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The Poet 'Umāra al-Yamani

1. Abū Muhammad 'Umāra^(b) ibn 'Alī was born in the Yomen in 515/1121. He studied jurisprudence at Zabid (531-535 A.H.) then he taught Shāfi'ī Jurisprudence there. While on pilgrimage to Mecca in 538/1145 he met the Queen al-Hurra of Zabid and became one of her close friends. He began trading between Aden and Zabid in 538 A.H., and became rich, famous, and a friend of Ibn Saba' (the Dā'i of Aden), his Vizier Bilāl b. Jarīr and his secretary al-'Abdī. He was sent by the Prince of "al-Haramain" (Qāsim b. Hāshim b. Falita), on a mission to the Fatimid Caliph (al-Fā'iz) in Egypt in 549 A.H. So successful was his mission that the Prince of al-Haramain sent him on another mission in 551 A.H. He went to Egypt and settled there, living happily until Saladin ended the Fatimid Caliphate in 567 A.H. when 'Umāra was involved in a plot to replace the son of the last Fatimid Caliph on the throne. The plot was betrayed and 'Umāra was executed on 2 Ramaḍān 569/6 April 1175) (Chapter 1 Part I P. 28 - 76).

2. 'Umāra had a good character, so that most people liked and respected him. He was a faithful and pious muslim, so that he seemed proud of his religion. He belonged to Shāfi'ī sect by birth, education and in his way of thinking; so it was said that he was a fanatic of sunna. He was one of

the most learned of the people of his time. He studied jurisprudence, Tafsīr Hadith, History, Arabic literature and language. Then he wrote many books in addition to his "Dīwān": al-Nukat al-ʿAṣriyya, Tārīkh al-Yaman, Shuʿarāʾ al-Yaman, al-Farāʿid and Sīrat al-Sayyida Nafīsa. All this made him gain a good position in his society (Chapter 2 P. 77 - 129).

3. ʿUmāra's poetic talent was revealed in Adon by the help of al-ʿAbdī, grew at Zabīd, and his fame made complete in Egypt especially when he joined "Dīwān al-Shuʿarāʾ" in the Fatimid Caliphate. So he became one of the greatest poets of his time until Saladin's reign when he became neglected.

(Chapter 1 Part II P. 131 - 159).

4. ʿUmāra was a panegyrist. He was expert in eulogy in which was most of his poetry, but he also wrote in most of the poetical themes common to his time; elegy epistolary-poetry, satire, love-poetry, ascetic-poetry, descriptive-poetry and other themes.

(Chapter 2 P. 160 - 230).

5. ʿUmāra constantly sought to express his ideas lucidly, so most of his poetry was understood by ordinary

readers. Although his style was not distinguished, it was adequate, and his language was eloquent. He was fond of rhetorical figures (Badī') which can be seen in most of his poetry. While he avoided strange rhymes and rare metres he wrote many "Urjūzas" and "Muwashshahs".

(Chapter 3. P. 231 - 282).

6. 'Umāra made use of some of his predecessors' art, especially Abū Tammām, al-Buḥturī and al-Mutanabbī. Similarly some of his followers benefitted from his art. His poetic thought and descriptions reached a high level, and he won the admiration of Arabs everywhere. His importance, then, was as a poet who was able to record in his poetry the events which happened in his time, and he was one of the pioneers of "Muwashshahs" in the east.

(Chapter 4. P. 283 - 318).

J. A. 'Alwash

The Poet 'Umāra al-Yamanī

by

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of Durham for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

عمارة رمز الوفاء الفريد وسدع الدرر الفاخرة
 وبحم أسماء الرمان التليد بأفق العصاحه في القاهرة
 أقدم هذا الكتاب الجديد الى مروه البرة الطاهرة

‘Umāra remains the symbol of a unique loyalty,
 the creator of veritable pearls of poetry.
 A star which illuminated his day and age,
 into the horizon of eloquence in Cairo.
 I dedicate this new book,
 to his unsullied loyal Spirit.

J. ‘Alwash.

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Preface

I first became interested in 'Umāra when I was writing an article about Rājih al-Hillī for "al-Ustādh", the academic magazine of the Faculty of Education in Baghdad University. (1) Some Arab writers said that Rājih took his elegy on the death of the King al-Zāhir of Aleppo from 'Umāra. I wanted to see to what extent Rājih imitated 'Umāra, so I sought out his "Dīwān." When I examined Derenbourg's edition, I found it interesting and thought it would be worth academic research.

This thesis is concerned only with 'Umāra's poetry, since its title is "The Poet 'Umāra al-Yamanī". (2) The first part is devoted to the study of his life and his personality, and examines his character, habits, religion, sect and culture. Part two is devoted to his poetry. It consists of four chapters, in which the development of his poetry, themes and techniques are studied.

The introduction gives a brief picture of his time, brief because there are quite a number of books, in Arabic, English and other languages, which deal with varying aspects of this period. (3)

 (1) Al-Ustādh, V.10, 1962

(2) The letter of the University of Durham.
 2nd December, 1964.

(3) Hasan, Ibrāhīm, Tārīkh al-Dawla al-Fātīmiyya 674-700

'Umāra himself gave us good references, because he wrote his biography at the beginning of his book "al-Nukat al-'Asriyya", which is one of the principal sources of this thesis, and the Petersburg (Pet.) and Copenhagen (Cop.) manuscripts of his "Dīwān" also. Of course, some other works contributed to the study of 'Umāra, for example Derenbourg's "'Oumāra du Yémen" (Der.).

I would like to thank all these friends who helped me in different fields My supervisor, Mr. J.A. Haywood, Miss N. Kaḥṭān; Mr. & Mrs. M. Willstrop; Mr. A. Farūḳī, and all the staff of the library in the School of Oriental Studies.

Transliteration

b	ب
t	ت
<u>th</u>	ث
j	ج
h	ح
<u>kh</u>	خ
d	د
<u>dh</u>	ذ
r	ر
z	ز
s	س
<u>sh</u>	ش
s	ص
d	ص
t	ط
z	ظ
ʿ	ع
<u>gh</u>	غ
f	ف
q	ق
k	ك

l	ل
m	م
n	ن
w	و
h	هـ
,	ء
y	ي

Vowels:

u	Short Ḍamma	و
a	Short Faṭḥa	ا
i	Short Kasra	ا
ū	Long Ḍamma	و
ā	Long Faṭḥa	ا
ī	Long Kasra	ي

Diphthongs:

au	or	aw	اؤ
ai	or	ay	اي

INTRODUCTION

(His Background)

(I)

The sixth A.H. Century was the epoch of 'Umāra, because his life covered just over the first half of that century. During this time, he lived in both the Yaman and Egypt, so this will be his background which we are about to review.

'Umāra spent the first part of his life in the Yaman, which is the furthest corner of south-western Arabia. Arab states have always tried to capture the Yaman because it is an ideal base, and also open to new religious and political movements. The prophet Muhammad sent Mu'ādh ibn Jabal to teach the people the rules of Islam. (I) Banū Umayya and Abbassids sent their "wālis" immediately to the Yaman to be sure of their authority there. The Yaman was one of the first centres for the Shī'ī, 'Alawī and Fatimid "Da'wa", such as the attempt of "Mansūr al-Yaman". So it was divided into many parts, cities, towns, "Mikhhlāfs" and fortresses, and thus there were disputes and struggles for power. They did exactly as the pre-Islamic tribes used to do. They raided each other, capturing women and plundering property. 'Umāra gives us vivid pictures of this life in his book, "The History of the Yaman".

(I) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil V. 2/227

The main parts of the Yaman during the life of 'Umāra were Aden, Zabīd and Tihāma. Zabīd was ruled by ^{Agahids} ~~Sulayhites~~, the Queen al-Sayyida al-Hurra ruled acting in the name of her son Fātik after his father's (^{Mansur} ~~al-Mukarram~~) death. Her Wazir, Abū Muhammad Surūr, was her chief support and the first man of importance in Zabīd. The Sulayhites were under the domination of the Fatimid Caliphate and they used to mention the name of the Fatimid Caliph in the Friday public prayers. (2) They ruled many towns and districts, such as Dhī Jibla and Ta'kar, and their authority lasted until 553-554 A.H., when 'Alī ibn Mahdī conquered them and ruled most of the Yaman. (3)

The Zurai'ites were the other important government in the Yaman. It existed in Aden and other towns, and 'Mikh-lāis followed them. 'Umāra visited Aden in 538 A.H. while the governor was al-Dā'ī Muhammad ibn Saba', whom 'Umāra met and praised with his Wazir, Bilāl ibn Jarīr. When ibn Saba' died, he was succeeded by his son, 'Imrān, who continued in the same way as his father until 564 A.H. The Zurai'ites were both rulers and Dā'is to the Fatimi sect in the Yaman.

When 'Umāra entered Egypt in the reign of al-Fā'iz, the country was not at peace. Most of the parts of the Fatimid Empire were separated from it, being independent or following other states, after this Empire had been

(2) Hasan, Tārīkh al Dawla al-Fatīmiyya 239-240

(3) 'Umāra, Tārīkh al-Yaman MS. 149

extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, to include the Yaman, Hijāz, ~~Mawarī~~ and Sicily, so the name of the Fatimid Caliph was mentioned in the public prayer on Fridays in the mosques of all these regions, (4) terrifying the Umayyad governors in Andalus and giving a warning to the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad. But now the situation became worse. The Caliphate became weaker; the Caliphs could not do anything to protect their authority because they were too weak, since they undertook the responsibility while they were still young. So the actual authority was directed by the Viziers, who were constantly struggling for favour and quarrelling with other leaders, so that they killed their closest friends for these purposes. The youngest Caliph was al-Fā'iz. When his father, al-Zāfir ibn al-Hāfiz, was killed by his Vizier 'Abbās al-Sinhājī in 549 A.H., he was succeeded by his son 'Isā, who was surnamed "al-Fā'iz" when he was only three years old. (5) 'Abbās tried to force the authority, but the women of the Caliphate palace asked al-Sāliḥ Talā'ī ibn Ruzzīk, who was the Prince in the south (Sa'id) for help. He came and conquered 'Abbās who was killed with his two sons. Therefore, al-Sāliḥ became the Vizier. (6) He took

(4) Hasan, Tārīkh 78

(5) Abū Shāma, al-Rawdatain. V. I/97

(6) Usāma ibn Munqidh. al-I'tibār 20-26

care of the young Caliph, but the real authority was in his hands, so that he was ^{one of} the first Viziers to be called "Malik" (King).

Al-Fā'iz did not live a long time; he died in 555 A.H., so al-Ṣāliḥ chose 'Abdullāh ibn Yūsuf to succeed him and called him al-'Ādid, he was the last Fatimid Caliph, who had not yet reached puberty. (7) Al-Ṣāliḥ gave his daughter in marriage to the Caliph to keep his own position, but he was killed in 556 A.H. (8) He was succeeded by his son, al-'Ādil Ruzzīk, but conditions were worsening. So many Viziers killed each other, forcing the authority from one to another, al-'Ādil, Shāwar and Dirghām. When Shāwar brought an army from ^{al-}Shām under the leadership of Asad al-Dīn and his nephew Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, he was able to kill Dirghām in 559 A.H. and to become Vizier again, but he did not live long because he, too, was killed by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in 564 A.H. (9)

Then Asad al-Dīn became the Vizier, for a few months until he died in 564/1169, and then Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn became the Vizier. (10)

(7) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil: V.IX/48

(8) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt VII/

(9) Abū al-Fidā, Tārīkh. VIII/48

(10) Lane-Pool, The Muhammadian Dynasties: 74

"In the first month of 567 (Sept. 1171), Saladin caused the 'khutba' or public prayer to be said at Cairo in the name of the contemporary Abbasid Caliph, Mustadī' instead of the Fatimid 'Āḍid, who lay on his death-bed. The change was effected without disturbance, and Egypt became once more" one of the countries which followed Baghdad, but Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was King.

(2)

The Islamic society was mostly corrupt and divided. It was growing worse and most of the virtues began to disappear. The people were a mixture of many kinds. Arabs, Turks, Ghuzz and Persians. There were also many Abyssinians and Indians in the Yaman. Therefore, the society was full of different habits and conventions. These people were of many different classes; the high class which contained Caliphs, Princes, nobles, Viziers and their relatives. These people had authority and did exactly as they wished. The great scholars "Ulamā'" made up the second class. The third class consisted of rich merchants. The last was the common people: workmen, farmers, small merchants, Soldiers and others. These classes were flexible however. Other factors divided people into classes, (11) and as there were

(11) Ibn al-Fuwatī, al-Ḥawādith 143

many slaves and "Jāriyas" in nearly every house, so relationship in most of the families was made weaker and enmity raised its head among relatives and even among brothers, murder became common, and crowds of "Ayyārs" (vagabonds) became evident in every city, disturbing the peace and security, killing people and stealing their money. At times, they became so dangerous that they terrified all the people and troubled the governors, because the relatives of some of the responsible chiefs had joined them. (12)

The position of the woman was rather doubtful, although she could hold a high position in society and even at times direct leaders, Viziers and Caliphs, such as Sayyidat al-Quṣṣūr (the aunt of al-Fā'iz) did in Egypt, and the Queen al-Hurra, who was the real governor in Zabīd at the time of her son Fātik. However, women could demand respect and they could educate themselves, even "Jāriyas" were well educated to the extent that they could have a marked effect on society.

Most people were Muslims, but there were many Christians and Jews who attained great wealth and held high positions in the Caliphate. (13) Muslims were divided into many sects; the main two being Shi'ites and Sunnīs. Egypt was

(12) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil. VIX/7

(13) Ḥasan, Tārīkh 402

governed by Fatimids whose sect was Ismā'īlī, which is a branch of Shi'ite. The people in the Yaman were of many sects. Shi'ite (Ismā'īlī, Zaidī and Imāmī) and Sunnī (Shāfi'ī, Hanafī and Mālikī). (14) Most people were still strongly influenced by religion, so religious men, such as Jurisprudents, were very important in so much that they were able to direct and influence the leaders.

People worked in business, trade, crafts and farming. Some were rich, others were poor because they had to pay different taxes to the government, which accumulated a great reserve of money in the treasury. Maqrīzī describes this in his "Khīṭaṭ" in incredible terms. (15) This was in spite of the fact that rich people mostly did not pay any tax, but were granted money by the government. But the fact which should be mentioned here is that the Fatimids spent most of this wealth to please the people, at feasts, celebrations and ceremonies, as they bestowed gifts on the poets, writers and scholars. 'Umāra was one of the fortunate.

(3)

The cultural side of life flourished. The actual means of culture were the Jurisprudents, the Qādis, the Muhaddiths,

(14) 'Umāra, Tārīkh: MS. 145

(15) Maqrīzī, Khīṭaṭ: VI/496

the linguists, the grammarians, the writers and the poets. There were, also, scientists, engineers, doctors and astronomers. Most of them were concerned with literature, as most of the Viziers, Princes, their relatives and friends were also.

The first primary school was the "Kuttāb", in which boys used to learn reading and writing, reciting and memorizing the Koran, calligraphy and arithmetic. The teachers at "Kuttābs" were called "Mu'allim" or "Mu'addib", and most of the "Kuttābs" were in the mosques.

There were in the Yaman many centres of culture; schools, mosques and palaces. The most famous and important centre was Zabīd, which was called the city of scholars and jurists. (16) There were many schools there, teaching most kinds of knowledge, especially jurisprudence, so that people used to come from everywhere to study under the great scholars there. Literature was one branch of which people were fond, especially poetry. So there were many poets in the Yaman. 'Umāra wrote a book about his contemporaries, quoting some of their poetry. The leaders and "Dā'īs" liked poetry and patronised poets. 'Umāra tells us many stories to show this. He said about the Queen Asmā', mother^{er} of the King al-Mukarram. "Asmā' was of a generous and noble disposition, liberal in the rewards she bestowed upon

(16) Al-Shaibānī, Bughya: MS. F. 9

poets... Her husband's poet, named As'ad ibn Yahyā al-Haythamī, spoke of her in the following terms:

"She hath impressed upon beneficence the stamp of generosity - of meanness, she allows no trace to appear." (17)

And 'Umāra says about Surūr, the Vizier of the King Fātik:

"I have seen a list of the gratifications which Surūr was in the habit of conferring, on his arrival at Zabīd, upon the Jurists, Kādīs, and upon the most distinguished scholars, learned in the traditions, in grammar, glossology, theology and jurisprudence. The whole amounted to twelve thousand Dinars each year." (18)

In Aden, all the leaders of the Zurai'ites were a great help to scholars and poets. Not only this, but many of them were poets and wrote good poetry; for example, Muḥammad ibn Saba' and his father, Saba' ibn Ahmad, who used to reply to the poets who praised him, writing poetry to them in addition to his gifts. 'Umāra said in this connection:

"But he was of a benevolent and generous disposition, an accomplished poet, learned in the doctrines of the Pure sect, well acquainted with the sayings of the wise, nurtured on poetry. He requited eulogists with eulogy as well as with substantial rewards."

(17) Kay, Yaman: 22

(18) Ibid.· 121

On that point, 'Aly ibn al-Kumm has said of him'

"When I panegyricized al-Hayzarī, the son of Ahmad, he rewarded me and he requited me with praise for my praise.

He gave me verses for my verses, and added gifts, these my capital in trade, these my profits." (19)

There were many leaders who did the same as Saba'; for instance 'Alī al-Ṣulaiḥī and Sulṭān Ḥātim Ahmad.⁽²⁰⁾ So these leaders not only protected and patronised poets and literary men, but they also shared their literary life with them. Consequently they encouraged them, respected them and created a competitive atmosphere to improve and encourage poetry.

As for Egypt, it became the centre of the Islamic world at that time; so people came there from all over to study, teach, work and earn fame. The Fatimid Caliphs welcomed them and encouraged all the scholars, scientists, philologists, writers and poets to come to Cairo.⁽²¹⁾ The new government there wanted, in this way, to create a great cultural movement and renaissance, to create propaganda in competition with the Abbasids in Baghdad, and the Umayyads in Andalus. On the other hand, because they were Shi'ite, they intended to support their sect with the help of all these kinds of knowledge, philosophy and literature.⁽²²⁾

(19) Ibid.. 43

(20) Al-Shaibānī, Qurrat al-'Uyūn. MS. F. 30, 41.

(21) Hasan, Tārīkh. 280-282

(22) Amin, Zuhri: V.I/188

The "Imāms" themselves looked after the scholars, paying them good salaries, and took care of the various knowledges ('Ulūm), so that they used to open their palaces for this purpose, arranging occasional meetings. They read books, discussed different matters and displayed their new ideas at these meetings. (23) Therefore, many Viziers, Princes and nobles followed the Caliphs in this way, and became a great help to the education of the country. But while these actions were useful from this point of view, they had their failings, the scholars who did not join these patrons did not have what they needed in life and they were left without means of support. (24)

Mosques were the greatest centres of study. Teachers made mosques their schools, so the students gathered round the teachers of the kind of knowledge which they chose. For this reason the Fatimids took great care of mosques and built many big ones. (25)

The greatest event, in this aspect, was the establishing of "al-Azhar", which became the most famous Islamic university in the time of al-'Azīz (378 A.H.). The other great cultural event was the establishment of the great

(23) Maqrīzī, Khitat: V. I/226

(24) Amīn, Zuhr: V. I/120

(25) Hasan, Tārīkh: 226

academy "Dār al-Hikma" which the Caliph al-Hikma" which the Caliph al-Hakim established in 395 A.H. near by his palace. He provided it with an extensive library called "Dār al-'Ilm". (26) It was not the only library at that time, because there were libraries in most of the important towns in Egypt and the biggest one was the one which was in the Caliphate palace. It was said that the books in "Khizānat al-Kutub" were more than 12000 v. (27) They were necessary for the benefit of students and teachers, and were a result of the interest of the Caliphs in books, for which they often paid large sums. The Caliphs made these excellent books available to readers at any time because they opened their palaces and libraries to the scholars and students, who could find all they needed in these libraries free of charge, such as paper, pens and ink. (28)

By these facilities, they could spread and improve "Ulūm" which at that time included the studies of the Koran, "Tafsīr" (interpretation), "Qirā'āt" (readings), religious knowledge, jurisprudence, "Usūl," "Farā'id," 'Hadīth' and other studies: History, geography, astronomy,

(26) Ibid.: 435

(27) Ibn Wāsīl, Mufarrīj V. I/201.

(28) Hasan, Tārīkh: 428

philology, "Nahw", "Sarf", in addition to the scientific studies such as. medicine, engineering, mathematics, biology, botany and so on. (29)

Although literature is one of these branches of knowledge, it received special attention from the Fatimids; it improved very quickly since it was abundant, but, unfortunately, most of the writings of the time are lost. (30) The poets were numerous, (31) and they all had their own different roles to play. (32) They describe their life giving real images from the society of Egypt, showing us how people lived at that time. People generally liked humour and insolence, so poetry was full of this. (33) They described the beauty of nature by which they were surrounded and they described the ceremonies, meetings and celebrations. (34) This poetry was full of "Badī'" in most of its themes because the Egyptian poets liked it, but the best of all was Ibn Qalāqīs, who was very fond of it, (35) as was 'Umāra also.

(29) For more details see: al-Maqrīzī, Khitat, Amīn, Zuhr al-Islām and Hasan, Tārīkh al-Fāṭimīyya.

(30) Husain, Fī Adab Miṣr: 127

(31) Al-'Imād Kharīda (Egypt)

(32) Husain, Fī Adab Miṣr 295

(33) Ibid. 300

(34) Ibid: 125-127

(35) Ibid. 226

This poetry in general might be divided into three kinds: praise poetry, the poetry of propaganda to the Ismā'īlī sect and lyric poetry. (36) The poets found patronage which showered them with many gifts. There was established a special "Dīwān" for the poets, which looked after them and paid them certain salaries.

The favoured position of poets and other literary men was not only because the Caliphs and the Viziers liked literature as propaganda for the state, but because they also enjoyed it. Some of them were poets, writers and orators (Khuṭabā) al-Mansūr, al-Qā'im and al-Mu'izzal were. Some books quoted their poetry but the best of them was Tamīm ibn al-Mu'izz, whose poetry was of a high order. (37) The Viziers, often used to compose poetry, for instance Ibn Kāllīs, al-Malik al-Sāliḥ, Dirghām and Shāwar. So they encouraged poets and writers and employed them in the "Dīwāns" or in any worthwhile government office. This was a factor which attracted poets and writers all over the Arab world to come to Egypt to gain what they wanted, money, fame and position. Many did so, (38) and 'Umāra was one of these poets who left his own country, for this purpose, and settled in Egypt.

(36) Amīn, Zuhr V.I/210-212

(37) Amīn, Zuhr V.I/212

(38) For more details see: al-'Imād, Kharīda, Husain, Fī Adab Misr, Hasan, Tārīkh al-Dawla al-Fāṭimiyya

PART I

'Umāra's Life

CHAPTER I

His Biography

1. His origin, birth and upbringing.

His full name was:- Najmuddīn Abū Muhammad (or Abū Hamaz) 'Umāra ibn Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Zaidān ibn Ahmad al-Ḥakamī, from al-Ḥakam ibn Sa'd al-'Ashīra al-Madhhijī, from Madhhij, al-Qahtānī, ⁽¹⁾ al-Yamanī. He was proud of his origin, so he said "The origin of the ancestors is Qahtān, then Al-Ḥakam ibn Sa'd al-'Ashīra al-Madhhijī".⁽²⁾

'Umāra was born of well-known parents into a famous family of one of the great Arab Tribes in Yaman. This tribe claimed to be pure Arabic blood, because they did not allow intermarriage. Therefore, 'Alī ibn Zaidān, 'Umāra's father, married his cousin, 'Umāra's mother, the daughter of al-Muthīb ibn Sulaimān. Both of his parents' fathers, Zaidān ibn Ahmad and al-Muthīb ibn Sulaimān, were amongst the chiefs of the tribe.

(1) Qahtān b. 'Abīr b. Shālikh b. Arfakh shadh b. Nūh, *claimed to be the origin of the Qahtānī Arabs*. The Arabs were *likely*, called Arab from his son Ya'rub. (al-Nuwairī-Nihāyat al-Arab. V.II. p. 292)

(2) 'Umāra, al-Nukat. p. 7

This tribe was one of the largest tribes in Yaman. It was noted for its generosity, courage and zeal. 'Umāra tells us many interesting stories about some of its members; for instance his uncle, 'Alī ibn Zaidān.⁽³⁾ There were also many scholarly writers in varying aspects of knowledge.

'Umāra was born in Murṭān, a town in Wasā' Valley in Tihāma of Yaman,⁽⁴⁾ most probably in about 515/1121, but we cannot be certain of this date, because he never mentions it. He merely mentions that he reached puberty in 529/1135.⁽⁵⁾ Since the age of puberty varies, this does not help us to fix his age, since there is no definite age when man reaches puberty. in the "Sharī'a".⁽⁶⁾

Most of his biographers, (ibn al-Aṭhīr (al-Kāmil), ibn Khallikān (Wafayāt), al-Qalqashandī (Ṣubḥ), Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (Mir'āt), ibn Kathīr (al-Bidāya), ibn al-'Imād (Shadharāt), al-Isbahānī al-(Kharīda) and abū Shāma (al-Rawḍatayn)) avoided the matter. Some of them, like ibn Khallikān for example, were interested in the birth dates of the men whom they wrote about, but they could not be

(3) Ibid: p. 10-20

(4) Wasā' may be changed from Wāsī' (wide)" said Yāqūt in his Mu'jam V.111/420

(5) 'Umāra, al-Nukat. p.20

(6) Al-Rāzī, Tafsīr. V.VI/p.304

certain of 'Umāra's. However, among those biographers who mentioned his birthdate were al-Janadī, al-Ansārī, al-Dhahabī, al-Suyūtī, al-Amīnī, Kahāla, Dermbourg and C.Huart. The earliest of them was al-Janadī, (died 732/1332), who said:

"He was born a few years after 510 A.H.". (7)

(bid'a 'ashra&wa khamsmī'a) «بصح سنة وخمسة»

"al-Dhahabī, Shams al-Dīn Muhammad, (died 746/1348), said the same in one of his books. (8)

But he gave a definite date in another book when he said "He was born in 515" (9)

Al-Suyūtī, Jalāl al-Dīn, (died 911/1505), agreed with al-Dhahabī. (10) So they both gave an exact date, although no one knows on what basis. Others, it appears, took this date to be accurate, but Derenbourg says "He was born in either 515 or 514". (11) And al-Amīnī, 'Abdū 'l-Husain says. "He was born in 513". (12)

(7) Al-Janadī, al-Sulūk. MS. (Der. 542)

(8) Duwal al-Islām. V.II/p.61

(9) Tārīkh al-Islām: MS. (Der. 491)

(10) Bughyat al-Wu'āt. P. 359

(11) 'Oumāra du Yemen: V.II/24

(12) Al-Ghadīr. V.IV/408

That means he did not agree with them that "biḍ'a 'ashra is 15", as they thought, so he reduced it to 513, or he thought that the age to reach puberty is about 16 years. At all events, the exact date of 'Umāra's birth remains in doubt.

'Umāra's early life in a wealthy and honourable family, was serene and secure. He spent happy years in these environments acquiring strength of character, knowledge and the respect of his relatives. They were his first examples and teachers. He had the gift of eloquence and also learnt the 'best language' among people who were considered "Afṣah Al-Nās", as Abū 'Amr ibn Al-'Alā' said *about their ancestors* (*)

When he was about eight years old, he began to study in the 'Kuttāb'; to recite the Koran and to learn it by heart, then to learn to read and to write. His first teacher was 'Atīyya ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥarām. When 'Umāra was able to read 'Ṣūrat Sād', his uncle 'Alī ibn Zaidān gave the teacher 100 cows and other gifts. (13) This story may be suspect, but 'Umāra told it in addition to many other stories, showing how dear he was to his family, although he was not the only son, he had, in fact, many brothers, probably more than five. (14) We know little more about him at this stage, but at any rate, he continued his education there

(13) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p.12

(14) Ibid: p.23

(*) al-Buḥārī; Ajā'ib al-Malahiqat V 1/163

until 529/1135 when he reached puberty, then he began to study seriously. He wanted to study jurisprudence, because God says. "But why should not a part of every section of them (the believers) go forth to become learned in religion (jurisprudents), and to warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware". (15)

‘Umāra also knew that Muḥammad had said: "From whomsoever God wants goodness, he makes him learned in ^{law} ~~religion~~". (16)

So ‘Umāra decided to study the subject which interested him most. He could not begin straight away, however, because there was drought and famine in Yaman that year, and his father had become the chief of the tribe after his brother's death in 526 A.H., so it was his responsibility to look after his people. They suffered under these conditions for something like a year until most of their farms were destroyed and the majority of their animals were dead. Their troubles were not solved until, as ‘Umāra says, "They became like the other people". (17)

 (15) The Koran, IX(Repentance)122

(16) Al-Bukhārī, Fath al-Bārī: V.I/133-134

(17) ‘Umāra, al-Nukat. p.21

2. At Zabīd.-

After this disaster had been overcome, 'Umāra began to realise his hopes, in 531/1137 his mother gave him jewellery ⁽¹⁸⁾ valued at 1000 Dīnārs, and his father gave him 470 Dīnārs, ⁽¹⁹⁾ to go to Zabīd to study whatever he wished, Zabīd having a great reputation as a place of learning at that time. "It is the city of knowledge and scholars, jurisprudence and jurists, religion and goodness". ⁽²⁰⁾ There were many scholars of religion, particularly in Shāfi'ī jurisprudence, teaching in its schools. 'Umāra referred to one of them Abū Muhammad 'Abdullāh ibn abī al-Qāsim al-Abbār, who was his teacher in "Madhhab al-Shāfi'ī". ⁽²¹⁾

When 'Umāra first arrived, he went directly to the house of the Vizier Muslim ibn Sakht, a friend of his father, where he lived as one of his sons. ⁽²²⁾ Everyone at Zabīd, the teachers, the jurists, the students and the people, took an immediate liking to 'Umāra, because he was polite, gracious and interesting to listen to, but what astonished them most was his eloquence.

 (18) 'Umāra says this in al-Nukat, p.21, but he says in Tārīkh al-Yaman (MS p.84) that he went to Zabīd in 530. It might be an accidental mistake and 531 is the right one.

(19) 'Umāra, al-Nukat: p.21

(20) Al-Shaybānī, Bughyat al-Mustafīd MS. F. 9

(21) 'Umāra, Tārīkh al-Yaman MS. p. 14

(22) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p. 21

He worked hard for four years, he did not absent himself from the school at any time in the day, except to pray in the mosque. When he had finished studying, he visited his parents at Murtān. They were very happy to see their son, now a great jurispudent and scholar, and they were surprised when they learnt that he had only spent the money and not made use of his mother's jewellery, which he returned to her. 'Umāra went back to Zabīd, not to study, but to teach. He taught Shāfi'ī jurisprudence, especially (al-Mawārith) - inheritance - and (al-Farā'id) - calculation of shares. He wrote a book called "al-Farā'id",⁽²³⁾ but it has since been lost. 'Umāra was an able lecturer, so everyone liked and respected him, especially the students. He had a fine reputation among the scholars, but he only taught there for three years. (24)

3. His Marriage

'Umāra seemed settled at this time. He lived quietly and happily. No mention is made either by his biographers or by 'Umāra himself of the date of his marriage, but it can be said that he married early. As soon as he had finished his elementary study, and reached puberty, he felt that he was now able to support a family. And, therefore, he felt

 (23) Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya V. XII/276

(24) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p. 23

he should marry to fulfill the demands of his religion, or according to the "Hadīth" of Muhammad "Marriage is my 'sunna' "(25), especially as he was wealthy. So he married early, in about 529 A.H. The proof of this is in his elegies to his son Muhammad "You were given to me a year after I had reached puberty, therefore your age did not seem far from mine". (26)

As already mentioned, 'Umāra said that he reached puberty in 529 A.H. (27) so it seems that 'Umāra married in 529 and his son was born in the same year. There are no details of the marriage available.

This lack of detail is typical of the Arabs, because they consider marriage a personal matter or a family secret, and so they do not like to make it public. His wife was from Yaman, however, because 'Umāra said "Dirghām was present with me, burying my wife when she died, she was from Yaman". (28) We do not know when that was, but it is certain that it occurred at the time of the Vizier Ruzzīk ibn al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, because 'Umāra mentioned his name in this time as a Vizier. And there is no doubt that the reign of Ruzzīk began on 19 Ramadān 556 A.H., and he was

(25) Al-'Amīlī, *Wasā'il*. V 8/ 3-4

(26) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 188B

(27) 'Umāra, *al-Nukat* p. 20.

(28) 'Umāra, *al-Nukat* p. 147

killed in Safar, 558 A.H. (29)

When 'Umāra's wife died, he married an Egyptian woman, firstly because he was settled in Egypt at that time, and secondly, Dirghām helped him to get married and afterwards he persuaded Ruzzīk to pay the bride's marriage portion, "Mahr", for him. It was 40 Dīnārs. (30)

'Umāra had many children Muḥammad, Husain, Ismā'īl, Yaḥyā, 'Aṭīyya and 'Abdullāh. But, unfortunately, all those children died during his lifetime, when they were young, some of them as children. This obviously caused 'Umāra much grief and he praised them in many of his odes. He was a good father, compassionate and full of kindness.

He also had daughters, although he never mentioned them individually, probably the reason is the conservatism and the conventions of Arabs as far as women were concerned. There were at least five, because he cited five in one of his elegies to his son Muḥammad

"Should destiny annihilate the spirit of my son
who might comfort me in my misfortunes while
affliction is poured on me with five daughters?" (31)

But it is odd that this pious jurisprudent should have written this, since we read in the Koran "And when a daughter is announced to one of them, his face becomes black

(29) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil. VI/81

(30) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p. 147

(31) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 28B.

انكسب النوايا لوجه احد ذريته بسوءي وتلوي بحسبي

and he is full of wrath!" (32)

4. To Mecca.

'Umāra went on pilgrimage to Mecca in 538/1143, because he felt deeply that he should go to perform this duty, especially seeing that he had taught jurisprudence for about three years.

"A pilgrimage to the House (of Allāh) is a duty unto Allāh for mankind for all those who can find a way there".⁽³³⁾

He prepared thoroughly for this great religious event in his life, but he did not know what lay ahead for him. He began the journey by ~~palanquin~~ ^{(litter) (مس)}. After some days he became weary of living inside such a confined space, so he transferred to a swift camel, ⁽³⁴⁾ and finding this more comfortable, pressed on. He had been travelling through the night, when, just before dawn, he heard a faint sound coming from his right. He stopped his camel, listened carefully, anxious to know what it was. After a few minutes he moved in its direction and was surprised to find a lonely camel grazing, with a howdah on it. At first, he did not approach, then he called, saying "Oh, owners of the camel, Oh, cameleer", ⁽³⁵⁾ but there was no reply. Then he went

(32) The Korān. XVI (the Bees) 58

(33) The Koran: III (the family of 'Imrān), 97

(34) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p. 25

(35) Ibid: p. 25

right up to the camel and he found that there were two women inside the howdah, sound asleep and wearing golden anklets, and their legs were outside. He led the camel to the main road, after removing the anklets, but the women did not awake. He shackled the camel and went away, but not too far, so that he could watch the camel and keep guard over the two women.

After some hours had elapsed and nothing had happened, a caravan came by. When the people saw the camel, they untied the shackles and drove it with their caravan. This was the caravan of the Queen al-Sayyida al-Hurra, the mother of Fātik ibn Mansūr ibn Fātik ibn Jayyāsh ibn Najāh the King of Zabīd, (died 545/1150).⁽³⁶⁾ She, too, was going to Mecca on the pilgrimage. It was her custom to travel right at the back of the caravan. She would help those who needed help, wake up those who slept and carry those whose camels perished. She took with her about a hundred camels for this purpose.⁽³⁷⁾ She also undertook all the services

 (36) Al-Zirkalī, Al-'A'alām. V.VI/49

(37) 'Umāra, al-Nukat. p. 25

for the Yaman pilgrims and arranged guards for the caravans. (38) Next day, a crier called out, asking for the anklets, promising to pay one hundred "Mithqāl" to the person who returned them. The owners were wives of two rich men of Zabīd, and the anklets were valued at one thousand "Mithqāl". (39)

‘Umāra did not return them immediately, but waited until midnight. He delayed in order to be at the rear of the caravan. When the men of the Queen al-Hurra arrived, they asked him if he needed any help. He thanked them and said: "I want to meet the Queen for an important purpose".

A meeting was at once arranged between ‘Umāra and the Queen. She was in her howdah. She leaned her head out of the curtains and he gave her the anklets. So she asked him "What is your name, and who are you? You should be rewarded". (40) He explained to her the circumstances in which he found the women, indicating that he did not need the reward.

She liked him very much, appreciated his action, respected him and admired his honesty. From that time he became one of her closest friends. When they went back to Zabīd, after

(38) Al-Shaibānī, Bughyat al-Mustafīd MS. Fol. 17B.

(39) ‘Umāra, al-Nukat. p.26

(40) ‘Umāra, al-Nukat: p. 26

he had been one of her courtiers, he became famous among the jurisprudents, the scholars and people of note. He was welcomed by the princes, nobles and the Viziers. Afterwards he became the most intimate friend of the leading figure in Zabīd, the Wazīr, al-Qā'id Abū Muḥammad Surūr al-Fātikī, (41) who was next in importance to the Queen and the King. They helped 'Umāra to become very rich at last, because they advised him to trade between Zabīd and Aden.

5. To Aden.

It was really the most opportune time when the Queen al-Hurra and her Vizier al-Qā'id Surūr asked 'Umāra to begin trading. At that time, the fleet of the Shaikh al-Sa'id Bilāl ibn Jarīr al-Muḥammadī, the Vizier of al-Dā'ī Muḥammad ibn Saba, (42) in Aden, attacked the shores of Zabīd, the army killed many people, plundered and robbed the people. (43) This made them so frightened that for a long time they stopped travelling between Zabīd and Aden, as a result the goods of Aden became very cheap there, but very expensive in Zabīd, and vice-versa. This caused a crisis in both Zabīd and Aden. 'Umāra, as a jurisprudent,

 (41) Al-Shaibānī, Bughyat al-Mustafīd: MS. 19

(42) 'Umāra, Tārīkh al-Yaman. MS. 95

(43) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p.26-27

knew that: "Allah permitted trading.....", (44) but he had insufficient capital. The Queen al-Hurra and her Vizier Surūr knew very well how clever and honest he was, so they gave him several thousand Dīnārs and they made a list of the goods for him to bring from Aden which they needed. 'Umāra was pleased. He bought, with the money he was given, different kinds of goods from Zabīd which were very cheap, to sell in Aden, then he went to Aden.

When he arrived there he was welcomed by everybody. The people liked him, the merchants trusted him and the chiefs honoured him. He made many friends and a great deal of money. He carried on trade between Aden, Zabīd, Mecca, 'Aīdhāb, India and elsewhere, for ten years.⁽⁴⁵⁾ He became famous as a merchant. Afterwards, the most important result at this stage of his life was that he became a friend of Shaikh Bilāl ibn Jarīr and his secretary, Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad al-'Abdī,⁽⁴⁶⁾ and it was in his entourage that 'Umāra first gained fame as a poet.

6. The First Poem:

When 'Umāra first arrived at Aden, he was able to meet the famous writer Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad al-'Abdī, the

(44) The Koran. II(the cow),275

(45) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p. 28

(46) It is mentioned in Kharīda and al-Sulūk as al-'Aīdhī, but it is evidently wrong, because it is al-'Abdī, in Tārīkh al-Yaman, of 'Umāra: MS. p. 95

secretary of Shaikh Bilāl ibn Jarīr. Al-‘Abdī was a good man. He was a great help to all the jurists, merchants, poets and writers. When he heard that a caravan had come to Aden, he asked about the men who were in the caravan so that he could help them, buy their goods and give them gifts. (47)

‘Umāra was fortunate to meet this helpful, cultured man, who welcomed him warmly, bought his goods, gave him gifts and advised him to write a poem praising al-Dā‘ī Muḥammad ibn Saba’. (48) ‘Umāra was pleased at this suggestion, but he was troubled because he could not write a suitable poem, when he said to al-‘Abdī. "I cannot write the poem, because I am just a jurist, not a poet" Al-‘Abdī saw that the poetry which ‘Umāra had written was very poor. At last al-‘Abdī wrote a poem and pretended that ‘Umāra wrote it. He praised al-Dā‘ī Muḥammad ibn Saba’, congratulating him on the celebration of his marriage to Shaikh Bilāl's daughter.

When al-Dā‘ī Muḥammad ibn Saba’ and Shaikh Bilāl ibn Jarīr heard the poem, they were delighted with it and gave al-‘Abdī gifts and money for ‘Umāra, which ‘Umāra used to

 (47) Al-‘Imād, al-Kātib (Kharīda) (Der. V.11/571)

(48) Al-Janādī, al-Sulūk (Der. V. II/543)

buy his merchandise. (49) When 'Umāra decided to leave Aden for Zabīd, al-'Abdī advised him as follows "O, jurispudent, you have been known as a poet among these people. Read the great works of literature and do not be satisfied with jurisprudence because, (50) 'the ^{adornment} beauty of a man is in his poetic language' ". (51) This piece of advice and al-'Abdī's encouragement was the first urge that 'Umāra had to become a poet. From this time 'Umāra devoted his studies to reading, so that he might become a famous poet. He obviously owed a debt of gratitude to al-'Abdī, who first encouraged and inspired him.

At any rate, 'Umāra wrote many poems to praise 'Muhammad ibn Saba', Shaikh Bilāl ibn Jarīr and his sons, (52) especially Yāsir ibn Bilāl, but, again, most of this poetry has been lost, except some poems in praise of Yāsir ibn Bilāl. (53) The interesting thing is that the available "Dīwān" of 'Umāra begins with his saying to Yāsir. (54)

"You have taken revenge on your enemies, and you have ruled over all Aden and San'a'.

And you have attained, with bare-back horses and spears, all you would want of honour and greatness". (55)

(49) Al-Janadī, al-Sulūk (Der. V.II/543)

(50) Ibid

(51) Al-'Imād al-Kātib, Kharīda (Der.V.II/572) ^{مداد السان حلة السان}

(52) Ba-Makhrama, Thaghr Aden ~~Aden~~. MS.553.

(Der. V.II/553)

(53) 'Umāra, Dīwān MS. Fol. IB, 62B, 63, 158B, etc.

(54) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. IB.

(55) ^{ادركت اوقاتاً من الاعداد وملكيت من عدون ال صماء}
^{ولميت الحرد العتاور والفا ما شئت من شرب دمن عليا}

Therefore, 'Umāra was not satisfied with jurisprudence only, and, as he had been advised by his teacher al-'Abdī, he became a famous poet, a great merchant and a rich man. Yet all this was not enough for him and he did not stop looking for something new. He returned to study under a scholar who was not known to people at Zabīd, Aden and elsewhere. He was al-Shaikh Ahmad ibn Muhammad, al-Hāsib of Hadramawt, an expert in the ^{calculation} ~~financial aspects~~ of "Farā'id". He was more than 80 years old when 'Umāra first met him in 539/1145. (56) 'Umāra helped him to go to Mecca on a pilgrimage, because he was very poor. When 'Umāra had seen his cleverness and vast knowledge, he asked him about the inheritance (Farīda) of the family of Ruzaiq al-Fātikī, (57) one of the Viziers of Fātik ibn Mansūr, the King of Zabīd. This inheritance was very difficult to manage because great wealth was involved and the beneficiaries were numerous. He left about thirty sons and daughters. Some of them had died and left children before they had the inheritance, so it became very complicated. Al-Hāsib explained it to 'Umāra as he understood it. Then he wrote about it in detail to 'Umāra who studied it closely and learned it by heart, then 'Umāra told al-Qā'id Surūr al-Fātikī about it. When Surūr

 (56) 'Umāra, Tārīkh al-Yaman MS. 121

(57) Ibid MS. 120,
 al-Shaibānī, Bughyat al-Mustafīd MS. 18B

was sure that this was the solution, he paid 'Umāra a great deal of money. (58) Therefore, 'Umāra studied "al-Farā'id" under ibn al-Hāsib. He also studied the reading of the Koran according to "Ḥarf" Abī 'Amr ibn al-'Alā', (one of the seven recognised Koranic readings). Al-Hāsib lived with 'Umāra in his house, (59) and was 'Umāra's private teacher until his death.

7. To Hijaz

'Umāre was distinguished in many ways, and this may have brought him some of his troubles. "He lived in luxury", and "a man of prosperity is envied", and as God says 'They envy the people for what Allāh has given them of his grace'.⁽⁶⁰⁾ For these reasons al-Qāḍī Abū 'Abūllāh, Muḥammad ibn abī 'Aqāma al-Hafā'ilī of Zabīd, (died 554), ⁽⁶¹⁾ once said to him "You are the 'Khārijī' ^(Self made man) and the happy man of this time, because you have great wealth, and because you are one of the brilliant jurists who give legal opinion and influence many people, and because you are one of the best-known literary men". (62)

(58) 'Umāra, Tārīkh al-Yaman MS. 124.

(59) 'Umāra, Tārīkh al-Yaman MS. 124.

(60) The Koran IV (the women) 54

(61) Ibn Taghrī Bardī, al-Nujūm V.5/330

(62) 'Umāra. al-Nukat 28

'Umāra saw this as a bad omen and said. "I felt that he announced the end of my happiness and the destruction of my wealth". From that time trouble and misfortune surrounded him.

On one occasion, al-Dā'ī Muhammad ibn Saba' gave 'Umāra 5,000 Mithqāl to buy goods for him from Mecca and Zabīd. When 'Umāra came to meet ibn Saba' in Dhū Jibla, he could not find him anywhere. The people told him that Ibn Saba' had been in his palace on his own country estate, which was called "al-Darbaḡān" (63) spending his honeymoon with his bride, the daughter of the Sulṭān 'Abdullāh ibn As'ad ibn Wā'il. He wanted to be alone and to see no-one whatever their business. After 'Umāra had arrived, he had written on a piece of paper, the verse of al-Mutanabbī

"Wherever you are we can always reach you, (64)
since there is only one earth and you are unique".

Then 'Umāra wrote asking for permission to meet him. Ibn Saba' wrote on the back of 'Umāra's paper, these two verses

"You are welcome, your coming is, happily,
welcome. The horizons were illuminated by you.
If we spread our eyes for you to walk on,
that could not be enough for you". (65)

(63) 'Umāra, al-Mukat p.26

(64) Al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān. V.2/70

من حيث نستقبل اليك وكاننا
فانظر واحدة دامت الوجود

(65) 'Umāra, Dīwān MS. Pet.27B

مرحبا مرصا قد دمتك بالسر لقد اشرقت لك الوجود
لو فرشنا الوجود حتى تطالعنا لقلت في حقك الوجود

'Umāra received the note and went to al-Dā'ī ibn Saba' and spent four days with him. But the man who carried the note was foolish enough to show it to many people before he gave it to 'Umāra. These people wrote to Zabīd covetously, inciting the people to kill 'Umāra, claiming that he was the intercessor between 'Alī ibn Mahdī and Muhammad ibn Saba', to join forces against Zabīd; 'Alī ibn Mahdī, they said, wanted to attack Zabīd, asking for the help of Muhammad ibn Saba'. The Zabīd nobles agreed to kill 'Umāra on Friday the second of Rabī' I in 543/1153. (66)

That night, they were attacked by the troops of Muhammad ibn 'Alī al Agnarr. While they were setting up their defences, they forgot 'Umāra for about 17 days. Then, a man for whom 'Umāra had done favours, reminded them about him. They began to think of him again. It happened, however, that al-Qā'id Ismā'īl ibn Muhammad, who was one of the King Fātik's friends, hurried past 'Umāra and said to him "Peace be upon you". Then he began to read "O, Moses, The Council are conspiring to slay thee. Depart, I am one of thy true friends". (67)

'Umāra understood this warning, and at midnight, he

(66) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p. 31

(67) The Koran XVIII(al-Qasas),20

departed to Hijāz, paying a large sum of money to a man whose name was al-'Arīf Kathīr, for his help and protection. (68) The reason which drove 'Umāra away from his country, Zabīd, helped him to reach Mecca and to be happy again, to perform his pilgrimage duties and to escape from the danger which surrounded him in Zabīd, and, most of all, to meet the Prince of al-Haramain, Qāsīm ibn Hāshim ibn Falīta, (69) (died in 557/1102), (70) who sent 'Umāra on an important mission to the Fatimid Caliph in Egypt. (71)

8. His Mission to Egypt

The ^{"Sharīf"} Prince Qāsīm ibn Hāshim ibn Falīta had recently become the ^{"Amīr"} Prince of al-Haramain after his father's death a few days before the time of the pilgrimage in 549 A.H. When he met 'Umāra, he liked him very much, admired his poetry and respected him. The Prince thought to himself 'this is just the man I am looking for'. He was seeking a wise and respected man to send on a mission to Egypt, because there had been some trouble with the Egyptian pilgrims the previous year, so the ^{A mir} Prince of al-Haramain wanted to explain the matter to the Fatimid Caliph who was

(68) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p. 31

(69) It is written 'Fulāita' in al-Nukat, but it is 'Falīta' in Tāj al-'Arūs: V. I/570

(70) Al-Zinkalī, al-'alām V.6/22

(71) Ibn Khallikān, 'afayāt. V.3/107

Sibt ibn al-Jawzī, al-Mir'āt V.8/302

perhaps angry about it, since he had not sent the grant this year and this would be a great loss to the Prince.

'Umāra accepted this offer with pleasure and prepared to go to Egypt. He arrived in Cairo in Rabī' 1st in 550/1154. (72) After he had rested, he went to the Caliph's palace. He was brought to the 'Gold Hall' (Qā'at al-Dhahab) to meet the Caliph al-Fā'iz, 'Isā ibn Ismā'īl al-Zāfir (died 555/1160), (73) and his Vizier, al-Malik al-Sāliḥ Ṭalā'ī ibn Ruzzīk. The Caliph's aunt, the Princess Sayyidat al-Qusūr, was there too, but she was seated behind a curtain. 'Umāra was welcomed by them. He recited his first poem in Egypt, praising the Caliph and his Vizier (74)

"Great praise to the camels, after praise
to their determination and resolution,
praise could serve to thank them for their
bounties.

Let me not deny the truth, I will always
remember the favour of the mount, and that
the bridle longed for the rank of the
camel's halter.

They brought nearer to my eye the remoteness
of the shrine of glory, so that I saw the
'Imām' of the epoch close by me". (75)

(72) 'Umāra, al-Nukat p. 32

(73) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil V. 9/68

(74) الحمد للعيس بعد العزم والاهم
لداؤد الكوه عهدي للركاب يد
عهداً يقوم ما أدلت من العلم
تمت اللهم على رسته الحكيم
حتى رأيت أيام العزم من اسم
نور من بعد سراج العزم من رطبي

(75) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 159

'Umāra was given a large sum of money, gifts and various allowances. The Princess Sayyidat al-Qusūr, the Caliph's aunt, met him after that to thank him and make him a gift and she asked him to be the poet of the Fatimid Caliphate. He promised her to do his best.

While 'Umāra was preparing this poem, he ^{likely} thought of the people whom he would mention in it. He knew that the next most important person, after the Caliph, was the Vizier al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalā'ī ibn Ruzzīk. 'Umāra gave him great importance in this poem. He praised him, after the Caliph, in eight lines, saying:

"His Vizier, al-Ṣāliḥ, who dispels griefs,
has protected religion, the world and
people.

His presence found what the days suggested,
and his generosity left no-one to complain
of poverty.

Spears made him a King in a kingdom which
lent the glory of disdain to the 'nose' of
the pleiads".

(76)

When 'Umāra recited his poem, the Vizier was delighted. He even asked 'Umāra to repeat several lines. When 'Umāra

(76) لقد همم الدين والدينا واملها
دريره الصالح العراج للعميم
اللاس العجم تسع غلاته
الايدي السعوية سيف والقلم
وهوده او حد الايام ما اقتضت
وهوده اعدم ان كنه للعميم
قد ملكته العوالي روه مملكة
تغير الف التراب مرة الشمس

finished reciting his ode, the Vizier gave him 500 Dīnārs and also told him that the doors of the palace were open to him always, particularly during literary gatherings. 'Umāra became, therefore, one of the regular attenders. He became the shining star in this society, and al-Malik al-Sāliḥ's closest friend. Here 'Umāra was able to meet all kinds of important people and they, in turn, respected him.

He mentioned some of them, such as: al-Shaikḥ al-Jalīs Abū'l Ma'ālī ibn al-Habbab, al-Muwaffaq ibn al-Khallāl, Abū al-Faḥ Maḥmūd ibn Qādūs and al-Muḥadḥab abū Muḥammad al-Hasan ibn al-Zubair. These were the people 'of the pen', but the people 'of the sword' and 'of the flag' were Majd al-Islām, his son, his son-in-law, Saif al-Dīn Husain, his brother, Fāris al-Muslimīn Badr ibn Ruzzīk and 'Izz al-Dīn Husām, one of his relatives. Others were Dirghām, who became Vizier later, 'Alī ibn al-Zubd, Yahyā ibn al-Khyyāt, Rudwān ibn Jalab Rāghib, 'Alī Hawshāt and Muḥammad ibn Shams al-Khilāfa. (77) All these people became 'Umāra's closest friends.

He wrote several poems praising al-Malik al-Sāliḥ and his relatives. They gave him a great deal of money, gold, silver, horses, sheep, clothes and other gifts. When 'Umara began to prepare to leave Egypt, he wrote two odes, one in

(77) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 34-35

praise of the Caliph, and the other of the Vizier. He thanked the Caliph in his ode for all his hospitality and what he had done for him. He mentioned al-Hijāz, hoping that these favourable omens and the news of his happy life would precede him. (78)

The Caliph gave him 300 Dīnārs, but the Caliph's aunt increased it to 500 Dīnārs. The Vizier also gave him 200 Dīnārs, after he had recited his ode, praising and thanking him for everything

"I have served him constantly, and he has inspired literature in me, so this eulogy is a part of his favour". (79)

The last benefit was the greatest of all. He took a letter from al-Malik al-Ṣālīḥ to the Prince of Aden, al-Dā'ī 'Imrān ibn Muḥammad, who later succeeded to the throne after his father's death, asking him to give 'Umāra respite until he could pay the debts of the Dā'ī's father. Al-Dā'ī, for al-Ṣālīḥ's sake, granted the whole amount to 'Umāra. This was great generosity, because the debts amounted to 3,000 Dīnārs. (80)

'Umāra immediately wrote a poem thanking al-Ṣālīḥ,

(78) 'Umāra, Dīwān. Pet. 107.

كس لي بان ترد الحجار وعبرها احبار طيب وارديها (صهارزي)

(79) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 38

لا رب خدمته نارب خاطرني طالع من احبار معدود
 طار اطلت له المديح حاسما احدي ليضاعة له والحمد

It is a piece of 5 lines of poetry which is not in the Dīwān.

(80) 'Umāra, 'al-Nukat: 38-40

Tārīkh al-Yaman MS 94-95

which begins.

"O, my nights in Fustāṭ on Egypt's coast,
Your sojourn might have been irrigated by
spring showers".

(81)

As soon as this fine poem had reached al-Malik al-Sāliḥ, he said: "We lost him when we let him leave us, we should have made him stay with us". (82)

ʿUmāra left Cairo for Mecca in Shawwāl 550/1155, anxious to meet the ^{Amir} ~~Prince~~ of al-Haramain as soon as possible, to inform him of the result of the mission and to convey to him good tidings of his great success.

9. The Great Merchant:

^{"Amir"}
~~The Prince of~~ al-Haramain" had already heard the news of ʿUmāra's success. He was pleased indeed, and he welcomed ʿUmāra as soon as he arrived. His faith in ʿUmāra had been justified and he thanked him and rewarded him amply. ~~Then the Prince said to himself: "This is the man of the hour."~~ He decided to ask ʿUmāra for help on all occasions. He asked ʿUmāra to do some commercial work for him after he had performed the pilgrimage duties in that year.

The Abbasid Caliph, al-Muqtafī abū ʿAbdillāh muhammad

(81) ʿUmāra, al-Nukat 40

ʿUmāra, Dīwān Pet. 105B

(82) ʿUmāra, al-Nukat 41

لِأَمِيرِ الْعِزَّةِ مِنْ سَالِحِي عَصْرِ
سَقَى عَيْدَكَ الْمَاهِي عِلَادَةَ الْعِزَّةِ

ibn Ahmad al-Mustazhir, (died 555/1160),⁽⁸³⁾ had written from Baghdad to the ^{Amir}Prince of al-Haramain, asking him to put a new teak door, coated with silver covered with gold, on the holy Ka'ba. He also asked him to keep the old silver for him (the Prince of al-Haramain) and to send the wood of the old door to the Caliph in order to make it into a coffin for him.⁽⁸⁴⁾ The Prince of al-Haramain changed the door and managed everything properly, but he kept the old silver, wondering how and where he would sell it, and who would do it for him. He thought that 'Umāra was the man who might do it very well, because of his honesty and shrewdness in trading. So the Prince asked 'Umāra to do it. 'Umāra accepted this offer with great pleasure. He took the silver, which weighed 15,000 'Dirhams'⁽⁸⁵⁾ to sell it in the Yaman, because he was going back home to see his family and relations there. That was, as 'Umāra himself says, in Safar 551 A.H.⁽⁸⁶⁾ He went again to Mecca on a pilgrimage in the same year, after he sold all the silver. It was then that he paid the Prince of al-Haramain the money. When 'Umāra finished his pilgrimage duties, he decided to go back to Yaman, but he did not go, because the ^{Amir}Prince of al-Haramain asked him to go, once again, to

 (83) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil V.9/68

(84) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil V.9/57

(85) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 41

(86) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 41

al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ to apologize to him for a mistake which had been made by the Prince's ^{men} ~~servants~~ to the Egyptian pilgrims. (87) 'Umāra happily accepted this task. He was pleased to have the chance to see his friends in Cairo, to meet al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, and to have the honour of praising the Fatimid Caliph.

The precise date of 'Umāra's second mission to Egypt is not certain, as he himself mentions two different dates. At any rate, he went back to Egypt and settled there.

10. In Egypt

'Umāra soon set off on his journey to Egypt, eager to reach the city he liked, to begin a new life there. Nevertheless, this period of his life had begun with troubles and it was to end with troubles which cost him his life, despite 'Umāra's saying "If your capital is your life, preserve it from being spent unnecessarily". (88)

He had scarcely reached 'Qūs', in Upper Egypt, when he was forbidden to go either forward or backward. The 'wālī' of Qūs ordered him to remain where he was. That was the order of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalā'ī ibn Ruzzīk. So 'Umāra was not allowed to go even to the Sultan's door, until the ^{"Amir"} ~~Prince of~~ al-Ḥaramain returned the money which his men had taken from the Egyptian pilgrims. (89)

(87) 'Umāra, al Nukat 42

(88) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 27B

اداکان رأس المال عمرک فاحرس علیہ من الامام فی غیر واحد

(89) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 42

This, it appears, was the reason and he was the messenger who came for this purpose. Afterwards, 'Umāra was to learn the real reason, which was altogether different: somebody told al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ that 'Umāra had spoken ill of 'Madḥab al-Imāmiyya', while al-Ṣāliḥ's sect was 'al-Imāmiyya'. (90) When 'Umāra realised this, he wrote poetry praising al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ. When al-Ṣāliḥ read the poetry he allowed 'Umāra to leave Qūs, 'he ordered me to be honoured and to be brought to him', said 'Umāra. As soon as he had arrived in Cairo, he went to greet al-Ṣāliḥ and recited a new ode praising him. He described in it the battle of 'Arīsh with the Franks and he explained his release at Qūs, saying

Please understand, and I am sure you do understand, what I want to say, better than me and better than anyone, that I was envied for the favours you did me which have brought me honour everywhere". (91)

This pleased al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ who soon forgot what had been said and gave 'Umāra 100 Dīnārs.

It will be appreciated that 'Umāra, at that time, was, still, a guest, he had not yet become one of the 'Dīwān poets', because he said. "He ordered the Prince 'Izz al-Dīn Ḥusām to pay me what was needed from his hospitality grant".

(90) Abū Shāma, al-Rawḍatayn V. 1/125

(91) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 177, Al-Nukat 43

Al-Malik al-Sāliḥ often tried to persuade 'Umāra to change his Madhhab as a sunnī shāfi'ī, to a shī'ī, either imāmī like him, or ismā'īlī like the Fatimid Caliphate Madhhab. He persuaded al-Malik al-Sāliḥ that keeping his Madhhab was better for the Caliphate than changing it, because the praise from him as a sunnī would be more appreciated by people, because 'self-praise is no good recommendation'.

In addition to the criticism with which people would confront him if he were to change his Madhhab, his praise would then be worthless. Al-Malik al-Sāliḥ was satisfied with these reasons and he trusted 'Umāra and appreciated his ideas. 'Umāra became one of his closest friends and one of his favourite courtiers, he also became the central figure of the literary society.

Al-Malik al-Sāliḥ once said. "We should keep him with us, in service and for company", (92) and after a short while, 'Umāra became one of the 'Dīwān' Poets in the Fatimid Caliphate. He was present at the great public feasts and he immortalised them in his poetry. He wrote much poetry on different subjects. (93) He panegyrised the Caliph, the Vizier and the Princes. Although Egypt, at that time, was full of poets from all parts of the world, 'Umāra was amongst the best. (94)

(92) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 41

(93) Husain, Fī Adab Miṣr al-Fāṭimiyya 128

(94) Husain, Fī Adab Miṣr al-Fāṭimiyya. 127-129

Hasan Ibrāhīm, Tāriḫ al-Dawla al-Fāṭimiyya. 445-455

'Umāra praised those whom he wished to praise, but many important people asked him to write poetry for them. Some of them had initially sent him fine gifts and paid him a great deal of money for that purpose. 'Umāra mentioned some for whom he wrote poetry: Ḥusām al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn al-Ma'mūn, (95) al-Awhad Subḥ, the brother of Shāwar, (96) al-Amīr al-Zahīr Murtafī, (97) Ward al-Ṣāliḥī (98)... the 'Dīwān' is full of them. 'Umāra had all the necessary qualifications for making friends and soon had many. His greatest friend, without doubt, was al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ whom he loved deeply.

His loyalty to al-Ṣāliḥ and his family was so strong that it was clearly shown in his poetry. Al-Ṣāliḥ was completely sure of 'Umāra's loyalty and he took delight in his friend's ability. He adopted him as an advisor in his poetry and used to show 'Umāra the poetry which he himself had written for 'Umāra's criticism, before he read it to the others. 'Umāra tells us a story about this "I saw him on 16th of 'Ramadān' in 556/1161, three nights before he died. He ordered that I should be given gold. Then he said to me, "Don't leave". He went into the palace and came to me with a piece of paper on which he had just written two lines of poetry

(95) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 120

(96) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 140

(97) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 135

(98) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 151

"We live in negligence and sleep, and death
has watchful eyes which never sleep.
For years and years we are moving towards
death, would that I knew when death will be".

Then the Vizier said. "Examine them carefully and correct
them if there is anything wrong". I said. "They are
good". (99)

Three days later, al-Ṣāliḥ was killed in the entrance
of the palace, this was on the 19th of Ramaḍān, 556. (100)

‘Umāra was grief stricken. He remained unhappy for a long
time and wrote many poems lamenting his great friend. (101)

Perhaps the best example is:

"Is there anyone omniscient amongst the
people of this area? So that I can
ask him, because I am distracted and have
lost my mind at what has happened". (102)

Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ was succeeded by his son, al-Malik
al-Nāṣir al-‘Ādil Ruzzīk as a Vizier in the Fatimid
Caliphate (103) ‘Umāra was so happy that he wrote many poems

(99) ‘Umāra, al-Nukat 48-49 عسى في غفلة و نوم د الموت عيون يتطاوله ان تباي
قد اهدا الى الكمام سينا لب شعور من باون الحمام

(100) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt. V.2/210
Abū Shāma, al-Rawdatain V.1/125

(101) ‘Umāra, Dīwān. Pet. 65, 69B, 121, 129 etc.

(102) ‘Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 129, al Nukat: 50

(103) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil: V.4/75 ابي اهل دار الادي عظم اسلمه فاني ملاي د اب اللب د اهل

to Ruzzīk, the new Vizier, not because he was 'Umāra's friend as his father had been, but because the authority remained with the Ruzzīk family. He believed that they deserved it, because they were honest and interested in the needs of the people. (104)

The Fatimid Caliph, al-'Āḍid 'Abdullāh ibn Yusuf married the daughter of al-Malik al-Sāliḥ, (105) during her brother Ruzzīk's rule. The marriage ceremony on this occasion was splendour itself. The people were delighted and 'Umāra was one of the happiest of all. He wrote many odes for the marriage, one of them began -

"The mouth of conversion is coming, light
and smiling.

And the faces of time days are handsome."

(106)

'Umāra followed events in his poetry, described the incidents of the Fatimid Caliphate and praised the most important people. He was given excellent gifts and large sums of money, over and above his monthly salary from the state treasury, in addition to that, he was still engaged in trading. He became extremely rich. He settled down quietly, owned his own house and lived happily with his family. He had "Jāfiyas" ^{as it was usual at his time} ~~too~~. He had achieved all he wanted,

(104) 'Umāra, al-Nukat: 53

(105) Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya: V. 12/242

(106) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 161

تم الهدى مبلغ سام و وعده ايام الزمان

so his happiness, comfort and wealth were reflected in his poetry at this stage of his life

"If there is anyone whose foot stumbled,
I found what is wanted in Egypt.

I settled down by its Nile, and, at any
rate, found the great gifts which spared
me the need of small gifts.

When I found all coin counterfeited and my
criticism revealed the ostentation of
the people, I turned my attentions to
the Ruzzīk family, and they did me abund-
ant favours.

I did my utmost with shining poetry, in return
for their white poetry". (107)

In 'Ṣafar' 556/1163, Ruzzīk ibn al-Ṣāliḥ was killed
by Abū Shujā' Amīr al-Juyūsh Shāwar ibn Mujīr al-Dīn al-
Sa'dī (108) and his troops. The Ruzzīk family was forced
out, their rule was ended and they were stripped of their
authority, so shāwar became the Vizier. Most of the
people showed their hatred of the last Vizier and his
family to gain the favour of the new one. But 'Umāra
remembered their time, mentioned them in his poetry and
showed his loyalty to them to everybody, even to the new
Vizier and his men

(107) 'Umāra, Dīwān. Pet. 46

(108) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil V.9/81

The following story shows this loyalty clearly. 'Umāra said.- "I entered the 'Secret Hall' in ^{the chancellory} ~~a monastery~~ and Tayy ibn Shāwar was there with Dirghām, 'Izz al-Zamān and Murtafī² al-Zahīr amongst others. And the head of Ruzzīk ibn al-Sālīh was in front of them in a basin (Tast). As soon as I caught sight of it, I covered my face with my sleeve and turned on my heel, because I could not bear to look at the head! When Tayy ordered someone to come and call me, I said 'I refuse to enter until the head disappears'. Then the basin was taken away. And Dirghām asked me 'Why have you returned?' I said 'Yesterday, he was our sovereign, in whose goodness we basked'. He replied 'If Ruzzīk had defeated Amīr al-Juyūsh or us, he would have left no one alive'. I said 'Then there is no advantage in an authority which leads its Lord from the Cabinet to the basin'. (109) I went out and said

'O, Abū Shujā'! I cannot bear to look at that forehead stained with blood.

These men whose hands turned it, turned their hands, before, in its bounties'

(110)

(109) « لا تحب يا حبيبي أن يؤول الأمر بهما من يدك إلى يديهم »

(110) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 66-67

أمر علياً أن يجمع أن يرى ذلك الكمين صرحاً يدعاه
ما قلته سوى رجال قلدوا أيديهم من قبل في نعمائه

At that time 'Umāra was very sad, not only because the authority of the Ruzzīk family was now with the Shāwar family, but also because he had lost those of his friends who had been killed by other friends of his. He grew troubled and confused. Because 'Umāra was a close friend of Shāwar, he said. "There was a great friendship between Shāwar and me". (111) So his own position was not, in fact, changed. He still held the respect and appreciation of all people. But he did not forget al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and his family. He alluded to them in several poems. When Shāwar celebrated victory on his second day of office, all the poets and orators blamed the Ruzzīk family and spoke ill of their regime, 'Umāra was angry about this and he recited his poem which was the only one in the celebration praising the Ruzzīk family. He began.

"The days have recovered, from sickness,
by your authority.
And the pain of which the era complained,
has disappeared.
The nights of the Ruzzīk family have come
to an end and disappeared, but the
praise and the dispraise lives on". (a)

(111) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 69

(a) *صوت يدرك الامام من سفر
الت ليل على ريلك والبريت
در ال ما يشكبه الدم ١٥٠م
والحمد والدم نيل عبد مسلم*

'Umāra, then imagines al-Ṣāliḥ and his son Ruzzīk seated in the Cabinet, and says

"It seems to me as if their Ṣāliḥ and their 'Ādil never sat, and never stood, on top of this 'uast'". (b)

Then 'Umāra begins to blame the crowds who surrounded the Ruzzīk family:

'We thought, and any suspicion is a sin, that their company could not run away". (c)

At last 'Umāra turns his face to Shāwar explaining why the Ruzzīk family has been defeated:

"From the time that you perched like an eagle, the vultures which were gathered betrayed them.

They were not cowardly enemies, but they were overwhelmed by your torrential flood".

(d)

'Umāra did not end his poem without reminding Shāwar that he should not allow his old friends to be blamed:

"I did not mean, by glorifying them, anything except to glorify you, so please forgive me. If I thanked their evenings for redeeming their pledges, the time spent was not long ago, and if I opened my mouth to dispraise them, your honour would only be satisfied with closing my mouth". (112)

-
- (111) (b) كَانِ صَاحِبِ يَوْمٍ وَعَارِ الْوَجْهِ
 فِي صَدْرِ الْوَسْتِ لَمْ يَعْصِدْ لَمْ يَغْمِ
 (c) كَمَا كَانَ رَعْدُ الْوَجْهِ لَأَنْتُمْ
 مَا نَزَلَ ذَلِكَ مَعَ عَيْدِ سَهْرٍ
 (d) دَامَ يَكُونُوا عِدْوًا دَلَّ حَابٍ
 وَأَمَا عَرَفُوا بِمَا سَيْلَتِ الْعَرَمِ
- (112) 'Umāra, *Dīwān*, Pet. 177B. al-Nukat 69-70
 مَا صَدَّتْ تَغَطِّي سَوَاكُ سَوْكٍ مَعْظِيمٍ شَأْنُكَ مَا عَدَرْتَنِي وَلَا لِمِ

When 'Umāra finished reciting the poem, Shāwar and his two sons thanked him for his loyalty to the Ruzzīk family. After a short while, events followed each other in rapid succession. There was a violent war between Shāwar and Dirghām ibn Sawwār al-lakhmī, Dirghām was the victor and became the Vizier in Ramadān 558. (113) Shāwar ran away to Nūr al-Dīn Zangī in al-Sham to ask for help. (114)

When Dirghām became the Vizier, 'Umāra was uneasy because the new Vizier was cruel. He killed many leaders who had done nothing Subh ibn Shahinshāh, al-Zahīr Murtafī', 'Aain al-Zamān, Asad al-Ghawī and their relatives. (115)

'Umāra kept company with Nāsir al-Muslimīn, the brother of Dirghām, as a safeguard. One night, the Vizier sent for 'Umāra. This was two months after he had assumed control. 'Umāra was frightened when he was taken to meet the Vizier, in "al-Bustān" Hall, thinking that the Vizier would harm him. The Vizier welcomed him, however, and asked 'Umāra the reason for his absence. Then he ordered gold to be given to him and said "O, you friends of al-Sālih, you are the symbol of beauty. Anyone you accompanied would be affected by your charm". (116)

(113) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil V.9/81

(114) Abū al-Fidā, Tārīkh V.3/43

(115) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 74

(116) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 74

'Umāra was now at peace and wrote a poem to praise

Dirghām

"Misfortune tried to bring harm to the state, but since you supported it, time itself turned in your favour and became greatly and consistently helpful".

(117)

Dirghām was Vizier for less than 9 months, because Shāwar had come back from Damascus in the company of an army with which he had been provided by Nūr al-Dīn Zankī, under the leadership of Asad al-Dīn shīrkōh ibn Shādhī and his nephew, Salāh al-Dīn ibn Ayyūb, (118) on Jumādā 1st 559/1154. (119) They killed Dirghām, and Shāwar was reinstated. When the soldiers of Shāwar passed by 'Al-Khalīj', (the Gulf) carrying Dirghām's head, 'Umāra saw them, because it was near his house and said

"It seems to me that the chin of the government became a sword, the sharp edge of which cuts the noble necks. It looks like a warning of calamity or an ill-omen of death and misfortune".

(120)

(117) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 75. Dīwān Pet. 156B.

(118) Ibn al-Athīr, al Kāmil: V.9/85
هم الرمان لا يدركه كغلة اصمى يراى صرحا و يراى

(119) Abū al-Fidā, Tārīkh V.3/43

(120) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 26B. Al-Nukat 77

ارى على الوراوه ما رسيها - يحده صيد الرقا -
كامل رائد العلوى والد سير المية والمهاج

'Umāra was happy to see Shāwar in control again, in view of his fear of Dirghām. But Shāwar's days, this time, were full of troubles, and of wars. 'Umāra wrote many odes to praise the Vizier, describing most of the events which happened during his time. (121)

Tayy, the son of Shāwar, was killed on Friday 28th of Ramadān, but the killers were not killed until 28th of Jumādā, 9 months later. 'Umāra said -

"You have stripped your authority from men who disputed it, but you had more merit, were more firm.

They pulled your robe forcibly, but you resisted until you covered them with robes of death.

The date of 'debt' you have regained, which was in repayment, is a lesson to the one who came. The days carried the event for 9 months until they gave birth to it in Jumādā." (122)

After Shāwar had come back from 'Bilbīs', 'Umāra congratulated him, saying -

(121) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 13B, 95, 110, 115B, 147, etc.

(122) 'Umāra, al-Nukat. 81. These verses are not in the Diwan.

ورب ذلك من حال ما عسوا فيه ولت به الحق واقفعا
 حذوا رداك عاصيه فلم ترك حتى كوت القوم ابرية الردي
 تاريخ ذين ملتة في مثله يوما بيوم عبدة لمن احندى
 حلت به الامام تعة اشور صي جعلن له حماري مولدا

"How great and glorious a victory this was
So confine the steps of happiness to it,
and do no more.

It is a victory which illuminated time
as if it were the face of the harbingers
of good news, and the blaze of the optimist.
It is a victory which reminds us, although
we have not forgotten, of what happened at
the victory of al-Wasīyy, ('Alī) in Khaibar".
(123)

Then he praised Shāwar in the battle

"If the horses advanced (in the battle) he
would be the first horseman, and he would
also be the first of the foot-soldiers in
the army.

He felt that his soul had become so worth-
less to him, that he tried to sell his
life (in the battle) but he did not find
anyone to buy it.

Iron became weary of iron, but Shāwar did
not feel weary, (from the war), helping
the family of Muhammad". (124)

- (123) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 107. Al-Nukat 82
أسمع يا الفتح المبين والصرى واقصر عليه على الزمان واقصر
فتح اصابه الرقاب كما به وجه الشير وعزة المستر
فتح يدكر ما - وان لم يسه - وكان من فتح الهى كخير
لغاه اول فارسى ان اقدمت حيل واول راحل من العكر
صارت عليه العسى حتى انه باع الحياة فلم يجد فيه شترى
صمر الكديد من الكديد وشاور في لزال محمد لم يصر
- (124)

'Umāra did not achieve what he was after, when he read this fine poem, because Shāwar was much occupied at this time, This made 'Umāra try to give up writing poetry. It seems that he tried to resign from the 'Dīwān', because he was one of "Shu'arā' al-Dīwān" in the Fatimid Caliphate. Shāwar did not agree with 'Umāra at first, but 'Umāra did not despair and tried to resign again and again. He explained. "One day I saw him in high spirits, so I said to him. 'I have been trying to talk to you for a long time about something which I am determined to tell you, and if you would assist me, I should be very grateful, and if you do not, I shall have my excuse'. He asked 'What is it?' I said. 'I want you to allow me to put poetry behind me and to change my salary from service to hospitality'. Shāwar said. 'Why did you not ask for this at the time of al-Ṣāliḥ and his son?' I said. 'I had an example and a model in al-Shaikh al-Jalīs ibn al-Ḥabbāb, al-Rashīd ibn al-Zubair and al-Muḥadḥhab ibn al-Zubair, but, now, they have died and my equals have disappeared.' He said 'You have my permission', and commanded that an order be written for this. He signed it and obtained the signature of the Caliph. (125) So 'Umāra became just a guest, he was no longer an official poet. He was very happy about this and he wrote a poem thanking

Shāwar.

"You removed from my face the signs of the craft and the life, with which the title was abusing me". (126)

‘Umāra did not leave Shāwar and his companionship. He saw him every day, attended meetings at his home and continued to sing his praises in his poetry. The following story illustrates this well and refers obviously to ‘Umāra's standing with Shāwar.

"The chief of al-Dīwān, Khāssat al-Dawla ibn Dukhān, used to wrangle with me about my salary, but when he hears from me what makes him troubled, he returns to treat me well, then I change my manner and speak to him. At last he said to Shāwar 'Would you please save me from ‘Umāra' if you don't, I will resign'. Shāwar said. 'Be ashamed of troubling a man who eats with me twice a day from the same plate'. After that he used to treat me very well and do what I wanted without delay". (127)

When the house of ‘Umāra was burnt, he lost everything and was seriously in debt. Shāwar did not forsake him, although his own position was not sound, and he paid for all ‘Umāra's needs. ‘Umāra had all he needed, although he was not an official poet, so he wrote a poem thanking

 (126) ‘Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 27B. al-Nukat 86
 دحوت عن دري واس صفة و معيشة كان اسما يفرى بي

(127) ‘Umāra, al-Nukat. 90

Shāwar for his favours

"You bore on my behalf an oppressive debt which would have crushed me without your great generosity".

(128)

Everyone was familiar with 'Umāra's position, so they used to ask 'Umāra for help in their problems, and to request him to intercede for them with Shāwar because they knew that Shāwar would not refuse 'Umāra's request.

When Shāwar came back from the siege of Alexandria, he killed many people and shed much blood for no good reason. He used to order men to be beheaded in his presence at "al-Bustān Hall" in the government house, then the bodies were drawn outside the building. The people were terrified and they asked 'Umāra to do something about it. He wrote a poem, saying.

"The sword's sharp edge did not leave people with any thought save confusion and hesitation. You have terrified the people until virtue was afraid for himself, several times more than
vice.

So put up the blades of the sabres, and return, for our sakes, to the custom of kindness which is the sheathing of the sharp swords.

Their flashing and clashing is like thunder, from which the muscles below the shoulder-blades tremble.

(128) 'Umāra, al-Nukat. 89. These verses are not in the Dīwān.

وحدث عبيد بن ربيعة دارع لولا عظيم مدالك امر عطا عي

Cease this, and if you do not, the
'Muqattam' will melt from fear, and
the water of the 'Nile' will certainly
freeze". (129)

Shāwar said to 'Umāra after he had heard this poem:

"Let there be an end to killing and if these is to be more, it will not be with my sanction". Shāwar did not live long after that, as he was killed by Ṣalāh al-Dīn ibn Ayyūb on 7th Rabī' 2, 564/1169. (130) Then Asad al-Dīn became the Vizier in the Fatimīd Caliphate on Wednesday 10th Rabī' 2, of that year. (131)

From this time onward, 'Umāra's position was changed, he began to slide from the highest position, gradually, until he fell to a very low level. He was no longer the senior poet, nor on close terms with the authorities. He was now just one poet among many in the new regime.

11. During the Time of the Ayyūbids

'Umāra began to suffer at this stage and lived quietly under the new government. He was a man of importance in

(129) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 87
الذ ان احد السيد امير طبرستان من الامم الاجانب ايتروا
دعوت الوري حتى لقد كان على بعض اصحابه ان يمشوا
باعدتها المرفوعة بعد رسالته الى عاددة الاحبار في التعمير

(130) Abū al-Fidā', Tārīkh V.3/48

(131) Ibn al-Asīl, 'Ufarrīj. V.2/172

the last government, a friend of the Viziers and a companion of the nobles, and, although the Caliph al-ʿĀdid himself was still Caliph in name, he was so weak that he had no authority and was lower than the Vizier. The first Vizier, Asad al-Dīn, did no harm to ʿUmāra. Indeed he treated ʿUmāra well and gave him money. ʿUmāra mentioned this in one of his poems which he wrote in the period of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, praising his father, Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, and asking him for help. "Alas! For the magnanimous Asad al-Dīn, for whom the tears flowed too much as blood. If he had lived I would not be either in such a position or in debt, my children and women humiliated me". (132)

But the misfortune of ʿUmāra soon became known as Asad al-Dīn did not last more than a few months. He died on 22 (or 23) Jumādā 2, 564 A.H. and his nephew, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, became the Vizier after him. (133) From then on real troubles beset ʿUmāra, although he wrote many odes praising Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, his father, his brothers and his relatives, in addition to his two elegy poems to Najm al-Dīn, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's father, but this was all in vain. The most important odes are those which ʿUmāra wrote to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn himself. There were many, but only seven remain (134) and

 (132) ʿUmāra, Dīwān Pet. 176

(133) Ibn al-^{At}~~ḥ~~īr, al-Kāmil V.9/101

(134) 4 of them in Pet. 35, 105, 117, 126B.
 3 of them in Cop. 50, 50B, 87

the others are lost. One of the earliest poems is the one which begins:

"Your claims are great and will last forever, and the honours which rise above the eagle".

(135)

This ode may be the first one he had written to Ṣalāh, al-Dīn, because its title says "He said praising al-Malik al-Nāsir Ṣalāh al-Dīn in his father's and uncle's lifetime". He also described his victory after the siege of 'Bilbīs', after Shāwar and the Caliph asked Ṣalāh al-Dīn and his uncle for help. They did help them and expelled the Franks, so 'Umāra said.

"You have taken the Franks unawares at every bend (of the road) and you said to the horses' legs 'Pass on, Murrī'. (136)

If they set up a bridge on land, you could cross a sea of iron on the bridge". (137)

'Umāra said that Shāwar did not last more than 13 days after this, and was killed by Ṣalāh al-Dīn, (138) on 7 Rabī' 2, 564, so this poem may be written in the middle of Rabī' 1st. He

(135) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 105
لنك الملك الاني على سيف الدر على الزحف الاني على قومه السر

(136) murrī is the name of the Frank's leader.

(137) احدتم على الك فرج كل تديتة وقلتم لا يدى الحمل منى على امرى
لئن صواحي الدر حراً با نكم عزم احسن من صيد على السر

(138) 'Umāra, al-Nukat. 81

praised all the Ayyūb family. Then he declared that this praise was important because it would be a relationship between him and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, although he had not written any poetry for many years. (139) This ode did not have any effect on Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, because he neglected 'Umāra from the beginning, even after he became Vizier he did not look after him, did not make him any gifts or money, nor did he pay him the salary as a guest which 'Umāra used to have after he resigned from "Dīwān al-Shu'arā'". This was what 'Umāra mentioned later many times in his poetry and he was still complaining about it until his death.

'Umāra continued writing poetry to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, trying to explain his attitude to him. And, when he realised that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn would not change his ways, he wrote a long, complaining ode, of 64 lines, he called it "Shikāyat al-Mutazallim wa Nikāyat al-Muta'allim", and its prelude was.

"O, ear of days, if I say, listen to the
choking of a consumptive and to the groan-
ing of a man in agony". (140)

(139) 'Umāra, Dīwān B. 106B

دلالة العتقادى انه مدخل قوله
ارضى بالاسل المتوجهة الامر
لما قلت شعرا سدا معا، خاطري
ولي سوات بدت من الشعر
رحا نرى تسهيل امرى عديهم
ونفقاكم الى بالظلمة والش

(140) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 117

الارن الياوم ان قلت تاسمعي
لفظه مصدر راحة موعج

'Umāra explained everything to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in this ode. He began from the time he was obliged to leave his home, Yaman, until that moment. He recalled with gratitude the times of al-Fā'iz, al-'Ādīd, the Ruzzīks and Shāwar, all those who had made him gifts and appreciated his talent, when he was not generally appreciated, in spite of the fact that representatives of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn were giving gifts freely in every city. Then he said frankly that his debts were a great burden and he could find no refuge except Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. He pointed out that his Madhhab was Shāfi'ī just as the Madhhab of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was Shāfi'ī too. They were partners in the same Madhhab. 'Umāra at the end of his poem, asked Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to pay him a salary again.

'Umāra did not benefit from this ode, but he wrote many poems to his friends and literary colleagues, particularly to al-Qādī al-Fādīl 'Abd al-Rahīm al-Baisānī, al-'Asqalānī (died in 7 Rabī' 2, 596/1200), (141) asking him for help, but in vain. So his position worsened. 'Umāra was the first poet of the Fatimid Caliphate in his time and he was very loyal to the Caliphs, the Viziers and everything connected with them. He could not forget the times they had spent together. He could not ignore their gifts, grants and presents. He talked about them day and night, until finally he angered the new authorities and annoyed

(141) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt. V. 2/236-237

the government officials. They knew, for sure that he could not like them as he had liked the Fatimids. The result was that his enemies and those who envied him, decided to do all they could to cast him out, and that was what ultimately took place.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was able to end the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt on the second Friday of Muḥurram 567/1171. (142) He ordered the people never to mention again the name of the Fatimid Caliph in the sermon on Fridays in the mosques, and to use instead the name of the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mustaḍī' al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf al-Mustanjid (died 575/1179) (143) who was in Baghdād. A few days later the Fatimid Caliph, al-'Āḍid, died on Monday 10th Muḥarram 567/1171 (144)

'Umāra was extremely sad and he wrote one of his greatest odes, elegising the Fatimid Caliphate, describing what had happened to their position.

"O, misfortune, you did render the hand of glory paralysed, and you made the ornamented neck divest".

(145)

As if 'Umāra was predicting his own end in the last verse of this ode, he said.

(142) Abū Shāma, al-Rawdatain V. 1/197-198

(143) Abū al-Fīdā, Tārīkh V. 3/65

(144) Abū Shāma, al-Rawdatain V.1/205

(145) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 154

است يا دركف المحدث المثل وحيد و صيد و صيد الحبل بالمثل
عامة فالرأسية وهو على حوف من القدر الحور من الازل

"Poor 'Umāra said that, while he was afraid, not of slipping, but of being killed". (146)

'Umāra, however, did something even more daring. One day he was in the presence of Najm al-Dīn, the father of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, when he was living in "al-Lu'lu'a" Palace which was one of the Caliph's palaces, al-Ahdab ibn Abū Ḥusaina abused the Fatimid Caliphs in parts of his poetry. 'Umāra retaliated angrily, saying. "You have sinned, O you who satirized the nobles and the Caliphs, and what you have said to defame them is nonsense". (147)

'Umāra did not live long after this, because his enemies were watching him carefully, listening eagerly to everything he said, following all his movements. They wished to find some crime to accuse him of and soon they were able to do just what they had wanted, and bring his life to a tragic end.

 (146) لما قاله السبي وهو على حود من القتل حور من الرل

(147) Al-Maqrīzī, al-Khitat V. 2/350

12. His Death.

‘Umāra was killed on Saturday, the second of Ramaḍān in 569 (148) 6th April, 1175. (149) His death hardly came as a surprise in view of the gradual decline of his position, and his attitude to the Ayyūbid regime.

When Ṣalāh al-Dīn ended the Fatimid Caliphate, some of the "friends of Egypt" began to make trouble for him, in an attempt to cast him out and revive the Fatimid Caliphate. (150) There were many attempts to do this at the beginning of his reign. Some revolted and fought here and there, (151) others plotted. ‘Umāra, who was one of the most sincere "friends" and who was saddened at their plight, was suspected of being involved in one of these plots with others who had held high posts in the Fatimid Caliphate.

Most historians said that eight men were involved, and they were in addition to ‘Umāra, al-Faḍl ibn Kāmil al-Qāḍī, dyā’ al-Dīn abū al-Qāsim Hibatullāh ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn Kāmil Qāḍī al-Qudāt, Dā‘ī al-Du‘āt ‘Abd al-Jabbār ibn ‘Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Abd al-Qawī, al-Sharīf al-Jalīs, Najāh al-Hamāmī, ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Kātib, al-Qaḍī al-‘A‘azz Salāma

(148) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt V. 3/110

(149) Huart, A Short History. 200

(150) Ḥusain, Dirāsāt Fī al-Shi‘r. 15-20

(151) Abū Shāma, al-Rawḍatain V.1/235

Ibn Wasīl, Mufarrij. V.2/16

al-‘Aurīs and a Christian astrologer. (152)

They made careful plans, they chose the new Caliph, appointed his Vizier and agreed with some of the army to kill Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Unfortunately, there was a traitor among them, a spy of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, (153) and he informed Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn about the plot, they were captured on 26th Sha‘bān 569. (154) They were sent for immediate trial and were executed without delay. ‘Umāra was brought to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in company with Qādī al-Fādīl. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn asked al-Fādīl "What shall we do with ‘Umāra? Shall we put him in prison?" Al-Fādīl replied "He still has a chance of reprieve". Then Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn said. "We shall kill him". Al-Fādīl said. "If Kings want something done, they will have it done". He stood up in an attempt to leave, showing that this was the most agreeable course to him, (155) because he had hated ‘Umāra secretly from the time of the Caliph al-‘Adīd. (156) Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ordered ‘Umāra to be hanged and the soldiers took him straight

(152) Al-Maqrīzī, al-Sulūk. V. 1/53

(153) Some historians said his name was Zain al-Dīn ibn Naja and others said Najm al-Dīn ibn Masāl.

(154) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt V. 3/110

(155) Al-Safadī, al-Ghath. V.2/80

(156) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil V.9/123

away and he was executed between "Bāb al-Dhahab" and "Bāb al-Bahr", (157) on the second of Ramadan, 569/1175, while he was fasting. (158) His last poetry was about himself, giving us the real reason for his being executed at the last moment

"I shall not be hanged, bowing my head,
for a reason which demands my punishment as
a human being.
But, as I have whispered magic with my words,
I am punished like (Hārūt) and (Mārūt)

(159)

(157) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt V.3/110

(158) Sibt ibn al-Jawzī, al-Mir'āt V.2/part I. p. 305

(159) Ibn al-Imād, Shadharāt V.4/235

For (Harut) and (Mārūt) see the Koran II (the cow)102.

وما خلقناهم من قبلنا
لكيف ندينهم ما سوتى
عذبت تدريبت ما روت دماروت
كأسى بد لغت الحرم كلى

CHAPTER 2

His Personality

I. His outward Appearance

'Umāra, who was born into a tribe which was proud of its pure blood and which did not permit intermarriage with foreigners, was naturally typically Arab in feature. He was also impeccable in appearance. This was one of the reasons why the Prince of al-Haramain chose 'Umāra to perform the mission to the Fatimid Caliph in Egypt. Yet we have, in fact, few details of his appearance. Al-Jārim described him, saying

"Sayyidat al-Quṣūr (the Caliph's aunt), admired his fine appearance, upright stature and the nobility and manhood which shone from his eyes." (1) But he does not disclose the source of his information.

It appears that 'Umāra was extremely elegant, for reasons both of his position as an ambassador and as a wealthy merchant. Al-Qāḍī Abū Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn abī 'Aqāme al-Hafṣ'illī of Zabīd mentioned his prosperity, his liking of perfume and his fine clothes. (2) 'Umāra's dress was

(1) Al-Jārim, Sayyidat al-Quṣūr 64-65.

(2) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 23

particularly fine when he settled in Egypt because the Caliph, the Viziers and nobles gave him many excellent suits, some of them covered with gold or with buttons of gold. 'Umāra makes reference to some of these suits after he had recited his first ode in Egypt, the Caliph al-Fā'iz gave him "clothes covered with gold" (3) when he praised 'Isz al-Dīn Husām, one of al-Halik al-Ṣāliḥ's relatives, he was given a sum of money and a suit covered with gold. (4) When 'Umāra married in Egypt, 'Alī ibn al-Zabad al-Ṣāliḥī gave him clothes covered with gold and red silk cloth with golden buttons. (5) They also gave him special suits for different occasions such as the suit which had been given to him by the Prince al-Zahīr Muṭaḥḥ which was made specially to be worn after a bath. (6)

'Umāra followed the fashion of men of religion like the Qādīs and the jurists. Their distinguishing features were their turbans and their "Ṭalāsāns". This was the style of the Caliphs and the Qādīs, and the Princes and the nobles used to imitate them. (7) 'Umāra tells us a story which shows his mode of dress

 (3) Ibid 24

(4) 'Umāra al-Mukāḥ II 6.

(5) Ibid 148

(6) Ibid 141.

(7) Ḥasan, Tarīkh al-Iclām V. 2/230.

'Umāra visited 'Izz al-Dīn Husam at 'Jazīrat al-Dhahab' in al-Jīza, after sunset, before 'Umāra arrived, some of the men of Ḥusām hastened to tell him that a guest was approaching. Ḥusām asked them "How is he dressed?" They replied "After the style of the Qācīs" (8) It is believed that 'Umāra used to wear a turban. His turban was white, the emblem of the Fatimid Caliphate. He alluded to this in a piece of poetry which he wrote to Muḥammad ibn Shams al-Khilāfa when he was in Dimyāt, asking him to send 'Umāra, as a gift, a "sherb" turban woven in Dimyāt, (9) describing it thus "Its whiteness gives it the look of a clean face, and its mark ('alāma) looks like a mole on the cheek." (10)

2. His Character

'Umāra was brought up in a good family which contained many famous men noted for their qualities of generosity, bravery, honesty and loyalty. 'Umāra had all these characteristics. His poetry is full of examples of them. Moreover, his autobiography describes several actions which were indicative of his good character. So there is little wonder that people liked him wherever he went, in Zabīd, Aden and Egypt.

(8) 'Umāra, al-Nukat II7.

(9) Yāqūt, Mu'jam V. 4/35.

(10) 'Umāra, al-Nukat I59.

Dīwān Pet. I78B

كأن يامل وجهي وصلى الرمح الحدشاه

'Umāra's greatest quality was fidelity. It is obvious to everyone who reads his poetry or peruses his biography. He kept faith with his friends, the Viziers, the Caliphs and everyone deserving of his trust. There were many incidents in his life which prove clearly his fidelity to the Ruzzīk family, especially to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and his son al-Malik al-'Ādil Ruzzīk. When al-Ṣāliḥ died, 'Umāra repeatedly mentioned him in poems addressed to others. After Ruzzīk had been killed and the Ruzzīk family's authority had disappeared, 'Umāra became unhappy, he felt that he had lost his greatest friends, so he decided never to enter the "Secret Hall" in the Ministry Building until the head of Ruzzīk was removed. He had seen it in a basin there, with the killers, the leaders of the new government, around it. They followed 'Umāra's suggestion to remove the head. About the time when 'Umāra saw them happy in their victory, he later wrote

'There is no-one in this company surrounding Ruzzīk's head who has not been killed and his head cut off his body.'"(II)

The reader of 'al-Mukat' could hardly forget the poem which 'Umāra recited in celebration of Shāwar's victory and of taking the Ministry from Ruzzīk, since all the poets strongly criticized Ruzzīk's regime except 'Umāra who gave it due praise. (I2)

(II) 'Umāra, al-Mukat 67.

(I2) 'Umāra, al-Mukat 69

His fidelity to al-Zahīr Murtaḍī¹ made the Vizier Dirghām angry because once Dirghām had asked ‘Umāra to go with him to ‘Hadaḥ al-Barqīyyū’, and ‘Umāra had refused because al-Zahīr was in prison there. (13)

Ultimately, his fidelity to the Fatimid Caliph and his family caused him to lose his life. He was killed because of his love for the Caliph al-‘Ādid, a martyr of his own fidelity. For this reason, al-Amīnī studied him as one of Virtue's martyrs. (14)

Amr ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī (died in 945/1041), a reliable historian⁽¹⁵⁾ and trustworthy investigator, has much to say in praise of ‘Umāra and his fidelity

"How excellent ‘Umāra was. He, indeed, fulfilled the promise of fidelity, and repaid in full the goodness of pledges, as he was accustomed to. Undoubtedly he was killed in the way of his duty towards those whom he loved, in the tradition of lovers. May God have mercy upon him and forgive him." (16)

Al-Maqrīzī was not alone in his praise, many others gave him similar praise. Ibn ‘Asīl, (17) Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh

(13) Ibid. 77.

(14) Al-Amīnī, *Shuhadā’ al-Isqāḥ*.

(15) Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharat* V. 7/254-255.

(16) Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ* V. 2/351.

(17) Ibn ‘Asīl, *Mufarrīj al-Kurūb* V. 1/212.

al-Ṭayyib,⁽¹⁸⁾ and Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusain.⁽¹⁹⁾ A man as loyal as 'Umāra was by nature courageous. 'Umāra had revered bravery from the time when he had lived in the Yaman amongst his tribe. He proudly related the courage of his relatives, his uncle 'Alī for instance, and his two cousins al-'Āṭif and Ḥamza.⁽²⁰⁾ Bravery teaches a man honesty and so it was with 'Umāra. He abhorred liars and showed his appreciation of truthful people by praising them.

"Know, (I redeem you) that truth is the great quality which you have both inwardly and outwardly. Were it not for his truthfulness "Abū al-'Isz" could not be safe from disaster." (21)

The partner of truth is honesty. 'Umāra was honest and this explains some of his success in life. He was an able teacher, successful ambassador and prosperous merchant. People had faith in him and entrusted large sums of money to him to buy what goods they needed. The Queen, al-Ḥurra, and her Vizier, Surūr, provided him with a large sum of money when he first began trading.⁽²²⁾ When al-Dā'ī Muhammad ibn Saba' died, 'Umāra kept 5,000 Dīnārs for him.⁽²³⁾ Before this al-Dā'ī had given 'Umāra 5,000

(18) Al-Ṭayyib, Tārīkh Thaghar 'Ujūn MS. (Del V 2/557)

(19) Ḥusain, Fi Adab Miṣr al-Ḥaṭṭāniyya 221-222.

(20) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 15-20.

(21) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. MS. Del. 183.

(22) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 27. هذا هو المراد لا صدق فيه في القول والعمل لم يعلمه من المصنف
 العلم قد نلت ان الصدق اصل ما لم يترك في سره وفعله

(23) Ibid 38.

"Mithqāls". (24) The Prince of al-Ḥaramain could not have chosen anyone better than 'Umāra to sell, for him, the large quantity of silver from the al-Ka'ba door.⁽²⁵⁾ At last, when al-Zahīr Wurtafī⁶ was imprisoned, he deposited a box full of jewellery and 700 Dīnārs with 'Umāra⁽²⁶⁾

'Umāra's biographers mention other of his qualities. shrewdness, ambition, wisdom, understanding, vision, modesty, forgiveness and probity. But there is another characteristic which warrants explanation. It is self-esteem. He respected all people as human beings and liked to be respected by everyone. He could not tolerate being despised by anyone, whoever that person might be. For this reason he did not like to bow to the Vizier and the Caliph, as others did. This was very difficult for him, especially as he was a jurist. So he asked Saīd al-Dīn Husayn, al-Malik al-Ḥalīq's son-in-law, to have him excused from having to bow to both the Vizier and the Caliph. Husayn promised to do his best.⁽²⁷⁾

What of 'Umāra's failings? Understandably, 'Umāra tried to hide his and to show us what was good in him in his biography and even in his poetry. Therefore, some of his

(24) Ibid 23.
 (25) Ibid 41.
 (26) Ibid 142.
 (27) 'Umāra, al-Fukhā 121.

biographers are able to speak ill of him, even those who tried to abuse him, except Ibn Kathīr and he criticized 'Umāra's faith, not his character (28) Nevertheless 'Umāra did some strange things which were, perhaps, black spots in his life.

The first was when he spoke badly of the people of Zabīd, accusing them of envy and injustice, (29) but he had forgotten that people, naturally, judge by appearances. The circumstances were as follows. 'Umāra was given permission by the Zabīd people to go to Aden to meet al-Dā'ī Muḥammad ibn Saba'. But he found Muḥammad ibn Saba' in solitude for a few days, not wanting to meet anyone, he did, however, allow 'Umāra to meet him and to spend four days with him. After this the people of Zabīd accused 'Umāra of being the intercessor between 'Alī ibn Mahdī and Muḥammad ibn Saba' to join forces to attack Zabīd. The Zabīd nobles, therefore, took it upon themselves to kill 'Umāra. So 'Umāra fled from Zabīd to Mecca. This reinforced the belief that 'Umāra had, for certain tried to intercede, because he was a good friend of both 'Alī ibn Mahdī and Muḥammad ibn Saba', and the enmity of ibn Mahdī to Zabīd people was well-known. It was discovered later (30) that Ibn Mahdī's attempt to join forces with ibn Saba' certainly had taken place, because 'Umāra mentions a

(28) Ibn Kathīr, al-Biogrāya v. 12/275

(29) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 30.

(30) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 30.

meeting of the three of them in Dhū Jibla for this purpose, but al-Dā'ī (ibn Sabā'), 'Umāra said, did not agree. (31)

In fact, 'Umāra failed to realize that appearances were against him, and that the people of Zabīd had reasonable grounds for suspicion. He was a friend of both the leaders and had been in contact with them at the crucial time.

The second matter concerned his teacher Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Ḥāsib. 'Umāra's dealings with him were as a merchant buying knowledge. Al-Ḥāsib wrote for him, "Farīdat Ruzaiq" but 'Umāra pretended to al-Ḥāsib that he had written it. (32) 'Umāra was paid a large sum of money for it which he kept for himself, and al-Ḥāsib, who had earned it, received nothing although 'Umāra certainly offered him some of it which he refused. When al-Ḥāsib lived with 'Umāra, as his teacher, 'Umāra accommodated him in his house but tried to hide him "I accommodated the jurispudent at the rear of the house," 'Umāra says, "so that no one could see him except for me," (33) It would seem that 'Umāra's reasons for this were so that he would have al-Ḥāsib's teaching all to himself. Such selfishness is unworthy of 'Umāra. Did 'Umāra dislike people knowing that he was still studying, because they knew

(31) 'Umāra, Tārīkh 13. 154.

(32) Ibid 124.

(33) 'Umāra, al-Fukat 124.

him as a scholar and a jurisprudent?. If so, he was mistaken because he must surely have learnt the saying of Muhammad

"Look for knowledge from the cradle to the grave."⁽³⁴⁾ So ~~that~~ the real scholar should study until the day he dies.

Even if one accepts these two incidents, it is hard to believe the third one. Yet 'Umāra himself tells the story "One day we attended al-Dā'ī Muhammad ibn Saba' in his palace which was in 'Al-Jannāt'", some of the poets were with him Safī al-Dawla Ahmad ibn 'Alī al-Haḡlī, al-Qāḡī Abū Bakr ibn Muhammad al-Yāfi'ī al-Janaḡī and others. Ibn Saba' suggested composing two lines of poetry in a special meter (wazn) which had suddenly occurred to him and he promised to give the first poet to complete the couplet money and the very clothes he himself was wearing. Al-Qāḡī al-Yāfi'ī was first, but before he could say so, 'Umāra who was sitting beside him, stole - as he said - the paper from al-Yāfi'ī and pretended, in front of al-Dā'ī ibn Saba', that these two lines were his own poetry:

"I won the money and the clothes," 'Umāra said proudly, and continued: "so I stole his thunder and blundered his spearhead (with which he had taken aim)."⁽³⁵⁾ It is quite

(34) Al-Minā'ī, Sharḡ Jāmi' al-Suyūṭī 73.

(35) 'Umāra, Tārīkh 91

natural to wonder how on earth 'Umāra could do that, let alone admit it. This is nothing more than theft because 'Umāra himself said that he stole the paper, and he added "I put it in my mouth" (36) because he did not want anybody to see what he was doing. Mean while, the man who had actually written the poetry kept silent to avoid the trouble which might arise if he said anything. No-one can excuse 'Umāra for this action whatever the reason. It was probably the ode which al-'Abdī wrote, pretending it to be 'Umāra's poem, which made him do this. There is a proverb which says "He that steals once will steal twice." At least 'Umāra did not resemble al-Knālidīyyān (Sa'īd Ibn Hāshim), (died 871/981) and Muḥammad ibn Hāshim, (died 380/990), who, throughout their lives, (37) stole the poetry of others pretending that it was theirs.

If anyone were to consider these actions seriously, looking carefully for the reasons behind them, he could find that the main influence was 'Umāra's profession, commerce. It seems that he loved the world of commerce so much that he was under its influence in all his actions and thoughts.

Whenever he started anything, he used to consider it as a trade deal, weighing its advantages and disadvantages. If he thought that it would be a favourable transaction, nothing

(36) 'Umāra, Tārīkh 9I. It may be "K ummī" (my slave)

(37) al-Tha'libī ḥatīb V. 1/507

could prevent him from seeing it through to its conclusion. He must have believed in the adage 'the end justifies the means.' This is one effect of commerce, and there is another indication of it in his poetry. He used the dual too much. He was obviously very taken with it, and he mentioned two things together many times - two persons, qualities, traits, actions, events, examples, in fact two 'anything's'. This point will not be expanded here, because it will be developed fully with examples in the chapter on his poetry. But I would like to explain how commerce affected it.

When 'Umāra first started to trade, he was a jurist. He no doubt found that there were many differences between trade and jurisprudence. Perhaps there was an inner conflict between 'Umāra the merchant and 'Umāra the jurist. Nevertheless, trade is not forbidden in the "Ṣarī'a". This conflict lasted a long time and thus 'Umāra developed a dual personality, one side of it was spiritual, idealist, unmaterialistic and always ready to help people, whilst the other was mundane and worldly, struggling to make money and having no interest in others. So 'Umāra has a dual personality in his character and behaviour. This was reflected in his poetry. This extract from his poetry shows the effect commerce had on his thinking.

"When my loss has been his gain, I ruined my situation for his good. He took from my life what I have spent in praising him but I did not gain his money." (38)

3. His Habits and Hobbies

'Umāra's habits and hobbies are of considerable interest. What did 'Umāra like doing most? He was a rich man, indeed he worked hard and did not much care for diversions, because he was always busy studying, teaching, attending the literary meetings, visiting friends or trading. As a jurist, he never drank wine nor did he write 'wine poetry'. He wrote only a little love poetry.

'Umāra sometimes went hunting with his friends, but it seems that he did not really care for it. It cannot have had much effect on him because he did not write any hunting poetry "Tardīyyāt", as Abū Nuwās, Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Ṣafīyy al-Dīn al-Ḥillī wrote.

'Umāra loved horses and used to ride as most Arabs did in those days, so Ṭayy ibn Shāwar arranged for the barley for their feed to be taken from the 'Dīwān' at ten "Ardabb" monthly, (39) and took care of them. For that some of the

(38) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 150B.

لا أغت ما ربي لركه احدت حالي صلاح حاله
 وغازي لم يري ما لفقته بي وصيه وكم افر حاله

(39) 'Umāra, al-Fukat 127.

Viziers and the Princes made him presents of several fine horses, Shāwar, for example, gave him a black mare,⁽⁴⁰⁾ ʿIzz al-Dīn Ḥusām once sent him a horse with other animals,⁽⁴¹⁾ and Fāris al-Muslimān Badr ibn Ruzzīk, the brother of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, sent him a high-quality horse as well as many different presents⁽⁴²⁾ Another time he gave him a roan foal which ʿUmāra described

"You have sent a steed whose normal pace is faster than the twinkling of an eye, and the strong winds, exhausted, follow in his wake. He is as graceful as the rose and roan as the ruby, and he was proud that he did not resemble the agate or the firebrands. You have sent him, the only one of such grace, and with his help I will seek revenge for calamities. Before the arrival of this horse, I vowed to ride on lightning, and now he has arrived, I will fulfil that pledge."⁽⁴³⁾

ʿUmāra was expert in his knowledge of horses, because he described them with clarity and precision in his poetry, their movement, their paces, their colours, their characteristics, and the different types of horse were all

(40) Ibid. 150.

(41) Ibid. 120.

(42) ʿUmāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 58.

(43) ʿUmāra, *al-Tukat* 99. *Dīwān* Pet. 107B

بعنت لظري سبق الطرف معقود وبعده اليباع الروع من عطفه حسري
 ملك الورد والياقوت حسياً وحرمة وناه علم يرهب العقيق ولا الحمر
 وارسلته في الكه وترأ كاسي اطاب عبد الباشات ه وترأ
 بدرت اكواب الرق قبل وصوله فوقيت لما جاء به ذلك الدرأ

familiar to him.

An interesting fact about 'Umāra is that he had many "Jāriyas". He mentioned these in his poetry and told us many stories about them

The Prince al-Zahīr Murtafi⁴⁴ once wanted to buy a certain "Jāriya" while 'Umāra was with him. He asked 'Umāra to have a look at her, he did so and told the Prince that she was beautiful indeed. Al-Zahīr bought her, but "she did not stay in his house more than a month", said 'Umāra, "and he brought her to me saying that he had quarrelled with his wife about this "Jāriya". Al-Zahīr then gave her to 'Umāra " (44)

One day 'Umāra visited Tāyy ibn Shēwar who had a large, golden apple in his hand. As soon as 'Umāra took his place, Tāyy handed the apple to 'Umāra. When 'Umāra complained that it was too heavy, Tāyy replied "give it to your 'Jāriyas'" 'Umāra kept it on his sleeve. "When I left," 'Umāra said, "he told someone to follow me and tell me that it cost more than forty Dīnārs." 'Umāra added, "I gave it to my 'Jāriyas' as he ordered, and this was on 25th of Ramaḡān "(45) 'Umāra once bought a 'Jāriya', but he could not pay the necessary amount, so he wrote a piece of poetry to one of the Viziers,

 (44) 'Umāra, al-Fuk-t 144
 (45) Ibid 128.

asking him to pay what he owed

"O, King, whose court is served by kissing and touching (with faces) your servant has bought a poor, but fine-looking 'Pamlūka'. She is valued at sixty Dīnārs, but I need one third of the price." (46)

'Umāra also bestowed some 'Jāriyas' on the nobles and famous men, such as al-Dā'ī 'Iḥammād ibn Sa'ad' to whom 'Umāra bestowed a 'Jāriya' who had a fine singing voice and who sang some of his poetry. (47)

Perhaps the only bad habit that 'Umāra had, as anyone who has read his poetry and biography will know, was that he was a scoundrel, although he knew very well that it was written in the Koran

"And be not prodigal. God loves not the prodigal." (48)

It is probable that 'Umāra was like this from the time he was a young man living in a rich family of a wealthy tribe. Most of its members were freelanders, like his uncle 'Alī, who once presented the teacher, who taught 'Umāra the Koran, with 100 cows (49). 'Umāra had spent what money he had and was obliged to one person after another for help, he was compelled to praise Viziers, Princes or anyone who would

(46) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 164.

(47) 'Umāra, al-Fuḳḳ 30.

(48) The Koran VII (al-Mā'ām) /142.

(49) 'Umāra, al-Fuḳḳ 12

بإتلافه الواهب
قد اشتد الكادم بملوكه
تبعه مستورا كاشي
اللهم والتعير محذومه
بلى الصورة مسدومه
المورثي اللث من القم

give him what he needed. Sometimes he had so many debts that he could not settle them without help, especially at the time of the Ayyūbids. He ^{was obliged to} blame the leaders for his troubles, criticising the ~~the~~ government everywhere until, in the end, they killed him. This ^{perhaps} was not the only reason that he was killed, but it was one of the main reasons.

4. His Religion

‘Umāra was a faithful and pious Moslem. He was proud of his religion, and often showed this pride in his poetry. This is hardly surprising because ‘Umāra had grown up in a religious tribe, many of whose members were jurists, like ‘Umāra's uncle, Ibrāhīm ibn Iḥṣām ibn Zaidān. ‘Umāra's uncle, ‘Alī ibn Zaidān, once said

"I can count amongst my ancestors, eleven scholars in many kinds of knowledge" (50) ‘Umāra's tribe fulfilled all their religious duties in prayer, fasting and pilgrimage. ‘Umāra says that his uncle, ‘Alī, went on pilgrimages forty times. ‘Umāra himself went on pilgrimages many times. His devout family used to bring up their children in the way of religion, filling their minds with religious ideals. They took care to teach the children the Koran reciting it, reading it,

(50) ‘Umāra. al-Nuzat 8

learning it by heart and interpreting it. 'Umāra did all this, and he learned "Sūra Ṣād" when he was about eight years old. (51)

The tribe was not the only basis for 'Umāra's religion, his country also helped considerably because "al-Yaman" had been a religious country from the beginning of Islām. Thus 'Umāra was brought up in an atmosphere which helped to create and foster the deep feelings of faith throughout his life. Many incidents illustrate this in his biography, poetry and other books. For some time in his life, he was in the company of 'Alī ibn Maḥdī in Zabīd, when 'Alī was a hermit and 'Umāra emulated him, quitting his study and jurisprudence until his father came to Zabīd and made him return to his study. (52) His religious feelings moved him to study the Koran thoroughly, even while he was a jurist, teaching jurisprudence in Zabīd, he chose for his study "Ḥarf ḥijr 'Amr ibn al-'Alī". (53) Most of his biographers mentioned his godliness and praised his faith, except Ibn Kathīr who unfairly criticized him "The least of his wickedness is that he belonged to al-Baḥrī, and he has been charged with 'Zandaq', and absolute atheism." (54)

 (51) Ibid 12.

(52) 'Umāra, Tarīkh MS.124.

(53) Ibid MS.150

(54) Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya V. 12/276.

But Ibn Kathīr said this without any proof of 'Umāra's atheism. The only thing on which Ibn Kathīr based his criticism was an ode of 'Umāra's which begins,

"Knowledge, since it has existed needs the flag (strength) and the sword can always do without the pen." (55)

Ibn Kathīr said that this ode was full of atheism and 'Zandāqa', especially this verse

"The beginning of this religion was made by a man who has made great efforts until (the people) called him "Sayyid al-Umamī" (the master of peoples)".

In fact, the most thorough investigation cannot find any atheism. How could 'Umāra be atheistic, particularly when he wrote it to Shams al-Dīn Turānshāh, the eldest brother of Salāh al-Dīn, encouraging him to conquer the Yaman? He began the ode by giving wise advice, and describing noble characters. 'Umāra then reminded Turānshāh that he should work hard to achieve what he really wanted, and to gain glory. For this purpose, 'Umāra mentioned Muhammad, the prophet, as an example of endeavour. Most historians maintain that "this verse is not 'Umāra's and that it was slipped into the poem by some of his enemies" (56) then we should

(55) 'Umāra, Dīwān Oct. 175B.

(56) Al-'Inād, al-Kharīda MS. (Dec. 595). Al-Tamīmī, Thamārat 23. Al-Safādī, al-Chaytā V. 2/180. Al-'Isāmī, Simt V. 3/447, etc

not condemn 'Umāra because of it. Some critics discussed this saying that the verse gives no indication of atheism, because endeavour, here, represents the diligence of Muḥammad in announcing the apostle of God and in performing the duties of his religion, asking the people to accept him as the prophet and being ready to suffer what injuries they did to him. (57) And, probably, this is what 'Umāra wanted to say.

Accusations were once made against 'Umāra, someone spoke ill of him to the Visier. He did not like to say anything, but turned to God for help
 "God is the highest, he knows the truth better than anyone, and he is the most wise (in the world)." (58)

'Umāra's faith led him to trust God in all his problems. When the people in Egypt were afraid of their enemies who had begun to attack, 'Umāra turned his face to God and said
 "O Lord, I have seen the enemies of Egypt awake after they have been asleep. Let Islām live forever, and prevent the

{57} Al-'Isāmī, *Sirṭ al-'Ujūm* V. 3/447.
 {58} 'Umāra, *Divān* Pet. 177.

links of conversion from breaking up. Grant us your help, to seek refuge from an affliction, the embers of which are burning." (59)

‘Um̄ir al-ayy advised people, in his poetry, to be faithful "For easy death will be to people if they are of good faith and trust in the Day of Judgement" (60)

So ‘Um̄ir was faithful and when he apologized to one of his friends because he had not been able to visit him for a long time, he said that the fever which had prevented him, had weakened everything except his faith (61)

He praised the leaders and the Viziers, describing them as being of good faith, piety and godliness, calling them the protectors of religion, Islam and the Islamic law, (al-Shari‘a). (62)

3. His Pedigree

There is no doubt that ‘Um̄ir was a shāfi‘ī. He was

(59) Ibid. Pct. 52B. يارب أي امرئ عرا قد استرقت لا عينون الإعمارى بعد قد طرد
 فاحصل لا ملة الإسلام ما قبة و امرئ عفر الدى من طرد
 رعب لا ملك كونا أشقىه من فته يتللى حرد قد ترا

(60) ‘Um̄ir, Dīwān Pct. 10.

ما ابرئ الموت عبد الماس لا و نغوا بعد و نغوا اوصى منقلب

(61) Ibid. 58.

(62) Ibid. 9, 55B, 847, etc.

born and grew up in a Shāfi'ī family and would naturally be of the same "Madhhab". He studied religious matters, especially the Shāfi'ī jurisprudence and his most important teacher in Zaid, Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh ibn abī al-ʿĀṣim al-Abbār, the only one whom 'Umāra mentioned, was the chief jurist of the Shāfi'ī Madhhab there. Then when 'Umāra became a scholar, he taught this Madhhab and also wrote a book in "al-Farā'id" according to Shāfi'ī jurisprudence. So he was Shāfi'ī by birth, education and in his way of thinking. He said so proudly many times. Ibn Khallikān, one of his biographers, said "He belonged to the Shāfi'ī Madhhab and was a fanatic of al-sunna" (65) Another, al-Qalqashandī, said "'Umāra did not follow the shī'ī sect, he belonged to the Shāfi'ī sect." (64) Others said likewise, Ibn Wāṣil, (65) al-Hakamī, (66) Ibn al-ʿImād, (67) and al-Yāfi'ī, (68) Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mahdī al-Subkī (died 771/1370) (69) mentioned 'Umāra in his book, "Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya". (70) Al-ʿImād al-Kātib said that

(63) Ibn Khallikān, Maʿāyāt V.I/109.

(64) Al-Qalqashandī, Subḥ V.5/333

(65) Iʿfariyy V.I/248

(66) Maʿāyāt al-Zuhār MS F 275

(67) Shadīḥāt V. 4/234-235.

(68) Al-ʿImādī MS.F.305B, (1.3/390).

(69) Al-Zinkāly al-Jawāʾid V.4/335

(70) Al-ʿIsāmī, simt V.5/418

he was "sunnī" and he was surprised that 'Umāra did not change his Madhhab when al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ tried to persuade him to do so, but 'Umāra was killed because of his love for "al-Shī'a". (71)

Several modern scholars have mentioned 'Umāra as a Shāfi'ī and one of the earliest was Kāmil Ḥusain, who specialised in Fatimid studies. He said that 'Umāra was involved in the plot against Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in spite of his "Tasannun." (72) On the other hand, there are a few of his biographers who said otherwise, some of them, such as Shaikh Agha buzurg al-Tīhrānī, (73) 'Abdul, Ḥusain al-Amīnī, (74) and Yūsuf al-Ṣan'ānī. (75) Hādī al-Amīnī said that he was shī'ī Imāmī. (76) They did not blame him or criticize his faith. But there are some writers who criticised him because they maintained that he changed his Madhhab, for example, al-Janadī who insisted that Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn al-Mukhtār told him that 'Umāra changed his Madhhab and joined the Fatimids, adopting their Madhhab. (77) Abū al-Ḥasan al-Khazrajī said much the same

(71) Al-'Imād, Kh̄rīda (Der. p.399).

(72) Dirāsāt Fī al-Adab al-Ayyūbī: 15.

(73) Al-Dhrī'a. S. 3, V. 9/769.

(74) Al-Ghadīr. V. 4/408; Shuhadā' al-Faḍīla. 59.

(75) Nasmat al-Sahar: NS. V. 2/F. 230.

(76) Diwān Talā'ī ibn Ruzzīk. 28-58.

(77) Al-Sulūk. MS. (Der. 546).

"the idea which I prefer is that he joined their Madhhab." (78)

His proof was in the poetry of 'Umāra. The poetry, in fact, has no evidence in support of this idea, but it contains some "Ismā'īlī" ideas about the Caliph, his dynasty, his parents, Fāṭima and 'Alī, and their first ~~grandfather~~ ^{ancestor}, Muhammad. This is quite true, but cannot be a proof because there were many "sunni" poets who mentioned Ismā'īlī ideas in their praises of the Fatimid Caliph and the Viziers, but they did not change their own "sunni". (79)

Kāmil Ḥusain believes that 'Umāra was the best example of this, he says. "Does this not prove that 'Umāra has been affected by the Fatimid ideas in spite of his retaining the Shāfi'ī Madhhab?" (80) For this reason, no one can associate 'Umāra with the Fatimid Caliphate poets, those who are called the Fatimid "'Aqā'id" poets, such as al-Mu'ayyad Fī al-Dīn Hibat allāh ibn Mūsa al-Shīrāzī, (died 470/1078). (81)

'Umāra was just one of the "Madīh" poets, in the same way as al-Muḥadhḥab ibn al-Zubair, abū al-Raqa'maq, al-Muḥadhḥab al-Mauṣilī and many others. (82)

(78) Al-Ṭayyīb, Tārīkh Thaghr Aden. (Der. 553)

(79) Ḥusain, Fī Adab Miṣr al-Fāṭimiyya 356.

(80) Ibid 159.

(81) Ḥusain, Sirat al-Mu'ayyad (The Preface. 17).

(82) Āmīn, Zuhr al-Islām V. I/210.

‘Umāra himself explained this clearly when he told us what happened to him with al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ who was always trying to persuade him to join shī‘at, ‘Umāra said: "One day I suddenly received three bags of gold,⁽⁸³⁾ with a piece of paper on which al-Ṣāliḥ had written some verses of poetry:

'Say to the jurisprudent ‘Umāra. O, you who are the best of those who can compose a speech and a letter, accept the advice of one who is guiding you along the right path. Say "Ḥiṭṭa", and enter the door (of the Madhhab) with us. You will find the "Imāms" mediating for you, and you will not find (anything) in our Madhhab save the "sunna" and the book, (the Koran).'" (84)

‘Umāra refused this offer, returned the gold and in reply to the poetry, said that he could not enter, asking al-Ṣāliḥ to close the "door", and keep ‘Umāra's pure love. But the most important point here is that ‘Umāra called changing his Madhhab corrupting (Iḥsād), because he said in his answer to al-Ṣāliḥ

"If your scholars corrupt my living beliefs, they will

(83) Al-‘Imād al-Kātib says that it was 3,000 Dīnārs Kharīda MS. (Der. p.399).

(84) ‘Umāra, al-Nukat 45.

قوله للعقبة عمارة يا حير من اصمى يؤلف حطة وحطانا
 اقل بصيبي من ديمان الى الهدي قل حطه راد حل اليها الشا نا
 تلق الرعة ش فعه راحد الا لربنا سة وكتانا

ruin them."(85)

He also tried to avoid argument at literary gatherings, when he did not agree about the subjects under discussion. One night, some of those present at the literary meeting spoke ill of some of the "sunna" thinkers. 'Umāra did not like to listen to this, according to what is written in the Koran

"And when thou seest those who engage in vain discourse concerning our signs, then turn thou away from them until they engage in a different discourse."(86) So 'Umāra could not stay with them, and left the meeting. Nor did he attend any more meetings for some time. When 'Umāra met al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, in his private orchard, al-Ṣāliḥ welcomed him and asked him about this matter and his absence. 'Umāra spoke frankly.

"Certainly I have not been ill, but I was not in agreement with what was being said against the "sunna" ancestors. If the Sultan orders an end to this, all will be well, otherwise, I will find another place in the wide land, and another King, of which there are many." (87) Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ was surprised and he listened attentively to 'Umāra. He asked him.

(85) 'Umāra, Dīwān. Pet. 26B.

(86) The Koran IV (The Women) 140.

(87) 'Umāra, al-Nukat. 44.

"What do you think about abū Bakr and 'Umar?" "I think", said 'Umāra, "without them, there would be no Islām for either you (Shī'a) or us (sunna)." Then 'Umāra added "Certainly, to love them is the duty of every Muslim."

'Umāra finished by saying

"And who will turn away from the religion of Abraham, but he that is foolish?" (88) Al-Ṣāliḥ smiled and treated 'Umāra kindly because he used to meet the jurists of "al-sunna" and listen to their discussions. (89) Until then, al-Ṣāliḥ had not despaired of 'Umāra and kept trying to persuade him, asking his relatives to do the same, until the following happened:

One day, 'Umāra was alone with Saif al-Dīn Ḥusain ibn Abī al-Haijā'. Al-Ḥusain said:

"'Umāra, do you know that al-Ṣāliḥ has wanted you to be faithful (Shī'i) since al-Ashtar ibn Dhī al-Riyāsatain joined our Madhhab? And unless al-Ṣāliḥ persuades you to join his Madhhab, he will not give al-Ashtar one more Dīnār."

'Umāra replied

"What occurs at the assemblies of pleasure should be kept secret." (90) Al-Ḥusain said "Say what you like, and nobody

(88) The Koran. II (The Cow) 130.

(89) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 45.

(90) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 120.

will blame you for it."

'Umāra said "Unless I am certain of my Madhhab, virtue would prevent me from changing it."

Therefore al-Ḥusain said to al-Ṣāliḥ:

"Don't try any longer with 'Umāra, because there is no hope for him."

This answer was decisive and it shows clearly how faithful 'Umāra was to his Madhhab, about which he was thoroughly convinced. Then what could possibly happen to 'Umāra which would cause him to change his mind and join another Madhhab? Nothing did happen to cause this, although there is not such a great difference between these Madhhabs because they all take their rules from the Koran, and the "sunna" of Muḥammad.

'Umāra also said, in a poem to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, that he would be Shāfi'ī until the end of his life.

"Did you not know that I belong to al-Shāfi'ī and you are the greatest mediator of the sect." (91)

It can be argued that proof comes at the end of 'Umāra's life, because he was accused in a shī'ī plot and was executed for this. The answer is clear. Even if one accepted that 'Umāra really joined the conspirators, he was accused and killed for his love of the Fatimid Caliphs and their people.

(91) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. II7B.

It was not a matter of religion or Madhhab, it was, in fact, a matter of humanity and justice.

Some people, (relatives of the Caliph) who had been living happily in peace, had troubles which made them ask for help. But Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, who came to help them, wronged them. At first, he appeared to be helping them, but when he had defeated the enemy, he turned on them. He took away their authority and their wealth and had them removed from their palaces.

‘Umāra saw all this as a man and a representative of justice. He could not restrain himself, he became angry at the wrongs he saw. Firstly because their great ancestor, Muḥammad, said. "Be merciful to a mighty man who is despised and to a rich man who becomes poor," and also because they had given him presents and done him favours. So ‘Umāra addressed the members of the new government, while he was being taken to be executed. "Their favours and your abuses killed me."⁽⁹²⁾ He said in praise of the Fatimid Caliphs and Viziers

"Their generous ways are the same as the sunna, even though they are different from me in being Shī'a."⁽⁹³⁾ He reminded Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn about his Madhhab:

"Did you know that I belonged to al-Shāfi'i?" And ‘Umāra was stating a fact.

{92} Ibn Duqmāq, al-Intesār V. 4/94.

{93} ‘Umāra, Diwān Pet. 236.

6. His Culture

'Umāra was one of the most learned people of his time. He had a wide knowledge and a command of a variety of sciences, such as jurisprudence, 'reading the Koran', history, the Arabic language, literature and the chronicles which dealt with ancient times. Al-Suyūṭī also mentions grammar (al-Naḥw) and philology (al-luḡa) amongst his studies.⁽⁹⁴⁾ But he did not become an authority in them as he did in the matter of jurisprudence, history and literature. He acquired his specialist knowledge by studying, travelling and attending literary meetings, added to this, of course, he had considerable intellectual powers. He was also ambitious, which was a driving force and helped him to continue his studies until he became famous. His abilities were well-known at an early stage in his life when he began to study in the "Kuttāb" at the age of eight. He studied the usual subjects the Koran, the 'Ḥadīth', 'al-ʿArabiyya', poetry and calligraphy.⁽⁹⁵⁾

These were his elementary studies and his more advanced studies began when he reached puberty. At that time, he enjoyed the study of jurisprudence at Zabīd. He chose Zabīd for this purpose because there were several scholars there, who together with many lecturers, were teaching subjects which were much in demand of the time, for example Koran,

(94) Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*. 359.

(95) Ibn Khalḍūn, *al-Muqaddima*. 1010.

Hadīth, Jurisprudence - especially "Farā'īd-Ḥisāb, Jabr and Muqābala", grammar (Naḥw), philology (Lughā) and "'Ilm al-Kalām." The government respected these scholars and paid them good salaries and gave them gifts. (96) 'Umāra realised his hopes in studying what he liked in Zabīd when he went there in 531/1137. (97) He studied under many scholars whom he met there in the different "Madhhabs", but the only one who was mentioned by 'Umāra himself and his biographers, was Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh ibn abī al-Qāsīm ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Abbār, the chief of the Shāfi'ī jurists, who was in charge of jurisprudence and responsible for legal decisions in Zabīd. Very many of the scholars there graduated under him. (98)

'Umāra's intelligence helped him to graduate quickly. He was so outstanding that the scholars in Zabīd invited him to take a master's seat with them and lecture in Shāfi'ī jurisprudence. He did so and not only was he a successful lecturer, who was accounted amongst the greatest jurists in Zabīd during the life of his great teacher, Ibn al-Abbār, but he also wrote a book called "al-Farā'īd". (99)

 (96) 'Umāra, Tārīkh MS. I46.

(97) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 2I.

(98) Al-Janādī, al-Sulūk MS. (Der. 638).

(99) Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya V. I2/275.

It is the book which 'Umāra himself taught and it became famous in Zabīd later on.

During the time when 'Umāra was lecturing, there occurred a legal problem in Zabīd which the greatest authorities in jurisprudence there could not solve. It was highly complicated. Many scholars tried to solve it, such as 'Uthmān ibn al-Ṣaffār and Muhammad ibn 'Alī al-Sihāmī, with the encouragement of the Viziers and their magnificent gifts and invitations. But all attempts were in vain. (100)

At last they gave up and tried no more. It seems that this problem greatly occupied 'Umāra's mind. He tried to find a solution many times to earn money, name and fame; but his efforts bore no fruit. In 539/1145, 'Umāra met a little-known jurist from Ḥaḍramawt. His name was Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥāsib, who was able to solve this "Farīḍa" easily, and put an end to the business. 'Umāra, who knew well enough that "there is one who is omniscient, above all those who are endowed with knowledge," (101) wanted to resume his studies in "al-Farā'īḍ" under this great scholar, so he accommodated him in his own house in Aden, and studied under him in "al-Farā'īḍ."

Another subject 'Umāra had studied under al-Ḥāsib

(100) 'Umāra, Tārīkh. MS I23.

(101) The Koran XII (Joseph) 76.

was the reading of the Koran in the "Ḥarf" (Reading) of Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā', who was one of the seven recognized 'readers' of the Koran. He was the most learned of all in the Koran, Arabic literature and language, (died in 154/771).⁽¹⁰²⁾ 'Umāra wished to learn this reading (Ḥarf), and when he knew that al-Ḥāsib was accomplished in it, he began to learn it under him every day until he completed his studies.

'Umāra had another great interest. This was history. He wrote a book on the history of the Yaman which is, probably, the second book after "al-Mufīd of Jayyāsh", who was one of the Kings of the Yaman. 'Umāra's book is very important and most of it is quoted by Arabic historians as we shall see later. Jurjī Zaidān who did not study 'Umāra with the Fatimid poets, studied him with the historians.⁽¹⁰³⁾

It seems that 'Umāra was interested in collecting books, not just because he was a jurispudent, a teacher and an author, but because he loved books for their own sake. This he mentioned in some of his works, and he asked some of his friends to give him books instead of other presents. One day Mu'ayyad al-Dīn, one of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's relatives, sent him 100 Dhira' of cloth, but 'Umāra returned them,

 (102) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt V. 3/136.

(103) Zaidān, Tārīkh Ādab al-lughā. V. 3/74.

asking al-Mu'ayyad to give him the book "al-Kāmil Fī al-Lughā" of al-Mubarrad⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ On one occasion he told one of his friends that he had so little money that he had been forced to sell two of his books, al-Muwatta' and al-Bukhārī.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

The various aspects of 'Umāra's culture are reflected in his poetry and prose. They appear clearly to the reader in "Iqtibās" (quotations) from the Koran and "Ḥadīth, Taḍmīn" from the old Arabic poets and in his use of Arabic proverbs. He used the ideas, phrases and idioms of jurisprudence, grammar (Naḥw), philology (Lughā) and prosody in his poetry. It is not necessary to develop this further here, since it will be explained in more detail and with examples, in chapter 3, part 2.

7. His Works.

'Umāra has left behind him valuable works, some of which have unfortunately been lost. These works are

A. The Dīwān.

Most of 'Umāra's biographers wrote about his Dīwān and were impressed by its size and the quality of its poetry.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

(104) 'Umāra, al-Nukat. 151. Dīwān Pet. 32.

(105) 'Umāra, Dīwān. Pet. 81.

(106) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil V.9/124. Al-Janadī,

Ibn Kathīr, al-Bīdāya. V.I /276. Al-'Iṣāmī, Simṭ:V.3/442.

Some of them, such as Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, had seen the Dīwān and often quoted from it. (I07) This Dīwān is arranged in alphabetical order. 'Umāra often mentioned his Dīwān in his book, al-Nukat, saying.

"This line is one from a poem which is written in the Dīwān," (I08) or

"there is much which resembles it in the Dīwān," (I09) and he said

"I wrote.... poetry which is written in the Dīwān and there is no need to repeat it here." (I10) All this means that

'Umāra himself collected his Dīwān, or tried to do so, during his lifetime, but the Dīwān which is available, is not the one which 'Umāra mentioned, because most of his poetry was lost, when "Miṣr" was burnt in 563 A.H. during the time

of Shāwar 'Umāra himself tells us that some of his poetry was lost, in his poems to Saif al-Dīn Ḥusain, (III) Ṭayy ibn Shāwar (II2) and al-Zahīr Murtafī. (II3) It can also

be seen that many of the poems in this Dīwān are not complete, and there are some notes indicating this, such as

"He ('Umāra) said part of a poem (Qaṣīda)." (II4) Thus it

(I07) Sibṭ, Mirāt al-Zamān S.I.V. 8/302.

(I08) 'Umāra, al-Nukat. 46.

(I09) Ibid 47.

(I10) Ibid. 133.

(III) Ibid 124.

(II2) Ibid 127.

(II3) Ibid 144.

(II4) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet.27B,32,58,I06B,I07,I08,etc.

can be assumed that this Dīwān is not complete and it is not the one which 'Umāra began to collect at the beginning of his poetical life. Al-Ziriklī says that some literary person must have collected this Dīwān.^(II5) This may well be true because this Dīwān consists of some of 'Umāra's poetry which he wrote towards the end of his life, for example this verse which he recited just before he was taken to be executed

عبدالرحيم فدا صحتي ان الخلاص هو اليك

"'Abdul Raḥīm has disappeared, so if I am saved now, it would be a miracle." (II6)

At any rate, there is some poetry which is not found in this Dīwān, but occurs in al-Nukat,^(II7) al-Rawḍatain^(II8) and elsewhere. There are three MSS. of 'Umāra's Dīwān at the present time.

The first one is in the Asiatic Museum Library in Leningrad, (Petersbourg), 298, No.66. It contains 196 Folios. There are 19 lines to every page. This copy is, perhaps, the best in clarity, thoroughness and arrangement.

The second one is in the Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen; No. 266. This copy contains 216 Folios and there

(II5) Al-Ziriklī, al-'A'lām. V.I0/I59.

(II6) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 28.

(II7) 'Umāra, al-Nukat: 38, 81, 85... etc.

(II8) Abū Shāma, al-Rawḍatain V.I/I81, I83, etc.

are 13 lines to every page. It is not arranged in any particular order.

The third copy is in "Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya" in Cairo; No. 5303 "Adab". It is incomplete and some of the writers called it "Mukhtārāt", selections from 'Umāra's poetry.

Derenbourg published a selection of 'Umāra's Dīwān, which was printed in Chalon in (1897-1904). It is very good, but not complete; so this selection is not sufficient, by itself, for a thorough study of 'Umāra's poetry and art.

B. Al-Nukat al-'Aṣriyya:

The full name of this book is "al-Nukat al-'Aṣriyya Fī Akhbār al-wuzurā' al-Miṣriyya." It is autobiographical and gives accounts of the contemporary Egyptian Viziers and their relatives, the Princes, the leaders and the chiefs. The importance of this book is that 'Umāra has written about them frankly, relating at the same time their good qualities and their faults. He has written in considerable detail, because he lived close to these people as a friend, an official poet and an admirer. So he was able to give us a vivid description of Egyptian society. Most of the historians after 'Umāra quoted from it and believed it to be authentic, for example Ibn Khallikān, abū al-Fidā', Abū Shāma, ibn Khaldūn and others. The other important point is that

'Umāra wrote about himself in detail at the beginning of this book.

Unfortunately, it is hard to say when 'Umāra began writing the book because he made no mention of this. It was probably written about the end of the second government of Shāwar, or a short time after that, because 'Umāra has written about this, describing Shāwar's last days and the critical events that took place. Then he mentioned the siege of Bilbis by the Franks, and the help given by Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, who sent an army to Egypt under the leadership of Asad al-Dīn Shīrkūh, in 564 A.H. (119) Al-"Guzz" came to Egypt as soldiers in this army. 'Umāra said. "The coming of al-Guzz to Egypt helped to drive out the Franks, but Shāwar did not live more than 18 days after their coming, when he was killed." (120) This was in 564 A.H. It may be assumed that 'Umāra did not finish this book, so it is still incomplete, because he promised to explain in the same book the events and the calamities which happened at that time, (121) but he was not able to fulfil this promise

There are three manuscripts of al-Nukat. (122)

(119) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 80.

(120) Ibid. 81.

(121) Ibid: 81.

(122) Derenbourg, 'Oumāra V. 2/I.

1. The copy of Oxford. 835 (March, 72, Uri Catalogue, p.181).
 2. The copy of Paris 810. No. 2147 in the Catalogue of Baron of Slane, p.380.
 3. The copy of Gotha. 2256, in the Catalogue of Dr. Wilhelm Pertsch, 4 p. 268.
- H. Derenbourg published it in Chalon in 1897, together with the selection of 'Umāra's poetry.

C. Tārīkh al-Yaman

This book has been mentioned by many authors under different titles, such as "Akhbār al-Yaman", (I23) "al-Mufīd Fī Akhbār Zabīd," (I24) "Mufīd 'Umāra" (I25) and "Arḍ al-Yaman Wa Tārīkhuhā." (I26)

'Umāra wrote this book in 563 to al-Qādī al-Fāḍil 'Abdul Raḥīm al-Baisānī, because he was asked to do so. 'Umāra tells us at the beginning of this book how al-Fāḍil realised that 'Umāra was an expert in the history of the Yaman and the chronicles of its people. 'Umāra began writing in the same year. Presumably it did not take long, but certain statements in it indicate that it was written at the end of

(I23) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt. V. 3/110.

(I24) Ḥajjī Khalīfa, Kashf al-Zunun V. 6/43.

(I25) Al-Janādī, al-Sulūk. (Der. 544).

(I26) Al-Zirīklī, al-A'lam V. 5/193.

'Umāra's life. 'Umāra tells us about the end of al-Zuray'it's government, saying that:

"Sultān al-Mu'aẓẓam Shams al-Dawla Tūrān Shāh ibn Ayyūb deposed them in 'Dhī al-Qi'da'", (I27) but there is no doubt that Tūrān Shāh did this in 569 A.H. and this is the same year ^{in which} ~~that~~ 'Umāra was killed: . It might be argued that 'Umāra added this information a few days before he was killed, this is possible, but more likely the "rāwīs" and the copyists did it without saying what they had done, particularly since 'Umāra has told us about 'Abd al-Nabī when he ruled over all Yaman, at the time when 'Umāra was writing the book. (I28)

This book is one of the most important of all 'Umāra's works, and of all the books which have been written about the Yaman, for its wide range of interest. So most of the historians quoted from it Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, (I29) Ibn al-Daiba', (I30) al-Shaibānī (I31) and abū al-Fidā'. (I32) These writers quoted from the book, and there are others who praised it in their prefaces. al-Janadī, who considered 'Umāra's book one of his three most important works of (I33)

(I28) 'Umāra, Tārīkh: I56.

(I29) Mu'jam al-Buldān V. 4/376, 5/387, 6/I2I, 7/436.

(I30) Bughyat al-Mustafīd: MS. F. 2, I9B.

(I31) Ṣīfat Bilād al-Yaman S.I/60, I20, 2/I72, I83.

(I32) Al-Mukhtaṣar. V. I/8, 2/I90, 3/37.

(I33) Al-Sulūk MS. (Der. 63I).

reference "The jurispudent, 'Umāra, (man) of skill and conciseness. (I34)

The real significance of this book is that 'Umāra filled it with facts. He attempted to tell nothing but the truth, so he wrote what he had seen or heard from reliable sources. He made use of trustworthy "rāwīs" and he tried to mention more than one "rāwī" for every fact. Most of his "rāwīs" were jurispudents. (I35) All this was in addition to the fact that he quoted "al-Mufīd", the book of Abū al-Ṭāmī Jayyāsh, Ibn Najāh, one of the Kings in the Yaman, (died 493/1099). (I36)

The influence of jurisprudence in this book can be clearly seen, in narration, the manner of writing and the quotations from the Koran, the Ḥadīth and the other references. Mr. H. Cassels Kay published the book in London in 1892 with an English translation, an abridged history of its (the Yaman) dynasties and an account of the Karmathians of Yaman. Kay says in his introduction.

"Of the not inconsiderable number of native writers by whom the history of Muhammdan Yaman has been treated, the earliest in date, and in certain respects, the most important, is

(I34) Qurrat al-'Uyūn: MS. IB.

(I35) 'Umāra, Tarīkh. MS. 2, 38, 52, 58, 60, 68.

(I36) Khalīfa, Kashf al-Zunūn: V. 6/43.

'Omārah, the "Yamanite"'. (I37)

There are two MSS. of this book as it is known now. One of them is in the library of the British Museum. It is the second part, of three parts, of the volume (Or. 3265). It consists of 84 folios or 166 pages; there are 17 lines to every page. It is riddled with errors but it is the only copy on which Kay relied to publish this book.

The other MS. is in "Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya" in Cairo, volume number 8048 H. It contains 234 pages or 117 folios and it is entitled. "al-Mukhtaṣar al-Mufīd". It seems from looking at the contents that this MS. contains the same as in the MS. of the British Museum Library, from the beginning until page 121 of the Cairo MS., which is the end of the last chapter in both MSS. "The Persons Who have held in Yamān the Office of Dā'ī for the Fatimids." This is the end of the B.M.L. MS., because there is written in it: "The end of an auspicious history. Praise be to God, by whose grace all good works are brought to completion." (I38) As for the Cairo copy, it goes further than this, because it has in it a chapter about the poets of Yaman. It begins on page 122 and goes as far as page 234. It is difficult to say

(I37) Kay, Yaman (Introduction p.4).

(I38) Kay, Yaman I37. 'Umāra, Tārīkh: MS. 167.

much about this chapter except that it is another book of 'Umāra's and it was added to his 'Tārīkh' by the copyist.

D. Shu'arā' al-Yaman.

Not much is known about this book except that it is mentioned by al-'Imād al-Kātīb in "al-Kharīda", al-Janādī in "al-Sulūk" and al-Khazrajī in "Tārīkh al-Yaman". (I39)

Ḥājjī Khalīfa wrote about this book:

"There is a book which is written by 'Umāra ibn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Zaidān al-Yamanī about the poets of his period." (I40)

It seems that Ḥājjī Khalīfa was not at all sure about its title, with the result that he makes no mention of it.

Confusion arises because it is referred to under different titles. "Shu'arā' al-Yaman", "Majmū' 'Umāra" and others. But it is indeed difficult to judge if it is an independent book of 'Umāra's or part of the whole book, "Tārīkh al-Yaman", which was detached from the MS. of the B.M.L.

E. Al-Farā'id

Not much is known about this book either, because it

(I39) Kay, Yaman 275. « اسم الرجال في المادان والمحمد لله الذي رحمة الله عليه في الامانيات »

(I40) Khalīfa, Kashf V. 4/I46.

has been lost. 'Umāra wrote it in Zabīd when he was lecturing in Shāfi'ī jurisprudence. 'Umāra mentioned it himself "I have a book in al-Farā'id, it is studied in al-Yaman."^(I41) Some writers Ibn Kathīr,^(I42) Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī,^(I43) al-'Iṣāmī,^(I44) and al-Amīnī^(I45) mentioned it, but, unfortunately, none of them gave us any details. Nothing more can be said until a copy of the book appears, except that it is about the religious duties which God ordered the Muslims to perform according to the Shāfi'ī sect.

F. Sīrat al-Sayyida Nafīsa

The name of this book denotes that 'Umāra wrote the biography of al-Sayyida Nafīsa, the daughter of Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Zaid ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn abī Ṭālīb, (died 208/824).^(I46) The book has been lost, but it is mentioned by some writers, for example Ibn Kathīr,^(I47) al-'Iṣāmī^(I48) and al-Amīnī. Not much is known about this book, but it is thought that 'Umāra wrote it after he settled

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- (I41) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 23.
 (I42) Al-Bidāya V. I2/276.
 (I43) Al-Mir'āt S.I.V. 8/302.
 (I44) Simṭ V. 3/447.
 (I45) Al-Ghadīr V. 4/409.
 (I46) Al-Suyūṭī, Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara V.I/2I8.
 (I47) Al-Bidāya V.I2/276.
 (I48) Simṭ V.3/447.

in Egypt; firstly because Nafīsa's grave is there and most of the Egyptians believe in the blessings she pours on them; and, secondly, because she, like the Fatimid Caliphs, was a descendant of Fāṭima, the daughter of Muḥammad. Another reason for writing this book can be given, that al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī, the founder of the sect which 'Umāra followed, trusted and respected her. He used to visit her at home to learn Ḥadīth and he asked that she would pray over his body after his death, and she did so. (149)

G. Rasā'il 'Umāra

Another work may be added to the previous works of 'Umāra. It may be called "Rasa'il 'Umāra", (the letters of 'Umāra). Derenbourg has collected nine letters from different sources and published them in his book about 'Umāra. These letters might be the beginning of a fine collection, if anyone were to continue Derenbourg's work because 'Umāra wrote many letters in Yaman, Zabīd, Egypt and elsewhere. It is known that whilst in Egypt, he wrote some official letters, but the letters which Derenbourg has published are personal. 'Umāra wrote them to some of his friends.

(149) Al-Husainī, al-Tāj al-Mukallal

8. His Social Position.

Such a man as 'Umāra was, possessing these qualities: fine appearance, good character, religious faith, culture and great talent, should hold a high position in society. He was born in a well-respected family of a famous tribe and many of his close relatives were the chiefs of the tribe, for instance: his uncles, 'Alī and Muḥammad, his grandfather and later, his father. Thus 'Umāra held a high rank in society from the time of his birth and he bettered himself during his lifetime by means of his intellect, his artistic qualities and his breeding. This can be seen at all stages of his life. When 'Umāra went to Zabīd to study, he lived in the Vizier's house, the Vizier being a friend of 'Umāra's father. 'Umāra's great talents and eloquence found favour with the people of Zabīd. So he soon achieved high status from the time he was a student, as a lecturer, a jurisprudent and as a poet. Before this stage of 'Umāra's life ended, 'Umāra had become one of the Queen al-Ḥurra's courtiers and the closest friend of the most important figure in Zabīd, al-Wazīr Surūr al-Fātikī. Then he was chosen to buy merchandise from Aden for them and they gave him capital which established him as a famous merchant. Therefore he gained greater fame on a wider horizon, because he became well-known in

Zabīd, Aden, 'Aidhāb and in other places. The most important factor was that he became a close friend of al-Dā'ī Muḥammad ibn Saba', his Vizier, Bilāl ibn Jarīr, and his secretary Abū Bakr al-'Abdī. So he was climbing even higher up the social ladder. Later the Prince of al-Ḥaramain heard about 'Umāra and saw that he would be the most suitable person to send on a mission to Egypt. This was very significant in the development of 'Umāra's social position.

'Umāra arrived in Cairo as an ambassador. He was not only successful in his mission, but he also gained the affection of all the people in Egypt, especially the Caliph, the Viziers, the leaders and all their associates and friends, when he became one of al-Ṣāliḥ's companions. In al-Ṣāliḥ's circle, 'Umāra met all the important men and became their friend. What he said was of importance and his ideas were really appreciated by the government. Some historians said that 'Umāra looked like a Vizier in the Fatimid Caliphate.^(I50) 'Umāra said something similar in his poetry

"I was one of the ministers of the 'dast',
when the head of the horse raises with
his rider on the croup." (I51)

'Umāra explained this new-found importance in one of

(I50) Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, Mir'āt S.I, V. 8/302.

(I51) 'Umāra, Diwān: Pet. I54B.

وتب من در را در دست جبهه سی رأس الحصان يعارب على آكل
دست من عطاء الجيش تكرمه دخله حرس من عارض الكلب

his letters:

"I did not praise anyone except the lord of the palace, and the ministers of the time, I sat only with Kings, and I praised no-one but them and no-one precedes me except them." (I52)

This can easily be appreciated when one considers many of the incidents which happened to 'Umāra during this period of his life, in ministry buildings, in the 'Secret Hall' and the private palaces. He attended most of the great receptions and ceremonies, for instance the one when 'Izz al-Dīn asked him to improvise poetry praising al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and his family. 'Umāra did compose eight lines praising them. (I53) 'Umāra used to talk to these important men as one of them, and he advised them on many occasions, (I54) and they listened to him, respected his ideas and took notice of his advice. He was able to meet the Caliph frequently, to see him without a curtain (Ḥijāb) and to talk to him as a friend. He explained this in his poetry, for example, his eulogy to the Caliph al-Fā'iz and his Vizier al-Ṣāliḥ

"He added many favours to honouring me, for which thanks cannot be adequately expressed. The most excellent of

 (I52) Derenbourg, 'Oumāra. V. I/480.

(I53) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 98. Dīwān Pet. I57.

(I54) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 92, 109, 118 etc.

Dīwān Pet. 20, 41B, 73 etc.

these is my position, now that I can see ^{"Nūr al-Hudā"} ~~the light of~~
~~conversion~~ (the Caliph) without a curtain covering his
 face." (I55)

Ordinary people, of course, were not allowed to meet the Caliph often or to see him without a curtain; and even those who were able to meet him without a curtain had to defer to him 'Umāra could not accept this and asked Saif al-Dīn Ḥusain to exempt him from bowing, and Ḥusain promised to do his best. (I56)

'Umāra's keeping company with the leaders and the Viziers made them feel that he was one of them, even a necessary person at one of their meetings; so if he did not attend at any time, they missed him, questioned his absence and tried to find out what had happened to him. Sometimes they admonished him for his non-appearance, and he apologized for this in his poetry

"O, my Lord, whose right is certain duty to all people, nothing prevented your servant from proceeding towards your door save sickness." (I57)

 (I55) 'Umāra, *Diwān* Pet. I6.

اصاف مع مئة التردد على مائة ليهو الكرم لى ما لى حب
 احلام وقين صدا حيث اركى (نور الهدى) رست من دهره احمى

(I56) 'Umāra, *al-Nukat* I22.

(I57) 'Umāra, *Diwān* Pet. II3B.

يا مالك الروم من حقه على الاعمال واجب مقدر
 لم يسع الكادم ن قصده سعياً الى مالك الا المره

‘Umāra often stayed with them the whole day, so he took some of his meals with them, especially with Shāwar, with whom he spent much of his time. Shāwar himself pointed to the significance of this honour when he said to Ibn Dukhān, blaming him for teasing ‘Umāra. "Be ashamed of troubling the man who eats with me twice daily from the same plate." (I58)

‘Umāra previously did the same with al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ. He announced this sorrowfully in one of his elegies to al-Ṣāliḥ

"Will fortune give me, after him, a generous one, with whom I may sit and eat?" (I59)

Some of these important people took ‘Umāra with them on their travels and when they went out hunting; and others used to visit him in his house. They often spent a long time with him as did al-Kāmil ibn Shāwar, about whom ‘Umāra said

"He visited my house many times a week and, sometimes, he stayed all day long; he comes at dawn and leaves at sunset." (I60) Most of them were aware of ‘Umāra's position

(I58) ‘Umāra, al-Nukat 90.

(I59) ‘Umāra, Diwān: Pet. I30.

(I60) ‘Umāra, al-Nukat. I30.

رجل سقم الدنيا على عظم
احاله من كسره واواكله

in society and amongst the rulers, so they used to ask him for help in important matters or when in difficulty. When Fāris al-Muslimīn, the brother of al-Ṣāliḥ wanted to give his son in marriage to a daughter of Ḍirghām's brother (either Mulham or Hammām), he could not think of anyone more appropriate to do that than 'Umāra, therefore, he sent him for this purpose. (I61)

Most of the ordinary people also knew very well 'Umāra's position and frequently asked him for help. 'Umāra says that even the 'flock' of Fāris al-Muslimīn came to 'Umāra asking him to mediate for them with Fāris al-Muslimīn. (I62) When Shāwar killed many people, 'Umāra was the only one who could discuss this with him and advise him to put a stop to it. The people were very aware of this and asked 'Umāra to do it in any way he could. He could not find any means better than poetry. He wrote what he thought was likely to achieve the purpose. (I63)

Shāwar also went further than this; one day he ordered that Abū Muḥammad ibn Shu'aib and 'Alī ibn Mufliḥ should be killed as soon as they had arrived from Aden because Shāwar found some letters of theirs to the people of Aden, speaking out against the ruler whom Shāwar had sent there. 'Umāra

- (I61) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 103.
 (I62) Ibid 99.
 (I63) Ibid. 87.

went to Shāwar and told him that the two men were at his own ('Umāra's) house so that no-one could touch them. Shāwar kept silent for a while, then he stood up without speaking. 'Umāra began to converse with him about the Kings of the Yaman, Zabīd and Aden until he had lessened Shāwar's anger. Then 'Umāra took a written pardon from Shāwar forgiving these two men, he also took 100 Dīnārs for them, Shāwar said to them when they were leaving "Before God, had it not been for 'Umāra, I would have severed your necks and cut the relationship between the Caliphate and Aden people." (I64)

'Umāra knew just where he stood, thought highly of himself, and was proud of his influence. He filled his poetry with pride

"I am but the hilt of a sword which has not been guided by a hand, and I am pearls which did not find the true valuer; a ruby which was put through the thread of a necklace, surrounded by heads with veined agate." (I65)

'Umāra's status and influence caused many troubles for him during his life. It increased the number of people who

(I64) 'Umāra, al-Nukat: 91.

(I65) 'Umāra, Diwān. Pet. 118.

وما انا الا قائم السيف لم يمس كلف ودر لم يحك من مرصع
ويا قوتة في سلك عقد مدارد على صرر ابى لفتيق مرسع

envied and decried him and those who tried to do him harm, until at last, they were able to kill him. 'Umāra knew this and mentioned those who were envious of him.

"His (al-ṣāliḥ) bounties have increased my enemies, because nothing increases enemies like bounties." (I66)

"He rewarded me for my praise with gifts which grieved the hearts of those who envied me." (I67)

'Umāra sometimes thought that even his friends felt jealous of him: "He granted me the favours, for which every friend is envious of me."

'Umāra, was, perhaps, right because most of his friends were jealous of his position and good fortune, even his colleagues, the poets tried sometimes to put him in a critical position, as al-Rashīd and al-Shaizari tried to do to him with Fāris al-Muslimīn. (I68)

----- قد كبرت عدد الحاد العمه عدى دياتر الحاد لاسم

(I66) 'Umāra, al-Nukat: 101. Dīwān Pet. I68B.

(I67) 'Umara, al-Nukat 95. Diwan. Pet. 58.

(I68) 'Umara, al-Nukat: 96 - 97. ^{ما نأسى من حمده الخلق التي طعت كسر قلب الكد}

PART II

'Umāra's Poetry

CHAPTER I

The Stages in 'Umāra's Poetical Development

I. The Beginning

The way in which 'Umāra became interested in poetry is unusual, because he was originally a jurispudent and a merchant. Evidently he had no thoughts of being a poet until he went to Aden on business. By the time he left, however, the people there were convinced he was a poet and from this time on, 'Umāra had to work hard to write poetry worthy of himself.

It was not long before he became one of the best-known poets in the Arab world, especially in the Yaman. Even more odd is the fact that the poem which was taken to be 'Umāra's best poem was not written by him, but by al-'Abdī, who pretended that 'Umāra had written it. 'Umāra reluctantly accepted this and listened to the poem as if it were his own work.

The story began then, in Aden, when 'Umāra first went there. 'Umāra did not mention exact dates, but when putting a date to his trading between Aden, Zabīd and other cities, he said "This period was from 538 A.H. to 548 A.H." (I) When 'Umāra first arrived he was fortunate enough to meet

(I) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 27.

al-'Abdī, who helped him in many ways and advised him to write a poem praising al-Dā'ī Muhammad ibn Saba'.⁽²⁾

'Umāra said that he was a jurispudent, not a poet. This was true at the time, because 'Umāra also said "When I came to Aden I could not compose poetry at all."⁽³⁾ Al-'Abdī insisted that 'Umāra should try. He also stayed close to 'Umāra for many days⁽⁴⁾, trying to help him, instructing him in the necessary techniques, but it was all in vain, because 'Umāra, after many efforts wrote 'an unacceptable poem', as he himself described it.⁽⁵⁾ But we have no details of the poem because, unfortunately, it has been lost. Perhaps 'Umāra himself threw it away because of its weaknesses. Thus al-'Abdī realised that he had wasted his time and he wrote a great poem pretending that it had been written by 'Umāra. It seems that 'Umāra himself did not care for this idea, because he was unwilling to read the poem in the presence of al-Dā'ī Muhammad ibn Saba', and al-'Abdī had to read it. He left al-'Abdī to do as he wanted and said nothing while the poem was being recited.⁽⁶⁾ The poem was admired and enjoyed, and al-'Abdī took money, presents and perfume to 'Umāra from ibn Saba' and his Vizier, Bilāl ibn Jarīr, who appreciated the poem,

(2) Al-Janadī, al-Sulūk MS. (Der. 543).

(3) Al-'Imād, Kharīda MS. (Der 572).

(4) Al-Janadī, al-Sulūk (Der 542)

(5) Ibid 543.

(6) Ibid 543.

unfortunately this poem also has been lost and little is known of it, except that it was full of rhetorical figures (Badī'), especially "Kināya". He began the poem with a description of the journey from Zabīd to Aden, mentioning all the places "Manāzil", (7) as the pre-Islamic poets did, describing "Aṭlāl".

It would be interesting to know more about this poem and if it had any influence on 'Umāra's art or not. It is probable that 'Umāra misplaced it intentionally, because it was not his own poem, and a man of his integrity would not want to claim the poetry of others as his own. At any rate, this event was very important in 'Umāra's poetic development. It aroused the poetical spirit in him, and inspired him to work hard to be a poet of a similar calibre. Al-'Abdī also gave him effective advice. He said to him "Jurisprudent, you have been known as a poet by these people. Read literary works, and do not be satisfied with jurisprudence." (8)

Finally al-'Abdī said something to 'Umāra which was to be a source of inspiration

"The adornment of a man is in his (poetic) language."

"Fadīlatu'l-lisān hiyyatu l-Insān."

So it was that 'Umāra returned to Zabīd with a strong desire to become a poet. He took the right steps, he read

(7) Ibid 543.

(8) Al-'Imād, al-Kharīd MS. (Der. 572).

a great deal of poetry, studied what he liked of it and memorized what he admired, until he was able to write poetry of which he was sufficiently proud to show his friends.

When 'Umāra's father, with some of 'Umāra's brothers, visited him in Zabīd in 539 A.H., 'Umāra recited some of his poetry to his father. His father appreciated it, and said "Study literature, it is one of God's bounties to you, and do not deny it by satirising people."⁽⁹⁾

'Umāra promised his father that he would follow his advice and he fulfilled his promise, at least in this period of his life.

Before the end of the year, 'Umāra made preparations to go to Aden for a second time, and he wrote a suitable ode. This time he did not need the help of al-'Abdī. On this occasion al-'Abdī was quite satisfied with 'Umāra's poem and in fact, he helped another aspiring poet - a camel-driver - instead.⁽¹⁰⁾ This poem has also been lost and nothing is known about it.

'Umāra did not forget the great help that al-'Abdī had given him. He showed his appreciation by writing poetry in praise of his teacher but, unfortunately, all this has been lost, save these four lines which 'Umāra wrote in Egypt and sent to al-'Abdī in Aden

(9) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 23.

(10) Al-'Imād, al-Kharīda MS. (Der. 572).

"Greetings to Aden, from those of us who are settled in Egypt, and I do not mean (anyone in Aden), but only Abū Bakr.

It is a greeting from an anxious, honest and humble man without malice.

He is greeting you with the prose and poetry, with which you have rewarded him, and you are the Lord of poetry and prose.

No wonder! because the sea causes the clouds, they change sometimes and it rains on the sea."(II)

This is the truth indeed, because without al-'Abdī, 'Umāra might never have become the poet he was.

Not much is known about 'Umāra's poetry in the early stages, its theme, its quality and quantity. At any rate, when 'Umāra had faith in his own ability, he began to write poetry at every opportunity, praising the Kings, the Viziers, the leaders and other important people.

2. The Merchant Poet

This stage of 'Umāra's poetic life lasted about ten years. It began after the success of his poem, about which he said

"It was better than the first one."(I2)

This poem, which he recited in Aden in 539 A.H., began his life as a poet. He praised, in this poetry, the important men he had met in his travels on business. It seems that 'Umāra found praise a trade in itself, because he made a considerable amount of money from it. This period continued

(II) 'Umāra, Dīwān MS. Pet. II2.

على عبد بن سائب بن طهني مصر سلام ونا المصور عبد راي بكر

(I2) Al-'Imād, al-Kharīda MS. (Der. 572)

in this way until 548 A.H. 'Umāra himself said so. (13)

'Umāra was now able to write worthwhile poetry after a year of directing his talents, and developing his ability, he had read poetry, studied the work of the poets whom he liked and composed poetry himself. Presumably he showed his first attempts to his friends, colleagues and relatives, not for reasons of pride, but to hear what they thought, especially those who knew something about poetry. He listened to their ideas, valued their comments and took advantage of their criticisms. There is no doubt that this reading, learning and criticising poetry was invaluable to 'Umāra in improving his poetry, and in developing his technique. 'Umāra benefitted from his travels, they increased his knowledge and made his horizons wider and his feelings more deep. Also the poetical movement in the Yaman during this time helped 'Umāra, and his poetry began to take shape.

The literary climate in the Yaman at this time was beneficial. There were many poets and men of literature. The ~~Kings~~^{chiefs}, Dā'īs, rulers, ~~Princes~~^{Amirs}, Shaikhs and Viziers took an interest in literature, appreciated poetry, and patronised poets. There was a sort of competition between the Kings, the Dā'īs and the other rulers in the Yaman, allied to their quarrels, disputes and wars, to possess land, cities and wealth, for which purposes they tried to attract the scholars

and poets, to profit from their works by making prop^oganda for them. They welcomed the praise of the many poets and so they gave the poets magnificent gifts and vast sums of money, in addition to respect and appreciation. These circumstances helped Arabic literature to make great progress. The situation bore close resemblance to what happened in the period of "Mulūk al-Ṭawā'if" in "Andalus", when the scholars and poets rose to the highest class in society and many of them became "Wazīrs", or secretaries to the ministers and the Kings, because of their talents. There is no doubt that al-'Abdī became the secretary of ibn Saba's minister, Bilāl ibn Jarīr, because of his ability to write. Some of the rulers themselves wrote, they held regular literary gatherings at their palaces, discussed literary topics and took interest in cultural affairs. Not only did they listen to the poets reciting their poetry, but they also suggested that poetry should be written in a special meter or on a special subject, and they gave presents to the one who did best. The most noteworthy example was al-Dā'ī Muhammad ibn Saba'

"He was a man of generous disposition, universally praised, fond of eulogy, liberal in his rewards to those who eulogized him, and himself a skilful improviser. He treated men of culture and learning with generosity and often introduced one or more verses in his conversation " (14)

'Umāra was a close friend of ibn Saba'. He used to praise him, to stay with him for many days and to attend his meetings, winning presents in his competitions, receiving magnificent gifts, and money 'Umāra tells us a good story to illustrate this

"I arrived from Tihāmah at a time when I was indebted to the Prince for a sum he had allotted to me for a certain purpose of his own. I received a letter at Zabīd from Dhū Jiblah, in which he invited me to join him, which I did. When I met him, he asked me what I had brought for him. I answered, telling him what I had brought for him, to which he replied that he wanted nothing but verses. 'By Allah!' I said to him, 'I have not composed one work of poetry, nor can I do so for fear of the people of Zabīd, who make my verses a subject of reproach to me.' However he pressed me still more, until he put me to shame and I improvised lines in the same meter as that in which the Kaḍī Yanyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Yahyā composed his verses. When I recited them to him, he said 'I rewarded the Kaḍī with five hundred dinars and a dress of honour. I reward you with a like sum from the amount in your hands, but in bestowing upon you a dress of honour, I will distinguish you from him, by giving you the robes I have on at this moment.'" (15)

The poets knew the value of the help of ibn Saba' and how fond he was of eulogy, and they went to him at every opportunity to recite their poems to be rewarded by him. One day, about thirty poets had gathered around him in the "Musallā" outside the City. 'Umāra says that ibn Saba' sat in the heat of the sun while 'Umāra himself vied with the others for a chance to recite their verses. "Tell them" he said to me, "and raise your voice so that they may hear, that they need not crowd around me, for I will not leave

this place until they have finished." (I6)

All this literary activity moved 'Umāra to write poetry, to develop his talents. There is no doubt that 'Umāra profited from listening to the poems which were read to praise ibn Saba', and he also had the benefit of hearing the criticisms of some of the poets. 'Umāra kept the company of the Zurā'it family every time he went to Aden, in particular their chiefs, Muḥammad ibn Saba', his son 'Imrān and their "Wazīrs", Bilāl ibn Jarīr and his son, Yāsir. He praised them in many poems, but unfortunately, most of them are lost, as is much of 'Umāra's poetry of this period, for example, the poems which 'Umāra wrote in praise of his friends 'The 'Aqāma Qādīs Family', especially al-Qādī abū 'Abdillāh Muḥammad. (I7)

There are only five fragments of poetry and one complete poem of this period available in the Dīwān. This makes a total of 55 lines. Four pieces (qit'as), together with the poem, were written in praise of Yāsir ibn Bilāl. (I8)

The other one is just two lines, those which he had taught to the "Jāriya" whom he presented to al-Dē'ī Muḥammad ibn Saba', and she sang them to ibn Saba' (I9) These two lines brought

(I6) Ibid 75.

(I7) Al-Janādī, al-Sulūk MS. (Der. 514).

(I8) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. I, 62B, 158B.

(I9) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 29-3).

trouble to 'Umāra, because when he had asked ibn Saba' to visit him, ibn Saba' welcomed 'Umāra by writing these two lines. The people could read the lines before the letter reached 'Umāra, and they spoke ill of his visit to ibn Saba'. Then they decided to kill 'Umāra and so he fled to Mecca.

It seems that most of 'Umāra's poetry of this period, if not all, was eulogy. He did not write any satire at this time, as he had promised his father not to do so. He probably did not write anything but eulogy, because there is not even one "Qit'ā", on any other theme among those extant, but one cannot be absolutely certain of this without knowing all the other poetry. 'Umāra used to begin some of his eulogies with love poetry (Ghazal), following the traditional way of earlier Arabic poets, because he has precluded one of his eulogies to Yāsir ibn Bilāl with "Ghazal" It was really chaste, fine and musical (20) He continued the "Ghazal" for six lines, then he changed the subject beginning the panegyric of Yāsir.

It is interesting to note that 'Umāra seemed at this stage in his poetry to be a lively youth, full of energy and enthusiasm. He was fond of his country, the Yaman, admired its people and was proud of its leaders. He compared them with the leaders of other countries, but he

(20) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 62B.

سفر الرمان بواضع من شعره
واقف باسم شعره من شعره

preferred his own to the others. He said, for example, that the Yaman became, because of Yāsir, greater than Iraq, Shām and Egypt,⁽²¹⁾ while Iraq was the centre of the of the Abbāsīd Caliphate, and Egypt was the residence of the Fatimid Caliphate. Moreover, 'Umāra appeared in this poetry, in spite of his youth, as an adviser, a teacher to the one whom he praised

"Prudence should be before intention", "Use kindness" or "Be generous, courteous and wise."⁽²²⁾

The use of rhetorical figures and of the dual, 'al-Muḥannā' appeared early at this period of his poetical life. Kay says

"'Umāra's verses in praise of the Dā'īy Muḥammad ibn Sabā' probably contained, like those he afterwards wrote at Cairo, eulogistic allusions to the Ismā'ilites and to their pretensions."⁽²³⁾ This is probable, but it is difficult to confirm because 'Umāra's poetry in the praise of the Dā'īs is lost, and there is nothing like this in the available poetry which 'Umāra wrote to the Vizier of the Dā'īs, Yāsir ibn Bilāl.

At any rate, 'Umāra had now become well-known. He was much in the demand of the Kings, ^{Amirs} ~~Princes~~, rulers and Viziers

(21) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 62B.

س طالت المي المراق بعقله وسميت على ارض التام ومصره

(22) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 159.

(23) Kay, Yamam 274.

in the Arabic countries, and soon he was to become even more famous.

3. The Ambassador Poet

This phase did not last long, it began when 'Umāra left Zabīd to go to Mecca. The ^{"Amīr"} Prince of al-Haramain sent him on a mission to the Fatimid Caliph in Cairo. This was at the beginning of 549 A.H., and it ended, presumably, at the end of the year 552 A.H., when 'Umāra settled in Egypt. 'Umāra was very active in this period. He visited new cities, travelled from Arabia to Egypt and was able to undertake new work. He became an ambassador between the Caliphs, the Kings, the Princes and the Viziers, he met the important people in Mecca, Cairo and elsewhere he associated with the writers, poets and scholars. He acquired more knowledge, new experience and his horizons widened. All this was reflected in his poetry, which grew in quantity and quality. 'Umāra had new ideas in this period of his poetry, he began to use Ismailite expressions in his poetry, because he wrote some poems to the Ismailites, the Fatimid Caliph and his Vizier.⁽²⁴⁾ He increased his use of 'Badī', (rhetorical figures)⁽²⁵⁾ and he began to take pride in his poetry, he described his poems as necklaces, and likened his words to pearls, saying

 (24) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 159.

(25) Ibid 25, 81B, 106B, 107...etc.

"Phrases, the most valuable pearls will be pebbles beside them. My words look like pearls or rather even purer than the purest pearls"

And he said

"I am one of those by whose poetry Gemini is ornamented." (26)

There are about 150 lines of poetry available, which were written at this time. They are four poems and ten fragments, most of these fragments are parts of longer poems, as is mentioned in the "Dīwān". (27) These four poems are

I. 'Umara's first ode which was written in 550 A.H. in praise of the Caliph al-Ḥā'iz together with his Vizier al-Ṣāliḥ, the one which he read in "Ḥā'at al-Dhahab," (the Gold Hall)

"Great praise be to the camels, after praise to determination and resolution, that praise could serve to thank them for their bounties." (28)

This poem was very important in 'Umāra's poetical life. It was the beginning of his glory, because all those who heard it admired it, and some of the poets appreciated it, but some of them were jealous of him also. This event was a test for 'Umāra, which he passed with ease. Therefore he became one of the best poets in Egypt in a short time. After this success, he wrote many poems praising the Caliph and his Viziers, unfortunately, most of them have been lost.

(26) Ibid 4, 124, 7B.

(27) Ibid 26, 106B, 107, 177.

(28) Ibid 159. See the thesis, p .

It seems that this first ode is not complete because it is only 23 lines, and the poet with such opportunities should look for both the quality and quantity of his poem, so one would expect it to be longer. It is probable that some of it is lost.

2. A poem he wrote in praise of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in 550 A.H. which consisted of 28 lines, beginning:

"Do you (either of you) know a different way, never before used, of saying thanks? So that I can return the generosity, which surpassed my desires, by a new thanks." (29)

3. The next poem which 'Umāra wrote was to the poet al-Qādī al-Jalīs, 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn al-Ḥusain ibn al-Ḥabbāb al-Sa'dī (died 561/1166). (30) It is 25 lines long, begins with "Ghazal". Then he praised his friend, al-Sa'dī, to whom he dedicated it. After expressing his pride in the poem, he said

"His acceptance of the poem will be my greatest reward." (31)

4. The last poem was to another friend, the poet Yahya ibn Ḥasan ibn Jābr (died 551 A.H.) (32) It is 17 lines long 'Umāra precluded it with love-poetry, and ended it by telling his friend, ibn Jābr that his purpose was friendship

(29) Ibid. I23B.

(30) Ibn Shākīr, Fawāṭ V. I/77.

(31) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 4-5.

(32) Al-'Imād, al-Kharīda V. 2/231.

only. These two poets were friends and members of al-Malik al-Sāliḥ's circle.

The ten pieces of poetry were as follows one of them was to the Caliph al-Fā'iz, seven were to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ one was to Ḥusām al-Dīn Maḥmūd, a relative of al-Ṣāliḥ, and the other one was to the poet, al-Qāḍī al-Muḥadḍḥab abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn al-Zubair (died 561/1166).⁽³³⁾ 'Umāra was asking ibn al-Zubair to send some of his poetry, telling him that he was preparing to leave quickly, hoping that ^{he} al-Zubair would not delay the travellers. 'Umāra says "You who have forgotten the golden friendship of which I have been reminded, even in my sleep."⁽³⁴⁾

'Umāra wrote all this poetry in different circumstances, some of it was written during his first visit to Egypt in 550 A.H., some of it was written while 'Umāra was in the Yaman. He sent it from there to Cairo. Again some of it was written in Egypt at the beginning of 'Umāra's second visit after 551 A.H.

Most of 'Umāra's poetry in this period can be said to have been written in praise of someone, because all the available pieces and poems are eulogies, except the one which 'Umāra wrote to al-Muḥadḍḥab which was friendship-poetry "Ikhwāniyyāt" An important thing to note is that

(33) Al-Adfawī, al-Tāli' al-Sa'id 100

(34) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 81B.

'Umāra tried, in this period, to find someone to back him and a family to give him patronage. Just as he had found ibn Saba', and the Zurai'ite family in Aden, he found al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and the Ruzzīk family in Egypt, who liked 'Umāra and his poetry, and respected his views, they were the main reason why 'Umāra settled in Egypt, and became one of the "Dīwān Poets."

4. The "Dīwān" Poet

No one can say definitely when this stage began, because even 'Umāra himself did not mention the date at which he joined "Dīwān al-Shu'arā'" in the Fatimid Caliphate, and none of his biographers mentioned it either. It is probable that 'Umāra agreed to belong to this "Dīwān" because of the persuasions of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, and his relatives, however it was only when 'Umāra was sure that they would not ask him to change his "Madhhab" that he felt confident that there would be no harm in his joining the "Dīwān". 'Umāra was pleased to join, because he thought of settling in Egypt when he visited it for the second time, not just to live amongst his friends, but also to be far from his enemies in Zabīd. So, as he left the Yaman he was obliged to leave his friends, the Zurai'ites, there. 'Umāra found that leaving the Yaman was absolutely necessary. He explained this in one of his eulogies to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ

"I emigrated (Hājartu) to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, and this "Hijra" became the reason of my security (for me) and he was the originator (of this security).

Home has been shown many times to be unsuitable for its people and they have found a better life by expatriation, and, in the same way, the messenger of God (Muḥammad) left Mecca when "Yathrib" did not accept his ~~attitude~~ ^{position} there." (35)

At any rate 'Umāra became one of the official poets in the Fatimid Caliphate at the end of 552 A.H., or the beginning of 553 A.H. So the pattern of his life and his poetry was changed.

He wrote abundantly, this is a fact, even if little of his work remains. The poetry of this period still available consists of about 100 fragments (نطح) and more than 110 poems, these figures are accurate and there may be other poems which belong to this period. Most of this poetry was in praise of the Caliph al-'Adīd and his Vizier al-Ṣāliḥ, although 'Umāra did write poetry to them and others on many different occasions feasts, visits, weddings, celebrations, wars, battles, revolts and assassinations, 'Umāra described many of these events in his poetry which reflected life in his time. (36)

He tried, as an official poet, to write about most of the official ceremonies, the prayers of the Caliph in the mosques "al-Ṣalāt al-Jūmi'a," (37) the speeches of the Caliph,

وهذا رسول الله ﷺ، طارق مكة على حاله لم يرضاه يرد

{35} 'Umara, Diwan Pet. 20B.

{36} Ibid 71B, 114, 136, 145B, 147 etc.

Husain, Fī Adab Misr 219

{37} 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 39B, 134.

at feasts or Ramaḍān, (38) at the celebrations in "Kasr al-Khālīj" for the flood of the Nile "wafā' al-Nīl". (39) 'Umāra used to wait for these opportunities to write poetry in praise of the Caliph, the Vizier and their relatives. He composed some odes congratulating them in Ramaḍān, 'Īd al-Fiṭr, 'Īd al-Aḍḥā, the middle of Sha'bān, and others. (40) When any important new appointment had been made in a new city, 'Umāra would write a poem praising the man who was leaving. (41) Therefore the themes of 'Umāra's poetry became more varied. He did not write in praise only, as he used to do previously, but he began to write in many other forms elegy, satire, description, love-poetry, religious poetry, poetry of complaint and poetry of reproach.

An important point is that the Ismā'īlī' ideas and expressions appeared clearly in this part of his poetry (42) He used to make them clear in his poems to the Caliphs and their Viziers, (43) for example saying to the Caliph al-'Āḍid

"O 'Hujjat allāh', by whose light the mind's eye of those who have lost the way has been guided." (44)

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- (38) Ibid 42, 134, 138B.
 (39) Ibid 64, 74, 143, etc.
 (40) Ibid Pet. 16B, 41, 57, 74, 100 etc.
 (41) Ibid Pet. 109, 114B, 145, 167 etc.
 (42) Ḥusān, Fī 'adab Miṣr 219.
 (43) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 9, 15, 39B, 42B, 44B, etc.
 (44) Ibid Pet. 44B.

Or saying in praise of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ

"He is a protector, who is the "Bāb" without which no one can reach you (the Caliph)." (45)

The influence of Egypt was very pronounced in 'Umāra's poetry at this time, he described the pyramids in three excellent stanzas which have been translated in Germany, by S. Von Hammer, in 'The Mines of the East'. (46) If 'Umāra wanted to show a difficulty, he would say that the Pyramids, the Muqattam and the Nile were affected by it. (47) 'Umāra mentioned the names of the old Kings, Governors and rulers of Egypt, the Pharaohs, "Hāmān" and "al-'Azīz", for instance

"It is the palace, but Hāmān did not build it, and the Pharaohs did not use it for his disbelief." (48)

When 'Umāra liked to show his respect for al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ he called him "Azīz Miṣr", the name of the ruler of Egypt at the time of Joseph the prophet (49) 'Umāra says

"O 'Azīz Miṣr, this is a word from a faithful man whom you made free by breaking the cord of bad luck " (50)

'Umāra seemed like an old man at this stage, because he mentioned his old age many times, he made reference to

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- (45) Ḥusain, Fī Adab Miṣr al-Fāṭimiyya 158.
 (46) Huart, A Short History 201.
 (47) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 179. al-Nukat 87.
 (48) Ibid Pet. 74B.
 (49) See the Koran ~~xvii~~ (Joseph), 78.
 (50) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 124.

how long he had been living, he wrote about his white hair "Shalb" (51), or about his age saying, once, that he was about 40 years old, (52) or nearly 50, at another time (53) For this reasons 'Umāra used to be like an advisor to those for whom he wrote poetry, whoever they were. He advised them, recounted his experiences for them, and filled his poetry with maxims (Ḥikam). (54)

At last there came a new development in 'Umāra's poetry which was that he wrote "Rajaz" and "Muwashshahāt" which are considered distinct forms. It is probable that 'Umāra realised his importance and he was proud of it, thus his reason for writing about his importance as the most valuable jewel. He compared himself favourably with other poets, whoever they were, because he felt that he had reached the zenith of poetic importance. It is interesting to note that 'Umāra, who was so proud of his country, Yaman, its people and its leaders, (55) changed his allegiance to Egypt at this time, for example "Leave Iraq and Shām to a man who prefers wrong to right, and come to the Nile shore, the riches known only to its explorers" (56) And he said in praise of al-'Ādil Ruzzīk

"The Ruzzīk family was proud of him (al-'Ādil) to the two

(51) Ibid Pet. 90, 92B, 97 etc.

(52) Ibid Pet. 8.

(53) Ibid Pet. 12.

(54) Ibid Pet. 10, 12, 14B, 20, etc.

(55) See this thesis, p. 141.

(56) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 47.

courts, Yaman and Shām."(57)

He apparently believed that Egypt was better than all the cities save the holy city, Mecca

"It (Egypt) surpassed, completely, all the cities and became the greatest except "Umm al-Qurā".(58)

5. The Neglected Poet

This period of neglect lasted about five years, it began at the start of the Ayyūbids regime in 564 A.H. and ended with 'Umāra's death in 569 A.H. 'Umāra's poetry at this time reflected his unhappiness. It is probable that 'Umāra wrote plenty of poetry at this time, poetry full of events and change, but, unfortunately, most of it has been lost. The poetry still available is about 950 lines. There are more than 20 poems, 17 eulogies and 5 elegies. Six poems were written to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and most of the other poems were to his relatives, especially Shāms al-Dawla Tūrān Shāh (died 576/1180), because he was a very close friend of 'Umāra, up to the time when Tūrān went to the Yaman in 569 A.H. 'Umāra wrote more than 6 poems in praise of Tūrān Shāh.

There are three important odes in this part of "Umāra's poetry. The first is the one 'Umāra wrote to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. It was called "Shikāyat al-Mutaḥallim wa Nikāyat al-Muta'allim, " the prelude of which was

(57) Ibid 165B.

(58) Ibid 77.

"O, ear of days, if I tell you to listen to the choking of a consumptive and the moaning of a man in agony." (59)

It is one of 'Umāra's longest odes - 64 lines. 'Umāra clearly explained to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn what he intended in this ode. He told of the bad position he was in, and how unhappy he was. Finally, he asked Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to pay his salary again, admitting that his debts were a great burden to him, from which no one else could save him. But, unfortunately, 'Umāra gained nothing from this, so he wrote again to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and his relatives, asking for mediation. He also took every opportunity to write poetry bemoaning his fate. So when Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's father died, 'Umāra wrote two elegies, expressing his sympathy, and comparing Ayyūb with the great men of old like the Orthodox Caliphs. (60) But none of this had the slightest affect on Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, who did not treat 'Umāra any differently. Therefore 'Umāra began to change the ideas in his poetry. 'Umāra did not recite the poem mentioned above but he sent it, after it had been written, to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Some of the writers mentioned it as an independent work. (61)

The second important ode is the elegy of the Fatimids, which began

(59) Ibid II7.

(60) Ibid IO4.

(61) Kaḥālā, Mu'jam V. 7/269, Huert, A Short History 201

"O, misfortune, you paralysed the hand of the glory,
and made the ornamented neck divest." (62)

'Umāra composed this ode after Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had ended the Fatimid Caliphate. One day 'Umāra passed by the Caliph's palaces which their people had left. They were dark and silent. Most of 'Umāra's biographers mentioned this poem, giving it great importance. Some of them said that they would examine it in detail because of its excellence,⁽⁶³⁾ and some of them said it was one of the reasons for 'Umāra's execution.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Others said that 'Umāra made critical reference to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in this ode,⁽⁶⁵⁾ but this is only in two lines, which may or may not refer to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The first line is

"What will the Franks do with the children of
'Commander of the Faithful' 'Alī?" (66)

And the other one is

"And this one who broke a promise with al-Imām
al-'Adīd ibn 'Alī, will never see Paradise,
which was created by God." (67)

(62) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 154.

(63) Ibn Khallikān, *al-Wafayāt* V. 3/110. Al-Safadī, *al-Ghaith* V. 2/180. Al-Hama'ī, *Thamarāt* 22. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ* V. 2/392.

(64) Al-Ṣalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* V. 3/531. Al-Amīnī, *al-Ghddīr* V. 4/116.

(65) Sibṭī ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Mir'āt* V. 8 S. 1/303.

(66) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 154B, line 13.

(67) *Ibid* Pet. 155, line 35.

This ode is about 43 lines long so it is not as long as these writers maintained. It is full of high feeling, because 'Umāra composed it to fulfil his word and show his loyalty to the Fatimid Caliphate at a time when nobody would say any good word about them for fear of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and his authority. 'Umāra was brave enough not just to speak, but to write poems to praise the Fatimids and also to satirize their enemies, the new governors. This ode is one of them. 'Umāra expressed in it his unhappiness for what had happened to his friends, the Fatimids, and he showed his own sorrow and the sorrow of the people. He began by blaming fortune, "al-Dahr", for his misfortunes. Then he explained his circumstances when he left his country, the Yaman, and came to Egypt to live under the wing of these great Caliphs, whom he loved not just because they favoured him, but because they were the children of Fāṭima, the daughter of Muḥammad. (68) When 'Umāra passed by the palaces he could not bear to look at them and tears ran down his cheeks. He said "I weep for the memory of your noble deeds, over which time has passed but not altered." (69) Thus 'Umāra observed their festivals and celebrations on different occasions, "Fītrat al-Ṣawm", "Kiswat al-Nās", "Yawm al-Khalīj", the beginning of the year, the two feasts and "Īd al-Ghadīr" (70) This description is full of

(68) Ibid 154, line 10.

(69) Ibid 154B, line 19.

(70) Ibid 154B-155, lines 2-30.

دار الصلوة كانت اس دافتم ر الصوم ارض من ركموس طلل

sentiment and affection. 'Umāra knew that this ode would bring him trouble, for he ended it in this way

"Poor 'Umāra said this, in fear of being killed,
not of slipping "

It may be said that this poem resembled those elegies of the Arabic Andalusian poets at the end of "Mulūk al-Ṭavā'if's" time, lamenting their cities, states and palaces. Ibn Sa'd said about this poem "Never has a better poem been written in honour of a state which has perished " (71) 'Umāra, after this, wrote many poems in the same vein, some of them were more critical than this, but it still remained the most famous and little was said about the others, for instance the poem which is not in his "Dī'ān", in which he says "nobility have their dead, but their noble deeds do not die, and some people are living, but they look, amongst others, like the dead." (72)

The third important ode in this period is that one which 'Umāra wrote in praise of Shamā al-Dawla Tūrān Shāh, the eldest brother of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, inciting him to conquer the Yaman It begins

(71) Al-Maqrīzī, Khīṭaṭ V. 2/392. "ولم يسع فيما بيئت لدولة بعد انقراضها
اصح من هذا"

(72) Ibn Duqmāq, al-Intiṣār V. 4/94.

قدمات قوم ومهمات نكارهم وعماش قوم وهم في الاساموات

"Knowledge, since it has existed, needs the flag (strength) and the sword can always do without the pen." (73)

Throughout the poem 'Umāra goes on urging Shams al-Dawla to go to the Yaman. He advises him to go forward, after he had conquered "al-Ṣa'īd" in Egypt, showing him that resolution is his greatest ally

"The heights are a bride whom you cannot attain unless you stain her ropes with blood, be decisive, do not hesitate and put the fire of war on the mountain." (74)

'Umāra filled this poem with principles, and advice. He did not forget his own plight, describing himself as wronged at that time because he was not receiving any payment, although he was the best poet of that era, and his mouth was the source of pearls and rubies. He ends this ode appealing for a long life for Shams al-Dawla (75). It seems that there is nothing wrong in this poem, but most of 'Umāra's biographers said that it was another reason for his execution, (76) mainly because of a line in it which the jurists in Egypt said was disbelieving, and they ordered 'Umāra to be killed. The line is

(73) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 173B.

(74) Ibid 174.

(75) Ibid Pet. 175.

(76) Al-Dhahabī, Tārīkh al-Islām MS. (Der. 492) Al-Anṣari, Murshid al-Zuwwār MS. P. 276. Al-'Imād, al-Kharīda MS (Der. 396).

"The beginning of this religion has been made by a man who has made great efforts until 'the people) called him "Sayyid al-'Umamī" (the master of peoples).

Al-'Imād, al-Ansārī and others said that 'Umāra's enemies added this line to his poem to accuse him while al-Ḥamawī⁽⁷⁷⁾ and al-'Iṣāmī⁽⁷⁸⁾ discussed this idea and decided that 'Umāra was unjustly executed because there was nothing wrong in the line.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Some writers thought that this ode was the reason why Shams al-Dawla went down to the Yaman⁽⁸⁰⁾ All this gave the poem great importance, although it is not the only one that 'Umāra wrote in praise of Shams al-Dawla.

As for 'pieces' of poetry, there are more than 20. There are eulogies, elegies, satires and some on other subjects. Satirical poetry increased at this period, and most of it, if not all, was aimed at the new government. Most of this poetry has been lost, people could not recite it or even listen to it, because they were afraid of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, and his family. This satire was really one of the principal causes of 'Umāra's death, especially the two lines which 'Umāra wrote to the Prince al-Muzaffar Taqīyy al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Shāhīnshāh, the nephew of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn

(77) Thamarāt al-Awrāq 23.

(78) Siimt al-Nujūm V. 3/447

(79) See this thesis, p.95-96.

(80) Sibt ibn al-Jawzī al-Mir'āt V.8, S.I/303. Al-Maqrīzī, al Sulūk V, I.S.I/52.

"You (both) have magnified the matter and made it great. The son of Shāhīnshāh is but the son of a sheep, whose mother is the sheep, his father will be none other than the ram." (81)

Another theme increased in the poetry of this period, it is the complaining poetry "Shakwā". 'Umāra wrote many poems to Ṣalāh al-Dīn's friends, especially to al-Qādī al-Fāḍil, explaining in it his circumstances at this time. Ṣalāh al-Dīn took no care of him, as previous Viziers had, for that 'Umāra hated the new regime, and he longed for the old one. It seems that this life made 'Umāra complain, not to people about his own problems, but to God about life itself. He wrote much on the subject of religion.

Another change can be observed in this part of 'Umāra's poetry, the "Ismāilit" ideas almost disappeared from his poetry. But 'Umāra continued to write exaggerated praise of himself and his talents. He used to say often that he was the only great poet, the most eloquent of all Arabs, (82) and that his mouth was the source of the most valuable jewels (83). He compared himself favourably with the greatest Arabic poets, for example

(81) Ibn Duqmāq, al-Intisār V.4/94.

عظيما الامر وكبريما
ما ان شامت الا من شاه
ومن تكون الشاة انا له
فما يكون التيس الا ابا

(82) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 24.

(83) Ibid 54B, 55, 106, 174B. etc.

"If you want friendship (I am) Salmān and 'Ammār,
or if you want praise (I will be) Bashshar
and Mihyār." (84)

He was still asking the Ayyūbids to appreciate his talent
and reward him, but it was all in vain, because they
rejected his poetry, and, finally, killed him because of
his poetry.

CHAPTER 2.

The Themes of his Poetry.

When 'Umāra first began to write poetry, he employed only a few themes (aghrōd), but these themes were gradually increased until he used nearly all the themes common to Arabic poetry eulogy, elegy, epistolary-poetry, satire, love-poetry, poetry of complaint, ascetic-poetry, descriptive-poetry, accusatory-poetry and others. It is not necessary to discuss all these, but the important ones should be examined

I. Eulogy (Madīh), Panegyric

Eulogy is the art of extolling a man's virtues. It is both common and important in Arabic poetry, so it has its own conditions and characteristics. The "Madīh" provides more than half of the poetry of 'Umāra which is still accessible to us, and consists of 100 long poems (Qaṣīda) and about 63 short poems (Qit'ā), while the rest of his poetry, dealing with other subjects, is about 23 long poems and 100 short poems. However, if we consider the length of the verses in 'Umāra's poetry, we shall find that verses of his eulogies are much longer than his other poetry.

Some of these poems are forty, fifty or sixty lines

long, some are even more than 70 lines long. (1) It is interesting to note that when 'Umāra wrote short poems, he tried to make reasonable excuses, for instance, the end of his short poem (of 26 verses) which he wrote in praise of Fāris al-Muslimīn

ولولا مرادي هوى الرواة ندائمه رطلت القصيدة

"Were it not for the fact that I wanted the narrators to learn his praises by heart, I would have lengthened the poem " (2)

These long waṣīdas (odes) include many themes 'Ḥamāse' (chivalry) 'Ḥikam' (Maxims), 'Fakhr' (Boasting) or 'Waṣf' (Description, besides 'Ghazal' prelude (love poetry).

'Umāra begins 33 of his eulogies with love poetry preludes (3), as is usual in the poetic style of the Arabic "Qasīda", but he sometimes attacks this method as being unnecessary, as the "mawālī" poets like abū Nuwās did.

'Umāra said in one of his eulogies

صهف السبب الى اللوى وروود صهف من اشعار عمر نصيد
وارفهم ديباحه من عبده عمر ليرود هوى القناه الروود

"Directing love poetry (Nasīb) to "al-liwā" and "Zarūd" is of no use to poets.

The gentlest prelude of them (the poets) is the one of which the 'Ghazal' (love poetry) entices the love of the beautiful girl " (4)

(1) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet 9B, 12, 76B, 77, 87B, 92, etc.

(2) Ibid 51.

(3) Ibid 3, 4B, 12, 13B, 15, 16B, 18, 20, 21B 23, etc.

(4) Ibid 55.

Sometimes 'Umāra says that the glory of the man he is praising does not allow him to begin the poem with love poetry

أوصيت في دمة الأشعار والخطب ريباً أنا من يبقى على الحقب
لم سبق مدك في السبب لي أرا ما حسب المدائح ما شئت من حسب

"O abū Ḥasān, poetry and speech have 'daim' (obligation) to you, which will last for ever. Your greatness did not leave me with any reason for (composing) love poetry, eulogies are sufficient to recount your great deeds." (5)

'Umāra began most of his eulogies without this prelude, love poetry, he began his praises immediately. There are about 60 eulogies available which he began without prelude⁽⁶⁾, while on the other hand, there are 33 eulogies which have love preludes.⁽⁷⁾ He also began 5 eulogies with 'Ḥikām' (Maxims)⁽⁸⁾, and 2 eulogies with 'Itāb' (~~laudatory~~ ^{reproach} poetry)⁽⁹⁾

'Umāra was skilful in changing his subject, in switching from one theme to another without causing surprise. He passes smoothly into the new theme, using the technique which is called in Arabic literature 'Ḥusn al-Intiqāl'

He began his eulogy to Fāris al-Muṣlimīn with love poetry, at the end of which he criticised the era, from

(5) Ibid 18.

(6) Ibid 3, 4B, 12, 13B, 15, 16B, 18, 20, 21B, 23, 94B, 105, etc.

(7) Ibid 4, 33, 35, 36B, 37, 47, 50B, 58E, 62B, etc.

(8) Ibid 9B, 18B, 43, 92, 137B.

(9) Ibid 27, 34B.

this he skilfully changed the subject to praise

ولما بلوت الناس وانكسفت لهم فحاسن جود هي عدي مفاع
كفعت رطائي عن الف كثره اصباح صرا البخل حين اصباح
ولولا انوالهم الطمر مطلت مشارب من سل الهدى ومسارح
كريم عدالي في سماء سماه مطار الى بيل الهدى ومطارح (10)

'Umāra does the same in the poem in praise of al-Malik al-Sālīḥ, after he had described the patience in his own love, he passed smoothly into the praise of al-Ṣālīḥ, saying that al-Sālīḥ's favour did not allow the poet to praise anyone else,

وما علمت الى ادا شفي الهوى اليراد عوى الصبر لا اتصح
وان المتراحي بالتأصر حيث لا يقدمي وصل اهلك وارع
الم تر وصل الصالح الملم يدع على الارض من شئني عليه ريدع (II)

There are many examples of this in the Dīwān. (I2)

As for the ends of his odes, 'Umāra mostly ends his eulogies with "Du'ā'" , as this was usual at this time. (I3) He used to ask God's blessings for those whom he praised. He wished them happiness, peace and love. He asked that they should have long life, good health, firm government and enlightened days and nights, for instance the end of his ode in praise of

(10) Ibid 33B.

(11) Ibid 36B.

(12) Ibid 59, 75B, 79, 83B, 86B, 88, 100B, 123, 126, etc.

(13) Al-Tāhir, al-Shi'r al-Saljūqī
V. 2/103.

Shujā' ibn Shāwar

تمت الملك العقيم وحرره ذيل عز وصحة وشعاع
(14) وتمت العام الذي استأوى فيه من كل منعم ما أساء

He ends one of his eulogies to al-ḡ̃līḡ̃ with best wishes for his happiness in the future as it has been in the past

ما سعد ما ينك الحسنى التي قسمت سيم الحميدى من ما نحن ومرتقب
(15) اذ انبت لك الهمام قاطبة فمما اساء بمقصود على رجب

His Dīwān is full of similar examples. (16)

'Umāra was expert in this art of poetry (Madḡ), and his praise is mostly excellent. He began his poetical career on this theme, and ended in the same way. He praised about 40 important persons: Caliphs, Viziers, Princes, Kings, rulers, leaders and their relatives, besides his friends: poets, writers, scholars, jurists and judges (Qāḡīs). He composed eulogies throughout his life, in the Yaman, Ḥijāz and Egypt. It is worth noting that about a quarter of his panegyric is in praise of his greatest friend, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḡ Ṭalā' ibn Ruzzīk, and his relatives.

It is interesting, too, that he did not praise his own tribe, family or any of his relatives, while Arabic poets

(14) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 5.

(15) Ibid IIB.

(16) Ibid I3B, 16B, 22B, 39, 4IB, 5IB, 74, 78, etc.

such as al-Mutanabbī, Abū Firōs al-Hamdānī and al-Sharīf al-Raḍī did so frequently, and proudly. However, 'Umāra praised many people from "Qaḥṭān" (I7), who is the origin of 'Umāra's tribe, or from "Ya'rūb", (I8) Qaḥṭān's son, ^{or} ~~and~~ from "Ghassān" (I9), which is a branch of Qaḥṭān, mentioning their noble deeds, their character and the pride he had in these ancestors. It seems that 'Umāra was satisfied with this pride in his ancestors, though he might well have written in praise of his contemporary relatives.

His eulogies were of good quality in the opinion of most writers, so he was always proud of his poetry, describing it as the best of the Arab poets, likening it to jewels, but he often ascribes the excellence of his poetry to the people he praises, for their outstanding characters, the inspiration they gave him, their gifts and presents. He said to Badr ibn Ruzzīk

واسمع أنا البجم مدح حادم نسو على الشرى لكم انتاره
 مدح بعضى مره من ما طري كأتى من صلحكم احنتاره
 مدح دعا الفكر الى استكاره منك احتراع الحور راركاره
 ان مال محراً منك افتتاره او طاب هراً منك انتتاره

(I7) Ibid 52.

(I8) Ibid 19B, 159.

(I9) Ibid 47, 79, 93, 123, 130

"O abū al-Najm, listen to the panegyric of a servant whose poetry becomes higher than the Dogstar by your grace.

It is panegyric, the "Bahr" of which is overflowing from my conceit, as I am taking it from your favour.

It is panegyric in the composition of which my mind was helped by your invention and contriving generosity.

If it (panegyric) gained honour, it would be from you, and if it was afraid of losing breath, it would gain victory because of your help." (20)

He said, praising al-Zahīr

أحدثت وعلمتني بالقول، فلو شكرت شعرا هوّرا

"You did best (in your generosity) and taught me what to say (poetry), so poetry should not be thanked if it was the best " (21)

'Umāra repeated this idea in many poems, but it was not his originally, and he probably followed the example of al-Mutanabbī who used the same idea

لك الحمد في الدر الذي لم ينظره فالك عطية واني ناظم

"Yours is the praise in regard to the pearl which I spit out, you were the giver of it, and if the arranger" (22)

All the men whom 'Umāra praised liked his poetry, and appreciated its sentiments. They gave 'Umāra much money and valuable presents. Some of them rewarded 'Umāra even before he praised them, it was then that they asked him to write poetry for them because they valued his importance

(20) Ibid 80.

(21) Ibid 49B.

(22) Arberrry, Arabic Poetry 90,
al-Mutanabbī, Divan V.4/I39.

and appreciated the fame which could be theirs when he praised them the Prince 'Alī ibn al-Zu'ayr,⁽²³⁾ Ṣubḥ, the brother of Shōwar ⁽²⁴⁾ Muḥammad ibn Saba',⁽²⁵⁾ Badr ibn Ruzzīk⁽²⁶⁾ and Rukn al-Islām Hajm,⁽²⁷⁾ all of these and other friends tried to persuade 'Umāra to keep writing poetry for them. The exception was Ṣalāh al-Dīn, who hated 'Umāra, did not appreciate his poetry and did not enjoy his praise. For this reason he did not pay 'Umāra any money and did not make him any presents, while he patronised other poets, paying them vast sums of money and giving them various presents, all this, despite the fact that they were lesser than 'Umāra in all respects. Even so until his death 'Umāra went on writing poetry for Ṣalāh al-Dīn, praising him and his family, hoping that he would treat him differently.

There is another important characteristic of 'Umāra's panegyric. He employed the names of the men whom he praised to form derivations he changed the first names or the surnames, made reference to the antonyms and synonyms, omitted letters or dots from them. He played on words in this way to surprise people, who heard him or listened to his poetry. When he praised the Caliph al-'Udūd, he said

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- (23) 'Umāra, Dīwān let. 18.
 (24) Ibid 119, al-Mukat 134.
 (25) 'Umāra, Tarīkh MS. 93.
 (26) 'Umāra, al-Mukat 104.
 (27) Ibid 135.

الباصد اشدُّ صِدْقًا من دامت كُنت حُرِّي الهدي وهو من إيسا كرا الب (28)

and he said to al-ʿAḍīl

لقد حُرِّمُ في دولة عَادِلِيَّة بِحُرِّي أَيَّامِ المَدْحِ والمَدْحِ (29)

And he said to him, justice being derived from his name

وَابْتِغَى المَدْحَ لِأَعْي عَادِلٍ يَتَدَحُّ لَوْرَ العَدْلِ من ر مَادِه (30)

As for Shams al-Dawla, he said, comparing light with darkness

رَعَدَتْ سَوْدُكَ العَرَبِيَّ مَقْرَةَ بِأَسْمِ دَوْلَتِهِم بَعِيرَ مُحَمَّد (31)
وَالنَّسْ عَرُوفٌ لِأَنَّ تَعْلَى نَضِيًّا كَرَامًا طَلَمَ اللَّيَالِي السُّور

When he praised Najm al-Dīn, he said

عَم دِينَ هَلَّا عَنَّا هَ اَصُولَ عَارِمَ اللَهْدِي وَرَأْفَتُ هَدَّة (32)

To Shihāb al-Dīn Iahmād, he said

عَلَّ مُحَمَّدٌ كَأَسْمِ عَدَائِيَّةٍ وَوَارِ أَوْ كَأَسْمِ عِي المَارِي (33)

Yāsir of Hden was called al-ʿAlīk al-Saʿīd, so he said about him

بِالْيَاسِرِ العَلِيِّ بَأَيِّرِ حُورِهِ وَالمَقْتَبِي عَمَ الرِّبَانِ أَسْرَهُ
وَالعَدْمَقَادِ لَهُ تَتَصَرَّفُ تَابِيَهُ عَالِي رَيْبِهِ أَوْ أَمْرِهِ
لَهُ العَامِ العَيْدِ فَاسَهُ أَعْيَى العَيْمِ وَسُدْفَاقَةَ مَقْرَةَ (34)

(28) ʿUmāra, Dīwān Pet. 16B.

(29) Ibid 37.

(30) Ibid 47E.

(31) Ibid 55B.

(32) Ibid 57.

(33) Ibid 60B.

(34) Ibid 63.

In this way 'Umāra was able to make use of these names and he composed poetry full of these figures.⁽³⁵⁾ But it must be admitted that 'Umāra was not the first poet to do this, because previous Arab poets had done the same. The most famous of these was al-Mutanabbī. He said in praise of Badr ibn 'Ammār al-ḥadī

(36) أنت لعمرى الدر المسود كأنك في حوضه الوعى زحل

'Umāra used names in his poetry more than the others, especially when he found that this appealed to people's vanity. This often helps one to know for whom 'Umāra wrote the poem. It seems that 'Umāra grew fond of names, and he compared the names of great men and those whom he praised, making examples of the deeds of the great men to his contemporaries. He made reference to some of the prophets Ibrahīm, Moses, Messiah, Muḥammad, Joseph, Nūh, Shu'ayb, Solomon, Yūsha', and al-Iḥdīr. As for other famous people, he mentioned al-Waṣī ('Alī), Alexander, Banrām, Salmān, 'Ammār, Ja'far, Yaḥyā, Ḥatīm, Ka'b, 'Umr, 'Antar, Dānis, Ibn Muqla and others. He did not like his poetry to be without some typical Yamanī names, so he used Dhū Ru'ayn and Dhū Kulā'. On the other hand he also wrote of misdeeds Qudūr (who killed the prophet Sālin's camel), Wahṣnī (who killed Ḥamza, Muḥammad's uncle), ibn Muḥjam (who killed

(35) Ibid 80, 32B, 88, 89B, 90, 95, 105B... etc.

(36) al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān* V.3/415

'Alī) and so on.

Another artistic feature can be seen in 'Umāra's praise, it is the use of the exaggeration in his description of these people and their actions. He used hyperbole in his images to make them appear larger than life to the reader or listener. This was not an invention of 'Umāra's, or his time. It had been used by most of the poets in Arabic literature, before 'Umāra, the most prominent of them was al-Mutanabbī who was very well-known for this, he invented new meanings and surpassed all other poets. (37) All the literary men can learn from his verse, in which he said to Saif al-Dawla al-Ḥamdānī (died 356/967)

(38) تحادرت مقدار الكعبة والهي إلى قول قوم انت قلت عالم

"You surpassed the bounds of courage and reason, so that people said you had knowledge of the unseen." (39)

Even poets before al-Mutanabbī had used exaggeration in their poetry. Abū Nuwās (died 199/814) said in praise of Ḥarūn al-Fashīd (died 195/809)

وأصغت أهل الزك حتى أصدت تحادرت الطف التي لم تحلف

(37) Daif, al-Fann wa Bedhāhiyuhu fī al-Shi'r 240.

(38) al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān V.4/133.

(39) Arberry, Arabic Poetry 86.

"You have terrified the polytheists until the seeds
which have yet to be created, indeed fear you." (40)

Some investigators say that abū Tammām al-Tā'ī (died 231/846)
was the first poet to use excessive exaggeration in his
poetry. (41)

Arabs, then, in "Jahiliyya" loved exaggeration, and no
one can deny this in the "Qasīda" of 'Amr ibn Kulthūm
(died 584 A.D.) such as this verse

(42) *أدائع العظام لا تصي تحمله الكبار ساعديا*

"Not a weakling of ours but shall win to manhood,
find the world at his knees, its great ones
kneeling " (43)

So Arabs were fond of exaggeration in their poetry, since
"Jahiliyya", showed their predilection for it, not just so
that they could receive gifts and rewards, but also because
they felt that it was one method of embellishing their
images and clarifying their ideas and their feelings. One
of the earliest Arab critics, Qudāma ibn Ja'far (died
337/948) preferred exaggeration, as did the poets, "because
the ancient authorities.. who understood poetry and the
poets held the same opinion .. one of them said, 'the best

(40) Abū Huwās, Dīwān 452.

(41) Ibn Rashīq, al-'Umda V.2/51.

(42) al-Shinqīṭī, Sharh al-Mu'allaqāt 121.

(43) Blunt, The Seven Golden Odes 43.

poetry is that which lies most' (aḥsanu s-ṣi'ri akdābuhu), and this is also the view of poetry held by the Greek philosophers in keeping with the structure of their language " (44)

It is worthy of note that hyperbole was widely used and assumed greater status in arabic literature in the Fatimid Caliphate, because of the use of Iemā'īlī expressions and ideas, which may be seen in the theory of Dr. Muḥammad Kāmīl Ḥusayn, called "al-Mathal wa al-Mamthūl" (45) because some of the previous writers said that this showed disbelief, because they did not understand what the poets meant. The first poet who could be held to be a good example of this was ʿaṣū'l-ʿāsim Muḥammad ibn Ḥanī' al-Andalusī (died 362/973). He was probably the originator of this method in arabic literature. (46) He said in praise of the Caliph al-Mu'izz (died 360/975)

(purpose)

"He is the cause of the world, for him it was created,
- Some kind of cause there is for all things -
From the pure water of divine inspiration, which is
the froth of the source of his well - and he is
the cure!" (47)

(44) Bonebakker, The introduction of
(Maqad al-Shi'r) of Qudāma 36

(45) Ḥusayn, Sharḥ Dī'ān al-Mu'ayyad 106-108.

(46) Amin, Zuh'r al-Islām V. I/207.

(47) Nykl, Hispano-arabic Poetry 29.

Most of the Fatimid poets followed him, especially al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī, Dā'ī al-Du'āt.

At any rate 'Umāra took the side of these poets who preferred exaggeration, and used it. His eulogies are full of exaggeration and hyperbole whether he was influenced by the Fatimid poets or not. When he praised al-'Ādil ibn al-Ṣāliḥ, he once described him as an expert doctor in dilemmas, who directed Time and its people.

(48) وقام تدبير الزمان وأصله
حيدر داء المعصيات طيب

He depicted him (al-'Ādil) on another occasion, so great that even Destinies yielded to him, and high positions seemed lowly beside him.

(49) دانت لسرك طاعة الأقدار
وتواضعت للجزء الإقدار
وملكت أصبغة الزمان داهله
عمري عما لا يهون العباد الكاري

This is exactly what 'Umāra said about al-'Ādil's father, al-Ṣāliḥ (50)

تعدو المقادير العواماً لقدرة
في الخلق ان سبق الاحكام اورثقا

as for al-Kāmil, son of Shōwar, 'Umāra said that he fought the stars until he terrified the very spirits of the meteors.

(51) ولو قد حمت نيران العرم ملتقاً
حرب الكواكب صامت العس لثوب

It is not necessary to give more examples of exaggeration which can clearly be seen in his Dīwān. (52)

(48) 'Umāra, Dīwān Fet. I3.

(49) Ibid 72 B.

(50) Ibid 120

(51) Ibid 23B.

(52) Ibid 77. 113B. 176. 179. 181. 185... etc.

'Umāra's panegyric can be divided into many types, but the two main types which should be noted are personal panegyric, and official panegyric. The first kind is the poetry which 'Umāra wrote to his friends, who held different social positions Kings, Viziers, rulers, poets or jurists. He greeted them, described their goodness and virtues. He did this to explain his feelings for them, without any obligation and not expecting any payment from them. 'Umāra gave this opinion in some of his odes, saying in his poem to al-Qādī al-Sa'dī

"It (the poem) does not want any reward, except acceptance, and it considers this its greatest recompense." (53)

لا تشقى غير القول مشورة وقد ذلك من أهل مرايا

'Umāra wrote this sort of panegyric throughout his poetic life. As for the other kind of panegyric, it is poetry which 'Umāra wrote to official persons, either to explain to them some official matter, to make some enquiry, to describe celebrations, festivals, wars or battles, or when he was on official missions. This kind of poetry clearly became official, when 'Umāra became one of "Shu'arā" al-Dīwān" in the Fatimid Caliphate. Then he was obliged officially, to write these poems to praise the Caliphs and Viziers, and most of 'Umāra's available

panegyric is of this kind.

A few features can be seen in this panegyric that 'Umāra had great artistic freedom, a readily created atmosphere and the necessary experience of life to say what he wanted to say in his poetry, to exhibit his talent, transferring from one artistic "garden" into another, without having to observe technical, moral or social rules which might restrict him. The old Arab writers said in explanation of this, that if the king was the subject of praise, the poet could not care how freely he used exaggeration or hyperbole. (54)

Another characteristic can be noted in this part of 'Umāra's panegyric, that when he praised the Fatimid Caliphs, he praised their Viziers at the same time. For instance, when 'Umāra praised the Caliph al-Fā'iz, he praised his Vizier, al-Şāliḥ, in the same poem, and when he praised al-'Adīl, he praised al-Şāliḥ, al-'Adīl or Shū'ar as well. This shows that the Viziers had great power at this time, and they were the real governors, although the Caliphs were still the nominal rulers of the Caliphate. The poets knew this well enough, took care of the Viziers in their eulogies and sometimes they wrote more verses to the Viziers than to the Caliphs. (55) On the other hand,

(54) Ibn Raḡhīq, al-'Umda V.2/103.

(55) Ḥusain, Fī Adāb Miṣr al-Fā'imiyya 137.

if the poets praised one of the Viziers they might not praise, or sometimes not even mention, the Caliphs. One can see this in 'Umāra's eulogies to the Viziers, (56) and to the Caliphs, (57) in his Dīwān

When 'Umāra praised the Viziers, he described them as the protectors of the Caliphs, who are the descendants of Muḥammad (the prophet). To show their importance, their holiness and their blessings, 'Umāra reportedly said in his poetry that the Caliphs were the children of the prophet, the sons of "al-Ḥaṣīyy" ('Alī), the sons of Fāṭima, the inheritors of Islam, religion and knowledge, the people of the "Bait al-Wahy". So the Viziers were protecting Islām when they protected the Caliphs. 'Umāra said in praise of al-Sāliḥ

كفيل انمة انى عليهم كلام الله في ام الكتاب
 احاب سالتم لما دعوه وقد صرنا الكفاة عن الكواب
 (58) وحاط درى الشريعة ما تنقوت قواعدا بعد ما عطرنا

He praised his son in the same way

واصتماعون الايمان وسما له في امر الملك حيرنا - (59)

'Umāra really extolled the Viziers for the reason that he

-
- (56) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 8, 9B, 12, 18B, 20, 35, 45B. etc
 (57) Ibid 13B, 15, 16B, 40, 41B, 44B.. etc.
 (58) Ibid 9.
 (59) Ibid 15

loved the Caliphs, and he was genuinely loyal to them, so he was influenced by the Ismā'īlit ideas, affected by their beliefs and learned from this atmosphere, and it all reflected in his poetry (60) He used the Ismā'īlit expressions and idioms in the panegyric which he wrote to them. He panegyrised al-'Āḍid

حدث حواراً عليك عيوننا ان العيون على حلالك تم
 بأمن السأ العظيم قدت الوارء والور لا يتجد (61)

and he said in another poem

وعلى شريعة حكم روصيه صلى وصلى احل كل شراد (62)

The Ismā'īlit figures are easily recognisable in these instances. As for the following, 'Umāra announced in it, that the Qoran praised the Caliphs, calling them 'Kujjat Allah', believing that they inherited the "Imāmo" from Muḥammad and 'Alī-

يا حمة الله الي لسبارها حديث بصيرة حائر عن قصده
 انت الذي بلغ الرابطة في الملا عموا ولم يبلغ بداية حده
 ورث الهداة الاشدس امامة احيى عالمنا نواصع رشده
 ان يعترسوة روصيه وما تراث من ابيه وجده
 راد اتك دون ذلك لم يجد الادلي خليفة في عبده
 ما حركتم والمصطفى لكم راد فقداه لعصيه ولبرده (63)

(60) Husain Fī Adab Miṣr al-Faṭimiyya I56

(61) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet 39B.

(62) Ibid 42B

(63) Ibid 44B.

Several examples of this may be seen by the reader (64)

It is important to note that 'Um̄ra, in all his panegyric, followed the system which Qudāma ibn Ja'far mentioned, attaching great importance to virtue and noble deeds. (65)

He described these virtues, displayed all the good qualities of his friends and praised patience, wisdom, resolution, decision, forgiveness, courage, justice and so on (66)

But he took care to describe generosity more than the others, (67)

as was usual in Arabic literature, since the poets imagined all those they praised to be generous. (68) 'Um̄ra himself

admired generosity and was eager to refer to it in his panegyric. He said to Shams al-Dawla

كريم ذلك به البمين وتلت لي اعدر فان الكور بالموهور
(69) وتكم وهت الالف هو اقل ما تغتده في الائل المعهور

Sometimes 'Um̄ra began a poem describing generosity

(70) يا موقداً نار الفرى للباري دشت حذوري لكل مبار

'Um̄ra might exaggerate to give a different meaning

(64) Ibid 45B, 63B, 74, 100, 134, 137, etc

(65) Ibid 9B, 21, 41, 45, 54, 59B, etc

(66) Qudāma, Maad al-Shi'r 28.

(67) 'Um̄ra, Diwān Pet. 44, 47, 51, 56, 59, 60, 82, 90, etc.

(68) Al-Tahir, Al-Shi'r...al-Saljuqi V. 2/103.

(69) 'Um̄ra, Diwān Pet. 56.

(70) 'Um̄ra, al-Diwan Pet. 106b

عرف الجور لعه طاصطفا ما قبل ان يعرف السؤال ويجلف
 عللا، احة تروع ، ونفسو في عراض الرعا بار المخلق (71)

He sometimes used his panegyric as a means to a certain end. He praised Viziers, rulers and friends, hoping for their assistance, that they would send him what he needed or give him money and gifts. One amusing thing is that he asked many times about sugar and rams, he said once

تفعل كرك وكا شي كيعا شئت لقة او حواله (72)

and he said at another time

عريم احاله حلك تصانك سادته من كرك وكا شي (73)

It can be concluded that 'Umāra's panegyric is as good as most writers suggest. He himself was very proud of it, he praised it many times, comparing it with the poetry of the greatest Arab poets

أناكم لامرقة ومرالته فرد قوامي عفرتم ومريرجا

"It was composed (the poem) for you with delicacy and vigour, by the Farazdaq and Jarir of your time" (74)

It may be said that it was an expression of his feelings, because he praised only those people whom he liked and wanted to praise. He felt that this poetry was a means of friendship between him and them. It was like a mirror reflecting his

(71) Ibid 123.

(72) Ibid 133B.

(73) Ibid 113.

(74) Ibid 111.

character, experience and culture, his loyalty, love and truth.

2. Elegy (Rithā')

Elegy is the art of extolling, praising and lamenting a dead person, or a group of people, enumerating their virtues and behaviour, and ascribing their goodness and humanity. There is no great difference between elegy and eulogy, as most Arab writers have said,⁽¹⁾ except that the poet expresses sadness and grief in his elegy, showing that he is praising a dead one. Elegy is then the second art, after eulogy, in the traditional arrangement of themes in the Arabic literature. So it was in 'Umāra's themes. He wrote many elegies and dirges. Those available in 'Umāra's *Dīwān* consist of 20 long elegies and 17 short poems. Some of these long poems are very long indeed, and two of them which were written at the death of al-Malik al-Ṣūfī, consisted of 83 and 97 verses.⁽²⁾ All these elegies were written in Egypt, none elsewhere, because the earliest of them was written in 556 A.H., and the others were composed after this date until the time of 'Umāra's death. The date when they were written was given in the titles of most of the poems so it

 (1) Ibn Raḥīq, al-'Umda V. 2/117,
 al-'Askarī al-Ṣinā'ī, 131,
 Qudāma, *Maqāḍ al-Shi'r* 49.

(2) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 69, 65.

is possible for one who so wishes to arrange them in chronological order, or to follow the development of this art in 'Umāra's poetry

Most of 'Umāra's elegies are effective in their sadness, because 'Umāra wrote these odes to show his real feelings, explaining his true grief and portraying his deep affection. There is no exaggeration in this, and one can well believe it, knowing that 'Umāra wrote most of his elegies to those whose death really hurt him and touched his heart, he wrote to relieve his sorrow and alleviate his sadness. 'Umāra wrote dirges only to his six sons (Muḥammad, Husayn, 'Abdullāh, 'Aṭīyya, Ismā'īl and Yaḥyā), his great friend (al-Malik al-Cālīh, Abū Yūsuf 'Alī Hawshāt, Najm al-Dīn) (the father of Salāh al-Dīn) and two women (the grandmother of the Caliph 'Ādil, and the mother of Saif al-Mulk).

Therefore one can divide 'Umāra's elegies into two kinds the elegies to his sons which are nine long poems and 14 short ones, and the elegies to others which are ten long poems and three short ones. Besides these, there is the elegy which he wrote to the Fatimid Caliphate.⁽³⁾ Some elegies to the Fatimids are lost, because the people were not allowed to write, recite or even listen to them during the reign of Salāh al-Dīn.

(3) See this thesis, p. 72-73

The first kind is very effective, full of regrets and sadness. It expresses the feelings of a father who lost his sons one after another in the course of a few years, until he had no sons left. He was disappointed with life, he was utterly dejected and weary of living. Afterwards, he looked through saddened eyes, and wished to follow his sons, to be dead so that one of them might live, and to meet them again soon. (4) He wrote long odes to lament each one of his sons after they had died, weeping for them, remembering the brothers who had died before, asking the recently dead, in his poetry, to take his remembrances to them. He also expressed his sadness and grief by composing and reciting poetry, from time to time during the various rituals of the dead, cleaning, carrying and burying them. He said while he was walking behind the coffin of his son 'Aṭṭīyya

ارتك الموت يا عطية سنا ويا بنت الطيب

(5)

and when 'Aṭṭīyya was buried and 'Umāra returned from the graveside he said

(6) يا ليلة اسلمك عادت في كدي على عطية من جد وسكند

Perhaps the best elegy to his sons is the poem of 4I

(4) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 26, 28B, 29, 51B, 50B, 153.

(5) It is in three verses in 'Umāra's Dīwān Pet. 194.

(6) It is in three verses in 'Umāra's Dīwān Pet. 52B.

verses which was written at the death of his son Ḥusain in 563 A.H., which begins

داويت لوقف العليل بكائي كل راد سقمي حلال صلائي
دايت من روالطيب لدايته ما عتل قلى اليايس دايي (7)

He begins by describing his son's illness because the doctor could not help his son to recover, he lost hope, after having expected so much. He continued to show his grief by use of ~~enough words~~^{suggested} and precise language, which revealed his inmost thoughts. He was the kind of unselfish father who wished to redeem his son and to be buried instead of him, but he could not fulfil his hopes

ررحوت ابي تدالون حذاه عورصت بي ايلي فكان دايي
ووددت لو كنت الدين لقره عوصماً له ويكون في دنياي

He gained no comfort in sleep, or rather did not sleep at all, while the fire was still burning in his heart

وحسرت طب السوم بعد راقه عن اطرك فاعن الاعفاء
ولعد ايت ربي تواري همرة ولا يبرأ تنوقد بحواء
ودالت اصى قلبي لدمرا يردني كدع الصل والاعفاء
وبجرة وتفكر وتهد رواته تنفس الصعاء

'Umāra portrayed his son in the coffin, as the bearers carried him to his grave, by use of images, and strength of language

تم املن شمع المظايا طالاً حدتاً ياباً لعمرة صماء
ياوي الى كد وحنة مرل وحادل صم وصلد صماء

(7) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 5.

Husain, so recently dead, reminded 'Umāra of his son Ismā'il, who died a long time before Husain. He lamented him and described his sadness for his son

أبي على آسما عيل لا اعطى عمراً بل عدت تخلي وعرائي
قد كنت ادمرد لكل نمة واقبه للأساء والبراء
فاعتالي فيه الحمام تعوقت فوس الميايا سره ليجاتي
تركت فوازي ومثما محراه متصرحاً بمداعي ودماي

'Umāra ends this ode with maxims (Ḥikam), explaining that 'all men must die, passing through nature to eternity'.

لا يعبرن الحي طول نقاه فغيره من بعده لفساد
ويطول فكت المرء ما وحي التري حتى ترى أثراً من العراء

The sincerity of 'Umāra can be gauged from listening to his poetry his warm breath, the tears courting down his cheeks, and his confusion, anxiety and resentment of life. This part of 'Umāra's elegy is admirable, despite the fact that the most difficult elegy is the elegy to children, because the poet finds it hard to know what to write about the dead.⁽⁸⁾

In the whole history of Arabic literature few poets wrote elegies to children. The most famous was Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Tihāmī (died 416/1025), who lamented his son with three poems,⁽⁹⁾ but the "Rā'iyā" is the best ode, and in the forefront of elegies in Arabic poetry. 'Umāra no doubt profited from it, as can be seen from his own elegies. It should be noted that there are no elegies among the available

(8) Ibn Rashīq, al-'Umda V. 2/124.

(9) Al-Tihāmī, Diwan 27, 43, 52.

poetry on the death of 'Umāra's father, or of his uncles, or of his brothers. It may be that none were written, it might equally be that they are lost.

'Umāra's other elegies are also of the best, because he wrote them at the death of people whom he liked. He explained his feelings of loyalty to his friends in one of his odes

(IO) حريت علياً عن جميل وراده وثنيتي في الحبل بعد وحا ص

In elegy, 'Umāra largely followed the traditional method. He began most of his elegies with maxims (Ḥikam), about life, destiny, calamity, death, the era, people, pleasure and sadness, sometimes he described the event itself, the death of his friend

(II) أرى كل جمع بالردى يتصرف وكل حديد بالليل يتسرق
وما حده الأعمار إلا صحائف توابع وقتاً ثم تمحي وتمحق

None of 'Umāra's elegies begin with the "Ghazal" (love poetry) prelude, because this is not usual in elegy. There are two exceptions to this rule: the first elegy which began with love poetry was the poem written by Duraid ibn al-Ṣimma al-Bakrī (died 8/630), and the second one was the ode of al-Ṣunā Bēhila, ('Āmir ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Piāh). Critics, however, are not sure whether the prelude of the latter is

(IO) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 30B.

(II) Ibid. 12J.

authentic or not. (I2) There is another exception which should be mentioned here, it is the attempts of al-Kumait ibn Zaid al-Asadī (died 126/744). He tried to begin his elegies with 'Ghazal', but he was only touching on it and it was not obvious in his poetry. (I3)

There is another traditional feature in Arabic poetry which 'Umāra used. This was that he used to mention examples from ancient Kings, great men and people of bygone generations, (I4) comparing them with the recently dead. When 'Umāra wrote his elegy at the death of Hajm al-Dīn Ayyūb, he mentioned the Orthodox Caliphs, al-"Khulafā" al-Rāshidūn," saying that they had all died and had set a good example to the people, as the Messenger of God, Muḥammad, had lived before them, and he should be an example to those people in distress

أودى علي وعثمان محله ولم يفترا الوكر ولا عمر
 ومن اراد التأسي في مصيبتهم فليؤس في رسول الله صبرا (15)

When he lamented his friend, al-Malik al-Ṣūlīn, he mentioned some of the great men who were killed in Islamic history al-Waṣīyy ('Alī), Ḥamza (Muḥammad's uncle), Ja'far ('Alī's brother) and al-Ḥusain ibn 'Alī

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- (I2) Ibn Rāshīq, al-'Umde V. 2/121-122
 (I3) Ibid V. 2/122
 (I4) Ibid V. 2/120
 (I5) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pct. 104.

فتنن الراجر العظيم وصيته درجت عليك الاخبار
 مات الوصي لا وعزة عمه وان السؤل وحضر الطيار (I6)

Just as the arab poets praised the dead^(I7), so too did

'Umāra in his elegies. He praised his friend 'Alī Hawshāt in the elegy which he composed at his death

سبيكك عسر كنت حيرت فقامت واليام ملك كنت اعنى كفاه
 وتفرادا اعيانا على الملك سده سدوت غراه من جميع حياه
 ويكسك ما لدع التبت مواطن صمت لا للملك مع شنائته
 وردك لا سريت تفوده هفت عدات الصرني عداته (I8)

'Umāra praised Najm al-Dīn, al-Ṣāliḥ^(I9) and others in elegies. From praising the dead, it is an easy step for 'Umāra to praise his own son or other relatives, saying that these will fill the emptiness of his life. All this will help to give the poet peace of mind. He praised al-'Ādil son of al-Ṣāliḥ, in the elegies of his father, as well he praised Salāḥ al-Dīn and his brothers at the death of their father⁽²⁰⁾. He also praised others who were not relatives of the deceased, for example his praise of Shāḥar in the elegy which he wrote at the death of the Caliph al-'Ādil's grandfather.⁽²¹⁾ for no other reason than that Shāḥar was the Vizier at that time

(16) 'Umāra, al-Dīwān Pet. 71.

(17) Ḥuḍāma, Maqāḍ al-Shu'ar 51.

(18) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 30.

(19) Ibid. 99E, 104B, 121B, 129B.

(20) Ibid. 23, 67, 71, 122, 130.

(21) Ibid. 2.

Another artistic feature in arabic dirge-poetry, a long time before 'Umāra, was "Al-Takrār" (Tautology). The poets would repeat certain words, phrases and lines in the same poem. They realised that tautology could add strength - firstly, because the repetition of comforting words could relieve feelings of intense grief - secondly, because repetition can be used to stress important phrases and sentences. Many poets used it in their elegies Muḥalhil ibn Rabī'a, al-Khanā' and others.⁽²²⁾ 'Umāra used repetition in his dirge-poetry. He repeated words

لا ساعيل اشواقى تريد على مدى الرمم
 واسماعيل لي شغل عن اللذات يصحلي
 واسماعيل لراسله حتى الموت يصعني (23)

and he also repeated phrases

وقولا له يا قمر بلع سدا سليت الى سرالهدى دراته
 وقولا له يا قمر بلع دعانا الى سماع صرور بصوت دعائه (24)

'Umāra ends most of his elegies appealing to God (Du'ā') to bless the deceased, to forgive them and to have mercy on them.⁽²⁵⁾

A most interesting fact is that 'Umāra used to create

(22) Ḥammūda, al-Taǧdīd III.

(23) 'Umāra Diwān Fet. 191.

(24) Ibid 29B.

(25) Ibid 29B.

new lines of thought, based on the time of the death of the subject of his poem Najm al-Dīn died in "Ramādān", so 'Umāra said

(26) شهيد تلقى ربه، هو صائم
فكان على أهل الزيادة طوره

When al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ was killed in 'Ramādān', 'Umāra was appalled by this evil in the holy month, and said

(27) لوصيام رايهم 'رام' ايام
طاهر ترابهم طهور

It was almost as if some sixth sense of 'Umāra was foretelling that he himself would also be killed in Ramādān.

The best elegy in this part of 'Umāra's large poetry is the ode which 'Umāra wrote at the death of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in 556 A.H., which began

(28) اعيان الدنيا في علم اسلمه
فابي لما يراجل الله راحله

It was so effective that the poet, Pājiḥ ibn Ismā'īl al-Ḥadī al-Hillī (died 627/1230), emulated it, composing an elegy in the same metre at the death of al-Malik al-Ḥāshimī Ghāzī ibn Salāḥ al-Dīn (died 613 A.H.) (29)

Another point to note is, that in spite of the fact that

-
- (26) Ibid. 100.
(27) Ibid. 66.
(28) Ibid. 129.
(29) Ibn Khallikān 'Wafayāt V.3/173-183.

elegy was supposed to deal only with one subject - and some critics regarded this as very important and in spite of the difficulty of combining dirge poetry with congratulation poetry, 'Umāra did this in three poems.⁽³⁰⁾ The first one was composed to congratulate the Caliph al-ʿAḍīd on the occasion of his being made Caliph in 555 A.H. Its opening is.

(31) لئن حل صرنا المصاب عظيم وان حل شكر فالوالم عظيم

It is a fine ode of medium length (37 verses), and 'Umāra interwove in it lamentations for the previous Caliph, al-Fāʾiz, together with the praise of al-ʿAḍīd and al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ.

The second one was one of his odes in praise of al-Ṣāliḥ which he began with 'Ghazal' prelude

(32) شأن العوام اهل ان يلجأ اليه وان كنت الفيق الحامي

He included in it lamentation for Muḥammad's children, especially al-Ḥusain ibn ʿAlī and he blamed the Umayyāds, who killed the latter, for their evil deeds. It was a long poem (of 51 verses), and it was noteworthy for its language and high sentiments.

(30) Ibn Rashīq, al-ʿUmda V. 2/124.

(31) 'Umāra, Diwan Pet. 170.

(32) Ibid 181B.

The third one was written to congratulate Prince Ward al-Sāliḥī on the arrival of his three brothers from al-Shām, beginning

اراحة لي بيته الرسل السر رعبت نفسي في كناية والسر (3)

He included in it some verses lamenting Dārghām, the son of Ward. These poems may be deemed successful and 'Umāra did well to merge these different themes, for thus he was able to recite them so that the people concerned could appreciate them and reward him.

3. Epistolary Poetry (al-Murāslāt al-Iknwāniyya)

Epistolary poetry is the art of writing poetical letters to friends to explain certain matters to them, or to inquire after their affairs. Some Arab critics called it Munājāt al-Asdiqā' (taking friends into confidence). Some writers maintained that this art was established in the early part of the history of Arabic literature, some said that it appeared at the second period of the Abbāsīd Caliphate, (1) while others said that it was before this time, and that it increased at the end of the Fatimid Caliphate and the beginning of the Ayyūbīd rule. (2)

(3) Ibid 86

(1) Ḥammūda, al-Tajdīd 27.

(2) Husayn, al-Shi'r al-Ayyūbī 172.

At any rate, this art was very well-known in Arabic literature, both in poetry and prose, during the fifth century. 'Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad al-Tha'ālibī (died 429/1035), devoted many chapters to this theme.⁽³⁾ The most famous poet in this art at this time was Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusain ibn al-'Amīd (died 439/1043).

'Umāra wrote a considerable amount of poetry on this theme. Five long poems and about 38 short poems (Qit'as) are available. It would be usual for such a man as 'Umāra, who used to travel widely and live among various peoples, to write much of this sort of poetry to his numerous friends. It is safe to assume that some of 'Umāra's epistolary poetry is lost, just as poetry on other themes has also been lost. This idea will seem more acceptable, when one realises that 'Umāra wrote some of his epistolary poetry on the backs of his friends' letters and papers, and he asked them to do likewise. He declared that this was his favourite method⁽⁴⁾, and preferred it to keeping secrets.

ان شئت ان اكتب مسترسلًا اليك فيما عني من امر
فأكتب على الظهر ولا تعذر فانه اكتب للمستر

"If you want me to tell you what I have been doing recently, write it on the back (of my letter), and do not apologise, because this is a safer way to keep secrets." (5)

(3) Al-Tha'ālibī al-Yatīma V.3/17,97. V. 4/262

(4)

(5) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 103B.

So 'Umāra's poetry would sometimes not be known because his friends would have kept it to themselves, or they might even have destroyed the letters, so that nothing would be known about the poetry

'Umāra's preoccupation with keeping secrets was not always successful, because in spite of using letter backs for this purpose, his secrets were often discovered, as for instance, when Muḥammad ibn Saba' used the back of 'Umāra's letter to welcome him in one of his visits to ibn Saba'.⁽⁶⁾

'Umāra closely followed the Arab poets in his epistolary poetry. His style is not exceptional, because he was not concerned with it, as he was in eulogy and elegy. In this type of poetry, he explained ordinary matters to his close friends and he was so frank that often his language was obscene and impolite.⁽⁷⁾ Sometimes, however, he did use rhetorical figures, "Badī'", for example

قل لمن يرتقب طيب الدمام عند تعريد طائرات الدمام
 اجعلت قلب الوردى ارا حيلك كما اجعلت هموم السرات
 ظاهياً ظل يرتقب العذب منياً معدات، ما كودى الدمام
 ما حيلت ما حيرت فيه دعرع حوراً من مستحلين بالليل
 والتمس عرب ما حيرت من العرب مما حاهت عارم لا عترات⁽⁸⁾

(6) See this thesis, p 41-42

(7) 'Umāra, *Diwān* Pet. 53, 164, 195.

(8) *Ibid* 25.

This could have been written to one of his poet friends who appreciated this art. Often he set puzzles in his epistles. When he wrote to ask his friend Muḥammad ibn Shams al-Khilāfa to send him a turban, he did not say this in so many words, but he put it in a language puzzle, using "Tashīf"

رَأَيْتَكَ فِي الْمَاءِ مِثْلَ حَمَلَةِ الْكِبَاءِ وَهِيَ الْعِمَامَةُ
 مَا دَلَّ الْكِبَاءُ حَيْثُ مَيِّ وَصَحَّتْ الْعِمَامَةُ بِالْعِمَامَةِ (9)

As he wrote to al-Mushārif

قُلْ لِلنَّارِ عَمْسَ مِقَالٍ مَبِثَّرٍ
 وَاللَّهِ إِنْ لَمْ تَنَارْ دَمْعٌ مَا قَدْ تَقَرَّرَ
 لِأَسْلَتِ اسْ آوَكِ الْبَيْتِ بِي آلِ هَرَمِ
 وَأَسِ الْكَلْقِ عَيْبِ بِلِيهِ مَرْهَنْ عَقَرِ
 هَدِي إِشَارَةَ عِلْمٍ بَعِيرَهَا لَيْسَ بِكِرِ (10)

In some of these epistles, 'Umāra asked his friends for money, presents or whatever he needed: sugar, turbans, clothes, animals and some things which he just hinted at

الْبَيْتُ إِنَّمَا إِسْحَاقُ عَسَتْ حَوِيحَةٌ يُؤْتِيهِ أَصْرُ الرِّحَالِ وَيُرْتَجِبُ
 حَمَلْتُ لِي مِنْ عَيْرِ سَمْعِكَ طَوْدًا مَدَارِعَ إِسْحَاقِ الْوَرَى طَبِي مَدْرَجِ

"O Abū Ishāq, a need occurred to me, which the vicissitude of time hopes for and desires from you.

I kept it from the hearing of all others but you, "turning" the hearings of people, like the turning of a book." (II)

(9) Ibid 178B

(10) Ibid 101.

(11) It is six verses in the Dīwān, Pet. 52B.

Whenever 'Umāra's friends did him a favour, he would write to thank them. He wrote to one of his friends, who could be Mūsā ibn al-Ma'mūn

أبي كل يوم أنت همة التي الأعمار من دورك الشكر
أخي إلى الإسكندرية لم تقف ألف سني المأمون عني ولا القطر
بصاعصي بي كل امرئ سوا لهم كأن المادهم عبي أبدأ سفر

"O Abū 'Imrān, every day you send me something which cannot but be of service to me.

I came to Alexandria, and the favours of the Ma'mūn family did not stop, as the rain did.

Granting me favours is like giving me your company, as if your hands are with me always." (I2)

Visiting is one of the most important aspects of this type of 'Umāra's poetry. He apologised in some of it to his friends, because he was unable to visit them, giving his reasons

قل لجمال الملك يا ابي الديب در عياله ابدأ حالد
ما عاقتي عليك سوى رمدة شرابا في مقلي واقد

"Say to Jamāl al-Mulk O son of one whose fame is immortal
Nothing delayed me from (visiting) you except ophthalmia,
its flame is burning in my eye " (I3)

On the other hand, when some of 'Umāra's friends did not visit him, he wrote poetry blaming ('Itāb) them for this

يا عاقتي قدا شتقت لطلبتك القلوب
ان كنت اصعب العبيد فانت بي قلبي قريب
الدرمي لصف الشهور وقد تكامل لا يعيب
وميب شوهل من رياره من سم حو العجب

"O you who are absent from me, my heart has longed for you
If you were far away, you would be close to my heart.
The moon in the middle of a month, when it is
full, does not disappear, and your failure to visit
someone who likes you, is surprising." (I4)

(I2) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 103B.

(I3) Ibid. 53.

(I4) Ibid. 25B

'Umāra gave advice to his friends in this poetry, explaining the real meaning of friendship,⁽¹⁵⁾ asking them to be loyal⁽¹⁶⁾ and showing them that a man should hurry to give help when it is asked for. Once 'Umāra was ill, and sent for a doctor to come and see him, but the doctor excused himself, so 'Umāra wrote to him

إذا ألتزم المحموم من هداياه فقدم له عذرا كبيرا
ولا تأخر حين تدعى كحاجة فما العيث بالمحمود بعد آوايه

"If the fevered man uttered great nonsense, make allowances for him as an expert in these circumstances. Do not be late, if you are needed, because rain will of little use if it comes after the suitable time."⁽¹⁷⁾

The content of some of 'Umāra's epistolary poetry is often amusing

One day 'Umāra went to visit his friend Zakī al-Dīn Najm, the brother of Shāwar, but he found his door locked. Before 'Umāra left, he wrote these verses to Najm

أنت إلى بابك المرشح والعيته معلقاً مرتحاً
فقلت لبوابه سألني . ابطلق باب الذي والمحيى ؟
فقال أراك تتبر الكلام وعدي من الرأس ان تخرجنا
والرشفه سال المدح والحفظه سال الاى

"I came to your door in hope, but I found it closed and locked. Then I said to the porter, wonderingly, 'Is it possible that the door of generosity and sagacity is closed?' 'You are talking too much', he said, 'and I think you should go away.' If not, I will pluck the "Sibāl" of praises and follow it with "Sibāl" of satire."⁽¹⁸⁾

(15) Ibid 158

(16) Ibid 8

(17) Ibid Pet. 183.

(18) Ibid Pet. 33.

4. Satire ('Hijā')

When 'Umāra first began to write poetry which was worthy of showing to people, he read some of it to his father who admired it and praised his son. He advised 'Umāra not to use poetry against people "Learn literature, it is one of God's bounties to you, and do not deny it by satirising people "(19) Let us listen to 'Umāra himself telling us what happened between them "He advised me never to satirise a muslim in a single line of poetry, I gave my promise then, that I would not satirise anyone."(20)

'Umāra agreed with his father in principle. The result was that he wrote no satirical poetry at all during two phases of his poetical life. But something happened later to him while he was in Egypt, which seemed to justify his writing satirical poetry. Someone satirised 'Umāra in the presence of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ. It seems that 'Umāra tried to ignore it, so that he would not break his promise to his father. But al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ wanted him to reply to the poet responsible because 'Umāra said "Al-Ṣāliḥ swore, asking me to write in reply. So I did, following the word of God

"To Him belong might and majesty, and ho so defendeth

(19) 'Umāra, al-Mukat 23.
 (20) Ibid 23.

himself after he hath suffered wrong, for such, there is no manner (of blame) against them "(21) And his saying 'And one who attacketh you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you' (22), (23)

What is open to misunderstanding here is that 'Umāra added 'We lam yakun shay'un ghairu hādihā" (24) which may have more than one meaning. It may mean "And there was nothing satirical except this'. If so, it hardly makes sense because there are many satirical poems (Dīwān 'Hijā') in 'Umāra's Dīwān. There is another meaning which this saying of 'Umāra might have 'And there was no other reason (to write satire) except this.' He was attempting to explain why he had to write satire after he had decided not to do so, and this latter reason seems more acceptable. It is also likely that 'Umāra did not intend to write more satirical poetry because most of the great Arab poets, for some years before 'Umāra's time, had avoided it. In fact, only a few lines can be found in the Dīwāns of al-Tughhrā'ī, al-Abī 'ardī and others. (25) As for Ḥaiṣa Bais (Sa'd ibn

(21) The Koran XIII (Shūrā), 41.

(22) The Koran II (The Cow), 194.

(23) 'Umāra, al-Nukāt 23-24.

(24) Ibid 24.

(25) Al-Tāhir, al-Shi'r al-Saljūqī V. 2/130.

Muhammad al-Tamīmī, died 574/1179), he tried to dissociate his Dīwān from satire.⁽²⁶⁾ Arab critics of the time did not like satire and considered it as a deficiency in poetry.⁽²⁷⁾ Nevertheless, it was very important in the early days of Arabic literature

'Umāra's available satirical poetry is about twenty short poems, making a total of more than 30 verses. It is interesting to note that ten of these satirical poems were written to satirise Khāṣṣat al-Dawla ibn Dukhān,⁽²⁸⁾ Ṣāhib al-Dīwān, who used to cause trouble for 'Umāra, and tried, many times, to delay paying him his dues.⁽²⁹⁾ For that reason, 'Umāra satirised him in an effort to make him change his ways, but all in vain. Three other poems were written to the clerk, Abū al-Faḍl, who joined the "Dīwān", working there by the order of ibn Dukhān. Four other poems were written in the Dīwān satirising other clerks,⁽³⁰⁾ who might also have caused trouble for 'Umāra.

Most of 'Umāra's satirical poetry, then, was personal. Arab critics divided satirical poetry into three types: personal, social and political.⁽³¹⁾ The first type is

(26) Al-'Imād, al-Kharīda (al-'Irāq) V. I/349.

(27) Al-Tahīr, al-Shi'r al-Saljuqi V. 2/130.

(28) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 58, 119, 119B, 129, 156, 164, 179, 192, 192B.

(29) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 90.

(30) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 114B, 121, 142B, 156.

(31) Muḥammad Ḥusain, al-Hijā' wa al-Hajja' 'un V. I/19.

"based upon personal and individual reflections, inspired by insults or ill-treatment "(32)

"It is written in search of justice"(33) It appears as "a quick expression of the poet's anger."(34)

This was 'Umāra's satire. He expressed his feelings towards these few people who were envious of him, for reasons of his fame, good fortune, and the money he received from the Caliphate treasury. They were, in fact, responsible for paying 'Umāra because they served at the "Dīwān", and, in spite of their attempts to delay his payments, he obtained them by the help of Viziers. Presumably 'Umāra did not write social satire because he was not a professional satirical poet, as Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akhtal were, but 'Umāra certainly wrote satirical poetry of a political vein.

It is well-known that he wrote a number of poems satirising the Ayyūbid regime, unfortunately, most of this poetry is lost, but some is included in 'Umāra's elegies to the Fatimid Caliphate, for the reason that the Ayyūbids took authority from them and abused them. 'Umāra, sometimes, wrote satirically in his elegies, hinting at his enemies, or the enemies of his patrons and of the people whom he praised, criticising them and comparing them with his virtuous

 (32) Ismā'īl, al-ʿaṣīda 357.

(33) Muḥammad Ḥusain, al-Hijā' wa al-Hojjā'ūn V. I/20.

(34) Ismā'īl, al-ʿaṣīda 357

friends. When he praised Bukhtiyār, he criticised Ḥamdān in the same poem

أبي لقيت صديقا حادان أحسن من حدار

"I found our friend, Ḥamdān, more luckless than Qudār." (35) (The man who killed the she-camel of Ṣalīḥ the prophet.) (36)

He satirised al-Surtī in the epistle which he wrote to his friend, al-Makīn

أما المكين الرضى صلته ناه هوهرة الوقت
وأما السرتي، لا قدس الرضى من يعنى الى سرت

"As for al-Makīn, whose deeds are worthy, he is the jewel of this time.

Not only from al-Surtī, may God withhold his blessing from all those who are from Surt, he blacked what was white in my needs with his dishonour, the pot of pitch." (37)

Umāra amalgamated these two themes, while the Arab critics maintained that satire was the opposite of praise. (38)

They defined satire as the art of criticising and defaming enemies, by depicting their shortcomings, recounting the wrongs they have done, and by comparing them with others more virtuous, this is the most effective form of satire. (39)

Umāra believed his satire to be effective, so that his enemies, rivals and sometimes even his friends were wary of it. He said to al-Buṣhārī

وليس حكم القوالي بحوزي كل ساعة
وسوى تسع منها مالا تزيد ساعة

(35) Umāra, Dīwān Pet. IOIB.

(36) See the Koran VII/73-77, XI/61-65, XVI/132-152.

(37) Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 31.

(38) Qudāma, Naqd al-Shi'r 44.

(39) Ibn Rashīq, al-ʿUmda V. 2/138.

"Restraint is not always possible, and you will sometimes hear what you do not like to hear." (40)

He often held his enemies, and at times, his friends, under the threat of his satire

وسوف تأتيك عبي كائت الدم تحدى
يتظعن بالقول عموراً من البرد وحدا
يشرب في كل سمع ذماً ويطوي صدا

"The 'Pakā'ib' (caravans) of satire will come, urged forward by singing, to you. They move, with their message, through high and low, they spread abroad for the hearing of all criticism and false praise." (41)

As for the enemies 'Umāra liked to scorn, he even said that he did not satirise them because they were not worth the trouble

لا استرهم اى الهمام من الحمار

"I do not permit him to be satirised, satire is too fine for a donkey" (42)

'Umāra followed most of the artistic features of satire known to Arabic poetry. He wrote short poems, not long ones, because all the Arab poets, except Jarīr (died 110/723), said that the brevity improved satire. (43)

'Umāra also used to draw, in his satirical poetry, vivid pictures, full of scorn and ridicule for his enemies.

He enlarged their faults to make people laugh at them. Many

(40) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet II4B.

(41) Ibiḍ Pet. 49.

(42) Ibiḍ IOIP.

(43) Ibn Faḥḥ, al-'Umde V. 2/140

of these jests were based on a play of words, such as deriving strange meanings and creating amusing images. He drew many vivid pictures from the name of his first enemy, Ibn Dukhān (Son of smoke)

وقالته مالي اري الكو مطلقاً انما اري مصر دون كل مكان؟
فقلت: ومصر كالسود وان يكن عارها دعان هو مان دعان

"It may be asked 'Why do I see the sphere dark in Egypt, different from anywhere else?' I could reply 'Egypt looks like any other country, and if smoke covers it, that would be from Ibn Dukhān'." (44)

He said about him on another occasion

أقسمت لا تفت لمصر غممة ومدبرها اس عناية المستوقد
هم لو اتحل الكان سلوه لم يفتقرن الى الكتمان الائمة

"I swore that grief could not leave Egypt while Ibn Dukhān is its director. (He is) affection (Hama), and if the beautiful girls apply salve to their eyes with its colour, they could have no use of antimony." (45)

‘Umāra did the same with Abū al-Faḍl. He gave his name the exact opposite of its real meaning "Abū al-Naḡa." (46)

He was a clerk at the 'House of Rams', so ‘Umāra made use of this and said

ومن حبه بي درات القرون عدا وهو نائب دار الكباش

"And with his love of all (animals') horns he became a representative of the House of Rams." (47)

This often leads ‘Umāra to another artistic feature,

(44) ‘Umāra, Dīwān Pet. I42B.

(45) Ibid 58.

(46) Ibid II2B, II3B, I56.

(47) Ibid II3B.

that is using hackneyed expressions and obscene language. (48)
 'Umāra descended to this level in his poetry, (49) in spite
 of being a jurist and a religious man. Nevertheless,
 even if this was accepted from 'Umāra, abusing the Koran,
 abusing its phrases and the names of "Suras" together with
 his obscenity, (50) can hardly be tolerated.

The third traditional characteristic of arabic satirical
 poetry is that the poet tries to show his enemy deficient in
 virtue, and, in fact, full of vices such as greed and
 meanness. (51) 'Umāra said, describing Ibn Dukhān

لأننا من الما الرذائل لعدما واحذر أمانة سارعه عطاف
 فالمرحى عبداللثام أمانة كالمرحى شراً من الصعاف

"Do not trust (a man) of vice, and be suspicious of
 the honesty of a thief and sbductor
 Because ne who desires honesty from a villain,
 is like one who hopes for fruit from the willow-
 tree." (52)

'Umāra occasionally exaggerates meanings and describes
 people whom he satirises, without honour ('Ird), which he
 finds it easy to attack

عدرت عدي الملك اذ ليس عدوه من العرص نبي يتقي ان يرفا

(48) Muhammad Husain al-Ijā' wa al-Hajjā'ūn V I/39

(49) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 52B., II23, II9B, II2B, I56.

(50) Ibid II9B, I56.

(51) Al-ʿaskarī, al-Šināʿatayn IO4

(52) 'Umāra Dīwān Pet. II9B.

"I forgave 'Adī al-Mulk, because he is a man without honour ('Ird), and I need not beware of destroying it." (53)

Another amusing picture was created by 'Umāra. It concerned the honour of Ibn Dukhān who was ill

احتر العرف يشقي بهما لي وهو عرض بالذم ليس بيالي

"He is a man of scabby honour, which seeks a cure from my satire, and it is an honour which does not take care of satire " (54)

'Umāra, as other poets did, likened these enemies without honour to stupid animals, in order to make them more ridiculous and to show them lacking in human qualities. He chose those animals which people hate and ridicule, for instance, he-goat (tars), ewe, mule, donkey and dog. (55)

5. Love Poetry "Ghazal"

There are three terms, in the Arabic language, for the art of poetry which expresses the ^{idea} ~~word~~ 'love', and what it entails. These three terms are "Ghazal, Nasīb and Tashbīb. It is really difficult to distinguish in meaning between these three terms, because they often appear rather similar. Some Arab critics said so, maintaining that they have the

-
- {53} Ibid I21.
 {54} Ibid I56.
 {55} Ibid II9, II9B, I92, I92B.

same sense and feelings, (56) while others tried to define each term, showing the difference between them. (57)

However, this art is very important in the history of Arabic literature, and it is extremely old. It originated at the very beginning of Arabic poetry, understandably, because it lives, as a lyric art, just as long as men lives. It is the means **by** which a man can express his feelings towards a woman, and he cannot restrain it, just as he cannot dispense with her. Some Arabic men of literature said that "Ghazal" was the first theme of the Arabic "Qaṣīda" (ode) in both importance and history. They also said that for this purpose, most of the Arab poets since the pre-Islamic time, used to begin their odes with "Ghazal" whatever the subject, and they developed "Ghazal" more than praise or other themes. (58) They believed that other themes were invented to assist "Ghazal" in showing the virtues of the poet to his beloved, in order to make her love him the more

At any rate, 'Umāra wrote a good deal of "Ghazal" as did other poets. 'Umāra's available love-poetry consists of four independent short poems and thirty-three preludes at the beginning of his eulogies. Some of 'Umāra's love poetry has undoubtedly been lost particularly the preludes

 (56) Ibn Faṣḥīq, al-'Umḍa V. 2/94, 102.

(57) Quṭāma, Maqā al-shī'r 65.

(58) Ibn Raṣḥīq, al-'Umḍa V. 2/99, 106.

of his eulogies It is very difficult to say whether 'Umāra fell in love or not, or to know how genuine are the feelings he expresses in his love poetry, because 'Umāra kept this side of his life secret. Nobody even knows anything about the women he married.

What is sure is that he was a man of poetic spirit and with a deep appreciation of beauty, he found it easy to write about love. 'Umāra himself says about love

من كان لا يشعده الاضمار والكفا ثم ادعى لذة الدنيا مما صدقنا
في المشقة معنى لطيف ليس يعرفه من الرية الا نزل من عيشنا

"He who has not appreciated (the beauty of) the neck and the eyes, and still claims to have enjoyed life, is not telling the truth. In love, there is an exquisite sense which is known only to those who fall in love" (59)

'Umāra's "Ghazal" is delicate and flowing and yet still precise. These are the requisities of this art, according to Arab critics (60)

اما حدر العى الصدودا ودرلمى لا يبيع الورودا
ويصفن صفاح تسمى العيون وسم رطاح تسمى القودا
و دركان الطير والنور اعين المتكلم صاه العقودا
ورسل ادا ارتختت الصور وكرنا الهوى دسينا زودا (61)

The second feature of 'Umāra's "Ghazal" is that its spirit is pure and honourable, this is natural in the "Ghazal", of a jurist, because it should be distinguished by the conservation befitting a scholar (62) The following verse

(59) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. II9B.
(60) Ibn Roshīq, al-'Umāra V. 2/93
(61) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 50B.
(62) Kānūn Adab al-Fuqahā (Majallat al-'ajma' al-'Ilmi
Damascus V.41/245, April 66

will prove this

سبح العفاف عليه ثوب صيانه هم الكيانه عند ما لا يرتقى

"Chastity wove a robe of protection for it (love), so that dishonesty never reached her." (63)

Umāra described his Ghazal thus

فمره العفاف لا يربى لقاله مع الاله مائة لا اتم دعا

"Its words are nonoutrably purified and neither wickedness nor snare, when with gentleness (Dumāthā), make the writer of Ghazal less honourable" (64)

This chastity might make Umāra satisfied with the phantom (Khayāl) of his beloved

يا هذه ذلك الامر المطاع صلي وادى لمرعه العاف ان طاقا

"O this girl, the obeyed order is yours, stay close (to) and do not close the way of the phantom, if it strikes (your mind)." (65)

Many examples were given of this phantom and shadow by Umāra (66)

Umāra shows us that he is faithful in his love and loyal to his beloved

أصا ساكم تحملون وكم سحر مداد واد لا يفقه لسخ
رصد مكر من الطبيعة منكم رما داركم الا (القطيعة) والكرم

{63} Umāra, Dīwān Fev. 125B.

{64} Ibid 102B. Other examples 33, 88, 125B ..etc.

{65} Ibid 120

{66} Ibid 4, 33, 110, 126B . etc.

"O my beloved, how miserly (in love) you are, and how generous I am in giving my love, nothing will ever change it.

Your repudiation is not surprising because your homes are but "al-Qaṭī'a" (repudiation) and al-Karḥ". You met my activity in love, with frigidity I have secured the "ropes of loving", so please do not make it loose." (67)

He said in another poem

سَدَلْتُمْ عِدَّ السَّوِيَّ وَسَلَوْتُمْ
وَقَلْبِي لَا يَسْلُو فِي سَبْتِي

"You change and forget, when you are far away, while my heart never forgets and cannot be changed." (68)

Sometimes he explains himself by making his conscience responsible for his loyalty

سَلِي حُلُوَاتِي عَنْ صَبْرِي الْمَبِينِ
سَوَالِكِ دَعْرُوفِ الْهَوَى سَبْتِي

"Ask my solitude, did my conscience not keep your love? While love is known to be ungrateful." (69)

Umara usually seemed to be sad in his "Ghazal", and unfortunate in his love. He expressed his grief describing the tears flowing down his cheeks as blood, not as what the eyelids are used to

سَعَى عَلَى سَوْحِ الْحَامِرِ أَرْضاً
فِي الدَّمِ لَمَّا اعْتَادَ حَسَى الْحَمْرَ
(70)

And as his tears betrayed him, so they announced his secret

-
- (67) Ibid 37.
 (68) Ibid 151
 (69) Ibid 37.
 (70) Ibid 88.

عذرت موقوفه المومع حادد سري اسيراً فإيد الاعلان (71)

But even so 'Umāra still remained faithful in his love

وعزير (سعي مشاهد لك ابي / نالت عهدي في عذار (72)

His sadness in love might be because of 'Umāra's enemies, who are mentioned many times in his "Ghazal". (73) He used to complain about time (Zemān), era, (Dahr) and days which hurt him because time is usually the enemy of good people and of lovers. (74)

'Umāra followed the example of previous Arab poets mentioning the Ḥijāz and Najd as the original home of love, (75) and he mentioned some of the famous places and cities there, such as Mīnā, al-ahraf, Sal', Zarūd.

Another artistic feature can be seen in 'Umāra's Ghazal, it is the care he takes in the description of beauty. According to the meaning of the term "Tasnbīb", taken from the verb "Shanba" (76), 'Umāra described, in detail, the

(71) Ibid 181b.

(72) Ibid 96B.

(73) Ibid 37, 78B, 153B, 181B ..

(74) Ibid 92B, 96, 124, 150B, 154, 169...etc.

(75) Al-Tāshir, al-Shi'r...al-Saljuqi V 2/98.

(76) Ibn 'Ashiq, al-'Umra V. 2/102.

physical attractions of his loved one. He portrayed the uprightness of her body "Qāmā", likening it to the straight and soft branch of certain trees, such as, Bān, or those which grow on "Naqā" hill

أحب القادالان مادام فيها تشابه ذات اللحن والملايح

"I loved "al-Naqā" and "al-Bān", as long as there was similarity between them and (the girl) with work lips." (77)

ويا حادي الان ملك في النفا تشابه ملا ما يضم ويحصر

"How great this similarity was between you and both "al-Bān" and "al-Naqā", some of which are embraced and some pressed." (78)

There are many examples of this in his Dīwān. 'Umāra, occasionally, paints a vivid picture

بت حيث الفتى شهباً دوماً وعديراً وقامتني قول (79)

He says that he found himself in a beautiful garden, full of branches blown by the East wind. He likened her face to the moon gleaming in the darkness, its brightness brighter than the morning

هي الدررل من غرة الدرالع وعتران من الصبح اصبح (80)

She is the moon, full moon or crescent, (81) but sometimes he

(77) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 35B, 36B.

(78) Ibid 88

(79) Ibid 36B, 47, 59, 92B, 126E, 143B, 153B .

(80) Ibid 36B.

(81) Ibid Pet. 78B, 98B, 100E, 126. .

likens her to the sun, stars or the various kinds of flowers, roses, daisies, and carnations. (82)

'Umāra preferred dark hair, so he used to describe his beloved's hair as black as coal, darkness and night, against the brightness of her forehead

وصي العدا لمن ابيت وشعره ليلي وهو حبيبه مصاصي (83)

'Umāra said that he loved the black nights for the black locks flowing from her head.

تعوس العبيد سود دانت من أحلامها عوى الليالي سودا (84)

He knew well how to describe eyes

والكدي الحبل لا اواصر يعين حكيم السر في القادر
 كمر حدر املا ادا ما اربك على العلوب أسهم السواطر
 هليس حرم عندما حمة وليس صدر ورا با تر
 وادماً لامن اسهم قبيل هو اصعب العوائس العوائس (85)

"The eyes are dark and full of charms. They fire their arrows to the hearts of the lovers or to the hearts of the lions, because the eye-brows look like bows, dangerous, although they are also weak, sick and sleepy." (85)

He described the neck, white, long and slim, saying that it looks like the neck of a deer

كان اللسان العنبر يمكن حيداً ومقلنا في حين ترسو وسع (87)

-
- (82) Ibid Pet. 35B, 58B, 67B, 147...
 (83) Ibid 37, 58B, 95B, 124.
 (84) Ibid 59.
 (85) Ibid 92B.
 (86) Ibid 36B, 47, 58B, 78B, 83, 92B, 101B.
 (87) Ibid 36B.

He described the saliva as sweet, delicious and cool. It is, for him, honey and wine.⁽⁸⁸⁾

He mentioned the mouth with its red lips, and teeth like pearls or hail stones. 'Umāra was obviously fond of describing the physical beauty of his beloved, as were other poets, but he also tried to portray her inner self and beauty. He described the way she talked.

فتنت بالخطأ ولعظاً محاطري وسقي سكر اللعذ والخط -سكر

"I was so captivated by her eyes and words, that my heart and my ear were bewitched by their charm."⁽⁸⁹⁾

He mentioned her perfume and her fragrance which pervaded the air

(90) يبعث من حيث الصبا لانسيم عطر

He sometimes could not distinguish her perfume from the sweet scent of "Arār"

انسيم عرفك ام نسيم عمار وسقيم طرغك ام صبيح عرار (91)

And he likened it to ambergris

ما اطيب الريح تهادي وقد عدت من زعفران بعض العبر الصفا (92)

It is interesting to end by showing 'Umāra's own ideas about his love-poetry. He himself explained what he thought

 (88) Ibid 58B, 143, 147.
 (89) Ibid Pet. 88.
 (90) Ibid Pet. 87B.
 (91) Ibid Pet. 107B.
 (92) Ibid Pet. 120.

of his "Ghazal" saying

رسمت من عذبي در قة لطفه ماشئت من طرب ومن تعريد
وشهدت لي سحر الة ومهدية تأتي مطع الماء والكورد

"You have heard from my "Ghazal" and its delicate words,
all you want of delight and melody.
Its fluency and vigour give its texture both soft
water and hard rock." (93)

This is one conception, the other is

هذا هو العزل المسوح من كلم في العقل من صهبها رواوتار
تعزل ظالمات الازرار طيباً وصلت عن الازرار

"This is the poetry of love which is woven from words
which affect the mind like wine and the strings of music
Reading it frequently unties the ropes, letting out
the fragrance, and revealing the rock." (94)

6 Ascetic Poetry (Zuhdiyyāt)

It is to be expected of a man like 'Umāra that he should write every kind of religious poetry, because he was a pious jurist. Throughout his life, when he was faced with any problems, he resorted to God, then he often wrote poetry to express his faith. Some of this poetry might have been lost because no more than nine short poems (Dīḡa) of this theme are available, consisting of less than 50 verses.

'Umāra's ascetic poetry is not of the sort which "breathes a spirit of profound melancholy and hopeless pessimism," or shows "the frailty and misery of man," as

(95) Ibid. Fet. 55

(94) Ibid. Fet. 102B.

Abū al-ʿAtāhiya's did, (95) but it gives meditations of a faithful spirit, and a pious heart which believes in the omnipotence of God. So ʿUmāra turned to God, appealing for help. He said in one of his poems

مارب صبي لنا من امرنا شداً واحل صعوبتك من احسن لنا موداً
 ولا تكلنا الى تدبير العباد بالفسق فمخبر عن اصلاحنا حسداً
 اب الكريم وقد صهرت من ابلي الى اياميك وجهك شهداً ديداً
 ولا حمار ثواب انت تعلمه فاحصل ثوابي دوام استر لي اهداً

"O Lord, grant us right guidance in our affairs, and let your most gracious help be our succour. Do not entrust us with the management of our own selves. For we are powerless to reform what is corrupt. You are munificent, and hoping to be one day in your presence, I have made ready my supplicant face and hands. The rewards of hope are known to you. let my reward be the continuation of your protection and honour."(96)

ʿUmāra was distressed when doctors gave him no hope of his son's recovery and as a result he composed these verses

اقول لراسي وقد قال الطيب له: لم يبق الا طار الى لوق التاربي
 رحمت الله صرحوا ارا اعترفت رساوس الأوس من طبي وافكاربي
 لا ارجع الى الرحمن مستهدلاً بد الصرامة في عهد واسرار
 مبراً من دعائي كل ما حمة بعيدا من علهج واستار
 سرهتاً عنك بي ان تعود بها مما تعرب على غير اصحابي
 سري الى الله من دعبي ومن عرجي منه القيص من ماء ومنه مار
 فان يسه لا مالي عدلك ما دعوت اولاد فقد املت اهداري

"I said to my son, when the doctor said to him 'There is nothing left except the hope of God our creator.' Even if I doubted the powers of the doctors, God's power would never be in doubt. I could have raised my hand imploring "al-Rahman" (the beneficent) praying both openly and secretly. I would have prepared everyone of my prayers, so that they would immediately intrude on curtains and covers (or the holy place).

(95) Nicholson *Literary History of the Arabs* 298.

(96) ʿUmāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 58B.

I did not pray by my tongue alone, but my prayers were purified by my conscience.
 My prayers will be carried to God with tears and ardour, by water and fire.
 So if you bestow my hopes for my son upon him, it will be as I desired, and if not, I would find solace in my efforts." (97)

Sometimes 'Umāra mentions the prophets such as Ayyūb (Job) and Ya'qūb (Jacob), describing their circumstances

يا كاسف المراد ماداه الوى وما مع التسل ارمحا ده ليعوف (98)

'Umāra confessed in his poetry that he committed misdeeds, so that he could ask God to forgive him, because he believed in one God, while others were disbelievers and polytheists.

يا جامع التسل المسدد وسدد الراى المسدد
 استر على عمد ادا ما اشرك الكفار وحد
 فعل القبيح نعداً فاعترف لعد (99)

It seems that 'Umāra wrote this poetry, not to be read at courts, but for himself, to express his difficulties to God, to pray for mercy and help. He found, in this way, relief from his grief even when he could not find any solution. He did, however, write similar poetry to some of his friends encouraging them to continue their religious duties. Once he wrote these verses to one of his friends who used to pray the Friday prayer in the mosque with the

 (97) Ibid IO9B-II0
 (98) Ibid 28
 (99) Ibid 43.

people

عبيك للمحبة محسوب والحرمة لك مكتوب
 ما كانت المحبة من لم يفت بحرمة من الله مطلوب
 يا عبيك فضلاً ان كنت اتقى الله دون الناس مسوب

"Your efforts (to pray) on Friday are observed and there will be rewards.

Friday (prayer) did not leave those who were determined in (performing duties of) God

It is enough for you, as an honour, that the title of piety of God has been acquired by you amongst people " (100)

'Umāra began some of his odes with ascetic-poetry such as the poem which he wrote to his friend al-Zahīr Murtafī, giving the good news of his release from prison

من استعان بغير الله لم يصب ومن تضرع بالرحمن لم يصب

"He who asked aid from others, apart from God, found no help, and he who was strongly established with God, was not despised." (101)

After this he gave advice about one's conscience then he said that one should mediate through ḥammad the prophet, his daughter, her husband and her two sons to God

سُبْحانَ رسولِ الله، وَابنته، وعليلَ الحبيبة الطهر والحسن

This part of 'Umāra's poetry is distinguished by its simplicity, fluency and quality of language, and because it is written naturally, by the depth of the poet's soul.

(100) Ibid 28.

(101) Ibid 183.

يارب ليس صافي وطرف عقد ونا قبي
 واستر علي فاني امان حنتك حار قبي
 دامن سالف مثل صدر بالفراسق
 وقد عرفت الي من اقام مع طابق (102)

7. Descriptive Poetry (wasf).

Descriptive poetry (Wasf) is an important theme in Arabic poetry. It is as old as Arabic poetry itself. Therefore, some of the Arab critics said that 'wasf' is the origin of most themes in Arabic poetry. Most Arab poets, since the Jahilyya, described what was around them, nature, the desert, animals, cities and houses. In the Mu'allaqāt (The Suspended Odes) there are many good examples of this. The poets gradually increased the use of description in their poetry until it became very important in the fourth century when Ḥamad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣunawbarī lived, (died 334/946) especially in Andalus where there were many poets who devoted themselves to description only, the best of whom was Ibrahim ibn Khafāja (died 535/1139). They loved nature and adorned it, so that their poems became like ^{songs.} ~~prayers~~.

ʿUmāra was surrounded by the beauty of nature and he tried to express the feelings it aroused in him in his poetry. He travelled through many countries, the Yaman, Hijaz, Najd and Egypt, and saw Nature in all its forms. He

used to ride on a camel or on horse-back, so that he could take in his surroundings. All this helped 'Umāra to write this sort of poetry, regrettably, there are only a few descriptive poems in his available poetry

The most important one is his poem written to describe the house of his friend Rukn el-Islām. 'Umāra began it,

إِذَا دَارَ دَارَ عَلَيْكَ مَعْدِ الْمَشْرِقِ وَمِنْ عَمَلِكَ لَأَلْهَرِ الْكَوْثَرِ

"O house, fortune of Juniter surrounded you, and the fresh pure water of the river "Kawther" (103) ran over you. You have gained all the beauty which has never been spread to the painter and the writer " (104)

After he described the house and its coloured marble

وَلَعْدَ كَيْتٍ مِنَ الطَّامِعِ نَدَى سَوْتٍ وَكَانَ مِنْ مَقَى الْمَرْمَرِ
كَانَ حَسْبَ يَأْمُرِهِ سَوَادُهُ لَيْلٌ بِسَمِّهِ مِنْ جَنَابِ مَعْرِ
"You have covered it with integuments (Ghalā'il) of marble, coverd from a pure alabaster, As if the beauty of its whiteness and blackness resembled an evening smiling with the light of morning."

'Umāra likened these two colours to black veils and necklaces made of ambergris and camphor

كَمَرَايَسِ الْكِرَاتِ أَوْ كَقَدْرِ نُدَى كَأَمْوَرٍ مِنْ مَعْرِجِ الْمَرْمَرِ

He portrayed, after this, a fountain which he likened to an eye, and displayed the beauty of the green fawn which surrounded it, while the water of the fountain which gushed

(103) See the Koran CVIII (al-Kauther)
(104) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 101B

forth, was returning like rain

وارت محاسن على سقية تملأ فتكبي نقلة من محجر
وعلى هواضها ساط صيلة قد وردوه باليات الأحر

Umāra did not forget to mention the abstract beauty of this house and its importance, which it gained for the honour of its owner. He likened it to the praise of the owner whose forehead was shining

واركتل العجم شرب قد دنا كحم من شاس دو الكس الارهر

This poem (of 8 verses) is not long, and it is probably not complete since we know that there are three verses in the same rhyme and metre in the description of the fountain which might well be part of this poem

كطبت محاربا ما ظهر عيظله . ما في حيا من حياء مظهر
وكأن قدور الماء من سعالها والعيه تنظر منه العين مظهر
فصب من اللور انهم مرعيا ما اتسبب اللؤلؤ المتهدر

"Its flow was suppressed, and its rage revealed its hidden secrets, and as the water pours from its spring the eye sees, in it, a better view
Bars of crystal ripening upon its branches like moistened pearls." (105)

The second poem is the long one (of 70 verses) which Umāra wrote in praise of Badr ibn Ruzāik, in which he combined many subjects. He began praising his friend on the building of a new house. From his praise he passed smoothly into another subject - the description of the fire which burned down a house of Badr in the ^{canal} ~~Gulf~~ "al-Khālīj",

(105) Ibid 215. (copy)

giving the reason for this incident as the fire of hospitality,
 "Nār al-Qirā," which found his house the highest place, so it
 as kindled there

لم تحترق دار الخليج وإنما شئت لي سرى في دار القري
 طلعت يفاع الارض دون وهابها هتوقدت بي رأس سائمة الدر (IO6)

From this Umāra began to describe the new house of Badr

عقل داراً أنتدرا همة بعد العير ما مر حاسيرا

This description occupied 22 verses, during which Umāra
 could change his subject, reverting to the praise of his
 friend in order to ask him, later, to give Umāra a house,
 because he wanted a large house near Badr's and if this
 could be, it would be worth his right. At that time Umāra
 lived in a rented house

حتى منى الماني حوارك التري داراً ودورك للإمام ملاكري
 دامن في القرب منك فيمي فالقرب منك سور عيسى يشري

Umāra went to great lengths to describe the house, its
 beauty and how it was built,

انشأت فيا للعيون مدانعا دقت فاذهل حيل من الرما
 هم الرحام سيرا وسرها وسمما ومدرها وصدرا
 والباع فيه الآسوس كأنه ارض من الكافور رشت عسرا

He described the effects the beauty of the house had upon him
 and let his imagination assist him in the vivid portrayal.

Arab critics have rated this description as the best in
 Arab poetry. (IO7)

(IO6) Ibid 77.

(IO7) Qudāma, Magd 62.

The description 'Umāra gives is so vivid that the reader can easily visualize the house in all its detail. 'Umāra also took great trouble to describe the gardens in such a way that the full beauty of the flowers, birds and animals came alive. 'Umāra's description of a giraffe is an outstanding example of his ability

فيل حدائقه لم تحدها ديمة الأبدان كنت على وجه التري
 لم يبد على الرده الأمرراً والسجل الرمان الأشمرا
 والطير عدد تغف على العماريا وثما صالم تستطع ان تغرا
 ولا من الحيوان كل مشهر ليس الوجع العقول مشهرا
 لا بعد الأعمار به مروحاً ليشاً طوطياً موصرة العمار
 دلا اراحات كأن رقا في الطول الوية تؤم العمار
 نوبية المشاترك من الأوقا ومن برل الأمان مشهرا (IO8)
 حلت على الأتقاء من العماريا صالاً للتيه تمشي القهوق

The third one of 'Umāra's descriptive poems is included in his eulogy to al-Ḥāṣir ibn al-Ḥāliq. It was a long poem (of 51 verses), most of it in praise of al-Ḥāṣir. 'Umāra took 17 verses to describe al-Ḥāṣir's house. He started by calling it "Dār al-Ḥarūr" (lasting abode), likening it to an orb, the sun of his al-Ḥāṣir, or a paradise, the sea of which was al-Ḥāṣir

دار عدت ما شمر ونماها ملكاً ولكن ليس بالدوار
 وكانها هي حمة العيترا يا حرمها عنسة الأبار

'Umāra portrayed the full beauty of the house and did not forget to refer to the influence of al-Ḥāṣir in its beauty.

واسد ما من افراجل بالدي لم تقزعه خواطر الافكار
 تشرهت الطماننا في صلح ان الكدائنه زينة الأبار

"Your suggestion provided it (the house) with (ideas) of minds that thoughts could not suggest." (I09)

'Umāra, then, was adept at describing houses and his powers of observation were such that he could touch upon hidden details and give life and colour to the whole picture

يتأس الحيوان من مروجها فوعورت البيت بدات لغار
 طير على الأشجار إلا أنها ليست موددة على الأشجار
 وملاة أشجارها وحملوا ربا أبدأ على شيء من الأشجار
 وقفوا على متعلقين تعلقني يد مام عدلك من دقوق الجاربي (I10)

This was probably the influence of the Fatimid literature on 'Umāra, because the Fatimids established buildings and gardens and preserved parks. (I11) The best example of 'Umāra's description of a garden was when he portrayed the whole scene alive and gave the trees human qualities

مت حيث التقى شاهدت يوماً وعديراً رأيتني قسول
 عيران القردوم الك ادري قبل هذا من اي شيء تميل
 وعسوں الكائنه المحر حار بيمن العيان والتميل
 محرم من اوححة العمر وحك نس حافت السيم عليل
 فانتارت بعد الكون هرا كالأردا منه تمثال وشول
 قارا العدمال بعد المستدال فتيفان السيم عدول

"Wherever I looked I was surrounded by perklang (Rawḍe) and a spring while a zephyr confronted me.
 But I never knew before this, by the branches bow.
 The green branches of gardens are busy embracing
 and kissing each other,
 And the breath of a gentle breeze moved in it from the
 spirit of dawn.
 Stirring the branches, after the calm, shaking them
 by north wind and wine

(I09) Ibid 73B.

(I10) Ibid 73B.

(I11) Husain, Fī al-Adab al-Fātimīyya I26-I27.

And the stature bowed from being upright, be sure that
the breeze is censor." (II2)

When 'Umāra went to Egypt, he visited the pyramids, and
rote three stanzas in description and praise of two of them

حليل ما أتت السماء بيته تماثل في اتقارها هربي مصر
بناء يحاف الدهر منه دلل ما على طاهر الدنيا يحاف من الدهر
تمه طرقي في مدبح بناؤها ولم يتروى من المارد إلا مكربى

"O my two friends, there is no building under the sun
which resembles, in its perfection, the pyramids
of Egypt.

(They are) a building of which the era is afraid,
while everything on earth is afraid of the era.

My eye enjoyed its fine construction, but my mind
did not enjoy the understanding of its meaning." (II3)

'Umāra who travelled through the desert many times, aware
of its silence and solitude, its monotony and simplicity, and
understanding its joy and sadness, gave fine descriptions of
it, such as these verses in his eulogy to 'aro al-Ṣāliḥī

دارم ما يدى العيسى كل قسرة تصل من الحظا القاسر (II4)

He started this poem advising people to take chances because
fortune favours those who do so. Then he explained this
idea, by leaving home, travelling on a camel which can go
through any wilderness, so that the eyes of travellers lose
their way. This is a real description of the desert

Then 'Umāra exaggerated, saying

مهما لا يسرن الهم حيتة حيل ولا طيف الخيال الراز
يعدو العان للحظام تاعاً ولا يدعى من هم طامر

(II2) 'Umāra, *Djān Pet.* 1513

(II3) *Ibid* IIIB.

(II4) *Ibid* 92.

"(It is) silent and vague, no air flows through it, nor the shade of the visiting phantom, through fear. The reins follow the halter, and the padded foot is redeemed by a horse's hoof."

Later 'Umāra showed how he was influenced by the desert, he used strange words (alfāz gho-ība)

ان لم تقر بالانبات ستدغم ولا سلسل حشاه الك ر ر
 ولا كرم من من ماع حصص يعص ويل الارض با كرا كرا

In chivalry poetry (Hamāsa) 'Umāra displayed many aspects of battles and fighting. His ode, which was written in praise of Faris al-Muḥlimīn, includes a notable image which is possibly the best example of its kind in descriptive poetry

وصحتم بدره رريك معلماً
 كأن اشتعال الرقبة في ليل لفق
 كأن ديف الرق في صساء
 وارسلت مثل السور كوا سراً
 صدقتهم مثل مجرد صلا دم
 طلعت ديمهم حدة ديمته
 رعد مع الاطال الا تروا قم
 محبس كوج الاحصر المتلا حتم
 كواك في قطع من الليل حاهم
 رددت سرت في عارض متر التسم
 فوق حماماً حورس الحمام
 صدعتهم صدح الحيا د السلام
 وهم به مردم حبان دمارم (II15)
 سال تكلم من الدول ساجم

'Umāra made every effort to make his pictures live, he used colours, sounds, movements and feelings. He tried always to choose 'le mot juste' both in meaning and sound. al-ḥutalā'im, naq', salāim, karr, fur, al-ḥān and ṣar'ē. He tried to bring warriors (in battle) into the mind of the reader, and to show the warriors' bravery, he mentioned strong birds like eagles, following weak ones like Joves

Beside all these poems, plenty of description can be found in his other poems, 'Umāra was fond of horses and often described them in their actions

بعثت لفرس سواد الأوفى عفوهُ وتعدو الأوجع من عله حرسى

"You have sent a steed whose normal pace is faster than the twinkling of an eye." (II6)

Many examples are to be seen in the Dīwān.

8 Other themes.

These were not the only themes in which 'Umāra wrote, he also wrote poetry of complaint (Shahād), ^{reproach} blame ('Itāb) maxims (Ḥikm) and other themes.

The principal theme among these is blame ('Itāb). He wrote this poetry to his friends if they had not visited him for a long time or for breaking promises to him

اس لي عمر بارك كيف طلوا او ما كان ام صارت طلوا
وعمرأ ما ويا فيهون عتبي على الامران ام صارت طلوا

"Tell me about your day, how was it?
Was it raining or just grizzling?
And did you find a pure wine, in order that
my blaming (ʿatb), for your having forsaken
me could be easy, or did you find an
intimate friend?" (II7)

'Umāra wrote a few poems on this subject to al-Qādī al-Fūḍil, explaining his unfortunate circumstance, asking for help,

(II6) Ibid IO7B.

See this thesis p. 90.

(II7) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 150.

appealing to him that he (ʿUmāra) should not be abused while his friend (al-Fāḍil) is one of the responsible men in the new regime, but it was all useless.

The available poetry in this theme is eight short poems, consisting of about 50 verses. This poetry could, sometimes, be confused with "l^{kh}wāniyyāt" or with "Complaining" poetry, with which it may be combined in the same poem.

ʿUmāra wrote many poems complaining to his friends of the time and regime in which he lived, because he was neglected and cast out in spite of his talent. He was paid no salary, so he was often in need of money. He suffered from poverty and debt.

The available poems in this art are about 8, most of them were written during the Ayyūbids' reign. ʿUmāra wrote to al-Ḥādī al-Fāḍil

الماحيك والهم الريب مقيم واربعوك والسر العجيج مقيم
 قت رافة الدنيا هو الاربعاظ علي ولا عبد الرحيم رحيم
 عفا الله عن آرائه كل حرة كلام الذي يلى علي كلوم
 واسمه في تطع اروه بعينه وصلت اليه والرحان ذميم
 الامل له عطف علي فابي عقبا الى ما اعتدت منه عديم

"I confide in you, while stranger worries are within me, and I call you, while true patience is sick. The mercy of the world has dried up, fate has no sympathy for me, neither is Abdul Ḥādim compassionate

May God forgive him for his views, al says, when the words of my enemies are like wounds in my body.

May God excuse him for having cut my means of living, which I attained through his goodness, while Time was worthy of blame.

Could he ever look with favour upon me? For, verily,
I am in need, and I miss his support. Please grant
me a charm to protect me from the viper of worry
for you are safe from the night of one who
is on the verge of ruin " (118)

Some of these poems were written before this time.
He complained of certain friends who did him wrong

(119) ابى عميت لمر الذي من لفر حظ المدح اليهم من عطايا ه

'Umāra's available Dīwān contains some verses in
maxims (Ḥikem). He explained his experience in matters of
life here, as well as his many lines which are included in
his eulogies and elegies (120)

'Umāra wrote about himself, his life and death, his
poetry, wondering what would become of everything when he
died, what people would say about him

ابها القاري ادا انت لطنى ولستري
ان ان احسد فاشكر او وقع ذمى وشكرى
واطلع ذركى ادا مترك على سخطك ذركى
ادفعل ما شئت ابى منك مشغول فركى

"O reader of my verses and prose, when I die, if I
did well, thank me, and if not, leave dispraising
and thanking me.
If talk of me came to your ears, cast it out,
Or say what you wish, because I could be protected
from you in my grave " (121)

He said about his books

ليت شعري بعد موتي من ترى يكلم دارى؟
وكذا باليب شعري من لمدى الكتب قاري
فلقد انفتت فيها عمر ليلى ولها ناري

(118) Ibid 176.

(119) Ibid 194B.

(120) Ibid 12, 20, 21, 273, 36, 73...etc

(121) Ibid 109B

"would that I know, after my death, who will live
in my house?
And would that I know who is going to read
these books?" (I22)

'Umāra wrote on other subjects such as congratulating his
friends at every opportunity, on the birth of a new child,
on a wedding, on his return from journeys or on a new job.

Finally 'Umāra wrote some interesting short poems on
amusing topics. The first one is about a cruel porter
belonging to one of his friends, who did not allow him
to enter the house, often keeping him waiting

يا من ادل سبط الدر من مازا ومد سفا الى العليا من حاري
اب على الباب السا باله ادب وعشرة يلتقي بالشر من رارا
دعنا حاليا باسم الكلوس ولا من علينا اذ احنا انكارا
علي ثلاثة ايام اعود من الدهلير السط عبد القى الحدارا

"O you who humiliated, in having to make apology,
one who did wrong, and gave help to those who
contended with you, thus achieving great things.
Appointed at the door a man of good manners and
suitable disposition so that your visitors may
be satisfied.

(Provide) in the name of sitting, a council hall
free from restraint, one of which, when we come
to it, we will approve.

For three days I have been turned away from the
entrance, trying to find excuses within my self.
Entrances are looked upon with awe and esteem by
those who suffer an injustice, but not by
those who have dignity

Ask Ibn 'Arif and al-Raḥīd for information, you
will find they know all there is to know
about me " (I23)

والله دالير اناب اعظم من
دا سكر انه عجب دالير من
له بها ما عني واصارا

Another interesting short poem was written by 'Umāra,

(I22) Ibid I09B.

(I23) Ibid I03B.

When Fāris al-Muslimīn's horse beat his brother's (al-Ṣāliḥ) horse in a race. People were surprised about it, so 'Umāra gave this excuse

سأحكم في امر الساق فأكومة ترهن من جعل الخطاب يتعلق
 رأيت الخوادر الفارسي وقراتي امام الخوادر السالحي يتعلق
 فقلت لعموم الخوادر سابقاً مما هو الاحاب ر تطرق
 صوادان كل منهما في زمانه ما علموه مولاه عدا يتعلق

"I shall give judgement in this race which demonstrates and pronounces the last word.
 I saw the steed of Fāris when it came before the steed of al-Ṣāliḥ, as it was circling.
 And so I said to people Do not think it is first, since it is but a chamberlain and eouerry.
 They are two steeds, both of them, in competition, adorning the characteristics of the master " (I24)

CHAPTER 3

His poetical technique

I. His ideas.

‘Umāra was an educated man, and his sense of culture helped him greatly to express his ideas in his poetry, and he did his utmost to put these ideas into the perfect forms. Arab critics maintained that the meaning is the spirit of the speech, while the words are the body.⁽¹⁾ Qudāma ibn Ja‘far considered the meaning of the poetry one of the four essential elements.⁽²⁾ ‘Umāra, therefore, gave great importance to meaning, and the quality of his poetry often lies in the depth of his thinking, despite the fact that there was an increase in shallow meanings and ideas in the Arabic poetry of his time.⁽³⁾ ‘Umāra constantly sought to express his ideas lucidly, and most of his poetry was understood by those who read it, he did not follow the way of some Arabic poets, such as Abū Tammām and al-Mutanabbī^a, who wrote poetry as "a perverse pleasure in challenging their

(1) Al-‘Askarī, Ṣinā‘atayn 80.

(2) Qudāma, Naqd al-Shi‘r 8.

(3) Daif, al-Fann Fī al-Shi‘r 286.

readers' wit and erudition." (4) Neither did 'Umāra follow those poets who filled their poetry with philosophy. 'Umāra avoided this, following al-Buhturī (died 284/898) and his school in keeping "'Amūd al-Shi'r". Even so, one can find the occasional touch of philosophy in some of 'Umāra's poetry. He said in praise of Ruzzīk ibn al-Ṣāliḥ

(5) مرانته الملك احصام الولد لا الروح اللطيف دانت السمع والسمع

And there is little need to say that "al-Rūḥ al-Laṭīf" is a philosophical idea. When 'Umāra described souls he likened them to pigeons

(6) وارسلط مثل السور تواسراً تسوقه عاماً محوسر الحمام

And he said the same about brains

() كأن عقول الكوسر حمام تحوم على احوالها وتلوه

He might have taken this from the Islamic philosopher, Abū 'Alī ibn Sīnā, (died 428/1037), who was the first poet to liken the soul to the pigeon

(7) صلت اليك من المحل الراجع ورجاء دات تدلل وتمسح

There were many verses which seem to have been

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- (4) Gibb, Arabic Literature 12.
 (5) 'Umāra, Diwan Pet. 85.
 (6) Ibid 160b.
 (7) Ibid 12.
 (7) Al-Minawī Sharḥ Qaṣīdat al-Nafs 30.

influenced by the philosophy of the Greek philosopher Pythagoras, who considered numbers to be the essential element in life. 'Umāra mentioned this while praising al-ʿĀdīd

عن واحد وهو السبي تفرعوا وكذا الالوف تفرعت عن واحد (8)

He advised Fāris al-Muslimīn

لا تستقل بعدو واحد فاللومى على آحاده (9)

And he said the same thing to Saif al-Dīn ibn Ayyūb

أنتاه عدوك شجعاً واحداً فكذلك الواحد أصل العدد (10)

It must be noted that 'Umāra was influenced by his profession, Jurisprudence, and he makes frequent use of it in his poetry

رأى لأمره يرد مرده الرثم لعل لا وحساق (11)
ولرب ما مضى أراما استعدت كسفت بالرحمان من اعلم قوا

He often mentions sinners, their faults, their excuses and punishments, and how they can be saved from their sins

واصحت حتى بالحور كرامة وينفي ثناء الأئمة تراش (٠)

Even the nights were described by 'Umāra as sin makers.

(8) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 39.

(9) Ibid 47.

(10) Ibid 54.

(11) Ibid. 128b.

(٠) Ibid 22.

so they too, needed forgiveness

(12) عرفت به رب الليالي الي صلت در سما يستوجب العفو منه

Occasionally he likes to give a "Fatwā" on some actions in which it is very difficult for any Jurist to give a "Fatwā", for example, the notion of asking people to worship a man for his good deeds and character

(13) اما العر لوطا ران تعد الكرام لا وقتيت ان تسدا

When he spoke about narration, he employed terms of the Tradition (Ḥadīth) of Muḥammad, such as "ḥaddatha, rawā and isnād" using the idea of making sure of the facts which are given

(14) بيت اذا حدثت عن سبهم لم يرد الاسناد عن ارساله

And it is easy to understand the ideas in this

(15) حسمت به وما الحى الذي رفع التواتر فيه بالمدود

There is no need to prove that most of his poetry in Egypt is full of shi'ite ideas and Ismā'ili thoughts. (16)

He praised the Caliph al-ʿAḍid

(17) انا رالك ومارك واما اعلانا لله من قبله
 حسد هو ارحا عليك عسوبا ان العيون على حلل لك تحسد

(12) ʿUmāra, Diwān Pet. 20b.

(13) Ibid 49b.

(14) Ibid 151.

(15) Ibid 56.

(16) Ibid 137, 143, 155, 168, 170, 181b.... etc.

(17) Ibid 39b.

and he said, in praise of the Caliph al-Fā'iz

(18) تَلَكَّتْ قُلُوبَ السَّلْمِيِّينَ سَعْدَةٌ اِدَّتْ لِعَقْدِهِنَ وَرَبُّنَا مَرْمَمٌ
 دَاوَيْتَ مِيرَابَ السَّيِّئَاتِ بِابٍ وَجَدَ نَهْيَ عَلِيٍّ رَمْلًا يَنْصَحُكُمْ
 لَكَ الْكُفَى يَبْدُو دُونَ كُلِّ مَسَارِعٍ وَلَوْ اِهْ اِلَ السَّانِ سَلَامٌ

'Umāra often forms his ideas from everyday life, and in his poetry they assume a new importance. Most Arab writers agreed that life is full of significance, the problem being how to express these ideas in such a way that makes them acceptable to others. (19) 'Umāra praised al-Kāmil, son of Shāwar, describing him as his father's right hand with which he can protect his father whenever any danger appears

(20) اُنْتُ يَمِينِي بِيَدِهِ اِنْ مَنَّ حَظٌّ تَتَوَقَّاهُ سَائِرُ الْعَصَاءِ

In praise of al-'Adil, he said this

حَرَلْتُ حَظِّي قَبْلَ عَلِيٍّ هِ وَالْمَاءُ قَدِ اسْتَرَ الطَّلْحُ

"I did not know my luck before I knew him, and water may be covered by green moss." (21)

When 'Umāra commended 'Izz al-Dīn, brother of al-Sāliḥ, as the clouds which are formed from the sea, then rain on the sea

وَكَمْ دَنَاتٍ مِّنْ لِّحِ مَحْرَمَاتِهِ سَرَى دَلِيلًا لِّحَيَّةِ الْبَحْرِ مَطْرًا (22)

(18) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 126b.

(19) Al-'Askarī, Sinā'at 57.
Qudāma, Naqd al-Shi'r 4, 83.

(20) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 4b.

(21) Ibid 19b.

(22) Ibid 76.

Many of his ideas assume a double significance in that one can interpret them in opposite ways, he once said

ولولا دراو السيف للعمد لم يقرب له تحمیل الدر حد ومضرب

"Had it not been for the drawing of the sword from its sheath, it would not be renowned for the sharpness of its blade." (23)

While on the other hand, he said

« كذا السيف حرد او العمد »

"Either the sword is made bare or it remains in its sheath." (24)

He used these ideas repeatedly. (25)

It should be said that this apparent contradiction cannot be one of 'Umāra's faults or deficiencies, because the Arab critics discussed this and made allowance for it. (26) Sometimes 'Umāra exaggerates these facts, giving strange viewpoints which may be unacceptable.

(27) درت عما حمة العمام انما على عوفت عمام كفه و عا نرا
لو سخته بيل الكواكب اصبت رسما و تاكلان راون سما نرا

(23) 'Umāra, Dīwān. Pet. 20b.

(24) Ibid 49.

(25) Ibid 9, 61...

(26) Qudāma, Naqd al-Shi'r 4-6.

(27) 'Umara, Diwan Pet. 4.

The exaggeration is clear, just as it is clear in his praise of Shāwar

(28) ولوقد عبت لآء العرم طمى مر الكواكب حادت امس الشهب

'Umāra wrote on many useful subjects, giving advice and illustrating his wisdom.⁽²⁹⁾ He emphasised maxims and advice about time for he believed that time (Dahr) is man's greatest enemy,⁽³⁰⁾ he warned people, reminding them that they should never trust it. He said in one of his poems

والدهر لا يستيك علو، ما عى الاربعقه بروطامه
(feeding)

"Time does not give you its sweetness, without soon bringing bitterness.." ^(weeding) (31)

'Umāra constantly showed that time was his enemy. He said that if he granted it his favour, he would cover all its deficiencies.

رهبى الى الدهر هل لوسنته عيب الحوارث لم يصب الى الرلال (32)

He might have been right in taking a stand against time, especially when one considers his circumstances and troubles, and what he suffered from both his enemies and

(28) 'Umāra, Dīwān. Pet. 23b.

(29) Ibid. 65, 73, 114, 118, 174...

(30) Ibid 2, 8, 26, 30, 43b, 65, 90, 92b...

(31) Ibid 169.

(32) Ibid 146.

friends, but would 'Umāra have been at such enmity with time, if he had not been persecuted to the extent that he had to leave his country and his home? At any rate, 'Umāra found some opportunities to praise time. He said to one of his friends

لا شكر لله عدى غير واحدة ابي واباك محمودان في بلد

"No thanks to time but for one favour, that is you and I are together in one city." (33)

As he said to Shāwar

حسنت وجه الدر عدى بعدا قد كان في عيني وحرأ شأها

"you adorned the face of time for me after it had been ugly." (34)

It is interesting to note in this sense that

'Umāra himself made a statement of his ideas

ما غرت فيه امرت من معان محرمات المحاسن والبلاد
اولف به اعراد المعاي بالفاظ يؤولها الصراحي
تكرر فيه اسرها فمسي تمسك المنادى والمباري (35)

When his ideas were well-received, he would show the reasons for them without any reservation

(33) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 53.

(34) Ibid 26.

(35) Ibid 46b.

نا عذرا ولا اي وقد علفت يدي ملكاً مجيداً ان آكون محبداً (36)

'Umāra was gifted in imagination which he developed with his experiences, studies and travel. There is no doubt that his travels through the deserts with their wide horizons, serenity and scattered oases, with their moving palm-trees, shaking bushes and different animals, developed his imagination and helped him to depict many unusual pictures with movement, shades of colour, perspective and detail. The most beautiful of these pictures are those which were in his descriptive poetry and poetry of chivalry. (37)

2. His Style and Language.

Bouffon said that the style is the man, because method, composition and instruction are only what a man can make himself, as for ideas, they may come from external sources. Thus as André Maurois said, 'Style is the mirror which reflects the writer'. And it is, therefore, a vital factor in literature. A critic must, then, be able to distinguish between various styles. Was

(36) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 60.

(37) See this thesis, p.218-226

'Umāra's style easily distinguishable? Some Arab poets, such as Abū Tammām, al-Buhturī and al-Mutanabbī had very much their own styles and while 'Umāra's style is not so obvious, it is distinctive enough.

'Umāra had a clear sense of construction and a marked elegance of language and poetic feeling. When appropriate, for example, in his panegyric, chivalry or descriptions of battles, his style is strong and vigorous

حردُ بريك سواد الليل عثرها درهعات ترك الصبح موقلقاً (38)
 حوارق لصدور لقع لو صدمت صدورها سدي القربى / خرقة
 صافت ربيتها الرقابة دامظلمت احل السقاوم فلم ترك لا بعقا
 كما يرام من دهان السقع حارحة حواره السل من حان او مرقا

In his love-poetry, on the other hand, 'Umāra's style shows the necessary delicacy

عادة في لعلها او كحلها
 مرحت برد اللمى والراح لي في ثيابا حلققت من برد
 ناولتسيرا فلم ادر الح اي تمس منها طانت يدي
 يا ليالي اسلفتني ارقاً انت في حاه الليالي الكدر
 قد وصات لرايم بها تنص العدل بان المعتدي

Likewise in his eulogies

رسم طرب الهدي حما نصيب طاه الكواحل والهوردي (40)
 تناط معا قد العلياء حبه عرمة راع على الحمد عادي
 طويل اللع سيد الكواصري اباديه على الودي الحمار

(38) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 120.

(39) Ibid 53b.

(40) Ibid 46.

'Umāra himself maintained that his style was smooth

رمد عناه شعر حل لي روه عن اجمع الكلام المقدر
راعه فاره حتى اتي لس الاعطار سهل المقود

"I praised him in poetry which had dignity without complexity.
Its poet moulded it until it became fluent and smooth." (41)

No-one would say, however, that his style was perfect.

There were in 'Umāra's poetry lines smacking of prose and weak expression, for example

(42) لو تمكنت اراً ارحله طرقت في القطر من سواده

Those who found this verse acceptable would not be able to accept the following

(43) كسر الجليح عارده عن سته اصمى بكر البيت بكر

because "Ibāratun 'An" is not poetical. The strange thing is he repeated it in other verses, like

(44) يادرو والدر المبر عارة عن نور وصال لم يزل اللصفرا

As for this verse

(45) وكانت على ما شاهد الناس قد لكم طرافه من تنوك القبايس تطرونه

it is not only prosaic, but also the phrase "Alā Mā

(41) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 54b.

(42) Ibid. 47b.

(43) Ibid 64b.

(44) Ibid 76b.

(45) Ibid 127.

Shāhada al-Nāsu" (as people saw) is weak in meaning, because he seemed to be uncertain of the idea he was trying to express, the following is yet another example

عسى عاردا ان الكريم يسأل

"It is like the habit of the generous man who always excuses." (46)

Style involves not only construction and connection between the words, but also choice of words, they should be suitable in every respect. (47) Because if the meaning was the focal point of a speech, words would be of extreme importance, so they should be connected in the same way that the spirit is connected to the body, as Arab critics used to say. (48) They also said that words ought to be carefully chosen, vivid and easy on the ear. 'Umāra was conscious of this and strove to succeed. Poets like al-Mutanabbī and Abū Tammām delighted in their use of strange words, just as others did not avoid ugly sounding words. 'Umāra, however, sought to succeed by normal usages.

(46) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 34b.

(47) Qudama, Naqd 100.

(48) Ibn Rashīq, 'Umda V. 1/80.

‘Umāra's poetry is readily understood

وفى لك حد سيف وسيف عازر وارسلت التأييد والدم عاثر (49)
 صقوع لا في كل يوم مسرنا تشارسج الحمد سجا البشار
 اتاك به الحمد السعد وملت تقادته في راحتك المقادر
 قضى الله يا حمر الائمة ان من يناويك يادع الائمة حاسر

‘Umāra claimed that his words were well chosen, as he lacked nothing in either strength or delicacy

كلمات تأن الحردن وتمشي حيث لا تبالج ورسول
 وادان امارت تحت صخور فساى تحترن كليل

"They are words which avoid heights and go into valleys and plains where the way is easy. But if I wanted to break up rocks, my tongue would be equal to the task." (50)

There are, however, a few strange usages to be found in ‘Umāra's poetry, 'alfāz gharība' for example

راكب من سل الكريد وشد قم قلعتا ابيد لا الرين والسيدا (51)
 وفت مرت عى الال وهي رواكد انقت صبا ه الوصه فيه ركودا
 همرت وصيد الاظلمه لم يبع الالحيز الاكريمه وصيدا

And he said

ويقتد الامانه والموامي على قلن سواهم كالسلام (52)

There are, in addition to this, words in ‘Umāra's

(49) ‘Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 71b.

(50) *Ibid* 164b.

(51) *Ibid* 59.

(52) *Ibid* 164b.

poetry which appear to be unsuitable and unpoetic, such as "قط" which he uses frequently

(53) كبريم ام اراه قط الواجب الردي وورثنا زنا ربي

‘Umāra was influenced by certain aspects of his life and he often uses terms associated with jurisprudence, religion and "Qadā'" sujūd, rukū‘, nadhr, wafā’, Ka‘ba, Qibla, Qorān, haqq, ‘adl, ‘afw, dhanb, ‘Iqāb, thawāb, fatwā, hukm, qādī, shuf‘a, shāhid, wirātha, kalāla, sanad, ḥadīth, tawātur

(54) وكل مقامات المظفر في الوعى لا السيف قاصى (الوقا تهود)

He said in praise of al-‘Adil ibn al-Ṣāliḥ

(55) درت السيف عن ابيه قلنا لم يرتك او شاع كلامه

There are many examples of this in his Dīwān. (56)

Another of ‘Umāra's characteristics was his use of duality too much in many ways and different cases. There is no need to mention particular examples from the Dīwān, since there are few pages without it. Many poems are also full of duality. (57) He talked to two

(53) ‘Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 21, 45b, 110b, 172b, 173b.

(54) Ibid 44.

(55) Ibid 33b.

(56) Ibid 43, 47b, 56, 84, 133b, 171...

(57) Ibid. 17, 37, 73, 159, etc.

persons in his imagination, for instance when he said

"Khalīlayya"

(58) خليلي لم يزل الرمان واما عليا وصرف الالونات جديد

Or, when he said

(59) وانك ما قد كنتا تعرفاه وقد يحضر الشد القتي ولبس

He had an obsession for connecting pairs of things two nouns, names, verbs, adjectives, genitives, phrases and sentences. For example "tall and diyam, naṣr and ʿaṣr, tʿayīd and ghalab, shīʿr and khutāb, jadd and abb, adhqān and rukab, ʿawhām and riyab.... laillatu Mihrāb wa yawmu hirāb, bifashli khitāb wa faisal dirāb. fī al-ahdāthi wa al-nuwab, dhī al-astār wa al-Hujub. Sometimes he mentioned two opposite words jidwa laʿib, bādīn wa muhtajib, māʾ wa lahab. He would give a word in dual form (muthannā), then he would mention the two separately

اعتنا حيا الرعب والرهب
على العيسى من ظلم ومن ظلم

and. رايا بيومي نأيه ورواله
ادانادكر ما دفعة من عرويه
مما يدكر الجان بكر وتعلب
(60)

(58) ʿUmāra, Dīwān Pet. 43.

(59) Ibid. 12.

(60) Ibid. 21.

The method he used is equally clear in the following examples

يا دارنا من يوسف احلرقه ومعيد فليبي سيفه، ولسه (61)

يدنو ويعد في عالي يدس درازت كالمصر ينقم اصيلاً، وستقم (62)

At times he praised two persons together

عينان ان دها ليسان ان دسا طاصا على اللق نار مطا، والعط (63)

'Umāra was fond of referring to "Hijra" (immigration), because when he had left his country, he tried to find an excuse in other examples, he saw the prophet, Muhammad, immigrated from Mecca to Yathrib, and this "Hijratu al-Rasūl" was the best example for him. He mentioned it many times in his poetry, (64) for instance

ان لم تاحصر الى صيرود منقطاً حرداء، يصرى عود وشلول (65)

'Umāra used few foreign words in his poetry, the exceptions being those few words in common use, such as "Dast" and "Tast". (66) 'Umāra did use some Arabic words unsuitably, for example the word (قط) which does not sound well and is not poetical

كريم لم اراه على الـ واحصب ائدي ورسى، رادي (67)

(61) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 183b.

(62) Ibid 175.

(63) Ibid 23.

(64) Ibid 20b, 128, 141b, 147b, 182b, 185.

(65) Ibid 147b.

(66) Ibn Manzūr, Lisān articles (دست و طست)

(67) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 45b.

He used this word many times, (68) and he used the word (أَيْضاً) in the same way

(69) لَأَقُولُ مَتَى سَمِعْتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَدَّةُ أَشْرَاطِهِ كَمَا نَا (69)

Umāra was proud of his eloquence and he himself said how people everywhere admired his language. (70)

He often mentioned this in his poetry

(71) لَمُحَادَاةِ عَرَبِيَّةٍ وَسَلَاةِ أَدَبِيَّةٍ سَوَاعِدًا مَرَار (71)

He said his poetry, like him, was pure Arab

(72) أَا الْعَرَبِيَّ الْمُحَمَّسَ شِعْرًا وَمَقْرَأً (72)

His language was the mirror which reflected his culture with its many and various sources. The influence of the Koran is there for all to see. He used words, phrases and stories, and he quoted verses ('Āyas) and sentences from it in the way which is called "Iqtibās", and this art was employed by the Egyptian poets in the Fatimid's reign. (73)

(74) مَصْفُوفِي حَمُونِ زَهْدَاتٍ وَتَلْفِيظِي طَعَانِ كَالْحُرَايِ (74)

It is known for sure that the last phrase in this verse

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- (69) Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 173b.
 (70) Umāra, Tārīkh 35.
 (71) Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 98.
 (72) Ibid 111.
 (73) Daif, al-Fann Fī al-Shi'r 382.
 (74) Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 8b.

يجهون له ما شاء من محارب وتماثيل وحصار الخوات (75) is taken from the Koran

رَأَى أَحْصَاعَ الْقَوْلِ مِثْلَ رَأْيِهِ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي عَدَبَ الْمَدَائِقَةِ وَالْمَلْحِ (76)

That he took this from the Koran is obvious.

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْحِرَانُ هَذَا عَدَبَ وَرَأَى سَائِعَ تَرَاهُ وَهَذَا مَلْحِ أَحْصَاعِ (77)

He also said

يَقْدِرُ الْمَوْجُ إِلَى السَّاحِلِ (78)

This quotation is surely taken from this verse

لَا حَادِيَهُ فِي الْمَمِّ طَبِيقَهُ الْمَمِّ بِالسَّاحِلِ (79)

There are quite a number of these quotations in the Dīwān. (80)

His language studies had considerable influence on him also, many expressions, terms and phrases of "Nahw", philology, "Balāgha" and "Arūd" can be found. He used "Khfd" and "Raf" in his verse

حَفِصَتْ لَوَادِ الْحَرَمِ مَعْدِ رَفْعِهِ وَحَلَّتْ سَارِ الْخَطِّ عَقْدَ لَوَائِي (81)

And he mentioned "Mubtada" and "Khabar"

رَحَالٌ هُوَ الْمُسْتَدَائِي السَّمَاعِ أ وَهَمُّ حَرِّ الْمَسْدِ (82)

-
- (75) The Koran 34 (Saba'), 13.
 (76) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 35.
 (77) The Koran 39 (Fāṭir) 12.
 (78) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 133.
 (79) The Koran 20 (Tāha) 39.
 (80) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 8b, 12, 14, 29, 33b, 35, 39, 40,
 (81) Ibid. 2b. 44, etc.
 (82) Ibid. 49b.

About "'Atf" and "Ta'kid", he said

(83) امدى الدرى واما در ليعيدى في المكربات اللطف والتاكيدا

Terms of prosody are used, for instance "Tawīl" (Long) and "Ramal" (Running)

(84) تركت من كتب اطربه واطره نال طويل يسيم رار ابي

He used to play on words, changing letters or making "Tashīf", interchanging its dots

(85) شوار عمدك ان رصبت وارا تصحيف عمد في الكسابة عبيد

He also said

(86) انمحت لعمدك فاشكل قدره دسوف يعطفه دات ويسكل

For all his eloquence, genius and culture, 'Umāra's work was not free from error. No-one would claim perfection for him, and from the point of view of language, there are errors in his work. He said

(87) وانا ملك الشمس التي لا تمطرها دانا دلا اموارها فظت تحت

He says that the sun is always shining and never covered, and he should have used the present tense (Mudāri').

Actually, he did so, but he used (Qatt) (قط) with it, which cannot be used in the present tense in this way,

(83) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 60.

(84) Ibid 146.

(85) Ibid 40.

(86) Ibid. 149b.

(87) Ibid 21b.

because it means the past tense.⁽⁸⁸⁾ He could have used its partner, (‘Awd), which is used in this way. He unfortunately used (Qatt) in another verse in the wrong tense

(89) *فلم سر كم عن مرغ وط مرغ ولو ما نكم عن سلق الخط معلق*

The second mistake is in this verse

(90) *هل ما اري في تاحه من حواهر كواكب ام در عليه تميب ؟*

He used the interrogative (Hal) when he should have used (Hamza) (أ) because this interrogation is "Taṣawwūrī", which cannot be asked with "Hal", because it is used in "Taṣdīq", as the Arab grammarians say.⁽⁹¹⁾

A third mistake occurs in the following verse

(92) *مدامت لياليه التي لم تر لها رحوه لياليه زواه زلا هسر* lam tazal

It is clear that he put the predicates of the verb (Damat), which are "Zawāhīn, Zawāhīru" in the nominative case (Marfū‘) when they should be in the accusative case (Mansūb) "Zawāhīyan, Zawāhīrā". ‘Umāra did this to accommodate the metre and the rhyme of the verse, but he broke a rule of grammar and this is not poetical license.

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- (88) Ibn_Ya‘īsh, Sharh Mufaṣṣal al-Zamakhharī V. 4/108.
 (89) ‘Umāra, Diwān Pét. 125.
 (90) Ibid 180b.
 (91) Ibn_Ya‘īsh, Sharh Mufaṣṣal al-Zamakhharī V. 8/151.
 (92) ‘Umāra, Diwān Pét. 72b.

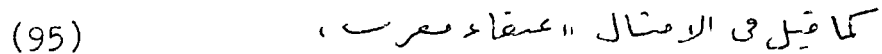
The last mistake is his use of the word "Nahw" (towards) instead of "Ilā" (to), after the verbal noun "Mudāfatan" (in addition) in his verse

(93) 

If anyone tried to excuse this by saying that 'Umāra intended it to mean 'such as', the sense of "Mudāfatan" would be incomplete.

These mistakes are not so serious, and he did not make them too often, but a famous poet, like 'Umāra, who was very proud of his poetical language and eloquence, should have avoided them, nor was it impossible for him to correct them.

The subject closely connected with the language is proverbs. 'Umāra's poetry is full of different proverbs and traditional sayings, (94) for example

(95) 

This is taken from

(96) 

(93) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 171b.

(94) Ibid 11b, 19, 61, 77, 99, 101, 135, 144b...

(95) Ibid 20b.

(96) Al-Maidānī, Majma' V. 1/210.

His verse

دلائل محمود يدبره عمري « فالك قد سقطت على الحسير » (97)

includes the proverb

(98) (على الحسير سقطت)

and the proverb

(99) (دون ذلك حرط القتاد)

is included in this verse

(100) « بي اورا فوس حرط القتاد »

'Umāra's literary culture shone through his poetry, as might have been expected, and he made frequent references to other poets and the special features of poetry. (101)

Other aspects of his culture, such as history, geography and astronomy, are also reflected in his work. He knew the names of stars and likened them in his eulogies to those whom he was praising. He tried, too, to relate stars and happenings to those about whom he wrote the moon, the sun, meteors, galaxies, pleiades, "Suhā", "Shi'rā", "Bahrām", signs of the zodiac Aries,

-
- (97) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 109.
 (98) Al-Maidani, Majma'. V. 2/484.
 (99) Ibid V. 1/276.
 (100) 'Umāra, Diwan Pet. 61.
 (101) Ibid 60, 75b, 76, 103, 111, 117...

Gemini, Taurus, planets Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars, were often referred to.⁽¹⁰²⁾ He tried to put them all in their true perspective. He knew that Arabs thought that Mars brings misfortune and Jupiter brings luck, so he said

(103) عوارماً كشف المريج صحوته عهزى والمسترى صهي محب

and he said about the house of Rukn al-Islām

(104) يادار دار عليك سعد (المستري)

When he wanted to describe one of his friends' continual generosity, he says that he was different from the moon because he was unchanging and never waned

(105) قد حالف الدر فلا حونه محاله نخسي ولا سراه

He explained some scientific facts, he maintained that moonlight is from the sun

(106) رعى الله عما تعرف الشمس انه ابودا وسور الدر سارا ر مره

And he knew that Saturn is high, so when he wanted to show the height of the man whom he praised, he said

(102) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 11b, 17, 27, 27b, 49, 59b, 80, 83, 94b, 100, 114, 122...

(103) Ibid 27.

(104) Ibid 101b.

(105) Ibid 80.

(106) Ibid 100.

(107) رفيعه صنت من دورا حكم رحل

The last point which should be noted is the influence of horsemanship in 'Umāra's language. It is full of names, expressions and phrases which are connected with horsemanship.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ If he praised a man, he would say. you are a horseman. He always mentions the ^{names} ~~names~~ of horses in a race, such as "Sābīq", "Lāhīq", "Musallī" or "Mujallī," as in the following examples

(109) لو كان حياً ونا ريقا كنت المحلي وهو العاشر
يا سابقاً لردعي ساعى يدع ناليه ولا ساعى

(110) صليت ارحلى ابوك ولم تزل اعماله لك قتلته ومنتاك

He praised Shāwar and his people.

عوارس من آل المحير ترى لهم سريرة عجب في صرايم الحما

When he praised one of his friends, asking him to execute an action they had agreed, he said, using the words of horsemanship

"Asrij" (saddle) the matter and "Aljīm" (bridle) it

(107) 'Umāra, Diwān Fet. 144.

(108) Ibid 33, 34, 37b, 41, 44, 45, 46, 56...

(109) Ibid 84.

(110) Ibid 140.

(111) وليست لا عينا ملكت ارادة طاحم لا جيعا عاه واسرع

He said in praise of al-'Adil, mentioning the fine qualities of horses "Agharr" and "Muḥajjal"

(112) مسحت سورريك عرتك الي جعلتك عرتك امر محجلا
 جعلت جعلك لاس توحلة يسمي وقت انامه منملا

3. The Rhetorical Figures (Badī')

Arabic poetry was largely without euphemism (Badī') in early times, so that it was simple and unornamented, and if there were rhetorical figures in the earliest poetry, that would be natural without any deliberate intention. Arab poets and writers, however, began to look seriously at rhetoric at the beginning of the Abbassid caliphate.⁽¹¹³⁾ The poets at that time followed two methods the first was to keep poetry simple and the second was to change it in keeping with the new life to portray new culture and taste. So they adorned it with rhetorical figures.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ The pioneers were

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- (111) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 33.
 (112) Ibid 141.
 (113) Daif, al-Fann 84.
 (114) Ibid 111, 114.

Bashshār (died 167/784), Mansūr al-Namarī (died 190/805) Muslim ibn al-Walīd (died 208/823) and Ibn al-Mu'tazz (died 296/909), ^{Ibn} who wrote the first book on the subject (Kitāb al-Badī'), ^{Ibn al-Mu'tazz} said that they were not the innovators of this art, because it was in the Koran, "Hadīth", and the speech of Arabs, but they tried to increase it in poetry. (115) The best of them was Abū Tammām, who increased it greatly and used it to perfection. (116) Some of the Arab poets imitated him and filled their poems with various figures, the Egyptian poets were fond of "Badī'", and they filled their poems with it, although most of them did not keep to one method, but changed from time to time. (117)

'Umāra was one of the poets who loved "Badī'". It is difficult to say if 'Umāra started using it from the beginning of his poetical life or whether he was influenced by the Egyptian poets, because most of his poetry before this period has been lost.

 (115) Daif, al-Fann 115, Ibn al-Mu'tazz, al-Badī' 1.

(116) Ibn Rashīq, al-'Umda V. 1/85.

(117) Daif, al-Fann 881.

This story shows how much 'Umāra was interested in "Badī'". When he recited his poem in praise of 'Alī ibn al-Zabād, after the death of al-Ṣāliḥ, which began

أوصيت بي دمة الرشيد، والخط
ديباً الأحسن بقى على الحقت

Dirghām suggested changing the word "Ghadarat" (betrayed) into "Ba'udat" (distant), in his verse

وصيت للهالمع الإرامي وقد عدت
ه السماع من ما، وعقت -

'Umāra refused, saying.

"I just wanted to make a contrast (Muqābala) between "Wafa'" (loyalty) and "Ghadr" (betrayal)."

The answer of Dirghām was

"So, for your contrast, you accuse us of betrayal?"
(118)

'Umāra's available poetry is full of most of the rhetorical figures. There is hardly a page in his "dīwān" without examples. "Tawriya" (pun) was newly discovered and increased greatly at this time, (119) and he used it successfully in his poetry

صلى الآت على تخم اصلا، لا من سلا، الير ان فئس، والعمر (120)

The word "Najm" here, gives two meanings, the first one

(118) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 146.

(119) Daif, al-Fann 383.

(120) 'Umara, Diwan Pet. 105.

is a star in the sky, because he said that his descendants, the sun and the moon, lighted it for us. The second meaning is the name of Ṣalāh al-Dīn's father.

He said to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ

لئن كان هذا الصالح الملك صالحاً فكيف من هذا لم تلده ثمود (121)

The word "Ṣāliḥan" in this verse gives firstly the name of the prophet of Thamūd, because he mentioned Qidār, the evil man, who killed Ṣāliḥ's she-camel and Thamūd, and secondly the meaning (Good).

Most of the Egyptian poets were fond of "Jinās" or "Tajnis", (122) which means homonym. 'Umāra was one of the poets who were fond of using it. His poetry is full of every use of it. He wrote "Jinās Tāmm" (complete)

فلكم يد لك يهيم متكورة استعبراً بسدي يد يهيماء (123)

The word "Yad" in this verse is used twice, it means 'favour' first and then 'hand'. The following of his verses containing "Jinās Nāqis" (incomplete), in which the two words differ in some respects

فارت ظهر صحالا محالا يوم الرصيل وحات طس طها'يا (124)

حسود كل يوم او صدال بعد ما لخط او عطات (125)

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- (121) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 43b.
 (122) Daif, al-Fann 380.
 (123) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 3b.
 (124) Ibid 4.
 (125) Ibid. 9b.

(126) سائر العيب حافظ العيب رعو وبل اهاه وحشى دماله

(127) مدرس ر ملك الديب ادى بدار الدر

The partner of "Jinās" is "Tibāq" (antithesis), of which 'Umāra was more fond

(128) احملني يا نعم الطمرا وستر

(129) اعف الدم نوسه سعيم ر صون في الاي منه كرو

He might put "Jinās" and "Tibāq" together in the same verse

(130) وكم حريت بعد الهان شداً فبعده طعم العدا

(131) وستر بيض عمائم نعمائم سور محلى كحون القتل

He filled verses with "Tashbīh" (simile), of which Arab poets are particularly fond in descriptive poetry

(132) ساقت كالبحوم الدر قد نلت حس اوها ويا اسماح واكس

Most of his similes are of the kind which is known as "Tashbīh Balīgh"

(133) وابوك لبت الساب شخ مثله واعدن منه فرائض الاعداء

Sometimes he includes more than one simile in a verse

(134) فعى ناعه مدر ودي لعه حيا وبي سرعه لبت وبي دسته مدع

(126) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 133.

(127) Ibid 68.

(128) Ibid 68.

(129) Ibid 66b.

(130) Ibid 6b.

(131) Ibid 149.

(132) Ibid 155.

(133) Ibid 3.

(134) Ibid 37b.

He used "Kināya" (Metonymy) with considerable skill. In praise of al-Fā'iz, he described security in his reign

(135) *يصلح الدنيا في الساعة موعداً على العيب وان اورد في البيت*

And he said showing that *his beloved was charming secluded* ~~Ruzzik family to illustrate their~~ *and her smell was sweet*, ~~generosity and bravery~~

(136) *وبين ذبا - انكف من حلي منى اسيمة قد لا يعنى اسيرتها*
بسم على كفا من ال - سببا على الرزق ودلا - كرا وعيدها

Another example is

(137) *سبب الليل الى اهلنا من سطله قد تقا عيب في العلة كفا في العير*

As for "Majāz" (Personification), he used it often and effectively

(138) *تسم في ايل اسما - متيب فاصح رد الام وهو فتيب*

He described his white hair smiling, while he himself was grieved by it, as if he wore a robe of sorrow, and he said in praise of Shāwar that his (Shāwar's) favours came to enlighten his mind, while his praise went under this light

(139) *وسرت كفا به تعي كفا ظري سرى المدح اليه من اهلنا*

His "Majāz" is particularly effective when he describes calamities, for instance when he lamented the loss of his son

(135) 'Umāra, Dīwān Fet. 16.

(136) Ibid 88b 110

(137) Ibid 105.

(138) Ibid 12.

(139) Ibid 2b.

ترحلت عن صدي وحسب الاليل عرس كسا الهم على محرابي (140)

His "Istī'āra" (Metaphor) includes all the kinds known in Arabic literature, for example

رلو كنت غير الله ارجو كاحية لطمت بكف الباس وجهه طاي (141)

He described despair as having a hand and hope with a face. In the same way he described destiny with bow and arrow, aiming it at his heart

لا ساي بي فيه الحمام فعوقت قوس الما يا سهرا شاي (142)

He often wrote "Majāz" and "Istī'āra" together in the same verse

من عقر شات الدنيا ومحمدم من فاثوانه صفا صهفت (143)
the

These rhetorical figures are not only ones which 'Umāra used in his poems, he used others, such as "Tafwīf"

فا سلم ودم وانق واسعد اعل واسم ورسد رعد وصد واقدر واحلم وطل وذل (144)

Ta'kīd al-Madh bimā yushbih al-Dhāmm, in his verse in praise of Badr ibn Ruzzīk, showing the weaknesses of this great man who was as high as the very stars

ولا عبت بي در رسون ان تدره وقد حاور الحوراء لا يتكبر (145)

-
- | | | | | | |
|-------|---------------|----------|-------|------|------|
| (140) | 'Umāra, Dīwān | Pet. 29. | (143) | Ibid | 15b. |
| (141) | ibid | 2b. | (144) | Ibid | 147. |
| (142) | ibid | 5b. | (145) | Ibid | 88b. |

Husn al-Ta'līl, "which is an ingenious assignment of cause." (146) He said in this sense to his son

ولولم تكن قمراً راحراً
لما كنت عند عسوف القمر

"If you were not a shining moon, you would not die with the moon's eclipse." (147)

Radd al-'Ajz 'Alā al-Ṣadr, in which "the line ends with the same word... as that which it begins," (148) or other words which it includes.

فقدتك الاسكندرية انسلت وابتعدت
وسرت في نادي براك كحراً حمداً
والمقامك المحمورا

The most admirable feature is that 'Umāra used to put many figures, (Jinās and Tibāq), together in a verse, creating balance between the two hemistiches of the verse, which is more perfect in the figure called "Mulā'ama" or "Muqābala"

تروح والصر العزيز رواعل رتعدو للصح المبين بكمورها (150)

It is easy to see that 'Umāra was balancing two words, one from each hemistich. The first word in the first hemistich (Ṣadr) corresponds to the first one in the second hemistich ('Ajz), they are, both, verbs in the

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- (146) Arberrry, Arabic Poetry 24.
 (147) 'Umāra, Diwan Pet. 101b.
 (148) Arberrry, Arabic Poetry 24.
 (149) 'Umāra, Diwan Pet 60.
 (150) Ibid 110b.

present tense, "Tarūh, Taghdū", but have contradictory meanings, (to go back and to go forward). Each of these two verbs is followed by "wa", which is followed by "Jārr wa Majrūr" (a preposition with its noun), in "Ṣadr" (Bilnaṣr), and in "ʿAjz" (Lilfath). He followed this with adjectives in each hemistich, which are "Al-ʿAzīz, al-Mubīn". He ended each hemistich with an infinitive with an attached pronoun, which are called "Rawāḥuhā, Bukūruhā", with opposite meanings. The following examples may show this art more clearly

(151) اب ما سترته اول وهو ما صدره آصر
 خالني ترعه حاصي دلا لمة تكسره حاصر

(152) عمار اعني في يومهم قط مرتع ورا ساقني في درهم قط مشرب

There are also a number of examples of this in his *Dīwān*.⁽¹⁵³⁾

It is interesting to note that 'Umāra used "Badī'" in every theme of his poetry, even in elegy, despite the fact that most poets avoided it in elegies because they felt that ornament is not compatible with the sadness which should be in elegy. 'Umāra said in his elegy to al-Ṣāliḥ

ظالما عوثر عورت وعمر ددت حتى ازلوا فيك الشور
 رترد الصفا من در دينا لم يزل في صفا را تكوير

(151) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 48.

(152) *Ibid* 20.

(153) *Ibid* 9b, 13b, 33b, 49b, 51b, 54b, 64, 84, etc.

(154)

4. Rhyme (Qāfiya).

"Qāfiya" is the melody which is repeated for effect at the ends of verses. It is of great importance in Arabic poetry because it resembles the musical theme we like to hear and our ears anticipate its melody. Arabs, from earliest literary times until the present day, have shown a preference for repeated rhyming and preferred it to other methods of ending verses. The last letter in the "Qāfiya", by which the poem is usually distinguished, is called "Rawiyy", so Arab critics called the poems by their "Rawiyy", in this way Jīmiyya, Dāliyya and Kāfiyya. For this reason Arab poets took care with their rhymes and tried to choose suitable letters. 'Umāra understood the importance of rhyme well, so his rhymes were generally suitable with letters which sounded well and easy to pronounce. (155)

It seems that 'Umāra, at least in his available poetry, did not compose poems in all alphabetical letters,

 (154) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 65.
 (155) Qudāma, Naqd 19.

because there is no poem in his *Dīwān* rhymed with any one of these seven letters "ن ذ ص ط ع و" These are very difficult to use, and Arab poets rarely used them in their poems. (156) He used other letters abundantly "ء ذ ر ب ل م ن ق" About half his poetry was rhymed with these three letters "ب, ذ, ر", they are used in about 3,400 of the available 7,000 verses. As for the other letters, he used some of them in a few lines, for example "ش س ح ج ك ص ر", *shīn* 14V. , *sīn* 15V. , *Jīm* 10V. ; *Hā'* 5V. , *Kāf* 2V. , *dād* 4V. , and *Zā'* 2V. .

It is difficult to know for sure if 'Umāra distinguished particular letters to use them in each theme or not, because it seems that he composed eulogy, elegy, epistolary and other themes in all of the letters which he used frequently ر ذ ب ل etc. He followed normal rules in rhyming his poetry. Most of his "Rawīyy" letters are "Muṭlaqa" (ending with a vowel - "Ḥaraka"), while those rhymes which end with "Sukūn" (consonant) called "Muqayyada", were very rare, as is usual in Arabic poetry. (157)

{156} Anīs, *Musīqā al-Shī'r* 248.
 {157} *Ibīd* 260.

'Umāra also used other technical devices, for instance adding "Alif al-Itlāq" (being absolute), "hā' al-Sakt" (silent Hā') and "Kāf al-Khitāb" (compellative Kāf)

(158) تاورأسمع الحيا الخطا عه ان لا يعيل على التقا ومبيدا

(159) ايل اسيدالدى اما عسده والدى الطق المداع محده

(160) عس منحد الاطمان يوماً يفردا وقا تل اساب السور لا يفردا

(161) اما على وما من حاحة عرصت الى سدال سوس عتي على كرمك

He began all his odes with "Tasrī'", which means that the first hemistich rhyme is the same as the rhyme pattern of the poem. Most Arab poets, especially the great ones, did this to show the beauty of their rhyming.⁽¹⁶²⁾ They also thought that this was more poetical and effective.⁽¹⁶³⁾ Abū Tammām had this to say

وتفوقوا الى الحدوى محدوى وانما يروقك بيت التوصيه بصرع

"You make gift after gift, exactly as you admire the verse of poetry when it is rhymed in both hemistiches (Yusarra'u)" (164)

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- (158) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 59.
 (159) *Ibid.* 57.
 (160) *Ibid.* 110.
 (161) *Ibid.* 164.
 (162) Qudama, *Naqd.* 19.
 (163) *Ibn Rashīq*, 'Umda V. 1/99.
 (164) Abu Tammam, *Diwan* V. 2/322.

Most Arabs did not only satisfy this condition, but they put other "Taṣrī's" in their poems. So did 'Umāra in many poems, (165) for example

لقد بدعته الستة الحمار حرد يديه في الستة الحمار (166)
رعلني المديح له ابادي يصيق من ربح الاعتدال

He also used other rhymes inside the verses, which could be called "Tarsī" (internal rhymes)

معلت اهل اقر الوادي، ام اقر الوادي ام اهل ران الكيد والكر (167)

Many examples of "Tarsī" can be seen in his *Diwān*. (168)

Besides this, he tried to add another rhyme at the ends of the first hemistiches of a few verses in many odes, (169) which is called "Arūd", to increase the sense of rhythm in his poetry.

امامه العربيات كلدة ساعا في دروس الاقر تعتتم
حرمت عدداً شهر العام فاطلة عيسى تعرف من الاشهر الحرم
سان كعل الاصلان والعتة لا يدعي وصلح الرواء والديم
كف تغلغ الرواء تكرمة والرسن يومين اليه صبه يستلم (170)

He was an expert in technique, so he accepted the sugg-

(165) 'Umāra, *Diwān* Pet. 2b, 27, 30b, 33b, 34b, 35b, 45, 60, 67...

(166) Ibid 46.

(167) Ibid 27.

(168) Ibid 9, 35b, 37b, 50, 77, 88, 133...etc.

(169) Ibid 47, 64, 66, 82, 154, 164...etc.

(170) Ibid 175.

estions of some of his friends to compose poetry ending with specific letters. One day, Ruz̄īk had asked him to compose a "poem rhyming with 'Khā' (ح)", so 'Umāra wrote one with the following opening

أصابتكم نخلون دكم لسحو بيدل و داد ل بعيره لسح (171)

But despite his technical ability, he avoided the complications of "Luzūm mā lā ylzam" (Observing what need not be observed), that is having two or more identical consonants in each end rhyme, as al-Ma'arrī had, except these seven verses

احلفت بيمادك يا اعمل وعبر هذا الوفا اعمل
لا تستقرها ههوه سولت ما كلاد ب ثقله تحمل
اعمالك صحاح اخلاقه حاشاك ان تعمل يا اعمل
اقسم لا سحوا نبيره وعبرها الموم والمومل

He pointed to this in the last verse

هذا عنان لرميت فيه مع لاد ما سمع لما اعمل (172)

On the other hand, 'Umāra tried to purify his poetry from the deficiencies of rhyme, whether permissible or not, such as "Iqwā'", "Iṭā'" and "Ikfā'", and he was successful, despite the fact that he sometimes

(171) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 37.

(172) *Ibid.* 153.

used unsuitable and unpoetic words in his rhyming, particularly when he used the difficult letters, for instance Madkh, Talā'ih, Jihāsh, Khashāsh and al-Bustuq.

5. His Metres (Buḥūr)

It is not easy to give a clear picture of the metres employed or the reasons he chose them. Not all his poetry is available of course, nor did he write anything on the subject. To judge from the poetry available to us, he used only eleven different metres, ignoring five "Muqāri'" (the similar), "Mutadārak" (the continuous), "Muqtaḍab" (the lopped), "Madīd" (the extended) and "Hazaj" (the trilling). 'Umāra used the more common metres from Janāliyya until his own time, avoiding the unusual. Most of the poets immediately before his time, had increased the short and unusual metres in their poetry, especially in "Ghazal, Khamriyyāt and Mujūn." (173) Al-Ma'arrī considered that the practical metres were about four in number, "Tawīl, Basīt, Wāfir and Kāmīl." The short ones were originally used in Islamic times when singing became popular. (174)

 (173) Ḥusain, Fī al-Aḍab_Miṣr al-Fatīmiyya 272.
 (174) Al-Ma'arrī, al-Fuṣūl 212.

It seems that 'Umāra tried to keep the traditional methods as far as metre was concerned. About 2,000 verses were written in "Ṭawīl", the most important metre in Arabic literature.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ About 1,950 verses were written in "Kāmil", about 1,150 verses in "Basīṭ", and about 400 verses in "Khafīf". These are ^{some of} the four metres which al-Ma'arrī chose, and they are the most widely used metres in the history of Arabic poetry. The other metres which 'Umāra used in his poetry are, in order of importance "Rajaz", "Wāfir", "Sari'", "Mutaqarīb", "Mujtathth", "Ramal" and "Munsarih". Some Arab writers maintained that there is a relationship between the metre and the subject matter and feeling of the poet.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Al-Ma'arrī obviously thought so, because he said that short metres were suitable to "Rithā'", "Ghazal" and "Ḥamāsa".⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ 'Umāra composed "Madīh, Rithā'" and other themes in Ṭawīl, Kamīl, Basīṭ and Wāfir. These subjects were written in long, slow metres because he felt that they best fitted the circumstances.

'Umāra tried to use normal metres in their basic

(175) Amīs, musīqā al-Shi'r 59.

(176) Ibid 177-178.

(177) Al-Ma'arrī, al-Fusūl 262.

forms, with complete feet and correct scansion, he tried to avoid "Majzū", Mashtūr, Manhūk" and other incomplete forms as often as he could. Only one poem in "Majzū' al-Kāmil" can be found and one in "Majzū' al-Rajaz", 'Umāra made strenuous efforts to avoid "Zihāfāt" (deviations), "ʿIlal" (defects) and other faults in his poetry, faults such as "Kharm, Khazm, Sharm, Khabn, Kaff and Waḡḡ". He aimed, then, at a pure poetry, which was normal acceptable.

'Umāra, as is a poet's right, often took advantage of poetic licenses, (al-darā'ir), of which there are about 160.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ He mostly used "Sarf al-Mamnū' Min al-Sarf" (putting nunation to the diptote) to fit the metre. He did this with the adjectives which are in the form of "Af'al" like "Abyad" and "Aswad"

ارحت عليه الدعي ابيضاً رقد كان وجه العبي اسورا (179)

or like "adham" and "ashhab" in this verse

اسري من الليل على ادم ومن قوس الصبح على اشوب (180)

He also did the same with words in the forms "Mafā'il", "Mafā'il" and "Fawā'il"

وعبست من رم الدهم طوالاً لا تجرد العليته عروب (181)

(178) Al-'Alūsī al-Dra'ir wa mā yasūgh lil-Shā'ir...

(179) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 49.

(180) Ibid 19.

(181) Ibid 2.

- (182) رامت سماه في القاة التي لهم حبيبا امانت لا وتعب
 (183) لما تراءت للليل من صبا تغطي الهدى من العار ما تصاب

Even non-Arab names were treated in the same way, such as "Bahrām" in the following verse

- (184) لما تراءت لبرام واسرته حبلأورا وراق السع بالعرب

The second license which he used was "Madd al-Maqṣūr", for instance "Af'ā" (افعى) in the following verse which he made "Af'ā" (افعاء)

- (185) وردنا به افعى نقلي لذعلا يردني كدع الصل والاعفاء

On the other hand he changed "Mamdūd" into "Maqṣūr", like Samā' (سما) and Dawā' (دواء) which he changed to (samā) and (Dawā), (دوا) (سما)

- (186) داستل من اترا به كالجم من در السبا
 داديته صفا ارا لم يتقني الديرها دوا

6. His Rajaz.

'Umāra's "Rajaz" should be studied separately because of the special importance of this metre in Arabic poetry, Arab prosodists claimed that it is the origin of all Arabic metres. Arabs began to sing it as "Hudā'" on their camels, in harmony with the movement

(182) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 13.

(183) Ibid 14.

(184) Ibid 10.

(185) Ibid 5b.

(186) Ibid 6b.

of the camels' feet. It might have developed from "Saj'" (prose rhyme), when it was first evolved in Jahiliyya, it became well-known all over Arabia in a short time and it was considered as "Dīwān al-'Arab", in which Arab virtues and chronicles were preserved. It was the storehouse for their language and preserved their fame (Aḥsāb) and origins (Anṣab).⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ They recited it, and added to it at every opportunity, during battles, disputes, races, work, while carrying water, or during any difficult task. When other metres were evolved, "Rajaz" was still used. Some Arab writers said that "Rajaz" is one of the ordinary metres, while others maintained otherwise. Al-Khalīl, the inventor of the Prosody, was asked about this idea and he once said "Yes, it is Qasīd", and he said at another time "It is not".⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ Indeed, "Rajaz" depends on its form, feet and rhyme, because rules were invented for it. A "Rajaz" ode which is called "'Urjūza" (P.Arājīz) should have the same rhyme at each end of all hemistiches (Ṣudūr and 'A'jāz). Thus some prosodists said that the hemistich in "'Urjūza" is a verse, not "Miṣrā'", as it is in Qasīd. Then they

 (187) Al-Bakrī, Arājīz al-'Arab 4.

(188) Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān Article (Rajaz) (رَجَز)

said that every 'Urjūza should consist of an odd number of verses. So the normal number and metre of this verse is, three times of "Mustai'īlun".⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ It may be only twice in some instances, which is called "Majzū'". In the 'Umayyād era, Rajaz became more famous. It was used for many subjects, particularly eulogy. Poets tried to preserve their vocabulary, so they filled it with "Gharīb" (little-known words). The most famous poets to improve Rajaz were al-'Ajjāj (died 90/708), Ru'ba (died 145/762) and Abū al-Najm (died 130/747). The poets in 'Abbasid time used Rajaz for new themes, such as hunting poetry (Ṭardiyyāt), the best known of them were Abū Nuwās and Ibn al-Mu'tazz. 'Umāra might have written many 'Urjūzas, but unfortunately, there are only five available in his Dīwān,⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ in addition to this, there are 10 poems, (Qaṣīdas) which are written in "Rajaz" metre, but they are not of "Rajaz" technique. They consist of 252 Rajaz lines which are called hemistiches in Qaṣīd. Some others have no doubt been lost. This Rajaz is of outstanding quality, a good example of 'Umāra's skill. Arab linguists said that not every poet is able to compose "Rajaz", and also that not every

(189)

سَعْلَى سَعْلَى سَعْلَى
 - - - - -

(190) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 52, 98, 115b, 150, 187.

"Rājiz" can compose "Qasīd", so those who composed both were rare indeed. (191)

The best of 'Umāra's 'Urjūzas is the one which was written to congratulate Shāwar at "Īd al-Fiṭr" which began:

(192) ان شطت فقل لا اترنعي على طول دارسات الارسع
واصراد المرع بدا لا تخرج ورا ادا ما مان ان الارسع

It consists of 85 Rajaz lines in the correct metre. In the introduction, he described his mount as the others did in Rajaz. 'Umāra gave his camel human characteristics, saying that she listens to the singer as if she understood what he says

نصعي الى الحاربي لا اترنعي

From this description, 'Umāra passes easily into the praise of Shāwar

ادانته مدح الكعبيل الارسع كعبيل اساء الطيبى الارسع
شاوردي الحمد الاصيل الارسع وصوله صفات لم تقسع

It seems that 'Umāra composed this 'Urjūza during the second rule of Shāwar, because he mentioned in it that Shāwar left the ministry for a short time. But he did not shed the robe of authority while the ministry was

(191) Al-Jāhīz, al-Bayān V. 1/215.

(192) 'Umāra, Diwan Pet. 115.

anxious about him, 'Umāra likened the authority to the sun of "Yūsha'" (Joshua) the prophet

ورارة رارواها لم ينزع وانما كانت كنس يوشع
معرة نعر كل مدعي طارفتا وهي بقلب مروع
شعولة الكاظم لتعجب

'Umāra ended this ode asking Shāwar for help because he was poor and in debt (Madīn)

دمسي الهرد من معي صا قنا احوالنا عرو سح
اصحك والحمر بين اصلي من كثره الدين ومقر مدقع
وانت طلي واليل مرخي

The language in this ode, as in others, is eloquent and vigorous. The words are well chosen and high-sounding. There are, however, many strange words (alfāz gharība), as the earliest poets made this a necessary condition many years before 'Umāra.

It is important to note that most of these "Arajīz" were written for Shāwar and his family, because the second one was written in praise of Shāwar's son, (Sulaimān)

يا ملكاً صرف الرمان عمدته واللائك صبه بطوحده (193)

The third is in praise of al-Mājid, Shāwar's son-in-law

(193) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 52.

راح لا في خلق البري واشدد عليا خلق الويس (194)

while one of the other two was written to be given on behalf of a friend of 'Umāra to Najm al-Dīn ibn Masāl.

(195) ان كنت ارضت علي المسير

The last was written for some unknown person; it may have been for Shāwar or one of his family, because 'Umāra was complaining of poverty and asking for help exactly as he did in the first one, but it was entitled: "and he also said."

(196) ابي الدك من حبي حالي ومن امور قد اظن مالي

This poem is certainly incomplete because the subject seems to be so, it is short (10 lines only) and this is not an odd number as it should be.

It might be asked why 'Umāra chose Rajaz for the Shāwars, and the answer is probably that the Shāwars are from the "Sa'd" tribe as Shāwar himself was called Shāwar al-Sa'dī, and from the Sa'd tribe came the greatest trinity of Rajaz poets al-'Ajjāj, his son Ru'ba and 'Uqba, his son. 'Umāra might then have written these

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- (194) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 187.
 (195) *Ibid* 98.
 (196) *Ibid* 150.

odes to this family with the intention of reminding them of their old relatives. It could be that Shāwar asked 'Umāra to do this.

7. His Muwashshahat.

The Muwashshah is one of the Arabic poetic arts which was probably evolved in Andalus in the ninth century A.H. in the Marwānī state. (197) Then it became well-known for many centuries, 'shining on the literary horizon'. Ibn Khaldūn says that the inventor was Muqaddam ibn Mu'āfir al-Farīrī, the poet of 'Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad al-Marwānī. (198)

When the Arab poets in Andalus settled down in the new land, they mixed with its people, were influenced by its culture and its way of life. They were thus able to develop this new poetic art which they employed for singing. The new art was developed with its own form and technique. They constructed it in order of many 'ribbons' (Asmāt) and branches (Aghsān) which follow each other in

(197) Al-Karīm, Fann al-Tawshīh 17.

(198) Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddīma 1103.

rapid succession. (199) The Muwashshah consists of several stanzas in which the rhymes are so arranged that the master rhyme ending each stanza and running through the whole poem like a refrain is continually interrupted by a succession of subordinate rhymes. (200) The majority of muwashshahat consists of 7 strophes according to ibn Sallām, in fact, the average number of strophes was 5-7. Most Arab literary men said that this art came to the East from Andalus, after it became popular there. (201)

The Eastern "Washshāh" who excelled in this art was Hibatullāh ibn Ja'far, ibn Sanā' al-Mulk (died 608/1212), (202) the author of the first book on this art (Dār al-Tirāz). In it he admitted that the Eastern poets learned it from Andalus and they were imitators of its Muwashshahat. (203) However, there were some poets in the East who wrote in this art before ibn Sanā' al-Mulk. Modern Arab writers have mentioned quite a number of them, such as 'Uthmān ibn 'Īsā al-Balṭī (died 599) and al-Qādī al-Fādīl, (204) but 'Umāra, who was one of the pioneers of composing

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- (199) Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddīma 1103.
 (200) Nicholson, a literary history 416.
 (201) Ibn Bassam, al-Dhakhira V. 2 S. 1/1.
 (202) Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddīma 114. —
 (203) Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk Dar al-Tirāz 10.
 (204) Al-Karīm, Fann al-Tawshih 151-152.

this art in the East was not acknowledged. 'Umāra's available Muwashshahs are only two, but they are so technically perfect and beautiful that it is reasonable to assume that some are lost.

It is certain, however, that 'Umāra wrote these two Muwashshahs more than 10 years before his death, because he wrote them in praise of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, his son and his brother, Fāris al-Muslimīn, whose rule ended in 556 A.H. The first one of them is

(205) العقل } يلاح في عارل في اهور عارل طوا لشم
في وصله وائل لروصي الدائل لابي الريم
سجيرة الودعات نكلرا ورايان يشكو الصدى
البيت } للمس والاصان بي رصه عوان ارا سدا
رعود الركان اصراعه الازان ادا سدا

It consists of five "Qufis" and four "Baits" in the "Basit" metre, but it is not complete

تفعلى فعلى متفعلى على تفعلى

As for the other one, it is in "Mutaqārib" metre, but it is "Maqsūr" in both its ('Arūd and Darb)

ابير محردة ام عيون نلى واحفا هي الكفوت نقد
 محب لا نساء ساره
 رسول لا المقول العاتره
 متقد ولا راوصا واتره
 بيت

ظلام فتكن باسم العربي ومأثرة فرغت من كس (206)

'Umāra began both of them with "Ghazal" which was the original theme of Muwashshahs, because "rarely does a Muwashshah deal in anything but love, except in religious poetry. Even in panegyric, the form of addressing a lover is often retained". (207) So 'Umāra followed this method and devoted half of each to "Ghazal". He passed on to the praise of Fāris al-Muslimīn saying

يا طرب الازلام وشف الازلام كم تعرف
والظلم والظلام فارس الاسلام لا يعرف

He ended the other saying in praise of al-Nāsir (the son of al-Ṣāliḥ

الكريم السبيته طلق الجيس برس الله كلنا يد به عيين

'Umāra used the metres usual in Muwashshahs, (208) as he used incomplete metres and this is the poet's favourite way. His style is delicate, his language facile and his words right-sounding, and these are the qualities necessary for poetry to be sung. They were without "Zajal" ending, "Kharja Zajaliyya" - having a colloquial ending - which the poets of Andalus believed so

(206) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 195b.

(207) Gibb, Arabic Literature 110.

(208) Anis, Mūsīqā al-Shi'r 223.

necessary in this art. (209) 'Umāra probably found it unsuitable, because the poets said that it should be vulgar and obscene. However, 'Umāra's two Muwashshahs were successful, and it would be interesting to know if he wrote others.

(209) Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, Dār al-Tirāz 31-32.

CHAPTER 4.

His Place in the History of the Arabic Literature.

1. His Predecessors

'Umāra did not begin writing poetry in the ordinary way. As we know, he was advised to write a poem on a particular occasion. He welcomed the idea, but was unable to complete the task. He might have had the innate ability, but he lacked the technical skill. Practise in poetry is, of course, essential and Arab critics have said that talent, motivation, skill, meditation, practise and diligence are the bases of good poetry.⁽¹⁾

Al-'Abdī, who had advised 'Umāra to write this poem, put him in a rather awkward position, in so much that he had to appear as a poet to the people. This experience, however, made 'Umāra set his mind to being a poet. He looked to literature for his inspiration and studied diligently the Arab poets who had preceded

(1) Al-Jurjānī, al-Wasāṭa 21.

him, memorising what he admired in their work. In this way they became his models and teachers. 'Umāra made much use of these poets and their influence can be seen clearly in his poetry. Some might consider this a deficiency.

This subject was widely discussed by Arab writers. Their point of view differs greatly from the Western one, they largely believed that imitation and influence of this sort was for the good. They gave different names to the various aspects of the process, stealing (Sariqāt), taking (Akhdh), imitation (Taqlīd), citation (Iqtibās), following (Ittibā'), generating (Tawlīd), extension (Tawsī'), adding (Idāfa) and so on.⁽²⁾ Arabic literature is full of examples of this kind. The critics, however, accused most, if not all, Arab poets of stealing others' poetry, even the greatest poets, such as Abū Tammām, al-Buhturī and al-Mutanabbī were involved and many books were written about them to show what they had done.⁽³⁾ However, 'novice' poets were allowed to imitate famous poets and this is a natural enough process.

(2) Ibn Rashīq, al-'Umda V. 2/215-226. Al-'Askarī, al-Sinā'atayn 196-235.

(3) Al-'Āmadī, al-Muwāzana, Ibn 'Abbād, al-Fashī, al-Tha'alībī, al-Yatīma V. 1/87-100, al-'Āmidī, al-Ībāna ibn Wakī', al-Munṣif, al-Hātīmī, al-Muḍīha... etc.

Al-'Askarī realised that this had to be so, but he also stressed that the poet should write in his own words. (4) Regardless of the critics' opinions, 'Umāra was in need of help. The effects on 'Umāra's poetry fall into three kinds

1 'Umāra thought the traditional Arab poets were so great, that those following them should imitate their methods. Thus, his poetry was conservative. He retained the traditional technique of the Arabic Qasīda, which was formed in the Jahīliyya in 'Madīh'. Arab poets, therefore, tried deliberately to preserve Qasīda in all their long odes. (5) 'Umāra maintained "'Amūd al-Shi'r", without breaking any basic rules of those writers who had gone before. A cursory look at his poetry reveals a number of these features the style, in its vigour and delicacy the prelude, "Ghazal", the conclusion, "Du'a'", other similar themes and the smooth passing from one theme to another. (6) This was the line which al-Buhturī followed, it was called "'Amūd al-Shi'r", 'Umāra is probably referring to this when he says

{4} Al-'Askarī, al-Sinā'atayn 196.
 {5} Daif, al-Fann 21.
 {6} See this thesis p.161-163

والحمزي ووريع وهو استوس يميم في رحمان العجل لعمارة (7)

II. The second major influence on 'Umāra's poetry was that he quoted verses or hemistiches of those poets he admired, this is called "Tadmīn" in Arabic literature.

'Umāra said

رهل عسدر ان الدخيل من الحوى «مقيم قلبي ما اقام عيب» (8)

It is clear that the second hemistich is taken from a hemistich of Imru' ul-Qais's verse

احارتنا ان الطوب سوب واني نقيم ما اقام عيب (9)

It is clear from

رغم فوري المشيب ولم يقل رواربي «الليت انساب يعود» (10)

that the second hemistich is taken from Abū al-'Atāhiya's verse

وباليت انساب يعود يوماً فاحره مما فعل المشيب (11)

This line

ويلاوه ان عمت قفارك من دكرى حبيب راره هوئل (12)

includes a part of the prelude of Imru' ul-Qais's

"Mu'allāqa"

قفا ذلك من دكرى حبيب وهرل سقط اللوى به الاصول نحوئل (13)

-
- (7) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 103.
 (8) Ibid 12b.
 (9) Imru' ul-Qais, Dīwān 55.
 (10) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 43.
 (11) Abū al-'Atāhiya, Dīwān 23.
 (12) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 152.
 (13) Imru' ul-Qais, Dīwān 124.

He sometimes mentions the name of the poet whose verse he has quoted, as he did with Imru' ul-Qais, calling him "Ibn Hujr".

كأن (إبه محرم) قد عناه بقوله: «حادل ملكاً أو عوت فصدراً» (14)
which is from his verse

فقلت له لانتك عيسك إنما حادل ملكاً أو عوت فصدراً (15)

In some verses, 'Umāra merely used the meaning of some other poet's verses

إذا هرحا ربح الريح رحت ومالت مع الراح حيث تميل (16)

This verse is taken from the meaning of 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib's hemistich

إذا الريح مالت مال حيث تميل (17)

'Umāra likened life to a borrowed dress which should be returned

وصياة الانسان ثوب عسار واحب ان يردده المستعير (18)

It is worth noting that 'Umāra repeated this meaning in his verse

عمر كما عارية مردودة أو لك ان يرد مستعاره (19)

It seems that he took this meaning from Labīd's verse

-
- (14) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 75b.
(15) Imru' ul-Qais, Dīwān 72.
(16) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 145b.
(17) 'Alī, Dīwān 34.
(18) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 65.
(19) Ibid 78b.

وما المال والأهلون إلا ودائعٌ ولا يد يوماً أن ترد الودائعُ (20)

or, perhaps, it is taken from al-Afwah al-Awdī

إما نعمة قوم متعة وحياة المرء ثوب ستار (21)

‘Umāra, bemoaning those days of his life which brought him trouble, said

أقصر لي ونكس من حياتي وقد أعتقني إلا صاب (22)

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Tihāmī had expressed the same thought before him

ليس من الحيران أن ليالياً تمر إلا صع ونكس من عمري (23)

‘Umāra's line

معو ان يحى السرى فكيف يحى القسراً (24)

is taken from ibn Abī Rabī‘a

قد عرفناه وصل يحى القمر؟ (25)

Sometimes ‘Umāra improves the meaning and adds to it, as he did to the verse of al-Nābigha

يا ملك شمس والملوك كواكب إذا طلعت لم يدمهم كوكب (26)

‘Umāra said here

لك الدرعد والملوك رعيبة تغاب قوماً تارة وتريب (27)

-
- (20) Labīd, Diwān 22. —
 (21) Al-Jurjanī, al-Wasāta V. 1/149.
 (22) ‘Umāra, Diwān Pet 8.
 (23) Al-Tihāmī, Diwān 105.
 (24) ‘Umāra, Diwān Pet. 68b.
 (25) Ibid 187.
 (26) Al-Nābigha, Diwān 25.
 (27) ‘Umāra, Diwān Pet 12.

There are many similar examples of other poets, for instance Samaw'al, 'A'shā, Abū Nuwās and ibn Zaidūn. (28)

III. The third influence in 'Umāra's poetry can be seen in the similarity between his techniques and subjects and those of Abū Tammām and al-Mutanabbī. Al-Buhturī, too, had a general influence on 'Umāra's poetry.

It might be reasonably asked if any of his contemporaries had any effect on his poetry. Al-'Abdī was 'Umāra's first teacher in poetry. He was with 'Umāra for a few days during his first attempt to write poetry, in an attempt to get 'Umāra to follow his advice. He also wrote 'Umāra's first poem for him which was declared as 'Umāra's own work. Al-'Abdī certainly did influence 'Umāra, but the extent of his influence is difficult to gauge because little is known of al-'Abdī's work. It is certain, however, that al-'Abdī was one of the members of the school which tried to uphold "Amūd al-Shi'r". He began most of his poems with "Ghazal" prelude, as 'Umāra tells us in recounting the poem which al-'Abdī wrote, describing the places from Zabīd to Aden, (29) in the same way as the Jāhiliyya poets used to

(28) 'Umāra, *Līwān* Pet. 35, 49, 61, 115, 134, 146b...

(29) Al-Janādī, *al-Suluk* MS. (Dep. 541).

do. The following is one of his poems in praise of al-Dā'ī 'Imrān ibn Muḥammad ibn Saba', which begins with "Ghazal"

(30) ذكر العديب وواثم رفاه وقف العواد على البر عبداه

On the other hand, al-'Abdī followed Abū Tammām's school in increasing "Badī'" in his poetry, as in his verses

(31) حياك يا مدبر الحيا حياك وعسى رحمت الماء فوجوه لماك
واقرت شر الودع فيه صاملاً بالشر، بوق ترك العواك
وست حدائقه عليك طارفاً فاحتمال في حداثا عطفاك

So al-'Abdī might well have sown the seeds of these techniques in 'Umāra's poetry.

As for the influence of al-Mutanabbī, this is almost automatic with nearly all the Arab poets who followed in his path. Most Arabic poets, in fact, were followers of al-Mutanabbī and they studied his works in an endeavour to write like him. 'Umāra was one of these. Anyone reading 'Umāra's poetry can readily see the influence of al-Mutanabbī. The spirit of al-Mutanabbī soars in 'Umāra's poetry, in self-confidence, boastful-

(30) Al-Shaibānī, Qurraṭ al-'Uyūn MS. 47.
(31) Ibid 48.

ness, pride and exaggeration. He used many of al-Mutanabbī's ideas and images and quoted some of his verses and phrases. The second hemistich of this verse, which is to Ibn Dukhān

فصدق مقال الناس في رثاقل «كلام العدا صرت من الهدمان» (32)

is the second hemistich of al-Mutanabbī's verse

ولله سرّي علوت واما كلام العدا صرت من الهدمان (33)

He quoted this verse of al-Mutanabbī

فكل مكان بيت المرطيب وكل امرئ يولي الخيل محب (34)

in these two verses

لئن شعفت عن القوايي حبه وكل امرئ يولي الخيل محب
 وان عرشواها وطاب نقره وكل مكان بيت المرطيب (35)

When 'Umāra praised al-Nāṣir ibn al-Ṣāliḥ in this verse

رى عائب الرساء حتى كأنما تساحيه من وط الدكاء عيوس (36)

he imitates closely what al-Mutanabbī said in praise of Saif al-Dawla al-Hamdānī

تجاوت عذار السخامة والهمى الى قول قوم ارت بالعب عالم (37)

In spite of the fact that al-Mutanabbī was proud of himself, he advised lovers to show humility to their

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- (32) 'Umāra, *Diwān* Pet. 192b.
 (33) Al-Mutanabbī, *Diwān* V. 4/473.
 (34) *Ibid* 1/209.
 (35) 'Umāra, *Diwān* Pet. 20b.
 (36) *Ibid* 36.
 (37) Al-Mutanabbī, *Diwān* V. 4/133.

beloved

تدلل لاد اصح على القرب والسوى مما عاشوه من لا يدل ويصح (38)

'Umāra agreed with him about this

لا تنكرا دل الاعره في الهوى ان المحبة دلة وصغار (39)

Al-Mutanabbī was very proud of his poetry, believing that time would sing its praises

روا الدهر الامن رواة تنكرا في ادا قلت شراً اصح الدهر منشداً (40)

'Umāra said in the same sense

سليتي من كل ان الكون يعط ما اقول وهي توارى واحار (41)

and said

رحلتي فيه ما يرضى وان امت وان سان الدهر بعض رواته (42)

There are many more examples in his *Dīwān*. (43)

As for the influence of Abū Tammām, it is not only in following Abū Tammām's method to fill his poetry with "Badī", (44) and using his thoughts and verses, 'Umāra went further than this, he actually wrote many poems in the same metre and rhyme of Abū Tammām's most famous ode which was written for the conquest of

(38) Al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān* V. 2/414.

(39) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 96b.

(40) Al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān* V. 2/16.

(41) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 103.

(42) *Ibid* 30b.

(43) *Ibid* 2, 7, 19, 21, 34b, etc.

(44) See this thesis p. 255-263

(‘Amūriyya) Amorium. Its prelude is

السيف اصدقه اساور من الكتب في حده الحديدين الحمد والعب (45)

The most important ode ‘Umāra wrote was the one he wrote in praise of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ. One can easily see the similarity between it and Abū Tammām's which ‘Umāra imitated according to the technique called "Mu‘ārada" in Arabic literature. It is a long ode (of 78 verses), which begins

اد اقدرت على العلماء بالعب وارتفع على سعي ولا طلب (46)

Abū Tammām wrote his ode in praise of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu‘taṣim (died 227/841) after the victory in the battle of "‘Amūriyya". And ‘Umāra wrote his ode in praise of al-Ṣāliḥ, the Fatimid Vizier, after the killing of the rebel Buhrām and the putting down of his revolt. So both of the odes have the same basis, containing the same themes of praise, war and bravery. ‘Umāra begins his ode with maxims, exactly as Abū Tammām did

واحتط بالسه العماد ما عمرت عن يدي الس الاشعار والمطلب
فما استوى الخط والخفي في وهم ولا الكتائب يوم الروع كالكتب
رع الهوينيا وان اصبحت الى تعب بك الماعي وان العرف في السعب

(45) Abū Tammām, *Diwān* V. 1/45.

(46) ‘Umāra, *Diwān* Pet. 9b.

After a few lines, Abū Tammām describes the battle, and while 'Umāra follows him in this, he passes into it through the praise of al-Ṣāliḥ, describing his courage, showing that he put his heavy chest upon Time, until Destiny lost its power. That is to say his people became the souls of doubt and uncertainty

القى الكفيل الوالغاب كللكه على الرمان فصاعنت حيلة البوب (47)
 ردا حلت العن الأيام حيلته حتى استراحت لغور الليل والريب
 بيت الدين والردى زحراً وتكرمة نكل قلب رهين العيب دارهف

'Umāra went on to praise the Ruzzik family, likening them to a quern turning round a pole

في نبتة من سي رر ان نسيم عن حاصيه رهي دارت على قطب
 قوزم اذا الحرب قامت سو قرا حلو من الغور البر العن الحلب

'Umāra used his ability to great advantage in describing the Ruzzik's horses, weapons and skill in battle and he emphasised al-Ṣāliḥ's pure Arab origin (of "عسان" Ghassān), high position in the Caliphate, his beautiful crown, his generosity, wisdom and bravery. He ended in the same way as Abū Tammām ended his ode, with "Du'ā'" to al-Mu'tasim, 'Umāra did it for al-Ṣāliḥ, saying

عاهدنا ملك الحسى التي قسمت من الحمير من ماضى ومرتعب
 ادا همت لك الايام فاطمة مما الرهاد بمقصور على رحف

(47) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 10.

There is no doubt that 'Umāra took much from Abū Tammām's ode, he obviously admired it and he might well have memorised it. When the opportunity arose of writing a great ode in praise of al-S̄alīh, he was naturally affected by it. 'Umāra employed many of Abū Tammām's vivid pictures, strong phrases and words. He ended 47 verses with rhymes from Abū Tammām's ode, and just as the portrayal of the battle by Abū Tammām was very much alive, so it was in 'Umāra's ode

كأن لمع المواصي في الفهم صواعق في الوحي تنفق من كبد
 مما تروع بلا الأرواح في صعد الاوتفقد في الاحكام في صيد

Most of the last verse is taken from Abū Tammām

القيت حدسي الإسلام في صعد والمشرية ودار الشرك في صيد

There are many verses or phrases like this, which 'Umāra borrowed from Abū Tammām.

2. His Creative Art.

In the Arabic language, creative art is expressed by many popular terms such as "Khalq", "lbdā", "Ibtikār", and others. Some Arab writers thought that there were some differences between them, while others thought that they were alike. Any difference, however, appears clearly in a discussion of their technical meanings.

First comes the creation of a new art form with new boundaries and techniques, for example the invention of "Muwashshah" in Arabic literature, or a branch of this art. For example, Ṣafīyy al-Dīn al-Hillī invented, "al-Muwashshah al-Mujannah" (the winged Muwashshah) or "al-Jinās al-Mujannah" (the winged homonym).⁽⁴⁸⁾

Secondly, the writers said that it is making something from nothing, the new ways of expressing originality in the creation of images and the expression of ideas. Bashshār, Abū Nuwās, Ibn al-Mu'tazz and ⁽⁴⁹⁾ Abū Tammām all showed creative powers, Abū Tammām wrote.

دارا اراد الله خير وسيلة طوبى لسان من حور

"If God wanted to reveal a virtue which had been hidden, he could easily provide the tongue of an envier to do it." ⁽⁵⁰⁾

Thirdly, is the creation of some great monument in art or literature, such as writing a perfect ode with a meaning near to perfection.

'Umāra did not have the good fortune to invent any

(48) 'Alwash, Ṣafīyy al-Dīn 232, 276.

(49) Ibn Rashīq, al-'Umda V. 2/183-188.

(50) Abū Tammām, Diwan V. 1/302.

new art form in Arabic literature, but he had much to offer in perfection of meaning and new ideas. A study of his available poetry will show that he wrote many excellent odes, such as his elegies to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, his two elegies to Ṣālah al-Dīn's father, most of his elegies to his sons, some of his eulogies to al-Ṣāliḥ and his relatives, and other eulogies to al-ʿAdīd, Shāwar, Shams al-Dawla, his ode to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn which is called (Shik-āyat al-Mutazallim) and his elegy to the Fatimid Caliphate, about which somebody said "Never has a better poem been written in honour of a dynasty after it has been destroyed."⁽⁵¹⁾ Almost everyone who reads them admits that they are excellent in their ideas, imagination, style, originality and strength. The virtues of these poems are extolled by most of the writers who wrote about ʿUmāra's poetry.⁽⁵²⁾ Analysis of these odes would be a useful study which would be proof of ʿUmāra's artistic experience and poetical technique.

As for the contrivance of meanings and ideas, his poetry is full of examples. Many of his biographers

 {51} Maqrīzī Khitat V. 2/392.

{52} Ibn KHallikān, Wafayat V. 1/568, Qalqashandī, Subh V. 3/533, ibn Hujja, Thamarat 22, ibn Wasīl Mufarrīj (Der: 611), sibt ibn al-Jawzī, Mirʿat V. 1, S. 8/302.

admired his verses and it is interesting to examine some of the verses which aroused admiration. 'Umāra said of Shāwar

صكر الحديد من الحديد وساء ور
حلف الرمان لبأيس مثلها
حي صر آل محمد لم يصغر
حننت عينك يا زمان فكفر

"Iron became weary from iron, and Shāwar did not tire (from the war) from helping the family of Muhammad. Time had sworn to find one like him (Shāwar), O, Time, your oath was unfulfilled, so you should make atonement." (53)

'Umāra portrayed Shāwar as a patient and brave hero in battle, because he continued fighting to bring victory to the Fatimid Caliph and never wearied when iron became weary. He was indeed unique. Time could not find one like him.

When Turkhān Salit was crucified, 'Umāra saw his body and said

اراد علو مرتبة وقدر
رمد على صليب الخد منه
فاصح فوق حدح وهو عالي
وكنس رأسه لئلا قلب
يميناً لا تطول الى شمال
رعاه الى الفؤاد والصلال

"He wanted a high position and degree, until he was raised on a tree. He was stretched on a cross, his right hand unable to reach his left. He bowed his head to lay the blame on the heart,

(53) Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya V. 12/259, Abū Shāma, Rawdatain V. 1/130.

which led him to commit error and go astray." (54)

Many Arab men of literature admired this fragment. (55)

The significance is that 'Umāra seemed to be looking forward to what would happen to himself in the future. He, too, bowed his head on a cross, but not to blame his heart, for it was the magic of his words which caused his downfall. It is this ominous quality which makes writers admire these verses so much. (56) Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ was full of admiration for them, and recited them from time to time, as he used to recite this verse

تَسْمُوا الْإِيَّامُ تَتَلَوُا قَتْلَهُمْ بِأَعْرَازِ السَّرْحِ رُوِيَ دَلَةُ الْفَتَى

"They (the enemy) mounted camels and followed their baggage.

O, glory of the saddle, try the abasement of camel-saddle." (57)

His three stanzas in description of the pyramids of Egypt were admired by both Eastern and Western writers, as was his description of the giraffe by al-Nuwairī who quoted three of its verses

وَلَا رَأْفَاتُ لَأَنْ رَحَا رِيَا نِي الْفُولِ الْوَيْتِ تَوْمِ السَّكْرَا
 مَوْسِيَةِ الْمَسَا تَرِيكُ مِنْ الْمَرَا رَوْقًا مِنْ نَزْلِ الْمَرَا رِي مَشْرَا
 حَبَلَتْ عَلَى الرَّحْفَاءِ مِنْ أَعْمَارِ فَتَحَى لِأَلْسِنَتِهِ نَشْرِي الْوَقْفَرَا

(54) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 156b.

(55) Al-Ṣafadī, Ghāith V. 2/179-180.

(56) Al-Murqīṣat MS. Fol. 76b, or 464.

(57) 'Umāra, Diwān Pet. 10b.

"There are giraffes in it, (the house), their necks look like flags, in length, leading an army. They are Nubian in origin, showing the beauty of the gazelle and the mouth of the fillies. They are created to squat from vanity, so you would think they moved backwards from pride." (58)

It might be said in criticism of these and other of 'Umāra's verses that the ideas they contain are not original, but this criticism is easily answered by modern Arab writers who contend that it is not necessary for a poet's ideas to be new. The real artist, they argue, is the one who can treat old ideas with his own imagination and experience. (59)

Many Arab and Western writers agree about this. Voltaire stressed the importance of style and technique, for these are what distinguishes one writer from another. Al-'Askarī thought that a new concept was of no great virtue on its own, but needed the technique of its creator to give it real significance. Some Arab linguists said that the inventor of a speech is the one who constructs it with suitable language and meanings. (60)

'Umāra's work fitted this description.

(58) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 77b.

(59) Al-Hakīm, *Fann al-Adab* 14-16.

(60) Al-'Askarī, *Ṣna'at al-Naṭṭ* 167.

It is interesting to examine the sources of 'Umāra's talent and the influence, both internal and external, which helped his talent to develop . 'Umāra undoubtedly had innate talent and this was supported by a sound education and wide knowledge. These factors gave him a firm basis for writing poetry, but were not sufficient on their own. A suitable environment and the urge and dedication to write poetry were of vital importance. 'Umāra found the necessary literary atmosphere in Aden, Zabīd and Egypt, in the circle of al-Dā'ī Muḥammad ibn Saba', the companionship of al-'Abdī and the literary gatherings of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ. There he met many poets and scholars. They used to read their own poetry, recite old Arabic poetry, make comparisons and criticisms.

These gatherings were of great value to 'Umāra and the lessons he learned there bore fruit later, beside providing incentive. Travel, which 'Umāra did frequently on business, and a constantly changing scene, gave 'Umāra a broad view of life. Another personal factor which had considerable effect on him, was the premature deaths of all his six sons, especially the eldest, Muḥammad, his elegies in lament of his sons are amongst some of the

best of 'Umāra's poetry. 'Umāra found much inspiration at the time of the Ayyūbids and at the time of the Fatimid Caliphs reign, but most of the poetry written at this time has been lost.

'Umāra was very fortunate to find assistance, encouragement and support from many patrons al-'Abdī, ibn Saba', Bilāl and his son Yāsir in Aden, al-Ṣālīḥ, his son (Ruzzīk), his brothers, Shāwar and his two sons, Dirghām, Tūrānshāh and others in Egypt. This patronage was essential to 'Umāra's development.

Competition was another factor in 'Umāra's life. There were many other well-known poets vying with him for fame, and prizes, when they were offered. 'Umāra often won first prize, particularly when he was in Egypt at the height of his fame. This led to jealousy amongst his colleagues. 'Umāra was ever ready to listen to criticism of his work by his friends and this helped him to improve his poetry. He explained this in his poetry when he said to 'Izz al-Dīn

وحدب شري قدوة دانستفاد

"His evaluation and criticism of my poetry improved it." (61)

(61) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 76.

'Umāra believed that criticism was essential to the progression of this poetical art, and to Fāris al-Muslimīn, he expressed its importance

قد كثرت الشعر وقل ما قد و انت اولى الناس بالسقاده

"Poetry became plenteous, but critics are scarce, and you are the most worthy critic of all." (62)

Many of his friends discussed the art of criticism with him, for example al-Sāliḥ, his son al-'Ādil, Fāris al-Muslimīn, 'Izz al-Dīn, Shāwar and Dirghām. Sometimes they suggested changing one word or phrase for another, while he was reciting his poetry. Dirghām once suggested that he should say "Ba'udat" instead of "Ghadarat" while he was reciting his ode in praise of 'Alī ibn al-Zubd. (63)

For this reason, 'Umāra gave much thought to his poetry and tried to make it as perfect as possible before it was read publicly. He said about his poetry

سبائك من مفعول الكلام وصره احاد النائي سبكها والتائق

"They are ingots of fine and pure speech, delicacy and improvement have made them perfect." (64)

(62) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 48.

(63) See this thesis p. 257.

(64) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 122b.

Most Arab writers were in agreement with 'Umāra's methods of making public his poetry.⁽⁶⁵⁾ 'Umāra, in this respect, followed Zuhair (ibn Abī Sulmā) and his school, whom the Arabic philologists regarded as typical "slaves of poetry" because of their excessive addiction to technique, as against the productions of the "poets by nature".⁽⁶⁶⁾

3. His Followers

When 'Umāra achieved fame as a poet, he was popularly acclaimed, his poetry was well-known and often recited. No doubt some of the Arab poets who came after 'Umāra's time were influenced by his poetry which they admired so much. So 'Umāra, like every famous poet and artist, had some students whose poetry was under his influence. Details of 'Umāra's followers are, however, lacking, the principal reason for this being that 'Umāra was out of favour with the government at the end of his life, which led to his execution. People naturally

{65} Al-Jāhīz, Bayān V. 1/210-214.
 {66} Gibb, 'Arabic Literature 20.

avoided reciting his poetry and poets were afraid to follow him in ideas or technique, or to show his influence in their poetry. Even so, there were still some who recited his poems, for instance Najm al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ibn Maṣāl, Abū al-Fawāris Murhaf ibn 'Usāma ibn Munqidh and Shams al-Dawla Tūrānshāh.⁽⁶⁷⁾ These men thus helped 'Umāra's poetry to become known further afield, especially as they were important figures in the Ayyūbid government.

Al-Malik al-Sāliḥ who used to show 'Umāra his poetry before he read it to his circle, asking 'Umāra to criticize it and give his opinion of it,⁽⁶⁸⁾ was probably one of the poets influenced by 'Umāra. Some verses of 'Umāra's are particularly well-known and have had considerable effect on later poets

ليت الكواكب بدولي ما تطير عبقود مع ما ارضيكم كلتي

"Would that the stars approach me, so that I can make necklaces of praise, because words do not satisfy me." (69)

'Abdul Ḥakam ibn Abī Ishāq al-Wafī (died 613/1216), said

عمادت امة ما كنت ا ما من كذا الو كند (70)

(67) Al-Imād, *Kharīda* MS. (Der. 397-398).

(68) 'Umāra, *al-Nukat*. 49.

(69) *Ibid* 159b.

(70) Ibn *Khallikan*, *Wafayāt* V. 1/14.

this verse is clearly taken from a verse of 'Umāra's

هل درى الديت ابي لى ورفقته ما سرت من حرم الا الى حرم (71)

Some ~~contemporary~~ Arab poets in Iraq have also been

influenced by 'Umāra's poetry. Ibn al-Furāt said

فأليوم عيد وهو في تصيغه عند طبع روضنا استرقاق

taking it from 'Umāra's verse

سؤال عندك ان رضيت واسما تصيف عند لي الاكتانة عيد (72)

This is taken exactly as it is

ووردنا كان لي غوراً على رضى ووردنا فوقه ما يد ريفه لي

from 'Umāra's verse

ووردنا اوحد اليا م بافترحت ووردنا عدم التائه للعدم (73)

Ibn Khallikān says that when al-Malik al-Zāhir Ghiyāth al-Dīn abū al-Fath ibn Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, the King of Halab (Aleppo) died in 613/1216, his poet Sharaf al-Dawla Rājih ibn Ismā'īl ibn Abī al-Qāsim al-Asadī al-Hillī (died 627/1230) lamented him in a fine ode which began

سل الخطاب ان اصحى الى من خامله من علقته اربا به و مخالسه

This ode is influenced, in some aspects, by 'Umāra's

-
- (71) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 159.
 (72) Ibid 40.
 (73) Ibid 159b.

elegy which was written at the death of al-Malik al-Sāliḥ

أبي اهل دار الادي عظيم اسائه طابى لمالي دانت اللب را حله

It seems as if Rājīḥ composed his ode after the manner of 'Umāra, because they are in the same metre (Tawīl), although the "Rawīyy" letters are different, 'Umāra's being "Lāmiyya" (ending with the letter "lām" (L)ل) and Rājīḥ's is "Bā'īyya" (ending with the letter "bā'" (B)ب). Rājīḥ has used al-Waṣl (Hā' al-Saḥ). The prosodists said that it just completes the sound of the rhyme in such poems.⁽⁷⁴⁾ It appears that Rājīḥ knew 'Umāra's ode and liked to imitate it to some extent.⁽⁷⁵⁾

However, we cannot be positive about the imitation of the poems despite a certain similarity of emotional content, due to the fact that the "Rawīyy" of Rājīḥ's ode is different from the "Rawīyy" of 'Umāra's, while they should be the same letter and the same "Ḥaraka" (vowel), if Rājīḥ really wanted to follow the literary art called "Mu'arada" or "Muḍāhāt". In addition to this, 'Umāra's ode (which has 78 verses) is longer than Rājīḥ's

(74) Sakkākī, Miftāḥ 271. Anīs, Musīqā 255.

(75) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt V. 3/178-183.

(which has 47), while the later one, in this art, is usually longer, the reason being that the later poet usually tries to show his ability to lengthen his ode. Perhaps Rājīh made these differences deliberately to show that he was not imitating 'Umāra.

4. His Importance

Arabs have always been lovers of literature and poetry in particular. Every tribe had its poets, who freely uttered what they felt and thought. Their unwritten words "flew across the desert faster than arrows and came home to the hearts and bosoms of all who heard them. (76) Every family liked to have a poet amongst its members

"When there appeared a poet in a family of Arabs, the other tribes round about would gather together to that family and wish them joy of their good luck. Feasts would be got ready, the women of the tribe would join together in bands, playing upon lutes, as they were wont to do at bridal, and the men and boys would congratulate one another, for a poet was a defence to the honour of them all, a weapon to ward off insult from their good name, and a means of perpetuating their glorious deeds and of establishing their fame for ever." (77)

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- (76) Nicholson, A Literary History 72.
 (77) Araberry, Arabic Poetry 2.
 Ibn Rashīq, 'Umda V. 1/37.

The importance of the poet in Arabic society may readily be appreciated and one can understand how happy 'Umāra was when he started to use his talent and when he found he could write good poetry. He showed it to his father, who was pleased with it, when he visited him in Zabīd, because he knew that his son, who was a famous jurispudent, would be a poet too. His talent grew and his fame spread, and he became one of the central figures in the Arabic literary world. He was welcomed by Caliphs, received by Viziers, and they were proud that he praised them. Many leaders and Princes desired his praise and gave him gifts for that purpose. (78)

'Umāra understood his position well and he hoped his poetry would be liked by everyone. His poems circulated through all Arabia and he was widely appreciated. Some of the most famous poets extolled his poetry, for instance al-Qādī al-Makīn 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn al-Husain ibn al-Habbāb al-Sa'dī (died 561/1165) who lauded him and commended his poetry in his absence, when 'Umāra heard this, he wrote a poem thanking him

وسأعد الرطراء صروداً ندىً وكنت لأبي عيسى حير حاصر

(78) 'Umāra, al-Nukat 134. Diwan Pet. 18, 119. Tārīkh 93.

"And you praised the quality of my poems and were the best attendant in my absence, for them." (79)

‘Umāra understood his importance well and became very proud of his poetry, talent and literary position. He used to say so in his poems, no matter for whom or what they were written. He likened his poems to brides, virgins, stars, flowers, jewels and pearls. He also used to compare himself with the greatest poets. He said in one verse that he was so full of literature, that if revealed, it would make him the equal of Ibn al-Muqaffa'. (80)

‘Umāra thought himself unique in his time, because Time itself suffered to produce him

تعب الزمان، عليّ حتى ما لي ورا وصدا ليس لي الطار (81)

He was always saying this, even at the time of the Ayyūbids when his attitude worsened

حتى كان بني أيوب ما علموا ما بي في رأي أجمع العرب

"As if the Ayyūbids did not know that I am the most eloquent Arab of my time." (82)

He went even further than this, saying that his poetry

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- (79) ‘Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 91b.
 (80) *Ibid* 117.
 (81) *Ibid* 98.
 (82) *Ibid* 24.

could immortalize those whom he praised for ever,
because it is really immortal

(83) *فدعتم له ما دام شعري فاصح* *سيفقى الى ان يصفى عمر الدهر*

Sometimes 'Umāra attached a deeper significance to his poems and thought that by praising Calamity, he would be spared

(84) *فصائد لوم دعت اللغات ربا* *لم تحم الا على قصدي وارتاري*

He thought that the abundance and fame of his poetry did justice to his great knowledge ('Ilm)

(85) *اصبت عند سوان ادى شاعرا* *والعلم تفسر سره الاشعار*

The range of 'Umāra's poems, written for many different occasions, illustrate the extent of his ability.⁽⁸⁶⁾ But just where does he stand in Arabic literature and what does he represent? Bashshār and Abū Nuwas, radicals in Arabic literature, Abū Tammām and al-Buhturī, leaders of new schools, and al-Mutanabbī, the most ingenious of Arab poets, all achieved distinction for their invention of new methods and techniques. But no-one would claim that 'Umāra should be ranked with

(83) 'Umāra, *Dīwān* Pet. 75.

(84) *Ibid* 96b.

(85) *Ibid* 98.

(86) *Ibid* 7, 26, 51b, 153, 157.

these. In fact he lived at a time of little development, when imitation and looking back to traditional Arabic literature for models, was considered right.⁽⁸⁷⁾ There is no doubt that ʿUmāra was, therefore, essentially classical both in his technique and themes, though he did follow some of the new artistic movements and the "Badī", with which he tried to enrich his poetry, was his own particular interest.

He avoided some of the main features of the Arabic "Qasīda", which was the description of the remains of ruined dwellings, and traces of their beloved (Aṭlāl),⁽⁸⁸⁾ together with sad memories of loved ones and tribal caravans, or travels with friends through the desert. ʿUmāra never did this, even though he followed the previous poets in writing Ghazal-prelude in many of his eulogies. His teacher, al-ʿAbdī, had begun the ode which he wrote instead of ʿUmāra with Ghazal-prelude. There is no doubt that ʿUmāra began quite a number of his praise odes with Ghazal, flowing smoothly from it into praise without any recourse to "Aṭlāl" or the

 (87) Daif, al-Fann Fī al-Shiʿr 379.

(88) Al-ʿAskari, al-Sinaʿatayn 452.
 Ibn Rashīq, al-ʿUmda V. 1/151.

journey on a camel or a horse from these places to the home of his patron, when "the poet is supposed to be travelling on a camel with one or two companions. The road leads him to the site of a former encampment or a friendly tribe.... he pursues his journey and seizes the opportunity to describe... the fine points of his long and dangerous journey which leads him to" (89) his destination, even when the poet was with his patron in the same city. 'Umāra avoided this rather illogical process.

We can hardly expect more from 'Umāra since he was primarily a panegyrist, whose poetry was in praise of Caliphs, Viziers and his friends, most of the features of this poetry are traditional in Arabic literature. Mandūr bemoaned the dominance of panegyric in Arabic poetry, which made it difficult for critics to determine the real spirit and feeling of the poets, and also left Arabic literature short of that sort of criticism common to the Western world. (90)

'Umāra, however, with his poetic ability, was able to make his panegyric interesting and full of life and

(89) Gibb, Arabic Literature 15-17.

(90) Mandūr, al-Naqd al-Manhaji 16.

vigour, with the result that he was continually in the demand of important personages. He avoided vagueness and complexities, so his *Dīwān* is noted for the simplicity of its language and the normality of its ideas. His poetry won high praise wherever it was recited. If it were not so, 'Umāra could not be ranked with the numerous great poets in the Fatimid Caliphate, nor be distinguished from them in any way.

'Umāra left his own country to go to Egypt when it was full of famous poets. Some were Egyptians, others were strangers come from other Arabic countries because they were attracted by the literary atmosphere. This was renowned for the generous grants and gifts which the poets were given by Caliphs, Viziers and leaders.⁽⁹¹⁾ Many of these poets achieved distinction, for instance Yūsūf ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Khallāl, the chief of "*Dīwān al-Inshā'*" (died 566/1171), 'Abdul 'Azīz al-Sa'dī, al-Muḥadhdhab 'Abdullāh ibn As'ad al-Mawṣilī (died 559/1164), al-Qādī al-Rashīd Ahmad ibn 'Alī al-Ghassānī (died 563/1167), his brother al-Hasan al-Muḥadhdhab (died 561/1165), 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Isā al-Azdī, ibn al-Ṣayyād Hibat allāh Badr

(91) Hasan, *Tārīkh al-Dawla al-Fāṭimīyya* 445-450.

and Yahyā ibn Ḥasan ibn Jabr.⁽⁹²⁾ 'Umāra was one of the 'brightest stars' amongst them, in spite of the fact that Arab poets wished to divide Arabia into districts to be allocated to individual groups of poets, their responsibility would be to cater for the needs of the great men of their district, and no strangers would be permitted to share with them.⁽⁹³⁾ So that when Abū Tammām himself wanted to go to Baṣra for this purpose, one of the poets in that area, 'Abd al-Ṣamad, wrote to him

امت به اثنته تصدوع السا من كلتها بوجه مدال
 نست نعل طابا الرجال من عيب او طابا لحوال
 اي ماء لما و جهك يفتى عددل الهوس و دل اسوال

When Abū Tammām read this poem, he decided not to go, saying "He can fill his area with his own talent, there is no place for me there."⁽⁹⁴⁾

This sort of thing happened many times in Iraq, Syria and Andalus. 'Umāra, on the other hand, who was originally known in Yaman, was able to go to Egypt and stay there amongst its poets because the range and quality of his poetry found favour with the country's leaders.

 (92) For more examples, see al-'Imāa, Kharīda, (Egypt).
 (93) Mandūr, al-Naqd al-Manhajī 131.
 (94) ṣūlī, Akhbār Abī Tammām 241-242.

Soon he achieved high literary status. In a few years he became known as the best poet in "Dīwān al-Shu'arā'", and the poetical advisor of al-Malik al-Sālīh.

When 'Umāra settled in Egypt, he mingled with the Egyptians, lived as one of them and followed their habits and conventions officially, socially and spiritually until he absorbed everything in their life and became affected by what was happening there, just as much as the Egyptian poets themselves.⁽⁹⁵⁾ So his poetry recorded most of the events which came to his notice, covering a wide range events.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Kāmil Husain mentioned some of the more important events. He told of the time when the Crusaders arrived in the district of "al-Hof" in Egypt at the time of al-Sālīh, who sent an army under the leadership of his son, al-'Adīl Ruzzīk, which was victorious, driving the Franks back and following them to Abū 'Urūq in Palestine. Many poets wrote in honour of this victory, but all is lost except 'Umāra's poem

(97) انت الذي يقدر الاسلام حميره عليه ان كل عطا او طرا رطير

It is a poem in which the poet explains the difficulties

(95) Husain, Fī Adab Mīsr 219.

(96) 'Umāra, Dīwān Pet. 9, 10, 12, 14, 15b, 18, 22, 38, 40, 45...

(97) Ibid 84b.

of the battle and how the leader was nearly killed and he was saved as if by a miracle

سما لك الدمت لما نلت سرية اهل حمرك على القدر والقدر
 روى تلك المواضي والقارنا اصحاها على ممان الغيب ينظر
 كان الرمان سم اللون والقصم له ما يملك الود صاع والعرر

Husain gives many examples of these events, (98) saying that some of the incidents in 'Umāra's poetry are described in detail, which even historians could not write. For this, 'Umāra's poetry was an important document. (99)

The social and moral value of his poetry are undeniable. 'Umāra portrayed not only everyday life, but also his own life, he explained his ideas, beliefs and passions in many different aspects of life he told what happened to him and his family, and gave particular emphasis to the death of his sons, one after the other, expressing his feelings and giving the causes of death which even the skill of the doctor could not cure. He traced his journeys from one country to another, giving the reasons why he left home and settled in Egypt. He wrote about the troubles which beset him here and there,

(98) Husain, Fī Adab Miṣr 234.

(99) 'Ibid 219.

such as what happened to him in "Qūs", (100) the burning of his house and the plundering of his furniture, his resignation from "Dīwān al-Shu'arā'" which later led to his death. There is no doubt that 'Umāra succeeded in depicting these incidents with clarity and depth of feeling.

'Umāra was Shāfi'ī in his sect, fanatical in his faith, but even so, he is a poet who expresses the Fatimid thoughts and the Ismā'īlī ideas and terms in his poetry. (101) He lived with these people, talked to their chiefs, scholars, jurists, dā'īs and poets, he attended their meetings and listened to their discussions. He was concerned in their life generally. His poetry naturally reflects this influence. (102) Actually he was not like al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī in this respect, but he was able to explain religious ideas in his poetry, which because of his skill in expressing them, pleased his patrons.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that 'Umāra was one of the pioneers of "Muwashshahs" in the East, and this, gives him great standing in the history of Arabic literature.

 (100) See this thesis P. 50-51.

(101) Ibid P 234.

(102) Husain, Fī Adab Mīsr 156, 220.

CONCLUSION.

‘Umāra is an Arabian Yamanī Qaḥṭānī poet, who was neglected for a long time, from the time he was executed until modern times. He was scarcely mentioned in most Arabic literary books, so he became nearly unknown in these days. The reason why researchers avoided him was that he was part of a plot to kill Ṣālah al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī, who is considered one of the great heroes in Islamic history. Historians have written very little about him and have not attempted to say whether his execution was just or not. Very few lines of his poetry were quoted by his biographers. It was not until more recent times that Derenbourg published his "Nukat", a selection of his poetry and a collection of his biographies, and Kay published his "Tārīkh". Only then did works essential for the study of ‘Umāra become available. Even with these works, it is difficult to give a complete picture of ‘Umāra and his poetry.

This thesis, then, does not claim to be a complete picture, but even so it is a first attempt to present ‘Umāra the poet in all his aspects. By collecting material from many different sources and fitting them together, it has been possible to establish a clear

picture of 'Umāra and his work, and also to see his place in the history of Arabic literature.

We know that he was one of the greatest poets of his time (the sixth A. H. century). He was born in Murtan, a small town in the Yaman, grew up among his people, the Qahtānī tribe, studied jurisprudence in Zabīd and acquired other knowledge. His poetic talent was revealed in Aden and his fame made complete in Egypt. He gained the admiration of the Caliphs, Viziers, Princes and the great people, so that he became a close friend of theirs and had the honour of praising them in his poetry.

He wrote in most of the poetical themes common to his time, and described practically every important incident in the Fatimid Caliphate when he became an official poet. His importance, then, was as a poet who could record in his poetry the various events which happened in his time. He represents the typical cultured poet of the age, because his poetry is full of different ideas, figures and terms of many kinds of knowledge, for instance, the Ismā'īlī ideas which appeared in his poetry while he settled in Egypt.

In addition to this, we have discovered that he was one of the pioneers of "muwashshah" in the East. Despite the unfortunate circumstances of his death, it is to be hoped that history might, one day, prove his innocence. It is to be hoped, also, that more of his poetry will be rediscovered, as so much is lost.

This study of 'Umāra is, then, in no way the perfect work, but it is a first step in a thorough and complete research into 'Umāra's poetry and into him as a person. Perhaps others may find in it the inspiration to examine other aspects of 'Umāra's work, such as jurisprudence and history.

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