029-34. The story of Tasm and Jadīs was current in Jāhiliyya as can be gauged

from the poetry of A^cshā and al-Nimr b. Tawlib
(Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 630-1; Zamakhsharī, Mustaqṣā,
II, p. 121).

Page 56

1. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 617-25; Mufaddal, Amthāl, pp. 144-7; Wāhidī, Wasīṭ, pp. 204-5; Yūsī, Zahr, I, pp. 187-92, 208-10. The story of Zabbā' was popular in Jāhiliyya. It is mentioned by Mutalammis, Mālik b. Nuwaira and Mukhabbal al-Sa^cdī (Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 617, 623, 625-6).

Page 58

1. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, II, pp. 47-50; Yāqūt, Buldān, II, pp. 281-4; Baihaqī, Mahāsin, p. 564. The story of the Ḥadrans is recorded in poems by ^cAdī b. Zaid and A^cshā (Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, II, pp. 48, 50; Yāqūt, Buldān, II, p. 284).

Page 59

1. Asma^cī, Tārīkh, pp. 3-5; Wahb, Tījān, pp. 39-40.
2. Wahb, Tījān, pp. 38-41; Mas^cūdī, Murūj, II, pp. 196-209.
3. Jāhiz, Ḥayawān, I, pp. 187-88, VI, p. 197.
4. Ibn al-Azraqī, Akhbār, I, pp. 84-5.
5. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, p. 613.
6. Ibid., p. 627.

Page 60

1. ^cAlī, Mufasssal, III, pp. 191-2.
2. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, p. 628.
3. Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 195-6; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, pp. 253-4; Ibn Nubāta, Sarḥ, I, p. 91.
4. Ibn al-Azraqī, Akhbār, I, p. 91; Jāḥiz, Ḥayawān, VI, p. 198; Balkhī, Bad', III, pp. 60-1.
5. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, pp. 12, 14.
6. Ibn al-Azraqī, Akhbār, I, p. 81.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-1.

Page 61

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-4.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
4. See pages 94-5.
5. Ibn Ḥazm, Jamhara, p. 8; Ibn Khaldūn, ^cIbar, II, p. 506.

Page 62

1. Ibn Khaldūn, ^cIbar, II, p. 506.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 520; Ḥamdānī, Iklīl, I, p. 164; Ibn ^cAbd al-Barr, Inbāh, p. 34; Balādhurī, Ansāb, I, p. 15.

Page 63

1. Maidānī, Majma^c, I, pp. 129-30. The Jāhilī poet

Zuhair b. Janāb alludes to this incident, which led to the separation of the Qudā^cī and Ma^caddī tribes (Balādhurī, Ansāb, I, p. 19).

2. Maidānī, Majma^c, I, pp. 129-30.
3. Tabarī, Tārīkh, II, pp. 272-3.
4. Ibid., p. 271; Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 6-7.

Page 64

1. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, pp. 317-8.
2. Ibn Ḥazm, Jamhara, p. 11.
3. Tabarī, Tārīkh, II, p. 256.
4. Ibid., p. 259; Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, pp. 327-43.
5. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, p. 328; Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 162-3.
6. Ibn Qutaiba, Ma^cārif, pp. 575-6.

Page 65

1. Abū Hilāl, Awā'il, I, p. 81.
2. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, pp. 244-8; Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 368-9; Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, Tārīkh, pp. 92-3.

Page 66

1. Ibn Qutaiba, Ma^cārif, pp. 640-2; Asma^cī, Tārīkh, pp. 102-6.
2. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, Iqd, V, pp. 261-4.

Page 67

1. Ibid., p. 264; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, VI, p. 70.
2. Ibn Qutaiba, Ma^cārif, p. 642.

Page 68

1. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, p. 326.

Page 69

1. Ibn Khaldūn, Ibar, II, p. 566.
2. Ibid.; Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, p. 246.
3. Dīnawarī, Akhbār, pp. 61-2; Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, p. 156.

Page 70

1. Dīnawarī, Akhbār, p. 63; Ibn al-Kalbī, Asnām, p. 29; Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, II, pp. 137-9; Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, pp. 159-60.
2. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, II, p. 144-6; Dīnawarī, Akhbār, pp. 63-4.
3. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, p. 162.

Page 71

1. Abū Hilāl, Awā'il, I, p. 76; Qutrūb, Azmina, pp. 116-7.
2. Mas^cūdī, Murūj, II, pp. 253-4.
3. Shahrastānī, Milal, II, p. 236.
4. Ibid.; Qalqashandī, Nihāya, p. 452.
5. Shahrastānī, Milal, II, p. 236.
6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 235.
8. Ibn Qutaiba, Ma^cārif, p. 621.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibn al-^cIbrī, Tārīkh, p. 159; Qalqashandī, Nihāya, p. 452; Ibn Qutaiba, Anwā', pp. 126-7.
12. Ibn al-Sikkīt, Kanz, p. 387; Qutrub, Azmina, p. 88; Marzuqī, Azmina, II, p. 46; Tīfāshī, Surūr, p. 123.

Page 72

1. Ibn Shajarī, Mukhtārāt, pp. 144-5; Qalqashandī, Subh, I, p. 407; Ibn Ṭabāṭibā, ^cIyār, pp. 35-6; Khalidiyyān, Ashbāh, pp. 167-8.
2. Ibn al-Kalbī, Asnām, p. 27.
3. Balkhī, Bad', III, pp. 134-5.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, III, pp. 124, 126-7.
5. Ibid., pp. 120-1; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 300.
6. Sijistānī, Mu^cammarūn, p. 88.
7. Ibid., p. 89; Balkhī, Bad', III, p. 135.

Page 73

1. Balkhī, Bad', III, p. 135.
2. I, pp. 221-2; Ibn al-Kalbī, Asnām, p. 31.
3. Ibn al-Azraqī, Akhbār, I, pp. 117, 124-6.
4. Ibn al-Kalbī, Asnām, pp. 5-6.
5. Ibid.

6. Khāzin, Min al-Sāmiyya, pp. 161, 163; °Alī, Mufaṣṣal, VI, pp. 232-4, 238, 250; Winnett, A Study Of Lihyanite And Thamudic Inscriptions, pp. 13, 33, 38, 42, 45.
7. Glueck, Deities And Dolphins, p. 416.
8. Ibn al-Kalbī, Asnām, p. 24.

Page 74

1. Ibid., p. 12.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 9.
4. Ibid., p. 15.

Page 75

1. Ibid., pp. 17, 28.

Page 76

1. Ibid., pp. 32-6.
2. Ibid., p. 34.

Page 77

1. Ibid., pp. 20-1.
2. Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 311, 319; Quṭrub, Azmina, p. 115.
3. Mas°ūdī, Murūj, II, p. 286.
4. Ibid., pp. 287; Ushnāndānī, Ma°ānī, p. 18.
5. Mas°ūdī, Murūj, II, pp. 287.

Page 78

1. Ibid., p. 287; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 446.

Chapter III

Jāhilī Poetry

The patriarch Mudar b. Nizār b. Ma^cadd was a handsome young man and had a beautiful voice. One day Mudar fell off his camel and hurt his hand and cried in pain: "Oh my hand, oh my hand ...". The camels grazing nearby heard Mudar's cry, and were spellbound by his doleful voice, and gathered around him and listened in silent reverence. From Mudar's doleful cry emerged the Hudā' song, and out of the Hudā' song Jāhilī poetry was born. Nothing is known about the origins of Jāhilī poetry other than what is traditionally related in the above story or in a variation of it. It is therefore fruitless to postulate theories on the origins of Jāhilī poetry that will ultimately lead to cul-de-sac conclusions.

There is a general consensus among classical critics that Jāhilī poetry is of a recent history. Ibn Sallām and Jāhiz³ credit Muhalhil b. Rabī^ca and Imru'al-Qais as being the first poets to write long polished poems which paved the ground for the later Jāhilī poets. In Kitāb al-Hayawān, Jāhiz goes further than Ibn Sallām in bolstering his assumption on the origins of Jāhilī poetry: "If we study this poetry we will find it pre-dates Islam by one hundred and fifty years, and if we study it in depth, we will find

it pre-dates Islam by two hundred years.¹ Towards the end of the same work, Jāhiz revised his above assumption and intimated that Jāhili poetry pre-dates Islam by well over two hundred years.² Another group of critics claims that al-Afwah al-Awdī, a contemporary of Muhalhil, was the first poet to write long, smooth poems;³ whereas Ibn Khālawaih regards Ibn Khidām, probably the same poet mentioned by Imru'al-Qais, as the first poet to write poetry.⁴ In Majālis Tha^clab, the critic Tha^clab quotes Asma^cī as saying that the earliest poets to write poems of thirty verses were Muhalhil, Dhu'aib b. Ka^cb b. ^cAmr b. Tamīm, Damra of the Banū Kināna and al-Adbaṭ b. Qurai^c, all of whom lived four hundred years before the advent of Islam.⁵ On the other hand, there were notable critics like Abū al-Faraj who implied that Jāhili poetry was the product of a long and uninterrupted tradition which could be traced back to the early Jurhumī poets who flourished centuries before Muhalhil and Imru'al-Qais.⁶

The bulk of Jāhili poetry belongs to the Late Jāhiliyya but there is also a body of work which consists of poems from the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations and the Ancient Jāhiliyya. The quality and length of the poems from the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations and the Ancient Jāhiliyya negate the assumptions of Ibn Sallām, Jāhiz, Ibn Khālawaih and Asma^cī, but confirm the assumptions of those who believed in the continuity of an ancient poetic

tradition.

The Poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations

The poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations falls into two groups: the poetry of the ʿĀdites and Thamūdīs and the poetry of the Tasmīs, Jadīsīs, ʿAmālikites and Hadrans. The ʿĀdite and Thamūdī poetry was dismissed by classical critics as unauthentic because they argued the ʿĀdites and Thamūdīs spoke an older form of Arabic than the language of the poetry attributed to them.¹ They also stressed that the ʿĀdite and Thamūdī poetry lacked the essential poetic qualities in terms of distinct language, rhythm, imagery and subject matter.² A study of the poetry attributed to the ʿĀdites and Thamūdīs confirms the classical critics reservations in respect of its authenticity, but does not rule out the possibility that the poetry was written in the late Jāhiliyya.³

The poems from the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations deal primarily with the incidents that led to the extinction of the tribes of that period. ʿAfīra al-Jadīsiyya known as Shamūs, a contemporary of the Lakhmid king Jadhīma al-Abrash, is the author of one of two significant poems from the poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations. The poem gives vent to the pent-up

anger and frustration of a woman who has been emotionally and physically abused by the Tasmī king on her wedding night, with the consent of her brother, the leader of the Jadīsīs, her bride-groom and her people. C'afīra denounces the Jadīsīs for letting the Tasmī king deprive them of their honour and stirs them to take action, for death is better than putting up with such a humiliating custom. C'afīra goes on to say that if the Jadīsī men do not defend their honour they might as well swap places with their women-folk and wear the bridal dress and the bridal perfume: (Tawīl)

وَأَنْتُمْ رِجَالٌ فِيكُمْ عَدَدُ النَّمْلِ؟	أَبْجُلُّ مَا يُرْتَى إِلَى قَتَابِكُمْ
جِهَاراً وَرُقَّتْ فِي النَّسَاءِ إِلَى بَعْلِ؟!	وَنُضِجُ تَمَشِي فِي الدَّمَاءِ عَفِيرَةً
نِسَاءً لَكُنَّا لَا نُقَرُّ بِذَا الْفِعْلِ	وَلَوْ أَنَّا كُنَّا رِجَالاً وَكُنْتُمْ
وَدَبُوا النَّارَ الْحَرْبَ بِالْحَطَبِ الْجَزْلِ	فَمَوْتُوا كِرَاماً أَوْ أَمِينُوا عَدْوَكُمْ
إِلَى بَلَدٍ قَفْسٍ وَمَوْتُوا مِنَ الْهَزْلِ	وَإِلَّا فَخَلُّوا بَطْنَهَا وَتَحَمَّلُوا
وَاللَّمُوتُ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مَقَامٍ عَلَى الذَّلِ	قَلْبَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مَقَامٍ عَلَى أذَى
فَكُونُوا نِسَاءً لَا تُعَابُ مِنَ الْكُحْلِ	وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ لَمْ تَغْضَبُوا بَعْدَ هَذِهِ
خَلَقْتُمْ لِأَسْوَابِ الْعُرُوسِ وَاللَّغْلِ	وَدُونَكُمْ طِيبَ الْعُرُوسِ فَإِنَّمَا
وَيَخْتَالُ يَمَشِي بَيْنَنَا مِثْلَةَ النَّحْلِ	قَبْعُداً وَسُخْفاً لِلَّذِي لَيْسَ دَافِعاً

The poem provoked a series of events that precipitated the demise of Tasm and Jadīs.²

The second poem from the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations by Riyāh b. Murra al-Tasmī was written

after his escape from the Jadīsīs' massacre of his people.¹
 Riyāḥ read the poem before the Himyarī king Ḥassān b.
 Tubba^c, and begged the king's assistance to fight the
 Jadīsīs:² (Tawīl)

اجبني الى قوم دعوك لغدرهم الى قتلهم فيها عليهم لك القدر
 دعونا وكنا آمنين لغدرهم فأفلكنا غدر يشاب به مكر
 وقالوا أشهدونا مؤنسین لتنعموا ونقصو حقاقا من جوار له خجر
 فلما انتهينا للمجالس كللوا كما كلت أسد نجوة خزر
 فانك لن تسمع بيوم ولن ترى كيوم اباد الحى طسما به المكر
 أتيناهم في أزرنا ونعالنا علينا الملاء الخضر والخلل الجر
 فصرنا حوما بالعراد وطعمنا تنازعنا ذنب الوقيمة والنمر
 فدونك قوم نيس لله لبيهم ولا نهم منه حجاب ولا ستر

The opening verbs of the first three lines of the poem probably allude to a missing narrative. The opening sequential fa in the fourth, fifth, seventh and eighth lines, dramatises the poet's horror at the way the Jadīsīs blatantly broke the code of hospitality when they invited the Tasmī king and nobles to lunch and then killed them while they were eating.

The Poetry of the Ancient Jāhiliyya

Apart from a few poems, the poetry of the Ancient Jāhiliyya is mostly snippets, devoid of poetic spark. There are also poems attributed to the Himyarī mythical

kings and poets, but classical critics discounted these poems in the same way as they had dismissed the poetry attributed to the ¹Ādites and Thamūdīs.

Arab critics hold Mudād b. ²Amr al-Jurhumī as the first important poet of the Ancient Jāhiliyya.³ In spite of the various dates proposed by classical historians in ascertaining Mudād's period, it is still impossible to fix this period within a time-bracket. Mudād is remembered for a few poems, the finest of which are the two poems he wrote in exile after ⁴Amr b. Luhayy al-Khuzā'ī, the new Lord of Mecca, rejected his request to return to Mecca. In the first poem Mudād expresses his sorrow for having lost his Holy City Mecca to the Khuzā'īs, and blames his people for incurring the wrath of Allāh who sent the Khuzā'īs to punish them for desecrating the Ka'ba. The poet dwells on the effect time and place have on people cut off from their roots. The sense of loss, eased by the poet's acceptance of Allāh's decree, evokes a mood of subdued nostalgia: (Tawīl)

كأن لم يكن بين الحجون إلى الصفا ،	أليس . ولم يسمر بمكة سامر
ولم يتربع واسطاً ، فجنوبه	إلى المنحنى من ذي الأراكمة حاضر
بلى ، نحن كنا أهلها ، فأبادنا	ضروف الليالي ، والجودود العوائر
وأبدلنا ربى بها دار غريبة ،	بها الذئب يعوي ، والعدو المخامر
أقول إذا نام الخلي ، ولم أنم	أذا العرش لا يبعث سهيل وعامر
وبدلت منهم أوجهها لا أريدناها .	وحمير قد بدلتها واليحاسر

فَإِنْ نَسِلِ الدُّنْيَا عَلَيْنَا ، بِكَلِّهَا
 فَتَحْنُ وِلَاةَ الْبَيْتِ مِنْ بَعْدِ نَابِتِ ،
 وَأَنْكَحَ جَدِي خَيْرَ شَخْصٍ عَلِمْتَهُ ،
 وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا الْمَلِيكَ بِفُدْرَةٍ ،
 فَصِرْنَا أَحَادِيثًا . وَكُنَّا بِغَيْطَةٍ ،
 وَسَحَّتْ دُمُوعَ الْعَيْنِ ، تُبْكِي لِبَلْدَةٍ
 وَيَا لَيْتَ شِعْرِي مَنْ بِأَجْبَادَ بَعْدَنَا ،
 قَبْطَنْ مِثْنِي أَمْسَى ، كَأَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ بِهِ
 قَهْلٌ قَرَجٌ آتٍ بِشَيْءٍ نُحِجُّهُ .
 وَيُضْبِحُ شَرًّا بَيْنَنَا وَتَشَاجِرُ
 نُمَثِّي بِهِ ، وَالْخَيْرُ إِذْ ذَاكَ ظَاهِرُ
 فَأَبْنَاؤُهُ مِنَّا ، وَنَحْنُ الْأَصَاهِرُ
 كَذَلِكَ يَا لِلنَّاسِ تَجْرِي الْمَقَادِرُ
 كَذَلِكَ عَضَّتْنَا السُّنُونُ الْعَوَابِرُ
 بِهَا حَرَمٌ أَمْنٌ ، وَفِيهَا الْمَشَاعِرُ
 أَقَامَ بِمُقْضَى سَبِيلِهِ وَالظُّلُومِ
 مُضَاضٌ وَمِنْ حَيْثِي عَدِيَّ عَمَائِرُ
 وَهَلْ جَزَعٌ مُنْجِيكَ مِمَّا تُحَادِرُ

Mudād's second poem is a bold reminder to the new lords of Mecca that they, like the Jurhumis, will one day fall victims to the vicissitude of time and experience humiliation, disintegration and exile: ¹ (Basit)

يَا أَيُّهَا الْحَيُّ ، سِيرُوا إِنَّ قَصْرَكُمْ
 أَن تَصْبِحُوا ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ . لَا تَسِيرُونَا
 إِنَّا كَمَا أَنْتُمْ كُنَّا ، فَغَيَّرْنَا
 دَهْرٌ بِصَرْفٍ كَمَا صِرْنَا تَصِيرُونَا
 أَرْجُوا الْمَطِيَّ ، وَأَرْخُوا مِنْ أَرْمِيهَا ،
 قَبْلَ الْمَعَاتِ ، وَقَضُوا مَا تَقْضُونَا
 قَدْ مَالَ دَهْرٌ عَلَيْنَا ، ثُمَّ أَهْلَكْنَا
 بِالْبَغْيِ فِيهِ فَقَدْ صِرْنَا أَفَانِيَا
 كُنَّا زَمَانًا مُلُوكَ النَّاسِ قَبْلَكُمْ ،
 نَأْوِي بِلَادًا حَرَامًا كَانَ مَسْكُونَا

Mudād's poems are significant for words that refer to Allāh: الملك ، إذا العرش و رَبِّي ; for terms that denote the Ka^cba and its custodians: وِلَاةَ الْبَيْتِ ، بِلَادًا حَرَامًا ، حَرَمٌ أَمْنٌ ; and for metaphors and images that have become part of the poetic heritage: مِيرْنَا أَفَانِيَا ، حُرُوفُ اللَّيَالِي ، دَارَ غُرْبَةٍ ، عَضَّتْنَا السُّنُونُ الْعَوَابِرُ ، فَصِرْنَا أَحَادِيثًا ، قَدْ مَالَ دَهْرٌ عَلَيْنَا .

Abū °Ubaid al-Bakrī relates that during the time of Juhaina b. Zaid, a seventh-generation Qudā°ī and uncle of the poet Khuzaima b. Nahd, a giant turned up at the Ka°ba, and the pilgrims who were praying and going round the Ka°ba were frightened by the giant's appearance and ran away. The giant called them to come back and told them not to be afraid, and then recited a prayer poem:¹ (Rajaz)

لَا هُمْ رَبُّ الْبَيْتِ ذِي الْمَنَابِكِ
وَرَبُّ كُلِّ رَاجِلٍ وَرَاكِبِ
أَنْتَ وَهَبْتَ الْفِتْيَةَ السَّلَاحِبِ
وَهَجَمْتَ بِحَارُ فِيهَا الْحَالِبِ
وَوَلَّهَ مِثْلَ الْجَرَادِ السَّارِبِ
مَتَاعَ أَيَّامٍ وَكُلَّ ذَاهِبِ

The pilgrims approached the giant and realised that the giant was a woman, and they asked her: "Are you human or are you a genie?" The giant said: "I am a Jurhumī woman." And then she explained that Allāh had cursed her people by sending ants to destroy them as a punishment for their crimes against Him:² (Rajaz)

أَهْلَكْنَا الذَّرَّ زَمَانَ يُعْلَمُ
بِمُجْجِفَاتٍ وَبِمَوْتٍ لَهْدَمُ
لِلْبَيْتِ مِنَّا وَرُكُوبِ الْمَأْتَمِ

The Jurhumī woman asked to be taken to a certain place and

promised to reward those who would help her. Two Juhainī men agreed to her request and took her to Jabal Juhaina where she walked to an ants' colony and told her two companions to dig a hole there. The two men dug a hole and found a treasure. While the Jurhumī woman was speaking to the two Juhainī men the ants got at her and she said that the ants had been sent by Allāh to devour her: ¹ (Rajaz)

يَا وَيَاتِي يَا وَيَاتِي مِنْ أَجَلِي
أَرَى صِفَارَ الدَّرِّ يَنْبِي هَيْبِي
سُلْطَانَ يَفْرِينِ عَلَيَّ مَحْمَلِي
لَمَّا رَأَيْنَ أَنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لِي
مِنْ مَنَعَةٍ أُخْرِزُ فِيهَا مَعْقَلِي

The first poem of the Jurhumī woman is the earliest prayer poem in which Allāh is invoked as Lord of the House and of Mankind, and also as the One Who controls our fate. The ² لاَهُمَّ is the idghām of اللَّهُمَّ, more commonly used in the Talbiya prayers. The second and third poems are important for their use of the words أَجَلِي, يَا وَيَاتِي, سُلْطَانَ, and the phrases زَمَانَ يُعَلِّمُ, وَرُكُوبِ السَّائِمِ, because of their religious implications.

Munabbih b. Sa^cd b. Qais^c Ailān b. Mudar, a sixth-generation Ma^caddī, was an ancestor of the Late Jāhilī poet Ṭufail al-Khail al-Ghanawī who was known as Muhabbir

on account of his fine poems. Ibn Sallām and Ibn Qutaiba
 quote a two-line poem by Munabbih in the form of a dialogue
 in which the daughter of the poet asks her father why his
 hair has turned grey, and her father says it is due to the
 problems brought on him by changing times: ² (Kāmil)

قالت عميرة: ما الرأسك - بعدما
 أعمير إن أباك شيب رأسه
 نفد الزمان - أتى بأون منكر
 كره الليالي واختلاف الأعصر

Later in his life Munabbih came to be known as A^csur³
 because of the last word in the second verse.

The next two poems are by Khuzaima b. Nahd, a
 corpulent and impetuous man. ⁴ Khuzaima had fourteen
 brothers, one of whom was Hanzala b. Nahd, one of the
 most respected men of his day in Hijāz and Tihāma. ⁵
 Abū ^cUbaid relates that Khuzaima had a quarrel with two of
 his cousins, Hārith and ^cArāba, sons of the formidable
 Qudā^cī leader Sa^cd b. Zaid, and killed them, then
 reported the incident to his father Nahd b. Zaid.
 Khuzaima's father was perturbed by his son's rash
 action, and expressed his fear of the dire consequences
 the death of his nephews might provoke: ⁶ (Basīt)

وهل نجاني من دعوى عرابة أن
 وحاجة مثل حر النار داخله
 صارت محلة بني السنفح والجبال
 سلتها يكتاز دمرت جمالا
 مطوية الزور طي البئر دوسرة
 مفروشة الرجل فرشالم يكن عملا

Khuzaima's first poem, the earliest recorded departure poem, was written at the end of one Spring season during which the families of Khuzaima and his girl Fāṭima spent in the countryside, as was (and still is) the custom in the Arabian Peninsula. When Khuzaima was told that Fāṭima and her people had returned home, and there was no way he could reach her, he said that as long as Fāṭima was alive he would always want her.¹ The news of Fāṭima's departure prompted Khuzaima to write a poem in which he says when Gemini is trailing behind the Pleiades, signalling the end of the spring and the coming of the hot summer, he thinks of Fāṭima and fears she and her people may be on the move to another location:² (Wāfir)

ظَنَنْتُ بِأَلِ فَاطِمَةَ الظُّنُونَا	إِذَا الْجَوَزَاءُ أَرْدَقَتِ الثُّرَيَّا
وَإِنْ أَوْفَى وَإِنْ سَكَنَ الْحَجُونَا	ظَنَنْتُ بِهِمْ وَظَنَّ الْمَرْءُ حُوبُ
يُسْجَلِي لِلغَى الْأَمْرِ المِينَا	ظَنَنْتُ بِهَا وَظَنَّ الْمَرْءُ مِمَا
هُمُومٌ تُخْرِجُ الشَّجْنَ الدَّفِينَا	وَحَالَتْ دُونَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ هُمُومِي
جَنُوبَ الْحَزَنِ يَا شَحَطًا مَبِينَا	أَرَى ابْنَةَ يَذْكُرُ رَحَلَتْ فَحَلَّتْ

Khuzaima's swift reaction encapsulated in the departure and nasīb poem indicates that the departure and nasīb theme was an established convention. The significance of Gemini trailing behind the Pleiades at the end of the spring season was elucidated by the Abbasid poet Ibn Kunāsa (741-823).³

Khuzaima's second poem describes the perfumed and wine-tasting mouth of the poet's love Fāṭima and his indifference to her response after he killed her father:¹

(Mutaqarib)

فَتَاةٌ كَأَنَّ رِضَابَ الْعَبِيرِ بِفِيهَا بُعْلٌ بِوِ الرُّنَجِيْلِ
قَتَلْتُ أَبَاكَ - عَلَى حَبِّهَا - قَتَبْتُ إِنْ بَخِلْتُ أَوْ تُبِيْلُ

The poem was set to music by the Umayyad composer-singer Tuwais.²

According to Ibn Sallām and Ibn Qutaiba, one of the earliest poets was Duwaid b. Zaid b. Nahd, a tenth-generation Qudā^cī, who was probably the nephew of Khuzaima b. Nahd. Both Ibn Sallām and Ibn Qutaiba quote the same two poems by Duwaid with minor variations. Duwaid wrote the first of his two poems on his death bed:³ (Rajaz)

اليَوْمَ يُبَدِنِي لِدَاوَيْدَ يَتُّهُ لَوْ كَانَ لِلدَّهْرِ بَلِيٌّ أَوْ بَلِيَّتُهُ
أَوْ كَانَ قِرْنِي وَاحِدًا كَفَيْتُهُ يَا رَبِّ نَهَبِ صَالِحَ حَوِيَّتُهُ
وَرُبَّ غَيْلٍ حَسَنٍ لَوِيَّتُهُ [وَمِعْصَمٍ مُخْضَبٍ مَنِيَّتُهُ]

As Duwaid prepares himself for his inevitable death he recalls the days of his youth when he fought and felled his equals, and the adventures he had with newly-wed young brides. The phrase ^{رُبَّ} in the third verse implies that it is the beginning of a new section in which Duwaid probably dwelt on the adventures he had with women

and the problems he had to surmount to reach them, in a manner made familiar by Imru' al-Qais.

In the second poem Duwaid personifies time as a man who has thrown the full weight of his legs and hands on his own body, and concludes that the good that time does today will be undone by death tomorrow: (Rajaz)¹

أَلْتَقَى عَلَى الدَّهْرِ رَجُلًا وَيدَا
وَالدَّهْرُ مَا أَصْلَحَ يَوْمًا أَفْسَدَا
يُصْلِحُهُ الْيَوْمَ وَيُفْسِدُهُ غَدَا

Ibn Sallām regards the short poem of al-^cAnbar b. ^cAmr b. Tamīm, a tenth-generation Ma^caddī, as one of the earliest examples of genuine Jāhiliī poetry.² The poem tackles the theme of the insecurity one feels when living in exile by employing the metaphor of a bucket half-full of water swinging while being anxiously lifted out of the well:³ (Rajaz)

قَدْ رَأَيْتَنِي مِنْ دَلْوِي أَضْطَرَّابُهَا وَالنَّأْيُ فِي بَهْرَاءِ وَاغْتَرَابُهَا
إِنْ لَا تَجِبِي مَلَأَى يَجِبِي قُرَابُهَا

Ibn Qutaiba cites a four-line poem by al-^cHārith b. Ka^cb but says nothing about him nor about his period except that he was ancient.⁴ But since Ibn Qutaiba quotes ^cHārith after Duwaid b. Zaid b. Nahd, it is assumed he lived

after Duwaid. There are two persons bearing the name of al-Ḥārith b. Ka^cb. The first al-Ḥārith b. Ka^cb was killed by Dabba b. Udd b. Ṭābikha b. Mudrika¹, the grand-nephew of Khuzaima b. Mudrika, presumably before reaching old age. The second al-Ḥārith b. Ka^cb was the father of the Bal-Ḥārith tribe of Najrān, who, before dying in old age, advised his sons: (Kāmil)²

أُبْنَىٰ إِنَّ أَبَاكَ يَوْمًا هَالِكٌ فَاحْفَظْ أَبَاكَ رِيَّاسَةً وَتَقَلُّبًا
وَإِذَا لَقِيتَ كَتِيبَةً فَتَقَدَّمَا إِنَّ الْمَقَدَّمَ لَا يَكُونُ الْأَخْيَبَا
تَلْقَى الرِّيَّاسَةَ أَوْ يَمُوتُ بِطَعْنَةٍ وَالْمَوْتُ يَا أَيُّهَا مَنْ نَأَى وَتَجَنَّبَا

The poem of Ḥārith describes a man pining over his lost youth, seeing his friends dying one by one leaving him to cope with decrepitude on his own, with no appetite for food and unable to move around, and all he does is star-gazing and reflecting on his life:³ (Mutaqārib)

أَكَلْتُ شَبَابِي فَافْنَيْتُهُ وَأَفْنَيْتُ بَعْدَ شُهُورٍ شُهُورًا
ثَلَاثَةَ أَهْلِيْنَ صَاحِبِيَّتِهِمْ فَبَانُوا وَأَصْبَحْتُ شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا
قَلِيلَ الطَّعَامِ عَسِيرَ الْقِيَا مِ قَدْ تَرَكَ الْقَيْدُ خَطْوِي قَصِيرًا
أَبَيْتُ أَرَاعِي نُجُومَ السَّمَاءِ أَقَلَّبُ أَمْرِي بَطُونًا ظُهُورًا

On the other hand, the biographer Sijistāni attributes the same poem to Mālik b. al-Mundhir al-Bijlī, an adherent of al-Nabī Shu^caib's faith.⁴

Sāma b. Lu'ayy, a fourth-generation Qurashī, had an argument with his brother ^cĀmir, and in a fit of anger he slapped his face and blinded one of his eyes. Fearing retribution Sāma left Mecca and settled in Oman where he married a local girl.¹ Al-Musayyab b. ^cAlas recorded the life of Sāma in a long narrative poem, fifteen lines of which are quoted in Abū ^cUbaid's Mu^cjam mā Ista^cjam.²

Sāma is noted for an epitaph poem he scribbled on the ground with one of his fingers as he was dying after he had been bitten by a snake while he was riding his camel. The poem was familiar to the Prophet Muhammad:³ (Khafīf)

عَلِمْتُ مَا بِسَامَةِ الْمَلَأَقَةِ	عَيْنَ فَا بَنِي لِسَامَةَ بْنِ لُؤَيٍّ
يَوْمَ حَلَّوْا بِهِ قَتِيلًا لِنَاقِهِ	لَا أَرَى مِثْلَ سَامَةَ بْنِ لُؤَيٍّ
أَنَّ نَفْسِي إِلَيْهِمَا مُشْتَاقِهِ	بَلِغًا عَامِرًا وَكَبِيرًا رَسُولًا
غَالِبِي خَرَجْتَ مِنْ غَيْرِ فَاوٍ	إِنْ تَسْكُنُ فِي عَمَانَ دَارِي فَا نِي
حَذِرَ الْمَوْتَ لَمْ تَسْكُنْ مَهْرًا	رَبِّ كَأْسٍ هَرَقْتَ يَا ابْنَ لُؤَيٍّ
مَالِي رَامَ ذَلِكَ بِالْحَتْفِ طَاقِهِ	رَمْتِ دَفْعَ الْحَتْفِ يَا ابْنَ لُؤَيٍّ
بَعْدَ جِدِّ وَحِدَةٍ وَرَشَاقِهِ	وَخَرُوسِ السَّرِيِّ تَرَكْتَ رِزْيَا

Mālik b. Fahm b. Ghanm b. Daws al-Azdī, king of Iraq, possibly died in the last half of the second century or the early part of the third century A.D. Mālik taught his son Sulaima the skill of archery until he excelled in it.⁴ One night Sulaima shot an arrow in the air and the arrow accidentally struck his father and killed him without

Sulaima being aware of what he had done. Before dying Mālik realised he had been shot by Sulaima and cried out cursing him for his misdeed:¹ (Wāfir)

جَزَانِي لَا جَزَاهُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا
 سَلِيمَةً إِنَّهُ شَرٌّ أَجْزَانِي
 أَعْلَمُهُ الرِّمَاطَةَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ
 فَلَمَّا اشْتَدَّ سَاعِدُهُ رَمَانِي

The poem is one of the most famous and quoted poems of Jāhilī poetry.²

Jadhīma al-Abrash (d.c.265) succeeded his father Mālik b. Fahm as king of Iraq,³ and he moved the capital from Anbār to Hīra which became the seat of power of the Lakhmid dynasty. Jadhīma was a priest and a seer, and worshipped two gods called Daizanān.⁴ Jadhīma was informed that a handsome Lakhmid young man named ^cAdī b. Naṣr was living among the Iyādī tribe. Jadhīma was constantly harassing the Iyādīs, and in retaliation the Iyādīs sent some of their men to the priest of the gods Daizanān. The Iyādī emissaries made the priest drunk and stole the two statues of the gods Daizanān. The Iyādīs sent a message to Jadhīma telling him they were in possession of the Daizanān statues which would be given back to him if he promised to stop raiding their land. Jadhīma agreed on condition that they sent ^cAdī b. Naṣr with the statues. ^cAdī and the statues

were dispatched and Jadhīma left the Iyādīs in peace.¹

Jadhīma appointed °Adī as his wine attendant.²

Jadhīma's sister Raqāsh met °Adī and was struck by his beauty and told him she would like to marry him. °Adī told Raqāsh it was not possible, but Raqāsh said that it would be possible if he got Jadhīma drunk and then asked him for her hand. °Adī followed Raqāsh's advice, and while Jadhīma was in a state of drunkenness he consented to °Adī's proposal, and the marriage was immediately consummated. In the morning Jadhīma discovered he had been tricked into consenting to the marriage and regretted it. °Adī, fearing for his life, ran away and returned to the Banū Iyād where he died after being accidentally struck by an arrow while hunting.³

Raqāsh gave birth to a son and named him °Amr, and Jadhīma was very fond of him. When °Amr was in his teens he was snatched away by the genii. One day two men were travelling from Syria to Hīra with gifts for Jadhīma, and on their way they met °Amr wandering in the desert, looking for food. °Amr revealed his identity and the two men happily took him with them to Jadhīma. Jadhīma was overjoyed to be reunited with his lost nephew, and he rewarded the two men by making them his boon-companions.⁴

Ṭabari quotes a poem of eleven verses by Jadhīma, and

says that in the opinion of Ibn al-Kalbī only three verses are genuine, but unfortunately he does not specify the three verses.¹ The poem engaged the interest of the classical critics and lexicographers. Ibn Sallām quotes the first two and fifth verses as examples of authentic early Jāhilī poetry;² Āmidī and ³Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī quote the first three and fifth verses; al-Akhfash al-Asghar quotes the first five verses and Ibn Sa⁴īd al-Andalusī quotes the first and third verses and says that the third verse was used by grammarians to illustrate grammatical points.⁵ The first verse is also quoted by Abū Zaid al-Ansārī,⁶ Sībawaih,⁷ Abū al-⁸Alā' al-Ma⁸arrī and al-A⁹lam al-Shantamarī.

Tabarī reports that while Jadhīma was on a campaign against Tasm and Jadīs, news reached him that the Hīmyarī king Ḥassān b. Tubba¹⁰ As¹⁰ad had already devastated them, and so Jadhīma prudently retreated to Hīra. Meanwhile, Ḥassān caught up with a Lakhmid contingent and routed it.¹¹ The devastation of the Lakhmid contingent prompted Jadhīma to write the eleven-line poem in which he boasts of his unparalleled leadership over an unvanquished army, and rounds up by saying he is the lord of all men, and only Allāh is above him:¹² (Ramal)

رُبَّمَا أَوْفَيْتُ فِي عِلْمٍ تَرْفَعُنْ بُرْدِي شِمَالَاتُ
فِي فِتْنَةٍ أَنَا كَالنُّهْمِ فِي بَلَايَا غُرُوقٍ بَاتُوا

مُنَّمُ أَبْنَاءِ غَانِمِي نَعَمٍ وَأَنَاسٌ بَعْدَنَا مَاتُوا
 نَحْنُ كُنَّا فِي مَمَرِهِمْ إِذْ مَرَّ الْقَوْمُ خَوَاتِ
 لَيْتَ شِعْرِي مَا أَمَاتَهُمْ نَحْنُ أَدْلَجْنَا وَهُمْ بَاتُوا
 وَلَنَا كَانُوا وَنَحْنُ إِذَا قَالَ مِنَّا قَائِلٌ صَاتُوا
 وَلَنَا أَلْبِيدُ أَلِيمَادُ الَّتِي أَهْلَهَا السُّودَانُ أَشْتَاتُ
 مُبِيَةُ الْأَخْيَارِ شَاهِدَةٌ ذَا كُمْ قَوْمِي وَأَهْلَاتِي
 قَدْ شَرِبْتُ الْخَمْرَ وَسَطَّهْمُ نَاعِمًا فِي غَيْرِ أَصْوَاتِ
 فَعَلَى مَا كَانَ مِنْ كَرَمٍ فَتَمَكَّنِي بُنْيَاتِي
 أَنَا رَبُّ النَّاسِ كُلِّهِمْ غَيْرَ رَبِّي الْكَافِتِ الْفَاتِ

The iqwā' in the last four verses indicates that the change in the rhyming scheme was used either arbitrarily or to signify a switch from one section to another section, and might not have been considered a technical fault as it was held in the Late Jāhiliyya.¹

In the wake of Jadhīma's defeat of the °Amālikites and subsequent death of their king °Amr b. Zarib, al-°Cwar b. °Amr b. Hunā'a b. Mālik b. Fahm al-Azdī, a grand-nephew of Jadhīma, hints in a short poem how °Amr b. Zarib was defeated by Jadhīma's powerful army: ² (Basīṭ)

كَانَ عَمْرُو بْنُ نُزَيْلٍ لَمْ يَمِشْ مَلِكًا وَلَمْ تَكُنْ حَوْلَهُ الرَّايَاتُ تَحْنَفُ
 لَاقَى جَذِيمَةَ فِي جَأْوَاءِ مُشْعَلَةٍ فِيهَا حَرَّ اشْفُ بِالنَّيْرَانِ تَرْتَشِقُ

After the murder of Jadhīma by the °Amālikite queen Zabbā', Jadhīma's adviser Qasīr urged °Amr b. °Adī to

avenge the death of his uncle. ^cAmr rallied the Lakhmids to fight queen Zabbā', but some of the Lakhmids preferred to fight under the leadership of ^cAmr b. ^cAbd al-Jinn. Qasir patched up the differences between ^cAmr b. ^cAdī and ^cAmr b. ^cAbd al-Jinn, and eventually the two groups agreed to be led by ^cAmr b. ^cAdī.¹ In a short poem ^cAmr b. ^cAdī alludes to his estrangement from ^cAmr b. ^cAbd al-Jinn and to the latter's initial reluctance and then acceptance to join forces with him:² (ṭawīl)

دَعَوْتُ ابْنَ عَبْدِ الْجِنِّ لِلْسَّلَامِ بَعْدَ مَا تَتَّبَعِ فِي غَرْبِ السَّمَاءِ وَكَأَسَمَا
فَلَمَّا ارْعَوْى عَن صَدْنَا بِاعْتِرَافِهِ مَرَّيْتُ هَوَاهُ مَرَّيَ آمٍ رَوَائِمَا

It appears from an incomplete poem that ^cAmr b. ^cAbd al-Jinn's response was swift:³ (ṭawīl)

أَمَا وَدِمَاءِ مَائِرَاتٍ نَحَايَاهَا عَلَى قَلَّةِ الْعُرَى أَوْ النَّسْرِ عِنْدَمَا
وَمَا قَدَّسَ الرَّهْبَانُ فِي كُلِّ هَيْكَلٍ أَبِيلَ الْأَبْيَانِ الْمَسِيحِ بَنَ مَرَّيَمَا

Ṭabari points out that the poem is incomplete because it lacks a third line to clarify its message.⁴ The importance of ^cAmr b. ^cAbd al-Jinn's poem is its reference to the worship of the goddess al-^cUzzā and of the god Nasr and to Christian belief in the region, as well as to the worship of the genii as the name of the poet ^cAbd al-Jinn suggests. Ibn al-Kalbī says that the genii were worshipped by the Banū Mulaiḥ, a branch of the Khuzā^ci tribe.⁵

It is interesting to note that the Jāhilīs believed that the poets were the hounds of the genii, as ^cAmr b. Kulthūm intimates in his Mu^callaqa: (Wāfir)¹

وَقَدْ هَمَّتْ كِلَابُ الْحَيِّ بِنَا . وَشَدَّبْنَا قَتَادَةَ مِنْ بَلِينَا

There was also a popular belief that the plague represented the sting of the spears of the genii.²

The finest example of an early long poem which begins with an aṭlāl and departure scene is by Laqīṭ b. Ya^cmur al-Iyādī who was killed by Kisrā Dhū al-Aktāf in the fourth century. There is uncertainty as to the period in which Laqīṭ lived. Ibn Qutaiba says Laqīṭ was killed by Kisrā Anūshirwān who lived in the sixth century.³ In al-^cIqd al-Farīd, Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih quotes some verses from Laqīṭ's poem in connection with the Battle of Yawm Dhī Qār which occurred at the beginning of the seventh century;⁴ whereas Abū al-Faraj, Ibn ^cTaifūr⁵ and ^cAbd al-Wāhid b. ^cAlī do not spell out Kisrā's name. On the other hand, Mas^cūdī, Ibn Badrūn, Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Khaldūn associate Laqīṭ with Kisrā Dhū al-Aktāf who annihilated Laqīṭ's tribe, the Iyādīs.⁶

The story goes that the Iyādīs who inhabited Jazīra attacked a convoy of Persian nobles and took them prisoners. Kisrā Dhū al-Aktāf heard of the incident and mobilised his army against the Iyādīs.⁷ Laqīṭ, an Arab

secretary at Kisrā's court, sent a short poem to his people warning them of Kisrā's intentions: ¹ (Wāfir)

سلامٌ بالصَّحِيفَةِ مِنْ لَقِيطٍ عَلَى مَنْ بِالْجَزِيرَةِ مِنْ إِيَادٍ
فِيَنَّ اللَّيْثَ يَأْتِيكُمْ دَلَاقًا فَلَا يَوْمِنَكُمْ سَوْقَ النَّقَادِ
أَتَاكُمْ مِنْهُمْ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفًا يَزْجُونَ الْكُتَّابَ كَالْجَرَادِ
عَلَى خَيْلِ نَبِيَّتِكُمْ فَهَذَا أَوْ أَنْ هَلَاكِكُمْ كَهَلَاكِ عَادِ

The Iyādīs disregarded his warning. ² Laqīt then sent them a long poem of fifty six verses which begins with an atḷāl and departure scene followed by the main topic of the poem whose purpose was to warn the Iyādīs of Kisrā's impending attack and to advise them to appoint an able leader and prepare for war: ³ (Basīt)

يَادَارَ عَمْرَةَ وَنَ مُحْتَلَّهَا الْجَرَاعَا
هَاجَتُ لِي الْهَمُّ وَالْأَحْزَانُ وَالْوَجَعَا
تَامَتْ فُؤَادِي بِذَاتِ الْجِرْعِ خَرْعَبَةً
مَرَّتْ تُرِيدُ بِذَاتِ الْعَذْبَةِ الْبَيْعَا
بِمُقْلَتِي خَاذِلِ أَدْمَاءَ طَاعَ لَهَا
نَبَتْ الرِّيَاضِ تُزْجِي وَسَطَهُ ذُرْعَا
وَوَاضِحِ أَشْنَبِ الْأَنْيَابِ ذِي أُشْرِ
كَالْأَقْمُحَوَانِ إِذَا مَا نَوْرُهُ لَمَعَا
جَرَّتْ لِمَا بَيْنَنَا حَبْلَ الشَّمُوسِ فَلَا
يَأْسًا مُبِينًا أَرَى مِنْهَا وَلَا طَمَعَا

فما أزالُ على شَحَطٍ يُؤرِّقُنِي
 طَيْفٌ تَعَمَّدَ رَحْلِي حَيْثُمَا وَضَعَا
 إِنِّي بِعَيْنِي إِذْ أَمَّتْ حُمُولُهُمْ
 بَطْنِ السَّلْوَطِحِ لَا يَنْظُرُونَ مَنْ تَبِعَا
 طَوْرًا أَرَهُمْ وَطَوْرًا لَا أُبِينُهُمْ
 إِذَا تَوَاضَعَ خَدْرٌ سَاعَةً لَمَعَا
 بَلْ أَيُّهَا الرَّاكِبُ الْمُزْجِي مَطِيَّتَهُ
 إِلَى الْجَزِيرَةِ مُرْتَادًا وَمُنْتَجِعَا
 أَبْلِغْ إِيَادًا وَخَلِّلْ فِي سَرَاتِهِمْ
 أَنِّي أَرَى الرَّأْيَ إِنْ لَمْ أَعْصِ قَدْ نَصَعَا
 يَا لَهْفَ نَفْسِي إِنْ كَانَتْ أُمُورُكُمْ
 شَتَّى وَأُحْكِمَ أَمْرُ النَّاسِ فَاجْتَسَعَا
 أَحْرَارُ فَارِسَ أَبْنَاءَ الْمَلُوكِ لَهُمْ
 مِنَ الْجُمُوعِ جُمُوعٌ تَزْدَهِي الْقَلَعَا
 فَهُمْ سِرَاعٌ إِلَيْكُمْ ، بَيْنَ مُلْتَقِطٍ
 شَوْكًا ، وَآخِرِ يَجْنِي الصَّابِ وَالسَّلَعَا
 فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ يَسُنُّونَ الْحِرَابَ لَكُمْ
 لَا يَهْجَعُونَ إِذَا مَا غَافِلٌ هَجَعَا
 خُزْرٌ عِيُونُهُمْ كَأَنَّ لَحِظَهُمْ
 حَرِيقٌ غَابَ تَرَى مِنْهُ السَّنَا قِطَعَا
 مَالِي أَرَاكُمْ نِيَامًا فِي بُلْهِنِيَّةِ
 وَقَدْ تَرَوْنَ شِهَابَ الْحَرْبِ قَدْ سَطَعَا

وتلبسون ثياب الأمن ضاحيةً
لا تفزعون وهذا الليث قد جمعا
وقد أظلكم من شطير ثغركم
دول له ظلم تغشاكم قطعاً
يا قوم ، لا تأمنوا ، إن كنتم غيراً
على نسايتكم كسرى وما جمعا
صونوا جياتكم واجلوا سيوفكم
وجددوا للقيسي النبل والشرعا
فاقنوا جياتكم واحموا ذماركم
واستشعروا الصبر لاتستشعروا الجزعا
أذكوا العيون وراء السرح واحترسوا
حتى ترى الخيل من تعدائها رجعا
واشروا تيلادكم في حرز أنفسكم
وحرز أهليكم لا تهلكوا هلعاً
والله ما انفكت الأموال منذ أبد
لأهلها إن أصيبوا مرةً - تبسعا
قوموا قياماً على أمشاط أرجلكم
ثم افزعوا قد ينال الأمن من فزعا
وقلدوا أمركم ، لله دركم
رحب الذراع بأمر الحرب مضطلعاً
فاشفوا غليلي برأي منكم حصداً
يُصبح فؤادي له ريان قد نقعا

لقد بذلتُ لكم نُصْحِي بِلاَ دَخَلِ
 فاستيقظوا ؛ إِنَّ خَيْرَ الْعِلْمِ مَا نَفَعَا
 هَذَا كِتَابِي إِلَيْكُمْ وَالنَّذِيرُ لَكُمْ
 لِمَنْ رَأَى رَأْيَهُ مِنْكُمْ وَمَنْ سَمِعَا

Somehow news of the poem reached Kisrā and he ordered the killing of Laqīṭ and marched on the Iyādīs and decimated them. The surviving Iyādīs sought refuge in Byzantium.

Laqīṭ's poem has a number of images which appear for the first time in the poetry of Ancient Jāhiliyya, but this does not necessarily mean that these images were not used before Laqīṭ, because some of the images do not have an individual touch that springs from a personal experience. One example is the image of the sparkling teeth of the loved one being compared to camomile flowers:

وواضحٍ أَشْنَبِ الْأَنْيَابِ ذِي أُشْرٍ
 كالأقحوانِ إِذَا مَا نَوْرُهُ لَمَعَا

The second example is the image of the departing camel bearing the howdahs seen appearing and disappearing in the sunlight:

إِنِّي بَعَيْنِي إِذْ أَمَّتْ حُمُولُهُمْ
 بَطْنِ السَّلْوَطِحِ لَا يَنْظُرُنَ مَنْ تَبِعَا

طوراً أرهم وطوراً لا أبينهم
إذا تواضع خدر ساعة لمعا

The third example is the image of people wearing the clothes of peace and tranquillity:

وتلبسون ثياب الأمن ضاحية
لا تفزعون وهذا الليث قد جمعا

And the fourth example is the image of the deadly bloodshot eyes of vengeance seen as a blazing forest:

خزر عيونهم كأن لحظهم
حريق غاب ترى منه السنن قطعاً

Classical critics considered Laqit's poem as one of the greatest action poems of Jāhili poetry.¹ The poem was popular during the Umayyad period and an excerpt of the poem was set to music by the Umayyad composer Akdam b. Ma^cbad.²

The Poetry of the Late Jāhiliyya

The poets of the Late Jāhiliyya built on the poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations and Ancient Jāhiliyya, and developed a wealth of poetic conventions which formed

the backbone of the Arab poetic tradition.

The proximity of the Late Jāhiliyya to the Islamic period made it possible for the Islamic scholars to retrieve Jāhili poetry and keep records of its cultural background. As a result, there is an abundance of Late Jāhili poetry. In order to study the large corpus of Late Jāhili poetry within a critical framework, we have conveniently divided the Late Jāhiliyya into the pre-Imru'al-Qais period, which is the endpoint of this study, the Imru'al-Qais period and the post-Imru'al-Qais period.

The Pre-Imru'al-Qais Period

The pre-Imru'al-Qais period covers the fifth century which witnessed the emergence of a host of poets whose lives and work had been documented in far more detail than those of any of their predecessors. And this is probably why classical critics considered the fifth century as the starting point of Jāhili poetry.

One of the prominent poets of the fifth century was al-Barrāq b. Rawhān b. Asad (d.c.470), a relative of the poets Muhalhil and Kulaib. As a small boy Barrāq spent some time with cameliers and a Christian priest who taught him to read the Gospels.

Barrāq was in love with his cousin the poet Lailā bint Lukaiz and tried to marry her but was refused, for her father had promised her to Barrāq's patron, an influential Yemeni prince, through whom he hoped to improve and strengthen the position of his people. Barrāq, upset by the rejection, moved with his family to Bahrain, and as a result Lailā's father postponed the marriage.¹

Meanwhile the war flared up between Barrāq's Rabī^ca tribe and the Yemeni Qudā^cī and Ṭa'ī tribes. Because of the absence of effective leadership among the Rabī^ca tribe the poets Kulaib and Muhalhil appealed to Barrāq, who was an acknowledged hero and respected leader, to take over the Rabī^ca leadership. Initially Barrāq turned down the offer, but later changed his mind and agreed to lead his people, especially after the Qudā^cīs and Ṭa'īs tried to win him over to their side:² (Wāfir)

لَعْمَرِي لَسْتُ أَتْرُكُ آلَ قَوْيِي وَأَرْحَلُ عَنْ فَيْسَائِي أَوْ أَسِيرُ
 بِهِمْ ذُلِّي إِذَا مَا كُنْتُ فِيهِمْ عَلَى رَنَمِ الْعِدَى شَرَفُ خَطِيرُ
 أَأْتِرُلُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنْ كَانَ يُسْرُ وَأَرْحَلُ إِنْ أَلَمَّ بِهِمْ عَسِيرُ
 وَأَتْرُكُ مَعَشْرِي وَهُمْ أَنَاسُ لَهُمْ طَوْلٌ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا يَدُورُ
 أَلَمْ تَسْمَعْ أَسَانَتَهُمْ لَهَا فِي تَرَاقِيكُمْ وَأَضْلَعِكُمْ صَرِيرُ
 فَكُفَّ الْكُفَّ عَنْ قَوْيِي وَذَرَهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَرَى فِعَالَهُمُ الضَّرِيرُ

Barrāq led his people to battle, defeated the Qudā^cī and the Ṭa'ī tribes and asserted the independence of his

people.¹

The Yemeni prince sent a word to Lailā's father reminding him of his promise, and Lailā's father complied with the prince's request. While Lailā was on her way to the Yemeni prince, the son of the Persian king, with the help of some Yemenis led by a man called Burd al-Iyādī, attacked Lailā's convoy and kidnapped her. The Persian prince tried to win Lailā's affection but failed and imprisoned her. Lailā sent an emotionally charged poem to Barrāq and her brothers in which she urged them to save her.²

Barrāq responded to Lailā's call and blamed her father for having been the cause of her misfortune, and promised to help her in spite of the long distance that separated them and the impregnable castle guarded by a formidable enemy:³ (Tawīl)

أَمِنْ دُونِ لَيْلَى عَوَّقْتَنَا الْعَوَاتِقُ جُودٌ وَفَرُّ تَرْبِيَةِ النَّفَاتِقِ
 وَعُجْمٌ وَأَعْرَابٌ وَأَرْضٌ تَحِيْقَةٌ وَحِصْنٌ وَدُورٌ دُونَهَا وَمَنَايِقُ
 وَعَرَبِيَّاتٌ عَنِّي لَكِيْزٌ بِجَهْلِهِ وَلَمَّا يَعْقُهُ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ عَاتِقُ
 وَقَلْدَنِي مَا لَا أُطِيقُ إِذَا وَتَتْ بَنُو مُضَرَ أَحْمَرَ الْكِرَامِ الشَّقَاتِقُ
 وَإِنِّي لَا رَجُوهُمْ وَلَسْتُ بِأَيْسَ وَإِنِّي بِهِمْ يَا قَوْمُ لَا شَكَّ وَاتِقُ
 فَمَنْ مَبْلَغُ بُرْدِ الْإِيَادِي وَقَوْمَهُ بَاتِي بِتَارِي لَا مَحَالَةَ لِأَحِقُ
 سَتْسَعِدُنِي بِيضُ الصَّوَارِمِ وَالْقَنَا وَتَحْمِلُنِي الْقَبُّ الْعِتَاقُ السَّوَابِقُ
 رَمَى اللَّهُ مَنْ يَرْمِي الْكَبَابَ بِرِيْمَةٍ وَمَنْ هُوَ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمَكْرِ نَاطِقُ

Before attacking the Persians Barrāq whipped up the martial spirit of his warriors by stressing that those who fight in the war of honour and survive will be proud for the rest of their lives, and those who die will earn immortal praise: (Basīt)

لَمْ يَبْقَ يَا وَيْحَكُمْ إِلَّا تَلَايِهَا وَمَسَمَرُ الْحَرْبِ لَأَقِيهَا وَأَتِيهَا
لَا تَطْمَعُوا بَعْدَهَا فِي قَوْمِكُمْ مُضِرٍّ مِنْ بَعْدِ هَذَا فَوَلُّوْهَا مَوَالِيهَا
فَمَنْ بَقِيَ مِنْكُمْ فِي هَذِهِ فَلَهُ فَخْرُ الْحَيَاةِ وَإِنْ طَالَتْ لَيَالِيهَا
وَمَنْ يَمُتَ مَاتَ مَعْدُورًا وَكَانَ لَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّنَاءِ مُقِيمًا إِذْ تَوَى فِيهَا
إِنْ تَتْرُكُوا وَإِلَّا لِلْحَرْبِ يَا مُضِرُّ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَاكُمْ مَا كَانَ لَأَقِيهَا
يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّأكِبُ الْفَجَّازُ تَرَفُّلُ فِي حَزَنِ الْبِلَادِ وَطَوْرًا فِي صَحَارِهَا
أَبْلَغُ بَنِي الْفَرَسِ عَنَّا حِينَ تَبْلُغُهُمْ وَحَيَّ كَهَلَانَ أَنَّ الْجُنْدَ عَافِيهَا
لَأَبْدَ قَوْمِي أَنْ تَرَقَى وَقَدْ جَهَدْتَ صَمْبَ الْمَرَاتِي يَمَا تَأْتِي مَرَاتِيهَا
أَمَا إِيَادُ فَقَدْ جَاءَتْ بِهَا بَدْعًا فِي مَا جَنَى الْبَعْضُ إِذَا مَا الْبَعْضُ رَاضِيهَا

Barrāq stormed the Persian stronghold where Lailā was imprisoned, rescued her and then married her.²

Barrāq's loss of his brother Gharsān in the Persian war affected him deeply, and he was also upset by his men who had gone home with the loot, leaving him behind to bury his brother:³ (Tawīl)

تَوَلَّتْ رِجَالِي بِالْفَتَاخِمِ وَالْفَنَى مُزَجِّينَ لِلْأَجْمَالِ مِنْ رَمْلَانِ
وَنَادَا وَنِدَاءً بِالرَّجِيلِ فَلَمْ أُطِقْ أَيَّابًا وَصِنُوبِي فِي الْمَعَارِكِ فَا نِ
أَوْوَبُ إِلَى أُمِّي سَلِيمًا مُكْرَمًا وَغَمْرَسَانَ مَقْتُولًا بِدَارِ هَوَانِ

آتْرَكَ مَنْ لَا يَتْرُكُ الدَّهْرَ طَاعَتِي مُبِّ لِمَا أَدْعُو بِكُلِّ لِسَانِ
 أَخِي وَمُعِينِي فِي الْخُطُوبِ وَصَاحِبِي بِكُلِّ إِغَارَاتِي بِحَدِّ سِنَانِ
 فَلَمَّا دَعَانِي يَا ابْنَ رَوْحَانَ لَمْ أَخْمِ وَقَوَّمتُ عَسَالِي وَصَدَرَ حِصَانِي
 طَفَنْتُ بِنَضْلِ الرُّمَحِ جِبَّةَ مَالِكِ وَغَيَّنْتُهُ فِيهِ بِغَيْرِ تَوَانِ
 وَجَنْدَلْتُ عَمَارًا بِضَرْبَةِ صَارِمِ وَمَزَّقْتُ تَمَثُلَ الْجُنْدِ بِالْحَوْلَانِ

Barrāq dedicated another moving poem to his dead
brother: ¹ (Tawīl)

بَكَيْتُ لِنَرْسَانَ وَحَقَّ لِنَاطِرِي بَكَاهُ قَيْلُ الْفُرْسِ إِذْ كَانَ نَائِيًا
 بَكَيْتُ عَلَى وَاوِي الزَّنَادِ قَتَى الْوَعْيِ م أَلْتَسْرِعُ إِلَى الْهَيْجَاءِ إِنْ كَانَ عَادِيًا
 إِذَا مَا عَلَا نَهْدًا وَعَرَّضَ ذَابِلًا وَقَحَمَ بِكُرْيَا وَهَزَّ يَمَانِيًا
 فَاصْبَحَ مُغْتَالًا بِأَرْضِ قَبِيحَةٍ عَلَيْهَا قَتَى كَالسِّيفِ قَاتَ الْجَارِيًا
 وَقَدْ اصْبَحَ الْبَرَّاقُ فِي دَارِ غُرَبِيَّةِ وَقَارَقَ إِخْوَانًا لَهُ وَمَوَالِيًا
 حَايِفُ نَوَى طَاوِي حَشَا سَافِحُ دَمًا يُرْجِعُ عَثْرَاتِ يَهْجِنَ الْبَوَايِكَا
 فَمَنْ مُبْلِغُ عَنِّي كَرِيمَةٌ أُمُّهُ لَتَنْدُبَ غَرْسَانَا وَبَرَّاقَ نَائِيَا

The repetition of the verb بَكَيْتُ at the beginning of the first and second verses and its masdar at the beginning of the second hemistich, as well as the staccato rhythm of the sixth line:

حَايِفُ نَوَى طَاوِي حَشَا سَافِحُ دَمًا يُرْجِعُ عَثْرَاتِ يَهْجِنَ الْبَوَايِكَا

intensifies the overwhelming feeling of loss experienced by the poet.

Barrāq is always aware that war is a poisonous drink

to which he has become addicted: ¹ (Tawīl)

أَقُولُ لِنَفْسِي مَرَّةً بَعْدَ مَرَّةٍ وَسُمِرُ الْقَتَا فِي الْحَيِّ لِأَشَاكَ تَلَمَعُ
 أَيَا نَفْسٍ رِفْقًا فِي الْوَعَى وَمَسْرَةً فَمَا كَأُسْهَا إِلَّا مِنَ السَّمِّ يُنْقَعُ
 إِذَا لَمْ أَقْدَحْ خَيْلًا إِلَى كُلِّ ضَيْعَةٍ فَأَسْكَلْ مِنْ لَحْمِ الْعُدَاةِ وَأَشْبِعُ
 فَلَا قُدْتُ مِنْ أَقْصَى الْبِلَادِ طَلَانًا وَلَا عِشْتُ مَحْمُودًا وَعَيْشِي مُوسِعُ

Barrāq's animated description of a successful overseas
 campaign foreshadows ² Antara's battle scenes: (Tawīl)

عَبَّرْتُ بِقَوْمِي الْبَجْرَ آزِفُ مَاءُهُ وَهَلْ يَنْزِفَنَّ الْبَجْرَ يَا قَوْمُ نَازِفُ
 وَيَوْمَ التَّقِينَا ظِلَّ يَوْمٍ عَصَبَصِبٍ وَفِيهِ غُبَارُ نَارٍ وَعَوَاصِفُ
 وَضَرْبُ يَقْدُ الْهَامِ بِالْبَيْضِ مُوجِعُ وَفِيهِ الْجِيَادُ السَّابِحَاتُ زَوَاجِفُ
 إِذَا قِيلَ قَدْ وَلَّتْ هَزِيمًا فَايْنَهَا بِمَدْرِ لِحَاظِ الطَّرْفِ مِنْكَ عَوَاطِفُ
 وَظَلَّ لَهَا يَوْمٌ يُجْمَعُ هَبُوءُهُ بِهَا يُبْتَنَى سَفْفٌ مِنَ الْأَفْقِ وَأَقِفُ
 وَدَارَتْ رَحَى الْحَرْبِ الْأَشِيْبَةَ لِلْفَتَى وَهَالَتْ ذَوِي الْأَلْبَابِ تِلْكَ الْمَوَاقِفُ
 بِهَا نَعْمُ الْأَسْيَافِ تَنْطِقُ بِالطَّلَى فَصِيحَاتُ حَدِّ نَائِرَاتِ خَفَافِ
 فَأَبَتْ إِلَى مَا يَسْتَشِيرُ بَنِي أَبِي وَنِيْهْضُهَا السَّمُّ الْكِرَامُ الْعَطَارِفُ

Barrāq represents an early Jāhili chivalrous hero,
 whose heroic life parallels that of Antara. Like Antara,
 Barrāq celebrated his exploits and was upheld by his people
 as their defender and saviour. Like Antara, Barrāq sang of
 his love for his cousin Lailā, and of his successful
 endeavours in rescuing her from bondage. Barrāq's clarity
 of language and flow of spontaneous rhythm: ³ (Wāfir)

صَبَّحْنَاهُمْ عَلَى جُرْدِ عِتَاقٍ بِأَسْيَافٍ مُهَنَّدَةٍ قَوَارِي
 فَيَا لَكَ مِنْ صُرَاخٍ وَأَفْتِضَاحٍ وَنَشْعٍ تَائِرٍ وَسَطِّ الدِّيَارِ
 فَيَمَّتْ السِّنَانُ إِصْدَارِ عَمْرٍو فَطَاحَ مُجَنَّدَلَا فِي الصَّفِّ عَارِي
 وَقَدْ جَادَتْ يَدَايَ عَلَى نَجْمِيسٍ بِضَرْبَةِ بَاتِرِ الْحَدَيْنِ قَارِي
 وَأَقْلَتِ فَارِسُ الْجِرَاحِ مِنِّي إِضْرَبَةَ مُنْضَلٍ فَوْقَ السَّوَارِ
 فَقُلْ لِابْنِ الذُّعَيْرِ النَّذْلِ هَلَا تَصَبَّرُ فِي الْوَعَى وَمِثْلَ أَصْطَبَارِي
 أَلَمْ أَدْعُوهُ فِي سَبْقِ فَوَلِي كَيْثِلِ الْكَبْشِ يَأْذَنُ بِالْحِدَارِ

influenced ¹ Antara's poetry: (Kāmil)

لَمَّا سَمِعْتُ دُعَاءَ مُرَّةٍ إِذْ دَعَا ، وَدُعَاءَ عَبْسٍ فِي الْوَعَى وَمُحَلَّلًا
 نَادَيْتُ عَبْسًا ، فَاسْتَجَابُوا بِالْقَنَا ، وَبِكُلِّ أَيْضٍ صَارِمٍ لَمْ يَنْجَلِ
 حَتَّى اسْتَبَاحُوا آلَ عَوْفٍ عَنُوءَةً بِالْمَشْرِفِ وَبِالْوَشِيحِ السُّبُلِ
 إِنِّي امْرُؤٌ مِنْ خَيْرِ عَبْسٍ مُنْصَبًا شَطْرِي ، وَأَحْيِي سَائِرِي بِالْمُنْضَلِ
 إِنْ يُلْحَقُوا أَكْرُرُ ، وَإِنْ يُسْلِحُوا أَشْدُّ ، وَإِنْ يُلْفُوا بِضَنْكَ أَنْزَلِ
 حِينَ التُّرُولُ يَكُونُ غَايَةً مِثْلَنَا . وَيَبِيرُ كُلُّ مُضَلَّلٍ مُسْتَوْهَلِ

Other echoes of the poetry of Barrāq: ² (Rajaz)

لَأَفْرِجَنَّ الْيَوْمَ كُلَّ الْعَمَمِ مِنْ سَنِينِهِمْ فِي اللَّيْلِ بَيْضَ الْحَرَمِ
 صَبْرًا إِلَى مَا يَنْظُرُونَ مُتَدَمِي إِيَّيَ أَنَا الْبَرَّاقُ فَوْقَ الْأَذْهَمِ
 لِأَرْجِعَنَّ الْيَوْمَ ذَاتَ الْمُبْسِمِ بِنْتُ لُكَيْزِ الْوَالِي الْأَرْقَمِ

are detected in ³ Antara's Mu^callaqa: (Kāmil)

لَمَّا رَأَيْتُ الْقَوْمَ أَقْبَلَ جَمْعُهُمْ ، يَتَدَامِرُونَ ، كَرَرْتُ غَيْرَ مُدَمِّمٍ
 يَدْعُونَ غَتَّرَ ، وَالرَّمَاخُ كَانَتْهَا أَشْطَانُ بَثْرِ فِي لَبَانِ الْأَذْهَمِ

It is interesting to note that Barrāq's horse was called Adham like the horse of ^cAntara, and both horses were black as the name suggests.

Barrāq's forte lies in his effective use of jinās:

فَأَصْبَحَ مُنْتَالًا بِأَرْضِ قَبِيحَةٍ عَلَيْهَا فَتَى كَالسِّيفِ فَاتِ الْجَارِيَا

and in his sustained balance of the rhythmic phrase

structure: فَيَا لَكَ مِنْ صُرَاخٍ وَأَقْضَاخٍ وَنَفْعٍ نَائِرٍ وَنَطِّ الدِّيَارِ and

وَعُجْمٍ وَأَعْرَابٍ وَأَرْضٍ سَحِيحَةٍ وَحِصْنٍ وَدُورٍ دُونَهَا وَمَغَالِقُ

which create an atmosphere of dramatic intensity.

Lailā bint Lukaiz b. Murra b. Asad (d.483), the youngest of Lukaiz's children, was a beautiful and cultured lady. Many noble men asked for her hand in marriage but she refused them all, because she was in love with her cousin al-Barrāq b. Rawhān. When her father promised to marry her off to the Yemeni prince ^cAmr b. Dhī Sahbān, Lailā reluctantly consented and refrained from seeing Barrāq, and consequently she became known as ^cAfīfa or Lailā al-^cAfīfa.²

The son of the Persian king heard of Lailā's beauty and asked to marry her but was turned down. And so the Persian prince engaged Yemeni mercenaries led by Burd al-Iyādī to help him kidnap Lailā. While Lailā was on her way to the Yemeni prince, Burd and the mercenaries surprised Lailā's convoy, kidnapped her and took her to

the Persian prince.¹

The Persian prince made advances to Lailā and failed, and then locked her up in his castle hoping to break her resolve. Lailā resisted the prince's amorous overtures, and sent a passionate poem to Barrāq and her brothers in which she appealed to them to save her from the humiliation of being in chains, and at the same time she assured them that her honour was intact:² (Ramal)

نَيْتَ الْبِرَاقِ عَيْنَا فَتَرَى مَا أَقَامِي مِنْ بَلَاءٍ وَعَنَا
يَا كَلِيًّا يَا عَمِيًّا إِخْوَتِي يَا جُنَيْدًا سَاعِدُونِي بِالْبُكَاءِ
عَذِبَتْ أُخْتُكُمْ يَا وَيْلَكُمْ بِعَذَابِ الْكُفْرِ ضَجْمًا وَمَسَا
يَكْذِبُ الْأَنْجَمُ مَا يَهْرُبُنِي وَمَعِي بَعْضُ حِسَّاتِ الْحَيَا
قِيدُونِي غَالُونِي وَأَفْعَلُوا كُلَّ مَا شِئْتُمْ جَمِيعًا مِنْ بَلَاءِ
فَأَنَا كَارِهَةٌ بُيْتِكُمْ وَمَرِيدُ الْمَوْتِ عِنْدِي قَدْ حَلَا
آتَدُلُونَ عَلَيْنَا فَارِسًا يَا بَنِي أُمَّارَ يَا أَهْلَ الْحَنَاءِ
يَا إِيَادُ خَسِرْتَ صَفْقَتُكُمْ وَرَمَى الْمُنْظَرَ مِنْ بَرْدِ الْعَمَى
يَا بَنِي الْأَعْمَاصِ إِمَّا تَقْطَعُوا لِبَنِي عَدْنَانَ أَسْبَابَ الرَّجَاءِ
فَأَصْطَبِلُوا وَعَزَاءٌ حَسَنًا كُلُّ نَصْرٍ بَعْدَ ضَرْبٍ يُرْتَجَى
قُلْ لِعَدْنَانَ فُديتُمْ شَمِرُوا لِبَنِي الْأَعْجَامِ تَشْمِيرَ الْوَحَى
وَأَعِدُّوا الرِّايَاتِ فِي أَقْطَارِهَا وَأَشْهَرُوا الْبَيْضَ وَسِيرُوا فِي الصُّحَى
يَا بَنِي تَغْلِبَ سِيرُوا وَأَنْصُرُوا وَذَرُّوا الْغَفْلَةَ عَنْكُمْ وَالْكَرَى
وَأَحْذَرُوا الْعَارَ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَعَالِيَكُمْ مَا يَقِيمُ فِي الْوَرَى

Barrāq stormed the Persian castle and saved Lailā.

The Persian campaign claimed the life of Barrāq's brother Gharsān. Lailā was broken-hearted by the loss of Gharsān and described in an elegy how the fire of grief had melted her heart like lead, and only the presence of her noble hero Barrāq helped her overcome her sorrow:¹

(Basit)

قَدْ كَانَ بِي مَا كَفَى مِنْ حُزْنِ غَرَسَانَ وَالآنَ قَدْ زَادَ فِي هَمِّي وَأَحْزَانِي
 مَا حَالَ بَرَّاقَ مِنْ بَعْدِي وَمَعْتَرَنَا وَوَالِدِي وَأَعْمَامِي وَإِخْوَانِي
 قَدْ خَالَ دُونِي يَا بَرَّاقُ مُجْتَهِدًا مِنَ التَّوَابِ جُهْدُ لَيْسَ بِالنَّاسِي
 كَيْفَ الدُّخُولُ وَكَيْفَ الوُضْلُ وَالْأَسْفَا هِيَاتِ مَا خَلَتْ هَذَا وَقْتِ إِسْكَانِ
 لَمَّا ذَكَرْتُ غَرِيْسَا زَادَ بِي كَمْدِي حَتَّى هَمَمْتُ مِنَ الْبَلْوَى بِإِعْلَانِ
 تَرَبَّعَ الشُّوقُ فِي قَلْبِي وَذَبْتُ كَمَا ذَابَ الرِّصَاصُ إِذَا أُصْلِيَ بِبِيرَانِ
 فَلَوْ تَرَانِي وَأَشْوَأِي نُقَلْبِي عَجِبْتَ بَرَّاقُ مِنْ صَبْرِي وَكَيْتَانِي
 لَا دَرَّ دَرُّ كَلْبٍ يَوْمَ رَاحَ وَلَا أَبِي لُكَيْزٍ وَلَا خَيْلِي وَفُرْسَانِي
 عَنِ ابْنِ رَوْحَانَ رَاحَتْ وَإِلَّ كَثْبًا عَنْ حَامِلِ كُلِّ أَثْقَالٍ وَأَوْزَانِ
 وَقَدْ تَرَاوَرَ عَنْ عِلْمِ كَلْبِيهِمْ وَقَدْ كَبَا الرِّزْدُ مِنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ رَوْحَانِ
 وَأَسْلَمُوا أَلْمَالَ وَالْأَهْلِيْنَ وَأَغْتَنَمُوا أَرْوَاحَهُمْ فَوْقَ قَبْرِ شَخْصِ أَعْيَانِ
 حَتَّى تَلَقَاهُمْ الْبَرَّاقُ سَيِّدُهُمْ أَخُو السَّرَايَا وَكَشْفِ الْقَسْطِ الْبَانِي
 يَا عَيْنِ قَابِكِي وَجُودِي بِالْذُّمُوعِ وَلَا تَمَلَّ يَا قَلْبُ أَنْ تُبْلَى بِأَشْجَانِ
 فَذِكْرُ بَرَّاقَ مَوْلَى الْحَمِي مِنْ أَسَدِ أَنْسَى حَيَاتِي بِلَا شَكِّ وَأَنْسَانِي
 فَتَى رَيْبَةٍ طَوَافٍ أَمَا كِنَهَا وَفَارِسُ الْخَيْلِ فِي رَوْعٍ وَمَيْدَانِ

The unusualness of Lailā's elegy is that the best part of the poem is devoted to Barrāq rather than to the deceased. This technique was fully exploited by the Abbasid poet Mutanabbī (915-965) in his elegy dedicated to the

sister of his patron Saif al-Dawla, in which the poet begins by talking about the deceased and ends by praising Saif al-Dawla.¹

Uhaiha b. al-Julāh al-Awsī (d.c.497) was a rich Medinian leader whose substantial property included two castles and ninety nine wells. Uhaiha was a contemporary of the last Himyarī Tubba^c who allegedly tried to destroy the Ka^cba and liquidate the Aws and Khazraj tribes of Medina for killing one of his sons whom he had appointed as governor of Medina. When Tubba^c reached Medina he asked to see the leaders of Medina including Uhaiha. Uhaiha sensed danger in the invitation and warned his colleagues about it, but they discounted his fears.

The Medinian leaders went to see Tubba^c and at the meeting Uhaiha felt he was doomed. Uhaiha returned to his tent, had a drink and wrote his own epitaph poem and asked his woman-singer Mulaika to sing it:² (Munsariḥ)

أَسْتُ قَرِيْبًا يَمْنُ يُطَالِبُهَا	يَشْتَاقُ قَتْلِي إِلَى مُلَيْكَةَ لَوْ
وَلْتَبْكِنِي قَهْوَةً وَشَارِبُهَا	إِتْبَكِنِي قَيْئَةً وَمِزْهَرُهَا
أَوْ غَابَ فِي سَرْدَحٍ مَنَّا كَيْهَا	وَلْتَبْكِنِي نَافَةَ إِذَا ارْتَحَلَتْ
لَا يَعْلَمُ النَّاسُ مَا عَوَّاقِبُهَا	وَلْتَبْكِنِي عُصْبَةَ إِذَا اجْتَمَعَتْ
جِيَّتْ إِذْ زَانَهَا تَرَائِبُهَا	مَا أَحْسَنَ الْجِدِّ مِنْ مُلَيْكَةَ وَاللَّ
سَاسَ وَنَمَّ الْكِلَابُ صَاحِبُهَا	يَا لَيْتَنِي لَيْئَةً إِذَا هَجَعَ النَّ
بَسَمَى عَنِيْمًا إِلَّا كَوَّا كَيْهَا	فِي لَيْسَةٍ لَا تَرَى بِهَا أَحَدًا

Uhaiha then told Mulaika of his escape-plan and said that when Tubba^c sent his guards to get him she should say he is asleep, but if the guards insist on waking him she should say he had gone back to his people. The guards went to fetch Uhaiha and were told he was asleep. The guards left but returned later in the night and insisted on taking him back with them. Mulaika told them he had gone back to his people. The guards rushed to Tubba^c and informed him of Uhaiha's escape. Tubba^c dispatched his soldiers after Uhaiha, but by the time they caught up with him he had already reached his fortified castle.

After a three-day siege, during which Uhaiha fought Tubba^c's soldiers in the daytime and at night treated them to dates dropped from the castle, the soldiers, baffled by their enemies' hospitality, failed to take the castle and returned to Tubba^c. The soldiers' failure to capture Uhaiha enraged Tubba^c who ordered the killing of the other three Medinian leaders. Uhaiha was so upset by the murder of his friends that he mourned their loss which could have been avoided had they listened to his advice:¹ (Wāfir)

ألا يا لَهْفَ نَفْسِي أَيُّ لَهْفٍ	عَلَى أَهْلِ الْفَقَارَةِ أَيُّ لَهْفٍ
مَضَوْا قَصْدَ السَّبِيلِ وَخَلَقُونِي	إِلَى خَلْفٍ مِنَ الْأَبْرَامِ خَلْفٍ
سُدِّي لَا يَكْتَفُونَ وَلَا أَرَاهِمُ	بُطِيعُونَ أَمْرًا إِنْ كَانَ يَكْفِي

Uhaiha was married to a noble lady called Salma[̄] but

was at war with her people.¹ As Uhaiḥa was preparing to attack Salmā's people, Salmā devised a plan to enable her to escape from the castle so as to warn her people. She tied a string round the stomach of her child and the child cried from pain, so Uhaiḥa stayed awake to look after the child. In the small hours of the morning Salmā untied the string and the child stopped crying and fell asleep. She then complained that the child's crying had given her a headache, so Uhaiḥa comforted her by spending the rest of the night pressing a cloth round her head. Towards the end of the night Salmā got up and said she had recovered and it was time for him to sleep. While Uhaiḥa was asleep, Salmā scaled down the wall of the castle on a rope, rushed to her people and told them to get ready for battle.

Uhaiḥa marched on his wife's people and to his surprise he found they were expecting him. After a minor skirmish Uhaiḥa withdrew to his castle, and recorded the incident in a poem which opens with a reflective note that recalls the poems of the Ancient Jāhilī poets. Mudād b.

Amr al-Jurhumī, the Jurhumī giant woman poet and Khuzaima b. Nahd:² (Wāfir)

وَنَفْسُ الْمَرْءِ ، آوَنَةٌ ، قَتُولُ	صَحَوْتُ عَنِ الصَّبِيِّ وَالِدَهُ غُولُ ،
وَبَاكَرَنِي صُبُوحُ ، أَوْ نَشِيلُ	وَلَوْ أَنِّي أَشَاءُ نَعِمْتُ حَالًا ،
عَلَى أَفْوَاهِهِنَّ الرَّنَجِييلُ	وَلَاعَبَنِي عَلَى الْأَنْمَاطِ لُغْسُ ،

ولكنني جعلت إزاي مالي ، فأقليل بعد ذلك ، أو أنيل
 فهل من كاهن أو ذي إله ، إذا ما حان من رب أقول
 براهني فبرهني بيه ، وأرهنه بني بما أقول
 وما يدري الفقير متى غناه ، وما يدري الغني متى يعيل
 وما تدري ، وإن ألقحت شولاً ، أتلقح بعد ذلك أم تحيل
 وما تدري ، إذا دمرت سقياً ، لغيرك أم يكون لك الفصيل
 وما تدري وإن أجمعت أمراً ، بأي الأرض يدركك المقل

The poet then refers humourously to his wife's betrayal and the tricks she played on him:

لعمر أبك ما بغني مقامي من الفتيان أنجبة حفور
 يروم ، ولا يقلص مشعلاً ، عن العوراء مضجعه ثقيل
 تبوع للحليلة حيث كانت ، كما يعقاد لفتحته الفصيل
 إذا ما بت أعصبها ، فباتت علي . مكانها ، الحمى السؤل
 لعل عصابها يأتيك حرباً ، ويأتيهم بعورتك الدليل

And the poem ends with Uhaiha counting his blessings for being secure in his castle which he built for all eventualities:

وقد أعددت للحداث عقلاً ، لو أن المرء تنفعه العقول
 طويل الرأس أبيض مشخراً ، بلوخ كأنه سيف صقيل
 جلاه القين نمت لم تشنه ، بشائنة ، ولا فيه قلوب
 هنالك لا يشاكلني ليم ، له حسب ألف ، ولا دحيل
 وقد علمت بنو عمرو باني ، من السروات أغدِل ما يعيل
 وما من إخوة كثرُوا وطأوا ، بناشئة ، لأيمهم ، الهبول
 ستكل ، أو يفارقها بنوها ، سريعاً ، أو بهم بهم قيل

Uhaiha divorced Salma and she married Hisham b. ^CAbd Manaf and bore him his son ^CAbd al-Muttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad. Uhaiha's grand-son Muhammad b. ^CUqba was one of the first people to be called Muhammad before the Prophet Muhammad, and his great-grand-son al-Mundhir b. Muhammad was a Sahabi who participated in the Battle of Badr and was killed in Bi'r Ma^Cuna.

Uhaiha was a successful merchant, and in spite of his wealth, he was notorious for his love of money and for being stingy; for he considered money as security in times of change: (Wafir)

إِذَا مَا جِئْتُهَا قَدْ بَعْتُ عِذْقًا تُعَانِقُ أَوْ تُقَبِّلُ أَوْ تُنَدِّي
 أَهَنْتُ الْمَالَ فِي الشَّهَوَاتِ حَتَّى أَصَارْتَنِي أَسِيفًا عَبْدَ عَبْدِ
 فَمَنْ نَالَ الْغِنَى فَلْيُضْطِئِعْهُ صَنِيعَتَهُ وَيَجْهَدْ كُلَّ جَهْدِ
 أُعَلِّمُكُمْ وَقَدْ أَرَدَيْتُ نَفْسِي فَمَنْ أَهْدِي سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ بَعْدِي

In another poem Uhaiha stresses the importance of saving money for he sees money as the only friend that will not let one down: (Basit)

استغنِ أَوْ مَتَّ وَلَا يَتَغَرُّرُكَ ذُو نَشَبٍ
 مِنْ ابْنِ عَمٍّ وَلَا عَمٍّ وَلَا خَالَ
 يَلْتَوُونَ مَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنْ حَقِّ جَارِهِمْ
 وَعَنْ عَشِيرَتِهِمْ وَالْمَالِ بِالْوَالِي

واجتمع ولا تحقرن شيئاً تجمعه
 ولا تضيعه يوماً على حال
 لأنني مقيمٌ على الزوراء أعمرها
 إن الكريم على الأقوام ذو المال
 لها ثلاثٌ بشارٍ في جوانبها
 وكلها عقيبٌ تسقى بإقبال
 كلُّ النداء إذا ناديتُ يخذلني
 إلا ندائي إذا ناديتُ يا مالي
 ما إن يقولُ لشيءٍ حين أفعله
 لا أستطيعُ ولا ينبو على حال

On the other hand, ^cAbdarī says that Uhaiha's
 proverb الذودُ إلى الذودِ إبلٌ¹ shows that Uhaiha was
 thrifty rather than stingy.

Uhaiha's poetry was of semantic, linguistic and
 metrical interest to classical scholars. In Majāz al-Qur'ān
 Abū ^cUbaida quotes Uhaiha's verse:

وما يدرى الفقير متى غناه وما يدرى الغني متى يعيلُ

to illustrate the Jāhili background of the Qur'ānic
 words عَائِلًا and وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً² .

In Kitāb al-Nabāt, Asma^cī quotes a verse from one of
 Uhaiha's lost poems, which describes a thick palm grove,³
 in order to explain the meaning of the الشوعُ tree:
 (Sarī^c)

مُعْرُورِفٌ أَسْبَلُ جَبَّارُهُ بِحَافَتَيْهِ الشوعُ وَالنَرِيفُ

In Laisa fi Kalām al-^cArab, Ibn Khālawaih quotes a verse from one of Uhaiha's lost poems: (Khafif)

أَبْنِيَّ التَّخُومِ لَا تَضْلِمُونَهَا إِنَّ ظُلْمَ التَّخُومِ ذُو عُقَالٍ

so as to give a rare example of how the singular of the تَخُومٌ form becomes plural when the opening fatha of the singular is changed into a damma.¹ In al-Wāfi fi al-^cArūd, al-Khatīb al-Tibrīzī uses the last verse of the Mulaika poem as an example of a mutlaq rhyme.²

There are three metaphors associated with Uhaiha. The first metaphor is that of the stars presented as spies:³

فِي لَيْلَةٍ ، لَا نَرَى بِهَا أَحَدًا يَحْكِي عَلَيْنَا ، إِلَّا كَوَاكِبُهَا

This metaphor crops up in a poem by the Andalusian woman poet Hafsa bint al-Hajj (d.1190), who was under the constant surveillance of the king:⁴ (Tawīl)

لَعْمُرُكَ مَا سُرَّ الرِّيَاضُ بِوَصْلِنَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَبْدَى لَنَا الْعَلَّ وَالْحَسْدُ
وَلَا صَفْتَقَ النَّهْرُ ارْتِيَاحًا لِقَرِينَا وَلَا غَرَّدَ الْقَمْرِيُّ إِلَّا مَا وَجَدُ
فَلَا تَحْسَنِ الظَّنَّ الَّذِي أَنْتَ أَهْلُهُ فَمَا هُوَ فِي كُلِّ الْمَوَاطِنِ بِالرَّشْدِ
فَمَا خَلَّتْ هَذَا الْأَفَقَ أَبْدَى نَجْوَمِهِ لِأَمْرِ سَوَى كَيْمَا تَكُونُ لِنَا رِصْدُ

The second metaphor is that of time devouring people:⁵

صَحَوْتُ عَنْ نَفْسِي وَبَدَيْتُ غَوْنًا وَنَفْسُ الْمَرْءِ . آوَنَةٌ . قَتُونُ

The third metaphor introduces the Pleiades as a bunch

of ripe, white grapes: ¹ (Tawīl)

وقد لاح في الصبح الثريا كما ترى كعنقود ملاحية حين نورا

Uhaiha's poetry was popular during the Umayyad period and some of his poems were set to music by Ibn Suraih.² The theme of the Mulaika poem, which echoes Sāma b. Lu'ayy's poem in which the poet mourns his own imminent death, became a recurrent feature of Jāhili, Islamic and Umayyad poetry.

Wā'il b. Rabī^ca (c.440-494), known as Kulaib, was one of the great heroes of the fifth century. In c.492 he succeeded his father as leader of the Rabī^ca tribes which included the Bakrī and Taghlibī tribes, descendants of Bakr b. Wā'il whose descent is traced back to the patriarch Rabī^ca b. Nizār b. Ma^cadd b. ³Adnān. Kulaib's sister Zahrā' was married to Labīd b. ^cAnbasa al-Ghassānī who was appointed governor of the Rabī^ca and Mudarī tribes by the Kinda king Sulaima b. al-Hārith.⁴ Labīd's harsh treatment of the Rabī^ca and Mudarī tribes upset Zahrā' and she appealed to him to be more considerate to her people. Labīd lost his temper and slapped Zahrā' violently in the face and almost blinded her. Zahrā' was shaken and went to Kulaib and told him that the humiliation she had suffered⁵ was due to the submissive behaviour of her people: (Kāmil)

ما كنت احسب والحوادث جمة أنا عبيد الحى من قحطان
حتى اتتني من لبيد لطمة قعشت لها من وقعها العينان

ان ترضى أسرة تغلب ابنة وائل تلك الدنيا اربو شيان
لا يبرحوا الدهر الطويل اذلة هدل الاعنة عند كل رهان

The poem of Zahra¹ and the state she was in so enraged Kulaib that he rushed to his brother-in-law and killed him, and boasted of his deed: (Khafif)

إِنْ يَكُنْ قَتَلْنَا الْمُلُوكَ خَطَاءَ أَوْ صَوَابًا فَقَدْ قَتَلْنَا لَيْدًا
وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَ الْمُلُوكِ مُلُوكًا بِحِيَادٍ جُرِيدٍ تُقَلُّ الْحَدِيدًا
نُسَمِرُ الْحَرْبَ بِالَّذِي يَخْلِفُنَا سِ بِه قَوْمِكُمْ وَنَذِي الْوَقُودَا
أَوْ تَزُدُّوْنَا الْإِتَاوَةَ وَالْقِيَامَ وَلَا تَجْعَلِ الْحُرُوبَ وَعِيدَا
إِنْ تَلْمِزْنِي عَجَائِزٌ مِنْ زُرَايَ فَأَرَانِي فِيهَا قَمَاتٌ مُجِيدَا

The Kinda king informed the king of Himyar of the murder of his governor and subsequently war broke out between the Himyari² and the Ma^caddi tribes. After a series of battles culminating in the Battle of Khazāzā, the Ma^caddi tribes, led by Kulaib, defeated the Himyari³ tribes and Kulaib was proclaimed king of all the Ma^caddi tribes. Kulaib celebrated his leadership of the Ma^caddi tribes and reminded the Himyari⁴ tribes of their defeat by his tribes at the Battle of Yawm al-Sullān in c.481: (Wafir)

دَعَانِي دَائِيَا مُضِرِّ جَمِيَا وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ تَدَانَتْ لِإِخْتِلَاقِ
فَكَانَتْ دَعْوَةٌ جَمَعَتْ زَارَا وَلَّتْ شَعْبَهَا بَعْدَ الْفِرَاقِ
أَجِينَا دَائِيَا مُضِرِّ وَبِرْنَا إِلَى الْأَمْلَاكِ بِالْقَبِّ الْعِتَاقِ

عَلَيْهَا كُلُّ أَنْبِضٍ مِنْ زَرَارٍ يُسَاقِي لَلْمَوْتِ كَرَهَا مِنْ يُسَاقِي
 أَمَامَهُمْ عِقَابُ الْمَوْتِ يَهْوِي هُوِي الدَّلْوِ أَسْلَمَهَا الْعَرَاقِي
 فَأَرَدْنَا الْمَلُوكَ يَكُلُّ عَضْبٍ وَطَارَ هَزِيمُهُمْ حَذَرَ التَّلْحَاقِي
 كَانَهُمُ النَّعَامُ غَدَاةَ خَافُوا بِذِي السُّلَانِ قَارِعَةَ التَّلَاقِي
 وَكَمْ مَلِكٍ أَذَقْنَاهُ الْمَنَايَا وَآخَرَ قَدْ جَلَبْنَا فِي الْوَبَاقِي

Kulaib extended his authority to any land the clouds happened to pass over. His tyrannical rule vexed the other tribes and no one dared to challenge him until one day a camel belonging to Basūs, the aunt of his wife Jalīla bint Murra and of her brother Jassās, ventured into Kulaib's territory and he killed it. Basūs called for help and Jassās killed Kulaib.¹ The death of Kulaib sparked off the Basūs War between Kulaib's Taghlibī tribe and Jassās's Bakrī tribe which lasted forty years.²

The few surviving poems of Kulaib reflect the mind of a man obsessed with absolute power:³ (Tawīl)

سَآمُضِي لَهُ قَدَمَا وَلَوْ شَابَ فِي الَّذِي أَهْمُ بِهِ فِيمَا صَنَعْتُ الْمَقَادِمُ
 خَجَافَةً قَوْلِ أَنْ يُخَالَفَ فِعْلُهُ وَأَنْ يَهْدِمَ الْعِزَّ الْمَشِيدَ هَادِمُ

In a poem Kulaib addresses the Banū Asad reprimanding them for their reluctance to support the cause of his tribe, the Banū Taghlib:⁴ (Wāfir)

إِذَا كَانَتْ قَرَابَتُكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مَقَوْمَةً أَعْتَبْنَا إِلَيْنَا
 فَأَنْتُمْ يَا بَنِي أَسَدَ بْنَ بَكْرٍ تُرِيدُونَ الطِّعْمَانَ فَمَنْ يَقِينَا

وَأَنْتُمْ يَا بَنِي آسَدِ عِمَادُ لِهَذَا الْمَعْرِ الْمَتَّعِينَا
 تَعَيْت إِلَيْهِمْ وَصَرَّخْتَ فِيهِمْ فَجَاؤُوا بِالْحَرَائِمِ أَجْمِينَا
 بَنِي آسَدِ يُرِيدُونَ الْمَنَابَا عَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَمَكُرُونَ
 وَحَلُّوا يَا بَنِي آسَدِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَجَاؤُوا لِلْوَعَى مُسْتَفْهِينَا
 وَصِرْتُمْ يَا بَنِي آسَدِ وَأَنْتُمْ لِإِخْوَتِكُمْ هَيْلَتُمْ خَائِتِينَا
 إِذَا كَثُرَتْ قَرَابَتُكُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِأَحْلَاسِ الْحَدِيدِ مُلَبِّسِينَا
 فَمَا يَجْرِي مَسِيرُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ كَلَابِكُمْ عَلَيَّ يَعْصِمُونَا
 أَبَا النَّصْرِ بْنِ رَوْحَانَ حَلِيلِي أَوِيَاتُ بَيْعَةِ الْمَتَابِعِينَا
 أَبَا النَّصْرِ بْنِ رَوْحَانَ حَلِيلِي إِذَا حُضُنَا الْوَعَى لَا تَحْمِلُونَا
 أَبَا النَّصْرِ بْنِ رَوْحَانَ حَلِيلِي أَرَاكَ الْعِزُّ رَهْطَكَ مُسْتَهِينَا
 أَبَا النَّصْرِ بْنِ رَوْحَانَ حَلِيلِي كَفَى شَرًّا فَمَاذَا تَفْعَلُونَا
 أَلَمْ تَتْرُكْ رَيْبَةَ لَا تَفْذُهَا تَرِيدُهُمُ الْمَدَلَّةَ وَالْمُنُونَا
 تَكُونُ هَدِيَّةَ لِجَمِيعِ طَيِّ وَكُنْتُمْ بِالسَّلَامَةِ رَائِحِينَا
 عَلَى شَأْنِ الْأَلَكِينِ وَشَانَ لَيْلِي أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَكُونُوا خَادِلِينَا
 بَنِي آسَدِ أَرَاكُمْ مِنْ هَوَاكُمْ تُرِيدُونَ الْقَطِيعَةَ جَاهِلِينَا
 بَنِي آسَدِ أَرَدْتُمْ آلَ عَمِي قَطِيعَتَنَا وَكُنْتُمْ وَاصِلِينَا
 بَنِي آسَدِ تَحْكُمُ لِيُوثُ وَأَنْتُمْ فِي الْأَقَا مُخْتَلِفُونَا

The repetition of *بَنِي آسَدِ* in the second, third, fifth, sixth, seventh, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth verses, and of *أَبَا النَّصْرِ بْنِ رَوْحَانَ حَلِيلِي* in the tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth verses dramatises Kulaib's displeasure.

Jalīla bint Murra (d.535) was the sister of Jassās and the wife of Kulaib b. Rabī^ca. The death of her husband at

the hand of her brother Jassās grieved her and made her vulnerable to the taunts of her husband's family which were so unbearable that she had to go back to her family.¹ While she was staying with her family, Jalīla heard she had been abused by her sister-in-law. Jalīla answered her sister-in-law in a poem in which she scolds her for her unjustified abuse, and then goes on to describe how she had been traumatised by the tragedy, since those involved were her husband and her brother:² (Ramal)

تَعَجَّلِي بِاللَّوْمِ حَتَّى تَسَالِي	يَابِنَةَ الْأَقْوَامِ إِنْ شِئْتِ فَلَا
يُوجِبُ اللَّوْمَ فَلَوْمِي وَأَعْدِي	فَإِذَا أَنْتِ تَتَيَّنَتِ الَّذِي
شَفَقِي مِنْهَا عَلَيْهِ فَأَفْعَلِي	إِنْ تَكُنْ أُخْتُ امْرَأٍ لَيْمَتْ عَلَى
حَسْرَتِي عَمَّا أَنْجَحْتَ أَوْ تَجَلِي	جَلَّ عِنْدِي فَعَلْ جَسَّاسٍ فِيَا
قَاطِعُ ظَهْرِي وَمُذِنُ أَجَلِي	فَعَلْ جَسَّاسٍ عَلَى وَجْدِي بِهِ
أُخْتِيَا فَأَنْفَقَاتِ لَمْ أَحْفَلِ	لَوْ يَعِينُ فُقِمْتُ عَيْنِي سَوَى
تَجْمَلُ الْأُمِّ أَدَى مَا تَفْتَلِي	تَجْمَلُ الْعَيْنُ قَدَى الْعَيْنِ كَمَا
سَقَفَ بَيْتِي جَمِيعًا مِنْ عَلِي	يَا قَتِيلًا قَوْضَ الدَّهْرُ بِهِ
وَأَثْنِي فِي هَدْمِ بَيْتِي الْأَوَّلِ	هَدَمَ الْبَيْتَ الَّذِي آسْتَحْدِثُهُ
رَهِيمةَ الْمُضْمِي بِهِ الْمُنَاصِلِ	وَرَمَانِي قَتَلَهُ مِنْ كَتَبِ
خَصَّنِي الدَّهْرُ بُرْزُءَ مُعْضِلِ	يَا نِسَاءَ دُونَكَ الْيَوْمَ قَدْ
مِنْ وَرَائِي وَاطَّيَّ مُسْتَقْبِلِ	خَصَّنِي قَتَلُ كَلْبٍ بِلَاطِي
إِنَّمَا يَبْكِي لِيَوْمٍ يَنْجَلِي	لَيْسَ مِنْ يَبْكِي لِيَوْمَيْنِ كَمَنْ
دَرَكِي نَارِي نُكَلُّ الْمُنْكَلِ	يَشْتَفِي الْمَدْرِكُ بِالنَّارِ وَفِي
بَدَلًا مِنْهُ دَمًا مِنْ أَكْحَلِي	لَيْتَهُ كَانَ دَمِي فَأَحْتَلَبُوا
وَلَعَلَّ اللَّهَ أَنْ يَرْتَاخَ لِي	إِنِّي قَاتِلَةٌ مُتَمَوَّلَةٌ

The poem was probably written at the beginning of the Basūs War at the turn of the fifth century. The poem's strength lies in its controlled emotion, sustained elegiac tone, clarity of diction and touching imagery. This poem and the Barrāq poem of Lailā bint Lukaiz stand out as two of the finest specimens of women poetry of the Late Jāhilīyya.

Jassās b. Murra (d.535) was known as the protector of his neighbours: ¹ (Ramal)

إِنَّمَا جَارِي لَعْمَرِي فَأَعْلَمُوا أَذَى عِيَالِي
وَأَرَى لِلْجَارِ حَقًّا كَيْمِينِي مِنْ شِيَالِي
سَأُؤَدِّي حَقَّ جَارِي وَيَدِي رَهْنُ فِعَالِي
أَوْ أَرَى الْمَوْتَ قَبِي لُؤْمُهُ عِنْدَ رِجَالِي

On the day Kulaib killed Sarāb, Basūs's camel, Jassās offered his aunt ten camels as compensation for Sarāb, but she refused and insisted that Kulaib should be punished. In order to further her demands for revenge, Basūs complained in a loud voice to Jassās's brother Sa^cd, making sure that Jassās who was nearby could hear her: ² (Tawīl)

لَعْمَرُكَ لَوْ أَصْبَحْتَ فِي دَارِ مُنْفَذِي لَمَا ضِيمَ سَعْدٌ وَهُوَ جَارٌ لِأَبِيَانِي
وَلَسَكُنِّي أَصْبَحْتُ فِي دَارِ غُرْبَةٍ مَتَى يَعْدُ فِيهَا الذُّبُّ يَعْدُ عَلَى شَانِي

فَمَا سَمَدُ لَا تُفَرِّزُ بِنَفْسِكَ وَارْتَحِلْ فَبَانَكَ فِي قَوْمِهِ عَنِ الْجَارِ أَمْوَاتِ
وَدُونِكَ أَذْوَادِي فَإِنِّي عَنْهُمْ كَرَاهِيَّةٌ لَا يُفْقِدُونِي بُنْيَانِي

Jassās could not bear the taunts of his aunt and replied he would kill Kulaib's favourite camel Fahl, meaning Kulaib himself. Jassās killed Kulaib and justified his action to his own father by saying that what he did was the only way to end the tyrannical rule of Kulaib who went around with his puppy (hence Kulaib's name) and laid claim to any land on which his puppy yelped : (Wāfir)¹

تَاهَبَ مِثْلَ أَهْبَةِ ذِي كِفَاحٍ فَإِنَّ الْأَمْرَ جَلَّ عَنِ التَّلَاجِي
تَاهَبَ مِثْلَ أَهْبَةِ ذِي كِفَاحٍ فَإِنَّ الْأَمْرَ جَلَّ عَنِ التَّلَاجِي
وَإِنِّي قَدْ جَنَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ حَرْبًا تُغْصُ الشَّيْخُ بِالْمَاءِ الْقِرَاحِ
تُسَعَّرُ نَارُهَا وَهَجَا وَجَاءَتْ إِذَا خَمَدَتْ كَعَبْرَانَ الْفِصَاحِ
تَعَدَّتْ تَغْلِبُ ظُلْمًا عَلَيْنَا بِأَلَا جُزْمٍ يُعَدُّ وَلَا جُنَاحِ
سِوَى كَلْبٍ عَوَى فِي بَطْنِ قَاعٍ لِيَمْنَعَ خِيْمَةَ الْقَاعِ الْبَاحِ
فَلَمَّا أَنْ رَأَيْنَا وَأَسْتَبْنَا عُنَابَ الْبُنْيِ رَافِعَةَ الْجَبَاحِ
صَرَفْتُ إِلَيْهِ نَحْمًا يَوْمَ سُوءٍ لَهُ كَأْسٌ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ الْمَتَاحِ
تُفَكِّلُ دَانِيَاتُ الْبُنْيِ قَوْمًا وَتَدْعُو آخِرِينَ إِلَى الصَّلَاحِ

The father of Jassās was snocked by the news, but assured his son he was solidly behind him: (Wāfir)²

لئن تك يا بُنيّ جنيت حرباً تُغْصُ الشَّيْخُ بِالْمَاءِ الْقِرَاحِ
جمعت بها يدك على كليب فلا وكلّ ولا رث السلاح
ولكنني إلى العلات اجري إلى الموت المحيط مع الصباح

سَأَلَسْتُ ثَوْبَهَا وَأَذْبُ عَنْهَا بِأَطْرَافِ الْعَوَالِي وَالصَّفَاحِ
فَمَا يَبْقَى لِعَزَّتِهِ ذَلِيلٌ فَيَنْتَعِمُ مِنَ الْقَدْرِ الْمَتَّاحِ
فَأَنِّي قَدْ طَرَبْتُ وَهَاجَ شَوْقِي طَرَادُ الْحَيْلِ عَارِضَةَ الرِّمَاحِ
وَاجِلٌ مِنْ حَيَاةِ الذَّلِّ مَوْتٌ وَبَعْضُ الْعَارِ لَا يَسْحَوهُ مَاحِ

Jassās was encouraged by his father's answer and said that death was the only remedy for tyranny, for there is no escape from Allāh's justice: ¹ (Kāmil)

الْبَغْيُ فِيهِ لِلنِّيَّةِ هَادٍ وَانَّهُ لَلْأَقْوَامِ بِالرِّصَادِ
لَوْ كَانَ أَقْصَرَ وَأَثَلٌ عَنْ ظَلَمْنَا لَمْ يُلَفَّ مَضْطَجِعًا بغيرِ وَسَادِ

The killing of Kulaib was inevitable since Jassās had previously warned Kulaib that if he killed Sarāb he would be killed: ² (Rajaz)

إِنِّي وَرَبِّ الشَّاعِرِ الْغُرُورِ وَبَاعِثِ الْمَوْتِ مِنَ الْقُبُورِ
وَعَالِمِ الْمَكْنُونِ فِي الضَّمِيرِ إِنْ رُمْتَ مِنْهَا مَعْقَرَ الْجَزُورِ
لَا يَبْنَ وَتَبَةَ الْمَغِيرِ الذَّيْبِ أَوْ ذِي اللَّبْدَةِ الْمَهْصُورِ
بِصَارِمِ ذِي قَنْ مَشْهُورِ

After the breakout of the Basūs War between the two main branches of the Wā'il tribe, Jassās accused Muhalhil and his people that it was their abuse of power that started the war: ³ (Sari^c)

بَدَأْتُمْ بِالظُّلْمِ فِي قَوْمِكُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ مِثْلَ الْعَدُوِّ الْحَنِيقِ

وَالظَّلْمُ حَوْضٌ لَيْسَ يُسْقَى بِهِ ذُو مَنَمَةٍ فِي سَكَلِ أَمْرِ يُطِيقُ
فَإِنْ آيَتُهُمْ فَازَكَّبُوهَا بِمَا فِيهَا مِنْ أَلْفِتَّةٍ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوقِ

Jalīla bint Murra was pregnant when she returned to her people. She gave birth to a son and called him Hajras. Jassās brought up Hajras and married him to his own daughter. At the end of the Basūs War, Hajras had an argument with a Bakrī man and was surprised to discover his Taghlibī connection. Hajras was shocked by the revelation and asked his mother and his uncle Jassās about the veracity of what he had been told. His mother and his uncle explained to him what happened to his father Kulaib and the circumstances that led to the Basūs War. When Jassās, Hajras and the leaders of the Bakrī and Taghlibī tribes met to sign the treaty of reconciliation, Hajras killed Jassās who became the last victim of the Basūs War.¹

Jassās's poetry is notable for its reference to Allāh

" وَرَبِّ الشَّاعِرِ الْغُرُورِ وَبَاعِثِ الْمَوْتَى مِنَ الْقُبُورِ
وَعَالِمِ الْمَكُونِ فِي الصَّيْرِ " , " وَاللَّهُ لَلاتَّوَامِ بِالرِّصَادِ "

and gives an idea of the Jāhilīs' conception of Allāh.

The expression "Lord of the great poets" indicates that the Jāhilīs believed that Allāh was the source of the poet's inspiration.² This belief is re-enforced by the third hemistich which presents Allāh as the "Lord Who knows the secrets hidden in the heart". Echoes of this belief survive in the proverb "the meaning of the poem

is in the heart of the poet".

Adī b. Rabī^ca, better known as Muhalhil (d.525) for writing polished and flexible poetry,¹ and whose kunya was Abū Rabī^ca,² was instrumental in sparking off and fuelling the Basūs War. As a young man his amorous escapades prompted his brother Kulaib to nickname him ³ زير نساء . On the night Kulaib was killed, Muhalhil met his close friend Hammām b. Murra for a drink. While they were drinking a maid entered the room and whispered in Hammām's ear that his brother Jassās had killed Kulaib. Muhalhil noticed a change of expression on Hammām's face and asked what was the matter. Hammām told him the bad news. Muhalhil burst out laughing and scornfully said that Jassās would not dare to do such a thing. Muhalhil then offered Hammām a drink and said: ⁴ اشرب ذاليم خمر وغدا امر⁵ . Hammām drank to please Muhalhil, but as soon as Muhalhil was drunk he sneaked out and returned to his people.⁴ Muhalhil woke in the morning and was told of Kulaib's death and he cried out: ⁵ (Kāmil)

كُنَّا نَعَارُ عَلَى الْعَوَاتِقِ أَنْ تَرَى بِالْأَمْسِ خَارِجَةً عَنِ الْأَوْطَانِ
فَخَرَجْنَ حِينَ نَوَى كَلِيبٌ حُسْرًا مُسْتَيْفِنَاتٍ بِنَدِهِ بِهَوَانِ
فَتَرَى الْكَوَاعِبَ كَالظُّبَابِ عَوَاطِلًا إِذْ حَانَ مَضْرَعُهُ مِنَ الْأَكْنَعَانِ
يُخْمِشْنَ مِنْ أَدَمِ الْوُجُوهِ حَوَاسِيرًا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَيَعِدْنَ بِالْأَزْمَانِ
مُسْتَلْبَاتٍ نُكْدَهُنَّ وَقَدْ وَرَى أَجْوَاهُنَّ بِجُرْقَةٍ وَرَوَانِي
يَالْهَفَ نَفْسِي مِنْ زَمَانٍ قَاجِعٍ أَلْقَى عَلَيَّ بِكَلْكَلٍ وَجِرَانِ
بِعَصِيْبَةٍ لَا تُسْتَمَالُ حَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ عَزَاءَ الْقَوْمِ وَاللِّسْوَانِ

هَدَّتْ حُصُونًا كُنَّ قَبْلُ مَلَاوِذَا لِذَوِي الْكُهُولِ مِمَّا وَلَا شُبَّانَ
 أَضَحَّتْ وَأَضْحَى سُورَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مُتَهَدِّمَ الْأَذْكَانِ وَالْبُنْيَانِ
 فَأَبْكِينَ سَيِّدَ قَوْمِهِ وَأَنْدَبْتَهُ شُدَّتْ عَلَيْهِ قَبَاطِي الْأَكْفَانِ
 وَأَبْكِينَ لِلْأَيْتَامِ لَمَّا أَحْطَطُوا وَأَبْكِينَ عِنْدَ تَخَاذُلِ الْجِيرَانِ
 وَأَبْكِينَ مَضْرَعَ جِيدِهِ مُتَمَرِّمًا بِدِمَائِهِ فَلَذَاكَ مَا أَبْكَانِي
 فَلَا تُرْكَنَّ بِهِ قَبَائِلَ تَغْلِبُ قَتْلِي بِكُلِّ قَرَارَةٍ وَمَكَانِ
 قَتْلِي تَعَاوَرَهَا النُّسُورُ أَكْفَهَا يَنْهَشْنَهَا وَحَوَاجِلُ الْعُرْبَانِ

Muhalhil buried his brother and mourned him, then shaved his head and swore he would give up his pleasure-loving life of women, gambling and drinking until he had wiped out the Bakris: ¹(Wāfir)

أَهَاجَ قَدَاءَ عَيْنِي الْأَذْكَارُ هُدُوءًا فَالْدُمُوعُ لَهَا أَنْحِدَارُ
 وَصَارَ اللَّيْلُ مُشْتَمِلًا عَلَيْنَا كَانَ اللَّيْلُ لَيْسَ لَهُ نَهَارُ
 وَبِتُّ أُرَاقِبُ الْجُوزَاءَ حَتَّى تَقَارَبَ مِنْ أَوَائِلِهَا أَنْحِدَارُ
 أَصْرَفُ مُغْلَبِي فِي إِثْرِ قَوْمِ تَبَايَلَتْ أَلْيَادُهُمْ فَغَارُوا
 وَأَبْكِي وَالتَّجُومُ مُطْلَعَاتُ كَانَ لَمْ تَحْوِهَا عَيْنِي الْجَارُ
 عَلَى مَنْ لَوْ نُبِعْتُ وَكَانَ حَيًّا لَقَادَ الْحَيْلَ تَحْجِبُهَا الْعِبَارُ
 دَعَوْتُكَ يَا كَلْبُ فَلَمْ تُجِيبِي وَكَيْفَ يُجِيبِي الْبَلَدُ الْفَقَارُ
 أَجِيبِي يَا كَلْبُ خَلَكَ دَمٌ صَنِيفَاتُ النُّفُوسِ لَهَا مَزَارُ
 أَجِيبِي يَا كَلْبُ خَلَكَ دَمٌ لَقَدْ فُجِعْتُ بِفَارِسِهَا نَزَاهُ
 سَقَاكَ الْغَيْثُ أَنْكَ كُنْتَ غَيْثًا وَبِتُّ عَيْنَايَ بَعْدَكَ أَنْ تَكْفَاهُ
 وَكُنْتُ أَعْدُ قُرْبِي مِنْكَ رِيحًا إِذَا مَا عَدَّتِ الرِّيحُ التَّجَارُ
 أَرَى طُولَ الْحَيَاةِ وَقَدْ تَوَلَّى كَمَا قَدْ يُسَلِّبُ الشَّيْءُ الْمَعَارُ
 كَانِي إِذْ تَعَى النَّاعِي كَلْبِيَا تَطَاوَرَ بَيْنَ جَنِي الشَّرَارُ

قَدَرْتُ وَقَدَّعَشِي بَصْرِي عَلَيْهِ كَمَا دَارَتْ بِشَارِبِهَا الْعُقَارُ
 سَأَلْتُ الْحَمِيَّ أَيْنَ دَفَنَتْهُ فَقَالُوا لِي بِسَفْحِ الْحَمِيَّ دَارُ
 فَسِرْتُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ بَلَدِي حَيْثَمَا وَطَارَ النَّوْمُ وَأَمْتَمَّ الْقَرَارُ
 أَتَعْدُوا يَا كَلِيبُ مَعِيَ إِذَا مَا جَبَانُ الْقَوْمِ أَنْجَاهُ الْفِرَارُ
 أَتَعْدُوا يَا كَلِيبُ مَعِيَ إِذَا مَا حُلُوقُ الْقَوْمِ يَتَّخِذُهَا الشِّفَارُ
 خُذِ الْهَذَا لَا كَيْدَ عَلَيَّ عُمَرِي بَرِّكِي كُلَّ مَا حَوَتْ الدِّيَارُ
 وَهَجْرِي الْغَانِيَاتِ وَشَرِبَ كَأْسِ وَلَبْسِي جُبَّةً لَا تُسْتَعَارُ
 وَلَسْتُ بِجَالِمِ دِرْعِي وَسَيْفِي إِلَى أَنْ يَخْلَعَ اللَّيْلُ النَّهَارُ
 وَالْآنَ تَبِيدُ سِرَاةُ بَكْرِي فَلَا يَبْقَى لَهَا أَبَدًا آثَارُ

Muhalhil rallied his Taghlibī tribe and declared war on the Bakrīs after the Bakrīs refused to deliver Jassās to him so that he could punish him for killing Kulaib:¹

(Kāmil)

قَتَلُوا كَلِيبًا ثُمَّ قَالُوا أَرْتُمُوا كَذِبُوا وَرَبَّ الْحِلِّ وَالْإِحْرَامِ
 حَتَّى تُلْفَ كَتِيبَةٌ بِكَتِيبَةٍ وَيَجْلُ أَصْرَامٌ عَلَى أَصْرَامِ
 وَتَقُومَ رَبَّاتُ الْخُدُورِ حَوَائِرًا تَمْسُخُنَ عَرْضَ تَمَائِمِ الْآيَاتِمِ
 حَتَّى زَى عُرْرًا تُجْرُ وَجْهَةً وَعِظَامَ رُؤْسِ هُشَيْتِ بَعْظَامِ
 حَتَّى يَعْضَّ الشَّيْخُ مِنْ حَسْرَاتِهِ مِمَّا رَى جَزَعًا عَلَى الْإِبْهَامِ

Muhalhil's excessive zeal in pursuing the war against the Bakrīs shocked his people, particularly after he killed al-Hārith b. °Ubād's son Bujair, whose people were not involved in the war. Muhalhil justified his killing of Bujair by saying that although Bujair's people stayed out of the war, they were still Bakrīs:² (Wāfir)

عَلَى آتِي تَرَكَتُ بِوَارِدَاتٍ يُجِيرًا فِي دَمٍ مِنْهُ الْعَبِيرِ
 هَتَكَتُ بِهِ يُبُوتَ بَنِي عُبَادٍ وَبَعْضُ الْقَتْلِ أَشْفَى لِلصُّدُورِ
 وَهَمَامَ بْنَ مِرَّةٍ قَدْ تَرَكَنَا عَلَيْهِ الْفُشْعَمَانِ مِنَ الشُّوْرِ
 قَبْلُ مَا قَتِلُ الرُّءُ عَمْرُو وَجَسَّاسُ بْنُ مِرَّةٍ ذُو صَرِيرِ

And nothing would satisfy his thirst for revenge until he could answer Kulaib's daughter Umaima, who had innocently asked him after her father, that he had killed all the Bakrī murderers of her father: ¹ (Wāfir)

نُسَائِنِي أُمَيْمَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهَا وَمَا تَدْرِي أُمَيْمَةُ عَنْ صَمِيرِ
 فَلَا وَآبِي أُمَيْمَةَ مَا أَبُوهَا مِنْ النَّمْرِ الْمُؤْتَلِّ وَالْجُرُورِ
 وَإِكْنَانًا طَعْنَا الْقَوْمَ طَعْنَا عَلَى الْأَنْبَاجِ مِنْهُمْ وَالنُّحُورِ
 نَكَبُ الْقَوْمَ لِلأَذْقَانِ صَرَغِي وَتَأْخُذُ بِالتَّرَائِبِ وَالصُّدُورِ
 فَذَى لِبَنِي شَيْقِي حِينَ جَاؤُوا كَأَسَدِ الْغَابِ تَجَلُّبُ بِالزَّرِيرِ
 كَانَ رِمَاحَهُمْ أَشْطَانُ بِرِ بَعِيدٍ بَيْنَ جَالِيهَا جُرُورِ

Muhalhil emphasises his deep sense of loss by repeating a hemistich and the opening word of the second hemistich eleven times in the existing version, and possibly more, according to Ibn Nubāta al-Masrī:²

عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبِ إِذَا خَافَ الْمَغَارُ مِنَ الْمَمِيرِ
 عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبِ إِذَا طُرِدَ الْيَتِيمُ عَنِ الْجُرُورِ
 عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبِ إِذَا مَا ضَمِيمٍ جَارُ الْمُسْتَجِيرِ
 عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبِ إِذَا ضَافَتْ رَحِيَّاتُ الصُّدُورِ
 عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبِ إِذَا خَافَ الْخُوفُ مِنَ الشُّغُورِ

عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبٍ إِذَا طَالَتْ مُقَاسَاةُ الْأُمُورِ
 عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبٍ إِذَا هَبَّتْ رِيَّاحُ الزَّمْهِرِ
 عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبٍ إِذَا وَبَّ الْمُنَارُ عَلَى الْمُسِيرِ
 عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبٍ إِذَا عَجَزَ الْغَنِيُّ عَنِ الْقَفِيرِ
 عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبٍ إِذَا خَرَجَتْ مَجْبَاهُ الْخُدُورِ
 عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلْبٍ إِذَا هَفَّ الْمَثُوبُ بِالْعَسِيرِ

Muhalhil ends his poem with a chilling description of thunderous battles that could be heard as far away as Hajr, and of horses scampering in streams of blood:¹

عَدَاةٌ كَانْنَا وَبَيْنِي أَيْدِيَنَا بِمَجْنِبِ عُنَيْزَةَ رُكْنَا تَبِيرِ
 كَانَّ الْجُدِي جَدِي بَنَاتِ نَفْسِي يَكْبُ عَلَى الْيَدَيْنِ بِمُسْتَدِيرِ
 وَتَحْبُو الشُّعْرِيَّانِ إِلَى سَهْلِي يُلُوحُ كَفْمَةَ الْجَبَلِ الْكَبِيرِ
 فَلَوْلَا الرِّيحُ أَسْمِعُ مِنْ بَحْرِ صَلِيلِ الْبَيْضِ تُرْعُ بِالذُّكُورِ
 وَكَانُوا قَوْمَنَا قَبَعُوا عَلَيْنَا قَمَدٌ لَا قَاهُمْ لَفْحُ السَّعِيرِ
 تَطْلُ الطَّيْرُ عَاكِفَةً عَلَيْهِمْ كَانَّ الْحَيْلَ تَنْصَعُ بِالْعَبِيرِ

The death of Kulaib and the subsequent Basūs War turned Muhalhil's carefree world into a vision of desolation, and imbued Muhalhil's poems with an obsessive and desperate note generated by the tikrār technique which relies on the repetition of the same words, phrases and shatrs, especially at the beginning of the lines, like:²

(Khafif)

ذَهَبَ الصُّنْحُ أَوْ تَرَدُّوا كَلْبًا أَوْ تَحُلُّوْا عَلَى الْحُكُومَةِ حَلًّا

ذَهَبَ الصَّلْحُ أَوْ تَرَدُّوا كُتَيْبًا أَوْ أُذِيقَ الْغَدَاةَ شَيْبَانَ مُكَلَّلًا
 ذَهَبَ الصَّلْحُ أَوْ تَرَدُّوا كُتَيْبًا أَوْ تَنَالَ الْغَدَاةُ هُونًا وَذَلًّا
 ذَهَبَ الصَّلْحُ أَوْ تَرَدُّوا كُتَيْبًا أَوْ تَذُوقُوا الْوَبَالَ وَرَدًّا وَنَهْلًا
 ذَهَبَ الصَّلْحُ أَوْ تَرَدُّوا كُتَيْبًا أَوْ تَمِيلُوا عَنِ الْحَلَالِ عَزَلًا

And: ¹ (Khafīf)

يَا خَلِيلِي نَادِيَا لِي كُتَيْبًا وَأَعْلَمَا أَنَّهُ مُلَاقٍ كِفَاحًا
 يَا خَلِيلِي نَادِيَا لِي كُتَيْبًا ثُمَّ قُولَا لَهُ نَعِمْتَ صَبَاحًا
 يَا خَلِيلِي نَادِيَا لِي كُتَيْبًا قَبْلَ أَنْ تُبْصِرَ الْعُيُونَ الصَّبَاحًا
 تَرَكَ الدَّارَ صَفِينًا وَوَعَلَى عَذَرَ اللَّهِ صَفِينًا يَوْمَ رَاحَا
 ذَهَبَ الدَّهْرُ بِالسَّمَاحَةِ مِنَّا يَا أَدَى الدَّهْرِ كَيْفَ تَرْضَى الْجَبَاحَا
 وَنَجَّ أُمِّي وَوَيْجَهَا لِقَتِيلٍ مِنْ بَنِي تَغْلِبٍ وَوَيْجَا وَوَاحَا

Muhalhil's effective use of the tikrār to magnify his distressed emotional state is illustrated in his threatening outburst: ² (Madīd)

يَا بَكْرِي أَنْشِرُوا لِي كُتَيْبًا يَا بَكْرِي أَيْنَ الْفِرَارُ
 يَا بَكْرِي فَاطْعِنُوا أَوْ خُلُّوا صَرَّحَ الشَّرُّ وَبَانَ السَّرَارُ

Muhalhil's outcry in the first shatr, in which he makes the impossible demand on the Bakrīs to bring his brother Kulaib back to life, is emphasised in the second shatr by the repetition of أَيْنَ which spells out the Bakrīs' inevitable doom. The repetition of the phrase يَا بَكْرِي at the start of the first three shatrs and the word أَيْنَ in

the second shatr together with the recurrence of the letter "k" in Bakrī and Kulaib, of the letter "r" in يَا بَكْرِي ,
السَّرَارُ , الشرُّ , صَرَاح , الفِرَارُ , أَنْشَرُوا
 and of the letter "n" in بَانَ , فَاظَعَنُوا , أَيْنَ , أَنْشَرُوا ,
 intensifies the fury of a man trapped in the web of
 vengeance. In other words, Muhalhil employs the tikrār
 technique to stress that, just as it is impossible for the
 Bakrīs to resuscitate Kulaib, it is also impossible for
 them to escape from his wrath.¹ The word أَنْشَرُوا must have
 been in common use in both its secular and religious sense,
 as it is attested by Muhalhil's poem and the Qur'ān.²
 Tibrizī and Jawharī quote:

يَا بَكْرِي أَنْشَرُوا لِي كَلِيًّا يَا بَكْرِي أَيْنَ أَيْنَ الْفِرَارُ

as an example of the madīd metre.³

Classical critics dubbed Muhalhil's elegiac
 masterpiece "Dāhiya" and included it in an anthology of
 seven Jāhilī poems known as "Muntaqayāt".⁴ The elegy is
 divided into several sections. In the first section
 Muhalhil blames the Bakrīs for committing a crime that
 led to unforeseen consequences, and compares the Bakrīs'
 crime to the action of a man throwing corpses down a
 bottomless pit: (Sarī^c)

جَارَتْ بَنُو بَكْرِي وَلَمْ يَنْدِيلُوا وَالْمَرْءُ قَدْ يَغْرِفُ قَصْدَ الطَّرِيقِ
 حَلَّتْ رِكَابُ الْبَغْيِ فِي وَإِلٍ فِي رَهْطِ جَسَّاسٍ ثِقَالِ الْوُسُوقِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْجَبَانِي عَلَى قَوْمِهِ جِنَايَةَ لَيْسَ لَهَا بِالْمُطِيقِ
 جِنَايَةَ لَمْ يَذِرْ مَا كُنْهَهَا جَانٍ وَلَمْ يُضَيِّحْ لَهَا بِالْخَلِيقِ
 كَفَافٍ يَوْمًا بِأَجْرَامِهِ فِي هُوَّةٍ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ طَرِيقِ
 مَنْ شَاءَ وَلَى النَّفْسَ فِي مَهْمِهِ ضَنْكَ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ لَهُ بِالْمُضِيقِ
 إِنْ رُكُوبَ الْبَجْرِ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ ذَا مَصْدَرٍ مِنْ مُهْلَكَاتِ الْفَرِيقِ

In the second section Muhalhil praises the leadership qualities of Kulaib for which he was chosen by his people, the Banū Hājar, to lead them at the Battle of Yawm Khazāzā in which they defeated the Banū Hamdān:

لَيْسَ أَمْرُهُ لَمْ يَبْدُ فِي بَنِيهِ غَدَا بِهِ تَحْرِيقُ رِيحٍ خَرِيقِ
 كَمَنْ تَعَدَى بَنِيهِ قَوْمَهُ طَارَ إِلَى رَبِّ الْإِلَوهِ الْخُفُوقِ
 أَبِي رَيْسِ النَّاسِ وَالْمُرْتَجِي لِعُقْدَةِ الشَّدِّ وَرَتَقِ الْفُتُوقِ
 مَنْ عَرَفَتْ يَوْمًا حَرَارًا لَهُ عَلِيًّا مَعَدَّةً عِنْدَ أَخَذِ الْخُفُوقِ
 إِذْ أَقْبَلَتْ خَمِيرٌ فِي جَمِيهَا وَمَذْجٌ كَالْعَارِضِ الْمُسْتَحِيقِ
 وَجَمْعُ هَمْدَانَ لَهُ لَجَبَةٌ وَرَايَةٌ تَهْوِي هُوِيَّ الْإَلُوقِ
 تَلْمَعُ لَمَعِ الطَّيْرِ رَايَاتُهُ عَلَى آوَادِي لُجِّ تَجْرِ عَمِيقِ
 فَاحْتَلَّ أَوْزَارَهُمْ إِزْرُهُ بِرَأْيِ تَحْمُودٍ عَلَيْهِمْ شَفِيقِ
 وَقَدْ عَلَنَهُمْ لِقَا هَبُوهَ ذَاتُ هِيَاجٍ كَالْهَيْبِ الْخَرِيقِ
 فَقَلَّدَ الْأَمْرَ بَنُو هَاجِرٍ مِنْهُمْ رَيْسًا كَالْحَسَامِ الْبَرِيقِ
 مُضْطَلَمًا بِالْأَمْرِ يَسْمُو لَهُ فِي يَوْمٍ لَا يَنْسَاغُ حَلْقُ بَرِيقِ
 ذَلِكَ وَقَدْ عَنَّ لَهُمْ عَارِضٌ كَجَنْجِ لَيْلٍ فِي سَاءِ بَرُوقِ
 فَأَنْفَرَجَتْ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ مُسْفِرًا مُتَبَلِّجًا مِثْلَ أَنْبِلَاجِ الشُّرُوقِ
 فَذَلِكَ لَا يُوفِي بِهِ غَيْرُهُ وَلَيْسَ يُلْقَى مِثْلُهُ فِي فَرِيقِ

In the third section Muhalhil warns the Bakrīs that if

they do not bring back Kulaib to life, they will be consumed by the fires of war for killing their lord and king:

قُلْ لِبَنِي ذَهْلٍ يَدُونَهُ أَوْ يَصِيرُوا لِلصَّيْلَمِ الْحَفِيقِ
 فَقَدَرُوا مِنْ دَمٍ مُحْرَمٍ وَأَنْتَهُكُوا حُرْمَتَهُ مِنْ عُفُوقِ
 وَأَسْتَسْرُوا مِنْ حَرْبِنَا مَا تَمَّا أَنَابُهُمْ نِيرَانَ حَرْبِ عُفُوقِ
 لَا يُرْقَا الدَّهْرَ لَهَا عَاتِكُ إِلَّا عَلَى أَنْفَاسِ نَجَلِي تَفُوقِ
 تَنْفَرِحُ الظُّلْمَاءُ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ كَاللَّيْلِ وَلَى عَنْ صَدِيعِ أَيْقِ
 تُحْمَلُ الرَّايِبُ مِنْهَا عَلَى سَيْسَاءِ حِدْبِيرٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ نُوقِ
 إِنَّ أَمْرًا ضَرَجْتُمْ تَوْبَهُ بِعَاتِكِ مِنْ دَمِهِ كَالْحُلُوقِ
 سَيْدُ سَادَاتٍ إِذَا ضَمَّهُمْ مُعْظَمُ أَمْرٍ يَوْمَ بُؤْسٍ وَضِيقِ
 لَمْ يَكُ كَالسَّيِّدِ فِي قَوْمِهِ بَلْ مَلِكٌ دِينَ لَهُ بِالْحُلُوقِ

In the fourth section Muhalhil accuses the Bakrīs of cutting the rope of friendship that held the Banū Wā'il together:

إِنْ نَحْنُ لَمْ نَفَارِ بِهِ فَأَتَّخِذُوا شِفَارَكُمْ مِنَّا لِحْرَ الْحُلُوقِ
 ذُبْحًا كَذَبْحِ الدَّاءِ لَا يَتَّقِي ذَابِحُهُمَا إِلَّا بِشُحْبِ الرُّوقِ
 أَضْبَحَ مَا بَيْنَ بَنِي وَائِلٍ مُنْقَطِعِ الْحَبْلِ بَعِيدِ الصَّدِيقِ
 عَدَا نُسَاقِي فَأَعْلَمُوا بَيْنَنَا رِمَاحَنَا مِنْ قَائِي كَالرَّحِيقِ
 بِكُلِّ مَغْوَارِ الضُّعْفَى قَاتِيكَ تَحْرَدَلِ مِنْ قَوْقِ طَرْفِ عَتِيقِ
 سَعَالِي يُخْمَانُ مِنْ تَغْلِبِ فِتْيَانِ صَدِيقِ كَلْبُوثِ الطَّرِيقِ
 نَيْسَ أَخُوكُمْ تَارِكًا وَرَهُ وَلَيْسَ عَنْ تَطْلَائِكُمْ بِالْمُفِيقِ

Muhalhil's poetry abounds in dramatic hyperboles employed to heighten an emotionally-charged scene or an explosive psychological mood. For example, the hyperbole of Gemini is compared to newly-born she-camels standing beside a spring-born camel which is unable to move: (Wāfir)¹

كَانَ كَوَاكِبَ الْجُوزَاءِ عُوْدًا مُعْطَفَةً عَلَى رَنْجٍ كَسِيرٍ

Another hyperbole is that of the tied up kid seen like a prisoner:² (Wāfir)

كَانَ الْجُدَى فِي مَشْنَاءِ رَنْجٍ أَسِيرٌ أَوْ مَشْنَاءِ الْأَسِيرِ

The third example is that of the Pleiades seen as young camels moving slowly on a rainy day.³ The fourth example is that of Kulaib leading an army as numerous as the leaves of the perennial Curā tree:⁴ (Kāmil)

بَحَلَّمَ الْمَلُوكَ وَسَارَ تَحْتَ لُؤَائِهِ شَجَرُ الْعَرَمِيِّ وَعَرَاءِ عُرِّ الْأَقْوَامِ

The poetry of Muhalhil is relevant to the understanding of the Qur'ān. In interpreting the Qur'ānic phrase قَوْمًا لَدًّا , Abū Ubaida quotes Muhalhil's verse: (Khafīf)⁵

إِنْ نَحْتِ الْأَحْجَارِ حَدًّا وَلِينًا وَخَصْبًا أَلَدًا ذَا مِغْلَاقٍ

to illustrate the Jāhili usage of the word أَلَدًا .⁵

Another verse of Muhalhil was used by Anbārī to point out the Jāhili background of the Qur'ānic phrase

واهجرتني ملياً¹ : (Kāmil)

وتصدعت قمم الجبال لموته وبكت عليه المرملات ملياً

Abū °Ubaida and Anbārī quote another verse of Muhalhil to back up their interpretation of the Qur'ānic phrase

كَأَنَّ لَمْ يَفْتَنُوا فِيهَا² : (Khafīf)

غَنِيَتْ دَارَنَا تِهَامَةً فِي الدَّمْرِ وَفِيهَا بَنُو مَمْعِدٍ حُلُولًا

The poetry of Muhalhil is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it throws light on the mourning and burial customs which entailed the wrapping of the dead in shrouds, and the aggrieved women uncovering and pulling their hair and weeping and beating their faces, while the men eulogised and enumerated the noble qualities of the deceased. Secondly, it alludes to the mythological tradition of the Jāhilīs who believed that heaven and earth were separated by still waters:³ (Wāfir)

وَأَبِي وَأَلْنُجُومُ مُطَلَعَاتُ كَانَ لَمْ تَخُوها عَنِّي الْبِحَارُ

and believed in Canopus, who was a tax-collector turned into a star by Allāh for his misdemeanours and who ran away by crossing the Milky Way towards Yemen, and was followed by Sirius, who was in love with him, leaving behind her sister Procyon in tears because she was also in love with Canopus but was unable to cross the Milky Way:⁴ (Wāfir)

وَتَحَبُّو الشُّعْرَيَانَ إِلَى سُهَيْلٍ يَلُوحُ كَقَمَّةِ الْجَبَلِ الْكَبِيرِ

Thirdly, it tells us that the earth, which was floating in the wind, was pegged down by the mountains Allāh created from the waves: (Basit)

نَمَى النَّمَاءُ كَلْبًا لِي فَقُلْتُ لَهُمْ مَادَتْنَا الْأَرْضُ أَمْ مَادَتْنَا رَوَاسِيهَا
لَيْتَ السَّمَاءُ عَلَى مَنْ تَحْتَهَا وَقَعَتْ وَحَالَتِ الْأَرْضُ فَأُنْجَابَتْ بِمَنْ فِيهَا

Fourthly, it alludes to the Jāhilīs' belief in their kings as representatives of their gods, who acted as intermediaries between Allāh and mankind, and considered the blood of their kings as sacred as that of their gods, as embodied in the expression : (Sarī^c)

فَقَدَّرُوا مِنْ دَمِ مُحْرَمٍ وَأَنْتَهَكُوا حُرْمَتَهُ مِنْ عُمُقٍ

And for this reason Muhalhil swore by the وَرَبِّ الْخَيْلِ وَالْإِحْرَامِ and the sacred أَنْصَابِ that he would fight the Bakrīs who killed their legitimate king³ (Sarī^c)

لَمْ يَكْ كَالسَّيِّدِ فِي قَوْمِهِ بَلْ مَلِكٌ دِينَ لَهُ بِالْحُقُوقِ

until none of them was left: (Kāmil)⁴

حَتَّى أُبَيْدَ قَبِيلَةٌ وَقَبِيلَةٌ وَقَبِيلَةٌ وَقَبِيلَتَيْنِ جَمِيعًا
وَتَذُوقَ حَقْفًا آلَ بَكْرِ كُلُّهَا وَنَهْدٌ مِنْهَا سَنَكهَا الْمَرْفُوعَا
حَتَّى تَرَى أَوْصَالَهُمْ وَجَمَاجِمَا مِنْهُمْ عَلَيْهَا الْخَالِمَاتُ وَقُوعَا
وَتَرَى سِبَاعَ الطَّيْرِ تَنْفُرُ أَعْيُنَا وَتَجْرُ أَعْضَاءُ لَهُمْ وَضُلُوعَا
وَالْمَشْرِيقَةَ لَا تُعْرِجُ عَنْهُمْ ضَرْبًا يَفْدُ مَغَافِرَا وَدُرُوعَا
وَالْخَيْلَ تَفْتَحِمُ الْغُبَارَ عَوَابِسَا يَوْمَ الْكَرْبَةِ مَا يُؤْدِنَ رُجُوعَا

The connection between the gods and the kings is confirmed by Muhalhil's verse which describes the goddess Shams wearing her black cloak and unwilling to rise in the morning as a mark of her disapproval of the murder of king Kulaib:¹

(Kāmil)

لَمَّا نَعَى النَّاعِي كَلْبِيًّا أَظْلَمَتْ شَمْسُ النَّهَارِ فَمَا تُرِيدُ طُلُوعًا

Fifthly, it refers to the custom of slaughtering animals on the return of the traveller to his home:² (Kāmil)

إِذَا لَنْظَرِ رَبِّ بِلَشِيُوفِ رِفْوَسِهِمْ خَرَبَ الْقَدَارِ تَقِيْعَةَ الْقَدَمِ

The Prophet's saying: الناسُ نفاقُ الموتِ shows the currency of this custom at the time of the Prophet.³ The custom of naqī^c is still practised in the Arabian Peninsula.

Sixthly, it demonstrates Muhalhil's extensive use of tibāq:⁴

كَأَنِّي إِذْ نَعَى النَّاعِي كَلْبِيًّا تَطَايَرًا بَيْنَ جَنِيِّ الشَّرَارِ

jinās:⁵ وَأَلَا تَرُكِّنُ بِهِ قَبَائِلَ تَغْلِبُ قَتْلَى كِلِّ قَرَارَةٍ وَمَكَانِ, internal rhyme, repetition, hyperbole and enjambement. This technique was later developed by the Abbasid poets and was known as badi^c.⁶ In this respect, Muhalhil can be regarded as the precursor of the badi^c poets.

In the 520s Muhalhil's forces were devastated by al-Hārith b. ^cUbad, and Muhalhil was taken prisoner.⁷ He was later released and withdrew to Yemen where he died a broken man.⁸ Muhalhil was the maternal uncle of Imru' al-Qais⁹ and the maternal grand-father of ^cAmr b. Kulthum who alludes to

him and to his great-uncle Kulaib in his Mu^Callaqa.¹

al-Hārith b. ^CUbād (d.c.550) was born in the fifth century. In his teens Hārith killed two young men, one of whom was the son of the Sadūsī leader, and consequently war erupted between the Sadūsī and the Rabī^Ca tribes. The Rabī^Ca tribe won the war which claimed the lives of Hārith's father and brothers. The Sadūsīs later allied themselves with the Qudā^Cī and Ta'ī tribes, and fought Hārith's Rabī^Ca tribe at the Battle of Yawm Khazāzā and lost.²

Hārith, a relative of the poet Jassās b. Murra al-Bakrī, disapproved of the motive behind the killing of Kulaib, and distanced himself from the Basūs War. Muhalhil's decimation of Hārith's Bakrī tribe forced the Bakrīs to urge Hārith to help them. Hārith sent his son Bujair to Muhalhil to remind him of his neutrality in the war and to appeal to him to stop the killing of the Bakrīs who were after all his own people, but Muhalhil killed Bujair. Hārith's reaction was that if the murder of his son would stop the war, then he would take no action. Muhalhil, adding insult to injury, boasted he killed Bujair with the strap of one of Kulaib's shoes. Muhalhil's remark incensed Hārith who called for his horse Na^Cāma and cut its mane and tail, and ordered his men to shave their heads and declared war in one of the most dramatic poems of the Late

¹
Jāhiliyya. The poem opens with a reflection on the
impermanence of life and the eternity of Allāh: (Khafif)

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَصِيرُهُ لِلزَّوَالِ غَيْرَ رَبِّي وَصَالِحِ الْأَعْمَالِ
وَرَى النَّاسَ يَنْظُرُونَ جَمِيعًا لَيْسَ فِيهِمْ لِدَاكُ بَعْضُ أَحْيَالِ

Ḥārith then moves on to describe the impact the death of
his son had on him:

قُلْ لِأَمِّ الْأَعْرَبِ تَبْكِي بُجَيْرًا حِيلَ بَيْنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالْأَمْوَالِ
وَلَعَمْرِي لَا بَكِينَ بُجَيْرًا مَا أَقَى الْمَاءُ مِنْ رُؤُوسِ الْجِبَالِ
لَهْفَ نَفْسِي عَلَى بُجَيْرٍ إِذَا مَا جَاءَتْ أَلْحِيلُ يَوْمَ حَرْبِ عُضَالِ
وَتَسَاقَى الْكُمَاهُ نَمًّا تَقِيمًا وَبَدَا أَلْيَضُ مِنْ قِبَابِ الْحِجَالِ
وَسَمِعْتُ كُلَّ حُرَّةٍ أَلْوَجْهِ تَدْعُو يَا لِبَكْرِ عَرَاءِ كَأْتِمَشَالِ
يَا بُجَيْرَ الْخَيْرَاتِ لَا صُلْحَ حَتَّى نَمَلًا أَلْيَدَ مِنْ رُؤُوسِ الرِّجَالِ
وَتَقَرَّ الْعُيُونُ بَعْدَ بُكَاهَا حِينَ تَسْقِي الدَّمَ صُدُورَ الْعَوَالِي
أَصْبَحْتُ وَإِلَّ تَعَجُّ مِنْ الْحَرْبِ بِ عَجِيجِ الْجِبَالِ بِالْأَنْتِقَالِ
لَمْ أَكُنْ مِنْ جُنَاتِهَا عَالِمُ اللَّهِ وَإِنِّي لِحَرْهَا أَلْيَوْمَ صَالِ
قَدْ تَجَبَّتُ وَإِلَّا كَيْ يُفِيضُوا قَابَتْ تَغْلِبُ عَلَيَّ أَعْرَابِي
وَأَشَابُوا ذُؤَابَتِي بِبُجَيْرِ قَتَلُوهُ ظَلَمًا بِبُغَيْرِ قِتَالِ
قَتَلُوهُ بِشِيعِ نَعْلِ كَلْبِ إِنْ قَتَلَ الْكُرَيْمِ بِالْشِيعِ عَالِ
يَا بَنِي تَغْلِبِ خُذُوا الْحِذْرَ إِنَّا قَدْ شَرِبْنَا بِكَاسِ مَوْتِ زَلَالِ
يَا بَنِي تَغْلِبِ قَتَلْتُمْ قَتِيلًا مَا سَمِعْنَا بِشِيعِهِ فِي الْحَوَالِي

Then Ḥārith ends the poem by dramatically repeating a hemistich
fourteen times and by extolling the courage of his unbeaten
army:

قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي لَقِحتُ حَرْبُ وَاثِلٍ عَن حِيَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي لَيْسَ قَوْلِي يُرَادُ لَكِنِ فِعَالِي
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي جَدَّ تَوْحُ النِّسَاءِ بِالْأَعْوَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي شَابَ رَأْيِي وَأَنْكَرْتَنِي الْقَوَالِي
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي لِلسَّرَى وَالنُّدُورِ وَالْأَصَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي طَالَ لَيْلِي عَلَى الْآيَالِي الطُّوَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي لِأَعْتِاقِ الْأَبْطَالِ بِالْأَبْطَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي وَأَعْدِلًا عَن مَقَالَةِ الْجُهَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي لَيْسَ قَلْبِي عَن الْقِتَالِ بِسَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي كَلَّمَاهُ رِيحُ ذَيْلِ الشَّمَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي لِيَجِيرَ مُفَكِّكَ الْأَغْلَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي لِكَرِيمِ مُتَوَجِّهِ بِالْجَمَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي لِأَنْبِيحِ الرِّجَالِ بَيْنَ النِّعَالِ
 قَرَبًا مَرَبَطَ النِّعَامَةَ مِنِّي لِيَجِيرَ فِدَاهُ عَمِّي وَخَالِي
 قَرَبًا هَا لِي تَغْلِبَ شُوسًا لِأَعْتِاقِ الْكُفَاةِ يَوْمَ الْقِتَالِ
 قَرَبًا هَا وَقَرَبًا لِأَمْتِي دِرْعًا دِلَاصًا تَرُدُّ حَدَّ النِّبَالِ
 قَرَبًا هَا بِمُرَهَقَاتِ حِدَادِ لِقِرَاعِ الْأَبْطَالِ يَوْمَ التَّرَالِ
 رَبِّ جَيْشٍ لَقِيْتُهُ يَطْرُقُ الْمَوْتَ عَلَى هَيْكَلٍ خَفِيفِ الْجَلَالِ
 بَسَّأَلُوا كِنْدَةَ الْكِرَامِ وَبَكَرًا وَأَسْأَلُوا مَذْجِبًا وَحَيَّ هَلَالِ
 إِذْ أَوْنَا بِمَسْكَرِ ذِي زُهَاءِ مُكْفَهَرِ الْأَذَى شَدِيدِ الْمَصَالِ
 قَرَبًا هَا حِينَ رَامَ قِرَانًا كُلَّ مَاضِي الذُّبَابِ عَضْبِ الصِّقَالِ

According to Ibn Badrūn, Hārith's poem runs over one hundred lines with the shatr repeated fifty times.¹

Muhalhil responded to Hārith's declaration of war with

a poem in which he repeated his call for his horse

Mushahhar fourteen times¹ قَرَبًا مَرَبَطًا الْمُشَهَّرِ مِنِّي .

Hārith fought and defeated the Taghlibīs and took Muhalhil prisoner without knowing his identity. Hārith requested from his prisoner if he could pin-point Muhalhil. The prisoner agreed to do so in exchange for his freedom. Hārith consented. Muhalhil revealed his true identity and Hārith cut off Muhalhil's locks and let him go:² (Khafīf)

مَهَفَ نَفْسِي عَلَى عَدِيٍّ وَلَمْ أَعْرِفْ عَدِيًّا إِذْ أَمَكَّنْتَنِي الْيَدَانِ
طُلَّ مَنْ طُلَّ فِي الْحُرُوبِ وَلَمْ أُؤَيِّسْ تَرْيُوسًا أَبْنَاتُهُ ابْنَ أَبَانِ
فَارَسٌ يَضْرِبُ الْكَنْبِيَّةَ بِالسِّبَايِ فَتَسْمُو أُمَّ مَسَّ الْعَيْنَانِ

Hārith's magnanimity became proverbial:³

Hārith pursued a relentless war against the Taghlibīs, for at the beginning of his involvement in the war, he swore that he would make no peace with his enemies until the earth had talked to him. As the Taghlibīs could no longer withstand the persistent onslaught of Hārith, they dug an underground tunnel and asked one of their men to hide in it and sing a verse: (Tawīl)

أَبَا مَنْذَرٍ أَفْنَيْتَ فَاسْتَبَقَ بَعْضُنَا حَنَاتِيكَ بَعْضُ الشَّرَاهُونَ مِنْ بَعْضِ

whenever he saw Hārith passing over the tunnel. When Hārith passed over the tunnel and heard the song, he was told now

that the earth had spoken to him he was no longer under oath to continue the war. Hārith agreed and stopped the war.¹

In an early poem, possibly written before the Battle of Khazāzā, Hārith advises the Sadawsīs not to delude themselves of their invincibility: (Basīt)²

سَائِلِ سَدُوسِ الَّتِي أَفْنَى كِتَابَهَا طَعْنُ الرِّمَاحِ الَّتِي فِي رُؤْيِهَا شُهْبُ
 إِن لَّمْ تُتْلَقُوا بِنَا جُهْدًا فَقَدْ شَهِدَتْ فُرْسَانُكُمْ أَنِّي بِالصَّبْرِ مُعْتَصِبُ
 يَا وَيْلَ أُمِّكُمْ مِنْ جَمْعِ سَادَتِنَا كِتَابِنَا كَالرُّبِيِّ وَالْقَطْرِ يَنْسَكِبُ
 أَبَا عُقَيْلٍ فَلَا تَفْخَرِ بِسَادَتِكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَالذَّهْرُ يَنْقَابُ
 قَانَ سَامِنَا فَإِنَّا سَارُونَ لَكُمْ بِكُلِّ هِنْدِيَّةٍ فِي حَدِّهَا شُطْبُ
 وَكُلِّ جَرْدَاءٍ مِثْلِ السَّهْمِ يَكْنُفُهَا مِنْ كُلِّ نَاحِيَةٍ لَيْتَ لَهُ حَسَبُ
 لَا تَحْسَبُوا أَنَّنَا يَا قَوْمُ نُفْلِتُكُمْ أَوْ تَهْرُبُونَ إِذَا مَا أَعَوَزَ الْعَرَبُ
 كَلَّا وَرَبِّ الْقَلَاصِ الرَّاقِصَاتِ صُحَى تَهْوِي بِهَا فَيْتَةٌ غُرٌّ إِذَا اتَّشَدُّوا

The galloping rhythm of the unrhymed tarsi^c

يَا وَيْلَ أُمِّكُمْ مِنْ جَمْعِ سَادَتِنَا كِتَابِنَا كَالرُّبِيِّ وَالْقَطْرِ يَنْسَكِبُ
 conveys effectively the readiness and eagerness of Hārith's vast battallions marching to war which are compared to green hills under the rain.

The poetry of Hārith abounds in vivid scenes of battles, like the description of the two opposing armies seen as two birds locked in a fight, each bird trying to overpower the other with its wings: (Basīt)³

سَلَّ حَتَّى تَلْبَ عَن بَكْرِ وَوَقَّتِهِمْ بِالْحِنُورِ إِذْ خَسِرُوا جَهْرًا وَمَا رَشِدُوا
فَأَقْبَلُوا بِجَنَاحِهِمْ يَلْفُهَا مِنَّا جَنَاحَانِ عِنْدَ الصُّبْحِ فَأَطْرَدُوا
فَأَصْبَحُوا نَمَّ صَفْوًا ذُونَ بِيضِهِمْ وَأَبْرُقُوا سَاعَةً مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا رَعَدُوا
وَأَيْتُوا أَنَّ شَيْئَانَا وَإِخْوَتَهُمْ قِنَسًا وَذَهَابًا وَتَمِيمَ اللَّاتِ قَدَرَصَدُوا
وَيَشْكُرُ وَبَنُو عَجَلٍ وَإِخْوَتَهُمْ بَنُو حَنِيفَةَ لَا يُخْصَى لَهُمْ عَدَدُ
ثُمَّ أَلْتَقَيْنَا وَنَارَ الْحَرْبِ سَاطِعَةً وَتَهَمَّرِي الْعَوَالِي بَيْنَنَا قِصْدُ
طَوْرًا نُدِيرُ رَحَانًا ثُمَّ نَضْحُهُمْ طَحْنَا وَطَوْرًا نُلَاقِيهِمْ فَتَجْتَلِدُ
حَتَّى إِذَا السَّمْسُ دَارَتْ أَجْفَلُوا هَرَبًا عَنَّا وَخَلَّوْا عَنِ الْأَمْوَالِ وَانْتَجَرَدُوا

The ferocious determination with which Hārith conducted the war of revenge for the murder of his son Bujair parallels that of Muhalhil: ¹ (Kāmil)

أَفْبَعَدَ مَقَاتِلِكُمْ بُجَيْرًا عَنُوةً تَرْجُونَ وَذَا آخِرَ الْأَيَّامِ
كَأَلَا وَرَبِّ الرَّاقِصَاتِ إِلَى مِثْيَ كَأَلَا وَرَبِّ الْحِلِّ وَالْإِحْرَامِ
حَتَّى تُقِيدُونَا النُّفُوسَ بِتَسْلِيهِ وَتَرُومُوا فِي السُّنْحَاءِ كُلِّ مَرَامِ
وَتَجُولُ رَبَّاتُ الْخُدُورِ حَوَاسِرًا يَبْكِينَ كُلِّ مُغَاوِرٍ ضَرْغَامِ

The reference of رَبِّ الْحِلِّ وَالْإِحْرَامِ proves that the Jāhilīs believed in a Supreme God Who decides what is permissible and what is prohibited to mankind. The fact that the Qur'ān addresses this point to the Jāhilīs² confirms the familiarity of the Jāhilīs with the concept of رَبِّ الْحِلِّ وَالْإِحْرَامِ. Moreover, Labīd's verse:³ (Kāmil)

دِمْنٌ، تَجْرَمٌ، بَعْدَ عَهْدِ أَنْبَسِيهَا،
حِجَجٌ خَلَوْنَ : حَلَالُهَا وَحَرَامُهَا

indicate that the belief in the concept of halāl and harām

was widespread in Jāhiliyya.

Zuhair b. Janāb al-Kalbī (d.c.560), whose grand-father¹ was a poet, is one of the earliest poets of Late Jāhiliyya. Like most of his contemporary poets he participated in the wars that engulfed the fifth century.

Zuhair was appointed by the Yemeni king Abraha b. Sabbāh as leader of the Bakrī and Taghlibī tribes and was responsible for collecting taxes. One year the Bakrīs and Taghlibīs went through a season of hardship and were unable to pay their dues. Zuhair's persistence in obtaining the taxes impelled the Bakrīs and Taghlibīs to rebel against his ruthless rule. Zuhair declared war on the two tribes and crushed them, and captured their leaders among whom were Kulaib and Muhalhil:² (Khafīf)

أَيْنَ أَيْنَ الْفِرَارُ مِنْ حَذَرِ أَلْمَوْتِ إِذَا يَتَّقُونَ بِالْأَسْلَابِ
 إِذْ أَسْرَتْنَا مُهْلِكًا وَأَخَاهُ وَأَبْنَ عَمْرِ فِي الْقَيْدِ وَأَبْنَ شِهَابِ
 وَسَبِينًا مِنْ تَغْلِبِ كُلِّ بَيْضًا كَنُورِ الصُّحَى رُودِ الرُّضَابِ
 حِينَ تَدْعُو مُهْلِكًا يَا لِبَكْرِ هَا أَهْذِي حَفِظَةَ الْأَحْسَابِ
 وَتِحْكُمُ وَتِحْكُمُ أُبَيْجَ حِمَاكُمْ يَا بَنِي تَغْلِبِ أَنَا ابْنُ الرُّضَابِ
 وَهُمْ هَارِبُونَ فِي كُلِّ فَجٍّ كَشَرِيدِ النَّعَامِ فَوْقَ الرَّوَابِ
 وَأَسْتَدَارَتْ رَحَى الْمَنَايَا عَلَيْهِمْ بِلُيُوثٍ مِنْ عَامِرٍ وَجَنَابِ
 فَهُمْ بَيْنَ هَارِبٍ لَيْسَ يَأْلُو وَقَتِيلٍ مُغْفَرٍ فِي التُّرَابِ
 فَضْلَ الْعِزِّ عِزُّنَا حِينَ نَسُو مِثْلَ فَضْلِ السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَ السَّمَابِ

In another poem Zuhair celebrated his victory over Muhalhil and the Taghlibīs and caricatured Muhalhil in chains and with tears running down his face as if he was crushing colocynth: ¹ (Kāmil)

تَبَا لِنَغَبٍ أَنْ تُسَاقَ نِسَاؤُهُمْ سَوِّقَ الإِمَاءِ إِلَى الْمَوَاسِمِ عَطَلَا
لَحْتِ أَوَائِلُ خَيْلِنَا سَرَعَانَهُمْ حَتَّى أَسْرَنَ عَلَى الْحَيِّ مَهْلَهَلَا
إِنَّا - مَهْلَهَلٌ - مَا تَطِيشُ رِمَاحُنَا أَيَّامَ تَنْقُبُ فِي يَدَيْكَ أَحْنَضَلَا
وَلَّتْ مِحْمَاتُكَ هَارِبِينَ مِنَ الْوَعَى وَبَقِيَتْ فِي حَلَقِ الْحَدِيدِ مُسْكَبَلَا
فَلَمَنْ قَهْرَتْ لَقَدْ أَسْرُنْتَكَ عَنُوءًا وَلَمَنْ قَتَلْتَ لَقَدْ تَكُونُ مَوْمَلَا

The expression تَنْقُبُ فِي يَدَيْكَ أَحْنَضَلَا crops up in
Imru' al-Qais's Mu^callaqa ² نَاقِفٌ حَنْظَلُ which
suggests that either Imru' al-Qais was influenced by Zuhair
or he was using a poetic convention.

The Bakrī and Taghlibī tribes re-grouped their forces and elected Rabi^ca b. Hārith b. Murra, Muhalhil's father, as their leader and marched against Zuhair and defeated him and freed Kulaib and Muhalhil. In another battle, Yawm al-Sullān (c.481), the Bakrīs and Taghlibīs defeated Zuhair and smashed his armies. Zuhair was defeated again at the Battle of Yawm Khazāzā, after which he renounced his leadership over the Bakrīs and Taghlibīs and retired to Yemen. He was by then about one hundred years old. ³

In recognition for his leadership, gallantry and

astuteness, Zuhair was honoured and rewarded by the Ghassānid king al-Hārith b. Māriya and by the Himyarī king Abraha b. Sabbāh¹ who reigned around 440 A.D.

Zuhair was succeeded as leader of his tribe by his nephew. In an attempt to consolidate his authority over his people, Zuhair's nephew flouted the orders of his uncle. Zuhair was deeply offended by his nephew's behaviour and committed suicide by drinking himself to death. Zuhair was about one hundred and fifty years old.²

In his old age Zuhair met one of his daughters who told her grandson : "Hold your grand-father's hand." Zuhair asked his great-grandson who he was, and his great-grandson told him his name, his father's name and his grand-mother's name. Then Zuhair told his great-grandson in a poem that he had bequeathed a glorious heritage to his offspring, and stressed that he had realised all his dreams except that of becoming a king:³ (Kāmil)

أَبْنِيَّ إِنِ أَهْلِكُ فَقَدْ أَوْرَثْتُكُمْ مَجْدًا بَيْنِيهِ
 وَتَرَكْتُكُمْ أَبْنَاءَ سَادَاتٍ زِنَادُكُمْ وَرِيَّهِ
 وَلَكُلِّ مَا نَالَ النَّسَى قَدْ نَلْتُهُ إِلَّا النَّجِيَّهِ
 وَأَمَوْتُ خَيْرًا لِلنَّسَى فَمَيْهِ كُنْ وَبِهِ بَقِيَّهِ
 مِنْ أَنْ يُرَى الشَّيْخَ الْبَجَا لَ وَقَدْ تَهَدَى بِالْعَسِيَّهِ
 وَنَدَّ شَهْدَتُ النَّارِ لِلْأَسْ سَافٍ تُوَقَّدُ فِي طَمِيَّهِ

وَقَدْ رَحَلْتُ الْبَاذِلَ الْكَوْمَاءِ لَيْسَ هَا وَوَلِيَّهِ
 وَخَطَبْتُ خُطْبَةً مَاجِدًا غَيْرِ الضَّعِيفِ وَلَا الْعَيْيَةِ
 وَقَدْ غَدَوْتُ بِمُشْرِفِ السُّطْرَيْنِ لَمْ يَفْعَزْ شَطِيئَةً
 فَصَبْتُ مِنْ بَقَرِ اجْتَابِ بَ ضُحَى وَمِنْ حُمْرِ الْقَفِيَّةِ

The word التَّجِيَّةُ has two meanings. First, it means kingdom, as in the expression التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ that is to say الْمَلِكُ لِلَّهِ . Second, it means to stay alive, as in the expression اللَّهُمَّ تَجِّهِ . The second meaning survives in the greeting expression حَيَّاكَ اللَّهُ وَبَيَّاكَ .

Towards the end of his life Zuhair wrote poems centred around the theme of exceptionally old age:² (Tawīl)

أَلَا يَا قَوْمِي لَا أَرَى النَّجْمَ طَالِعًا وَلَا الشَّمْسَ إِلَّا حَاجِبِي بِيَمِينِي
 مُعَزِّبِي عِنْدَ الْقَفَا بَعْمُودِهَا فَأَقْصَى نَسْكِيرِي أَنْ أَقُولَ ذَرِيئِي
 أَمِينٌ عَلَى أَسْرَارِهِنَّ وَقَدْ أَرَى أَسْأَلُ عَلَى الْأَسْرَارِ غَيْرَ أَمِينِ
 فَلَمَوْتُ خَيْرٌ مِنْ حِدَاجِ مَوْطَأِ عَلَى الظُّعْنِ لَا يَأْتِي الْحِلَّ الْحِينِ

The word الأسرارِ in the third line has two meanings both of which apply to the poem. The first meaning is "secret", and the second meaning is "to make love". Zuhair was so old and regarded impotent, and so the women, untroubled by his presence, gossiped freely thinking he would be unable to follow their intimate conversations, and the men were not afraid of him seducing their women. The latter meaning is

found in one of Imru' al-Qais's poems: ¹ (Tawīl)

أَلَا زَعَمْتَ بِسَبَاسَةِ الْيَوْمِ أَنِّي كَثُرْتُ وَالْأَيُّسِينَ السِّرَّ أَمْثَالِي

Another interesting word used in the poem is ² الظعن which refers only to women in travelling howdas.

Zuhair wrote an unusual poem which begins with a taif and nasīb motifs followed by an atḷāl scene: ³ (Tawīl)

أَمِنْ آلِ سَلَمَى ذَا الْخَيْالِ الْمُوَرَّقِ وَقَدِ يَمِيقُ الطَّيْفَ الْغَرِيبُ الْمَشْوَقُ
وَأَنْتَى اهْتَدَتِ سَلَمَى لِوَجْهِ مَحَلَّنَا وَمَا دُونَهَا مِنْ مَهْمَةٍ الْأَرْضُ يَخْفِقُ
فَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَّا هَاجِعًا عِنْدَ حُرَّةٍ عَلَى ظَهْرِهَا كُورٌ عَتِيقٌ وَنُعْرُقُ
وَلَسَا رَأَتْنِي وَالطَّلِيحُ تَبَسَّمَتْ سَمَا أَنْهَلَّ أَعْلَى عَارِضٍ بِتَالِقُ
فَجُمِّيتِ عَنَّا زَوْدِنَا تَحِيَّةً لَعَلَّ بِهَا الْعَانِي مِنَ الْكَبَلِ يُطَلِّقُ
فَرَدَّتْ سَلَامًا ثُمَّ وَلَتْ بِحَاجَةٍ وَنَحْنُ لَعَمْرِي يَا بَنَةَ الْخَيْرِ أَشْوَقُ
فِيَا طَيْبَ مَارِيَا وَيَا حَسَنَ مَنْظَرٍ لَهَوْتُ بِهِ لَوْ أَنَّ رُؤْيَاكَ تَصْدُقُ
وَيَوْمَ أَنَا لِي قَدْ عَرَفْتُ رُسُومَهَا فَعُجْنَا إِلَيْهَا وَالذَّمُوعُ تَرَفَّرَقُ
وَكَادَتْ تُبَيِّنُ الْقَوْلَ لَمَّا سَأَلْتُهَا وَتُخْبِرُنِي لَوْ كَانَتْ الدَّارُ تَنْطِقُ
فِيَادَارَ سَلَمَى هَجَّتِ لِلْعَيْنِ عَنبْرَةً فَمَا الْهَوَى يِرْفُضُ أَوْ يَتَرَفَّرَقُ

Salā'ah b. ^cAmr, known as al-Afwah al-Awdī, was one of the leaders of the Madhhijī tribe. ⁴ He participated with Zuhair b. Janāb in the Battle of Yawm al-Sullān, and although his forces were eventually routed by the Nizārī tribes, he still boasted of the bravery of his people in battle and of the humiliation they had inflicted on their enemies which entailed the payment of a tribute: ⁵ (Kāmil)

وبروضة السلان منا مشهد
والخيل شاحية وقد عظم الشبي
تحيى الجاجم والأكف سيوفنا
ورماحنا بالظمن تنتظم الكلي
عافوا الإتاوة واستقت أسلافهم
حتى ارتووا عللا بأذنبه الردى

After his defeat at the Battle of Yawm Khazāzā, Afwah returned home and informed his daughter of the death of her two brothers, and of the nobles of Himyar taken prisoners by Kulaib b. Rabī^ca. His daughter asked him about himself and he showed her his wounds and said: ¹ (Kāmil)

لما رأته بشرى تغير لونها
من بعد بهجته فأقبل أحمر
ألوت بإصبعها وقالت إنما
يكفيك مما قد أرى ما قدرا
إني ذؤابة مذحج وسنامها
وأنا الكريم ذرى القديعة كرا
قولي لمذحج عاودوا للحوكم
لولا يجيئوا دعوتي حلب الصرى
كان الفخار يمانيا متقحطنا
وأراه أصبح شاميا متزرا
ما خير حمير أن تسلّم مذحجا
أو خير مذحج أن تسلّم حميرا

In a controversial poem Afwah extols the purity of the noble line of Qahtān, its power and its great deeds, and at the same time he berates the Nizārīs as being the descendants of Ismā^cīl and Hājar; in other words, the Nizārīs are not full-blooded Arabs but half-breed Arabs. The poem starts with a contemplative section on the changing times and their effect on people: ² (Ramal)

إن ترى رأسي فيه قزع
وشواتي خلة فيها دوار
أصبحت من بعد لون واحد
وهي لوان وفي ذلك اعتبار
فصروف الدهر في أطباقه
خلة فيها ارتفاع وانحدار

بينما الناس على عليائها إذ هَوَوْاْ فِي هُوَّةِ مِنْهَا فغَارُوا
 إِنَّمَا نِعْمَةٌ قَوْمٍ مُتَعَمَّةٌ وحيَاةُ الْمَرْءِ ثَوْبٌ مُسْتَعْمَارُ
 وِلْيَالِيهِ إِلاَّ لِلْقَوَى مِنْ مُدَاهِ تَحْتَلِيهَا وَشِفَارُ
 تَقْطَعُ اللَّيْلَةَ مِنْهُ قُوَّةٌ وَكَمَا كَرَّتْ عَلَيْهِ لَا تَنَارُ
 حَتْمُ الدَّهْرِ عَلَيْنَا أَنَّهُ ظَلَفٌ مَا نَالَ مِنَّا وَجُبَارُ
 فَهْ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ عَادُوَةٌ لَيْسَ عَنْهَا لِأَمْرِي طَارَ مَطَارُ
 رَيْسَتْ جُرْهُمُ نَبَلًا فَرَمَى جَرَّهَا مِنْهُمْ فُوقَ وَغِرَارُ
 عَامُوا الطَّعْنَ مَعْدًا فِي الْكُلَى وَأَدْرَاعَ اللَّأْمِ فَالطَّرْفِ يَحَارُ
 وَرَكُوبَ الْخَيْلِ تَعْدُو الْمَرَطَى قَدْ عَلَاهَا نَجْدٌ فِيهِ أَحْمَرَارُ

Afwah then goes on to pour his scorn on the Banū Hājar, reminding them of the previous battles in which his people routed them:

يا بني هاجرَ ساءت خُطَّةٌ أن تروموا النِصْفَ مِنَّا وَنُجَارُ
 إن يَجُلُ مُهْرِي فِيكُمْ جَوْلَةٌ فعليه الكَرُّ فِيكُمْ وَالغَوَارُ
 كَشَهَابِ الْقَذْفِ يرميكم به فارس في كَفِّهِ لِلْحَرْبِ نَارُ
 شَنَّ مِنْ أَوْدٍ عَلَيْكُمْ شِنَّةٌ إنه يحمي حماها وَيَنَارُ
 فارس، صَعدته مسمومة تَخْضِبُ الرِّيحُ إِذَا طَارَ الْغَبَارُ
 مستطير ليس من جهلٍ وهل لأخِي الْحِلْمِ عَلَى الْحَرْبِ وَقَارُ
 يَحْمُ الْجَاهِلُ لِلْسِلْمِ وَلَا يَقَرُّ الْحِلْمُ إِذَا مَا الْقَوْمِ غَارُوا

Afwah concludes with the boastful claim that his noble Madhhiġī people had done great deeds long before the Nizārīs were in existence:

نحن أود وأود سِنَّةٌ شرف ليس لنا عنه قَصار

سنة أورثناها مذججُ قبل أن ينسب للناس نزار
نحن قُذنا الخيلَ حتى انقطعت شدن الأفلاء عنها والمهازُ
كلما سرنا تركنا منزلا فيه شئى من سباع الأرض غاروا
وترى الطيرَ على آثارنا رأى عين ثقةً أن سمارُ
جحفل أورق فيه هبوةٌ ونجوم تتلظى وشرارُ
ترك الناس لنا أكتافهم وتولوا لآلات لم يُغن الفرار
ملكنا ملك لقاخ أول وأبونا من بنى أود خيار
ولقد كنتم حديثاً زمعاً وذُنابى حيث يحتل الصغارُ
نحن أصحاب شبا يوم شبا بصفاح البيض فيهن أظفارُ
عنكم في الأرض ! إنا مذججُ ورؤيداً يفضح الليل النهارُ

The poem was highly appreciated by classical critics¹
and some of the lines like

إنا نعمة قوم مُتمة وحياة المرء ثوب مستعارُ

have passed into common speech. The poem is noted for the
line:

وترى الطيرَ على آثارنا رأى عين ثقةً أن سمارُ

which describes predatory birds accompanying Afwah's
powerful army to battle, because they expect to feast on
the corpses of Afwah's enemies. ^cAbd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī
regards Afwah as the first poet to introduce the image of
birds accompanying an army to battle,² and this debunks Ibn
Taifūr's assumption that this image was introduced by
al-Nābigha al-Dhubyanī.³ The appearance of the same image in

one of Kulaib's poems:¹ (Wāfir)

أَمَامَهُمْ عَقَابُ الْمَوْتِ يَبُوءِي هُوِيَّ الدَّلْوِ آتَلَمَهَا الْعِرَاقِي

indicates that either Kulaib got the image from Afwah or Afwah got it from Kulaib or it was an inherited poetic convention. On the other hand, Jāhiz questioned the authenticity of the poem on account of the verse:

كشهاب القذف يرمىكم به فارس في كفه للحرب ناز

by arguing that the idea of the meteor being thrown at a target was introduced by the Qur'ān; but Jāhiz undermines his own argument by quoting Jāhili verses similar to the verse of Afwah in question.² It seems Jāhiz had overlooked the fact that a shooting star was a Jāhili metaphor for either the death of a king or the birth of a child.³

Afwah's poem provoked al-Find al-Zimmanī to write a long poem in which he demolishes Afwah's claim of the superiority of the Qahtānī noble lineage, influence and courage, and mocks the Qahtānīs who could not withstand the thrust of his Rabi'a tribes at the Battle of Yawm Khazāza.⁴ The two poems of Afwah and Find have the same rhyme and metre and represent the earliest examples of naqā'id poetry. The provocative nature of Afwah's poem prompted the Prophet Muhammad to ban it as part of his policy to eliminate any element that might cause discord among the tribes.⁵

In his old age Afwah was unhappy with the political in-fighting among his people and threatened that if they did not bury their differences and elect a competent and astute leader he would not remain with them: ¹ (Basit)

فينا معاشر لم يبنوا لقومهم	وإن بني قومهم ما أفسدوا عادوا
لا يرشدون ولن يرعوا المرشدم	فالقى منهم معاً والجهل ميعاد
كانوا كمثل لقيم في عشيرته	إذ أهلكت بالذي قد قدمت عاد
أو بعده كقदार حين تابعه	على الغواية أقوام فقد بادوا
والبيت لا يبتنى إلا له عمده	ولا عماد إذا لم ترس أوتاد
فإن تجمع أوتاد وأعمدة	وساكن بلغوا الأمر الذي كادوا
وإن تجمع أقوام ذوو حسب	اصطاد أمرهم بالرشد مصطاد
لا يصلح الناس فوضى لا سراة لهم	ولا سراة إذا جهأهم سادوا
تلقى الأمور بأهل الرشدماصلحت	فإن تولوا فبالأشرار تنقاد
إذا تولى سراة القوم أمرهم	نما على ذلك أمر القوم فازدادوا
كيف الرشاد إذا ما كنت في نفر	لهم عن الرشد أغلال وأقياد
حان الرحيل إلى قوم وإن بعدوا	فيهم صلاح لمرتاب وإرشاد
فسوف أجعل بعد الأرض دونكم	وإن دنت رجم منكم وميلاد
إن النجاة إذا ما كنت ذا بصر	من أجة النعى إبعاد فإبعاد
والخير تزداد منه ما لقيت به	والشر يكفيك منه قل ما زاد

The simplicity of Afwah's language and the accessibility of his imagery based on mundane experiences had popular appeal, and some of his lines passed into everyday speech, as in the case of the dog barking at the

clouds: ¹ (Tawīl)

له هَيْدَبٌ دَانٍ وِرْعَدٌ وَلِجَّةٌ وِبْرَقٌ تَرَاهُ سَاطِعًا يَنْبَجُّ
فَبَاتَتْ كَلَابُ الْحَيِّ يَنْبَحْنَ مُزْنَهُ وَأَضْحَتْ بَنَاتُ الْمَاءِ فِيهَا تَمَعَّجُ

and: ² (Basīt)

لَا يَصْلِحُ النَّاسُ فَوْضَى لَأَسْرَاةٍ لَهُمْ وَلَا سِرَاةٍ إِذَا جُهَا لَهُمْ سَادُوا

Afwah wrote his own epitaph which is unlike the epitaphs of Sāma b. Lu'ayy and Uhaiha b. al-Julāh. Afwah's poem throws light on the Jāhiliī burial and mourning customs: ³ (Tawīl)

أَلَا عَلَّلَانِي وَأَعْلَمَا أَنِّي غَرَزْتُ	وَمَاخَلْتُ مُجْدِنِي الشَّفَاقَ وَلَا الْحَذْرُ
وَمَاخَلْتُ مُجْدِنِي إِسَاتِي وَقَدِ بَدَتْ	مَفَاصِلُ أَوْصَالِي وَقَدْ شَخَّصَ الْبَصْرُ
وَجَاءَ نِسَاءُ الْحَيِّ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَمْرَةٍ	زَفِيغًا كَمَا زَفَّتْ إِلَى الْعَطْنِ الْبَقْرُ
وَجَاؤَا بِمَاءٍ بَارِدٍ وَبِفَسْلَةٍ	فِيَا لَكَ مِنْ غُسْلِ سَيْتَبَعِهِ عِبْرُ
فَنَائِحَةٌ تَبْكِي وَلِلنَّوْحِ دَرَسَةٌ	وَأَمْرُهَا يَبْدُو وَأَمْرُهَا يُسْرُ
وَمَنْهِنَّ مَنْ قَدْ شَقَّقَ الْخَمَشَ وَجْهَهَا	مَسْلَبَةٌ قَدْ مَسَّ أَحْشَاءَهَا الْعَبْرُ
فَرَمَوْا لَهُ أَثْوَابَهُ وَتَفَجَّعُوا	وَرَنَ مِرْنَاتٍ وَثَارَ بِهِ الْفَرْ
إِلَى حُفْرَةٍ يَأْوِي إِلَيْهَا بِسَعْيِهِ	فَذَلِكَ يَبْتَاطِقُ الْحَقَّ لَا الصَّوْفَ وَالشَّعْرُ
وَهَالُوا عَلَيْهِ التُّرْبَ رَطْبًا وَيَابَسًا	أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا سَوَى ذَلِكَ يُجْتَبَرُ
وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ قَدْ شَجَّوَتْ وَسَاءَ لَهُمْ	مَكَانِي وَمَا يُعْنِي التَّأْمَلُ وَالنَّظَرُ
قَفُّوا سَاعَةً فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا مِنْ أَخِيكُمْ	بِقُرْبِ وَذِكْرِ صَالِحٍ حِينَ يُدَّكَّرُ

Afwah's reference to the grave as بيت الحق strengthens

the view that the Jāhilīs believed in life after death, and this explains why they meditated on their dead after the burial.¹ It was the custom of the Jāhilīs to wash the dead body, wrap it in a shroud and pray for the deceased, then carry the body on a pall to the cemetery. Before the burial, the family of the deceased recounted the good qualities of the deceased and ended by saying: عليك رحمة الله.² The family of the deceased would leave a camel tied to the grave of the deceased without food or drink, for it was believed that on the day of resurrection the deceased would rise and ride the camel to wherever he was supposed to go. The camel was called Baliyya. The Jāhilīs talked to their deceased for two reasons: to deny the fact that their loved ones were really dead, and to keep their memory alive.³

Classical grammarians and critics used Afwah's poetry to illustrate certain grammatical and badī^c points. In Iaisa Fi Kalām al-^cArab, Ibn Khālawaih quotes a verse of Afwah in order to give a rare example of the mamdūd noun whose plural can be in the mamdūd or maqsūr form: (Ramal)

نَقْرَعُ الْأَعْدَاءَ فِي أَفْنَائِهَا قَرَعَةً فِيهَا اسْتِبَاءٌ وَإِسَارٌ

The plural of فناء in the mamdūd form is أَفْنِيَّةٌ and in the maqsūr form أَفْنَاءٌ.⁵ In al-Rawd al-Murī^c, Ibn al-Bannā' quotes a verse of Afwah as an example of tibāq:⁶ (Sarī^c)

وَأَقْطَعُ الْهَوَجَلَ مَسْتَأْنَسًا بِهَوَجَلِ عَيْرَانَةَ عَنْتَرِيْسَ

The first ¹ اُجُوجَل means land, and the second اُجُوجَل means she-camel. In Naqd al-Shi^cr, Qudāma b. Ja^cfar quotes the verse of Afwah: (Basit)

سُودٌ غَدَايَرُهَا بُبُجٌ تَحَايَرُهَا كَانَ أَضْرَافَهَا لَمَّا اجْتَلَى الْعُفَى

as an example of tarsi^c2.

Afwah was very old when he died in the sixth century.

Shahl b. Shaibān b. al-Zimmānī al-Bakrī was known as al-Find (mountain) al-Zimmānī (d.c.530) on account of his towering height. Like al-Hārith b. ^cUbād he stayed out of the Basūs War. But the annihilation of his Bakrī tribe compelled him to join forces with Hārith against Muhalhil and his Taghlibī tribe in the 520s. Find was then about one hundred years old.³ At the end of a series of battles the Taghlibīs suffered a crushing defeat, and Find celebrated the Bakrī victory in his famous poem:⁴ (Hazaj)

صَفَحْنَا عَنْ بَنِي ذُهَلٍ وَقُلْنَا الْقَوْمُ إِخْوَانُ
عَسَى الْآيَامُ أَنْ يُرْجِعَنَّا قَوْمًا كَالَّذِي كَانُوا
فَلَمَّا صَرَخَ الشَّرُّ فَامَسَى وَهُوَ عُرْيَانُ
وَلَمْ يَبْقَ سِوَى الْعُدَاةِ دِنَانُهُمْ كَمَا دَانُوا
مَشِينًا مَشِيَةَ اللَّيْلِ غَدَاً وَاللَّيْلِ غَضْبَانُ
يَضْرِبُ فِيهِ تَوْهِينٌ وَتَخْضِيعٌ وَإِقْرَانُ
وَطَعْنٌ كَقَمِّ الزَّرْقِ غَدَاً وَالزَّرْقُ مَلَانُ
وَبَعْضُ الْجِلْمِ عِنْدَ الْجَهْلِ مِثْلُ الذَّلَّةِ إِذْعَانُ
وَفِي الشَّرِّ نَجَاةٌ حِينَ لَا يُنَجِّيكَ إِحْسَانُ

In a poem written after the Battle of Khazāzā, the victorious Find undermines the boasting of al-Afwah al-Awdī who glorified the power and noble lineage of Qahtān at the expense of Find's Ma^caddī tribes.¹ Find's poem of seventy eight verses, which has the same rhyme and metre as Afwah's poem, is the earliest longest Jāhiliī poem before Imru' al-Qais. Ibn Maimūn says that the purpose of Find's poem was to demolish (بناقض) Afwah's poem without specifying which poem he had in mind.² A closer reading of Afwah's poetry leaves the reader in no doubt as to which poem Find was knocking down. The rhyme, metre, theme and counter-argument of Find's poem point to Afwah's poem quoted earlier.

After a short atḷāl opening Find scornfully plays down Afwah's bravado and advises him not to cry over a bygone dream, for the defeated Qahtānīs have been reduced to nannygoats looking for knives with which to be slaughtered:³

(Ramal)

وبكاء المرء للرّبِّ بَعِ خَسَارُ	أَشْجَاكَ الرَّبِّعُ أَقْوَى وَالْدِيَارُ
عَابِدٌ بِالْحِزْنِ إِذْ تَشْجِيهِ دَارُ	أَيُّ لُبٍّ لَامْرِيٍّ فِي قَدْرِهِ
فَاتَأْوَهُ بَعْدُ فَانْشِطْ الْمَزَارُ	إِنَّمَا يَكِي الْأُلَى كَانُوا بِهَا
وَحَرَابُ الدَّهْرِ لِلدَّارِ عَمَّارُ	يُخْرِبُ الدَّهْرُ وَيَبْنِي جَاهِدًا
اقْصِرْ عَنْكَ فَبَعْضُ الْقَوْلِ عَارُ	أَيْهَا الْبَاكِي عَلَى مَا فَاتَهُ
سَبَبٌ لِلْجَهْلِ وَالْجَهْلُ مَحَارُ	إِنَّ لَتَوْمَ الْمَرْءِ عَجْزٌ نَدْرًا
سَبَبُ الْقَدْرِ اضْطِرَارُ وَانْبِهَارُ	إِنَّ لَتَوْمَ الْمَرْءِ إِنْ فَاتَ امْرَأُ
جَزَعٌ بِالْقَوْمِ لَتَوْمٌ وَاضْطِرَارُ	لَيْسَ يُغْنِي اللَّتَوْمُ إِلَّا آتَهُ
وَقَعَ الْأَمْرُ بِهِمْ إِلَّا الْغِيَارُ	لَيْسَ يُغْنِي جَزَعُ الْقَوْمِ إِذَا

فاجزعوا للأمرِ أو لا تجزعوا
 قلَّ ما تجدِي قوافيكَ على
 فأضعتَ الكرمَ في إبانِهِ
 وتغنييتَ بهِ مُتاً نِياً
 تتَمَنَّاكَ الأمانِي: وقد
 كأنججارِ الكلبِ يَدَمِي وَجْهَهُ
 إنسا ذِكْرُكَ شيئاً قد مَضَى
 هَدَمَ الآخِرُ ما كانَ بَنَى
 يا بني تَيْسَةَ قد عايَنتُمُ
 لَمْ تَزَلْ فحطانُ عَنزاً باحِشاً¹

قد تَداعَى السَّقْفُ وانهارَ الجِدَارُ
 أَعْظَمَ قَدَ شَنَقَتِ منها التَّسارُ
 ونسيتَ الضَّرْبَ إذْ في الضَّرْبِ عارُ
 بَعْدَ ما نَجَّكَ رَكْضُ "وبِدارُ"
 مِلتَ بالمهَرِّ ونجَّكَ النِّرارُ
 وهو يَعُورِي حينَ أَعْيَاهُ الهِرارُ
 حلُّمٌ لم يرجعِ الحُلْمُ ادِّكارُ
 لكمُ الأَوَّلُ فانقاصَ المنارُ
 وَقَعَةَ مَنَّا لها نارُ" شَنارُ
 عَن مَدَى فيها لِقحطانَ البَوَارُ

To counter Afwah's claims, Find says that honour and glory belong to the Nizāris, because Allāh had singled them out of all the tribes to be the beacon that dispels the darkness which overwhelms the other tribes:

رَفَعَ اللَّهُ نِزاراً فَعَلَّتْ
 جَمَعَ اللَّهُ نِزاراً فَتَقَى
 إثمًا الناسِ ظلامٌ دُونَهُمْ
 نحنُ للناسِ سِراجٌ ساطِعٌ
 فاسألوا عِبا الرَدِي ثُمَّ الظُّبِي
 إذْ قَتَلْنَا بِالْحِيسِ ساداتِكُمْ
 يومَ فيكُمْ ذِلَّةٌ عن عِزَّةٍ
 وعلى نِوِيكُمْ أَرْدافُنَا
 حينَ للخَطِيءِ في أَكْنافِكُمْ
 كَمْ قَتَلْنَا بِخَزازِي منكُمْ
 إثمًا قحطانُ فينا حَطَبٌ
 لَنْ تَنالوا من نِزارٍ مِثْلَما

بالعلى الناسَ فلباغي الصِّغارُ
 بهمِ الناسَ جميعاً فاستناروا
 فإذا ما أَتَلَمَ الناسُ أَناروا
 وضِرامٌ يُتَقَى منه الشَّرارُ
 يومَ قحطانُ ضِباعٌ لا تُجارُ
 وأَجْرناكُمْ وفي ذاكَ اعْتِبارُ
 ولنا منكُمْ سِباءٌ وإِسارُ
 كالرِّبَيبِيحِ من الحَوَلِ شِوارُ
 كأَطِيطِ البُزْلِ هاجتَها البِكارُ
 وأَسَرْنَا بَعْدَ ما حُلَّ الحِرارُ
 ونِزارُ" في بني قحطانَ نارُ
 منكُمْ نالتَ من الذِّلَّةِ نِزارُ

Find concludes that the Ma^caddīs are proud of being the children of Hājar and her son Ismā^cīl, and they are also proud of having been chosen by Allāh as custodians of His House the Ka^cba¹:

نحنُ أولادُ معدِّ ذي الحمى	ولنا من هاجرِ المجدِّ الكبارِ
ولدتُ أكرمَ من شدِّ بهِ	عقدُ الحبوَّةِ قدماً والازارِ
إنَّ اساعيلَ من يفخرُ بهِ	يلفُ في دارِ بها حلَّ الفخارِ
عكفَ الليلُ على آثارنا	مثلَ ما حنتُ على البؤِّ الظوارِ
فاخسأوا ليسَ لكم بيتُ على	مثلنا اللهُ له ربُّ وجارِ
ليسَ بيتُ رغبةُ الناسِ معاً	أنَّ يزوروهُ كبيتِ لا يزارِ
قد رأنا اللهُ عزاً أهلهُ	وهو المختارُ والخلقُ كثارُ
قد رأنا اللهَ أولى منكمُ	باليَدِ العُليا وللهِ الخيارُ

Sa^cd b. Mālik (d.c.530), the father of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, grand-father of ^cAmr b. Qamī'a and great-grand-father of Tarafa b. al-^cAbd, was one of the leaders of the Bakrī tribes. When Jassās's father consulted the Bakrī leaders on whether to hand over Jassās to the Taghlibīs, Sa^cd swayed the Bakrī council to his view that the Bakrīs must fight to the last man rather than deliver Jassās to the Taghlibīs. Sa^cd then called for a camel to be slaughtered and swore on its blood that the Bakrīs would fight to the end. Some of the Bakrī leaders like al-Hārith b. ^cUbād and al-Find al-Zimmānī did not join in the oath and refused to be dragged into the inevitable war.² As the war began to take its toll on the Bakrīs, Sa^cd taunted

al-Hārith b. ^cUḅād for not joining them in the war: ¹ (Kāmil)

يَا بُوْسَ . لِلْحَرْبِ . الَّتِي . وَصَمْتَ . أَرَاهِيْطَ . فَاسْتَرَا حُوا
 وَالْحَرْبُ . لَا . يَبْقَى . لَهَا . جِيْمَا . التَّخِيْلُ . وَالْمِرَا حُ
 إِلَّا . الْفَتَى . الصَّابِرُ . فِي . مِ . التَّجْدَاتِ . وَالْقَرَسُ . الْوَقَا حُ
 وَالنَّثْرَةُ . الْحَصْدَا مِ . وَالْبَيْضُ . الْمَكْلُ . وَالرَّمَا حُ
 وَتَسَا قَطُ . الْأَوْشَا طِ مِ . وَالذَّنْبَاتُ . إِذْ . جُهِدَ . الْفِيضَا حُ
 وَالْكَرُّ . بَعْدَ . الْقَرِّ . إِذْ . كُرِيَ . التَّقْدُمُ . وَالنَّطَا حُ
 كَفَفَتْ . لَهُمْ . عَن . سَاقِيهَا . وَبَدَا . مِنَ . الشَّرِّ . الصَّرَا حُ
 فَالَهُمْ . يَبِيضَاتُ . الْخُدُو رِ . رَهْنَا كَ . لَا . التَّمَمُ . الْمِرَا حُ
 بِسَ . الْخِلَافِ . بَعْدَنَا . أَوْلَادُ . يَشْكُرُ . وَاللِّقَا حُ
 مَن . صَدَّ . عَن . نِيْرَانِيهَا . فَأَنَا . ابْنُ . قَيْسٍ . لَا . بَرَا حُ
 صَبْرًا . بِنِي . قَيْسٍ . لَهَا . حَتَّى . تُرِيحُوا . أَوْ . تَرَا حُوا
 إِنَّ . الْمَوَانِلَ . خَوْفَهَا . يَتَافَهُ . الْأَجَلُ . التَّمَا حُ
 هَيْبَاتَ . حَالِ . الْمَوْتِ . دُونَ . الْقُوْتِ . وَأَتَضِي . السِّلَا حُ
 كَيْفَ . الْحَيَاةِ . إِذَا . حَلَّتْ . مِنَّا . الظُّوَاهِرُ . وَالْبَطَا حُ
 آيِنَ . الْأَعِيْزَةَ . وَالْأَيْسِنَةَ . عِنْدَ . ذَلِكَ . وَالسَّمَا حُ

Hārith was moved by the poem, and agreed to get involved in
 the war.²

The image of war baring its legs, implying the breakout of hostilities, makes its first appearance in Sa^cd's poem, but it does not mean that Sa^cd was the first poet to use it. The phrase ³ **يَبِيضَاتُ الْخُدُوْرِ** was employed in Jāhiliyya as a metaphor for virgins, for the ostrich eggs symbolised virgins.

Jahdar b. Dubai^ca (d.c.530) was one of the Bakrī heroes. Just before the Battle of Yawm Qida, al-Hārith b. Ubād suggested that the Bakrī women should fight along with the men against the Taghlibīs, and that the women should carry clubs and leather bottles full of water and should remain behind the men's lines, and that the men should shave their hair in order to be distinguished from the enemy, so that when the women saw a wounded shaven-headed man they would give him water and nurse his wounds, but if the wounded man had an unshaven head they would club him to death. Jahdar, who had an ugly face but fine locks of hair, said that if they shaved his hair they would disfigure him. So, for the privilege of keeping his hair, he promised to fight the first Taghlibī that appeared the following morning. Jahdar kept his hair, and on the following morning a Taghlibī warrior appeared before the battle and was attacked and killed by Jahdar. In the heat of battle Jahdar was severely wounded. As the Bakrī women went around nursing their wounded men and clubbing to death the wounded enemies, they saw Jahdar without recognising him and took him for an enemy because of his unshaven head and clubbed him to death:¹ (Rajaz)

قَدْ يَتَمَّتْ بِنْتِي وَأَمَّتْ كَنَّتِي وَشَمِثَتْ بَعْدَ الرَّهَانِ جَمِّي
 رُدُّوا عَلَيَّ الْخَيْلَ إِنْ أَلَّتْ إِنْ لَمْ يُسَاجِرْهَا فَجِرُوا لِعَيِّي
 قَدْ عَلِمْتُ وَالِدَةَ مَا صَمَّتِ مَا لَقَّيْتُ فِي خِرْقٍ وَتَمَّتِ
 إِذَا الْكُمَاهُ بِالْكُمَاهِ أَنْفَتِ أَخْدَجُ فِي الْحَرْبِ أَمْ أَمَّتِ

Salama b. Khālīd b. Ka^cb, better known as al-Saffāh al-Taghlibī (d.c.555), was entrusted by Kulaib b. Rabī^ca to light two fires on Mount Khazāzā (hence the name of the Battle of Yawm Khazāzā) so as to warn his forces of any surprise attack by the enemy. When the Madhhijī tribes got wind of the Rabī^ca's whereabouts they launched their attack; Saffāh lit the two warning fires and the two armies clashed and eventually the Madhhijīs were routed: ¹ (Wāfir)

وَأَيَّةَ بَيْتٍ أُوقِدُ فِي خَزَازِي هَدَيْتُ كَتَابًا مُتَحَيِّرَاتِ
ظَلَلْنَ مِنَ السُّهَادِ وَكُنَّ لَوْلَا سُهَادُ الْقَوْمِ أَحْسَبَ هَادِيَاتِ
فَكُنَّ مَعَ الصَّبَاحِ عَلَى جُذَامٍ وَلِحْمٍ بِالسُّيُوفِ مُشَهَّرَاتِ

Saffāh participated in the Battle of Yawm Kulāb al-Awwal (c.540s) which involved the uncles of Imru' al-Qais b. Hujr. At the Battle of Yawm Kulāb al-Awwal, Saffāh earned the title of Saffāh for his magnanimity. He was the orator of the Taghlibīs in the Basūs War. ²

Al-Akhnas b. Shihāb (d.556) was known as Fāris al-^cAsā on account of his horse ³Asā which had the same name as the horse of Jadhīma al-Abrash. Akhnas, who was regarded as the poet of the Basūs War, believed in life after death and Allāh's retribution: ⁴ ⁵ (Kāmil)

ولقد شهدتُ الحِصْمَ يَوْمَ دِفَاعِهِ
فَأَخَذْتُ مِنْهُ خَطَّةَ الْمُقْتَالِ

وعلمت أن الله جاز عبده
يوم الحساب بأحسن الأعمال

In al-Wāfī fi al-^cArūd wa al-Qawāfī, al-Khatīb al-Tibrizī quotes a verse from one of the lost poems of Akhnas to illustrate al-Tajnis al-Nācis:¹ (Tawīl)

وحامي لواء قد قتلنا ، وحامل لواء منغنا ، والسيوف شوارع

Akhnas's longest surviving poem begins with an atḷāl section in which the ruins are compared to a decorative title written on hide by a scribe:² (Tawīl)

فَمَنْ يَكْ أَمْسَى فِي بِلَادٍ مُقَامَةٍ يُسَائِلُ أَطْلَالَهَا لَا تُجَاوِبُ
فَلِابْنَةِ حِطَّانَ بْنِ قَيْسٍ مَنَازِلُ كَمَا نَمَقَ الْعُنْوَانَ فِي الرِّقِّ كَاتِبُ
تَمَثَّلِي بِهَا حَوْلَ النَّعَامِ كَمَا نَهَا إِمَاءُ تُرْجَى بِالْمَشِيِّ حَوَاطِبُ
وَقَفْتُ بِهَا أَبْيَ وَأَشْعُرُ سُخْنَةً كَمَا اعْتَادَ مَحْمُومًا بِجَيْدِ صَالِبُ
خَلِيلِي عُوَجًا مِنْ نَجَاءِ شِمْلَةٍ عَلَيْهَا فَتَى كَالسِّيفِ أَرْوَعُ شَاجِبُ

The most important part of the poem is considered by classical critics as a relevant document for its reference to the geographical locations of some of the tribes:³

لَكَيْزٌ لَهَا التَّجْرَانُ وَالسِّيفُ دُونَهُ وَإِنْ يَأْتِيهِمْ نَاسٌ مِنَ الْهِنْدِ هَارِبُ
تَطَاوَرُ عَنْ أَنْجَازِ حَوْشٍ كَانَتْ جَمَامُ هَرَّاقَ مَاءَهُ فَهَوَّ آئِبُ
وَبَكَرٌ لَهَا بَرُّ الْعِرَاقِ وَإِنْ تَحْفُ تَحُلُّ دُونَهَا مِنَ الْيَلَامَةِ حَاجِبُ
وَصَارَتْ تَمِيمٌ بَيْنَ قُفِّ وَرَمْلَةٍ لَهَا مِنْ جِبَالِ مُتَنَائِي وَمَذَاهِبُ
وَوَكَلَبُ لَهَا خَبْتُ قَوْمَلَةَ عَاجِلٍ إِلَى الْحَرَّةِ الرَّجْلَاءِ حَيْثُ تُحَارِبُ
وَعَسَانُ حَيٌّ عِزُّهُمْ فِي سِوَاهُمْ تُجَالِدُ عَنْهُمْ حُرٌّ وَكَتَابُ

وَبِهَرَاهُ حَيٌّ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَكَانَهُمْ لَّهُمْ شَرِكٌ حَوْلَ الرُّصَاقَةِ لَاجِبٌ
 وَغَارَتْ إِيَادُ فِي السَّوَادِ وَدُونَهَا بَرَّازِيْقٌ نُجْجِمٌ تَبْتَنِي مَنْ تُضَارِبُ
 وَتَحْنُ أَنْاسُ لَا حِجَازَ بِأَرْضِنَا مَعَ الْفَيْثِ مَا نَلْنِي وَمَنْ هُوَ غَائِبُ
 تَرَى رَائِدَاتِ الْخَيْلِ حَوْلَ بِيوتِنَا كَمِعْزَى الْحِجَازِ أَعُوذَتْهَا الرِّزَابُ
 فَلِلَّهِ قَوْمٌ مِثْلُ قَوْمِي عِصَابَةٌ إِذَا اجْتَمَعَتْ عِنْدَ الْمُلُوكِ الْعِصَابُ
 أَرَى كُلَّ قَوْمٍ قَارَبُوا قَيْدَ فَخْلِهِمْ وَتَحْنُ خَلَعْنَا قَيْدَهُ فَهُوَ سَارِبُ

In Risālat al-Sahil wa al-Shāhiḥ, Ma^carrī explains the meaning of the word عَرُوضٌ¹ as "road". Ibn Qutaiba and Baṭalyūsi quote the last verse of the poem as an example in which the word سَارِبٌ² is used to mean "unfettered".

Awf b. Sa^cd b. Mālik acquired the name of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar after a verse in which he compared the ruins of houses to pen decorations on hide. Muraqqish was the uncle of ^cAmr b. Qami'a and of al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar. Muraqqish fought with al-Ḥārith b. ^cUbād at the Battle of Yawm Qida in the 520s. As a small boy, Muraqqish and his brother Harmala studied under a Christian priest.³

Muraqqish was in love with his cousin Asmā' with whom he grew up, and asked his uncle ^cAwf b. Mālik to marry her. His uncle consented on condition that Muraqqish proved his metal as leader and attended the courts of kings. Muraqqish joined the court of a Yemeni king who treated him kindly and generously.⁴

While Muraqqish was in Yemen his uncle went through hard times which sapped his resources, and consequently married Asmā' to a rich Murādī who took her to his home town in Najrān.

Having met his uncle's conditions, Muraqqish returned home and was told that Asmā' was dead and was shown her supposed grave. Muraqqish regularly visited the grave. On one occasion he dozed off by the grave and was awoken by children quarrelling over a bone which one of the children said belonged to the sheep buried in the grave in which Asmā' was supposed to have been interred. Shaken by what he heard, Muraqqish asked the children to tell him the story of the grave, which they did.¹

Muraqqish set out with his maid and her husband to the land of the Banū Murād to see Asmā'. But on his way to Asmā' Muraqqish's health deteriorated and the party rested in a cave. The Ghufalī husband of Muraqqish's maid convinced his wife that as Muraqqish was dying they should go back to their people and leave him to die on his own. Muraqqish heard what they were plotting, and while they were not looking he scribbled a poem addressed to his brothers on the camel's saddle, telling them to kill his maid and her Ghufalī husband for abandoning him:² (Kāmil)

يَا صَاحِبِي تَلَوَّمَا لَا نَعَجَلَا إِنَّ الرَّحِيلَ رَهِينُ أَنْ لَا تَعُدُّلَا
فَلَعَلَّ بُطَّاكُمَا يُفَرِّطُ سَيِّئَا أَوْ يَسْبِقُ الْإِسْرَاعُ سَيِّبَا مُقْبِلَا

يَا رَاكِبًا إِمَّا عَرَضْتَ فَبَلَّغْنِ أَنْسَ بْنَ سَعْدٍ إِنْ لَقَيْتَ وَحَرَمَلَا
لِللَّهِ دَرَكُمَا وَدَرُّ أَبِيكُمَا إِنْ أَفَلَتَ الْغُفْلِيُّ حَتَّى يُقْتَلَا
مَنْ مُبْلِغُ الْأَقْوَامِ أَنْ مَرَّقَشَا أَمْسَى عَلَى الْأَصْحَابِ عَيْثَا مُنْقَلَا
ذَهَبَ السَّبَاعُ بِأَنْفِهِ فَتَرَكَنَهُ أَغْنَى عَلَيْهِ بِالْجِيَالِ وَجَيْثَلَا
وَكَاثِمًا تَرُدُّ السَّبَاعُ بِشَلْوِهِ ، إِذْ غَابَ جَمْعُ بَنِي ضُبَيْعَةَ ، مِنْهَا

The maid and her husband went back to Muraqqish's people and told them Muraqqish was dead. Muraqqish's brother Harmala noticed the poem on the saddle and read it, and pressed the maid and her husband to tell him the truth about the fate of his brother. The maid and her husband confessed everything and told him where they had left Muraqqish. Harmala killed the maid and her husband and rushed to the cave.

Muraqqish's cave was the haunt of a shepherd. The shepherd visited the cave and got acquainted with Muraqqish who found out that he was working for the husband of Asmā'. The shepherd told Muraqqish he had never seen 'Asmā', but her maid regularly came to him to get milk for her mistress. Muraqqish gave his ring to the shepherd and promised him a reward if he put the ring in the milk container. When the maid of Asmā' came to get the milk, the shepherd put the ring in the milk container. While Asmā' was drinking the milk, she felt something in her mouth, removed it and recognised it as the ring of Muraqqish. She asked her maid

about the ring but the maid said she knew nothing about it. Asmā' asked her husband to call the shepherd, and the shepherd told them about the ring and Muraqqish. Asmā' said that they should all go immediately to the cave to save Muraqqish. After a journey of a day and a night they reached Muraqqish and took him with them to their home where he died shortly afterwards. By the time Harmala reached the cave Muraqqish was already dead and buried.¹

In one of the last poems Muraqqish wrote while he was in the cave, he says he dreamt of Sulaimā, meaning Asmā', sitting with her friends around the fire. Although Sulaimā had been married to another man and moved to another region, he would always be loyal to her:² (Wāfir)

سَرَىٰ لَيْلًا خَيْالٌ مِنْ سُلَيْمِيْ	فَأَرَقْنِيْ وَأَصْحَابِيْ مُجُودٌ
فَبِتُّ أُدِيرُ أَمْرِيْ كُلِّ حَالٍ	وَأَرْقُبُ أَهْلَهَا وَهُمْ بَعِيدٌ
عَلَىٰ أَنْ قَدْ سَمَا طَرْفِيْ لِنَارِ	يُشَبُّ لَهَا بِنْدِي الْأَرْضَىٰ وَقُودٌ
حَرَائِيهَا مَهَا جُمُ التَّرَاقِي	وَأَرْأَمُ وَغِزْلَانُ رُقُودٌ
نَوَاعِمُ، لَا تُعَالِجُ بُؤْسَ عَيْشِ	أَوَانِسُ لَا تُزَاحُ وَلَا تَرُودُ
يُرْحَنَ مَعَا بِطَاءِ الْمَشِيِّ بُدَا	عَلِيهِنَّ الْمَجَاسِدُ وَالْبُرُودُ
سَكَرَتْ بِلِدَّةٍ وَسَكَنْتُ أُخْرَىٰ	وَقُطِعَتْ الْمَوَائِقُ وَالْعُهُودُ
فَمَا بَالِي أِنِّي وَبِحَانَ عَهْدِي	وَمَا بَالِي أَصَادُ وَلَا أَصِيدُ
وَرُبَّ أَسِيلَةٍ الْخَلْدَيْنِ بِكِرٍ	مُنْعَمَةٍ لَهَا فَرَعٌ وَجِيدٌ
وَذُو أُشْمِرٍ شَتِيَتْ التَّنْبِتِ عَذْبُ	نَقِيُّ اللَّوْنِ بَرَّاقُ بَرُودُ
لَهَوْتُ بِهَا زَمَانًا مِنْ شَبَابِي	وَزَارْتَهَا النَّجَائِبُ وَالْقَصِيدُ
أَنَاسُ كَلَّمَا أَخْلَقْتُ وَضَلَا	عَنَانِي مِنْهُمْ وَضَلَّ جَدِيدُ

Muraqqish's treatment of the theme of baldness and grey hair is distinct from that of the Ancient Jāhilī poet A^csur b. Sa^cd and of his own contemporaries. Muraqqish compares his baldness and his grey hair to camomile flowers growing on a strip of dry land lying between two rain-watered strips of land, and employs the crow as a metaphor for black hair and youth: ¹ (Tawīl)

هل يَرْجِعَنَّ لِي لِمَتِّي إِنْ خَضِبْتُهَا إِلَى عَهْدِهَا قَبْلَ الْمَثِيبِ خِضَابُهَا
رَأَتْ أَفْحُوا وَالشَّيْبُ فَوْقَ خَطِيطَةٍ إِذَا مُطِرَتْ لَمْ يَسْتَكِنَنَّ صُؤَابُهَا
فَإِنْ يُظْعِنِ الشَّيْبُ الشَّبَابَ فَقَدْ تَرَى بِهِ لِمَتِّي لَمْ يُرَمَّ عَنْهَا غُرَابُهَا

Most of the poems of Muraqqish open with an atlaal or with a nasib, or with an atlaal followed by a nasib. Muraqqish's finest nasib is a description of beautiful girls leaving town on camels and stopping to set up a camp on their way to their destination: ² (Tawīl)

أَلَا بَانَ جِيرَانِي وَلَسْتُ بِعَائِفٍ أَدَانَ بِهِمْ صَرْفُ النَّوَى أَمْ مُخَالِنِي
وَفِي الْحَيِّ أَبْكَارُ سَبِينِ فُوَادِهِ عَلَالَةٌ مَا زَوَّدَنَّ، وَالْحُبُّ شَاعِنِي
دِقَاقُ الْخُصُورِ لَمْ تُعْفَسِرْ قُرُونُهَا لِشَجْوٍ وَلَمْ يَخْضُرَنَّ حُمَى الْمَزَالِفِ
نَوَاعِمُ أَبْكَارُ سَرَائِرُ بَدَنُ حِسَانُ الْوُجُوهِ لَبِنَاتُ السَّوَالِفِ
يُهْدَلْنَ فِي الْأَذَانِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَذْهَبٍ لَهُ رَبْدٌ يَعْيَا بِهِ كُلُّ وَاصِفِ
إِذَا ظَنَّ الْحَيُّ الْجَمِيعُ اجْتَنَبَتْهُمْ مَكَانَ النَّدِيمِ لِلنَّجِيِّ الْمُسَاعِفِ
فَصُرْنَ شَقِيًّا لَا يُبَالِيَنَّ غَيْهَ يُعَوِّجَنَّ مِنْ أَعْنَاقِهَا بِالْمَوَاقِفِ
نَشْرَنَ حَدِيثًا آتِسًا فَوْضَعَتْهُ خَفِيضًا فَلَا يَلْعَنِي بِهِ كُلُّ طَائِفِ

فلما تَبَيَّنَى الْحَيُّ جِئْنَ إِلَيْهِمْ فكانَ النَّزُولُ فِي حُجُورِ النَّوَاصِفِ
تَنْزَلْنَ عَنْ دَوْمٍ تَهْفُ مَتُونُهُ مُزَيَّنَةٌ أَكْنَافُهَا بِالزَّرْحَارِفِ

In another nasīb Muraqqish compares the howdas on the camels to dawn trees and to big ships: (Khafif)¹

لِمَنْ الطُّعْنُ بِالضُّحَى طَافِيَاتٍ شَبَّهَهَا الدَّوْمُ أَوْ خَلَائِيَا سَفِينِ
جَاعِلَاتٍ بَطْنِ المَضْبَاعِ شِمَالاً وَبِرَاقِ النِّعَافِ ذَاتَ البَيْمِينِ
رَافِعَاتٍ رَفْعاً تَهَالُ لَهُ العَيْدُ نَ عَلَى كُلِّ بَازِلٍ مُسْتَكِينِ

Muraqqish's best known poem is an elegy written for his cousin Tha^claba b. ^cAwf b. Mālik who was killed by Muhalhil in the Basūs War. The atḷāl and nasīb sections have the famous line after which he was named: (Sari^c)²

هَلْ بِالذِّيَارِ أَنْ تُجِيبَ صَمَمٌ لَوْ كَانَ رَسْمٌ نَاطِقاً كَلَمٌ
أَلدَّارُ قَفَرٌ والرُّسُومُ كَمَا رَقَّشَ فِي ظَهْرِ الأَدِيمِ قَلَمٌ
ذِيَارُ أَسْمَاءِ الَّتِي تَبَلَّتْ قَلْبِي ، فَعَيْنِي مَاوُهَا يَسْجُمٌ
أَضَحَتْ خَلَاءَ نَبْتِهَا نَيْدٌ نَوَّرَ فِيهَا زَهْوُهُ فَاعْتَمٌ
بَلْ هَلْ شَجْتِكَ الطُّعْنُ بِأَكْرَةَ كَانَتْهُنَّ النَّخْلُ مِنْ مَلْهَمٌ
النَّشْرُ مَسْكٌ وَالْوَجُوهُ دَنَا نِيرٌ وَأَطْرَافُ البَنَانِ عَمٌ

Muraqqish is aggrieved by the death of his cousin, but resigns himself to the fact that life must go on:

لَمْ يُشْجِ قَلْبِي مِلْحَوَاتِثٌ إِلَّا صَاحِبِي المَشْرُوكِ فِي تَغْلَمٍ
تَعَلَّبُ ضَرَابَ القَوَانِسِ بِأَلِ سَيْفِ وَهَادِي القَوْمِ إِذْ أَظْلَمَ

فَادْهَبْ فِدَى لَكَ ابْنُ عَمِّكَ لَا يَخْلُدُ إِلَّا شَابَةً وَأَدَمَ
 لَوْ كَانَ حَيًّا نَاجِيًا لَنَجَّأَ مِنْ يَوْمِهِ الْمُرْلَمُ الْأَعْصَمُ
 فِي بَاذِخَاتٍ مِنْ عَمَائَةٍ أَوْ يَرْفَعُهُ دُونَ السَّمَاءِ خَيْمَ
 مِنْ دُونِهِ بَيْضُ الْأُنُوقِ وَفَوْقَهُ طَوِيلُ الْمَنْكَبِينَ أَثَمَّ
 يَرْقَاهُ حَيْثُ شَاءَ مِنْهُ وَإِلَّا مَا تُنْسِيهِ مَنِيَّةٌ يَهْرَمُ
 فَغَالَهُ رَبُّبُ الْحَوَادِثِ حَاتِي زَلًّا عَنْ أَرْيَادِهِ فَحُطِّمُ
 لَيْسَ عَلَى طُولِ الْحَيَاةِ نَدَمٌ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ الْمَرْءِ مَا يَعْلَمُ
 يَهْلِكُ وَالِدٌ وَيَخْلُفُ مَوْ لُودٌ وَكُلُّ ذِي أَبِي يُيْتَمُّ
 وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يَسْتَفِيدْنَ غِنْيِي ثُمَّ عَلَى الْمِقْسَادِ مَنْ يُعْتَمُّ

In Kitāb al-Addād, Anbārī says that although the meaning of the word وراء is "at the back", it is also used to mean "in front".¹ To illustrate the latter meaning Anbārī quotes Muraqqish:

لَيْسَ عَلَى طُولِ الْحَيَاةِ نَدَمٌ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ الْمَرْءِ مَا يَعْلَمُ

and the Qur'ān:

" مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ "

" وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا "

In al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt, Muhammad b. ^cAlī al-Jurjānī quotes Muraqqish's verse:

النَّشْرُ مِنْكَ وَالْوُجُوهُ دَنَا نِيرُ وَأَطْرَافُ الْبَنَانِ عَنَّمْ

as an example of the mafrūg simile.¹

The tragic love story of Muraqqish and Asmā' must have been popular in Jāhiliyya, for it was mentioned by Tarafa in a poem:² (Tawīl)

وهل غير صيد أحرزته حبائله	وقد ذهبت سلمى بعقلى كله
بحبء كلمع البرق لاحت مخائله	كما أحرزت أسماء قلب مرقش
بذلك عوف أن نصاب مقاتله	وأنكح أسماء امرئى يتقى
وإن هوى أسماء لأبد فائله	فلم رأى أن لا قرار ينقره
على ضرب تقيوى سراعاً روائحه	ترحل من أرض العراق مرقش
ولم يدر أن الموت بالسرور غائله	إلى السرو أرض ساقه نحوه الهوى
مسيرة شهر دائب لا يواكله	فغودر بانفردين أرض بضيئه
تسرقه ذؤبانته وأحبائله	بأسف واد من أخلة شينوه
وما كل من يهوى الفتى هو نائله	فيالك من ذى حاجة حين دونها

توجدى بكلمى مثل وجد مرقش
 بأسماء إذ لا يستيق عوادله
 قضى نجه وجداً عليها مرقش
 وعلقت من سلمى خيالاً أماطله

The love story of Muraqqish and Asmā' has all the ingredients of an ^cUdhri love story: the constant love of the man who dies broken-hearted because his girl was married off to another man. In this respect Muraqqish can be regarded as the forerunner of the ^cUdhri poets.

Rabī^ca b. Sufiyān b. Sa^cd b. Mālik, known as

al-Muraqqish al-Asghār, participated with his uncle al-Muraqqish al-Akbar in the Basūs War. al-Muraqqish al-Asghār owned a small herd of camels which he took around wherever he went.

Muraqqish was in love with Fātima, the daughter of the Lakhmid king al-Mundhir b. Mā' al-Samā'. Before meeting Fātima, Muraqqish was the lover of her maid Hind bint ^cAjlān who was in the habit of picking up men at night from a spot where people brought their animals to drink. A close friend of Muraqqish, ^cAmr b. Janāb, suggested to Muraqqish he should take his camels to the watering spot frequented by Hind. Muraqqish followed his friend's suggestion. In the evening Hind went to the watering spot, saw Muraqqish who was very handsome and invited him to spend the night with her in her house next to Fātima's palace. The next day Hind undressed in front of her mistress who noticed bruises on her thighs and asked her what caused them. Hind told Fātima the bruises were from the man she slept with the night before. Fātima asked whether he was the same handsome young man she saw from her palace window leaving her house in the morning. Hind said that he was the same young man. Fātima expressed her desire to meet him.

The king, who was suspicious of his daughter's character, had appointed special guards to keep watch on his daughter and gave orders to spread a cloth all around

the palace to check the footprints of her visitors. So Hind fetched Muraqqish, covered him with a cloth and carried him on her back to Fāṭima. Muraqqish spent the night with Fāṭima, and in the morning Hind took him out on her back to her house. In the morning the king called the guards to check if Fāṭima had had any visitors and they told him that the only visible footprints were those of Hind and they seemed deeper than usual.

Muraqqish visited Fāṭima night after night, but people thought he was spending his time with Hind. One day ḲAmr b. Janāb pressed Muraqqish to tell him what was going on between him and Hind. Muraqqish revealed his secret, and ḲAmr, who looked like Muraqqish but for his hairy legs, begged him to let him go to Fāṭima in his place. Muraqqish reluctantly agreed. ḲAmr was taken to Fāṭima by Hind. But when ḲAmr and Fāṭima were about to make love, she felt his hairy legs and pushed him away, and called Hind to throw him out. ḲAmr returned to Muraqqish and told him what happened, and Muraqqish bit off his finger in a fit of remorse: ¹ (Tawīl)

أَلَا يَا سُلَيْمِي لَأَصْرَمَ لِي الْيَوْمَ فَاصِمًا	وَلَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامَ وَصْلُكَ دَائِمًا
رَمْتِكَ ابْنَةُ الْبَكْرِيِّ عَنِ فَرْعِ ضَالَّةٍ	وَهُنَّ بِنَا خُوصٌ يُعْخَنُ نَعَائِمًا
تَرَاءَتْ لَنَا يَوْمَ الرَّحِيلِ بَوَارِدٍ	وَعَذَبِ الثَّنَائِيَا لِمَ يَكُنْ مُتْرَاكِمًا
سَقَاهُ حَبِيْبِي الْمُنَزْنِ فِي مُتَهَلَّلٍ	مِنَ الشَّمْسِ رَوَاهُ رَبَابًا سَوَاجِمًا

أَرْتَاكَ بِذَاتِ الضَّمَالِ مِنْهَا مَعَاصِمًا
صَحَا قَسْبُهُ عَنْهَا عَلَى أَنْ ذِكْرَهُ
تَبَصَّرَ خَلِيلِي هَل تَرَى مِنْ ظَعَائِنِ
تَحْمَلْنَ مِنْ جَوْ الْوَرِيعةِ بَعْدَ مَا
تَحْلَيْنَ يَاقُونَا وَشَدْرًا وَصِيفَةً
سَلَكُنِ الثَّرَى وَالْجَزْعُ تُحْدَى جِمَالُهُمْ
أَلَا حَبْدًا وَجْهٌ تُرِينَا بِيَاضَهُ
وَإِنِّي لِأَسْتَحْيِي فُصَيْمَةً جَائِعًا
وَإِنِّي لِأَسْتَحْيِيكَ وَالْخَرْقُ بَيْنَنَا
وَإِنِّي وَإِنْ كَلَّتْ قَلُوصِي لِرَاجِمٍ
[أَفَاطِمُ إِنَّ الْحُبَّ يَغْنُوعُ عَنِ الثَّقِيلِ
أَلَا يَا أَسْمَى بِالْكَوْكَبِ الطَّلَقِ فَاطِمَا
أَلَا يَا أَسْمَى ثُمَّ اعْلَمِي أَنَّ حَاجَتِي
أَفَاطِمَ لَوْ أَنَّ النِّسَاءَ بِبِلْدَةِ
مَتَى مَا يَشَاءُ ذُو الْوُدِّ يَصْرِمُ خَلِيلَهُ
وَإِلَى جَنَابِ حِلْفَةٍ فَاطِئَتُهُ
[كَأَنَّ عَلَيْهِ تَاجَ آلِ مُحَرَّقٍ
فَمَنْ يَنْقُ خَيْرًا يَحْمَدُ النَّاسُ أَمْرَهُ
أَنْتُمْ تَرَى أَنَّ الْمَرْءَ يَجْزِمُ كَفَّهُ
أَمِنْ حُلْمٍ أَصْبَحَتْ تَنْكُتُ وَاجِبًا

وَحَدًّا أَسِيلاً كَالْوَدِيدَةِ نَاعِمًا
إِذَا خَصَّرَتْ دَارَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ قَائِمًا
خَرَجْنَ سِرَاعًا وَاقْتَعَدْنَ الْمَنَائِمَا
تَعَالَى النَّهَارُ وَاجْتَزَعْنَ الصَّرَائِمَا
وَجَزَعًا ظَنَارِيًا وَدُرًّا تَوَائِمَا
وَوَرَكْنَ قَوًّا وَاجْتَزَعْنَ الْمَخَارِمَا
وَمُنْسَابَاتٍ كَالْمَثَانِي وَاجِمَا
خَبِيصًا : وَأَسْتَحْيِي فُطَيْمَةَ طَاعِمَا
مَخَافَةً أَنْ تَلْقَى أَخَا لِي صَارِمَا
بِهَا وَبَنَفْسِي : يَافُطَيْمَ : الْمَرَاجِمَا
وَيُجْشِمُ ذَا الْعَرِضِ الْكَرِيمِ الْمَجَاشِمَا
وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ صَرَفُ النَّوَى مُتَلَائِمَا
إِلَيْكَ : فَرُدِّي مِنْ نَوَالِكَ فَاطِمَا
وَأَنْتِ بِأُخْرَى لِاتَّبِعْتِكِ هَائِمَا
وَيَعْبُدُ عَلَيْهِ لَا مَحَاذَةَ ظَالِمَا
فَسَنَسَمِكَ وَلِ الدُّومِ إِنْ كُنْتَ لِأَيْمَا
بِأَنَّ ضَرَّ مَوْلَاهُ وَأَصْبَحَ سَالِمَا
وَمَنْ يَغْوِ لَا يَعْدَمُ عَلَى الْعِيِّ لِأَيْمَا
وَيَجْشِمُ مِنْ نَوَاهِ الصَّلْبِ الْمَجَاشِمَا
وَقَدْ تَعْتَرِي الْأَحْلَامُ مَنْ كَانَ نَائِمَا

A painful cry that springs out of remorse pervades the poem and is sustained by repeating certain forms of address at the beginning of some hemistiches:

أَلَا يَا أَسْلَمِي لَأَصْرَمَ لِي الْيَوْمَ فَاطِمَا	ولا أَبَدًا ما دَامَ وَصَلُّكَ دَائِمًا
أَلَا حَبْدًا وَجْهٌ تُرِينَا بِيَاضَهُ	وَمُنْسَدِلَاتٍ كَالْمَثَانِي وَاحِمًا
وَإِنِّي لَأَسْتَحْيِي فُطَيْمَةَ جَائِعًا	خَمِيصًا ، وَأَسْتَحْيِي فُطَيْمَةَ طَاعِمًا
وَإِنِّي لَأَسْتَحْيِيكَ وَالخَرْقُ بَيْنَنَا	مَخَافَةً أَنْ تَلْفِي أَحَا لِي صَارِمًا
وَإِنِّي وَإِنْ كَلَّتْ قَلُوبِي لِرَاجِمٍ	بِهَا وَبِنَفْسِي ، يَافُطَيْمَ ، المَرَاجِمَا
[أَفَاطِمَ إِنَّ الحُبَّ يَغْفُو عَنِ القَلْبِ]	وَيُجْشِمُ ذَا العَرِضِ الكَرِيمِ المَجَاشِمَا]
أَلَا يَا أَسْلَمِي بِالكَوَكَبِ الطَّلُقِ فَاطِمَا	وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ صَرَفُ النَّوَى مُتَلَايِمًا
أَلَا يَا أَسْلَمِي ثُمَّ اعْلَمِي أَنَّ حَاجَتِي	إِلَيْكَ ، فَرُدِّي مِنْ نَوَالِكَ فَاطِمَا
أَفَاطِمَ لَوْ أَنَّ النِّسَاءَ بِبِلْدَةِ	وَأَنْتِ بِأُخْرَى لَا تَبْعُثُكَ هَائِمَا
أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ المَرْءَ يَجْذِمُ كَفَّهُ	وَيَجْشِمُ مِنْ لَوْنِ الصَّدِيقِ المَجَاشِمَا

Muraqqish's next poem was highly appreciated by classical critics and was included in the "Muntaqayāt" section of Abū Zaid al-Qurashī's anthology Jamharat Ash^car al-^cArab. The atḷāl and taif themes are followed by a wine motif: ¹(Tawīl)

أَمِنْ رَسْمِ دَارِ مَاءِ عَيْنَيْكَ يَسْفَحُ	غَدَا مِنْ مَقَامِ أَهْلُهُ وَتَرَوَّحُوا
تُرْجِي بِهَا خُنُسَ الطَّبَاءِ يَسْخَالُهَا	جَادِرُهَا بِالْجَوِّ وَرُدُّ وَأُصْبِحُ
أَمِنْ بِنْتِ عَجَلَانَ الخِيَالِ المَطْرَحِ	أَنْتِ وَرَحْلِي سَاقِطٌ مُتَزَحِّحُ
فَلَمَّا انْتَبَهْتُ بِالخِيَالِ وَرَاعِي	إِذَا هُوَ رَحْلِي وَالبِلَادُ تَوْصَحُ

وَلِكِنَّهُ زَوْرٌ يُبْقِظُ نَائِمًا
 بِكُلِّ مَيْبِتٍ يَغْتَرِينَا وَمَنْزِلٍ
 فَوَلَّتْ وَقَدْ بَثَّتْ تَبَارِيحَ مَا تَرَى
 وَمَا قَهْوَةٌ صَهْبَاءُ كَالْمِسْكِ رِيحُهَا
 ثَوَتْ فِي سِبَاءِ الدَّنِّ عِشْرِينَ حِجَّةً
 سَبَاهَا رِجَالٌ مِنْ يَهُودَ تَبَاعَدُوا
 بِأَطْيَبَ مِنْ فِيهَا إِذَا جِئْتُ طَارِقًا
 وَيُحَدِّثُ أَشْجَانًا بِقَلْبِكَ تَجْرَحُ
 فَلَوْ أَنَّهَا إِذْ تَدْرِيحُ اللَّيْلَ تُصْبِحُ
 وَوَجْدِي بِهَا إِذْ تَحْدُرُ الدَّمْعَ أَبْرَحُ
 تُعَلِّي عَلَى النَّاجِدِ طَوْرًا وَتُنْصَحُ
 يُطَانُ عَلَيْهَا قَرْمَدٌ وَتُرَوِّحُ
 لِحْيَانًا يَأْتِيهَا مِنَ السُّوقِ مُرْبِحُ
 مِنَ اللَّيْلِ ، بَلْ فَرِحَ أَلَدُّ وَأَنْصَحُ

Muraqqish ends the poem with a description of his horse in the heat of battle:

غَدَوْنَا بِصَافٍ كَالْعَسِيبِ مُجَلَّلٍ
 أَسِيلٌ نَسِيلٌ لَيْسَ فِيهِ مَعَابَةٌ
 عَلَى مِثْلِهِ آتَى النَّدَى مُخَايَلًا
 وَيَسْبِقُ مَطْرُودًا وَيَلْحَقُ طَارِدًا
 تَرَاهُ بِشِكَاكِ الْمُدَجِّجِ بَعْدَ مَا
 شَهَدْتُ بِهِ فِي غَارَةٍ مُسْبِطِرَةٍ
 كَمَا انْتَفَجَتْ مِنَ الظُّبَاءِ جَدَابِيَةٌ
 يَجْمُ جُمُومَ الْجِسِيِّ جَاشَ مَفْسِيئَتُهُ
 طَوِينَاهُ حِينًا فَهَوَ شَرْبٌ مُلَوِّحُ
 كَمَيْتٌ كَلَوْنِ الصَّرْفِ أَرْجَلُ أَفْرَحُ
 وَأَغْيَزُ سِرًّا : أَيُّ أَمْرِي أَرْبِحُ
 وَيَخْرُجُ مِنْ عَمِّ الْمَضْيِقِ وَيَجْرَحُ
 تَقْصَعُ أَقْرَانُ الْمُغِيرَةِ يَجْمَحُ
 يُطَاعِنُ أَوْلَاهَا فِثَامٌ مُصْبَحُ
 أَشْمٌ ، إِذَا ذَكَرْتَهُ الشَّدَّ أَفِيحُ
 وَجَرْدَةٌ مِنْ تَحْتِ غَيْلٍ وَأَبْطَحُ

^cAmr b. Qamī'a (d.530s), the grand-son of Sa^cd b.

Mālik, was a small boy when his father died, and he was brought up by his uncle Marthad. When ^cAmr was a young man his aunt tried to seduce him and failed, but she told her

husband that ^cAmr had made advances to her. His uncle was outraged and grabbed his sword and went after him. ^cAmr ran away and sought refuge in Hira, and from there he sent a poem to his uncle telling him he was innocent: ¹ (Tawīl)

لعمرك ما نفسٌ بجدٍ رشيدةٍ توامرني سرهًا لأصرمَ مرتدا
 وإن ظهرت مني قوارصُ جمةٍ وأفرعَ من لومي مرارًا وأصمدا
 على غير جرمٍ أن أكون جنيتهُ سوى قولِ باغٍ كاذني فتجهدا
 لعمري لنعم العرو تدعو بخيله إذا ما المُنَادِي في المقامة نددا

According to Ibn Qutaiba, ^cAmr was attached to the court of Imru'al-Qais's father king Hujr of Kinda.² On the other hand, Abū al-Faraj says Imru'al-Qais met ^cAmr for the first time when he asked ^cAmr's people for a poet to accompany him to Byzantium.³ ^cAmr accepted to go with Imru'al-Qais, but he pointed out that he was an old man and had many children; and Imru'al-Qais told him he was more than welcome if he did not mind eating game: ⁴ (Tawīl)

شكوتُ إليه أنبي ذُو خلالةٍ وأنبي كبيرُ ذُو عيالٍ مجنبُ
 فقال لنا أهلاً وسهلاً ومرحباً إذا سرکم لحمٍ من الوحشِ فاركبوا

^cAmr and Imru'al-Qais set out on their journey to Byzantium, and it was not long before Imru'al-Qais noticed that ^cAmr was homesick and comforted him: ⁵ (Tawīl)

بَكَى صَاحِبِي لَمَّا رَأَى الدَّرْبَ دُونَهُ وَأَيُّقَنَ أَنَا لِاحِقَانَ بَقِيصَرًا
فَقُلْتُ لَهُ لَا تَبْكِ عَيْنُكَ إِنَّمَا تُحَاوِلُ مُلْكَاً أَوْ تَمُوتُ فَتَعْتَدِرَا

In the same poem Imru' al-Qais imagines ^cAmr's mother crying because she missed her son:¹

أَرَى أُمَّ عَمْرٍو دَمْعُهَا قَدْ تَحَدَّرَا بَكَاءٍ عَلَى عَمْرٍو وَمَا كَانَ أَصْبَرَا

^cAmr died on his way to Byzantium. He was by then over ninety, battered by a barrage of invisible arrows shot at him by the daughters of time:² (Tawīl)

كَأَنِّي وَقَدْ جَاوَزْتُ تِسْعِينَ حِجَّةً خَلَمْتُ بِهَا عَنَى عِنَانَ لِبِجَامِي
عَلَى الرَّاحَتَيْنِ مَرَّةً وَعَلَى الْعَصَا أَنُوهُ ثَلَاثًا بَعْدَهُنَّ قِيَامِي
رَمْتَنِي بَنَاتُ الدَّهْرِ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا أَرَى فَمَا بَالُ مَنْ يُرْمَى وَلَيْسَ بِرَامٍ
فَلَوْ أَنَّ مَا أُرْمَى بِنَبْلِ رَمِيَّتِهَا وَلَكِنَّمَا أُرْمَى بِغَيْرِ سِهَامٍ
إِذَا مَا رَأَى النَّاسُ قَالُوا: أَلَمْ يَكُنْ حَدِيثًا جَدِيدَ الْبَرَى غَيْرَ كِهَامٍ
وَأَفْنَى وَمَا أَفْنَى مِنَ الدَّهْرِ لَيْلَةً وَلَمْ يُفْنِ مَا أَفْنَيْتُ سِلْكَ نِظَامٍ
وَأَهْلَكَ كُنِي تَأْمِيلُ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ وَتَأْمِيلُ عَامٍ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ وَعَامٍ

Some of ^cAmr's poems begin with an aṭlāl theme and some are aṭlāl poems in their own right. A calm and reflective tone pervades ^cAmr's poems and his language is simple and accessible as seen in his nostalgic poem on the passing of youth:³ (Munsariḥ)

يَا لَهْفَ نَفْسِي عَلَى الشَّبَابِ وَلَمْ
 أَفْقِدُ بِهِ إِذْ فَقَدْتَهُ أَمَّا
 قَدْ كُنْتُ فِي مِيعَةٍ أُسْرُ بِهَا
 أَمْنَعُ ضَيْمِي وَأَهْبِطُ الْعَصْمَا
 وَأَسْحَبُ الرِّيطَ وَالْبُرُودَ إِلَى
 أَدْنَى تِجَارِي وَأَنْفُضُ اللَّيْمَا
 لَا تَغِيْطُ الْمَرْءَ أَنْ يُقَالَ لَهُ
 أَمْسَى فَلَانَ إِعْمَرِهِ حَكْمًا
 إِنْ سَرَهُ طَوْلٌ عَيْشِهِ فَلَقَدْ
 أَضْحَى عَلَى الْوَجْهِ طَوْلٌ مَا سَلِمَا

Anbārī and Sijistānī take the word أَمَّا as an addād example, that is to say a word that has a reversible meaning.¹

Amr's next poem is one of the earliest examples of wine poetry and does not follow the Khalīlī metres:²

يَا رَبِّ مَنْ أَسْفَاهُ أَحْلَامُهُ
 أَنْ قِيلَ يَوْمًا إِنَّ عَمْرًا سَكُورُ
 إِنْ أَكُّ مِسْكِيرًا فَلَا أَشْرَبُ
 وَغَلَا وَلَا يَسَامُ مِنِّي الْبَعِيرُ
 وَالزَّقُ مُلْكٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ
 وَالْمُلْكُ فِيهِ طَوِيلٌ [وَأَقْصِيرُ
 فِيهِ الصَّبُوحُ الَّذِي يَجْعَلُنِي
 لَيْثَ عَفْرَيْنَ وَالْمَالُ كَثِيرُ
 فَأَوْلُ اللَّيْلِ فَتَى مَا جِدُ
 وَأَخِرُ اللَّيْلِ ضِبْعَانُ عَشُورُ
 قَاتَلَكَ اللَّهُ مِنْ مَشْرُوبَةٍ
 لَوْ أَنَّ ذَا مِرَّةٍ عَنْكَ صَبُورُ

In al-Sāhil wa al-Shahij, Ma^carrī says that al-Khalīl b.

Ahmad called ^cAmr's unusual poem mudhāl because the last foot ends with an extra harf sākin.¹

^cAmr's poem in praise of Mundhir, king of Hīra, is in two parts. The first part has a departure and nasīb themes which depict Umāma and her party leaving the neighbourhood - the howda-bearing camels were like tall palm trees, and the houri-eyed girls in the howdas were like gazelles stretching themselves to reach the branches:² (Mutaqārib)

وَأَعْقَبَكَ الْهَجْرُ مِنْهَا الْوَصَالَا	نَاتِكَ أَمَامَةً إِلَّا سُؤَالَا
تَبَدَّلُ أَهْلَ الصَّفَاءِ الزِّيَالَا	وَحَادَتْ بِهَا نِيَّةٌ غَرْبَةً
قِي ثُمَّ اسْتَقَلُّوا لِبَيْنِ عَجَالَا	وَنَادَى أَمِيرُهُمْ بِالْفِرَا
عَرِيضِ الْحَصِيرِ يَغُولُ الْحِيَالَا	فَقَرَّبِينَ كُلَّ مُنِيفِ الْقَرَى
وَرَاجَعْنَ بَعْدَ الرَّسِيمِ النِّقَالَا	إِذَا مَا تَسْرِبَلْنَ مَجْهُولَةً
شَدِيدِ الْمَطَا أَرْحَبِيًّا جَلَالَا	هَدَاهُنَّ مُشْتَمِرًا لِأَحْقَا
بِ لَمَّا تَوَاهَقْنَ سَحْقًا طَوَالَا	تَخَالَ حُمُولَهُمْ فِي السَّرَا
تَغْمَرُ حَتَّى أَتَى وَاسْتَطَالَا	كَوَارِعَ فِي حَائِرٍ مَفْعِمٍ
لَ مِنْهَدِلًا فَوْقَهُنَّ أَنْهَدَالَا	كَسُونَهُنَّ هَوَادِجَهُنَّ السُّدُو
تَقْرُو بِأَعْلَى السَّلِيلِ الْهَدَالَا	وَفِيهِنَّ حُورٌ كَمِثْلِ الظُّبَا

جَعَلَنَ قَدِيْسًا وَأَعْنَاهُ يَمِينًا وَبُرْقَةَ رَعْمٍ شِمَالًا
 نَوَازِعُ لِلْخَالِ إِذْ شِمْنَهُ عَلَى الْفُرْدَاتِ يَحُلُّ السِّجَالًا
 فَلَمَّا هَبَطْنَ مَصَابَ الرَّبِيعِ بَدَلْنَ بَعْدَ الرِّحَالِ الْحِجَالًا

The second part is devoted to ^cAmr's journey to king Mundhir, braving the heat of the desert on his strong and fast camel, at a time when the gazelles seek shelter from the heat of the sun:¹

وَبِيدَاءٍ يَلْعَبُ فِيهَا السَّرَا بٌ يَخْشَى بِهَا الْمُدَاجُونَ الضَّلَالَا
 تَجَاوَزْتُهَا رَاغِبًا رَاهِبًا إِذَا مَا الظُّبْيَاءُ اعْتَنَقْنَ الظَّلَالَا
 بِضَامِرَةٍ كَأَتَانِ الثَّمِيلِ عَيْرَانَةٍ مَا تَشْكِي الْكَلَالَا
 إِلَى ابْنِ الشَّقِيْقَةِ أَعْمَانَهَا أَخَافُ الْعِقَابَ وَأَرْجُو النَّوَالَا
 إِلَى ابْنِ الشَّقِيْقَةِ خَيْرِ الْمَلُو لِكِ أَوْفَاهُمْ عِنْدَ عَقْدِ حِبَالَا

^cAmr then appeals to Mundhir not to believe what his enemies say about him:

أَلَسْتُ أَبْرَهُمُ ذِمَّةً وَأَفْضَلُهُمْ إِنْ أَرَادُوا فِضَالَا
 فَأَهْلِي فِدَاؤُكَ مُسْتَعْتَبَا عَتَبْتَ فَصَدَقْتَ فِي الْمَقَالَا
 أَتَاكَ عَدُوٌّ فَصَدَقْتَهُ فَهَلَا نَظَرْتَ هُدَيْتَ السُّوَالَا

فَمَا قُلْتُ مَا نَطَقُوا بِاطِلَا وَلَا كُنْتُ أَرْهَبُهُ أَنْ يُقَالَ
 فَإِنْ كَانَ حَقًّا كَمَا خَبَرُوا فَلَا وَصَلْتُ لِي يَمِينُ شِمَالًا
 تَصَدَّقَ عَلَيَّ فَإِنِّي آمَرٌ أَخَافُ عَلَى غَيْرِ جُرْمٍ نِكَالًا

And the poem ends with a description of the king's courage in battle:

وَيَوْمَ تَطَلَّعَ فِيهِ النُّفُوسُ تَطَّرَفَ بِالطَّعْنِ فِيهِ الرَّجَالَا
 شَهِدَتْ . فَأَطْفَأَتْ نِيرَانَهُ وَأَصْدَرَتْ مِنْهُ ظِمَاءَ نِهَالَا
 وَذِي لَجَبٍ يُبْرِؤُ النَّاطِرِينَ كَاللَّيْلِ الْبَسِ مِنْهُ ظِلَالَا
 كَانَ سَنَا الْبَيْضِ فَوْقَ الْكَمَا فِيهِ الْمَصَابِيحُ تُخْبِي الذُّبَالَا
 صَبَحَتْ الْعُدُوَّ عَلَى نَائِبِهِ تَرِيشُ رِجَالًا وَتَبْرِي رِجَالَا

In ^cAmr's next poem, the taif of Umāma visits the taif of ^cAmr in a dream. In verse ten, the object of ^cAmr's love is Khawla, which could be another name of Umāma or an imaginary name.¹ The use of the two names could mean that the taif-nasīb motif is merely employed as a poetic convention. Classical critics thought highly of this unusual taif-nasīb opening:² (Mutaqārib)

نَأْتِكَ أَمَامَةً إِلَّا سُؤَالَ
 يُؤَافِي مَعَ اللَّيْلِ مِيعَادَهَا
 فَذَاكَ تَبَدَّلَ مِنْ وُدِّهَا
 وَقَدْ رِيعَ قَلْبِي إِذْ أَعْلَنُوا
 وَحَثَّ بِهَا الْحَادِيَانِ النَّجَاءَ
 بَوَازِلَ تَحْدَى بِأَحْدَاجِهَا
 فَلَمَّا نَأَوْا سَبَقَتْ عِبْرَتِي
 تَرَاهَا إِذَا أَحْتَشَّهَا الْحَادِيَا
 فَبِالظَّلِّ بَدَلْنَ بَعْدَ الْهَجِيرِ
 وَفِيهِنَّ خَوْلَةٌ زَيْنُ النَّسَاءِ
 لَهَا عَيْنٌ حَوْرَاءٌ فِي رَوْضَةٍ
 وَتَجْرِي السِّوَاكُ عَلَى بَارِدِ
 كَأَنَّ الْمُدَامَ بَعِيدَ الْحَنَامِ
 كَأَنَّ الذَّوَائِبَ فِي فَرْعِهَا
 وَوَجْهٌ يَحَارُ لَهُ النَّاطِرُونَ
 إِلَى كَفَلٍ مِثْلِ دِعْصِ النَّقَا
 وَالْأَخْيَالُ يُؤَافِي خَيْالًا
 وَيَأْبَى مَعَ الصُّبْحِ إِلَّا زِيَالًا
 وَلَوْ شَهِدَتْ لَمْ تَوَاتِ النَّوَالَا
 وَقِيلَ أَجَدَّ الْخَلِيْطُ أَحْتِمَالَا
 مَعَ الصُّبْحِ لَمَّا اسْتَشَارُوا الْجَمَالَا
 وَيُحْذِنُ بَعْدَ نِعَالِ نِعَالَا
 وَادْرَتَ لَهَا بَعْدَ سِجْلِ سِجَالَا
 نِ بِالْخَبْتِ يَرْقِنُ سِيرًا عِجَالَا
 وَبَعْدَ الْحِجَالِ الْفَنَ الرَّحَالَا
 زَادَتْ عَلَى النَّاسِ طَرًّا جَمَالَا
 وَتَقْرُو مَعَ النَّبْتِ أَرْضَى طَوَالَا
 يَخَالُ السِّيَالِ وَلَيْسَ السِّيَالَا
 عَلَيْهَا وَتَسْقِيكَ عَذْبًا زَلَالَا
 حِبَالٌ تُوَصِّلُ فِيهَا حِبَالَا
 يَخَالُونَهُمْ قَدْ أَهْلُوا هِلَالَا
 وَكَفَّ تَقَلَّبُ بِيضًا طِفَالَا

فَبَاتَتْ وَمَاتَتْ مِنْ وَدَّهَا قَبَالًا وَلَا مَا يُسَاوِي قَبَالًا

Amr then scolds his girl for abandoning him, he who is the hero unbeaten in battle and in the art of words:

وَكَيْفَ تَبِينِينَ حَبَلُ الصَّفَا
أَرَادَ النَّوَالَ فَمَنْنِيَتِهِ
فَتَى يَبْتَنِي الْمَجْدَ مِثْلَ الْحَسَا
يَقُودُ الْكَمَاةَ لِيَلْقَى الْكَمَاةَ
تَشْبَهُ فُرْسَانَهُمْ فِي اللَّقَاءِ
وَتَمْشِي رِجَالًا إِلَى الدَّارِعِينَ
وَتَكْسُو الْقَوَاطِعَ هَامَ الرِّجَالِ
وَيَأْبَى لِي الضَّيْمَ مَا قَدْ مَضَى
بِقَوْلٍ يَذُلُّ لَهُ الرَّائِضُونَ
وَهَاجِرَةَ كَأَوَارِ الْجَحِيمِ
وَلَيْلٍ تَعَسَفَتْ دِيَجُورَهُ
مِنْ مَا جِدِ لَا يُرِيدُ اعْتِرَالًا
وَأَضْحَى الَّذِي قُلْتِ فِيهِ ضَلَالًا
مِ اخْلَصَهُ الثَّقِينَ يَوْمًا صِقَالًا
يُنَازِلُهُمْ إِنْ أَرَادُوا النَّزَالَ
إِذَا مَا رَحَا الْمَوْتِ دَارَتْ حِيَالًا
كَأَعْنَاقِ خُورٍ تَزْجِي فَصَالًا
وَتَحْمِي الْفَوَارِسِ مِنْ الرِّجَالِ
وَعِنْدَ الْخِصَامِ فَنَعْلُو جِدَالًا
وَنَفْضُلُهُمْ إِنْ أَرَادُوا فَضَالًا
قَطَعَتْ إِذَا الْجُنْدُبُ الْجَوْنَ قَالًا
يَخَافُ بِهِ الْمُدْجُونَ الْخَبَالًا

The poem is interesting for the words **الجحيم** and **ضلالًا** used in a non-religious context. The appearance of the two words in the Qur'an attests to their religious usage in Jāhiliyya.

One of ^cAmr's poems features two important religious words دِينِي and بِالْحَجِّ which indicate they were in common use long before they became associated with Islam: ¹(Tawīl)

وَأَنِّي أَرَى دِينِي يُوَافِقُ دِينَهُمْ إِذَا نَسَكُوا أَفْرَاعَهَا وَذَبِيحَهَا
وَمَنْزِلَةَ بِالْحَجِّ أُخْرَى عَرَفْتُهَا لَهَا نَفْعَةٌ لَا يُسْتَطَاعُ بَرُوحَهَا
بُودِّكَ مَا قَوْمِي عَلَى أَنْ تَرَكَتَهُمْ سَلِمَى إِذَا هَبَّتْ شَمَالٌ وَرِيحَهَا

^cAmr's attempts in probing the mystery of immortality brought him to the conclusion that however bright and colourful the blaze of youth might be, there will come a time when that burst of energy will be reduced to dust: ²(Wāfir)

وَمَا عَيْشُ الْفَتَى فِي النَّاسِ إِلَّا كَمَا أَشْعَلَتْ فِي رِيحِ شَهَابًا
فَيَسْطَعُ تَارَةً حَسَنًا سَنَاهُ ذِكِّي اللَّوْنِ ثُمَّ يَصِيرُ هَابًا

^cAmr's weariness of old age and his grief for the death of his friends have made him ponder on the impermanence of life, and he appeals to time to treat man gently, as man is not made of rock or iron: ³(Mutaqārib)

كَبُرْتُ وَفَارَقَنِي الْأَقْرَبُونَ وَآيَقَنْتِ النَّفْسُ إِلَّا خُلُودًا

وَبَانَ الْأَحِبَّةُ حَتَّى فَنَوْا وَلَمْ يَتْرُكِ الدَّهْرُ مِنْهُمْ عَمِيدًا
فِيَا دَهْرُ قَدِّكَ فَاسْجِحْ بِنَا فَلَسْنَا بِصَخْرٍ وَلَسْنَا حَدِيدًا

There are images which crop up again and again in
Amr's poetry. The first image is that of an old man unable
to shield himself from the arrows of time, who tells his
love Taktum, who is moving out of town on a camel
resembling a ship, that death is the fate of all living
creatures, be they crocodiles, bulls or heroes: ¹ (Khafif)

إِنَّ قَلْبِي عَنْ تَكْتُمٍ غَيْرِ سَالِي تَيْمَتْنِي وَمَا أَرَادَتْ وَصَالِي
هَلْ تَرَى عَيْرَهَا تُجِيزُ سِرَاعًا كَالْعَدْوِيِّ رَائِحًا مِنْ أَوَالِي
نَزَلُوا مِنْ سُوَيْقَةِ الْمَاءِ ظَهْرًا ثُمَّ رَاحُوا لِلنَّعْفِ نَعْفٍ مِطَالِي
ثُمَّ اضْحَوْا عَلَى الدَّيْثِيَّةِ لَا يَالُو نَ أَنْ يَرْفَعُوا صُدُورَ الْجِمَالِي
ثُمَّ كَانَ الْجِسَاءُ مِنْهُمْ مَصِيفًا ضَارِبَاتِ الْخُدُورِ تَحْتَ الْهَدَالِي
فَزَعَتْ تَكْتُمٌ وَقَالَتْ عَجِيبًا أَنْ رَأَيْتَنِي تَغْيِرُ الْيَوْمَ حَالِي
يَابَنَةُ الْخَيْرِ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ رَهْنُ لِصُرُوفِ الْأَيَّامِ بَعْدَ اللَّيَالِي
جَلَّحَ الدَّهْرُ وَأَنْتَ حِي لِي وَقَدِّمًا كَانَ يُنْجِي الْقَوَى عَلَى امْتَالِي
أَقْصَدْتَنِي سِهَامَهُ إِذْ رَمْتَنِي وَتَوَلَّتْ عَنْهُ سُلَيْمَى نِبَالِي

لَا عَجِيبَ فِيمَا رَأَيْتَ وَلَكِنْ عَجَبٌ مِنْ تَفَرُّطِ الْأَجَالِ
تَدْرِكُ التَّمَسِّحَ الْمَوْلَعِ فِي اللَّجَّةِ وَالْعَصْمَ فِي دُوُوسِ الْجِبَالِ
وَالْفَرِيدَ الْمُسَفَّعَ الْوَجْهَ ذَا الْجِدِّ إِذْ يَخْتَارُ آمِنَاتِ الرِّمَالِ
وَتَصْدَى لِتَصْرَعِ الْبَطْلِ الْأَرْوَاحَ بَيْنَ الْعُلَاهِ وَالسِّرْبَالِ

The second image is that of an ageing man whose hair is turning grey: ¹(Tawīl)

بَكَيْتَ وَأَنْتَ الْيَوْمَ شَيْخٌ مُجْرَبٌ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ شَرْحَانٍ مِنْ لَوْنِ أَصْنَافِ
سَوَادٍ وَشَيْبٍ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ شَامِلٌ إِذَا مَا صَبَا شَيْخٌ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ شَافٍ

In another poem ^cAmr says that old age has discoloured and worn out his dress of youth and he sees his condition like that of the atlāl: ²(Khafīf)

هَلْ عَرَفْتَ الدِّيَارَ عَنْ أَحْقَابِ دَارِسًا أَيَّهَا كَخَطِ الْكِتَابِ
وَكَأَنِّي لَمَّا عَرَفْتُ دِيَارَ الْحَيِّ بِالسَّفْحِ عَنْ يَمِينِ الْحَبَابِ
يَسَّرَ حَارِصَ الرَّبَابَةِ حَتَّى رَاحَ قَصْرًا وَضِيمَ فِي الْأَنْدَابِ
جَزَعًا مِنْكَ يَا بَنَ سَعْدٍ وَقَدْ أَخْلَقَ مِنْكَ الْمَشِيبُ ثَوْبَ الشَّبَابِ

The third image is that of smoke rising to veil the girls as they place the cooking pots on the fire: ¹ (Tawīl)

وَإِذَا الْعَذَارَى بِالدُّخَانِ تَقَنَّعَتْ وَأَسْتَعْجَلَتْ نَصَبَ الْقُدُورِ فَمَلَّتْ
دَرَّتْ بِأَرْزَاقِ الْعِيَالِ مَغَالِقُ بِيَدَيَّ مِنْ قَمَعِ الْعِشَارِ الْجَلَّتْ

In the next poem the veil of smoke is seen rising behind the curtains, while the slavegirls crouch around the cooking pots like old dry roots: ² (Khafīf)

لَيْسَ طَعْمِي طَعْمَ الْأَرَانِبِ إِذْ قَلَّ حَصْرُ دَرُّ اللَّقَاحِ فِي الصَّبْرِ
وَرَأَيْتَ الْإِمَاءَ كَالْجَعِينِ الْبَا لِي عَكُوفًا عَلَى قَرَارَةِ قَدْرِ
وَرَأَيْتَ الدُّخَانَ كَالرَّدَعِ الْأَصْحَمِ يَنْبَاعُ مِنْ وَرَاءِ السِّتْرِ
حَاضِرُ شُرُكُمُ وَخَيْرُكُمْ دَرُّ خُرُوسٍ مِنَ الْأَرَانِبِ بِكْرِ

The bait poem of ^cAmr in which the setting of the new moon is compared to the clipping of the nail of the little finger: ³ (Mutaqārib)

كَأَنَّ ابْنَ مَزْنَتِهَا جَانِحًا فَسَيْطُ لَدَى الْأُفُقِ مِنْ خَنْصِرِ

influenced the way the Abbasid poet Ibn al-Mu^ctazz saw the new moon, as can be gauged from the following three poems. In the first poem Ibn al-Mu^ctazz compares the new moon to

a nailclipper:¹ (Kāmil)

أَعْمَلْتُهَا وَالْبَدْرَ مُؤْتَنِفٌ حَتَّىٰ انْكَفَا كَقَلَامَةِ الظَّفَرِ
عَيْسًا إِذَا اضْطَرَّيْتَ أَرْزَمْتُهَا طَارَ النُّجَاءُ بِهَا مِنَ الدُّعْرِ

In the second poem the new moon is depicted as a
silver boat loaded with ambergris:² (Kāmil)

أَهْلًا بِفِطْرٍ قَدْ أَنَارَ هَيْلَهُ ، فَالآنَ فَاغْدُ إِلَى الْمُدَامِ وَبَكْرٍ
وَانظُرْ إِلَيْهِ كَزَوْرَقٍ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ ، قَدْ أَنْقَلَتْهُ حَمُولَةٌ مِنْ عَنَبَرٍ

In the third poem the new moon is portrayed as a
silver sickle picking narcissi out of the night's flowers:³
(Sarī^c)

انظُرْ إِلَى حُسْنِ هَيْلٍ بَدَا يَهْتِكُ مِنْ أَنْوَارِهِ الْحِنْدِسَا
كَمِنْجَلٍ قَدْ صَبَغَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ يَحْصُدُ مِنْ زُهْرِ الدُّجَى نَرَجِسَا

It can be deduced from the poetry of ^cAmr that the
immortality of the soul was one of the main concepts that
preoccupied his contemporaries. This is evident from the
two verses:⁴ (Mutaqārib)

كَبُرْتُ وَفَارَقْنِي الْأَقْرَبُونَ وَأَيَقُنْتِ النَّفْسُ الْأَخْلُودَا

and:⁵ (Tawīl)

لَا عَجِيبٌ فِيمَا رَأَيْتَ وَلَكِنْ عَجَبٌ مِنْ تَفَرُّطِ الْأَجَالِ

The word الْعِبَاد in ¹Amr's verse: (Tawīl)

بأيديهم مقرومة ومغاليق يعود بإرزاق العباد منيحتها

does not refer only to Christians as it was commonly assumed, but it includes all people irrespective of their religious affiliations; ² as we have pointed out earlier the Jāhilīs regarded themselves as Allāh's creatures.

Jāriya b. al-Hajjāj, known as Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī (d.c.555), was fortunate to have a rich and generous neighbour called Hammām as his patron who protected him and showered him with gifts, and their friendship became a by-word: "Like the neighbour of Abū Du'ād". ³ In gratitude Abū Du'ād dedicated many poems to his patron: ⁴ (Kāmil)

فإلى ابن همام بن مرة أصدت طعن الخليط بهم قتل زبالها
أنعت نعمة ماجد ذي ينة نصبت عليه من العلاء اظلالها
وجعلنا دون الولي فأصبحت زبأ منقطعا إليك عقالها

Abū Du'ād had a wife known as Umm Habtar; and she was always criticising him for being extravagant. Abū Du'ād took his wife's quibbling light-heartedly: ⁵ (Khafīf)

في ثلاثين دغدعتها حقوق أصبحت أم حبرتشكوني
زعمت لي بانني أنسد الما ل وأزويه عن قضاء ديوني
أملت أن أكون عبد الما وتنهنا بنافع الما دوني

Abū Du'ād's wife was annoyed for not being taken seriously, and gave her husband the cold shoulder. Abū Du'ād mused over her behaviour: ¹ (Basīt)

والمراء يعجز لا محالة	حاولت حين صرّيتني
والدهر يلعب بالفتى	والدهر يلعب بالفتى
والشح يورثه الكلالة	والمراء يكيب ماله
والحر تكفيه المقالة	والبسد يفرع بالعصا
فالحين من بعض المقالة	والسكت خير للفتى

Most of the lines of the poem have passed into the repository of proverb-lore and are still used in contemporary speech.

Abū Du'ād's longest surviving poem, considered by classical poets and critics as his greatest, ² is a polythematic gasīda in forty verses. In the opening nasīb section the poet compares the howdas of the departing ladies to sailing boats and to palm trees, and the veiled faces of the ladies to the sun covered by clouds: ³ (Khafīf)

منع النوم ماوي التهمام	وجدير بالهم من لا ينسام
من ينم ليله فقد أعمل اللي	ل ، وذو البث ساهير مستهام
هل ترى من طعائن باكرات	كالعدولي سيرهن انقحام
واكنات يفضمن من قضب الضر	م ويشقى بدلهن الهمام
وسبتني بنات نخلة لو كند	ت قريبا ألم بي إلام

يَكْتَسِبِينَ السُّجُوجَ فِي كَبَّةِ الْمَشَّةِ تَيَّأُ وَيُبْلُهُ أَحْلَامُهُنَّ ، وَسَامُ
 وَيَصْنُ الرُّجُوهَ فِي الْمَيْسَنَارِ يَّ كَمَا صَانَ قَرْنَ شَمْسٍ غَمَامُ
 وَتَرَاهُنَّ فِي الْهَوَادِجِ كَالغَيْرِ لَانَ مَا إِنَّ يَنَالُهُنَّ السَّيَامُ
 نَخَلَاتٌ مِنْ نَخْلِ بَيْسَانَ أَيْشَةَ نَ جَمِيعاً وَنَبْتُهُنَّ تُوَامُ
 وَتَدَلَّتْ عَلَى مَنَاهِلِ بُرْدٍ وَفُلَيْحٌ مِنْ دُونِهَا وَسَنَامُ

Abū Du'ād goes on to talk about his cousin who accused him unjustly, and about the dead relatives he loved and missed, and whose souls have turned into owls perched on their graves:¹

ولقد رأيتني ابن عمي كعب
 غير ذنب بني كنانة إنني
 لا أعدُّ الإيتارَ عُدماً ولكن
 فقد من قد رزيتُهُ الإعدامُ
 من رجالٍ من الأقاربِ فادوا
 من حذاقِهم الرُّؤوسِ العظامُ
 سُلطَ الدفنُ والمنونُ عليهم
 فدلهم في صدَى المقابرِ حَمَامُ

Abū Du'ād then moves on to describe camels, horses and the hunt:²

إيلي الإبلُ لا يُحَوِّزُهَا الرَّأْيُ عُونَ مَجَّ النَّدَى عَلَيْهَا الْمَدَامُ
 فَإِذَا أَقْبَلْتُ نَقُولُ إِكَامُ مُشْرِفَاتٌ فَوْقَ الْإِكَامِ إِكَامُ
 وَإِذَا أَعْرَضْتُ نَقُولُ قُصُورُ مِنْ سَمَاهِيحٍ فَوْقِهَا آطَامُ
 وَإِذَا مَا فَجِئْتَهَا بَطْنَ غَيْبٍ قَلَّتْ نَخْلٌ قَدْ حَانَ مِنْهَا حِرَامُ

فَهِيَ مَا إِنْ تُبِينُ مِنْ سَلْفِ أَرْ عَنْ طَوْدٍ لِسَرِيرِهِ قُدَامُ
 مُكْفَهْرٌ عَلَى حَوَاجِبِهِ يَغُ رَقٌ فِي جَمْعِهِ الْخَمِيسُ اللَّهَامُ
 فَارِسٌ طَارِدٌ وَمُلْتَقِطٌ بِيَدِ ضَاٌ وَخَيْلٌ تَعْدُو وَأُخْرَى صِيَامُ
 قَدْ بَرَأْنُ غِرَّةَ الصَّيْدِ وَالْإِغَاءِ لِمَاءِ حَتَّى كَانَهُنَّ جِلَامُ

The word **تَوَامٌ** in Abū Du'ād's verse:

نَخَلَاتُ مِنْ نَخْلٍ بَيْسَانَ أَيْتَغُ مِنْ جَمِيعًا وَنَخْلَيْنِ تَوَامٌ

is an example of the rarely used plural form **فُعَالٌ** whose singular form is **تَوَامٌ**¹. The **تَوَامٌ** form has also another plural form **تَوَائِمٌ**, as in the word **تَوَائِمٌ** in al-Muraqqish al-Asghar's verse:²

تَحْلَيْنُ يَأْقُوتًا وَشَذْرًا وَصَيْفَةً وَجَزْعًا ظَفَارِيًّا وَذُرًّا تَوَائِمٌ

Abū Du'ād was in charge of the stables of al-Mundhir b. Mā' al-Samā'³. Abū Du'ād had a vast knowledge of horses and wrote several poems on them, which were highly commended by classical critics. His famous poem on his graceful and fast-running horse on which he used to go hunting early in the morning was a favourite of Abū al-Aswad al-Du'ali:⁴ (Khafīf)

وَلَقَدْ أَغْنَيْدِي بِدَانِعِ رُكْنِي أَحْوَذِي ذُو مَيْعَةِ إِضْرِيحُ
 يَخْلُطُ مِزَابِلَ مَيْكْرٍ مِفْرَ مِيفَعٍ مِطْرَحِ مَسْبُوحِ نَحْرُوجِ
 سَلُوبٌ شَرَجِبٌ كَانَ رِمَاحَا حَمَلْتَهُ وَنِي السَّرَاةِ دُمُوجِ

The poem forms the background to the well-known description of horses in action in the Mu^callaqa of Imru' al-Qais.¹

There is a fragment of a love poem of two lines by Abū Du'ād which describes the passion-driven poet entering a house and finding a gazelle as beautiful as the moon uncovered by the clouds. The poem's narrative tone and rhythmic pace suggest that it must have been culled from a longer poem: (Kāmil)²

وَقَدْتُ دَخَلْتُ الْبَيْتَ بَعْدَ فَيَزُونِي إِلَى السَّيْرِ الْفَرَامُ
فَإِذَا غَزَا لِي عَاقِدُهُ كَأَنْبَدُرٍ قَشَعَتُهُ الْغَمَامُ

In a qit^{ca} Abū Du'ād reflects on death saying that neither man nor monument can escape death: (Basit)³

وَكُلُّ حِضْنٍ وَإِنْ طَالَتْ سَلَامَتُهُ يَوْمًا سَتُدْرِكُهُ النُّكْبَاءُ وَالْحُوبُ
كُلُّ أَمْرٍ بِلِقَاءِ الْمَوْتِ مُرْتَهَنٌ كَأَنَّهُ غَرَضٌ لِلْمَوْتِ مَنْصُوبٌ

Abū Ziyād was the kunya of ^cAbīd b. al-Abras (d.530s) whose grand-father Suwaid b. ^cAmr al-Asadī took part in the Battle of Yawm al-Sullān.⁴ Nothing is known about ^cAbīd's early life except that when he was a young man, a man from the Banū al-Zinya saw him resting under a shady tree beside his sister May and insinuated: (Rajaz)⁵

ذَلِكَ عَبِيدٌ قَدْ أَصَابَ مَيًّا يَا نَيْتَهُ أَلْتَحَجَّهَا صَبِيًّا
فَحَمَلَتْ فَوَلَدَتْ ضَاوِيًّا

°Abīd was upset by the man's insinuation and cried:
 "Lord, if the man has wronged me by falsely accusing me,
 help me to fight him." °Abīd slept and dreamt that someone
 stuffed his mouth with a ball of poems and ordered him to
 get up. °Abīd woke up reciting his first poem:¹ (Ramal)

يا بني الرّبيّة ما غرّكم لكم الويل بسرّالٍ حُجْرُ

°Abīd was involved in the affairs of his people, the
 Banū Asad, who were under the tutelage of King Hujr of
 Kinda. Once the Banū Asad refused to pay their tribute and
 beat up the tribute collector. The king marched on the Banū
 Asad and ruthlessly subdued them and transferred them to
 the Tihāma region and imprisoned their leaders. °Abīd was
 shocked by the scale of the retaliation and appealed to the
 king to be merciful to his people and to free the
 prisoners:² (Kāmil)

يا عَينِ فابكبي ما بيّ أسدٍ فهِمُ أهلُ النّدامَةِ
 حِلاّ - أبَيّت اللّعن - حِلاّ - إنّ فيما قُلّت آتاهُ
 في كلّ وادٍ بَينَ بَربَ فالقُصُورِ إلى اليَمامَةِ
 تَضُربُ عانٍ أو مِيا حُ نُحَرِّقِ أو صَوْتُ هابَةِ
 ومَنَعَتَهُمُ نَجِداً فَقَدُ حَلَلُوا على وَجَلِ يَمامَةِ
 بِرِمَتِ بَنُو أسدٍ كَما بِرِمَتِ بَبيضِها الحَمامَةِ
 جَعَلتُ كَما عودَينِ مِن نَشَمِ وآخَرَ مِن نَمامَةِ

إِمَّا تَرَكَتَ تَرَكَتَ عَفْوًا أَوْ قَتَلْتَ فَلَا مَلَامَةَ
 أَنْتَ الْمَالِكُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَهُمْ الْعَبِيدُ إِلَى الْقِيَامَةِ
 ذَلُّوا لِسَوْطِكَ مِثْلَ مَا ذَلَّ الْأَشْتِيرُ ذُو الْحِرَاءِ

The king was touched by the poem, freed the prisoners and
 let the Banū Asad return to their homeland.¹

Abid improved his relationship with the Kinda court,
 not only with the king, but also with the king's brothers,
 as can be deduced from his panegyric addressed to the
 king's brother Sharāhīl:² (Kāmil)

إِنَّ الْحَوَادِثَ قَدْ تَجِيءُ بِهَا الْعَدُوُّ وَالصُّبْحُ وَالْإِمْسَاءُ مِنْهَا مَوْعِدُ
 وَالنَّاسُ يَلْتَحُونَ الْأَمِيرَ إِذَا غَوَى حَطَبَ الصَّوَابِ وَلَا يُلَامُ الْمُرْشِدُ
 وَالْمَرْءُ مِنْ رَبِّ الْمَنُونِ بِغَيْرَةٍ وَعَدَا الْعَدَاءُ وَلَا تُودَعُ مَهْدَدُ
 وَإِلَى شَرَّاحِيْلَ الْهَمَامِ بِنَصْرِهِ نَصَرَ الْأَشَاءِ سَرِيهُ مُسْتَرْغَدُ
 مَنْ سَبَّهِ سَحَّ الْفُرَاتِ وَحَمَلَهُ مَزَنُ الْجِبَالِ وَنَيْلُهُ لَا يَنْفَدُ

Abid was beset by domestic problems. In an amusing
 poem Abid records a tiff he had with his wife in their old
 age. Thinking of his wife's strained behaviour Abid is not
 sure whether she is threatening to leave him because he is
 old, short of money and has fewer friends, or she is just
 being coquettish - if her intention is simply to leave him,
 he will not care, but if she is playing him up, it is
 rather late in the day for her to entertain such
 pretensions, for she, like him, has also passed her prime,

and so raising her eyebrows will get her nowhere: ¹ (Khafif)

تلكَ عِرْسِي غَضَبِي تُرِيدُ زِيَالِي أَلَيْبِينَ تُرِيدُ أَمٌ لِدَلَالِ
 إِنُّ يَكُنُّ طِبُّكَ الْفِرَاقَ فَلَا أَحْسَنِلُ أَنْ تَعْطِنِي صُدُورَ الْجِمَالِ
 أَوْ يَكُنُّ طِبُّكَ الدَّلَالِ فَلَتَوْنِي سَالِفِ الدَّهْرِ وَاللَّيَالِي الْخَوَالِي
 ذَاكَ إِذْ أَنْتِ كَالْمَهَاةِ وَإِذَا آ تِيكِ نَشْوَانِ مُرْخِيَا أَذْيَالِي
 فَدَعِي مَطَّ حَاجِبِيكِ وَعَيْشِي مَعَنَا بِالرَّجَاءِ وَالنَّامَالِ
 زَعَمْتَ أَنْتِي كَذِبَتْ وَأَتَى قَلَّ مَالِي وَضَنَّ عَنِّي الْمَوَالِي
 وَصَحَا بَاطِلِي وَأَصْبَحْتُ شَيْخَا لَا يُوَاتِي أَمْثَالَنَا أَمْثَالِي
 أَنْ رَأَيْتَنِي تَغَيَّرَ اللَّوْنُ مِثِّي وَعَلَا الشَّيْبُ مَفْرَقِي وَقَدَّالِي

Abid teases his wife by saying that she should be ashamed of letting herself be tempted by the promises of stingy and pennyless men, and that she should be so lucky to find another man like him: ²

فَارْفُضِي الْعَاذِلِينَ وَأَقْتِي حَيَاءً لَا يَكُونُوا عَلَيْكَ خَطًّا مِثَالِ
 وَبِحَظِّ مِمَّا نَعِيشُ فَلَا تَدُ حَسْبُ بِيكِ التَّرَهَاتُ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ
 مِنْهُمْ مُنْسِكٌ ، وَمِنْهُمْ عَدِيمٌ وَبِخِيلٌ عَلَيْكَ فِي بُخَالِ

And he never forgets to remind her of the glorious days of his youth when he visited beautiful girls, led the army to war and indulged in desert adventures: ³

وَلَقَدْ أَدْخَلُ الْحِجَاءَ عَلَى مَهْمُضُومَةِ الْكَشْحِ طَفْلَانَةَ كَالغَزَالِ
 فَتَعَاطَيْتُ جِيدَهَا ثُمَّ مَالَتْ مِيلَانَ الْكَثِيبِ بَيْنَ الرَّمَالِ
 ثُمَّ قَالَتْ : فِدَى لِنَفْسِكَ نَفْسِي وَفِدَاءُ لِمَالِ أَهْلِكَ مَالِ

ولقد أُنقِدُ الخَمِيسَ عَلَى الجِرِّ دَاءِ ذَاتِ الجِرَاءِ وَالتَّنْقَالِ
فَتَقِيَنِي بِنَحْرِهَا وَأَقِيَهَا بِقَضِيبٍ مِّنَ التَّنَا غَيْرِ بَالِي
ولقد أُنقَطِعُ السَّبَابَ وَالثُّهْبَ عَلَى الصَّيْعَرِيَّةِ الشَّمَالِ

And tails off with the contented note of a man satisfied
with his life:¹

ذَآكَ عَيْشٌ رَّضِيْتُهُ وَتَوَالِي كُلُّ عَيْشٍ مَّصِيرُهُ لِهَبَالِ

It appears from another poem which begins with a
reference to ruins and loaded camels trudging along a gorge
like ships that matters got worse for ^cAbīd, for his wife
became impossibly rude to him, and constantly threatened
to leave him now that he had grown old and useless:² (Wāfir)

تَغَيَّرَتِ الدِّيَارُ بِذِي الدَّفِينِ فَأَوْدِيَّةَ اللّوَى فَرِمَالِ لِينِ
فَخَرَجِي ذِرْوَةَ فِلْوَى ذِيَانِ يُعْفَى آيَهُ مَرُّ السَّنِينِ
تَبَيَّنَ صَاحِبِي أَنْتَرَى حُمُولًا يُشَبَّهُ سَيْرُهَا عَوْمَ السَّفِينِ
جَعَلَنَ الفَجَّ مِّنْ رَّكَكِ شِمَالًا وَنَكَهَنَ الطَّوَى عَنِ الِيمِينِ
أَلَا عَتَبْتُ عَلَى اليَوْمِ عِرْسِي، وَقَدْ هَبَّتْ بَلِيلُ تَشْتَكِينِي
فَقَالَتْ لِي: كَبُرْتُ، فَقُلْتُ: حَقًّا لَقَدْ أَخْلَفْتُ حِينَا بَعْدَ حِينِ
تُرِينِي آيَةَ الإِعْرَاضِ مِثْلَهَا وَقَضَّتْ فِي المَقَالَةِ بَعْدَ لِينِ
وَمَطَّتْ حَاجِبِيهَا أَنْ رَأَيْتَنِي كَبُرْتُ وَأَنْ قَدِ ابْيَضَّتْ قُرُونِي

^cAbīd told his wife not to be so hard, but if she really
wanted to leave him so she could lead the kind of life she
was dreaming of, he would not stand in her way:³

فقلتُ لها: رُوَيْدَكَ بَعْضَ عَتَبِي فَإِنِّي لَا أَرَى أَنْ تَزِدَهِمِي
وَعَيْشِي بِالَّذِي يُغْنِيكَ حَتَّى إِذَا مَا شِئْتَ أَنْ تَنْأَى فَبِي

°Abīd admits that he had lost his youth, but not the memory of his youth, when he indulged in the pleasures of life, like visiting the homes of beautiful and graceful virgins whose eyes were like those of oryxes:¹

فإنَّ يَكُ فَاتَنِي أَسْنَا شَبَابِي وَأَمْسَى الرَّأْسُ مِثِّي كَاللَّجِينِ
وَكَانَ النَّهْوُ حَالَتَنِي زَمَانًا فَأَضْحَى الْيَوْمَ مُنْقَطِعَ الْقَرِينِ
فَقَدُّ أَلِيجُ الْخَبَاءِ عَلَى الْعَذَارَى كَأَنَّ عِيُونَهُنَّ عِيُونُ عَيْنِ
يَمْلُنَ عَلَى بِالْأَقْرَابِ صَوْرًا وَبِالْأَجْيَادِ كَالرَّبِطِ الْمُصُونِ

°Abīd was killed by the Lakhmid king al-Mundhir b. Mā' al-Samā' (d.554). The story goes that °Abīd went to Hīra to visit Mundhir, and passed by the tomb of Ghariyyān where two of the king's boon-companions were buried. The day of °Abīd's arrival coincided with the day which had been designated by the king as "The Day of Bad Luck", for, on that day, whoever passed by the tomb would be killed. °Abīd was escorted to the king who had been advised to spare him, since he was a fine poet. The king delayed °Abīd's execution and requested from him to recite his popular poem which he declined. °Abīd was then asked in what manner he would like to die. °Abīd retorted that the choice of death granted to him was no better than that of the °Adites:²

(Ṭawīl)

وَحَسَبِي ذُو الْبُؤْسِ فِي يَوْمِ بُؤْسِهِ خِصَالًا أَرَى فِي كَلْبِهَا الْمَوْتَ قَدْ بَرَّقَ
 كَمَا خَسِرَتْ عَادٌ مِثْلَ الدَّهْرِ مَرَّةً سَحَابًا مَا فِيهَا لَذَى خَيْبَرَةَ أَنْقَى
 سَحَابِ رِيحٍ لَمْ تَوَكَّلْ بِسَلْدَةٍ فَتَتْرَكُهَا كَمَا لَيْسَلَةُ الطَّلَقُ

°Abid requested to be given wine until he was dead drunk and then to have his wrists' veins cut and be left to bleed to death. Mundhir then asked °Abid to read a poem of his own before being killed. °Abid said indifferently that being alive or dead did not matter to him: ¹ (Mutaqārib)

وَاللَّهِ إِنْ مِثُّ مَا ضَرَّ فِي وَإِنْ عِشْتُ مَا عِشْتُ فِي وَاحِدَةٍ
 فَأَبْلِغْ بَنِي وَأَعْمَامَهُمْ بِأَنَّ الْمَنَابِ هِيَ الْوَارِدَةُ
 لَمَّا مُدَّةٌ فَتُفُوسُ الْعِبَادِ إِلَيْهَا وَإِنْ كَرِهَتْ قَاصِدَةٌ
 فَلَا تَجْزَعُوا لِحَمَامِ دَنَا فَلِلْمَوْتِ مَا تَلِدُ الْوَالِدَةَ
 فَوَاللَّهِ إِنْ عِشْتُ مَا سَرَّني وَإِنْ مِتُّ مَا كَانَتْ الْعَائِدَةُ

Mundhir demanded another poem. °Abid responded sarcastically, implying that in spite of the different names we call death, the end result is the same: ² (Mutaqārib)

هِيَ الْحَمْرُ بِالْمَنْزَلِ تُكْتَبِي الطَّلَا كَمَا الذَّنْبُ يُكْتَبِي أبا جَعْدَةَ

°Abid was given wine which he drank until he lost consciousness, and was killed in the way he requested. ³

After the Banū Asad killed King Hujr (c.529), °Abid invariably taunted Imru'al-Qais by reminding him of his

debauched life which rendered him incapable of avenging the death of his father:¹ (Tawīl)

سَقَيْنَا امْرَأَ الْقَيْسِ بْنِ حَجْرٍ بِنِ حَارِثٍ كَثُوسَ الشَّجَا حَتَّى تَعَوَّدَ بِالْقَهْرِ
وَأَلْنَاهُ شُرْبَ نَاعِمٍ وَقَدْرَاقِرٍ وَأَعْيَاهُ ثَارًا كَانَ يَطْلُبُ فِي حُجْرِ
وَذَلِكَ لِعَسْرِي كَانَ أَمَهْلَ مَشْرَعَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْبَيْضِ الصَّوَارِمِ وَالسَّمْرِ

and:² (Tawīl)

وَأَنْتَ امْرُؤُ الْهَيْكَلِ زِقٌّ وَقَيْنَةٌ فَتُصْبِحُ مَحْمُورًا وَتُنْسِي مَتَارِكَا
عَنِ الْوَتْرِ حَتَّى أَحْرَزَ الْوَتْرَ أَهْلُهُ فَأَنْتَ تُبْكِي إِثْرَهُ مَتَهَالِكَا
فَلَا أَنْتَ بِالْأَوْتَارِ أَدْرَكْتَ أَهْلَهَا وَلَا كُنْتَ - إِذْ لَمْ تَنْتَصِرْ - مُتَمَسِكَا

Apart from a few references to Imru'al-Qais's failure to crush the Banū Asad soon after the murder of Hujr,³ °Abīd is silent on Imru'al-Qais's devastation of the Asadī tribe, nor does he allude to Imru'al-Qais's journey to Byzantium and to his subsequent tragic death. The reason for °Abīd's silence suggests that °Abīd might have died before Imru'al-Qais routed the Asadīs, possibly in the 530s.

Like many Late Jāhilī poets °Abīd tends to exaggerate his age. He says that he is so old that anyone who had been shrivelled by old age is surprised to see that he is still around and asks Time whether it has touched him. °Abīd says he is two hundred and twenty years old and he knew the first Lakhmid king and had only just missed meeting Dhū

al-Qarnain and David. ^cAbīd ends the poem by stressing that immortality is denied to man and only Allāh is eternal:¹

(Kāmil)

وَلْتَأْتِيَنِي بَعْدِي قُرُونٌ جَمَّةٌ تَرَعَى مَخَارِمَ أَيْكَمَةٍ وَلَدُودًا
فَالشَّمْسُ طَالِعَةٌ وَلَيْسَلٌ كَامِنٌ وَالنَّجْمُ يَجْرِي أُنْحُسًا وَسُعُودًا
حَتَّى يُقَالَ لِمَنْ تَعَرَّقَ دَهْرُهُ : يَا ذَا الزَّمَانَةِ . هَلْ رَأَيْتَ عَبِيدًا
مِثِّي زَمَانٍ كَامِلٍ وَنَصِيَّةٌ عِشْرِينَ عِشْتُ مُعْتَرَا مَحْمُودًا
أَدْرَكْتُ أَوَّلَ مُلْكٍ نَصْرٍ نَاشِئًا وَبِنَاءِ سِنْدَادٍ وَكَانَ أُبَيْدًا
وَطَلَبْتُ ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ حَتَّى فَاتَنِي رَكْنًا ، وَكَدْتُ بِأَنْ أَرَى دَاوُدَا
مَا تُبْتَغَى مِنْ بَعْدِ هَذَا عَيْشَةً إِلَّا الْخُلُودَ ، وَلَنْ يُنَالَ خُلُودَا
وَلَيَفْتَنِيَنَّ هَذَا وَذَلِكَ كِلَاهُمَا إِلَّا الْإِلَهَ وَوَجْهَهُ الْمَعْبُودَا

The literary biographer Sijistānī took ^cAbīd's word in respect of his age at face value, overlooking the fact that ^cAbīd was exaggerating the length of his life in order to boast of his vast experience of the political upheavals he had witnessed.² Judging from ^cAbīd's poems and the contemporary political events mentioned in his poems, he must have lived over one hundred years.

Perhaps more than any of his contemporaries and older contemporaries, ^cAbīd precludes most of his long poems with an aṭlāl section followed by a nasīb, or with just a nasīb. In his aṭlāl openings ^cAbīd invariably likens the ruins of the abandoned town of the girl he loved, now inhabited by ostriches and gazelles, to the writings in a book:³ (Khafīf)

لَمَنْ الدَّارُ أَفْقَرَتْ بِالْحِنَابِ غَيْرَ نُؤْيٍ وَدِمْنَةٍ كَالكِتَابِ

or to a tattered dress: (Basīt)¹

يَا دَارَ هِنْدٍ عَقَاها كُلُّ هَطَّالٍ بِالْحَوِّ مِثْلَ سَحِيحِ الْيُمْنَةِ الْبَالِي

or to the title of a book: (Tawīl)²

لَمَنْ دِمْنَةٌ أَقْوَتْ بِجُودَةٍ ضَرَعْدٍ تَلُوحُ كَعُنُوتِ الْكِتَابِ الْمُجَدِّدِ

or to the decorations on a sheath: (Khafīf)³

دَارُ حَتَّى أَصَابَهُمْ سَالِفُ الدَّهْرِ فَأُضْحَتْ دِيَارُهُمْ كَالْخِلَالِ

and he also likens the remains of the fireplaces to the faded writings in an old parchment: (Kāmil)⁴

لَمَنْ الدِّيَارُ بِصَاحَةِ فَحَرُّوسٍ دَرَسَتْ مِنْ الْإِفْطَارِ أَيْ دُرُوسٍ
إِلَّا أَوَارِيئًا كَانَ رُسُومَهَا فِي مُهْرَقٍ خَلَقَ الدَّوَاةَ لَبِيسِ

Sometimes ^cAbīd charges his atḷāl scenes with unexpected poignancy: (Tawīl)⁵

تُحَاوِلُ رَسْمًا مِنْ سُلَيْمَى دَكَادِكا خَلَاءَ تُعْنَيْهِمُ الرِّيحُ سَوَاهِكا
تَبَدَّلَ بَعْدَى مِنْ سُلَيْمَى وَأَهْلِهَا نَعَامًا تَرَعَّاهُ وَأُدْمًا تَرَاكَا
وَقَفْتُ بِهِ أَبْكِي بُكَاءَ حَمَامَةٍ أَرَاكِيَّةٍ تَدْعُو الْحَمَامَ الْأَوَارِكا
إِذَا ذَكَرْتُ يَوْمًا مِنَ الدَّهْرِ شَجَّوْهَا عَلَى فَرْعِ سَاقٍ أَذْرَتِ الدَّمْعَ سَافِكا

^cAbīd emphasises his sadness at the sight of the deserted dwellings of his girl Sulaimā, haunted by ostriches and

deers, by comparing himself to a dove calling other doves to mourn the cherished dove that, according to tradition, had been lost since Nūh's time. At other times the ruins have a dazing effect on ^cAbīd like that of the vintage wine of Bābil:¹ (Sarī^c)

أَمِينِ رَسُولٍ نُؤْيِيهَا نَاحِلٍ وَدِينِ دِيَارٍ دَمَعَكَ الْهَامِلِ
 قَدْ جَرَّتِ الرِّيحُ بِهِ ذَبَلَتْهَا عَامَا ، وَجَوْنٌ مُسْبِلٌ هَاطِلِ
 حَتَّى عَفَاها صَيَّتْ رَعْنَدُهُ دَانِي النَّوَاحِي مُسْبِلٌ وَأَبِلِ
 ظَلْتُ بِهَا كَأَنِّي شَارِبٌ صَهْبَاءَ مِمَّا عَتَقْتُ بَابِلِ

In one of his best atāl and nasīb preludes ^cAbīd says that on one occasion he stopped with his friends at the deserted dwellings where his love Hind once lived, and asked the ruins what happened to its inhabitants:² (Basīt)

يَا دَارَ هِنْدٍ عَفَاها كُلُّ هَطَّالٍ بِالْجَوِّ مِثْلَ تَمِيحِ الْيَمْنَةِ الْبَالِ
 جَرَّتْ عَلَيْهَا رِيَّاحُ الصَّيْفِ فَاطَّرَقَتْ وَالرِّيحُ مِمَّا تُعَفِّيها بِأَذْيَالِ
 حَبَسْتُ فِيهَا صِحَائِي كَيْ أُسَائِلَهَا وَالذَّمْعُ قَدْ بَلَّ مَسِّي جَيْبَ سِرْبَالِ
 شَوْقًا إِلَى الْحَيِّ أَيَّامَ الْجَمِيعِ بِهَا وَكَدَيْفَ يَطْرَبُ أَوْ يَشْتَاقُ أَمْثَالِ

^cAbīd, now getting old, with his hair turned grey, and dropped by women, falls back on the days when he indulged in dawn-drinking bouts in the company of refined and voluptuous women who happily responded to his touch, and the thrilling time he spent with them was constantly on his mind:³

وَقَدْ عَلَا لَمْتِي شَيْبٌ فَوَدَّ عَيْنِي مِنْهُ الْغَوَانِي وَدَاعَ الصَّارِمِ الْغَالِي
 وَقَهْوَةٌ كَرُفَاتِ الْمِسْكِ طَالَ بِهَا فِي دَنْتِهَا كَرُّ حَوْلٍ بَعْدَ أَحْوَالِ
 بَاكَرْتُهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَبْدُو الصَّبَاحُ لَنَا فِي بَيْتِ مَنْهَمِرِ الْكَفْتَيْنِ مِفْضَالِ
 وَغَيْلَةَ كَهَاءِ الْجَوِّ نَاعِمَةً كَأَنَّ رِيْقَتَهَا شَيْبَتُ بَسَلْسَالِ
 قَدْ بَتُّ الْعَيْبُهَا طَوْرًا وَتُلْعِيْبِي مُنَّمٌ انْصَرَفْتُ وَهِيَ مِثِّي عَلَى بَالِ

°Abid then regrets the passing of youth, and concludes that old age stigmatises people in a society of action:¹

بَانَ الشَّبَابُ فَآلَى لَا يُلِيمُ بِنَا وَاحْتَلَّ بِي مِنْ مَشِيْبٍ أَى مِحْلَالِ
 وَالشَّيْبُ شَيْنٌ لِمَنْ أَرَسَى بِسَاحَتِهِ لِلَّهِ دَرُّ سَوَادِ اللَّمَّةِ الْحَالِ

In the nasib section of another poem °Abid compares the soft houri-eyes of his girl to those of an oryx lovingly watching over its calf grazing with the herd or resting under a tree:² (Tawil)

وَإِذْ هِيَ حَوْرَاءُ الْمَدَامِعِ طِفْلَمَةً كَشَلِّ سَهَاءِ حُرَّةٍ أُمِّ فَرَقْدِ
 تُرَاعِي بِهِ نَبْتِ الْخَمَائِلِ بِالضَّحَى وَتَأْوِي بِهِ إِلَى أَرَاكِ وَغَرَقْدِ
 وَتَجْعَلُهُ فِي سِرِّهَا نُصْبَ عَيْنِهَا وَتَشِينِي عَلَيْهِ الْجِيدَ فِي كَلِّ مَرَقْدِ

And when his girl smiles her bright teeth sparkle like the dew-fresh camomile flowers of the meadows:³

غَدَاةَ بَدَّتْ مِنْ سِيرِهَا وَكَأَنَّهَا تَحَفُّ ثَنَائِيهَا بِحَالِكِ إِثْمِيدِ
 وَتَبْسِمُ عَنْ عَذْبِ اللَّثَاتِ كَأَنَّهُ أَفْجَحِي الرَّبِّي أَضْحَى وَظَاهِرُهُ نَدَى

And he longs for her company like a man dying for water:¹

فإني إلى سعدى وإن طال نأيتها إلى نيلها ما عشت كالحائم الصدى

One of ^cAbid's nasīb openings depicts a dawn scene with camels carrying ^cAbid's girl and her friends on colourful howdas, like palm trees loaded with fruit, ready to move out early in the morning. ^cAbid's girl was covering her delicate face with a veil held by her untattooed hand, which implied she was a respectable woman, for only whores had tattooed hands:² (Basīt)

لَمَنْ جَمَالَ فُبَيْلَ الصُّبْحِ مَزْمُومَةٌ مُسَيَّمَاتٌ بِلَادًا غَسِيرَ مَعْلُومَةٍ
عَالَتِينَ رَقْمًا وَأَنْمَاطًا مَظَاهِرَةً وَكِلَّةً بَعْتِيقِ الْعَقْلِ مَقْرُومَةٍ
مِلْعَبَتَرِي عَلَيْهَا إِذْ غَدَوْا صَبْحُ كَأَنَّهَا مِنْ نَجِيعِ الْجَوْفِ مَدْمُومَةٍ
كَأَنَّ أَطْعَامَهُنَّ نَخْلٌ مُوسَّسَةٌ سُودٌ ذَوَائِبُهَا بِالْحَسْلِ مَكْمُومَةٍ
فِيهِنَّ هِنْدٌ وَقَدْ هَامَ التُّوَادُ بِهَا بَيْضَاءُ آنِسَةٌ بِالْحُسْنِ مَوْسُومَةٍ
فَأَتَتْهَا كَتَهَاءِ الْجَوِّ نَاعِمَةٌ تُدْنِي النَّصِيفَ بِكَتْفٍ غَيْرِ مَوْشُومَةٍ

And her mouth tasted like vintage wine kept in a container sealed with musk for which foreign winesellers demanded the earth:³

كَأَنَّ رِيْنَتَهَا بَعْدَ الْكَرَى اغْتَبَقَتْ صَهْبَاءَ صَافِيَّةً بِالْمِسْكِ مَحْتُومَةٍ
مِمَّا يُغَالَى بِهَا الْبِيَاعُ عَتَقَهَا ذُو شَارِبٍ أَصْهَبَ يُغَالَى بِهَا السَّيْمَةِ

^cAbid ends the section with a description of the lightning

lashing the nimbus clouds, and of the downpour, and concludes that if he were to drink the rain it might cure his love-stricken heart:¹

يَا مَنْ لِبَرْقٍ أَبَيْتُ اللَّيْلَ أَرْقُبُهُ فِي مَكْنُفِهِرٍ وَفِي سَوْدَاءَ مَرَكُومِهِ
فَبَرَقَتْهَا حَرِيقٌ وَمَاؤُهَا دَفِيقٌ وَنَحْتُهَا رَيْقٌ وَفَوْقَهَا دَيْمَةٌ
فَذَلِكَ الْمَاءُ لَوْ أَتَى شَرِبْتُ بِهِ إِذْ نَشِمْتِي كَبِيدًا شَكَّاءَ مَكْلُومِهِ

A recurrent theme in ^cAbīd's poetry is the storm and the way lightning, clouds, wind and rain affect the landscape:² (Kāmil)

سَقَى الرَّيَّابَ مُجَلَّجِالُ الْأَكْنُفِ لَمَّاحٌ بِرُوقُهُ
جَوْنٌ تُكْرِكِرُهُ الصَّبَا وَهَنَا وَتَمْرِيهِ خَرِيْقُهُ
مَرَى الْعَيْفِ عِثَارُهُ حَتَّى إِذَا دَرَّتْ عُرُوقُهُ
وَدَنَا يُضِي رِبَابُهُ غَابًا بِضَرْمِهِ حَرِيْقُهُ
حَتَّى إِذَا مَا ذَرَعُهُ بِالْمَاءِ ضَاقَ فَمَا يُطِيقُهُ
هَبَّتْ لَهُ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ رِيحٌ يَمَانِيَّةٌ تَسُوقُهُ
حَلَّتْ عَزَالِيَهُ الْجَنُوبُ بُ فَتَجَّ وَأَمِيَّةٌ خَرُوقُهُ

There is a poem which classical critics are at variance as to its authorship. Asma^ci attributes the poem to Aws b. Hajar while Abū ^cUbaida ascribes it to ^cAbīd.³ With the exception of this poem, the storm, lightning, clouds and rain themes rarely appear in Aws's existing poems. Whereas the recurrence of the same themes, as well as the use of tarsi^c, love, wine and fatalistic motifs, in

addition to the reference to Mount Shatib, which was in the Banū Asad region, in °Abīd's poetry strengthen the argument in favour of its attribution to °Abīd. The poem opens with °Abīd's girl reproaching him for his heavy drinking and uncontrollable passion as he cajoles her to postpone her admonishing until the following morning, since he knows that he will one day sober up, then die and be buried, wrapped in a white shroud, in the bend of a wadi: ¹ (Basīt)

هَبَّتْ تَلُومٌ وَلَيْسَتْ سَاعَةَ الْأَحْيِ هَلَاً أَنْتَظَرْتِ بِهَذَا النَّوْمِ إِصْبَاحِي
 قَاتَلَهَا اللَّهُ تَلْحَافِي وَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ لِنَفْسِي إِفْسَادِي وَإِصْلَاحِي
 كَانَ الشَّبَابُ يَأْتِينَا وَيُعْجِبُنَا فَمَا وَهَبْنَا وَلَا بَعْنَا بِأَرْبَاحِ
 إِنْ أَشْرَبِ الْخَمْرَ أَوْ أُرْزَأْ لَهَا تَمْنَا فَلَا مَحَالَةَ يَوْمًا أَنْتِي صَاحِي
 وَلَا مَحَالَةَ مِنْ قَبْرِ بِمَحْنِيَّةٍ وَكَفَنٍ كَسْرَاةِ الثَّوْرِ وَضَاحِ

The rest of the poem is devoted to the storm which is arrestingly delineated. °Abīd observes the lightning flashing through the clouds like dawnlight, and the clouds so low he could almost touch with the palms of his hands: ²

يَا مَنْ لِبَرْقِ أَيْتِ اللَّيْلِ أَرْقُبُهُ مِنْ عَارِضِ كَبْيَاضِ الصُّبْحِ مَلَّاحِ
 دَانَ مُسِنٌ فَوَيْقَ الْأَرْضِ هَيْدَبُهُ يَكَادُ يَدْفَعُهُ مَنْ قَامَ بِالرَّاحِ

The downpour was battering and sweeping everything away, the lightning over Mount Shatib was like the white legs of a black horse racing with other horses, and the lightning-lit cumulus clouds, which resembled a fine colourful dress

or the light of a lamp, thundered like the husky voice of a she-camel tired of calling her camelets to graze; and all the land was covered in water:¹

يَنْزِعُ جِلْدَ الْحَصَى أَجَشُّ مَبْرَكٌ كَأَنَّهُ فَاحِصٌ أَوْ لَاعِبٌ دَاحٍ
 كَأَنَّ رَيْقَهُ لَمَّا عَلَا شَطْبًا أَقْرَابُ أْبْلَقَ يَنْفَى الْحَيْلَ رَمَاحٍ
 فَالْتَجَّ أَعْلَاهُ مُمَّ ارْتَجَّ أَسْفَلُهُ وَضَاقَ ذَرَعًا يَحْمَلُ الْمَاءَ مُنْصَاحٍ
 كَأَنَّمَا بَيْنَ أَعْلَاهُ وَأَسْفَلِهِ رَيْطٌ مُنْشَرَّةٌ أَوْ ضَوْءٌ مُصْبَاحٍ
 كَأَنَّ فِيهِ عِشَارًا جِلَّةً شُرْفًا شَعْنَا كَلَامِيمَ قَدَّ تَمَّتْ بِإِرْشَاحٍ
 بُحًّا حَتَا جِرُّهَا هُدًى لِمَشَافِرِهَا تُسِيمُ أَوْلَادَهَا فِي قَرَقَرٍ ضَاحِي
 هَبَّتْ جَنُوبٌ بِأَوْلَاهُ ، وَمَالَ بِهِ أَعْجَازُ مَزْنٍ بِسُخِّ الْمَاءِ دَلَّاحٍ
 فَتَنُّ بِنَجْوَتِهِ كَمَنْ يَمْحَفِلِيهِ وَالْمُسْتَكِينُ كَمَنْ يَمْشِي بِتِيرُوَاحٍ
 فَأَصْبَحَ الرَّوْضُ وَالْقَيْعَانُ مُمْرِعَةً مِينَ بَيْنَ مُرْتَفَقٍ فِيهِ وَمِينَ طَاحِي

Most of 'Abid's reflective verse has become part of the proverb-lore, and many of his verses are still being used now in contemporary speech: (Basit)²

يَا عَمْرُومَارَاحٍ مِنْ قَوْمٍ وَلَا ابْتَكَّرُوا إِلَّا وَاللِّمَوْتِ فِي آثَارِهِمْ حَادِي
 يَا عَمْرُومَا طَلَعَتْ شَمْسٌ وَلَا غَرَبَتْ إِلَّا تَتَقَرَّبُ أَجَالٌ لِمِيْعَادِي
 هَلْ نَحْنُ إِلَّا كَأَرْوَاحٍ تَمَرُّ بِهَا تَحْتَ التُّرَابِ وَأَجْسَادٍ كَأَجْسَادِي
 إِنَّ أَمَّا مَسَكَ يَوْمًا أَنْتَ مُدْرِكُهُ لَا حَاضِرٌ مُغْلِبٌ مِنْهُ وَلَا بَادِي
 فَانظُرْ إِلَى قِيءِ مَلِكٍ أَنْتَ تَارِكُهُ هَلْ تُرْسَسِينَ أَوْ أَخِيهِ بِأَوْتَادِي
 الْحَيْرُ يَبْتَنِي وَإِنْ طَالَ الرِّمَانُ بِهِ وَالشَّرُّ أَخْبَثُ مَا أَوْعَيْتَ مِنْ زَادِي

And:³ (Tawil)

وَلَا تُظْهِرَنَّ وُدَّ امْرِئٍ قَبْلَ خُبْرِهِ
 وَلَا تَتَّبِعَنَّ الرَّأْيَ مِنْهُ تَقْصُصُهُ
 وَلَا تَزْهَدَنَّ فِي وَصْلِ أَهْلِ قَرَابَةٍ
 وَإِنْ أَنْتَ فِي تَجْدٍ أَصَبْتَ غَنِيمَةً
 تَزَوَّدُ مِنْ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعًا فَإِنَّهُ
 تَمَّتْ مِرْيَةُ الْقُدَيْسِ مَوْتِي، وَإِنْ أَمْتُ
 لَعَلَّ الَّذِي يَرْجُو رَدَائِي وَمَوْتِي
 فَمَا عَيْشُ مَنْ يَرْجُو خِلَافِي بِضَائِرِي
 وَالْمَسْرَةَ أَيَّامٌ تُعَدُّ وَقَدْ رَعَتْ
 مَنِيَّتُهُ تَجْرِي لِيَوْقَتٍ وَقَصْرُهُ
 فَمَنْ لَمْ يَمُتْ فِي الْيَوْمِ لَا بُدَّ أَنَّهُ
 فَمَلَ لِلَّذِي يَبْغِي خِلَافَ الَّذِي مَضَى
 فَإِنَّا وَمَنْ قَدْ بَادَ مِنَّا لِكَالَّذِي
 وَبَعْدَ بِلَاءِ الْمَرْءِ فَادْنُمُ أَوْ أَحْتَدِ
 وَلَكِنْ بَرَأَى الْمَرْءُ ذِي اللَّسْبِ فَاقْتَدِ
 لِذُخْرِ، وَفِي صُرْمِ الْأَبَاعِدِ فَازْهَدِ
 فَعُدْ لِلَّذِي صَادَفَتْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَأَزْدَدْ
 عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ خَيْرٌ زَادِ الْمَرْوَدِ
 فَتِلْكَ سَبِيلٌ لَسْتُ فِيهَا بِأَوْحَدِ
 سَفَاها وَجُبْنَا. أَنْ يَكُونَ هُوَ الرَّدِي
 وَلَا مَوْتُ مَنْ قَدِمَاتِ قَبْلِي بِمُخْلِدِي
 حِبَالُ الْمَنَابِا لِلْفَتَى كُلِّ مَرَّصِدِ
 مُلَاقَاتِهَا يَوْمًا عَلَى غَيْرِ مَوْعِدِ
 سَيَعْلَقُهُ حَبْلُ الْمَنِيَّةِ مِنْ غَدِ
 تَهِيًّا لِأُخْرَى مِثْلِهَا فَكَأَنَّ قَدِ
 يَرْوُجُ وَكَالْقَاضِي الْبَتَاتِ لِبَغْتَدِي

And: ¹ (Khafif)

صَبَّرِ النَّفْسَ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مُلِيمٍ
 لَا تَضِيقَنَّ فِي الْأُمُورِ فَقَدْ تَكْشَفُ غَمَاؤُهَا بِغَيْرِ احْتِيَالِ
 رُبَّمَا تَجَزَعُ النَّفُوسُ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ لَهُ فُرْجَةٌ كَحَلِّ الْعِقَالِ

² Abid's travel scenes have crows of departure: (Kāmil)

زَعَمَ الْأَحِبَّةُ أَنْ رِحْلَتَنَا غَدًا وَبِذَلِكَ خَبَّرَنَا الْغُدَافُ الْأَسْوَدُ

and camels moving in and out of town like ships sailing
along the Tigris: ³ (Tawil)

تَبَصَّرَ خَلِيلِي هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ طَعَائِنِ بَيْمَانِيَّةٍ قَدْ تَعْتَسِدِي وَتَرُوحُ

كَعْتَوْمٍ سَفِينٍ فِي غَوَارِبِ لُجَّةٍ تَكْتَفُّهَا فِي وَسْطِ دِجْلَةَ رِيحُ
جَوَانِبِهَا تَغْشَى الْمَتَالِفَ أَشْرَفَتْ عَلَيْهِنَّ صُهْبٌ مِنْ يَهُودِ جُنُوحُ

As an old man, ^cAbīd was haunted by the days of his youth when times were better and his people were prosperous, and he particularly recalls frequenting with his young and noble friends houses where girls sang and played the lute in musk-scented rooms: ¹(Tawīl)

تَذَكَّرْتُ أَهْلَ الصَّالِحِينَ بِمَنْحُوبٍ	فَقَلَّبِي عَلَيْهِمْ هَالِكٌ جِيدٌ مَغْلُوبٍ
تَذَكَّرْتُ أَهْلَ الْخَيْرِ وَالْبَاعِ وَالنَّدَى	وَأَهْلَ عِتَاقِ الْجُرْدِ وَالْبِرِّ وَالطَّيِّبِ
وَبَنَاتِ بَفُوحِ الْمِسْكِ مِنْ حَجَرَانِهِ	تَسَدَّيْتُهُ مِنْ بَيْنِ سِرٍّ وَمَخْطُوبِ
وَمُسْمِعَةٍ قَدْ أَحْمَلَتِ الشَّرْبُ صَوْتَهَا	تَأَوَّى إِلَى أَوْتَارِ أَجْوَفِ مَنْحُوبِ
شَهِدْتُ بِفَيْتِيَانِ كِرَامٍ ، عَلَيْهِمُ	حِبَاءٌ لِمَنْ يَنْتَابُهُمْ غَيْرُ مَنْحُوبِ
وَحِرْقٍ مِنَ الْفَيْتِيَانِ أَكْرَمَ مَصْدَقًا	مِنْ السَّيْفِ قَدْ أَخْبِتُ لَيْسَ بِمَذْرُوبِ
فَأَصْبَحَ مَسِيٌّ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ قَدْ مَضَى	فَأَتَى قَدَّتِي فِي النَّاسِ لَيْسَ بِمَكْدُوبِ

Classical critics were unanimous in their praise of ^cAbīd's next poem. The critic Abū Zaid al-Qurashī included it in the "Mujamhara" section of his classic anthology Jamharat Ash^cār al-^cArab and considered it equal to any of The Seven Mu^callaqāt.² The critic Tibrizī added ^cAbīd's poem together with a poem by al-Nābigha al-Dubyānī, and another poem by A^cshā to the seven Mu^callaqāt, thereby editing a new anthology entitled The Ten Mu^callaqāt.³

Classical critics were puzzled and fascinated by the poem's rhythmical structure which did not fit into the Khalīlī metrical patterns,¹ and for this reason they compared it to the rhythm of a speech and of the spoken idiom.² On the other hand, Ibn Jinnī and Hāzīm al-Qartajānī refer to the metre of the poem as Mukhallā^c al-Basīt, because each hemistich ends with a fa^cūlun foot.³ The poem has four remarkable features each of which centres around a theme. The first feature is the aṭlāl opening which is different from other aṭlāl openings on account of its Ma^carrīan notion that the land on which his people once thrived had in time past been the home of other tribes:⁴

(Basīt)

أَفْتَرَّ مِنْ أَهْلِهِ مَلْحُوبٌ فَالْقَطُطِيَّاتُ فَالذَّنُوبُ
 فَرَاكِيْسٌ فَشُعَيْبَاتٌ فَذَاتُ فِرْقَيْنِ فَالْقَلْبِيبُ
 فَعَرْدَةٌ فَتَقَمًا حَبْرٌ لَيْسَ بِهَا مِنْهُمْ عَرِيبُ
 وَبُدِّلَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا وَحُوشًا وَغَيْرَتْ حَالَهَا الْخُطُوبُ
 أَرْضٌ تَوَارَتْهَا شَعُوبٌ فَكُلُّ مَنْ حَلَّهَا مَحْرُوبُ
 إِمَّا، قَتِيْلًا وَإِمَّا هَالِكًا وَالشَّيْبُ شَيْنٌ لِمَنْ يَشِيْبُ

The second feature is the extended image of the eyes over-flowing with tears which are first compared to water coming out of an old punctured leather bottle, then to a river running down a hill or in a valley, and then to a stream flanked by palm trees:⁵

عَيْنَاكَ دَمْعُهُمَا سَرُوبٌ كَأَنَّ شَأْنَيْنِيهَا شَعِيبٌ
 وَاهِيَّةٌ أَوْ مَعِينٌ مُمَعِنٌ مِّنْ هَضْبَةِ دُونِهَا لُحُوبٌ
 أَوْ فَلَاحٌ مَا يَبْطِنُ وَادٍ لِلْمَاءِ مِّنْ تَحْتِهِ قَسِيبٌ
 أَوْ جَدُولٌ فِي ظِلَالٍ تَخْلُ لِلْمَاءِ مِّنْ تَحْتِهِ سُكُوبٌ

The extended eye-image is effectively sustained by the comparative device كَأَنَّ and the conjunction أَوْ. ^cAbīd's rhythmic structure of the image and the technique of the extended image influenced the Tafīla poet Badr Shākīr al-Sayyāb's (1926-64) conception of imagery. Sayyāb, like ^cAbīd, uses the same technical tools to build his extended image: ¹(Rajaz)

عَيْنَاكَ غَابَتَا نَحِيلِ سَاعَةِ السَّحَرِ ،
 أَوْ شَرَفَتَا رَاحَ بِنَايَ عِنْمَا الْقَمَرِ .
 عَيْنَاكَ حِينَ تَبْسُمَانِ تَوْرَقُ الْكَرُومُ
 وَتَرْقُصُ الْأَضْوَاءُ ... كَالْأَقْمَارِ فِي نَهْرٍ
 يَرْجُوهُ الْمَجْدَافُ وَهَذَا سَاعَةُ السَّحَرِ
 كَأَنَّمَا تَنْبُضُ فِي غُورِهَا ، التَّجْرُومُ ...

The third feature is meditative, and centres around ^cAbīd's belief in the Oneness of Allāh who never fails those who seek His help: ²

لَا يَعْظُ النَّاسُ مَنْ لَا يَعْظُ السُّدُورُ وَلَا يَنْفَعُ التَّنْبِيهُ
 لَا يَنْفَعُ اللَّبُّ عَن تَعَلُّمٍ إِلَّا السَّجِيَّاتُ وَالْقُلُوبُ
 فَقَدْ يَعُودُنَّ حَبِيبَا شَانِيٍّ وَيَرْجِعُنَّ شَانِيْنَا حَبِيبُ
 سَاعِدٌ بِأَرْضٍ إِذَا كُنْتَ بِهَا وَلَا تَقُلْ إِنِّي غَرِيبُ

قَد يُوَصِّلُ النَّازِحُ النَّاقِيَّ وَقَدْ يُقْطَعُ ذُو السُّهْمَةِ الْقَرِيبُ
 مَنْ يَسْأَلُ النَّاسَ يَحْرِمُوهُ وَسَائِلُ اللَّهِ لَا يَخِيبُ
 بِاللَّهِ يُدْرِكُ كُلُّ خَيْرٍ وَالْقَوْلُ فِي بَعْضِهِ تَلْغِيبُ
 وَاللَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ عِلَامٌ مَا أَخْفَتِ الْقُلُوبُ
 وَالْمَرْءُ مَا عَاشَ فِي تَكْذِيبٍ طُولُ الْحَيَاةِ لَهُ تَعْذِيبُ

The fourth feature revolves around the striking comparison of the speed of ^cAbid's horse to a hungry hawk crouching dejectedly in its nest, as though it has lost a hawkling, and with its feathers covered in snow; and all at once it sees a fox, and quickly shakes the snow off its feathers, and swoops on the fox. And when the fox sees the hawk approaching, it instinctively tries to run away, but realises there is no escape, so it straightens and fluffs up its tail defensively, and the hawk bounces on the screaming fox and claws it to the ground and kills it:¹

فَذَلِكَ عَصْرٌ وَقَدْ أُرَانِي تَحْمِلُنِي سَهْدَةٌ سُرْحُوبُ
 مُضَبَّرٌ خَلَقَهَا تَضْبِيرًا يَنْشَقُّ عَنْ وَجْهَيْهَا السَّيْبُ
 زَيْتِيَّةٌ نَاعِيمٌ عُرُوقُهَا وَلَسَيْنٌ أَسْرَهَا رَحِيبُ
 كَأَنَّهَا لِقْوَةٌ طَلُوبُ تَحْنُ فِي وَكْرَهَا الْقَلُوبُ
 بَاتَتْ عَلَى إِرْمٍ رَابِئَةٌ كَأَنَّهَا شَيْخَةٌ رَقُوبُ
 فَأَصْبَحَتْ فِي غَدَاةٍ قِرَّةٍ يَسْمُطُ عَنْ رِيشِهَا الضَّرِيبُ
 فَأَبْصَرَتْ تَعْلَبًا مِنْ سَاعَةٍ وَدُونَهُ سَبَسَبٌ جَدِيدُ
 فَتَفَضَّتْ رِيشَهَا وَانْتَفَضَّتْ وَهِيَ مِنْ نَهْضَةٍ قَرِيبُ
 فَاشْتَالَ وَارْتَاعَ مِنْ حَسِيْسِهَا وَفَعِلَهُ يَفْعَلُ الْمَدَّؤُوبُ

فَنَهَضَتْ نَحْوَهُ حَثِيثَةً وَحَرَدَتْ حَرْدَةً تَسِيبُ
 فَدَبَّ مِنْ رَأْيِهَا دَبِيبًا وَالْعَيْنُ حِمْلَاقُهَا مَقْلُوبُ
 فَأَدْرَكَتْهُ فَطَرَحَتْهُ وَالصَّيْدُ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا مَكْرُوبُ
 فَرَتَّحَتْهُ وَوَضَعَتْهُ فَكَدَحَتْ وَجْهَهُ الْجَبُوبُ
 فَعَاوَدَتْهُ فَرَفَعَتْهُ فَأَرْسَلَتْهُ وَهُوَ مَكْرُوبُ
 يَضْغُو وَمِخْلَبُهَا فِي دَفِّهِ لَا بُدَّ حَيْرُومُهُ مَسْمُوبُ

Abid was aware of his unique poetic genius and boasted that his unrivalled mastery of the art of poetry and prose was comparable to the swimming skills of a fish: ¹ (Wāfir)

سَلَّ الشُّعْرَاءَ هَلْ سَبَّحُوا كَسَبَّحِي بُجُورَ الشُّعْرِ أَوْ غَاصُوا مَغَاصِي
 لِسَانِي بِالنَّثِيرِ وَبِالْقَوَانِي وَبِالْأَسْجَاعِ أَسْهَرُ فِي الْغِيَاصِ
 مِنْ الْحَوْتِ الَّذِي فِي لُجِّ بَحْرِ يُجِيدُ السَّبْحَ فِي لُجِّجِ الْمَغَاصِ
 إِذَا مَا بَاصَ لَاحَ بَصْفُ حَتِّيهِ وَبَيْصُ فِي الْمَكْرَةِ وَفِي الْمَحَاصِ
 تَلَاوَصَ فِي الْمَدَاصِ مُلَاوَصَاتٍ لَهُ مَلَصَى دَوَاجِنُ بِالْمَلَاصِ
 بَنَاتُ الْمَاءِ لَيْسَ لَهَا حَيَاةٌ إِذَا أَخْرَجْتَهُنَّ مِنْ الْمَدَاصِ
 إِذَا قَبَضَتْ عَلَيْهِ الْكَفُّ حِينَا تَنَاعَصَ تَحْتَهَا أَيْ انْتِعَاصِ
 وَبَاصَ وَلاَصَ مِنْ مَلَصَى مِلَاصٍ وَحَوْتُ الْبَحْرِ أَسْوَدُ ذُو مِلَاصِ
 كَلَوْنِ الْمَاءِ أَسْوَدُ ذُو قُشُورٍ نُسِجِنَ تَلَاحِمَ السَّرْدِ الدَّلَاصِ

Abid's religious ideas and language are echoed in the Qur'an as illustrated in the following examples:

أَفْلِيحُ بِمَا شِئْتَ فَقَدْ يُدْرِكُ بِالضِّئِ نَفٍ وَقَدْ يُخَدَعُ الْأَرِيبُ

The Qur'an:

أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

وكل ذي غيبة يؤوبُ وغائب الموت لا يؤوبُ

The Qur'an¹: ﴿إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ﴾ ﴿بِأَرْوَاحٍ حَاطِرٍ﴾ ﴿إِنَّهُ أَرَابٌ﴾

فاشتال وارتماع من حسيها ورفمته بفعل الذووب

The Qur'an²: « لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيبَهَا »

Abid's poetry is wide-ranging, and shows he was far more inventive and original than any of his predecessors and contemporaries. His poetry is a watershed: on the one hand, it crystallised the Jāhilī poetic experience from its early days to the end of the pre-Imru'al-Qais period, and on the other, it opened new vistas for the succeeding generations. And because of this, the poets of the Imru'al-Qais and post-Imru'al-Qais periods found Abid's poetry richer in terms of subject matter, imagery and rhythm, and drew heavily on it, to the extent that some of his imagery was so extensively imitated that in the end it became part of the Jāhilī poetic conventions. The following examples of Abid's varied imagery illustrate this point:³ (Basit)

أَوْ لَا تَوَكَّ يَجْمَعُ لَا كِفَاءَ لَهُ قَوْمٌ هُمْ الْقَوْمُ فِي الْأَنْأَىٰ وَفِي الْبُعْدِ
يَجْحَفُلُ كَبْتِهِمِ اللَّيْلُ مُنْتَجِعٍ أَرْضَ الْعَدُوِّ لِهَامٍ وَأَفْرِ الْعَدَدِ

and:⁴ (Kāmil)

وَالْحَيْلُ عَاكِفَةٌ عَاتِيهِ كَأَنَّهَا تُنْقُ السَّخِيلِ نَاتٍ عَنِ الْجُرَامِ

and:⁵ (Tawil)

وَتَبَسُّمٌ عَنِ عَذْبِ اللَّثَاثِ كَأَنَّهُ أَقْحَابِي الرَّبِّي أَضْحَى وَظَاهِرُهُ نَدَى
فَلَاتِي إِلَى سَعْدَى وَإِنْ طَالَ نَأْيُهَا إِلَى نَيْلِهَا مَا عِشْتُ كَالْحَائِمِ الصَّدَى

and:¹ (Kāmil)

زَعَمَ الْأَحْيَةَ أَنْ رِحْلَتَنَا غَدًا وَبِذَاكَ خَبَرْنَا الْغُدَاةَ الْأَسْوَدَ

and:² (Khafif)

وَطِبَاءٌ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَبَارِيْقٌ بُلْحَيْنٍ تَخْنُو عَلَى الْأَطْفَالِ

and:³ (Basit)

فَقَدْ أَتْرَكَ الْقِرْنَ مُصْفَرًا أَنَامِلُهُ كَانَ أَثْوَابَهُ نُجَّتْ بِفِرْصَادِ

and:⁴ (Tawil)

كَأَنَّ صَبَا جَاءَتْ بِرِيحٍ لَطِيمَةً مِنْ الْمِسْكِ لَا تَسْطَاحُ بِالثَّمَنِ الْغَالِي
وَرِيحِ الْحُزَامَى فِي مَدَانِبِ رَوْضَةٍ جَلَا دِمْنُهَا سَارٍ مِنَ الْمُنَزَنِ هَمَطَالِ

Classical critics maintain that Imru'al-Qais was the Jāhiliī poet who invented and established the forms and poetic conventions of Jāhiliī poetry.⁵ But this is not the case, as we have seen from our study of the poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations, Ancient Jāhiliyya and the pre-Imru'al-Qais period of Late Jāhiliyya. Indeed, by the time of Imru'al-Qais, Jāhiliī poetry had developed a clearly defined poetic tradition with its distinct language, metres, rhyming patterns, conventions and structural and thematic forms which became the standard tradition of

Jāhili poetry. Classical critics also credit Imru'al-Qais with having introduced certain images and scenes into Jāhili poetry, overlooking the fact that such images and scenes betray the influence of 'Abīd's poetry, as can be gauged from the following examples:

Love scenes - 'Abīd:¹ (Basīt)

رُودَ الشَّبَابِ كَعَابَا ذَاتَ أَوْضَاحِ	وَقَدْ تَبَطَّنْتُ مِثْلَ الرِّيمِ آيَسَةً
فِي الصَّيْفِ حِينَ يَطِيبُ الْبَرْدُ لِلصَّاحِ	تُدْنِي الضَّجِيعَ إِذَا يَشْتَوُ وَتُخَصِرُهُ
كَمِنْزَجٍ شَهْدٍ بَأْتُرُجٍّ وَتُفَاحِ	تَخَالُ رَيْقَ شَنَايَاهَا إِذَا ابْتَسَمَتْ
حِينَ الظَّلَامِ مُهَيِّمٍ: ضَوْءُ مِصْبَاحِ	كَأَنَّ سُنَّتَهَا فِي كُلِّ دَاجِيَةٍ

Imru'al-Qais:² (Tawīl)

نَضَى الظَّلَامَ بِالْمِشَاءِ كَأَنَّهَا	مَنَارَةٌ مُمْسَى رَاهِبٍ مَبْتَلٍ
--	------------------------------------

and:³ (Tawīl)

يُضِيءُ الْفِرَاشَ وَجْهَهَا لَضَجِيْعِهَا	كَمِصْبَاحِ زَيْتٍ فِي فَنَادِيلِ ذُبَالٍ
--	---

and:⁴ (Kāmil)

يِضَاءُ مُرْتَجٍ رَوَادِفُهَا	فِي رَيْقِهَا كِثْلَافَةِ النَّحْلِ
يَجْلُو تَبَسُّمُهَا الظَّلَامَ رِبْحَلَةً	غَرَاءَ كَالْمِصْبَاحِ فِي الذُّبُلِ

and:⁵ (Tawīl)

كَأَنَّي لَمْ أَزْكَبْ جَوَادًا لِلذَّةِ	وَلَمْ أَتَبَطَّنْ كَاعِيَا ذَاتَ خَلْخَالِ
--	---

°Abīd¹: (Kāmil)

خَوْدٌ مُبْتَلَةٌ الْعِظَامِ كَأَنَّهَا بَرْدِيَّةٌ نَبَتَتْ خِلَالَ غُرُوسِ

Imru'al-Qais: (Tawīl)²

وَكَشِجٍ لَطِيفٍ كَالْجُدِيلِ مُخَصَّرٍ وَسَاقٍ كَأَنْبُوبِ السَّقِيِّ الْمَذَلِّ

°Abīd³: (Tawīl)

تَبَصَّرَ خَلِيلِي هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ ظِعَائِنِ بِيَمَانِيَّةٍ قَدْ تَغْتَدِي وَتَرُوحُ

Imru'al-Qais: (Tawīl)⁴

تَبَصَّرَ خَلِيلِي هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ ظِعَائِنِ سَوَالِكِ تَقْبَا بَيْنَ حَزْمِي شَعْبَعَبِ

°Abīd⁵: (Basīṭ)

هَبَّتْ تَلُومٌ وَليستُ سَاعَةَ الْأَحْيِ حَتَّى أَنْتَظَرْتِ بِهَذَا اللَّوْمِ إِصْبَاحِي
قَاتَلَهَا اللَّهُ تَلْحَانِي وَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ لِنَفْسِي إِفْسَادِي وَإِصْلَاحِي
كَانَ الشَّبَابُ يُلْهِنُنَا وَيُعْجِبُنَا فَمَا وَهَبْنَا وَلَا بَعْنَا بِأَرْبَاحِ

Imru'al-Qais: (Tawīl)⁶

بُخْتٌ وَقَدْ نَضَتْ لِنَوْمِ ثِيَابَهَا لَدَى السِّتْرِ إِلَّا لِبَسَةِ الْمَفْضَلِ
فَقَالَتْ يَمِينُ اللَّهِ مَالِكِ حِيلَةٍ وَمَا إِنْ أَرَى عَنْكَ الْعِمَايَةَ تَنْجَلِي
خَرَجْتُ بِهَا تَمَشِي تَجُرُّ وَرَاءَنَا عَلَى أَثَرَيْنَا ذَيْلَ مِرْطٍ مُرْحَلِ

°Abīd⁷: (Khafīf)

وَصَحَا بَاطِلٌ وَأَصْبَحْتُ شَيْخًا لَا بُوَاتِي أَنْتَا لَهَا أَنْتَالِي

Imru' al-Qais: ¹ (Tawīl)

أَلَا زَعَمْتَ بَسْبَاسَةَ الْيَوْمِ أَنِّي كَبُرْتُ وَالْأَيُّحْسِنُ اللَّهُ أَمْثَالِي

²Abid: (Basīt)

هَذَا، وَحَرَّبِ عَوَانَ قَدْ سَمَوْتُ لَهَا حَتَّى شَبَّبتُ لَهَا نَارًا بِإِشْعَالِ

Imru' al-Qais: ³ (Tawīl)

سَمَوْتُ إِلَيْهَا بَعْدَ مَا نَامَ أَهْلُهَا سُمُوَّ حَبَابِ الْمَاءِ حَالًا عَلَى حَالِ

⁴Abid: (Khafīf)

يَعْفِرُ الظَّنْبِيَّ وَالظَّلِيمَ وَيَلْوِي بِلَبُونِ الْعِزَابَةِ الْمِعْزَالِ
وَلَقَدْ أَدْخُلُ الْجَبَاءَ عَلَى مَيْتِ ضُومَةِ الْكَشْحِ طَفْلَةَ كَالغِزَالِ
فَتَعَاطَيْتُ جِيدَهَا ثُمَّ مَالَتْ مَيْلَانَ الْكَثِيبِ بَيْنَ الرَّمَالِ
ثُمَّ قَالَتْ: فِدَى لِنَفْسِكَ نَفْسِي وَفِدَاءُ لِمَالِ أَهْلِكَ مَالِي

Imru' al-Qais: ⁵ (Tawīl)

وَمِثْلِكَ بِيضَاءِ الْعَوَارِضِ طَفْلَةَ لَعُوبٍ تُنَسِّبِنِي إِذَا قَمْتُ سِرْبَالِي
كَحِقْفِ النَّقَا يَمْشِي الْوَالِيدَانِ فَوْقَهُ بَمَا أَحْتَسَبَا مِنْ لَيْنِ مَسِيٍّ وَتَسْهَالِ
لَطِيفَةٍ طَى الْكَشْحِ غَيْرِ مُفَاضَةٍ إِذَا أَنْفَلْتِ مُرْتَجَةً غَيْرِ مِتْفَالِ

Lightning - ⁶Abid: (Wafīr)

أَرَقْتُ لِضَوْءِ بَرَقِي فِي نَشَاصِ تَلْأَلَا فِي مُمَّأَلَةٍ غِصَاصِ
لَوَاقِحِ دَلْحِ بِالْمَاءِ سُحْمِ تَشْحُ الْمَاءِ مِنْ خَلْدَلِ الْخِصَاصِ
تَحَابِ ذَاتِ أَسْحَمِ مَكْتَهْرِ تَوَحَّى الْأَرْضِ قَطْرًا ذَا افْتِحَاصِ

تَأَلَّفَ فَاسْتَوَى طَبَقًا دُكَاكَا مُخِيلاً دُونَ مَشْعَبِهِ نَوَاصٍ
 كَلَيْسِلٍ مُظْلِمٍ الْحَجَرَاتِ دَاجٍ بَيْمٍ أَوْ كَبَّحِرٍ ذِي بَوَاصٍ
 كَانَ تَبَسُّمَ الْأَتْوَاءِ فِيهِ إِذَا مَا انْكَلَّ عَنْ لَمِيقِ مُصَاصٍ
 وَوَلَّاحَ بِهَا تَبَسُّمٌ وَأَضِاحٌ يَتْرِينُ صَفَائِحَ الْحُورِ الْقِيَاصِ

and¹: (Sari^c)

فَهَوَّ كَنِبْرَاسِ النَّسِيطِ أَوْ السَّفَرُضِ بِكَفِّ اللَّاعِبِ الْمُسْمِرِ

Imru' al-Qais:² (Tawil)

أَعْنَى عَلَى بَرْقِ أَرَاهُ وَمِیْضٍ يُضِيءُ حَبِيًّا فِي شَمَارِيخِ بِيضِ
 وَيَهْدَأُ تَارَاتِ سَنَاهُ وَتَارَةً يَنْوَهُ كَتَعْتَابِ الْكَسِيرِ الْمِیْضِ
 وَتَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ لَامِعَاتٌ كَأَنَّهَا أَكْفٌ تَلْقَى الْفَوْزَ عِنْدَ الْمِیْضِ

and³: (Tawil)

أَحَارٍ تَرَى بَرْقًا كَانَ وَمِیْضُهُ كَلَمَحِ الْيَدَيْنِ فِي حَبِيٍّ مُكَلَّلِ
 يُضِيءُ سَنَاهُ أَوْ مَصَائِحُ رَاهِبٍ أَهَانَ السَّلِيطَ فِي الذُّبَالِ الْمَقْتَلِ

and⁴: (Tawil)

وَلَيْلٍ كَمَوْجِ الْبَحْرِ أَرْخَى سُدُودَهُ عَلَى بِأَنْوَاعِ الْهَمُومِ لِيَبْتَلِي

Horses - Abid:⁵ (Tawil)

خَلَّوَجٍ بِرِجْلَيْهَا كَانَ فَرُوجِيهَا فَيَأِي سُهُوبٍ حِينَ تَحْتَتُ فِي الْآلِ

Imru' al-Qais:⁶ (Tawil)

وَأَنْتِ إِذَا أَسْتَدْبَرْتَهُ سَدَّ فَرْجَهُ بِضَافٍ فُوقَ الْأَرْضِ لَيْسَ بِأَعْزَلِ

¹Abid: (Kamil)

وَإِذَا اقْتَنَصْنَا لَا يَجِيفُ خِضَابُهَا وَكَأَنَّ بِيْرَكَتَهَا مَدَاكُ عَرُوسٍ

²Imru'al-Qais: (Tawil)

كَأَنَّ عَلَى الْكَتْفَيْنِ مِنْهُ إِذَا انْتَحَى مَدَاكُ عَرُوسٍ أَوْ صَرَائِعَ حَنْظَلٍ

Imru'al-Qais's comparison of the speed of his horse to that of a hawk swooping down on its prey is a replica of ¹Abid's last scene in his popular poem mentioned earlier: (Basit)

وَالرَّجُلُ طَائِحَةٌ وَاللَّوْنُ غَرِيْبٌ	وَالْمَيْنُ فَادِحَةٌ وَالْيَدُ سَائِحَةٌ
وَالْقُصْبُ مُضْطَمِرٌ وَالنَّهْثُ مَأْجُوبٌ	وَالْمَاءُ مِنْهَمِرٌ وَالشَّدُّ مُنْحَدِرٌ
صَقْعَاءُ لَاحٍ لَهَا بِالسَّرْحَةِ الذَّيْبُ	كَأَنَّهَا حِينَ فَاضَ الْمَاءُ وَاحْتَفَلَتْ
وَدُونَ مَوْقِعِهَا مِنْهُ شَنَاخِيْبٌ	فَأَبْصَرَتْ شَخْصَهُ مِنْ رَأْسِ مَرْقَبَةٍ
إِنْ الشَّقَاءُ عَلَى الْأَشْقَيْنِ مَصْبُوبٌ	صُبَّتْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا تَنْصَبُ مِنْ أَمَمٍ
وَخَانَهَا وَذَمُّ مِنْهَا وَتَكْرِيْبٌ	كَالَّذِي بَدَّتْ عُرَاهَا وَهِيَ مُثْقَلَةٌ
وَلَا كَيْدَ الَّذِي فِي الْأَرْضِ مَطْلُوبٌ	وَيُلْمَبُ مِنْ هَوَاءِ الْجَوِّ طَالِبَةٌ
مَا فِي اجْتِهَادٍ عَنِ الْإِسْرَاعِ تَغِيْبٌ	كَالْبَرْقِ وَالرَّيْحِ شَدًّا مِنْهُمَا عَجَبٌ
فَانْسَلَّ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا وَالذَّفُّ مَنْقُوبٌ	فَأَذْرَكَتُهُ فَنَالَتْهُ مَخَالِبُهَا
مِنْهَا وَمِنْهُ عَلَى الْعَقْبِ الشَّايِبُ	يَلُوذُ بِالصَّخْرِ مِنْهَا بَعْدَ مَا فَتَرَتْ
وَبِاللِّسَانِ وَبِالشَّدِّ قَدَيْنِ تَهْرِيْبٌ	ثُمَّ اسْتَعَاثَ بِدَحْلِ وَهِيَ تَعْفَرُهُ
وَلَا تَحْرَزُ إِلَّا وَهَوَ مَكْرُوبٌ	مَا أَخْطَأَتْهُ النَّيَايَا قَيْسَ أُنْمَلَةٌ
وَيَرْقُبُ الْعَيْشَ إِنْ الْعَيْشُ مَحْبُوبٌ	فَظَلَّ مُنْجِحِرًا مِنْهَا يِرَاقِبُهَا

Watery eyes - ¹Abīd: (Basīt)

عَيْنَاكَ دَمْعُهُمَا سَرُوبٌ كَأَنَّ شَأْنَيْهِمَا شَعِيبٌ
 وَاهِيَّةٌ أَوْ مَعِينٌ مُعِينٌ مِّنْ هَضْبَةٍ دُونَهَا لُحُوبٌ
 أَوْ فَلَاحٌ مَا يَبِطُنِ وَادٍ لِلْمَاءِ مِّنْ تَحْتِهِ قَسِيبٌ
 أَوْ جَدْوَلٌ فِي ظِلَالِ نَخْلٍ لِلْمَاءِ مِّنْ تَحْتِهِ سَكُوبٌ

Imru' al-Qais: ²(Basīt)

عَيْنَاكَ دَمْعُهُمَا سِجَالٌ كَأَنَّ شَأْنَيْهِمَا أَوْشَالٌ
 أَوْ جَدْوَلٌ فِي ظِلَالِ نَخْلٍ لِلْمَاءِ مِّنْ تَحْتِهِ مَجَالٌ

and: ³(Tawīl)

فَمَيْنَاكَ غَرْبًا جَدْوَلٍ فِي مَفَاضَةٍ كَمَرِّ الْخَلِيجِ فِي صَفِيحِ مُصَوَّبٍ

The over-lapping of ¹Abīd's and Imru' al-Qais's scenes and images is not coincidental but shows the direct influence of the older poet ¹Abīd on the younger poet Imru' al-Qais. Since ¹Abīd was one of the court poets of Imru' al-Qais's father, it was during his stay at court that he came into contact with Imru' al-Qais with whom he engaged in a test of poetic aptitude known as munāfara, as shown by the following poem in which ¹Abīd begins with the first bait followed by the second bait by Imru' al-Qais followed by the third bait by ¹Abīd then followed by the fourth bait by Imru' al-Qais, and the alternating pattern goes on until

the two poets call it a day: ¹ (Basit)

فقال عبيد :

ما حَيَّةٌ مَيِّتَةٌ أَحْيَتْ بِمَيِّتِهَا دَرْدَاءٌ مَا أَنْبَتَتْ سِنًا وَأَضْرَاسًا

فقال امرؤ القيس :

تلكَ الشَّعِيرَةُ تُسْفِي فِي سَنَابِلِهَا فَأُخْرِجَتْ بَعْدَ طَوْلِ الْمَكْثِ أَكْدَاسًا

فقال عبيد :

ما السُّودُ وَالْبَيْضُ وَالْأَسْهَاءُ وَاحِدَةٌ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ لِمَنْ النَّاسُ مَسَاسًا

فقال امرؤ القيس :

تلكَ السَّحَابُ إِذَا الرَّحْمَنُ أَرْسَلَهَا رَوَى بِهَا مِنْ مَحْوِلِ الْأَرْضِ أَيْبَاسًا

فقال عبيد :

ما مُرَّجَاتٌ عَلَى هَوْلِ مَرَاكِبِهَا يَتَقَطَّعْنَ طُولَ الْمَدَى سَيْرًا وَأَدْرَاسًا

فقال امرؤ القيس :

تلكَ النُّجُومُ إِذَا حَالَتْ مَطَالِعُهَا شَبَّهَتْهَا فِي سَوَادِ اللَّيْلِ أَقْبَاسًا

فقال عبيد :

ما الْقَاطِعَاتُ لِأَرْضٍ لَا أَنْيَسَ بِهَا تَأْتِي سِرَاعًا وَمَا يَرْجِعْنَ أَنْكَاسًا

فقال امرؤ القيس :

تلكَ الرِّيحُ إِذَا هَبَّتْ عَوَاصِفُهَا كَفَى بِأَذْيَالِهَا لِلتَّرَبِّ كَنَاسًا

فقال عبيد :

ما الْفَاجِعَاتُ جِهَارًا فِي عِلَاقِيهَا أَشَدُّ مِنْ فَيْلَقٍ مَمْلُوءَةٍ بِاسَا

فقال امرؤ القيس :

تلكَ الْمَنَايَا فَمَا يُبْقِينَ مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَكْفِيَنَّ حَمَتِي وَمَا يُبْقِينَ أَكْيَاسًا

فقال عبيد :

ما السَّابِقَاتُ سِرَاعَ الطَّيْرِ فِي سَهْلٍ لَا تَسْتَكِينُ وَلَوْ أَلْجَمْتَهَا فَاسًا

فقال امرؤ القيس :

تلكَ الْجِيَادُ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْمُ قَدْ سَبَّحُوا كَانُوا لِمَنْ غَدَاةَ الرَّوْعِ أَحْلَاسًا

فقال عبيد :

ما القاطِعاتُ لأَرْضِ الجَوِّ في طَلَقٍ قَبْلَ الصَّبَاحِ وَمَا يَسْرِينِ قِرْطَاسَا
فقال امرؤ القيس :

تلكَ الأمانِيُّ يترُكُنَ الفَتَى مَلِكَا دُونَ السَّمَاءِ ولم تَرَفَعْ بِهِ رَاسَا
فقال عبيد :

ما الحَاكِمُونَ بِإِلا سَمْعٍ وَلَا بَصَرٍ وَلَا لِسَانٍ فَصِيحٍ يُعْجِبُ النَّاسَا
فقال امرؤ القيس :

تلكَ المَوَازِينُ والرَّحْمَنُ أَنْزَلَهَا رَبُّ البَرِيَّةِ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ مِثْيَاسَا

Furthermore, ^cAbīd's influence on Imru'al-Qais manifests itself in the depiction of horses as well as in the structure of the polythematic gasīda that begins with an aṭlāl section followed by a nasīb and a chase section.

It seems that it was an oversight of classical critics to attribute innovative qualities to Imru'al-Qais which established him in their eyes as the father of Jāhilī poetry, when in fact, those same qualities belonged, as we have seen, to ^cAbīd, or had become part of the Jāhilī poetic heritage before Imru'al-Qais. Therefore, we can reasonably assume that ^cAbīd is the first major influence in shaping and determining the course of development of Jāhilī poetry. But this does not diminish the major role played by Imru'al-Qais in articulating the poetic tradition established by his predecessors and older contemporaries.¹

Page 89

1. Balādhurī, Ansāb, I, pp. 30-1.
2. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 33.
3. Jāhiz, Hayawān, I, p. 74.

Page 90

1. Ibid.
2. VI, p. 277.
3. Suyūtī, Muzhir, II, p. 477; Suyūtī, Wasā'il, p. 123; Abū Hilāl, Sharḥ, p. 428.
4. Suyūtī, Muzhir, II, p. 477.
5. II, pp. 479-8. It is unclear whether the Muhalhil of Asma^cī is the same Muhalhil of Ibn Sallām or another Muhalhil.
6. Abū al-Faraj and other critics invariably refer to poets who flourished from the time of the first important Jāhiliī poet Mudād b. ^cAmr al-Jurhumī to Imru' al-Qais.

Page 91

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, pp. 10, 24.
2. Ibid
3. Anbārī, Addād, pp. 43-4.

Page 92

1. ^cUbaid, Akhbār, pp. 496-7; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XI,

pp. 165-6.

2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XI, pp. 166-7.

Page 93

1. Yāqūt, Buldān, IV, pp. 1031-2.
2. Ibid., p. 1032.

Page 94

1. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt, p. 24.
2. He is also known as ^cAmr b. al-Ḥārith b. Mudād (Yāqūt, Buldān, IV, p. 623; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, p. 11; Ibn Hishām, Sīra, I, p. 120).
3. Ibn Hishām, Sīra, I, p. 122.
4. Ibn al-Azraqī, Akhbār, I, p. 96-9; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, pp. 17-19.

Page 95

1. Ibn al-Azraqī, Akhbār, I, pp. 99-100.

Page 96

1. Abū ^cUbad, Mu^cjam, I, p. 35.
2. Ibid., pp. 35-6.

Page 97

1. Ibid., p. 36.
2. Quṭrub, Azmina, pp. 116-26; Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 311-5. ^{لهم} and ^{الله} were used in Jāhiliyya, but

after Islam الله superseded لاه because the use of لاه was discouraged. (Khalīl, Ain, III, pp. 95-6).

Page 98

1. Ibn Sa^cid, Nashwat, II, p. 580-1; Tufail al-Ghanawī, Dīwān, p. 17; Marzubānī, Mu^cjam, p. 184.
2. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, pp. 28-9; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, pp. 104-5; Abū Hilāl, Sharḥ, pp. 428-9.
3. Ibn Duraid, Ishtiqāq, p. 269; al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Ikhtiyārāin, p. 1; Baghdādī, Khizāna, VII, p. 280.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIII, p. 78.
5. Abū ^cUbaid, Mu^cjam, I, pp. 32, 34.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Page 99

1. Marzūqī, Azmina, II, pp. 125-6, 130-1; Zamakhsharī, Mustaqṣā, I, pp. 127-8; Abū ^cUbaid, Simt, I, pp. 99-100.
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIII, pp. 78, 338; Balādhurī, Ansāb, I, p. 18; Marzūqī, Azmina, II, pp. 130-1; Abū ^cUbaid, Mu^cjam, I, p. 19; Abū ^cUbaid, Fasl, pp. 473-4; Abū ^cUbaid, Simt, I, pp. 99-100.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIII, p. 338.

Page 100

1. *Ibid.*, p. 79; Ibn Qutaiba, Ma^cārif, p. 617; Abū ^cUbaid, Mu^cjam, I, p. 20.

2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIII, p. 77.
3. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, pp. 27-8; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 104; Abū Hilāl, Sharḥ, p. 428.

Page 101

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 28; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 104; Abū ^cUbaid, Mu^cjam, I, p. 35.
2. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 24.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 105.

Page 102

1. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, p. 467.
2. Sijistānī, Wasāyā, pp. 122-3.
3. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 105.
4. Sijistānī, Wasāyā, pp. 123-5.

Page 103

1. Abū ^cUbaid, Mu^cjam, I, p. 46.
2. Ibid., pp. 47-8.
3. Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya, II, pp. 203-4.
4. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, p. 219.

Page 104

1. Ibid.
2. Abū ^cUbaid, Fasl, pp. 420-1.
3. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, p. 219. Tabarī says Mālik was

first succeeded by his brother ^cAmr, then by his son Jadhīma (Tārīkh, I, p. 612).

4. Ṭabari, Tārīkh, I, p. 614; Abū ^cUbaid, Fasl, pp. 124-5.

Page 105

1. Ṭabari, Tārīkh, pp. 614-5.
2. Ibid., p. 615.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 615-7.

Page 106

1. Ibid., pp. 613-14.
2. Tabaqāt, pp. 32-3.
3. Mu^ctalaf, p. 39; Khizāna, XI, p. 404.
4. Ikhtiyārain, p. 718.
5. Nashwat, I, p. 68.
6. Nawādir, p. 536.
7. Kitāb, III, pp. 517-8.
8. ^cAbth al-Walīd, p. 100; Sāhil, p. 523.
9. Nukat, II, p. 960.
10. Tārīkh, I, p. 613.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid, pp. 613-14.

Page 107

1. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, pp. 157-8, 270.

2. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, p. 618; al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Ikhtiyārain, p. 719.

Page 108

1. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, p. 621.
2. Ibid., pp. 621-2; al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Ikhtiyārain, p. 724.
3. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, p. 622.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibn al-Kalbī, Asnām, p. 34.

Page 109

1. Jāhiz, Hayawān, VI, p. 229; Zamakhsharī, Rabī^c, p. 383.
2. Jāhiz, Hayawān, VI, pp. 218-20; Zamakhsharī, Rabī^c, p. 382.
3. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 199; Abū ^cUbaid, Mu^cjam, I, pp. 69-75.
4. V, p. 268.
5. Aghānī, XXII, pp. 35-8; Qasā'id, pp. 63-8; Addād, I, p. 707.
6. Murūj, I, pp. 295-7; Sharh, pp. 41-2; Kāmil, I, p. 282; Ibar, II, pp. 348-9.
7. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXII, pp. 35-8; Ibn al-Shajarī, Mukhtārāt, p. 1.

Page 110

1. Mas^cūdi, Murūj, I, pp. 295-6.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibn al-Shajari, Mukhtārāt, pp. 1-5; Ibn Taifūr, Qasā'id, pp. 63-8.

Page 113

1. Abū ^cUbaid, Mu^cjam, I, pp. 69-75.

Page 114

1. Ibn Taifūr, Qasā'id, p. 63; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, I, p. 282.
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXII, p. 354.

Page 115

1. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 141.

Page 116

1. Ibid., pp. 141.
2. Ibid., pp. 141-2.

Page 117

1. Ibid., pp. 142-4.
2. Ibid., pp. 144, 148-9.
3. Ibid., pp. 145-6.

Page 118

1. Ibid., pp. 144-5.

2. Ibid., pp. 144, 148.
3. Ibid., pp. 146-7.

Page 119

1. Ibid., p. 147.

Page 120

1. Ibid., p. 142.
2. Ibid., p. 146.
3. Ibid., pp. 143-4.

Page 121

1. Dīwān, pp. 247-9.
2. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 145.
3. Dīwān, p. 216.

Page 122

1. Tha^cālibī, Fiqh, p. 73.
2. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 148.

Page 123

1. Ibid., pp. 148-9.
2. Ibid.

Page 124

1. Ibid., pp. 149-50.

Page 125

1. Diwān, pp. 422-6.
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, pp. 36, 38-40; ^cAbdarī, Timthāl, I, pp. 237-8, II, pp. 547-8; Baghdādī, Sharḥ, III, pp. 233-4.

Page 126

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, pp. 40-1, 43-4.

Page 127

1. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
2. Qurashī, Jamhara, II, pp. 646-51.

Page 129

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, p. 49; Ibn Duraid, Ishtiqaq, p. 441.
2. Ibn Duraid, Ishtiqaq, p. 441; Ibn al-Kalbī, Jamhara, p. 27; Baghdādī, Khizāna, III, pp. 357-8.
3. Asma^ci, Asma^ciyāt, p. 120; Mubbarrad, Kāmil, III, p. 60; Jāhiz, Bayān, II, p. 361.
4. Zakariyyā, Jalīs, I, pp. 478-9; Ibn Qutaiba, Uyūn, I, p. 240; Yāqūt, Buldān, II, p. 954; Jāhiz, Bayān, II, p. 361; Abū Hilāl, Jamhara, I, p. 217, II, pp. 383-4.

Page 130

1. Timthāl, I, p. 266.
2. I, p. 255, II, p. 302; Ibn ^cAbbās, Lughā, p. 27;
^cUkbarī, I^crāb, p. 80.
3. pp. 36-7.

Page 131

1. pp. 236-7.
2. pp. 217-8.
3. Ibid.; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, p. 36; Baghdādī,
Sharḥ, III, pp. 233-4.
4. Maqqarī, Nafh, IV, pp. 177-8.
5. Ma^carri, Ghufrān, p. 517.

Page 132

1. Jurjānī, Ishārāt, pp. 179-80; Jurjānī, Asrār, p. 108.
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, p. 36.
3. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 151.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., pp. 151-2.

Page 133

1. Ibid., p. 152.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 152-3.
4. Ibid., p. 156; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, Iqd, V, p. 213.

Page 134

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, pp. 36-7; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, pp. 214-5.
2. Tha^cālībī, Thimār, p. 308; Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 165.
3. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 161.
4. Ibid., pp. 157-8.

Page 136

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, p. 62.
2. Ibid., pp. 62-4; Marzubānī, Ash^cār, pp. 183-7.

Page 137

1. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 246.
2. Ibid., pp. 154-5; Maidānī, Majma^c, II, pp. 181-2; Zamakhsharī, Mustaqṣā, I, pp. 176-7; Tha^cālībī, Thimār, p. 308.

Page 138

1. Maidānī, Majma^c, II, pp. 181-2; Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 154-5.
2. Maidānī, Majma^c, II, p. 182; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, I, p. 387; Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 247-8.

Page 139

1. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 248.
2. Ibid., p. 249.
3. Ibid., pp. 250-1.

Page 140

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, pp. 61-2.
2. It was also believed that poets had jinn seers who inspired them to write their poems (Zamakhsharī, Rabī^c, pp. 383-4).

Page 141

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 33.
2. Ibn Ḥabīb, Kunā, p. 28.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, p. 53; Qālī, Amālī, II, p. 131.
4. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, I, pp. 387-90; Maidānī, Majma^c, II, pp. 182-3.
5. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, I, pp. 389-90.

Page 142

1. Ibid., p. 390; Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 163-4.

Page 143

1. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, p. 220.
2. Qālī, Amālī, II, p. 131; Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 168-70; Ibn Nubāta, Sarḥ, pp. 97-100.

Page 144

1. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 170.
2. Ibid., pp. 169-70. Abū Hilāl says the same shatr was repeated over twenty times (Sinā^catāin, p. 194).

Page 145

1. Ibid., p. 170.
2. Ibid, pp. 167-8.

Page 146

1. Ibid., pp. 176-7.
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, p. 59; Sijlimāsī, Manza^c, pp. 324-5.

Page 147

1. Shantamrī, Nukat, p. 560.
2. Muqātil, Ashbāh, p. 208; Abū Hilāl, Awā'il, I, p. 48.
3. Tibrizī, Wafī, p. 47; Jawharī, Arud^c, p. 18.
4. Qurashī, Jamhara, II, pp. 571-80; Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 172-4.

Page 150

1. Qālī, Amālī, II, p. 130.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Asma^cī, Nabāt, pp. 12-13.
5. Majāz, II, p. 13; Khalīl, Ain^c, I, p. 162; Abū Hilāl, Talkhīs, I, p. 307.

Page 151

1. Idāh, I, p. 191; Farrā', Ma^cānī, II, p. 169.

2. Majāz, I, p. 221; Īdāh, I, pp. 83-4.
3. Safadī, Mawsū^ca, I, p. 200 (n. 5). See poem on page 141.
4. Jāhiz, Hayawān, VI, p. 155.

Page 152

1. Balkhī, Bad', I, pp. 149-50.
2. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 173; Abū Hilāl, Awā'il, I, pp. 75-6.
3. Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 172, 174-5.
4. Ibid., p. 172.

Page 153

1. Ibid.; Abū Hilāl, Awā'il, I, pp. 75-6.
2. Dabbī, Amthāl, p. 121; Marzūqī, Sharh, III, p. 1025; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, VIII, p. 362, XII, p. 471.
3. Dabbī, Amthāl, p. 121.
4. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 164.
5. Ibid., p. 163.
6. Ibn al-Mu^ctazz, Badi^c, p. 1.
7. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, pp. 48-9; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, ^cIqd, V, pp. 220-1; Abū ^cUбайд, Fasl, pp. 305-6.
8. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, pp. 50-2.
9. Ibn Sa^cid, Nashwat, II, p. 642.

Page 154

1. ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, Mu^callaqa, p. 89.
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, p. 46; Cheikho, Shu^carā',

pp. 270-1.

Page 155

1. Maidānī, Majma^c, II, pp. 183-4; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, pp. 46-7; Ibn Nubāta, Sarh, I, pp. 96-8; Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 271-3; Ibn al-Qazzāz, ʿAsharāt, p. 274; Qālī, Dhail, p. 26; Asma^cī, Khail, p. 380; Abū Hilāl, Dīwān, II, p. 63.

Page 156

1. Ibn ʿAbdūn, Sharh, pp. 116-7. Abū Hilāl says that the same shatr is repeated more than twenty times (Sinā^catain, p. 194).

Page 157

1. Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 273-6.
2. Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, Durra, p. 418.
3. Ibid., p. 415.

Page 158

1. Ibn ʿAbdūn, Sharh, p. 117.
2. Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 276-7.
3. Ibid., p. 277.

Page 159

1. Ibid., p. 279.
2. Nahl: 116.
3. Ibn Manzur, Lisān, XXII, p. 93.

Page 160

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIX, p. 24.
2. Ibid., pp. 17-20; Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 205-6.

Page 161

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIX, p. 19.
2. Diwān, p. 9.
3. Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 206-7.

Page 162

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIX, pp. 17, 20.
2. Ibid., XIX, pp. 23-4; Raqīq, Qutb, pp. 418-9; Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 207.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIX, p. 22; Dabbī, Amthāl, p. 24; Marzubānī, Mu^cjam, p. 130.

Page 163

1. Dabbī, Amthāl, pp. 24-5; ^cUkbarī, Mashūf, I, pp. 225-6.
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIX, p. 23; Murtadā, Amālī, I, p. 240.

Page 164

1. Murtadā, Amālī, I, pp. 240-2; Diwān, p. 28.
2. Murtadā, Amālī, p. 242.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIX, pp. 25-6.

4. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 70.
5. Ibid., pp. 72-3.

Page 165

1. Maimanī, Tarā'if, pp. 14-5.
2. Ibid., pp. 11-2.

Page 166

1. Ibid., p. 12.
2. Ibid., pp. 12-3; Jurjānī, Ishārāt, p. 314; Tha^cālibī, Tamthīl, p. 51.

Page 167

1. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 223.
2. Khizāna, IV, p. 289; Abū Hilāl, Sinā^catāin, p. 225.
3. Qasā'id, p. 149.

Page 168

1. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 156.
2. Hayawān, VI, pp. 275, 280, 273-80; Ma^carrī, Ghufrān, p. 206.
3. Nuwairī, Nihāya, I, p. 87.
4. See pages 173-5.
5. Maimanī, Tarā'if, p. 3.

Page 169

1. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 223; Tha^cālibī, Muntahā,

p. 172; Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 70-1; Maimanī, Tarā'if, pp. 9-10; al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Ikhtiyārain, pp. 745-8.

Page 170

1. Jāhiz, Hayawān, II, p. 73; Ibn Qutaiba, Ma^cānī, I, p. 232.
2. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 223.
3. Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, p. 319-20.

Page 171

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 323; Batalyūsī, Hulal, pp. 18-9.
4. P. 344.
5. Ibid.
6. Pp. 163-4; Qudāma, Naqd, pp. 185-6; Baqillānī, I^cjāz, p. 123.

Page 172

1. Ibn Sinān, Sirr, p. 195; Ibn al-Bannā', Rawd, p. 163-4. The same word also means "light sleep" (Abū Hilāl, Mu^cjam, p. 156).
2. Qudāma, Naqd, pp. 38, 43.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, pp. 45-6, XXIV, pp. 93-4.
4. Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 243-5; Abū Tammām, Hamāsa, I, pp. 20-1.

Page 173

1. See pages 165-7.
2. Majallat al-Mawrid, VIII, No. 3, pp. 291-3.
3. Ibid., pp. 291-2; Usāma, Manāzil, pp. 138-9.

Page 174

1. This verse refers to the proverb لا تكن كالغز تبث عن المدينة (Tha^calibī, Khās, p. 14).
2. Majallat al-Mawrid, VIII, No. 3, pp. 292-3.

Page 175

1. Ibid., p. 293.
2. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 264.

Page 176

1. Ibid.; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, p. 46; Qālī, Dhail, p. 26; Batālyūsī, Hulal, pp. 244-6.
2. Qālī, Dhail, p. 26; Batālyūsī, Hulal, pp. 245-6.
3. Jāhiz, Hayawān, IV, p. 346.

Page 177

1. Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 268-9; Qālī, Dhail, p. 26.

Page 178

1. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 182; Yāqūt, Buldān, II, p. 434.
This incident is mentioned in ^cAmr b. Kulthūm's

Mu^callaqa (Abū Hilāl, Awā'il, I, p. 38).

2. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 183.
3. Ibid., p. 184; Ghundiĵānī, Asmā', p. 169; Abū ^cUbaid, Mu^cjam, I, p. 86.
4. Usāma, ^cAsā, p. 244.
5. Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 322-3.

Page 179

1. P. 262.
2. Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 184.
3. Ibid., pp. 184-7; Ibn Duraid, Ishtiqāq, pp. 14-15. Ma^carrī, Sāhil, pp. 598, 602.

Page 180

1. P. 599.
2. Tafsir, p. 225; Farq, p. 428.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, p. 129; Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 184-7; Khalīl, ^cAin, V, p. 40; Abū ^cUmar al-Zāhid, ^cAsharāt, p. 137.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, p. 129; Cheikho, Shu^carā', p. 283.

Page 181

1. Tibrīzī, Sharh, II, p. 991-2.
2. Ibid., pp. 986-900, 992-3.

Page 182

1. Ibid.

Page 183

1. Ibid., pp. 993-4.
2. Ibid., pp. 995-9.

Page 184

1. Ibid., pp. 1050-1. The metrical structure of the first shatr is not right; the first foot needs an extra weak syllable to scan correctly. This discrepancy appears in the Mufaddaliyyāt and in all the classical commentaries of the Mufaddaliyyāt.
2. Ibid., pp. 1027-32.

Page 185

1. Ibid., pp. 1011-13.
2. Ibid., pp. 1052-62.

Page 186

1. P. 68.
2. Ibid.

Page 187

1. P. 182; Jurjānī, Dalā'il, p. 467; Ibn Rashīq, Qurāda, p. 181.
2. Hamdānī, Iklīl, II, pp. 314-5.

Page 189

1. Tibrīzī, Sharḥ, II, pp. 1077, 1090-1106; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, pp. 136-9.

Page 191

1. II, pp. 545-52; Mufaddal, Mufaddaliyyāt, pp. 241-3.

Page 193

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XVIII, pp. 139-41. The second ^cAjz is based on a proverb (Mu'arrij, Amthāl, p. 57).
2. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi'r, I, p. 376.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XVIII, p. 144; Dīwān, p. 54.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XVIII, pp. 144; Dīwān, p. 54. ^cAmr's use of the greeting expression أهلاً وسهلاً ومرحباً proves that Abū Hilāl and Sālihī are incorrect in saying that the greeting expression was introduced by Saif b. Dhī Yazan (Awā'il, I, p. 117; Subul, I, p. 147).
5. Dīwān, pp. 65-6.

Page 194

1. Ibid., p. 69.
2. Dīwān, p. 23; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XVIII, p. 142. أنوء refers to the proverb ما ساءه وناءه (Dabbī, Amthāl, p. 47).
3. Dīwān, pp. 26-7.

Page 195

1. Addād, p. 124; Addād, pp. 84-5; Abū al-Ṭayyib, Addād, I, pp. 3-4.
2. Dīwān, p. 47.

Page 196

1. Ma^carrī, Sāhil, p. 578.
2. Dīwān, pp. 55-6.

Page 197

1. Ibid., pp. 56-8.

Page 198

1. Ibid., pp. 42-3.
2. Abū Hilāl, Dīwān, I, pp. 276-7.

Page 201

1. Dīwān, p. 15.
2. Ibid., p. 63.
3. Ibid.

Page 202

1. Ibid., pp. 31-2.

Page 203

1. Ibid., p. 34.

2. Ibid., p. 37.

Page 204

1. Ibid., p. 66.
2. Ibid., pp. 66-7.
3. Ibid., p. 64; Batalyūsi, Farq, p. 585; ^cAbd al-Rahmān, Khalq, p. 223.

Page 205

1. Dīwān, ed. Sharīf, II, p. 186.
2. Dīwān, ed. Bustānī, p. 247.
3. Ibid., p. 278.
4. Dīwān, p. 63.
5. Ibid., p. 31.

Page 206

1. Ibid., p. 15.
2. Ibid; Muqātil, Ashbāh, p. 288.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XVI, p. 373; Tha^cālībī, Thimār, pp. 127-8; Ibn Khafājī, Raiḥāna, II, p. 380. The story of Abū Du'ād and his generous neighbour is mentioned in a poem by the Jāhilī poet al-Aswad b. Ya^cfur (Ibn Qutaiba, Ta'wīl, pp. 8-9).
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XVI, p. 377.
5. Ibid., p. 374.

Page 207

1. Ibid., p. 375.
2. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, pp. 238-9.
3. Asma^cī, Asma^ciyyāt, pp. 185-6.

Page 208

1. Ibid., p. 187.
2. Ibid., pp. 188-9.

Page 209

1. ^cUkbarī, Mashūf, I, p. 131.
2. Ibid., pp. 130-1.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XVI, p. 375.
4. Ibid., p. 376.

Page 210

1. Dīwān, p. 19.
2. Ma^carrī, Abth al-Walīd, pp. 324-5.
3. Ibn Dā'ūd, Zahra, II, p. 560.
4. Ibn Ḥabīb, Kunā, p. 288; Dīnawarī, Akhbār, p. 53.
5. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXII, p. 81.

Page 211

1. Ibid., p. 82.
2. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, pp. 105-6.

Page 212

1. Ibid., p. 106.

2. Dīwān, pp. 42, 45.

Page 213

1. Ibid., pp. 106-8. To raise one's eyebrows was regarded as a sign of haughtiness (Abū Hilāl, Mu^cjam, p. 147).
2. Dīwān, p. 108.
3. Ibid., p. 110.

Page 214

1. Ibid., p. 111.
2. Ibid., pp. 132-3.
3. Ibid., p. 133.

Page 215

1. Ibid., pp. 133-4.
2. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXII, pp. 87-9, 90-1.

Page 216

1. Ibid., p. 88; Dīwān, p. 62; Baghdādī, Khizāna, II, pp. 218-9.
2. Dīwān, p. 62. The ^cAjz is a proverb (Tha^cālibī, Thimār, p. 252). Ma^carrī assumes that the bait was written after the prohibition of wine, but does not justify his assumption (Ghufrān, p. 466).
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXII, p. 89; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 268.

Page 217

1. Dīwān, pp. 63-4.
2. Ibid., p. 94.
3. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, pp. 108, 267; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XXII, pp. 82-5; Baghdādī, Khizāna, II, pp. 213-4.

Page 218

1. Dīwān, pp. 61-2.
2. Sijistānī, Mu^cammarūn, pp. 75-6.
3. Dīwān, p. 21.

Page 219

1. Ibid., p. 101.
2. Ibid., p. 52.
3. Ibid., p. 105.
4. Ibid., p. 67.
5. Ibid., pp. 91-2.

Page 220

1. Ibid., pp. 97-8.
2. Ibid., p. 101.
3. Ibid., pp. 101, 103.

Page 221

1. Ibid., p. 104.

2. Ibid., p. 53.
3. Ibid.

Page 222

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., pp. 127-8.
3. Ibid., p. 128.

Page 223

1. Ibid., pp. 128-9.
2. Ibid., pp. 89-90.
3. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, pp. 207-8; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XI, p. 68; Jāhiz, Hayawān, VI, p. 132; Qālī, Amālī, I, p. 177; Ibn al-Shajari, Mukhtārāt, pp. 374-9; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, II, p. 561; Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt, pp. 76-7.

Page 224

1. Diwān, p. 34.
2. Ibid.

Page 225

1. Ibid., pp. 35-7.
2. Ibid., pp. 48-9; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 269.
3. Diwān, pp. 56-7.

Page 226

1. Ibid., pp. 111-2.
2. Ibid., p. 43. It appears from the verse that the proverb أَشْأَمُ مِنْ غُرَابِ الْبَيْنِ (Maidānī, Majma^c, II, pp. 194-7) predates ^cAbīd.
3. Dīwān, p. 30.

Page 227

1. Ibid., pp. 24-5.
2. I, p. 105, II, pp. 470-84.
3. Pp. 41-51.

Page 228

1. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, I, p. 396.
2. Ibn Ṭaifūr, Qasā'id, p. 36.
3. ^cArud, pp. 40-1; Minhāj, p. 257.
4. Dīwān, pp. 10-11.
5. Ibid., p. 12.

Page 229

1. Unshūdat al-Matar, p. 160.
2. Dīwān, pp. 13-5.

Page 230

1. Ibid., pp. 17-20.

Page 231

1. Ibid., pp. 76-8.

2. Abū ^cUbaida, Majāz, I, pp. 29-30; Ibn Qutaiba, Tafsīr, p. 39; Rāghib, Mufradāt, p. 399.

Page 232

1. Abū ^cUbaida, Majāz, II, pp. 179-80; Rāghib, Mufradāt, pp. 25-6.
2. Abū ^cUbaida, Majāz, II, p. 42.
3. Dīwān, p. 59.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Page 233

1. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
5. Ibn Rashīq, Umda, I, p. 49.

Page 234

1. Dīwān, p. 40.
2. Dīwān, p. 17.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Page 235

1. Dīwān, p. 68.

2. Diwān, p. 17.
3. Diwān, p. 30.
4. Diwān, p. 43.
5. Diwān, p. 34.
6. Diwān, p. 14.
7. Diwān, p. 107.

Page 236

1. Diwān, p. 28.
2. Diwān, p. 102.
3. Diwān, p. 31.
4. Diwān, p. 110.
5. Diwān, p. 30.
6. Diwān, pp. 75-6.

Page 237

1. Ibid., p. 139; Ibn al-Qazzāz, ʿAsharāt, p. 241.
2. Diwān, p. 72.
3. Ibid., p. 24.
4. Ibid., p. 18.
5. Diwān, p. 113.
6. Diwān, p. 23.

Page 238

1. Diwān, p. 70.
2. Diwān, p. 21.
3. Ibid., pp. 226-9.

Page 239

1. Dīwān, p. 12; Ibn Dā'ūd, Zahra, II, p. 812; 'Ukbarī, Mashūf, II, p. 579; Bātalyūsī, Farq, p. 368.
2. Dīwān, p. 189; Ibn Dā'ūd, Zahra, p. 812.
3. Dīwān, p. 44.

Page 240

1. 'Abīd, Dīwān, pp. 72-4; Tanasī, Nazm, pp. 155-6.

Page 241

1. 'Umda, p. 94.
2. Ibn Sharaf, Rasā'il, pp. 23-4.

Conclusion

In the previous chapters we have studied the work of over thirty poets and found that the bait and shatr structures, and virtually all the meters, like ramal, khafīf, mutaqārib and munsariḥ, are as old as Jāhilī poetry. We have also found that the tadmīn (enjambment) and the thematic forms like the prayer poem, epitaph poem, love poem, reflective poem, wine poem and chase poem, as well as the structural forms, like the muzdawaj, rajaz, qit^ca and qaṣīda, were in use long before Imru' al-Qais.

The assumption that Imru' al-Qais was the inventor of the polythematic qaṣīda, particularly the one that begins with an atḷāl section, falls apart when the work of Imru' al-Qais is compared to the work of his predecessors like Mudād b. ^cAmr al-Jurhumī, Uḥaiḥa b. al-Julāḥ, or his older contemporaries Muḥalhil, al-Ḥārith b. ^cUbād, Zuhair b. Janāb, al-Find al-Zimmānī, al-Akhnas b. Shihāb, al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar, ^cAmr b. Qamī'a, Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī and ^cAbīd b. al-Abras, all of whom wrote polythematic qaṣīdas and atḷāl poems. Indeed, Imru' al-Qais does not regard himself as the originator of the qaṣīda that begins with an atḷāl section, and he admits in more than one poem that he modelled his atḷāl poems on the work of Ibn Khidhām: (Kāmil)

عُوجًا عَلَى الطَّلَالِ الْمُجِيلِ لَعَنَّاهُ
نَبِيَّ الدِّيَارِ كَمَا بَكَى ابْنُ خَيْدَامِ

of Ibn Harām:¹

نَبِيّ الدِّيَارِ كَمَا بَكَى ابْنُ حَرَامٍ.

of Ibn Humām:²

يَا صَاحِبِيَّ قِفْنَا النَّوَاعِجَ سَاعَةً
نَبِيّ الدِّيَارِ كَمَا بَكَى ابْنُ حُمَامٍ.

and of Ibn Hidhām:³

عُوجًا عَلَى الطَّلَلِ الْمُحِيلِ لَعَلَّنَا
نَبِيّ الدِّيَارِ كَمَا بَكَى ابْنُ حِذَامٍ.

It is not clear whether the names of the four poets are variations of the same name or they belong to four different poets. Abū Ubaida says he was told by some country people from the tribe of the Banū Ja'far b. Kilāb that the verse in Imru'al-Qais's Mu'allaga: (Tawīl)

كَأَنِّي غَدَاةَ الْبَيْنِ يَوْمَ تَحْمَلُوا لَدَى سَمَرَاتِ الدَّارِ نَاقِفٌ حَنْظَلٌ

was by Ibn Khidhām.⁴ Ibn al-Kalbī says that the first five verses of Imru'al-Qais's Mu'allaga were by Ibn Harām;⁵

whereas others attribute the same five verses to

Muhalhil:⁶ (Tawīl)

بَسْفَطِ اللَّوَى ، بَيْنَ الدَّخُولِ فَحَوْمَلِ	فَمَا نَبِكِ مِنْ ذِكْرِي حَبِيبٍ وَمَنْزَلِ
لَا نَسَجْتَهَا مِنْ جُنُوبٍ وَشِمَالِ	فَتَوْضِيحَ فَالْمِقْرَاةِ ، لَمْ يَعْرفُ رَسْمَهَا
وَقِيَعَانِهَا . كَأَنَّهُ حَبٌّ فَلُفْلِ	تَرَى بَعَرَ الْأَرَامِ ، فِي عَرَصَانِهَا
لَدَى سَمَرَاتِ الْحَيِّ ، نَاقِفٌ حَنْظَلِ	كَأَنِّي غَدَاةَ الْبَيْنِ ، يَوْمَ تَحْمَلُوا ،
يَقُولُونَ : لَا تَهْلِكِ أَسَى ، وَتَجْمَلِ	وُقُوفًا بِهَا صَحْبِي عَلَيَّ مَطِيئُهُمْ ،

Ibn al-Kalbī also thinks that Imru'al-Qais b. Hāritha b. al-Humām b. Mu^cāwiya, the Ibn Humām of Imru'al-Qais, was the inventor of the aṭlāl genre, of which only one example has so far surfaced: (Basīt)

لَأَلِّ هِنْدِي بِجَنَبِي نَسَبِي دَارُ لَمْ يَنْحُ جِدَّتَهَا رِيحٌ وَأَمْطَارُ
 أَنَا تَرِينِي بِجَنَبِ الْيَتِّ مُضْطَجِعاً لَا يَطْبِينِي لَدَى الْحَيِّينِ أَبْكَارُ
 قُرْبَ بَيْتِ يُصِيمُ النَّوْمَ رَجْنُهُ أَفَاتُهُ إِنَّ بَعْضَ النَّوْمِ عَوَارُ

Ibn Humām, together with Zuhair b. Janāb, fought Muhalhil at the Battle of Khazāzā.² As for Ibn Hīdhām, Ibn Sallām says that nothing is known about him other than the reference in Imru'al-Qais's verse.³

Classical critics were intrigued by the thematic forms of aṭlāl and nasīb, and made every attempt to trace their origins, but came to no definite conclusion. When discussing the aṭlāl and the nasīb conventions, Ibn Qutaiba avoids tackling the question relating to their origins, and dwells on their function in the qasīda. He defines the polythematic qasīda as having four principal themes: aṭlāl, nasīb, chase and praise. The aṭlāl-nasīb section is associated with the beloved, the chase with a detailed description of the landscape with its flora and fauna and of the poet's riding beast, be it a camel or a horse, and the fourth section is in praise of the poet's patron. Ibn Qutaiba thinks the purpose of introducing the

first three themes is to create a longing for the countryside with which the poet's urban audience or readers were familiar, before the poet moves on to eulogise his patron.¹ Ibn Qutaiba's view of the qasīda would be valid had all the qasīdas been written in the same mode; but not all the qasīdas begin with an aṭlāl-nasīb opening, nor do they have hunting scenes nor panegyric sections. The word qasīda has four different meanings. Firstly, it simply means a poem, irrespective of its length. Secondly, it means a poem exceeding seven verses according to one theory, or exceeding ten verses according to another theory.² Thirdly, it means a long polythematic poem as detailed by Ibn Qutaiba. Fourthly, it means a long polythematic poem with no fixed themes. Therefore, Ibn Qutaiba's definition of the qasīda applies to the Umayyad and Abbasid panegyric qasīda rather than to the flexible Jāhilī polythematic qasīda.

In Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān, Ibn Qutaiba says the reason why the poet starts with an aṭlāl motif is to drive home the message that nothing is eternal except Allāh.³

On the other hand, Ibn Aibak al-Dawādārī quotes Ma^carrī as saying that as the Arabs were merchants and were sometimes away from home, they always remembered nostalgically their families, their homes and the aṭlāl.⁴

that punctuated the landscape of the Arabian Peninsula, where they stopped to rest during their journeys. For this reason the old name of the month of *Jumād al-Ākhira* was ¹ حنين .

It is interesting to note that the poets of the *Imru al-Qais* and post-*Imru al-Qais* periods did not extend the scope of the atlāl imagery of their predecessors as they had done with the nasīb imagery, but they just reproduced the inherited imagery.

The earliest reference to a town once inhabited by people and now the haunt of gazelles is in a two-line poem by *Mudād b. ʿAmr al-Jurhumī*: ² (Tawīl)

وكننا ولاية البيت والقاطن الذي اليه يوفى نذره كل محرم
سكننا بها قبل الظباء ورائة لنا من بني هي بن بني جرهم

As we discussed earlier the *Khuzāʿīs* settled in Mecca after they had banished the *Jurhumīs*.³ It would appear from *Mudād's* poem that he was following an atlāl convention to express sadness for the loss of Mecca.

The second surviving atlāl prelude consists of two verses by *Uḥaiḥa b. al-Julāh*, in which he mentions the name of *Suʿād* and of his wife *Salmā*:⁴ (Khafīf)

أَخْلَقَ الرَّبِيعُ مِنْ سَعَادَ فَامَسَى رَبُّهُ مُخْلِئًا كَدْرَسَ الْمَلَاةِ
بَالِبًا بَعْدَ حَاضِرِ ذِي أُنَيْسٍ مِنْ سَلِيمِي إِذْ تَعْتَدِي كَالْمَهَاةِ

Abū al-Faraj says that Uhaiḥa wrote the poem after Salmā escaped from Uhaiḥa's castle in order to warn her people that her husband was planning to attack them.¹ As the poem is about the disappearance and betrayal of Salmā, there is no reason why the name of Su^cād should be mentioned alongside Salmā's in the poem, unless she was an old flame Uhaiḥa recalls in order to help him forget his treacherous wife. It is possible that Uhaiḥa, like Khuzaima b. Nahd before him, might have met Su^cād in the country in the Spring or the Autumn, when the town people in the Arabian Peninsula used to, and still do, spend some time in the countryside and return to their town homes at the end of each season, leaving behind traces of their seasonal sojourn.² There is also the possibility that the poet might have revisited the same spot which rekindled memories of the happy season.

In the case of Su^cād and Salmā it is likely that after recovering from the shock of his wife's betrayal, which reduced his world to ruins, Uhaiḥa was trying to compare the contrasting experiences he had with the two women. In the absence of the full text of Uhaiḥa's poem, which according to Abū al-Faraj is a long poem, it is pointless to indulge in labyrinthine conjectures.

The case that the aṭlāl was used merely as a poetic device and thought of as good an opening as any is further endorsed by a poem of al-Muraqqish al-Asghar, which begins with the description of the deserted dwellings of his lover Hind bint ^cAjlān who was the maid of princess Fātima bint al-Mundhir, the daughter of the king of Hira: ¹ (Basīt)

لَابْنَةُ عَجْلَانَ بِالْجَوِّ رُسُومٌ لَمْ يَتَعَفَّنِينَ وَالْعَهْدُ قَلِيمٌ
لَابْنَةَ عَجْلَانَ إِذْ نَحْنُ مَعًا وَأَيُّ حَالٍ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ تَدُومُ
[أَمِنْ دِيَارٍ تَعَفَّى رَسْمُهَا عَيْنُكَ مِنْ رَسْمِهَا بِسَجُومِ]
أَضْحَتْ قِفَارًا وَقَدْ كَانَ بِهَا فِي سَالِفِ الدَّهْرِ أَرْبَابُ الْهَجُومِ
بَادُوا وَأَضْبَحَتْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَحْسَبُنِي خَالِدًا وَلَا أَرِيمُ

As we have pointed out earlier, Hind's home was next to the palace of Fātima,² and it is inconceivable that the house and the palace could have been abandoned and left to crumble soon after al-Muraqqish al-Asghar's short-lived love affair with both the princess and her maid, unless they were destroyed by war or natural disaster like an earthquake. The poem makes no reference to the house or the palace having been demolished by war or natural disaster. Therefore, the employment of the aṭlāl prelude in this case is no more than a convenient device to evoke an atmosphere of nostalgia before moving on to other themes.

The same can be said of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar's poem which begins with a mention of the aṭlāl of the dwellings of his love Asmā'¹: (Tawīl)

أَمِنْ آلِ أَسْمَاءِ الطُّلُودِ الدَّوَارِئِ	يُحِطُّطُّ فِيهَا الطَّيْرُ ، قَفَرٌ بَسَابِئُ
ذَكَرْتُ بِهَا أَسْمَاءَ لَوْ أَنَّ وَلِيَّهَا	قَرِيبٌ وَلَكِنْ حَبَسْتَنِي الْحَوَابِئُ
وَمَنْزِلِ ضَنْكَ لَأُرِيدُ مَبِيتَهُ	كَأَنِّي بِهِ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الرَّوْعِ آئِسٌ
لِتُبْصِرَ عَيْنِي ، إِنْ رَأَيْتَنِي ، مَكَانَهَا	وَفِي النَّفْسِ إِنْ خَلَى الطَّرِيقُ الْكَوَادِئُ
لِتُبْصِرَ عَيْنِي ، إِنْ رَأَيْتَنِي ، مَكَانَهَا	وَفِي النَّفْسِ إِنْ خَلَى الطَّرِيقُ الْكَوَادِئُ

We have seen from Muraqqish's life that Asmā' was his cousin and both of them lived in the same neighbourhood before the marriage of Asmā' to a Murādī who took her with him to his home in Najrān. After her departure the people of Asmā' and of Muraqqish did not leave their homeground, nor were their abodes reduced to aṭlāl, yet Muraqqish talks of the deserted dwellings of Asmā' as being inhabited by birds. Moreover, Muraqqish died in the arms of Asmā'². Muraqqish's description of the aṭlāl of the dwellings of Asmā' is the product of the poet's imagination rather than a reflection on a lived experience. al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, like al-Muraqqish al-Asghar, uses the aṭlāl purely as a literary device current in his day.

Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī wrote three poems with aṭlāl preludes, but only the aṭlāl opening lines have survived.

The first of the aṭlāl openings is: ¹ (Wāfir)

أَمِنْ رَسْمٍ نَعَفَى أَوْ رَمَادٍ وَسُخْمٍ كَالْحَمَامَاتِ الْفِرَادِ
 أَطَاعَتِكَ الشُّعُونَ فَظَلَّتْ صَبَاً كَيَّانَ وَكَيْفَهَا وَاهِبِي الْمَزَادِ
 وَهَلْ يَشْتَأِقُ مِثْلَكَ فِي دِيَارِ عَفْتَهَا الرِّيحُ وَاللَّدِيمُ الْغَوَادِي
 ذَكَرْتَ بِهَا سُعَادَ فَعُجِئْتَ جَهْلًا عَلَى رَسْمٍ تُسَائِلُ عَنْ سُعَادِ

The second aṭlāl opening is: ² (Ramal)

قَدْ عَرَفْتُ الدَّارَ قَفْرًا لَمْ تُحَلَّ بَيْنَ أَجْيَادٍ خُفَافٍ فَالرُّحَلِ
 ظَنَّ الْحَيُّ الْأَلَى كَانُوا بِهَا وَعَفَا رَسْمٌ وَأَضْحَى كَالْخِلَلِ
 هَبَّجَ الشُّوقَ الَّذِي كَانَ صَحَاً حَبْسُكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَى ذَاكَ الطَّلَلِ

And the third aṭlāl opening, which Abū al-Faraj says was set to music by several composers, is: ³ (Khafif)

بَاعِدِيَا لِقَلْبِكَ الْمَهْتَاجِ أَنْ عَفَا رَسْمٌ مُتَزَلِّيًا بِالْبَاجِ
 غَيْرَتِهِ الصَّبَا وَكُلُّ مِلَّتٍ دَائِمِ الْوَدْقِ ذِي أَهْلَابِ دَاجِ

Abū Du'ād's general treatment of the aṭlāl theme indicates that the aṭlāl theme was employed as a poetic convention.

Some of al-Hārith b. °Ubād's poems start with an aṭlāl prelude followed by a martial theme: ⁴ (Khafif)

هَلْ عَرَفْتَ الْغَدَاةَ رَنَّمًا مَحِيلًا دَارِسًا بَعْدَ أَهْلِهِ مَجْهُولًا

لِسْلِي كَانَهُ سَخِقُ بُرْدٍ زَادَهُ قِلَّةُ الْاَيْسِ مَحْوَلًا
 زَعَزَعْتُهُ الصَّبَا فَادْرَجَ سَهْلًا ثُمَّ هَاجَتْ لَهُ الدُّبُورُ نَحِيلاً
 فَكَانَ الْيَهُودَ فِي يَوْمِ عِيدِهِ ضَرَبَتْ فِيهِ رَوْقًا وَطُوبَلًا
 وَامْتَرَنَهُ الْجَنُوبُ حَتَّى إِذَا مَا وَجَدَتْ قُوْدَهُ عَلَيْهَا تَقِيلاً
 ثُمَّ هَالَتْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهَا سِجَالًا مُكْفَوْرًا فَتَسْتَبِيهِ سَحِيلاً
 وَتَذَكَّرْتُ مَنَزِلًا لِرِيَابِ أَنَّهُ كَانَ مَرَّةً مَاهُولًا
 غَيْرَ أَنَّ السَّيْنِ وَالرَّيْحَ أَلْتِ تَرْبَهُ فِي رُسُومِهِ مَنَحْوَلًا
 سَفَهَتْ تَغَابُ غَدَاةً تَمَّتْ حَرْبَ بَكْرِ قُتِلُوا تَقْتِيلاً
 غَيْرَ أَنَا قَدِ اخْتَوَيْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فَتَرَكَتَاهُمْ بَقَايَا فُلُولًا
 اذْكُرُوا قَتَلْنَا الْأَرَاقِمَ طُرًّا يَوْمَ أَخْضَى كُلِّيَهَا مَثُولًا

And: ¹ (Kāmil)

حَيِّ الْمَنَازِلِ أَفْقَرَتْ بِسَهَامٍ وَعَفَتْ مَعَالِمَهَا بِجَنْبِ بَرَامٍ
 جَرَتْ عَلَيْهَا الْأَرَامَاتُ ذُيُولَهَا وَسِجَالٌ سَكَلٌ يُخْتَلِ سَجَامٍ
 أَفْوَتْ وَقَدْ كَانَتْ تَحُلُّ بِجَوِّهَا حُورُ الْمَدَامِعِ مِنْ ظَبَاءِ الشَّامِ
 تَرَكَتْكَ يَوْمَ تَعَرَّضْتَ لَكَ بِالْوَا دَقًّا تُعَالِجُ لَوْعَةَ الْأَسْقَامِ
 إِنَّ الْأَرَاقِمَ أَصْحَبَتْ مَسْئَلَةَ بِقَرَارَةِ لِيُوَاطِي الْأَقْدَامِ
 تَرَكَتْ ظُبَاءَهُ سُيُوفُنَا سَادَاتِهِمْ مَا بَيْنَ مَضْرُوعٍ وَآخِرِ دَائِي
 لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ إِذَا هَمَمْتَ بِحَرْبِنَا أَنَا لَدَى الْعَهْجَاءِ غَيْرُ كِرَامِ
 وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ وَأَنْتَ فِينَا شَاهِدٌ وَسُيُوفُنَا تَنْفِرِي فُرُوعَ الْهَامِ
 إِنَّا لَنَمْنَعُ بِالطَّعَانِ دِيَارَنَا وَالضَّرْبُ تَحْسَبُهُ شِهَابَ ضَرَامِ

The switch from the atāl section to the next theme is abrupt, which suggests that the atāl prelude is used simply as an opening convention.

One of Muhalhil's poems starts with an aṭlāl opening, then moves on unexpectedly to another theme like the poems of al-Hārith b. °Ubād that have an aṭlāl prelude:¹ (Khafīf)

هَذَا عَفْوٌ، الْغَدَاةَ مِنْ أَطْلَالٍ رَهْنٍ رِيحٍ وَدِيمَةٍ مِهْطَالٍ
 رَهْلٌ عَرَفَتْ الْغَدَاةَ مِنْ أَطْلَالٍ رَهْنٍ رِيحٍ وَدِيمَةٍ مِهْطَالٍ
 وَيَسْتَبِينَ الْحَلِيمُ فِيهَا رُسُومًا دَارِسَاتٍ كَصَنْعَةِ الْعَمَالِ
 قَدْ رَأَاهَا وَأَهْلَهَا أَهْلُ صِدْقِي لَا يُرِيدُونَ نِيَّةَ الْإِرْتِحَالِ
 يَا لَقَوْمِي لِلْوَعَةِ الْبَلْبَالِ وَالْقَتْلِ الْكُمَاةِ وَالْأَبْطَالِ
 وَلَعَيْنِ تَبَادَرَ الدَّمْعِ مِنْهَا يَكْتَلِبُ إِذْ قَاقَاهَا بِأَنْهَمَالِ

In another poem Muhalhil includes the following two aṭlāl verses:² (Khafīf)

أَزْجُرُ الْعَيْنَ أَنْ تُبْكِيَ الطُّلُولَا إِنَّ فِي الصَّدْرِ مِنْ كُتَيْبٍ قَلِيلَا
 كَيْفَ يَبْكِي الطُّلُولُ مَنْ هُوَ رَهْنٌ بِطِعَانِ الْأَنَامِ جِيَلَا فَجِيَلَا

The fact that Muhalhil orders his eyes not to weep over the aṭlāl because of the deep sense of anger he felt over the murder of his brother Kulaib proves the currency of the aṭlāl convention.

The ruins are sometimes described as being those of a deserted town or village where the poet stopped over for the night or where he had love affairs with the local girls or as being those of the poet's once prosperous

town which had been destroyed by war, as can be deduced from ¹Abid b. al-Abraṣ's aṭlāl poem: (Tawīl)

لَمَنْ طَلَّلَ لَمْ تَعْنُفْ مِنْهُ الْمَدَانِبُ فَجَدَّبَا حَبِيرٌ قَدَّ تَعَمَّى فَرَاهِبُ
 دِيَارُ بَنِي سَعْدِ بْنِ ثَعْلَبَةَ الْأُكْلِ أذَاعَ رَيْبِهِمْ دَهْرًا عَلَى النَّاسِ رَائِبُ
 فَأَذْهَبَهُمْ مَا أَذْهَبَ النَّاسَ قَبْلَهُمْ ضِرَاسُ الْحُرُوبِ وَالْمَنَابِ الْعَوَاقِبُ
 أَلَا رَبَّ حَتَّى قَدَّ رَأَيْنَا هُنَالِكُمْ لَكُمْ سَلَفٌ تَزَوَّرَ مِنْهُ الْمَقَانِبُ
 فَأَقْبِلْ عَلَى أَفْوَاقِ سَهْمِكَ إِنَّمَا تَكَلَّفْتُمْ الْأَشْيَاءَ مَا هُوَ ذَاهِبُ

The words aṭlāl and rab^c are usually translated as "vanishing traces of tents"² and "desolate encampment",³ yet the description of the aṭlāl and rab^c indicate that they are the remains of مَنَازِلُ (houses), دِيَارُ (houses, palaces, castles), بُيُوتُ (houses, tents) or خِيَمَ⁴ (bowers, tents) of a once thriving town or village. If the aṭlāl and rab^c had been abandoned campsites of nomads, there would have been no traces left since the nomads would have obviously taken the tents and all their belongings with them on their departure. Therefore, the way of seeing the aṭlāl and rab^c and the manner in which they are delineated re-enforce the urban background of the poets who lived before Imrū al-Qais.

In the hunting scene of the qasīda the poet makes no reference to nomads living in the bādiya nor to a nomadic way of life; he simply paints a vivid, idealistic

and romanticised picture of his riding beast and of the landscape with which he had grown familiar through his extensive travels across the length and breadth of the Arabian Peninsula in search of adventure or fortune.

It was the custom of the Jāhili inhabitants of towns bordering on the bādiya to go hunting during the season as illustrated in Abū Du'ād's poem: ¹ (Mutaqārib)

وَدَارٍ يَقُولُ لَهَا الرَّائِدُو	نَ وَيْلُ أُمَّ دَارِ الْحُدَايِ دَارَا
فَلَمَّا وَضَعْنَا بِهَا بَيْتَنَا	نَتَجْنَا حُورًا وَصِدْنَا حِمَارًا
وَبَاتَ الظُّلُمُ مَكَانَ الْمِجَمِ	نَ تَسْمَعُ بِاللَّيْلِ مِنْهُ عِرَارًا
وَرَاخَ عَلَيْنَا رِعَاءَ لَنَا	فَقَالُوا : رَأَيْنَا بِهَجَلٍ صُورَا
فَبِتْنَا عُرَاةً لَدَى مُهْرِنَا	نُدْرَعُ مِنْ شَفْتَيْهِ الصُّفَارَا
وَبِتْنَا نُغْرَثُهُ بِاللِّجَامِ	نُرِيدُ بِهِ قَنَصًا أَوْ غَوَارَا
فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ لَنَا سُدُفَةٌ	وَلَا حَ مِنْ الصُّبْحِ خَيْطُ. أَنَارَا
غَدَوْنَا بِهِ كِسْوَارِ الْهَلُو	لِ مُضْطَمِرًا حَالِيَاءَ اضْطِمَارَا
فَلَمَّا عَلَا مَتْنَتَيْهِ الْغُلَامُ	وَسَكَّنَ مِنْ آلِهِ أَنْ يُطَارَا
وُسْرَحَ كَالْأَجْدَلِ الْفَارِسِ	ي فِي إِثْرِ سِرْبِ أَجَدِّ النَّفَارَا
فَصَادَ لَنَا أَكْحَلَ الْمُقْلَتِ	مِنْ فَحْلًا وَأُخْرَى مَهَاءَ نَسْوَارَا
وَعَادَى ثَلَاثًا فَخَرَّ السَّنَا	نُ إِمَّا نُصِيلًا وَإِمَّا انْكَسَارَا
أَكَلَ أَمْرِي تَحْسِينِ امْرَأً	وَنَارٍ تَوَقَّدُ بِاللَّيْلِ نَارَا

And this custom persists to this day in the Arabian Peninsula. In no Jāhili qasida do the poets hint that the hunt was undertaken for survival purposes; the urban people

hunted for sport, whereas the nomads hunted for survival.

One of the areas where the classical critics held different opinions is the tadmīn. Some critics thought that the use of the tadmīn shows technical weakness on the part of the poet; while others like Naṣr Allāh b. al-Athīr believed that the tadmīn is an essential device which helps sustain the flow of ideas in a poem or a prose text.¹ Nothing is known about the Jāhiliī poets' views on the tadmīn, but what is certain is that there is scarcely a Jāhiliī poem which is devoid of tadmīn. Indeed, when Tibrīzī wanted to give an example of tadmīn he chose an extract from a poem by the earliest known Jāhiliī poet Mudād b. ^cAmr al-Jurhumī:² (Tawīl)

وقائلة ، والدَّمْعُ سَكْبٌ مُبَادِرٌ
وقد شَرِقَتْ بالماءِ منها المَحَاجِرُ
وقد أَبْصَرْتُ حِمَانَ ، من بَعْدِ أَنْسِيَا
بنا ، وهي مِنَّا مُوَحِشَاتُ ، دَوَائِرُ :
كَأَنَّ لَمْ يَكُنْ بَيْنَ الْحُجُونِ إِلَى الصَّفَا
أَنْسِيَا ، وَلَمْ يَسْمُرْ بِمَكَّةَ سَامِرُ
فَقَلْتُ لَهَا ، وَالْقَلْبُ مَنِي كَأَنَّمَا
يُقَلِّبُهُ بَيْنَ الْجَوَانِحِ طَائِرُ :
بَلَى ، نَحْنُ كُنَّا أَهْلَهَا ، فَأَبَادَنَا
صُرُوفُ اللَّيَالِي ، وَالْجُدُودُ الْعَوَائِرُ

The tadmīn and the husn al-takhalluṣ devices are key factors in maintaining the unity of the Jāhili qasīda.

It appears from our study of the classical Arab sources that the poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations, Ancient Jāhiliyya and the pre-Imru'al-Qais period of the Late Jāhiliyya, was the product of an urban society, and that virtually all the Jāhili poetic conventions were already established before Imru'al-Qais, and that Imru'al-Qais was following a well-trodden path.

Page 274

1. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 128.

Page 275

1. Ibn Khaldūn, ^cIbar, II, pp. 517-8.
2. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, p. 128.
3. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 33.
4. Marzubānī, Nūr, p. 121; Abū Hilāl, Sharḥ, p. 212.
5. Ibn Khaldūn, ^cIbar, p. 518.
6. Ibn Sa^cīd, Nashwat, II, p. 642.

Page 276

1. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi^cr, I, p. 128; Āmidī, Mu'talaf, pp. 7-8.
2. Āmidī, Mu'talaf, p. 7.
3. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 33.

Page 277

1. Shi^cr, I, pp. 74-5.
2. Ibn Rashīq, ^cUmda, I, pp. 188-9.
3. Pp. 8-9.
4. Kanz, I, pp. 84-5.

Page 278

1. Ibid., p. 85.
2. Ibn ^cAbdūn, Sharḥ, p. 81.

3. See pages 60-1.
4. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, p. 51.

Page 279

1. Ibid., pp. 49-51.
2. Marzūqī, Azmina, II, p. 125.

Page 280

1. Mufaddal, Mufaddaliyyāt, pp. 247-8.
2. See pages 188-9.

Page 281

1. Mufaddal, Mufaddaliyyāt, pp. 224-5.
2. See pages 180-3.

Page 282

1. Usāma, Manāzil, p. 185.
2. Ibid., pp. 281-2.
3. Aghānī, XVI, p. 372.
4. Cheikho, Shu^carā', pp. 279-80.

Page 283

1. Ibid., p. 278.

Page 284

1. Ibid., pp. 273-4.
2. Ibid., p. 178.

Page 285

1. Dīwān, pp. 8-9.
2. Lyall, The Mufaddaliyyāt, I, p. 462, poem XLVII, verse 1, II, p. 171, verse 1.
3. Nicholson, A Literary History Of The Arabs, p. 77.
4. Iskāfi, Mabādi', pp. 30-35; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, VIII, p. 102. Tibrizī says خيم refers only to arboral houses (Sharḥ, II, p. 1019). Lyall mistranslates مآزل and ديار as "tent traces", "resting places" and "camping places" (The Mufaddaliyyāt, II, p. 171, verses 1 and 3, p. 181, verse 1; ^cAmr b. Qamī'a, Dīwān, p. 34, verse 1, p. 52, verse 4; The Dīwāns Of ^cAbid Ibn al-Abras And ^cAmir Ibn al-Tufail, p. 24, verse 1).

Page 286

1. Asma^ci, Asma^ciyyāt, pp. 190-1.

Page 287

1. Mathal, II, p. 342; Jāmi^c, p. 232.
2. Wāfi, pp. 292-3.

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TRANSLATION

Laqīṭ b. Ya^cmur al-Iyādī

The original poem is on page 110. The following translation is from M. A. Mu id Khan, Dīwān of Laqīṭ Ibn Ya^cmur al-Iyādī, Beirut, 1971, p. 45.

Greetings from Laqīṭ through this letter, to those of the tribe of Iyād who dwell in the land between the rivers.

The Lion Kisra has come to you; may not your occupation with the grazing of goats cause you to ignore his approach.

Seventy thousand armed men have come, pressing forward their hosts like locusts.

With a swelling heart we have come to you, as this may be the time of your destruction like that of the tribes of ^cĀd.

The original poem is on pages 110-113. The following translation is from Diwan of Laqīṭ Ibn Ya^cmur al-Iyādī, pp. 45-49.

O abode of 'Amra in the sand-dunes, the place where she used to dwell, to see it derelict has excited my sorrows (and filled me with) anguish and pain.

At the turn of the valley a young damsel has captured my heart ; and carried it with her to the chapel of Dhāt al'Adhba.

She is of fastidious nature, does not adhere to her purpose: neither frustration of hopes, nor the attainment of ambition are to be expected of her.

Her dream comes to me wherever my saddles are placed (i.e. wherever I am encamped). It keeps me awake in spite of my being afar off.

When their baggage-train moves toward the place of Salutaḥa, they do not look to what is being followed by them; but I with my own eyes have seen them marching forward.

Sometimes I see them going, and sometimes I am unable to see them, as they shine for a while, and then disappear in the mirage.

O you who are driving your camel in haste towards the land between the rivers in search of grass and water.

Convey to the tribe of Iyād my message, and to their leaders in particular; I have a word to tell them, of the meaning of which there can be no doubt, provided I am not disobeyed.

How sad it is that you are disunited and your affairs in confusion, while others are united and well-organised.

They are nobles of Persia, sons of kings, whose armies look down upon mountains and clouds.

They are marching speedily towards you, gathering weapons and deadly poisons for you.

Everyday they are grinding their spears and lances for you without taking rest, while you who are neglectful are drowned in slumber.

I am amazed to see you drowned in the sleep of negligence, although you know that the shooting star of war has appeared.

Beginning from your borders, grave danger is gradually encircling you.

O my people do not trust Kisra and the army he has gathered, where (the safety of) your womenfolk is concerned, if you have regard for their honour.

Protect your horses, clean your swords, and prepare arrows and strings for your bows.

Intensify the vigilance of your spies in the rear of the advancing troops, and be alert until the invading cavalry have retreated.

Spend your ancestral wealth in the defence of your soul's honour, and in guarding your women-folk, and do not perish out of fear and fright.

May God bless you. Hand over your affairs to one who is brave and experienced in matters of war,

Al-Muraqqish al-Akbar

The original poem is on pages 181-182. The following translation is from Charles Lyall, The Mufaddaliyyāt, II, The Clarendon Press, 1921, p. 169.

Ye two comrades of mine, stay awhile, hurry not on so fast: in sooth the departure [which is at hand] is a guarantee that ye will not be blamed.

And perchance your delaying may send on ahead some evil thing [so that it will not affect us]: or it may be that, if ye hurry away, ye may miss some good that is coming to you.

* * * * *

O camel-rider, whoever thou mayst be, bear this message, if thou lightest on them, to Anas son of Sa'd, and Ḥarmalah:

'Great will be the virtue of you twain and your father, if the man of Ghufailah escapes being slain!'

Who shall tell my people how that Muraqqish has become to his companions a troublesome burden?

The beasts of prey have bitten off his nose, and have left him in the mountains with the thick-maned [male hyæna] and his mate waiting for him to die,

As though in his mangled limbs the beasts had come down to a water-spring—since the whole of the kin of Dubai'ah are far away.

The original poem is on pages 185-186. The following translation is from The Mufaddaliyāt, II, pp. 181-182.

Are the abodes deaf, that they give no answer? Yet, if a tent-trace had the gift of speech, much could it tell.

The place is desolate, and the remnants of habitation like the tracery which a pen draws on the surface of a piece of leather.

'Tis the home of Asmā, who has smitten my heart with love-sickness, and from mine eyes falls a stream of tears.

Void is it now: its plants are moist and rank, flowering freely its many-coloured herbs, growing close and thick.

Nay, but is not thy grief due to the departing litters that started in the morning, looking as though they were date-palms of Malham?

About them floated odours of musk: the faces [of those who sat in them] were like bright gold, and the tips of their fingers were tinged pink as it were with *'anam*.

* * * * *

Not all the chances of fortune brought to my heart such a pang as the death of my comrade who was left lying in Taghlam.

O Tha'labah, smiter of helmet-crests with the sword, leader of the kin when ways were dark around!

Go then! may thine uncle's son be a sacrifice for thee! Nought abides for ever but Shābah and Adam.

If any living thing could escape its fated day, then would escape the light-limbed mountain goat, banded with white streaks on its fore-legs,

Among the lofty peaks of 'Amāyah, or where Khiyam lifts it up just short of the heaven.

Below it are the eggs of the white vulture, and above it the tall-shouldered mountain-summit, soaring high.

It roams thereupon wheresoever it will; and if Destiny gave it but a respite, it might live until it grew decrepit:

But the guile of changeful Fortune wrought its destruction, so that it slipped from the mountain ledges, and was dashed to pieces.

No cause for grief is it to a man that he has missed length of days: there in the darkness before him is what he knows!

The sire perishes and the son remains behind—every one born of a father must one day be orphaned;

And mothers get gain from their pains [of travail and tendance]—then comes the time when the barren is in as good a case as they.

Al-Muraqqish al-Asghar

The original poem is on pages 189-190. The following translation is from The Mufaddaliyyāt, II, pp. 189-190.

Ah, be thou safe from harm! No parting for me to-day, Fāṭimah, nor evermore, so long as the tie of thy love endures!

The daughter of the Bakrite shot thee [with an arrow] from [a bow made of] the top branch of a lote-tree, while [our camels,] with eyes sunken [from long travel, sped by] with us [so swiftly that] they seemed to be ostriches [hurrying along].

She showed herself to us on the day when the tribe set forth, with [her long hair] hanging down, and [her mouth] sweet with its rows of teeth set not too closely together,

Which a cloud-mass full of rain, lighted-up by the sun, has watered well from streaming white clouds [below the dark masses above].

In Dhāt ad-Ḍāl she showed thee wrists of hers, and a cheek smooth and long, and bright like a silver mirror, soft.

His heart is cured of its intoxication with her, notwithstanding that when there comes into it a recollection of her, the earth swims about him as he stands.

* * * * *

Look forth, O friend: seest thou aught of ladies camel-borne, that go forth swiftly on their way, seated in litters broad?

They moved away from the wide strath of al-Warī'ah after that the day had risen high, and they crossed the detached strips of sand.

They have decked themselves out with rubies, and gold beads between, and large balls of molten gold, and onyx from Dhafār, and pearls two and two.

They took their way among the villages, and crossed the bend of the valley, their camels stepping out swiftly; and they left behind them Qaww, and passed forth along the mountain paths.

Ah, how lovely is the face whose brightness she shows us, and the tresses of hair long as cables, coal-black!

As for me, I feel shame before little Fāṭimah when I am hungry and lean, and shame before her also when I eat ;

And I feel shame before thee, though the wide desert be between us, lest thou meet a brother of mine who has severed himself from us [and may tell of my evil qualities].

And verily I, though my young camel be spent, batter the ground with it, and with myself, O Fāṭimah, with the batterings [of recklessness].

[O Fāṭimah, verily love grows in spite of [the Beloved's] hate, and imposes on the noble soul difficulties to be overcome.]

Hail to thee ! mayst thou have a mild and genial constellation, O Fāṭimah, even though the turning of thy way be not united with mine !

Good greetings to thee ! and know thou that my need is of thee : so return to me somewhat of thy favour, O Fāṭimah.

O Fāṭimah, if all other women were in one land, and thou in another, I would follow after thee, distraught.

When the Beloved one wills, she cuts the bond that binds her to her lover, and is wroth with him without a cause, casting him off without appeal.

And whoso lights on good, men praise his enterprise, and whoso goes astray, shall not lack one to blame his error :

Seest thou not that a man will cut off his hand, and take upon himself the severest tasks, from fear of the blame of his friends ?

Is it by reason of a dream that thou hast become one that writes upon the ground in extremity of grief ? And sometimes dreams visit one who is asleep : [may not this be one ?]

* * * * *

Janāb swore an oath, and thou didst obey him : so turn thy blame upon thyself, if thou must have some one to revile ;

[And he is as though he were wearing the crown of the House of Muḥarriq, for that he has wronged his cousin, and come off safe himself.]

The original poem is on pages 191-192. The following translation is from The Mufaddaliyyāt, II, 186-187.

Is it for a home now void that the tears stream forth from thine eyes
 —an abode whence its people have passed in the morning and
 journeyed away?

The flat-nosed gazelles therein lead about their younglings to feed,
 and the fawns in the open valley are bay and bright red in hue.
 Was it of Bint 'Ajlān that the shade cast itself our way
 by night, while m̄ saddle lay by, where we slept a little removed?

And when I started awake at the phantom, and terror grew,
 lo! 'twas but my saddle, nought else, and the country was white
 and bare.

Nay, but 'twas a visitor able to wake from his sleep a man,
 and pierce him again with anguish that rends his heart in twain.

At each of our nightly halts she comes to trouble our rest—
 ah! would that she stayed not only by night but when dawns
 the day!

She turned and departed, leaving behind her a gnawing pain,
 and sore was my torment when her eyes seemed to gush with tears.
 Not wine of the white grape, fragrant as musk [when the jar is broached],
 and set on the strainer to clear, and ladled from cup to cup—
 A captive it dwelt in the jar for twenty revolving years,
 above it a seal of clay, exposed to the wind and sun,
 Imprisoned by Jews who brought it from Gōlān in lands afar,
 and offered for sale by a vintner who knew well to follow gain—
 Is sweeter than is her mouth when night brings me near to her—
 nay, sweeter her lips than the wine, and fuller of pure delight.

* * * * *

At dawn I went forth on a steed clean-skinned, as a palm-branch lean:
 I trained him until his flesh was worn down and fined away:
 His cheeks long, perfect in shape, none finds in him aught to blame;
 a bay of a bright red tinge, one leg ringed, a star on brow:
 A proud man I ride on his back to where sit the chiefs in moot.
 I ponder within which course to take with the most of gain:
 Pursued, he outstrips all speed: pursuer, he wins with ease:
 he knows how to thread all straits, and gain for his master spoil.
 Behold how he gallops, gay, on his back a full-armed knight:
 when all of the troop are spent, he prances from side to side.
 On him have I ridden, one of raiders in far-stretched line,
 who meet in the folk they raid a spear-play to match their own.
 He bounds like a young gazelle that springs from the covert, tall
 and head-high he answers when thou callest on him for speed:
 He gushes, as forth spouts fast the flow of a pent-up fount
 beneath in the sand, where gravel and bushes lay bare the spring.

^cAmr b. Qamī'a

The original poem is on page 195. The following translation is from Charles Lyall, The Poems of ^cAmr Son of Qamī'a, CUP, 1919, p. 27.

Alas my soul for Youth that's gone!
 no light thing lost I when he fled.
 Time was I dwelt in joy of prime,
 hurling back wrong, casting down the wild goats,
 Trailing my skirts and robes of price
 to the nearest tavern, shaking forth my locks.
 Nay, envy not a man that folk
 say 'Age has made him a Judge of men':
 Though he love life and live long safe,
 long living leaves its print on his face.
 * * * *
 Some men there be that are their people's life,
 and some bear a stain like a spot of grease.

The original poem is on page 95. The following translation is from The Poems of 'Amr Son of Qamī'a, p. 48.

Many the man whose senses have led him to folly, in that he says on a day
 'Verily 'Amr has become a drunkard!'

If I be a drinker of much wine, at least I drink at my own cost and not as a
 spunger upon others, and the camel is not safe from my slaughtering
 sword.

The wine-skin is a kingdom to him who possesses it, and the kingdom therein,
 though small, how great it is!

Therein is the morning draught, which makes of me a lion of 'Ifirrīn, with
 great wealth mine—

At the beginning of the night a glorious warrior, at the end of the night a
 male hyæna unable to keep his legs.

God curse thee for a drink! would that the resolute man could keep himself
 away from thee!

The original poem is on pages 196-198. The following translation is from The Poems of ^cAmr Son of Qamī'a, pp. 58-60.

Umāmah is gone far from thee, and there is left for thee only to ask after her
the encampments where she dwelt, and ever-growing remoteness from her
has taken the place to thee of union ;

A distant destination has carried her far away, bringing alienation in exchange
to those who offered sincere affection.

The leader of the camp gave the call for departure : then quickly all betook
themselves to making ready for the start ;

[The handmaids] brought near all the male camels with lofty humps, broad in
the sides, that devour [in their speed] the way that lies before them :

Whensoever [the other camels] clothed themselves with the unknown [*i.e.*,
entered upon travel in a land of which they did not know the way-marks],
and slackened down, after going at a quick pace (*rasīm*), to a lesser speed
(*nigāl*),

There guided them in the right path one having his loins girt up, overtaking
them with a male camel strong in the back, of Arḥab's breed, great in size.

Thou wouldst think the burdens of the tribe [*i.e.* the litters of the ladies and
the baggage], when in the mirage [the camels] travelled along in a string
together, were tall palm-trees

Drinking up water [with their roots] in the midst of a well-filled pool that has
overflowed, so that it has become broad and long.

[The handmaids] had clad their litters with curtains which hung down loosely
over them,

And in them were black-eyed ladies like gazelles that reach out to crop the
hanging branches in the upper parts of the valley of as-Salīl.

The train put Qudais and the outskirts thereof to their right, and the gravelly
plain of Ra'm to their left ;

Yearningly they gazed on the cloud-mass, as they watched it letting loose its
buckets-full of rain on al-Furudāt :

And when they came down to the place where the Spring rain had fallen,
they exchanged their seats in the camel-litters for curtained canopies.

* * * * *

Yea, many the waterless desert in which the mirage plays, wherein those that
journey by night fear to lose their way,

Have I traversed with a mind between hope and fear, what time the gazelles
creep into their refuges for shade,

Mounted on a spare she-camel, [hard] like the boulder in a stream-bed with
little water left in it, swift as a wild-ass, that makes no complaint of
weariness ;

Towards the Son of ash-Shaqīqah have I directed her course, fearing punishment, yet hoping for a boon—

Towards the Son of ash-Shaqīqah, the best of kings, and the most faithful of them when he makes covenants.

Art thou not the kindest of them to those under thy protection, and the most bountiful of them when they contend in respect of fame for bounty?

May my folk be thy sacrifice! [I come,] petitioning the return of thy favour.

Thou wast angry, and didst think true the word that was said about me;

An enemy came to thee, and thou didst believe him: why didst thou not wait (—mayst thou be rightly guided!—) till an enquiry was made?

I never said that of which they falsely accused me, nor did I ever apprehend that it would be said of me.

If that was true which they told thee of me, then may not my right hand join to my left!

Look closely into my case and follow after the truth: for verily I am a man who fears to be punished without having committed any crime.

* * * * *

Yea, many the day of battle, when the souls rise [to the throats of men through fear], wherein thou dost assail with thy spear-thrusts the flanks of the [enemy's] infantry,

Hast thou been present at, and hast extinguished the fires of its fury, and brought back therefrom the thirsty camels fully satisfied with their drinking.

And many the clamorous host, to behold which cures sore eyes, like the night clothed in shadows [from its masses of men],

When the flashing of the helmets on the heads of the warriors therein is like brilliant lamps that put out all lesser flames,

Hast thou brought upon thy foes, notwithstanding their distance, in a morning attack: to some thou bringest clothing [compared to plumage], and others thou strippest of their plumes.

The original poem is on pages 198-200. The following translation is from The Poems of ^cAmr Son of Qamī'a, pp. 44-46.

Umāmah is gone far from thee, and there is left for thee only to ask after her the place where she dwelt, and the vision of her that comes when thou dreamest—

Its appointed time is when night closes in, and as soon as dawn breaks it refuses to stay any longer.

Yea, this is what she gives in exchange for my love of her; and if she were here she would not grant me a single boon.

Sooth, fear seized my heart when they proclaimed their purpose, and men said, 'Our comrades are preparing for an early departure';

And the two captains of the caravan hurried her swiftly away at earliest dawn, after stirring up the male camels to rise from the place where they couched—

Camels full-grown, driven along in line with their litters upon them, with new foot-coverings cut for them after their old ones worn out.

And when they had passed on, my tears sprang forth, and poured in buckets after buckets in longing for her.

Thou mightest have seen them, when the two captains drove the train on through the hollow plain, hastening along at a swift pace;

They have been given in exchange for shade exposure to the sun, and in place of curtained canopies have had to put up with camel litters.

Among them is Khaulah, the pearl of women, fairest in beauty among all mankind;

She has the full black eyes of an antelope in a meadow, where in the midst of the greenery it reaches out to bite the branches of a tall *artā*-bush.

She passes the tooth-stick over a cool row of teeth that might be thought to be the white thorns of the *sayāl*, but they are not that;

After she has slept but a little they are as though they had been steeped in strong wine, and she gives thee to drink therewith cool sweet water.

The locks that hang from her head are as long as cables with others joined on to them.

A face she has which dazzles those who gaze upon it, so that they fancy themselves to be gazing upon the new moon.

Withal she has hips round like a heap of moist sand, and a hand with soft white fingers deft and skilful.

At night from love of her I was like nothing so much as the thong of a sandal under her feet—no, not even the worth of that!

How then dost thou sever the tie that binds thee in sincerity to a man of glorious fame, who desires not to withdraw from it?

He desired a favour, and thou didst lead him to hope, and that which thou didst promise concerning it proved to be false:

A warrior who builds up glory, a man like a sword-blade which the armourer
by long polishing has made bright and spotless ;
He leads a band of warriors to meet another like itself, and he springs down
to fight afoot when they desire foot-fighting.
Thou mightest compare their cavalry in the onset, when the mill of Death
whirls, to she-camels barren for a year.
The warriors stride on foot towards the mail-clad foemen, stretched out like
the necks of camels mixed drab and red in colour that push on their
foals.
And they clothe their keen blades with the heads of the men they meet, and
the horsemen of our side shield our footmen from harm.
That which has passed over us [of victories and stubborn fighting] makes it
impossible for me to accept injurious treatment, and in contentions we are
the superiors when it comes to the struggle,
By means of a speech before which those who attempt to break us in are
abased, and we come out superior to them when they essay the contest
for superiority.
And many the poet of a tribe filled with hatred against us have I vanquished,
and his people were put to shame and abased ;
And many the noon-tide, hot as blazing fire, have I journeyed through, what
time the black locust sought his midday rest ;
And many the night I have travelled, with no waymark to help me, through
its thick darkness, wherein the wayfarers fear to light on perdition.

ʿAbīd b. al-Abras

The original poem is on pages 211-212. The following translation is from Charles Lyall, The Dīwāns of ʿAbīd Ibn al-Abras and ʿĀmir Ibn al-Tufail, Luzac, 1913, p. 61.

Weep, O mine eye, for Asad's sons!
 Sunk are they in anguish of heart.
 Once had they tents of leather red,
 vast herds of camels, and plenteous wine,
 And short-haired steeds of noble race,
 and spears well straightened in the clip.
 Give pause, O King! avoid the curse!
 stay! in thy sentence ruin falls.
 In every valley from Yathrib's town,
 and from the Castles to far Yamāmah,
 Sounds wailing of captives, or the shriek
 of fire-scathed wretch, or the death-bird's hooting.
 Najd hast thou barred to them, and now
 in fear they dwell in low Tihāmah;
 Trembling the sons of Asad crouch,
 as the dove trembles o'er her eggs:
 A poor nest built she of two twigs
 of *nasham*² and of panic-grass.
 If thou leave them, it is thy grace;
 and if thou slay them, it is no wrong:
 Thou art the Lord and Master, thou,
 and they thy slaves till the Resurrection;
 Submissive under thy scourge are they
 as a young dun camel under the nose-ring.

The original poem is on page 212. The following translation is from The Dīwāns of ^cAbīd Ibn al-Abras and ^cAmir Ibn al-Tufail, pp. 45-46.

Of a truth the morrow shall bring with it its happenings,
 and the morning light and the eventide are their time of tryst;
 And mankind revile their leader when he has missed the way
 to attain success: but he that walks straight is not blamed.
 And a man is ever the prey of Fate -- unawares it comes
 and bears him down. But to Mahdad how shall we say farewell?
 To the Lord Sharāhīl, great in bounty to all who come,
 like palms fruit-laden, with runnels flowing about their stems;
 Euphrates-like he pours his gifts, and the burden bears
 like mountain-masses , unfailing ever his generous hand.