

THE POETRY OF THE BAKR TRIBE IN THEIR  
POLITICO-TRIBAL ROLE FROM 1-132 A.H., WITH  
A DETAILED STUDY OF FOUR BAKRĪ POETS

by

Khalil Saleh Saleem Abu-Rahmeh

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
to the School of Oriental and African Studies,  
University of London,  
May, 1981

ProQuest Number: 10731469

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10731469

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the poetry of the Bakr tribe in their politico-tribal role from the early Islamic period up to the fall of the Umayyad dynasty in 132 A.H., with a detailed study of four prominent Bakrī poets. It consists of two parts. The earlier part consists of four chapters, the first of which contains a general survey of the politico-tribal interrelationship of the main Bakrite clans on the eve of Islam, including a brief account of their religion before Islam, and the conversion of the majority to Islam shortly before the death of the Prophet. The second chapter is on the role of Bakr in the Riddāh movement and their poetry in that context. Chapter III tackles the migration of Bakr throughout the period of the Islamic conquests and their settlement in the conquered lands, especially in Iraq and Khurāsān where the conquerors settled in Khiṭaṭ designed on tribal lines thus reinforcing their tribal polarity. Subsequently great tribal blocs and alliances emerged and were among the major motive factors of the Umayyad era. This re-emergence of tribalism had a clear impact upon politics and poetry. Most of the poets devoted much of their poetry to defending their tribes and glorifying their heroic deeds. This chapter also studies briefly tribal factors in the emergence and history of the Khawārij, which was the only movement heavily dependent on the Bakr for warriors, leaders and poets. The fourth chapter examines the poetry of the Bakrites in respect to their politico-tribal role from the Great Fitnah that culminated

in the killing of the third caliph, 'Uthmān, to the fall of the Umayyad dynasty.

Part Two consists of a foreword and four chapters devoted to a detailed study of four well-known Bakrī poets. They are: Nahār b. Tawsi'ah, the most gifted Bakrī poet in Khurāsān, al-'Udail b. al-Farkh who was described as the poet of Bakr, Nābighat B. Shaibān, the only Bakrī poet whose dīwān has survived, and 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān who embraced the Khārijite beliefs and was a talented poet. He was the chief of the Ṣufrite sitters and their muftī.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Professor T. M. Johnstone, whose direction, help and encouragement have guided me through the course of my study and helped me to finalize this research.

I should like to express my deepest gratitude to my wife for her support, endurance and constant encouragement while taking care of the home and children.

My thanks are due to the librarians and staff of the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies and those of the British Museum. I have also to acknowledge help from the University of London library, the University of Edinburgh library and other libraries which provided me with useful material not otherwise available. I am grateful also to all my friends for their much needed encouragement and help in the preparation of this study. I would like, as well, to express my profound thanks to Yarmouk University for providing me with a scholarship which enabled me to complete this work.

Dedicated

to the soul of my late brother, Muḥammad,  
to whom I was unable to say my final  
farewell due to the circumstances of my study.

ABBREVIATIONS AND READING CONVENTIONS

b. (between two names)	Ibn
B.	Banū
E.I.	The Encyclopedia of Islam
S.E.I.	Short Encyclopedia of Islam

Abbreviations of book titles are given immediately after their titles in the Bibliography.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
ABBREVIATIONS AND READING CONVENTIONS	vi

## PART ONE

CHAPTER I :	THE POLITICAL AND TRIBAL RELATIONS OF BAKR ON THE EVE OF ISLAM	1
CHAPTER II :	BAKRĪ POETRY ON THE SUBJECT OF THE <u>RIDDAH</u>	59
CHAPTER III :	THE MIGRATIONS AND ALLIANCES OF BAKR	79
	Emigration throughout the Islamic Conquest	79
	Tribal Blocs and Alliances	93
CHAPTER IV :	BAKRĪ POETRY IN RELATION TO THEIR POLITICO-TRIBAL ROLE FROM <u>AL-FITNAH AL-KUBRĀ TILL THE END OF THE UMAYYAD ERA</u>	109

## PART TWO

INTRODUCTION:		172
CHAPTER V :	NAHĀR B. TAWSI'AH	177
CHAPTER VI :	AL-'UDAIL B. AL-FARKH	214
CHAPTER VII :	NĀBIGHAT B. SHAIBĀN	281
	Al-Nābigah's Religion	293
	The Dīwān of Al-Nābigah	300
	A General Account of the Poetry of Al-Nābigah and of its Most Salient Features	306
	The Descriptive Poetry of Al- Nābigah	312



	The <u>Fakhr</u> Poetry of Al-Nābighah	326
	The <u>Madh</u> Poetry of Al-Nābighah	346
	The Technical Characteristics of the Poetry of Al-Nābighah	377
CHAPTER VIII:	'IMRĀN B. ḤIṬṬĀN	386
BIBLIOGRAPHY:		431

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

THE POLITICAL AND TRIBAL RELATIONS OF  
BAKR ON THE EVE OF ISLAM

Some modern scholars hold that certain events, which took place among the Arab tribes in northeastern Arabia, paved the way for the Muslim conquest of Iraq. The most important of these events are the three following: the end put to the rule of the Lakhmid family in Ḥīrah when the Persian King killed the last of them al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir; the battle of Dhū Qār when the Bakrites defeated a Persian army; and the successive raids launched by certain Bakrite chiefs, notably al-Muthannā b. Ḥārithah al-Shaibānī, and Quṭbah b. Qatādah al-Sadūsī or Suwaid b. Quṭbah al-Dhuhlī on the western fringes of the Persian Empire. The first used to attack from the direction of Ḥīrah<sup>1</sup>, while the other used to attack from the direction of al-Khuraibah.<sup>2</sup> These raids took place shortly before the Islamic conquest of Iraq, a campaign which both leaders joined or were asked to join when the Islamic army, led by Khālīd b. al-Walīd, reached the frontiers of southern Iraq.

---

<sup>1</sup>Futūḥ, 337-338, 475; Ṭabarī, I, 2016, 2381; Wāqidī, 3.

<sup>2</sup>Futūḥ, 337-338, 475; Ṭabarī, I, 2016, 2381; Usd, IV, 206, Iṣābah, III, 473.

These events together seem to give a certain picture of the overall situation in this important part of Arabia, shortly before the emergence of Islam as a political power, and of the relations of the Arab tribes there, especially of the Bakr, with the rulers of Ḥīrah and their Persian masters. This ordering of events shows that the tribe of Bakr challenged Persian authority by refusing to hand over to the Persian monarch the things entrusted to them by al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir, and that they were able to defeat the Persians at Dhū Qār, later raiding the frontiers of Iraq, and finally hastening to join the Islamic army that conquered Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

This arrangement of the three events and the interpretation given may seem to be plausible in the first place, but a serious study of the period and of the nature of tribal society highlights some objections. The most important of these objections is that this interpretation is overgeneral in that it portrays the tribe of Bakr as

---

<sup>3</sup>For examples, see: Wellhausen, Prolegomena zur allesten Geschichte des Islams, 37-38; Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, I, 199; Becker, the Expansion of the Saracens - the East, in The Cambridge Medieval History, II, 329; al-'Alī, al-Tanzīmāt al-Ijtimā'iyah wa al-Iqtiṣādiyyah fī al-Baṣrahfī al-Qarn al-Awwal al-Hijrī, 34; Qasim, Shi'r al-Baṣrahfī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, 7; al-Shoush, The Nature of Authority in Arabia at the Advent of Islam, 144.

a monolithic bloc, functioning as a unified political entity and, as suggested by Schleifer, exercising a policy independent of the Persians.<sup>4</sup> This interpretation even attempts to establish that the tribe of Bakr, after Dhū Qār, had been exercising an anti-Persian policy, namely, for a period of around two decades. It fails to comprehend the internal divisions and rivalries in the tribe. Although al-A'shā implies in boasting of the victory of Dhū Qār that all the Bakrite sections took part in it:

When they faced us we uncovered our heads in order to let them know we were Bakr, so that they would flee.<sup>5</sup>

لما رأونا كشفنا عن جماجمنا      ليعلموا أننا بكر فينصرفوا

the available sources are unanimous that Hanīfah, one of the most powerful and prominent sections of Bakr, did not play any part in the said battle. In fact, the Bakrite sections, on the eve of Islam, did not constitute a tribal or political unity or even as much as a loose alliance. Bakr was one of the great tribes to which many powerful and independent sections belonged and this prevented a united chieftainship. Thus at the advent of Islam, there was no one person who could be called the chief of Bakr. Not one person had been invested with the power to command the loyalty of the whole tribe. The Bakrite sections,

---

<sup>4</sup>E.I., Bakr b. Wā'il.

<sup>5</sup>Dīwān al-A'shā, 311.

with the exception, of those who were allied, were not led in their ayyām by any one leader. Every section; and even subsection in some instances, was led by its own chief. The accounts of these ayyām frequently use the word mutasānidūn,<sup>6</sup> i.e., standing side by side, which implies a plurality of the leaders. There is an interesting passage quoted by Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, on the authority of Abū 'Ubaidah, which illustrates the relationship which existed between the chiefs of certain Bakrite sections and subsections: "Whenever the land of Bakr b. Wā'il was barren, they were wont to graze their flocks on the land of Tamīm. When the latter decided to prevent the Bakrites using the land, both sides mobilized their forces. The leader of Bakr was al-Aṣam 'Amr b. Mas'ūd. The chiefs of Bakr were envious of his leadership. Thus they came to him and said that in the view of the great number of the army of Bakr, they found it advisable that every hayy should be led by a man from amongst them, so that they would compete and fight better". When al-Aṣam consulted his son Mafrūq, the latter said: "They intend to deceive you because they envy your leadership. By God if you were victorious we would always be known for this privilege, and if you were defeated we would be remembered for our chieftainship".<sup>7</sup> The available

---

<sup>6</sup>For examples, see: Dabbī, 740; Naqā'id, 47, 144, 580, 781; Kāmil, I, 256; 'Iqd, V, 192, 198.

<sup>7</sup>'Iqd, V, 204-205.

evidence, therefore, shows that the Bakrite sections did not function as a political or tribal entity. The information about the war of al-Basūs is one of the earliest on the recorded history of the tribe of Bakr. This war erupted between the two sister-tribes, Bakr and Taghlib, towards the end of the fifth century,<sup>8</sup> and the feud is said to have continued between the two tribes for around forty years. This feud was caused because Jassās, the chief of the B. Shaibān, killed Kulaib, the arrogant chief of Taghlib. Some sections of Bakr like Lujaim and Yashkur condemned the crime and refused to support the B. Shaibān.<sup>9</sup> Sa'd b. Mālik refers to this fact saying:

All of Lujaim have refused to support us  
even with a single man.  
Because of Yashkur's perfidious behaviour,  
it has none left to praise it.<sup>10</sup>

ان لجيما قد أبت كلها      أن يردفونا رجلا واحدا  
ويشكر الآن على خترها      لم يسمع الآن لهم حامدا

It was only later, when Muhalhil, the chief of Taghlib, alienated some other Bakrite sections that the latter united against him. Shortly after the war of al-Basūs, the tribe of Bakr fell under the sway of Kinda. According to one account, the sway of Kinda over the tribe of Bakr was an act

---

<sup>8</sup>Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, 55.

<sup>9</sup>On al-Basūs see: Naqā'id, 905-907; Aghānī, V, 34-64; Ma'ārif, 605-606; Kāmil, I, 214-222; 'Iqd, V, 213-222; Majma', I, 342; Nuwairī, XV, 396-399; Baghdādī, I, 425-427.

<sup>10</sup>Dhail, 26; Aghānī, V, 52.

of choice on their part. <sup>Thus</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbih quotes the following narration of Abū 'Ubaidah which is "a more complete tradition about this":<sup>11</sup> "When the tribe of Bakr b. Wā'il was driven to anarchy, due to the continuous wars and blood-feuds between its families, their chiefs assembled and agreed that the only way to avoid this anarchy and stop the bloodshed was to appoint a strong ruler to whom they would be ready to give part of their wealth. He should be strong enough to protect the weak and stop the bloodshed. He should not be someone from one of their own subsections as no-one would be unanimously accepted by all the tribe. They decided that the best course would be to go to the Tubba' and ask him to be their King. They went to the Tubba' and explained to him their difficulty. The Tubba' then appointed al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr, the Ākil al-Murār of Kinda, who with the Bakrites attacked the Lakhmid Kings of Ḥīrah and the Ghassānid Kings of Syria".<sup>12</sup> Although one may not find much in this statement that can be considered trustworthy, it may, nevertheless, shed light on the fact that the great tribes which had many branches, had no one chieftain or administrative mechanism. Likewise, it sheds light on the internal divisions within the Bakr which subsided and almost disappeared when many of their tribesmen later migrated to the conquered Islamic

---

<sup>11</sup>Olinder, The Kings of Kinda, 55.

<sup>12</sup>'Iqd, V, 222. Also Kāmil, I, 209; Bakrī, IV, 1363, Nuwairī, XV, 406.



states, in which the military and administrative policy required that members of any one tribe, regardless of its sections, be settled in a certain khittah (quarter). The new situation of common interest therefore came to play a role in the emergence of leaders representing all the Bakrites in such a quarter, like Mālik b. Misma' in Basra and al-Ḥudāin b. al-Mundhir in Khurāsān. Thus any account of the political and tribal role of the tribe of Bakr before Islam should be preceded by thorough research into its sections, especially the well-known ones. It should be noted, in this context, that the works of the genealogists and the accounts of ayyām, despite some doubts about their accuracy, are among the most important sources for research on the Arab tribes before Islam.

We know nothing about the eponym 'Bakr' except from mythical accounts, which appear to have been fabricated in later times to interpret the traditional antagonism between Bakr and Tamīm.<sup>13</sup> One of the dubious aspects of the genealogical tables prepared by the Arab genealogists, who depended wholly on oral narratives, is that they are continuous tables without interruption or deficiency. Beginning from Adam, 'Adnān or Qaḥṭān, as the case may be, these tables continue to grow vertically and horizontally embracing all the tribes, clans and even families and certain notable

---

<sup>13</sup>For examples, see: 'Uyūn, 185; Aghānī, XIX, 21; 'Iqd II, 318.

individuals. Moreover, the Arab genealogies are based on the paternal or male line, and presuppose that every tribe is the offspring of a certain man. This is why a tribe has been described by the genealogists and philologists as "the aggregate offspring of some common ancestor".<sup>14</sup> This genealogical classification was early called into question by European scholars such as Noeldeke, Goldziher, Smith and others. It is obvious from the lack of consistency between the various accounts that much of it is of later invention. On the other hand, it can be seen that the purpose of systematizing the genealogical relations was not historical, but rather social and political. The earliest example of a classification of Muslim society was the dīwān drawn up by the second caliph, 'Umar. This dīwān was primarily a register of those who were entitled to receive 'aṭa' (stipend). Notwithstanding, it may have given impetus to other attempts in respect of the older organization of the Arabs. Unfortunately, the information available about 'Umar's dīwān is meagre in the extreme.<sup>15</sup> The genealogists never make reference to the dīwān, which may merely mean that by the time of the earliest of these works it had already become inaccessible.

The early Arab genealogists seem to have extracted their data from various sources. The genealogy of ancient

---

<sup>14</sup>Qāmūs, Qabila; Jamharat, 431; Nihāyat, 20.

<sup>15</sup>See: Ya'qūbī, II, 175-176.

people from the time of Adam and of extinct Arab tribes were derived mostly from the Old Testament, and from the accounts narrated by Jews and Christians. The early genealogists frequently used to mention these two sources.<sup>16</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm mentions that Ibn Ishāq used to accept the accounts narrated by the Jews and Christians whom he used to describe as 'early people of knowledge'.<sup>17</sup> The more recent genealogies of the Arab tribes were derived from the accounts of the genealogists of respective tribes. Such genealogists were the source of Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', Ibn al-Kalbī and his son, Ibn Ishāq, al-Wāqidī, Abū 'Ubaidah, Ibn Ḥabīb, and others who wrote well-known books on Arab genealogies. Ibn al-Nadīm's Fihrist and other sources mention the names of some of these early tribal genealogists such as Daghfal, Ṣaḥār al-'Abdī and al-Najjār b. Aws.<sup>18</sup> Pre-Islamic poetry contains indications that the Arabs both in the Jāhilī and the early Islamic periods, i.e. before the appearance of written genealogical accounts, were aware of the genealogical relations and the paternal and maternal links between tribal sections.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup>For example, see: Ma'ārif, 9; Ishtiqāq, 5; Jamharat, 7.

<sup>17</sup>Fihrist, 136.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>19</sup>Zuhair b. Abī Sulmā, for example says:

رأيت بني آل امرئ القيس أصفقوا علينا، وقالوا: إننا نحن أكثر  
 سليم بن منصور وأقناء صامر وسعد بن بكر، والمنصور وأعسر  
 خذوا حظكم، يا آل بكر، واذكروا أوامرنا، والرحم بالغيب تذكر

Shi'r Zuhair b. Abī Sulmā, 155. See also: Dīwān Bishr b. Abī Khazim, poem no. 15.

It is not far-fetched to suppose that early Arab genealogists found a communal structure based on the paternal or male line, that Old Testament genealogy was also based on the same principle and that they were, therefore, led to believe that this was the case from the oldest times. Thus they built their genealogical tree based on the male line, managing to find an eponym for every tribe and linking these eponyms to one another until they reached Adam, from whom all humanity descended. Therefore, they imagined that it was possible to represent the main tribal sections and subsections, that existed at the time the genealogy was recounted, as discrete blood-lines. They appear to have missed the point that many individuals, families, or even small groups must have merged into stronger groups for tribal, political, social, or economic reasons. Such small groups must have lost their identity with the passage of time, and been wholly absorbed in their new community.

However, we should not deny the great efforts of the genealogists, nor we can describe their work as large-scale falsification. Doubts are raised only about far-away origins and certain of the conventions involved. It is known that each tribe used to have a certain number of people concerned with keeping accounts of its genealogy, and with determining the relations between its various families and offshoots. This tradition is still alive in the tribal life. The genealogists who became active in the Umayyad period in writing down and classifying genealogies, depended on these tribal authorities. Their genealogical

tables contained names of famous tribal personalities who were still alive, and it was impossible to falsify the genealogies of these contemporary personalities. Falsification of the genealogy of even the later links was difficult because their kinship ties were fresh in the memory of their offspring for many generations. If we suppose that a genealogical tree of a certain tribe comprises lower, middle and upper levels, we will find that there is no difference between the genealogists about the lower level, and that the difference is negligible at the middle level, but that on the other hand the difference about the upper level is sometimes great, i.e., the difference is about far-away origins about which we have no accurate information and which appear to have been symbols, totems or merely fabrications to which names were given and myths attached. The genealogical tables, therefore, offer useful information about certain members of the tribe, certain aspects of its history for several generations, its sections and subsections competing for chieftainship, and the alliances between some of these sections with each other or with foreign powers. Our information about important events in the recorded history of the tribe of Bakr does not go beyond one and a half centuries before Islam, which is not a long period for the memories of people concerned with the genealogies. Whether these genealogical tables and accounts were accurate and correct in their entirety or not, they were accepted in later Jāhili and Umayyad

periods to be historical facts. The tribes and their sections reacted to one another according to the stand demanded by these accounts. Affections and partisanship were in accordance with the relationships conceived of by these accounts, irrespective of whether they conformed totally or partially to the facts of history.

As regards the accounts of the ayyām of the Arab tribes, they are indispensable for any study of the history of the tribes and their poetry before Islam, although they cannot be accepted at face value. The ayyām of a tribe were its legacy, its patrimony and its birthright from the past. Thus one may understand why each tribe gave much consideration to its ayyām, explained in detail its heroic deeds, and recorded with great pride its victories and achievements. The accounts of the tribe's ayyām were judiciously guarded and anxiously handed down from father to son in order to imbue the rising generation with the spirit of consanguinity, to infuse them with pride in and love of their tribe, to incite their tribal chauvinism and to increase their resolution to safeguard the honour of their tribe with their very lives. Since their main objective was not to communicate accurate historical information, but to laud the tribe and glorify its prowess and to shame and belittle its foes; and since there were no authentic and impartial written records in the period before Islam, one may expect to find that some of these accounts were exaggerated or perverted according to the viewpoint and inclination

of the narrator, from whose tribe the hero of the yawm concerned came, and rarely from its allies. The earlier the period in which a yawm took place, the greater the differences of opinion and the contradictory nature of the accounts. This happened because the narrators of the tribes were keen to ascribe as much privilege as they could to their respective tribes. One example of this is the dispute about the chief in the yawm of Khazāzā. Ibn 'Abd Rabbih mentions on the authority of Abū 'Ubaidah that some distinguished people from Basra - who used to hold an assembly on Fridays and boast to each other - were disputing one day over the chieftainship in the yawm of Khazāzā. Khālid b. Jabalah said: "the chief was al-Aḥwaṣ b. Ja'far". 'Āmir and Misma', sons of 'Abd al-Mālik, said: "Kulaib b. Wā'il was the chief", while Ibn Nūḥ al-'Aṭārī said: "The chief was Zur'ah b. 'Udūs". Then they went to the majlis, i.e. meeting-place, of Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā' for him to judge who was the chief. Abū 'Amr said: "The yawm took place long before the tribe of 'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'ah, Dārim b. Mālik and Jusham b. Bakr existed. I have asked about it for sixty years", went on Abū 'Amr, "but I have not found anyone of the people who knew who was chief and who was king in the yawm of Khazāzā, which was the occasion on which the people of Ma'add, father of Nizār, first won their independence and became free of the domination of the Kings of Ḥimyar. This yawm of Khazāzā", went on Abū 'Amr, "would not have been known, had it not been for the verse of 'Amr b. Kulthūm in which he says:

"And we of the tribe of Taghlib , in the early morning when the fire was lit on Khazāzā, played a greater part in the battle than any of the other tribes that were present."<sup>20</sup>

ونحن غداة أوقد في خرازی      رفدنا فوق رفد الرافدینا

This example may suffice to prove that the ayyām al-'Arab provided splendid opportunities for boasting and taunting, that every tribe was keen on ascribing to itself as much heroism and glory as it could and that the truth was, sometimes, impossible to be derived from such conflicting claims.

Despite the exaggerated accounts of the ayyām of before and soon after the advent of Islam, we seldom find any essential differences in them, because they belong to a period not too distant in time from that during which the early compilation of the Arab ayyām and genealogies took place. It was difficult for a narrator to falsify essential matters, especially since some of the participants in those ayyām were still alive. Most of our information about the ayyām involving Bakr and others, especially the Tamīmites, falls into this category.

The ayyām accounts, moreover, offer important information about a certain tribe on the eve of Islam. From one angle, they contain place-names that are useful to determine the approximate location of a territory where a certain

---

<sup>20</sup> Iqd, V, 245-246.



tribe and its sections lived. It is implausible to suggest the possibility of falsification in this respect, because it could easily be exposed and the narration would lose its intended purpose; especially because the dwellers in the new cities in the Umayyad period still had fresh memories of their old territories in the Peninsula, and the relations were still strong between the members of the tribe who remained behind and those who migrated to settle in Basra<sup>21</sup> and Kufa, where lived most of those who compiled the ayyām accounts. It may well be plausible to suppose the opposite. A narrator who wanted to glorify a certain tribe by inventing false ayyām accounts had to be well aware of the territory of the tribe and of its neighbours, so that his invented accounts could not be easily challenged. A knowledge of a territory inhabited by a certain section and of the nature of that territory is important, because it helps in the understanding of the tribal and political relations between that section and neighbouring sections and other power-groups. Moreover, such information helps one to understand the nature of life of any one section, so as to classify it as nomad, quasi-nomad or settled. This in turn helps to explain the reason behind the small or great numbers of ayyām ascribed to various sections, and which form their history. The majority of the B. Hanīfah, for example, enjoyed a settled life in al-Yamāmah which was one

---

<sup>21</sup>See: Qāsim, Shi'r al-Baṣrah fī al-'Asr al-Umawī, 39-41.

of the most fertile regions in the Peninsula.<sup>22</sup> There was therefore no economic impetus to lead them to raid and violate others' territories as did the B. Shaibān who led a nomadic life. This is one of the reasons behind the dearth of information about the B. Ḥanīfah in comparison with that about the B. Shaibān. From another point of view, the ayyām accounts usually mention the chief and this in turn indicates the prominent subsection or family within a certain section. Sometimes we find that some sections or an alliance took part in several ayyām because of common territory and interests. If we find, for example, that the alliance called the Lahāzim was usually led by a member of the B. 'Ijl, then it will be plausible to suggest that the B. 'Ijl was the dominant component in that alliance.

Despite the impossibility of giving accurate dates for most of the ayyām of the Bakrites, nevertheless many contain factual evidences, especially in the way of names of certain persons, which help in their chronological arrangement. For example, the ayyām of Khazāzā, al-Basūs, al-Kulāb I, Dhū Qār, al-Shaqīqah, al-Shayyitān, al-Waqabā, and al-Ghabīṭ contain evidences that support the idea that these ayyām are mentioned above in their chronological sequence. When we find accounts depicting a certain subsection in the leading role in certain ancient ayyām, and find that its role was less obvious in later ayyām,

---

<sup>22</sup>Bakrī, I, 83-85; Mu'jam, IV, 1028; Rawd, 620; Belyaev, (Eng. trans) Arab, Islam and the Arab Caliphate, 57.

we may plausibly suggest that it enjoyed a special prominence at an earlier date, then lost that prominence to another group. This criterion, however, is not as accurate as it might be since none of the early books about ayyām, such as that of Abū 'Ubaidah, has survived, and because most of what has reached us on the ayyām of Bakr refers to the years surrounding the advent of Islam.

However, from the genealogist's works, the ayyām accounts and the standard historical and literature works, one may deduce that the main Bakrite sections were the following: The B. Yashkur b. Bakr; the B. Taim al-Lāt b. Tha'labah; the B. Dhuhl b. Tha'labah; the B. Qais b. Tha'labah; the B. 'Ijl b. Lujaim; the B. Hanīfah b. Lujaim; and the B. Shaibān b. Tha'labah. Of the others we know almost nothing except their names and that some of them merged into the sections mentioned above. The B. Badan, for example, lived among the B. Yashkur.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, the B. Qais b. 'Ukābah lived among the B. Dhuhl b. Tha'labah,<sup>24</sup> while the B. Zimmān lived among the B. Hanīfah.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to these Bakrite sections, we know of the existence of an alliance called the Lahāzim which

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab Ma'add wa al-Yaman al-Kabīr, MS, fol., 4; Jamharat, 290.

<sup>24</sup>Jamharat, 295.

<sup>25</sup>Ma'ārif, 97.

consisted of four sections: the B. Taim al-Lāt b. Tha'labah, the B. Qais b. Tha'labah, the B. 'Ijl, and the non-Bakrite section, the B. 'Anazah b. Asad.<sup>26</sup> Caskel suggests that this confederation may have been created in order to help its members not to be overwhelmed by the dominant B. Shaibān.<sup>27</sup> This interpretation may seem to be logical, but the surviving account of ayyām do not contain any information about the conflict between the Lahāzim and the B. Shaibān, although the yawm of Muḥallim at Hajar was between the B. Qais b. Tha'labah, one component of the Lahāzim, and the B. Shaibān,<sup>28</sup> and despite the indication in the mu'allaqah of al-A'shā that relations between these two sections were strained for a short period.<sup>29</sup> It might well be the case that the alliance of the Lahāzim was founded to confront some nomadic groupings in their neighbourhood, such as that of the B. Tamīm, since we find in the accounts of many ayyām that fighting took place between the Lahāzim and some elements of the Tamīm.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, we find in the accounts of many ayyām like the yawm of Dhū

---

<sup>26</sup>Naqā'id, 305, 728, 764, 1023; Aghānī, XI, 316-317; Kāmil, I, 263; 'Iqd, III, 363; 'Asākir, III, 81.

<sup>27</sup>I.E. (new edition), Bakr b. Wā'il.

<sup>28</sup>Aghānī, IX, 154-156.

<sup>29</sup>Dīwān al-A'shā, 61-62; Aghānī, IX, 153.

<sup>30</sup>For examples, see: Naqā'id, 47, 781; Aghānī, XIV, 78; 'Iqd, V, 182, 185.

Ṭulūh,<sup>31</sup> Jadud,<sup>32</sup> al-Falj,<sup>33</sup> al-Shayyīṭān<sup>34</sup> and al-Ghabīṭ,<sup>35</sup> that the Lahāzim or some of its components fight side by side with the B. Shaibān. In the famous battle of Dhū Qār, the Lahāzim and especially the B. 'Ijl were the strongest supporters of the B. Shaibān against the Persians and their allied Arab tribes.<sup>36</sup> Abū 'Ubaidah mentions another alliance, called al-Dhuhlān, as having existed before Islam. It comprised the B. Shaibān, the B. Yashkur, the B. Dhuhl b. Tha'labah and the non-Bakrite section, the B. Dubai'ah b. Rabī'ah.<sup>37</sup> Abū 'Ubaidah's claim is not substantiated by the surviving accounts of ayyām which never mention this claimed alliance. The two poems by Rāshid b. Shihāb,<sup>38</sup> a leader of Yashkur, quoted in the Mufaddaliyyāt indicate that the relations between Yashkur and Shaibān were strained, and that fighting took place between them shortly before the yawm of Dhū Qār. Moreover, the name "al-Dhuhlān" suggests that the prominent component within the so-called alliance

---

<sup>31</sup>Naqā'id, 47, 781; Kāmil, I, 267; 'Iqd, V, 188; Nuwairī, XV, 383.

<sup>32</sup>Naqā'id, 144, 326; Aghānī, XIV, 78; Kāmil, I, 255; 'Iqd, V, 199; Nuwairī, XV, 389.

<sup>33</sup>Kāmil, I, 274.

<sup>34</sup>Naqā'id, 1020; Kāmil, I, 274; 'Iqd, V, 206, Nuwairī, XV, 393; Bākri, IV, 1156.

<sup>35</sup>Naqā'id, 313; Kāmil, I, 250; 'Iqd, V, 196; Nuwairī, XV, 388.

<sup>36</sup>Naqā'id, 640-641; Kāmil, I, 199; 'Iqd, V, 263.

<sup>37</sup>Naqā'id, 728; Ṭabarī, II, 448-449.

<sup>38</sup>Dabbī, 611, 614.

was the B. Dhuhl. This suggestion is not substantiated by the ayyām accounts, nor is it borne out from the genealogical works or the standard historical and literary sources; furthermore it contradicts Abū 'Ubaidah's testimony about the dominant position enjoyed by the B. Shaibān within the Bakr.<sup>39</sup> Unlike the Lahāzim, the so-called alliance of al-Dhuhlān is never mentioned in the surviving pre-Islamic poetry. The word "al-Dhuhlān" occurs in the following verse by Jarīr:<sup>40</sup>

وراض بحكم الحي بكر بن وائل      اذا كان في الذهلين أوفي اللهبازم

Abū 'Ubaidah comments on the above verse saying: "Al-Dhuhlān are Shaibān and Dhuhl b. Tha'labah and with them there allied themselves the rest of the components of the alliance of al-Dhuhlān".<sup>41</sup> But there is no indication of the existence of such an alliance in the above verse of Jarīr. He might well have meant by "al-Dhuhlān": the B. Dhuhl b. Tha'labah together with the B. Dhuhl b. Shaibān. In another place, Abū 'Ubaidah says that the B. Ḥanīfah did not join the Lahāzim or the [so-called] al-Dhuhlān alliance because these two alliances consisted of nomadic sections, while the B. Ḥanīfah were settled people.<sup>42</sup> But it seems more likely that the B. Ḥanīfah did not ally themselves with other

---

<sup>39</sup> See: 'Umdah, II, 192; Kāmil, I, 254; 'Iqd, V, 380.

<sup>40</sup> Naqā'id, 764.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 728.

Bakrite sections because their territory, at al-Yamāmah, was surrounded by non-Bakrite tribal groupings.<sup>43</sup> For this reason, namely their isolation, their relation with their mother tribe was severed, and they never took part in the ayyām of other Bakrite sections.<sup>44</sup> Mūsā b. Jābir al-Ḥanafī refers to this, boasting that they allied themselves with their swords, and that they took their own revenge despite the location of their territory among their enemies from Qais 'Ailān and Tamīm:

We found our father camped in an area midway between Qais 'Ailān and al-Fizr. When our tribe became far away from us, we stood fast and made a covenant with our swords to withstand the [calamities of] time. They [swords] have never let us down in a battle, nor have we sheathed them before taking our revenge.<sup>45</sup>

وجدنا أبانا كان حل ببلدة	سوى بين قيس قيس عيلان والفزر
فلما نأت عنا العشيرة كلها	أقمنا وحالفنا السيوف على الدهر
فما أسلمتنا بعد في يوم وقعة	ولا نحن أغمدنا السيوف على وتر

The territories of the Bakrite sections were never determined very precisely, and this is, of course, characteristic of Arabian society until modern times. During their recorded history, they moved to various regions due to economic conditions and changing politico-tribal relations. The early writers say that the Bakrites, like the

---

<sup>43</sup> Ḥayawān, IV, 380; Aghānī, XI, 316.

<sup>44</sup> Aghānī, XI, 316.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 317.

other 'Adnānite tribes, used to live in Tihāmah.<sup>46</sup> After the war of al-Basūs, they moved to al-Yamāmah and the regions adjoining in the direction of al-Baḥrain, and northward to the fringes of al-Sawād and the region between al-Ubullah and Hīt.<sup>47</sup> A pre-Islamic poet, al-Akhnas b. Shihāb al-Taghlibī, says:

And Bakr - all Iraq's broad plain is theirs:  
but if they so will, a shield from  
Yamāmah's [dales] will come to protect them.<sup>48</sup>

ويكرلها بر الحراق وان تشأ      يحل دونها من اليمامة حاجب

At the period surrounding the advent of Islam, we have relatively more information concerning the territories of certain Bakrite sections and their political relations with the Lakhmids and their Persian masters, as well as on their tribal relations, with the Tamīm and in particular the B. Yarbū', who began to press forward in order to pitch their tents in al-Ḥazn during the spring, giving rise to mutual raiding,<sup>49</sup> even after the advent of Islam.

The extent of information, however, on some Bakrite sections at the advent of Islam is insufficiently extensive for a clear picture about them to be formed, perhaps because

<sup>46</sup> Bakrī, I, 79, 85.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 82, 85.

<sup>48</sup> Dabbī, 415. Cf. E.I. (new ed.), 963.

<sup>49</sup> E.I. (new ed.), Bakr b. Wā'il.



of their relative unimportance or because of the remoteness of their home territories from the garrison towns of Basra and Kufa, where the genealogical lore of the Arab tribes and their ayyām were gathered and recorded during the first century of the Hijrah. Another reason may be that no genealogists of importance belonged to them, or because the number of the migrants from any of these sections in the two cities was too small to allow anyone of its members to be among the notable leaders of the tribe there.

The available information on the B. Yashkur suggests that they enjoyed a prominent position among the Bakrite sections at certain times before the advent of Islam. Under the chieftainship of a sayyid named al-Ḥārith b. Ghubar, they are said to have been the dominant section of the tribe of Rabī'ah<sup>50</sup> to which Bakr belong. Al-Rayyān al-Yashkurī was said to be the sayyid of the tribe of Bakr in the later phase of their war with the tribe of Taghlib.<sup>51</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb mentions that Jahbal b. Tha'labah al-Yashkurī was one of the chiefs of the tribe of Bakr in the Jāhilī period.<sup>52</sup> Al-Marzubānī mentions that the ancient poet 'Amr b. Mālik, of the B. Taim al-Lāt b. Tha'labah, caused the removal of Yashkur from the chieftainship of Rabī'ah, which then moved

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Hurūb al-Basūs bain Bakr wa Taghlib, MS, fol. 127; Jamharat, 290.

<sup>51</sup> Jamharat, 291.

<sup>52</sup> Muḥabbar, 254.

to the B. Tha'labah b. 'Ukābah. 'Amr says boasting of this deed:

It was we who destroyed the power of Yashkur, after they had seized the meadows and transgressed.<sup>53</sup>

ونحن هد منا عز يشكر بعد ما مضت حقة تغشى الرياض وتغشم

Ibn Ḥazm on the other hand ascribes this act to 'Amr al-A'mā of the B. Shaibān.<sup>54</sup> The ayyām accounts, which seldom mention the B. Yashkur, like the yawm of Malham<sup>55</sup> and al-Ḥājir,<sup>56</sup> indicate that most of them were settled in al-Yamamah where they had date-palms and raised crops. But part of them seem to have been nomads and ranged farther to the north near the frontiers of the territory of the B. Shaibān b. Tha'labah. The B. Yashkur appear to have had good relations with the Lakhmids, the ruler of Ḥīrah, while like most of the Bakrite sections they were on bad terms with their Tamīmite neighbours. Al-Ḥārith b. Ḥillizah refers to the good relations between the B. Yashkur and the Lakhmids in his mu'allaqah, which he recited at the court of 'Amr b. Hind. Al-Ḥārith reminded 'Amr of the yawm of al-Shaqīqah in which the B. Yashkur defeated a company of Qais b. Ma'dīkarib who came to raid 'Amr's camels. He says:

---

<sup>53</sup>Marzubānī, 223.

<sup>54</sup>Jamharat, 290.

<sup>55</sup>'Iqd, V, 190; Nuwairī, XV, 385.

<sup>56</sup>'Iqd, 211; Nuwairī, XV, 396.

A monarch who knows us by three infallible signs, by each of which our excellence is decided:-

The first is, the conspicuous token of our valour, when all Arabia came forth in the rocky vales, each tribe of Ma'add under their banner, and assembled, in complete armour, round the warlike Qais, that valiant prince of Yemen, who stood firm and brilliant like a white cliff. But we repelled them with strokes, which made their blood gush from their sides, as the water streams from the mouth of a bottle which contains it.<sup>57</sup>

من لنا عنده من الخير آيات ثلاث في كلهن القضاء  
آية شارق الشقيقة اذ جاءوا جميعا لكل حي لواء  
حول قيس مستلئمين بكبش قرظي كأنه عبلا  
فرددناهم بضرب كما يخرج من خرة المزاد الماء

The rulers of Ḥīrah appointed the leaders of friendly tribes collectors of taxes, military leaders of divisions of their forces, and officials in territories in which they exercised some control. They collected taxes from the tribes who were under their power. A clash between the tax-collector of Ḥīrah and a clan often grew into a clash between tribal units.<sup>58</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbih narrates on the authority of Abū 'Ubaidah that the B. Usayyid of Tamīm killed Wā'il b. Ṣuraim al-Yashkurī. Consequently, Wā'il's brother, al-Ba'īth, raided the B. Usayyid and killed one of their chiefs and many of their tribesmen. He refers to this in a poem, boasting that he avenged his brother:

<sup>57</sup> Al-Tibrīzī, Kitāb Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id al-'Ashr, 139-140; Jones, The Moallakat, 100, 162.

<sup>58</sup> Kister, al-Ḥīrah, some notes on its relations with Arabia, Arabica, XV (1968), 161.

Ask Usayyid! Did I take revenge for  
Wā'il, or did I cure my own anxiety?  
When they sent me drawing with their  
buckets, and I filled them with blood  
to the brim.<sup>59</sup>

سائل أسيد هل سأرت بوائل      أم هل شفيت النفس من بلبالها  
اذ أرسلوني ماتحا لدلائهم      فملأتها علقا الى أسبالها

According to al-Bakrī, Wā'il was sent by 'Amr b. Hind as a tax-collector to the B. Tamīm and was killed by the B. Usayyid.<sup>60</sup> It seems that the B. Yashkur were represented in al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir's army which was despatched to punish the B. Tamīm when they refused to pay the tax imposed on them. Al-Mubarrad says, on the authority of Abū 'Ubaidah, that al-Nu'mān sent his brother al-Rayyān b. al-Mundhir at the head of a troop which belonged mainly to the tribe of Bakr. They raided the B. Tamīm, captured their children and took their cattle as spoils.<sup>61</sup> In a poem, Abū al-Mushamraj refers to this incident, praising al-Nu'mān and voicing his prejudice against the tribe of Tamīm:

When they saw the banner of al-Nu'mān  
advancing, they said: "would that our  
nearest abode were 'Adan. Would that  
the mother of Tamīm had not known Murr  
and been like one annihilated by the  
changes of time.  
If you kill them - they are [mere] asses  
with cut noses, and if you show grace -  
well, since ancient time you have shown  
grace.

<sup>59</sup> 'Iqd, V, 211-212. See also Marzūqī, 531.

<sup>60</sup> Bakrī, III, 899.

<sup>61</sup> Mubarrad, II, 82-83.

Among them are Zuhair, 'Attāb and Muḥtadar and two sons of Laqīṭ while Qaṭan perished in the battle.<sup>62</sup>

قالوا : ألا ليت أدنى دارنا عدن	لما رأوا راية النعمان مقبلة
مراً وكانت كمن أودى به الزمن	يا ليت أم تميم لم تكن عرفت
أو تنعموا فقدمنا منكم المنن	ان تقتلوهم فأعيار مجدلة
وابنا لقيط وأودى في الوغى قطن	منهم زهير وعتاب ومحتضر

The B. Yashkur joined the ranks of the B. Shaibān in the battle of Dhū Qār against the Persians.<sup>63</sup> In one of his poems, Suwaid b. Abī Kāhil al-Yashkurī celebrates the exploits of a champion of Yashkur named Yazīd b. Ḥārithah, who is said to have killed the Persian Marzubān in the battle of Dhū Qār, saying:

When the Marzubān, decked with bracelet, challenged your groups, Yazīd who belonged to us fought him with a sharp sword which cuts off anything it falls upon.<sup>64</sup>

فلم تقرىوه الرزيان المسور	ومنا يزيد ان تحرى جموعكم
حسام اذا لاقى الضريبة ييتر	وبارزه منا غلام بصارم

The B. Taim al-Lāt b. Tha'labah, to whom the poet Nahār b. Tawsi'ah belonged, are even less well-known than the B. Yashkur on the eve of Islam. They are very summarily described in the genealogical literature. Likewise the ayyām accounts scarcely mention them apart from the alliance of the Lahāzim of which they were a component.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.; Marzubānī, 211. Cf. Kister, 'al-Hīra, some notes on its relations with Arabia', Arabica, XV (1968), 163.

<sup>63</sup> Tabarī, I, 1034; 'Iqd, V, 264.

<sup>64</sup> Tabarī, I, 1034; Shajarī, I, 174-175; Aghānī, XXIII, 71.

It seems that they were of less importance than any other Bakrite components of that alliance. The accounts of the Lahāzim ayyām, which were usually directed against some sections of the tribe of Tamīm (like the yawm of Dhū Ṭulūh,<sup>65</sup> Jadūd<sup>66</sup> and Thaital<sup>67</sup>) never mention that any yawm was led by a member of the B. Taim al-Lāt. The precise territories they occupied are not clear to us. However, the accounts of the yawm Thaital; the fact that part of them joined the rebellion of al-Ḥuṭam in Baḥrain;<sup>68</sup> and the accounts of the battle of Ullais in which part of them joined the forces of the Persian commander Jābān against the Islamic army led by Khālīd b. al-Walīd,<sup>69</sup> all these points indicate that they were nomads moving in a territory which is roughly the region between the north of Baḥrain to the southern fringes of Ḥīrah. They appear to have maintained good relations with the Lakhmid rulers of Ḥīrah, who had to rely on foreign troops or on mercenary troops because it was a family and not a tribe which ruled Ḥīrah. In the view of Rothstein, the Ṣanā'i', one of the five contingents of al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir, was the royal guard.<sup>70</sup> Aḥmad b. 'Ubaid is quoted as having stated that the Ṣanā'i' were people upon

---

<sup>65</sup> 'Iqd, V, 189; Kāmil, I, 267; Nuwairī, XV, 383-384.

<sup>66</sup> Naqā'id, 144, 326; 'Iqd, V, 199.

<sup>67</sup> 'Iqd, V, 185; Nuwairī, XV, 381.

<sup>68</sup> Tabarī, I, 1968.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 2032.

<sup>70</sup> Rothstein, Die Dynastie der Lahmiden, 137.

whom the King used to bestow his favours and who remained in his service.<sup>71</sup> Al-Mubarrad mentions that most of them were from Bakr b. Wā'il.<sup>72</sup> Abū al-Baqā' mentions that the Lahāzim, to which the B. Taim al-Lāt belonged, were represented in the Ṣanā'i'.<sup>73</sup> Al-Maidānī, on the other hand, states that "the Ṣanā'i'" were from the B. Qais and the B. Taim al-Lāt, sons of Tha'labah, and that they were trusted by the King and never left the doors of his court".<sup>74</sup> The B. Taim al-Lāt joined the ranks of the B. Shaibān in the battle of Dhū Qār. One of their poets, Abū Kalbah, refers to this, boasting of the role of the Lahāzim as a whole, saying:<sup>75</sup>

لولا فوارس لا ميل ولا عزل      من اللّهبانم ما قظتم بذي قار

Notwithstanding, part of them led by Abjar b. Jābir al-'Ijlī, joined the rebellion of al-Ḥuṭam<sup>76</sup> who is said to have been supported by the Persians.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the Christians among them joined the ranks of the Persians against the Muslim army at the battles of al-Walajah and Ullais.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Naqā'id, 884.

<sup>72</sup> Mubarrad, II, 83.

<sup>73</sup> Al-Manāqib al-Mazydiyyah fī Akhbār al-Mulūk al-Asadiyyah,

<sup>74</sup> Majma', I, 78.

Ms., fol. 21.

<sup>75</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 1036.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 1968.

<sup>77</sup> Balansī, 138.

<sup>78</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 2032.

Like the B. Taim al-Lāt, the B. Qais b. Tha'labah are seldom mentioned in the ayyām accounts. Within them, the genealogists list a number of subsections among which the Dubai'ah is singled out as the dominant one.<sup>79</sup> The other subsections of Qais, like Taim, Tha'labah and Sa'd, are never described in detail in the surviving genealogical literature. The genealogists concentrate on Dubai'ah rather than the other subsections of Qais. This may be the result of the prominence achieved by the family of al-Masāmi'ah as the most prominent family of the tribe of Bakr in Iraq of the Umayyad period. To this family belonged Mālik b. Misma' who was the leader of Rabī'ah, let alone Bakr, during his lifetime in the Umayyad period.<sup>80</sup> The B. Qais were in the forefront of the tribes who produced famous poets before Islam. Of these poets the most famous were Tarafah b. al-'Abd, 'Amr b. Qamī'ah, al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar and al-A'shā. The accounts of the war of al-Basūs suggest that the B. Qais enjoyed some prominence among the Bakr. One of their chiefs, al-Ḥārith b. 'Ubād, led the Bakrites at the yawm of Qidah which was the last of the famous and decisive ayyām of the war of al-Basūs, and was tilted in favour of the Bakrites by the presence of al-Ḥārith and his tribesmen.<sup>81</sup> Notwithstanding,

---

<sup>79</sup>This may be, as Caskel suggests, because a famous genealogist, Muqātil, belonged to them. Ḡamharat an-Nasab, das Genealogische Werk des Hišām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī, I, 24-25.

<sup>80</sup>See: Tabarī, I, 3179, II, 240, 450.

<sup>81</sup>Anon., Kitāb Bakr wa Taghlib, MS., fol. 22; 'Iqd, V, 220-221; Ma'ārif, 606.



they appear to have been of relatively minor importance on the eve of Islam. They were a component part of the alliance of the Lahāzim and took part in its ayyām, which were mostly directed against the B. Tamīm. The leader of the Lahāzim in the yawm of Jadūd<sup>82</sup> was Ḥumrān b. 'Amr, a member of the B. Qais. Our sources do not help to determine their territories precisely. They, however, indicate that the B. Qais were living in Bahrain and al-Yamāmah. Al-Balādhurī reports that "al-Bahrain constituted a part of the Persian empire. In its desert lived a great many Arabs from the tribe of 'Abd al-Qais, Bakr b. Wā'il and Tamīm".<sup>83</sup> Al-Balādhurī writing about the rebellion of al-Ḥuṭam says: "The offspring of the B. Qais b. Tha'labah became apostates with al-Ḥuṭam".<sup>84</sup> Of their abodes in Bahrain, there are mentioned amongst others: Hajar,<sup>85</sup> al-Shayyitān,<sup>86</sup> al-Sīdān,<sup>87</sup> and Thāj.<sup>88</sup> However, they were not alone in living in these abodes. Parts were used by certain sections of the B. Tamīm. One of the villages of the B. Qais in al-Yamāmah was Manfūḥah,<sup>89</sup> in which al-A'shā

---

<sup>82</sup>Kāmil, I, 255.

<sup>83</sup>Futūḥ, 106.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>85</sup>Dīwān Tarafah b. al-'Abd, 15.

<sup>86</sup>Hamdānī, 123.

<sup>87</sup>Naqā'id, 482.

<sup>88</sup>Naqā'id, 130; Mu'jam, II, 811.

<sup>89</sup>Mu'jam, IV, 669.

was born, grew up and died.<sup>90</sup> Caskel says that "the B. Qais were partly nomads and partly settled people in al-Yamāmah".<sup>91</sup> But it appears that most of them were nomads, as the above-mentioned quotation from al-Balādhurī implies. When the Chosroe of Persia threatened the Bakrites after their refusal to hand over the pledge of al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir, al-A'shā replied to the Persian Emperor with a poem in which he says that his tribe is not like that of Iyād who are settled and depend on agriculture. He boasts of his tribesmen, who depended on huge camels and their milk for their livelihood, in these words:

We are not like Iyād who have settled in Takrīt and wait for their grain to be harvested.

God has given us an inexhaustible supply of food in the shape of our camels.

They [the camels] are as massive as rocks and ready for slaughter on our swords; in spite of being frightened they would not be driven away.

Their hindquarters guarantee our cooking pot and their udders our pure frothless milk.<sup>92</sup>

تكرت تنظر حبها أن يحصدا	لسنا كمن جعلت إيراد دارها
رزقا تضمنه لنا لن ينفدا	جعل الأله طعامنا في مالنا
فاذا تراع فأنها لن تطردا	مثل الهضاب جزارة لسيوفنا
وضروعهن لنا الصريح الأجردا	ضمنت لنا أعجازهن قد ورننا

<sup>90</sup> Aghānī, IX, 126; al-Tunjī, al-A'shā, 40.

<sup>91</sup> Gamharat an-Nasab, das genealogische Werk des Hiṣām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī, II, 463.

<sup>92</sup> Dīwān al-A'shā, 234.

The B. Qais appear to have had strong ties with the Lakhmids, the rulers of Ḥīrah. It is claimed that they, with the B. Taim al-Lāt, made up al-Nu'mān's Ṣanā'i' contingent as previously mentioned.<sup>93</sup> Their great poet al-A'shā used to visit the Kings of Ḥīrah and praise them, especially al-Aswad b. al-Mundhir.<sup>94</sup> It would appear that the Persians, on the eve of Islam, had no real power over the people of Bahrain, especially those who were living in the bādiyah there. Bahrain was nominally Persian territory due to the hostilities resumed in A.D. 603 between the Persians and Byzantines in Mesopotamia, Syria and Asia Minor.<sup>95</sup> Thus the Persian Empire, at that time, had its full attention concentrated on a far-away field of military and political activities. Perhaps this situation may have encouraged the B. Qais to join the ranks of the B. Shaibān at the battle of Dhū Qār. Al-A'shā tells in more than a poem of the triumph of the Bakrites over the Persians and their Arab allies; for instance, in the poem rhyming in "F", to which the following verses belong, he sings:

When they faced us we uncovered our heads  
 in order to let them know that we were  
 Bakr, so that they would flee.  
 If every Ma'addite had taken part with us  
 on the yawm of Dhū Qār they would not have  
 missed the honour.  
 When they came towards us they were so

---

<sup>93</sup> See above, p. 29.

<sup>94</sup> Shu'arā', 258-259.

<sup>95</sup> See Sykes, A History of Persia, I, 481-486.

numerous that it seems as if night was advancing before them, covering the whole earth with overwhelming darkness.

They consisted of patricians, sons of the kings and satraps of Persia with earrings in their ears.

Whenever they bent to pick up their arrows we attacked them with our shining swords, striking off their heads so quickly that it seemed as if they were being snatched away.

And the cavalry of Bakr did not cease to crush them, until they fled though it was hardly noon.<sup>96</sup>

ليعلموا أننا بكر فينصرفوا	لما التقينا كشفنا عن جماجمنا
في يوم ذي قار ما أخطاهم الشرف	لو أن كل معد كان شاركننا
مطبّق الأرض يخشاها بهم سدف	لما أتونا كأن الليل يقدمهم
من الأعاجم في آذانها النطف	ججاجح وينو ملك غطسارفة
ملنا ببيض فظل الهام يختطف	إذا أمالوا إلى النشاب أيديهم
حتى تولوا وكاد الليل ينتصف	وخيل بكر فما تنفك تطحنهم

The antagonism between the B. Qais and the Persians appears to have been of short duration after the battle of Dhū Qār. The rebellion of al-Ḥuṭam, followed by the B. Qais in Baḥrain appears to have been with the support of the Persians. Moreover, the Christians of Dubai'ah, the most prominent subsection of the B. Qais, joined the ranks of the Persian army against the Muslims in the battle of Ullais.<sup>97</sup>

Although there are no ayyām accounts indicating that the B. Dhuhl b. Tha'labah or one of their chiefs figured prominently, they appear to have been of a certain importance

<sup>96</sup> 'Iqd, V. 267; Dīwān al-A'shā, 311.

<sup>97</sup> Tabarī, I, 2032.

on the eve of Islam, but less important than the B. Ḥanīfah, the B. 'Ijl and the B. Shaibān. Their genealogy is fairly comprehensively treated in the genealogical literature. This may be, as Caskel suggests, because a certain famous genealogist, Daḡfal b. Ḥanzalah (d. 65 A.H.) belonged to them.<sup>98</sup> But it seems more likely that it could have been the result of their pro-Islamic stance, as they were not carried away by the Riddah and participated prominently in the Islamic conquest movement, and because many prominent personalities of the early Islamic and Umayyad periods belonged to them. Of these personalities are Ḥassān b. Maḥdūj, the carrier of 'Alī's banner at the battle of al-Jamal;<sup>99</sup> al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir, the leader of Bakr and Rabī'ah on the side of 'Alī at the battle of Ṣiffīn<sup>100</sup> who later became the unquestioned leader of the Bakrites in Khurāsān<sup>101</sup> until his death in 97 A.H., when the leadership was inherited by his son Yaḥyā;<sup>102</sup> and Suwaid b. Manjūf, one of the prominent figures in Kufa in the Umayyad period.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, we find that the overwhelming majority of their personalities mentioned in the genealogical literature belong to the early Islamic and Umayyad periods rather than to the pre-Islamic period.

---

<sup>98</sup>Caskel, Jamharat an-Nasab, das Genealogische Werk des Ḥisām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī, I, 24.

<sup>99</sup>Jamharat, 297.

<sup>100</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3312; Ṣiffīn, 231, 326-327; Jamharat, 298; 'Iqd III, 362.

<sup>101</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1290.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 1571.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 443, 779.

Their territories are not determined precisely by our sources. Ibn Ḥazm, however, mentions that the B. Mālik, a subsection of the B. Dhuhl, lived in al-Yamāmah.<sup>104</sup> One of their villages there was Sadūs which was named after Sadūs b. Shaibān b. Dhuhl and is still flourishing today.<sup>105</sup> Ibn Sa'd mentions that 'Abd Allāh b. Aswad al-Sadūsī sold his property in al-Yamāmah, and migrated to Medina to join the Prophet.<sup>106</sup> These pieces of information indicate that part of the B. Dhuhl were settled in al-Yamāmah. On the other hand, the raids launched by Qutbah b. Qatādah or Suwaid b. Qutbah on the western fringes of the Persian empire around al-Ubullah, shortly before the arrival of the Islamic army led by Khālīd b. al-Walīd, may indicate that part of them were nomads living in the vicinity of that area.

The B. Sadūs appear to have been the dominant subsection of the B. Dhuhl for several generations before Islam. 'Amr b. Sadūs, killed during the war of al-Basūs, was described as "the sayyid of Dhuhl".<sup>107</sup> Their chiefs had the privilege of the ridāfah of the Kings of Kindah.<sup>108</sup> This term means, according to tradition, that their chief was entitled to sit at the King's right side, act for him during his absence, acquire a fourth of the spoils and booty gained by the King in

---

<sup>104</sup>Jamharat, 298.

<sup>105</sup>See: Mu'jam, II, 161, IV, 84, 1027; Philby, Arabia of the Wahhabis, 77; Ālūsī, Tarīkh Najd, 28; 'Alī, al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tarīkh al-'Arab qabl al-Islam, IV, 178-179.

<sup>106</sup>Sa'd, I/2, 55.

<sup>107</sup>Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Hurūb al-Basūs bain Bakr wa Taghlib, Ms., fol. 158.

<sup>108</sup>Ma'ārif, 99; Ishtiqaq, 352; Ibn Ruzaiq, al-Sahīfah al-'Adnāniyyah, Ms., fol. 9.

raids and receive some payment from the King's subjects.<sup>109</sup> It seems that the B. Mālik b. Shaibān b. Dhuhl was another prominent subsection of Dhuhl on the eve of Islam. Their chief, al-Ḥārith b. Wa'lah, is described as sayyid sharīf,<sup>110</sup> i.e., a noble chief. He is the only Dhuhlī mentioned by Ibn Ḥabīb among the jarrārūn of Rabī'ah,<sup>111</sup> viz., those who are said to have led one thousand warriors. He is described also as one of the dhawū al-ākāl.<sup>112</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb defines the dhawū al-ākāl as follows: "The dhawū al-ākāl are from Wā'il; they are the noble among them. The Kings were wont to grant them fiefs".<sup>113</sup> A description of these dhawū al-ākāl, stressing their socio-political position is given by al-A'shā in his praise of al-Aswad b. al-Mundhir, brother of al-Nu'mān the last ruler of Ḥīrah;

Your army is a long-established one, made  
up of chiefs who are people of leathern tents  
and fiefs.<sup>114</sup>

جندك التالذ العتيق من السادات      أهل القباب والآكال

Thus it is plausible to suggest that al-Ḥārith together with his kindred joined the ranks of the B. Shaibān in the battle of Dhū Qār, because the Persians had deprived them of the prestige they formerly enjoyed through their good relations with al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir, the last Lakhmid ruler of Ḥīrah. According to some accounts, al-Ḥārith used to invade with his

<sup>109</sup>Lisān, radafa; Naqā'id, 66, 299, 809; Fawāt, II, 626.

<sup>110</sup>Iqd, III, 362.

<sup>111</sup>Muḥabbar, 249-250.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 253.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>Diwan al-A'shā, II.

tribesmen certain Persian border lands, after the execution of al-Nu'man b. al-Mundhir; and this in turn led to the battle of Dhū Qār.<sup>115</sup> Unlike most of the Bakrite sections, the B. Dhuhl appear to have remained anti-Persian after Dhū Qār, and were sincere in their Islam. Our sources do not mention any Dhuhlī as having joined the Riddah, nor is any Dhuhlī reported as having joined the Persian armies during the conquest of Iraq. On the contrary, the sources mention that some tribesmen of Dhuhl used to raid Persian border lands shortly before the arrival of the Muslim army, something which was of help to the Muslims during the conquest of Iraq, as we shall see.

The B. 'Ijl seem to have been the dominant component of the Lahāzim alliance. The leaders of most of the Lahāzim ayyām (against the B. Tamīm for the most part) belonged to the B. 'Ijl. Most of them would seem to have been nomads. The ayyām accounts in which they are specifically mentioned suggest that their home territory extended roughly from Hīrah to al-Ṣammān.<sup>116</sup> Part of them, it is said, resided in al-Yamāmah, as al-Arākah is mentioned to be one of their abodes there.<sup>117</sup> The meagre information supplied about the B. 'Ijl, by the genealogical literature and the ayyām accounts, indicates that their most powerful and prominent subsections were the B. Sa'd and the B. Rabī'ah, to whom the poets

---

<sup>115</sup>Aghānī, XXIII, 54-57; Ibn Ruzaiq, al-Ṣaḥīfah al-'Adnāniyyah, Ms., fol. 9.

<sup>116</sup>On al-Ṣammān see Thilo, Die Ortsnamen in der altarabischen Poesie, 90 and map D; Phylby, Arabia of the Wahhabis, 346-347.

<sup>117</sup>Mu'jam, I, 182-183.



al-'Udail b. al-Farkh and Abū al-Najm belonged. It is for this reason that the names of Ḥanẓalah b. Sayyār of the B. Sa'd, and Abjar b. Jābir of the B. Rabī'ah are mentioned time and again as leaders in the ayyām of the B. 'Ijl and the Lahāzim on the eve of Islam.<sup>118</sup> Unfortunately, our sources do not provide information about the relations of the B. 'Ijl with either the Persians or the Lakhmids in Ḥīrah. Their relations with their neighbours, the B. Shaibān, appear to be good. Thus both sections co-operated against their common enemy, the B. Tamīm, in various ayyām like that of al-Shayyitān, al-Zuwairān and Dhū Ṭulūḥ. In the battle of Dhū Qār, the tribesmen of the B. 'Ijl were the strongest supporters of the B. Shaibān, probably because they had had a previous encounter with the Chosroe's governor of the Sawād in the yawm of 'Ain Saïd, when the latter tried to deny them access to pasture lands in this area.<sup>119</sup> According to one account, their chief, Ḥanẓalah b. Sayyār, was the one who opted to continue to fight the Persians at Dhū Qār, when the leader of the B. Shaibān was on the point of fleeing with his tribesmen into the desert for fear of being exterminated by the Persians.<sup>120</sup> The poets of the B. 'Ijl in the Islamic era frequently boasted of the victory of Dhū Qār. Al-'Udail b. al-Farkh, for example, says:

We have been warmed by every fire kindled  
for noble deeds - indeed we it was who  
kindled the fire.  
There is no day of honour more noble than  
the day of Dhū Qār.

---

<sup>118</sup>For examples, see: 'Iqd, V, 184, 189, 263.

<sup>119</sup>Bakrī, III, 1042.

<sup>120</sup>Naqā'id, 640; 'Iqd, V, 262-263.

We brought in their weapons and the horses  
were formidable in appearance when we took  
the arm of every horseman of the Chosroe.<sup>121</sup>

ما أوقد الناس من نار لمكرمة	الا اصطلينا وكنا موقدي النار
وما يعدون من يوم سمعت به	للناس أفضل من يوم بذى قار
جئنا بأسلابهم والخييل عابسة	يوم استلبنا لكسرى كل أسوار

However, it would be naive to assume that the B. 'Ijl continued their anti-Persian stand for a considerable time after the battle of Dhū Qār. There are indications that some of them at least endeavoured to hinder the Islamic conquest by helping the Persians. Abjar b. Bujair, is said to have joined the rebellion of al-Ḥuṭam<sup>122</sup> who aimed, with Persian help, at establishing a Lakhmid rule in Baḥrain similar to that they had in Ḥīrah. At the battles of al-Walajah and Ullais, the Christians of the B. 'Ijl fought the Muslims side by side with the Persians.<sup>123</sup>

The B. Ḥanīfah was a section of considerable importance. Their territories in the region of al-Yamāmah partly interlocked with those held by others, especially some groups of the B. Tamīm with whom they sometimes had encounters. The region of al-Yamāmah was never determined precisely. "It possibly extended along the slopes of al-'Āriḍ and along Wādī 'Irḍ in the southeastern part of Najd, with its eastern

<sup>121</sup>Shu'arā', 414; 'Iqd, V, 266.

<sup>122</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 1968; Kāmil, II, 155.

<sup>123</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 2031-2032; Kāmil, II, 162-163.

boundary at the Dahnā' desert".<sup>124</sup> The two largest towns in al-Yamāmah al-Ḥajr, the capital, and Jaww, were originally in the hands of the B. Ḥanīfah.<sup>125</sup> The dearth of information about them should not be taken as an indication of their insignificance or weakness, for the Riddah movement of Musailimah, who was joined by part of the B. Ḥanīfah, formed the most adamant opposition to the incipient religio-political system of Islam after the death of the Prophet. The lack of information about them may, however, be a result of their remoteness from the two prime cities of Iraq, Basra and Kufa, and of their settled life in the fertile Yamāmah which prevented a considerable migration of them to Iraq. We must also take into account the non-existence of early genealogists among their ranks, and their anti-Islamic role in spearheading the Riddah movement. Al-Jāhiz says that he had "seen no tribe other than the B. Ḥanīfah to which little poetry is attributable despite their great number and might, which make them seem to be the equal of the whole of Bakr".<sup>126</sup> Yāqūt describes al-Yamāmah as an agricultural territory where entire districts were covered by cultivated fields, saying: "Al-Yamāmah was the best of God's countries in respect of land, produce, trees and date-palms".<sup>127</sup> Grain was grown there as well. Philby speaks of an extensive oasis there, the whole of which was planted

---

<sup>124</sup>Belyaev, (Eng. trans.) Arab, Islam and the Arab Caliphate, 57.

<sup>125</sup>Mu'jam, II, 208-209, IV, 1026; Bakrī, I, 83-85, 176.

<sup>126</sup>Ḥayawān, IV, 380.

<sup>127</sup>Mu'jam, IV, 1028.

with wheat and barley.<sup>128</sup> Al-Yamāmah used to supply grain to Mecca as may be understood by the accounts of Thumāmah b. Uthāl's acceptance of Islam.<sup>129</sup> Thus the B. Ḥanīfah are to be regarded as a settled agriculture community. When Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān, the governor of Iraq, appointed as his deputy in Khurāsān al-Rabī' b. Ziyād al-Ḥanafī, the poet Anas b. Abī Unās of Tamīm composed satirical verses describing the B. Ḥanīfah as slaves and tillers of the land.<sup>130</sup> On the other hand, al-Ḥajr was prominent as a regional trading centre. Three caravan routes converged there: one from Mecca and Medina, another from Persia in the North, and one from Oman and Yemen in the South.<sup>131</sup>

The main subsections of the B. Ḥanīfah were al-Dūl, 'Āmir and 'Adī of whom Musailimah the false prophet was a member. The B. al-Dūl, however, is singled out by the genealogists as the most powerful line within the B. Ḥanīfah on the eve of Islam. They are said to have both numbers and wealth.<sup>132</sup> Likewise they are described as a house of sayyids.<sup>133</sup> Of their chief Hawdhah b. 'Alī, Wellhausen

<sup>128</sup>Philby, The Heart of Arabia, 43.

<sup>129</sup>See: Sīrah, II, 638; Iṣābah, I, 412-413.

<sup>130</sup>He says:

مغللة يخب بها البريد	ألا من مبلغ عني زيادا
لقد لاقت حنيفة ما تريد	أتعزلني وتطعمها خليدا
فأولكم وآخركم عبيد	عليكم باليماة فاحرثوها

Tabarī, II, 155-156.

<sup>131</sup>Barthold, Musailimah, Bulletin de l'Academie des Sciences de Russie, XIX (1925), 488.

<sup>132</sup>Jamharat, 291.

<sup>133</sup>'Ibar, II, 625.

observes that he was the most powerful man of his day in Central Arabia; and as such he is mentioned among the Kings to whom the Prophet sent a special invitation to adopt Islam.<sup>134</sup> The relations between the B. Ḥanīfah and the other Bakrite sections were severed, because the former were living among certain Mudarite groups.<sup>135</sup> Their separation from their mother-tribe apparently took place towards the end of the war of al-Basūs and thus they never backed other Bakrite sections nor did they receive their support on the eve of Islam.<sup>136</sup> Notwithstanding, their relations with their Tamīmite neighbours were strained and some ayyām are recorded as having taken place between them. Of these ayyām, there is mention amongst others, of the yawm of al-Sitār in which a certain chief, Qatādah b. Maslamah, was killed.<sup>137</sup> Qatādah boasts, in one of his poems, of his fierce fight in an encounter with some of the B. Tamīm, and threatens them with further raiding, saying:<sup>138</sup>

يَمَّتْ كَبْشَهُمْ بِطَعْنَةِ فَيْصَلٍ	فَهَوَى لِحِرِّ الْوَجْهِ وَهَوَى مِيمٍ
وَمَعِيَ أَسْوَدٌ مِنْ حَنْيْفَةٍ فِي الْوَهْيِ	لِلْبَيْضِ فَوْقَ رُؤُوسِهِمْ تَسْوِيمٍ
فَلْتَنْ بَقِيَّتَ لَأَرْحَلَنَّ بَغْزَوَةَ	نَحْوَ الْغَنَائِمِ أَوْ يَمُوتَ كَرِيمٍ

When the Chosroe decided to punish the B. Tamīm who had robbed his caravan, he asked Hawdhah b. 'Alī whether there

<sup>134</sup>Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, IV, 102; Lyall, The words 'Ḥanīf' and 'Muslim', *JRAS* (1903), 775.

<sup>135</sup>*Aghānī*, XI, 317.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*; E.I., *Ḥanīfa*.

<sup>137</sup>*Mu'jam*, III, 38.

<sup>138</sup>*Marzūqī*, II, 765.

was a treaty of peace between him and the B. Tamīm.  
 Hawdhah replied : "O King, between me and them is death.  
 They killed my father".<sup>139</sup>

Unfortunately, there is almost no information about relations between the B. Ḥanīfah and the Lakhmids of Ḥīrah on the eve of Islam. There are, however, clear indications of good politico-economic relations between the B. Ḥanīfah and the Persians. Several Ḥanafites occupied major posts in the Persian bureaucracy.<sup>140</sup> Hawdhah was held in esteem by the Chosroe. He was responsible for the protection of the Persian caravans on a certain section of the route from Yemen to Persia.<sup>141</sup> From the latter fact, Watt infers that Hawdhah belonged to the nomadic section of the B. Ḥanīfah.<sup>142</sup> But this does not necessarily follow. During one of his visits to the Persian ruler, the latter was fascinated by Hawdhah's reply to a certain question and said: "This is a mind nurtured by bread";<sup>143</sup> i.e. Hawdhah had a better mind than the nomads bred on camel-milk and dates. On one occasion, Hawdhah was well-received at the Persian court and was given a crown.<sup>144</sup> Al-A'shā, the pre-Islamic poet, describes him as an awe-inspiring man saying that people prostrated

---

<sup>139</sup> Aghānī, XVII, 321. See also Ṭabarī, I, 985.

<sup>140</sup> Barthold, Musailimah, Bulletin de l'Academie des Sciences de Russie, XIX(1925), 491.

<sup>141</sup> See Aghānī, XVII, 319-320; Lyall, The words 'Ḥanīf' and 'Muslim', JRAS (1903), 775.

<sup>142</sup> Watt, Muhammad at Medina, 133.

<sup>143</sup> Mubarrad, II, 24-25; 'Iqd, II, 243.

<sup>144</sup> Dabbī, 709; Kāmil, I, 260; Jamharat, 292; 'Ibar, II, 625.

themselves in front of him while he sat with the crown on his head.<sup>145</sup> However, Abū 'Ubaidah, on the authority of Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', disputes this statement, saying that only in Yemen were there any kings, and that the crown of Hawdhah was nothing more than beads (kharazāt) arranged as a circlet on his head.<sup>146</sup> Unfortunately, nothing has come down to us about the relations of the B. Ḥanīfah with the Persians after the death of Hawdhah (about A.D. 630).

One may easily infer from the statements of the early writers concerned with the tribes and from the ayyām accounts that the most powerful and prominent of the sections of Bakr, through their recorded history, was the B. Shaibān. Ibn Rashīq mentions that Ibn Sallām used to say: "It used to be said 'If you belong to Bakr, boast of Shaibān and of their great numbers and fight alongside them'".<sup>147</sup> Ibn al-Kalbī is reported to have said: "My father used to say 'Bakr is the most numerous tribe of Rabī'ah. Their bait of sayyids and their knights are of Shaibān'".<sup>148</sup> Ibn al-Athīr quotes Abū 'Ubaidah's saying: "At the advent of Islam there was no tribe more mighty, more protective of its neighbours and with more allies than Shaibān".<sup>149</sup> The ayyām in which they took part and the accounts of the conquest of Iraq suggest that their home territory stretched roughly from a point

---

<sup>145</sup> Dīwān al-A'shā, 107.

<sup>146</sup> 'Iqd, II, 244.

<sup>147</sup> 'Umdah, II, 192.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>149</sup> Kāmil, I, 254.

somewhere between Kāzimah,<sup>150</sup> near the bay of Kuwait, and al-Ubullah in the south to perhaps Hīt in the north. And therefore, in the southern part of this zone they were close neighbours to the B. 'Ijl who maintained good relations with them.

Among the great number of the subsections and clans which the genealogists mention as belonging to the eponym 'shaibān', the B. Rabī'ah b. Dhuhl b. Shaibān and the B. Hammām b. Murrah b. Dhuhl b. Shaibān appear to have been the most powerful and dominant. One may find that the leaders in the vast majority of the ayyām which took place on the eve of Islam and in which the B. Shaibān are specifically mentioned, belonged to these two subsections. Thus the ayyām accounts mention, for example, that the leaders on the yawm of Jadūd, Dhū Ṭulūḥ, al-Shayyitān and al-'Uzālā belonged to the B. Hammām; while the leaders of the yawm of al-Zuwairān, al-Ghabīṭ and Dhū Qār were from the B. Rabī'ah. Although the account of yawm Mubāyid shows a dispute between the two subsections,<sup>151</sup> the ayyām accounts in general suggest that they were co-operative and maintained good relations.

Relations between the B. Shaibān and some sections of Tamīm, especially the B. Yarbū' appear to have been strained on the eve of Islam. This period witnessed a formidable struggle and there was permanent bad blood between the two

---

<sup>150</sup> On the location of Kāzimah see Thilo, Die Ortsnamen in der Altarabischen Poesie, 63 and map B.

<sup>151</sup> Kāmil, I, 252; Ma'āhid, I, 205; 'Iqd, V, 208-209.



sides. The opponents of the B. Shaibān in most of their ayyām were mostly elements of the B. Tamīm. These ayyām arose, commonly, from disputes over cattle, pasture-lands or water. Of them there are mentioned amongst others, the yawm of al-Zuwairān, al-'Uzālā, al-Waqīṭ and al-Iyād. On the other hand, this period witnessed certain relations between the B. Shaibān and the Lakhmids and their Persian masters. In order to secure the domination of Ḥīrah the loyalty of the neighbouring tribes was essential and this was gained by granting their chiefs certain privileges. Abū al-Baqā' mentions that the Chosroe granted the rulers of Ḥīrah some territories in the vicinity of Ḥīrah as fiefs and as assistance to them in their governorship. From the taxes collected from these territories they bestowed presents on people (of the tribes), whom they blandished and tried to win over. They might grant them areas from the fiefs presented to themselves.<sup>152</sup> The rulers of Ḥīrah seem to have held some of the chiefs of the friendly tribes in high esteem, and appointed some of them to fairly high positions. Ibn Duraid mentions that a certain chief of the B. Shaibān named Sharīk b. Maṭar "was the greatest favourite of King al-Mundhir".<sup>153</sup> 'Amr b. Sharīk, father of al-Ḥawfazān, was in command to the security force of al-Mundhir and his son al-Nu'man.<sup>154</sup> Likewise, the kings of Persia granted loyal

---

<sup>152</sup> Abū al-Baqā', al-Manāqib al-Māzyadiyyah fī Akhbār al-Mulūk al-Asadiyyah, MS., fol. 145; Kister, 'al-Ḥīrah, some notes on its relations with Arabia, Arabica, XV (1968), 151.

<sup>153</sup> Ishtiqāq, 358.

<sup>154</sup> Kister, 'al-Ḥīrah, some notes on its relations with Arabia, Arabica, XV (1968), 159.

chiefs of the neighbouring tribes some territories as fiefs. The case of these fiefs is illustrated by the story of Qais b. Mas'ūd al-Shaibānī who was the chief of the family of Dhū al-Jaddain, the most prominent family of the B. Shaibān.<sup>155</sup> He was also one of the three personalities known as the dhawū al-Ākāl from Wā'il,<sup>156</sup> i.e. men of the fiefs. Qais b. Mas'ūd was granted the land of Ṭaff al-Ubullah by Parvīz on condition that he would guarantee that the tribe of Bakr b. Wā'il would refrain from invading the territory of the Sawād.<sup>157</sup> This happened after the execution of al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir (about A.D. 605), and lasted for the short time up to the battle of Dhū Qār (about 611 A.D.), after which Qais was executed by the Chosroe, perhaps because he collaborated with his kindred or because he had failed to fulfil his guarantee. The reason for this battle, according to many accounts,<sup>158</sup> was that when al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir fled from the Persian king, he took refuge with the B. Shaibān. Then he entrusted his arms and family to Hani' b. Qabiṣah al-Shaibānī and came to plead his cause in person before the Chosroe by whom, however, he was executed. Hāni' was then called upon to surrender the pledge of al-Nu'mān but refused to betray his trust. The Chosroe thereupon sent an ultimatum

---

<sup>155</sup> Mubarrad, I, 56; Nasab, 15; 'Umdah, II, 192; Aghānī, XIX, 184; 'Iqd, III, 332, V, 377.

<sup>156</sup> Muḥabbar, 253.

<sup>157</sup> Aghānī, XXIII, 54; Marzubānī, 324-325.

<sup>158</sup> On the battle of Dhū Qār, see: Naqā'id, 638-648; Tanbīh, 207-208; Ma'ārif, 603; 'Umdah, II, 217-218; Aghānī, XXIII, 53-81; Tabarī, I, 1015-1037; Kāmil, I, 196-200; 'Iqd, V, 262-268; Majma', II, 261; Mu'jam, IV, 10-11; Nuwairī, XV, 431-434.

to the B. Shaibān, in which they were ordered to submit unconditionally to his will, to leave their home territory, or to be invaded by his army. The B. Shaibān along with some other sections of Bakr cut to pieces the army which was despatched to execute the commands of the Persian monarch. This victory over the Persians and the Arab groups that had joined their ranks, gave the B. Shaibān in particular immense prestige among the Arabs, was celebrated by many Bakrite poets for several generations, and was an important motif of fakhr poetry. Thus, for example, A'shā B. Rabī'ah al-Shaibānī said:

On the day of Dhū Qār in which the tribes took part,  
 we remained' steadfast assisting our kindred .  
 They [the Persians] came in a grandly equipped  
 and terrible army whose contingents were crowded  
 close together and crushing.  
 They came to inflict a calamity, but the  
 darkness ended with our swords still drawn.  
 They all fled and took refuge with al-Nu'mān  
 b. Zur'ah.  
 We came to fight this army like the sand grouse  
 coming to the spring water of a small pool.<sup>159</sup>

وقد شهد القبائل محلبينا	ونحن غداة ذى قار أقمنا
لملمة كتائبها طحوننا	وقد جاءوا بها جأواء فلقا
ظلال دجاه عنا مصلتينا	ليوم كريمة حتى تجلّت
بنحمان بن زرة أكتعيننا	فولونا الدواير واتقوننا
كما ورد القطا الشمد الميننا	وردنا عارض الأحرار وردا

Despite the dearth of information about the B. Shaibān's relations with the Persians up to their acceptance of Islam,

<sup>159</sup>Naqā'id, 646.

after the conquest of Mecca, our sources contain some indications that the battle of Dhū Qār did not represent a point of no return between the two sides. It represents rather a temporary dispute which was bound to change according to the needs of both sides. Bräunlich observes with justice that the B. Shaibān did not continue their raids upon the Persian borders in the wake of Dhū Qār, and Biṣṭām, the son of Qais b. Mas'ūd who was killed by Chosroe in prison after Dhū Qār, did not try to take revenge on the Persians for the evil done to his house; but instead he turned against the old enemy of Bakr, namely the B. Tamīm and especially the B. Yarbū'.<sup>160</sup> In the accounts of the yawm of al-'Uzālā which took place between the B. Shaibān and the B. Yarbū' of Tamīm shortly after the battle of Dhū Qār, and led by Biṣṭām b. Qais and Hāni' b. Mas'ūd, the latter one of the prominent leaders of Dhū Qār, we read the following statement that indicates the resumption of relations between the Persians and at least some Bakrite sections: "Bakr were under the control of the Chosroe and the Persians. They [the Persians] used to strengthen and equip them. They came from the Persian governor of 'Ain al-Tamr three hundred strong side by side".<sup>161</sup> Yazīd b. Mushir, the leader of the right flank of the Bakrites at Dhū Qār, is said to have concluded an alliance with the Persians after Dhū Qār.<sup>162</sup> When the Prophet presented the

---

<sup>160</sup> Bräunlich, Biṣṭām b. Qais, ein vorislamischer Beduinenfürst und Held, 43.

<sup>161</sup> Naqā'id, 581; Kāmil, I, 256; 'Iqd, V, 192; Nuwairī, XV, 386.

<sup>162</sup> Caskel, Ġamharat an-Nasab, das Genealogische Werk des Hišām b. Muhammad al-Kalbī, II, 595.

Islamic message to the B. Shaibān and sought their protection in the fourth year after the revelation, they gave him a favourable reply but said that his message was not liked by the kings, i.e. the Kings of Persia; that they had a covenant with the Persians not to disturb the status quo; and that they would not offer refuge to anyone so doing.<sup>163</sup>

Moreover, Hānī' b. Qabīṣah, the prominent leader of the B. Shaibān at Dhū Qār, was living in Hīrah and was among the notables who represented the town in signing the peace treaty with the Muslims in 12 A.H.<sup>164</sup>

In the light of the above discussion, the notion that the Bakrites, especially the B. Shaibān, were pursuing an anti-Persian policy in the wake of Dhū Qār up to the Islamic conquest, cannot be substantiated on the basis of the meagre amount of information available. On the contrary, there is an indication of the opposite. However, the years surrounding the battle of Dhū Qār did reveal the weakness of the Persian empire and its inability to control the Arab tribes of the borders which had earlier been used to fear it. This weakness was further exposed in the struggle between the Persian and Byzantine empires. The Byzantines dealt (in A.D. 627) Chosroe Parvīz a fatal blow which sealed the fate of the Persian Empire.<sup>165</sup> This struggle was closely watched both by the unbelievers and Muslims. According to the commentators on the first two verses of the Qur'anic sūrah

---

<sup>163</sup>Asākir, V, 444; Nuwairī, XVI, 310.

<sup>164</sup>Tabarī, I, 2019; Futūḥ, 339-340.

<sup>165</sup>See Sykes, A History of Persia, 481-486.

al-Rūm ,<sup>166</sup> the sympathies of unbelievers in Mecca were with the Persians while the Muslims inclined towards the Byzantines.<sup>167</sup> The collapse of Persian military power at the hands of the Byzantines, it is to be stressed, coincided with the victories of the Prophet which later enabled Medina to exploit the favourable situation, for expanding Islam through a movement of conquest in which the Bakrites played a prominent role, especially in Iraq as we shall see.

The Bakrites, therefore, did not constitute a political or tribal unity at the advent of Islam, but were composed of a number of sections and subsections. Their interests were in conformity at times and contradictory at others, to the point that dispute might take place between clans or families of the same section. Their relations with the Lakhmids differed from one grouping to another, although the later period of the Lakhmids in Ḥīrah witnessed prosperous relations between them and most of the Bakrite sections. Their relations with the Persians were subject to quick changes at any specific point, due to a change in the balance of power in the region. The Persian destruction of the Lakhmids' rule affected their relations with most of the Bakrite sections. On the other hand, all the Bakrite sections were in dispute with the neighbouring sections of the B. Tamīm, This period accordingly witnessed many ayyām and there was always bad blood between the two sides. This rivalry

---

<sup>166</sup>Qur'ān, XXX.

<sup>167</sup>Tabarī, Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, XXI, 16; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm, V, 342.

subsided with their acceptance of Islam and during the Islamic conquest, but it re-emerged strongly during the Umayyad period for the reasons we shall see later.

The Pre-Islamic Religious Beliefs of the Bakr and their Conversion to Islam

Many of the tribesmen of Bakr still worshipped idols on the eve of Islam. Of their idols there are mentioned: al-Muḥarriq, in Salmān, whose sadanah (custodians) were Āl al-Aswad of the B. 'Ijl and who is said to have been worshipped by other Rabī'ite tribes;<sup>168</sup> Dhū al-Ka'abāt, in Sindād who was also worshipped by Taghlib and Iyād;<sup>169</sup> 'Awd;<sup>170</sup> and Uwāl whom Taghlib also worshipped.<sup>171</sup> It is said that the B. Ḥanīfah worshipped an idol made of a paste of dates kneaded with milk. During famines it was eaten by them; and for this reason a poet said:

The Banū Ḥanīfah in a time of stress  
devoured their God.<sup>172</sup>

أكلت حنيفة ربها      زمن التقم والمجاعة

On the other hand, Abū 'Ubaidah mentions that the tribe of Bakr b. Wā'il used to provide safe conduct to the pilgrims

<sup>168</sup> Muḥabbar, 317; Jamharat, 460.

<sup>169</sup> Sīrah, I, 88; Aghānī, XXII, 355; Ya'qūbī, I, 266; Bakrī, I, 69; Jamharat, 460.

<sup>170</sup> Bakrī, I, 84.

<sup>171</sup> Mu'jam, I, 395.

<sup>172</sup> Ma'ārif, 621; A'lāq, 217.

from al-Abṭah to the Ka'bah.<sup>173</sup>

Christianity, however, seems to have been spread among most of the sections of Bakr.<sup>174</sup> The bishōp and religious leader of the Monophysite Church in Najrān during the lifetime of the Prophet was a man of Bakr called Abu Ḥārithah b. 'Alqamah.<sup>175</sup> This may indicate that at least some families of Bakr were firmly rooted in Christianity. The famous chief Bisṭām b. Qais who is described as the hero of Bakr and its sayyid,<sup>176</sup> was a Christian.<sup>177</sup> His son, Zīq, remained Christian until his death in the Umayyad era.<sup>178</sup> There is a verse by a pre-Islamic poet of the B. Hammām, named 'Abd Allāh b. Zuhair, which indicates that Christianity was widespread among one of the prominent subsections of the B. Shaibān. The verse runs:

Our only fault in the eyes of our people  
is that the followers of al-Masīh b. Maryam  
have flourished among us.<sup>179</sup>

وما ذنبنا في قومنا غير أننا  
زكا وسطنا زرع المسيح بن مريم

As for the Lahāzim, the accounts of the conquest of Iraq informs us that Christianity was wide-spread among them, especially among the B. 'Ijl, the most prominent component of the alliance. It is reported that the Christians

<sup>173</sup>Naqā'id, 425.

<sup>174</sup>See Ma'ārif, 621; Jamharat, 457.

<sup>175</sup>Sīrah, I, 573.

<sup>176</sup>Mubarrad, I, 156, 228.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid., 228.

<sup>178</sup>Tabaqāt, 333; Naqā'id, 821.

<sup>179</sup>Mu'talif, 113.



of 'Ijl, Taim al-Lāt and Dubai'ah (the latter probably or rather certainly Dubai'ah b. Qais, a subsection of Qais b. Tha'labah) followed 'Abd al-Aswad al-'Ijlī' who joined the ranks of the Persian commander, Jābān, against the Muslim army.<sup>180</sup> The unquestioned chief of the B. 'Ijl on the eve of Islam was Abjar b. Jābir, who is said to have remained Christian until his death in Kufa (40 A.H.).<sup>181</sup>

In respect of the B. Hanīfah, their powerful chief, Hawdhah b. 'Alī, was a Christian.<sup>182</sup> When he interceded with the Persian governor of the Bahraīn coast, and obtained the release of a hundred prisoners of the B. Tamīm, who had robbed the caravan of the Chosroe,<sup>183</sup> the great poet al-A'shā celebrated this deed of mercy, saying that Hawdhah had hoped to get God's grace by releasing them at Easter:

And there he loosed from their bonds a hundred  
out of their pain.  
From all on that happy morn he cast the fetters  
away.  
These were his offering meet the Easter morning,  
with these he came before God in hope to win the  
meed of His grace.<sup>184</sup>

وأصبحوا كلهم من غلّه خلعا	فك عن مئة منهم اسارهم
يرجو الاله بما أسدى وما صنعا	بهم تقرب يوم الفصح ضاحية

<sup>180</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 2032; Kāmil, II, 162.

<sup>181</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3460.

<sup>182</sup>Kāmil, I, 260, II, 89.

<sup>183</sup>See Ḍabbī, 708-709; Ṭabarī, I, 984-987; Kāmil, I, 260; Mu'jam, III, 401.

<sup>184</sup>Dīwān al-A'shā, III; translated by Lyall in JRAS(1903), 776.

Likewise, the Ḥanafī poet, Mūsā b. Jābir is said to have been a Christian.<sup>185</sup> Moreover, one of the deputations of the B. Ḥanīfah which visited the Prophet were certainly Christians, for they had a church with a priest in charge, which they were ordered by the Prophet to destroy.<sup>186</sup>

It would appear that the spread of Christianity among the Bakrites, in addition to the remoteness of their home territories from al-Ḥijāz and various tribal jealousies, delayed the spread of Islam among them. Our sources mention some Bakrite individuals who were early adherents of Islam. Among them were two 'Ijlī brothers who were allies of the B. 'Adī b. Ka'b of Quraish, and who took part in the battle of Badr<sup>187</sup> in 2 A.H. Somewhat later, we find that a certain Furāt b. Ḥayyan al-'Ijlī was among the Muslims during the expedition of the Trench<sup>188</sup> in 5 A.H. A prominent chief of the B. Ḥanīfah named Thumāmah b. Uthāl was captured by the Muslims in an expedition, and was won over to Islam after the Prophet had treated him kindly. He had threatened the people of Mecca that he would cut off the food supplies to them from al-Yamāmah.<sup>189</sup>

When the Prophet returned from al-Ḥudaibiyah in 6 A.H., he sent messengers to certain kings and chiefs, among whom was Hawdhah b. 'Alī al-Ḥanafī, inviting them to join the fold

<sup>185</sup>Mu'talif, 248; Baghdādī, I, 275.

<sup>186</sup>Lyall, The words 'Ḥanīf' and 'Muslim', JRAS (1903), 777.

<sup>187</sup>Sīrah, II,

<sup>188</sup>Iṣābah, III, 397.

<sup>189</sup>Sīrah, I, 684; Iṣābah, I, 412-413.

of Islam. Hawdhah apparently welcomed the Prophet's messenger and entertained him. He sent to the Prophet asking that after the Prophet, the authority might be delegated to himself and promising to embrace Islam.<sup>190</sup> According to another account, Hawdhah sent the following message to the Prophet: "Share with me a part of your affairs, so that I may follow you".<sup>191</sup> The Prophet rejected his appeal and Hawdhah had not become a Muslim before his death in A.D. 630.

After the Prophet had gained possession of Mecca in 8 A.H., had finished with Tabūk, and Thaqīf had paid homage, deputations from the Arab tribes came to him. "In deciding their attitude to Islam, the Arabs were only waiting to see what happened to this clan of Quraish and the Prophet. For Quraish were the leaders and guides of men, the people of the sacred temple, and the pure stock of Isma'īl son of Ibrāhīm; and the leading Arabs did not contest this. When Mecca was occupied and Quraish became subject to the Prophet and he subdued it to Islam and the Arabs knew that they could not fight the Prophet or display enmity towards him they entered into God's religion in batches".<sup>192</sup> Most of the tribal deputations came to the Prophet in the ninth year of the Hijrah which was therefore, called the Year of Deputation. Our sources mention some deputations as representative of different sections or subsections of the tribe

---

<sup>190</sup> Kamīl, II, 89.

<sup>191</sup> Diyārbakrī, II, 43.

<sup>192</sup> Sirah, 559-560; Guillaume, The life of Muhammad, 627-628.

of Bakr like the deputation of the B. Ḥanīfah,<sup>193</sup> Shaibān<sup>194</sup> and Sadūs.<sup>195</sup> There is an account, however, which mentions a certain deputation representing the tribe of Bakr in its entirety, and thus Bishr b. Ḥassān b. Ḥawṭ said boasting of his father:

I am the son of Ḥassān b. Ḥawṭ and my father, was the messenger of the entire tribe of Bakr to the Prophet.<sup>196</sup>

أنا ابن حسان بن حوط وأبي رسول بكر كلها الى النبي

Such an account must not be taken at its face value, for the tribe of Bakr was split into groups which did not pursue the same policies as we have seen. Three of the four persons mentioned in this account were members of the B. Sadūs, while the fourth was a member of the B. 'Āmir b. Dhuhl, i.e., the deputation may have represented the B. Dhuhl b. Tha'labah or at least part of them.

One could not expect to conclude that the tribe of Bakr in its entirety embraced Islam before the death of the Prophet. The conquest accounts suggest that some Bakrite groups, certainly Christians, did not come into the fold of Islam for a not unconsiderable time after the death of the Prophet. They fought side by side with the Persians against the Muslim armies in more than one battle.

---

<sup>193</sup> Sīrah, II, 576; Khalīfah, I, 65; Ṭabarī, I, 1737.

<sup>194</sup> Ya'qūbī, II, 86; Nuwairī, XVIII, 74.

<sup>195</sup> Iṣābah, II, 1042, III, 1263.

<sup>196</sup> 'Asākir, III, 268.

## CHAPTER II

BAKRĪ POETRY ON THE SUBJECT OF THE RIDDAH

The Prophet died in Medina in 11 A.H. At the news of his death, revolt spread like wildfire through Arabia. The situation was confused and tense. The Riddah movement was in reality more political and tribal than religious. Jealousy of the rising hegemony of Medina and the leadership of the Quraish was certainly one of the underlying motives. According to tribal custom, the submission of one tribe to another was regarded as a sign of the inability of a tribe to protect itself. Submission to Islam would be prone to interpretation in this manner, especially by those tribes who were living away from the Ḥijāz and never before connected with a Ḥijāzī authority or confederation in pre-Islamic times. In this connection, it is reported that one of the murtaddūn from Rabī'ah said to Musailimah: "I testify that you are a liar and that Muḥammad is truthful; but a liar of Rabī'ah, is preferable to a speaker of the truth from Muḍar".<sup>1</sup>

"The Arabs in most part of the Peninsula had acknowledged the authority of the Messenger of God, but had no intention of remaining longer subject to Medina, or paying tithe to the caliph".<sup>2</sup> Regarding the tribe of Bakr, the delegates (wufūd) reported to have come to pay the Prophet homage could not have represented the whole tribe. In some cases, a delegate might not have represented his section or clan

---

<sup>1</sup>Kāmil, II, 151.

<sup>2</sup>Vaglieri, the patriarchal and Umayyad caliphates, in The Cambridge History of Islam, I, 58.

but only a faction, the clan being divided into factions intensely jealous of one another. We are told, for example, of a deputation which represented the B. Suḥaim,<sup>3</sup> a subsection of Ḥanīfah. And for a clan or faction to become Muslim in those days simply meant that its chiefs so became. Moreover, the Bakrites who embraced Islam did so shortly before the death of Muḥammad, i.e. they were not well-acquainted with Islam by the time of the Prophet's death.

However, we should not be misled by statements made by some chroniclers who claim that all Arabia outside of al-Ḥijāz, which is alleged to have accepted Islam and acknowledged the authority of the Prophet, broke away upon his death from the newly organized state and followed a number of local and false prophets.<sup>4</sup> Al-Ṭabarī reports that the B. Shaibān b. Tha'labah did not go over.<sup>5</sup> Ibn Ḥajar says that nobody of the B. Suḥaim, a subsection of Ḥanīfah, apostatized.<sup>6</sup> However, among those who led the murtaddūn were two belonging to the tribe of Bakr: Muṣailimah b. Ḥabīb al-Ḥanafī and Shuraiḥ b. Ḍubai'ah b. 'Amr b. Marthad, nicknamed al-Ḥuṭam, one of the members of the B. Qais b. Tha'labah.

Muṣailimah, according to one account, was among the deputation of the B. Ḥanīfah, which met the Prophet and embraced Islam,<sup>7</sup> while another account mentions that the

---

<sup>3</sup> Iṣābah, I, 116.

<sup>4</sup> For examples, see: Kāmil, II, 142-143; Hitti, History of the Arabs, 140-141.

<sup>5</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 1975-1976.

<sup>6</sup> Iṣābah, I, 116.

<sup>7</sup> Sīrah, II, 576; Tanbīh, 239; Khalīfah, I, 65; Futūḥ, 118; Ya'qubī, II, 87.

deputation came to the Prophet having left Musailimah behind with the camels and the baggage.<sup>8</sup> Having returned to al-Yamāmah, Musailimah apostatized and gave himself out as a prophet.<sup>9</sup> He is reported to have sent a letter to the Prophet demanding recognition by Medina and speaking of his entitlement to equal rights. His letter reportedly runs: "From Musailimah the apostle of God to Muḥammad the apostle of God. Peace upon you. I have been made a partner with you in authority. To us belongs half the land and to the Quraish half, but the Quraish are hostile people".<sup>10</sup> This letter gives some evidence of the tribal basis of the authority which Musailimah attempted to establish. It expresses Musailimah's attempt to create an independent principality in al-Yamāmah and to reject at least the secular authority of the Quraish. On the other hand, it reminds us of the letter sent by Hawdhah b. 'Alī al-Ḥanafī to the Prophet, for it suggests that Musailimah renewed Hawdhah's offer, albeit in a slightly modified form. Musailimah in order to gather more supporters round him and make a strong impression on them, employed saj', i.e. rhymed prose, in his "revelations", and is said to have imitated the early style of the Qur'ān<sup>11</sup> "with ludicrous effect, if we may judge from the sayings ascribed to him".<sup>12</sup> Below is one of

---

<sup>8</sup> Sīrah, II, 576; Ṭabarī, I, 1738; 'Ibar, I, 834.

<sup>9</sup> Sīrah, II, 576; Futūḥ, 118; Ṭabarī, I, 1738; Tanbīh, 239.

<sup>10</sup> Sīrah, II, 600; Ṭabarī, I, 1749; Kāmil, II, 125; Ya'qūbī, II, 149.

<sup>11</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 1738.

<sup>12</sup> Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, 183.

his "revelations" followed by its Arabic text which gives an idea of its acoustic impression. "O frog, daughter of a frog, croak as you want. Your upper part is in the water, while your lower part is in the mud. You cannot hinder the drinker, nor can you befoul the water."<sup>13</sup>

(يا ضفدع يا ابنة ضفدع،<sup>13</sup>  
نقي ما تنقي، أسفلك في الماء، وأعلارك في الطين، لا الشارب تنجس،  
ولا الماء تكدّرين.) This style (saj')

was employed prior to the advent of Islam by Kāhins or soothsayers, who usually enjoyed a considerable politico-religious influence even beyond the bounds of their respected tribes. The Kāhins often expressed themselves in obscure and ambiguous language and claimed, like the poets, to receive their revelations from a jinnī or shaitān (daemon).<sup>14</sup> Some modern writers, however, deem that Musailimah, in his religious teachings, may have been influenced by Christianity,<sup>15</sup> but what has come down to us is too little and from too hostile sources for us to arrive at any firm conclusion. On the other hand, Musailimah is reported to have imitated the Muslim call to prayer, and prescribed fasting and three formal prayers daily instead of the five prescribed by Islam.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, al-Jāhiz says that Musailimah, before his pretensions to prophecy, travelled between the Arab lands

<sup>13</sup>Tabarī, I, 1933-1934.

<sup>14</sup>See Blachère, Histoire de la littérature Arabe, 188-195; Ryckmans, Les religions Arabes préislamiques, 11-12; S.E.I., Kāhin.

<sup>15</sup>For examples, see: Margoliouth, On the Origin and Import of the Names Muslim and Hanīf, JRAS (1903), 491; E.I., Musailima. Watt, Muhammad at Medina, 136.

<sup>16</sup>Tabarī, I, 1916, 1919, 1932.



and these of Persia (bain dār al-'Arab wa dār al-'Ajam), learning sorcery, astrology and tricks of magic, and then returned to his tribe and claimed prophecy.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, the contexts in which Musailimah's extant "revelations" occurred are not always known to us. Since the B. Ḥanīfah were primarily settlers in the fertile region of al-Yamāmah, it is not surprising to find that many of Musailimah's extant "revelations" are directed to settled people and none of them to nomads. In the following "revelation", for example, Musailimah appeals to an audience of settled people, and swears by a number of agricultural occupations, encourages his followers to protect their fields, and gives preference to them over the nomads: "By the sowers of the seeds, by the reapers of the harvest, by the winnowers of wheat ... verily you have been given preference over the nomads ... Protect your fields, and fight the attacker".<sup>18</sup>

The death of the Prophet provided Musailimah with the excuse and opportunity to practice his authority over al-Yamāmah. He expelled therefrom the functionaries who had been appointed by the Prophet, got hold of Ḥabīb b. Zaid, one of the Companions of the Prophet, and cut him into pieces because he refused to acknowledge his prophethood and to testify that he was the apostle of God.<sup>19</sup> This

---

<sup>17</sup>Ḥayawān, IV, 369-370.

<sup>18</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 934.

<sup>19</sup>Diyārbakrī, I, 177.

action indicates that Musailimah felt it possible to resort to force in order to impose his will over al-Yamāmah.

However, the available information about Musailimah indicates that he attempted to reconcile the B. Ḥanīfah with their traditional enemies, the B. Tamīm. Al-Ṭabarī reports, on the authority of Saif b. 'Umar, that Musailimah declared an area in al-Yamāmah to be a ḥaram, viz. an inviolable sanctuary. The B. Usayyid of Tamīm used to raid the harvest crops in a certain area in al-Yamāmah and then take refuge in the ḥaram. After repeated raids, the B. Ḥanīfah decided to pursue them into the ḥaram. Musailimah stopped them saying: "I am waiting for a revelation from the heavens about you and them". Then he announced that he had received the following: "By the black night, by the long dark wolf, and by time, the B. Usayyid have not violated the ḥaram". The B. Usayyid repeated their raid and Musailimah again stopped his followers from attacking them in the ḥaram, and claimed to have received the following "revelation": "By the black night, by the strong wolf, the B. Usayyid have not picked any [crop] soft or dry". When his followers told him that the B. Usayyid had indeed cut the ripe dates, he said to them: "Go back, as you have no right".<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, al-Ṭabarī offers no explanation of Musailimah's lenient attitude towards the B. Usayyid. It is plausible to suggest that Musailimah attempted to reach a settlement with his neighbours, or that such was his

---

<sup>20</sup>See Ṭabarī, I, 1932-1933.

scheme. This assumption may be further reinforced by Saif's account, cited above, that Musailimah established a haram, which might constitute "a nucleus about which may be gathered an indefinite number of tribes"<sup>21</sup> under the *aegis* of a holy person or family, to whom they agreed to submit their dispute to arbitration. In another of his "revelations", Musailimah lauds the B. Tamīm and regards their defence as an obligation, saying: "The B. Tamīm are pure and not submissive people. They are not to be compelled, nor ordered to pay a tax. We have to be their good neighbours and defend them. After our death, they will be entrusted to God".<sup>22</sup>

A movement similar to Musailimah's was also started by a woman called Sajāḥ, who claimed to be a prophetess and a soothsayer. This was in the north of Peninsula among the Tamīm tribe, in the neighbourhood of the Persian border. After Sajāḥ and her followers were beaten by other tribesmen of Tamīm, they decided to raid the B. Hanīfah in al-Yamāmah.<sup>23</sup> There are two basic accounts concerning relations between Musailimah and Sajāḥ. The first account claims that Sajāḥ renounced her claim to prophethood, declared her belief in Musailimah and married him, after he had enticed her sexually.<sup>24</sup> This account should be viewed

---

<sup>21</sup> Serjeant, *Haram and Hawtah, the Sacred Enclave in Arabia, in Melanges Taha Husain*, 50.

<sup>22</sup> Tabarī, I, 1933.

<sup>23</sup> Tabarī, I, 1908-1916; 'Ibar, II, 873-874.

<sup>24</sup> Tabarī, I, 1917-1918.

with scepticism. It seems to have been fabricated in order to defame both Musailimah and Sajāh because of their animosity towards Islam. It portrays a libidinous picture of them, and this contradicts the fact that Musailimah was fairly advanced in age, as well as contradicting other evidence regarding his teachings. Moreover, this account is not supplied with an isnād, i.e. chain of transmitters. Al-Tabari says only that "it is an account narrated on the authority of someone other than Saif".<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, this account contains Musailimah's saying to Sajāh: "Do not you wish to marry me to devour the Arabs with my people and yours".<sup>26</sup> That such a plan was even propounded is doubtful in view of the weakness of Musailimah, who could not unite behind him all of his own clan, let alone Sajāh's repeated defeats before her arrival in al-Yamāmah.

Another more convincing account is narrated by Saif, one of the principal narrators of the Riddah movement. This account shows that fearful of being occupied in a marginal conflict with Sajāh, Musailimah offered her half the harvest of that year with a promise to offer her half of that of the following year, in exchange for her departure. Musailimah was afraid that Sajāh's presence would offer an opportunity to Thumāmah b. Uthāl and Shuraḥbīl b. Hasnah, the leader of the Muslim army despatched from Medina, to attack him and reduce al-Yamāmah.<sup>27</sup> Thus both sides failed to unite

---

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 1917.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 1918.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 1916; 'Ibar, II., 874.

their efforts against Medina. There is no mention that Sajāh's followers took part in fighting the army of Medina side by side with Musailimah. Nor indeed is there any information suggesting that there might have been any co-operation between Musailimah and the similar movement of al-Ḥuṭam in Bahrain.

Musailimah even appears to have failed to attract Bakrites other than the B. Ḥanīfah, living at that time in al-Yamāmah. There is no evidence in the accounts of the Riddah suggesting that any person of the B. Sadūs, for example, joined Musailimah. On the contrary, there is a passionate elegy composed by Sawād b. Qārīb al-Sadūsī in which he considers the death of the Prophet to be a great calamity, warns his fellow tribesmen against the Riddah, and rejoices that they are steadfast in their faith. The verses concerned are:

now

O Sawād, your misfortune<sup>now</sup> is great, and I think that it will continue to worsen. Although misfortunes are abundant, I warn you [the B. Sadūs] of an affair [i.e. the Riddah] whose wind has lightning in it. If any people could have performed more than hoped for by their chief, you would. Nothing more can be hoped for [than has been done by you].<sup>28</sup>

وأرى المصيبة بعدها تزاد	جلت مصيبتك الغداة سواد
أما لعاصف ريحه ارعاد	اني أحاذر والحوادث جممة
زدتم وليس لمنية مزاد	لوزاد قوم فوق منية صاحب

<sup>28</sup>Jābīzādah, Husn al-Sahābah fī Sharḥ Ash'ār al-Sahābah, I, 286-288.

Likewise, there is no mention of the B. Yashkur's participation in the decisive battle of 'Aqrabā'. Murrah b. Ṣābir or Ṣābī al-Yashkurī, whose father is said to have been the sayyid of Yashkur,<sup>29</sup> persevered in his faith and wrote a poem to Khālīd b. al-Walīd which contains the following two verses testifying to his disavowal of Musailimah, whom he describes as an unbeliever and a liar:

O [Khālīd] b. al-Walīd b. al-Mughīrah, I  
declare to you my disavowal of the renegade  
infidel.

I mean Musailimah the liar. By God, his  
company is more ill-omened than Nāshir.<sup>30</sup>

أبرا اليك من الجحود الكافر	يا ابن الوليد بن المغيرة اني
والله أشأم صحبة من ناشر	أعني مسيلمة الكذوب فانه

'Umair b. Dābi' al-Yashkurī, who is described as one of the sayyids of al-Yamamah,<sup>31</sup> is reported to have participated in the army of Khālīd against Musailimah.<sup>32</sup> 'Umair composed a poem in which he reprimands both al-Rajjāl b. 'Unfuwah and Muḥakkam b. al-Ṭufail who were among the most loyal and valiant supporters of Musailimah, as well as reprimanding Musailimah himself. On the other hand, he declares his steadfastness in his loyalty to Islam. The verses concerned are:-

<sup>29</sup> Qiṭa', 17; Iṣābah, III, 1007.

<sup>30</sup> Qiṭa', 18; Iṣābah, III, 1007.

<sup>31</sup> Qiṭa', 16; Iṣābah, III, 239; Balansī, 59.

<sup>32</sup> Iṣābah, 239; Balansī, 60.

O Su'ād, daughter of Uthāl, I suffer from prolonged nights due to the sedition of al-Rajjāl.

This sedition, O Su'ād, is one of the calamities of life, like the sedition of the Dajjāl (Antichrist).

He [al-Rajjāl] tempted the people by bearing witness [that Musailimah is a prophet]. But God is powerful and strong.

Musailimah's utterance are not worth a shoe-lace or even his shoes.

My religion is the religion of the Prophet and there are rightly guided people like me in the tribe.

Muhakkam b. Tufail and men, who are not men to us, have destroyed the people [of the tribe].

Musailimah has overpowered them and they will never be able to guide him again [to the right path].

If I die rightly guided in God's religion, then I care for nothing else.<sup>33</sup>

يا سعاد الفؤاد بنت أثال      طال ليلي بفتنة الرجال  
 انها يا سعاد من حدث الدهر عليكم كفتنة الدجال  
 فتن القوم بالشهادة والله عزيز ذو قوة ومحال  
 لا يساوي الذي يقول من الأمر قبلا ولا ما احتدى من نعال  
 ان ديني دين النبي وفي القوم رجال على الهدى أمشالي  
 أهلك القوم محكم بن طفيل      ورجال ليسوالنا برجال  
 بزهم أمرهم مسيلمة اليوم      فلن يرجعوه أخرى الليالي  
 ان تكن منيتي على فطرة الله حنيفا فاني لا أبالي

There is no evidence to show that any member of the B. 'Ijl joined Musailimah in al-Yamāmah. The well-known 'Ijlī poet, al-Aghlab, derides the relationship between Musailimah and Sajāh and portrays it as a lewd one. Below are some verses:<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ṭabaqāt, 573; Aghānī, XXI, 31-32.

قد لقيت سجاج من بعد العمى      تاح لها بعدك حنزاب وزى  
 قالت : متى كنت أبا الخير ؟ مستى      قال : حديثا لم يغيرني البلى ،  
 قال : ألا أشيئه ؟ قالت : بلى ،      فشام فيها مثل محراب الغضى  
 يقول لما غاب فيها واستوى :      " لمثلها كنت أحسبك الحسى "

In support of the view that Musailimah even failed to unite his own section Ḥanīfah under his flag, we may quote the letter of Ṣuhbān b. 'Amr al-Ḥanafī which he is reported to have sent to Abū Bakr describing the attitude of the people in al-Yamāmah towards Musailimah's movement: "The people here [in al-Yamāmah] may be classified into three categories: unbelievers led into temptation, believers wronged and defrauded, and sceptics in distress".<sup>35</sup> Ṣuhbān is said to have recited the following verse in which he disavows Musailimah:

I declare my innocence to al-Ṣiddīq [Abū Bakr],  
 and apologize to him for what Musailimah the  
 liar is pretending.<sup>36</sup>

اني برىء الى الصديق معتذر      مما سيلمة الكذاب ينتحل

The most serious Ḥanafī opponent of Musailimah in al-Yamāmah was Thumāmah b. Uthāl who, unlike Musailimah, belonged to the most prominent subsection of the B. Ḥanīfah.<sup>37</sup> His personality was similar to that of Hawdhah. According to Ibn Hishām, the Prophet wrote to Hawdhah and Thumāmah as "the co-regents of al-Yamāmah".<sup>38</sup> On this

<sup>35</sup> Qiṭa', 14; Iṣābah, II, 513.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> See Jamharat, 291, 293-294.

<sup>38</sup> Sīrah, II, 607.



base, Watt says: "It is conceivable that Thumāmah was leader of the nomadic part of the tribe"<sup>39</sup> (i.e. the B. Ḥanīfah). Barthold takes the account of Thumamah's acceptance of Islam and his threat to cut off the food supply to Mecca from al-Yamāmah, to imply that Thumāmah was ruling the western part of al-Yamāmah since this would be the most appropriate place to cut off trade between Mecca and al-Ḥajr, it being much less arable than the region of al-Ḥajr was, therefore, more suitable to nomadic life.<sup>40</sup>

It seems that both Watt and Barthold have not examined the data about Thumāmah thoroughly. Thumāmah, in fact, belonged to the B. 'Ubaid<sup>41</sup> b. Tha'labah b. Ḥanīfah who, by the consensus of ancient Arab historians, were the first to settle in the fertile parts of al-Yamāmah, after Ṭasm and Jadīs.<sup>42</sup> Yāqūt mentions that the majority in al-Ḥajr belonged to the B. 'Ubaid.<sup>43</sup> Thumāmah, however, expresses his anti-Musailimah stand in more than one fragment. He says, for instance, accusing Musailimah of being a liar and deriding his followers:

Musailimah the liar, uttering rhyming speech,  
called me to renounce the faith and guidance.  
How strange are the group who have followed  
him in the way of misguidedness, and how  
abominable is misguidedness!  
Guidance and unity are far from the dwellings

---

<sup>39</sup> Muhammad at Medina, 133.

<sup>40</sup> Barthold, Musailimah, Bulletin de l'academie des sciences de russie, XIX (1925), 492.

<sup>41</sup> Jamharat, 293.

<sup>42</sup> Bakrī, I, 83-84; Mu'jam, II, 208-209; 'Ibar, II, 46.

<sup>43</sup> Mu'jam, II, 209.

of misguided people. The path to that far place is easy and wide.<sup>44</sup>

دعاني الى ترك الديانة والهدى	مسيلة الكذاب اذ جاء يسجع
فيا عجباً من معشر قد تبايعوا	له في سبيل الخي، والخي أشنع
وفي البعد عن دار وقد ضلّ أهلها	هدى واجتماع كل ذلك مهيع

In another fragment, Thumāmah refutes Musailimah's claim to co-prophethood, accuses him of silliness and foretells his imminent defeat:

Musailimah, return to your senses and do not persist, because you have not been made a partner in the prophethood. You have lied to God by claiming to receive a revelation and your whims are those of a fool.

Your people have led you to believe that they will protect you, but you will be deserted when Khālid arrives.

You will have no way out towards the sky or escape into the earth.<sup>45</sup>

مسيلة ارجع ولا تمحك	فانك في الأمر لم تشرك
كذبت على الله في وحيه	فكان هواك هوى الأنوك
ومّاك قومك أن يمنعووا	وان يأتهم خالد تترك
فما لك من مصعد في السماء	ولا لك في الأرض من مسلك

It would appear that Thumāmah did not enjoy a following as powerful as that of Musailimah, who was able to inflict a defeat upon Thumāmah at Dhū Dawarān. This was an occasion celebrated by a pro-Musailimah Ḥanafī poet, who says boasting:<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup>Istī'āb, I, 208.

<sup>45</sup>Balansī, 70.

<sup>46</sup>Mu'jam, II, 615.

ألم ترنا على عهد أتنا  
فشل الجمع جمع أبي فضيل  
بملهم والخطوب لها انتها  
بذى ذوران اذ كره اللقاء

Thumāmah, therefore, waited until the arrival of the Muslim army which he joined and in which proved to be exceptionally helpful. Al-Suhailī mentions that three thousand Ḥanafīs followed Thumāmah, and that this polarisation weakened Musailimah whose main support was from the B. Ḥanīfah.<sup>47</sup>

In dealing with the murtaddūn Abū Bakr stood firm, although the cause of Islam was at stake. He was firmly resolved on the unconditional surrender of those who had renounced allegiance, or war to the bitter end. He despatched 'Ikrimah b. Abī Jahl with an army to Musailimah, but the latter defeated them<sup>48</sup> and later defeated another army led by Shurahbīl b. Ḥasnah.<sup>49</sup> After this success, Musailimah pressed forward to 'Aqrabā' on the northern boundary of al-Yamāmah, leaving behind the landed estates and fertile countryside of al-Yamāmah.<sup>50</sup> Muḥakkam b. al-Ṭufail is reported to have recited the following verses foretelling a severe struggle, when he heard of the approach of the Muslim army led by Khālīd b. al-Walīd:

I see that travellers bring us unwelcome news.  
Do all the travellers tell lies?  
If they tell the truth and the Muslims  
fight us, we and they shall have a long day  
[i.e. a protracted battle].

<sup>47</sup> Al-Rawq al-Unuf, IV, 253.

<sup>48</sup> Tabarī, I, 1929.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., I, 1931.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., I, 1939.

Inform Khālīd b. al-Walīd then, that death has its way in both easy and difficult times. There is nothing in wars worse than injured, prisoners or dead falling between them.<sup>51</sup>

أرى الركبان تخير ما كرهننا	أكل الركب يكذب ما يقول
فان صدقوا لهم منا ومنهم	لنا ان حاربوا يوم طويل
فقل لابن الوليد وللمنايا	على السراء والضراء دليل
وما في الحرب أعظم من جريح	وعان خرب بينهما قتيل

It was there in 'Aqrabā' that a decisive battle took place. Khālīd crushed Musailimah and his supporters. The fighting was more severe than the Muslims had experienced before.

A Ḥanafī says portraying the severity of the fighting:

I never have seen an army like the army of Muḥammad, nor have I seen any army like ours when we met in the gardens. Nor have two sides more fierce in attack and defence. In Ubāḍ the swords were at a loss [sc., they were fighting so close that they could not strike at each other].<sup>52</sup>

ولم أر مثل الجيش جيش محمد	ولا مثلنا يوم احتوتنا الحدائق
أكر وأحمى من فريقين جمعوا	وضاقت عليهم في أباض البوارق

A Ḥanafī woman, portraying the heavy casualties on the side of Musailimah whom she wishes had never been born, appeals in the following words to Mujjā'ah, who concluded the peace treaty with Khālīd, to save them saying:

O Musailimah, no-one is left save the women, spoil to the cavalry and the camel-men. Save the small children at the breasts of their mothers; they will be only hired men when they grow up. As for the men, they have perished in the

<sup>51</sup>Balansī, 66.

<sup>52</sup>Mu'jam, I, 73.

events of our stumbling time.  
 Would to God, your father was dead, and  
 you [Musailimah] among those long dead.  
 O Mujjā'ah the admirable, take care of us,  
 We have none to take care of us today  
 but you.  
 We are in such a state that even the  
 movement of a bird frightens us.<sup>53</sup>

سبأيا لذى الخف والحافر	مسيلم لم يبق الا النساء
حقير متى يرب يستأجر	وطفل ترشحه أمه
حوادث من دهرنا العاشر	فاما الرجال فأودى بهم
وليتك قد كنت في الغابر	فليت أباك قضى نحبه
فليس لنا اليوم من ناظر	أمجاعة الخير فانظر لنا
ترونا هزة الطائر	سواك فانا على حالة

Khālid made terms with the B. Ḥanīfah who, eventually accepted Islam and joined its fold. The victory determined the fate not only of the B. Ḥanīfah but of the Arabs in general. Bernard Lewis considers the battle of 'Aqrabā' as the beginning of the Islamic conquest, he says: "The victory proved to the Arabs the capacity of the Medinese government and the advisability of submitting to it. Thereafter a series of expeditions radiated in all directions".<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, despite the fact that part of the B. Ḥanīfah participated with the Muslim army in fighting Musailimah and his supporters, they would seem to have been taunted for a considerable time for having taken part in the Riddah. 'Alī b. Hawdhah al-Ḥanafī, in a fragment, endeavours to cover up the role of the B. Ḥanīfah in the Riddah, claiming that their mistake was the same as that

<sup>53</sup>Balansī, 106.

<sup>54</sup>The Arabs in History, 52.

of other tribes that were murtaddūn, and wishing Musailimah not to have been born:

The tribes have accused us of committing abominable acts. We are only like others who disavowed.

We are not more infidel than 'Āmir or Ghatafān, or Asad, nor more so than Sulaim and their followers or Tamīm or the people of al-Janad; no more than Dhū al-Khimār or his people at Sūq al-Nujair or Sūq al-Naqad.

We were people deceived, who looked on misguidedness as if it were right guidance itself.

We believed as our liar [Musailimah] did. We wish he had never been born.<sup>55</sup>

وما نحن الا كمن جحد	رمتنا القبائل بالمنكرات
ولا غطفان ولا من أسد	ولسنا بأكفر من عامر
ولا من تميم وأهل الجند	ولا من سليم وألفافها
بسوق النجير وسوق التقد	ولا ذى الخمار ولا قومه
نرى الغي من أمرنا كالرشد	وكنا أناسا على غيرة
فيا ليت والدة لم يلد	ندين كما دان كذابنا

Regarding al-Ḥuṭam, he was not a claimant to prophethood but a chieftain of the B. Qais b. Tha'labah in Baḥrain where there were non-Arab elements, especially Persians, since Baḥrain had constituted a part of the Persian empire.<sup>56</sup> The most powerful tribe there was 'Abd al-Qais whose chief, al-Jarud, was a pious Muslim and who managed to convince his tribe to remain loyal to Islam.<sup>57</sup>

It is likely that al-Ḥuṭam was motivated by a Persian

<sup>55</sup>Mu'jam, II, 127-128.

<sup>56</sup>Futūḥ, 106-107; Mu'jam, I, 508.;

<sup>57</sup>Futūḥ, 114; Aghānī, XV, 255.

conspiracy aimed at weakening the young Islamic state. According to most accounts, al-Ḥuṭam did not aim at achieving independence. Instead, he chose a son of al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir, named al-Mundhir to be ruler of Bahrain and to establish a kingdom like that of Ḥīrah which had been ruled by his forefathers.<sup>58</sup> Al-Balansī mentions on the authority of Wathīmah that it was the Sassanian monarch who chose al-Mundhir, appointed him to rule Bahrain and sent him with warriors of Bakr.<sup>59</sup> Al-Bakrī mentions that the Persian asāwirah (cavalry guards) were under the command of al-Mundhir and took part in engagements against the Muslim army.<sup>60</sup> However, al-Balādhurī reports that those in Bahrain descended from Qais b. Tha'labah apostatized under al-Ḥuṭam. Together with these there apostatized all the Rabī'ah tribe with the exception of al-Jārūd and those of his people who followed him.<sup>61</sup> Abū Bakr despatched against them al-'Alā' al-Ḥaḍramī who marched at the head of Muslims. Having arrived at al-Yamāmah al-'Alā', was reinforced by Thumāmah b. Uthāl with Hanīfīs of the B. Suḥaim.<sup>62</sup> A fierce battle ensued when al-Ḥuṭam was killed, his followers defeated and Bahrain brought again into the fold of Islam.<sup>63</sup>

The surviving poetry concerning Musailimah's movement is meagre, but the verses that have reached us concerning

<sup>58</sup>Futūh, 114; Aghānī, XV, 256-257; Kāmil, II, 154; Mu'jam, I, 510.

<sup>59</sup>Balansī, 145.

<sup>60</sup>Bakrī, II, 693.

<sup>61</sup>Futūh, 114.

<sup>62</sup>Balansī, 137.

<sup>63</sup>Futūh, 115-116; Tabarī, I, 1968-1976; Kāmil, II, 154-155; Mu'jam, I, 510-511.

that of al-Huṭam are almost negligible. It is observed that the majority of the surviving poetry concerning the Riddah, in general, was composed by poets or individuals who opposed the Riddah and persevered in their faith in Islam. It may be rightly presumed that the loss of most of the rival poetry is due to the deliberate neglect or suppression of such material by the early Muslim historians. Such poetry may not have been attractive to tribal narrators because of its anti-Islamic nature.



CHAPTER IIITHE MIGRATIONS AND ALLIANCES OF BAKREmigration throughout the Islamic Conquest

No sooner had the Islamic state finished with the murtaddūn and brought them back into the fold of Islam, when it saw fit to direct its troops to conquer the neighbouring countries in compliance with the call to Holy War, in order to spread Islam outside the Peninsula and provide new outlets for the warlike spirit of the tribesmen, who had found, before Islam, the most congenial outlet for their vigour in tribal warfare and plundering expeditions. Certainly, the condition of the tribes which took part in the conquest movement improved.. With respect to fertility and resources, the neighbouring territories aroused their desire for land and booty. Accordingly people, actuated on the one hand by religious fervour and on the other by economic motives, hastened to take part in the fighting.<sup>1</sup> In his speech, after the battle of al-Walajah, Khālid b. al-Walīd addressed his army: "Do you not see the food, as plentiful as flint? By God, were it not our duty to fight for God against the unbelievers, and were it only as means of livelihood, it would be right to lay our claim to these fair fields, so that we show ourselves worthy of them and give over our hunger and penury to those who prefer them, and who find burdensome that which you are enduring".<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>See Futūḥ, 149.

<sup>2</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 2031.

When 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb asked the messenger of 'Utbah b. Ghazwān about the people in Basra, he replied that they were heaping up gold and silver.<sup>3</sup> The conquerors, therefore, preferred the occupied countries to their former lands and founded military camps (amṣār) such as Basra, Kufa and Fustāṭ, which in due course became cities. "These amṣār played a vital role in the establishment and consolidation of Arab influence in the conquered lands".<sup>4</sup> Tribal dissensions were also shifted from the Arabian homeland to the new amṣār, especially those of Iraq, Syria and Khurāsān. "As a general thing a whole tribe did not journey from home to settle down in corpore at one and the same spot, but fragments of the tribe were scattered hither and thither, fragments which could not exist of themselves. So in order to gain the necessary solidarity, they made a closer alliance with fragments of related tribes belonging to the similar higher group".<sup>5</sup> The main tribal blocs were Azd, Qais, Tamīm and Rabī'ah (Bakr and others). The Bakrites, on their side, took part in the conquest of Syria. In 13 A.H., Abū Bakr ordered Khālīd b. al-Walīd, after the latter had reduced Hīrah, to rush with part of the army to the relief of his fellow generals on the Syrian front and to leave the Iraqi front in the hands of al-Muthannā b. Hārithah al-Shaibānī.<sup>6</sup> The warriors who were despatched with Khālīd

---

<sup>3</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 2386; Kāmil, II, 206; Dīnawarī, 124.

<sup>4</sup>Lewis, The Arabs in the History, 55.

<sup>5</sup>Wellhausen, (Eng. trans.) The Arab Kingdom and its Fall, 27.

<sup>6</sup>Futūh, 349; Ṭabarī, I, 2089; Kāmil, II, 170.

participated in the decisive battle of Yarmūk<sup>7</sup> which decided the fate of Syria. Ibn Ḥajar reports that Madh'ūr b. 'Adī al-'Ijlī was at the head of a cohort (kurdūs) in this battle.<sup>8</sup> However, they did not settle in Syria; they returned to Iraq where they participated in the decisive battle of al-Qādisiyyah<sup>9</sup> in 14 A.H. It is worth mentioning that in the battle of Ṣiffīn the Syrian army of Mu'āwiyah was composed mainly of Yemenites with a minority of Qaisites and was completely devoid of Bakrite elements.<sup>10</sup> One can detect from the accounts of the campaign which was led by 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ against Egypt that the majority of the four thousand warriors were Southern Arabs.<sup>11</sup> Indeed Northern Arabs appear to be in a minority throughout the first century. When 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Marwān was appointed to Egypt in 65 A.H. he wrote to his father, the Caliph: "O, Commander of the Faithful, how can I stay in a country which contains no-one of my lineage".<sup>12</sup>

The frontiers of Persia were the most formidable to the Arabs, and those which inspired in their minds the greatest respect and fear, so that they were loathe to

---

<sup>7</sup>See Ṭabarī, I, 2090, 2121-2122; Kāmil, II, 172; 'Asākir, I, 170.

<sup>8</sup>Iṣābah, III, 806.

<sup>9</sup>See Ṭabarī, I, 2305; Kāmil, II, 180; Ya'qūbī, II, 164-165.

<sup>10</sup>See Ṭabarī, I, 3312; Ṣiffīn, 232-233; Sharḥ, V, 184; Dīnawarī, 183-184.

<sup>11</sup>Ibn Taghrībardī, al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Akhbār Miṣr wa al-Qāhirah, I, 6; al-Kindī, al-Wulāh wa al-Qudāh, 8; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ Miṣr, 51; Mu'jam, III, 893.

<sup>12</sup>Al-Kindī, al-Wulāh wa al-Qudāh.

attack them, and tended to avoid them out of respect for the Persian state, and because of what was generally believed to be their power to subdue other nations.<sup>13</sup> In spite of this, we are told that Bakr and Rabī'ah preferred to take part in the conquest of Iraq and to settle there.<sup>14</sup> The reason is to be found in the fact that their abodes were adjacent to Iraq and the Persian borders, and that they were consequently well-acquainted with the frontiers. The recollection of the battle of Dhū Qār was still alive in their memories. Because of these factors it is said that Rabī'ah was the most courageous of the tribes fighting the Persians.<sup>15</sup>

The proposal to invade Iraq came from Bakrite warriors. Even while the Muslim armies were busy with the wars of the Riddah, some Bakrites were already making forays across the Persian borders. This they were doing without any direction from Medina. Al-Muthannā b. Ḥārithah al-Shaibānī together with some of his kindred were making forays from the direction of Ḥīrah.<sup>16</sup> Hitti says, "al-Muthannā was no more than a bedouin chief, and had not heard of or accepted Islam until after the death of the Prophet".<sup>17</sup> However, we are told that al-Muthannā was one of the Prophet's Companions.

---

<sup>13</sup> See Futūh, 353; Ṭabarī, I, 2159; Kāmil, II, 181-182; Fakhrī, 56.

<sup>14</sup> Asākir, I, 162.

<sup>15</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 2223, 2339; Kāmil, II, 190; 'Ibar, II, 918.

<sup>16</sup> Futūh, 337-338, 475; Ṭabarī, I, 2016, 2381; Wāqidī, 3, Dīnawarī, 117.

<sup>17</sup> Hitti, History of the Arabs, 155.

He embraced Islam in 9 or 10 A.H.<sup>18</sup> His clan, the Banū Shaibān, did not apostatize,<sup>19</sup> and he himself took part in the subjugation of Bahraïn during the war of the Riddah.<sup>20</sup> Another warrior was Suwaid b. Quṭbah al-Dhuhlī or, according to another account, Quṭbah b. Qatādah al-Sadūsī who was making forays from the direction of al-Khuraibah.<sup>21</sup> Al-Balādhurī reports that al-Muthannā presented himself before Abū Bakr, and asked him to be his lieutenant over those of his people who had accepted Islam in order to fight against the Persians, and that Abū Bakr wrote him a covenant to that effect.<sup>22</sup> When Khālīd b. al-Walīd went against Iraq, Abū Bakr wrote to al-Muthannā to instruct him to receive Khālīd and obey his word.<sup>23</sup> When Khālīd proceeded to Basra, Suwaid or Quṭbah joined him and together they reduced al-Ubullah<sup>24</sup> which was the most important inhabited centre in the area of Basra. It was the main port of Iraq for commerce with India, and was known to the Arabs as the Indian land or the Indian seaport.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, some Bakrites joined the Persian army against the Muslims.<sup>26</sup> Since Islam had replaced the

---

<sup>18</sup> Iṣābah, III, 730-731.

<sup>19</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 1975-1976.

<sup>20</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 1971; Kāmil, II, 155; 'Ibar, II, 884.

<sup>21</sup> Futūḥ, 337-338; 475; Ṭabarī, I, 2016, 2381; Usd, IV, 206; Iṣābah, III, 473.

<sup>22</sup> Futūḥ, 337.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.; Ṭabarī, I, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Futūḥ, 338, 475.

<sup>25</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 2016, 2021, 2023, 2223, 2380.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., I, 2032; 'Ibar, II, 890.

tribal relationship with a relationship based on membership of one Muslim community, we find that Muslims of the Banū 'Ijl showed the greatest courage in fighting those of Bakr who joined the Persian army in Ullais,<sup>27</sup> Al-Muthannā, although himself of Bakr, boasted that he had inflicted a defeat on the Bakrite allies of the Persians at the battle of al-Khanāfis and that he had laid waste their market-place; saying:<sup>28</sup>

صبحنا بالخنافس جمع بكر	وحيا من قضاة غير ميل
بفتيان الوغى من كل حي	تباري في الحوادث كل جيل
نسفنا سوقهم والخيل رود	من التطواف والشرب النجيل

Al-Ṭabarī reports, on the authority of al-Sha'bī, that the majority of the army led by Khālīd were of Rabī'ah and Muḍar. It consisted of 2,000 warriors. 8,000 warriors from the area between al-Yamāmah and Iraq joined them.<sup>29</sup> This area included some Bakrite settlements. The 10,000 warriors were reinforced by 8,000 of Bakr under the command of al-Muthannā, Madh'ūr, Ḥarmalah and Sulmā<sup>30</sup> and by those who were with Quṭbah. With their help Khālīd defeated the Persians and the Christian Arab tribes who allied themselves with them, at Kāzīmah, Walajah and Ullais,<sup>31</sup> and in 12 A.H. he reduced Hīrah.<sup>32</sup> When Khālīd left for Syria in 13 A.H.,

<sup>27</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 2032; Iṣābah, III, 998.

<sup>28</sup>Mu'jam, II, 474.

<sup>29</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 2021.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.; 'Ibar, II, 888.

<sup>31</sup>See Ṭabarī, I, 2023-2024, 2029, 2031.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., I, 2019, 2044; Kāmil, II, 163.

he gave al-Muthannā command of the troops in Hīrah.<sup>33</sup> The latter went to Medina to request reinforcements.<sup>34</sup> Unlike Abū Bakr, the second caliph, 'Umar, allowed the former murtaddūn to take part in the conquest.<sup>35</sup> The first draught sent by 'Umar to Iraq was of 1,000 warriors from Medina and around, under the command of Abū 'Ubaid al-Thaqafī.<sup>36</sup> After the battle of the Bridge (al-Jisr) in 13 A.H., where the Muslim army had been defeated, a succession of reinforcements began. Jarīr b. 'Abd Allāh came at the head of the Bajīlah and offered to go to Iraq.<sup>37</sup> Then 700 warriors belonging to Azd and Kinānah came to 'Umar, who ordered them to go to Iraq.<sup>38</sup> He also reinforced al-Muthannā with groups belonging to the tribes of Rabāb, Khath'am, Ḥaṅṅalah b. Tamīm, 'Amr b. Tamīm, Ḍabbah and 'Abd al-Qais.<sup>39</sup> Al-Muthannā then won a victory over the Persian general Mihrān at al-Buwaib<sup>40</sup> on the Euphrates. The decisive battle of al-Qādisiyyah, which took place in 16 A.H.,<sup>41</sup> required more reinforcements. 'Umar sent to al-Muthannā and to his 'āmilis (prefects) ordering them not to leave a single person of any note or dignity in the land, whether warrior, poet, orator, or chieftain, nor any man possessed of horse or

---

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., I, 2089; Dīnawarī, 117; 'Ibar, II, 900.

<sup>34</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 607.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., I, 2225.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., I, 2162, 2164; Futūh, 350.

<sup>37</sup>Futūh, 353; Ṭabarī, I, 2183.

<sup>38</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 2187-2188.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., II, 2188-2189.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., I, 2199.

<sup>41</sup>Futūh, 358; Ṭabarī, I, 2377.

weapons, but to send him off to Iraq.<sup>42</sup> 'Umar chose Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ as commander in chief and sent him at the head of 4,000 warriors: 1,000 from Qais and 3,000 from Yemen.<sup>43</sup> Later, 'Umar reinforced Sa'd with 2,000 from Yemen and 2,000 from Qais,<sup>44</sup> and Sa'd chose 3,000 from Tamīm, 1,000 from Rabāb and 3,000 from the Banū Asad.<sup>45</sup> Al-Muthannā was at the head of 12,000 warriors: 6,000 belonging to Bakr, 2,000 to tribes of Rabī'ah other than Bakr, 2,000 to Bajīlah and 2,000 to Quḍā'ah and Ṭai'.<sup>46</sup> Then al-Ash'ath al-Kindī went to Sa'd at the head of 1,700 from Yemen.<sup>47</sup> Those who were with Khālīd in Syria returned and joined the army of Sa'd; they were 6,000: 5,000 from Rabī'ah and Muḍar, and 1,000 from Yemen dwelling in Ḥijāz.<sup>48</sup> Thus those who took part in the battle of al-Qādisiyyah numbered in toto over 30,000.<sup>49</sup>

The above-mentioned table is of great significance. It sheds light on the Arab tribes which later formed the nucleus of the new society of Kufa. It also confirms that the Bakrite warriors who had participated in al-Qādisiyyah and settled in Kufa outnumbered those from any one other tribe.

---

<sup>42</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 2211; 'Ibar, II, 916.

<sup>43</sup>See Ṭabarī, I, 2217-2219.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., I, 2221.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., I, 2222.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., I, 2305.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., III, 2222.



Kufa was built mostly in 17 A.H.,<sup>50</sup> for military and geographical reasons.<sup>51</sup> Al-Balādhurī reports that Sa'd drew lots with two arrows between the tribes of Nizār and the tribes of Yemen, promising the left side, which was the better of the two, to the one whose arrow was drawn first. The people of Yemen had theirs drawn first; and they were, therefore, allotted the east side,<sup>52</sup> i.e. the initial part of the settlement in Kufa based on tribal ground. Since Kufa at that time was no more than a military encampment, its warriors were divided into a'shār<sup>53</sup> with respect to their tribes,<sup>54</sup> i.e., tribesmen of related clans were lumped together into divisions. This mode of organization was of help in mobilization for war and for the distribution of stipends ('aṭā'). When some of these tenths preponderated, Sa'd reorganized the Arab tribesmen with respect to their ancestors and allies. He entrusted this job to well-known Arab genealogists who divided the people of Kufa into seven tribal groups called sevenths (asbā'),<sup>55</sup> or as Massignon puts it "seven military zones".<sup>56</sup> Al-Ṭabarī reports that the sevenths were as follows:

1. Kinānah, together with its allies (Aḥābīsh and others), and Jadīlah.

<sup>50</sup> See Futūḥ, 387; Ṭabarī, I, 2481, 2485, 2486.

<sup>51</sup> See Khulaif, Ḥayāt al-Shi'r fī al-Kūfah ilā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thānī li al-Hijrah, 21-23.

<sup>52</sup> Futūḥ, 388-389.

<sup>53</sup> Probably meaning not 'tenths' but 'numerous divisions', as against asbā' which does seem to mean 'sevenths' and arbā' 'fourths'.

<sup>54</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 2491, 2495.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., I, 2495.

<sup>56</sup> Massignon, (Ar. trans.) Khiṭaṭ al-Kūfah, 9.

2. Quḍā'ah, Bajīlah, Khath'am, Kindah, Ḥaḍramawt, and Azd.
3. Madhḥij, Ḥimyar, Hamdān and their allies.
4. Tamīm, Rabāb and Hawāzin.
5. Asad, Ghatafān, Muḥārib, al-Namir, Dubai'ah and Taghlib.
6. Iyād, 'Akk, 'Abd al-Qais, the people of Hajar and al-Ḥamrā,<sup>57</sup> (Dailamites or the local non-Arab people).

Unfortunately, al-Ṭabarī does not mention the last seventh. Massignon infers that it is the seventh of Ṭai' since this is the only tribe which is not mentioned in the above table. It had a share in the booty, and founded a distinct corps at the battle of Ṣiffīn.<sup>58</sup> One may disagree with Massignon, however, since the tribe of Bakr is not mentioned either, though we find it together with its sister tribe Taghlib in a distinct seventh in 36 A.H.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, we have seen that Bakr outnumbered any one other tribe at al-Qādisiyyah whereas Ṭai' and Quḍā'ah numbered 2,000, a fact which does not qualify Ṭai' to be a distinct seventh. In this light, it is more likely that the unmentioned seventh was that of Bakr. This organization, however, lasted until the caliphate of 'Alī who appears to have modified it shortly before the battle of Ṣiffīn. One can infer that the modified organization was as follows:

1. Hamdān and Ḥimyar.
2. Madhḥij, Ash'ar and Ṭai'.
3. Qais and 'Abd al-Qais.
4. Kindah, Ḥaḍramawt, Quḍā'ah and Mahrah.

---

<sup>58</sup>Massignon, (Ar. trans.) Khiṭaṭ al-Kūfah, 10, 11.

<sup>59</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3174.

5. Azd, Bajīlah, Khath'am, Khuzā'ah and Anṣār (helpers).
6. Bakr and Taghlib.
7. Quraish, Kinānah, Asad, Tamīm, Ḍabbah and Rabāb.<sup>60</sup>

It is clear that this modification was based on tribal grounds. The first, second, fourth and fifth divisions belonged to Yemen, while the third, sixth and the seventh belonged to Nizār. In 50 A.H., Kufa was handed over to Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān, the governor of Basra, who reorganized it. He divided it into quarters (arbā') as follows: Tamīm and Hamdān; Ahl al-Madīnah (Quraish, Kinānah, Azd, Bajīlah, Khath'am, Qais and Muzainah); Rabī'ah and Kindah; Madhḥij and Asad.<sup>61</sup> It would appear that Ziyād deliberately compounded tribes belonging to both main groups, the Yemenite and the Nizārite, in every quarter, and that he put every small clan or tribe in with a great tribe descending from the same ancestor. This new organization lasted for the rest of the Umayyad era. Arab sources make indications to these quarters in the accounts of most of the events of the Umayyad era.<sup>62</sup>

In short, the Arab settlement in Kufa was based on tribal considerations from the beginning. Ziyād tried to decrease this tribal polarity but his procedures were not of

---

<sup>60</sup> See Tabarī, I, 3174; Siffīn, 132; Dīnawarī, 155; al-Nuṣṣ, al-'Āṣabiyyah al-Qabāliyyah wa Atharuhā fī al-Shi'r al-Umawī, 223.

<sup>61</sup> See Tabarī, II, 131, 1382.

<sup>62</sup> For examples, see Tabarī, II, 644, 1702.

great effect on the social life of the city, because the clans belonging to one tribe were together in one quarter, i.e., Ziyād grouped ethnically related clans into larger tribal divisions of roughly equal size. Each division was granted a big lot of vacant land where members built their houses and, beside the great mosque, their own mosques.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, every tribe and sometimes even every clan, had its own graveyard.<sup>64</sup> Thus tribalism was still one of the main features of the social life in Kufa.

Basra was built mostly in 14.A.H.<sup>65</sup> It was destined as a camp to afford a control over the routes from the Persian Gulf, from Iraq and from Persia, and to constitute a starting base for the subsequent expeditions to the east of the Euphrates and the Tigris, while at the same time it contributed to the settlement of the Bedouin.<sup>66</sup> Our sources do not indicate which clans formed the population of Basra at this early stage. Its population quickly increased because of immigration from the neighbouring tribes of Tamīm, Bakr and 'Abd al-Qais. Then, unlike Kufa, it was divided into five big tribal divisions called akhmās, where every khums (fifth) comprised several clans. These akhmās were as follows:-

1. Tamīm, Dabbah and Rabāb
2. Bakr

---

<sup>63</sup>See, Nasab 20; Ansāb, V, 217; Ṭabarī, II, 532, 533.

<sup>64</sup>See Ansāb, V, 231-232; Iṣbahānī, Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn, 138; Ṭabarī, II, 614, 652, 653, 1702.

<sup>65</sup>See Futūh, 483; Ṭabarī, I, 2377.

<sup>66</sup>E.I. (new ed.), al-Baṣra.

3. 'Abd al-Qais
4. Azd
5. Ahl al-'Āliyah (Quraish, Kinānah, Qais and Anṣār).<sup>67</sup>

Shaban says that it was Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān, governor of Baṣra (45-53), who divided Baṣra into fifths,<sup>68</sup> but we have reports of the fifths as early as the battle of Ṣiffīn in 37.<sup>69</sup> Al-'Alī says: "In the light of the alliance, mentioned by Abū 'Ubaidah during the governorship of Ziyād, between the Bakrite clans of Baṣra, one can detect that Bakr was constituted of eight great clans: Qais b. Tha'labah, 'Anazah, Taim al-Lāt, 'Ijl, Dhuhl b. Shaibān, Yashkur, Dhuhl b. Tha'labah and Dubai'ah".<sup>70</sup> It sounds as if al-'Alī has misunderstood, because 'Anazah and Dubai'ah were not clans belonging to Bakr. The organization of Baṣra, however, was not changed or modified during the Umayyad caliphate. It would appear that Azd were a minority in the beginning, but that their number increased in the later years of Mu'āwiyah, and under Yazīd I's caliphate because of groups emigrating to the city.<sup>71</sup>

It is likely that Khurāsān was conquered in 22 A.H.<sup>72</sup> After 'Umar had been assassinated the Khurāsānīs rose against

<sup>67</sup> See Ṭabarī, II, 584, 586, 720, 1381-1382; Ṣiffīn, 131.

<sup>68</sup> Shaban, Islamic History, A New Interpretation, I, 87; The 'Abbāsīd Revolution, 31.

<sup>69</sup> Ṣiffīn, 131.

<sup>70</sup> Al-'Alī, Khiṭaṭ al-Baṣrah, Sumer, VIII (1952), 292.

<sup>71</sup> Naqā'id, 729; Ṭabarī, II, 450.

<sup>72</sup> Ṭabarī, I, 2682; Kāmil, III, 14.

their rulers. During 'Uthmān's caliphate, successive campaigns were organized by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Āmir, the governor of Basra, and Khurāsān was reconquered in 31 A.H.<sup>73</sup> In 45 A.H. Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān, the governor of Basra, appointed 'Umair b. Aḥmar to Marw, the latter being the first governor who settled Arabs there.<sup>74</sup> Our sources do not mention the number of these Arabs nor the tribes they belonged to. In 51 A.H. Ziyād appointed al-Rabī' b. Ziyād al-Ḥārithī to Khurāsān. He is reported to have sent with him 50,000 men from Kufa and Basra along with their families.<sup>75</sup> Al-Ṭabarī reports, on the authority of 'Umar b. Shubbah that half of them were from Basra and the other half from Kufa.<sup>76</sup> But one may doubt this claim because during the governorship of Qutaibah b. Muslim in 96 A.H., there were only 7,000 men from Kufa, and there is no evidence in our sources that the Kufans had withdrawn from Khurāsān after the time of Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān. The majority of the population were, however, from Rabī'ah and Muḍar at the beginning. The Azdites were in a minority until the governorship of al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufrah in 78 A.H.<sup>77</sup> During the governorship of Qutaibah, the Muḍarite bloc (Qais and Tamīm) made up the majority. The tribes and their members in Khurāsān were as follows in 96 A.H.: Ahl al-'Āliyah (Qais and others) (9,000); Bakr (7,000); Tamīm (10,000); 'Abd al-Qais (4,000); Azd (10,000);

---

<sup>73</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 2884; Kāmil, III, 51.

<sup>74</sup>Futūh, 576.

<sup>75</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 81, 155; Futūh, 577.

<sup>76</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 81.

<sup>77</sup>Naqā'id, 276.

Kufans (7,000); Clients (7,000).<sup>78</sup>

Since Khurāsān was of the conquest of Basra and the Arabs there were mostly Basrans, it was divided, like Basra, into five divisions. When Asad b. 'Abd Allah al-Qasrī moved the Arab garrison from Barūqān to Balkh in 107 A.H., he did not organize the tribesmen according to their fifths. Instead he made them live alongside one another, so as to prevent the emergence of 'asabiyyah, tribal solidarity, and the resultant factions and petty jealousies.<sup>79</sup> The Kufans and Syrian reinforcements were a minority and were not settled with the Basrans or divided among the fifths. It would appear that Bakr outnumbered all other tribes in Harāt to the south of Khurāsān. During their encounter with Ibn Khāzim after the death of Yazīd I, the Bakrites in general flocked to their chieftain Aws b. Tha'labah in Harāt.<sup>80</sup> In the east of Khurāsān the lands of the Bakrites and that of the Tamīmites were interspersed; both tribes laid claim to some districts by right of first possession.

#### Tribal Blocs and Alliances

The above mentioned organization of the amṣār was one of the reasons for the emergence of the great tribal blocs. We have seen that the Bakrite clans were disunited before Islam, but now those Bakrites who had emigrated to a new miṣr were living in one khiṭṭah, and had one chieftain.

---

<sup>78</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1290-1291; Futūh, 595-596.

<sup>79</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1490.

<sup>80</sup>Futūh, 583; Ṭabarī, II, 491; Kāmil, IV, 66.

Thus a feeling of tribal harmony developed between clans of the same bloc and tribal loyalty was increased. On the other hand, the closeness of the tribes and the incompatibility of their interests made friction between them unavoidable, thus causing unrest and feuding. The loyalty to the clan (batn) was weak in comparison with loyalty to the tribal group. The most notable groups were Yemen, Rabī'ah and Mudar. One can detect from several accounts, regarding the events which took place in the era under study, that the tribe of Bakr was the most prominent tribe of the Rabī'ah group in Iraq and Khurāsān. It dominated the other tribes of Rabī'ah to the extent that the word Bakr sometimes became synonymous with the word Rabī'ah.<sup>81</sup> The main tribes of Rabī'ah were Bakr, 'Abd al-Qais and Taghlib. While 'Abd al-Qais was a minority in Khurāsān, Taghlib is not mentioned either in the akhmās of Khurāsān or in the akhmās of Basra. Christianity had been wide-spread among Taghlib and their main abodes were in Mesopotamia. Bakr were joined in Basra by 'Abd al-Qais who were but sparsely represented in Kufa.<sup>82</sup> The Rabī'ites were mostly headed by a chief of Bakr. It is fair to mention the personality of Mālik b. Misma' who is described by al-Mubarrad as "the chief of Bakr in Islam",<sup>83</sup> while Abū al-Faraj reports that "Rabī'ah were congregating round Mālik as they had been congregating round Kulaib during his life time".<sup>84</sup> When 'Abd al-Malik asked about Mālik, he

---

<sup>81</sup>For examples, see: Ṭabarī, II, 447-452, 493.

<sup>82</sup>Wellhausen, (Eng. trans.) The Arab Kingdom and its Fall, 398; Zakī, al-Hayāt al-Adabiyah fī al-Basrah ila Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thānī al-Hijrī, 79.

<sup>83</sup>Mubarrad, I, 229.

<sup>84</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 339.



was replied to: "If Mālīk became angry, one hundred thousand men would be angered with him, without asking him the reason for his anger".<sup>85</sup> Another personality whose fame was equal to that of Mālīk was al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir in Khurāsān.<sup>86</sup>

Although Rabī'ah and Muḍar have the same descent as Nizār, the relations between them were on the most part, strained. In most cases, Rabī'ah took the side of Azd against its sister tribe Muḍar. This happened in the civil strife after the death of Yazīd I and in the strife which ended the Umayyad dynasty. Rabī'ah were jealous of the extent to which Muḍar were exploiting the situation and holding the higher positions since the caliphate itself was held by Quraish. Regarding Tamīm (a Muḍarite tribe) one must not forget that the relations between them and Bakr were strained before Islam. 'Abd Allah b. Khāzīm is reported to have said: "Rabī'ah always rages against God, since he raised up the Prophet from Muḍar".<sup>87</sup> A poet of Rabī'ah in Khurāsān expresses the thoughts of jealousy they harboured towards Quraish, when he recited:

Quraish have indulged in the pleasures of life, and used us to defend them in the difficult terrains of Khurāsān. Would to God Quraish were trapped in the depths of a dark sea.<sup>88</sup>

بنّا كل فج من خراسان أغبرا	تولت قريش لذّة العيش واتقت
يعومون في لج من البحر أخضرا	فليت قريشا أصبحوا ذات ليلة

<sup>85</sup>Ma'ārif, 419; 'Uyūn, I, 255; 'Iqd, I, 159, II, 287.

<sup>86</sup>See Tabarī, II, 1290, 1291.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., II, 493; Kāmil, IV, 66.

<sup>88</sup>Tabarī, II, 1580-1581.

This tribal jealousy was one of the underlying motives for the large number of Khārijites who came from Bakr. Macdonald says: "It is probable, but as yet unproved, that mingled with the political reasons for their existence as a sect were tribal jealousies and frictions; of such there have ever been enough and to spare in Arabia".<sup>89</sup> The scope of this study does not permit a thorough examination of the causes that led to the emergence of the Khārijite movement, its development and its doctrines. It must suffice to mention some events and phenomena which show the major role played by the tribal system in Khārijite history. Perhaps the first important stand based on Jāhilī 'asabiyyah, which led to strengthen Khārijite power later, was that of al-Ash'ath b. Qais regarding 'Alī's representative in the arbitration. Al-Ash'ath vetoed the nomination of Ibn 'Abbās saying: "No by God, two Muḍarites will not arbitrate in this matter until the Day of Judgement".<sup>90</sup> When 'Alī explained the situation to him and warned him against the nomination of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, al-Ash'ath opted <sup>for</sup> his Yemenite 'asabiyyah <sup>as</sup> against the very aims for which he was fighting and said: "By God, if they give a verdict we dislike, it will be more acceptable to us if one of them is a Yemenite, than a verdict to our liking given by two Muḍarites".<sup>91</sup> It is known that the results of the arbitration played an important role in encouraging the Khārijites and strengthening their position

---

<sup>89</sup> Macdonald, Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, 24-25.

<sup>90</sup> Ṣiffīn, 573; Ya'qūbī, II, 220.

<sup>91</sup> Ṣiffīn, 573.

in challenging 'Alī and refusing to accept him as the legal Imām.

In the beginning the Khawārij were composed of Bedouins in particular, to the extent that, after their stand on the arbitration, they were described as "Bedouins from Bakr and Tamīm".<sup>92</sup> A close study of the best-documented revolts of the Khawārij in the Umayyad period, reveals that most of their leaders belonged to the tribe of Bakr, and especially to the B. Hanīfah and Shaibān. Among them are Najdah b. 'Āmir al-Ḥanafī (after whom the Najdiyyah sect is named); Nāfi' b. al-Azraq (after whom the Azāriqah sect is named); Shabīb al-Shaibānī (leader and commander of the Ṣufriyyah sect who disturbed al-Ḥajjāj, posed a threat to the whole of Iraq, and was able to enter Kufa after inflicting defeats upon many armies dispatched by al-Ḥajjāj who was eventually forced to seek the help of the Syrian army to confront him); and al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qāis al-Shaibānī (who conquered Iraq in 127 A.H. and was defeated and killed by Marwān b. Muḥammad in 128 A.H.). Wellhausen rightly observes that most of the rebellions of the Khawārij in the later Umayyad period started from Mawṣil and were inspired by the Bakr.<sup>93</sup> On the other hand, the Khārijite poets known to us suggest that those who belonged to Bakr outnumbered the Khārijite poets of any one other tribe. Among the 65 Khārijite poets whose poetry was compiled by Iḥsān 'Abbās in his Shi'r al-Khawārij, we find that 28 belong to Bakr.

---

<sup>92</sup>Tabarī, I, 3353.

<sup>93</sup>Wellhausen, (Eng. trans.) The Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam, 79.

One of the striking features of the tribalism and 'aṣabiyyah of the Khawārij directed against the Quraish and its rule, is that until the last years of the Umayyad dynasty there was no Qurashī in their ranks. Al-Mubarrad<sup>94</sup> reports that Ibn 'Abbās entered into a dialogue with the Khawārij at Ḥarūrā'. He refuted their arguments and was about to drive a wedge between them when some of them began to tell those who seemed to be impressed by Ibn 'Abbās: "Do not accept Qurashite arguments as valid against you; because this person belongs to the people about whom Allāh says 'But, they are a contentious people'<sup>95</sup> 'بل هم قوم خصمون'. The Bakrite Khārijī poet 'Itbān b. Waṣīlah or Aṣīlah al-Shaibānī exposes his 'aṣabiyyah in a poem intended for 'Abd al-Malik, in which he threatens the caliph with a hard battle if he does not satisfy the Bakrites in Iraq. He rejects the possibility that a member of Thaḳāfī, i.e. al-Ḥajjāj, should remain as governor of Iraq. He also takes pride in Khārijite personalities belonging to Bakr. The verses concerned are:

Convey to the Commander of the Faithful a message, and I am a well-wisher and close to you only if you listen to me.  
 There will be no reconciliation so long as a Thaḳāfī orator stands on the pulpits of our land.  
 If you do not satisfy [the tribe of] Bakr b. Wā'il, you will face a difficult battle in Iraq.  
 No matter if Quraish are our enemies.  
 If they hit us once, we shall hit them in turn.  
 If Marwān, his son, 'Amr, Hāshim, and Ḥabīb belong to them [i.e. Quraish], then we have

<sup>94</sup>Mubarrad, III, 165.

<sup>95</sup>Qur'ān, XLIII, 58.

Suwaid, al-Buṭain, Qa'nab, and Shabīb, the  
Commander of the Faithful, belongs to us.  
And to us belong Sinān the Dreadful, Ibn  
'Umair and Murrah.  
So look whom of them you can denounce!<sup>96</sup>

وذو النصح لو تصغي اليه قريب	فأبلغ أمير المؤمنين رسالة
يقوم عليها من ثقيف خطيب	فلا صلح ما دامت مناير أرضنا
يكن لك يوم في العراق عقيب	فانك ان لا ترض بكر بن وائل
يصيبون منا مرة ونصيب	فلا ضير ان كانت قريش عري لنا
وعمرو ومنهم هاشم وحبيب	فان يك منهم كان مروان وابنه
ومنا أمير المؤمنين شبيب	فمنا سويد والبطين وقعناب
ومرة فانظر أي ذاك تعيب	ومنا سنان الموت وابن عويمر

When Najdah b. 'Āmir took possession of Yamāmah and  
Bahrain, after his split from Nāfi' b. al-Azraq, one of his  
followers composed a poem in which he boasts of the power  
of his people, and exposes his tribal partisanship against  
Mudar to which Qurāish belonged. The verses concerned are:

Our soldiers wearing coats of mail, subjugated  
to our authority from Buṣrā to Dawmah.  
If anyone vies for our rule, he will have to  
give up his own and stay behind.  
Our swords have driven back Mudar al-Ḥamrā',  
as the day drives night away.<sup>97</sup>

كتائب منا يلبسون السنورا	أباح لنا ما بين بصرى فدومة
من الناس خلى ملكه وتقطرا	اذا نحن سامانا على الملك واحد
كما طرد الليل النهار فأدبرا	نفت مضر الحمراء عنا سيوفنا

<sup>96</sup> Bayān, III, 266; Marzubānī, 266; Murūj, III, 203; Dhahabī,  
III, 160; Damīrī, Hayāt al-Hayawān al-Kubrā, II, 219;  
Baihaqī, al-Mahasin wa al-Masāwī, 102; 'Abbās, Shi'r  
al-Khawārij, 63-64.

<sup>97</sup> Al-Tayālīsī, Kitāb al-Mukātharah 'ind al-Mudhākarah, 6.

The Khārijite leader al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qais al-Shaibānī is reported to have crossed the bridge of Mawṣil reciting the following rajaz which expresses his deep desire to snatch the rule away from Quraish at a turbulent time. He sees himself as a spokesman for the B. Shaibān:

This is a fabulous horse carrying a fabulous old man who is experienced and has attended encounters. Shaibān have come across a rule which is on the verge of collapse.<sup>98</sup>

رائعة تحمل شيخا رائعا      مجريا قد شهد الوقائع  
قد صادفت شيبان ملكا ضائعا

When al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qais took possession of Iraq for a short period and was paid allegiance by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and Sulaimān b. Hishām, both of them Umayyads, a Khārijite Bakrī poet, Shubail b. 'Azrah, celebrated this occasion, considering it a victory of Bakr over Quraish, saying:

Do you not see that God has indeed bestowed the victory on his religion, and that Quraish have prayed behind Bakr b. Wā'il?<sup>99</sup>

ألم تر أن الله أظهر دينه      وصلست قريش خلف بكر بن وائل

When Abū Ḥamzah, the Khārijite, inflicted a defeat upon the people of Medina in the battle of Qudaid in 130,<sup>100</sup> he checked the captives and killed the Qurashites and set the Anṣār free.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Al-Azdī, Tārīkh al-Mawsil, 70, 132.

<sup>99</sup> Bayān, I, 343; Ṭabarī, II, 1913; 'Asākīr, VI, 286.

<sup>100</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 2006.

<sup>101</sup> Anon., al-'Uyūn wa al-Ḥadā'iq fī Akhbār al-Ḥaqā'iq, III, 169.

All the Khārijite sects believed that the most noble pious Muslim was the most suitable to become an Imām regardless of his race, colour, or tribe.<sup>102</sup> They maintained that every dutiful Muslim was eligible to occupy the Imamate whether he was free, a slave, a Nabatean or a Qurashī,<sup>103</sup> rejecting the Qurashite descent stipulated by Sunnites and Shī'ites for the Imām. Notwithstanding this and the fact that Persia was in many cases the springboard of their rebellion against the Umayyads and the Zubairids, they seldom chose a non-Arab to be their Imām. It is reported that when the Najdites dismissed Najdah, they gave their allegiance to Thābit al-Tammār, a non-Arab. They then had second thoughts and said: "Only an Arab can lead us". Thābit himself chose an Arab called Abū Fudaik, 'Abd Allāh b. Thawr to whom they gave the oath of allegiance.<sup>104</sup>

Although there was a large number of Khārijite poets and some of them are reported to have composed a large number of poems, the poetry which has survived is no more than a few bits or fragments attributed to this poet or that. Many of their poems have survived in part only. The only surviving dīwān of the Khārijite poets is that of al-Ṭirimmāḥ b. Ḥakīm al-Ṭā'ī about whom Abū al-Faraj reports, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Sahl, that he was: "A Qaḥṭānī Khārijī Ṣufrī poet from Yemen. He was biased in favour of

<sup>102</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal wa al-Nihal, I, 107; Ibn al-Jawzī, Talbīs Iblīs, 96; Ḥayawān, II, 102; Sharḥ, IX, 87.

<sup>103</sup> Al-Baghdādī, Uṣūl al-Dīn, 275, 279; al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal wa al-Nihal, I, 107.

<sup>104</sup> Anon., al-Muṣannaf al-Majhūl, XI, 143.

Qaḥṭān and the Syrians".<sup>105</sup> The dīwān of al-Ṭirimmāh shows clearly his strong bias for Yemen, to the extent that he praised Yazīd b. al-Muhallab who was renowned for his crushing many Khārijite uprisings. Moreover, al-Ṭirimmāh frequently satirizes the tribe of Tamīm in a bitter way, despite the fact that they played a major role in supporting the Khārijite movement. He says, for example, boasting of his tribe and satirizing the tribe of Tamīm:

I am the son of the Banū Nafr ibn Qais ibn Jaḥdar, the sons of men who always renew the attack when the cavalry turns away in flight. Tamīm among Qaḥṭān, when the latter rise, are like a stone thrown into deep water at night, which disappears.

If the Antichrist were to appear proclaiming his faith, Tamīm would strut and congregate round him.

But where are Tamīm on a day when troops of ours brandish the lances, troops which have caused men to journey and to halt.<sup>106</sup>

أنا ابن بني نفر بن قيس بن جدر	بني كل عطف اذا الخيل ولت
وكانت تميم وسط قحطان اذ سمت	كهقد وفة في اليم ليلا فضلت
ولو خرج الدجال ينشد دينه	لرافت تميم حوله واحزالت
فأين تميم يوم تخطر بالقنا	كتائب منا أظعننا وأحسالت

Salāmah b. Sayyār al-Shaibānī is reported to have joined the ranks of Shabīb, on condition that the latter provide him with thirty horsemen in order to take his revenge on his maternal uncles of the B. 'Anzah, who let down his brother Fuḍālah when the latter revolted.<sup>107</sup> Boasting of his revenge raid and claiming that the blood

<sup>105</sup> Aghānī, XVII, 2.

<sup>106</sup> Dīwān al-Ṭirimmāh b. Ḥakīm b. Nafr al-Ṭā'ī, 50-52, 130-131.

<sup>107</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 893-894.



of his tribe was nobler than theirs, Salāmah says:

I waged an early dawn foray in the company  
of youths, who are men of war, who do not  
flee from the encounters, and are not  
without arms or defenceless.  
The blood of the Yaqdumiyyūn is not equal  
to that of the B. Shaibān.<sup>108</sup>

فصّحتهم قبل الشروق بفتية	ساعير لا كشف اللقاء ولا عزل
وليست دماء اليقد ميين بالتي	توازي دماء الحي شيبان في القتل

In the light of the above discussions, it may be said that 'aṣabiyyah and the tribal partialities were important factors which, intermingled with various other factors, gave birth to and kept alive the Khārijite movement, which played its most active role during the Umayyad era.

Tribal coherence, however, was not confined to clans of the same tribe in the same province, but sometimes covered all clans belonging to the same tribe in the provinces. Tribesmen of Rabī'ah in Iraq supported those of Mesopotamia during the tribal feuds between the tribes of Qais (Mudar) and Taghlib (Rabī'ah). Al-Balādhurī reports a dispute which arose between 'Ikrimah b. Rib'ī from Bakr and Asmā' b. Khārijah from Qais in Basra after 'Umair b. al-Ḥubāb had been killed by Taghlib. Asmā' threatened to wreak vengeance on both Bakr and Taghlib, and recited:

My hand is in pledge to you that Sulaim will  
stage a raid that will turn the temples of  
Bakr b. Wā'il white, and will leave the sons  
of al-Fadawkas in want, orphans and prey to  
tribesmen.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>108</sup>Abbās, *Shi'r al-Khawārij*, 66.

<sup>109</sup>Ansāb, V, 327; Kāmil, IV, 133.

يدى لك رهن عن سليم بخارة      تشيب لها أصداء بكر بن وائل  
وتترك أولاد الغد وكس عالسة      أيامى يتامى نهضة في القبائل

Having heard of the encounters between Bakr and ibn Khāzim with Muḍar in Khurāsān, Mālik b. Misma' is reported to have burnt some houses belonging to B. Tamīm in Basra.<sup>110</sup>

Beside the emergence of the great tribal blocs, tribal alliances came to exist in the new amṣār. The most prominent alliance was that which held between Rabī'ah and the Yemen tribes. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd mentions the text of this alliance in Iraq. He claims, on the authority of Ibn al-Kalbī, that it was 'Alī who wrote it, and he tries to justify such a tribal alliance from the Islamic point of view.<sup>111</sup> No other sources confirm this account, but even if it is an unfair statement, it may have been based on a reaction to the state of tribal tension at that time. At the beginning of the Umayyad dynasty, a new alliance was made between Bakr (Rabī'ah) and Azd in Basra. Some of our sources mention the motives behind this alliance. Rabī'ah was outnumbered by Muḍar in Basra. The Persian Asāwirah, the Indian Zuṭṭ and Sayābijah had been affiliated to Tamīm (Muḍar), increasing the numerical status of Tamīm. Bakr had been unfriendly to Tamīm since before Islam, and were joined by 'Abd al-Qais. Towards the later years of Mu'āwiyah and during the caliphate of Yazīd I, the number of Azd had increased and they became powerful by supplementary emigration from the homelands. Tamīm had an idea of entering into an alliance with them; but

<sup>110</sup>Naqā'id, 731.

<sup>111</sup>Sharh, XVIII, 74.

the proud Ahnaf, chief of Tamīm, turned down the idea because he believed that whoever had taken the first step in this alliance would play the less important role in it. Therefore he waited for Azd to take such a first step. Rabī'ah did not hesitate to ally themselves with Azd in order to be supported by them if need be. They sent their chief, Mālik b. Misma', who appealed to Azd to renew some of the old alliances which had been made before Islam, such as the alliance between Bakr and Kindah and the alliance between Tai' and Dhuhl b. Tha'labah. We are told that two copies were written to confirm and emphasize this alliance, but our sources do not mention the text of the agreement. When al-Ahnaf rebuked Mālik for entering into a tribal alliance which was against Islam, Mālik reminded him of the alliance which had been made between Tamīm and the Asāwirah and Sayābijah and accused him of being jealous of Rabī'ah because they had gained an advantage through the alliance.<sup>112</sup> Azd and Rabī'ah claimed that the root of their alliance could be traced back to the pre-Islamic period. This alliance, however, put right the tribal imbalance. Tamīm held close to Qais, so Basra was divided into two, in which the new united Azd and Rabī'ah stood opposed to Muḍar (Qais and Tamīm).

Shortly after the death of Yazīd I in 64 A.H., the new circumstances required the alliance to be renewed. The Umayyad dynasty had come into a tottering condition; civil

---

<sup>112</sup>On this alliance, see: Naqā'id, 729-730; Ṭabarī, II, 449-450; Ansāb, IV/2, 105-106.

strife spread like wildfire in the amṣār. Mālik b. Misma', the chief of Bakr, was afraid that his tribe might suffer adversity since it was outnumbered by Tamīm. He appealed to Mas'ūd b. 'Amr al-'Atakī, the chief of Azd at that time, to renew the alliance between their tribes. 'Ubaid Allāh b. Ziyād, the deposed governor of Basra, exploiting the situation by exciting enmity between Bakr and Tamīm, urged Mas'ūd to renew the alliance.<sup>113</sup> We hear of this alliance during the course of most of the events which took place before the fall of the Umayyads.

Since the Khurāsānī Arabs were mostly Basrans, the alliance between bakr (Rabī'ah) and Azd was also formed in Khurāsān. Our sources do not give the date of this agreement explicitly. It is likely that it was formed during the governorship of al-Muhallab (79-82 A.H.) for there is no mention in our sources of this alliance before his time. Abū al-Faraj reports a dispute which arose between 'Abd al-Qais and Azd during the governorship of al-Muhallab who interceded and paid bloodmoney to both sides.<sup>114</sup> He also reports that the tribesmen of Yemen and Rabī'ah were in alliance during the time of al-Muhallab and his son Yazīd.<sup>115</sup> The Bakrite poet, Nahār b. Tawsi'ah, refers to this alliance in his elegy on al-Muhallab in which he says:

Qaḥṭan were congregating round him [al-Muhallab], supporting him together with their allies, Bakr and Taghlib.<sup>116</sup>

تطيف به قحطان قد عصبت له وأحلافها من حي بكر وتغلب

<sup>113</sup>Naqā'id, 729; Tabarī, II, 449.

<sup>114</sup>Aghānī, XIII, 58.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., XIII, 59-60.

Shāban, however, seems to have ignored these reports, saying: "We do not have enough information to enable us to tell which clans of Rabī'ah were included with Azd. Only Taghlib is mentioned as part of al-Muhallab's followers as allies (aḥlāf) along with the more general names of Bakr and Rabī'a. This suggests that some tribesmen from certain clans of Rabī'a, but who did not belong to the clans of the two akhmās of Basra, Bakr and 'Abdulqays, might have found it easier to enlist in the dīwān to ally themselves with al-Azd and join Muhallab's campaigns".<sup>117</sup>

We have references to this alliance in the revolt of Qutaibah b. Muslim in 96 A.H.,<sup>118</sup> that of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab in 101 A.H., and in the civil strife at Barūqān in 106 A.H.<sup>119</sup> In the later period, as misguided strife (fitnah) had broken out between al-Kirmānī with Azd and Rabī'ah, and Naṣr b. Sayyār with Muḍar, al-Dīnawarī reports that al-Kirmānī asked 'Umar b. Ibrahīm, a man descended from the Kings of Ḥimyar living in Kufa, to send him the copy of the alliance which had been made between Yemen and Rabī'ah before Islam. Having received it, al-Kirmānī read its text before the chiefs of both parties, and they agreed to support each other.<sup>120</sup> Al-Nuṣṣ, however, doubts the authenticity of the text of this alliance as mentioned by al-Dīnawarī and considers that the Yemenites fabricated it in order to incline

---

<sup>117</sup>Shaban, The 'Abbāsīd Revolution, 55.

<sup>118</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1290.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., II, 1473.

<sup>120</sup>Dīnawarī, 352-353.

Rabī'ah to their side.<sup>121</sup>

The alliance between Rabī'ah and Yemen came to an end in the early years of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty, when Ma'n b. Zā'idah al-Shaibānī violated it, by his bias against the Yemenites and by his atrocities against them. As a consequence, 'Uqbah b. Salm al-Hanā'ī al-Azdī began to discriminate against the Rabī'ites who dwelt in Oman and Bahrain.<sup>122</sup>

The emergence of tribal blocs and alliances left a clear impact on the work of poets who, in general, were influenced by tribalism to the point of negating their own individuality. Even the poets attracted by political parties, or those prostituted their skills for material benefit, failed to get rid of the tribal loyalties. Therefore, the majority of the poets continued to serve the tribal interests, imitating the Jāhilī pattern of their predecessors. This phenomenon will be discussed in the next chapter, and in the second part of this thesis, which will be devoted to a study of four Bakrī poets.

---

<sup>121</sup>Al-Nuṣṣ, al-'Asabiyāh al-Qabaliyyah wa Atharuhā fī al-Shi'r al-Umawī, 296.

<sup>122</sup>Murūj, II (ed. Cairo, A.H. 1346), 197.

## CHAPTER IV

BAKRĪ POETRY IN RELATION TO THEIR POLITICO-TRIBAL ROLE FROM  
AL-FITNAH AL-KUBRĀ TILL THE END OF THE UMAYYAD RULE

The Bakrites played an important role in most of the events which took place during the period between the thirties and the fall of the Umayyad dynasty in 132 A.H. Their role was of special importance in the Kharijite movement as we have previously seen. Clearly the period was rife with political and tribal discord. Extant records are inadequate for us to be able to determine the role of each individual tribe in the Great Sedition (al-Fitnah al-Kubrā), which led to the murder of the third orthodox caliph 'Uthmān b. 'Affān and resulted in the split of the Muslim community into disputing groups. The yawm of al-Waqīṭ between Bakr and Tamīm took place during this time.<sup>1</sup> Although the Arabic sources do not mention the reason for this yawm, it can be explained in terms of the deep-rooted hostility between these two tribes, and in many ways it is reminiscent of the ayyām al-Jāhiliyyah, that is to say the great early battle days commemorated in literature. The Bakr appear to have tried to fish in troubled waters. They aimed at gaining booty by shedding blood and holding hostages for ransom. Some Bakrite poets boast of this yawm in the same way as the pre-Islamic poets used to do. 'Umair b. 'Umarah al-Taimī, for instance, derides some of the notables of the B. Tamīm, who fled from the battlefield, accusing them of being cowards. He claims that B. Tamīm's

---

<sup>1</sup>On al-Waqīṭ, see: Naqā'id, 305-313; Kāmil, I, 263-264; 'Iqd V, 182-185; 'Umdah, II, 215; Nuwairī, XV, 379-381.

humiliating defeat was a divine punishment. On the other hand, he boasts of his powerful tribe having inflicted a severe defeat upon the B. Tamīm, killing some and taking others into captivity in a surprise raid, saying:

'Uwaif b. Qa'qā' escaped us by running swiftly,  
While our people dragged down Ḍirār.  
O' 'Uwaif, if you have escaped the battlefield  
it is because you have always been a coward  
put to flight.  
How many of your people have we left behind us  
killed and how many of you have we taken into  
captivity.  
This is how God rewards Tamīm and this is how  
He awards them disgrace and misfortune.  
Mālik b. Qais was saved from us by one worthy  
of trust who led him [to safety] in the deserts.  
'Athjal together with al-Ma'mūm faced a bitter  
fate when they tried hard to flee.  
And we left Hukaim killed on the battlefield  
and stripped him of his waist-wrapper.  
We sent out a raid between Falj and Laṣāf,  
trampling down the abodes.  
They did not become aware of us until they saw  
us flying our standards, marching through the dust.<sup>2</sup>

حسب الركب واحتطوا ضرارا	وأفلتنا ابن قعقاع عوف
فقد ما كنت منتخبا مطسارا	فان تك يا عوف نجوت منها
وأخر قد شددناه إسارا	وكم غاد رن منكم من قتيل
وبرزقها المساة والعثارا	كذاك الله يجزي من تهيم
أخوشقة يؤم به الققارا	ونجى مالكا منا ابن قيس
مع المأموم اذ جدوا نفارا	وصادف عشجل من ذاك مرا
صريحا قد سلبناه الأزارا	وغاد رنا حكيما في مجال
وبين لصاف نوطئها الديارا	مددنا غارة ما بين فلج
على الرايات ندرع الغبارا	فما شعروا بنا حتى رأونا

'Amr b. Khālid boasts that his fellow tribesmen humiliated the B. Tamīm whom he mocks, portraying them, at the time of the encounter, as a she-camel that kneels down, saying:<sup>3</sup>

حكّت تهيم بركها لما التقت      راياتنا ككواسر العقبان

<sup>2</sup>Naqā'id, 309-310; Marzubānī, 242-243.

<sup>3</sup>Naqā'id, 311; Kāmil, I, 264.



Yazīd b. al-Jad'ā' derides 'Awf b. al-Qa'qā' al-Tamīmī and present a caricature of him as one who keeps his sword safe in his scabbard and takes to flight on his horse to save his skin, saying:

'Awf said: yesterday I sheathed my sword.  
How strange is 'Awf who kept his sword sheathed.  
He was saved from being killed at al-Waqīṭ by a  
tall horse prone to bite its iron bit.<sup>4</sup>

وقد قال عوف شمت بالأمن بارقا  
فله عوف كيف ظل يشيم  
ونجاه من قتل الوقيط مقلص  
يعض على فأس اللجام أروم

The political attitude of Basra has been described as 'Uthmanite, and Kufa as 'Alid.<sup>5</sup> This unreliable generalization arises out of the battle of the Camel (al-Jamal). After homage had been paid to 'Alī in Medina, Talḥah and al-Zubair revolted against him. They departed for Basra and took possession of it. 'Alī followed them into Iraq and made for Kufa. The two forces met at the battle of the Camel which was, however, not a contest between the two rival cities as some writers suggest.<sup>6</sup> For while the Kufans joined 'Alī, the Basrans were divided, part of them supporting the revolt, part refusing to become involved, and part withdrawing from Basra and marching to join 'Alī.<sup>7</sup> The members of this last group were from Bakr and 'Abd al-Qais,<sup>8</sup> the two Rabī'ite

<sup>4</sup>Naqā'id, 310.

<sup>5</sup>'Iqd, VI, 248; Khulaif, Hayāt al-Shi'r fī al-Kūfah ilā Nihayāt al-Qarn al-Thānī li al-Hijrah, 52.

<sup>6</sup>Muir, The Caliphate; its Rise, Decline, and Fall, 249; Khulaif, Hayāt al-Shi'r fī al-Kūfah ilā Nihayāt al-Qarn al-Thānī li al-Hijrah, 55.

<sup>7</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3178; Ibn 'Umar, al-Fitnah wa Waq'at al-Jamal, 153.

<sup>8</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3131.

tribes of Basra. Al-Baladhurī reports that the B. 'Ijl, a section of Bakr, removed from Basra to Kufa at the time of the battle of the Camel.<sup>9</sup> This withdrawal of those Bakrites to Kufa was due to the conflict which arose over the distributing of stipends in Basra, in that they rejected the proposition that the early Muslims should have special prestige and position.<sup>10</sup> Shortly before the battle broke out, Shaqīq b. Thawr and 'Amr b. Marḥūm al-'Abdī together with their fellow tribesmen of Bakr and 'Abd al-Qais respectively deserted the army of Ṭalḥah and al-Zubair and joined the ranks of 'Alī. Some people present there are reported to have said: "The winner is the one who is supported by these people".<sup>11</sup> Al-Ṭabarī reports, moreover, on the authority of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyyah, that the majority of those who joined 'Alī, other than the Kufans, were from Bakr b. Wā'il.<sup>12</sup> It is said that Rabī'ah (Bakr and 'Abd al-Qais) constituted half of 'Alī's army in the battle.<sup>13</sup> Some verses attributed to 'Alī have come down to us which speak in glowing terms of Rabī'ah and describe them as being obedient to his cause. The verses read:<sup>14</sup>

يا لهف نفسي على ربيعة      ربيعة السامحة المطيعة  
 قد سبقنتني فيهم الوقيعة      دعا علي دعوة سميعة  
 حلّوا بها المنزلة الرفيعة

<sup>9</sup>Ansāb, IV/I, 187.

<sup>10</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3131; Ibn 'Umar, al-Fitnah wa Waq'at al-Jamal, 132.

<sup>11</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3174.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 3181.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 3210.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 3145, 3185.

This valiant adherence has led some writers to go as far as to claim that Bakr in Basra belonged to the Shī'ite movement.<sup>15</sup> In all tribes, however, there were elements that went contrary to the tribe as a whole and we find indeed that some Bakrites present at the battle were in the ranks of Ṭalhah and al-Zubair.<sup>16</sup>

Having won the battle, 'Alī entered Basra and was publicly acclaimed there. He then returned to Kufa where he ruled over all the Islamic provinces except Syria. Mu'āwiyah, as we know, refused to recognize 'Alī and the latter then marched with the men of Iraq against the Syrians. The two forces met in a fierce battle at Ṣiffīn. Khulāif minimises the role of the Basrans in this battle and counts it as a contest between Kufa and Syria.<sup>17</sup> However, we have already seen that most of the Bakrites in Basra had joined 'Alī and moreover there is a general agreement in the Arabic sources that Rabī'ah, headed by Bakrite leaders, were the most loyal and valiant supporters of 'Alī during all stages of Ṣiffīn.<sup>18</sup> The warriors of Rabī'ah were headed by Khālīd b. al-Mu'ammār, a Bakrite from Basra, and later by al-Ḥudāin b. al-Mundhir, another Bakrite from Basra.<sup>19</sup> It should be

---

<sup>15</sup>For example, see: Zakī, al-Hayāt al-Adabiyah fī al-Basrah ilā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thānī al-Hijrī, 79, 87.:

<sup>16</sup>See Ṭabarī, I, 3179, 3195.

<sup>17</sup>Khulāif, Hayāt al-Shi'r fī al-Kūfah ilā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thānī li al-Hijrah, 56.

<sup>18</sup>See Ṭabarī, I, 3276, 3293, 3311, 3314, 3316, 3321; Dīnawarī, 195, 198; Ṣiffīn, 280, 327, 344, 345, 394, 458; Sharḥ, V, 228, 233, 241, 242.

<sup>19</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3312; Ṣiffīn, 326-327; Sharḥ, V, 226.

remembered that Bakr were located exclusively in Iraq with no bases in Syria, while most other tribes were divided between the two provinces. We have a fragment attributed to 'Alī, which glorifies and praises the valour and courage of the Bakrite leader, al-Ḥudain. It also praises Rabī'ah for being steadfast, brave and courageous when they met a numerous army, the fragment reads:<sup>20</sup>

لَمِنْ رَايَةِ حَمْرَاءٍ يَخْفِقُ ظَلْمَهَا	إِذَا قِيلَ قَدْ مَهَا حَضِينُ تَقْدَمَا
وَيَدْنُو بِهَا فِي الصَّفِّ حَتَّى يَزِيرَهَا	حَمَامِ الْمَنَايَا تَقَطَّرُ الْمَوْتَ وَالِدَمَا
جَزَى اللَّهُ قَوْمًا صَابِرُوا فِي لِقَائِهِمْ	لَدَى النَّاسِ حَرًّا مَا أَعَفَّ وَأَكْرَمَا
رَبِيعَةَ أَعْنِي إِنَّهُمْ أَهْلُ نَجْدَةَ	وَأَسْ إِذَا لَاقُوا خَمِيسًا عَرْمَرَمَا

When Muḍar found that Rabī'ah were favoured by 'Alī they began to reveal their jealousy. Al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir, the leader of Bakr and Rabī'ah, made the matter worse. He recited verses in which he boasted of their close relationship with 'Alī, accused Muḍar of having a deep-rooted hatred for his tribe, defied them to prove themselves as brave in war as his tribe and stated the opinion that they would never occupy the same position as his tribe:

When Muḍar saw that Rabī'ah had become closer to the Commander of the Faithful ['Alī] - which is an honour - they exposed a deep-seated hatred for us which was hitherto hidden in their hearts. Allāh has chosen us for the grace that belongs to us, and chosen for you the plight you are in. You have to prove yourselves in fighting as we have done, or you have to acknowledge our superiority, and you will never reach us as long as the camel yearns.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Tabarī, I, 3316; Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, I, 48-49; Siffīn, 325; Jamharat, 298; Sharḥ, V, 227; 'Iqd, III, 362; 'Asākir, IV, 375.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, III, 164; Siffīn, 348-349; Sharḥ, V, 244.

شعار أمير المؤمنين وذا الفضل	رأت مضر صارت ربيعة د ونهم
علينا من البخضا وذاك له أصل	فأبدوا الينا ما تجنّ صد ورهم
رآنا لها أهلا وأنتم لها أهل	ونحن أناس خصنا الله بالتي
ولن تلحقونا الدهر ما حنت الأبل	فأبلوا بلانا أو أقرّوا بفضلنا

The sources that have recorded the history of struggle between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah include a considerable amount of poetry. In the various encounters of Ṣiffīn and during the periods preceding and following them, the poets, in addition to their physical participation, played an important role by composing rajaz and qaṣīd, for poetry was still effective propoganda in enhancing the valour and skill of warriors. Naṣr b. Muzahim's Waq'at Ṣiffīn is probably the richest source of information in this respect. The poets are seen recording the events of the dissension, the heroic deeds of their groups, encouraging their supporters, boasting of their perseverance in the battles, deriding enemies and rejoicing in their misfortune, and in defending the rights of their leader, 'Alī or Mu'āwiyah, as the case may be. It seems as if poetry had become an equipment of fighting, depended upon like the swords and spears.

The Bakrites had no physical presence in Syria, as the bulk of their migration was to Iraq. Therefore, it was natural for them to support 'Alī, especially because the battle of Ṣiffīn was between the Iraqis and the Syrians and because the Bakrites were among the ardent supporters of 'Alī in the battle of the Camel, as we have previously seen. Thus unlike the poetry of other tribes that took part in the conflict, the vast majority of the Bakrite poetry, that has survived, was composed by poets and warriors who were in

the ranks of 'Alī and defended his claims. Ḥuraith al-Ḥanafī, for example, is said to have launched his attack on 'Ubaid Allāh b. 'Umar, reciting the following rajaz in which he boasts of Rabī'ah's quick response to support 'Alī:

Rabī'ah have hastened to support the truth,  
and the truth is their law.  
So, refrain because you are not going to  
leave the battle against the God-fearing  
party until you drink of [death's] dreadful  
cup.<sup>22</sup>

قد سارعت في نصرها ربيعة      في الحق والحق لهم شريعته  
فاكف فلست تارك الوقيعه      في العصبة السامعة المطيعه  
حتى تذوق كأسها الفظيعة

In one of his poems, Ibn al-Kawwā' al-Yashkurī complains of those of the Yemenite tribes, who were the principal supporters of Mu'āwiyah, that they had gone astray, that they had compromised their faith by siding with Mu'āwiyah against 'Alī, whom the poet describes as "the full moon", i.e. a guide to the truth. The verses concerned run:

Who will carry to the tribes of Kalb and  
Lakhm the advice of one who feels most  
affectionately ... that you and all your  
brothers are like falcons which have strayed  
from the clear path.  
You have sold your faith at the whim of a  
slave [Mu'āwiyah].  
Your shaking hands with a slave has misled you.  
You stood against us with drawn swords, and  
you brought many a valiant one like stallions.  
And we marched in contingents around the full  
moon ['Alī] whose brightness shines through  
the dust.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Ṣiffīn, 337; Sharḥ, V, 234.

<sup>23</sup>Ṣiffīn, 332.

ألا من مبلغ كلبا ولخما	نصيحة ناصح فوق الشقيق
فأنكم واخوتكم جميعا	كبار حاد عن وضح الطريق
وسحتم دينكم برضا عبد	أضل بها مصافحة الرقيق
وقتمت دننا بالبيض صلتنا	بكل مصايح مثل الفنيق
وسرنا بالكثائب حول بدر	يضيء لدى الغبار من البريق

Al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir, in one of his poems, portrays the brutal fighting between the two sides. He boasts of the perseverance of his fellow tribesmen in the battle, portraying Mu'āwiyah as fleeing from the battlefield and seeking the help of some of his followers:

The tribes of 'Akk, Lakhm and Ḥimyar persevered in fighting against Madhḥij until no blood was left unblended. And Judhām called: O' Madhḥij, woe to you! May God requite with evil whomsoever of us is the transgressor. Do you not fear God, violating the sacrosanct right sanctified by God. We made Ibn Harb taste our stabbings and sword-strokes until he fled and withdrew. And he ran away calling al-Zibriqān, Zālim, Kuraib, and An'am.<sup>24</sup>

وقد صبرتك ولخم وحمير	لمذحج حتى لم يفارق دم دما
ونادت جذام يال مذحج ويحكم	جزى الله شرّا أينا كان أظلما
أما تتقون الله في حرمتكم	وما قرب الرحمن منها وعظما
أذقنا ابن حرب طعننا وضربنا	بأسيافنا حتى تولى وأحجما
وفرّينادي الزبرقان وظالما	ونادي كلاعا والكريب وأنعما

Similarly, 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān, in a fragment, rejoices in the humiliation to which Ḥammām b. Qabīsaḥ, the most abusive to 'Alī, was subjected by 'Adī b. Ḥātīm who deprived him of his flag, saying:

<sup>24</sup>Sharḥ, V, 227.

O Hammām, you will recall that horseman  
for all eternity biting your thumbs for what  
you did.

From the clouds of dust a horseman came forth  
to you, powerful, excited and raising his voice.  
When you heard his voice, you escaped, saying:  
'take the standard, O 'Adī b. Ḥātim.  
You were robbed of your standard and perplexed...  
And how great an insult is this to you!'<sup>25</sup>

وغير على ما جئته بالأباهم	أهّام لا تذكر مدى الدهر فارسا
شديد القصيري ذوشجا وغماغم	سما لك من وسط العجاجة فارس
تقول له خذ يا عدي بن حاتم	فوليته لما سمعت نداءه
وأعظم بهذا من شتمة شاتم	فأصبحت مسلوب اللواء مذبذبا

The story of Maṣqalah b. Hubairāh, one of the prominent leaders of Bakr, reveals the great sympathy of the Bakrites for 'Alī and that they had bound their destiny with that of the Iraqis against Mu'āwiyah and the Syrians. Maṣqalah bought the captives of B. Nājiyah, who joined al-Khirrīt b. Rāshid who had revolted against 'Alī, promising to pay a million dirhams to 'Alī's treasury. But he was unable to pay the amount in full, and therefore he fled to join Mu'āwiyah.<sup>26</sup> Maṣqalah is reported to have composed the following verses in remorse for leaving 'Alī's ranks and for deserting his people:

I left behind the women of Bakr b. Wā'il,  
and set free the captives of Lu'ayy b.  
Ghālib.  
I deserted the best man ['Alī], excepting  
Muhammad the Prophet, for a small fortune  
which, for sure, will be ephemeral.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Siffīn, 453.

<sup>26</sup> See Ṭabarī, I, 3435, 3439-3441; Kāmil, III, 160-161; Sharḥ, III, 144-145.

<sup>27</sup> Murūj, II, 419.



تركت نساء الحي بكر بن وائل      وأعتقت سبيا من لؤى بن غالب  
وفارقت خير الناس بعد محمد      لمال قليل لا محالة ذاهب

Na'īm b. Hubairah is reported to have sent to his brother, Maşqalah, a poetical message which makes a comparison of his position in Iraq and plight in Syria, reprimanding him and portraying him to be remorseful and hated because of his misdeed. The verses concerned are:

You were in the best summer and spring place, defending Iraq and you were known as the best of Shaibān, until you committed that act which you yourself despised others committing secretly or openly.

Had you put trust in God, in patience to truth, you would have cleansed our living and dead. But you joined the Syrians, seeking the favour of Ibn Hind [Mu'āwiyah] and this act has grieved us.

Today, you are gnashing your teeth in regret. What you can say after all that has happened. Now, all living persons hate you. God has never elevated a person indulging in disobedience.<sup>28</sup>

تحمي العراق وتدعى خير شيبانا	قد كنت في خير مصطاف ومرتبغ
للراكبين له سرا واعلاننا	حتى تقحمت أمرا كنت تكرهه
للحق زكيت أحيانا وموتانا	لو كنت أديت مال الله مصطبرا
فضل ابن هند وذاك الرأي أشجانا	لكن لحقت بأهل الشام ملتسما
ماذا تقول وقد كان الذي كانا	فاليوم تفرع سن الحجز من ندم
لم يرفع الله بالبغضاء انسانا	أصبحت تبغضك الأحياء قاطبة

Mu'āwiyah tried secretly to foment hostility between Kindah and Rabī'ah,<sup>29</sup> and then tried to subvert one of the Bakrite leaders in order to divide the tribe but he failed in this.<sup>30</sup> According to one account, Mu'āwiyah vowed that he would capture the women and kill the warriors of Rabī'ah.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Tabarī, I, 3442; Kāmil, III, 161; Sharḥ, III, 146.

<sup>29</sup>Şiffīn, 156.

<sup>30</sup>Tabarī, I, 3276-3277; Şiffīn, 224.

<sup>31</sup>Şiffīn, 331.

In a fragment, Khālīd b. al-Mu'ammār refers to this point, persisting in supporting 'Alī, challenging Mu'āwiyah and resolving to fight him in order to consolidate the reign of the B. Hāshīm. The verses concerned are:

Ibn Harb [Mu'āwiyah] has vowed to enslave our women. Razor-sharp swords will deny him his intention.  
We will give the Banū Hāshim the reign you have tried to uproot. And this is said by one who is not a liar.  
If you do not want to violate your oath, then be ready for a war that will choke you.<sup>32</sup>

ودون الذي ينوي سيوف قواضب	تمنى ابن حرب نذرة في نساءنا
بني هاشم قول امرىء غير كاذب	ونمنح ملكا أنت حاولت خلعه
بحرب شجى بين اللها والشوارب	فان كنت لا تغضى على الحنث فاعترف

When the Syrians stuck the Qur'ān on the points of their spears to symbolize their appeal for peace and the orators of the Iraqi tribes expressed their opinions about this appeal, most of the orators of the Rabī'ah were from Bakr. They put their affairs in 'Alī's hands and their leader, al-Ḥudain, concluded his speech by saying: "If 'Alī says 'No', we shall say 'No', and if he says 'Yes' we shall say 'Yes'".<sup>33</sup> As a result, al-Najāshī, the poet of 'Alī, eulogized the Bakrite leaders.<sup>34</sup>

'Alī saw through the Syrian trick but was forced by the pious party in his camp to accept a truce and arbitration, and this was a direct motive for the rise of the

<sup>32</sup>Ṣiffīn, 331; Asākīr, V, 34.

<sup>33</sup>Dīnawarī, 202, Ṣiffīn, 555.

<sup>34</sup>Ṣiffīn, 556-558.

Khawārij as a political movement. The arbitrators did not solve the problem. Instead, they in one way or another, worsened the strife in 'Alī's camp. Mu'āwiyah was able to exploit the undermining of 'Alī's authority and seized the province of Egypt in 38 A.H.<sup>35</sup> Mu'āwiyah then began to foment such disunity among the Iraqi tribes as could be exploited in his favour. He sent 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥadramī to win support against 'Alī in Basra, with instructions to be accommodating to Muḍar, and to cultivate Azd, but to avoid Rabī'ah since they were wholly committed to the cause of 'Alī.<sup>36</sup> The deputy governor of Basra, Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān, summoned al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir and Mālik b. Misma', both of Bakr, and asked them for protection, since Bakr were reckoned to be of those most loyal to the Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 'Alī. While al-Ḥudain agreed, Mālik hesitated. Ziyād then turned to Azd because he feared that Bakr would come to dispute among themselves.<sup>37</sup> The attitude assumed by Mālik, however, was to be expected. He was pro-Umayyad<sup>38</sup> and he fought against 'Alī at the battle of the Camel.<sup>39</sup> In the same year, al-Khirrīt b. Rāshid revolted against 'Alī and a certain Bakrite, Ziyād b. Khaṣafah, together with some others of the tribe, voluntarily marched to fight against the insurgents.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup>Tabarī, I, 3391.

<sup>36</sup>Kāmil, III, 156; Sharḥ, IV, 35.

<sup>37</sup>Tabarī, I, 3414; Kāmil, III, 156; Sharḥ, IV, 41.

<sup>38</sup>Tabarī, I, 3414.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 3179.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 3418-3422; Kāmil, III, 158.

'Alī was assassinated in 40 A.H., and his son and successor Ḥasan gave up the struggle and abdicated in favour of Mu'āwiyah, the founder of the Umayyad Caliphate. Mu'āwiyah was now acclaimed the new caliph by all except the Khawārij. Al-Ḥuḍain b. al-Mundhir was among the Iraqi deputation who went to Syria.<sup>41</sup> Ibn 'Asākir reports on the authority of Abū 'Ubaidah that after the assassination of 'Alī, Mu'āwiyah invited Khālīd b. al-Mu'ammār, the leader of Bakr and Rabī'ah during the first phase of Ṣiffīn, and asked him: "How much do you admire 'Alī?" He replied: "By God, I admire him for his bearing in anger, loyalty to his agreements, truthfulness in speech and justice in judgement".<sup>42</sup> It seems that Khālīd sensed in Mu'āwiyah's question a discreet threat, challenge or reprimand. He is reported to have sent to Mu'āwiyah a poetical message warning him not to go too far in his criticism, reminding him of Rabī'ah's steadfastness on 'Alī's side in Ṣiffīn, and calling upon him to win them over, to stop deriding 'Alī and to ignore the past. The verses concerned are:

O Mu'āwiyah, do not act the fool with us  
because we will humiliate you on the critical  
day.  
When you call upon the Rabī'ite, we shall  
respond with men who are used to dyeing the  
heads of their spears [with blood].  
They answered when 'Alī called them for  
support, and made you suffer calamities at  
[the battle of] Ṣiffīn.  
So O [Mu'āwiyah] son of Ḥarb, if you do us  
favours for such support we will be the readiest  
to answer when you have to call for support.  
Have you not seen that I procured for you [the  
support of] Bakr b. Wā'il who were like serpents

---

<sup>41</sup> 'Asākir, IV, 374, 375.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., V, 89-90.

in Iraq.

If they [serpents] bite someone, he says to his people: Do not worry. I do not think that you will find a maker of charms capable of curing the bite .

And leave the old man ['Alī] who whether right or wrong has passed away. Because you cannot bring back what has passed away, nor can avert what is still to come.

You loved Iraq and its people when you were a Hijazī, but then you became a Syrian.<sup>43</sup>

معاوى لا تجهل علينا فانيما	نذلك في اليوم العصيب معاويا
متى تدع فينا دعوة رعيية	نحك رجالا يخضبون الحواليما
أجابوا عليا اذ دعاهم لنصره	وجروا بصفين عليك الداهيما
فان تصطنعنا يا ابن حرب لمثلها	نكن خير من تدعوا اذا كنت داعيما
الم ترني أهديت بكرين وائل	اليك وكانوا في العراق أفاعيما
اذا نهشت قال السليم لأهله	رويدك إني لا أرى لك راقيما
ودع عنك شيخا قد مضى لسبيله	على أي حاله مصيبا وخاطيما
فأنك لا تستطيع ردّ الذي مضى	ولا دافعا شيئا اذا كان جائيما
وكنت امرءا تهوى العراق وأهله	اذا أنت حجازي فأصبحت شاميما

Although Mu'āwiyah showed magnanimity by avoiding to the humiliation of those who had supported 'Alī, it seems that the Umayyads had not forgotten the hostile attitude assumed by Bakr towards them. During the era of their dynasty, they did not appoint any member of Bakr over Iraq. When Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik sought 'Abd al-Karīm b. Salīṭ's advice as to whom he would appoint over Khurāsān and the latter suggested Yahyā al-Shaibānī of Bakr, he received this reply from Hishām: "Rabī'ah are unreliable in defending border fortresses".<sup>44</sup> Hishām gave the same reply when 'Abd

<sup>43</sup>Ibn A'tham, III, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, 83-84; 'Asākir, V, 90.

<sup>44</sup>Tabarī, II, 1662; Kāmil, V, 89; Dīnawarī, 342; Ya'qūbī, II, 392.

al-Karīm suggested Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥuḍain. Some of the Umayyad caliphs and their governors were responsible to a great extent for inflaming tribal discords identified with politics. Notorious examples of this tendency were Asad al-Qasrī who was scandalously partial to the southern Arabs,<sup>45</sup> Yazīd b. al-Muhallab who relied on Azd,<sup>46</sup> and Naṣr b. Sayyār who was flagrantly partial during the first four years of his governorship, to the extent that he would not employ anyone from outside Muḍar in important posts and persecuted the tribes of Rabī'ah and Yemen.<sup>47</sup> While the caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd was wholly committed to Qais and favoured its clans,<sup>48</sup> his successor Yazīd III favoured the Yemenites.<sup>49</sup> It is said that the last caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad, used to excite enmity among the tribes, in that he favoured Qais and alienated Yemen.<sup>50</sup> The tribal dispute over the higher positions had economic implications. The tribe on which any given governor relied shared with him in the government and privileges such as the disposal of offices and money. When Yazīd b. al-Muhallab was reappointed over Khurāsān in 97 A.H., he is reported to have told his fellow tribesmen there that he and his father had employed them in any position where wealth could be found.<sup>51</sup> Such policies

---

<sup>45</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1497, 1587-1588; Kāmil, V, 56.

<sup>46</sup>Naqā'id, 367.

<sup>47</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1664, Kāmil, V, 90; Dīnawarī, 351; Ya'qūbī, II, 399; 'Ibar, III, 207.

<sup>48</sup>Ṭanbīh, 280.

<sup>49</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1837.

<sup>50</sup>Ṭanbīh, 283-284.

<sup>51</sup>Naqā'id, 367.

created division and were resented. When Salm b. Ziyād gave Ibn Khāzim a patent as governor of Khurāsān the Bakrites said: "Why should those [Muḍar] devour Khurāsān without us".<sup>52</sup>

It was natural to find Mu'āwiyah and his son Yazīd I favouring the Yemenite tribes, which constituted the majority in Syria, because Mu'āwiyah had relied upon them in his conflict with 'Alī. However, the death of Yazīd I in 64 A.H., was a herald of the actual outbreak of tribal feuding in Syria, Iraq and Khurāsān. His successor Mu'āwiyah II abdicated without nominating his successor but recommended that the caliph be elected by the shūrā<sup>53</sup> (council), i.e. he reacted away from the hereditary system which was enacted by his grandfather, Mu'āwiyah I. In Ḥijāz, Ibn al-Zubair saw himself as a possible claimant to caliphate. The problem as to who should be entitled to the position of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, however, set the tribes against each other. Thus politics became identified with tribal interests and jealousies, and each tribal group pressed only for what seemed to be in its own interest. In Syria the Umayyads, who were supported by the Yemenite tribes there, won the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ against Muḍar as represented by Qais.<sup>54</sup> In Kufa, the people revolted against the Umayyads and

---

<sup>52</sup>Futūḥ, 582.

<sup>53</sup>Abū Tammām, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akḥṭal, 6.

<sup>54</sup>On Marj Rāhiṭ see: Khalīfah, I, 326-327; Ansāb, V, 136-146; Abū Tammām, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akḥṭal, 15-17; Tabarī, II, 474-486; Kāmil, IV, 63-65; Aghānī, XIX, 195-198; Tanbīh, 266-267.

appointed a certain Qurashī, 'Āmir b. Mas'ūd, who was confirmed by Ibn al-Zubair.<sup>55</sup> In Basra, the governor 'Ubaid Allāh b. Ziyād failed to win the confidence of the tribesmen after they had paid homage to him as governor of the territory. As in Syria Muḍar, represented by Tamīm, demanded the recognition of Ibn al-Zubair. Ibn Ziyād saw fit to incline towards the Rabī'ah-Azd bloc, and thus gave Bakr bountiful rewards and took refuge with Azd. Consequently, Mālik b. Misma' renewed the alliance with Azd, especially after he was told that Tamīm in Khurāsān had supported the Qaisite, Ibn Khāzim, against Bakr. Abū 'Ubaidah reports that Mālik's move was made on the recommendation of Ibn Ziyād who wanted to strengthen the support he was receiving from Azd against Tamīm. He is said to have spent more than two hundred thousand dirhams to achieve this end. Tamīm appointed 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥārith to Basra without having consulted Bakr and Azd, while Ibn Ziyād is represented as having wished Mas'ūd al-'Atakī, the Azdite chief, to assume responsibility over Basra until affairs had become more settled. Tamīm, of course, did not accept this situation and they had support from another Mudarite tribe, Qais. Thus every tribal bloc was headed by a chief and a clash between them became inevitable. Mas'ūd who was supported by Azd and Bakr went to the great mosque to receive the homage of the people, while Mālik b. Misma' together with some Bakrites exploited the situation and burnt down several houses belonging to the Tamīm as a

---

<sup>55</sup>Tabarī, II, 466, 508, 530.



reprisal for the slaughter of the Bakr at Harāt. When Mas'ūd was killed in obscure circumstances the relation between the two blocs became even more strained. The new leader of Azd, Ziyād b. 'Amr, formed a pact with Mālīk of Bakr against Muḍar (Qais and Tamīm) and forced them to sue for peace. The Basrans agreed upon the Qurashī, al-Ḥārith b. 'Abd Allāh, as governor of the territory. The latter, however, retired when Ibn al-Zubair sent his representative.<sup>56</sup> Thus Muḍar won the advantage because they had demanded recognition for Ibn al-Zubair from the very beginning. However, the important conclusion to draw from this discord is that the most trifling excuse was sufficient for hostility to break out between the main tribes. They had become so accustomed to hostilities that it seemed a normal condition and none of them was willing to sacrifice any portion of its independence for the sake of the tranquillity of the state.

The troubles mentioned above had their repercussions in Khurāsān and other eastern provinces. Before breathing his last, Ṭalḥah b. 'Abd Allāh, the governor of Sijistān, appointed as his successor a Bakrite of the B. Yashkur. This appointment infuriated the Muḍarites who expelled him, causing friction between the two factions, each seizing control of its own city.<sup>57</sup>

The governor of Khurāsān was Salm b. Ziyād who tried to

---

<sup>56</sup> On this discord see: Naqā'id, 112-117, 721-744; Ansāb, IV/2, 97-123; Ṭabarī, II, 433-459; Kāmil, IV, 55-61; Dīnawarī, 279-280, 295.

<sup>57</sup> See: Futūḥ, 560 ; Kāmil, IV, 43.

keep secret the news of the caliph's death. When he found that he could no longer do so, he appealed to the people to pay him homage as governor of the territory. They agreed, but soon renounced him and he found himself compelled to escape, leaving behind as his deputy governor the Azdite al-Muhallab.<sup>58</sup> Since Azd were in a minority at that time in Khurāsān, Bakr saw fit to exploit the situation. When Sulaimān b. Marthad al-Bakrī met Salm b. Ziyād in Sarkhas he forced the latter to appoint him as governor of Marw al-Rūdh, Faryāb, Ṭāliqān and Jūzajān.<sup>59</sup> Salm was also forced to appoint another Bakrite, Aws b. Tha'labah, to Harāt.<sup>60</sup> Muḍar meanwhile found it humiliating to be ruled by Azd and Bakr (Rabī'ah). When Salm arrived at Nishāpūr, where Qais were predominant, he met the Qaisite Abd Allāh b. Khāzim who asked him ironically: "Could you not find a Muḍarite instead of dividing Khurāsān between Bakr b. Wā'il and Mazūn 'Umān (Azd)?" أما وجدت في من رجلاً تستعمله حتى فرقت خراسان بين بكر بن وائل ومزون عمان؟! Salm was forced to give him a patent to govern the whole of Khurāsān and a 100,000 dirham subsidy. Ibn Khāzim now returned to Marw.<sup>61</sup> This complicated situation made conflict between Bakr and Muḍar inevitable. Al-Muhallab withdrew from the contest and his tribe Azd did not take part<sup>62</sup> because they were in a minority. Meanwhile Ibn Khāzim was confirmed by Ibn al-Zubair,

<sup>58</sup>Tabarī, II, 488-489.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 489.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.; Futūh, 582.

<sup>62</sup>Tabarī, II, 489; Kāmil, IV, 66.

but Ibn Marthad forbade the acceptance of this on the pretext that Ibn al-Zubair was not a caliph, but only a refugee in the Ka'bah.<sup>63</sup> Tamīm supported Ibn Khāzim who did not belong to them but to Qais which, together with Tamīm, belongs to Muḍar. Bakr, however, were not prepared to leave Muḍar to gobble up Khurāsān. Consequently, Ibn Khāzim marched from Marw to Marw al-Rudh against Sulaimān b. Marthad and killed him.<sup>64</sup> Ibn Khāzim then went to Ṭāliqān where he inflicted another defeat on Bakr and killed 'Amr b. Marthad, the governor of the city.<sup>65</sup> The Bakrite fugitives fled to Harāt to Aws b. Tha'labah, and Bakr in general now flocked to Aws and paid him homage provided that he would drive Muḍar from Khurāsān.<sup>66</sup> The negotiations opened between the two sides failed because the reply of Bakr was: "either every last Muḍarite is expelled from Khurāsān, or they are allowed to settle there on condition that they surrender to Bakr all of their property, weapons, gold and silver".<sup>67</sup> These conditions indicate the deep-seated hostility between Bakr (Rabī'ah) and Muḍar. Ibn Khāzim is reported to have said as a result: "Rabī'ah always rages against God, since he raised up the Prophet from Muḍar".<sup>68</sup> However, in the battle which ensued, Bakr suffered heavy losses in lives.<sup>69</sup> Nahār b. Tawsi'ah probably refers to the misfortune inflicted on his tribe by Ibn Khāzim,

---

<sup>63</sup>Futūḥ, 583.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.; Ṭabarī, II, 490.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 491.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 492-493.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 493.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 496; Futūḥ, 583.

in the following verse:

Before the rule of Banū Sulaim, we used to  
subject them [our enemies] to the greatest  
disasters.<sup>70</sup>

وكنّا قبل ملك بني سليم      نذيقهم الدواهي الأقرينا

Another Bakrite poet is said to have composed the following  
verse in which he regrets that they could not avenge the  
killing of 'Amr b. Marthad:<sup>71</sup>

أتذهب أيام الحروب ولم تبيء      زهير بن حيان بعمر بن مرشد

These successive defeats weakened the Bakr in Khurāsān,  
so they hastened to ally themselves with Azd when the latter  
increased in number in Khurāsān during the governorship of  
al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufrah (78-82). As in Syria, these  
tribal rivalries had political implications, in as much as  
the Muḍarites were directly opposing the authority of the  
Umayyads, preferring the rather loose authority of Ibn al-  
Zubair; the Rabī'ites, on the other hand, opposed the  
Zubairids, largely because of their fear and jealousy of  
the Muḍarites.

In 66 A.H. al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī revolted and took  
Kufa. One of his zealous followers, al-Muthannā b.  
Mukharribah al-'Abdī, was inspired by this success to demand  
the recognition of al-Mukhtār in Basra.<sup>72</sup> The governor sent  
a force of Muḍarites under the command of al-Aḥnaf, the

<sup>70</sup>Zamakhsharī, Asās al-Balāghah, II, 283; Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān,  
qawara.

<sup>71</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 491.

<sup>72</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 680.

chief of Tamīm, who defeated al-Muthannā and the latter withdrew and took refuge with his tribe 'Abd al-Qais. Mālik b. Misma' and Ziyād b. 'Amr came out with their tribes, Bakr and Azd respectively against al-Aḥnaf who represented Muḍar and wanted to liquidate al-Muthannā, the Rabī'ite, and impose his will on the tribe of Rabī'ah.<sup>73</sup> Although Mālik and Ziyād had neither affection for al-Muthannā nor sympathy for his cause, they supported him because of tribal solidarity and the affinity of Bakr to 'Abd al-Qais.<sup>74</sup> Dixon seems to have misunderstood the descent of 'Abd al-Qais and decided that this was a Yemenite tribe.<sup>75</sup> Eventually a settlement was reached, specifying that al-Muthannā should quit Basra.<sup>76</sup> In the same year the Kufans revolted against al-Mukhtār, accusing him of being a soothsayer and doubting his relationship with Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah. Rabī'ah was led by two Bakrites in the ensuing battle.<sup>77</sup> The Kufans were defeated and more than ten thousand fled from Kufa to Basra wherein they joined Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubair and encouraged him to fight al-Mukhtār.<sup>78</sup> It would appear that the majority of Bakr in both Kufa and Basra supported Muṣ'ab. Al-Mukhtār sent to every tribal khums (fifth) one of his Kufan followers belonging to the same tribe. To Bakr, however, he sent the non-Bakrite Sa'īd b. Munqidh<sup>79</sup> which

---

<sup>73</sup>See Ansāb, V, 244; Ṭabarī, II, 682.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Dixon, The Umayyad Caliphate, 52.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.; Ansāb, V, 244.

<sup>77</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 652.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 665, 667; Kāmil, IV, 112; Dīnawarī, 310.

<sup>79</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 726.

indicates that Bakr in general were against him and in disfavour with him. Moreover, the Bakrite poet Suwaid b. Abī Kāhil later boasted that his tribe had killed al-Mukhtār; saying:

I wish I knew when the well-trained she-camel would travel to bear the news to the people of the pilgrimage, that we have cut off the head of the liar, after stabbings and strikings that could rout a multitude.<sup>80</sup>

يا ليت شعري متى تغدو مخيصة  
أنا جزرنا عن الكذاب هاتمه  
عنا فتبلغ أهل الموسم الخبرا  
من بعد طعن وضرب يكشف الخمرا

Iraq was now under the command of Ibn al-Zubair. The tribal chiefs were ready to support whomsoever paid the most. When Ziyād b. 'Amr al-'Atakī and Mālīk b. Mīsmā' al-Bakrī received a letter from al-Mukhtār, promising them a reward in this life and the next if they would support his cause, they could not hold back their laughter and said: "We shall not fight on credit, but for whoever pays cash".<sup>81</sup> 'Abd al-Malik, the Umayyad caliph, took full advantage of this in his conflict with Muṣ'ab. In any case, the Bakrites were not prepared to accept the rule of the Zubairids. The relations between the two sides had not been good from the beginning. We have seen that Bakr stood against Muḍar who demanded the recognition of Ibn al-Zubair in Basra. The chief of Bakr, Mālīk b. Mīsmā', was pro-Umayyad. He confronted Ḥamzah b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubair, the governor of Basra, and dismissed him forcibly because Ḥamzah had imposed

<sup>80</sup>Dīnawarī, 314.

<sup>81</sup>Ansāb, V, 245; Tabarī, II, 683.

strict controls on the allocation of public funds.<sup>82</sup> This occasion was celebrated by the Bakrite poet, al-'Udail b. al-Farkh, in his praise of Mālīk, which sheds light on the strength of some tribal chiefs, especially when confronted by weak governors:

Whenever we fear an injustice by an amīr, we call out to Abū Ghassān [i.e. Mālīk] who will form an encampment [with troops].  
Whenever Abū Ghassān is refused his demand, he strives to assume command.  
O Banū Misma', if it were not for God and you, people would not have rejected such forbidden actions.<sup>83</sup>

دعونا أبا غسان يوماً فحسكرا	إذا ما خشينا من أمير ظلامه
أراد بنو غسان أن يتأممرا	إذا ما أبو غسان لم يعط سؤله
بنو مسمح لم ينكر الناس منكرا	بنو مسمح لولا الأله وأنتم

When Muṣ'ab came to Basra he was welcomed and supported by Tamīm whose chief al-Aḥnaf became one of his closest confidants.<sup>84</sup> Muṣ'ab was not pleased with Bakr, because they had supported their sister tribe Taghlib against the Muḍarite Qais in Mesopotamia.<sup>85</sup> The Bakrite poet, A'shā Rabī'ah visited Abd al-Malik and found him reluctant to despatch an army to fight Ibn al-Zubair. He satirized the Zubairids, portraying them as misers unsuitable for carrying out the tasks of the caliphate. He encouraged 'Abd al-Malik to fight the Zubairids, being the rightful caliph. The verses concerned are:

<sup>82</sup> See Ansāb, V, 265; Kāmil, IV, 118; 'Ibar, III, 71-72.

<sup>83</sup> Ansāb, V, 265; Aghānī, XXII, 339; Kāmil, IV, 118; 'Umdah, II, 76.

<sup>84</sup> Tabarī, II, 750, 806.

<sup>85</sup> Ansāb, V, 318-319.

The Zubairids' affair with the Caliphate is like the one who, in haste, wanted his she-camel to become pregnant and, as a result, made her sterile.

Or they are like a weak animal overloaded, and thus lost all its load.

Rise up to fight and do not neglect them.

How much have you abetted the misguided.

The Caliphate is your right not theirs, you remain its pillars and stays.

They [Zubairids] have become a lock on the wealth, so rise with your good luck, to unlock the doors.<sup>86</sup>

عجل النتائج بحملها فأحبالها	آل الزبير من الخلافة كالتى
ما لا تطيق فضيبت أحمالها	أو كالضعاف من الحمولة حملت
كم للغواة أطلت أمهالها	قوموا اليهم لا تناهوا عنهم
ما زلت أركانها وشمالها	إن الخلافة فيكم لا فيهم
فانهض بيمنك فافتح أقالها	أمسوا على الخيرات قفلا مغلقا

However, 'Abd al-Malik sought to instigate a tribal revolt in his favour in Iraq. He sent letters to the Bakrite chief, Mālik b. Misma', and others promising them rewards if they would support his cause.<sup>87</sup> Suwaid b. Manjūf warned Muṣ'ab against the virtual treachery of his entourage when he said:

Convey to Muṣ'ab a message from me - and you will not find a sincere adviser in every valley. Be sure that most of those you take as confidants are real enemies however close you draw them to you.<sup>88</sup>

ولن تلقى النصيح بكل واد	فأبلغ مصعبا عني رسولا
وان أد نيتهم فهم الأعداي	تعلم أن أكثر من تنساجي

'Abd al-Malik sent in 70 A.H. Khālid b. 'Abd Allah to demand

<sup>86</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 134; 'Asākir, VII, 375, 376.

<sup>87</sup> Ansāb, IV/2, 157.

<sup>88</sup> Ansāb, V, 343; Abū Tammām, Kitāb al-Waḥshiyāt, 98; Hayawān, V, 594.



recognition for the Umayyads in Basra. Khālīd took refuge with the Bakrite chief, Mālīk b. Mīsmā', and they were joined by Azd under the leadership of Ziyād al-'Atakī, mainly because of the alliance between Bakr and Azd. Yazīd b. Dahnā' boasts that his tribe protected Khālīd, and that his people were the best to support Quraish whenever threatened:

And we gave protection to Khālīd when  
men had seriously taken up arms  
[against him].  
Whenever Quraish are frightened and seek  
protection, we prove to be the best  
protectors.<sup>89</sup>

وخالدا قد أجزنا بعد ما خطرت  
أيدي الرجال بهيل غير خوآن  
انا اذا ما قريش خاف خائفها  
سألوا الجوار فكنا خير جيران

On the other hand, Muḍar supported 'Umar al-Makhzūmī, Muṣ'ab's governor of Basra.

The resultant battle of al-Jufrah lasted for 24 days. Muṣ'ab sent reinforcements from Kufa to his governor, who was able to suppress the insurrection, and Mālīk fled to Yamāmah, not returning to Basra until Muṣ'ab had been killed.<sup>90</sup> The Bakrites were never to forget their defeat or to forgive Muṣ'ab. 'Abd al-Malik marched on Iraq and met Muṣ'ab's army at Maskin in 71 A.H.<sup>91</sup> The leader of Bakr in Kufa, Dāwūd b. Qaḥdham, deserted the battlefield.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup>Marzubānī, 509.

<sup>90</sup>On al-Jufrah see: Ansāb, IV/2, 155-157; Naqā'id, 749-750; Ṭabarī, II, 799-803; Kāmil, IV, 128-129; Bakrī, II, 387; Mu'jam, II, 93.

<sup>91</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 800; Dīnawarī, 318; Murūj, III, 112; 'Ibar, III, 76.

<sup>92</sup>Ansāb, V, 334.

Al-Ya'qubi says that the majority of those who deserted Muṣ'ab were from Rabī'ah<sup>93</sup> (Bakr and 'Abd al-Qais). Al-Mas'ūdī reports that Rabī'ah deserted Muṣ'ab because the latter had killed the son of Ziyād al-Bakrī (al-Nābi'), one of the Bakrī chiefs.<sup>94</sup> When 'Īsā b. Muṣ'ab advised his father to leave for Hijāz the latter refused, on the pretext that he would not like to hear Quraish speak about his having fled because Rabī'ah had deserted him.<sup>95</sup>

The poet of the Zubairids, 'Ubaid Allāh b. Qais al-Ruqayyāt, rebuked Bakr, he says in a poem: "Bakr ibn Wā'il did not act faithfully in the cause of God".<sup>96</sup> "فما نصحت لسه  
بكر بن وائل" The Bakrī poet, 'Ubaid Allāh b. Ziyād b. Zabyān, whose brother al-Nābi' was killed by Muṣ'ab, is reported to have cut off Muṣ'ab's head and brought it to 'Abd al-Malik, boasting and reciting the following:

We obey kings as far as they do justice to us, but their killing is not forbidden to us, [if they do not do justice].<sup>97</sup>

نطيع ملوك الأرض ما قسطوا لنا      وليس علينا قتلهم بمحرم

It would appear that 'Ubaid Allāh's first priority was to avenge his brother's death. He is described as one of the futtāk<sup>98</sup> i.e., exceptionally daring killers. It appears

<sup>93</sup>Ya'qūbī, II, 31.

<sup>94</sup>Murūj, III, 114.

<sup>95</sup>Tabarī, II, 807.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 812; Dīwān 'Ubaid Allāh b. Qais al-Ruqayyāt, 196.

<sup>97</sup>Ansāb, V, 332, 340; Anon., Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 5, 'Iqd, IV, 411.

<sup>98</sup>Muḥabbar, 213.

that tribal bias dominated his orientation. It is said that he later regretted not having killed the caliph, 'Abd al-Malik, when the latter fell prostrate on seeing the head of Muṣ'ab. Ubaid Allāh said:

I considered it but I did not act. Would to God I had acted and left his relatives ever bathed in tears, bringing Bakr ibn Wā'il into a fire of revenge, and joining the prostrator in thanks [Abd al-Malik] to his fellow [Muṣ'ab].<sup>99</sup>

هممت ولم أفعل وكدت وليتني  
فعلت فأدمنت البكا لأقاربه  
فأوردتها في النار بكر بن وائل  
وألحقت من قد خرشكرا بصاحبه

In another fragment, 'Ubaid Allāh boasts of himself and of his tribe for taking revenge on Muṣ'ab for the killing of his brother:

As long as 'Ubaid Allāh remains alive, he will continue to move around in spite of his enemy. We have killed Ibn al-Zubair and cut off his head for the head of al-Nābi' b. Ziyād.<sup>100</sup>

ان عبيد الله ما دام سالما  
لسار على رغم الحد ووفاد  
ونحن قتلنا ابن الزبير ورأسه  
حزنا برأس النابي ء بن زياد

In a third fragment, 'Ubaid Allāh arrogantly boasts that he avenged his brother by killing eighty members of B. Fihri to whom Muṣ'ab belonged, and declares his aim of killing another twenty, considering that to be a matter of pride for him among the Bakrites:

<sup>99</sup> Iqd, IV, 411.

<sup>100</sup> Mubarrad, IV, 44.

Muṣ'ab presumed that I had forgotten [the murder of] Nābi'; and how miserable was what Muṣ'ab presumed.

By God, I will never forget him as long as the sun rises, and as long as a star appears in the night.

You pounced on him unjustly and killed him. You will be vanquished by the evil of a severe day of mine.

I have killed for him eighty of the tribe of Fihr b. Mālik, youth and aged.

My hand is in pledge [to kill another] twenty, or let me be wept by wailing women on a woeful morning.

Can I raise my head high among Bakr b. Wā'il while I have not seen my sword dripping [enough] blood.<sup>101</sup>

ويئن لحم الله ما ظن مصعب	يرى مصعب أني تناسيت نابئا
وما لاح في داج من الليل كوكب	ووالله لا أنساه ما ذر شارق
فقهرك مني شر يوم عصيب	وثبت عليه ظالما فقتلتسه
ثمانين منهم ناشئون وأشيب	قتلت به من حي فهر بن مالك
علي من الأصباح نوح مسلّب	وكفّي لهم رهن بعشرين أو يرى
ولم أر سيفي من دم يتصبّب	أأرفع رأسي وسط بكر بن وائل

Having crushed Muṣ'ab and his followers in Iraq, 'Abd al-Malik was able to concentrate his war effort against Ibn al-Zubair in Ḥijāz, whereas the Umayyad caliphate had been impotent to take any action against him for the past few years. 'Abd al-Malik's aims materialised when the commander of his expedition, al-Ḥajjāj, was able to kill Ibn al-Zubair after a siege of not less than six months. The Zubairids party which successfully competed with the Umayyads for the caliphate for a period of about nine years, was thus liquidated. The Zubairids strongly believed that only the most fit Qurashī was eligible to rule; that 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubair was more fit for the caliphate than Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah or even than Mu'āwiyah himself; and that the hereditary form

<sup>101</sup>Mu'jam, IV, 530-531.

of rule, inaugurated by Mu'āwiyah, was illegal.<sup>102</sup>

As expected, many Bakrite poets celebrated the defeat of the Zubairids. Moreover, it was an occasion exploited by some of them to laud the Umayyads as being having more right to the caliphate. Al-Ba'īth al-Yashkurī, for example, was delighted that Muṣ'ab, his son 'Īsā and some prominent supporters of the Zubairids were killed. He boasts that his fellow tribesmen were instrumental in defeating the Zubairids, and extols the Umayyads' merits; saying:

When we realized that things had become inverted - that those in the forefront were about to be relegated to the rear, we waited for the command of God to be fully unfolded, accepting none but one of the Umayyads as ruler.

And it was we who killed Muṣ'ab, and the son of Mus'ab - that member of the tribe of Asad - as well as the Yemenī, the Nakha'ī. And our eagle of death passed over Muslim.

It struck at him, so he fell slain.

We gave Ibn Sīdan a sufficient cup of death which satisfied us, and the best of things is that which satisfies.<sup>103</sup>

ولما رأينا الأمر نكسا صدوره	وهمّ اليهودي أن يكن تواليها
صبرنا لأمر الله حتى يقضيّه	ولم نرض إلا من أميّة واليها
ونحن قتلنا مصعبا وابن مصعب	أخا أسد والنخعي اليمانيها
ومرت عقاب الموت منّا بمسلم	فأهوت له نابا فأصبح ثاويها
سقيناه ابن سيدان بكأس رويّسة	كفتنا وخيرا لأمر ما كان كافيها

In a poem, Sulaimān al-Ḥanafī rejoices at the uprooting of the Zubairids and the return of the Umayyad rule to Iraq.

<sup>102</sup> See al-Ḥufī, Adab al-Siyāṣah fī al-'Asr al-Umawī, 116-117.

<sup>103</sup> Ansāb, V, 342; Anon., Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 9; Ṭabarī, II, 810.

He describes Ibn al-Zubair as a lunatic unable to shoulder the responsibilities of the caliphate, and accuses him of devouring the revenues of Iraq. The verses concerned are:

We prayed to the All-hearing [God] who answered our prayers and He is not deaf to the prayers of his servants.

He saved us from the unjust Banū al-'Awwām, and chose for us a righteous caliph from Banū al-Hakam.

He is an experienced striker whose sword is never turned aside, whose enemy becomes submissive and humble before him.

Ibn al-Zubair suffered from madness which could only be cured by an arrow to heal him of his insanity.

He wanted to rule but the affairs of the Caliphate left him hopeless, so that he took refuge in the corner of the House [i.e. al-Ka'bah] and the Holy Sanctuary.

He deceived us by reading the Book of God, while his belly did not leave dates enough even for the collector of dates.

He reduced the stipends of the Two Cities [Basra and Kufa] in order to devour them, and was not afraid of the punishment of the merciful God..<sup>104</sup>

وما به حين يدعو المرء من صمم	انا دعونا سميعا فاستجاب لنا
واستخلف الله عدلا من بني الحكم	أراحنا من بني العوام اذ قسطوا
يمسي العدو له لحما على وضم	مجرّب الوقع لا تنبو مضاربه
الا سريجية تشفي من اللّسم	يا بن الزبير جنون لا شفاء له
حتى أحل بركن البيت والحرم	رام الأ مور فأعيتيه مطالعها
ولم يدع بطنه - تمرا لمجترم	وغرنا بكتاب الله يدرسه
ولم يخف نقمة الرحمن ذي النعم	وعال أعطية المصريين ياكلها

Al-Nābighah al-Shaibānī in his praise of 'Abd al-Malik considers the uprooting of the Zubairids as a source of pride to 'Abd al-Malik, and claims that the clan of Āl Abī al-'Āṣ

<sup>104</sup>Ansāb, V, 378; Anon., Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 76.

is the best of Quraish, and that 'Abd al-Malik is the inheritor of Quraish, i.e., he is the most eligible for the caliphate:

You removed from us 'Āl al-Zubair, and if it were an Imām other than you, people would not be pious.

Justly do you rule over the people of Islam and distribute booty amongst them, and you are sincere to God.

Now the Āl Abī al-'Āṣ have generous qualities. They are illustrious, noble and diffuse favours. They are the best of Quraish, truly the best of them.

They are earnest even when they are witty.

As for the Quraish, you are the inheritor.

You prevent them from sowing discord when they aspire to power.<sup>105</sup>

كان امام سواك ما صلحوا	أزحت عنا آل الزبير ولو
وأنت عند الرحمن منتصح	تسوس أهل الإسلام عملتهم
غرعتاق بالخير قد نفضوا	وآل أبي العاص أهل مأثرة
في الجد جد وان هم مزحوا	خير قريش وهم أفاضلها
تكف من شخبهم اذا طمحوا	أما قريش فأنت وارثها

The Zubairids, on the other hand, attracted some Bakrites who appear to have been of no considerable importance, as we do not find any impact of their alliance on the Zubairids during the fighting that decided the fate of the latter in Iraq. However, a few elegiac fragments by certain Bakrites who lamented Muṣ'ab and 'Abd Allah have survived. In addition to portraying the great calamity caused by their death, these fragments contain some principles of the Zubairid party such as their fitness and eligibility for the caliphate, their piety and priority over the

<sup>105</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 106-107.

Umayyads. Na'im al-Shaibānī, for example, considers their demise as a loss for both religion and life in this world; saying:

After Muṣ'ab and his brother, all have disowned this religion. So we have wept for the religion and the world because the religion and this world are things to be grieved for. Every year he [Muṣ'ab] used to give us the stipend twice, and in his rain [i.e. generosity] we enjoyed our summer and spring. God's greetings to the son of the Hawārī of the Prophet. God alone gives and withholds.<sup>106</sup>

وعد أخيه قد تنكر أجمع	ألا ان هذا الدين من بعد مصعب
على الدين والدنيا لك الخير، يجزع	فللدين والدنيا بكينا وانما
وغيث لنا فيه مصيف ومرسح	ففي كل عام مرتين عطاؤه
من الله إن الله يعطي ويمنع	على ابن حواري النبي تحيية

'Amr b. Ma'mar al-Dhuhlī laments Muṣ'ab and 'Abd Allah in an elegy, condoles himself, considers them to be better than 'Abd al-Malik and that they were more eligible to the Caliphate than him:

By your life, in no way am I in need of the people, nor am I confused in my inclinations, nor unstead.  
 When Muṣ'ab called me, I responded to him and said: 'Welcome to you'.  
 Your father is the Hawārī and the sword of the Prophet.  
 By the grace of God, you have the best father among us.  
 And your brother whose light is sought for guidance, was calling us from Mecca for Godly recompensation.  
 I did not have two faces, to turn a sick face to Muṣ'ab and another to ['Abd al-Malik] the son of Marwān who turned renegade.  
 I acted faithfully to him and did not prefer

<sup>106</sup>Asākir, VII, 422.



Ibn Marwān to him, nor did I seek closeness to 'Abd al-Malik by anything that might pain the eyes of Muṣ'ab. And, for the sake of God, I acted faithfully to Muṣ'ab until calamities struck him with their arrow. And how severe and straight their arrow was! If time has destroyed Muṣ'ab, and 'Abd Allāh has been cut to pieces, everyone has to sip the cup of death, howsoever he tries to avoid it or be afraid of it.<sup>107</sup>

ولا كنت للبوس الهوى متذبذبا	لعمرك ما أبقيت في الناس حاجة
وقلت له أهلا وسهلا ومرحبا	غداة دعاني مصعب فأجبتـه
فأنت بحمد الله من خيرنا أبا	أبيك حواري النبي وسيفه
بهكة يدعونا دعاء شويا	وذاك أخوك المهتدى بضياءه
مريض ووجه لابن مروان اذ صبا	ولم أك ذا وجهين وجهه لمصعب
عليه ابن مروان ولا متقربا	وكنت امرءا ناصحته غير مؤثر
ولكنني ناصحت في الله مصعبا	اليه بما تقضى به عين مصعب
فله سهما ما أشد وأصوبا	الى أن رمته الحادثات بسهمها
وأصبح عبد الله شلوا ملحبا	فان يك هذا الدهر أودى بمصعب
وان حاد عنها جهده وتهيبا	فكل امرء حاس من الموت جرعة

'Arfajah b. Sharīk, a member of the B. Qais b. Tha'labah, appears to have been shocked by the death of Muṣ'ab. He elegized him, praising his generosity, and ability, and cursing 'Abd al-Malik:

What about Ibn Marwān - may God blind him and may he not fulfil his desires and gain booty. He [Ibn Marwān] seeks salvation while his cavalry has killed a mighty and noble hero [i.e. Muṣ'ab]. O son of the Hawārī, how many are your favours which will preoccupy others if they endeavour to achieve them. You were made to bear the responsibility and so you did endure every difficult affair.

<sup>107</sup>Asākir, VII, 422-423.

The noble endures, if he is made to bear  
responsibility .<sup>108</sup>

ما لابن مروان أعمى الله ناظره      ولا أصاب رغيبات ولا نفلا  
يرجو الفلاح ابن مروان وقد قتلت      خيل ابن مروان قرما ماجدا بطلا  
يا ابن الحواري كم من نعمة لكم      لو رام غيركم أمثالها شغلا  
حُكَلْتُمْ فحطمتكم كل معضلة      إن الكريم اذا حطته حملا

Suwaid b. Manjūf, in a passionate elegy, portrays the great calamity caused by their death, the humiliation and the loss of direction that followed:

Tell this stubborn accuser that the nights have become too long, after Mus'ab and his brother, the refugee in the House [i.e. al-Ka'bah].

Our noses have been hacked off.  
And we have become like goats whose shepherds are absent, untended in the darkness and prey to wolves.

Time has attacked us with teeth and claws, and the Syrians have begun to strike our country [Iraq] with arrows sharpened to hit their mark, so shall I remain weeping for them as long as I am alive and I will continue to praise them; and for this I cannot be blamed.

Both faith and worldly affairs have been stricken by a grave calamity.

How great were they in the protection of the faithful - and what more is required after that. For them I pray to God and to them I raise my lamentations like that of the ever-wailing woman bereft of her child. The two cities [Basra and Kufa] are suffering sadness and humiliation, and the people of Mecca and Yathrib are humiliated.

The persons whom I wish were alive are replaced by those belonging to Dhū Kalā', Yaḥsub, 'Akk, Lakhm, al-Sukūn and a gang composed of savage races and Slavic rabble.<sup>109</sup>

ألا قل لهذا العاذل المتصعب      تطاول هذا الليل من بعد مصعب  
وبعد أخيه عائد البيت إننا      رمينا بجدع للعرايين موعب

<sup>108</sup> Ansūb, V, 343; Anon., Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 11.

<sup>109</sup> Asākir, VII, 423.

فصرنا كشاء غاب عنها رعاؤها  
فان يك هذا الدهر أخنى بناه  
وأصبح أهل الشام يرمون مصرنا  
فاني لبك ما حييت عليهما  
أرى الدين والدنيا جميعا كأنما  
هما ما هما كانا لدى الدين عصمة  
فزادهما مني صلاة ورحمة  
فقد دخل المصيرين حزن وذلة  
ودلت ممن كنت أهوى بقاءه  
وعكّ ولخم والسكون وفرقة

معطلة جنح الظلام لأذؤب  
وأخنى عليه بعد ناب بمخلب  
بنبل بروها للعداوة صيب  
وشن ثناء لست فيه بمعتب  
هوت بهما بالأمس عنقاء مغرب  
فهل بعد هذا من بقاء لمطلب  
وحرة تكلى دائم ينتحـب  
وذل لأهل المكتين ويشرب  
معاشرحي ذى كلاع ويحصب  
برابرة الأجناس أخلاط سقلب

Although the support of Bakr was critical to 'Abd al-Malik's position in Iraq, it seems that he did not forget that Bakr nourished a traditional enmity towards Muḍar. However, he suborned the tribal leaders with lavish subsidies and left it to them to ensure the compliance of their followers.<sup>110</sup> Thus Dāwūd b. Qaḥḍham al-Bakrī went at the head of two hundred Bakrites to Damascus to make a public profession of loyalty. When they left 'Abd al-Malik, the latter was reported to have said: "None of these scoundrels would have paid me homage but for the example of their chief".<sup>111</sup>

Bakr might have seen in the appointment of al-Ḥajjāj over Iraq as a triumph for Muḍar. The Bakrite poet, al-'Udail b. al-Farkh, suborned the people of Iraq against the

<sup>110</sup> Iqd, IV, 410.

<sup>111</sup> Tabarī, II, 816.

new governor:

Leave aside cowardice, O men of Iraq, for whoever fails to fight is humiliated and taken captive.

Al-Hajjāj has certainly unsheathed his sword, so be upright and let none desert [the fighting].<sup>112</sup>

دعوا الجبن يا أهل العراق فانه  
لقد جرد الحجاج للحق سيفه  
يهان ويسبى كل من لا يقاتل  
ألا فاستقيموا لا يميلن مائل

Another Bakrite poet warned the Iraqis about al-Hajjāj's malice and tyranny:

Beware, beware, the lion [i.e. al-Hajjāj]  
is grinding his dog-teeth, and breaking against  
you sockets of arrows out of malice.<sup>113</sup>

حذار حذار الليث يحرق نابه  
ويكسر أرهاظا عليك من الحقد

When al-Ḥajjāj reduced the 'atā' (stipend) from the amount which had been approved by Muṣ'ab, he provoked a rebellion in 76 A.H. led by 'Abd Allah b. al-Jārūd who aimed at getting rid of al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>114</sup> The Bakrites of Kufa, under the leadership of Ghaḍbān al-Shaibānī,<sup>115</sup> joined in the rebellion together with their fellow tribesmen of Basra. A Bakrite poet is said to have composed the following rajaz in which he lauds the leader of the insurgents, predicts that even the caliph himself will be deposed, and boasts that it were his people who killed Muṣ'ab and his son 'Īsā, who although being the bitterest enemies of the caliph, belonged to the same Quraishite stock:

<sup>112</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 340.

<sup>113</sup>Majma', I, 24.

<sup>114</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 874; Anon., Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 281.

<sup>115</sup>Ṭabaqāt, 401.

How worthy is 'Abd Allāh to guide, and to lead a huge army, composed of the noble war heroes of the two Iraqs [i.e. Basra and Kufa], to dethrone the mighty caliph.

They have put a chief in charge of their affairs.

What a noble and great leader he is!

It was we who killed Muṣ'ab and 'Īsā and<sup>116</sup> how many of their heroes we have killed!

أخلق بعبد الله أن يسوسا	وأن يقود جحفلا خميسا
أهل العراقيين الكرام الشوسا	ويخلعوا الخليفة المقعوسا
ان قلدوا أمرهم الرئيسا	أكرم به من قائد قد موسا
نحن قتلنا مصعبا وعيسى	وكم قتلنا منهم بئيسا

Al-Ḥajjāj was brought to the verge of destruction, but was rescued by his tribe Qais who decided not to allow a Qaisite to be murdered and plundered. Ibn al-Jārūd was killed in the battle and his followers defeated.<sup>117</sup> The Bakrite poet A'shā Shaibān further angered al-Ḥajjāj by elegizing Ibn al-Jārūd.<sup>118</sup>

Another revolt during the governorship of al-Ḥajjāj was that of Ibn al-Ash'ath primarily directed against al-Ḥajjāj,<sup>119</sup> then at getting rid of the Syrians and the caliph himself.<sup>120</sup> Although the Iraqi tribes joined Ibn al-Ash'ath, the revolt was not free of tribal 'aṣabīyyah. One can infer that it was an effort made by Yemenites to break the Muḍarite domination. Thus Ibn al-Ash'ath assumed

<sup>116</sup> Anon., Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 282.

<sup>117</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 874; Kāmil, IV, 158; Anon., Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 287.

<sup>118</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 135.

<sup>119</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 1054-1055; Ansāb, VII, Ms, fol. 20.

<sup>120</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 1057-1058.

the title Nāṣir al-Mu'minīn,<sup>121</sup> minted money,<sup>122</sup> defied the Quraish,<sup>123</sup> and saw himself as a leader who would restore the ancient Qahtanite Kingdom.<sup>124</sup> Due to the alliance between Bakr and the Azdites, we would expect to find the Bakrites strongly supporting the cause of Ibn al-Ash'ath. It is reported that the first who declared in favour of deposing the caliph was the Bakrite, Tījān b. Abjar.<sup>125</sup> Rabī'ah was under the leadership of the Bakrite Bisṭām al-Shaibānī who epitomized the regional feeling by saying: "I would rather die with the Iraqis than live with the Syrians".<sup>126</sup> While the famous Muḍarite poets kept silent, the prominent poets of the revolution were the Yemenite A'shā Hamdān, and the Bakrite Abū Jildah al-Yashkūri. Earlier Abū Jildah was among those closest to al-Ḥajjāj who had delegated him to ask for the hand of Umm Kulthūm, daughter of 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far.<sup>127</sup> When Ibn al-Ash'ath revolted, Abū Jildah joined him and was reported to have been among the fiercest in instigating rebellion against al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>128</sup> He physically participated in the revolt and was killed in one of its battles.<sup>129</sup> The tribal partiality of

---

<sup>121</sup>Tanbīh, 227; Maqdisī, al-Bad' wa al-Tārīkh, VI, 35.

<sup>122</sup>See Walker, A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum, I, 117; Kritzcek and Winder, The World of Islam, 95.

<sup>123</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1075.

<sup>124</sup>Tanbīh, 227; Maqdisī, al-Bad' wa al-Tārīkh, VI, 35.

<sup>125</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1057.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 1089.

<sup>127</sup>Aghānī, XI, 310.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

Abū Jildah overcame his strong personal relationship with al-Ḥajjāj. The militant idea that governed his mind and transpired in his poetry considers sometimes that the revolt is a military conflict with al-Ḥajjāj while at some other times it shows that the conflict is with the Syrians themselves. He was optimistic about the revolution and expected al-Ḥajjāj to be killed or defeated. He recited the following verses in this theme:

We have brought horses from Zaranj.  
 Ḥajjāj you have no way to escape from us.  
 Our spears will split your body open,  
 or you will have to flee - for fleeing  
 is more appropriate for you.<sup>130</sup>

نحن جلبنا الخيل من زرنجا	مالك يا حجاج منا منجى
لتبعجن بالسيوف بعجا	أو لتفرن وذاك أحجى

In a poem, Abū Jildah instigates the people of Iraq in the battle of al-Zāwiyah against the Syrians. He incites courage in an emotional way, reprimands the Iraqis for their cowardly flight, and reminds them of the Syrians' advance. He describes the Syrians as Christians defiling women who are shown as hopelessly crying for help; the verses concerned are:

By my life, the Syrians are cleverer in striking by lances, and more vehement in the protection of things that are feared to lead to disgrace.  
 They advanced on horses with bleeding throats when the hair of foreheads whiten because of the terrible encounter.  
 Hastily we fled from our sons, families and wives when we were confronted by broad swords.  
 We became cowards although there is no refuge

---

<sup>130</sup> Anon., Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 329.

from Death.

Shame on those miserly souls.

We left the plains of Iraq for them, and we fled on the powerful and tall A'wajite horses. So, tell the women to mourn for people other than us, for only barking dogs may weep over us. They cried for help for fear of being exposed to the spears of the Christians and their sharp swords. And they called us saying : where flee you who were angry at the exposure of our [women's] anklets and ornaments. No one of you felt jealous for his wife, nor any did bachelor care for the maidens' [honour].<sup>131</sup>

وأحسى لما يخشى عليه الفضائح	لعمري لأهل الشام أطعن بالقنا
إذا ابيض من هول اللقاء المسائح	هم المقدمون الخيل تد مى نحوها
وأزواجنا إذ عارضتنا الصفايح	فررنا عجالا عن بنينا وأهلنا
ألا قبحت تلك النفوس الشحايح	جبنا وما من مورد الموت مهرب
بنا الأعوجيات الطوال الشرايح	تركنا لهم صحن العراق وناقلت
ولا تبكنا الا الكلاب النسوايح	فقل للحواريات يبكين غيرنا
رماح النصارى والسيوف الجوايح	بكين الينا خشية أن تبيحها
تغارون أن تبد والبرى والوشايح	وناديننا : أين الفرار وكنتم
ولا عزب عزت عليه المنايح	فما غار منكم غائر لحليسة

When Ibn al-Ash'ath was defeated in the decisive battle of Dair al-Jamājim in 82, Abū Jildah, in a fragment, expressed his deep sorrow for this defeat and blamed his countrymen, the Iraqis, who did not persevere in the fighting, and thereby deserted their religion and worldly position; the verses concerned are:

O, all my sadness and sorrow, and the grief covering my heart for [the defeat] we faced. We have deserted both faith and earthly concerns, and abandoned our wives and children.

<sup>131</sup> Mu'talif, 79; Aghānī, XI, 311; Abū Tammām, Kitāb al-Waḥshiyāt, 29; Shajarī, 64-65.



We were not such believers in religion as to endure when we were subjected to a test. Nor were we people of earthly concerns to protect them even if we did not seek religious piety .

We left our houses at the mercy of the ignoble of 'Akḳ, the Nabateans of the villages, and the Ash'arites.<sup>132</sup>

ويا غم الفؤاد لما لقينا	أيا لهفي ويا حزني جميعا
وخلينا الحلائل والبنينا	تركنا الدين والدنيا جميعا
فنصبر للبلاء اذا ابتلينا	فما كنا أناسا أهل دين
فنمنعها وان لم نرج ديننا	ولا كنا أناسا أهل دنيا
وأنباط القرى والأشعرينا	تركنا دورنا لطغام عك

Iraq was now brought under the strict control of al-Ḥajjāj who continued to hold the governor of Iraq and the east until his death shortly before the demise of the caliph al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik in 96 A.H. The new caliph, Sulaimān, had been hostile to al-Ḥajjāj and his adherents, especially towards Qutaibah b. Muslim, the governor of Khurāsān, because of their efforts to block his succession.<sup>133</sup> Qutaibah realized that his deposition was imminent.<sup>134</sup> He, therefore, revolted and tried to win the support of the Arab tribes for his cause. However, his appeal was to no avail, and he went out of his mind and broke into abusive reproach of the tribes in a public address.<sup>135</sup> From the very beginning, however, the Bakrites had been opposed to him simply because he was a Qaisite and a supplanter of the Azdite

<sup>132</sup> Aghānī, XI, 312-313; Ṭabarī, II, 1102; Kāmil, IV, 200.

<sup>133</sup> See Naqā'id, 353; Ṭabarī, II, 1274, 1284.

<sup>134</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 1284.

<sup>135</sup> Naqā'id, 354; Futūḥ, 594; Ṭabarī, 1287.

Yazīd b. al-Muhallab. The Bakrite poet, Nahār b. Tawsi'ah, received Qutaibah with the following satirical verses in which he declared his preference of Ibn al-Muhallab over Qutaibah:

Khurāsān was a land, where, when Yazīd was there, every door of prosperity was open. But now it has received instead Qutaibah of the grasping fingers whose face seems as if it were besprinkled with vinegar.<sup>136</sup>

كانت خراسان أرضا إذ يزيد بها      وكل باب من الخيرات مفتوح  
فاستبدلت قتها جعدا أنا مله      كأنها وجهه بالخل منضوح

In another fragment, Nahār says preferring Ibn al-Muhallab over Qutaibah:

O Qutaibah, we said when you came to us:  
You are indeed a bad replacement for the  
praiseworthy Yazīd.<sup>137</sup>

أقتيب قد قلنا غداة أتيتنا      بدل لعمرك من يزيد أعور

The Bakrite chief, al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir, had been concealing bitter hatred for Qutaibah in his heart.<sup>138</sup> Azd and Bakr had begun secret negotiations to mutiny against Qutaibah. They offered the leadership to the Bakrite, al-Ḥudain, who was farsighted when he decided to turn down the leadership in favour of the Tamīmite chief, fearing that Tamīm, the largest and most powerful tribe in Khurāsān, would stick to Qutaibah out of 'asabiyyah if they were

<sup>136</sup> Mu'talif, 193; Shu'arā', 537; 'Uyūn, III, 155; Mu'jam, I, 843; 'Iqd, II, 146.

<sup>137</sup> Shu'arā', 537; Wafayāt, VI, 290.

<sup>138</sup> Asākir, IV, 375.

challenged by the Azd-Bakr bloc,<sup>139</sup> even though they themselves were displeased with Qutaibah. The mutiny was led by Wakī' b. Ḥassān al-Tamīmī and Qutaibah was easily disposed of. The Bakrite poets celebrated arrogantly the so-called victory. Nahār b. Tawsi'ah for example, boasts that his tribe shed Qutaibah's blood, and castigates him as a tyrant:

When we found the Bāhilī, Ibn Muslim, had  
become a tyrant, we struck off his head with  
a sharp sword.<sup>140</sup>

ولما رأينا الباهلي ابن مسلم      تجبر عمناه عضا مهتسدا

Al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir boasts that his Azdite allies had killed Qutaibah, and thus assisted the Tamīmites to take their revenge. He says that Qutaibah was killed by the swords of two Azdites and a Tamīmite who is portrayed as ugly and weak. By this description al-Ḥudain refers to the Tamīmite chief Wakī'. This shows that the co-operation between Bakr and Tamīm was only a provisional arrangement arrived at for the sole aim of getting rid of the common enemy, Qutaibah, and that even during such a period of co-operation the Bakrite leader could not conceal his spiteful feeling towards his traditional opponent. The verses concerned are:

Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Zahr struck alternatively  
with their swords at the head of the crowned  
hero [i.e. Qutaibah]. Banū Minqar could not  
avenge their blood-feud with Qais 'Ailān but

<sup>139</sup>Naqā'id, 358; Futūḥ, 595; Ṭabarī, II, 1289-1290.

<sup>140</sup>Naqā'id, 364; Ṭabarī, II, 1301.

with the [help] of Azd and Madhhij.  
 On that evening when we came with Ibn  
 Zahr and you [Banū Tamīm] came with [Ibn  
 Sa'd] the dark-lipped, the one with marked  
 arms, the blackish deaf man of Ghudān  
 whose forehead is like a blot of ink on  
 a leather with scrawlings on it.<sup>141</sup>

بسيقيهما رأس الهمام المتوج	وان ابن سعد وابن زحر تعاورا
بنو منقرالا بالازد ومذحج	وما أدركت في قيس عيلان وترها
بأدغم مرقوم الذراعين ديسزج	عشية جننا بابن زحر وجئتم
لطاخة نفس في أديم مجمع	أصم غداني كأن جبينه

Sulaimān now entrusted Iraq and the East to Yazīd b. al-Muhallab and Azd came to power but for a short while. Sulaimān died in 99 and his successor 'Umar II imprisoned Ibn al-Muhallab, because the latter did not deliver to the treasury its share of the booty from his expeditions in Jurjān and Ṭabaristān.<sup>142</sup> Having heard of 'Umar's mortal illness, Ibn al-Muhallab escaped from his prison and revolted in Iraq against the new caliph Yazīd II, who was indignant with Ibn al-Muhallab, because the latter had ill-treated the family of al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>143</sup> The cause of this revolt was trifling therefore it was due merely to a personal hostility between Ibn al-Muhallab and the new caliph. Wellhausen's attempt to find in this revolt a struggle between Azd-Rabī'ah and Qais-Tamīm<sup>144</sup> is not borne out by our sources. Despite the traditional alliance of Bakr and Azd, the Bakrites were

<sup>141</sup> Naqā'id, 362; Ṭabarī, II, 1297.

<sup>142</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 1350; Futūḥ, 471.

<sup>143</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 1359-1360.

<sup>144</sup> Wellhausen, (Eng. trans.) The Arab Kingdom and its Fall, 314.

tardy in offering their support in this case. Some Bakrites supported the revolt because of lavish subsidies from Ibn al-Muhallab, while others led by 'Imrān b. Misma' joined the revolt for selfish reasons; the governor of Basra having not appointed 'Imrān to the leadership of Bakr but one of his cousins, Nūh b. Shaibān, who led the Bakrite khums (fifth) of Basra against Ibn al-Muhallab.<sup>145</sup> Even Azd in Iraq were divided in their support for the revolt. Al-Mughīrah al-'Atakī is reported to have led the Azdite khums of Basra against the revolt.<sup>146</sup> In Khurāsān, Azd, Bakr and other tribes refused to support Ibn al-Muhallab.<sup>147</sup> They saw no reason to revolt probably because they were satisfied with the policies of 'Umar II and the new caliph, Yazīd II, who had not so far changed the governor of the province.<sup>148</sup> Ibn al-Muhallab was defeated and killed at the battle of al-'Aqr in 102 A.H. The Bakrite poet, al-Nābighah al-Shaibānī, thereupon celebrated the occasion, praised the caliph and his leader and congratulated him on his triumph. He says:

You have destroyed the contingents of the  
 Azdite [Ibn al-Muhallab] with an army leader  
 who loves encounters.  
 When he meets and fights heroes, he kills  
 or surrounds them.  
 With the swords he cuts down the mighty and  
 powerful, and acts daringly whenever the  
 flag is dyed [with blood].  
 You have exterminated the people's enemy

---

<sup>145</sup>Tabarī, II, 1381.

<sup>146</sup>Tabarī, II, 1381.

<sup>147</sup>See Tabarī, II, 1390; Kāmil, V, 30.

<sup>148</sup>Shaban, The 'Abbāsīd Revolution, 94-95.

and forgiven others in order to spare  
blood.<sup>149</sup>

بكبشك وهو بغيته اللقاء	فضضت كتائب الأزد في فضا
وناطحن قتل واحتوا	وعادته اذا لاقى كباشا
ويجسر كل ما اختضب اللوا	يفلق بالسيوف شرنبثات
به حققت من الناس الدماء	أبرت عدوهم وغفوت غفوا

In 116 A.H., the Murji'ite al-Ḥārith b. Suraij al-Tamīmī revolted in Khurāsān. He took most of the province with the exception of Marw and Abarshahr (Nishāpūr). When he advanced towards Marw, the Qaisite governor 'Āṣim al-Hilālī realized that part of the population there, probably part of the B. Tamīm, were in league with al-Ḥārith.<sup>150</sup> The governor won the first encounter,<sup>151</sup> but when he knew that he was deposed by the caliph, Hishām, and that Asad al-Qasrī, who was reckoned a Yemenite had been appointed to replace him, he attempted to reach an agreement with al-Ḥārith provided that they would call upon the caliph to appeal to the Book of God and the Sunnah of the Prophet.<sup>152</sup> The Bakrite chief in Khurāsān at that time was Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥudain who prevented the governor from doing so on the pretext that this agreement amounted to a revolt against Amīr al-Mu'minīn.<sup>153</sup> Yaḥyā's action was not taken on behalf of the Umayyads. It must be viewed in the light of tribal relations at that time. Both the rebel and the deposed

<sup>149</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 49-50.

<sup>150</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 1568-1569.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 1570-1572.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 1576-1577.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 1577.

governor came originally from Muḍar, while the new governor was reckoned as being from Yemen and in alliance with Bakr. Thus it was to be expected that the Bakrite chief would try to play the two Muḍarite sides a dirty trick in the name of the national interest. Yaḥyā succeeded and al-Ḥārith was defeated and withdrew to Marw al-Rūdh. The Bakrite poet, Khalaf b. Khalīfah, seized this opportunity to praise the strength of his tribe and of its leader, Yaḥyā, as well as to remind the Umayyads of the great role played by Bakr to protect their rule. He counts the favours of his tribe to the Umayyads in safeguarding their caliphate which was about to be snatched from their hands, and reminds them that it was his tribe that killed Ibn al-Zubair, and that it was his tribe that rendered Ibn Suraij's revolt in Khurāsān to a failure and thereby safeguarded Khurāsān. He reveals the innermost desire of Bakr as a wish to be well-treated and trusted. He frankly calls upon Hishām, the caliph, to reconsider his attitude towards the tribes in the light of their services to the Umayyads. He calls upon the caliph to meet loyalty with loyalty. The verses concerned are the following:

The anxiety of your [my] heart yearns but for unity, and it is impossible for you to sleep, although you are not listening to a singer nor you are trying to listen to an entertaining singer.

We have safeguarded the rule of Umayyah. And we march proudly to prevent it from being terrorized.

We defend it and its rule, when we find that its hands are not capable of defence.

The old unity between us and Umayyah could not but break off.

Did we not snatch off the head of Ibn al-Zubair, and did we not wrest from him the power.

We kept the caliphate in the hands of those

who deserved it [i.e. the Umayyads], when people wrestled to snatch it .

We supported Umayyah with the mashrifite swords when they were about to be stripped of power.

To us belongs the one who united the people of Iraq.

Had Yaḥyā been absent, the frontier [Khurāsān] would have been lost. We undid the plots of Ibn Suraij who had perfected them as far as he could.

He [Yaḥyā] is wise; his sayings are wisdom which unite when people want disunity.

In a blind moment when they had resolved to revolt , we wrecked the resolution of the violators.

Were it not for the leader of Wā'il, no chief would have been able to defend himself.

Therefore, tell Umayyah to observe our favours and services which have not been evaluated.

Do you turn your attention from the killing of our chieftains, while we persevere in adhering to your rights!

Is the one, who did not sell you to buyers, like the one who found bidder and sold!?

Despite your [Banu Umayyah] behaviour, Ibn Ḥudain could not have but carried out his responsibility and followed you.

Were al-Ḥārith safe from the Wā'ilites, he must have terrorized you as he did terrorize others.

He was a proud and mischievous man who spread misguidance.

We saved Umayyah from the evil of the letter in which 'Aṣim obeyed [al-Ḥārith].

Were it not for the positions of our flags in the armies, the troops would have feared destruction.

Our old [allegiance] is continued by our new [allegiance], but Umayyah refuse but to break off relations. These stores of our deeds benefit others; while we have never known them to be beneficial.

Then, where is loyalty to the faithful?

Thankfulness is better than ingratitude.

Then, how is the preservation of the good deeds of Banū Wā'il for the times of need ; since good deeds are exchanged between the people.

Do you not know that our swords quench the thirst for revenge and cure headaches?

When Ibn Ḥudain marches with the flag, he signals to the eagles and hyenas [to eat the corpses of the enemy].

When Ibn Ḥudain marches with the flag, people of fortresses surrender. Ibn Ḥudain kindles the war, when he marches with his flag, while



Ma'add suffer a state of destruction.<sup>154</sup>

ويأبى رقادك الا امتناعا	أبى هم قلبك الا اجتماعا
أحاول من ذات لهو سماعا	بخير سماع ولم تلقني
ونخطر من دونها أن تراعا	حفظنا أمة في ملكها
إذا لم نجد بيديها امتناعا	ندافع عنها وعن ملكها
وبين أمة الا انصداعا	أبى شعب ما بيننا في القديم
وننتزع الملك منه انتزاعا	ألم نختطف هامة ابن الزبير
إذا اضطرع الناس فيها اضطراعا	جعلنا الخلافة في أهلها
إذا انخلع الملك عنها انخلاعا	نصرنا أمة بالمشرفي
ولو غاب يحيى عن الشغرضاعا	ومنا الذي شد أهل العراق
وقد كان أحكمها ما استطاعا	على ابن سريج نقضنا الأمور
إذا شتت القوم كانت جماعا	حكيم مقالته حكممة
قمعنا من الناكثين الزماعا	عشية زرق وقد أزمعوا
لينضج فيها رئيس كراععا	ولولا فتى وائل لم يكن
أيادي لم نجزها واصطناعا	فقل لأمة ترعى لنا
ونأبى لحقك الا اتباعا	أتلهمين عن قتل ساداتنا
كآخر صادف سوقا فباععا	أمن لم يبعك من المشترين
الا اضطلاعا والا اتباعا	أبى ابن حنبل لما تصنعين
لراذك في بعض من كان راععا	ولوياً من الحارث الوائلين
أشاع الضلالة فيما أشاععا	وقد كان أصغر ذا نيسرب
أطاع بها عاصم من أطاععا	كفينا أمة مختومة
من الجند خاف الجنود الضياعا	فلولا مراكز راياتنا
وتأبى أمة الا انقطاعا	وصلنا القديم لها بالحديث
وما إن عرفنا لهم انتفاعا	ذخائر في غيرنا نفعها
والشكر أحسن من أن يضاععا	فأين الوفاء لأهل الوفاء
إذا الذخرفي الناس كان ارتجاعا	وأين ادخار بني وائل

<sup>154</sup>Tabarī, II, 1577-1579.

تداوي الخليل وتشفي الصداعا	ألم تعلمي أن أسيافنا
أشار النسور به والضباعا	إذا ابن حضير غدا باللواء
وأسلم أهل القلاع القلاعا	إذا ابن حضير غدا باللواء
ذكى وكانت محدّ جداعا	إذا ابن حضير غدا باللواء

Hishām died in 125 A.H. His successor was Walīd II who ruled in the Qais (Muḍar) interest.<sup>155</sup> The Yemenite tribes and their Bakrī allies were not happy with this procedure. He further infuriated them by selling Khālīd al-Qasrī, who had been for many years governor of Iraq, to the Qaisite Yūsuf b. 'Umar, the governor of Iraq, who tortured and killed him.<sup>156</sup> This act sealed the caliph's fate. The first to respond were the poets who inflamed the Yemenites by composing verses and attributing them falsely to Walīd, such as the following verses in which the Yemenites are humiliated and portrayed as being cowards, slaves, base and despicable:

We are governing the people by force.  
 We bring them humiliation and punishment.  
 We have crushed the Ah'arites with the power  
 of Qais.  
 How great was the punishment which will never  
 be forgotten [by them].  
 Here [lies] Khālīd, a captive in our hands.  
 Could not they protect him if they were  
 [real] men.  
 If they were powerful tribes, his favours  
 would not have gone astray.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>155</sup> See Tanbīh, 280; Abū Raḥmeh, Ḥarakat al-Shi'r fī Qabīlat Qais fī al-'Asr al-Umawī, 78.

<sup>156</sup> Tabarī, III, 1780.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 1781.

نسومهم الهذلة والنكالا	ونحن المالكون الناس قسرا
فيا لك وطأة لن تستقالا	وطئنا الأشعرين بحز قيس
ألا منحوه ان كانوا رجالا	وهذا خالد فينا أسيرا
لما ذهبت صنائعه ضلالا	فلو كانت قبائل ذات عز

The Bakrite poet, Ḥamzah b. Bīḍ satirized al-Walīd, accusing him of having worsened the plight of the people and that he had extinguished even the mere hope the people entertained during the time of Hishām:

Having claimed that the clouds of our poverty would clear away, you elevated us to the skies of greater poverty. Would to God Hishām were alive and ruling us, and we were as we used to be expecting and coveting.<sup>158</sup>

زعت سماء الضر عنا ستقلح	وصلت سماء الضر بالضر بعد ما
وكنا كما كنا نرجي ونطمح	فليت هشاما كان حيا يسوسنا

In another fragment, Ḥamzah satirizes al-Walīd, accusing him of irreligiousness, and portrays him as a drunkard who seldom comes to his senses, saying:

O Walīd the abominable, you have deserted the clear path and followed a deep and low road. You have gone to extremes, violated, transgressed, misguided and come out as a sinner. You always cry 'bring', 'bring', 'bring' and 'bring' until you fell down insensible. You are intoxicated and you do not wake up to bring reconciliation, although you have created many a dissension.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>158</sup> Irshād, IV, 148; Aghānī, VII, 22; Ṭabarī, II, 1783; Kāmil, V, 112-113.

<sup>159</sup> Kāmil, V, 113.

يا وليد الخنا تركت الطريقا      واضحا وارثكبت فجنا عميقا  
 وتماديت واعتديت وأسرفت      وأغويت وانبعثت فسوقا  
 أبدا هات ثم هات وهات      ثم هات حتى تخرصعيقا  
 أنت سكران فما تترتق فتقنا      وقتند فتقت فتسوقا

Eventually, the Yemenites in Syria are reported to have exploited the steadily increasing hostility between the caliph and some Umayyad amīrs like Sulaimān b. Hishām and Yazīd b. al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, and came to the latter with an oath of allegiance.<sup>160</sup> Yazīd led the conspirators and put an end to the life of the caliph in 126 A.H., an occasion celebrated by the Bakrite poet, Khalaf b. Khalīfah who considers, in a fragment, that the killing of the caliph was a proper revenge for Khālīd al-Qasrī. Khalaf revived a Jāhilite belief that the bird called hāmah that kept crying since the killing of Khālīd had been quietened by the assassination of the caliph. The verses are:

The tribe of Kalb and the swords of Madhḥij  
 have quietened the unsleeping bird that  
 shrieked during the nights [calling for  
 revenge].  
 We left the Commander of the Faithful [slain],  
 avenging for Khālīd, lying on his nose but  
 not in prayers.  
 If you have cut down one of our necklace-  
 holders [i.e. necks], then we have cut down  
 for it many of yours.  
 And if you have diverted the attention of  
 Khālīd from the call to prayers, then we  
 have diverted al-Walīd from listening to  
 the songs of the entertainers.  
 And if [Khālīd] al-Qasrī has gone on the  
 voyage of death, then [al-Walīd] father of

<sup>160</sup>Tabarī, II, 1784.

of al-'Abbās is not present as well.<sup>161</sup>

لقد سكنت كلب وأسياف مذحج	صدي كان يزقو ليلة غير راقد
تركنا أمير المؤمنين بخالد	مكبا على خيشومه غير ساجد
فان تقطعوا منا مناط قـلادة	قطعنا بها منكم مناط قلائد
وان تشغلوه عن أذان فاننا	شغلنا الوليد عن غناء الولايد
وان سافر القسرى سفرة هالك	فان أبا العباس ليس بشاهد

This act opened wide the gate of civil war and led to the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty. It gave fresh impetus to tribal warfare. Those Bakrites in Yamāmah exploited the tottering condition of the state and revolted against their Qaisite governor, 'Alī b. al-Muhājir, who escaped at the battle of al-Qā'.<sup>162</sup> They further infuriated the Qaisite clans by appointing one of the B. Ḥanīfah over Yamāmah.<sup>163</sup> Thus the two sides rushed into a number of battles which bore a great resemblance to the ayyām al-Jāhiliyyah.<sup>164</sup> Poets on both sides boasted arrogantly of the bravery of their chiefs and their capability for shedding the blood. Shaqīq b. 'Amr al-Sadūsī, for example, praises al-Muhair al-Ḥanafī who drove out 'Alī b. al-Muhājir, the governor of al-Yamāmah, and killed some of the governor's men at al-Qā'. The poet goes to the extent of claiming that al-Muhair's act was designed to acquire good reputation and to receive rewards from God:

<sup>161</sup>Tabarī, II, 1822-1823; Tanbīh, 218; 'Iqd, IV, 463; 'Umdah, I, 324.

<sup>162</sup>Kāmil, V, 119.

<sup>163</sup>Ibid., 119-120.

<sup>164</sup>See Aghānī, VIII, 180-181, XXIII, 85-88; Kāmil, V, 119-120; Mu'jam, III, 908, IV, 784.

If you make peace with al-Muhair and his group, you will be saved from the enemies and terror.

He is the youth who acted gloriously in the battle day of al-Qā', intending to earn both good reputation and [heavenly] recompense.<sup>165</sup>

إذا أنت سالمته المهير ورهطه  
أمنت من الأعداء والخوف والذعر  
فتى راح يوم القاع روحة ما جسد  
أراد بها حسن السماع مع الأجر

Another poet boasts of the defeat and humiliation of the Qaisites in the battle of al-Falj II, at the hands of the Bakrites:

We rose and hastened to fight Ka'b with broad swords, spears and horses covered by dust, swaying in their reins. The sun did not set before we were driving Banū Ka'b like animals, by blows that remove heads from their places and stabbings [opening wounds] like the wide mouths of flowing water-bags.<sup>166</sup>

سمونا لكعب بالصفائح والقنا  
وبالخييل شعثا تنحني في الشكائم  
فما غاب قرن الشمس حتى رأيتنا  
نسوق بني كعب كسوق البهائم  
بضرب يزيل السهام عن سكناته  
وطعن كأفواه المزاد الشواجم

Likewise, a fragment by Jaḥsh b. Zaid al-Ḥanafī in which he boasts of the numerous casualties of the B. Ka'b whom he portrays as people who have deserted their daughters, claiming that his fellow tribesmen did not violate the honour of their enemy's womenfolk out of chastity and magnanimity:

<sup>165</sup>Kāmil, V, 119.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid., 120.

We stopped the Banū Ka'b from acting aggressively as they faced indiscriminate strokes from our heroes ...

When we had equipped the army with broad-edged suraijite unbending swords.

Leaving their daughters behind they fled, but we did not violate their daughters' honour, because of shame, and not in fear of reprisals from them.

We indeed withdrew in chastity and magnanimity.

We sealed the lips of Ka'b in a battle which flooded valleys with blood from their mouths.<sup>167</sup>

فطمنا بني كعب عن البغي بعدها	ولا قوا من الأبطال ضربا غشمشما
عشية نكسوا البيض كل صفيحة	وكل سرجي إذا هز صمما
فولوا وخلوا هاريين بناتهم	على أننا لم نخش منهن محرما
حياء ولم نخش الدوائر منهم	ولكن نزعنا عقبة وتكرما
ختمنا على أفواه كعب بوقعة	أسالت من الأفلاج أودية دما

'Amr b. al-Dharrā' al-Ḥanafī, on the other hand, boasts that their spears put al-Muhājir's daughters under their power:

If we wish, our spears will couple us with women of our choice., as they have put al-Muhājir's daughters under our mastery.<sup>168</sup>

إذا نحن شئنا زوجتنا رماحنا      كما أمكنتنا من نساء المهاجر

Another poet rejoices the humiliation of Qushair at the hands of 'Ubaid Allāh al-Ḥanafī who raided Ḥalbān, a well belonging to Qushair:

The B. Qushair faced an evil when they met 'Ubaid Allāh. They met at Ḥilbān a lion who never sleeps over revenge.<sup>169</sup>

لقد لاقت قشيريوم لاقت      عبيد الله احدى المنكرات  
لقد لاقت على حلبان ليثا      هزيرا لا ينام على الترات

<sup>167</sup> Shajarī, 46-47.

<sup>168</sup> Ṭayālisī, al-Mukātharah 'ind al-Mudhākarah, 66.

<sup>169</sup> Kāmil, V, 121.

Another Bakrite poet reviles Abū Laṭīfah al-'Uqailī and certain other warriors of B. Qushair for their flight from the battlefield of al-Falj:

Abū Laṭīfah, the hypocrite, the two Jafunites, and Ṭāriq took to flight when they were encircled by bright swords.<sup>170</sup>

فأبولطفة المنافق والجفونيان وفر طارق  
لما أحاطت بهم البوارق

Normalcy returned to al-Yamāmah only after the arrival of al-Muthannā al-Fazārī al-Qaisī as a governor appointed by Marwān, the caliph. Al-Muthannā showed bias in favour of the B. 'Āmir against the B. Ḥanīfah. He punished a number of Ḥanafites and shaved their heads. A Ḥanafite poet refers to this treatment reminding the governor and his people of the humiliation they had been subjected to by the Ḥanafites in the past:

If you have flogged us then we already have struck at you with sharp swords.  
If you have shaved some of our heads, then we have cut off the heads and gullets of some of you.<sup>171</sup>

فان تضربونا بالسياط فاننا  
وان تحلقوا منا الرؤوس فاننا  
ضربناكم بالمرهفات الصوارم  
قطعنا رؤوسنا منكم بالخلاصم

<sup>170</sup>Ibid., 120.

<sup>171</sup>Ibid., 121.



In Khurāsān, the Muḍarite ruler, Naṣr b. Sayyār did not recognize the usurper, nor his Yemenite representative in Iraq.<sup>172</sup> Naṣr tried to assume a non-party position by appointing men of Bakr and Yemen to some sub-governorships.<sup>173</sup> Bakr at first professed to be content with these procedures as appears from a poem composed by al-Mughīrah al-Jahḍamī who was appointed to Qūhistān. Al-Mughīrah's poem shows the Bakrites to be loyal and faithful to Naṣr. It praises him for his equitable treatment of the Muslims and for his elimination of feuds between them and for unifying them. The poet declares that his fellow tribesmen have put their confidence in Naṣr and that they are prepared to support him until the political climate becomes clear. Likewise, the poet reminds the Umayyads of the outstanding services of his tribe Bakr to them and pleads with them to evaluate his tribe and its services properly; the verses concerned are the following:

Having sworn allegiance to Naṣr on behalf of all the Bakr and its allies, I say to him:  
My hand is in pledge to you in respect of the Bakr of Iraq, chiefs and servants alike. I have done the thing firmly for the Muslims - the people of the country and the city dwellers. If your wishes are not carried out, swift she-camels will come [to assist you], following one another.

You call the soldiers to swear allegiance, and you treated them with all justice. You established the domain of Khurāsān for the Muslims, when the country [Khurāsān] was about to be plunged into strife.

When the unity of the Muslims was restored, you distributed wealth among the deserving people. You protected and brought peace to the people

---

<sup>172</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1845, 1847, 1849.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid., 1847.

of the country and the dwellers on its borders.

For the soldiers in the East, you have become like a milch camel whose milk produce is devoted to them.

We will adhere to this [allegiance] until affairs come clear; and until Quraish reveal their concealed intentions.

If the powerful do injustice to the weak, we will come forward to fight spurring on the horses with their manes.

We will remain, as we always have been, faithful to Quraish, content with their alliance.

We will be satisfied by your shelter as a protector of theirs [Quraish's] rule in Khurāsān .

Your shelter is part of their protection.

We hope that Quraish in their efforts will do justice in some of their aims.

The lions [i.e. braves] belong to us, and the lions have manes on their shoulders.

Through you, our feet have been steadied after they were about to collapse down the ridge.

We have found you a favourable and merciful to us, like the mercy and favours of a mother.

We did not swear allegiance secretly, so that it could be disavowed easily like the marriage of the woman who hurried to her husband before her fingers were dyed.<sup>174</sup>

أقول لنصر ويايحته	على جل بكر وأحلافها
أخذت الوثيقة للمسلمين	أهل البلاد والأفها
إذا لا تجيب الى ما تريد	أنتك الرقال بأخفافها
دعوت الجنود الى بيعة	فأنصفتها كل انصافها
وطدت خراسان للمسلمين	ان الأرض همت بأرجافها
وان جمعت ألفة المسلمين	صرفت الضراب لألافها
أجار وسلم أهل البلاد والنازلين بأطرافها	
فصرت على الجنود بالمشرقين	لقوها لهم در أحلافها
فنحن على ذاك حتى تبين	مناهج سبل لحرافها
وحتى تبوح قريش بما	تجن ضدائر أجوافها
فان كان من عزيز الضعيف	ضربنا الخيول بأعرافها

<sup>174</sup>Ibid., 1847-1848.

فنحن على عهدنا نستديم      قرىشا ونرضى بأحلافها  
سنرضى بظلك كنا لها      وظلك من ظل أكنافها  
لعل قرىشا اذا ناضلت      تقرطس في بعض أهدافها  
والأسد منا وان الأسود لها لبدا فوق أكتافها  
فقد ثبتت بك أقدامنا      اذا انهار منهار أجرافها  
وجدناك برا رؤوفا بنا      كرامة أم والظافها  
ولم تك بيعتنا خلسة      لأسرع نسفة خطافها  
نكاح التي أسرعت بالحليل قبل تخضب أطرافها

But the Bakrites' passivity was of short duration because the Yemenite chief, 'Alī al-Kirmānī was not prepared to accept a Muḍarite ruler who had no real legal status. He manifested open hostility towards Muḍar by calling for the vengeance for Banū al-Muhallab.<sup>175</sup> The Bakrites who had long been allied with Azd, joined al-Kirmānī and extolled him.<sup>176</sup> Thus when Naṣr tried to make up with al-Kirmānī, the latter proposed that Naṣr be deposed, and a man of Bakr be chosen as the interim governor until the caliph himself made known his decision.<sup>177</sup> Naṣr reacted to this challenge by arresting al-Kirmānī who escaped from prison; and Azd and Bakr gathered round him, while Muḍar gathered round Naṣr<sup>178</sup> and active feuding became unavoidable. 'Umārah al-Ḥanafī, in the following verses, refers to the strained situation in Khurāsān, and foretells the dangerous results awaiting the warring factions there:

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 1858.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 1865.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 1866.

<sup>178</sup> *Dīnawarī*, 351-352.

Rabī'ah and their brothers in Marw are facing grave events and dangers. Would God, who of the two princes of Bakr and Mudar shall undergo a quick slaughter at Marw al-Shāhijān, for - knowingly - committed sins, to become mean and failed.<sup>179</sup>

أُمت ربيعة في مرو واخوتها  
يا ليت شعري بمر والشاهجان غدا  
على عظيم من الأحداث والخطر  
يصلى بقتل ذ ربيع في مخمصة  
أي الأميرين من بكر ومن مضر  
حتى يصير ذليلا غير ذي نضر

About this time (126) Yazīd III died. His successor Ibrāhim b. al-Walīd was deposed by a revolt led by Marwān b. Muḥammad who ruled in the interest of Muḍar, especially Qais on whom he had to rely.<sup>180</sup> Politics and tribalism had become so closely connected that they could not be separated. Everywhere the Arabs divided into two hostile blocs: Muḍar on one side and Yemen and Bakr on the other. The appearance of Abū Muslim al-Khurāsāni and his followers in Khurāsān was a surprise to both parties. The poetical appeal<sup>181</sup> of Naṣr to Rabī'ah (Bakr) was of no avail. Abū Muslim took advantage of this discord. In 130 A.H., he allied himself with the Yemenites and Rabī'ah against Muḍar who were fighting for the cause of the Umayyads.<sup>182</sup> Naṣr fled and Khurāsān became an easy prey to Abū Muslim who was received in Marw by his new allies.<sup>183</sup> In 132 A.H., Rabī'ah together with the Yemenite tribes revolted in Iraq (Basra and Kufa) in favour of the 'Abbāsids, while Muḍar supported

<sup>179</sup>Marzubānī, 247.

<sup>180</sup>Tanbīh, 283-284.

<sup>181</sup>See Dīnawarī, 360; Dīwān Naṣr b. Sayyār al-Kinānī, 28.

<sup>182</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1984-1986.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid., 1992.

the governor of the Umayyads.<sup>184</sup> The struggle lasted until the defeat of Marwān and his followers at the battle of Zāb in 132 A.H., the battle which was to decide the fate of the Umayyad caliphate for once and for all. The poet Khalaf b. Khalīfah is reported to have presented himself before the new 'Abbāsīd caliph and recited the following two verses in which he ridicules the Umayyads, and goes to the extent of casting doubts on their faith:

If you forgive them [i.e. the Umayyads], you have power over them.  
 And if you punish them, you will not inflict penalties on innocents.  
 Or if you censure them for their weakness in religion, their faith was that of the Samaritans.<sup>185</sup>

ان تجاوز فقد قدرت عليهم  
 او تعاقب فلم تعاقب برياً  
 او تعاقبهم على رقة الدين  
 فقد كان دينهم سامرياً

Another Bakrite poet celebrated the occasion and accused the Umayyads of being disobedient to God and His Prophet, saying:

O [house of] Umayyah, let the Hāshimites succeed you [in Caliphate].  
 May God take your treasury in booty.  
 If the family of Marwān and al-'Āṣī have disobeyed God, so verily there were disobedients to the Prophet!<sup>186</sup>

اعقبى آل هاشم يا أمياً  
 جعل الله بيت مالك فياً  
 ان عصا الله آل مروان والعاصي لقد كان للرسول عصياً

<sup>184</sup>Tabarī, III, 22, Kāmil, V, 164; Dīnawarī, 365.

<sup>185</sup>Iqd, IV, 487.

<sup>186</sup>Bayān, III, 258.

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION

Jurjī Zaidān writes that the poets of Rabī'ah, to which Bakr belongs, were during the Umayyad era, a mere eleven in number.<sup>1</sup> This count is a gross underestimate, not based on a comprehensive survey of even the well-known sources such as the Aghānī, al-Mu'talif wa al-Mukhtalif, Mu'jam al-Shu'arā' and others. It is possible to trace around 120 Bakrī poets who lived in the period of the study and some of whose poetry has survived. Among them are the mukhaḍramūn who lived both in the Jāhilite and the early Islamic period, like al-Aghlab al-'Ijlī, or those who survived until the Umayyad period like Suwaid b. Abī Kāhil. Most Bakrī poets known to us, like 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān and Abū Jildah al-Yashkurī, spent the large part of their lives in the Umayyad era, while some of them lived both in the Umayyad and the early 'Abbāsīd period, like Ḥamzah b. Bīḍ and Khalaf b. Khalīfah.

Despite the many Bakrī poets known, most of the dīwāns and poetry known to the writers of early periods has not survived as, for example the dīwān of Suwaid b. Abī Kāhil whom Ibn Sallām puts with the poets of sixth ṭabaqah on a level with 'Antarah al-'Absī.<sup>2</sup> His poetry is reported to have been read by Abū Naṣr Aḥmad b. Ḥātim before al-Aṣma'ī,<sup>3</sup> and the dīwān of al-Aghlab al-'Ijlī who is reported to be the first poet who composed rajaz at the same length as qaṣīd.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Tarīkh Ādāb al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, I, 276.

<sup>2</sup>Ṭabaqāt, 127-128; Aghānī, XIII, 29.

<sup>3</sup>Aghānī, XIII, 102.

<sup>4</sup>Shu'arā', 613; 'Umdah, I, 189; Aghānī, XXI, 29.

Al-Marzubānī mentions that Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī said: "Ishāq b. 'Abbās requested the rajaz of al-Aghlab from al-Aṣma'ī who in turn requested it from me. I gave it to him and he extracted twenty poems from it".<sup>5</sup> Al-Āmidī tells that he chose the poetry of al-Aghlab in his anthology of rajaz.<sup>6</sup> Commenting on the controversy about ascribing a poetical fragment, Ibn Manẓūr says: "Ibn Barrī said that he had found this fragment in the dīwān of al-Aghlab as al-Jawharī mentions".<sup>7</sup>

Among the poets whose dīwāns were compiled by al-Sukkarī but have not survived is Abū al-Najm.<sup>8</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm says that Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī narrated the poetry of Abū al-Najm on the authority of Muḥammad b. Shaibān, the son of Abū al-Najm, as well as on the authority of Abū al-Azhar, who was the grandson of Abū al-Najm.<sup>9</sup> Ibn Khair mentions that the dīwān of Abū al-Najm was amongst the books which Abū 'Alī Ismā'il b. al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī carried to Andalus, and that it was contained in one volume and had been read in front of 'Alī b. Duraid.<sup>10</sup> Al-Āmidī says that A'shā, Rabī'ah's dīwān was in one volume.<sup>11</sup> Al-Āmidī also describes the dīwān of Nahār b. Tawsi'ah<sup>12</sup> which was later mentioned by Ḥājī Khalīfah.<sup>13</sup> Abū al-Faraj, on the other hand, reports

<sup>5</sup>Muwashshah, 333-334.

<sup>6</sup>Mu'talif, 22.

<sup>7</sup>Lisān, zawara.

<sup>8</sup>Fihrist, 225.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Fahrasat Ibn Khair, 395.

<sup>11</sup>Mu'talif, 13.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 193.

<sup>13</sup>Kashf al-Dhunūn 'an Asamī al-Kutub wa al-Funūn, 401.



that he had read the dīwān of Abū Jildah before Muhammad b. al-'Abbās al-Yazīdī.<sup>14</sup> It is to be understood from an item of information given by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī that the dīwān of 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān was available in the third century of the Hijrah.<sup>15</sup> The only surviving dīwān of a Bakrī poet of the period concerned is, in fact, that of Nābighat B. Shaibān.

Likewise, none of the books devoted to the accounts of certain of the Bakrī clans and their poetry has survived. Among the books used and mentioned by al-Āmidī are: Kitāb B. Hanīfah,<sup>16</sup> Kitāb B. 'Ijl,<sup>17</sup> Kitāb B. Qais b. Tha'labah,<sup>18</sup> Kitāb B. Dhuhl B. Tha'labah,<sup>19</sup> Kitāb or 'Ash'ār B. Yashkur,<sup>20</sup> Ash'ār B. Abī Rabī'ah,<sup>21</sup> and Ash'ār B. 'Awf b. Hammām.<sup>22</sup>

Ibn al-Nadīm, on the other hand, mentions in his Fihrist five dīwāns of Bakrī clans.<sup>23</sup> It is observed that all of these dīwāns which include the poetry of the B. Rabī'ah, the poetry of the B. Ḥanīfah, the poetry of the B. Dhuhl, the poetry of the B. Shaibān, and the poetry of the B. Yashkur were compiled by al-Sukkarī. Ibn Ḥabīb is also reported to have compiled the poetry of the B. Shaibān.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Aghānī, XI, 310.

<sup>15</sup>Irshād, VI, 138-139.

<sup>16</sup>Mu'talif, 194.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 71, 179.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 88, 91.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 41, 57, 154, 186.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Fihrist, 222.

<sup>24</sup>Baghdādī, IV, 231.

Moreover, what has survived of the poetry of the Bakrī poets is little more than fragments and small parts. Even the surviving poetry of the well-known Bakrī poets is meagre such as that of 'Īsā b. Fātik, about whom al-Balādhurī says that he composed abundant poetry,<sup>25</sup> and Samīrah b. al-Ja'd who is reported to have composed numerous poems,<sup>26</sup> as well as Abū al-'Aṭṭāf Jarīr b. Kharqā', who is said to have been a poet specializing in abuse.<sup>27</sup>

The part of the study which follows, however, is devoted to a detailed examination of four Bakrī poets, as far as is permitted by the poetry and other relevant information that have survived. All of them spent the larger part of their lives in the Umayyad period and their surviving poetry was mostly composed during that period. They are among the best known poets of Bakr in the period concerned. The information and poetry that have survived may well be sufficient for a fairly sound study to be based on them and their poetry; the same seems to be nigh impossible for other Bakrī poets of the period because of the lack of information. On the other hand, these four poets belonged to the various major places where the Bakr was concentrated. Two of them spent most of their lives in Iraq, while the third spent most of his life in Khurāsān, and the fourth in his original habitat in the bādiyah from where he used to visit the seat of the caliphate in Syria. Among them is

---

<sup>25</sup>Ansāb, IV/2, 95.

<sup>26</sup>Murūj, III, 78.

<sup>27</sup>Tabaqāt, 304.

'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān who embraced the Khārijite beliefs; without forsaking his tribal prejudices.

## CHAPTER V

NAHĀR B. TAWSI'AH

Nahār was a member of a Bakrite section, namely the B. Taim al-Lāt b. Tha'labah<sup>1</sup> who were desert dwellers in pre-Islamic times and were, before Islam, in alliance with the B. 'Ijl b. Lujaim, another Bakrite clan, and a component of the alliance of the Lahāzim.<sup>2</sup> This alliance, established before Islam, still existed in the Umayyad era in Basra and the B. Ḥanīfah b. Lujaim joined it there, although previously they had not been in alliance with the other Bakrite clans as they had been city-dwellers in al-Yamāmah, wherein their abodes were surrounded by non-Bakrī elements.<sup>3</sup>

Although Nahār was described as the most gifted poet of the tribe of Bakr in Khurāsān,<sup>4</sup> our sources are inadequate to give us a clear picture of his upbringing and the various stages of his life. What survives of Nahār's poetry is fragmentary and is linked to important political and historical events far apart in time. This may explain why the historical sources are concerned with such fragments. It is related that Nahār's father was a poet,<sup>5</sup> but I have been able to trace only two verses attributed once to him<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ansāb, V, 153; Mu'talif, 193; Sīrah, II, 249; Aghānī, XVI, 19; Tanbih, 278.

<sup>2</sup>Naqā'id, 305, 728, 764, 1023; Aghānī, XI, 316; Kāmil, I, 263; 'Īqd, III, 363; 'Asākir, III, 81.

<sup>3</sup>Naqā'id, 728; Aghānī, XI, 317.

<sup>4</sup>Shu'arā', 537.

<sup>5</sup>Mu'talif, 193.

<sup>6</sup>Ansāb, V, 153.

and once to Nahār himself.<sup>7</sup> It is said that Nahār's son 'Attāb was a poet<sup>8</sup> also, but I have found only two verses attributed to him in which he boasts of his power and daring, they are:<sup>9</sup>

كالفجر مدّ عموده المنجبا	قد مت صدر السيف ثم تبعته
سيف وقلب لم يكن وجّابا	في مظلم الأرجاء يؤنسنى به

We do not know for certain when Nahār was born, nor where. It would be far-fetched to imagine that he was born in Khurāsān; it is more likely that he was born and brought up in Basra or its bādiyah and from there emigrated to Khurāsān. This may be supported by the fact that the B. Taim al-Lāt b. Tha'labah, the section of Nahār, were among the famous Bakrite sections in Basra<sup>10</sup> probably because their abodes, in pre-Islamic times, were closer to Basra than to Kufa, and thus their role in Kufa on the contrary was not a prominent one. Khurāsān was among the conquests of Basra and mostly followed Basra in policies. The governor of Basra, for example, often used to appoint the governor of Khurāsān.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, this proposition that he grew up in Basra may be reinforced by two verses which Ibn Hishām attributes to Nahār,<sup>12</sup> although al-Balādhurī attributes them to Tawsi'ah,<sup>13</sup> the father of Nahār. The two verses may be

<sup>7</sup>Sīrah, II, 249.

<sup>8</sup>Marzubānī, 265.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>See Naqā'id, 728; Ṭabarī, II, 448.

<sup>11</sup>For examples, see: Ṭabarī, II, 17, 79, 172.

<sup>12</sup>Sīrah, II, 249.

<sup>13</sup>Ansāb, V, 153.

traced back to the battle of al-Rabadhah in 65 A.H. After the Umayyads had triumphed at the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ in Syria over their opponents, the Zubairids, the caliph 'Abd al-Malik despatched an army led by Ḥubaish b. Duljah al-Qainī to Ḥijāz, in an attempt to crush Ibn al-Zubair. But the army of the latter which was sent by the governor of Basra was able to defeat the Syrian army, and Yūsuf b. al-Ḥakam al-Thaqafī and his son al-Ḥajjāj were amongst those fleeing;<sup>14</sup> thus Tawsi'ah or his son Nahār said, mentioning the escape of Yūsuf and mocking him:

A long gallop saved Yūsuf al-Thaqafī  
after the standard had fallen.  
Had they overtaken him they would have  
fulfilled their need of him.  
There is a protector for every victim  
missed.<sup>15</sup>

دراك بعد ما سقط اللواء	ونجى يوسف الثقي ركض
به ولكل مخطأة وقاء	ولو أدركه لقضيين نحسبا

If the aforementioned two verses had really been composed by Nahār, then they would be the oldest extant examples of his poetry. Whether the two verses were composed by him or by his father, they add weight to the assumption that he was in Basra before his departure for Khurāsān. Our sources are also silent regarding the dating of his migration to Khurāsān and of his settling there. 'Aṭwān says: "The earliest information which indicates the existence of Nahār in Khurāsān may be safely traced back to 82 A.H., for al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufrah died in

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 150-153; Ṭabarī, II, 578-579.

<sup>15</sup>Ansāb, V, 153; Sīrah, II, 249.

this year, and Nahār celebrated him in an elegy which became widely known and was frequently quoted by traditional sources; from this it may be inferred that Nahār had migrated to Khurāsān during the governorship of al-Muhallab or shortly before".<sup>16</sup> It would appear that 'Aṭwān's assumption is not based on a detailed examination of the information on the poetry of Nahār in the sources which concern themselves with him. 'Aṭwān also fails to date certain verses composed by Nahār in Khurāsān which can be traced back to considerably before 82 A.H. It would not be going too far to suppose that Nahār emigrated to Khurāsān in 51 A.H., for in that year Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān, the ruler of Iraq, sent 50,000 men together with their families to settle there,<sup>17</sup> and most of them were from Basra as has been mentioned. At the very latest Nahār must have been in Khurāsān by 65 A.H. Both al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn Manẓūr cite a verse composed by Nahār in which he laments the power of his tribe before the B. Sulaim came to power in Khurāsān, but neither author specifies either the occasion or the date when the verse was uttered but merely mention it in order to explain the meaning of a word. The verse is:

Before the rule of Banū Sulaim, we used  
to subject them [our enemies] to the severest  
of disasters.<sup>18</sup>

وكنّا قبل ملك بني سليم      نذيقهم الدواهي الأقرينا

<sup>16</sup> 'Aṭwān, al-Shi'r al-'Arabī bi Khurāsān fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, 280.

<sup>17</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 81, 155; Futūḥ, 577.

<sup>18</sup> Asās, II, 283; Lisān, Qawara.

No member of the B. Sulaim was appointed as a ruler of Iraq throughout the entire Umayyad era. Thus it is most likely that this verse is a fragment of a poem composed by Nahār after his emigration to Khurāsān, since three members of the B. Sulaim were appointed governors over Khurāsān during the Umayyad era, namely: Qais b. al-Haitham al-Sulamī who ruled from 41-43 A.H.<sup>19</sup> when Ibn 'Āmir, the governor of Basra, deposed him and appointed another member of the B. Sulaim, 'Abd Allāh b. Khāzim whose first governorship initially extended for one year,<sup>20</sup> although he later took power by force after the death of the caliph Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah in 64 A.H.<sup>21</sup> The third member of the B. Sulaim was Ashras b. 'Abd Allāh who ruled from 109-111 A.H.<sup>22</sup> It is likely that the governor meant by Nahār in his verse was 'Abd Allāh b. Khāzim in his second term of office. It is far-fetched to suppose that Nahār was in Khurāsān during the governorship of Qais b. al-Haitham, and Ashras b. 'Abd Allāh did not encounter the tribe of Bakr in Khurāsān, and was not fanatically against them, or against other tribes to the extent that he is described as being "the complete man regarding respect".<sup>23</sup> Moreover, 'Abd Allāh b. Khāzim during his second governorship crushed the tribe of Bakr in Khurāsān, diminished their power and killed about 8,000 of their best warriors, after they had assembled from the whole of Khurāsān at Harāt, in

---

<sup>19</sup> See Ṭabarī, II, 15, 17, 65.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 65, 66.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 490, Futūḥ, 582.

<sup>22</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 1504, 1527.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 1504.



an attempt to continue the struggle against him.<sup>24</sup> It would not be unreasonable to assume that Nahār himself took part in the fighting in Harāt against Ibn Khāzim because in his praise of Mīsmā' b. Mālīk, he mentions that he was residing in Harāt. Thus:

Leave Harāt for many years and months have passed since you dwelt here.<sup>25</sup>

اطعني من هرة قد مرفيها حجج مذ سكنتها وشهور

Al-Muṣ'ab al-Zubairī mentions that when Abd al-Malik, the caliph, appointed Umayyah b. 'Abd Allāh b. Khālīd b. Asīd over Khurāsān, Nahār praised Umayyah.<sup>26</sup> And it is related that Umayyah was appointed to rule over Khurāsān in 74 A.H.,<sup>27</sup> and lasted until 78 A.H., when 'Abd al-Malik deposed him and joined Khurāsān to the strong governor of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj;<sup>28</sup> nothing survives of the praise poetry of Nahār on Umayyah except two fragments consisting of three verses each.<sup>29</sup> The information we have concerning Nahār then jumps to 82 A.H., when al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufrah, the governor of Khurāsān, died and the poets composed many poems celebrating him and Nahār joined in this by composing a poem of which only seven verses survive.<sup>30</sup> Our sources do not supply any information regarding Nahār during the first governorship of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab (82-85 A.H.), or

<sup>24</sup>See Futūḥ, 582-583; Ṭabarī, II, 488-496.

<sup>25</sup>Aghānī, XVI, 19; Baghdādī, II, 485.

<sup>26</sup>Al-Zubairī, Kitāb Nasab Quraish, 190.

<sup>27</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 859.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 1032.

<sup>29</sup>See al-Zubairī, Kitāb Nasab Quraish, 190; 'Asākir, III, 129.

<sup>30</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1084.

that of his brother al-Faḍl (85-86), although Ibn Khallikān describes Nahār as "the poet of al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufrah and his sons".<sup>31</sup> When al-Ḥajjāj expelled the B. al-Muhallab from Khurāsān, imprisoned some of them and appointed the Qaisite, Qutaibah b. Muslim al-Bāhilī, over Khurāsān in 86 A.H.,<sup>32</sup> Nahār felt pessimistic about the measures and welcomed the new governor by satirizing him.<sup>33</sup> In this context Abū 'Alī al-Qālī claims that Nahār went to Qutaibah while the latter was distributing the stipends ('aṭā'), and Qutaibah reminded Nahār of his earlier elegy for al-Muhallab, revealing that he was indifferent to Nahār and his poetry, and ordering that Nahār's name should be struck off the register of stipends. Nahār consequently stayed at home until Qutaibah had been killed in 96 A.H. and Yazīd b. al-Muhallab was re-appointed for a second term, and then Nahār went to him and praised him.<sup>34</sup> It would appear that this information is a creation of Abū 'Alī's imagination, as was at times his wont, for he claims that the information derived from the authority of Abū 'Ubaidah, while the latter, on the contrary, mentions something which contradicts Abū 'Alī's claim. This is that Nahār was in Qutaibah's army at Farghānah shortly before the latter's assassination.<sup>35</sup> It seems that the truth is that, as Ibn Qutaibah mentions, Qutaibah was displeased with Nahār because the latter had satirized and mocked him, when he first came to Khurāsān as

---

<sup>31</sup>Wāfayāt, IV, 87.

<sup>32</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1138, 1178, 1182, 1209.

<sup>33</sup>See Mu'talif, 193; Shu'arā', 537.

<sup>34</sup>Amālī, II, 198-199.

<sup>35</sup>See Naqā'id, 350, 359.

governor. Thus when Qutaibah demanded that Nahār should be brought to him, Nahār fled; he then went to Qutaibah's mother, obtained a letter from her to pacify her son and to gain Nahār's reinstatement.<sup>36</sup> To support Ibn Qutaibah's statement, it is known that Nahār was among Qutaibah's army when the latter invaded Bukhārā and conquered Rāmīthān in 89 A.H.<sup>37</sup> For these deeds Nahār praised him in a poem of which only the following verse<sup>38</sup> survives, portraying the severity of the battle at Kharqān:

وأتت لهم منا بخرقان ليلة      وليلتنا كانت بخرقان أطولا

Nahār was also among the army of Qutaibah when the latter invaded Ṭukhāristān and killed Nīzak Ṭarkhān in 91 A.H.<sup>39</sup> Likewise Nahār was present when Qutaibah conquered Samarqand in 93 A.H.<sup>40</sup> During each of the aforementioned invasions, Nahār praised Qutaibah and glorified his heroism. It even seems that Nahār enjoyed close contact with Qutaibah, for Ibn Qutaibah mentions that when Qutaibah ordered him to be shown favour and this was delayed, Nahār met Qutaibah and remonstrated with him, saying:

You are well aware that awards are marred  
by delay.<sup>41</sup>

ولقد علمت وأنت تعلمه      أن العطاء يشينه الحبس

And thus Qutaibah ordered that Nahār's gift should be restored without delay. In 96 A.H., Nahār was with Qutaibah when the

<sup>36</sup>Shu'arā', 537-538.

<sup>37</sup>Tabarī, II, 1198.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 1226.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 1251.

<sup>41</sup>Shu'arā', 538.

latter invaded Farghānah.<sup>42</sup> After the assassination of Qutaibah, Nahār turned his back on him, praised Qutaibah's successor who had overthrown him, described Qutaibah as being an oppressor and tyrant and praised the new governor Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, who was re-appointed to Khurāsān for a second time in 97 A.H. But Nahār could not accept Yazīd's embezzlement of funds from the treasury, nor could he accept Yazīd's policy of fostering relations with the Syrians in Khurāsān and certain people of Khurāsān other than the tribe of Bakr. Thus Nahār turned against him, threatened him and then satirized him.<sup>43</sup> It would seem that Nahār was not on good terms with Sa'īd b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Umawī, the governor of Khurāsān (102-103), who imprisoned some of the Yemenite chiefs who were in alliance with the tribe of Bakr and tortured them. Thus Nahār expressed his joy when 'Umar b. Hubairah al-Fazārī, the governor of Iraq, deposed Sa'īd and substituted him with Sa'īd al-Ḥarshī, especially since the latter had enjoyed success in fighting the Turks from the very beginning of his governorship.<sup>44</sup> Nahār says, drawing a comparison between al-Umawī and al-Ḥarshī in which he slandered the first while praising the second:

Who will inform the youth of my people,  
that the arrows have been feathered perfectly;  
as it happened when God substituted Sa'īd the  
effeminate Qurashī for Sa'īd [al-Ḥarshī]<sup>45</sup>

بأن النبل ريشت كل ريش  
سعيدا لا المخنث من قریش

فمن ذا مبلغ قتيان قومي  
بأن الله أبدل من سعيد

<sup>42</sup>See Naqā'id, 350, 359.

<sup>43</sup>Tabarī, II, 1312-1313.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 1438.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 1437; Kāmil, V, 42.

In 112 A.H. Nahār was a member of the army of al-Junaid b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Murrī, took part in the battle of al-Shi'b at Samarqand, and was selected by al-Junaid to lead a delegation to Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, the caliph, to clarify the circumstances of the aforementioned battle.<sup>46</sup> We have no information regarding Nahār's residence in Syria nor the kind of life he enjoyed there, but we do know that he returned to Khurāsān because he accompanied Asad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Qasrī, the governor of Khurāsān, when the latter attended the festival at Balkh in 120.<sup>47</sup> This is the final piece of information we have concerning the life of Nahār. It can be inferred from this that he died after 120 A.H. It is likely that his death took place before the final demise of the Umayyad dynasty in 132 A.H., especially since the last few years of their rule were rife with tribal and political dissensions which aroused even non-poets to compose poetry, and since tribal conflict then reached its zenith in Khurāsān. Although Khurāsān was the birthplace of the 'Abbāsīd's revolution, nothing is recorded as having been composed by Nahār during this turbulent period.

Ibn Qutaibah describes Nahār as "the most gifted poet of the tribe of Bakr b. Wā'il in Khurāsān",<sup>48</sup> while Ibn Khallikān describes him as "a famous poet",<sup>49</sup> and as "the poet of al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufrah and his sons".<sup>50</sup> Ma'n b.

---

<sup>46</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1544.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 1638.

<sup>48</sup>Shu'arā', 537.

<sup>49</sup>Wafayāt, V, 354.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., IV, 87.

Zā'idah al-Shaibānī appreciated Nahār's praise of Misma' b. Mālīk, and preferred it to the praise of him by the famous poet al-Ḥusain b. Maṭīr.<sup>51</sup> It would appear that al-Āmidī (d. 370 A.H.), having read the dīwān of Nahār, was fascinated by it, saying: "He has a dīwān of a single volume which contains many good poems".<sup>52</sup> It might be deduced that Ḥājī Khalīfah (d. 1067 A.H.) possessed a copy of the dīwān of Nahār, since he mentions it in his famous bibliography.<sup>53</sup> We have no later information about the dīwān of Nahār, and it seems likely that it was either lost or lies in some library awaiting the removal of the dust from it.

All the extant poems of Nahār consist of no more than fragments and short selections scattered here and there in the historical and literary works. I have been unable to find any long poem by Nahār, and the longest fragment is only seven verses long. This is true for most of the poetry of Khurāsān up to the end of the Umayyad era, namely that it has largely been lost to all appearances. One may deduce that the poets of Khurāsān during this period rarely conformed to the typical structure of the ancient Arabic poems. Thus the traditional prelude is only occasionally found in their poetry. Their poems deal mostly with the main subject directly, thus diminishing their length. The reason behind this may be the nature of Arab society at the time, when

---

<sup>51</sup> See Mubarrad, IV, 187; Aghānī, XVI, 18-19; Baghdādī, II, 485.

<sup>52</sup> Mu'talif, 193.

<sup>53</sup> Kashf al-Zunūn 'an Asāmī al-Kutub wa al-Funūn, I, 401.

there were excessive internal dissensions and the Arabs were constantly in battle against their neighbours. Famous poets such as Nahār, Thābit Quṭnah, Ziyād al-A'jam and al-Mughīrah b. Ḥabnā' were soldiers, physically taking part in battle, and their poetry resembles a short propaganda leaflet or poster defending the stance taken by their tribes in the civil struggle, or describing the outcome of the battles; moreover so much of their poetry has not survived that we do not have a single dīwān for any of them.

In spite of the loss of Nahār's poetry, more of his verses have survived for us than of any other Bakrite poet of his era in Khurāsān. Among these were al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir, Ḥājib al-Fīl, Abū al-Barīd al-Bakrī and others. In most of his surviving poetry Nahār is motivated by tribal solidarity and partisanship. This phenomenon is apparent in most of the famous Arab poets of Khurāsān, who occupied themselves with tribal partisanship, and thus each of them was nothing more than a mouth-piece for his tribe merely reiterating its interests. It is possible that this preoccupation with tribalism diverted their attention from describing their new surroundings in Khurāsān.

Madḥ (praise-poetry) is the most prominent element in the surviving work of Nahār. For example, he praised Misma' b. Mālik, one of the famous Bakrite chiefs of Basra,<sup>54</sup> when he was appointed over certain districts in Khurāsān in

---

<sup>54</sup>Tabarī, II, 822, 1125; Jamharat, 301.

72 A.H.<sup>55</sup> He describes him as being generous, as an amīr who enables one to dispense with others. He glorifies his lineage and portrays him as the most outstanding of the entire tribe of Nizār. Nahār is fervent in his tribal praise. He recommends Misma' to grant favours to the members of the tribe of Bakr and to heal their wounds; especially poignant since 'Abd Allāh b. Khazim had recently defeated the tribe of Bakr, and killed the best of their warriors. He says:

Leave Harāt, for many a year and month has passed since you dwelt here.  
 Leave for Misma'; he is the most generous and the best person to visit.  
 He will satisfy your needs if any land in Khurāsān is unsuitable for you, or if any amīr ill-treats you.  
 He [Misma'] belongs to Banū al-Ḥiṣn, 'Āmil b. Barīh.  
 He does not suffer from scarcity of bounty, nor is he one who gives only on being pressed. He is the one in whom heroes take refuge when throats are bloody with cuts [in war]. Nizār have entrusted him with their affairs, although their generous and noble chiefs are still alive.  
 So, Ibn Mālik, do favours to Āl Bakr and set the bone that is broken.<sup>56</sup>

حجج منذ سكنتها وشهور	اطعني من هرة قد مرفيها
نعم ذي المنتأى ونعم المزور	اطعني نحو مسمع تجدييه
بخراسان أو جفاك أمير	سوف يكفيك ان نبت بك أرض
لا قليل الندى ولا منزور	من بني الحصن عامل بن بريح
حين تدمي من الطعان النحور	والذي يفزع الكمأة اليه
قبل أن يهلك السراة البحور	قلده عرى الأمور نزار
واجبر العظم انه مكسور	فاصطنعيا ابن مالك آل بكر

<sup>55</sup>Tabarī, II, 822.

<sup>56</sup>Mubarrad, IV, 187; Aghānī, XVI, 19; Irshād, IV, 97; Muḥāḍarāt, I, 158, Baghdādī, II, 485.



Nahār rejoiced at the appointment of Umayyah b. 'Abd Allāh over Khurāsān, firstly because the new governor was from Quraish who were believed to stand apart from tribal conflict in Khurāsān; and thus the chiefs of the tribes there, among whom was the tribe of Bakr, appealed to 'Abd al-Malik, the caliph, to appoint a Quraishite governor after Bukair b. Wishāḥ al-Tamīmī had become so high-handed in the affairs of Khurāsān, that even the tribe of Tamīm were divided amongst themselves, and the Arabs there felt the dangers of a situation which threatened their very existence on the frontiers.<sup>57</sup> Secondly, the tribe of Bakr in Khurāsān were not prepared to accept a Tamīmīte governor after the assassination of Ibn Khāzim, in spite of the fact that Tamīm had been the tribe to defeat Ibn Khāzim and kill him.<sup>58</sup> This was because Tamīm at the beginning had supported Ibn Khāzim in his conflict against Bakr, and this had enabled Ibn Khāzim to defeat the tribe of Bakr and crush them. Thirdly, Khālid b. 'Abd Allāh, the brother of Umayyah, who was the governor of Basra at that time, appears to have sided with the allies of Azd and Rabī'ah, and appointed some of the B. al-Muhallab and three sons of Mālik b. Misma', the most famous chief of Bakr in Iraq, to certain important offices.<sup>59</sup> These points may explain why Nahār rejoiced at the appointment of Umayyah, kept close to him and praised him in the traditional manner by glorifying his abundant generosity; he says:

---

<sup>57</sup> See Ṭabarī, II, 859-860; Kāmil, IV, 153; Ya'qūbī, II, 324.

<sup>58</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 832-834.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 822.

Whenever you ask Umayyah, he will give you the best of awards, and if you do not ask him, he will redouble his award.

He gives you cheerfully and smiling, while the one whose hands are contracted frowns and his teeth chatter.

So, enjoy the generosity of the hands of [Umayyah] ibn Khālid which if touched by a coward makes him give by force.<sup>60</sup>

أمية يعطيك اللها ان سألته	وان أنت لم تسأل أمية أضعفا
ويعطيك ما أعطاك جذلان ضاحكا	اذا عبس الكزاليدين ووقفقسا
هنيئا مريئا جود كسف ابن خالد	اذا مسها الرعيد أعطى تكلفا

In other verses Nahār portrays Umayyah as giving generously when it has been requested while others hold back. He says that Umayyah gives without show, and likens him to the sea which gives water to everyone who comes to it:

Umayyah gives spontaneously to whomsoever asks him, while the niggardly withhold their money.

He is not avaricious towards those to whom he gives, while the base one is excited by gossip.

There are two kinds of rivers; one is plentiful of water for whoever comes to it, while the other is difficult and dry.<sup>61</sup>

أمسى أمية يعطي المال سائله	عفوا اذا ضمن بالمال المباخيل
لا يتبع المم من أعطاه منفسة	ان اللئيم زهاه القال والقيل
بحران بحر نمير فاز وارده	اذا البحور مياريح صلاحيل

With regard to the famous Qaisite governor of Khurāsān Qutaibah b. Muslim, it would appear that Nahār, having formerly satirized Qutaibah and preferred Ibn al-Muhallab

<sup>60</sup>Al-Zubairī, Kitāb Nasab Quraish, 190; 'Asākir, III, 129.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 190.

to him, and having been forced to flee from Qutaibah when the latter first reached Khurāsān, later found himself compelled to praise him out of fear. Thus in his praise of Qutaibah he portrays him as if he were the best governor over Khurāsān for the past, present and even the future. He lauds his military ability especially since Qutaibah conquered Samarqand and Khawārizm in the same year. Thus he says:

No one, either since we were born or among  
Those who preceded or will succeed us, will  
be like Ibn Muslim.  
No one will put more polytheists to the  
sword and none will bring to us more booty  
upon booty [than he has].<sup>62</sup>

وما كان مذكنا ولا كان قبلنا      ولا هو فيها بعدنا كابن مسلم  
أعم لأهل الشرك قتلا بسيفه      وأكثر فينا مخنما بعد مخنم

The personality of Qutaibah, his military ability and his continual invasions which were always successful, overawed many Arab poets in Khurāsān and even some of them who were markedly partisan, such as Nahār and Ka'b al-Ashqarī. The latter was a loyal supporter of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab,<sup>63</sup> the opponent of Qutaibah, but he says, praising Qutaibah and portraying the abundance of booty in his triumph over the Soghdians:<sup>64</sup>

كل يوم يحوي قتيبة نهبا      ويزيد الأموال مالا جديدا  
كلما حلّ بلدة أو أتاهها      تركت خيلها بها أخسدا ودا  
دوّخ الصغد بالكتائب حتى      ترك الصغد بالعراء قعودا

<sup>62</sup>Tabarī, II, 1251; Kāmil, IV, 235; Shu'arā', 538; Wafayāt, IV, 87; Amālī, II, 199.

<sup>63</sup>Marzubānī, 346.

<sup>64</sup>Tabarī, II, 1252.

In a fragment, Nahār rejoices at the deeds of Qutaibah when the latter killed the Turks left as hostages with him, after the Turks had killed Ḥabīb b. 'Abd Allāh al-Bāhilī, who was sent by Qutaibah as a hostage to the king of Jūzajān.<sup>65</sup> Nahār reckons the killing of Ḥabīb as breaking the covenant and treachery, while he glorifies the judgement of Qutaibah upon the Turks he held hostage, and likens his action to that of the Prophet against the Jews of the B. Quraizah and the B. al-Nadīr, he says:

God guided you to a verdict on the Turks, similar to the verdict on Quraizah and al-Nadīr.

The verdict by Qutaibah was not unjust, and it satisfied the thirst for revenge in our hearts.

If Nīzak [the Turkish leader] has faced shame and disgrace, so, many a chief has been proved to be foolish in war.<sup>66</sup>

أراك الله في الأتراك حكما	كحكّم في قريظة والنضير
قضاء من قتيبة غير جور	به يشفى الغليل من الصدور
فان يبر نيزك خزيسا وذلا	فكم في الحرب حوق من أمير

Nahār also rejoices at the conquest of Tukhāristān and the killing of Nīzak. Ṭarkhān, in a poem of which only the following verse survives:

By my life, how good was the campaign of the soldiers which fulfilled its need from Nīzak.<sup>67</sup>

لعمري نعمت غزوة الجند غزوة	قضت نجبها من نيزك وتعلت
----------------------------	-------------------------

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 1225-1226.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 1226.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 1223; Kāmil, IV, 226.

It would appear that Nahār's great admiration for Qutaibah, reckoned to be the most famous governor of Khurāsān in the Umayyad era, and the one who made Transoxania accessible to the Arabs, made him rise above his tribal sentiments and partisanship and even forget his tribal lineage. Accordingly, he warned Qutaibah when the latter intended to revolt in Farghānah against the authority of the new caliph Sulaimān b. 'Abd al-Malik, advising him not to shut his eyes to the conspirators from Tamīm whom he accuses of being oppressors; Azd whom he accuses of being treacherous; and he even admonishes the tribe of Bakr whom he accuses of making lawful that which is forbidden. Nahār goes beyond this to state that if Qutaibah does not eliminate the conspirators, he will face the same fate as Ibn Khāzim, in spite of the fact that the latter was the bitter enemy of the tribe of Bakr. He says:

O Qutaibah b. Muslim, be brave like a tiger and be prepared, because Tamīm are transgressors and the offspring of transgressors. Do not trust the rebels and do not be careless, because the warrior is not caught napping. Do not have confidence either in Azd because treachery is their field, nor in Bakr to whom belong violators of the forbidden. O Qutaibah, I am afraid you will face the disgrace of a day like that of Ibn Khāzim.<sup>68</sup>

فان تمينا ظالم وابن ظالم	تمر وشمريا قتيب بن مسلم
فان أخوا الهيجا ليس بنائم	ولا تأمن الثائرين ولا تنم
ويكر فمهم مستحل المحارم	ولا تثقن بالأزد فالغد رفيهم
محرّة يوم مثل يوم ابن خازم	واني لأخشى يا قتيب عليكم

<sup>68</sup>Naqā'id, 359.

The attitude assumed by Nahār, in the aforementioned verses, is to a certain extent similar to that assumed by Qutaibah himself who, when he felt the tribesmen of Khurāsān beginning to desert him after he had appealed to them for support in his revolt against the new caliph Sulaimān, made a speech in which he reproached all the Arab tribes of Khurāsān, humiliating them and reminding them of their former shortcomings; none of the tribes escaped his recriminations including his own tribe Qais.<sup>69</sup> Thus one may safely assume that the speech of Qutaibah inspired Nahār to the aforementioned verses although he did not dare to call down the tribe of Qais. It would appear that Qutaibah found in the verses of Nahār a reiteration of his own thoughts, therefore when he heard them recited he said to Nahār, "you have spoken the truth".<sup>70</sup>

However, Nahār's alienation from his tribe was only of short duration and was quickly banished, and it would appear that it represented nothing more than an emotional turmoil, which diverted him for a while from his tribal partisanship. In this respect Nahār displays a similarity to the Azdite poet, Ka'b al-Ashqarī, who when he praised Qutaibah forgot his former loyalty to the Azdite chiefs, i.e. the B. al-Muhallab and satirized them.<sup>71</sup> However, Ka'b after the killing of Qutaibah repented of his poetry against Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, apologized to him and described Qutaibah as

---

<sup>69</sup> See Futūḥ, 594; Naqā'id, 354; Ṭabarī, II, 1287.

<sup>70</sup> Naqā'id, 360.

<sup>71</sup> See Aghānī, XIV, 299.

a tyrant and oppressor.<sup>72</sup> Similarly Nahār after the killing of Qutaibah turned his back on him, describing him as a tyrant and an oppressor, and boasting that his tribe took part in his assassination. Thus:

When we found that al-Bāhilī Ibn Muslim had become a tyrant, we struck his head with a sharp sword.<sup>73</sup>

ولما رأينا الباهلي ابن مسلم      تجبر عمناه غضبا مهتدا

This new stance assumed by Nahār is completely in harmony with that assumed by his tribe and their allies against Qutaibah. This is because the brain behind the revolt against Qutaibah and his assassination was the Bakrite chief, al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir, who used his shrewdness to break the alliance between the tribe of Qais and Tamīm and exploited the tribe of Tamīm, which was the most numerous of the Arab tribes of Khurāsān, against Qutaibah and thus he made the crushing of Qutaibah's revolt easy by staging counter-insurgency.<sup>74</sup> He boasted of the killing of Qutaibah and said:

Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Zahr one after the other struck with their swords at the head of the crowned hero.<sup>75</sup>

وان ابن سعد وابن زحر تعاورا      بسيفيهما رأس الهمام المنوج

Initially Nahār saw no harm in praising Wakī' b. Abī

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 292.

<sup>73</sup>Naqā'id, 364; Ṭabarī, II, 1301.

<sup>74</sup>See Naqā'id, 358-362; Ṭabarī, II, 1289-1297; Kāmil, V, 6-7.

<sup>75</sup>Naqā'id, 362; Ṭabarī, II, 1297.

Sūd al-Ghudānī, who led the revolt against Qutaibah and thus seized power in Khurāsān, especially because both tribes, Bakr and Tamīm, were united in their aim of deposing of Qutaibah. However Nahār in his praise of Wakī' slanders the B. 'Amr, Qutaibah's family, and deems their revolt to be the destruction of Arabs in Khurāsān. He exaggerates the role played by Wakī', endears his personality to the people and thus glorifies his ability in taking responsibility over Khurāsān, and his ability in destroying the concentrations of polytheists. He portrays the tribes as being re-united under the standard of Islam and giving their allegiance to the new caliph, Sulaimān b. 'Abd al-Malik, whom he describes as the Mahdī; he says:

Banū 'Amr wanted us to die unmissed, but instead their corpses were left unmissed. The Syrians will be informed of our battle which is credited solely to Wakī', the Handhalite.

The people of Irāq have entrusted their affairs to a person who is capable of bearing the trust.

He has a black standard, on the frontier, which continues to rout concentrations of polytheists.

It [standard] is blessed and guides the troops, like an eagle shaking its wings to strike.

It is the only flag still in obedience to al-Mahdī [i.e. the caliph].

Thus the Muslims have agreed on the best thing that any people can agree upon; that is religion which has no imperfection.<sup>76</sup>

أراد بنو عمرو لنهلك ضيعة	فقد تركت أجسامهم بمضيح
ستبلغ أهل الشام عنا وقيحة	صفا ذكرها للحنظلي وكيسح
وقد أسندت أهل العراق أمورها	الى حامل ما حطوه منيـح
له راية بالشجر سودا لم تزل	تفض بها للمشركين جموع

<sup>76</sup>Naqā'id, 364.



عقاب نحت من ريشها لوقوع	مباركة تهدي الجنود كأنها
فأبنا وأمر المسلمين جميع	على طاعة المهدي لم يبق غيرها
على الدين دينا ليس فيه صدوع	على خير ما كانت تكون جماعة

In this respect, Nahār mirrors the general views of his tribe and allies, pleased with the caliphate of Sulaimān who hated al-Ḥajjāj and men such as Qutaibah because they had attempted to block his succession to the caliphate.<sup>77</sup>

Thus many of the poets of the tribe of Bakr such as Abū al-Najm al-'Ijlī,<sup>78</sup> Ḥamzah b. Bīd,<sup>79</sup> A'shā Shaibān<sup>80</sup> and others praised Sulaimān especially because he had shielded Yazīd b. al-Muhallab from the wrath of al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>81</sup>

The governorship of Wakī' had barely lasted nine months when Sulaimān deposed him and gave the governorship of Khurāsān to Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, the governor of Iraq,<sup>82</sup> and thus the position of the tribe of Azd, the allies of the tribe of Bakr, reached its zenith in Khurāsān. The new governor was among those praised by Bakrite poets in Iraq and Khurāsān due to the alliance between the tribes of Azd and Bakr, and because Yazīd at times respected the covenant between the two tribes. He advised his son, Makhlid, whom he installed as deputy over Jurjān saying: "Look at the tribe of Rabī'ah, they are your followers and supporters so

<sup>77</sup> Tabarī, II, 1283-1284.

<sup>78</sup> Ibn Jinnī, Sirr Sinā'at al-I'rāb, I, 272.

<sup>79</sup> Aghānī, XVI, 220, Irshād, IV, 146; 'Asākir, IV, 440.

<sup>80</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 136; Marzūqī, 1778.

<sup>81</sup> Tabarī, II, 1208.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 1306.

give them their rights".<sup>83</sup> Abu 'Alī al-Qālī quotes three verses composed by Nahār in praise of Yazīd, when the latter was reappointed over Khurāsān, in which he lauds the generosity of Yazīd's father to the wronged, orphans and poor. He again alludes to Qutaibah stating that he was indifferent to him and did not heed Qutaibah's aversion for him since God, the only Benefactor, was keeping Yazīd and his brother Makhlid alive; he says:

O Qutaibah, if my crime is that I praised a person who was unique in glory... who was the father of every wronged and helpless one. And the aid of the helpless women who turned for help right and left. So, do whatever you like; if you wrong me God is my Benefactor, who keeps Yazīd and Makhlid alive.<sup>84</sup>

مدحت امرأة قد كان في المجد أوحدا	ان كان ذنبي يا قتيبة أنني
ونيث مغنيات أطلن التـلددا	أيا كل مظلوم ومن لا أبا له
الي اذا أبقى يزيد ومخلدا	فشأنك ان الله ان سؤت محسن

Just as Nahār was motivated by tribal loyalty in his praise - poetry, this is likewise the feeling that motivated his surviving satirical poetry. The earliest surviving satirical verses of Nahār are the fragments composed by him against Qutaibah when the latter came as a governor to Khurāsān in 85 A.H., in place of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab. These proceedings displeased the Bakrites because they were in alliance with the tribe of Azd against Mudar from which Qutaibah's tribe, i.e. Qais, was descended; and thus when al-Ḥajjāj summoned Yazīd to Iraq, the latter consulted al-Ḥuḍain b. al-Mundhir, the most famous Bakrite chief in Khurāsān, who suggested that Yazīd should refuse

<sup>83</sup>Sharḥ, XVII, 25.

<sup>84</sup>Amālī, II, 199.

al-Hajjāj's demands and write directly to the caliph to ask him to keep him in office.<sup>85</sup> Nahār felt displeasure at the appointment of Qutaibah, the Qaisite, over Khurāsān and welcomed him by composing satirical poetry of which only two fragments have survived. In the first, Nahār makes a comparison and hence prefers Yazīd and his father to Qutaibah and his father. He also portrays the B. Bāhilah, the clan from which Qutaibah came, as a clan amongst whom generosity has died while evil flourishes; thus he says:

O Qutaibah, we said when you came to us:  
 "You are indeed a bad replacement for the  
 praiseworthy Yazīd".  
 Al-Muhallab [father of Yazīd] was not like  
 your father.  
 How different your quality is, contemptible  
 and mean!  
 What a difference there is between one who  
 reached [high position] by playing cymbals  
 and one who reached [it] equipped with a  
 sword amidst raging war.  
 [You are] the cross-eyed one of Bāhilah in  
 whose reign generosity has died and evil  
 flourished.<sup>86</sup>

أقتيب قد قلنا غداة أتيتنا	بدل لحمك من يزيد أعور
ان المهلب لم يكن كأبيكم	هيهاشأ أنكم أدق وأحقر
شتان من بالصنج أدرك والذى	بالسيف شمر والحروب تسعر
حولان باهلة الألى في ملكهم	مات التدى فيهم وعاش المنكر

Ibn Khallikān ascribes the aforementioned verses to 'Abd Allāh b. Hammām al-Salūlī. Ibn Khallikān, however, was not certain in his ascription and thus comments: "It is said that these verses were not composed by 'Abd Allāh b.

<sup>85</sup>Tabarī, II, 1141; Kāmīl, IV, 207.

<sup>86</sup>Shu'arā', 537; Wafayāt, VI, 290; Anon., Majmū'at al-Ma'ānī, 171.

Hammām, but by Nahār b. Tawsi'ah, and only God knows".<sup>87</sup>

It would seem reasonable that the verses should be ascribed to Nahār, for Ibn Hammām was a Kufan poet<sup>88</sup> and did not emigrate to Khurāsān; equally he belonged to the tribe of Qais and it is unthinkable that a Qaisite poet should prefer an Azdite governor to a governor from his own tribe.

In the second fragment, Nahār laments the blessing of the past when Yazīd was governor and the doors of generosity had been flung wide open. He expresses his displeasure at the arrival of Qutaibah and portrays him in a humorous caricature, saying:

Khurāsān was a land, where, when Yazīd was there, every door of prosperity was open. But now it has received instead Qutaibah of the grasping fingers whose face seems as if it were besprinkled with vinegar.<sup>89</sup>

كانت خراسان أرضاً إذ يزيد بها  
وكل باب من الخيرات مفتوح  
فاستقبلت قتباً جعداً أناطه  
كأنما وجهه بالخلّ منضوح

Some sources link the above two verses with three other verses and ascribe them to Mālik b. al-Raib,<sup>90</sup> but this is manifestly false, since Qutaibah was appointed to Khurāsān in 85 A.H., while Mālik died about 60 A.H.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>87</sup>Wafayāt, VI, 290.

<sup>88</sup>See Fādīl, 79; Mubarrad, II, 276; Aghānī, XVI, 31; Abū Zaid, al-Nawādir fī al-Lughah 4; Ansāb, V, 191.

<sup>89</sup>Shu'arā', 537; Mu'talif, 193; 'Uyūn, III, 155; 'Iqd, II, 146; Mu'jam, I, 843; al-Zawzanī, Hamāsāt al-Zurafā' min Ash'ār al-Muḥdathīn wa al-Qudama', II, 143; Ibn Abī 'Awn, Kitāb al-Tashbīhāt, 71; al-Maqdisī, al-Bad' wa al-Tārīkh, VI, 37.

<sup>90</sup>See Futūḥ, 579; Mu'jam, I, 843.

<sup>91</sup>See Tabarī, II, 178; Marzubānī, 364.

Although Nahār glorifies the role of Wakī' in leading the revolt against Qutaibah, Wakī' failed to live up to his people's expectations. He went beyond the limits set by religion and was not satisfied with merely flogging a drunkard but sentenced him to death. When he was reminded of the statutory penalties, he replied: "I punish not by the lash but by the sword".<sup>92</sup> He was a scandalously partisan supporter of Mudār against Rabī'ah. He once made a speech in which he reiterated what Ibn Khāzim used to say, namely that Rabī'ah was always raging against God since he had raised up the Prophet from Mudār. In the same speech, he accused Rabī'ah of being cowardly and showing timidity in battle.<sup>93</sup> For such reasons, the Bakrites altered their opinion of him. The Bakrite chief, al-Ḥudain b. al-Mundhir, who had formerly suggested that Wakī' would lead the revolt against Qutaibah, reminds the B. Tamīm in a fragment that his allies, the Azdites, were those who had killed Qutaibah and supported the tribe of Tamīm in seeking revenge. Al-Ḥudain lauds these Azdites who killed Qutaibah while he satirizes Wakī' and describes him as having a disfigured face. He says:

Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Zahr one after the other  
struck with their swords at the head of the  
crowned hero.

Banū Minqar could not avenge their blood-  
feud with Qais 'Ailān except with the help  
of Azd and Madhhij ...

On that evening when we came with Ibn Zahr  
and you [Banū Tamīm] came with [Wakī'] the  
dark-lipped, the one with marked arms, the  
dark deaf man of Ghudān whose forehead is like

---

<sup>92</sup>Naqā'id, 364; Ṭabarī, II, 1301.

<sup>93</sup>Bayān, II, 237.

a blot of ink on leather with scribbles on it.<sup>94</sup>

بسيقيهما رأس الهمام التوج	وان ابن سعد وابن زحرتعاورا
بنو منقرا لا بالازد ومذحج	وما أدركت في قيس عيلان وترها
بأدغم مرقوم الذراعين ديزج	عشيّة جئنا بابن زحرو جئتم
لطاخة نفس في أديم مجمجم	أصمّ غداني كأن جبينه

Nothing has survived of Nahār's satirical poetry on Wakī' except the following verse in which he describes Wakī' as more evil and wicked than Qutaibah:

We used to lament [our misfortune] at the hand of the Bahilī, but this Ghudānī has proved to be a greater evil.<sup>95</sup>

وكنّا نبكي من الباهلي      فهذا الغداني شر وشر

Although Nahār eagerly supported the alliance with Azd and preferred the governor to be from them rather than from Muḍar, he did not always support them unreservedly. He inclined to them as long as they maintained the covenant between the two tribes, were loyal to Bakr and respected their rights. But when they departed from the covenant and neglected their duty towards the tribe of Bakr, then Nahār swiftly turned his back on them by satirizing and threatening them. In this he adopted the stance of his tribe, became its mouth-piece and gave their interests the highest priority. However the relationship between the two allies, Bakr and Azd, was not always sullied, and it would appear that the alliance itself was not always strong and

<sup>94</sup>Naqā'id, 362; Ṭabarī, II, 1297.

<sup>95</sup>Naqā'id, 364; Ṭabarī, II, 1301.

they were obliged to renew it again and again either in Iraq or in Khurāsān. Likewise every tribe appears to exploit the alliance for their own interests. Thus when the interests of the tribes were opposed, the poets of both tribes involved themselves in satirizing the other side and defending their own tribe. For example, Abū al-Faraj reports that when Rabī'ah allied themselves to the Yemenites, they and Azd used to group round Yazīd b. al-Muhallab. When Rabī'ah felt that Yazīd had set back their affairs, they provoked discord against him until he put matters right. Thus the Azdite poet, Thābit Quṭnah, satirized the tribe of Bakr, accusing them of being skilled in inciting evil and withdrawing at times of difficulty. Thus he says:<sup>96</sup>

عصافيرتنزو في الفساد وفي الوغى      اذا راعها روع جماهيع بروق

When Yazīd b. al-Muhallab was re-appointed over Khurāsān in 97 A.H., he favoured the Syrians there and depended on them and some others, neglecting the tribe of Bakr. Nahār was infuriated, changed his opinion of Yazīd, and threatened him with a mutiny of Bakr if he did not show them favour again. He says:

We did not expect of any amīr what we expected of Yazīd, but we are disappointed and for long we have been used to abstain from the company of the niggardly.

If an amīr does not give us our rights, we march against him like lions.

Now, Yazīd, show us favour, and relieve us of the company of your servants.

When we come to you we see in you only aversion, although we greet you from a distance.

And we go back disappointed and unfavoured.

<sup>96</sup>Aghānī, XIV, 280.

What is the reason for frowning and aversion.<sup>97</sup>

كما كنا نؤهل من يزيد	وما كنا نؤهل من أمير
زهدنا في معاشره الزهيد	فأخطأ ظننا فيه وقدا
هشينا نحوه مشي الأسود	إذا لم يعطنا نصفا أمير
ودعنا من معاشره العبيد	فمهلا يا يزيد أنب الينا
على أنا نسلّم من بحيد	نجىء فلا نرى الا صدودا
فما بال التجهم والصدود	ونرجع خائبين بلا نوال

When Yazīd b. al-Muhallab embezzled the wealth gained

from his conquest of Jurjān, failed to pay the portion due to the treasury, displayed meanness and was imprisoned by 'Adī b. Arṭah, the governor of Basra, on the order of the new caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz,<sup>98</sup> the Bakrites found no grounds to support Yazīd, especially since the new caliph was not fanatically loyal to any single tribe and had come to power on the recommendation of his predecessors, Sulaimān, whose caliphate was appreciated by the Bakrites. On the contrary, the Bakrites later rejoiced at the crushing of Yazīd's revolt. I have been unable to find a single verse composed by any Bakrite poet which elegizes the B. al-Muhallab in spite of the long-standing alliance which linked the tribe of Bakr with the tribe of Azd. Nahār portrays the standing of Yazīd as an orator as humiliation to the pulpit. He describes him and the Azdites in general as being afflicted with senility and blemished by meanness in old age. Thus he says:

<sup>97</sup>Tabarī, II, 1313; Kāmil, V, 10; Sharḥ, III, 267.

<sup>98</sup>Tabarī, II, 1351.



The pulpit wood, in which you stand carrying a stick in your hands, has endured humiliation. When you approached old age, I saw you suffering from what the aged of Azd suffer, i.e. insanity and avarice.

Whoever wishes to find fault with al-Mazūn will find shame in you.<sup>99</sup>

لقد صبرت للذل أعواد منبر	تقوم عليها في يدك قضيب
رأيتك لما شبت أدركك الذي	يصيب شيوخ الأزدي حين تشيب
بخفة أحلام وقلبة نسائل	وفيك لمن عاب المزون محيب

Also the Bakrites could not bear Asad al-Qasrī's desertion of them and his favouring the Yemenites, and thus they were irritated by this. The Bakrite poet, Abū al-Barīd, having praised Asad and considered him the best king,<sup>100</sup> turned his back on him, rebuked the tribe of Azd in general and accused them of breaking the agreement of alliance first ratified in Basra during the lifetime of Mālik b. Misma' and Mas'ūd b. 'Amr, which laid down that both tribes should have equal rights and support each other; saying:<sup>101</sup>

ان ينقض الأزدي حلفا كان أكده	في سالف الدهر مسعود وعباد
وما لك وسويد أكسدها معا	لما تجرد فيه أي تجريد
حتى تنادوا أذاك الله ضاحية	وفي الجلود من الايقاع تقصيد

Likewise Nahār did not appreciate the manner in which the Yemenites, who had grouped themselves round Asad, swarmed to receive presents on the festival day. He accuses them of disappearing at difficult times while they were numerous at times of festival. He criticizes them in a poem of which

<sup>99</sup>Naqā'id, 368.

<sup>100</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1490.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 1497.

only the following verse has survived and this verse represents the last extant verse of his poetry; he says:

Your numbers decline if you are called to a war to be recompensed [only by God], while you turn up in great numbers during festivals.<sup>102</sup>

تقلّون ان نادى لرّوع مشوّب      وأنتم غداة المهرجان كثير

The aforementioned two types of poetry, i.e. praising and satirizing, encompass most of the surviving poetry of Nahār. Unfortunately I have been unable to find any fragments of other types of poetry composed by him except two elegiac fragments and certain meagre fragments of fakhr (boasting) poetry. In the first of the elegiac fragments he elegizes his brother 'Itbān, whose date of death is unknown to us. He shows himself to be changed in state, says his pride has been wiped away and that he is without helpers after the death of those whom he used to consult when faced by misfortune. The verses run:

O 'Itbān, I was a man of position until I was afflicted by the loss of you - fortunes do decline. I was difficult to handle, cared for nothing and looked from the outer angle of my eye [by reason of pride].

Then I straightened my sight and crushed my pride.

And I lost my friends during whose life I used to give or retain as I desired.

Whose advice shall I seek if I face a calamity, and with whom will I seek refuge?!

A day must come once when I shall be mourned, lying in shroud, unable to hear.<sup>103</sup>

عتبان قد كنت امرأً لي جانب      حتى رزيتك والجدود تضعضع

قد كنت أشوس في المقامة سادراً      فنظرت قصدي واستقام الأخدع

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 1638; 'Asākir, II, 461.

<sup>103</sup>Manāzil, 412; Marzūqī, 952.

وقد كنت أعطي ما أشاء وأمنح	وفقدت اخواني الذين بعيشهم
أرني برأيك أو الى من أفرع	فلمن أقول اذا تلم مصيبة
بيكي عليك مفتحا لا تسمع	فليأتين عليك يوم مـرة

In the second fragment Nahār specifically elegizes al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufrah who died in 82 A.H., at Marw al-Rūdh, after ruling Khurāsān for four years. In this fragment Nahār heightens the calamity generated by the death of al-Muhallab. Thus invasions which had procured wealth have ceased and generosity has died. He glorifies the role of al-Muhallab in the conquests when he spurred on his horses over rugged land, the horses not fearing stab wounds but returning safely, achieving triumph and smeared with blood. He also portrays al-Muhallab as being dear to all the Arab tribes in Khurāsān and supporting the tribes of Qaḥṭān and their allies from Bakr and Taghlib; equally he was a refuge for the tribes of Ma'add who were ready to ransom him with their fathers and mothers. The verses which depict this run:

After al-Muhallab, wealth-procuring campaigns have vanished and bounties and generosity have died.

They [bounties and generosity] have remained fixed to his tomb at Marw al-Rūdh and have stayed away from both east and west.

When it is asked: 'who is the benefactor of the people', we say: 'It is he' and we do not hesitate.

He opened to us lands plain and rugged, with horses that advance like successive flight of sand grouse.

He used to expose them [horses] to piercing as if to cover them in purple dye. Qaḥṭān were congregating round him, supporting him together with their allies, Bakr and Taghlib.

And both the Ma'addite tribes used to take refuge in his flag.

Theyransomed him with themselves, and  
their mothers and fathers.<sup>104</sup>

وما تالندى والجود بعد المهلب	ألا ذهب الغزو المقرب للغنى
وقد غيبا من كل شرق ومغرب	أقاما بمرو الروذ رهن ضريحه
على الناس قلناه ولم نتهميـب	إذا قيل أي الناس أولى بنعمة
بخيل كأرسال القطا المتسرب	أباح لنا سهل البلاد وحزنها
يجللهـا بالأرجوان المخضب	يعرضها للطعن حتى كأنما
وأحلافها من حي بكر وتغلب	تطيف به قحطان قد عصبت له
يفدّونه بالنفس والأب	وحيا معدّ عوذ بلوائه

It would appear that this emotional commemoration is exaggerated by Nahār, and that he was not motivated by a genuine admiration of al-Muhallab's military ability, since the latter did not achieve remarkable victories in Khurāsān. However it would seem that Nahār was driven by tribal orthodoxies since the alliance between his tribe Bakr and the tribe of al-Muhallab, the Azd, was formed in Khurāsān during the governorship of al-Muhallab who keenly supported it.

Of the fakhr of Nahār what has survived is very meagre, and what there is is dominated by tribalism and expresses the partiality, which dominated the feelings of most poets of the Umayyad era. Nahār boasts of the killing of Qutaibah, attributing it to his tribe; and making use of the first person plural pronoun 'we', he says:

When we found the Bāhiliī Ibn Muslim had  
become a tyrant, we struck his head with a  
sharp sword.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>104</sup>Shu'arā', 538; Tabarī, II, 1084; Kāmil, IV, 197, 235; Tanbīh, 278; Wafayāt, IV, 87, V, 354; Amālī, II, 198-199; Mu'jam, IV, 506; 'Iqd, III, 298; Lubāb, 31.

<sup>105</sup>Naqā'id, 364; Tabarī, II, 1301.

ولما رأينا الباهلي ابن مسلم      تجبر عممناه غضبا مهتدا

In one of the fragments in which Nahār satirizes Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, he boasts of the might and power of his tribe who refuse to accept injustice from any amīr, saying:

If an amīr does not allow us our rights,  
we march against him like lions.<sup>106</sup>

إذا لم يعطنا نصفا أمير      مشينا نحوه مشي الأسود

When al-Junaid al-Murri selected Nahār to be the head of a delegation to the caliph Hishām, formerly under Saif b. Waṣṣāf who now feared to go, Nahār composed the following fragment in which he boasts of his power and ability to put himself in danger. Even boasting of himself, Nahār does not forget his tribal loyalty. Thus he boasts of his tribe describing them as people who had been accustomed to take part in delegations since the reign of 'Uthmān, the third caliph, and even before. He also portrays them as the people of the old and new glory, saying:

By your life, you did not favour me when you delegated me, but you did expose me to dangers. You invited people for this responsibility but they were afraid to undertake it, while I am a person who ventures upon dangers. I believe that unless God protects me I will be carrion for beasts or birds that circle over corpses. I am the companion of 'Arāk whose death is easy to you and still you have given him letters to carry. Although he is a nearer relative to you, I have the greater rights to the gifts of the caliphs.

During the reign of 'Uthmān and even before we

---

<sup>106</sup>Tabarī, II, 1313; Kāmil, V, 10; Sharḥ, III, 267.

were delegated and we are people of glory,  
old and new.<sup>107</sup>

ولكنما عرضتني للمتالف	لحمرك ما حابيتني اذ بعثتني
وكنت امرأ ركابة للمخاوف	دعوت لها قوما فهابوا ركوبها
طعام سباع أو لطير عوائف	فأيقنت ان لم يدفع الله أنسي
عليك وقد زملتته بصحائف	قرين عراك وهو أيسر هالك
لأعظم حقا في جباة الخلائف	فاني وان آثرت منه قرابسة
وكننا أولي مجد طريف وتالد	على عهد عثمان وفدنا وقبله

Ibn Qutaibah and al-Mubarrad ascribe a fragment to Nahār, in which he casts aside tribal sentiment, rejects tribal boasting, and declares that he belongs to Islam which makes people equal, and that piety not ancestry is the criteria for measuring nobility and esteem. The verses run as follows:

My parent is Islam beside which I have no other when they boast of Bakr and Tamīm. Either tribe supports one claiming descent from among its members in order to link him up with those of noble descent. But there is no nobility in descent - even though such origins are noble - only the pious man is noble.<sup>108</sup>

اذا فخروا ب بكر أو تميم	أبي الاسلام لا أبلي سواه
ليلحقه بذى الحساب المميم	كلا الحيين ينصر مدعيه
ولكن التقي هو الكريم	وما حسب ولو كرمت عروقي

On the aforementioned verses al-Nuṣṣ comments, saying:  
"Amongst the voices half-heartedly raised against tribalism, is that of Nahār who preferred belonging to Islam to belonging

<sup>107</sup>Tabarī, II, 1545.

<sup>108</sup>Mubarrad, III, 179; Shu'arā', 537.

to the tribe of Bakr or Tamīm".<sup>109</sup> 'Aṭwān, followed al-Nuṣṣ, says: "Nahār in the aforementioned verses was motivated by reason, perspicacity and open-mindedness, casting aside his emotions and freeing himself from tribalism".<sup>110</sup> It would appear that these two writers took for granted that the verses were composed by Nahār although al-Marzubānī ascribes them to the Kharijite poet from Bakr, 'Isā b. 'Ātik al-Khaṭṭī.<sup>111</sup> There is not the slightest evidence within these verses that they were composed by Nahār, and they even display deviations from the norm when compared to Nahār's surviving, strongly tribalist, poetry. Whereas when they are compared to the surviving poetry of 'Isā,<sup>112</sup> where Islamic features are dominant, these verses exhibit no such incompatibility.

In conclusion, it can be argued that Nahār was the poet of Bakr in Khurāsān who defended them and was their mouth-piece. His personality was fused with the personality of his tribe and thus he did not see any harm in praising those whom he had previously satirized, or satirizing those whom he had previously praised, because the views of his tribe superimposed themselves over his own views. From another point of view his poetry mirrors the reality of the tribe of Bakr in Khurāsān and its relation with other Arab tribes there; the Bakrites were rarely on good terms with

---

<sup>109</sup> Al-Nuṣṣ, al-'Aṣabiyyah al-Qabaliyyah wa Atharuhā fī al-Shi'r al-Umawī, 375.

<sup>110</sup> 'Aṭwān, al-Shi'r al-'Arabī bi Khurāsān fī al-'Asr al-Umawī, 287.

<sup>111</sup> Marzubānī, 258.

<sup>112</sup> See 'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 12-15.

the Muḍarite tribes and their relation even with their allies, the Azdites, was not completely devoid of turbulence. Had Nahār's dīwān survived, it would have cast light on his personality and that of his tribe to a deeper and more comprehensive extent. The description of Nahār by Ibn Qutaibah as being the most gifted poet of the tribe of Bakr in Khurāsān is specific and imposes limits on Nahār's fame, for the Bakrites in Khurāsān did not produce any poet who would vie with the master poets of the Umayyad era such as Jarīr, al-Farazdaq, al-Akḥṭal, al-Rā'ī and others. The surviving verses of Nahār indicate that he did not follow the traditional artistic constraints of the ancient Arab poetry which were slavishly followed by the famous poets of his era other than in Khurāsān. He did not employ extended poetical imagery nor did he probe its limits; he immediately gives the reader the idea he wants to convey without repeating it in more than one poetical image, as famous poets used to do. However it should not be forgotten that the surviving poetry of Nahār is fragmentary and it is unjust to describe the artistic merits of Nahār merely on the basis of such fragments while his dīwān is lost. We can be safe in assuming that his dīwān would have displayed his poetical technique and creativity more effectively than the fragments from which we are now forced to make the basis of our aesthetic judgment.



## CHAPTER VI

AL-'UDAIL B. AL-FARKH

The information we have on the life of al-'Udail is scant and at times self-contradictory; moreover the poems or parts of poems that have come down to us are few in number. With the exception of the short account by Ibn Qutaibah,<sup>1</sup> the brief chapter by Abū al-Faraj<sup>2</sup> on al-'Udail, and the seven poems selected by Ibn Maimūn in his *Muntahā al-Ṭalab*<sup>3</sup> from the poetry of al-'Udail, the remainder of the sources which mention al-'Udail suffice to give only a very meagre account of his life and poetry, some of the latter merely repeating the information supplied by Ibn Qutaibah or Abū al-Faraj without adding further details. Al-Baghdādī<sup>4</sup> confines himself to repeating the information given by Ibn Qutaibah, whilst other sources merely mention al-'Udail without adding anything about his life or poetry. Among those is al-Ṭayālīsī who merely says "al-'Udail the famous poet".<sup>5</sup>

Among modern commentators who have concerned themselves with al-'Udail is Lewis Cheikho who gives a chapter to the poet.<sup>6</sup> With the exception of the claim by Cheikho

---

<sup>1</sup>Shu'arā', 413-414.

<sup>2</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 327-343.

<sup>3</sup>Nurī al-Qaisī edited these poems together with some fragments by al-'Udail in his *Shu'arā' Umawīyyūn* which is devoted to collecting the available poetry of certain poets of the Umayyad era.

<sup>4</sup>Baghdādī, II, 367-368.

<sup>5</sup>Kitāb al-Mukātharah 'ind al-Mudhākarah, 42.

<sup>6</sup>Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islam, 213-228.

that al-'Udail was Christian, he merely copies some of the points contained in the Aghānī without any detailed analysis although the accounts given by the Aghānī are sometimes contradictory. Cheikho also cites some verses attributed to al-'Udail from some other sources.

The majority of our sources are in agreement that the name of our poet is al-'Udail, but al-Zabīdī says: "Al-'Udail b. al-Farkh, a well-known poet. In some copies it is 'Adīl without the letter "L" and this is the correct form".<sup>7</sup> Thus the name of our poet, according to al-Zabīdī is "'Adī". However, al-Zabīdī's claim cannot be substantiated because the genealogists, among whom Ibn al-Kalbī was the most prominent, mention him as al-'Udail and because al-Zabīdī does not supply the reader with evidence for his judgement. Moreover, al-Zabīdī's work is of a late date when compared to some of the other commentators concerned with al-'Udail. Ibn Qutaibah mentions that al-'Udail was known by the laqab (nickname) of al-'Abbāb which was the name of his dog.<sup>8</sup>

None of the traditional sources mentions a kunya for al-'Udail. Al-'Udail himself does not mention sons in his poetry, but he does mention in a fragment,<sup>9</sup> his wife and daughters, who were robbed of their ornaments, as we shall see, by a client of al-Ḥajjāj when al-'Udail escaped

---

<sup>7</sup> Tāj, 'adala.

<sup>8</sup> Shu'arā', 413; Baghdādī, II, 368.

<sup>9</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 336-337.

from al-Ḥajjāj. Abū al-Faraj reports that al-'Udail had eight brothers amongst whom were Aswad, Sawādah, Shamlah or Salamah and al-Ḥārith who were both poets and knights.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, I have been unable to trace any verse attributed to them, with the exception of one verse attributed to Sawādah who composed it when his cousin 'Amr struck him with a sword and severed his leg, the verse runs as follows:<sup>11</sup>

ألا من يشتري رجلا برجل      تأبى للقيام فلا تقوم

Al-'Udail was a member of the B. 'Ijl b. Lujaim, one of the most eminent sections of the tribe of Bakr. His mother was called Darmā'.<sup>12</sup> She was from the B. Shaibān about whom it is said: "None of the Arab tribes is mightier than Shaibān nor has more allies than them".<sup>13</sup> Al-'Udail feels strongly about his noble descent from both his father and his mother, and says:

Not only does my mother belong to Shaibān,  
but I as well am a white 'Ijlī of good  
descent.<sup>14</sup>

فان تك من شيان أمي فاني      لأبيض عجلي عريض المفارق

The abodes of the B. 'Ijl extended roughly from Ḥīrah to al-Ṣammān<sup>15</sup> before the advent of Islam. It would appear

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>13</sup> *Kāmil*, I, 254.

<sup>14</sup> *Aghānī*, XXII, 326, 339; *Ma'āhid*, I, 26.

<sup>15</sup> See above p. 38.

that the B. 'Ijl were on good terms with their neighbours the B. Shaibān of Bakr, because in most of their ayyām before Islam, they supported each other and fought side by side against the B. Tamīm of Muḍar,<sup>16</sup> and others. Amongst the most notable battles of which the Bakrites boast is the victory at Dhū Qār over the Persians. Both the clans of 'Ijl and that of Shaibān played a prominent role in the latter battle in which 'Ijl were led by Ḥanḏalah b. Sayyār who refused to submit to the demands of the Chosroe, while Hāni' b. Mas'ūd, the leader of Shaibān, was about to flee into the desert with his kindred.<sup>17</sup> Because of Ḥanḏalah's steadfastness, some of our sources refer to him as the leader of the whole Bakr tribe and they glorify the role of 'Ijl and its performance in the battle.<sup>18</sup>

The B. 'Ijl embraced Islam shortly after the yawm of al-Shayyṭān, which took place around 9 A.H.<sup>19</sup> 'Ijl itself was an important participant in the Islamic conquest amongst other sections of Bakr, especially in the conquest of Iraq, to the extent that they fought under their own standard in the battle of al-Buwaib<sup>20</sup> in 14 A.H. After this conquest, some of the B. 'Ijl settled in Iraq, Basra and Kufa, while the majority remained in their former abodes. The ayyām of Bakr, in general, and of the B. 'Ijl in particular, their old history, and their famous men, provided al-'Udail with

---

<sup>16</sup>For examples, see: Naqā'id, 47, 144, 781, 1019.

<sup>17</sup>See Naqā'id, 640; 'Iqd, V, 262-263.

<sup>18</sup>Naqā'id, 641; Ishtiḡāq, 346; Tanbīh, 207; Bakrī, III, 1042; Kāmil, I, 199; 'Iqd, V, 263; Jamharat, 294.

<sup>19</sup>See al-Jūrnard, Ghurrat al-'Arab; Yazīd b. Mazyad al-Shaibānī, 42-43.

<sup>20</sup>Tabarī, I, 2192.

material for his boasting poems since he descended from a famous clan of the famous Bakr tribe.

We have no information whatsoever in our sources which enables us to determine either 'Udail's date of birth, or his date of death with precision. With regard to his place of birth and where he was brought up, our sources make no direct references. Abū al-Faraj reports, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Sallām, that "al-'Udail came to Basra and praised Mālik b. Misma' who rewarded him. He stayed with Mālik and remained in Basra until his death".<sup>21</sup> This statement raises two questions: where did al-'Udail come to Basra from? and when did he come to Basra?. It is most probable that al-'Udail was born and brought up among his clan around Dhū Qār which was a watering-place for the tribe of Bakr adjacent to the Sawād of Iraq.<sup>22</sup> This assumption is reinforced by what Abū al-Faraj relates that when al-'Udail and his brothers took their swords to kill their cousin 'Amr, their mother said to them: "I take refuge with God from your evil". Her son Aswad replied: "What are you afraid of regarding us? By God, if we strike our swords on this Ḥinw (i.e., Ḥinw Qurāqir), they will not rise up against us".<sup>23</sup> The aforementioned Ḥinw is Ḥinw Dhū Qār<sup>24</sup> which is a night's walk from Dhū Qār.<sup>25</sup> Al-'Udail mentions Dhū Qār more than once in his poetry; for example,

---

<sup>21</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 343.

<sup>22</sup>Bakrī, III, 1042; Mu'jam, IV, 10.

<sup>23</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 327-328.

<sup>24</sup>Bakrī, III, 1059; Mu'jam, II, 349.

<sup>25</sup>Mu'jam, IV, 10.

the following verse which is directed to one Salmā who left Dhū Qār: the verse itself appears to be part of a prelude to a poem only four verses of which survive. It runs:<sup>26</sup>

يا دار سلمى أقفرت من ذى قار      وهل بأقفار الديار من عار

It is not far-fetched to suppose that al-'Udail took part in the battle of the Camel in the ranks of 'Alī, especially as we know that 'Alī stayed at Dhū Qār on his way to Basra, and that there the Bakrite clans joined his army,<sup>27</sup> especially men from the B. 'Ijl,<sup>28</sup> namely the clan of al-'Udail. Regarding the battle of Şiffīn in which al-'Udail took part, a fragment of a poem composed by him has come down to us in which he, as the ancient Arab poets were wont to do, portrays the bravery of his opponents, the severity of the fighting between some of 'Alī's supporters and Mu'āwiyah's Ghassānid supporters, and the defeat of Ghassān without injury to any of 'Alī's supporters. In the verses he assures us, as do other Bakrite poets who took part in the battle of Şiffīn, of his loyalty to 'Alī. The relevant verses are as follows:

I will never forget Ghassān's steadfastness  
at the hill, even if I live as long as Shamām  
[the mountain] casts its shadow.  
They are chiefs and leaders when people  
gather for the fierce battle.  
When we marched to them, they engaged us with  
high spears and bloody swords.

<sup>26</sup> Shu'arā', 414; Aghānī, XXII, 328.

<sup>27</sup> Ibn 'Umar, al-Fitnah wa Waq'at al-Jamal, 146; Kāmil, II, 96.

<sup>28</sup> Ansāb, IV/I, 187.

When the battle became fiercer, they came back but could not kill anyone dear to us . We are satisfied with the noble and steadfast old man ['Alī], who belongs to a large tribe.<sup>29</sup>

لست أنسى مقام غسان بالتسلّ وان عشت ما أظل شمام  
 سادة قادة اذا اعصوب القوم ليوم القراع عند الكدام  
 ناوشونا غداة سرنا اليهم بالحوالي وبالسيوف الدوامي  
 فتولوا ولم يصيبوا حميما عند وقح السيوف يوم اللخامي  
 ورضينا بكل كهل كريم ثابت أسسه من القمهقام

From the meagre information on the life of al-'Udail, it would appear that he lived a traditional Bedouin life and remained relatively untouched by Islam. He believed in violence and power as a means of achieving his demands without paying regard to the rule of the state or the requirements of Islam. Among his characteristics was a strong individualism which made him prefer his own interests to those of others. This can be shown by what Abū al-Faraj relates that when one of his cousins called 'Amr married another cousin without asking his permission, al-'Udail and his brothers took their swords and went to kill 'Amr who was accompanied by his slave Dābigh. They did not heed the appeal of 'Amr but insisted on fighting. As a result, four of the brothers of al-'Udail were killed, Sawādah lost his leg, and al-'Udail received a blow on the head but later recovered.<sup>30</sup> It is not reported to us whether al-'Udail went to the authorities to seek redress, however we are told that he concealed his hatred and insisted on seeking revenge from Dābigh and not from 'Amr. This feature of revenge-seeking is tribal and

<sup>29</sup> Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, III, 303; *Ṣiffīn*, 445-446.

<sup>30</sup> *Aghānī*, XXII, 327-328.

pre-Islamic, indeed Islam prohibits it though it has never succeeded in suppressing it. If we investigate the pre-Islamic battle-days, we find that revenge was their most prominent feature. The phenomenon of revenge-seeking was still strong among the Arab tribes after Islam, especially in those Bedouin tribes which had not settled in cities. It would appear that after his brothers had been killed, al-'Udail was reluctant to seek revenge from his cousin 'Amr for fear that his cousin's relations would seek revenge from him if 'Amr was killed, but Dābigh was a slave and to satisfy his desires for revenge, al-'Udail sought to kill Dābigh, who escaped to Syria.<sup>31</sup> But it happened, as we are told, that Dābigh and al-'Udail were going to perform the Ḥajj in the same year. When al-'Udail was told of this he began to spy on Dābigh. Disguising himself, he exploited a favourable situation and killed Dābigh treacherously in Wadī Ḥunain near al-Ta'if. He boasts of this treacherous action and says:

Did you not see that I struck at Dābigh  
with the sword and although it was revenge  
I did not quench my thirst.  
On the night of the full-moon, I attacked  
him, in Wadī Ḥunain with a polished white  
sword.<sup>32</sup>

وان كان ثارا لم يصبه غليلي	ألم ترني جلتت بالسيف دابغا
بأبيض من ماء الحديد صقيل	بوادى حنين ليلة البد رعتسه

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 328.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 329.



Although in the above two verses he boasts of the killing of Dābigh, he deems that his thirst for revenge has not been satisfied. There is no reason for this haughtiness except for the fact that Dābigh was a slave and the killer was a pure Arab. Al-'Udail was not unique in this respect. When he satirized Jurthūmah al-Jillānī and portrayed the b. Jillān as having no glory either in ancient times or the present:

I am satirizing the B. Jillān, who were unknown to glory, in olden times or new.<sup>33</sup>

أهاجي بني جَلان اذ لم يكن لهم حديث ولا في الأولين قديم

Jurthūmah replied to him by these two verses in which he mocks him for satirizing the nobles and generous, i.e. the B. Jillān, while he would not seek revenge except from Dābigh, who according to Jurthūmah, was of little worth and thus al-'Udail was ignoble because he boasted of killing a slave, the verses are:<sup>34</sup>

وان امرءاً يهجو الكرام ولم ينل من الثأر الا دابغاً للتيسيم  
أتطلب في جَلان وترا ترومه وفاتك في الأوتار شر غريم

Al-'Udail at this stage of his life, i.e. before he moved to Basra and settled there was extremely fanatical regarding his close relations in the clan of 'Ijl. In his sentiments, al-'Udail could not rise above the narrow tribal fanaticism which caused antagonism among families belonging to the same clan. It was as if he was a vehicle for discord

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

and stirred evil. Abū al-Faraj relates, on the authority of Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī, that a man of the B. 'Ukābah, the family of al-'Udail, cut off the nose of a certain Jabbār, one of the B. al-Ṭāghiyah, who were from 'Ijl. Al-'Udail glorifies the action of his relations and by caricature ridicules the man with the severed nose in his verses. He makes use of the plural pronoun 'We' as if he wants to show that the action of his relations bestowed honour on the entire family of the B. 'Ukābah, of which he was a member.

He says:

Do you not see Jabbār and the cartilaginous part of his nose with holes which need to be moved down when he wishes to clear his nose. Verily we cut off his nose, so whenever his nose appears, he feels others are his enemy [because they laugh at him].<sup>35</sup>

لم تلم يهوين أن يتنخعا      ألم ترجبّارا وما رن أنفه  
يرى الناس أعداء إذا هو أطلعا      ونحن جدعنا أنفه فكأنما

It would appear that the B. Ukābah and the B. al-Ṭāghiyah were not on friendly terms. In addition to the severing of Jabbār's nose, Abū al-Faraj mentions that one of the B. 'Ukābah hacked at the arm of Wakī', one of the B. al-Ṭāghiyah, and cut it off. Al-'Udail again exploits the situation and boasts of it, attributing the deed to himself, and mocking Wakī' with the fact that this action dealt a blow to his pride. Thus he calls upon Wakī' to content himself with feeding the camels and to stay inside with the women, because of the shame his severed hand had brought him. He says:

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 337.

I left Wakī' with his hair turned white,  
his right hand spoiled and his pride crushed.  
So, go on feeding dusky young camels with  
it and eat with it the food of the mean and  
stay inside the chambers [with women].<sup>36</sup>

تركت وكيعا بعدما شاب رأسه      أشل اليمين مستقيم الأخادع  
فشرب بها ورق الأفال وكل بها      طعام الذليل وانحرفي المخادع

This venting of anger and the bragging and mockery in his verses, against the men of the B. al-Ṭāghiyah, infuriated them, and they demanded the cutting off of 'Udail's nose and hand,<sup>37</sup> although he was not the one responsible for the original acts; this seeking of revenge from a relation of the one who had committed the outrage is a marked feature of the pre-Islamic tradition and was expressly forbidden by Islam, but nevertheless remained a prevalent feature among tribes in the bādiyah and even in the cities, especially when the central authority was weak and allowed the rise of tribalism. It would appear that al-'Udail was chosen because he was the poet of his family and their spokesman in denouncing the B. al-Ṭāghiyah. It seems that the family of al-'Udail did not have sufficient strength to protect him and his father from the B. al-Ṭāghiyah and that they had to seek refuge with 'Ufair b. Jubair, one of the B. Qais of 'Ijl. He tried to make peace between the two related clans and ordered al-Farkh, the father of al-'Udail, to acknowledge the rights of the B. al-Ṭāghiyah. When al-Farkh accompanied by Ḥassān, Waqqāf and Dīnār, all from the B. 'Ukābah, went to the B. al-Ṭāghiyah to sue for peace, the latter exploited the situation, seizing al-Farkh and

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 338.

making off with him towards Basra. In reprisal, the B. 'Ukābah seized a man of the B. al-Tāghiyah. As a result, 'Ufair found himself in a situation to intercede and al-Farkh was released. Al-'Udail uses this episode in one of his poems in eulogizing the B. Qais wherein he portrays them as generous and powerful, while he satirizes the B. al-Tāghiyah, describing them as 'ignoble' and 'base'; features prominently mentioned in the satirical poetry of that era. Al-'Udail says:

The B. Qais b. Sa'd, since the time of Dhū al-Qarnain, are used to bestow benefits and to protect. They have rescued Hassān forcibly with spears pointing [at them], since you [the B. al-Tāghiyah] are mean of spirit. You committed treachery with Dīnār and Hassān, as well as with al-Farkh who submitted himself to you.<sup>38</sup>

ما زال في قيس بن سعد لجارهم	على عهد ذي القرنين معط ومأنح
هم استنقذوا حسان قسرا وأنستم	لئام المقام والرماح شوارع
غدرتم بدینار وحسان غدره	والفرخ لما جاءكم وهو طائح

In another fragment, al-'Udail mentions that he was in debt to the B. Qais and that he was on good terms with them. Thus when al-Farazdaq was granted favours by the B. Qais and al-'Udail was not, he threatened to satirize them. He says that he was on the point of composing a satirical poem against them but was prevented, by their former favours. In this respect, he acts as though he had a greater claim to the favours of the B. Qais than al-Farazdaq, because he and the B. Qais had common ancestors. He says:

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

Is it just that al-Farazdaq should obtain what he requested, while my hands are empty of gifts.

I would present a satirical poem to the B. Qais b. Sa'd that would break their bones [when they read it].

I intended to compose such a poem but I am held back because of the relations between us, and the favours for which I have been unable to express my thanks.<sup>39</sup>

وترجع كفي من نساوكم صفرا	أفي الحق أن يعطى الفرزدق حكمه
هتي ما تلاق العظم تترك به كسرا	سأهدى الى قيس بن سعد قصيدة
وأيد حسان لم أؤد لها شكرا	أهم فتتيني أوامر بيننا

It would appear that the aforementioned fragment was one of the last to be composed by al-'Udail before his departure for Basra, and settling there. Our sources specify neither the date al-'Udail departed for Basra, nor the reason, but it is possible to infer this from his poems and the other available information concerning him. Abū al-Faraj relates, on the authority of 'Alī b. Shafī', who said: "I met al-Farazdaq on his departure from the B. Bakr b. Wā'il and I asked him: 'Oh Abū Firās, who is the poet of Bakr amongst those you have left behind?' He replied: 'Umair Banī 'Ijl, viz. al-'Udail b. al-Farkh'.<sup>40</sup> This statement can be traced to 50 A.H. when Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān, the governor of Iraq was pursuing al-Farazdaq, because the latter was satirizing the B. Fuqaim and the B. Nahshal. They made an appeal to Ziyād against al-Farazdaq, and he fled from the hand of Ziyād to Syria. Al-Farazdaq then went to the abodes of Bakr and found security among them, and as a result he praised them. Al-Farazdaq left them in 50 A.H. and took

<sup>39</sup> Baṣriyyah, I, 251; Shajarī, 66.

<sup>40</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 340.

refuge with Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ, the governor of Medina.<sup>41</sup>

This statement indicates further that al-'Udail was amongst his clan in the desert in 50 A.H. But it would appear that al-'Udail departed for Basra shortly after al-Farazdaq had departed from the tribe of Bakr. This can be shown by what is related by al-Baladhurī, namely Qarīb b. Murrah al-Azdī and Zahhāf al-Ta'ī, both Khārijites, revolted in Basra when Ḥajjār b. Abjar, one of the Bakrite chiefs of Kufa and a relation of al-'Udail, happened to be there. The Khārijites beat Ḥajjār but rescued by Shaqīq b. Thawr who prevented him from being killed. Al-'Udail mentions this event in one of his fragments when he praises the B. Thawr, saying:

You [Shaqīq] saved Ḥajjār b. Abjar after he was exposed to the assault of the Harūrītes. To the B. Thawr belongs the highest part of the glory of Iraq.<sup>42</sup>

ونجيت حجار بن أبجر بعدما بدت للحرورين منه مقاتله  
وان بني ثور اذا ما لقيتمهم لهم ثبجا مجد العراق وكاهله

Al-Ṭabarī mentions that this revolt took place in 50 A.H.,<sup>43</sup> indicating that al-'Udail departed in this year for Basra, which was a centre for the pre-Islamic kind of poetry at that time. The most prominent poets in Basra, such as al-Farazdaq, Jarīr, Dhū al-Rumma and al-Rā'ī al-Numairī were fanatical proponents of the old qaṣīdah genre. The Mirbad of Basra where the poets used to recite their verses before an audience was a fascinating place for the Bedouins, who

<sup>41</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 94.

<sup>42</sup>Ansāb, IV/I, 150-151.

<sup>43</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 90.

found in it the atmosphere of their traditional culture. Prominent poets saw themselves as students at the feet of the ancient poets, and al-Farazdaq confesses that he was influenced by famous pre-Islamic poets, such as the three Nabighas, Abū Zaid al-Mukhabbal who emigrated to Basra, Imru' al-Qais, Ṭarafah, 'Abīd and others.<sup>44</sup> Because of his having taken these models, al-Aṣma'ī claims that "nine-tenths of the poems of al-Farazdaq were plagiarized".<sup>45</sup> It is also claimed that Jarīr plagiarized some of al-Farazdaq's ideas.<sup>46</sup> From another point of view, the division of Basra into five areas, each inhabited by clans of the same tribe, led to the development of great tribal blocs, such as Qais, Tamīm and Bakr. This had a great influence on the psychology of the poets, and inspired them to compose many poems in praise not of sections or clans, but of their tribes, as entities and to boast of their old glories. Competition in Basra was no longer between clans of the same tribe, as it had been sometimes in the bādiyah, but between whole tribes. Thus the 'aṣabīyyah' of the poet was no longer limited to his clan, but extended to compass an entire tribe or even to a grouping of tribes with common roots. The tribes continued to take pride and refuge in their poets, who acted as spokesmen and defenders of their honour, and protected them from the attacks of others. That this function was entrusted to the poets by their tribes is an indicator of the high status of poets within their

---

<sup>44</sup> Dīwān al-Farazdaq, II, 159.

<sup>45</sup> Muwashshah, 167.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 168.

tribes. The poets did, indeed, enjoy high esteem, and their tribes were not reluctant to support them when they sought help. The literary sources indicate fairly clearly how high the position of the poets was.<sup>47</sup> This seems to explain why, when al-'Udail came to Basra, he praised Mālik b. Misma',<sup>48</sup> the chief of Bakr and Rabī'ah, about whom it was said: "Rabī'ah were congregating round Mālik as they had congregated round Kulaib during his lifetime".<sup>49</sup> It would appear that Mālik was fascinated by the poetry of al-'Udail and bestowed honour upon him and invited him to live in his house. He may have seen al-'Udail as the poet promised to Bakr in Iraq.

Although al-'Udail remained in Basra until his death, the information we have concerning his life there is not consecutive, but episodic. Thus the information we have about al-'Udail jumps from 50 A.H., to the period of the rule of the Zubairīds over Iraq (64-71 A.H.). Abū al-Faraj reports on the authority of Ibn 'Ayyāsh that Ḥawshab b. Yazīd al-Shaibānī and 'Ikrimah b. Rib'ī, both from Bakr, were competing with one another in hospitality, feeding guests and slaughtering camels in the encampment of Muṣ'ab. When 'Ikrimah outdid his competitor, al-'Udail praised both of them, boasting that the two of them belonged to his tribe of Bakr, and showing no preference for either since they were both Bakrites. He estimates them to be higher in position than any other chiefs, higher even than the Aqyāl

---

<sup>47</sup>For examples, see: 'Aghānī, VI, 49, VIII, 280.

<sup>48</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 343.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 339.



(Kings of Ḥimyar). Thus he says:

'Ikrimah the generous and Ḥawshab belong  
to us.  
They are two youths who have not been  
surpassed in eminence.  
They are two youths whom no chief, nor even  
Qail of Āl Ḥimyar has reached.<sup>50</sup>

وعكرمة الفياض منسا وحوشب      هما فتيا الناس للذا لم يخمرا  
رئيس ولا الأقيال من آل حميرا      هما فتيا الناس للذا لم ينلها

It seems that Muṣ'ab was extravagant and that poets reproached him for this, criticizing him especially when he married 'Ā'ishah, daughter of Ṭalḥah, and Sukainah, daughter of al-Ḥusain, paying a bride-price of five hundred thousand dirhams for each.<sup>51</sup> Amongst these poets was Anas al-Laithī or 'Abd Allāh b. Hammām who sent a poetical appeal to 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubair saying:

Convey to the Commander of the Faithful  
a message from a sincere advisor who does  
not seek to deceive.  
Their bride price is a full million while the  
leaders of the army sleep hungry.<sup>52</sup>

أبلغ أمير المؤمنين رسالة      من ناصح لك لا يريد خداعا  
بضخ الفتاة بألف ألف كامل      وتبيت سادات الجنود جيعا

Consequently, 'Abd Allāh dismissed his brother and appointed instead his son Ḥamzah b. 'Abd Allāh the ruler of Basra.<sup>53</sup> The latter was youthful, self-interested and had delusions of grandeur. He reversed the liberal policy of his uncle

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 342.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., III, 361.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Muṣ'ab and put a tight curb on public expenditure. This infuriated public figures in Basra who could do none other than come into confrontation with him, and appeal to Mālīk b. Misma' who made Ḥamzah stand down as governor and dismissed him from Basra in 68 A.H.<sup>54</sup> Al-'Udail makes mention of this event and praises the leadership of Mālīk, representing him as the best of Ma'add whom none could defy and glorifying the B. Misma' which was Mālīk's family. He describes them as the most noble of the tribe of Wā'il; Bakr and Taghlib together, and portrays the people as rejecting that which is forbidden for fear of God and the B. Misma'. He says:

Whenever we fear an injustice from an amīr,  
we call to Abū Ghassān [i.e. Mālīk], who will  
pitch an [armed] camp.  
You see people coming in great numbers to his  
doorstep.  
According to his wish, they come with or without  
armour.  
No-one in the whole of Ma'add is like Mālīk,  
most illustrious in competition, and most  
venerated.  
O Banū Misma', you have been the noblest of  
Wā'il, and of its finest essence ever since  
their origin.<sup>55</sup>

دعونا أبا غسان يوماً فحسكرا	إذا ما خشينا من أمير ظلامته
إذا شاء جاءنا ودارعين وحسرا	تري الناس أفواجا الى باب داره
أغر إذا سامى وأهيب منظرا	فما في محدك كلها مثل مالك
وأكرمها في أول الدهر جوهرها	بني مسمع أنتم ذؤابة وائل

Mālīk was not prepared to accept the rule of the

<sup>54</sup>See Ansāb, V, 265; Kāmil, IV, 118; 'Ibar, III, 71-72.

<sup>55</sup>Ansāb, V, 265; Aghānī, XXII, 339; Kāmil, IV, 118; 'Umdah, II, 76.

Zubairids, because he was pro-Umayyad.<sup>56</sup> When the caliph 'Abd al-Malik sent Khālīd b. 'Abd Allāh b. Asīd as an envoy with instructions to foment rebellion against the Zubairids, the Bakrites, under the leadership of Mālīk, and their allies the Azd, under the leadership of Ziyād b. 'Amr al-'Atakī, joined the cause of Khālīd. But the Zubairid governor of Basra, 'Ubaid Allāh b. Ma'mar, was able to suppress the insurrection and consequently Mālīk fled to Thāj.<sup>57</sup> When Muṣ'ab was killed in 71 A.H. and the rule of the Zubairids in Iraq was overthrown, Mālīk returned overjoyed to Basra. Arrogantly, he made his she-camel lie down on the carpet of Khālīd b. 'Abd Allāh, the Umayyad ruler in Basra. This occasion was celebrated by al-'Udail who composed a poem only one verse of which has survived:

You made your she-camel kneel on the carpet,  
in spite of the dislike of Khālīd's enemies.<sup>58</sup>

أنخت على ظهر البساط ولم تسر      على رغم من أمسى عدواً لخالد

After this event, the information we have concerning the life of al-'Udail jumps to the incident between him and al-Ḥajjāj who was appointed to Iraq in 75 A.H. At this point, the available accounts diverge as to the cause of the antagonism which broke out between the poet and al-Ḥajjāj and which resulted in his fleeing Basra, and wandering from one place to another out of fear that al-Ḥajjāj would do violence to him. According to one account, when al-'Udail

<sup>56</sup>Tabarī, I 3414.

<sup>57</sup>Tabarī, II, 800; Dīnawarī, 318; Murūj, III, 112; 'Ibar, III, 76.

<sup>58</sup>Ansāb, IV/2, 165.

killed Dābigh, the latter's master appealed to al-Ḥajjāj seeking retaliation. Al-'Udail fled from al-Ḥajjāj and went to Byzantine lands where he took refuge with the emperor who gave him security. Al-'Udail further incurred the anger of al-Ḥajjāj when he composed poems mocking his inability to reach him. On this account al-Ḥajjāj wrote to the emperor: "Either you return him, or I will invade you with an army whose head will be with you, while its tail is still with me". The emperor consequently returned him to al-Ḥajjāj who reminded him of his defiant poems, but al-'Udail recited to al-Ḥajjāj verses in which he portrayed al-Ḥajjāj's ability and excellent leadership. Al-Ḥajjāj accordingly released him and took upon himself the responsibility for paying the blood-wit of Dābigh.<sup>59</sup> This account is not to be trusted, since it would be difficult to imagine al-Ḥajjāj being willing or able to rush into the decision to invade a foreign land without consulting the caliph, especially since the reason behind the decision was a trifling one, the situation in no way endangering the stability of the Islamic state. Iraq at that time did not even possess a common border with the Eastern Roman Empire. Moreover, the killing of Dābigh took place before al-'Udail departed for Basra, i.e. before 50 A.H. when al-Ḥajjāj was not the governor of Iraq. Furthermore, the most ancient of the sources which have come down to us giving information on al-'Udail is the kitāb al-Kāmil by al-Mubarrad, who mentions the flight of al-'Udail and his peregrinations from one place to another,<sup>60</sup> without mentioning either the

---

<sup>59</sup> Shu'arā', 413-414; Aghānī, XXII, 329-330.

<sup>60</sup> Mubarrad, II, 99.

Roman lands or the Byzantine emperor. Al-Jāhīz relates, on the authority of Abū 'Ubaidah, that there was some disagreement between al-'Udail and al-Ḥajjāj who threatened al-'Udail who then fled;<sup>61</sup> he likewise does not mention either Byzantium or the emperor. The first to mention al-'Udail's fleeing to the Byzantine emperor is Ibn Qutaibah<sup>62</sup>, but without naming the source of his narrative. It would appear that Abū al-Faraj was fascinated by this part of the narrative in Ibn Qutaibah's book and that he accordingly elaborates on the story, naturally not mentioning his source, nor a chain of transmitters (as he usually does), but he stops at saying at the beginning of the account: "They said"<sup>63</sup> without specifying who the 'they' refers to. Moreover, the surviving poems of al-'Udail are completely devoid of any mention of the Emperor, or his lands, instead they contain information which indicates that al-'Udail wandered from place to place, as when he says:

Here I am [brought] to you, having found the world narrow after roaming everywhere.<sup>64</sup>

ها أنا ذا ضاقت بي الأرض كلها      اليك وقد جئت كل مكان

It seems that this account was constructed in such an exaggerated way so as to provide an example of the violent and tyrannical nature of al-Ḥajjāj. Such a picture of Ḥajjāj is a distorted one even though his tyranny is

<sup>61</sup>Bayān, I, 391.

<sup>62</sup>Shu'arā', 413-414.

<sup>63</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 329.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 341.

depicted by literary authors, and historical sources.

However, there are two further accounts which complement each other which may be linked to the relationship between al-Ḥajjāj and the tribe of Bakr from the very beginning of his governorship over Iraq. The Bakrites of Iraq were unwilling to accept as ruler over them a man like al-Ḥajjāj who belonged to the tribe of Qais, especially as they were the most vocal opponents of the Zubairids, and it was upon them and their allies that the caliph 'Abd al-Malik depended, when he sent his envoy Khālīd b. 'Abd Allāh to foment rebellion in Basra.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, most of the Bakrites deserted the army of Ibn al-Zubair at the battle which decided the fate of the Zubairids in Iraq,<sup>66</sup> while Muḍar, from which Qais (the tribe of al-Ḥajjāj) came, supported Ibn al-Zubair from the very beginning,<sup>67</sup> after the death of the caliph Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah. Thus we are not far from the truth when we suppose that the appointment of al-Ḥajjāj was considered by the tribe of Bakr and Azd as being an act of defiance against them. After one year of his appointment when al-Ḥajjāj reduced the stipend approved by Muṣ'ab, he provoked a revolt led by Ibn al-Jārūd who was supported by the tribe of Bakr.<sup>68</sup> The Bakrites were equally strong in their support of the revolt of Ibn al-Ash'ath against the governorship of al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>69</sup> It would seem that we rarely find a Bakrite poet who praised al-Ḥajjāj,

---

<sup>65</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 799.

<sup>66</sup>See Ansāb, V, 334; Ya'qūbī, II, 31; Murūj, III, 114.

<sup>67</sup>See above p.126.

<sup>68</sup>Ṭabaqāt, 401; Anon., Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 282.

<sup>69</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1057; 1089.

on the contrary they opposed him; for example, Qatādah al-Yashkurī warned the people of Iraq against al-Ḥajjāj and portrays him as full of spite, he says:<sup>70</sup>

حذار حذار الليث يحرق نابه      ويكسر أرغظا عليك من الحقد

Another Bakrite poet, 'Itbān b. Waṣīlah al-Shaibānī, threatened the caliph 'Abd al-Malik with a confrontation if he did not satisfy the desires of the tribe of Bakr, and he also demanded that al-Ḥajjāj should be dismissed from office, or there would be no peace between the two sides:

There will be no reconciliation so long as a Thaqafite orator stands on the pulpits of our land.

If you ['Abd al-Malik] do not satisfy Bakr b. Wā'il, you will face a difficult day in Iraq.<sup>71</sup>

فلا صلح ما دامت منابر أرضنا      يقوم عليها من ثقيف خطيب  
فانك ان لا ترض بكرين وائل      يكن لك يوم بالحراق عسيب

In this light, it might be the case that al-'Udail was not pleased at the silence of the people of Iraq, when al-Ḥajjāj had threatened them in his famous speech at the beginning of his governorship. Al-'Udail calls upon the people of Iraq in the following verses to leave cowardice behind and to fight, since he who does not fight would be humiliated and captured. He mocks them and portrays them as fledgling birds and likens al-Ḥajjāj to a falcon looking here and there from a vantage-point. The verses run as follows:

<sup>70</sup> Majma', I, 24.

<sup>71</sup> Bayān, III, 266; Marzubānī, 266; Murūj, III, 203; Dhahabī, III, 160.

Leave aside cowardice, O men of Iraq, for whoever fails to fight will be humiliated and taken captive.

Al-Ḥajjāj has certainly unsheathed his sword, so be upright and let none desert [the fighting].

People fear him so much that their hearts have become like the young sand-grouse caught in the [hunter's] net.

He [al-Ḥajjāj] is like a falcon which watches from a vantage-point, while birds flee from it.<sup>72</sup>

دعوا الجين يا أهل العراق فانه	يهان ويسبى كل من لا يقاتل
لقد جرد الحجاج للحق سيفه	ألا فاستقيموا لا يميلن مائل
وخافوه حتى القوم بين ضلوعهم	كنزو القطا ضمت عليه الحبائل
وأصبح كالبارى يقلب طرفه	على مرقب والطير منه د واحد

Although in their outward form, these verses can be taken as praise and as glorifying al-Ḥajjāj's power over the people of Iraq, especially since al-'Udail does not mention the enemy against whom he calls upon the people to fight, but al-Ḥajjāj's sensitivity was such that he was infuriated whenever he heard poems in which he felt revolt was being fomented or rebels supported. We are informed that when he heard the aforementioned verses of al-'Udail recited, he asked those around him: "What do you think?" They replied: "He [al-'Udail] has praised you." He said: "No, he is inciting the people of Iraq against me".<sup>73</sup> He then ordered al-'Udail be summoned, but, foreseeing or refusing the summons, al-'Udail fled.<sup>74</sup> In support of al-Ḥajjāj's hypersensitivity it is reported that when Jarīr praised him with the following verses:<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 340-341.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 341.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Dīwān Jarīr b. 'Atīyyah al-Khatafī, I, 33.



قل للجبان اذا تأخر سرجه      هل أنت من شرك المنية نجاج  
 فتعلقن بينات نعش هاربا      أو بالبحور وشدّة الأمواج  
 من سدد مطلع النفاق عليهم      أو من يصول كصوله الحجاج

Al-Ḥajjāj said to him: "You have allowed the people to dare to oppose me, O son of the Unclean". Jarīr replied: "By God, oh Prince, what you have thought never occurred to my mind before now".<sup>76</sup> Al-'Udail, however, either attempted to exploit the antagonism between al-Ḥajjāj and his opponent Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, or to foment dissension between the tribe of Azd and Qais, especially since the Bakrites were the allies of Azd in Iraq. And Yazīd b. a-Muhallab was among the personalities who were given much praise by Bakrite poets such as Nahār b. Tawsi'ah<sup>77</sup> and Ḥamzah b. Bīd.<sup>78</sup> Al-'Udail had, therefore, to take refuge with Yazīd and accordingly praised him and satirized al-Ḥajjāj. He says:

If al-Ḥajjāj has closed his door with  
 niggardliness, the door of the Azdī youth  
 is open with graciousness.  
 He is a youth who never cares about the  
 dwindling of his wealth, when even the  
 hands of the gracious hesitate.  
 His hands are such that one of them allows  
 what it contains to be plundered out of  
 graciousness, while the other overpowers and  
 wounds the enemies.  
 The poor coming to him are sure that shortly  
 they will become rich.  
 He has instructed the guard at his door to  
 attend to the seekers of bounty. They  
 [guards] call them [seekers] and the free man  
 pleased with [the call of] the free.  
 'Come all of you to partake of the gracious-  
 ness of the amīr whose favours are diffused

<sup>76</sup> 'Iqd, I, 123.

<sup>77</sup> Shu'arā', 537; Mu'talif, 193; Wafayāt, VI, 290.

<sup>78</sup> Aghānī, XVI, 209-210; al-'Askarī, al-Maṣūn fī al-Adab, 134-135; Irshād, IV, 148; 'Asākir, IV, 441.

among the people.'

He is not a coarse fellow of the Thamūd  
in whose palm is ill-disposed and  
determined against liberality and  
graciousness.<sup>79</sup>

فباب الفتى الأزدى بالحرف يفتح	لئن أرتج الحجاج بالبخل بابه
إذا جعلت أيدى المكارم تسنح	فتى لا يبالي الدهر ما قل ماله
وأخرى على الأعداء تسطو وتجرح	يداه يد بالحرف تنهب ما حوت
بأن الغنى فيهم وشيكا سيسرح	إذا ما أتاه المرطون تيقنوا
ينادونهم والحرّ بالحرّ يفرح	أقام على العافين حراس بابه
فان عطاياه على الناس تنفح	هلموا الى سيب الأمير وعرفه
من الجود والمعروف حزم مطوح	وليس كعلاج من ثمود بكفه

Such a comparison between al-Ḥajjāj and Yazīd surely brought great harm to al-Ḥajjāj, and such satire, based on the preference for one person over another in a comparison was the most socially wounding and was called hijā'muqdhī (slander-satire).

We are told that when 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the second caliph, released al-Ḥuṭai'ah, the famous satirical poet, from his prison he said to him: "Never return to slander-satire". When al-Ḥuṭai'ah asked: "What is slander, O Commander of the Faithful?" 'Umar replied: "Slander-satire is saying such-and-such people are better and more honoured than others, and constructing a poem praising some people and satirizing others whom you consider your enemies".<sup>80</sup>

This genre of satirical poetry was frequently composed by the poets of the Umayyad era. One of the most famous verses

<sup>79</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 330-331.

<sup>80</sup> 'Umdah, II, 170.

which was widely current among people is the following,  
composed by Jarīr satirizing the B. Numair:

Cast down your eyes because you are from  
Numair, you have not attained the stature  
of either Ka'b or Kilāb.<sup>81</sup>

فخفض الطرف انك من نمير      فلا كعبا بلغت ولا كلابا

Al-'Udail does not stop short at accusing al-Ḥajjāj of meanness, but goes beyond this to discredit the tribe of Thaqīf, from which al-Ḥajjāj was descended. He links Thaqīf to Thamūd in ancestry and thus places them in the category of non-Arabs; in this he is following a current trend in the Umayyad era. It would seem that the policies of al-Ḥajjāj and his reputed violence and tyranny was the reason that caused the tribe of Thaqīf to be exposed to a campaign of vilification and discredit regarding its ancestry, and that this campaign also led to the fabrication of many accounts which link Thaqīf with names hateful to both Arabs and Muslims, such as Thamūd and Abū Righāl.<sup>82</sup> Some narrators went to the extreme and claimed that Thaqīf was non-Arab, forging ḥadīths of the Prophet to reinforce their views. One of these ḥadīths is the following: "There are tribes considered as Arabs which are not: Ḥimyar from Tubba', Jurhum from Azd and Thaqīf from Thamūd.<sup>84</sup> The Bakrite poet, Shabīb b. Shaibān, says about al-Ḥajjāj:

<sup>81</sup>Dīwān Jarīr b. 'Aṭīyyah al-Khaṭafī, I, 31.

<sup>82</sup>See Ansāb, I, 25, 260; Aghānī, IV, 302; Inbāh, 90-91; Subḥ, I, 343.

<sup>83</sup>Ansāb, I, 4; Aghānī, IV, 307; Inbāh, 90.

<sup>84</sup>Ansāb, V, 197.

Slave, bastard, of Thamūdite descent.  
Nay, it is said that the father of their  
forefather was of Yaqum.<sup>85</sup>

عبد دعي من ثمود أصله لا بل يقال أبو أبيهم يقدم

Another poet, Ahmar b. Sālim, says satirizing al-Ḥajjāj:

Thaqīf are a remnant of Thamūd and they have  
no noble forebear of Qaisite descent.<sup>86</sup>

ثقيف بقايا من ثمود وهما لهم أب ماجد من قيس عيلان يحرف

It would appear that Yazīd b. al-Muhallab was fascinated by the aforementioned verses of al-'Udail which glorify his generosity and place him in a higher position than his opponent al-Ḥajjāj; at the same time Yazīd calculated the difficulties that such verses would arouse, and thus awarded al-'Udail fifty thousand dirhams and some horses, saying to him: "You have exposed us to danger and you have risked your neck (lit. blood). By God, al-Ḥajjāj will never reach you while you are in my care. So flee to Najd, and take care not to be trapped in al-Ḥajjāj's net".<sup>87</sup> This event brought the wrath of al-Ḥajjāj on Yazīd, and he saw in it an eagerness for rebellion in al-'Udail. Accordingly he heatedly pursued al-'Udail who fled to his clan 'Ijl. But al-Ḥajjāj insisted on the return of al-'Udail and sent one of his clients at the head of an army to gain his return. Nevertheless, he managed to flee far away. In this situation the client of al-Ḥajjāj found himself obliged to take revenge

<sup>85</sup> 'Asākir, I, 232.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 331.

on al-'Udail by seizing his camels, burning his house and robbing his wife and daughters of their ornaments.<sup>88</sup> Al-'Udail recalls this event in a poem in which he mentions the morality of the last action and describes his female dependants as enjoying a life of ease, as illustrated by their dyed fingers, their plump legs and their cherished beauty. He portrays them as appealing to the caliph for rescue, but in vain. The verses concerned are as follows:

You stole the ornaments of my daughters, and did not leave a golden bracelet, necklace, or even *gilded* earring. Thus at sword-point carefully brought-up young ladies were divested of their ornaments. They are destitute of ornaments, but in their cheeks is the beauty of free women: you can see their *hinnah*-dyed fingers. You took off the anklets from their strong ankles, which now are like the trees of a thicket left unwatered. They did not appeal to their mother or father. They sought instead the help of the Commander of the Faithful, but he did not respond.<sup>89</sup>

سوارا ولا طوقا على النحر مذ هبا	سلبت بناتي حليهن فلم تدع
تعطل بالبيضا الأوانس ريرا	وما عزفي الأذان حتى كأنما
قسامة عتق أو بنانا مخضببا	عواطل الا أن ترى بخدودها
برادى غيل مأوه قد تنضببا	فككت البرين عن خدان كأنها
دعاء ولم يسمعن أمّا ولا أببا	دعون أميرالمؤمنين فلم يجب

Al-'Udail having ventured such a distance imagined that he had been saved from the hand of al-Ḥajjāj, as a great expanse of desert separated him from his persecutor. He felt secure, but it was only for a short time. Speaking of his inaccessibility to al-Ḥajjāj, he composed the following verses:

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 336.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 336-337.

There lies between me and the hand of al-Ḥajjāj, preventing him from reaching me, a broad expanse of land that only excellent camels can traverse.

Wastelands looking alike, as though their mirages were clean sheets in the hands of washer-women.

If they [camels] are made to travel to reach me, they will be kept away by deserts of changing mirages and dark patches.<sup>90</sup>

بساط لأيدي الناعجات عريض	ودون يد الحجاج من أن تنالني
هلاء بأيدي الغاسلات رحيف	مهاه أشباه كأن سرابها
خرابي يجري آلها وغموض	إذا كلفتها العيس زيل بينها

He mocks al-Ḥajjāj's threat of casting him fettered into prison, and says that his legs are tough and would not be harmed by fetters; he says:

He has threatened me to imprison me and fether my legs, but my legs are tough right through [i.e. not to be pained by fetters].<sup>91</sup>

أوعدني بالسجن والأداهم	رجلي ورجلي شثنة المناسم
------------------------	-------------------------

These emotions which dominated al-'Udail and his imagined security did not last long, because al-Ḥajjāj was informed of the aforementioned verses which bore the stamp of defiance to his authority. It was no simple matter to escape the wrath of al-Ḥajjāj even if the desert did form a barrier between him and those who had escaped from him. It would appear that al-'Udail felt the heat of the pursuit of al-Ḥajjāj and began to travel from one place to another. He did not remain in a single place without imagining the

<sup>90</sup> Mubarrad, II, 99; Bayān, I, 391; Shu'arā', 413; Shajarī, 199; Asās, I, 47; Ishtiqaq, 115; 'Asākir, IV, 62; Lisan, basata; Aghānī. XXII, 329; Ibn Duraid, Kitāb Jamharat al-Lughah, II, 137; al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyyūn, I, 301.

<sup>91</sup> Ibn Qutaibah, Adab al-Kātib, 376; Baghdādī, II, 366.

avenging spirit of al-Ḥajjāj pursuing him. Fear began to dominate him and he recognized the strength of the desire for vengeance and the single-mindedness of al-Ḥajjāj. Al-'Udail therefore portrays his feelings in such a way as to arouse sympathy and humour; he portrays himself as weak, lacking strength and full of fear at the thought of being seized by the hand of al-Ḥajjāj which, as al-'Udail says, if it should extend to the enemy would make them swim in blood:

So frightened am I with fear of al-Ḥajjāj,  
that I have become like a donkey that  
breaks wind even though the iron is still in  
the fire.  
He [al-Ḥajjāj] is strong and illustrious.  
Bitten by his claws, his wicked enemy swims  
in a flood of blood.  
On being branded the donkey can break wind,  
but he should not while the iron is still  
in the fire.<sup>92</sup>

كالعير يضرب والكواة في النار	أصبحت في حذر الحجاج منتخبا
أهل الشنأة عاموا في الدّم الجارى	صرم أغرّ اذا نالت أظفاره
لا يضرب العير والكواة في النار	قد يضرب العير والكواة تأخذه

It would appear from the surviving poems that al-'Udail found himself obliged to implore al-Ḥajjāj to forgive him, and to apologize to him in a manner which reminds us of the apology of al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī to al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir in the pre-Islamic period. Al-'Udail attempts to avoid responsibility for his satirical and taunting verses directed at al-Ḥajjāj. He belittles himself and exaggerates in portraying his fear of al-Ḥajjāj to the extent that

<sup>92</sup> Al-Jāhiz, Kitāb al-Mahāsin wa al-Addād, 97; al-'Askarī, Kitāb Jamharat al-Amthāl, II, 124.

he makes it seem that even the mention of al-Ḥajjāj terrifies him. The following verses illustrate this:

You know that my tongue holds back from you, while I defame all others.  
I will bear any misfortune that is beyond your generosity to bear.  
I am haunted by the fear of al-Ḥajjāj to such an extent that I feel as though a broken bone were sharply grating in my heart.  
Whenever al-Ḥajjāj is mentioned I conceal a fright that sends a shiver through my crooked bones.<sup>93</sup>

لَعَفَّوَانِي دُونَكُمْ لِعَضُوضٍ	وَأَنْ لِسَانِي عَنْكُمْ قَدْ عَلَّمْتُمْ
تَضْيِيقٍ بِهَا أَعْطَانَكُمْ لِنَهْوِضٍ	وَأَنِّي لَمَّا حَمَلْتُمْ مِنْ مَلْمُومَةٍ
يَحْرُكُ عَظْمَ فِي الْفُؤَادِ مَهْيُضٍ	أَخَوْفٍ بِالْحَجَّاجِ حَتَّى كَأَنَّهَا
لَهَا بَيْنَ أَحْنَاءِ الضَّلُوعِ نَفْيُضٍ	إِذَا ذَكَرَ الْجَجَّاجِ أَضْمَرْتُ خَيْفَةَ

In another poem, al-'Udail claims that he was innocent of what had been falsely attributed to him and thus he did not acknowledge what had been attributed to him. He describes the transmitter of his poems against al-Ḥajjāj as being a damned enemy of the Muslims. He says:

Much has been said that is wrong and there are false assumptions, with which I have no concern.  
These are sayings of men and women who speak without ascertaining what they say.  
What you have been told has been related [to you] by a damned enemy of Muslim unity.<sup>94</sup>

أَقَاوِيلَ مِينْتِ بَاطِلِ وَظُنُونِ	وَقَدْ قِيلَ حَتَّى مَا أَبَالِي حَدِيثِهِ
يَقْلُنَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِنَّ يَقِينِ	أَقَاوِيلَ أَقْوَامِ وَقَالَةَ نَسْوَةٍ
عَدُوِّ لِحَبْلِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ لَعِينِ	فَأَنَّ الَّذِي حَدَّثْتَ رَقِيَّ حَدِيثِهِ

<sup>93</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 329; al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyūn, I, 301.

<sup>94</sup>Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyūn, I, 320-321.



It would appear that despair dominated the personality of al-'Udail, and the spirit of al-Ḥajjāj seemed to hover near him in every place, and he sought to put an end to this life of fear and uncertainty, especially as he was no longer young and could not bear the continuous traumatic tension. Abū al-Faraj reports on the authority of Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah that when al-Ḥajjāj hotly pursued al-'Udail, the latter was at his wit's end and went to Wāsīt. He there disguised himself and, taking a piece of paper, went before al-Ḥajjāj amidst wronged supplicants and says, surrendering his fate to the hands of al-Ḥajjāj:

Here I am brought to you, having found the world  
narrow after roaming everywhere.  
Had I been at Thahlān or the two branches  
of Ajā mountain, I would have thought that  
you would, unless you desist, see me.<sup>95</sup>

ها أنا ذا ضاقت بي الأرض كلها      اليك وقد طوّفت كل مكان  
فلو كنت في شهلان أو جبلي أجا      لخلتك إلا أن تصدّ تراني

According to another account given by Abū al-Faraj, on the authority of Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī, when al-Ḥajjāj hotly pursued al-'Udail, the latter felt unable to stay in one place and sought refuge amongst his tribe Bakr b. Wā'il while they were in the bādiyah, amongst whom were the B. Shaibān, B. 'Ijl and B. Yashkur. He complained to them about his affairs and said to them: "I am being killed. Will you surrender me easily when you are the mightiest of Arab tribes?" They replied: "No, by God, but al-Ḥajjāj cannot be opposed. All we can do is to ask for you to be restored

<sup>95</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 341.

to us as a favour from him. If he accepts our appeal all will be well, if not we will protect you and appeal to the Commander of the Faithful for you to be restored to us". Consequently, the chiefs of the tribe of Bakr assembled in the presence of al-Ḥajjāj and by subterfuge secured the freedom of al-'Udail,<sup>96</sup> who when standing before al-Ḥajjāj recited a poem in his praise from which the following is a verse, portraying his despair at his ability to escape from the wrath of al-Ḥajjāj:

If I were in Salma Ajā and its valleys,  
Ḥajjāj would find a way to reach me.<sup>97</sup>

فلو كنت في سلمى أجا وشعابها      لكان لحجاج علي دليل

It would appear that the second account is more reliable because Ḥammād has been accused by himself and others of fabricating accounts,<sup>98</sup> while Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī is considered trustworthy and reliable.<sup>99</sup> It would be strange to imagine that al-'Udail would surrender so easily without first taking refuge or consulting his tribe, since it was a frequent occurrence that tribes defended their poets; this is shown by the fact that when Yazīd b. Mufarrigh al-Ḥimyarī was imprisoned by 'Abbād b. Ziyād, the Yemenites were infuriated, went to the caliph, Mu'āwiyah, and asked him to put an end to the imprisonment of their

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 331-332.

<sup>97</sup> Mubarrad, II, 99, Bayān, I, 391; Aghānī, XXII, 332; Shu'arā', 414; 'Asakir, IV, 62.

<sup>98</sup> See Ṭabaqāt, 40-41; Aghānī, VI, 88-95; Irshād, IV, 140.

<sup>99</sup> Al-Asad, Maṣādir al-Shi'r al-Jāhilī wa Qīmatuhā al-Tārikhiyyah, 447.

poet and the caliph responded to their appeal.<sup>100</sup> From another angle, al-'Udail himself mentions that his tribe defended him, favoured him and supported him because he was of high stature among them. He says:

If you ask the two sons of Nizār, they will testify to my nobility and my place among the sons of Wā'il.  
The B. Bakr, noble and numerous, favoured me.  
They strutted behind me and assembled in tribe after tribe.<sup>101</sup>

وإذا سألت ابني نزار بيّنا	هجدى ومنزلتي من ابني وائل
حدبت بنو بكر عليّ وفيهم	كلّ الكارم والحديد الكامل
خطروا ورائي بالقنا وتجمّعت	منهم قبائل أردفوا بقبائل

In another poem, al-'Udail mentions that the generous men of the tribe of Bakr were favourably disposed towards him, saying:

Every generous and wealthy man of Wā'il is favourably inclined towards me.<sup>102</sup>

علي تعطف من وائل	إذا قمت كل جواد خضم
------------------	---------------------

This assumption may be strengthened by the fact that al-Ḥajjāj did not settle his court in Wāsiṭ, before crushing the revolt of Ibn al-Ash'ath<sup>103</sup> in 82 A.H. This was the most threatening revolt in Iraq during his governorship. Al-'Udail in praising al-Ḥajjāj does not mention the crushing of Ibn al-Ash'ath, but does mention the crushing of the revolt of Qaṭarī b. al-Fujā'ah, the Khārijite, which took place in 78 A.H. He says:

<sup>100</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 193.

<sup>101</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 334.

<sup>102</sup> Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawīyyūn, I, 315.

<sup>103</sup>

See al-Ma'ādīdī, Wāsiṭ fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, 75-79.

You killed both the sons of 'Ubād, so they  
[their followers] became weak and bereft.  
And you meted out the same fate to Qaṭarī  
despite his men and horses.<sup>104</sup>

أذقت الحمام ابني عباد فأصبحوا  
ومن قطرى نلت ذاك وحوله  
بمنزل موهون الجناح تكول  
كتائب من رجالة وخيول

The assumption may be also reinforced by the fact that none of our sources mentions the account of Ḥammād except Abū al-Faraj.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore the account of Abū 'Ubaidah, which is mentioned by al-Jāhiz,<sup>106</sup> is reasonably similar to that of Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī. Similarly the account by al-Mubarrad, although he does not mention a source, says: "He [al-'Udail] was brought to al-Ḥajjāj".<sup>107</sup> It would be reasonable to suggest that Ḥammād wove a story around the two aforementioned verses, in which al-'Udail portrays his despair at his ability when compared by al-Ḥajjāj's, especially since the first verse would give the impression that al-'Udail surrendered of his own volition.

However, the information about al-'Udail in Basra after this event now goes no further and we know nothing more about him. Our sources are silent even as to the year of his death. Abū al-Faraj narrates on the authority of Muhammad b. Sallām that al-'Udail was a companion of al-Farazdaq and that they would accompany each other. When al-'Udail died, al-Farazdaq elegized him in the following verses:

<sup>104</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 332-333.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 341.

<sup>106</sup>Bayān, I, 391.

<sup>107</sup>Mubarrad, II, 99.

No woman of former times since has borne  
such a man as al-'Udail.<sup>108</sup>  
He devoted himself completely [to his tribe],  
and through him they opened the doors of  
prosperity.

وما ولدت مثل الحديد حليّة      قديما ولا مستحدثات الحلائل  
وما زال مذ شدّت يده ازاره      به تفتح الأبواب بكر بن وائل

When we know that the last event mentioned in the poetry of al-'Udail is the crushing of the revolt of Qaṭarī<sup>109</sup> in 78 A.H. and that al-Farazdaq died in 114 A.H.,<sup>110</sup> we can safely assume that the death of al-'Udail occurred between the two dates.

Abū al-Faraj describes al-'Udail as a poet of few verses (muqill),<sup>111</sup> and at the same time Abū al-Faraj relates on the authority of 'Alī b. Shafī' who said: "I met al-Farazdaq on his departure from the tribe of Bakr b. Wā'il and asked him: "Oh Abū Firās, who is the best poet of Bakr amongst those whom you have left behind?" He replied: "Umāim Banī 'Ijl - i.e. al-'Udail - but he is a poet whose verses are lost".<sup>112</sup> This statement can be traced back to 50 A.H., shortly before al-'Udail's departure to Basra as we formerly mentioned. Although al-Farazdaq does not mention the reason for the loss of al-'Udail's verses, he does guide us to an important phenomenon which can be investigated. Those poets of the bādiyah and of the tribes who did not

<sup>108</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 343.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>110</sup> See al-Faḥḥām, al-Farazdaq, 204-205.

<sup>111</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 327.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 340.

settle in the famous cities of the time, like Basra and Kufa, did not enjoy the detailed care of transmitters of the poetry. Thus our information and sources concerning them is scant, while information about even the less worthy of poets who resided in cities or migrated to and from cities is mostly adequate. Abū al-Faraj himself was aware of this phenomenon as he stated in a speech about the poet 'Abd al-Malik al-Salūlī that: "What made this poet undistinguished was that he did not leave the land of al-Yamāmah, nor did he seek any connection with the caliphs or any other governors".<sup>113</sup> But we usually have adequate information concerning those poets of the bādiyah who used to migrate to and from the cities and to praise caliphs, amīrs or chiefs. Among these was the Bakrite poet, Nābighat B. Shaibān, who was residing in the same area as al-'Udail was, and Ḥamzah b. Bīd al-Ḥanafī who was from Yamāmah, and whose fame among transmitters was due to his approaches to governors through his poetry, especially those to al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufrah and his sons.<sup>114</sup> Thus the lack of attention paid to these poets who resided in the bādiyah and remaining far from centres of activity, may enlighten us as to the reason for the scarcity of their surviving poems and why they have been considered as poets of few verses (muqillūn), although some of them did in fact produce a great many verses. The description of al-'Udail as a poet of lost verses is reasonably accurate with regard to the poems, which survive from the time before his departure for Basra. It would

---

<sup>113</sup>Aghānī, XXIII, 169.

<sup>114</sup>Aghānī, XVI, 202.

appear that of the seven poems of al-'Udail selected by Ibn Maimūn, which make up more than two-thirds of his surviving poetry when number of verses is considered, six were composed in Basra while the seventh is most likely to have been composed also in Basra, because in it he boasts of Rabī'ah as a tribal group which was true in the Basran ambience. When we recognize that these seven poems, which consist of 222 verses, were but a selection from the poetry of al-'Udail chosen by Ibn Maimūn, we can cast doubt on the proposition that al-'Udail could possibly be considered a poet of few verses. From another angle, as previously mentioned, al-'Udail spent a not inconsiderable amount of time being pursued by al-Ḥajjāj and this may have caused the loss of some of his poems. Moreover, our sources contain signs which would indicate that parts of the poems of al-'Udail have been lost; for example reference is made to him satirizing the B. Jillān,<sup>115</sup> and yet what remained is only one verse which says: '

I am satirizing the B. Jillān who were  
unknown to glory, in olden times or new.<sup>116</sup>

أهاجي بني جلان اذ لم يكن لها  
حديث ولا في الأولين قديم

It is also said that he used to compose rajaz,<sup>117</sup> and yet what survives of his arājiz are only two fragments. The first begins with the hemistich :<sup>118</sup>

" يا دار سلمى أقفرت من ذي قار "

<sup>115</sup> Aghani, XXII, 329.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Shu'arā', 414.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.; Aghānī, XXII, 328.

and only seven hemistichs of this survive even though Ibn Qutaibah says that it consists of many.<sup>119</sup> The second fragment which he addressed to al-Hajjāj has only two hemistichs which survive. They are:

He has threatened to imprison me and fetter  
my legs, but my legs are tough from inside  
[i.e. - not to be pained by fetters].<sup>120</sup>

أوعدني بالسجن والأداهم      رجلي ورجلي شنة المناسم

It is only fair to mention in this context that the B. 'Ijl, the clan of al-'Udail, begat a group of the most famous composers of rajaz in Islam, amongst them al-Aghlab who was the first to lengthen it and liken it to the ode;<sup>121</sup> and Abū al-Najm the composer of the best urjūzah up to his time.<sup>122</sup> Thus it is related that al-Aṣma'ī said: "One of the Arab transmitters was once asked: 'Who are the most gifted composers of rajaz?' He replied: 'The B. 'Ijl, and then the B. Sa'd'".<sup>123</sup>

However, the surviving parts of the poetry of al-'Udail would indicate that he was conforming to the traditional genres of poetry of the time, even though I could find no trace of elegiac poetry. Had his diwān survived we would probably have found elegies on Bakrite and Rabī'ite chiefs such as Mālik b. Misma', who respected al-'Udail and

<sup>119</sup> Shu'arā', 414.

<sup>120</sup> Ibn Qutaibah, Adab al-Kātib, 376; Baghdādī, II, 366.

<sup>121</sup> Shu'arā', 613; Aghānī, XXI, 29.

<sup>122</sup> Shu'arā', 604; Aghānī, X, 151; al-Maimanī, al-Tarā'if al-Adabiyah, 55.

<sup>123</sup> Aghānī, X, 152.



allowed him to live with him. Moreover, it is inconceivable that al-'Udail would have kept silent over the death of Mālik in 71 A.H.

The two most prominent types of poetry found in the surviving verses of al-'Udail are praise and boasting. When we investigate the figures who appear in his poems of praise, we find that with the exception of al-Ḥajjāj and his son Muḥammad, they all belong to the tribe of Bakr. He praised the B. Qais, 'Ikrimah, Ḥawshab and Mālik b. Misma', all from the tribe of Bakr. Although he was motivated by personal interest in his praise for the B. Qais, as they had rescued his father from the B. al-Ṭaḡhiyah, his praise for the afore-mentioned Bakrite chiefs was motivated by his feeling of loyalty to the Bakr tribe as a whole, since none of them was from the clan of the B. 'Ijl, his clan. With regard to his praise of al-Ḥajjāj, this was not motivated by liking as much as by fear of al-Ḥajjāj. He, to the best of my knowledge, only praised al-Ḥajjāj in one poem which he recited before al-Ḥajjāj when he was brought before him; he begins the poem with the following verse in which he portrays his despair, because of his inability to escape the wrath of al-Ḥajjāj:

If I were in Salmā Ajā and its valleys,  
Ḥajjāj would find a way to reach me.<sup>124</sup>

فلو كنت في سلمى أجا وشعابها      لكان لحجاج علي دليل

<sup>124</sup> Mubarrad, II, 99; Bayān, I, 391; Aghānī, XXII, 332; Shu'arā', 414; 'Asākir, IV, 62.

It seems that al-'Udail was successful in his praise of al-Ḥajjāj, and knew the right way to approach him. Al-Ḥajjāj used to claim that obedience to the caliph was obligatory by quoting the Qur'anic verse: "واسمعوا وأطيعوا" (listen and obey),<sup>125</sup> to such an extent that he considered that obedience to him was equally obligatory. It is once said that he claimed: "If I order a man to enter a certain door and he does not, his blood would be lawful to me".<sup>126</sup> Thus a great number of the poems in praise of al-Ḥajjāj, which portray the people's fear of his strong personality were not natural responses to genuine emotion, but a response to a policy of terror followed by al-Ḥajjāj, and actively implemented by him in order to silence the voice of his opponents. It should not be forgotten that most of the poems composed in praise of al-Ḥajjāj, and which exaggerate his abilities in exercising power and in spreading terror amongst his people, were recited before him and would indicate his fascination with such types of praise. As a consequence of this policy, the poets went to great lengths to add religious tags to their poems on al-Ḥajjāj, describing his enemies as hypocrites and unbelievers. For example al-Farazdaq says:

Whenever al-Ḥajjāj fights a hypocrite, he envelopes him with a continuously cutting sword.<sup>127</sup>

إذا حارب الحجاج أيّ منافق  
علاه بسيف كلما هزّ يقطع

<sup>125</sup> Qur'ān, LXIV, 16.

<sup>126</sup> Ḥayawān, III, 15-16.

<sup>127</sup> Dīwān al-Farazdaq, I, 417.

Jarīr portrays the hatred of hypocrites for al-Ḥajjāj whereas religious people love him, saying:

Every hypocrite conceals hatred towards you,  
while every religious man favours you.<sup>128</sup>

يسرُّك البغضاء كل منافق      كما كل ذي دين عليك شفيق

The poets also went to great lengths to add fear-inducing characteristics to the personality of al-Ḥajjāj, thus planting terror in the minds of the people. Therefore he is portrayed in many verses as the sword of God being drawn through the necks of the opponents of the ruling class supported by God's help. Further they glorified his endeavours to maintain security throughout Iraq and to crush insurgence. Al-Farazdaq for example says:<sup>129</sup>

شفيت من الداء العراق فلم تدع      به ريبة بعد اصطفاق الزلازل

Jarīr says:<sup>130</sup>

عفريت العراق شفيت منهمم      فأسوا خاضعين لك الرقابا

When Lailā al-'Akhyaliyyah praised al-Ḥajjāj and went as far as to describe his might in the following verse:<sup>131</sup>

إذا هبط الحجاج أرضها مريضة      تتبَّح أقصى دائها فشفاهها

Al-Ḥajjāj was fascinated and said: "What a person? By God, nobody has touched on my characteristics since I entered Iraq except her".<sup>132</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Dīwān Jarīr b. 'Aṭīyyah al-Khaṭafī, II, 20.

<sup>129</sup> Dīwān al-Farazdaq, II, 137.

<sup>130</sup> Dīwān Jarīr b. 'Aṭīyyah al-Khaṭafī, I, 9.

<sup>131</sup> Dīwān Lailā al-Akhyaliyyah, 121.

<sup>132</sup> Amālī, I, 86-87.

All the aforementioned features which al-Ḥajjāj appreciated when he was being praised, would appear to be in the mind of al-'Udail, when he composed his poem in praise of al-Ḥajjāj. Thus he portrays him as the one who guided people after they had gone astray, who ruled according to the Book of God whilst others oppressed, and who was the sword of the caliph from whom he gained strength over his enemies. He likens him to the famous leader Khālīd b. al-Walīd, glorifies his endeavours to maintain security and crush the rebellion of Qaṭarī, the Khārijite leader, and exaggerates the power of al-Ḥajjāj, saying that human beings and jinn obey his words. The verses which depict these features are as follows:

He [al-Ḥajjāj] built the dome of Islam.  
 He is like a Prophet who guides the people  
 after they have gone astray.  
 While others do injustices, he rules  
 according to the law of God, judges  
 according to the Book [Qur'ān] and is wise.  
 He is the steadfast friend and sword of  
 the Commander of the Faithful.  
 Every Imām has a companion and a steadfast  
 friend.  
 Through him, God has helped the caliph  
 against them [his enemies], and consolidated  
 a rule which was about to vanish.  
 You are Khālīd, the sword of God upon the  
 earth, and whenever you assault, you are  
 helped by God.  
 You assaulted the Murrān of Iraq, so that  
 its sides became easy to ride and walk upon.  
 You killed both the sons of 'Ubād, so that  
 they [their followers] became weak and  
 bereft.  
 And you meted out the same fate to Qaṭarī  
 despite his men and horses.  
 Whenever my she-camel reaches the door-steps  
 of al-Ḥajjāj, she comes to the best host and  
 dwelling.  
 You see that both the Jinn and the human-beings  
 obey the orders of al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 332-333; Mubarrad, II, 99; Bayān, I, 391; Shu'arā', 414; 'Asākīr, IV, 62; Baghdādī, II, 366.

هدى الناس من بعد الضلال رسول	بنى قبة الاسلام حتى كأنه
الى الله قاض بالكتاب عقول	اذا جار حكم الناس ألجأ حكه
لكل امام صاحب وخبيل	خليل أمير المؤمنين وسيفه
وثبت ملكا كاد عنه ينزل	به نصر الله الخليفة منهم
تصول بحون الله حين تصول	فأنت كسيف الله في الأرض خالد
مناكبها للوطء وهي ذلول	وصلت بمران العراق فأصبحت
بهنزل موهون الجناح تكول	أذقت الحمام ابني عباد فأصبحوا
كتائب من رجالة وخبول	ومن قطرى نلت ذاك وحوله
أنت خير منزل به ونزول	اذا ما أتت باب ابن يوسف ناقتي
على طاعة الحجاج حين يقول	نزي الثقلين الأنس والجن أصبحا

It would appear that al-Ḥajjāj was charmed by the aforementioned verses and said to al-'Udail: "This is more appropriate [than what you said before], you have been saved",<sup>134</sup> and he gave him his stipend. Al-Jāhiz mentions that al-Ḥajjāj said to al-'Udail after hearing his poem: "Save yourself, spare your blood and never repeat what you have done; what was between me and killing you was shorter than the claw of a bustard".<sup>135</sup>

We do not know for certain the reason behind al-'Udail's poem in praise of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥajjaj. But there are indications in the poem which may possibly show that Muḥammad had taken part in interceding with his father in favour of al-'Udail. This indicates that Muḥammad had saved al-'Udail from choking, restored his lost power, and had done what al-'Udail had considered would never be done for him. He says:

<sup>134</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 333.

<sup>135</sup>Bayān, I, 391.

You have let my tongue speak [in your favour]  
after it was checked, and you have returned to  
me my lost strength.  
You have done what I myself aspired to, but I  
kept it secret [as being an impossible dream].  
And a secret is to be safeguarded.<sup>136</sup>

لقد بسطت لساني بعد غصته      وقد جبرت جناحي وهو مهضوم  
وقد أتيت الذي كانت تحدّثني      نفسي فأكتته والسر تكسّوم

On the other hand, he may have been motivated to praise Muḥammad through his desire for favour, or through a fear of al-Ḥajjāj so strong that he was to praise even his son. However in this poem al-'Udail undoes what he said in his satirical poem about al-Ḥajjāj. Whereas formerly he considered Thaqīf to be non-Arab and to belong to Thamūd, now he glorifies the tribe of Thaqīf, claims that it is the fount of all the great men of old, and describes Muḥammad as inheriting the glory of his forefathers, and he glorifies the ancestors of Muḥammad on both paternal and maternal sides. He says:

They [she-camels] intend to reach the quarters  
of Thaqīf, to whom - if they want to take pride -  
belong great people, from old times.  
They intend to reach the illustrious man, who  
is like a sword, from whom Abū 'Aqīl has  
inherited indestructable glory.  
He is a generous man who was given birth by  
an illustrious woman who has noble children.  
She belongs to the clan of Sa'd known for  
its glory and honour.<sup>137</sup>

ينوين فرج ثقيف في أرومتها      إذا ثقيف سمت منها الخراشيم  
ينوين أبيض مثل السيف أورثه      أبو عقيل ثناء غير مهسوم  
بحر أجادت به غراء منجبة      من فرع سعد لها مجد وتكريم

<sup>136</sup> Al-Qaisī, *Shu'arā' Umawiyūn*, I, 318.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 317-318.

Whereas he had described al-Ḥajjāj as being mean, the fathers of Muḥammad among whom was al-Ḥajjāj were now described as being generous. Al-'Udail portrays Muḥammad as the giver of hundreds of camels, one who deserves thanks and who puts aside meanness. He says:

How many of your forefathers, through whom prayers for rain were made, rewarded in abundance and were known for their good. And how many are those who have received generous awards from you and are not pursued by ignominy or reproach. You are the one who gives a hundred camels and short-haired horses, followed by illustrious and strong guards. You are the seeker of glory difficult to achieve, and the one who renounces miserliness which is disgraceful. The Lord of the throne has awarded you what He He is the Lord of the Prophet and the Almighty.<sup>38</sup>

جزل مواهبه بالخير موسوم	كم من أب لك يستسقى الغمام به
منا ولا فيه إن أعطيت تأثيم	ونائل منك جزل لا تتبعه
والجرد تتبعها البيض الحراميم	الواهب المئة الأشباه ضاوية
والتارك البخل إن البخل مذوم <sup>م</sup>	والمشترى الحمد ان الحمد ذو مهمل
رب الرسول له سيما وتسويم <sup>وم</sup>	أعطاك ذو العرش ما أعطى كرامته
رب الرسول له سيما وتسويم	اعطاك ذو العرش ما أعطى كرامته

Al-'Udail does not stop at this, but goes as far as to describe Muḥammad as being more generous, at a time of drought, than a bay of vehement waves would be; he even sees him as a spring which leaves destitute those untouched by his favour. He says:

No tumultous bay, with its vehement waves upon waves, is more generous than you [Muḥammad], when asked, in a year of drought

when the healthy she-camels became lean.  
 You are the spring overflowing with rewards  
 and whoever is denied these awards is  
 deprived [indeed].<sup>139</sup>

جون الأواذيّ تحلوه العلاجيم	ما هزید من خلیج البحر منجرد
إذا الصبا حاردت واعتلت الكوم	یوما بأجود منه حين تسألہ
وكل من لم يصبه الغيث محروم	أنت الريح الذي جادت مواطرہ

Having considered al-'Udail's praise poetry, we may now assess his boasting poetry. Most of his surviving poems of this genre were composed after he had settled in Basra, when he was not occupied with boasting about his closest relatives, as he formerly did in the bādiyah, but he went beyond this to boast about the entire tribe of Bakr, and even extended it to the tribe of Rabī'ah. This attitude could be expected since the tribe of Bakr encompassed other Rabī'ite tribes in Iraq. The leader of the tribe of Bakr, Mālik b. Misma', was also the leader of Rabī'ah, and Basra witnessed the formation of great tribal blocs such as Bakr and Tamīm, as has already been mentioned. It is reasonable to state that boasting was among the traditional types of poetry closely linked to 'aṣabiyyah and the tribal spirit, because it is the echoes of the pride of the tribe in itself and its belief in its superiority and priority over other tribes. Most of the boasting poetry which has come down to us from the Umayyad era is characterized by strong tribalism. If the poet wanted to boast of himself, he usually did not neglect to praise his tribe and to boast of it, thus the two tendencies, individualism

---

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.



and tribalism, could come together in the same poem. The full expression of individualism portraying the pride of the poet in himself, his feelings of independence from his tribe and his ability to dispense with the tribe, did not find its way into Arabic poetry until the 'Abbāsīd era. Thus al-Mutanabbī says:

I do not derive honour from my tribe, they derive  
honour from me and I take pride in myself, not  
in my forefathers.<sup>140</sup>

لا بقومي شرفت بل شرفوا بي      ونفسي فخرت لا بجدودي

Since boasting poetry in the Umayyad era still had its roots in the tribalism inherited from the pre-Islamic period, it is natural to find that it concentrates on the same virtues and glorious deeds which had been boasted of by the pre-Islamic poets. Many of the pre-Islamic ideals continued to be held in high esteem among poets, especially among those who were dominated by bedouin haughtiness. Like al-'Udail, who whenever they desired to boast slavishly followed the example of their predecessors. Thus when al-'Udail boasts, he ascribes the reason for it to his forefathers, and says:

Not only does my mother belong to Shaibān,  
but I as well am a white 'Ijlite of good  
descent.<sup>141</sup>

فان تك من شيبان أمي فاني      لأبيض عجلي عريض المفارق

It seems as though he derives the elements of his personality from his ancestors. He sees himself as the most noble poet

<sup>140</sup> Dīwān Abī al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī, I, 322.

<sup>141</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 326, 339; Ma'āhid, I, 26.

of Wā'il, i.e. Bakr and Taghlib, on both his paternal and maternal sides, and his nobility is known through his forefathers and thus he says:

In descent, I am the noblest poet in Wā'il  
[tribe].  
I belong to the most illustrious paternal and  
maternal uncles.  
And I belong to a father by whom I rise and  
through whom my nobility is known, who is  
generous, a chief, and of excellence.<sup>142</sup>

اني لأكرم شاعري وأهل  
وأبا به أعلو وتعرف غرتي  
عما أغر إذا نسبت وخالا  
ضخم الدسيعة سيّدا هفضالا

In another poem he boasts of his generosity and stature, but he sees them not as personal achievements but as having been inherited from his ancestors. Thus:

These are positions acquired for me by my  
father, and whoever acquires such positions  
will not be dispraised.<sup>143</sup>

منازل أنزلنيها أبي  
ومن بيتني مثلها لا يذم

Al-'Udail was filled with admiration for his tribe Bakr, and he sings the praises of the nobility of its clans, and considers their old deeds and might as worthy vehicles for boasting; he says:

The horsemen of Lujaim still enjoy the  
reverence of Al Hawdhah - the exalted, the  
daring, the crowned - before whom people  
prostrated, and who were the bearers of all  
nobility.  
The clan of Ḥanzalah - whose spears are poison  
for the horsemen and bring quick death - are

<sup>142</sup>Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyūn, I, 306.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 315.

such people, who, having drawn swords, believe that they [swords] are right and have not been drawn in vain.

If I take pride in them, then their old history is abundant in honour, fit for the tongue to speak of.

They are the sons of Tha'labah, whose ideals teach gentleness to the gentle and erase the ignorance of the ignorant.

To Yashkur belongs ancient nobility, and their forefather if mentioned, was not obscure.

And if the good deeds of the B. Qadār are mentioned, then their past will show that they have preserved all nobility.<sup>144</sup>

ان الفوارس من لجيم لم يزل	فيهم مهابة كل أبيض فاعل
متحتم بالتاج يسجد حوله	من آل هوزة للمكارم حامل
أو رهط حنظلة الذين رماحهم	سمّ الفوارس حتف موت عاجل
قوم اذا شهروا السيوف رأوا لها	حقا ولم يك سلّها للباطل
ولئن فخرت بهم لمثل قديمهم	بسط الفاخر للسان القائل
أولاد ثعلبة الذين بمثلهم	حلم الحليم وردّ جهل الجاهل
ولمجد يشكر سورة عادية	وأب اذا ذكره ليس بخال
ونو القدار اذا عددت صنيعهم	وضح القديم لهم بكل محافل

Al-'Udail was deeply aware of the history of his tribe and their victories which he lauds. It is worthy of note in this context that boasting of the old battle days of the tribe was among the most prominent themes employed by the poets, during the Umayyad era, and was used to such an extent that it would not be an exaggeration to assume that the poetry of every tribe, in that era, contains a record of its victorious battles from earliest days. The most prominent victory of the tribe of Bakr was the battle of Dhū Qār over the Persians and those Arab tribes who followed them. The Bakrite poets composed many poems lauding the heroism

<sup>144</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 334-335.

of their tribe in the aforementioned battle, among them

A'shā Rabī'ah who says:

On the day of Dhū Qār in which the tribes took part, we remained steadfast assisting [our kindred].

They [the Persians] came in a grandly equipped and terrible army whose contingents were crowded close together and crushing.

They came [to inflict a calamity], but the darkness ended with our swords still drawn.

They all fled and took refuge with al-Nu'mān b. Zur'ah.

We came to fight this army like the sand grouse coming to the spring water of a small pool.<sup>145</sup>

وقد شهد القبائل محلبينا	ونحن غداة ذى قار أقمنا
ملممة كئائبها طحونا	وقد جاءوا بها جأوا فلقنا
ظلال دجاء عنا مهلبتينا	ليوم كريهة حتى تجللت
بنعمان بن زرعسة أكتعينا	فولونا الدوابر واتقونا
كما ورد القطا الثمد المينا	وردنا عارض الأحرار وردا

Al-'Udail in one of his poems portrays his tribe as the doers of every noble deed and considers the aforementioned battle day of Dhū Qār, in which they despoiled the heroes of the Persians, to be the most excellent of all battle-days. He says:

We have been warmed by every fire kindled for noble deeds - indeed we it was who kindled the fire.

There is no day of honour more noble than the day of Dhū Qār.

We brought in their weapons and the horses were formidable in appearance when we took the arm of every horseman of the Chosroe.<sup>146</sup>

ما أوقد الناس من نار لمكرمة      الا اصطلبينا وكنا موقدي النار

<sup>145</sup>Naqā'id, 646.

<sup>146</sup>Shu'arā', 414; 'Iqd, V, 266.

وما يعدون من يوم سمعت به      للناس أفضل مبيت يوم بذي قار  
جئنا بأسلابهم والخيل عابسة      يوم استلبنا لكسرى كل أسوار

In another poem, al-'Udail boasts of the horsemen of the tribe of Bakr who defeated the army of the Chosroe at the battle of Dhū Qār, describing them as paying no heed to their opponents. The verses concerned are:

On the day of Hinw Qurāqir [i.e. Dhū Qār], we mobilized true horsemen who did not heed their opponents, to fight the Chosroe and all those gathered about him. Our horsemen have a cheerful and bright day victory whenever they seek a confrontation.<sup>147</sup>

ونحن عبأنا يوم حنو قراقر      لحلة كسرى والذي كان أشببا  
فوارس صدق لا يباليون من ثوى      اذا كسفوا يوما أغرمحجبا

Al-'Udail boasts of the victorious battles of the tribe of Bakr in pre-Islamic times over Mudarite tribes such as Qais, Tamīm and Asad. He exaggerates to such an extent that he goes beyond historical accuracy in claiming that the Bakrites killed Zaid al-Fawāris of al-Rabāb. But we must remember that the poet is a poet first and foremost, and not an historian. His historical facts may be true, but he is at liberty to use those facts in any way he pleases to enhance his own art. Boasting of the heroism of the tribe of Bakr and of some of its victorious battles over some Mudarite tribes, al-'Udail says:

We made a morning raid of death on Asad at al-Liwā, and annihilated the enemy.

<sup>147</sup> Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyūn, I, 293.

And we killed the tribes of Yarbū' and  
 Dārim and captured Hājib and 'Iqāl.  
 At the battle-day of al-Shayyitain we  
 heavily pressed upon 'Amr and killed  
 numerous people of Sa'd.  
 And we met al-Rabāb and killed Zaid al-  
 Fawāris with the spear, so he fell down  
 from his excellent, brisk horse that  
 swiftly moves over the rugged ground.  
 And from all the clans [afnā'] of Qais,  
 we captured their nobles and wealth.  
 If I calculate the deeds of my people, it  
 will be clear that they are above all  
 other beings in magnitude and deeds.<sup>148</sup>

موتا أزلن به العدو وفزلا	قصبحن من أسد حلولا باللوى
وأخذن منهم حاجبا وعقلا	وقتلن يربوعا بهن ودارملا
عمرا ومن سعد أبين حلالا	ووطنن يوم الشيطان بكلـكل
زيد الفوارس بالتصال فمالا	ومن الرباب لقينه فقتلـl

A noticeable phenomenon in this context is that the surviving poems of al-'Udail show that he did not boast of victorious battle-days of the tribe of Bakr over other Rabī'ite tribes, especially the tribe of Taghlib, even though Bakr and Taghlib opposed each other in the war of al-Basūs, when the antagonism lasted for forty years with intervals of fierce battle-days.<sup>149</sup> On the contrary, al-'Udail boasts of the old glory of Rabī'ah, their might and their patience in battles. He says:

I take pride not in a remote stock, but in  
 the nobles who are most numerous.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>149</sup> On al-Basūs see: Naqā'id, 905-907; Aghānī, V, 34-64; Ma'ārif, 605-606; Kāmil, I, 214-222; 'Iqd, V, 213-222; Nuwairī, XV, 396-399.

I take pride in Rabī'ah the wealthy, who  
are higher than others in dignity.  
In hard battles, you will find them with  
shining faces, hitting the enemy hard.<sup>150</sup>

بالأكرمين الأكثرين رجالا	فاذا افتحرت فخرت غير مغرب
والأطولين فوارعا وجبالا	بربيعة الأثرين في أيامها
بيض الوجوه على العدو وثقالا	تلقاهم في الحرب حين تكهشت

Al-'Udail in another poem boasts of the generous men of Wā'il,  
i.e. Bakr and Taghlib, who favour him and afflict their  
enemies while they restore those who seek refuge in them;  
he says:

Every generous and wealthy man of Wā'il is  
favourably inclined towards me.  
They crush the bones of some and set the  
broken bones of others who take refuge in  
them.<sup>151</sup>

إذا قت كل جواد خضم	عليّ تعطف من وائل
ويرأب منهم إذا ما اتحصم	بهم يكسر الحظم من غيرهم

In another poem, al-'Udail specifically boasts of the tribe  
of Taghlib. He lauds their generosity, glory and might.  
He commends their attack on al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir who was  
on good terms with the tribe of Bakr and even entrusted the  
chief of Bakr with his arms and family, before surrendering  
to the Chosroe.<sup>152</sup> Likewise, he commends the killing by  
Taghlib of the two sons of Qatām, one of whom was Shuraḥbīl  
who was supported by the tribe of Bakr, against his brother  
Salamah who was in turn aided by the tribe of Taghlib, at

<sup>150</sup> Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyūn, I, 306.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 315.

<sup>152</sup> See Naqā'id, 639; Kāmil, I, 199, 'Iqd, V, 262.

the battle-day of al-Kulābī, after the death of their father al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr al-Kindī.<sup>153</sup> He boasts of the killing of the king of al-Ḥīrah, 'Amr b. Hind, who decided in favour of the tribe of Bakr against the tribe of Taghlib in their dispute,<sup>154</sup> and was killed by the famous poet of Taghlib, 'Amr b. Kulthūm.<sup>155</sup> He also boasts of some chiefs of Taghlib such as Abū Ḥanash who killed Shurahbīl b. al-Ḥārith;<sup>156</sup> Muhalhil who led the tribe of Taghlib against the tribe of Bakr in the long battle of al-Basūs; and of Kulaib and his assembly and power, portraying him as tyrannizing over even kings and crushing the pride of tyrants even though Kulaib was killed by the Bakrite chief, Jassās, and this killing of Kulaib was the cause of the war of al-Basūs involving the two sister tribes of Bakr and Taghlib. He says:

And if you want to take pride in Taghlib,  
daughter of Wā'il, mention the honours of  
generosity and natural disposition.

And to the mighty Taghlib belongs over-  
whelming, clear and ancient glory.

They [Taghlib] attacked al-Nu'mān [Ibn  
Mundhir], Ibn Muharriq, and the two sons  
of Qatām, with might and pride.

They are the people who killed Ibn Hind  
while their spears prevented the enemy  
from reaching the water to quench their  
thirst .

And to them belongs Abū Ḥanash in whose hand  
was the fore-part of the strong spear.

And to them belongs Muhalhil, the poet,  
and Kulaib the generous, if honours are to

<sup>153</sup> See Ḍabbī, 427; Naqā'id, 452; Kāmil, I, 226, Aghānī, XII, 209, Nuwairī, XV, 406.

<sup>154</sup> Al-Tibrīzī, Kitāb Sharḥ al-Qasā'id al-'Ashr, 108.

<sup>155</sup> Shu'arā', 234.

<sup>156</sup> Ḍabbī, 430.



be mentioned.

He [Kulaib] renounced the company of the abused.

His assembly was not held in contempt, by the Revelation [Qur'ān].

He tyrannized even over Kings, and did not leave alone anyone mad with pride or haughty.<sup>157</sup>

فاذكر مكارم من ندى وشمائيل	واذا فخرت بتغلب ابنة وائل
عادية ويزيد فوق الكاهل	ولتغلب التغلباء عزّ بـيـن
وابني قطام بعزة وتنـاول	تسطو على النعمان وابن محرق
وقنا الرماح تذود ورد الناهل	قوم هم قتلوا ابن هند عنوة
ريّ السنان وريّ صدر العالم	منهم أبو حنش وكان بكفّسه
وندى كليب عند فضل النساءل	ومهلهل الشعراء ان فخروا به
يستبّ مجلسه وحق النـازل	كفى مجالسة السباب ولم يكن
حربا ولا صعرا لرأس مائل	حتى أجار على الملوك فلم يدع

There is no doubt that the above verses can be explained in the light of the emergence of great tribal blocs, such as Rabī'ah and Muḍar, in the cities during the Umayyad era, where each tribal bloc consisted of different clans of the same ancestry. We have seen that the tribe of Bakr encompassed other Rabī'ite tribes in Iraq and the Bakrites supported the tribe of Taghlib against the tribe of Qais in Mesopotamia. The emergence of great tribal blocs made certain poets go beyond narrow tribal affinities, and widen the limits of their 'aṣabīyyah to embrace those tribes from the larger stock. Al-Quṭāmī, the Taghlibī poet says for example:<sup>158</sup>

ربيعة آبائي الألى اقتسموا العلى اذا عدّ باق من زمان وسالف

Al-Farazdaq as another example says:<sup>159</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 335-336.

<sup>158</sup> Dīwān al-Quṭāmī, 293.

<sup>159</sup> Dīwān al-Farazdaq, I, 158.

أبت مضر الحمراء الا تكرّما      على الناس يععلوكل جدّ جدودها

Boasting about the battle days of the tribe is closely linked to boasting of the power of the tribe, its ability to defy other tribes, and the number of its people. The dependence of the tribes on the number of their people is a marked feature indicating deep rooted tribal affinities in the spirit of the people in the Umayyad era, since this indicates the measure of power that the tribe could exercise in the balance of political power. These features frequently occurred in the poetry of the Umayyad era, especially in the poetry of tribes which had a long tradition of Bedouin life, such as Bakr and Tamīm. Among the best poetry after this manner is the saying of al-Farazdaq:<sup>160</sup>

وأكرمهم من بالكرام يعرف	وجدنا أعزّ الناس أكثرهم حصي
عصائب لاقى بينهن المعرف	وكلتاها فينا الى حيث تلتقي
علينا تميم ظالمين وأسرفوا	وبالله لولا أن تقولوا تكاشرت
ولا تركت عين على الأرض تطرف	لما تركت كفّ تشير باصبع

Al-'Udail boasts about the power and might of his tribe in more than one poem. In one of these poems, al-'Udail portrays his tribe as defending the dreaded frontiers and despoiling the leaders of the invaders, who either surrendered their armies to the tribe of Bakr or abandoned them to be killed in battle. He says:

Whenever the call for war and recompense  
is made, we defend the feared frontiers.  
How many a chief, invaded us, only to return

<sup>160</sup> Diwān al-Farazdaq, II, 30, 32.

to his people naked, driven off, and saved  
from fighting.  
He reached his people without booty, leaving  
his army captured and humiliated or killed  
and cut to pieces.<sup>161</sup>

إذا ما دعا داعي الصّباح وثوباً	بنا يتقى الثّغر المخوف لقاءه
الى قومه الا طليقا مسيباً	وكم من رئيس قد غزانا فلم يئوب
أسيرا مهانا أو قتيلا ملجباً	أناهم بلا نهب وأسلم جيشه

In another poem al-'Udail boasts about the power of his tribe portraying them as advancing to the frontiers, afflicting their enemies, casting other tribes out of the fertile land, giving support to kings and crushing the armies that invade them, allowing their corpses to be eaten by birds. He says:

We go to the frontiers in battles to defeat the enemy and capture booty.  
You should be aware that to us belongs the good land, the generosity [lit. fire] of Kings, and good pastures.  
We expelled the tribes from this good land, attacking them with an army as thick as a forest.  
It [our army] is called to war incessantly and goes far away in its marching. It is like a deep-black darkness.  
And how many kings have we humiliated.  
And how many armies raided us with plenty of horses, only to be killed and injured.  
We put [the corpses of] their heroes to be eaten by eagles, ignoble birds eaters of human dung.<sup>162</sup>

فنكي العمد و ونحوي الغنم	نحل على الثّغر عتد العتوب
ونار الملوك وأرض النّحم	لنا سرّة الأرض قد تعلمون
بأرعن ذي غابة كالأجسم	نفينا القبائل عن حرّها
كمثل الظلام اذا ما ادلهم	كثير الدّواعي بعيد المسير

<sup>161</sup>Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyūn, I, 293.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid., 315-316.

وهلك أقمننا له رأسه      وان كان من قبلنا لم يقيم  
 وجيش غزانا كثير الصهيل      فلاقى الذى كان منا اجترم  
 قرينا السور صناديده      ووكن البغاث وجون الرخم

In a third poem, al-'Udail portrays the relationship between the horses and the horsemen of the tribe of Bakr which is so close, that the horses became aware that the Bakrite horsemen are the true knights who are ready to fight either as horsemen or foot soldiers, who advance striking out at the enemy when the contingents retreat. The verses that depict this are:

The horses are aware that we alone are their riders when they see fighting in the morning raid.

And we are the chargers, if chased, and we are attackers in the duel.

When contingents abstain [from fighting], we strike with our swords to slaughter the heroes of the enemy.<sup>163</sup>

والخيل تعلم أننا فرسانها      عند الصبح اذا رأين قتالا  
 الضارين اذا أردت طرادهم      والتأزليين اذا أردت نزالا  
 والضارين اذا الكتائب أحجمت      غربا يذبح مل عدا الأبطالالا

Al-'Udail makes a link between the number of people in his tribe and the extent of its power. He portrays the tribe of Bakr as defying all human beings and even the jinn; the verses run as follows:

We outnumber the pebbles, and ours is an ancient glory which was never confused.  
 To whoever compares the old nobility and honour, [we say] in merit we challenge both jinn and human beings.  
 We are the people most deserving of glory

<sup>163</sup>Ibid., 306-307.

and generosity.  
Whenever chiefs are counted, we exceed them.  
We exceed in exalted nobility, and we are  
the first to come forward when the call for  
war is made.<sup>164</sup>

ومجد تلاد لم يكن متأسباً	لنا عدد أرى على عدد الحمى
فضالا لمن عدّ القديم ومحسباً	فنحن حدياً الجن والأنس كلهما
وأكثرهم قوما إذا عدّ مصعباً	وانا أحق الناس بالباع والندى
وأكثرهم بدء إذا هزّ محرباً	وأكثرهم بيتا طويلا عمساده

Boasting of generosity is a highly regarded virtue for desert people and this feature frequently occurs in the poetry of the Umayyad era. The poets enjoyed exaggerating the generosity of their tribes in times of drought; al-Farazdaq, for example, says:<sup>165</sup>

نعجل للضيفان في المحل بالقرى      قد ورا بمحبوط تهتّ وتغرف

Al-'Udail excels in this respect. He frequently portrays the tribe of Bakr as being at the peak of generosity in lean times, and thus their pots are always boiling with food in winter; he says:

Our pots boil during the winter [to feed the guests], and we stand steadfast under the bright swords [in battles].<sup>166</sup>

وانا لتغلي في الشتاء قد ورا      ونصبر تحت اللامعات الخوافق

Al-'Udail derives pleasure in showing the generosity of the Bakrites, who feed with great bowls full of meat at a time of severe drought, when the horizons of the sky have become

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>165</sup> *Dīwān al-Farazdaq*, II, 28

<sup>166</sup> *Aghānī*, XXII, 326.

red out of the drought. He says:

While youths speak of beautiful women, I  
would praise, and I do not fear to be belied,  
the crowned and raised heads of Bakr.  
They are noble hosts, who labour to entertain  
guests when pastures are stricken by drought.  
When the horizons of the sky are coloured a  
blackish-red due to drought, you will find  
great bowls [of food] around their houses,  
for whoever spends the night in their abodes.  
Meat of fat camels overflows these bowls.  
Whenever a bowl is empty, it is filled with  
pieces from the camels' humps.<sup>167</sup>

تهدّ شباب بالغواني وانني      لمن وما أخشى به أن أكذباً  
على الصّيد من بكر ذوى التاج انهم      كرام القرى حشد اذا السّرح أجدبا  
اذا قطر آفاق السماء رأيت      من المحل محمّر الجوانب أصهباً  
وجدت الجفان الرّوح حول بيوتهم      لمن بات في ناديرهم أن يحجّباً  
مبرزة فيها البوائك كلّمها      خلت جفنة علّت سديفاً مشطّباً

In another poem, al-'Udail also says in portraying the  
generosity of his tribe at a time of drought:

In a year of severe drought, in which the  
skies are coloured with darkness, and in a  
sterile winter, we feed people from the  
meat of the camel's hump.<sup>168</sup>

ونحن اذا سنة أمحلت      وآضت محولا كلون الأدم  
نقيم فنطعم لحم السنّام      اذا ما الشتاء علينا أزم

This all-embracing admiration of the tribe of Bakr  
by al-'Udail, and the fusing of his personality with the  
personality of the tribe, affected al-'Udail and made him  
claim that the tribe of Bakr was over all other tribes, and  
even he defies human beings and jinn in honour and virtue;

<sup>167</sup>Al-Qaisī, *Shu'arā' Umawiyūn*, I, 291-292.

<sup>168</sup>*Ibid.*, 316.

he says:

These are my people; whoever compares them  
to his people shall find it hard to attain  
[their stature].

The branches of our nobility have reached  
the skies.

It [nobility] is great and its outward  
branches refuse to bow down.

To whoever compares the old nobility and  
honour, [we say]:

In merit, we challenge both jinn and human  
beings.<sup>169</sup>

يلاق وعورا د ونهم اذ تذبذبا	أولئك قومي من يقسمهم بقومه
جسيم أبت أركانه أن تصومسا	لنا بادخ نال السماء فروعسه
فضالا لمن عدّ القديم ومحسببا	فنحن حدّيا الجن والأنس كلها

In another poem al-'Udail portrays the tribe of Bakr  
as being over all other creatures to the extent that none  
can defy him in this respect; he says:

If I calculate the deeds of my people, it  
will be clear that they are above all other  
beings in magnitude and deeds.

If I speak to the boastful, I do not leave  
any pride for him to take.<sup>170</sup>

وإذا عددت فعمال قومي بينوا	فوق الخلائق بسطة وفعالا
وإذا نطقت مع المفاخر لم أذع	للقائلين إذا نطقت فعالا

He also says:

If the nobles compete for superiority, you  
will find us the most exalted, like the peaks  
of the mountain.<sup>171</sup>

وإذا تطاولت الجبال رأيتنا	بفروع أرفعن فوقه متطاول
---------------------------	-------------------------

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>171</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 334.

These then are the salient features of the surviving poems of al-'Udail. They cast light on the different stages of his life in the bādiyah and Basra, and they indicate that al-'Udail was the poet of his closest relatives in the bādiyah but his emigration to Basra widened the horizons of his tribal affinity, and thus he became truly the poet of the tribe of Bakr, and even of Rabī'ah. He was loyal to his tribe in political and tribal situations, and because of this he tasted the bitterness of being pursued. In general, al-'Udail slavishly followed his predecessors both in the form and content of his poetry. Al-Farazdaq alleges that al-'Udail plagiarized verses.<sup>172</sup> This statement of al-Farazdaq contains grains of truth, and al-'Udail was clearly influenced by other poets and imitated them; his verse:

And we are the chargers, if chased, and we  
are the attackers in a duel.<sup>173</sup>

الضاربين اذا أردت طرادهم      والنازلين اذا أردت نزلا

is close to a verse by al- A'shā Maimūn b. Qais:<sup>174</sup>

قالوا الطراد فقلنا تلك عادتنا      أو تنزلون فانا معشر نزل

Al-'Udail's verse in al-Ḥajjāj:

Had I been at Thahlān or the two branches of  
Ajā mountain, I would have thought that you  
would, unless you desist, see me.<sup>175</sup>

فلو كنت في شهلان أو شعبيتي أجا      لخلتلك إلا أن تمده تراني

<sup>172</sup>Ibid., 340.

<sup>173</sup>Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyyūn, I, 306.

<sup>174</sup>Dīwān al-A'shā, 63.

<sup>175</sup>Aghānī, XXII, 341.



can be identified with a verse by Muhammad al-Numairī who says:<sup>176</sup>

ولو كنت بالعنقاء أو بيسومها  
لخلتك إلا أن تصدّ تراني

Another verse by al-'Udail in al-Ḥajjāj runs:

People feared him until their hearts became  
like the young sand grouse caught in the  
hunter's net.<sup>177</sup>

وخافوه حتى القوم بين ضلوعهم  
كنزوا القطا ضمت عليه الحبائل

can be identified with a verse by Jarīr also in al-Ḥajjāj:<sup>178</sup>

وخافوك حتى القوم تنزرو قلوبهم  
نزاء القطا التفت عليه الحبائل

Regarding the following poetical image in which al-'Udail use the istidārah tashbīhiyyah:

No tumultous bay, with its vehement waves  
upon waves, is more generous than you, when  
asked, in a year of drought when the healthy  
she-camels become lean.<sup>179</sup>

ما مزيد من خليج البحر منجرد  
جون الأواذي تعلوه العلاجيم  
يوما بأجود منه حين تسأله  
إذا الصبا حاردت واعتلت الكوم

the verses have close similarities to a saying of al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī in praise of al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir:<sup>180</sup>

فما الفرات إذا جاشت غواره  
يرده كل واد مترع لجب  
يوما بأجود منه سيب نافلة  
ترمي أواذيه العبرين بالزبد  
فيه حطام من الينبوت والخضد  
ولا يحول عطاء اليوم دون غد

<sup>176</sup> Mubarrad, II, 103, 206; Bayān, I, 391.

<sup>177</sup> Aghānī, XXII, 341.

<sup>178</sup> Dīwān Jarīr b. 'Aṭīyyah al-Khaṭafī, II, 45.

<sup>179</sup> Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawīyyūn, I, 318.

<sup>180</sup> Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, 22-24.

However, exaggeration is a feature of the poetry of al-'Udail; he exaggerates in portraying his fear of al-Ḥajjāj and the ability of al-Ḥajjāj, and in portraying those he praises. His exaggeration reaches its zenith in his boasting poetry and this is to be expected, for boasting is motivated by self-delusion, pride and a belief in one's own superiority. One of the most excessive examples of his exaggerating is the following verse:

To whoever compares the old nobility and  
honour, [we say]:  
In merit, we challenge both jinn and human  
beings.<sup>181</sup>

فنحن حدياً الجن والأنس كلها      فضلا لمن عدّ القديم ومحسبا

The aforementioned verse is close to the following verse by al-Farazdaq:<sup>182</sup>

لنا الجن قد دانت وكل قبيلة      يدين مصّلوها لنا وكفورها

Al-'Udail excels in painting a poetical picture, especially in his satirical fragments which have survived, in which he draws a caricature stressing the humiliation and baseness of his opponents, such as his satirical verses about Jabbar and Waki'. The images of al-'Udail are close to the everyday Bedouin experiences and are thus close to the senses and this is not surprising, for he was raised in the bādiyah. Thus he likens himself to a donkey, the generous to the sea, the horse to a spear, al-Ḥajjāj to a falcon, and Salmā to a gazelle.

<sup>181</sup> Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyūn, I, 292.

<sup>182</sup> Dīwān al-Farazdaq, I, 223.

With exception of fragments by al-'Udail, his poems selected by Ibn Maimūn indicate that he followed his predecessors with regard to the construction of the poems. He begins them with a traditional prelude as a lead into his main theme. For example, in his poem<sup>183</sup> in praise of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥajjāj, he begins by describing the women who deserted him because of his white hair, then he speaks of his she-camel which bore him on his journey to Muḥammad to whom he attributes qualities of generosity, power and so on. In conclusion it should perhaps be said that his surviving poems are completely devoid of the hunting scenes which frequently occur in old Arabic poetry.

---

<sup>183</sup>See Al-Qaisī, Shu'arā' Umawiyūn, I, 316-319.

## CHAPTER VII

NĀBIGHAH B. SHAIBĀN

The information we have concerning the life of al-Nābighah is meagre, and can give only an inadequate interpretation of his life. With the exception of the short chapter dedicated to al-Nābighah by Abū al-Faraj which is, for the most part, devoted to the relationship between the poet and certain Umayyad caliphs and amīrs, the information supplied by the few other sources does not go much beyond the mere repetition of some of Abū al-Faraj's statements, and the citing of the poet's nickname (laqab) and name, a short-appraisal of his poetry, and quotations from some of his verses to illuminate the meaning of certain old words. Of the modern writers who concern themselves with the study of poetry during the Umayyad era, some do not mention the poet at all, while others content themselves with citing a few verses by the poet, within the content of a discussion of political poetry in the Umayyad era.<sup>1</sup> However Lewis Cheikho does devote a short chapter to the poet, although most of the chapter is in fact merely a recital of certain of the poet's verses from various sources.<sup>2</sup> It seems that Cheikho did not pay much attention to the details of the accounts of the poet, nor did he investigate them seriously, and thus his work contains errors which make the short study inadequate. Regarding the editor of al-Nābighah's dīwān,

---

<sup>1</sup>See al-Shāyib, Tārīkh al-Shi'r al-Siyāsī ilā Muntasaf al-Qarn al-Thānī, 206-207; al-Hūfi, Adab al-Siyāsah fī al-'Asr al-Umawī, 151. 160.

<sup>2</sup>See Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Nasrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, 137-162.

he limits himself to merely copying what Abū al-Faraj says about the poet, without adding further detail and without an examination of the accounts by Abū al-Faraj himself, although these sometimes contain errors as we shall see.

The traditional accounts are in conflict regarding the name of our poet, his father and some of his forefathers. According to some traditions, among whom the most notable are Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb and al-Āmidī, his name was 'Abd Allāh b. Mukhāriq.<sup>3</sup> Al-Suyūṭī mentions, on the authority of Ibn Duraid, that his name is Jumal b. Su'danah.<sup>4</sup> Cheiko claims that many traditions call him Mukhāriq,<sup>5</sup> but contrary to his normal procedure he does not mention any of his sources. Moreover, I have been unable to trace in the sources upon which he depends for his chapter, or in any other sources, information which would lend support for his claim. It would appear that the name of the poet's father, i.e. Mukhāriq, as is mentioned in some sources,<sup>6</sup> has confused Cheikho and as a result he has been unable to distinguish between our poet and another called Mukhāriq b. Shihāb al-Māzinī, who was a member of the tribe of Tamīm. He, therefore, attributes to al-Nābighah certain of the verses composed by the aforementioned Mukhāriq, saying that they were derived from the work of al-Dīnawarī,<sup>7</sup> whereas in fact

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, Alqāb al-Shu'arā' (Nawādir al-Makḥṭūṭāt, series 7), 321; Mu'talif, 192.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, al-Muzhir fī 'Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā'ihā, II, 456.

<sup>5</sup> Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, 137.

<sup>6</sup> Mu'talif, 192; Aghānī, VII, 106.

<sup>7</sup> Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, 161.

al-Dīnawarī does not specify who this Mukhāriq was.<sup>8</sup> Had Cheikho consulted the book of al-Hayawān by al-Jāhiz, he would have found these same verses attributed to Mukhāriq b. Shihāb,<sup>9</sup> no relation to al-Nābighah. However the poet himself does not give his name in his poetry, and as such it is impossible to give a decisive judgement as to his actual name, although one may prefer the narration of Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb because he is from an earlier period than Ibn Duraid, whose book, moreover, upon which al-Suyūṭī claims to have depended, contains no mention of the name of al-Nābighah. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, furthermore, was amongst the most famous narrators of the second generation in Kufa, and he took his narrations from Ibn al-A'rābī and Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī, who are considered to be trustworthy. He specialized in assembling the poetry of various tribes, among them the poetry of the tribe of Shaibān,<sup>10</sup> the tribe of our poet. Al-Āmidī agrees with him, and both his book and that of al-Āmidī are devoted to the names of poets. In addition, the manuscript of al-Nābighah's dīwān shares his view.<sup>11</sup>

The laqab Nābighah was given to a group of poets of whom eight are mentioned by al-Āmidī.<sup>12</sup> The most famous of them are: Al-Nābighah al-Dhubayānī, al-Nābighah al-Ja'dī, and al-Nābighah al-Shaibānī. The ancient Arab critics and

---

<sup>8</sup>Dīnawarī, 197.

<sup>9</sup>Ḥayawān, VI, 369.

<sup>10</sup>See al-Asad, Maṣādir al-Shi'r al-Jāhilī, 252, 268, 448, 556.

<sup>11</sup>See Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 1.

<sup>12</sup>See Mu'talif, 191-193.

linguists are in conflict regarding the interpretation of this laqab, and the reason behind it. Some of them argue that a man may be called Nābighah if he began to write poetry when he was advanced in age.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, one may deduce that the period devoted to the composition of poetry by al-Nābighah would be short. This view can be refuted by some verses of al-Nābighah which portray youth and vitality. We cannot ascribe a date to all his poems, but Abū al-Faraj narrates, on the authority of al-'Utbī, that al-Nābighah devoted himself to the praise of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik.<sup>14</sup> He visited the caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd (125-126 A.H.), and recited one of his poems before him.<sup>15</sup> This would imply that he composed poetry during a period of between fifty and sixty years which can in no way be considered a short period - a fact which casts doubts on the aforementioned interpretation of the laqab Nābighah. It is also said that the laqab Nābighah was applied to a poet who had not inherited poetical talent, but recited poetry and excelled in it, and thus his poetry was like water flowing from a spring of an unknown source.<sup>16</sup> This view would be acceptable except for the fact that this laqab has not been applied to the many poets who did not inherit poetical talent, such as 'Antarah, Ḥassān b. Thābit, and Jarīr, the last a contemporary of al-Nābighah. Moreover,

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Duraid, Jamharat al-Lughah, I, 319; al-Suyūṭī, al-Muzhir fī 'Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā'ihā, II, 433; Lisān, nabagha; Baghdādī, I, 287.

<sup>14</sup> Aghānī, VII, 106.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Jawharī, Ṣiḥāh, nabagha; Lisān, nabagha; Tāj, nabagha.

one of the forefathers of al-Nābighah, called 'Amr al-Muzdalif, was a poet<sup>17</sup> so that the inheriting of talent is not excluded. Another interpretation of this laqab is that it derives from the saying,<sup>18</sup> "نبغت الحمامة إذا تفننت" i.e. the pigeon coos, but this is an attribute not confined to the Nābighahs. Many poets would recite their poetry and sing it and the relationship between singing and old Arabic poetry is well-known. Ibn Wallād says:<sup>19</sup> "نبيع بالماء ونبيع بالشعر" (it spouts forth water and he spouts forth poetry), i.e. his poetry ceaselessly gushes from him as water gushes from a spring. It may be understood from the saying of Ibn Wallād that poets with the laqab Nābighah were known for their prolific poetry, but this laqab was not applied to other poets who were prolific. All the aforementioned explanations are unsatisfactory, and they appear to be nothing more than later semantic rationalisations to explain the use of the laqab as applied to some poets. It may indeed be that the word Nābighah had a meaning during the Jāhiliyyah different from that of the Umayyad era, since the meaning of the word seems to change over a period. Our poet mentions in one of his poems that he is 'Nābighah al-Bakrī'; he says boasting of himself:

Both the enemy and friends say that the poems of Nābighah al-Bakrī are exalted.<sup>20</sup>

لنابغة البكري شعر ممدّق

وقال العدو والصدیق كلاهما

<sup>17</sup>Mu'talif, 13.

<sup>18</sup>Baghdādī, I, 287.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 116-117.

<sup>20</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 3.



Unfortunately the poem from which this verse is taken contains no indication which would help to date it. Likewise we do not know whether he composed it after he had become known as Nābighah, or whether he himself was the first to use the name Nābighah in this aforementioned verse, although he claims that his laqab Nābighah was constantly on the tongues of people. It may not be far from the truth to suppose that the poet called himself Nābighah out of admiration for al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, or alternatively that he was called Nābighah because of certain similarities between the two poets. Al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī rarely praised men other than kings as he says,<sup>21</sup> and as his Dīwān shows. Likewise our poet's Dīwān indicates that he praised only caliphs or Umayyad amīrs. Then again, both of them frequently inset gnomic verses within their poems. For this quality, Derenbourg deems that al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī was one of the poets called fuhūl, since the word fahl is by extension applied to all those who express an idea in a brief sentence, even in prose.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, in the poetry of our poet there are signs of influence by al-Dhubyanī; as, for example, his saying:

If I do not aid my companion by doing good,  
my enemy will not be harmed by my hate.<sup>23</sup>

إذا أنا لم أنفج صدقي بوجهه      فان عدوي لم يضرهم بخضبي

is identified with that of al-Dhubyanī:<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, 171.

<sup>22</sup>Le Dīwān de Nābigha Dhobyānī, 12-13.

<sup>23</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 117.

<sup>24</sup>Cheiko, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, 726.

إذا أنا لم أنفع خليلي بوجهه فان عدوي لا يضرهم بغضبي

And his verse in speaking of the abodes of his beloved who left him:

I stood in her abode asking it in the evening;  
It did not answer me for traces do not speak.<sup>25</sup>

وقفت في دارها أصلا أسألتها فلم تجب دارها واستعجم الطلل

is close to the saying of al-Dhubyānī:<sup>26</sup>

وقفت فيها أصيلا أسألتها عيت جوابا وما في الريح من أحد

Likewise his verse about generosity and the respect of guests:

Do not save the night's food for tomorrow;  
every coming day brings its food.<sup>27</sup>

ولا تجعل طعام الليل ذخرا حذار غد لكل غد غدا

is to a certain extent an echo of al-Dhubyānī's saying:<sup>28</sup>

ولست بخابي لغد طعاما حذار غد لكل غد طعام

Finally, one who reads the dīwāns of both poets is struck by the fact that both appear as tasks, which the poets laboured over and were anxious not to hurry over. Thus we frequently find that they build their poetical images in a manner which did not lend itself to quick and direct expression, but instead they were eager to investigate the qualities of the various parts of the image, to the extent

<sup>25</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 90.

<sup>26</sup> Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Dīwān Nābighat. B. Shaibān, 42.

<sup>28</sup> Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, 232.

that the reader can feel the effort exerted by the poet, and his miraculous ability at drawing the full potential from his word usage. In furnishing the details of his poetical image with partial images which are knit together and strengthen each other, the poetical image as a whole thus emerges as if complete and without defect. Moreover, there is a great similarity between some of the poetical scenes of both poets. For example, the hunting scene where al-Dhubyānī likens his she-camel, tiring after a long journey in the desert, to a wild bull. He then leaves the she-camel and begins to investigate the qualities of the bull, such as its caution, power, noise, abode and colour. Then he describes it under difficult conditions, when the cold and rain force it to spend the night protecting itself beneath an arṭā tree. Hardly had the dawn broken, when it faced by an agile professional hunter accompanied by his lean hungry dogs eager and skilled in the hunt. A contest then takes place between both sides and the poet paints the different stages of the struggle, which results in the triumph of the bull, after it has killed some of the dogs while others are frightened, the bull fleeing like a flaming comet, sprightly and filled with power.<sup>29</sup> Thus the poet digresses in describing the parts of his poetical image, and is not satisfied until the entire image is painted in detail. This long digression causes the poet to tell us a story, full of life and motion, all to set off the portrait of his she-camel when she was exhausted. He even reverses

---

<sup>29</sup> See Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, 236-239.

the simile, in the last verse, by saying that the bull resembles the she-camel and not the other way round. The hunting scene portrayed by al-Nābighah al-Shaibānī in one of his poems in praise of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, the caliph, is to a great extent comparable with this scene in regard to the stages of the story and its elements, although the image of the latter is more compact. Both scenes, moreover, employ the same metre. Furthermore, both of the poets have words in common such as: "وصيد، ووبات، أو أشك، وغضض، وارطاة، وفطار، كثر" "وانقض، وكوكب، والدرية، ونذاك، وتبه، لريق". Just as al-Dhubyanī ends his image by reversing the simile, so does al-Nābighah al-Shaibānī. His verses are:

Slender from fatigue, she has become like a white spotted wild bull with a camoised nose. It spent its night under the *arṭā* tree in a curving tract of sand put in motion by the winds. When darkness vanished, it came across a thin and lean man from Dawmah, who came early in the morning, seeking to hunt down a wild animal. He incited dogs, that did not show cowardice, as well as their puppies, that were dusky and lean with flapping ears. It ran right and left borne by, and bearing, its solid hoof, disquieted by its fear of the hunter. When it came near their [the dogs'] mouths: and was engaged by brave dogs accustomed to the chase; as the fast dogs approached, it turned back to fight like a strong angry lion. Moving its tail, it repelled the harrying dogs and left them injured or cast aside. It struck and killed the forward runners, while those behind were reluctant to [return to] their master. Then it turned away quickly like a bright star. Its running was swift like the fire kindled in darkness. I liken this wild bull to my strong and submissive slender she-camel, for whose any belly-girth is loose.<sup>30</sup>

كأنها بعد جهد العين قد ضمرت      مولى لهق في وجهه خنس

<sup>30</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 26-28.

<p>ريح، فلما انجلى عن شخصه الغلس،  من أهل " دومة " صيد الوحش يلتبس  غضفا نواحل في ألوانها عيس  وهو بذعر من القنّاص منتخس  وما طلته ضراء كلها حنيس  كأنه مرزيان مغضب مرس  فهن شتان : مجروح ومنحدس  ففي التّوالي الى كلابها شوس  كما تضرّم وسط الظلمة القيس  اذ كل جبل عليها جائل سلس</p>	<p>بات الى حقف أرطاة تصفّقه  صادف خوطا قليل اللحم مختديا  أشلى كلابا فلم تنكل وأجرىها  فاشتقّ تحمله ربحّ ويحملها  حتى اذا كان من أفواهها كئيبا  كرّ وقد لحقت منها سوابقها  يهزّ لدننا يذبّ الضاريات به  أردى أوائلها طعنا فأقصدها  وانصاع كالكوكب الدرّيّ ميعته  فذاك شبّهته عنسا مقتلّة</p>
---	--

I do not maintain that our poet was no more than an imitator of al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, but he was a bedouin poet and strictly followed the old methods in the construction of his poetry and poetical images, as we shall see. It would appear that he was influenced by al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī more than other poets. One can conclude that the traditions recognize this and thus give him the laqab Nābighah, or that he himself felt this affinity and called himself Nābighah. This may possibly give an alternative explanation for the laqab of our poet, which has eluded some old linguists and critics.

However, al-Nābighah was of the B. Shaibān b. Tha'labah, the most powerful and prominent section of the tribe of Bakr. The eminence of the B. Shaibān over and above the other Bakrite clans is reflected in the record of their activities as provided in the accounts of their ayyām, and in the Islamic conquest; as well as in the occasional statements made by the genealogists and other early scholars.

Ibn Sallām, for example, says: "It used to be said 'If you belong to Bakr, boast of Shaibān and of their great numbers, and fight alongside them'".<sup>31</sup> It would appear that they were virtually proverbial for their power by the time of the advent of Islam. After the Prophet's capture of Mecca, he marched out of the city with an army of twelve thousand men, one of whom said: "Even if we were to encounter the B. Shaibān, we would not be concerned".<sup>32</sup> The B. Shaibān seem to have occupied districts West of the Euphrates between al-Ubullah and Hīt, but they were found especially in the central parts of this zone, in the area west of Hīrah.<sup>33</sup> It seems that they were on good terms with their neighbours the Bakrī B. 'Ijl. These clans supported each other in many battle-days both before and after the advent of Islam. Amongst the most notable battles of which the Bakrites in general, and the B. Shaibān in particular, boast is the victory over the Persians at Dhū Qār.

The majority of the B. Shaibān embraced Islam around 9 A.H.,<sup>34</sup> after they had inflicted a severe defeat upon the tribe of Tamīm, in the battle-day of al-Shayyitān. The B. Shaibān played an important role in the Islamic conquest and especially in the conquest of Iraq and the east, as we have previously noted. Part of them settled in the conquered

---

<sup>31</sup>Umdah, II, 192.

<sup>32</sup>Al-Wāqidī, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, 889.

<sup>33</sup>See above, pp. 45-46.

<sup>34</sup>See al-Jūbard, Ghurrat al-'Arab, Yazīd b. Mazyad al-Shaibānī, 42-43.

lands but the majority remained in their former abodes, where most of them enjoyed a bedouin life. Their old history and notable men provided al-Nābighah with material for his boasting poems.

The few sources which mention al-Nābighah supply no information whatsoever which may enable us to determine his date of birth with precision. With regard to the place he was born and where he was brought up, the sources give no direct references. They, indeed, go no further than mentioning that he was a Bedouin.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, it is likely that he was born, brought up and lived permanently among those of his clan who did not emigrate to the new amṣār, but remained in their former abodes. Likewise, our sources are silent as to the year of his death. The poet seems to have lived long. He mentions his old age and white hair in more than one poem. For example, he says in his poem rhyming in 'L' in the praise of Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik:

O my son, listen as this is the advice of an  
old man who has experienced the world for many  
long years.<sup>36</sup>

يا بني استمع فذا وعظ شيخ      عجم الدهر في السنين الطوال

In another poem, he portrays himself as being an old white-haired, strengthless and debilitated person; nevertheless, pleased with the ability of his sons; he says:<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Aghānī, VII, 106.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Buḥturī, Kitāb al-Ḥamāsah, 160; Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, 153.

<sup>37</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 124-125.

مرّ الليالي مع الأيام تختلف  
 وآل مني وشيب الرأس مختلف  
 كما يغيّر جسم المخصب العجف  
 والنفس صادقة لو أنها تقف  
 تهن قوى شيخه والشيخ منحذف

وقد كساني شيبا ما يـزايـلني  
 وزال أيدي وشيبي ما يـزايـلني  
 حتى اذا الدهر بلاني وغيـرني  
 قالت لي النفس سرّا اذ خلوت بها  
 من ير في ولده أيـدا يسـر به

Unfortunately, the poem from which these verses are taken does not contain any indication which might help to date it. The final piece of information we have concerned the life of al-Nābighah goes back to the caliphate of al-Walīd b. Yazīd (125-126 A.H.), in front of whom he recited one of his poems in which he boasts of his tribe.<sup>38</sup> It can be inferred from this event that he died after 125 A.H., when al-Walīd was acclaimed caliph. It is likely that his death took place before the final demise of the Umayyad dynasty in 132 A.H., especially since nothing is recorded as having been composed by him during the turbulent years, which followed the assassination of al-Walīd, and paved the way for the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty and the opening of the 'Abbāsīd era.

#### Al-Nābighah's Religion

Abū al-Faraj says about al-Nābighah: "In my view he was a Christian because I have found in his poetry mention of swearing on the Gospel, monks and other oaths which the Christians swear".<sup>39</sup> Al-Ṣafadī says about him: "It is said that he was a Christian". Abū al-Faraj on the other

<sup>38</sup>Aghānī, VII, 110.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 106.



hand relates, on the authority of al-'Utbi, that when 'Abd al-Malik intended to depose his brother 'Abd al-'Azīz as crown prince and replace him by his son al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, al-Nābighah visited him and recited him a poem in his praise, in which he urged him to pursue his intentions. When 'Abd al-'Azīz was informed of this he said: "Verily the son of a Christian has come into a constricted entrance and put himself in a dangerous place. By God, if I seize him I will dye his foot with his blood".<sup>41</sup> It would appear that certain modern writers have been influenced by these statements and thus they consider the poet to be a Christian, among them are Huart who says: "Amongst the desert poets who were Christians 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mukhāriq, called the Nābighah of the B. Shaibān, who swore by the Gospels, the monks and all the usual christian oaths".<sup>42</sup> And Cheikho who considers the poet to be Christian, and accordingly devotes a chapter to him in his book *Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah*. The aforementioned statements can, however, be refuted and cannot lend support to the view that the poet was a Christian. Al-Ṣafadī does not express a firm opinion on this point and his statement indicates that he was not sure. Thus he begins by saying: "It is said". It is not far-fetched to imagine that he is referring to Abū al-Faraj when he says: "It is said". I have been unable to find any other tradition which refers to this matter apart from Abū al-Faraj who belonged to a period earlier than al-Ṣafadī, the latter citing some of the information

---

<sup>41</sup>Aghānī, VII, 106-108.

<sup>42</sup>Huart, A History of Arabic Literature, 54.

and verses mentioned by Abū al-Faraj.<sup>43</sup> The statement of 'Abd al-'Azīz, if it is true, must not be taken for granted, as it was spoken by a man who was infuriated with the poet who had encouraged the caliph to depose him; and thus it may be taken as merely an insult, and in any case it refers to the mother of al-Nābighah. The statement of Abū al-Faraj is merely a personal point of view and is not supported by a chain of transmitters. It may be close to the truth to suppose that Abū al-Faraj had not seen or read the dīwān of the poet. The verses by the poet which Abū al-Faraj cites, in his book, are merely fragments of poems and give no indication that the poet was a Christian. It would appear that Abū al-Faraj gained his view from al-Nābighah's saying in a poem devoted to the praise of 'Abd al-Malik:<sup>44</sup>

آليت جهدا وصادق قسمي      برب عبد تجننه الكرح ،  
فهو يتلو الانجيل يد رسه      من خشية الله قلبه قفح

It is clear that the poet in the aforementioned verses does not swear by the Gospel, monks or the usual oaths of the Christians, but simply swears by the Lord of the pious monks. This does not make him a Christian unless he means Jesus by 'the Lord', but the verses do not categorically imply this. Moreover, some traditions attribute the poem, from which these two verses are taken, to a Muslim poet called A'shā B. Shaibān.<sup>45</sup>

However, in al-Nābighah's dīwān there are clear

<sup>43</sup>See Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, 138.

<sup>44</sup>Aghānī, VII, 107; Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 108.

<sup>45</sup>Anon., al-Muṣannaḥ al-Majhūl, XI, 240.

indications that he was a Muslim. For example, he mentions that sometimes he is fascinated by pleasure but that Islam, white hair and piety make him relinquish it. He says:

Pleasures delight me but I relinquish them  
and God veils them from me.  
And Islam, whiteness of hair and piety  
prevent me; for in age and Islam there is  
a protection for a man [from committing  
sins].<sup>46</sup>

وتعجبني اللذات ثم يحوجني      ويسترني عنها من الله ساتر  
ويجزني الاسلام والشيب والستى      وفي الشيب والاسلام للمرء زاجر

In one of his poems, he testifies that God is one without any partner and that his belief in this and his fear of God prevent him from drinking the pure wine, which delights its drinkers; he says:

Except for [my fear of] God who has no partner,  
who is the Lord of beings; the Possessor of  
the throne, I would have fetched to me in the  
early morning a glass of wine whose excellent  
odour arouses pleasure.  
A glass of this pure wine is exchanged for  
clean camels of rough skin.<sup>47</sup>

ولولا الله ليس له شريك      اله الناس ذو ملك وعرش  
لباكرني من الخرطوم كأس      تكاد سؤور نفحتها تنشي  
يباع الكأس منها غير صرف      بصفية من الأوراق حرش

In another poem, he confesses that al-Walīd is the caliph of God through whom prayers for rain are made:

He is the caliph of God through whom prayers  
for rain are made, whose character has never  
been polluted by treachery.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 17.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 28.

خليفة الله يستسقى الخمام به      ما من أثوابه من غدره دنس

Moreover, there are indications in his poetry that he was fanatically anti-Christian. When the caliph al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik destroyed the Church of St. John in Damascus, which had been shared by Muslims and Christians, in response to the plea of Muslims who had felt apprehensive at hearing the monks at prayer,<sup>49</sup> al-Nābighah praised him in a poem in which he speaks well of his deeds, even casting doubt on the sincerity of the Christians towards their Muslim fellow-citizens, mocking their voices in prayer and expressing his joy that Muslims will no longer hear such voices again; he says:

The Christians publicly pray for us to gain victory, but God alone knows what is concealed within them.

You have uprooted their Church from inside our Mosque, thus its stones have been carried off the face of the earth.

Whenever religious men [Muslims] supplicate God, we receive replies from Bishops.

Their non-Arab voices, when they play their qurbah is like the morning chatter of the swallows.<sup>50</sup>

تدعو النصارى لنا بالنصر ضاحية      والله يعلم ما تخفي الشراسيف

قلعت بيعتكم عن حصف مسجدنا      فصخرها عن جديد الأرض منسوف

أصوات عجم إذا قاموا بقرتكم      باتت تجاونا فيها الأسساقيف

أصوات عجم إذا قاموا بقرتكم      كما تصوت في الصبح الخطاطيف

Also there are indications of ambivalence in his poetry.

From one angle, he adopts some of the Bedouin traditions inherited from the pre-Islamic period as we shall see when we speak of his poetry of fakhr and madh. From another angle, he assimilates some pure Islamic concepts, expressing

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh, IX, 145.

<sup>50</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 52-53.

them in terms close to the Qur'ān, to the extent that one may feel that he had placed certain Qur'anic verses by his side and then attempted to re-unite them in verses, which bear the same meaning and Qur'anic words. For example, he says:

And I say, when I see someone's death, "Nothing is lasting except my Lord".  
He knows the inward secrets, the Lord of gracious state.  
He is the Beginning and the End, the Generous, the Clement.  
His decrees cannot be repealed, the Great Endower and the Forgiver of sins.  
Oh man, are you doing good deeds !  
For after death verily you will be resurrected, and he who does good works or makes unintentional mistakes [doing good], will be recompensed for them on the day when secrets shall be revealed.  
I see both wealth and misfortune brought into being by the decree of God.  
Verily if difficulty harms those afflicted by it, ease, as we are promised [in the Qur'ān], shall follow.<sup>51</sup>

ألا ليس شيء غير ربي غابر	وقلت - وقد مرت حتوف بأهلها -
وأول شيء رينا ثم الاخر	هو الباطن الرب اللطيف مكانه
كثير أيادي الخير للذنب غافر	كريم حلیم لا يعقب حكمه
فانك بعد الموت لا بد ناشر	ألا أيها الإنسان هل أنت عامل
يجازيها أيام تبلى الشرائر	ومن يحمل الخيرات أو يخط خاليا
يجيء بها يسعد إله المقادير	وجدت الشراء والمصيبات كلسها
أنت بعدها مما وعدنا المياسر	فان عسرة يوما أضرت بأهلها

These verses closely resemble a religious exhortation

derived from the <sup>53</sup> "كل من عليها فان" <sup>54</sup> "صودرك ولا تمر" <sup>55</sup> "غافر الذنب" <sup>52</sup> such as: <sup>53</sup> "كل من عليها فان" <sup>54</sup> "صودرك ولا تمر" <sup>55</sup> "غافر الذنب"

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>52</sup> Qur'ān, LV, 26.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., LVII, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., XL, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., LXXXVI, 9.

" *إن مع العسر يسرا* " and<sup>56</sup> " *يوسف تبلى السرائر* ". In one of his praise poems addressed to Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, al-Nābighah begins with a group of wise maxims and concentrates on the death-concept, which is frequently mentioned in the Qur'ān such as:<sup>57</sup> " *إنك ميت وإنهم ميتون* " and<sup>58</sup> " *كل نفس ذائقة الموت ثم اليها ترجعون* " and which is frequently mentioned by the poets of the Umayyad era, as a result of the spread of asceticism, preachers of Islam and devotees, all of which made spiritual life part of artistic experience and affected it. Al-Nābighah composed these verses in the manner of a religious exhortation which refers to Qur'anic verses such as:<sup>59</sup> " *أيضا تلونوا بدمكم الموت ولو كنتم في روع مستبدة* ",<sup>60</sup> " *إن مع العسر يسرا* ", and<sup>61</sup> " *كل من عليا فان* ". He pleads for a brotherhood in the cause of God, considering it as one of the good deeds which will not perish as man perishes. He says:

Every calamity afflicting a clan will be followed by prosperity.  
And tell the one who tries to avoid death, obviation is of no use to you.  
Do not cry for the dead for no weeping can bring the dead back to life.  
The mountains and every being and wealth will perish.  
A person with a chronic disease, who is a burden on his relatives and of no use, may live long, while chief of the clan dies, despite efforts to ransom him.  
Every brotherhood in God will survive, and no worldly brotherhood will last.<sup>62</sup>

فكل شديدة نزلت بحيي      سيأتي بعد شدتها الرخاء  
وقل للمتقي حدث المنيا      تووِّقليس ينفعك اتقَاء

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, XCIV, 6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, XXIX, 57.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 78.

<sup>62</sup> *Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān*, 41.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, XXXIX, 30.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, XCIV, 6.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, L, 26.

إذا ما مات يحييه البكاء	ولا تبك المصاب وأيّ حي
وما ل سوف يبلغه الفناء	ستفنى الراسيات وكل نفس
على الأدنى وليس له غناء	يحمّر ذو الزمانة وهو كلّ
ولو فادوه ما قبل الفداء	ويردى المرء وهو عميد حي
وليس يدوم في الدنيا إخاء	وكل أخوة في الله تبقى

All the above features strongly support the view that al-Nābighah was a Muslim, and that he was influenced by the Qur'ān, which has a clear and traceable effect on his poetry; thus we are forced to conclude that Abū al-Faraj conjectured that he was a Christian on the basis of inadequate data and not having read his dīwān.

#### The Dīwān of al-Nābighah

Aḥmad Nasīm edited the dīwān of al-Nābighah in 1932 in Cairo. He depended on a manuscript deposited in Dār al-Kutub (No. 86 literature "sh") and written by Muḥammad Maḥmūd b. al-Talāmīd, who is well-known as al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1927). The dīwān consists of 20 poems most of which are long, the total number of verses being 1163. Despite the great efforts made by the editor, especially in the explanation of difficult words which are many in number, because the poet was a Bedouin and derived his vocabulary from the desert, nevertheless some elements escaped his attention: Firstly, in the introduction concerning the life of the poet he limits himself literally to copying the details supplied by Abū al-Faraj without examination, although some of them conflict with the information supplied in the poetry. Secondly, he does not refer to the origin of the manuscript written by al-Shinqīṭī, nor does he describe the

manuscript on which al-Shinqīṭī depended. Thirdly, it seems that he did not pay any attention to sources other than the Aghānī, and thus he does not indicate the different readings as between the manuscript and other sources. He does not even show the difference in the readings between the Aghānī and the manuscript. Among these differences, the word 'التَّبَشُّشِ' which is in verse no. 22 of poem no. 13 in the dīwān occurs in Amālī al-Murtadā<sup>63</sup> as 'التَّبَشُّشِ' which is the correct form. The word 'سَامِيهِ' which is in verse no. 47 of poem no. 10 occurs in Amālī al-Murtadā<sup>64</sup> as 'سَامَاهِ', i.e. in the nominative case. The word 'نَائِلِه' in the verse no. 35 of poem no. 11 occurs in al-Mu'talif wa al-Mukhtalif<sup>65</sup> as 'تَدْرِكِه'. The word 'يُتَلَعُ' which is in verse no. 90 of poem no. 10 occurs in Tarīkh Ibn 'Asākir<sup>66</sup> as 'أَتَلَعُ' which is a mistake because the poet addresses his speech to the caliph and not to himself. Regarding the differences between the Aghānī and the dīwān, they are numerous although Abū al-Faraj cites only fragments from just five of the poet's poems. Amongst these differences, the word 'فَلْتِي' in the first verse of the poem no. 15 occurs in the Aghānī<sup>67</sup> as 'أَمَلِه'. The second hemistich of the verse no. 42 from the same poem is 'كَانَ إِذَا مَا سَوَاكَ مَا صَاكُوا', while it is in the Aghānī<sup>68</sup> as 'كَانُوا هُمُ الْمَاكِلِينَ مَا صَاكُوا' which is more accurate. The first hemistich of verse no. 44 of the

<sup>63</sup>Vol. I, 630.

<sup>64</sup>Vol. II, 268.

<sup>65</sup>Mu'talif, 192.

<sup>66</sup>'Asākir, III, 322.

<sup>67</sup>Vol. VII, 107.

<sup>68</sup>Vol. VII, 107.



same poem is ' *إن تلوه بلوى نصابر أنفت* while it occurs in the Aghānī<sup>69</sup> as ' *إن تلوه بلوى فانتك وصبر طبر* . Fourthly, since the editor did not draw on sources other than the manuscript, he did not supplement the dīwān with verses attributed to al-Nābighah and cited in other sources if they were not recorded in the manuscript. Thus, for example, there are some fragments mentioned by al-Buḥturī in his Hamāsah.<sup>70</sup> Fifthly, the editor does not supplement the dīwān with indices of proper names and place-names mentioned in the poetry. Sixthly, there are certain misreadings, in the manuscript, which have escaped the scrutiny of the editor. Thus, for example, the word ' *الأساد* ', which has no sense in the context of the verse,<sup>71</sup> the correct form being ' *الأساد* '. Likewise the word<sup>72</sup> ' *نمى* ', which should be ' *نمى* ', and the word<sup>73</sup> ' *المهنة* ', which should be ' *المهنة* ', the name of a Roman fortress conquered by the army of al-Walīd b. Abd al-Malik in 88 A.H.<sup>74</sup>

On the other hand, Cheikho edited parts of the poetry of al-Nābighah, depending on the Aghānī and on a manuscript of the dīwān lodged in the Eastern Library, copied from the manuscript in the Egyptian Library, called al-Khidīwiyyah, and containing 20 poems.<sup>75</sup> Cheikho also depended on certain other sources and added to the dīwān seven fragments which

<sup>69</sup>Vol. VII, 107.

<sup>70</sup>Al-Buḥturī, Kitāb al-Ḥamāsah, 58, 155, 227, 234.

<sup>71</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 25.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 102.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>74</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1191-1192.

<sup>75</sup>Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, 147.

he claimed to have been composed by al-Nābighah.<sup>76</sup>

Unfortunately four of those so attributed were not composed by al-Nābighah. The two fragments mentioned by al-Dīnawarī<sup>77</sup> were composed by Mukhāriq b. Shihāb al-Māzinī<sup>78</sup> and not by al-Nābighah, contrary to the assumption made by Cheikho. One of the fragments which he attributes to al-Nābighah, is in all the editions of the Lisān al-'Arab, upon which he depended, attributed to al-Taghlibī<sup>79</sup> and there is no excuse in this case for Cheikho's error.

Regarding the fragment which he, depending on Mu'jam al-Buldān, attributes to al-Nābighah, is in fact the opening verse of a poem attributed to al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī<sup>80</sup> and is likely to be correctly attributed so, because the place-names mentioned in it, namely al-Banānah, Sudair and Uqur, were all abodes of the Ghatafān<sup>81</sup> to which the tribe of Dhubyān belonged. However, we do not know the writers of the manuscripts, on which Aḥmad Nasīm and Cheikho depended, nor do we know their date.

It would appear that the dīwān of al-Nābighah in its present state does not include all the poems composed by the poet. It is unreasonable to suppose that the poet only composed twenty poems when he was composing poetry for at least fifty years as has been mentioned. We are told that the poet devoted himself to panegyric of the caliph 'Abd

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 143, 160-161.

<sup>77</sup>Dīnawarī, 197.

<sup>78</sup>Ḥayawān, VI, 369.

<sup>79</sup>Lisān, namaya.

<sup>80</sup>Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, 192.

<sup>81</sup>See Mu'jam, I, 335, 742, III, 61.

al-Malik,<sup>82</sup> but there is in his dīwān only one such poem.<sup>83</sup> Among the fragments cited by al-Buḥturī, there are three<sup>84</sup> which appear to be parts of three lost poems, because their rhythm differs from that of the poems, in the dīwān, which have the same metre. The poet mentions more than once that he had composed satirical poems. He says in one of his poems that many of the proud and the spiteful would be apoplectic when they heard his narrators reciting his satire:

And many a rancourous proud one is seen as if  
they were being throttled, when my narrators  
recite my poems.<sup>85</sup>

وأشوس ذي ضغن تراه كأنه      - إذا أنشدت يومًا رواتي - مخنق

In another poem, he mentions that he overcomes his enemy by his satirical poems, saying:

God's gifts of poetry and power to me, which  
enable me to overcome enemies, make me  
immune.  
People of judgment should not fear uncouthness  
in me, and I do not spare the proud and haughty.<sup>86</sup>

أبى لي ما غلبت به الأعداي      عطاء الله من شعري ومطشي  
فلا يخشى ذوو الأحلام جهلي      ولا أرى عن البذخ الغطمش

In a third poem he declares that he is well aware of the defects of his enemies, and that he kills whoever vies with him in satirical poems of high merit, which are known

<sup>82</sup>Aghānī, VII, 106.

<sup>83</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 101.

<sup>84</sup>Al-Buḥturī, Kitāb al-Hamāsah, 58, 155, 234.

<sup>85</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 3.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 21.

everywhere. He says:

If anyone's face shows enmity, verily I am well-aware of the shortcomings of the enemy. I afflicted and killed the person who provoked me, with illustrious [poems] which have journeyed abroad and are still current.<sup>87</sup>

فان امرأ أبدى الشنأة وجهه  
فاني بعورات الرجال بصير  
رمت فأقصدت الذي يستنيصني  
بغرأبرت ما تزال تعير

In a fourth poem, he says that he makes those who satirize him as breathless as the over-loaded camel panting up a slope. He says:<sup>88</sup>

بهرتهم وأفحم ناطقوهم  
كما بهر المحملة الصعود

Despite these obvious indications, his dīwān is completely devoid of satirical poetry which may indicate that the poems of this genre have been lost. However one may conjecture that part of his poems may have been lost, because he was a Bedouin and did not reside in the city, although he frequently visited Umayyad caliphs and amīrs in Syria, to praise them and receive his reward. The poets of bādiyah did not gain the special attention of the transmitters of poetry, unlike those of the cities, and consequently information and verses concerning them are usually scant, when compared to city poets such as those of Basra and Kufa. However, what has survived of his poetry does, to a certain extent, enable us to study his poetical career.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>88</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 36.

A General Account of the Poetry of al-Nābighah and of Its  
Most Salient Features

It is possible to divide the poetry in al-Nābighah's dīwān into three major traditional types: Madh, fakhr and descriptive. It can be seen that his dīwān is completely devoid of elegiac poetry although all the caliphs and amīrs whom he praised and from whom he received favours died before him. There is no obvious reason for this except that one can suppose that his elegiac poetry has been lost, or that the poet refrained from the composition of this type of poetry, or that he was eager to receive favours from them when alive but quick to forget them thereafter.

With regard to his satirical poetry, his dīwān contains only a few verses in which he boasts of himself. His satirical verses do not refer to those whom he satirized or exchanged satire with. I have also been unable to find any verse by any poet satirizing him. He recognizes the impact of satire on the tribal society in which he used to live. Thus he says:

Every injury is cared for and cured, but the  
injury of satire does not heal.  
It afflicts the heart; it causes injuries  
which, like death, have no curing medicine.<sup>89</sup>

وكل جراحة تؤسي فتبرا      ولا يبيرا اذا جرح الهجاء  
يؤثر في القلوب له كلوم      كداء الموت ليس له شفاء

In one poem he accuses those whom he satirized of being

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 42.

base or despicable (lu'amā'), a characteristic frequently mentioned by the satirical poets of the Umayyad era to the extent that no tribal satirical poem was able to avoid mentioning it. This characteristic, according to the linguists, is the opposite of generosity and nobility, and a despicable person is one whose origins are base and whose spirit is mean, but this word gained in the Umayyad era an extension of its meaning which comprised a variety of bad qualities regarded with displeasure.<sup>90</sup> Al-Nābighah also portrays them as cowardly and prostrate when they hear his voice:<sup>91</sup>

عليّ لهم اذا شبحوا فديد	فما بالي وبال بني لكاع
وأبي الناس يقتلته الوعيد ؟	اذا ما غبت عنهم أوعد وني ،
كما دانت لسيدّها اليهود	متى ما يسمّحوا رزي يدينوا
مخافة أن أجدّهم سجد	كأنهم وقد خشعوا وذلسوا

In another poem he portrays himself as being able to humiliate his enemies; likewise he portrays them as surrounded by baseness as the head of the palm-tree is surrounded by the palm leaves:<sup>92</sup>

ولو ضربت أنوفاً منهم رفسوا	ومعشر أكلوا لحمي بلا ترة
هم اللثام اذا ما استشرفوا عرفوا ؟	ألست أبين منهم غير أنهم
كما أحاط برأس النخلة السعف	وقد تكنّفهم لؤم أحاط بهم

Despite the meagreness of his satirical verses, one may assume that he did not imitate the satirical poetry, based

<sup>90</sup> Al-Nuṣṣ, al-'Aṣabiyyah al-Qabaliyyah wa Atharuhā fī al-Shi'r al-Umawī, 507-508.

<sup>91</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 36.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 125-126.

on slander and harming the honour of others, which was a widespread type of satire in the Umayyad era, especially in the satirical poetry of the famous three polemic poets, i.e. Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akḥṭal. It would appear that the reason for this is that the poet was a conservative Bedouin living in an environment which was an extension of the environment of the pre-Islamic poets, who mostly did not value this type of trifling poetry and only rarely took it up themselves. As for the poets of the cities, they enjoyed a life in a society whose taste had changed, and to a certain extent whose social life had also altered and inclined to the pursuit of pleasure; including listening to poets exchanging satirical verses in the markets and assemblies, and poets displaying their skill in dishonouring their opponents. Al-Nābighah frequently visited Syria but the environment of Syria did not witness the intense satirical battles seen in Iraq. Also the environment of Syria was not favourable for poetry at that time because the majority of the population were of Yemeni origin, and they did not excel at handling North Arabic. Most of the poetry composed in Syria and Damascus was composed by poets who used to visit Syria from other countries, in order to praise the Umayyads and to receive their gifts.<sup>93</sup> Al-Nābighah was one of these. He mentions more than once that he does not utter slanders in his poetry; he says for instance:<sup>94</sup>

وَأَتَيْنِي قَوَارِصَ عَن رِجَالٍ      فَأَبْلَغُ حَاجَتِي فِي غَيْرِ فَحْشٍ

<sup>93</sup> See Daif, Tārīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī, al-'Asr al-Islāmī, 165-166.

<sup>94</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaiban, 21.

In another poem, he mentions that his poetry casts aside the spiteful without containing slanders; he says:

In my poetry I say what is reasonable, I do not utter obscenities and my poetry wards off wicked enemy.<sup>95</sup>

وأحلم في شعري فلا أنطق الخنا      ويدراً عني شعر ذي الحرّة العنّ

As far as the love-poetry is concerned, it occupied a not too insignificant portion of the poetry of al-Nābighah. Most of his love poetry falls into the category of nasīb. His eagerness to follow the traditional structure of the poem leads him to devote some verses to nasīb in the vast majority of his poems. The description of ruined camps, is part of the nasīb but it is not meant for its own sake. It is an embodiment of the poet's grief over the departure of his beloved. Likewise, the description of the scene of the departure, which is another essential element, is only a means to revive the memory of the agony felt. It is significant that al-Nābighah often mentions the departure and sometimes portrays the scene of the departure. In addition to his imitation of the ancient structure of the poem, it may be that his frequent journeyings and his unsettled life made it possible for him to know a number of women, from whom he soon had to depart. We have no information concerning the women mentioned by al-Nābighah in his poetry, nor do we know for sure if they really existed or if they were merely a creation of the poet's imagination, as was certainly the practice of many old poets. However, it may be added that he mentions Salmā or Sulaimā in six

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 118.



poems,<sup>96</sup> while he hardly mentions other names more than once. Unless one assumes this to be a conventional name for an imaginary love, one may be encouraged to think that al-Nābighah knew this woman. However, it seems that al-Nābighah, in his love-poetry, is subject to two interrelated inclinations: the sentimental that leads him to express his ardent love and love-pains with vividness and truth, and the technical inclination that leads him to curb his emotions, to take care of the technical aspect, which he could not ignore, being one of those poets who subject their poetical art to a fine and conscious craftsmanship. This technical aspect almost overlays the sentimental aspect in his love-poetry. It might seem that his love-poetry was not the echo of a true emotion, like other poets who did not depend on their poetical talent alone but employed their technical experience to produce polished verse.

Although al-Nābighah lived in a period that witnessed the currency of two new kinds of love-poetry, viz. the licentious trend and the platonic trend, it seems that he was not influenced by either of them. Instead he continued to follow the traditional line. His poetry is not free from the dominant feature of Jahilī love-poetry, namely the description of the tangible aspects of the fair sex, while ignoring the psychological and emotional aspects. His love-poetry is almost a portrayal of bodily beauties of woman, without taking any account of her internal world, wishes, whims and anxieties as related to reflections of

---

<sup>96</sup> See Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 1, 12, 19, 83, 89, 116.

the restrictions imposed on her by a conservative society. Likewise, the poet makes no display of his internal personality and emotions, unlike both the platonic and licentious love-poetry which explore these aspects. Al-Nābighah's method in his nasīb is not different from that followed by the ancient poets. He sometimes opens his poem by mentioning the scene of the departure of his beloved, only then to enter into nasīb. One such example is his poem in praise of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik. He opens by describing the departure of beloved women and the effects on him. He then proceeds to describe their bodily beauties, likening their teeth to hail and lightning, and describing their eyes as languid, their noses as high. He portrays their skins as pale as a result of an excessive use of perfume that indicates their rich and easy life; he says:

The company has departed and therefore my heart was carried off [with them] when they journeyed away, without stopping or alighting nearby.

Inside the camel-litters there are women whose eye sockets are white.

When they smile they show teeth like hail which are beautified by a blackness in the gums.

Their sweet front teeth would please hearts if they were offered; they are like the lightning and are neither long nor short.

Their eyes are languid but not ill, their noses are high but neither thick nor flat.

Their skins are radiant, covered with scent and smooth and pale.<sup>97</sup>

حين ازلاًّ ما فما عاجوا ولا حبسوا  
تفتّر عن برد قد زانه اللّمس  
كالبرق لا روق فيها ولا كسس  
شمّ الأنوف فلا غلظ ولا فطس

بان الخليط فقلبي اليوم مختلس  
وفي الخدور مها بيض محاجرهما  
يشفي القلوب عذاب لو يجاد بها  
مرضى العيون ولم يعلق بها مرض

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 23.

The traditional love-poetry goes mostly on these lines, i.e. a description of the departure of the beloved, then a detailed description of the bodily beauties of the woman, in which the poet employs his technical expertise to exaggerate her beauty and even the beauty of the things associated with her like her necklace and anklets. He presents an ideal picture of his beloved, taking advantage of similies derived from his surroundings. This portrayal of the tangible reality of woman may be considered a result of the social conditions of conservative Bedouin society, that did not permit prolonged meetings between men and women. Therefore, a man's vision of a woman was usually limited to her material existence. This was a general pattern to which the poets adhered, although they differ in some marginal details due to differences in their poetical vision as shaped by different factors. This sensuous description, on the other hand, often concealed a strong and suppressed carnal desire, that led the poet to concentrate on the more seductive attractions of women.

#### The Descriptive Poetry of al-Nābighah

Al-Nābighah was particularly fond of descriptive poetry. He was especially concerned with the description of ruined habitations, rains, the desert and some of its animals. His description occurs mostly in his poems' traditional preludes, and he rarely devotes whole poems to this kind of verse, following the tradition observed since the Jāhilite period, of considering description as a

part of the structure of the qaṣīdah which consisted of various related types. It appears that al-Nābighah's fondness for this poetical type, in addition to his fondness for imitating and following slavishly the ancient structure of the poem, led him to lengthen the descriptive element and bring it in more frequently, to the extent that rarely is any poem of his dīwān devoid of this poetical type.

It is expected of a Bedouin poet enslaved by the traditional structure and subjects of the poem to spare a considerable part of description to ruined abodes. In his descriptive verses of these abodes, al-Nābighah frequently mentions their names. This practice had psychological dimensions for the ancient poets, because their experience with ruins of abodes was a part of their nomadic life, since they used to put up at a place so long as its water and pastures lasted, then move to other places, leaving behind some of their acquaintances and memories, griefs and yearnings. Whenever they returned to that place or passed by it, they could see only silent remains and relics, which suddenly revived their memories. Thus they used to halt at such places, going through the scant ruins which awakened their dormant feelings as they could see in them faint indications of times past beloved to their memory. Al-Nābighah says:<sup>98</sup>

ولم يك في الرسوم لنا جدا	فعبت على الرسوم فشوقتني
وقد ناديت لو نفع النداء	فناديت الرسوم فلم تجبني

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 46.

Al-Nābighah does not stop at mentioning the names of places alone, he mentions, as well, the name of the woman in whose former abodes he had halted. For instance, al-Nābighah mentions Salma, Hind, al-Rabāb and others. This is natural because the description of the deserted camps was not meant for its sake. It is an opening to the nasīb, in which the poet mentions the woman with whom he no longer has a relationship because of her departure. Little surprise that he is weeping over the times he enjoyed in the company of his beloved. For example, al-Nābighah says:<sup>99</sup>

وقفت بها ود مع العين يجري      تحادر لؤلؤ من وهي سلك  
ومن يسلم الرسوم فلا تجبه      يحن كما حننت بها وببكي

In another poem he says:<sup>100</sup>

فقد بكيت على رسم لد منتها      فالقلب من ذكرها ما عشت مختبل

In a third poem he says:<sup>101</sup>

فالريح عاف ود مع العين منسكب      أبكي الرسوم بها طورا وأعترف

In his description of the remains of abodes affected by the passage of time, rain and wind, al-Nābighah does not go beyond the traditional description, such as to liken the traces of the abodes to an old garment:<sup>102</sup>

وبدلت من سلمى وحسن صفاتها      رسوما كسحق البرد بل هي أخلق

or to liken them to an old piece of writing:<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 3.

ذرفت عيني د موعا      من رسوم بحفير  
موحشات طامسات      مثل آيات الزور

Al-Nābighah frequently mentions or describes the remnants that are usually left behind, at the departure of the Bedouin, such as tent-pegs, old cooking-pots and the trench dug around the tent. For example, he says likening the remnants to an old piece of writing:

[The remains are] the trench, cooking-pots, tent-pegs and heaps of compacted sand, like old and obliterated writings.<sup>104</sup>

نؤي وسفع ومشجوج وملتبد      كأنها كتب عادية درس

In another poem, al-Nābighah portrays a vivid and lively picture of the fire-trivets. Having described their colour, he likens them, surrounding the ash, to affectionate az'ār bending over their weak offspring, saying:<sup>105</sup>

وأواريّ ونؤي      وهطايا للقدر  
نصفها سود ونصف      ضبّحته بسحير  
فهي كالأظآر حنّت      حول بوّ وكسير

Al-Nābighah's description of the abodes and the relics is usually accompanied by a description of rain and wind, which is a recurring phenomenon in the Jāhili poetry. Perhaps, al-Nābighah was more faithful to this tradition than most of the Jāhiliyyah poets. Relics and traces of abodes are always associated in his poetry with rains or winds, or both. It would appear that in this relationship of noises, the poet has found an acceptable poetic image in which the roaring rains over the abodes are to be equated with power

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 55.

of passing time, to obliterate the traces of his beloved ones. Al-Nābighah does not simply mention the rains and their effect, but continues to paint a picture whose recurring elements include continued heavy rains and roaring noises. Likewise, he exaggerates in his portrayal of the effects of rain. For example, he says:

The traces of their abode are laid waste, its dust swept away by the wind.  
It is still subjected to a torrent and a strong downpour of rain, whose water sounds like thunder.

It is pouring from cloud blackish, heaped up, simakī and vociferous which seem to confine its rain to the area over their abode. Its rough and copious torrent levels mounds to plains and splits pebbles.  
It has laid waste the traces of the remains of the abode, and changed it.  
Thus are all its marks obliterated and effaced.<sup>106</sup>

فدمنة الدار بعد الحي قد بليت	ترايبها بحشى الأرواح مكتس
وما يزال عليها مسبل هـ سطل	مستأسد هزج بالماء مرتجس
جون ركام سماكي له لجيب	كأنه ماكت في الدار محتس
يفري الأكام مع القيعان وابله	ينزع جلد الحصى أجش منجس
أبلى معارف أطلال وغيرها	فكل آياتها محسوة طمس

After the description of rain, al-Nābighah usually portrays the abodes as being full of tall plants, and blossoming wild flowers, and other things consistent with the uninhabited abodes, since the inhabited areas do not have such tall plants which are usually grazed by the animals. Thus the picture of tall and dense plants indicates, in a poem, uninhabited places. For example, in one of his poems al-Nābighah describes the dense plants, especially

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 24.

arbiyān and shāqīd which covered the whole surface of the former abodes. He says:<sup>107</sup>

مثل الزرابي للونه صبح	والأرض منه جمّ النبات بها
نور عميم والأسهل البطح	وارتدّت الأكم من تهاويل ذي
يخبق ماء الندى ويصطبغ	من أريان تزينه شقق

Like his predecessors especially Zuhair b. Abī Sulmā, al-Nābighah does not portray the abodes as dead ruins devoid of any signs of life. Instead, he revives in them a new life, different from their previous life when they were inhabited by human beings. He portrays them as the lively habitat of various kinds of animals, such as wild cows, deer and other animals. For example, after painting the noise-picture of the rains, he says:

It is inhabited by wild cows, flocks of ostriches, herds of wild asses both those pure of menstrual discharge and the stubborn newly pregnant.<sup>108</sup>

فالعين فيها وخيطان النعام بها      والعون : أطهارها واللّح الشمس

In another poem, he portrays the animals which have inhabited the abodes after the departure of their former inhabitants; the gazelle feed their offspring, the wild bulls roam, the ostriches are followed by their offspring, in utmost activity and joy. He says:<sup>109</sup>

بها الظباء مطافيل تربعها	والعين والعون في أكتافها همل
وكل أخرج أبدى البيض جوّؤه	كأنه بغدافيين مشتمل
ظل يراطن عجا وهي تتبعه	نقانا زعلات قادها زعل

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 104.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 92-93.



كان أعناقها من طولها عمد      وكلها من نشاط يحترى جذل  
 كالحيث منها على أثابجها برد      قرع يحن بها هييق لها شول

The poet's eagerness to mention animals, as the only substitute of the beloved ones who used to inhabit those abodes, is a natural and expected result of the vacuum caused by the departure of the dwellers, as the aforementioned animals live usually in places uninhabited by humans. On the other hand, it offers us the poetic image that occupied the poet while he was describing places beloved to him. Thus the scene of the relics and traces is a coherent picture and its elements are connected by cause and effect. The change in the signs of the abodes is connected with the rain that produces the plants and grass and, in effect, attracting the animals.

In some of his poems, al-Nābighah associates the description of the traces of the abodes with the description of the departure of the dwellers. Sometimes he opens his poem by describing the departure, giving a vivid picture of that moment, and in his mind follows the track of their travel. For example, he says:

The company has departed and therefore my heart is carried off [to them] since they journeyed away, without stopping or alighting nearby.

They drove on chiding excellent camels in the foreparts of whose necks there is no defect or bending.

They swim through the mirages, with their lead-ropes relaxed.

When I think they are tired by the journey, they still advance swiftly.

In the litters, there are women whose eye-sockets are white.

When they smile they show teeth like hail

which are beautified by a blackness in the gums.<sup>110</sup>

حين ازلأ مّوا فما عاجوا ولا حبسوا	بان الخليط فقلبي اليوم مختلس
ما في سوالفها عيب ولا قعس	يحدى بهم كل عجاج ويعلمة
اذا أقول : ونوا من سيرهم ملسوا	تعوم في الآل مرخاة أزمستها
تفتّر عن برد قد زانه اللّعس	وفي الخدور مها بيض محاجرها

It is evident from his poetry, that al-Nābighah frequently travelled, as many names of places in the Peninsula and Syria occur in his poems. It is said that he frequently travelled to the B. Umayyah whom he used to praise. This may be the reason why his poems are full of descriptions of his journeys, deserts crossed, she-camels ridden, and other desert animals. He frequently boasts of passing through dreadful deserts, of which he portrays such a picture as to show it as an example of a desert difficult to pass. However, most of al-Nābighah's description is devoted to animals, especially to she-camels. It would appear that he held she-camels in great esteem. In the majority of his poems he devotes verses to the description of them; whenever he speaks of his travels, he describes them. He may halt at relics and may find no means to relieve his sorrows except to ride his she-camel and journey in the desert. He may boast of some of his nomadic virtues, such as his bravery in passing through deserts, and turn then to describe his she-camel. Al-Nābighah always portrays his she-camel in an idealizing manner, and ascribes to it attributes that show it to be an excellent one. He uses in his description difficult words of strong

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 23.

jars (sonority). It seems to me that the usage of such difficult words is not because of the Bedouin origins of the poet, but that he uses them deliberately to emphasize the strength of the she-camel. One of the examples of such is this poetical image, full of such attributes of his she-camel; it is powerful, firmly-built, fleshy, used to travel and bear hardships:

I have crossed [a far-extending desert] while heads of other travellers were inclined from side to side because of the length of the journey, and they dozed because of the journeying at night.

I was carried by a she-camel, strong, firmly-built, full in flesh, with greatly elevated cheeks, large in the middle, of known lineage and eight years of age.

She is used to journeys, tall, excellent, resembling a he-camel in disposition.

All her feet are chafed yet powerful in step. She moves her thick tail with clumps of hair like the excellent feathers of a bird; and no urine or dung clinging to it.

As she outran others in journeys, the plaited fore-girth left its marks on her [back], like the marks left on [the walls of] a well by its rope.

Slender from fatigue, it has become like a white spotted wild bull with a camoised nose. 111

من مشهم ومن الادلاج قد نحسوا	قد جبتها ورؤوس القوم مائلة
وجناء مجفرة منسوية سدس	تحلني جسة أجد مضبرة
فكل أخفافها ملثومة لطس	رهب عرندسة حرف مذكرة
مثل القوام ، لم يعلق به العيس	تمرّ جشلا على الحاذين ذا خصل
كما يؤثرفي العادية المرس	قد أثر النسخ فيها وهي مسنفة
مولح لهيق في وجهه خنس	كأنها بعد جهد الأين قد ضممت

Sometimes, al-Nābighah goes on to liken his she-camel to a wild bull or ostrich, and exploits that occasion to describe,

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 25-26.

in detail, these animals. The Jāhili poets and their followers frequently adopted this technique to describe the animals of their environment. Zuhair b. Abī Sulmā, for instance, likens his she-camel to an ostrich, then goes on to describe the ostrich itself. Again, he goes on, in the same poem, to liken his she-camel to a wild bull and goes too far in his description, detracting from the images of his mount in the process.<sup>112</sup>

In one of his poems, al-Nābighah likens the galloping of his she-camel to the running of an ostrich, and proceeds to describe the latter with attributes and in circumstances that compel it to run more swiftly than usual. He portrays the ostrich as frightened, with no offspring to worry about; it is so cautious that even the faintest noise makes it flee. Al-Nābighah does not stop at this; but proceeds to give another word-picture in which he likens his she-camel to a rough wild bull which, out of fear of a skilled hunter, is inciting its mates to flee swiftly. The bull also is over-cautious and any faint noise puts it to flight. In its running it proceeds like a stone thrown from a mangonel, or like an arrow shot at a distant point. The verses depicting these images are as follows:<sup>113</sup>

عيسجور كأنها عرس الوادي أمون تزيف كالمختال  
 فاذا هجتها وخافت قطيعا خلطت مشيها بعد و نقال  
 كذعور قرعاء لم تغل بيضا ذات نأي ليست بأم رئال  
 فبها كالجنون أو طائف الألق من ذعر هيقة مجفال

<sup>112</sup>See Shi'r Zuhair b. Abī Sulmā, 127-130.

<sup>113</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 65-68.

أوكجأب مكدم أخذريّ      حول أتن لواقح وحيال  
 حشها قارج فجالت جميعا      خشية من مكدم جوال  
 سحره دائم يرجع يحسدوها      مصرّ مزاييل للفحال  
 فاذا استاف عودا قد أقصّت      ضرحته تشيح بالأبوال  
 فهو يهوي كأنه حين ولى      حجر المنجنيق أو سهم غال

It may be noted that the poet does not form these poetical images simply to complete the description of his she-camel, but to satisfy his artistic inclination to describe some of the scenes of his environment, with which he lives and to which he reacts. On the other hand, this description of the ostrich and the wild bull, fearful and cautious of even the slightest of noises, may be interpreted as a portrayal of the desert life, where the nomads are left prey to raiders and at the mercy of nature. They are always fearful of sudden misfortunes. Thus the poet may be comparing his own situation to that of the animals.

The hunting scene follows the description of the wild bull. It is one of the most marvellous images of the desert. It ought to have been the main subject of some of the poems, but it seems that the ancient traditions of poetry did not permit this, and the poets were constrained to pursue indirect techniques to describe it. They had to describe the she-camel, then liken it to the wild bull and proceed to portray the hunting scene, offering us a lively story that moves from one scene to another. The poet usually puts the bull at a decisive moment in a game of life and death. It is the high-point of the powerful instinct for survival and the hunting instinct of its opponents.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>114</sup> See above, p. 289.

It is observed that the conflict between the wild bull and the hunter and his hunting dogs always ends with the successful escape of the fleeing bull, and the death of some of the chasing dogs. This phenomenon is ascribed to the fact that the description of hunting scenes, in al-Nābighah's poetry, occurs only in poems devoted to panegyric or boasting. Al-Jahīz remarks: "It is a habit of the poets to portray the killing of the bull by the dogs, if the poem is an elegy or exhortation; and to portray the death of the dogs, if it is a praise poem".<sup>115</sup> Thus the hunting scene is usually made to conform with the poetic theme. It is usually the last part of the traditional prelude, to be followed by the main subject of the poem.

There is no other significant description in the poetry of al-Nābighah. However, he mentions wine a little and in different ways. Thus he likens a woman's saliva to wine, as the ancient poets were wont, and likens himself to a drunkard because of the departure of those he loves and, as a result, describes wine in a few verses, mentioning its effects on the drinker. In one of his poems, he says that it is only the fear of God that prevents him from drinking wine. Then he goes on to describe its effects:

Except [for my fear of] God who has no partner,  
 who is the Lord of beings; the Possessor of  
 throne, I would have brought to me in the early  
 morning a glass of wine whose excellent odour  
 arouses pleasure.  
 A glass of this pure wine is fair exchange for  
 clean camels of rough skin.<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> Ḥayawān, II, 20.

<sup>116</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 22.

ولولا الله ليس له شريك	اله الناس ذ و ملك وعرش
لباكرني من الخرطوم كأس	تكاد سؤ ورنفحتها تنشي
يباع الكأس منها غير صرف	بصافية من الأوراق حرش

In another poem, al-Nābighah praises wine and its effect, saying that it is worth the money paid for it. The verses concerned are:<sup>117</sup>

امدح الكأس ومن أعلمها	واهج قوما قتلوننا بالعطش
وترخي بال من يشربها	ويفدى كرمها عند التجش
وهي من يطعمها يشحن لها	ينفق الأموال فيها كل هس

Many of the predecessors of al-Nābighah, like 'Antarah, 'Amr b. Kulthūm and others mention such themes. However, al-Nābighah was not concerned with the description of wine. He frequently mentions that his religion prevents him from indulgence in pleasure. His verses in praise of a glass of wine occur in the prelude of a poem devoted to boasting of the pride of his tribe, and it seems that it was an ecstasy of pride that led him to make use of wine and praise it.

On the other hand, in his poem praising al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik after the conquest of the Roman fortress, Tyana, in 88 A.H.,<sup>118</sup> there are verses describing the Umayyad Mosque, which al-Walīd built on the foundations of St. John's church in Damascus. These verses are of significance, not only because they are among the earliest verses on the said mosque, but also because they may contain the only description recording the construction of the said

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>118</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1191.

mosque shortly after it was built. Notwithstanding the poetic exaggeration, they may be considered as a historical document, in which the poet fails to employ his usual creative ability to paint a poetical image as he was wont to in respect of things related to the desert. His description of the Mosque is simply a recording of the various materials used to build it, as well as mention of its decorations and lights; of these verses are the following:

Today the true prayer is evident, and the true book [Qur'ān] of God is known in it. Chrysolite and sapphire are sparkling in it. Quick lime and pure gold are laid in it. You see its pictures [hanging] from the direction of Qiblah, colourful decorations gleam in it. Its embellishment seems to weaken the sight, and the eye-ball seems to be stricken. [It has] a tomb which [even] birds seem unable to reach, and its high niches are roofed by ebony. They [niches] have golden oil-lamps, whose lights illuminate Lebanon and al-Sīf.<sup>119</sup>

وصادق من كتاب الله معروف	فاليوم فيه صلاة الحق ظاهرة
والكلس والذهب العقيان مرصوف	فيه الزبرجد والياقوت مؤتلق
يلوح فيه من الألوان تفويف	ترى تهاويله من نحو قبلتنا
حتى كأن سواد العين مطروف	يكاد يحشي بصير القوم زبرجه
أعلى محاريبها بالساج مسقوف	وقبة لا يكاد الطير يبلغها
يضيء من نورها لبنان والسيف	لها مصابيح فيها الزيت من ذهب

To sum up, most of al-Nābighah's descriptive poetry is about things a Bedouin is accustomed to in the desert. It is not strange that al-Nābighah excels in this poetical type, as he was brought up in the desert and had ample experience of his environment. His descriptive poetry bears

<sup>119</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 53.



witness to his excellent talent in exact portrayal of scenes.

The Fakhr Poetry of al-Nābighah

A tribal and Jāhilī character is dominant in most of the surviving fakhr poetry of the Umayyad era. The poets, in general, continued to be the upholders of the Jāhilī tradition in life and imitators of Jāhilī ideals. Although most of the famous poets were born in Islamic times, they were nevertheless brought up and nurtured in environments controlled by Jāhilī rather than Islamic norms. Thus their poetry and especially the genre of fakhr reflects many Jāhilī practices and notions. As this phenomenon dominates the fakhr poetry of the cities, it must have been even more dominant in the fakhr verse of the poets of the bādiyah, such as al-Nābighah, whose life style did not undergo great changes and remained more or less as it was before Islam. The Bedouin clung to their old traditions, undeterred by any effective authority. With the exception of tax-collectors, who used to come at specified times to collect tax and zakāt, the Bedouin rarely felt any official presence in their areas.<sup>120</sup>

Despite the recurrence of Islamic themes and exhortations in his poetry, as we have seen, al-Nābighah's fakhr poetry is almost identical to that employed by the Jāhilī poets. It would appear that he even believed in some of the Jāhilī social duties abolished by Islam, or assumed to

---

<sup>120</sup>Qāsim, Shi'r al-Baṣrah fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, 39.

have become the duty of the State rather than of the individual. Boasting about his own good qualities, he declares that he will never forsake the blood revenge; he says:

I break the enemies' heads by vehement  
punishment.  
And as long as I live, I shall not overlook  
the seeking of revenge.<sup>121</sup>

وأشدخ هامات الأعداء بوطأتي      ولست على الأوتار ما عشت بالمغضي

In another poem, he portrays himself as being helped by God to accomplish his revenge:<sup>122</sup>

وأدرك صالح الأوتار عفوا      بعون الله في طلبي ونجشي

In a third poem, he even seems to be preaching the philosophy of blood revenge:<sup>123</sup>

وطلاب الترات بها طلبوب      ذكي لا يحالفه السهوب  
وشرّ مطالب الأوتار نكس      من الأقوام جثام لبود

Out of his tribal prejudices, al-Nābighah believes that it is wise to hurt an enemy provided he is not your blood-relative:<sup>124</sup>

وضرك من عاديت أمر قواية      وحزم وضرك الأقربين فجور

Al-Nābighah frequently portrays himself as a challenger, therefore his self-praise is always accompanied by a mention of his enemies. Likewise, he frequently lauds his own power and courage. These characteristics were seen as a

<sup>121</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 118.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 31.

source of pride to the Bedouin. Since they lived under the open sky, they defended themselves and did not leave their defence to someone else. Ibn Khaldūn observes about them: "They do not sleep at night, live alone in the deserts, proud of their power, confident in themselves. Power has become their character and courage has their nature".<sup>125</sup>

Al-Nābighah, in one of his poems, portrays himself as inspiring awe, one whose enemies submit to him, by feeling his presence and out of their fear of humiliation at his hands. Then he proceeds to liken himself to a lion, feared by other lions, and that no-one might speak ill about him except an impostor, one who is envious or an outlaw. He says:<sup>126</sup>

متى ما يسمعوا رزي يدينوا	كما دانت لسيدها اليهود
تفادوا من خبعتنة هموس	تبول من مخافته الأسود
وليس يعينني إن غبت الا	دعي أو دحيق أو حسود

In another poem, al-Nābighah boasts about his gentleness with his friends and his ability to humiliate his enemies. He portrays himself as a horseman, warrior, steadfast in the battlefield, killing heroes and dispelling the fears of his comrades, in the battle, on his strong lively horse. He says:

I act gently to whoever I befriend out of my  
good humour, and to whoever I antagonise, I  
apply to his eyes burning collyrium.  
In every intense grief, those who feel rancour  
cannot bear either my confirmation or an

<sup>125</sup> Ibar, I, 219.

<sup>126</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 36.

annulling of affairs.

Verily I am even more patient if demise is feared, and none remain except those of pure disposition.

In war when they persist with their swords after their spears have broken, I strike the head of the hero with my sword.

I dispel the cover of fear and death from my comrades - when the swift steeds are summoned to raise the dust - by a rushing horse whose stepping hoof breaks and crushes the pebbles.<sup>127</sup>

وأكل من عاديت بالكحل البصر	ألين لمن صادقت من حسن شيمتي
يطيقون أبرامي الأمور ولا نقضي	وليس ذوو الأضغان في كل كريمة
ولم يبق إلا كل ذي حسب محض	وأتي لصبار إذا خشى الردى
إذا ما اعتصموا بالبيض بعد قنا رفض	وأضرب رأس الكبش بالسيف في الوضي
إذا ندبت خيل الطليقة للنفض	وأكشف عن صحبي غما الخوف والردى
يرض الحصى رضا جميعا مع القرض	على كل موار يرجع نسوره

There is another characteristic that al-Nābighah, like most of the pre-Islamic poets, frequently mentions and boasts about. This is his courage in passing through deserts and journeying in unknown and frightening regions, travelling alone riding a strong she-camel. This poetic phenomenon, although it is a tradition created and followed by ancient poets, may be an indication of the poet's masculinity and personal courage. Thus the poet ascribes to his desert such attributes that make it difficult to pass through. He chooses for his journey a she-camel, to which he attributes exaggerated power and endurance, indicating - metaphorically - his own power and strength. There are many examples of this poetic phenomenon in the dīwān of al-Nābighah. For example, in one of his poems, he boasts of passing through a certain desert, and describes particulars

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 117.

which might frighten anyone thinking of a journey through that extensive desert, with only a little brackish water and devoid of any population, where even the small sand-grouse finds no water to drink. It is a desert full of mirages that make its mountains look like swimmers in a sea. Al-Nābighah does not stop short at this account, but portrays, as well, the state of other travellers who have ventured to journey through that desert, whom he left behind; their necks and heads bent, seeming like men struck dumb. They had nothing left except their souls and breath, due to the long and difficult journey. Their she-camels had become lean and over-tired.<sup>128</sup>

It seems that al-Nābighah was full of self-admiration and pride about his poetical talent. Verses boasting of his talent occur frequently in his poems. This phenomenon was common in the famous poets of his time, who used to compete in praising the caliphs, amīrs and governors to win the lion's share of the available rewards and gifts. Al-Nābighah himself refers to this competition; in one of his poems devoted to the praise of Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik he says:

On this [she-camel] I betake myself to a king  
 from al-A'yāṣ, illustrious, whose forehead  
 shines like a light, so that he may hear  
 excellent verses of wonderful poetry; and I  
 will praise him where praise [of poets] is  
 contended for.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 25-26.

<sup>129</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 49.

أؤم بها من الأعياص ملكا  
أغرّ كأنّ غرّته ضياء  
ليسمع من غريب الشعر غرا  
وأني حيث ينتضل الشناء

Moreover, the poets were aware of the public admiration of their poetry. Their poems contain many indications as to this matter. Al-Farazdaq used to call his poems "al-qawāfī al-shawārid",<sup>130</sup> i.e. poems current travelling everywhere through the countries. He boasts of the wide-spread acclaim his poems enjoyed. He says, for instance:<sup>131</sup>

بلغن الشمس حيث تكون شرقا  
ومسقط رأسها من حيث غابا  
بكل ثنية وكل شجر  
غواربهن تنتسب انتسابا

His contemporary Jarīr boasts as well that his poems enjoyed wide appreciation. He says:<sup>132</sup>

وجهزت في الآفاق كل قصيدة  
شروء ورود كل ركب تنازع  
يجزى الى نجران من كان دونه  
ويظهرن في نجد وهن صوادع

Likewise, al-Nābighah boasts of the wide currency of his poetry:

My poetry is all of two kinds: the first I improve, and the second is current in all lands.<sup>133</sup>

فشعري كله بيتان : بيت  
أشققه وقافية شروء

In another poems, he boasts of satirical poems that humiliated his enemies, portraying them as journeying from one place to another:

<sup>130</sup> Naqā'id, 125.

<sup>131</sup> Dīwān al-Farazdaq, I, 104.

<sup>132</sup> Naqā'id, 688.

<sup>133</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 39.

I afflicted and killed the person who provoked me, with illustrious [poems] which travel and are still current.<sup>134</sup>

رَمِيتَ فَأَقْصَدْتَ الَّذِي يَسْتَنْصِنِي      بِغَرِّ أَبْرَتِ مَا تَزَالُ تَعْبِيرُ

In a third poem he claims that both his enemies and friends acknowledge the high standard of his poetry:

Both the enemy and friends say that the poems of al-Nābighah al-Bakrī are exalted.<sup>135</sup>

وَقَالَ الْحَدُو وَالصَّدِيقُ كِلَاهِمَا      لِنَابِغَةِ الْبَكْرِيِّ شَعْرٍ مَصْدُقٌ

Like the well-known satirical poets, who used to boast that their poetry was a means to humiliate their enemies, al-Nābighah boasts, time and again, that his poetry is a weapon to humiliate the enemy or to protect him from their evils. For example, he says:

And many a rancorous proud one is seen as if they were being throttled, when my narrators recite my poems.<sup>136</sup>

وَأَشْوَسُ ذِي ضَعْفٍ تَرَاهُ كَأَنَّهُ      إِذَا أَنْشَدْتَ يَوْمًا رَوَاتِي مَخْنُقٌ

In another poem, he says:

I disperse someone's ignorance by patience and piety. And if he seeks to satirize me then my satire will obstruct him. In my poetry I say the reasonable, I do not utter obscenities and my poetry wards off the wicked enemy.<sup>137</sup>

وَأَقْتُلُ جَهْلَ الْمَرْءِ بِالْحِلْمِ وَالتَّقَى      وَأَنْ رَامَ قَرْضِي حَالَ مَنْ دُونَهُ قَرْضِي  
وَأَحْلِمُ فِي شِعْرِي فَلَا أَنْطِقُ الْخَنَا      وَيَدْرَأُ عَنِّي شِعْرُ ذِي الْحَرَّةِ الْعَضِّ

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 118.

One might expect that al-Nābighah, as a Bedouin poet, had to respond to the partisan role, and that he could not have escaped the tribal loyalty that turned the poet into a spokesman for his tribe, sparing much of his poetry for it. The tribal poet had to defend his tribe, glorify it and laud its heroic deeds. Most of the famous Umayyad poets, whether they belonged to the cities or the bawādī, could not escape this obligation. The poet still enjoyed the function and position enjoyed by the Jahilī poets. Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā' says: "To the Jahilī Arabs, the poets were like the Prophets in other nations".<sup>138</sup> It would appear that this phenomenon was an outcome of the socio-political life of that era. Umayyad policy is based on the exploitation of the tribal conflicts to the advantage of the dynasty, and intensified the discord between the various tribes and groups, contributing to the continuation of the production of different species of poetry, that solely tend to glorify and elevate the position of the group to which the poet belonged, or to defend the group against the attacks by poets of other groups. The poet still continued to declare himself to be the poet of his tribe, their mouthpiece and to maintain that their defence is one of his prime duties. Al-Farazdaq, for example, says:<sup>139</sup>

أنا الضامن الراعي عليهم وإنما      يدافع عن أحسابهم أنا أو مثلي

The Kharijite poet al-Ṭirimmāh b. Ḥakīm says:

<sup>138</sup> Al-Rāzī, Kitāb al-Zīnah fī al-Kalimāt al-Islāmiyyah, I, 95.

<sup>139</sup> Dīwān al-Farazdaq, II, 152.



I defend the honour of Qahtān, for I am the  
son of those who inhabit their torrent-bed  
where they have their settlements.<sup>140</sup>

أذيب عن أحساب قحطان انني أنا ابن بني بطحاءها حيث حلت

Likewise, al-Nābighah expresses his deep loyalty to his tribe.

He says, after boasting of some of their noble deeds:

These are my thoughts and my thanks and  
they are a people, who deserve my purest love  
without deceit.<sup>141</sup>

ذاك قلبي وثنائي وهم أهل ودي خالص في غير غش

In another poem, he considers the honour of his tribe as  
his own honour; saying that his wealth is not difficult for  
them to obtain:

My people never find my old or newly acquired  
wealth difficult to obtain, because of a duty  
through which I protect my honour.<sup>142</sup>

وما عز أقوامي تلادي وطارفي من المال في حقّ وقيت به عرضي

In a third poem, he portrays himself as taking delight in  
praising his tribe:

Every day, I cheerfully praise my people,  
but I do not cheerfully censure them.<sup>143</sup>

أهش لحمد قومي كل يوم ولست الى ملامتهم بهش

In order to shoulder the responsibility of being a  
tribal citizen, the poet had to respond quickly to any

<sup>140</sup> Dīwān al-Ṭirimmāh b. Hākīm b. Nafr al-Ṭā'ī, 51, 130.

<sup>141</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 89.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 21.

attack on his tribe. If he failed he was unworthy of the honour of his title, i.e. the poet of the tribe, and his tribe would look at him in contempt and derision. When Jarīr went to extremes in satirizing al-Ba'īth and his clan, the B. Mujāshi', while al-Farazdaq maintained silence because he had taken a vow to abstain from satirical poetry, the women of the B. Mujāshi' kept reproaching him, for refraining from the defence of his clan, until they succeeded in inciting him to respond to Jarīr and to defend the honour of his clan.<sup>144</sup> Al-Nābighah mentions repeatedly his defence of his tribe. In one of his poems, he declares, after taking pride in many of the chiefs of his tribe, that he defends the tribe by his poetry against whosoever attacks it. He says:

These are my relatives, if those who defend  
will refrain, I will defend them by excellent  
poems which pass through chests, wounding and  
piercing.<sup>145</sup>

أولئك أسرتي سأؤد عنهم      إذا ما خام عنهم من يؤد  
بخر من قواف نافذات      جوارح في الصدور لها خدود

In another poem, he threatens whomsoever endeavours to defame his tribe; saying:

Whoever is occupied with doing evil to my  
people, I will give him a wound which will  
not heal.<sup>146</sup>

سأعني من عني قومي بسوء      ولا يبلى إذا رجمت خدشي

<sup>144</sup> See Naqā'id, 126-127, 181; Ṭabaqāt, 327-329; al-Zuhairī, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Farazdaq, 72-74.

<sup>145</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 39.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 22.

It will be noticed that al-Nābighah's partiality, in his boasting poetry, does not go beyond the B. Shaibān. He even claims, in one of his poems, that B. Abī Rabī'ah, one of the branches of Shaibān to which he belonged, are more exalted than all other Bakrite clans. He says:

I have found that Abū Rabī'ah rise above [the other clans of] Bakr, just as Banāt Na'sh rise over the country.<sup>147</sup>

وجدت أبا ربيعة فوق بكر      كما علت البلاد بنات نعش

I have been unable to find any verses by any city-dwelling Bakri poet giving preference to one clan over the other clans of Bakr, as al-Nābighah does in the aforementioned verse. For example, the Bakrī poet Khalaf b. Khalīfah boasts of his clan but does not prefer it over other clans of Bakr. Khalaf counts it as one of their virtues that they struggle for the good of other clans, and that enmity to any personality of the tribe is directed against all. He says:<sup>148</sup>

سعاة على أفناء بكر بن وائل      وتبل أعالي قومهم لهم تبل

The aforementioned verse of al-Nābighah may be interpreted in the light of the fact that he lived among his clan in the bādiyah, where tribal groups were left to live in small independent units, each struggling for its own interests that might be in conflict with the wider interests of the parent tribe. On the other hand, the Bakrites who migrated to the new cities, lived together in one area of each city,

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>148</sup>Lubāb, 365; Marzūqī, 1774.

although they belonged to different clans. Therefore the circle of tribal loyalty expanded there, and the partisanship for the clan weakened as compared with partisanship for the parent tribe or the root. Moreover, we have no information indicating that al-Nābighah used to visit Iraq, where the Bakrites formed one of the major rival tribal blocs in Kufa and Basra. As far as concerns Syria which al-Nābighah used to visit, there was no mentionable presence of the Bakrites, as we have previously seen.

However, al-Nābighah's boasting of his tribe is based mostly on the virtues of the desert, forced by nature on the Jāhilī society. These virtues - such as generosity and courage - retained their importance in the tribal set-up of the Umayyad era, especially because the majority of the Umayyad poets belonged to the tribes with deep-rooted Bedouin traditions such as al-Farazdaq, Jarīr, al-Akhṭal, and unlike the more civilised and settled tribes such as those of Yemen, in general, which could not produce such a big number of talented poets. Moreover, many famous Umayyad poets were brought up in bādiyah. Some of these poets continued to live there and used to travel, from time to time, to the cities. Naturally, these poets were strongly influenced by the environment of the bādiyah and its values, despite their visits to the cities and attending the courts of the governors and the caliphs. The virtue of generosity was considered as an instrument to achieve the nobility. Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī says, for example:<sup>149</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> Dīwān Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī, 8.

يقولون لي أهلك مالك فاقتصد      وما كنت لولا ما تقولون سيديا

They frequently boast that they present to the guest the best of their food. For example, Muḍarris b. Rib'ī boasts that he provides his guests the meat of the camel-hump and says:<sup>150</sup>

أبيت أعشيه السديف وانني      بما نال حتى يترك الحي حامده

Similarly, al-Nābighah says:

We give our guest a meal at midday from the top of the camels' hump, and we give him sufficient in the evening from the camels' hump cut into pieces.<sup>151</sup>

نغدّي الضيف من قمح المتالي      سديفا مشبعا منه نعشي

The Jāhilī poets and their imitators frequently sing the praises of generosity especially during drought and famine, because in difficult times everyone tends to save himself and conserve his wealth, and therefore such a virtue should be glorified. Al-Nābighah does not stop at referring to drought in his boasting of generosity. He goes further and illustrates the effects of drought, and makes use of animal-imagery in painting his poetical image of the situation. In one of his poems about his tribe, he portrays a situation in which the camels have become weak, their fur matted, when snakes and lizard have died in their holes because of the drought, but nevertheless his tribe continues distributing food cheerfully to whomsoever seeks their favour, and offering the best of the camel-meat to

<sup>150</sup>Marzūqī, 1694.

<sup>151</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 21.

their guests in a time when only hunters manage to find food for themselves:

If the eyes of the camels become weak because of the drought, and their hair is stripped off because of clouds which bear no rain, and their eyes sunken, they can eat only grass which is hollow within, and their hair has become matted and does not bristle, and moreover the drought kills even serpents and all the snakes in their holes, and lizards who can no longer expose their tails to the hunter; at such a time they have an abundance of food, while there is none to fill the stomachs of those who do not hunt.

We give buckets of wealth in our liberal hands to the seeker of wealth, and to those who take refuge in us.

We give our guest [pieces] from the hump of the camel for lunch, and for dinner, cut up pieces of the hump which satisfy him.

When a seeker of sustenance inquires of them, they fill his hands [with wealth].<sup>152</sup>

وهي في أعينها مثل العمش	وإذا الابل من المحل غدت
من سحب صاف عنها لم يشرش	حسراً وأبار مما لقيت
هدمت أوارها لم تنتشفش	خسفاً العين ترعى جسوفة
جاحرات كل أفعى وحشش	وأما المحل من حياته
ليس بيدي ذنبا للمحترش	قتل الضب فأودى هزله
لم يكن حشولمن لا يحتنش	فهم فيها مخاصيب اذا
بسجال جئن من أيدي نعش	تنعش العافي ومن لاذ بنا
من سديف مشبح منه نعش	ونغدّي الضيف من شخم الذرى
سائل يملون كف المحترش	وهم إن يحترش أموالهم

Al-Nābighah not only glorifies his own courage in battles, he lauds, as well, the power of his tribe, which is a virtue frequently praised by the Jāhili poets, when every tribe was almost a primitive state occupying a certain geographical area, and depending on itself for defence.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 88-89.

Battles were the only means by which a tribe could prove its supremacy and power. Likewise battles were the only means to absorb the energies of the members of a tribe, and enable them to establish a history of their glories. The Jāhili traditions continued to have a powerful impact on the minds of the people both of the cities and of the bādiyah, especially during the period of turmoil and lawlessness, when people used to revert to their old habits and tribal rivalries, as happened in the wake of the death of Yazīd b. Mu'awiyah in 64 A.H., and the assassination of al-Walīd b. Yazīd in 126 A.H. This phenomenon was more evident in the bādiyah. The relative liberty enjoyed by the Bedouin during the Umayyad era helped them to continue the old tribal life without any tangible change that should have taken place as a result of Islam. They continued to follow many of their old ways of life, undeterred by any official control. The periods of the collapse of authority in the cities encouraged them to practice the life of plunder, invasion and robbery which they were used to in the Jāhilite period. Battles and raids, ignited by quarrels over waters and pastures, were a common matter. Poetry continued to be the tribal propaganda and portray an awe-inspiring picture of the tribe, and its ability to crush all its enemies. Glorifying the power of his tribe and its ability to defeat enemies, al-Nābighah says:

We take upon ourselves every burden and  
 bloodwit, and we strike every leader of the  
 army.  
 Whoever opposes us, we wound grievously in  
 the open not in the darkness.  
 They have ventured on their destiny, armed

with weapons which are not bad.<sup>153</sup>

ونحمل كل مضلعة وعقل      ونضرب في الكتيبة كل كبش  
ونضرب من تعرّض موضحات      علانية جهارا غير غطش  
هم المستقد مون الى المنايا      وقد لبسوا سلاحا غير دخش

In another poem, he sings the praise of power of his tribe, reviving some of the old traditions and notions of the Jāhiliyyah. He describes the lively horses by which they despoil the enemies of wealth. He proceeds, then, to describe the courage of his tribe in battles. Zealously he revives the memory of the Jāhili bloody encounter and invokes Jāhili pride. He shows pleasure in tormenting his enemies and taking their chiefs into captivity. To him courage is cruelty and wanton violence, although such practices and ideas were anathema to Islam. He says:

You see horses around their houses,  
horses which are lively and fine-haired.  
They are not blemished by the dust colour  
of wolves nor by being dappled.  
At night, they reply to one another neighing,  
they are lively and either shrill or  
resounding [in voice].  
With them they gather the wealth of the enemy,  
and with them they hunt all wild animals.  
Their rumps bleed with the stabbing of spears  
and with the vehemence of their advance.  
In battle, they march between two lines of  
horses mobilized.  
We wet our spears in the [blood of] our enemy,  
and we split the heads of those we have not  
slain.  
We slew them with our hands grasping Rabī'ite  
swords which are light and swift.  
With them they [the tribe] rise and come forth  
in the confusion of battle, and capture every  
man equal to the chief.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 87-88.



كل جرداء وساجي همش	وترى الخيل لدى أبياتهم
بلق الغشر ولا عيب برش	ليس في الألوان منها هجنة
أرناات بين صلصال وجش	يتجاون صهيلا في الدجى
ويصيدون عليها كل وحش	فبها يحوون أموال العدا
بالردينيات والخيل النجش	دميت أكفالمها من طعنهم
بين خيلين بزحف منتغش	وهم في الحرب لما زاحفوا
ثم نفري الهام ان لم نفترش	نسهل الخطي من أعدائنا
بسيوف رعيات بهش	بأكف لقحت لما سمت
غاصبات كل قرن للكيش	فبها تسموا اذا التج الوغى

Beside this, al-Nābighah was conscious of the well-known people of his tribe. Poets of the Umayyad era frequently boast of the personalities whose glories constituted a part of the pride of their tribes. It will be noted that the majority of the personalities, boasted of by these poets, belonged to the pre-Islamic period. The currency of this kind of boasting may indicate the strong tribal partiality rampant in the society of the Umayyad era. Every tribe used to claim that its record was the best. Stories about famous Jāhili horsemen and chiefs have been told in a highly exaggerated form. Abū al-Faraj reports that the nobles of Kufa used to assemble on its outskirts exchanging ancient boasting-poems and taking pride in the old glories of their respective tribes. One of them was 'Amr b. Ma'dī-Karib al-Zubaidī who used to invent stories about his fabulous courage and the battles he participated in during the Jāhiliyyah. When his fabrication was discovered, 'Amr claimed that he had invented such stories to terrorise the Ma'addites.<sup>155</sup> The Umayyad

<sup>155</sup> Aghānī, XV, 223.

policy of exploiting tribal rivalries contributed to the emergence of certain types of stories and poetry, that aimed at glorification of the respective tribe of each poet. Boasting of ancient pride took place even at the courts of some of the Umayyad caliphs and amīrs and was encouraged by them.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, poetry, by the passage of time, became the most important means of propaganda for the tribes competing for political influence. Al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr al-Anṣārī, for instance, boasts that Dhū al-Qarnain and Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī belonged to his tribe; saying:<sup>157</sup>

فمن ذا يفاخرنا من الناس معشر      كرام فذو القرنين منا وحاتم

Even the Khārijite poet al-Ṭirimmāḥ b. Ḥakīm takes pride in some Jāhilite horsemen and personalities of Tai', such as 'Āmir b. Juwain, 'Aws b. Sa'd and Ḥātim:

To us belong cavalries and illustrious chieftains - the loftiest of Ma'add; know it!  
And men all of whom are held in high estimation like 'Āmir the son of Juwain in his lineage, or like 'Aws the son of Su'dā, the Lord of the Arabs.  
Or like the man Ḥātim when he said: 'That which my two hands have siezed I give as plunder to the people on the battle-day of Dhū Khushab.<sup>158</sup>

منا الفوارس والأعلام قد علمت      عليا معد ومنا كل ذي حسب  
كعامر بن جوين في مركبه      أو مثل أوس بن سعدى سيد العرب  
أو كالفتى حاتم إذ قال ما ملكت      كفاي للناس نهبي يوم ذي خشب

<sup>156</sup> See Aghānī, X, 153-154, Ṭabaqāt, 578-579.

<sup>157</sup> Al-Ḥimyarī, Muntakhabāt fī Akhbār al-Yaman, 48.

<sup>158</sup> Dīwān al-Ṭirimmāḥ b. Ḥakīm b. Nafr al-Ṭā'ī, 54, 128-129.

Likewise, al-Nābighah in one of his poems boasts of a number of the notables of his tribe. All of those, with the exception of al-Muthanna b. Ḥārithah (who played a major part in the conquest of Iraq),<sup>159</sup> and Maṣqalah b. Hubairah al-Shaibānī (who released the captives of B. Najiyah and fled to the ranks of Mu'āwiyah),<sup>160</sup> are either pre-Islamic or those who witnessed Islam but did not embrace it. Among them are Mafrūq b. 'Amr, known for his raids on the B. Tamīm and on the Sawād after the assassination of al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir,<sup>161</sup> Hani' b. Qabīṣah who led the B. Shaibān and their allies in the battle of Dhū Qār,<sup>162</sup> Biṣṭām b. Qais whom Abū 'Ubaidah describes as "the knight of Rabī'ah",<sup>163</sup> 'Awf b. Muḥallim who was the chief of his family and had a famous qubbah in which the hungry, the destitute, and the frightened took refuge,<sup>164</sup> and al-Ḥawfazān who was one of the Arab jarrārūn.<sup>165</sup> He says:

Proud and strong chiefs of the B. Shaibān  
 have driven the enemy away from me.  
 From them when the exalted vie with one  
 another and when the generosity and standing  
 of men is mentioned, Mafrūq and Ḥārithah b.  
 'Amr are the most eminent and ancient of  
 glory.  
 And the two Hāni's dominated the B. Nizār,  
 and those who resided in their land were  
 ruled by them.  
 And Biṣṭām subjugated and through al-Muthannā  
 the Persian army was destroyed.

---

<sup>159</sup> See above, pp. 82-83.

<sup>160</sup> See Ṭabarī, I, 3435, 3439-3441; Sharḥ, III, 144-145.

<sup>161</sup> Marzubānī, 471.

<sup>162</sup> See above pp. 48-49.

<sup>163</sup> 'Umdah, II, 192.

<sup>164</sup> Muḥabbar, 241, 349;

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 249-250.

And 'Awf, the man of generosity, who faithfully kept every covenant, when others abrogated their covenants.

And the gentle one, Abū Ḥarb b. 'Awf, in whose refuge the fetters [of captives] were loosened.

And verily al-Ḥawfazān was penetrating in war, the chief of men who led and was followed.

And Abū Thabīt, Yazīd, the freer of captives, after him another Yazīd belongs to us.

And consider Abū al-Wajīhah amongst the numerous stars [who belong to us], this is auspicious.

From them [the stars] are Qabīṣah, Ibn Dhū al-Jaddain, Ashras, al-Maḥabbah and al-Sharīd.

And 'Amr and al-Aghan, the leader of people, and each one of them was a leader through his lineage.

And Ibn al-Qarīm dominated and he was a chief, a warrior for whose war the fire had been kindled.

And Ibn al-Ḥuṣain bestowed liberally and was generous; and Hazhāz in time of distress was a man of generosity.

And Maṣqalah who bestowed favours and supplied those who came to him.

He released the captives of Sāmah after being enslaved, when the delegations delayed in freeing them.

All of these were pure, completely devoid of fault, when others became impure. [because of faults].<sup>166</sup>

قروم من بني شيان صيد	نفى عني العدو قراسيات
اذا ذكر المآثر والحديد	فمنهم حين تنتطح النواصي
هما الفرعان مجدهما تلديد	فمفروق وحارثة بن عمرو
ومن يحلل بأرضهما مسود	وساد الهانئان بني نزار
به فضت من الفرس الجنود	وسظام تخمط والمثنى
وفي حين تنتقض العهد	وعوف المآثرات وكل عهد
معاذته تفك بها القيود	وذو المانا أبو حرب بن عوف
رئيس الناس متبعا يقود	وكان الحوفزان شهاب حرب
يزيد بعده منا يزيد	وفكك العناة أبو ثبيت
نجوم جمة، تلك السعود	وعد أبا الوجيهة في نجوم
وأشرس والمحبة والشريد	قبيلة وابن ذي الجددين منهم

وعمرو والأغنّ عميد حيّ	وكل في أروقتيه عميد
وساد ابن القريم وكان قرما	أخا حرب يشب لها الوقود
وجاد ابن الحصين وكان بحرا	وللمهزهاز عند الجهد جود
ومصقلة الذي أجدى وأعطى	له من مدّ عافية ورود
به عتق لسامة بعد رق	إذا ابطت عن فكاكهم الوفود
جلودهم من العثرات لمس	نقيات إذا دنس الجلود

In a nutshell, al-Nābighah, in the light of his boasting poetry, seems to be very proud of his self and full of admiration for his tribe, fanatically prejudiced, a self-appointed guardian and advocate of his tribe. His boasting ideals are derived from the still-strong Jāhilī notions. Seldom do we find him boasting of Islamic notions.

#### The Madh Poetry of al-Nābighah

Poetry of praise encompasses the major part of the dīwān of al-Nābighah. Of the twenty poems which make up his dīwān, nine are devoted to praise. It will be noted that all of the latter are in praise of some Umayyad caliph or amīr. Abū al-Faraj says about al-Nābighah: "A Bedouin poet, he used to visit the Umayyad caliphs, in Syria, to praise them, and thus they gave him abundantly".<sup>167</sup> This statement is general and loose. From one angle, there is no poem in the dīwān of al-Nābighah which indicates that he praised any of the Umayyad caliphs before 'Abd al-Malik, the fifth caliph, and the only poem, in his dīwān, in praise of 'Abd al-Malik can be traced to the last days of his reign. The poet composed it after 'Abd al-Malik had

<sup>167</sup>Aghānī, VII, 106.

decided in 85 A.H., to depose his brother 'Abd al-'Azīz from the position of crown-prince and place his son in his stead.<sup>168</sup> In this respect, al-Nābighah is in complete harmony with other Bakrī poets who linked themselves to the caliphs, since none had praised any Umayyad caliph before 'Abd al-Malik. This may be interpreted in light of the fact that the Bakrites were the most faithful of people to 'Alī, and the most vigorous opponents of Mu'āwiyah as we have previously seen.<sup>169</sup> Some of the Bakrite poets, among whom were A'shā Rabī'ah and al-Nābighah, began to associate closely with 'Abd al-Malik during the reign of the Zubairids over Iraq. This was because the Bakrites, in general, and their allies, the Azd, were not satisfied with the Zubairids as has been previously mentioned, and thus many of their poets celebrated the killing of Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubair in 72 A.H.<sup>170</sup> From another angle, al-Nābighah praised only three of the Umayyad caliphs, namely 'Abd al-Malik and his sons al-Walīd and Yazīd, and two amīrs namely Maslamah b. 'Abd al-Malik and 'Abd al-'Azīz b. al-Walīd. It would appear that Cheikho misunderstood when he imagined that the poem in praise of 'Abd al-'Azīz was composed by the poet in honour of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz.<sup>171</sup> In this poem there is an indication that the praise was directed at 'Abd al-'Azīz, the poet says:

---

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> See above, p. 113.

<sup>170</sup> See above, p p. 136-141.

<sup>171</sup> Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, 155.

O son of Umm al-Banīn, you are the chief  
of the people and you are the one who has  
attained success and recompense [from God].<sup>172</sup>

ابن أم البنين أنت فتى الناس وأنت الموفق المأجور

The Umm al-Banīn mentioned in the above verse was the wife  
of al-Walīd.<sup>173</sup>

The traditions do not mention why the poet did not  
praise Sulaimān b. 'Abd al-Malik, the caliph. But it is  
possible to link this with the poem in which the poet  
praised 'Abd al-'Azīz. It would appear that the poet com-  
posed this poem after al-Walīd had intended in 96 A.H., to  
depose his brother, Sulaimān, as crown-prince and to  
appoint his son in his stead,<sup>174</sup> because there are indica-  
tions in the poem that the poet was among those involved  
in supporting the attempt of al-Walīd. Thus he describes  
'Abd al-'Azīz as a caliph, an Imām of the faithful and  
their commander; saying:

I rode a strongly-built, easy to manage,  
mature and mighty she-camel.  
On its way to 'Abd al-'Azīz it does not  
taste sleep.  
It continues to journey both evening and  
morning.  
He is the third caliph of God, Imām of the  
Believers and an amīr.<sup>175</sup>

قد تسديتها وتحتي أمون  
نحو عبد العزيز ما تطعم النوم  
وهو الثالث الخليفة لله  
طوعة الرأس يازل عيه مور  
ومنها بعد الرواح البكور  
امام رابعا للمؤمنين أمير

<sup>172</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 124.

<sup>173</sup> Ṭabarī, II, 1270.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 1274.

<sup>175</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 122-123.

The views expressed in the aforementioned verses were sufficient to infuriate Sulaimān. It seems that al-Nābighah recognized the danger of what he did and he did not visit the new caliph. There is no record of him ever paying a visit to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, and this may have been occasioned by the fact that the poet had infuriated the father of the caliph when he had urged 'Abd al-Malik to depose 'Umar's father as crown-prince.<sup>176</sup> From another angle, 'Umar was a pious and religious caliph who did not relish the praise of poets nor did he lavishly finance them. Abū al-Faraj relates on the authority of Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī concerning the relations between the poet and the caliph, Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, that: "When Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik crushed the revolt of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab (in 102 A.H.), al-Nābighah visited the triumphant caliph to congratulate him, and he praised him through a poem (as found in the dīwān) from which these three verses are taken:

You have forged close ties with your brother  
the crown-prince.  
And the reward for these [ties] is with God.  
We hope he will be our Imam and likewise in  
the reign of al-Walīd we have hope.  
Hishām, al-Walīd and all wish for your  
demise, but may they be a ransom for you.<sup>177</sup>

وصلت أخاك فهو ولي عهد	وعند الله في الصلة الجزاء
نرجي أن يكون لنا اماما	وفي ملك الوليد لنا الرجاء
هشام والوليد وكل نفس	تريد لك الفناء لك الفداء

When Hishām came to power, the poet visited him to praise him but Hishām drove him away and swore that he would not receive

<sup>176</sup>Aghānī, VII, 106.

<sup>177</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 50; Aghānī, VII, 109.



any of his favours. Thus the poet stayed away from court until the caliphate of al-Walīd b. Yazīd when he resumed his visits and praised him in abundant poems, and the caliph rewarded him with numerous favours.<sup>178</sup> One may have doubts about the truth of this narration. Abū al-Faraj does not mention, as he was wont, the chain of transmitters said to have related this statement from Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī, but stops saying: "Abū 'Amr said ...". Then again there is an obvious contradiction between the third verse and the other two verses. While the poet rejoices and is full of hope at the proceedings when the caliph had demanded that his brother should be his crown-prince and his son should succeed thereafter, we find him in the third verse portraying Hishām and al-Walīd as fierce opponents of the caliph, desiring his quick demise. It is hard to accept that the caliph would have been pleased to hear a poet denouncing his brother whom he himself had appointed, and his son whose age did not exceed fourteen years old at that time.<sup>179</sup> It is ridiculous of Cheikho to think that the one meant by al-Walīd in the above verse is al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik,<sup>180</sup> the brother of the caliph, since this al-Walīd had died in 96 A.H., i.e. six years before the composition of the poem. It is not far-fetched to suppose that the third verse was a later addition to the poem in order to justify the expulsion of the poet by Hishām; one can even imagine that the three verses were inserted into the poem, because

---

<sup>178</sup>Aghānī, VII, 108-109.

<sup>179</sup>Al-Walīd b. Yazīd was born in 88 A.H. Ṭabarī, II, 1192.

<sup>180</sup>Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, 142.

directly preceding them are verses lauding the generosity of the caliph which run:

And you have revived lifeless stipends and  
except through God the stipend should not  
be revived.  
And in all the tribes from Ma'add and Yemen  
he [Yazīd] has a favour.<sup>181</sup>

وأحييت العطاء وكان ميتا      ولولا الله ما حيي العطاء  
ففي كل القبائل من معد      ومن يمن له أيضا حياء

and immediately following the three verses are verses which continue in praising the generosity of the caliph which go:

The courtyard of your father was full of  
people and abundant with comfort in drought,  
when the quarters are not visited.  
Meanness may not be feared in your promises  
when the promised time of meeting is at  
hand.<sup>182</sup>

فناء أبيتك مأهول خصيب      اذا لم يخش في المحل الفناء  
عدائك لا يخاف الزهد منها      اذا ما حان بالعدة اللسقاء

One may envisage two possibilities. Either the poet did not visit Hishām or he did visit him and the latter drove him away, 'especially because Hishām was miserly<sup>183</sup> and also had a low opinion of the tribe of Bakr in particular, and of Rabī'ah in general.<sup>184</sup> Although certain Bakrī poets, such as Abū al-Najm al-'Ijlī and Nahār b. Tawsi'ah, visited Hishām on certain occasions, our sources do not furnish us

<sup>181</sup>Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 50.

<sup>182</sup>Ibid.

<sup>183</sup>Al-Zubairī, Kitāb Nasab Quraish, 164.

<sup>184</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 1661-1662.

with any poem in praise of Hishām by any of the Bakrī poets, also we have no information concerning the praise of any Bakrī poet directed to Hishām. It would seem that they recognized the attitude assumed by Hishām towards their tribe, and thus they refrained from praising him.

As for the claim of Abū al-Faraj that the poet visited al-Walīd b. Yazīd, the caliph, and poured abundant praise upon him, this statement cannot be taken unchallenged. The dīwān of al-Nābighah does not lend support to the claim of Abū al-Faraj and it is moreover completely devoid of any single poem in praise of al-Walīd b. Yazīd, the caliph. Al-Bakrī imagined that the poem by al-Nābighah from which this verse is taken:

The previous four [caliphs] who were our  
Imāms gave descent to you and thus your  
reign is not unjust.

نمك أربعة كانوا أممتنا      فكان ملكك حقاً ليس بالحبوب

was composed in praise of al-Walīd b. Yazīd. He even goes beyond this and says making comment on the aforementioned verse and on al-Nābighah: "Al-Nābighah, a Bedouin poet, used to visit the kings of the B. Umayyah in Syria and the one he most praised was al-Walīd b. Yazīd who is described in this verse, because paternally he was descended from three caliphs and the mother of his father, Yazīd, was the daughter of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah, who were caliphs. The poet does not say 'five' to preserve the intonation of the verse".<sup>185</sup> It is evident that the poem from which the

<sup>185</sup> Al-Bakrī, Simṭ al-La'ālī, II, 901-902.

aforementioned verse is taken was composed in praise of Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, as mentioned in the dīwān,<sup>186</sup> and as al-Āmidī says.<sup>187</sup> Moreover the poem contains a verse which annuls the statement of al-Bakrī, the verse is:

You are the son of 'Ātikah, of good fortune,  
the mother of kings who are the sons of  
illustrious, of noble children.<sup>188</sup>

أنت ابن عاتكة الميمون طائرها أم الملوك بني الغر المناجيب

'Ātikah mentioned in this verse is the mother of Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik.<sup>189</sup> The four caliphs meant by the verse are: Yazīd II and his father 'Abd al-Malik, and Yazīd I and his father Mu'āwiyah. On the other hand, Abū al-Faraj relates, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Sallām, that al-Walīd b. Yazīd was fascinated by one of al-Nābighah's poems, thought it contained praise directed at him and asked that the poet should recite it before him, but the poem was boasting of al-Nābighah's tribe and thus al-Walīd said to him, "Had you been fortunate, it would have been in praise of us, not in praise of B. Shaibān".<sup>190</sup> One may be inclined to accept such a narration from a linked chain of transmitters, and one may be inclined to believe that the poet deliberately did not praise al-Walīd, because the Bakrites in general were not pleased with him because he showed partiality towards Muḍar, and especially the tribe of Qais against the Bakrites

<sup>186</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 71.

<sup>187</sup> Mu'talif, 192.

<sup>188</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 77.

<sup>189</sup> Tabarī, II, 1174.

<sup>190</sup> Aghānī, VII, 110.

and their allies the Azdites. Thus certain of the Bakrite poets satirized him, amongst whom was Ḥamzah b. Bīḍ who says:

Having claimed that the clouds of our poverty would clear away, you elevated us to the skies of greater poverty.<sup>191</sup>

وصلت سماء الضرب بالضر بعد ما  
زعمت سماء الضرب عنا ستقلع

The Bakrī poets also celebrated the assassination of al-Walīd considering it as revenge for Khālīd al-Qasrī, who was reckoned to be a member of their allies, the Azdites, thus Khalaf b. Khalīfah says:

We left the Commander of the Faithful [slain], avenging for Khālīd, lying on his nose but not in prayers.<sup>192</sup>

تركنا أمير المؤمنين بخالد  
مكباً على خيشومه غير ساجد

However the poetry of al-Nābighah in praise of the Umayyads indicates that he was nothing more than a trumpet sounding out their propaganda. In this poetry one may find most of the elements upon which the Umayyad party was based, and these elements were broadcast by some of the caliphs and their provincial governors. They financially supported certain poets to act as mouthpieces for their cause. If we leave aside the Zubairīd movement which was of short duration, and the Khārijite movement which rejected public opinion and did not gain widespread support, we find that the population was divided into two factions: firstly, those who supported the B. Hāshim and known as the Shī'ah,

<sup>191</sup>Irshād, IV, 148; Aghānī, VII, 22; Ṭabarī, II, 1783; Kāmil, V, 112-113.

<sup>192</sup>Ṭabarī, II, 1784.

and secondly those who supported the Umayyads, attributing to the Umayyads certain religious qualities which the Shī'ah attribute to their Imāms; to this point Ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah makes reference when he says: "The members of two Arab houses are taken by people as an object of worship instead of God: we and our cousins the B. Umayyah".<sup>193</sup>

The parties of the Umayyad era were established on the basis of the right of certain persons to the Imamate or the Caliphate. The Khārijites believed that the caliphate should revert to all Muslims who should appoint, as caliph, the best and ablest.<sup>194</sup> The Zubairids believed that only the Quraish had rights to the caliphate and that it should be conferred upon the best and ablest of the Quraish, and thus they rejected Yazīd's inheritance of the caliphate after the death of his father, Mu'āwīyah.<sup>195</sup> The Shī'ah believed that the caliphate should be confined to the B. Hāshim of Quraish, because they were of the house of the Prophet.<sup>196</sup> For the Umayyad party, which was the governing party, it was established on the pretext that an Umayyad caliph, i.e. 'Uthmān, was unlawfully killed and that the members of his house, represented by Mu'āwīyah, were his avengers and inheritors. They believed that they were the most fitting of the Quraish for the caliphate. They were of an ancient glory exceeding that of the B. Hāshim, and

---

<sup>193</sup> Sa'd, V, 68.

<sup>194</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, I, 107, Ibn al-Jawzī, Talbīs Iblīs, 96.

<sup>195</sup> See al-Ḥufī, Adab al-Siyāsah fī al-'Asr al-Umawī, 116-117.

<sup>196</sup> See al-Shāyib, Tārīkh al-Shi'r al-Siyāsī ilā Muntaṣaf al-Qarn al-Thānī, 155-156.

they claimed that they were the inheritors of the Prophet; and thus they considered themselves as the ones who had the most right to rule over the Muslim society.<sup>197</sup> The members of this party used to laud the Umayyad caliphs and placed them in a high position. They were considered to be the caliphs on earth of God and his Prophet; and thus obedience to them and support of them was mandatory. We find tendencies evident in the speeches of certain governors and leaders such as the speech of Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān, well-known as al-batrā', in which he claimed that Mu'āwiyah and his governors ruled with authority from God and obedience to their will was mandatory.<sup>198</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbih relates on the authority of Ibn 'Ayyāsh who said: "We were together with 'Abd al-Malik when he received a letter from al-Ḥajjāj in which he lauded the caliphate, claiming that the skies and the earth were not established except by the caliphate, and that the caliph is preferred by God over the angels, devotees, prophets and messengers, because God created Adam by His hand, made the angels bow down before him, placed him in paradise, then sent him down to earth, made him His caliph and made the angels his messengers". 'Abd al-Malik was fascinated by this letter and said: "I wish I had some Kharijites with me so that I could use this letter to counter their argument".<sup>199</sup> According to these and similar concepts, the opponents of the Umayyads and those

---

<sup>197</sup> Al-Shāyib, Tārīkh al-Shi'r al-Siyāsī ilā Muntaṣaf al-Qarn al-Thānī, 202; al-Ḥufī, Adab al-Siyāsah fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, 14-16.

<sup>198</sup> See Ṭabarī, II, 73-76.

<sup>199</sup> Iqd, V, 51.

who revolted against them were accused of being infidels and heretics. Thus political problems were enveloped by religion. These concepts and the like were deeply embedded in the hearts of the poets who used to praise the Umayyad caliphs and amīrs. They were well-aware of the political propaganda which they played their part in spreading, to the extent that one may imagine that they did not neglect to use every opportunity to convey the message to others. Consequently the traditional panegyric, which deals with personal qualities, was modified to become political poetry, in which propaganda elements were mixed with personal qualities and tribal praise, in general concentrating on the right of the Quraish as opposed to other tribes, and the right of the Umayyads within the Quraish. Al-Nābighah makes frequent mention of this feature. In his praise of 'Abd al-Malik he lauds his forefathers, considering them to be the best of the Quraish and likewise he considers 'Abd al-Malik to be the inheritor of the Quraish, who restrains them when they clamour for power, retains his favour amongst them, and aids them although they have not given him his due support. It seems that the poet is here referring to the insurgencies led by some of the Quraishites such as that of Ibn al-Zubair and of 'Amr b. Sa'īd, known as al-Ashdaq, and others when he says:

The generosity of al-'A'āsī is manifest in him, with the same clarity as the appearance of dawn.

The Āl Abī al-'Āṣī have generous qualities, they are illustrious, noble and confer favours.

They are the best of Quraish, truly the best of them.

They are earnest even when they are witty.



They are the most mighty [of the Quraish] and the most patient of them when people in battle are frightened.

As for the Quraish, you are the inheritor. You prevent them from sowing discord when they aspire to power.

You have kept your favours which they did not acknowledge.

You have assisted them while they did not aid you.

You are the inheritor of a fine disposition. Verily gratitude is a profitable treasure.<sup>200</sup>

يبين يومًا للناظر الصبح	يبين فيه عشق الأعاصي كما
غرّ عتاق بالخير قد نفحوا	وآل أبي العاص أهل مآثرة
في الجدّ جدّ وان هم مزحوا	خير قریش وهم أفاضلسها
صبرًا إذا القوم في الوشى كلحوا	أرحبها أذ رعا وأصبرها
تكفّ من شغبهم إذا طمحو	أما قریش فأنّت وارثها
أوريت إذ أصلدوا وقد قدحوا	حفظت ما ضيّعوا وزندهم
والحمد ذخرتغلي به رح	مناقب الخيرات أنت وارثها

In his praise of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, al-Nābighah portrays the Umayyads as the loftiest of the Quraish, and the best of them on the scale of glory and says:

If the Quraish contend for superiority they are its noblest, and since the days of yore they are the best of them in glory.<sup>201</sup>

إذا قریش سمت كانوا ذوائبها وخيرهم منبتا في المجد ان غرسوا

In another poem, he considers him to be the stay of Quraish and none of them can vie with him in glory:

If the Quraish with their ancient glory vie with you, you will surpass them and you are their stay.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 107-108.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 115.

وإذا قرّيش سابقتك سبقتها      بقديم أولها وأنت قوامها

In one of al-Nābighah's poems in praise of Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, he considers Yazīd's forefathers to be the elite of the Quraish and glorifies his paternal and maternal lineage. Likewise he prefers him over all of the Quraish, and claims him to be devoid of any defect.

On this [she-camel] I betake myself to a king from al- A'yās, illustrious, whose forehead shines as a light. He is Yazīd, the good; of growing goodness; he increases [in goodness] whenever it is required. [I betake myself] to the noble and lofty of the Quraish, who are like a peak from which dense clouds are removed. Although the Quraish have established goodness of old, they have no establishment like yours. Your branch originates from the top of the tree of al-Nab', and is so lofty that the tree of al-Sarā' cannot attain its height. Your ancestors are the best of the Quraish, and they are devoid of any fault, and Banū al-A'āsī are the best of the dwellers in Tihāmah, just as the best mountain is that which contains Hīrā'.<sup>203</sup>

أغر كأن غرته ضياء	أوم بها من الأعياص ملكا
وينمي كلما ابتغي النماء	يزيد الخير وهو يزيد خيرا
تجوّب عن ذوائبها العماء	الى الشم الشمارخ من قرّيش
وليس كما بنيت لها بناء	قرّيش تبنتي المعروف قدما
رفيح لا يوازيه السراء	وعودك من أعالي النبع فرع
وهم من كل سيئة برأء	فعيضك خير عيص في قرّيش
كما خير الجبال بها حراء	وخير المتهمين بنو الأعاصي

As a consequence, al-Nābighah declares more than once that the caliphate is a right conferred upon them alone and that there is no injustice in this. He says addressing Yazīd:

<sup>203</sup>Ibid., 49-51.

The previous four [caliphs] who were our Imāms gave descent to you, and thus your reign is not unjust.<sup>204</sup>

نماك أربعة كانوا أئمتنا فكان ملكك حقاً ليس بالحبوب

Likewise he praises 'Abd al-'Azīz b. al-Walīd, saying:

He is the third caliph of God, Imām of the believers and amīr. A magnanimous king, he was given life by kings.

He is the shining full-moon which has concealed the stars.

They are the people in whom the caliphate originated; it begins with them and it reverts to them.<sup>205</sup>

وهو الثالث الخليفة لله  
ولدت له الملوك ملكا هماما  
امام للمؤمنين أمير  
فهو بدرغم النجوم منير  
معشر معدن الخلافة فيهم  
بدؤها منهم وفيهم تحور

In the aforementioned verses, al-Nābighah refers to the legality of inherited principles in the caliphate which was created by the Umayyads. It seems that al-Nābighah, like Jarīr, always made a quick response to the caliphs' wishes to appoint their sons as heirs-apparent. Thus when 'Abd al-Malik intended to transfer succession from his brother 'Abd al-'Azīz to his son al-Walīd, al-Nābighah recited before him a panegyric from which the following verses are taken, in which he urges the caliph to pursue his aims. He tries to tempt 'Abd al-Malik by citing the precedents for his action, namely the prophet Dawūd and Āl Marwān who appointed their sons; he says:

Your son is most entitled to the kingship of his father; and his uncle should he disobey

<sup>204</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>205</sup>Ibid., 123.

you will be rejected.

Dawūd was just, so follow his model, and  
 Āl-Marwān were faithful to God; they were  
 the most excellent, so follow their model  
 and live well and exert yourself for the  
 sake of the present and the future as they  
 did.<sup>206</sup>

ابنك أولى بملك والده	وعه ان عمك مطّرح
داود عدل فاحكم بسنته	وآل مروان كانوا الله قد نصحوا
فهم خيار فاعمل بسنتهم	واحي بخير واكدح كما كد حوا

He also revealed his delight at the appointment by Yazīd of his brother Hishām, who would be succeeded by al-Walīd b. Yazīd, considering this deed to be rewardable by God in the hereafter; he says:

You have forged close ties with your brother  
 and he is the crown-prince.  
 And the reward for these ties is with God.  
 We hope he will be our Imām and likewise in  
 the reign of al-Walīd we have hope.<sup>207</sup>

وصلت أخاك فهو ولي عهد	وعند الله في ذاك الجزاء
نرجي أن يكون لنا اماما	وفي ملك الوليد لنا الرجاء

When al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik intended to appoint his son as crown-prince, al-Nābighah also responded quickly and praised 'Abd al-'Azīz describing him as a caliph, amīr and Commander of the Faithful, although 'Abd al-'Azīz never came to power as caliph. He says:

He is the third caliph of God, Imām of the  
 believers and amīr.<sup>208</sup>

وهو الثالث الخليفة لله	امام للمسلمين أمير
------------------------	--------------------

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 123.

Al-Nābighah goes beyond this when he claims that al-Walīd has a divine right to be honoured and respected:

Verily al-Walīd, the Commander of the Faithful, has the right from God to be preferred and exalted.<sup>209</sup>

ان الوليد أمير المؤمنين له حق من الله : تفضيل وتشريف

He also claims that the caliphate of Yazīd has been decreed by God. This concept and the like gained widespread support among poets, especially Jarīr, who used to go to the Umayyad caliphs to praise them and receive rewards. The Umayyads themselves used to broadcast this view in order to circumvent the questions of the people about the legitimacy of the caliphate, and to prevent them from attempting to transfer the caliphate to others. Thus, according to them, God has determined that they should be His and His Prophet's caliphs, and that none should reject the decree of God. Al-Nābighah says in praise of Yazīd:

God who revealed to the bees, has bestowed upon you sovereignty and piety and charity.<sup>210</sup>

أعطاك ملكا وتقوى أنت سائسه بعد الفضائل من أوحى الى النوب

In another poem, al-Nābighah mentions that the decree of God and His Will demanded that Yazīd should crush the revolt of Ibn al-Muhallab, establish his reign and give life to the stipends after they were about to vanish, he says:

You have given them sovereignty, by the will of God, just as the sky has been raised over

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 76.

the earth.  
And you have revived dormant stipends, and  
except through God the stipend should not be  
revived.<sup>211</sup>

سمكت لهم باذن الله ملكا      كما سمكت على الأرض السماء  
وأحييت العطاء وكان ميتا      ولولا الله ما حيي العطاء

Consequently, al-Nābighah frequently attributes religious qualities to the Umayyads which give them the qualifications to rule the community, and which make their caliphate a necessity for the survival of the community both spiritually and materially. In this respect, al-Nābighah approached the view points of the poets of the Shī'ah who used to attribute every religious virtue to their Imāms. Thus al-Nābighah considers the Umayyads as the caliphs of God and Imāms, and that through them the faithful are rightly-guided and prevented from going astray; such a view refers to the concept of al-Mahdī which was widespread among the Shī'ah. For example, al-Nābighah describes al-Walīd as the Commander of the Faithful through whom prayers for rain may be addressed, and describes the Umayyads as those who guide people to the path of truth:

My [she-camel] intends to reach al-Walīd, the  
Amir al-Mu'minīn, although long is the journey  
and between us lies al-Ṭabas.  
He is the caliph of God through whom prayers  
for rain are made, whose character has never  
been polluted by treachery.  
The B. Umayyah lead their followers to the  
path of truth.  
And he who is doubtful about this is con-  
founded.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 28.

تنوي الوليد أمير المؤمنين وان      طال السفار وأضحت دونه الطّيس  
 خليفة الله يستسقى الخمام به      ما من أثوابه من غدره دنس  
 هدت أمية سبل الحق تابعها      ان الأمور على ذي الشكّ تلتبس

In another poem, al-Nābighah describes al-Walīd as the one who has guided the Qurāish after God had guided them, portraying al-Walīd as the inheritor of the leader of Quraish, i.e. the Prophet:

Verily you are the one, after God, who guided them when they had laid a stake with you on the gaming-arrow. You inherited their leader, you won their stake and you overcame vehement adversaries whose dispute did not dismay you.<sup>213</sup>

أنت الذي بعد الاله هديتها      اذ خاطرتك بأقدح أقوامها  
 فورثت قائدها وفزت بقدرتها      وخصمت لدا لم يهلك خصامها

He also considers 'Abd al-Malik as a favourite of God and sincere to Him:

Justly do you rule over the people of Islam and distribute the booty, and you are sincere to God.<sup>214</sup>

تسوس أهل الإسلام عملتهم      وأنت عند الرحمن منتصح

Yazīd who was known for his pleasure-seeking to the extent that it is said that his maid Ḥabbābah used to appoint and depose some of his officers without his authority,<sup>215</sup> is nevertheless depicted by al-Nābighah as being granted piety from God. He portrays him as spending the entire night

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>215</sup> See Mājid, al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī li al-Dawlah al-'Arabiyyah, II, 271-272.

praying reciting Qur'ānic sūras which so dominated his feelings that he frequently wept:

He is awarded gentleness, chastity, generosity and intelligence superior to all. The Lord has granted him piety and goodness; he has an ascetic origin. He spends his night moaning, weeping and supplicating God; fervently bowing and prostrating himself with tears flowing from his eyes. He weeps when he stands reciting sūras after sūrat al-Anfāl.<sup>216</sup>

أعطي الحلم والعفاف مع الجود ورأيا يفوق رأي الرجال  
 وحباه المليك تقوى ويرا وهو من سوس ناسك وصّال  
 يقطع الليل آهة وانتحابا وابتهاالا لله أيّ ابتهاال  
 تارة راکعا وطورا سجودا ذاد موع تنهل أيّ انهلال  
 وله نجة اذا قام يتسلو سورا بعد سورة الأنفال

Most of the Umayyad caliphs and amīrs were known for their partiality for one tribe over others. Thus tyranny was usually transferred from one side to another according to the wishes and inclinations of whoever was in power. Notwithstanding al-Nābighah frequently glorifies their justice and defends them from charges of tyranny often levelled at them by the Shi'ah and the Khārijite poets. For example, he says in praise of Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik:<sup>217</sup>

عادل مقسط وميزان حق لم يحف في قضائه للموالي

He describes the judgment of Maslamah as devoid of prejudice and injustice:

His judgment is straight without deviation. It is devoid of injustice or prejudice.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>216</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 68-69.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 99.



قضاؤه مستقيم غير ذي عوج فليس في حكمه حيف ولا ميل

Likewise, he describes 'Abd al-'Azīz as being pious and just:

If they seek piety, he is just and pious,  
and if they seek injustice, he is no  
tyrant.<sup>219</sup>

ان أرادوا التقي فعديل تقيّ أو أرادوا عدلا فليس يجور

In addition to the qualities of justice, piety, right guidance and being the best of the Quraish which al-Nābighah attributes to the Umayyads, we find him from time to time blackening their opponents. For example, in his praise of al-Walīd; he accuses the opponents of the caliph of being spiteful and treacherous. He rests his case upon the Qur'ān and says that they were those meant by the Qur'anic verse:<sup>220</sup> " صم بكم عمي فهم لا يعقلون ". He also claims that God has threatened them because they are impure idolators:

May your enemy be overcome; they will be  
killed through their malevolence.  
And if they intend treachery [against you],  
they will stumble.  
They do not see nor hear [correctly]; if you  
rescue them from dissension they will revert  
to it again.  
They are those whom God has threatened; they  
are polytheists and he who does not incline  
to you is unclean.<sup>221</sup>

قسرا عدوك ان الضغن قاتلهم  
لا يبصرون وفي آذانهم صمم  
وانهم ان أرادوا غدرة تعسوا  
اذا نعشتهم من فتنة ركبوا  
المشركون ومن لم يهوكم نجس

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>220</sup> Qur'ān, II, 171.

<sup>221</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 28.

In his praise of 'Abd al-'Azīz he accuses the Umayyads' opponents of pride, proximity to Satan and breaking of the covenant:

No human being should assail their rule.  
Naive is the one who seeks their sovereignty.  
It was sought by the violators of the  
covenant who were uprooted and by the friends  
of Satan who were destroyed.<sup>222</sup>

لا يروهن ملكهم آدمي ان من رام ملكهم مخرور  
راه الناكثون فاستأصلوهم وولاة الشيطان حتى أبيروا

He also claims that those who defy Maslamah and threaten him will never attain his position:

They never will reach you and their utmost  
effort will not touch you, until the camel  
passes through a needle's eye.<sup>223</sup>

لن يلحقوك ولن يبلغك شأوهم حتى يلج بين سم الأبرة الجمل

This picture painted of revolts against the state, and the accusation that they are infidels rejecting obedience to the caliph supported by God-given right, was spread abroad by the Umayyads and their governors. In this fashion they legalized the killing of those who revolted against the state. For example when al-Ḥajjāj crushed the revolt of Ibn al-Ash'ath, he tracked down those who had joined the revolt and he who confessed to being an infidel was freed, while those who refused to confess were killed.<sup>224</sup>

The poets who praised the Umayyads frequently accuse their

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>224</sup> 'Iqd, II, 176-177.

opponents of being infidels, hypocrites and irreligious traits. When Jarīr praised 'Abd al-Malik he addressed Ibn al-Zubair accusing him of being a hypocrite, saying:<sup>225</sup>

دعوت الملحدین أبا خبیب جماحا هل شفیت من الجماح

Al-Farazdaq likens Ibn al-Zubair to Musailimah the liar of al-Yamāmah:<sup>226</sup>

بعد الفساد الذي قد كان قام به كذاب مكة من مكر وتخريب

Al-Nābighah expresses his joy at the crushing of the revolt of Ibn al-Zubair, accusing the Zubairids of being irreligious while describing 'Abd al-Malik as being sincere towards God:

You have removed from us Āl al-Zubair.  
Had they been in power, they would not have been pious.  
Justly do you rule over the people of Islam and distribute booty, and you are sincere to God.<sup>227</sup>

أزحت عنا آل الزبير ولسو كانوا هم المالکین ما صلحوا  
تسوس أهل الإسلام عملتهم وأنت عند الرحمن منتصح

When Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik crushed the revolt of Ibn al-Muhallab, al-Nābighah congratulated him and glorified his power and considered Ibn al-Muhallab as the enemy of the Muslim community:

You have destroyed the contingents of the Azdite with an army leader who loves encounters. When he meets and fights heroes, he kills or surrounds them.

<sup>225</sup> Dīwān Jarīr b. 'Atyyah al-Khaṭafī, I, 37.

<sup>226</sup> Dīwān al-Farazdaq, I, 24.

<sup>227</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 106; Aghānī, VII, 107.

With the sword he cuts down the mighty  
and powerful, and acts daringly whenever  
the flag is dyed [with blood].  
You have exterminated their [people's]  
enemy and forgiven others in order to  
spare blood.<sup>228</sup>

بكبشك وهو بغيته اللقتاء	فضضت كئائب الأزدى فضاً
فناطحهن قتل واحتواء	وعادته اذا لاقى كباشا
ويجسر كلما اختضب اللواء	يفلق بالسيوف شرنبثات
به حقنت من الناس الدماء	أبرت عد وهم وعفوت عفوا

It is worth mentioning in this context that the attitude assumed by al-Nābighah towards both the revolt of Ibn al-Zubair and that of Ibn al-Muhallab is in complete harmony with the attitude assumed by his tribe, Bakr, in general. Al-Nābighah does not mention in his poetry any of the revolts in which the Bakrites played a prominent role. The poem in which he humiliates Ibn al-Zubair was composed after a thirteen-year gap during which many revolts took place involving the Bakrites. Amongst these revolts were the revolt of Shabīb the Khārijite, that of Ibn al-Jārūd, and that of Ibn al-Ash'ath. The last was the most threatening and took place only three years before the composition of the poem. Al-Nābighah, however, does not mention any of these revolts specifically, possibly because Shabīb belonged to the tribe of Bakr. The Bakrites supported Ibn al-Jārūd and they were strong supporters of Ibn al-Ash'ath.

The conquest movement during the Umayyad era ebbed and flowed according to the internal conditions of the

---

<sup>228</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 49-50.

state. The Arab Kingdom reached its zenith during the reign of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, when many capable leaders arose who extended the Islamic lands in both east and west. Al-Walīd gave responsibility for fighting the Romans to his brother Maslamah and to his son al-'Abbās. Both display superb military ability, especially Maslamah whose father used to call him the "eyetooth of the B. Umayyah".<sup>229</sup> Amongst the important fortresses which the Muslims captured during the reign of al-Walīd was the fortress of Tyana, in 88 A.H., which lay near al-Muṣaiṣah, the strong Muslim frontier, after it had been besieged for nine months.<sup>230</sup> Al-Nābighah refers to this in one of his praise poems to al-Walīd. He portrays him as a man of war, glorifying the leaders of his army especially Maslamah, and likewise he glorifies the fighters of the army which besieged the city and conquered it. He considers this as being an unchallengeable decree by God, and says:

He is the illustrious caliph who acts carefully, through whom chiefs are raised.  
 He does not extinguish battle except to re-ignite it and on every long road he has advancing horses.  
 He obtains booty, gives it and distributes it, and among his favours are tall short-haired horses.  
 His forceful army abased Tyana and it was not led by cowardly unarmed leaders.  
 Maslamah, the blessed, was present when its pillar was being crushed by heavy rocks.  
 The heroes of the clamouring army encircled it, just as the sheath encircles the palm-tree.  
 Then they clambered over its walls from all directions, and those within grieved because

---

<sup>229</sup> Anon. Muṣannaf Majhūl, XI, 162.

<sup>230</sup> See Tabarī, II, 1191-1192.

their time was near.  
 And thus its people were either killed,  
 despoiled or firmly bound in thongs.  
 Alas for the mutilated one who weeps over  
 their loss!  
 Is the severe punishment of your God  
 diverted from those He wishes to punish?<sup>231</sup>

أغر تنمي به البيض الغطاريف	خليفة لم يزل يجري على مهل
في كل فج له خيل مسانيف	لا يخمد الحرب الا ريث يوقدها
ومن عطيته الجرد السرايف	يحوي سبياً فيعطيهما ويقسمها
وعسكر لم تقده العزل الجوف	أخزى طرندة منه وابل برد
وركنها بثقال الصخر وقذوف	ما زال مسلمة اليمون يحضرها
كما أحاط برأس النخلة الليف	وقد أحاطت بهم أبطال ذي لجب
وحان من كان فيها فهو ملهوف	حتى علوا سورها من كل ناحية
ومنهم مرثق في القد مكستوف	فأهلها بين مقتول ومستلب
هل بأس ريك عن رام مصروف؟	يا أيها الأجدع الباكي لمهلكهم

In another poem he portrays al-Walīd as being a master to whom Arabs, Persians and Romans have submitted out of fear of his contingents which obtain booty:

Arabs of all countries have submitted to him out of fear, and Byzantines and Persians have submitted to him in their entirety. They fear his ever-conquering armies will encircle them. The heroes of his armies are clothed in coats of mail which ring out. Through them you obtain booty and you distribute it, just as your horse hunts wild beasts of the desert for you.<sup>232</sup>

والروم دانته له جمعاء والفرس	دانته له عرب الآفاق خشيته
للسابغات على أبطالها جرس	خافوا كتائب غلبا أن تطيف بهم
كما يصيدك وحش القفرة الفرس	بهن تحوي سبياً ثم تقسمها

<sup>231</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 51-52.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 28.

He also lauds the military ability of Maslamah and his preparations for war, portraying the fear which his massed army arouses:<sup>233</sup>

السيف والدرع والخنديد والبطل	أعددت للحرب أقرانا وهم حسب
بجحفل أرعن الحافات تنتقل	إذا فعمت بقوم جئت أرضهم
كما يصيح على ظهر الصفا الحجل	تصيح نسوانهم لما هزمتهم

Al-Nābighah portrays, in one of his praise-poems to Yazīd, the Umayyads in general as being more powerful than all others:

You are numerous when your wave breaks with every active and proud man rushing headlong . You are the smiters of the heads of champions, with strong, vehement, crushing blows.<sup>234</sup>

بكل أصيد سامي الطرف هيبوب	الأكثرين إذا ما سال موجهم
ضربا طلخفا وهكّا غير تذييب	والضاريون من الأبطال هامهم

With regard to generosity, which had frequently been the subject of panegyric poetry since pre-Islamic times, al-Nābighah often lauds the Umayyads to the extent that one may imagine that he was motivated in his praise by desire for their favours. One may equally imagine that he prostituted his poetical art for wealth. In this respect he is similar to many poets who were tempted by the wealth of the caliphs and coveted it. The Umayyads themselves used to bestow abundant gifts upon their poets, because they saw them as defenders of their right to rule and as supporters of their legitimacy amongst the people. The poets sometimes used openly to declare their aim of

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 77.

travelling to the Umayyads to ask for favours. Jarīr addresses 'Abd al-Malik saying:<sup>235</sup>

أغثني يا فداك أبي وأمي      بسيب منك انك ذوارتياح

Al-Nābighah says in praising 'Abd al-Malik:<sup>236</sup>

آمل فضلا من سيب منتجع      اياه ينوي الثناء والمدح

He also says in praising Yazīd:

It [she-camel] seeks the favour of the hand of Yazīd who is cheerful, noble and most generous.<sup>237</sup>

تنتوي من يزيد فضل يديه      أريحيسا فرعا سمين الفعال

In his praise of al-Walīd, Al-Nābighah confesses that he has visited the Umayyads for the sake of the favours which they bestowed upon him:

They are most generous to him who seeks favour, and the most severe in matters of religion and warfare. By your father, they granted me boons when I sought their favour: they were not mean, nor did they frown.<sup>238</sup>

وأسهل الناس أعطانا لمختبط      وأكثر الناس عيدانا اذا حمسوا  
قوم هم مولوني قد عفوتهم      فلا وجدك ما ضنوا ولا عسوا

In another poem he portrays al-Walīd as constantly giving the best from his hand when other palms are miserly:

The [she-camel] goes and seeks Walīd, a caliph, its rest and labour are dominated

<sup>235</sup> Dīwān Jarīr b. 'Atīyyāh al-Khaṭāfī, I, 36.

<sup>236</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 106.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 29.



by this.

He is a king, illustrious, descended from a king, his palm bestows the best favours; purses with thousands of dirhems and pasturing camels. Morning and evening he is constantly benevolent. He possesses various properties from which he dispenses.<sup>239</sup>

يعنى بذلك جهدها وجمامها	تنوي وتنتج الوليد خليفة
خير العطاء بذورها وسوامها	ملك أغر نمي لهلك كفسه
شتى له نعم جدا انعامها	وهو الذي يمسي ويصبح محسنا

In his praise of Yazīd, he portrays his favours as being spread through all the tribes, portraying him as removing poverty from those who praise the A'yāṣ and who come from afar especially for his favour:

And in all the tribes from Ma'add and Yemen he [Yazīd] has favour. Whoever praises al-A'yāṣ and seeks favour will find in you a priceless recompense. And how many seekers of gifts from distant lands there are to whom you have given bountifully when they came to you; you have removed the wrappings of poverty and lack of sustenance from them and thus they obtained favours.<sup>240</sup>

وممن ييمن له أيضا حبساء	ففي كل القبائل من معد
للمتدح من الثمن الغلاء	على الأعياص عندك حين تعفى
عربأت لهم سجالك حين جاءوا	ومختبطين من بلد بعيد
فذفالوا الخير وانكشف الغطاء	كشفت الفقر والأقلال عنهم

In another poem he portrays al-Walīd as exceeding kings in generosity just as one horse overtakes others, and he considers him to be the best source of favours:

If kings hastened to perform a good deed as

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 50-51.

a rushing horse is spurred on, you would race like a horse which is potent, outstripping swift and excellent horses without being whipped on.

He is easily visited.

The people require his generosity and he fills great bowls with the top of the hump of aged she-camels.

You refresh groups when they have wilted, like the refreshment of a rain-cloud to the spirit of Ḥulbūb.

You are the best of them for a seeker and you are the most generous at a time when the bark is stripped [from the tree].<sup>241</sup>

جري المحاضير حثت بالكلايب	إذا الملك جرت يوماً لمكرمة
بذ العناجيج سبقاً غير مضروب	جريت جري عتيق لم يكن وكلاً
يكسو الجفان سديفاً من ذرى النيب	سهل المباءة يعفو الناس جمته
أحياء غيث بصوب نفس حلسبوب	وأنت تحيي فتأماً بعد ما همدت
وأجود الناس جوداً عند تنجيب	وأنت خيرهم يوماً لمختببط

These are the salient features encompassed in the poetry of al-Nābighah in praise of the Umayyads. It can be seen that the poet, like most others who praised the Umayyads, does not exhibit a critical opinion of authority. He merely describes them using loose concepts such as piety and justice. He does not mention them because he has an understanding of authority based on them, but because his patrons were eager to have ascribed to them these religious characteristics upon which the political ideologies of some of their opponents were based, in order to reinforce their right to the caliphate and support the view that God had chosen them for it. Moreover, his clear intention in praising the Umayyads for the sake of wealth, does not negate his tribal loyalty. When he decided he

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 77-78.

had to forge links with the Umayyads and praise them, neither decision contradicted his tribal attitudes. His tribal loyalty dominated his own feelings even in the assembly of Yazīd b. al-Walīd. Thus he mouthed boasts of his own tribe instead of praising the caliph - a caliph who was reckoned by the Bakrites to be their worst enemy. Al-Nābighah goes so far in exaggerating the qualities he puts into his panegyric indiscriminately. He frequently applies the same concept to more than one person. For example, what he says about 'Abd al-Malik:

If afflicted by misfortune you are patient  
and aloof, and if you obtain wealth you do  
not rejoice.<sup>242</sup>

ان تلق بلوى فصاير أنف      وان تلاق النعمى فلا فرح

is similar to what he says about al-Walīd:

They are not saddened when there is killing  
amongst them, nor are they seen to rejoice  
when they take a fifth of the booty.<sup>243</sup>

لا يجزعون اذا ما القتل حل بهم      ولا يرون فراحي ان هم خسوا

His saying about al-Walīd:

He is a magnanimous king to whom one  
possessed by the darkness of his affairs  
turns for resolution.<sup>244</sup>

ملكا هما ما يحيل الأمر جائله      اذا تحير عند الخطّة الهوس

is similar to what he says about Yazīd:

<sup>242</sup>Ibid., 107.  
<sup>244</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>243</sup>Ibid., 29.

You are the Imām of the people, neither humble nor low and you do not allow the intelligence of others to render you speechless.<sup>245</sup>

امام الناس لا ضرع صغير  
وذا فحم يثلمه الذكاء

He frequently repeats some of the same words such as *أغرى، وظلك* and others. *وختبب، وهمام، وقمرئس، ونعماك، وسبجان، وإعيص، وظلك*

This phenomenon of repeating meanings and words excluded the personality of those whom he praised to the extent that any panegyric poem would fit any Umayyad or governor. This may cast light on the intentions of the poet who probably did not praise because of his true emotions, but ran after the mirage of wealth. This may be equally true of many of the panegyrists of the Umayyad era and none escaped it, even the fuhūl.

#### The Technical Characteristics of the Poetry of al-Nābighah

No critical appraisal by ancient scholars has come down to us about al-Nābighah, except al-Āmidī's brief statement that he was a "muḥsin poet".<sup>246</sup> On the other hand, al-Farazdaq boasts, in one of his poems, that he was the inheritor of old famous poets, mentioning a number of them including "the Nawābigh";<sup>247</sup> saying:

وهب القصائد لي النوابغ إذ مضوا  
وأبو يزيد وذا القروح وجرول

Some old commentators, followed by some modern writers, consider al-Nābighah al-Shaibānī as one of the 'Nawābigh'

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>246</sup> Mu'talif, 192.

<sup>247</sup> Dīwān al-Farazdaq, II, 159.

mentioned in the above verse.<sup>248</sup> There is no evidence to support this assumption, which seems indeed to be a hasty interpretation of the implications of the word 'al-Nawābigh'. It is evident from the fact that al-Farazdaq mentions that the 'Nawābigh' who influenced him were all dead, that al-Nābighah was not one of those who influenced him. The poets mentioned in al-Farazdaq's poem, composed after 71 A.H.,<sup>249</sup> from which the above-mentioned verse is taken, are either Jāhilī or mukhaḍramūn who had already passed away. Accordingly, al-Farazdaq used the verbs ورث and مضى to indicate that the poets concerned were dead. Moreover, al-Farazdaq himself died in 114 A.H.,<sup>250</sup> while al-Nābighah survived to witness the caliphate of al-Walīd b. Yazīd (125-126 A.H.). On the other hand, al-Farazdaq's poetry contains no indication of being influenced by al-Nābighah's poetry, although he is known for his imitation of many other poets, to the point that it was claimed that nine-tenths of his poems were plagiarized.<sup>251</sup> On the contrary, al-Nābighah was fascinated by the verse of al-Farazdaq of which he claims that nobility and good poetry are twins. The verse concerned says:<sup>252</sup>

وخير الشعر أكره رجالا      وشر الشعر ما قال العبيد

Al-Nābighah therefore inserts the above verse in one of

<sup>248</sup>For examples, see: Naqā'id, 200; Zakī, al-Ḥayāt al-Adabiyah fī al-Baṣrah ilā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thānī al-Hijrī, 281.

<sup>249</sup>See al-Shāyib, Tārīkh al-Naqā'id fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabī, 280.

<sup>250</sup>See al-Fahḥām, al-Farazdaq, 204-205.

<sup>251</sup>Muwashshah, 167.

<sup>252</sup>Aghānī, I, 338.

his own poems. He says:

And verily I am passing judgment over poetry  
when both rhythm and recitation are considered;  
for the best of poetry is that composed by the  
noblest of men, and the worst of poetry is that  
uttered by slaves.<sup>253</sup>

واني حاكم في الشعر حكما      اذا ذكر القوافي والنشيد  
فخير الشعر أكره رجالا      وشرا الشعر ما قال العبيد

However al-Nābighah's poetry, in general, indicates that he did not rush to publish his poems. Instead, he used to revise his poems in order to refine and to polish them. He was not unique in this habit. Some of his predecessors had practised it, like Zuhair, al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī and al-Ḥuṭai'ah. Ancient critics had realized the preoccupation of these poets in the beautification of their poetry. For example, al-Aṣma'ī used to call them "the slaves of poetry"<sup>254</sup> (عبيد الشعر). Like some of these poets who were conscious of their habit, al-Nābighah himself mentions more than once indicatives of his consciousness of this habit and effort in composition and refinement of his poems. For example, he mentions that he cultivates his poems:

Verily my poetry is all of two kinds; the  
first I improve, and the second is current  
in all lands.<sup>255</sup>

فشعري كله بيتان : بيت  
أثقفه وقافية شرود

<sup>253</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 39.

<sup>254</sup> 'Umdah, I, 133.

<sup>255</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 39.

In the last verse of his poem devoted to the praise of al-Walīd, after the conquest of Tyana, he says that his poem is devoid of defects because he has corrected or straightened it:

I have straightened it to be devoid of any deviation and bending, like the straightening of spears.<sup>256</sup>

قومت منها فلا زيغ ولا أود      كما أقام قنا الخطي تثقيف

In a third poem, he says that the criterion of the true poet is that he is able to distinguish between good and bad verses by repeatedly reciting them:

No-one is a poet until he can by repeatedly singing his poetry differentiate the good and bad. Repetition repels the bad ikfā' like the waves that dispel the scum.<sup>257</sup>

وحوك الشعر ما أنشدت منه      يزايد بين مكفته الغناء  
فينفي سبيء الاكفاء عنه      كما ينفى عن الحدب الغناء

In a fourth poem, he advises the poets to refine their poems twice.<sup>258</sup> Perhaps this phenomenon may be interpreted by the fact that most of these poets had turned their poetry into the occupation of praising rulers and chiefs, in order to gain their gifts and awards. Poetry to them was not to be devoted to expressing their personal feelings. Since their role was public and a matter of craftsmanship, they had to perfect their craft. Al-Jāhiz realizes the relation between this phenomenon and the professional poet's livelihood. He says: "Whoever uses his poetry to earn his

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

livelihood and seeks the gifts of notables and leaders, and the awards of the kings and chiefs, has to imitate the practice of Zuhair, al-Ḥuṭai'ah and others. If they had composed other types of poetry they would have been content with whatever they can manage without effort".<sup>259</sup> Al-Nābighah himself advises that whoever wants to praise the kings must refine his poems:

If you journey to praise a king, then journey  
with pure poetry which is not unpolished.<sup>260</sup>

وان رحلت الى ملك لتهدحه فارحل بشعرنقي غير مخشوب

Consequently, al-Nābighah appears to be highly concerned with the poetical images which are abundant in his poems, especially in descriptive verses. He gathers as much possible detail as is needed to construct a detailed and complete image of his subject. In one of his poems, for instance, he does not stop at ascribing to his she-camel attributes that show it to be ideal in power and endurance. He proceeds to broaden his image by likening the she-camel to a wild bull, then goes on to detail the mighty attributes of the bull.<sup>261</sup> In another poem, he likens the generosity of Yazīd to the overflowing Euphrates. He does not stop at this but goes on to portray the agitated and tumultuous river, flowing with palm-trees and ruins of flooded houses, .. only to end by saying that Yazīd's generosity is more overflowing than this river.<sup>262</sup> Thus

---

<sup>259</sup> Bayān, II, 13-14.

<sup>260</sup> Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, 75.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 69-70.



*hyperbole* - not uncommon in the poetry of the Umayyad era - is a predominant feature of his poetry. Al-Nābighah, in the construction of most of his simple and complex images, depends on similies derived from his environment, such as to liken his she-camel to a wild bull, the caliph to the full moon and the sea, and to liken his longing for his beloveds to that of the camel for its home territory and other similies frequently, with slight difference, used by ancient poets. Al-Nābighah sometimes employs a number of successive attributes to construct an impressive image. For example, describing his she-camel, he says:

I am carried by a she-camel, which is strong,  
firmly built, full in flesh, has great elevated  
cheeks, large in the middle, of known lineage  
and eight years of age.<sup>263</sup>

وَجَنَاءٌ مَجْفَرَةٌ مَسْمُومَةٌ سَدَسٌ	تَحْمِلُنِي جِسْرَةٌ أَجْدٌ مَضْبِرَةٌ
فَتَكُلُّ أَخْفَافَهَا مَلْثُومَةٌ لَطَسٌ	رَهْبٌ عَرْنَدَسَةٌ حَرْفٌ مَذْكُورَةٌ

These two verses are a heavy cluster of attributes piled upon one another to paint a picture of a strong and enduring she-camel.

Despite his conscious concern for his poetry, al-Nābighah employs sometimes the method of a simple presentation of facts, which is of the nature of prose. An example of this method is his verses in his poem rhyming in "D", in which he mentions people of his clan one after another. Another example is his saying in the praise of Yazīd:

They are the people who were born in the

---

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 26.

baṭhā' of Makkah.

They are the children of Makkah and not  
Bedouins.<sup>264</sup>

قوم بمكة في بطحاءها ولدوا      أبناء مكة ليسوا بالأعراب

It may be observed that this is a common phenomenon in Arabic ancient poetry and even master poets do not escape it.

In most of his poems, especially the ones devoted to praise, al-Nābighah adheres to the traditional structure of the ancient qaṣīdah. It seems that his preoccupation with the traditional prelude exceeds that shown by his contemporaries and even most of the Jāhili poets. It is not far-fetched to suppose that he might have found the traditional prelude a means to satisfy his poetical appetite and to exhibit his artistic prowess, especially because the traditional prelude consists in its entirety only of description. Al-Nābighah advises adherence to the traditional prelude. For instance, he says in one of his poems in praise of Yazīd:

And praise Yazīd, do not overlook his praise,  
and embellish the commencement of your poem  
by mentioning women.<sup>265</sup>

وامدح يزيد ولا تظهر بهدحته      وقد أوائلها قودا بتشبيب

In another poem, he advises the poets to revise their poems and to prolong the tashbīb, which constitutes a part of the traditional prelude, saying:

<sup>264</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>265</sup>Ibid., 76.

Tell the one who wants to compose poetry:  
 some of the verses are maddening.  
 Straighten your poetry twice and overdo  
 the mentioning of women, and the use of  
 proverbs.<sup>266</sup>

ثم قل للمريد حوك القوافي      ان بعض الأشعار مثل الخبال  
 أثقف الشعر مرتين وأطنب      في صنوف التشبيب والأمثال

Al-Nābighah frequently prolongs the preludes and inserts in some of them proverbs and maxims, to the extent that the preludes of most of his poems overshadow the main themes. For example, his poem rhyming in "M", in praise of al-Walīd, consists of 61 verses, of which 53 are devoted to the prelude. His poem rhyming in "S", in praise of Yazīd, consists of 113 verses, of which 83 are devoted to the prelude. His poem rhyming in "L", in praise of Maslamah, consists of 97 verses, of which 78 are devoted to the prelude. Ibn Rashīq al-Qairawānī considers this phenomenon as a poetical defect. He quotes the saying of Naṣr b. Sayyār to a poet who prolonged the traditional prelude in his praise-poem to Naṣr: "By God, you did not spare a good word nor a sweet meaning but to employ it in your nasīb instead of in my praise. If you want to praise me, you must economise on the nasīb".<sup>267</sup> It is a fact that the prelude exhausts the artistic capability of al-Nābighah, and one can sense the failure of his creative abilities in his repeated use of general and loose themes in the praise verses of such poems.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

<sup>267</sup> Umdah, II, 123.

Al-Nābighah was a Bedouin who inherited the legacy of the Jāhiliyyah and its moral standards. He adopted some of the Jāhili values abolished by Islam, like the belief in the violent achievement of aims, revenge and giving preference to tribal interests. On the other hand, he enjoyed a religious awareness. It seems that his frequent visits to the seat of caliphate cultivated this awareness. Thus, we find that Qur'ān, lectures of fuqahā' and preachers have a strong impact on his poetry. Maxims and religious exhortations are abundant in some of his poems. This religious knowledge helped him to ascribe to the Umayyads, whom he praised, some religious attributes that were mostly exploited to endear them to their subjects. Thus, tribal and Islamic themes intermingle in one and the same poem - a common phenomenon in the poetry of the Umayyad era. Even known poets of Islamic movements like al-Ṭirimmāh, al-kumait and others could not escape it.

## CHAPTER VIII

'IMRĀN B. ḤIṬṬĀN

Al-Mas'ūdī says: "There is much information about 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān and his father, Ḥiṭṭān, which I give in the chapter on the information about the Khawārij until 318 A.H., in our book, Akhbār al-Zamān".<sup>1</sup> Had a complete copy of this book survived, our knowledge of the personality and poetry of 'Imrān would certainly have been enriched. Al-Mus'ūdī's statement is important, however, as it can be taken as an indication that 'Imrān's father, too, embraced Khārijite beliefs. This assumption is strengthened by Ibn Ḥazm's statement that Ḥiṭṭān, father of 'Imrān, was among the companions of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī,<sup>2</sup> who is known to be one of the most renowned qurrā' (reciters of the Qur'ān) about whom it was said: "No-one in this ummah is a better reciter than Abū Mūsā".<sup>3</sup> He used to teach the Qur'ān and was the governor of Basra in the caliphate of 'Umar and 'Uthmān.<sup>4</sup> He believed that both 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah should have been debarred from the Imāmate, in the wake of the battle of Ṣiffīn, and that the Imām should be elected by a council of Muslims (shūrā)<sup>5</sup>. It is a well-known fact that the qurrā' of Iraq played an important role in the bringing about of the Khārijite movement. Moreover, al-Mas'ūdī's statement

---

<sup>1</sup>Murūj, II, 428.

<sup>2</sup>Jamharat, 299.

<sup>3</sup>Bayān, I, 368.

<sup>4</sup>Khalīfah, I, 106, 128, 136, 156.

<sup>5</sup>See Tabarī, I, 3342, 3356, 3358-3359; al-'Iṣāmī, Simṭ al-Nujūm al-'Awālī fī Anbā' al-Awā'il wa al-Tawālī, II, 458-459.

might, equally, indicate that 'Imrān's father was a person of importance, especially since he was a muḥaddith<sup>6</sup> (transmitter of the Traditions of the Prophet).

Apart from the missing parts of al-Mas'ūdī's Akhbār al-Zamān, 'Imrān's dīwān is also untraceable today. It sounds as if it were read secretly during the third century of the Hijrah. Yāqūt, on the authority of Abū 'Alī al-Tanūkhī, mentions that al-Ḥasan b. Sahl al-Īdhajī arrived in Basra, accompanied by his father during the Zanj insurrection (255-270 A.H.). They stayed as guests of Abū Khalīfah al-Qādī. When Abū Khalīfah retired at night, he used to remove from his sleeve a book of yellow paper and ask al-Īdhajī to recite from it, and that book contained the dīwān of 'Imrān written by Abū Khalīfah.<sup>7</sup>

It seems that al-Rāghib al-Iṣbahānī (d. 502 A.H.) was fascinated by the poetry of 'Imrān. We know that he wrote a poetic letter to Abū al-Qāsim b. al-'Alā', requesting that he be given access to 'Imrān's poems. His poetic letter contains these two verses:

I greedily request Ibn Ḥiṭṭān's poems; so  
do me a favour and lend them to me, and I  
will thank you.<sup>8</sup>

شعر ابن حطان شه	أصبحت يدعوني الى
غاية لأشكره	فليعطيه منعمًا

<sup>6</sup> Iṣābah, II, 262; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl, I/2, 303.

<sup>7</sup> Irshād, VI, 138-139.

<sup>8</sup> Muḥāḍarāt, I, 119.

We do not know if these poems of 'Imrān, requested by al-Rāghib, are the dīwān of 'Imrān or only a collection of his poems in a book. The compiler of the dīwān, or book containing some of 'Imrān's poems, remains unknown. However, there is no further mention of 'Imrān's dīwān or Poems after this citation by al-Iṣbahānī made between the late fifth century and the beginning of the sixth century after the Hijrah. As far as al-Āmidī (d. 370 A.H.) is concerned, he says that he gives a mutanakhkhal (selection) of 'Imrān's poems and biography in his Kitāb B. Dhuhl b. Tha'labah,<sup>9</sup> but this has not survived either.

'Imrān was a prolific poet of great genius (muflīq mukthir).<sup>10</sup> He was so renowned that good anonymous poems used to be attributed to him.<sup>11</sup> He was the chief of the Ṣufrite qa'adah (sitters in the sense of not participating in battle) as well as their faqīh, orator and poet.<sup>12</sup> Despite all this, none of his khutbah (oratory) has survived. It seems that some of the early historians and writers have deliberately neglected him. Neither Ibn Qutaibah, Ibn Sallām, Ṭabarī nor Ibn al-Athīr have mentioned him for instance. This is not strange because most of the surviving books and annals date back to the 'Abbāsīd period and 'Imrān abused 'Alī, describing him as "the most evil of all creatures", as well as glorifying Ibn Muljam, 'Alī's assassin, and regarding him as "the one whose merits outweigh all

<sup>9</sup> Mu'talif, 91.

<sup>10</sup> Iṣābah, III, 355; Baghdādī, II, 440.

<sup>11</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 117.

<sup>12</sup> Mubarrad, III, 256; Bayān, I, 47; Baghdādī, II, 439.

creatures in the scales of God". This assumption may be supported by the abundance of the curses heaped on 'Imrān by some of those who mention him. Abū al-Faraj, for instance, says about 'Imrān: "Before being tempted by the Khawārij, he was reknowned for seeking knowledge and Ḥadīth. Then he was afflicted by those beliefs. He went astray and perished. May God curse him".<sup>13</sup> On another occasion, Abū al-Faraj mentions him with these words: "May God curse 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān and Ibn Muljam".<sup>14</sup> Ibn al-Subkī admires Bakr b. Ḥammād's polemical poem against 'Imrān's and comments: "Bakr b. Ḥammād has done well and excelled in his polemical poem. May God be pleased with him and please him, and may God disgrace, blacken and curse 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān. How daring was he to God!".<sup>15</sup>

'Imrān was a muhaddith,<sup>16</sup> but most of the Ḥadīth literature neglects him. Ibn Sa'd, for example, spares only these words for him: "He was a poet who narrated on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and others".<sup>17</sup> However the meagre amount of information about 'Imrān scattered here and there perhaps suffices to study his career.

The traditional accounts vary regarding the clan to which 'Imrān belonged. Some of the writers mention him as

---

<sup>13</sup>Aghānī, XVIII, 109.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 112.

<sup>15</sup>Al-Subkī, Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-Kubrā, I, 288; Baghdādī, II, 437.

<sup>16</sup>Isābah, III, 356; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl, I/2, 303; Baghdādī, II, 436.

<sup>17</sup>Sa'd, VII, 113.



belonging to the B. Sadūs b. Shaibān b. Dhuhl,<sup>18</sup> while others mention that he belonged to the B. 'Amr b. Shaibān<sup>19</sup> or to the Shaibānī the B. Raqāsh.<sup>20</sup> It is more likely that he belonged to the B. Sadūs because most of the sources are of this opinion, as well as Ibn al-Kalbī, the famous genealogist, who regarded him as a Sadūsī.<sup>21</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī is of a later age and moreover does not mention the source of his information on this point. Ibn Ḥazm says: "Al-Kalbī mentions that 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān belonged to the B. Sadūs, but it has been narrated to us about his lineage that he is 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān al-Raqāshī".<sup>22</sup> But Ibn Ḥazm fails to mention the source of his account, however. Al-Jāḥiẓ says about 'Imrān: "He belongs to the B. 'Amr b. Shaibān, the brother of Sadūs".<sup>23</sup> But al-Jāḥiẓ also belongs to a later age from al-Kalbī and his son. Moreover, al-Jāḥiẓ was not a specialist in genealogy nor does he mention the source of his narration. Like his lineage, 'Imrān's kunyah is disputed as well. He is, for instance, variously mentioned as 'Abū Shihāb',<sup>24</sup> 'Abū Simāk',<sup>25</sup> and 'Abū Dillān'.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>Mu'talif, 91; Ibn Ḥabīb, Kunā al-Shu'arā' (Nawādir al-Makḥṭūṭāt, series 7), 291; Iṣābah, III, 354; Tahdhīb, VIII, 127; Dhahabī, I, 284, Aghānī, XVIII, 109; 'Iqd, III, 363.

<sup>19</sup>Bayān, I, 47.

<sup>20</sup>Jamharat, 299; Murūj, II, 428.

<sup>21</sup>Jamharat, 299; Aghānī, XVIII, 109.

<sup>22</sup>Jamharat, 299.

<sup>23</sup>Bayān, I, 47.

<sup>24</sup>Ibn Ḥabīb, Kunā al-Shu'arā' (Nawādir al-Makḥṭūṭāt, series 7), 291; Aghānī, XVIII, 109.

<sup>25</sup>Bayān, III, 265.

<sup>26</sup>Mu'talif, 91.

'Imrān lived in Basra<sup>27</sup> and his date of birth is unknown. It may be assumed that he, in 17 A.H., was a young fighter who took part in the conquest of Tustur. It has been narrated that his wife doubted his claim:

And so Majza'ah b. Thawr was braver than a lion.

وكذاك مجزأة بن شور      كان أشجع من أسامه

He told her: "I have had seen Majza'ah b. Thawr conquering a city, whereas a lion could not conquer a city".<sup>28</sup> Majza'ah cited in the above verse, conquered the city of Tustur and died in 17 A.H.<sup>29</sup> 'Imrān mentions Tustur in the following traditional introductory verse which seems to be part of the prelude of a missing poem:

The two regions of Ḥawzān came not to be inhabited by Umm Ma'fas, and Tustur and Tabāriq became vacant of her.<sup>30</sup>

غنا كنفنا حوزان من أم معفس      وأقفر منها تستر وتبارق

Our references do not mention that 'Imrān left Basra before he fled in fear of al-Ḥajjāj. But these sources, at the same time, mention that he narrated Ḥadīth on the authority of 'Ā'ishah, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar,<sup>31</sup> which indicates that he had travelled to Ḥijāz

<sup>27</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 109; Isābah, III, 356.

<sup>28</sup> Al-'Askarī, al-Maṣūn fī al-Adab, 58; Mubarrad, III, 128.

<sup>29</sup> See Ṭabarī, I, 2556, 2559.

<sup>30</sup> Lisān, baraqa.

<sup>31</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 109; Dhahabī, I, 284; Tahdhīb, VIII, 127; Isābah, III, 356-357; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl, III/1, 296.

before embracing the Khārijite beliefs, because 'Ā'ishah did not leave Hijāz except for the battle of the Camel in 37 A.H., as well as the fact that Ibn 'Umar spent most of his life confined to Hijāz. The muḥaddithūn disagree about accepting 'Imrān's narrations. Some of them accept 'Imrān's narrations on the pretext that 'the Khawārij are the most likely to be correct of the dissenters in the narration of Ḥadīth',<sup>32</sup> or 'he repented and forsook the Khārijite doctrines before his death',<sup>33</sup> or they claim that 'they accept his narration before his embracing the Khārijite doctrines'.<sup>34</sup> Some of them reject his narrations because 'Imrān, as al-Dāraqūṭnī says, "was of the Khārijite opinion, and because of his evil belief wicked doctrine".<sup>35</sup> The available information on 'Imrān indicates that he was a just narrator, a seeker of truth,<sup>36</sup> known for the trustworthiness of his narration to the extent that 'Abd al-Malik himself bore witness to his reliability.<sup>37</sup> Al-Mubarrad mentions that 'Imrān was known for his wisdom and his knowledge of poetry and fiqh, and that he was especially knowledgeable in the Qur'ān, traditions, biographies, Sunnah, and gharīb.<sup>38</sup> This reputation and wide knowledge probably qualified 'Imrān to be the Imām of the Sufriyyah which, being one of the most famous Khārijite sects, would be likely to have high standards.

---

<sup>32</sup> Iṣābah, III, 356; Tahdhīb, VIII, 127; Baghdādī, II, 436.

<sup>33</sup> Iṣābah, III, 356; Tahdhīb, VIII, 128.

<sup>34</sup> Iṣābah, III, 356; Tahdhīb, VIII, 128; Baghdādī, II, 436.

<sup>35</sup> Iṣābah, III, 356-357; Tahdhīb, VIII, 128.

<sup>36</sup> Tahdhīb, VIII, 127; Ibn Hajar, Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb, 162.

<sup>37</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 111.

<sup>38</sup> Mubarrad, III, 262.

'Imrān probably participated in the battle of the Camel in the ranks of 'Alī. This assumption might be strengthened by the fact that one of his relatives, Shaqīq b. Thawr al-Sadūsī, was the leader of the Bakrites who deserted Ṭalḥah and al-Zubair and joined 'Alī's forces.<sup>39</sup> It is certain that 'Imrān took part in the battle of Ṣiffīn in 38 A.H., like the Bakrites of Iraq who, as previously mentioned, were among the most faithful supporters of 'Alī. At one stage of the battle of Ṣiffīn, Khālīd b. al-Mu'ammār al-Sadūsī, a relative of 'Imrān, was the leader of the whole tribe of Rabī'ah.<sup>40</sup> It seems that 'Imrān was an enthusiastic supporter of 'Alī and his allies. When 'Adī b. Ḥātim confronted Hammām b. Qabīṣah al-Qaisī, the most abusive critic of 'Alī, and when, as a result, Hammām escaped only after being stripped of his standard, 'Imrān rejoiced and mocked him, representing his escape as an eternal shame to him. 'Imrān, at the same time, praised 'Adī's bravery and might.

O Hammām, you will recall that horseman  
for all eternity biting your thumbs for what  
you did.

From the clouds of dust a horseman came forth  
to you, powerful, excited, and raising his  
voice.

When you heard his voice, you escaped, saying:

'Take the standard, O 'Adī b. Ḥātim'.

You were robbed of your standard and perplexed  
... And how great an insult is this to you!<sup>41</sup>

وَعَضَّ عَلَى مَا جِئْتَهُ بِالْأَبَاهِمِ	أَهْمَامٍ لَا تَذْكُرُ مَدَى الدَّهْرِ فَارِسًا
شَدِيدِ الْقَصْبِيِّ ذَوْ شَجَا وَنَمَاغِمِ	سَمَا لَكَ يَوْمَ فِي الْعَجَاجَةِ فَارِسِ
تَقُولُ لَهُ خَذْ يَا عَدِي بِنِ حَاتِمِ	فَوَلِيَّتَهُ لَمَّا سَمِعْتَ نَسْدَاءَهُ

<sup>39</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3174.

<sup>40</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 3312; Ṣiffīn, 326.

<sup>41</sup>Ṣiffīn, 453.

فأصبحت مسلوب اللواء مذذبا وأعظم بسهدا من شتيمة شاتم

After the battle of Siffīn, we have no further information about 'Imrān, until the time of the governorship of Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān (45-53 A.H.) over Basra. Al-Jāhiz, on the authority of al-Haitham b. 'Adī, quotes 'Imrān as saying: "People were fascinated by my first oration at the court of Ziyād or Ibn Ziyād. My uncle and father were present. Then I passed by an assembly of people and heard a person saying about me: 'This man would be the best Arab orator if only he had some (verses) of the Qur'ān in his speech'".<sup>42</sup> It is probable that this speech was given in front of Ziyād (i.e., rather than Ibn Ziyād), because al-Jāhiz mentions this oration a second time saying that it took place in front of Ziyād,<sup>43</sup> without mention on this occasion of his son. Nothing is known about the contents of this speech or about the occasion. However, we are informed that Qarīb al-Azdī and Zahhāf al-Ṭā'ī, the Khārijites, revolted in Basra in 50 A.H. In the wake of their revolt, Ziyād spoke to the people of Basra and threatened the Arab tribes, saying: "I pledge to God that I will bring to account any clan or tribe whose members revolt against me after this": The orators of Basra rose and apologized.<sup>44</sup> Was 'Imrān among these orators? We can neither confirm or reject this possibility.

However, 'Imrān's relationship with Ziyād was not good

<sup>42</sup> Bayān, I, 118.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., II, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Ya'qūbī, II, 275-276.

all the time. For example, when Ziyād exiled a party of the Azd from Basra to Egypt, accusing them of collaboration with his enemies, 'Imrān was not pleased with Ziyād's action. He composed a poem in which he thanked God for the safe arrival of the Azd party at Babylon. He goes on to say that they were fortunate to be rid of Basra; that they should put their hope in none save in God; to hope that their new dwellings were comfortable and secure; that their neighbours in Egypt were Ghāfiq and Tujīb (Yemenite tribes like al-Azd, who were in good relations with Bakr). All this is mentioned in such a way as to imply that Ziyād was terrorizing the people of Basra. The following is the surviving fragment of this poem:

They travelled, thank God, until the swift  
camels settled them down at Babylon.  
And they stayed the night, thank God, where  
vast deserts and high mountains stood as a  
barrier.  
They settled at a place where they enjoy  
self-sufficiency and facilities, and entreat  
none save God.  
They put up at a place whose dwellers are  
not terrorized, and where their neighbours  
are [from the tribes of] Tujīb and Ghāfiq.<sup>45</sup>

فساروا بحمد الله حتى أحلهم	ببليون منها الموجفات السوابق
فأمسوا بحمد الله قد حال د ونهم	مهاه بيد والجنال الشواحق
وحلوا ولا رجوا سوى الله وحده	بدار لهم فيها غنى ومرافق
فأمسوا بدار لا يفرع أهلها	وجيرانهم فيها تجيب وغافق

These verses indicate the daring spirit of 'Imrān and show his challenge to Ziyād, the governor. The occasion of these verses pose a question: Who were the enemies of Ziyād with whom the Azdites were accused of collaborating? Probably

<sup>45</sup>Mu'jam, I, 451.

they were the men and women of the Khawārij who were being persecuted by Ziyād.<sup>46</sup> This assumption is to some extent strengthened by the fact that Ziyād, in his aforementioned speech, singled out the Azd for their part in the dissension.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, it was Ziyād's usual practise to exile the Khārijites.<sup>48</sup>

However, our sources portray 'Imrān embracing the Khārijite beliefs in a surprising and unexpected manner. The sources do not mention any date for this turn in the life of 'Imrān, but there are two basic accounts of the way in which 'Imrān joined the Khārijites. The first says that he entered into polemics with a Khārijite in a certain gathering, and at the selfsame gathering he came to accept the need for him to become a Khārijite.<sup>49</sup> The second story says that he married his cousin Jamrah to win her away from her Khārijite beliefs, but it was she, on the contrary, who won him away from the Jamā'ah creed and turned him into a Khārijite.<sup>50</sup> The first story is the less convincing because it contradicts our information as to the extensive knowledge of 'Imrān, who was not so inexperienced or unlearned as to be likely to change any part of his beliefs in such a hasty way.

The second story has been accepted by some modern

<sup>46</sup> See Mubarrad, III, 246, 263.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>48</sup> See Ṭabarī, II, 83.

<sup>49</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 114, 117; Iṣābah, III, 356; Tahdhīb, VIII, 128.

<sup>50</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 114, 120; Iṣābah, III, 356; Tahdhīb, VIII, 127-128; Baghdādī, II, 436.

writers who have studied the Khārijite literature.<sup>51</sup> Foremost among these is Suhair al-Qalamāwī. She observes in 'Imrān a new sense of appreciation of woman. She supports her thesis by a fragment of a poem which, ironically, is attributed to five poets as well as to 'Imrān. The verses in question portray the poet's kindness to his daughters incapable of looking after themselves - which, however, is a natural instinct and not unique to 'Imrān or even to poetry of the Islamic period:

My love of life has increased because of my daughters' weakness, for fear that after my death they may live in misery and taste bitter draughts, after being used to limpid water.<sup>52</sup>

لقد زاد الحياة الي حبا      بناتي اتهنن من الضعاف  
مخافة أن يرين البؤس بعدي      وأن يشرن رنقا بعد صاف

More strangely, Suhair explains 'Imrān's partiality towards women by saying that he belonged to the B. Tamīm, who were known in Jāhili times for redeeming girls due to be buried alive, and for being followers of the false prophetess Sajāh.<sup>53</sup> But unfortunately for her argument 'Imrān was not a Tamīmite but a Bakrite.

However, the second story is also self-contradictory. How could Jamrah, a beautiful Khārijite, accept marrying

<sup>51</sup>For examples, see: Qalamāwī, Adab al-Khawārij fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, 78-80; 'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 10; al-Qāḍī, al-Fīraq al-Islamiyyah fī al-Shi'r al-Umawī, 639; Ḍaif, Tārīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī, al-'Aṣr al-Islāmī, 307.

<sup>52</sup>See 'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 13, 122.

<sup>53</sup>Qalamāwī, Adab al-Khawārij fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, 79-80.



'Imrān, an ugly non-Khārijite,<sup>54</sup> it being known that the Khārijites regarded non-Khārijite Muslims as infidels? Jamrah was a well-known Khārijite, moreover, before marrying 'Imrān, she was the wife of Suwaid b. Manjūf al-Sadūsī, a prominent chief of the tribe of Bakr and a relative of 'Imrān. Jamrah asked Suwaid to divorce her because he was not a Khārijite and because their marriage was therefore not legal, in the view of Jamrah. When her husband hesitated over divorcing her, Jamrah sought the help of 'Imrān.<sup>55</sup> This account of the story strongly indicates that 'Imrān was a Khārijite before he married Jamrah. A Khārijite poet mentions this event in one of his poems and 'Imrān himself mentions it in his poem which runs:

Suwaid b. Manjūf is a noble who has been elevated by ancestors who gave in abundance. A need led me to call upon him, and I found him - by the life of your father - quick to respond.

He called a free woman [Jamrah] to abandon her beliefs, but she declined his shameful suggestion.

He told her: O Jamrah, reply to him [Imrān] truthfully and refrain from deceitful reply.

I have never seen someone asked to give up his wife be more responsive [than Suwaid] to us [Khārijites] in his good and concise reply. How fine is his deed, although he is but an old man lacking right guidance.<sup>56</sup>

جدود وآباء عظام الوسابع لعمرك أبيت الخير سهل التسابع فلم تر رأي الفاضح الدين نافع بحق وكفي عن جواب الخواص أرد بمهمود من الأضر جامع ولان كان مشيخا لهردي غير سابع	سوید بن منجوف کریم نمت به دعتی الیه حاجه فوجدته دعا خدرة لم يقبل الكفر قلبها فقال لها يا جهم ردي جوابه فلم أر مطلوبا الیه حلیة على مثلنا منه فلاه دره
---	--

<sup>54</sup> See Dhahabī, I, 284-285; Baghdādī, II, 436; al-Huṣarī, Zahr al-Ādāb, II, 856; al-Sarraḡ, Maṣari' al-'Ushshāq, II, 290.

<sup>55</sup> Ibn A'tham, Kitāb al-Futūḡ, Ms., II, fol. 96.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Suwaid b. Manjūf mentions his divorce in a poem in which he describes Jamrah as 'Imrān's sister (i.e. in religious beliefs), and that he met her wish when he divorced her. The following is the relevant part of the poem:<sup>57</sup>

وأعطيتها من أمرها ما تمت	تركت لحرمان بن حطان أخته
فلما رأنتي قد توليت ولّيت	وقد كان ديني في المنية دينها
على أنها صامت لجاجا وصلت	على غير ذنب كان مني جنيته
فلمست أبالي أكثرت أم أقلت	فان تكن الأيام أحدثن فرقة

It is more likely that 'Imrān embraced the beliefs of the Khawārij under the influence of Abū Bilāl Mirdās who was the most renowned Imām and Muhaddith of the Khawārij. He was held in great esteem by all Khārijite sects because of his strong beliefs and piety, to the point that the Shī'ah and certain other Muslim sects claimed that he belonged to them.<sup>58</sup> Al-Asfarāyīnī reports that the Ṣufriyyah sect elected Abū Bilāl Mirdās as their Imām, and that they chose 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān as his successor.<sup>59</sup> Despite the discrepancies in this statement, it serves at least the purpose of illustrating the deep relationship between Abū Bilāl and 'Imrān and the importance of the latter in the sect. We do find no Khārijite poet who lamented the death of Abū Bilāl as did 'Imrān. True, a number of Khārijite poets mention Abū Bilāl, but not in a very determined way. Al-Rahīn al-Murādī mentions the names of some Khārijites whom he

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> See Mubarrad, III, 214-215, 247, 248; Sharḥ, IV, 136.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Tabsīr fī al-Dīn wa Tamyīz al-Firqa al-Nājiyah 'an al-Firaq al-Hālikin, 52.

hopes to meet in Paradise. One of those is Abū Bilāl.<sup>60</sup> Another poet, 'Ubaidah b. Hilāl mentions Abū Bilāl just once when he boasts of being the son of an elder following the beliefs of Abū Bilāl.<sup>61</sup> Shubail b. 'Uzrah mentions Abū Bilāl only once when he names the Khārijites whose persuasion he follows:

Our religion is that of al-Dahhāk b. Qais, of Miskīn, of Abū Bilāl, of Marwān the weak, and of Khaibarī; those are the men of supreme nobility.<sup>62</sup>

ندین بدین ضحاک بن قیس      ومسکین و دین ابي بلال  
ومروان الضعیف وخیبری      أولئك منتهی النفر النبالی

But as far as 'Imrān is concerned, the killing of Abū Bilāl was a personal shock which robbed him of sleep and which had an important impact on his poetry, as we shall see. Al-Mubarrad indicates that 'Imrān elegized Abū Bilāl immediately after his murder.<sup>63</sup> Had 'Imrān been not a Khārijite at that time (sc. in 61 A.H.), he would not have elegized the leader of the Khārijites. In one of his elegies, 'Imrān states that Abū Bilāl has left them, i.e. the Khārijites, like orphans whose father had perished and that therefore they no longer enjoyed the pleasures of life. He states also that Abū Bilāl was his teacher and guide. He says:

My soul be ransom to you [O Abū Bilāl] whose corpse was left in a deserted land, not buried [even] today in a graveyard.

<sup>60</sup> Abbās, Shi'r al-khawārij, 33.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>63</sup> Mubarrad, III, 167-168.

You have left us like orphans whose father has perished, so they could not enjoy after him the life of ease and tranquility.  
O Mirdās, may you be allotted [a seat in] Paradise for the guidance you were wont to give us.

نفسى فداؤك من ملقى بمهملة      لم يصبح اليوم في الأجدات مدفونا  
تركنا كيتامى باد والدهم      فلم يروا بعده خفضا ولا لينا  
فاله يجزيك يا مرداس جنته      عنا كما كنت في الأرشاد تولينا

Al-Mubarrad says that Abū Bilāl was among the Khārijite poets known for the prolificacy of their poetry.<sup>65</sup> It is unfortunate that only few fragments of Abū Bilāl's poetry have survived. It would appear that his and 'Imrān's poetry are quite identical. 'Imrān, for example, says:<sup>66</sup>

فمن يك همه الدنيا فاني      لها ، والله رب العرش قال

Abū Bilāl says:<sup>67</sup>

الهي هبلي زلفة ووسيلة      اليك فاني قد سئمت من الدهر

In another poem, 'Imrān says:<sup>68</sup>

لقد زاد الحياة الي بغضا      وحبا في الخروج أبوبلال  
وعروة بعده سقيا ورعيًا      لعروة ذى الفضائل والمعالي

Likewise, Abū Bilāl says:<sup>69</sup>

أبعد ابن وهب ذى الشّاهة والتقى      ومن خاض في تلك الحروب المهالكا  
أحب بقاء أو أرجي سلامة      وقد قتلوا زيد بن حصن وما لكنا

After the killing of Abū Bilāl, we come suddenly to

<sup>64</sup> 'Abbās, Shi'r al-khawārij, 16-17.

<sup>65</sup> Mubarrad, III, 250.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., III, 168.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Bayyāsī, al-I'lām bi al-Ḥurūb al-Wāqi'ah fī Ṣadr al-Islām, Ms., I, fol. 78.

<sup>68</sup> Mubarrad, III, 168.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 250-251.

'Imrān's relations with al-Ḥajjāj, the governor of Iraq (73 or 75-95 A.H.). Two different accounts have come down to us about the reason behind Ḥajjāj's hunt for 'Imrān. Both accounts complement each other and both of them indicate 'Imrān's overt rebellion against the ruling class. One of these accounts says that 'Abd al-Malik, the caliph, was strongly angered when he heard 'Imrān's poem in which he eulogized Ibn Muljam - the assassin of 'Alī - and abused 'Alī.<sup>70</sup> It is not strange that 'Abd al-Malik was infuriated by the poem of 'Imrān because both he and 'Alī belonged to the same line, i.e. the Quraish, and therefore he felt insulted and was infuriated to the point of ordering the killing of 'Imrān according to this account. Moreover, he must have been infuriated because the poem of 'Imrān represents a dangerous new religio-political idea, which not only calls for revolt against the caliph, but also regards his murder as a religious duty to be rewarded in the Hereafter. Therefore, the poem describes Ibn Muljam as free from his past sins because, according to 'Imrān, he killed 'Alī, the Imām.

The second account says that 'Imrān was in the region of Bakr b. Wā'il - the area between Kufa and Basra - inciting the people but without taking part in actual fighting.<sup>71</sup> Al-Ḥajjāj accordingly recognized the danger of 'Imrān, and wrote to 'Abd al-Malik that 'Imrān had spoiled the people of Iraq and endeared the Khārijite beliefs to them.<sup>72</sup> This shows

---

<sup>70</sup> Dhahabī, I, 285; Baghdādī, II, 438.

<sup>71</sup> Al-Azdī, Kitāb al-Mutawārīn, Ms., fol. 6.

<sup>72</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 111.

that 'Imrān was not silent or still during that period. Al-Jāhiz says that "'Imrān was the muftī of the Ṣufrites and their arbitrator in disputes".<sup>73</sup> Abū al-Faraj says: "'Imrān was among the Sitters (Qa'adah), because he was aged and too weak to fight or be present at the battles, therefore he contented himself with preaching and verbal incitement".<sup>74</sup> Al-Ḥuṣarī says about 'Imrān: "He was one of the most capable and eloquent orators. When he used to speak, the Khawārij hastened to their weapons".<sup>75</sup> A man of this kind has to face sometime the punishment of al-Ḥajjāj. 'Imrān therefore hid himself among his tribe, Bakr. During this period, Shabīb b. Yazīd, the leader of the military wing of the Ṣufriyyah to whom 'Imrān belonged, successfully revolted with his wife Ghazālah and defeated various expeditions sent out by al-Ḥajjāj. They were able to enter Kufa in 76 A.H. so successfully that al-Ḥajjāj was terrified, and took refuge in his fortress-palace.<sup>76</sup> 'Imrān exploited this opportunity to mock al-Ḥajjāj. In a poem, he describes him as an ostrich that flees even from a whistle, as well as glorifying Ghazālah - a woman who together with some Khārijite women was able to put fear into al-Ḥajjāj and destroy his pulpits. He suggests that al-Ḥajjāj should lay down his arms and, instead, put on a woman's scarf like a coward infidel. The following are the verses deriding al-Ḥajjāj:

---

<sup>73</sup>Bayān, I, 47.

<sup>74</sup>Aghānī, XVIII, 109.

<sup>75</sup>Zahr al-Ādāb, II, 856.

<sup>76</sup>See Ṭabarī, II, 892.

You behave with me as if you were a lion,  
while in battle you are like a black ostrich,  
that flees even at the voice of a whistler.  
Why not do you go forth to the battlefield  
to Ghazālah?

Your heart is palpitating [with fear]!  
Ghazālah, with her cavalry, stunned his  
heart and left his pulpits [destroyed and  
finished] like a yesterday that has passed.  
Lay down your arms and put on the scarf of a  
girl, and be satisfied with the position of  
a coward infidel.<sup>77</sup>

أسد علي وفي الحروب نعمة	رداء تنفر من صفير الصافر
هلا برزت الى غزالة في الوغى	بل كان قلبك في جناحي طائر
صدعت غزالة قلبه بفوارس	تركت منابره كأس السداب
ألق السلاح وخذ وشاحي معصر	واعمد لمنزلة الجبان الكافر

With this derision, 'Imrān gratifies his thirst for revenge for his treatment by al-Ḥajjāj who had chased him everywhere. This poem, however, inflamed the anger of al-Ḥajjāj who, as soon as he had put down the rebellion of Shabīb, set off in search of 'Imrān and terrorized Bakr, his tribe, and this experience gave birth to a new period in the life of 'Imrān. This period is characterized by constant moving and restlessness. 'Imrān fled from place to place taking refuge among various tribes. Whenever he reached a tribe, he would forge a genealogy relating him to the host tribe, in order to get refuge and their respect, which shows his excellence at the exploitation of the tribal 'aṣabīyyah in his own favour, as well as his practising the doctrine of taqīyyah in word but not in deed, as was acceptable to the

<sup>77</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 116; Sharh, VI, 108; Khalīfah, I, 273; 'Iqd, V, 44; Ma'ārif, 411; Maqdisī, al-Bad' wa al-Tārīkh, VI, 34; Ibn Duraid, Jamharat al-Lughah, III, 114; al-Damīrī, Hayāt al-Hayawan al-Kubrā, II, 219; al-Tha'alībī, al-Mudaf wa al-Mansūb, 351; Anon., Majmū'at al-Ma'anī, 43; Wafayāt, II, 455; Ibn Ruzaiq, al-Sahīfah al-'Adnāniyyah, Ms., fol. 121; 'Abbās, Shi'r al-khawārij, 25.

Şufriyyah sect.<sup>78</sup> Describing his moving in Iraq from one tribe to another, he says:

We stayed with the B. Sa'd b. Zaid, and with Ri'l and 'Āmir, both of whose tribes are composed of mixed elements. And we stayed with Lakhm, and Udad b. 'Amr, and Bakr and the tribe of B. 'Udān.<sup>79</sup>

وفى رعل وعامر عوثان	نزلنا في بني سعد بن زيد
وفى بكر وحي بني الغدان	وفى لخم وفى أدد بن عمرو

It seems that al-Hajjāj's hot pursuit was so effective that he fled from Iraq to Syria and put up with Rawḥ b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī, who was held in esteem by the caliph 'Abd al-Malik. As Rawḥ belonged to the Azd, 'Imrān pretended to be an Azdite. Rawḥ was fascinated by 'Imrān's knowledge and the wide range of what he knew, to the point that Rawḥ is reported to have said about him: "I did not see anyone who had a more comprehensive knowledge than him. I did not narrate anything to him but to be overtaken by him. He provided me with added information which I did not know".<sup>80</sup> Rawḥ spoke to 'Abd al-Malik and aroused his interest in him. But 'Abd al-Malik could not help doubting that Rawḥ's guest was none but 'Imrān, despite Rawḥ's assurance that his guest was an Azdite. 'Abd al-Malik is reported to have told Rawḥ: "I think that you are describing a person speaking the Nizārite dialect, who is known for his prayers, piety and wide knowledge; and this is the

<sup>78</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal wa al-Nihal, I, 137.

<sup>79</sup> Mubarrad, III, 168; Aghānī, XVIII, 110; Sharḥ, V, 92; Baghdādī, II, 438.

<sup>80</sup> Mubarrad, III, 169; Aghānī, XVIII, 110-111; Sharḥ, V, 92-93; Baghdadi, II, 438.



description of 'Imrān'.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, 'Abd al-Malik asked Rawḥ to bring his guest to the court. 'Imrān was alerted and disappeared, leaving a note that contained a poem which portrays his anxiety and his wandering from one tribe to another. It shows that 'Imrān had a peaceful life for a year as a guest of Rawḥ. He regrets that he could not tell his host of his true identity, and that he pretended to be a Yemenite or Ma'addite according to the affiliation of his hosts. He says that he would never beg forgiveness of the tyrant, i.e. 'Abd al-Malik, because the holy verses of the Qur'ān, which he recites, deny him seeking rapprochement with such a regime. The verses concerned are as follows:

O Rawḥ, how many hospitable people, I have stayed with from Lakhm and Ghassān, have had the same thought as you.

I left their dwellings when I came to fear them, after it was said that [this was] 'Imrān b. Hiṭṭān.

I was your guest for a year, free from any fear from human being or jinn until you wanted to lead me into severe calamity, and therefore I suffered from what people do suffer of the fear of Ibn Marwān.

So, excuse your brother, O Ibn Zinbā', because he has means of different kinds [to meet] misfortunes.

One day I am a Yemenī when I meet a man from Yemen, and an 'Adnānī when I meet a Ma'addī. If one day I had had to beg forgiveness of a tyrant ['Abd al-Malik], I would have liked to expose my secrets and my known affairs to you. But the pure verses of [Qur'anic Suras] of Tāhā and [Āl] 'Imrān do not allow me to swear allegiance [to 'Abd al-Malik].<sup>82</sup>

يا روح كم من أخي متوى نزلت به	قد ظن ظنك من لحم وغسان
حتى اذا خفته فارقت منزله	من بعد ما قيل عمران بن حطان

<sup>81</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 111; Sharḥ, V, 93.

<sup>82</sup> Mubarrad, III, 170; Aghānī, XVIII, 112; Sharḥ, V, 93; Dhahabī, I, 285; 'Iqd, III, 137; Baghdādī, II, 438; al-Sharīshī, Sharḥ al-Maqāmat al-Harīriyyah, II, 209.

فيه روايح من انس ومن جسان	قد كنت جارك حولا لا يروعي
ما أدرك الناس من خوف ابن مروان	حتى أردت بي العظمى فأدركني
في النائبات خطوبا ذات ألوان	فاعذر أخاك ابن زنباع فان له
وان لقيت محديا فعد نساني	يوما ييمان اذا لاقيت ذا ييمن
كنت المقدم في سري واعلاني	لو كنت مستغفرا يوما لطاغية
عقد الولاية في طه وعمران	لكن أبت لي آيات مطهرة

'Imrān then went to Mesopotamia and became the guest of Zufar b. al-Ḥārith al-Kilābī, the chief of the Qaisites in Qarqīsyā'. He pretended here to be an Awzā'ī, maternal uncles of Zufar. 'Imrān could not enjoy his stay for long because a person who had seen him at Rawḥ's place, recognized him and informed Zufar that his guest was an Azdī. Zufar said to 'Imrān: "Are you an Azdī in a place and an Awzā'ī in another. If you are terrified we will give you security, and if you are poor we will make you rich". 'Imrān replied: "God alone meets people's needs". He left the place for fear of being identified and told his story in a poem which describes his ambivalence and reluctance to reply to the questions posed by his hosts. He scorns Zufar's question about his lineage, saying that he does not care about genealogies. He praises Rawḥ b. Zinbā' and his family in whose peaceful protection he spent a year. He advises the ageing Zufar to do good deeds. The verses concerned are as follows:

The thing that is baffling Zufar has also baffled Rawḥ b. Zinbā'. He continued asking me, for a year, to tell him [who I was], but people are [of two kinds] either deceived or deceitful. He continued to ask until he had exhausted his means [of questioning] and he did not like to make me apprehensive.

So leave me as he did.

I am a man either the core [of a tribe] or rootless, I do not abandon prayers.

Everyone seeks out that which concerns him.

How noble are Rawḥ b. Zinbā' and his family, people whose predecessors have attained glory.

I took refuge with them for a year, in a state pleasing to me, my honour intact and my sleep restful.

So, do good deeds because even one white hair should prove to be a sufficient indication to wise man of his death.<sup>83</sup>

أعيت عياء على روح بن زنباع	ان التي أصبحت يعيا بها زفر
والناس ما بين مخدوع وخدّاع	ما زال يسألني حولا لأخبره
كف السؤال ولم يولج باهلاعي	حتى اذا انقطعت عني وسائله
اما صميم واما فقعة القاع	فاكف كما كف عني انني رجل
كل امرئ للذي يعنى به ساع	أما الصلاة فاني لست تاركها
قوم دعا أوليهم للحلا داع	أكرم بروح بن زنباع وأسرته
عرضي صحيح ونومي غير تهجاع	جاورتهم سنة فيما أسرّ به
حسب اللبيب بهذا الشيب من داع	فاعلم فانك منعي بواحدة

In another poem, two verses of which have survived, he says that he was afraid of staying with Zufar and was obliged to treat him courteously, only because of the weakness of his position and despite his knowledge that Zufar was not a good man. Following are the two verses:

I was compelled, due to my weakness, to treat him courteously, although he was malevolent and spiteful.

I left him quickly when I was identified, and I did not stay even long enough to take a meal.<sup>84</sup>

تضعفا وهوذ وغل وأحقاد	لاطفته بوداد اضطررت له
سبلي ولم أتلّبث لبثة الزاد	ثم انصرفت وشيكا عنه اذ وضحت

<sup>83</sup>Mubarrad, III, 171; Aghānī, XVIII, 111; Sharḥ, V, 94.

<sup>84</sup>Abbās, Shi'r al-khawārij, 119.

'Imrān returned again to unsettled life. He travelled to Oman and put up with people who held Abū Bilāl in esteem. Here, he declared his identity.<sup>85</sup> Al-Hajjāj was informed of 'Imrān's new whereabouts and pursued him. 'Imrān fled then to Rawdha-Maisān, a village near Kufa, and put up with an Azdite community. It seems that he felt secure among his new hosts, so he eulogized them and described their place as 'the best of dwellings'. He praised their lineage as they did not make him forge a genealogy in the way Rawḥ and Zufar had done previously, and claimed that his own lineage from Bakr was an honour to whomsoever belonged to it. He stated, at the same time, that Muslims were equals and that true believers truly deserved God's grace:

Praise be to God, we have put up at the best of the dwellings, rejoicing in its friendliness and homeliness.

We have put up with folk whose only aim is to attain glory, may God safeguard their unity. They belong to Azd, the most noble of people. When people come to trace ancestries, they [Azd] are Yemenites of good descent.

I have become secure among them, unlike with those people who started enquiring and said: [Are you] from Rabī'ah or Muḍar or from the Qahtān?

That was the stupidity I experienced with Rawḥ and his friend Zufar.

Both of them although having numerous people, are only pleased that genealogy brings me closer to them.

We are but sons of Islam, and our God is the same.

And those most deserving of God are the grateful.<sup>86</sup>

نسر بما فيه من الأئس والخفر	نزلنا بحمد الله في خير منزل
وليس لهم دعوى سوى المجد يعتصر	نزلنا بقوم يجمع الله شملهم

<sup>85</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 114; Sharḥ, V, 95; Baghdādī, II, 439.

<sup>86</sup> Mubarrad, III, 172; Aghānī, XVIII, 114; Sharḥ, V, 95; Baghdādī, II, 439.

من الأزد ان الأزد أكرم معشر  
وأصبت فيهم آمنة لا كمعشر  
أو الحي قحطان فتلكم سفاهة  
وما منهما الا يسر بنسب  
وأولى عباد الله بالله من شكر  
فنحن بنو الاسلام والله واحد

'Imrān spent the rest of his life among this Azdite community until his death in 84 A.H., according to Ibn Ḥajar on the authority of Ibn Qāni'.<sup>87</sup> Ibn Taghrībardī, however, states that 'Imrān died in 89 A.H.<sup>88</sup> It is likely that Ibn Ḥajar's statement is more credible because he was closer to the times of 'Imrān and because his book Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb is concerned with muhaddithūn, in particular and 'Imrān was a muhaddith as was ascertained above.

Thus, because of his Khārijite beliefs, 'Imrān spent almost a decade of his life before death, homeless and persecuted. It is worth mentioning that there is no indication that he took part in actual fighting. Abū al-Faraj explains this by saying that: "'Imrān was among the qa'adah because he was too aged and weak to fight".<sup>89</sup> 'Imrān himself mentions his old age to Zufar in the following verse:

Stop your tongue from rebuking and questioning me.  
What do you want from an old man of Awzā'.<sup>90</sup>

وأكف لسانك عن لومي ومسألتي  
ماذا تريد الى شيخ لأوزاع

<sup>87</sup> Iṣābah, III, 357; Tahdhīb, VIII, 128.

<sup>88</sup> Ibn Taghrībardī, al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa al-Qāhirah, I, 240.

<sup>89</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 109.

<sup>90</sup> Mubarrad, III, 171; Aghānī, XVIII, 113.

In another fragment of a poem, whose date is unknown, he complains of bad health to the point of wishing for death:

How long shall I have periods of illness and  
convalescence, year after year?  
How long shall I continue to wail for the death  
of others and not be bewailed?  
For sure, a day or a night will come bringing  
forth my death.<sup>91</sup>

أفي كل عام مرضة ثم نقهة      وتنعى ولا تنعى متى ذا الى متى ؟  
ولا بد من يوم يجي ء وليلة      يسوقان حتفا راح نحوك أو غدا

It should be mentioned here that the first real uprising of the Ṣufriyyah, the sect to which 'Imrān belonged, took place in 76 A.H. when 'Imrān, an old man, was being pursued by al-Ḥajjāj. Some modern scholars claim that 'Imrān preferred qu'ūd (sitting) to khurūj (fighting) due to his strong love for Jamrah, his wife. 'Imrān's surviving poetry and the information in the sources do not support this claim.

However, most of the surviving parts of 'Imrān's poetry are only fragments related to the second part of his life, i.e., after his adherence to the Khārijite beliefs. Our study of his poetry is limited to this small part of his lost dīwān, and must therefore remain incomplete..

Perhaps the best known of his fragments is the one praising Ibn Muljam, the assassin of 'Alī, which says:

What a stroke by a pious [man] who sought by it  
only to attain the grace of [God] the Possessor  
of the heavenly throne.  
Whenever I remember him, I think him to be the  
one whose merits outweigh all creatures in the

<sup>91</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 120; Sharḥ, XI, 168-169; Asās, II, 379, 474; 'Asākīr, I, 433.

scales of God.

How noble are those people whose graves are the  
crops of birds.

They did not mingle faith with tyranny and  
aggression.

How good is the Murādī whose hands shed the  
blood of the most evil of creatures .

He became free of all sins when he struck him  
['Alī] with the sword.<sup>92</sup>

يا ضربة من تقي ما أراد بها	الا ليلبخ من ذي العرش رضوانا
اني لأذكره يوماً فأحسبـه	أوفى البرية عند الله ميزاننا
أكرم بقوم بطون الطير قبرهم	لم يخلطوا دينهم بغيا وعدوانا
لله در المرادي الذي سفكت	كفاه مهجة شر الخلق انسانا
أمسى عشية غشاه بضرته	مما جناه من الآثام عيرانا

This fragment gained such publicity that we find parts of  
it wherever there is an account of 'Imrān's life. It has  
incited many poets over the ages. They replied to it and  
cursed its composer, 'Imrān, and the assassin, Ibn Muljam,  
and many naqā'id poems were composed in response to it.  
For example, the Shī'ite poet, al-Sayyid al-Himyarī said:<sup>93</sup>

لا دردر المرادي الذي سفكت	كفاه مهجة خير الخلق انسانا
ويله أيما ذا أمه ولسدت	لا ان كما قال عمران بن حطانا
عبد تحمل اثما لو تحمله	شهران طرفة عين هدد شهلانا

Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Ṭabarī said:<sup>94</sup>

اني لأبرأ مما أنت ذاكره	عن ابن ملجم الملعون بهتانا
عليك ثم عليه من جماعتنا	لعائن كثرت سرا واعلاننا

<sup>92</sup>Mubarrad, III, 169; Aghānī, XVIII, 111-112; Dhahabī, I, 285; Baghdādī, II, 436, 438; Iṣābah, III, 355; Murūj, II, 428; al-Maqdisī, al-Bad' wa al-Tārīkh, V, 224; al-Damīrī, Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā, I, 39; Ibn Ruzaiq, al-Qaṣīdah al-Nūrāniyyah, Ms., fol. 241.

<sup>93</sup>Dīwān al-Sayyid al-Himyarī, 221-223.

<sup>94</sup>Baghdādī, II, 437.

Muhammad Ahmad al-Tayyib said:<sup>95</sup>

يا ضربة من غدور صار ضاربها  
أشقى البرية عند الله انسانا  
إذا تفكرت فيه ظلت ألعنه  
والعن الكلب عمران بن حطانا

The above-mentioned verses of 'Imrān stem from his strong adherence to the beliefs of the Khārijites, who disavowed 'Alī and accused him of Kufr (unbelief), despite his close relationship with the Prophet and his long history of support for Islam. The Khārijite poets, in general, take pride in their disavowal of 'Alī and in the misdeed of Ibn Muljam. Abū al-Maṣakk al-Ṭā'ī, for example, says:<sup>96</sup>

أبرا الى الله من سيف وشيخته  
ومن علي ومن أصحاب صفينا

Another Khārijite poet says:<sup>97</sup>

دسنا له تحت الظلام ابن ملجم  
جزاء اذا ما جاء نفس كتابها  
أبا حسن خذها على الرأس ضربة  
بكف كريم بعد موت ثوابها

Elegiac poems dominate the part of 'Imrān's poetry which has been preserved. They are almost entirely devoted to Khārijites killed in battles against the Umayyad authorities. Among those lamented by 'Imrān is Yazīd b. Ba'thar about whom he says:

Yazīd b. Ba'thar lived in the world eager to do good deeds, and he enjoyed a pleasant disposition.<sup>98</sup>

لقد كان في الدنيا يزيد بن بعثر  
حريصا على الخيرات حلوا شمائله

<sup>95</sup>Mubarrad, III, 169.

<sup>96</sup>'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 68.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>98</sup>Tāj, ba'thara.



'Imrān's passion and grief are most manifest in his lamentation for Abū Bilāl as his model, whose death made a deep impact on his life, to the point that he was about to chose khurūj rather than qu'ūd, wishing to die on the battlefield as Abū Bilāl and his companions had:

Abū Bilāl's [death] has made life more detestable to me, and me more desirous of going out [to battle].

I fear that I will die on my bed, while I wish to die under the shadows of high spears.

I would not care did I but know that my death would be like that of Abū Bilāl.

Whoever else is preoccupied by this world, I detest it, by God Lord of the Ka'bah.<sup>99</sup>

وحيبا للخروج أبو بلال	لقد زاد الحياة الي بغضا
وأرجو الموت تحت ذرى العوالي	أحاذر أن أموت على فراشي
كحتف أبي بلال لم أبال	ولو أنني علمت بأن حتفي
لها، والله رب البيت قال	فمن يك همه الدنيا فاني

In another poem, 'Imrān portrays his true and deep grief for Abū Bilāl, asking his eyes to weep ever more for him and praying God to join him to Abū Bilāl. To him the world has become lonely to the point that people seem to have changed, or even that all have died with Abū Bilāl:

O my eyes, weep for Mirdās and his death.

O Lord of Mirdās, join me to him.

O Mirdās, you have left me bewildered and crying, because of a calamity, in a deserted abode after I had enjoyed your company.

After you, I disavowed those whom I used to know; people after you, O Mirdās, are not what they used to be.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Mubarrad, III, 168; Sharh, V, 91; Baghdādī, II, 439-440; al-Suyūṭī, Sharh Shawāhid al-Mughnī, 887.

<sup>100</sup> Mubarrad, III, 168; Sharh, V, 91; Ansāb, IV/I, 160; 'Iqd, I, 256; Baghdādī, II, 440; al-Jurjānī, al-Wasātah bain al-Mutanabbī wa-Khuṣūmih, 236; al-'Ukbarī, Sharh Dīwān al-Mutanabbī, II, 396.

يا عين بكي لمرداس ومصيره  
 تركتني هائما أبكي لمرزأة  
 يا رب مرداس ألحقتني بمرداس  
 في منزل موحش من بعد ايناس  
 ما الناس بعدك يا مرداس بالناس  
 أنكرت بعدك من قد كنت أعرفه

Similar expressions are repeated time and again in 'Imrān's elegies. He portrays himself terrified by the loss of Abū Bilāl, weakening his eyes by excessive weeping. He wishes to have a quick death on the battlefield and prefers it to dying on a bed:

O Jamr, I feel saddened by the events, terrified in heart, and perplexed.  
 I keen for Mirdās and his companions until my eyes seem to become weak.  
 A sword stroke, in the Path of God, that brings a quick death, is more pleasant than death in a cave or a house.<sup>101</sup>

يا جمر نفسي من الأحداث موحشة  
 أبكي لمصرع مرداس وصحبته  
 مفروعة القلب في روع وفي دهش  
 حتى ستنفذ منه العين بالعمش  
 أشهى من الموت في الأشماد والفرش  
 لضربة في سبيل الله مجهزة

'Imrān envies the honourable death of Abū Bilāl and his companions. He deems that their souls were pleased by death. He exploits their death as a suitable reason to encourage others to follow their path, i.e. he encourages revolt and fans a spirit of vengeance:

And their [Khārijites'] brethren were pleased by death when people confronted each other [in the battle].  
 By God, they did not forsake the source of guidance, nor did they prefer leisure to fighting in [the battle of] Mijās.  
 You fail, and yet still hope to reach them!  
 How impotent can the skillful be!<sup>102</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Al-Azkawī, Kashf al-Ghummah al-Jāmi' li Akhbār al-Ummah, Ms., fol. 268.

<sup>102</sup> Mu'jam, IV, 712; 'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 15.

واخوة لهم طابت نفوسهم  
 والله ما تركوا من منبج لهدى  
 بالموت عند التفاف الناس بالناس  
 ولا رضوا بالسويينا يوم يجاس  
 أتعجزون وترجون اللحاق بهم  
 أنى يكون ذو عجز كأكياس

Al-Āmidī says: "'Imrān is the most gifted of poets in the field of asceticism (zuhd)".<sup>103</sup> Abū al-Faraj reports that Maslamah b. 'Abd al-Malik used to say: "By God, no poetry has instructed me like 'Imrān's poetry".<sup>104</sup> Sufyān al-Thawrī used to recite some of 'Imrān's verses as a model for ascetics.<sup>105</sup> It is impossible to decide whether 'Imrān composed all of his zuhd poems after he embraced the Khārijite beliefs. We know, however, that some of them were composed by 'Imrān as a Khārijite because he mentions in certain verses the name of his wife, Jamrah, or other Khārijite names like Abū Bilāl. No doubt 'Imrān's wide knowledge of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth was the main reason for the asceticism which features prominently in his poetry. There are many Qur'anic verses and Ḥadīths which give preference to the Hereafter over life in this world. A wave of asceticism was wide-spread in Iraq especially in the wake of the Islamic conquest, and at the beginning of the Umayyad caliphate.<sup>106</sup> However, the marked note of asceticism which impregnated 'Imrān's poetry is worthy of attention. 'Imrān, sometimes, went to extremes, to the point that he rejected enjoyment throughout his life. His pessimism may be due to the

<sup>103</sup> Mu'talif, 91.

<sup>104</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 120.

<sup>105</sup> Dhahabī, I, 286; Baghdādī, II, 440.

<sup>106</sup> See Goldziher, (Ar. trans.) al-'Aqīdah wa al-Sharī'ah fī al-Islām, 130; Daif, al-Taṭawwur wa al-Tajdīd fī al-Shi'r al-Umawī, 55-62; Khulaif, Hayāt al-Shi'r fī al-Kūfah ila Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thānī lī al-Hijrah, 188.

difficult circumstances which he met during the last decade of his life, when he was hunted and unsettled as mentioned above. In one of his poems, 'Imrān rejects the acquisitiveness of the people around him, and points out the futility of their endeavours which are invariably thwarted by death:

This life of ours enjoys no goodness or lastingness, and this worldly abode of ours is not the real abode.

Well may we say 'perhaps there will be stability in it' for no-one alive enjoys stability.

I see that we are never tired of living here, and that we are fond of gain, and waiting and watching.

It is not everlasting and we do not continue to stay here.

We have no option in this matter.

Our wealth is but borrowed stuff; the lender will retrieve it from the borrower.<sup>107</sup>

وليس لعيشنا هذا مهاه	وليست دارنا هاتا بدار
وان قلنا لعل بها قرارا	فما فيها لحي من قرار
أرانا لا نمل العيش فيها	وأولعنا بحرص وانتظار
ولا تبقى ولا تبقى عليها	ولا في الأمر أخذ بالخيار
وما أموالنا الا عوار	سيأخذها المعير من المعار

Such a hollow endeavour should not engage the attention of or deceive the wise man, who is not given to dreams or vain hopes. 'Imrān proceeds to exhort and warn the people not to be preoccupied by the worldly, but to amass provisions and merits instead, for on the day of the Hereafter they will become destitute:

How long will souls be kept drinking from the cup of death, while you are playing and

<sup>107</sup> Mubarrad, III, 118; Baghdādī, II, 440; al-Balawī; Kitāb Alif Bā, I, 411; al-Suyūtī, Sharḥ Shawāhid al-Mughnī, 926-927; 'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 18.

enjoying.

Are you satisfied to be deceived by wishful thoughts, while you are being pushed nearer to death day by day!?

These are dreams or fleeting shadows, by which wise men are not deceived.

So take without cease provisions for the day of your destitution, and earn merits for yourself, not for others.<sup>108</sup>

حتى متى تسقى النفوس بكأسها	ريب المنون وأنت لاه تترتع
أفقد رضيت بأن تعلل بالمنى	والى المنية كل يوم تـدفع
أحلام نوم أو كظلم زائل	ان اللبيب بمثلها لا يخدع
فتزودن ليوم فقرك دائبا	واجمع لنفسك لا لخيرك تجمع

'Imrān believes that the destitute poor cling to the worldly life despite its triviality and shortness. Although confessing that the worldly life is attractive he emphasises its fleeting character, like a summer cloud which clears away rapidly. He would not indulge in its evils:

I see that the wretched are not weary of life though naked and hungry they are. Although it is beloved, I see it like a summer cloud which will soon clear off ... just like a company of travellers who having satisfied their needs have gone away. Their path is well-marked and broad. I am not following a course that will bring<sup>109</sup> disgrace on me, nor I indulge in its evils.

أرى أشقياء الناس لا يسأمونها	على أنهم فيها عراة وجوع
أراها وان كانت تحب فانها	سحابة صيف عن قليل تقشع
كركب قضاوا حاجاتهم وتحملوا	طريقهم بادي العلامة مهيع
وما كنت في هدي علي غضاضة	وما كنت في مخزاته أتقنع

<sup>108</sup>Dhahabī, I, 285; Baghdādī, II, 440.

<sup>109</sup>Dhahabī, I, 286; Baghdādī, II, 440; Lisān, hadaya.

Consequently, death as the inevitable end features prominently in 'Imrān's poetry. Therefore we find him always remembering his wife, Jamrah, in a way that leads us to believe his deep love of her and his failing as well, despite his zuhd. His poetry acquires a touch of deep sorrow when he remembers life with his beloved wife:

Whenever I remember life and its goodness to me, tears pour out copiously from my eyes.<sup>110</sup>

إذا ما تذكرت الحياة وطبيها      الي جرى دمع من العين غاسق

He endeavours to get rid of this conflict between the two opposites, life and death. He is preoccupied that he will be unable to console Jamrah since every human being is preoccupied by himself:

O Jamr, O Jamr, do not be carried away by hopes, for death disappoints the assumption of the hopeful.

O Jamr, how can a believer in death taste the softness of life; while after death a horrible agony is to come.

How can I console you, while events are approaching which will distract every person from [care for] others.<sup>111</sup>

يا جمر يا جمر لا يطمح بك الأمل      فقد يكذب ظن الآمل الأجل  
يا جمر كيف يذوق الخفض معترف      بالموت والموت فيما بعده جل  
كيف أواسيك والأحداث مقبلة      فيها لكل امرئ عن غيره شغل

Time and again, he returns to his senses and tackles the question of death with realism. In a poem, 'Imrān portrays death as a hard fact, suffered by every human being. He challenges Jamrah - or perhaps himself - to seek refuge

<sup>110</sup> Al-Anbārī, Kitāb al-Aḍḍād, 5, 139.

<sup>111</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, al-Muzhir fī 'Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā'ihā, I, 398; al-Anbārī, Kitāb al-Aḍḍād, 2, 90.

in a land where people are free from death. He answers himself, sparing Jamrah's or his own mind from confused or despairing thoughts, that such a land does not exist. The death of Mirdās and his companions, and of the prophets before them, is sufficient proof. If exalted souls were free from death, Mirdās would not have tasted the cup of death:

If you hate death, leave and seek the inhabitants of a land who do not die. You will not find any land inhabited by human beings who do not come in [through birth] and go out [through death]. O Jamr, Mirdās and his brethren died, and before their death the prophets passed away. O Jamr, if a chaste soul could escape this event which still continues to baffle us, then Mirdās should have remained alive, and no-one should have announced his death at Dhāt al-Ghuṣn.<sup>112</sup>

ثم اطلبني أهل أرض لا يموتونا	ان كنت كارهة للموت فارتحلي
الا يروحون أفواجا ويأتوننا	فلست واجدة أرضا بها بشر
وقبل موتهم مات النبيوننا	يا جمر قد مات مرداس واخوته
من حاد ثلم يزل يا جمر يعييننا	يا جمر لو سلمت نفس مطهرة
وما نعاه بذات الغصن ناعوننا	اذا لدامت لمرداس سلامته

The most novel idea in 'Imrān's poetry on death is his viewing death with a logical realism, and a deep philosophical understanding and concluding that death, being the ultimate end of all creation, will itself as a creation taste the cup of death and perish. Perhaps 'Imrān looks as if he wishes to take revenge on death itself:

Nothing can defeat death except its Creator.

<sup>112</sup> 'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 16.

And death will perish when its end comes.  
Every [worldly] agony is insignificant,  
compared to death.  
And after death comes the most horribe  
agony.<sup>113</sup>

لا يعجز الموت شيء دون خالقه      والموت فان اذا ما ناله القدر  
وكل كرب أمام الموت متضح      للموت والموت فيما بعده جليل

Many of the poets of the Umayyad period, including some Khārijites like al-Ṭirimmāḥ b. Ḥakīm, are known to have used their skill as means of earning and subsistence, or as a vehicle to curry favour with the rulers. The surviving part of 'Imrān's poetry proves that he was not a poet of this kind. True, some of 'Imrān's poems are panegyrical, but most of them are in praise of the Khārijites. For instance, he lauds the good qualities of his wife without exaggeration:

O Jamr, despite my characteristics [of not praising]. I do praise your good disposition. God knows that I do not lie, as far as I know, and that I am not [merely] praising you.<sup>114</sup>

يا جمراني على ما كان من تخليقي      من بخلات صدق كلها فيك  
الله يعلم أنني لم أقل كذبا      فيما علمت وأني لا أركيك

To him, the Khārijites were people of truth who must be defended:

Whoever will come out against the people of truth him will I fight as he fights me.<sup>115</sup>

ومن يقصد لأهل الحق منهم      فاني أتقيه كما اتقاني

<sup>113</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 120; 'Asākir, I, 433; al-Ḥuṣarī, Zahr al-Adāb, II, 856.

<sup>114</sup> Aghānī, XVIII, 120.

<sup>115</sup> Baghdādī, II, 435.



In a poem, 'Imrān praises the mighty and experienced Khārijite horseman who is not distracted by anything while shooting his arrows, as well as praising his weapons and presenting a beautiful picture of the horse of the Khārijite praised, mentioning the strength of its neck and back:

She [the knight's mother] begot him like a sharp-edged sword, and admired him.  
 Would that she enjoyed begetting a noble son and her pregnancy!  
 He is skillful, alert and pure of hand, neither unsteady, and hesitant nor unstable on horse-back .  
 No desire distracts him from shooting his arrows. His sharp sword is never sheathed, nor his [bow] ever stringless.  
 He has selected a bare-backed [horse] with locks of hair and has stripped it of the stirrups with which it is to be spurred.  
 It [the horse] marches with weapons rising above other horses as if it were a full-grown camel searching for a fodder in the desert.  
 It twists its rein with its unswollen strong full grown back; and its high withers, the spine of which is neither lean nor crooked, like the top of a camel-saddle.  
 It is a manageable [horse] like a wild ass in its strength , hurried in its gallop; and it is as slender as a wolf, neither weak nor lean; as if it were the whirl of a spindle controlled by its rider, when it gallops swiftly and hot-heeled. 116

لو كان يعجبها الأنجاب والجبل  
 لا طائش الكف وقاف ولا كفل  
 وسيفه لا مصابة ولا عطل  
 واختار أجرد صهبالا له خصم  
 كأنه قارج بالدو مبتسقل  
 منه فلا سخف فيه ولا رهمل  
 وليس في صلبه ضعف ولا عصل  
 أقب كالسيد لا رطل ولا سفل  
 اذا جرى وهو حامي العقب منسحل

قد أنجبتة وأشبته وأعجبها  
 ثقف حويد ميين الكف ناصعه  
 لم تلهه ارة عن رمي أسهمه  
 عرى الركاب التي قد كان يعطمها  
 يمشي بشكته بالقوم مشترف  
 يثني الحبال بجوزتم محزومه  
 وحارك مثل شرخ الكور مرتفع  
 طوع القيادة وأي تقريبه خذم  
 كأنه فلكة في كف صاحبه

116 Abū 'Ubaidah, *Kitāb al-Khail*, 161; 'Abbās, *Shi'r al-Khawārij*, 49. Cf. al-Salihi, *The Society, Beliefs and Political Theories of the Kharijites as Revealed in their Poetry of the Umayyad Era*, 203-204, 255-256.

Only a fragment (of three verses) exists in which 'Imrān asks someone to satisfy needs. He does not degrade himself nor does he exaggerate the generosity of the person asked. Instead, 'Imrān initiates a unique religious dialogue about the virtues of generosity, uncharted by his contemporaries or predecessors:

I am faced by a need, and I believe that if I approach you, it will be satisfied.  
If I will be profited by receiving the award, you will gain yet more in giving it ...  
Because you will receive an unadulterated award in the Hereafter, as well as my thanks in this world, thus your lot will be heavier [in the scales].<sup>117</sup>

وقد عرضت بي حاجة وأظنني	بأني اذا أنزلتها بك منج
فان أك في أخذ العطية مريحا	فانك في بذل العطية أرح
لأن لك العقبى من الأجر خالما	وشكري في الدنيا فحظك أرجح

'Imrām's poetry is devoid of the lies of flattering poets because of his lack of interest in worldly pleasures, and because of his belief that the worldly wealth belongs to God. Therefore, God alone the Possessor and just Distributor, should be asked in need. 'Imrān condemns the phenomenon of flattery that plagued his contemporary poets who resorted to lies in order to earn money. It is narrated that 'Imrān passed by al-Farazdaq while the latter was reciting some of his poems in a gathering. 'Imrān says:

O you, who praise the servants of God to be given favour, to God belongs all that their hands possess.  
So ask God whatever you asked them and look forward to the favour of the Distributor and the Bestower of benefits.

---

<sup>117</sup>Uyūn, III, 159.

Do not credit the generous man with attributes that are not his due, nor give a miser the title of generous.<sup>118</sup>

ان لله ما بأيدي العباد	أيها المادح العباد ليعطى
وارح فضل المقسم العواد	فاسأل الله ما طلبت اليهم
وتسم البخيل باسم الجواد	لا تنقل في الجواد ما ليس فيه

Al-Farazdaq was not alone in hankering after other people's wealth. Even some soldiers are reported to have been fighting for Ibn al-Zubair, until he was killed. They then moved to the ranks of his opponent 'Abd al-Malik. The switching of allegiance with such ease is strange to a staunch believer. 'Imrān was angered when he came across some soldiers who said: "Why should not we fight the Khāri-jites? Aren't our stipends regular?". 'Imrān ridicules this attitude in the following verses:

If some of the Jews or converts to Christianity were sent forth to lead them; they would say: 'We are content, provided you continue to give us our 'aṭā' and provide us with our quota of the wheat of Kaskar.<sup>119</sup>

فلو بعثت بعض اليهود عليهم	يؤمهم أو بعض من تنصروا
لقالوا رضينا ان أقمت عطاءنا	وأجريت ذاك البر من فرض كسكرا

As far as 'Imrān's criticism of contemporary political system is concerned, he complains of injustice and looks forward to the day when justice would triumph:

How long we shall not have justice to live in,  
and how long shall we not see supporters of  
the preachers of Truth!<sup>120</sup>

<sup>118</sup>Aghānī, XVIII, 119; Baghdādī, II, 440.

<sup>119</sup>Mu'jam, IV, 13; 'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 20.

<sup>120</sup>Mu'talif, 91.

حتى متى لا نرى عدلا نحيش به ولا نرى لدعاة الحق أعوانا

'Imrān asserts that giving the bai'ah to a tyrannical Umayyad caliph contradicts the teaching of the Qur'ān:<sup>121</sup>

لو كنت مستغفرا يوما لطاغية كنت المقدّم في سرّي واعلاني  
لكن أبت لي آيات مطهرة عقد الولاية في طه وعمران

In another poem, 'Imrān asserts that accepting the obedience of the tyrant contradicts Qur'anic doctrines. He says:

Have you accepted to be the follower of the oppressors, abandoning the teaching of God's book?<sup>122</sup>

تكن تبعا للظالمين تطيعهم وتجعل كتاب الله منك على ظهر

These are the salient features of 'Imrān's surviving poetry. Despite his Khārijite beliefs and his wide religious knowledge, 'Imrān could not get rid of tribal prejudice, either in his behaviour or in his poetry. Although a Khārijite, he preferred at first to take refuge with his tribe, Bakr. Tribal loyalty is evident in his praise of Suwaid b. Manjūf al-Sadūsī, wherein he lauds his predecessors, describing them as the most generous. 'Imrān and Suwaid belonged to the same tribal lineage. He says in the afore-said panegyric poem:

Suwaid b. Manjūf is a noble who has been elevated by ancestors who gave in abundance.<sup>123</sup>

سويد بن منجوف كريم نمت به جد ود وآباء عظام الوسايح

In his subconscious mind, 'Imrān believed that he was of

<sup>121</sup>Mubarrad, III, 170; Aghānī, XVIII, 112.

<sup>122</sup>Al-Anbārī, Kitāb al-Addād, 256.

<sup>123</sup>Ibn A'tham, Kitāb al-Futūh, Ms., II, fol. 96.

noble origin. Speaking about Zufar and Rawḥ, he said:<sup>124</sup>

وما منهما الا يسر بنسبة      تقرني منه وان كان ذا نفر

In a comparative study between 'Imrān's verses about his experiences with Rawḥ and Zufar, both of whom had been his hosts, we find that he praises Rawḥ, describing him as a brother and apologizes to him. But he reprimands Zufar in an aggressive way, to the point that, in the same poem, he reverts to glorifying Rawḥ and praising his forefathers:<sup>125</sup>

أكرم بروح بن زنباع وأسرته      قوم دعا أوليهم للعلا داع

In another poem, he satirizes Zufar, describing him as malevolent and spiteful, although Zufar is not reported as having mistreated him. 'Imrān says:<sup>126</sup>

لاطفته بوداد اضطررت له      تضعفا وهو ذو غل وأحقاد

This attitude can be clarified by the fact that 'Imrān's tribe, Bakr, had good relations with the Yemenite tribes, including that of Rawḥ. The tribe of Bakr was in alliance with those of Yemen against Tamīm and Qais whose leader in Mesopotamia at that time was Zufar. Certainly, 'Imrān was conscious of these tribal realities and therefore usually used to take refuge with Azd. As a matter of fact, he spent most of the last years of his life among Azdites and praised them in a way that the tribal characteristics and values are evident. For instance he says:<sup>127</sup>

<sup>124</sup>Mubarrad, III, 172; Aghānī, XVIII, 114.

<sup>125</sup>Mubarrad, III, 173; Aghānī, XVIII, 111; Sharḥ, V, 94.

<sup>126</sup>'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 119.

<sup>127</sup>Mubarrad, III, 172; Aghānī, XVIII, 114.

نزلنا بقوم يجمع الله شملهم      وليس لهم دعوى سوى المجد يعتصر  
من الأزد ان الأزد أكرم معشر      يمانية طابوا اذا نسب البشـر

'Imrān is not unique in his tribal inclinations. Many of the Khārijite poets could not get rid of their tribal prejudice. A Khārijite poet of Bakr, 'Itbān b. Waṣīlah al-Shaibānī, for instance, threatened the caliph, 'Abd al-Malik, of a difficult day if the latter did not placate the tribe of Bakr in Iraq:<sup>128</sup>

فانك ان لا ترض بكر بن وائل      يكن لك يوم في الحراق عقيب

Another well-known Khārijite poet, al-Ṭīrimmah b. Ḥakīm was notorious for his partisanship of his tribe. He was so prejudiced that he praised al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufrah who crushed many of the Khārijite uprisings, only because he and al-Muhallab belonged to the same tribal stock.

However, 'Imrān's poetry, in general, is characterized by a clear religious nature. Perhaps, the reason for this is that he was brought up in a religious environment. His father was a narrator of Ḥadīth and one of the companions of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī. 'Imrān himself narrated on the authority of Abū Mūsā and others, and was known for his numerous and long prayers. Were he not learned in religion, he would not have been chosen as the chief of the Ṣufriyyah, as the Khawārij are known for their insistence that their Imām must enjoy the attribute of piety. The impact of the Qur'ān on 'Imrān's poetry is evident from his usage of Qur'anic words, concepts and phraseology. For example, he

<sup>128</sup>Marzubānī, 266.

says: 129

أم من تظني عليه موقفة الفارح  
أم أسكن الجنة التي وعد الأبرار مصفوفة غارقا

Most of the words and praseology of the aforementioned verses belong to the Qur'ān, such as: 130, "فَأْتَدْتِكُمْ نَارًا تَلْفَحُ", 131, "أَمَامَهُمْ سَرَادِقًا", 132, "وَنَارًا مَصْفُوفَةً", and 133, "إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ".

In another poem, 'Imrān says: 134

دعتهم بأعلى صوتها ورفعتهم  
عقل الجمال الصفر تراعت الشوى

This verse seems to have quoted the Qur'anic verses: 135, "إِنِّي أُنذِرُكُمْ بِشَرِّكَالْقَصْرِ، كَأَنَّ جِبَالَ صِفْرٍ", 136, "كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْزَعْتَهُ الشَّوْيَ", and 137, "فَنَحْنُ بَنُو الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ وَأُوْهُنَّ عِبَادٌ لَّهِ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّ".

In a third poem, 'Imrān says: 137

فَنَحْنُ بَنُو الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ  
وَأُوْهُنَّ عِبَادٌ لَّهِ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّ

This verse contains the meaning of the Qur'anic verses: 138, "إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ فِي أَعْيُنِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ", and 139, "إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ".

With the exception of a few fragments, in his poems 'Imrān endeavours always to be simple and clear, avoiding strange words and artificial techniques. His poetry is comprised of simple words and clear expressions, which is

129 'Asākir, III, 125.

130 Qur'ān, XCII, 14.

131 Ibid., XVIII, 29.

132 LXXXVIII, 15.

133 LXXXII, 13.

134 'Abbās, Shi'r al-Khawārij, 19.

135 Qur'ān, LXX, 15.

136 LXXVII, 32.

137 Mubarrad, III, 172; Aghānī, XVIII, 114.

138 Qur'ān, XLIX, 10.

139 Ibid., XLIX, 13.

perhaps due to his religious knowledge, or because most of his surviving poems belong to his Khārijite career. Poetry was not a skill to him sought for its own sake, but a means to serve his creed. Al-Farazdaq, the famous poet, realised 'Imrān's poetic potential. He is reported to have said when the names of al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī and 'Imrān were mentioned to him: "Had these two persons concerned themselves with the practice of other poets [i.e. panegyric and satire] we should have been nonentities in their company, but God caused them to busy themselves with composing poetry about their respective creeds".<sup>140</sup> Most of 'Imrān's poems speak to sentiments, and excite emotions more than impressing minds.

Two surviving verses by 'Imrān indicate that they were parts of the traditional preludes to missing poems. The first is:<sup>141</sup>

عفا كنفنا حوزان من أم معفس      وأقفر منها تستر وتبارق

The second verse is:<sup>142</sup>

فألرحبتان فأكناف الجناب إلى      أرض يكون بها الغسول فالرتم

The rest of his surviving poems comprised of fragments, each of which belongs to a certain motif-type, i.e. they do not follow the structure of the traditional ode which incorporates many subjects.

---

<sup>140</sup> Aghānī, VII, 231-232.

<sup>141</sup> Lisān, baraqa.

<sup>142</sup> Tāj, ghasala.



In conclusion, I would like to stress that this study of 'Imrān is derived from the few fragments of his poetry that survive. Had more of his poems and reports of his career survived, we would, needless to say, have been able to study him in a more satisfactory manner.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 'Abbās, Ihsān, Shi'r al-Khawārij, Beirut, 1963.
- Al-'Abbāsī, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Aḥmad, Ma'āhid al-Tanṣīṣ 'alā Shawāhid al-Talkhīs, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Hamīd, Cairo, 1367/1947. (Abbrev. Ma'āhid).
- Abū al-Baqā', Hibat Allāh, al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyyah fī Akhbār al-Mulūk al-Asadiyyah, MS. Brit. Mus. (no. Add. 23296).
- Abū Rahmeh, Khalīl Ṣāleḥ, Ḥarakat al-Shi'r fī Qabīlat Qais fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Jordan, 1976.
- Abū Tammām, Ḥabīb b. Aws, Kitāb al-Waḥshiyāt, ed. 'Abd al-Azīz al-Maimanī, Cairo, 1970.  
Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akḥṭal, ed. A. Salihani, Beirut, 1922.
- Abū 'Ubaidah, Ma'mar b. al-Muthannā, Kitāb al-Khail, Haidarabad, 1358.  
Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Farazdaq, ed. A.A. Bevan, Leiden, 1905-9 (Abbrev. Naqā'id).
- Abū Zaid, Sa'īd b. Aws, al-Nawādir fī al-Lughah, ed. Sa'īd al-Shartūnī, Beirut, 1894.
- 'Alī, Jawād, al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-'Arab qabl al-Islām, Beirut, 1968-72.
- Al-'Alī, Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad, al-Tanzīmāt al-Ijtimā'iyah wa al-Iqtisādiyyah fī al-Baṣrah fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, Beirut, 1969.  
Kitāṭ al-Baṣrah, Sumer, A Journal of Archaeology in Iraq, VIII (1952), 281-303.
- Al-Alūsī, Maḥmūd Shukrī, Tārīkh Najd, ed. Muḥammad Bahjat al-Atharī, Cairo, 1347/1929.
- Al-Āmidī, al-Ḥasan b. Bishr, al-Mu'talif wa al-Mukhtalif fī Asmā' al-Shu'arā' wa Kunāhum wa Alqābihim wa Ba'd Shi'rihim, ed. F. Krenkow, Cairo, 1354/1935. (Abbrev. Mu'talif).
- Al-Anbārī, Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, Kitāb al-Aqdād, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Kuwait, 1960.
- Al-Asad, Nāṣir al-Dīn, Maṣādir al-Shi'r al-Jāhilī wa Qīmatuhā al-Tārīkhiyyah, Cairo, 1969.

- Al-Asfarāyīnī, Abū al-Muẓaffar 'Imād al-Dīn, al-Tabṣīr fī al-Dīn wa Tamyīz al-Firqah al-Nājiyah 'an al-Firaq al-Halikīn, Cairo, 1925.
- Al-A'shā, Maimūn b. Qais, Dīwān al-A'shā, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Husain, Cairo, 1950.
- Al-'Askarī, Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd Allāh, al-Maṣūn fī al-Adab, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Kuwait, 1960.
- Al-'Askarī, Abū Hilāl Ḥasan b. 'Abd Allāh, Dīwān al-Ma'ānī, Cairo, 1933.  
Kitāb Jamharat al-Amthāl, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm and A.M. Qatāmash, Cairo, 1964.  
Kitāb al-Ṣinā'atain, al-Kitābah wa al-Shi'r, ed. 'Alī al-Bajāwī and Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, 1971.
- 'Aṭwān, Ḥusain, al-Shi'r al-'Arabī bi-Khurāsān fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, Amman/Beirut, 1974.
- Al-Azdī, 'Abd al-Ghanī b. Sa'īd, Kitāb al-Mutawārīn, MS., in al-Zāhiriyyah (no. 3 Majmū' 71/2) pp. 21A-28A.
- Al-Azdī, Yazīd b. Muḥammad, Tārīkh al-Mawṣil, ed. 'Alī Ḥabībah, Cairo, 1387/1967.
- Al-Azkawī, Sirḥān b. Sa'īd, Kashf al-Ghummah al-Jāmi' li Akhbār al-Ummah, MS. Brit. Mus. (no. Or. 8076).
- Al-Baghdādī, 'Abd al-Qādir b. Ṭahir, Kitāb Uṣūl al-Dīn, Istanbul, 1928.
- Al-Baghdādī, 'Abd al-Qādir b. 'Umar, Khizānat al-Adab wa Lubb Lubāb Lisān al-'Arab, Cairo, A.H. 1299. (Abbrev. Baghdādī).
- Al-Baihaqī, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, al-Maḥāsin wa al-Masāwī, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo.
- Al-Bakrī, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, Mu'jam mā Ista'jam min Asmā' al-Bilād wa al-Mawāḍi', ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Cairo, 1945-1951. (Abbrev. Bakrī).  
Simt al-La'ālī, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Maimanī, Cairo, 1936.
- Al-Balādhurī, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, I, Cairo, 1959; IV/I, Jerusalem, 1971; IV/2, Jerusalem, 1938; V, Jerusalem, 1936; VII, MS, in Dār al-Kutub, (no. Tārīkh, 1103). (Abbrev. Ansāb).

- Al-Balādhurī, Aḥmad b. Yahyā, Futūh al-Buldān, ed. 'Abd Allāh al-Ṭabbā' and Anīs al-Ṭabbā', Beirut, 1377/1957. (Abbrev. Futūh).
- Al-Balansī, Sulaimān b. Mūsā, Tārīkh al-Riddah, gleaned from al-Iktifā', ed. Khurshid Fariq, New Delhi, 1970. (Abbrev. Balansī)
- Al-Balawī, Yūsuf b. Muḥammad, Kitāb Alif Bā, Cairo, A.H. 1287.
- Barthold, V.V., Musailimah, Bulletin de L'academie des Sciences de Russie, XIX (1925) pp. 483-512.
- Al-Baṣrī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Ḥamāsah al-Baṣriyyah, ed. Mukhtār al-Dīn Aḥmad, Haidarabad, 1964. (Abbrev. Baṣriyyah.)
- Al-Bayyāsī, Yūsuf b. Muḥammad, al-I'lām bi al-Ḥurūb al-Wāqi'ah fī Ṣadr al-Islām, MS., in Dār al-Kutub, (no. Tārīkh, 399).
- Becker, C.H., The Expansion of the Saracens - the East, The Cambridge Medieval History, II, Cambridge (1913), pp. 329-64.
- Belyaev, E.A., (Eng. trans.) Arab, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages, translated by Adolphe Gourevitch, London, 1969.
- Bishr b. Abī Khāzim, Dīwān Bishr b. Abī Khāzim al-Asadī, ed. 'Izzat Hasan, Damascus, 1960.
- Blachère, R., Histoire de la littérature Arabe, Paris, 1952.
- Braunlich, E., Bisṭām ibn Qais, Ein Vorislamischer Beduinenfürst und Held, Leipzig, 1923.
- Al-Buḥturī, al-Walīd b. 'Ubaid, Kitāb al-Ḥamāsah, ed. Lewis Cheikhō, Beirut, 1910.
- Caskel, W., Bakr b. Wā'il, The Encyclopedia of Islam, new ed. (Abbrev. E.I.).  
Ḡamharat an-Nasab: das Genealogische Werk des Hiṣām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī, Leiden, 1966.
- Cheikhō, Lewis, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah ba'd al-Islām, Beirut, 1967.  
Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyyah qabl al-Islām, Beirut, 1967.
- Al-Ḍabbī, al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad, Dīwān al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt, ed. C. Lyall, Beirut, 1920. (Abbrev. Ḍabbī.)
- Ḍaif, Shawqī, Tārīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī, al-'Aṣr al-Islāmī, Cairo, 1963.

- Daif, Shawqī, Al-Tatawwur wa al-Tajdīd fī al-Shi'r al-Umawī,  
Cairo, 1965.
- Al-Damīrī, Muḥammad b. Mūsā, Hayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā,  
Bulaq, 1868.
- Al-Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, Tārīkh al-Islām wa Ṭabaqāt  
al-Mashāhīr wa al-A'lām, ed. Ḥusām al-Dīn al-  
Qudsī, Cairo, 1948-1949. (Abbrev. Dhahabī.)
- Al-Dīnawarī, Aḥmad b. Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl, ed.  
V. Guirgass, Leiden, 1888. (Abbrev. Dīnawarī.)
- Dixon, 'Abd al-Ameer, The Umayyad Caliphate (65-86/684-705),  
London 1971.
- Al-Diyārbakrī, Ḥusain b. Muḥammad, Tārīkh al-Khamīs fī  
Aḥwāl Anfas Nafīs, A.H. 1302. (Abbrev.  
Diyārbakrī.)
- Al-Faḥḥām, Shākīr, al-Farazdaq, Damascus, 1397/1977.
- Al-Farazdaq, Hammām b. Ghālib, Dīwān al-Farazdaq, ed. Karam  
al-Bustānī, Beirut, 1960.
- Al-Fīrūzabādī, Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb, al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ, ed.  
Nāṣir al-Ḥūrānī, Bulaq, 1884-85.
- Goldziher, I, (Ar. trans.), Al-'aqīdah wa al-Sharī'ah fī  
al-Islām, Cairo, 1378/1959.
- Guillaume, A., The Life of Muhammad, A Translation of Ishāq's  
Sīrat Rasūl Allāh, Oxford, 1955.
- Ḥājī Khalīfah, Muṣṭafā b. 'Abd Allāh, Kashf al-Zunūn 'an  
Asāmī al-Kutub wa al-Funūn, ed. Muḥammad al-  
Adkawī.
- Al-Ḥamawī, Yāqūt b. 'Abd Allāh, Irshād al-Arīb ilā Ma'rifat  
al-Adīb, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, Leiden/London,  
1907-13. (Abbrev. Irshād.)  
Kitāb Mu'jam al-Buldān, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Leipzig,  
1866-69. (Abbrev. Mu'jam.)
- Al-Hamdānī, al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad, Kitāb Ṣifat Jazīrat al-'Arab,  
ed. D.H. Muller, Leiden, 1884.
- Ḥātim al-Tā'ī, Dīwān Shi'r Ḥātim b. 'Abd Allāh al-Tā'ī, ed.  
'Ādil Jamāl, Cairo, 1975.
- Al-Ḥimyarī, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mun'im, Kitāb al-Rawḍ al-Mi'ṭar  
fī Khabar al-Aqṭār, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Beirut,  
1975. (Abbrev. Rawḍ.)
- Al-Ḥimyarī, Nashwān b. Sa'id, Muntakhabāt fī Akḥbār al-Yaman,

- ed. 'Azīm al-Dīn Aḥmad, Leiden, 1916.
- Hitti, Philip, History of the Arabs, London, 1946.
- Hodgson, M.G.S., The Venture of Islam, Chicago, 1974.
- Haurt, C., A History of Arabic Literature, London, 1903.
- Al-Ḥūfī, Aḥmad Muḥammad, Adab al-Siyāsah fī al-'Aṣr al-Ūmawī,  
Cairo, 1969.
- Al-Ḥuṣarī, Ibrāhīm b. 'Alī, Zahr al-Ādāb wa Thamar al-Albāb,  
ed. Muḥammad 'Alī al-Bajāwī, Cairo, 1969.
- Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Yūsuf b. 'Abd Allāh, al-Inbāh 'alā Qabā'il  
al-Ruwāh, Cairo, A.H. 1350. (Abbrev.  
Inbāh.)  
Al-Istī'āb fī Ma'rifat al-Aṣḥāb, ed. 'Alī  
al-Bajāwī, Cairo, 1958. (Abbrev. Istī'āb.)
- Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Allāh, Futūḥ Miṣr  
wa al-Maghrib wa Akhbāruhā, ed. C.C. Torrey,  
Leiden, 1920.
- Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, Kitāb al-'Iqd al-Farīd,  
ed. Aḥmad Amīn, Aḥmad al-Zain and Ibrāhīm  
al-Abyārī, Cairo, vol. I-III 1st ed., 1940-  
1952; Vol. IV-VI 2nd ed. 1949-1965. (Abbrev.  
'Iqd.)
- Ibn Abī 'Awn, Kitāb al-Tashbīhāt, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'īn  
Khān, Cambridge, 1369/1950.
- Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, 'Izz al-Dīn, Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah, ed.  
Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, 1959-  
1964. (Abbrev. Sharḥ.)
- Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Kitāb al-Jarḥ  
wa al-Ta'dīl, Haidarabad, 1371/1952.
- Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad, Kitāb Hurūb al-Basūs bain Bakr wa  
Taghlib, MS., in Tehran University (Mishkat IX,  
776, no. 2134).
- Ibn 'Asākir, 'Alī b. Ḥasan, al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr, Damascus,  
A.H. 1329-46. (Abbrev. 'Asākir.)
- Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, Aḥmad, Kitāb al-Futūḥ, Haidarabad, 1969-  
1970.  
Kitāb al-Futūḥ, MS., in the Library of  
Ahmet III, Istanbul, (no. 2956).
- Ibn al-Athīr, 'Alī b. Muḥammad, al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, Cairo,

- A.H. 1290. (Abbrev. Kāmil.)  
Usd al-Ghābah fī Ma'rifat al-Ṣaḥābah, Cairo, 1869-1871. (Abbrev. Usd.)
- Ibn Duraid, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, al-Ishtiqāq, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo, 1958. (Abbrev. Ishtiqāq.)  
Kitāb Jamharat al-Lughah, Haidarabad, A.H. 1344.
- Ibn al-Furāt, Wathīmah b. Mūsā, Qīṭa' min Kitāb al-Riddah, ed. W. Hoenerbach, Wiesbaden, 1951. (Abbrev. Qīṭa'.)
- Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥammad, Kitāb Alqāb al-Shu'arā' (Nawādir al-Makḥṭūṭāt, series 7), ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo, 1954.  
Kitāb al-Muḥabbar, ed. I.L. Städter, Haidarabad, 1942. (Abbrev. Muḥabbar.)  
Kunā al-Shu'arā' (Nawādir al-Makḥṭūṭāt), ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo, 1954.
- Ibn Ḥajar, Ahmad b. 'Alī, al-Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah, ed. Muḥammad Wajyh, 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, Gholam Qādir and A. Sprenger, Calcutta, 1856-73. (Abbrev. Iṣabah.)  
Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, Haidarabad, 1907-9. (Abbrev. Tahdhīb.)  
Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb, Delhi, 1320/1902.
- Ibn Ḥazm, 'Alī b. Ahmad, Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab, ed. E. Levi-Provencal, Cairo, 1948. (Abbrev. Jamharat.)
- Ibn Hishām, 'Abd al-Malik, al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ Shalabī, Cairo, 1375/1955. (Abbrev. Sīrah.)
- Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Ḥafīẓ b. Qudāmah, Talbīs Iblīs, Cairo, 1347/1928.
- Ibn Jinnī, 'Uthmān, Sirr Ṣinā'at al-I'rāb, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Muḥammad al-Zafzāf, Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafā and 'Abd Allāh Amīn, Cairo, 1374/1954.
- Ibn al-Kalbī, Hishām b. Muḥammad, Nasab Ma'add wa al-Yamam al-Kabīr, MS. Brit. Mus. (no. Add. 22376).
- Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Fidā', al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Beirut, 1394/1974.

- Ibn Khaldūn, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad, Kitāb al-'Ibar, Beirut, 1956-61. (Abbrev. 'Ibar).
- Ibn Khallikān, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, Wafayāt al-A'yān wa Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Beirut, 1968-72. (Abbrev. Wafayāt.)
- Ibn Khayyāṭ, Khalīfah, Tārīkh Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ, ed. Suhail Zakkār, Damascus, 1967. (Abbrev. Khalīfah.)
- Ibn Manẓūr, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad, Lisān al-'Arab, Beirut, 1955-56. (Abbrev. Lisān.)
- Ibn Munqidh, Usāmah, Lubāb al-Ādāb, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr, Cairo, 1354/1935. (Abbrev. Lubāb.)  
Al-Manāzil wa al-Diyār, ed. Muṣṭafā Ḥijāzī, Cairo, 1387/1968. (Abbrev. Manāzil.)
- Ibn al-Nadīm, Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq, al-Fihrist, Cairo, A.H. 1348.
- Ibn Qutaibah, 'Abd Allāh b. Muslim, Adab al-Kātib, Leiden, 1900.  
Al-Ma'ārif, ed. Tharwat 'Ukāshah, Cairo, 1969. (Abbrev. Ma'ārif.)  
Al-Shi'r wa al-Shu'arā', ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr, Cairo, 1966. (Abbrev. Shu'arā'.)  
'Uyūn al-Akhbār, Cairo, 1925-30. (Abbrev. 'Uyūn.)
- Ibn Rashīq, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan, al-'Umdah fī Maḥāsin al-Shi'r wa Ādābih wa Naqdih, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, 1383/1963. (Abbrev. 'Umdah.)
- Ibn Rustah, Aḥmad b. 'Umar, al-A'lāq al-Nafīсах, ed. M.J. De Goeje, 1892. (Abbrev. A'lāq.)
- Ibn Ruzaiq, Ḥumaid b. Muḥammad, al-Qaṣīdah al-Nūrāniyyah, with a commentary of Ibn Ruzaiq. MS., Brit. Mus. (no. or. 6565).  
Al-Sahīfah al-'Adnāniyyah, MS. Brit. Mus. (no. or. 6569).
- Ibn Sa'd, Muḥammad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr, Leiden, 1904-1928. (Abbrev. Sa'd)
- Ibn al-Shajarī, Hibat Allāh b. 'Alī; Kitāb al-Ḥamāsah, Haidarabad, A.H. 1345. (Abbrev. Shajarī.)



- Ibn al-Tiqṭaqī, Muḥammad b. 'Alī, al-Fakhrī fī al-Ādāb al-Sultāniyyah wa al-Duwal al-Islāmiyyah, Cairo, 1345/1927. (Abbrev. Fakhrī.)
- Ibn 'Umar, Saif, al-Fitnah wa Waq'at al-Jamal, ed. Aḥmad 'Amrūsh, Beirut, 1972.
- Al-'Iṣāmī, 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥusain, Simṭ al-Nujūm al-'Awālī fī Anbā' al-Awā'il wa al-Tawālī, Cairo, A.H. 1380.
- Al-Iṣbahānī, Abū al-Faraj 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain, Kitāb al-Aghānī, vol. I-XVI (Dār al-Kutub); XVII-XXIV (al-Hai'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmmah li al-Kitāb). (Abbrev. Aghānī.)  
Maqātil al-Tālibiyyīn, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr, Beirut.
- Al-Iṣbahānī, Ḥusain b. Muḥammad, Muḥāḍarāt al-'Udabā' wa Muḥāwarāt al-Shu'arā' wa al-Bulaghā', Beirut, 1961. (Abbrev. Muḥāḍarāt.)
- Jabizādah, 'Alī Fahmī, Ḥusn al-Ṣaḥābah fī Sharḥ Ash'ār al-Ṣaḥābah, 1906.
- Al-Jāḥiẓ, 'Amr b. Baḥr, al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo, 1960-1961. (Abbrev. Bayān.)  
Al-Ḥayawān, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo, 1938-1945. (Abbrev. Ḥayawān.)  
Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa al-Addād, ed. Muḥammad al-Khanjī, Cairo, 1324/1906.
- Jarīr b. 'Aṭiyyah, Dīwān Jarīr b. 'Aṭiyyah al-Khaṭafī, Cairo, A.H. 1313.
- Al-Jawharī, Ismā'il b. Ḥammad, Tāj al-Lughah wa Ṣiḥāḥ al-'Arabiyyah, Cairo, A.H. 1882. (Abbrev. Ṣiḥāḥ.)
- Jones, W., The Moallakat, or Seven Arabian Poems, with a translation and arguments by W. Jones, London, 1783.
- Al-Jumāhī, Muḥammad b. Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shu'arā', ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr, Cairo, 1952. (Abbrev. Ṭabaqāt.)
- Al-Jūmard, 'Abd al-Jabbār, Ghurrat al-'Arab Yazīd b. Mazyad al-Shaibānī, Beirut, 1961.
- Al-Jurjānī, 'Alī b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, al-Wasāṭah bain al-Mutanabbī wa Khuṣūmih, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm and 'Alī al-Bajāwī, Cairo, 1966.
- Al-Kindī, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf, Kitāb al-Wulāh wa Kitāb al-

- Quḍāh, ed. R. Guest, Beirut, 1908.
- Kister, M.J., al-Ḥīra, some notes on its relations with Arabia, Arabica, XV (1968), 143-170.
- Kitāb Bakr wa Taghlib (anonymous), MS. Brit. Mus. (no. Or, 6499).
- Kritzeck, J. and Winder, R.B., The World of Islam, London, 1959.
- Khulaif, Yūsuf, Ḥayāt al-Shi'r fī al-Kūfah ilā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thānī li al-Hijrah, Cairo, 1388/1968.
- Al-Kutbī, Muḥammad b. Shākir, Fawāt al-Wafayāt, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ak-Khaṭīb, Cairo, 1951. (Abbrev. Fawāt.)
- Lailā al-Akhyaliyyah, Dīwān Lailā al-Akhyaliyyah, ed. Khalīl al-'Aṭiyyah and Jalīl al-'Aṭiyyah, Baghdad, 1967.
- Lewis, B., The Arabs in History, London, 1966.
- Lyall, C.J., The words 'Ḥanīf' and 'Muslim', Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1903), 771-784. (Abbrev. JRAS.)
- Al-Ma'āḍidī, 'Abd al-Qādir, Wasit fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, Baghdad, 1396/1976.
- Macdonald, D.B., Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, New York, 1903.
- Al-Maidānī, 'Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, Majma' al-Amthāl, Cairo, A.H. 1310. (Abbrev. Majma'.)
- Al-Maimanī, 'Abd al-'Aziz, al-Tarā'if al-Adabiyyah, Cairo, 1937.
- Mājid, 'Abd al-Mun'im, al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī li al-Dawlah al-'Arabiyyah, Cairo, 1960.
- Majmū'at al-Ma'ānī (anonymous), Constantinople, A.H. 1301.
- Al-Maqdisī, Muṭahḥar b. Ṭāhir, Kitāb al-Bad' wa al-Tārīkh, ed. M. Cl. Haurt, Paris, 1899-1919.
- Margoliouth, D.S., On the Origin and Import of the names Muslim and Ḥanīf, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1903), 467-493. (Abbrev. JRAS.)
- Al-Marzubānī, Muḥammad b. 'Imrān, Mu'jam al-Shu'arā', ed. F. Krenkow, Cairo, A.H. 1354. (Abbrev. Marzubānī.)

- Al-Marzubānī, Muḥammad b. 'Imrān, Al-Muwashshah fī Ma'ākhidh al-'Ulamā' 'lā al-Shu'arā' fī 'Iddat Anwā' min Sina'at al-Shi'r, ed. 'Alī al-Bajāwī, Cairo, 1965. (Abbrev. Muwashshah.)
- Al-Marzūqī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah, ed. Aḥmad Amīn and 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo, 1951. (Abbrev. Marzūqī.)
- Al-Musannaf al-Majhūl (anonymous), ed. W. Ahlwardt, Vol. XI, Griefswald, 1883.
- Massignon, L., (Ar. trans.) Khiṭaṭ al-Kūfah, translated by Taqī b. Muḥammad, Ṣaidā, 1946.
- Al-Mas'ūdī, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain, Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ādin al-Jawhar, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Hamid, Cairo, 1958. (Abbrev. Murūj.)
- Al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf, ed. 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣawī, 1357/1938. (Abbrev. Tanbīh.)
- Al-Minqarī, Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, Waq'at Ṣiffīn, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo, 1365/1946. (Abbrev. Ṣiffīn.)
- Al-Mubarrad, Muḥammad b. Yazīd, al-Fāḍil, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Maimanī, Cairo, 1375/1956. (Abbrev. Fāḍil.)
- Al-Kāmil fī al-Lughah wa al-Adab, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm and al-Sayyid Shaḥātah, Cairo, 1956. (Abbrev. Mubarrad.)
- Nasab 'Adnān wa Qaḥṭān, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Maimanī, Cairo, 1354/1936. (Abbrev. Nasab.)
- Muir, W., The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall, Edinburgh, 1924.
- Al-Murtaḍā, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain, Amālī al-Murtaḍā, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, 1373/1954.
- Al-Mutanabbī, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusain, Dīwān Abī al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, and 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ Shalabī, Cairo, 1355/1936.
- Nābighat B. Shaibān, 'Abd Allāh b. Mukhāriq, Dīwān Nābighat B. Shaibān, ed. Aḥmad Nasīm, Cairo, 1351/1932.
- Al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, Ziyad b. Mu'āwiyah, Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, ed. Shukrī

- Faiṣal, Damascus, 1388/1968.  
Le Dīwān de Nābīga Dhobyānī, ed. M.H. Derenbourg, Paris, 1869.
- Naṣr b. Sayyār, Dīwān Naṣr b. Sayyār al-Kinānī, ed. 'Abd al-Waḥḥāb al-Khaṭīb, Baghdad, 1972.
- Nicholson, R.A., A Literary History of the Arabs, London, 1914.
- Al-Nuṣṣ, Iḥsān, al-'Aṣabiyyah al-Qabaliyyah wa Atharuhā fī al-Shi'r al-Umawī, Damascus, 1973.
- Al-Nuwairī, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Waḥḥāb, Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-'Arab, Cairo, 1923-1955. (Abbrev. Nuwairī.)
- Olinder, G., The Kings of Kinda of the Family of Ākil al-Murār, Lund, 1927.
- Pellat, C., Al-Baṣra, The Encyclopedia of Islam, new ed. (Abbrev. E.I.)
- Philby, H.J.B., Arabia of the Wahhābis, London, 1928.  
The Heart of Arabia, London, 1922.
- Al-Qādī, al-Nu'mān, al-Firaq al-Islāmiyyah fī al-Shi'r al-Umawī, Cairo, 1970.
- Al-Qaisī, Nūrī Ḥammūdī, Shu'arā' Umawiyyūn, al-Mawṣil, 1976.
- Qalamāwī, Suhair, Adab al-Khawārij fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī, Cairo, 1945.
- Al-Qālī, Ismā'īl b. al-Qāsim, al-Amālī, Cairo, 1344/1926. (Abbrev. Amālī.)  
Dhail al-Āmālī wa al-Nawādir, Cairo, 1344/1926. (Abbrev. Dhail).
- Al-Qalqashandī, Aḥmad b. 'Alī, Nihāyat al-Arab fī Ma'rifat Ansāb al-'Arab, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, Cairo, 1959. (Abbrev. Nihāyat.)  
Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā, Cairo, 1913. (Abbrev. Ṣubḥ.)
- Qāsim, 'Awn al-Sharīf, Shi'r al-Baṣrah fī al-'Asr al-Umawī, Beirut, 1392/1972.
- Al-Quṭāmī, 'Umair b. Shuyaim, Dīwān al-Quṭāmī, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Samirra'ī and Aḥmad Maṭlūb, Beirut, 1960.
- Al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Idrīs, Kitāb al-Zīnah fī al-Kalimāt

- al-Islāmiyyah, Cairo, 1957.
- Rothstein, G., Die Dynastie der Lahmidin in Hira, Berlin, 1899.
- Ryckmans, G., Les Religions Arabes Preislamiques, universite de Louvain, 1951.
- Al-Sam'anī, 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad, al-Ansāb, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Maimanī, Haidarabad, 1382/1962.
- Al-Salihi, Azmī Muḥammad, The Society, Beliefs and Political Theories of the Kharijites as Revealed in Their Poetry of the Umayyad Era, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, SOAS, University of London, 1975.
- Al-Sarrāj, Ja'far b. Aḥmad, Maṣāri' al-'Ushshāq, Beirut, 1958.
- Al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, Dīwān al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, ed. Hādī Shakar, Beirut.
- Schleifer, J., Bakr b. Wā'il, The Encyclopedia of Islam, Leiden, 1913. (Abbrev. E.I.)
- Serjeant, R.B., Ḥaram and Ḥawṭah, the Sacred Enclave in Arabia, Melanges Tāhā Husain, Cairo, 1962, pp. 41-58.
- Shaban, M.A., Islamic History (A.D. 600-750); a New Interpretation, Cambridge, 1971.
- The 'Abbāsīd Revolution, Cambridge, 1970.
- Al-Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm, al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Wakīl, Cairo, 1968.
- Al-Sharīshī, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Mu'min, Sharḥ al-Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīriyyah, Bulaq, A.H. 1300.
- Al-Shāyib, Aḥmad, Tarīkh al-Naqā'id fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabī, Cairo, 1966.
- Tarīkh al-Shi'r al-Siyāsī ilā Muntaṣaf al-Qarn al-Thānī, Cairo, 1945.
- Al-Shoush, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, The Nature of Authority in Arabia at the Advent of Islam, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, SOAS, University of London, 1959.
- Al-Subkī, 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Alī, Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-Kubrā, ed. Muḥammad Ṭanāḥī and 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥulw, Haidarabad, 1371/1952.

- Al-Suhailī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Allāh, al-Rawḍ al-Unuf, ed. 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd, 1398/1978.
- Al-Suyutī, Jalāl al-Dīn, al-Muzhir fī 'Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā'ihā, ed. Muḥammad Jād al-Mawlā, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm and 'Alī al-Bajāwī, 3rd. ed., Cairo.  
Sharḥ Shawāhid al-Mughnī, ed. Lajnat al-Turāth al-' Arabī.
- Sykes, P.M., A History of Persia, London, 1921.
- Al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr, Ṭarīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, ed. M.J. De Goeje, Leiden, 1879-1901. (Abbrev. Ṭabarī.)  
Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Bulaq.
- Ṭarafah b. al-'Abd, Dīwān Ṭarafah b. al-'Abd, ed. Karam al-Bustānī, Beirut, 1953.
- Al-Ṭayālīsī, Ja'far b. Muḥammad, Kitāb al-Mukātharah 'ind al-Mudhākarah, ed. R. Geyer, Leipzig, 1927.
- Al-Tha'ālibī, 'Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad, Thimār al-Qulūb fī al-Mudāf wa al-Mansūb, Cairo.
- Thilo, U., Die Ortsnamen in der Altarabischen Poesie, Wiesbaden, 1958.
- Al-Tibrīzī, Yaḥyā b. 'Alī, Kitāb Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id al-'Ashr, ed. C.J. Lyall, Calcutta, 1894.
- Al-Ṭirimmāḥ b. Ḥakīm, Dīwān al-Ṭirimmāḥ b. Ḥakīm b. Nafr al-Ṭā'ī, ed. F. Krenkow, London, 1927.
- Al-Ṭunjī, Muḥammad, al-A'shā, Aleppo, 1979.
- 'Ubaid Allāh b. Qāis, Dīwān 'Ubaid Allāh b. Qais al-Ruqayyāt, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm, Beirut, 1378/1958.
- Al-'Uyūn wa al-Ḥadā'iq fī Akhbār al-Ḥaqā'iq, (anonymous), ed. M.J. De Goeje, 1865.
- Vaglieri, L.V., The Patriarchal and Umayyad Caliphates, The Cambridge History of Islam, I, Cambridge (1970), pp. 57-103.
- Walker, J., A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum, London, 1941-1956.
- Al-Wāqidī, Muḥammad b. 'Umar, Kitāb Futūḥ al-Islām li Bilād al-'Ajam wa Khurāsān, ed. 'Azīz Zand, Cairo,

- 1309/1891. (Abbrev. Wāqidī.)  
Kitāb al-Maghāzī, ed. M. Jones, London,  
 1966.
- Watt, W.M., Ḥanīfah b. Ludjaym, The Encyclopedia of Islam,  
 new ed. (Abbrev. E.I.)  
Muhammad at Medina, Oxford University Press, 1956.
- Wellhausen, J., Prolegomena zur ältesten Geschichte des  
 Islams, Berlin, 1899.  
Skizzen und Vorarbeiten, Berlin.  
 (Eng. trans.) The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall,  
 translated by M.G. Weir, Calcutta, 1927.  
 (Eng. trans.) The Religio-Political Factions  
 in Early Islam, translated by R.C. Ostle and  
 S.M. Walzer, Amsterdam/Oxford, 1975.
- Al-Ya'qūbī, Aḥmad b. Abī Ya'qūb, Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī, ed.  
 M.T. Houtsma, Leiden, 1883. (Abbrev. Ya'qūbī.)
- Al-Zabīdī, Muḥammad Murtaḍā, Tāj al-'Arūs min Jawāhir  
 al-Qāmūs, Benghazi.
- Zaidān, Jurjī, Tārīkh Ādab al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, ed.  
 Shawqī Daif, 1957.
- Zakī, Aḥmad Kamāl, al-Ḥayāt al-Adabiyyah fī al-Baṣrah ilā  
 Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thānī al-Hijrī, Damascus, 1381/  
 1961.
- Al-Zamakhsharī, Maḥmūd b. 'Umar, Asās al-Balāghah, Cairo,  
 1341/1922. (Abbrev. Asās.)
- Al-Zawzanī, 'Abd Allāh al-'Abdalakānī, Hamāsāt al-Zurafā'  
 min Ash'ār al-Muḥdathīn wa al-Qudamā', ed.  
 Muḥammad al-Mu'aibid, Baghdad, 1973.
- Al-Zubairī, al-Muṣ'ab b. 'Abd Allāh, Kitāb Nasab Quraish,  
 ed. E. Levi-Provencal, Cairo, 1953.
- Zuhair b. Abī Sulmā, Shi'r Zuhair b. Abī Sulmā, ed. Fakhr  
 al-Dīn Qabāwah, Aleppo, 1970.
- Al-Zuhairī, Maḥmūd, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Farazdaq, Baghdad,  
 1954.