

THE POETRY OF TAGHLIB

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the composition of this thesis is entirely my own work.

Fadi Ammar Saleh al-Ammary al-Dousary

ABSTRACT

The object of this thesis is to study the poetry of Taghlib from the earliest times until the end of the Umayyad period. No such study of the poetry of this tribe has previously been attempted, and we have attempted in the present work to establish what common features this poetry displays, and to discover how much continuity of themes and language there has been throughout the history of this tribe.

Part I is divided into two chapters, the first covering the history of Taghlib from the Jāhiliyya till the last decisive war between them and Qays. Particular attention has been given to their wars with Yemen, Bakr and Qays. This chapter shows how Taghlib lived in a state of continuous warfare which had a decisive effect on their tribal history. The second chapter deals with the relation of Taghlib with the Muslim rulers since their first delegation in 9 A.H./630 A.D. and how they resisted conversion to Islam, hence showing very little influence of the new religion in their poetry.

Part II. This part is divided into two chapters, the first a stylistic study and the second one of themes. A detailed attempt has been made here to analyse and discuss the whole accepted poetic material which belongs to Taghlib. It is hoped that the techniques used here offer a criterion for judging the authenticity of the poetry described as Taghlibī.

The second chapter consists of the main themes in their poetry. Its main characteristics are boasting and martial poetry, but individuals always had their own tastes. Thus we find poetry describing, for example, the horse, wine, oryx and the sand-grouse. They also had love poetry, albeit superficial, and elegy in their oldest poet, al-Muhalhil. In addition we find praise and satire. From their poetry we find that they

reflect purely bedouin attitudes, while expressing their own outlook which we find in proverbs and aphorisms.

Part III. This part is devoted to a study of the two major poets of Taghlib in the Jāhiliyya. The first chapter of this part is a detailed analysis of the poetry of al-Muhalhil. As his poetry has not been edited, the method adopted has been to study the one generally accepted poem to him and try to compare it with the rest of the poetry attributed to him. A thorough study of what the earlier critics have said about him and his poetry is an important aspect of this approach.

The second chapter in this part is "Some observations on the Mu^callaqa of ʿAmr b. Kulthūm". ʿAmr is an ancient poet and his famous mu^callaqa is disputed as to its beginning, Nasīb and length. Therefore, a detailed study is undertaken to decide whether its wine theme is an additional or an integral part of the poem, and whether its nasīb is traditional or reflects the poet's individuality. After a study of the themes of the mu^callaqa it is concluded that this long ode is no different *from* the other long odes which are known as mu^callaqa, and that there is no evidence that it was once much longer, as sometimes claimed.

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DEDICATION

Whether I have chosen literature (the craft of poverty/hīrfat al-faqr), or whether it is something which I could not avoid, the words of the poet may be quoted:

مشيناها حتى كتبت علينا ومن كتبت عليه خطي مشاها

We have followed steps which are destined to us, and the one who is destined to follow steps he has no way other than to follow them.

I might also quote the words of ʿĪliyā Abū Mādī:

جئت لا أدري ولكني أتيت ولقد أبصرت قدامي طريقا فمشيت

I came to the world without knowledge, but nevertheless I came, I saw a road in front of me and I followed it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is customary on the completion of a thesis to express oneself regarding the preparation and arrangement of one's material, and this is, therefore, an opportunity to thank Dr. M.V. MacDonald, my supervisor. It is not merely a matter of guidance and giving access to references, journals and other academic material, but it is also a matter of the relationship which he built during the research. He was present at all times, and always ready to help. Poetic material such as that of the Jāhiliyya and early Islam is not an easy study. Lines can be completely unclear or vague. Accounts and narratives are inconsistent and contradictory. Careful scrutiny and scrupulous reading is the only way to overcome these obstacles, not by observing the metre of the line, or the vocabulary which has an inappropriate meaning or seems corrupted, but by considering the subject matter, the author and the reference. This took time and time was always available when I needed it from Michael. He was friendly but critical, patient but a guide. From the beginning in 1980 until the last minute of this thesis, I was always disturbing him but he was always available.

Another person who is a colleague but at the same time a friend is Aḥmad Ṭāhirī, who without even being asked used to bring me references of which I was not aware. There are many different books on the Jāhiliyya and early Islam, but with the aid of Aḥmad I found myself obtaining most of them. A friend of books or a friend of the people, he is both of these.

There are many other people in this department at Edinburgh University and in its main library to whom I also owe gratitude.

My thanks to those whom I know and to those whom I do not know.

TRANSLITERATION

The method of transliteration adopted by the Department of Islamic and Middle Studies at the University of Edinburgh has been followed in this thesis.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abū ^cUbayda: Al-Ayyām
Kitāb Ayyām al-^cArab Qabl al-Islām

Abū ^cUbayda: An-Naqā'id
The Naqā'id of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, ed. by A.A. Bevan.

^cAfīf: Ash-Shi^cr wa Ayyām al-^cArab
Ash-Shi^cr wa Ayyām al-^cArab fī al-^cAṣr al-Jāhilī by ^cAbd
ar-Rahmān

al-Aghānī

al- Isfahānī, Al-Aghānī

Al-Akhfash al-Aṣghar: Al-Ikhtiyārayn
Kitāb al-Ikhtiyārayn

Al-Baghdādī: Khizānat
Khizānat al-Adab

Al-Bakrī: Al-Mu^cjam
Mu^cjam Mā-Ista^cjam

Al-Ghalāyīnī: Rijāl al-Mu^callaqat
Rijal al-Mu^callaqāt al-^cAshr

Al-Lisān

Ibn Manzūr, Lisān al-^cArab

Al-Mufaddaliyyāt (Lyll)

Al-Mufaddal b. Muḥammad, The Mufaddaliyyāt, ed. by
Charles James Lyall

- Al-Qādī al-Jurjānī: Al-Wasāṭa
Al-Wasāṭa Bayn al-Mutanabbī wa Khuṣūmih
- Al-Qālī: Al-Amālī
Kitāb al-Amālī
- Al-Qaysī: Aṭ-Ṭabī^Ca
Aṭ-Ṭabī^Ca fī ash-Shi^Cr al-Jāhilī
- Al-Qurashī: Al-Jamhara
Jamharat Ash^Cār al-Arab
- Al-Yazīdī: Al-Amālī
Kitāb al-Amālī
- An-Nuwayhī: Ash-Shi^Cr al-Jāhilī
Ash-Shi^Cr al-Jāhilī, Manhaj fī dirāsatih wa-taqwīmih
- An-Nuwayrī: Nihāyat al-Arab
Nihāyat al-Arab fi Funūn al-Adab
- As-Suyūṭī: Al-Muzhir
Al-Muzhir fi ^CUlūm al-Lugha wa Anwā^Cihā
- Aṭ-Ṭabarī: Tārīkh
Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī
- At-Tibrīzī: Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id al-^CAshr
Kitāb Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id al-^CAshr
- At-Tibrīzī: Al-Kāfī
Kitāb al-Kāfī fī al-^CArūd wa al-Qawāfī
- Brockelmann
Tārīkh al-Adab al-^CArabī

Bushrā al-Khatīb: Ar-Rithā'
Ar-Rithā' fī ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī wa Ṣadr al-Islām

Dīwān al-A^cshā
Gedichte von Abū Baṣīr Maimūn Ibn Qais al-A^cshā, Rudolf
Geyer

Dīwān ^cAmr
F. Krenkow, "Dīwān ^cAmr b. Kulthūm"

Dīwān an-Nābigha
Dīwān an-Nābigha adh-Dhubaynī

Dīwān Zuhayr
Sharḥ Shi^cr Zuhayr b. Abī Salma

Ghāzī: Al-Akḥṭal
Al-Akḥṭal Shā^cir Banī Umayya

Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih: Al-^cIqd
Al-^cIqd al-Farīd

Ibn an-Anbārī: Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id as-Sab^c aṭ-Ṭiwāl
Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id as-Sab^c aṭ-Ṭiwāl al-Jāhiliyyāt

Ibn al-Athīr: Al-Kāmil
Al-Kāmil Fī at-Tārīkh

Ibn al-Jarrāḥ: Risalat al-^cAmrīn
Risāla Fī Man Yusammā Min al-Shu^carā' ^cAmran

Ibn al-Kalbī: Al-Jamhara
Jamharat an-Nasab

Ibn al-Kalbī: Ansāb al-Khayl
Ansāb al-Khayl fī al-Jāhiliyya wa al-Islām

Ibn an-Nahhās: Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c
Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c al-Mashhūrāt

Ibn an-Nadīm: Al-Fihrist
Kitāb al-Fihrist

Ibn ash-Shajarī: Al-Amālī
Al-Amālī ash-Shajariyya

Ibn Dirhim: Nuzhat al-Abṣār
Nuzhat al-Abṣār bi Ṭarā'if al-Akhbār wa al-Ash^cār

Ibn Hazm: Al-Jamhara
Jamharat Ansāb al-Arab

Ibn Nubāta: Sarḥ al-^cUyūn
Sarḥ al-^cUyūn fī Sharḥ Risālat Ibn Zaydūn

Ibn Sa^cd: Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt
Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā

Ibn Sallām: Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt
Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā'

Jamharat Ibn Shabba
Ibn Shabba, Kitāb al-Jamhara

Jawād ^cAlī: Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-^cArab
Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-^cArab Qabl al-Islam

Ma^cāhid at-Tanṣīṣ
Ma^cāhid at-Tanṣīṣ ^cAlā Shawāhid at-Talkhīṣ

Mālik: Al-Muwaṭṭa'
Mālik Ibn Anas, Muwaṭṭa' Mālik

Qabāwa: Al-Akhṭal

Al-Akhṭal al-Kabīr

Shukrī Fayṣal: Taṭawwur al-Ghazal

Taṭawwur al-Ghazal Bayn al-Jāhiliyya wa Ṣadr al-Islām

Trimingham: Christianity among the Arabs

Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times

Yāqūt: Al-Mu^cjam

Mu^cjam al-Buldān

INTRODUCTION

The pre-Islamic period, the Jāhiliyya, is a well studied subject, the various aspects and features of its literature having attracted the attention of many scholars. However tribalism, that is the tribe's function as a unit, has until recently suffered neglect despite its critical role in that literature. It is particularly to be regretted that a tribe such as Taghlib, whose members are said (albeit somewhat dubiously) to have been the first to compose the long qaṣīda or indeed poetry in general, and whose poetry played such an important function in the history of the tribe have been so neglected except for the mu^callaqa of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm and al-Akhtaḷ.

Taghlib was a tribe whose natural environment was conflict and whose predominant ethos was love of warfare. Indeed the reason for them having acquired the name "Taghlib", which implies conquest, may be found in the situations in which they were involved during the Jāhiliyya and which continued under Islam. Wherever Taghlib moved they always acknowledged their desert roots and were always regarded as bedouins even in the Umayyad period. Their bedouin or tribal background provided the great motifs for their poetry, particularly the martial poetry, into which category ^{their} pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic poetry can be placed.

As a branch of Rabī^ca, Taghlib played a prominent role in the composition of Arabic poetry in Islam, just as their famous predecessors had done before Islam. In Islam they maintained their role as poets through their well known exponents, Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl, al-Akhtaḷ and al-Quṭāmī, whose poetry contributed to conflicts such as Ṣiffīn or clashes between Taghlib and Qays. This encourages the general impression that their poetry is a poetry of war.

Tribalism as a subject of research, from the point of view of critical analysis of its poetry, has rarely been studied in its role as instigator and patron of this literary form. Most studies have confined themselves to the historical dimension, the relations between the tribes, or what is known among scholars as ʿaṣabiyya, the tribal spirit. Jāhiliyya literature is a field which has attracted many modern scholars, but, by and large, the direction of their studies has tended to thematic and stylistic approaches to the body of literature as a whole. On the other hand some scholars have devoted much energy to the investigation of particular points, either in an individual poet or in a very specific area.

The tribe of Taghlib being a unique entity in the history of tribalism certainly deserves closer study, in particular in respect of their literature. They were bedouins and mostly remained Christian, unlike other large tribes who had converted to Islam during its initial period of expansion throughout Arabia. Moreover they were constantly engaged in conflict with many large tribes such as Bakr and Qays, in addition to their long feuds with Yemen.

Their poetry is an integral part of their history and reflected their feelings, attitudes and thinking, while expressing a particular tribal view of society and life. It is clear that their history shaped their poetry and it is not surprising to find that in the Islamic period one of their poets, al-Akhtal, expresses his own character which finds its roots within the tribe and at the same time within Jāhiliyya poetry in general.

The most recent studies on the Jāhiliyya with reference to Taghlib are Ḥarb al-Basūs, which is an M.A. thesis (1970) by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Nabawī at the University of Cairo, and Ash-Shiʿr Wa Ayyām al-Arab by ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ʿAfīf, a Ph.D. thesis (1971) also in Cairo, from both of which the present

thesis has benefited. It has also benefited from certain other studies in which efforts are made to analyse the very nature of the poetry itself, and to characterise its most particular features in an attempt to find those traits and particular features which are their hallmarks. In particular we should mention Ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī by Sayyid Ḥanafī (Cairo 1981) and Ar-Rithā' by Bushrā al-Khatīb (Baghdad 1977).

This thesis has paid particular attention to al-Muhalhil, whose poetry serves as the best basis for a study of the orally transmitted heritage of the Jāhiliyya era. In this part of my study (Part III), I have been indebted to ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī, a study by Dr. M. an-Nuwayhī (Cairo 1970), which provides a model for approaching Jāhiliyya poetry.

^cAmr b. Kulthūm's mu^callaqa is one of the seven, or ten, mu^callaqāt, which have attracted the attention of nearly all scholars. ^cAmr's mu^callaqa with its unusual opening has always been regarded as being very traditional in form. I have analysed its nasīb (Chapter II B) in an attempt to discern the persona of the poet and to discover the relationship between its parts, as a result of which it has proved possible to establish that it is a poem composed by one poet in specific circumstances. This psychological approach is fairly recent in its application to Jāhiliyya literature. Y. al-Yūsuf in his two studies, Buhūth fī al-Mu^callaqāt (Damascus 1978) and Maqālāt fī ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī (Damascus 1980), adopted this approach in his analysis of the mu^callaqāt, but had reservations in studying the mu^callaqa of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, leaving this subject for others to complete.

Among the many problems encountered in this study, for example the history and nature of the nasīb as a poetical form, the most vexing was the establishing of the authenticity of the poetry and its attribution to Taghlib. As there is so often in the older sources a confusion between Taghlib and

Tha^c lab, considerable effort has been required to determine real authorship, but with the aid of certain techniques, for which I am partially indebted to the above named scholars, it is hoped that the problems have been overcome. The establishing of authenticity naturally depends on selecting those reliable sources which are generally accepted by scholars.

A work which is particularly worthy of mention is the study of I. Hāwī, al-Akhtal (Beirut 1979), which casts much light on this great poet whose role in the poetry of Taghlib is very significant.

As all aspects of the poetry of Taghlib are interrelated with others, it has been deemed necessary to indicate the characteristics which shape the poetry of Taghlib. The Ayyām are dealt with in the first chapter which provides a necessary introduction to the background of Taghlib and shows how history influenced their life. This is continued in Chapter II, which deals with the history of Taghlib under Islam.

The third chapter, which deals with stylistics, will, it is hoped, draw attention to particular features which appear as a result of critical reading and analysis of the poetry itself. This may provide a viable way of establishing criteria by which one may authenticate and assess poetry belonging to an era in which the oral tradition was the exclusive literary form. Thereafter the study proceeds to a discussion of themes in Taghlibī poetry, and concludes with the above-mentioned study of two poets, al-Muhalhil and ^cAmr b. Kulthūm.

This study has attempted in its investigation of Taghlibī literary history to find the links between two markedly different periods, the Jāhiliyya and Islam. The continuity is marked, for there is no clear demarcation line in the character of the tribe, who until well into the Islamic period

remained Christians and bedouins.

Finally, it is hoped that this research, within the limits which it sets itself, will be a useful contribution to our knowledge of the Jāhiliyya and early Islamic poetry, and offer a clearer idea of the role of Taghlib in establishing themselves as a unique and independent tribe.

PART I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TAGHLIB

Chapter 1: Taghlib in History

Chapter 2: Taghlib and Islam

CHAPTER 1

TAGHLIB IN HISTORY

1: The Tribe

a) Genealogy

Taghlib is said to be a branch of Rabī^Ca, a branch of Nizār b. Ma^Cadd b. ^CAdnān. Taghlib were called Taghlib bint Wā'il. The main branch of Taghlib is al-Arāqim and there are other branches such as Banū Ka^Cb, Banū Sa^Cd, Banū ^CAwf and Banū Tha^Claba.¹

Various theories have been advanced to explain the origin of the name itself. According to Ibn Ḥazm, Taghlib is the nickname of the forefather of the tribe whose real name was Dithār.² However, W.R. Smith in his book Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia observes "the gender shows that the tribal name existed before the mythical ancestor was invented".³ Nöldeke thinks that "such a distinctly verbal name as Taghlib is originally a collective expression which describes the whole tribe as victorious".⁴

However, the present study is not concerned with the problem of Arab tribal origins, and it is sufficient here to point out that the Arabs held to the first theory, which refers this name to a person named Dithār, who was called for some

1. Ibn Ḥazm, al-Jamhara, pp.9-10, 292-3, 295, 300, 302-7; Kindermann, "Taghlib", EI¹ Supp., p.223.

2. Ibn Ḥazm, al-Jamhara, p.302; al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyal), v.I, pp.705-711.

3. W.R. Smith, Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia, p.14.

4. Nöldeke, "Robertson Smith's Kinship and Marriage etc.", ZDMG XL, p.169.

reason Taghlib.

There are other different tribes with the same name, the most famous one being Taghlib bint Hulwān, a Yemenite tribe.¹ All Taghlibites referred to themselves by the name of the tribe, while their kinsmen Bakr used to use the name of the branch of Bakr to which they belonged rather than the name of the tribe itself. The reason for this is said to be that Bakr was regarded as a jumjuma while Taghlib were not.²

b) Religion

When Islam came Taghlib were Christians belonging to the Jacobite sect.³ They had been pagans like other tribes before they were converted to Christianity,⁴ and most of them adhered to Christianity long after the advent of Islam.⁵ Their main religious centre was Dayr Mār Sarjīs⁶ (the Monastery of St. Sergius), a name which was coupled with that of the cross itself during their wars. Thus al-Akhtal says:

لَمَّا رَأَوْنَا وَالصَّلِيبَ ظَالِمًا وَمَارَ سَرْجِيْسَ وَسَمًا نَاقِعًا

رجز

When they saw us, and the cross appearing,
and Mār Sarjīs and steeped venom.⁷

1. Ibn Hazm, al-Jamhara, pp.450-3.

2. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-Iqd, v.3, pp.284-5. The word jumjuma (skull) implies a large tribal grouping which is subdivided into a number of smaller tribal units.

3. Tringham, Christianity among the Arabs, p.174.

4. Kinderman, "Taghlib", EI¹ Supp., p.244.

5. Ibid.

6. Tringham, Christianity among the Arabs, p.236.

7. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.744.

c) Origins

According to the Arab historians, Taghlib were living with other tribes in Mecca and the region of al-Ḥijāz.¹ Afterwards they moved towards the east and the north-east where they were found in the highlands of Najd. They then moved towards Iraq and established their settlements in the area which is known as Diyār Rabī^ca in al-Jazīra, particularly in al-Mawṣil, Naṣībīn, Qarqīsiyā and Sinjār. Some of them were to be found outside al-Jazīra in such places as ^cAyn at-Tamr, Manbij, Qinnasrīn and ar-Ruṣāfa.² In addition some of them were forcibly moved to parts of Iran during the reign of Shāpūr II (309-379 A.D.) and were settled in Ahwāz, Kirmān and Tawwaj.³

2. Wars (Al-Ayyām)

A. Wars with Yemen

We are not certain about the period in which the events to be discussed below took place, nor are we sure of their authenticity. The available materials which refer to the history of the Arabs in the middle and the north of the Arabian Peninsula do not give many details about them and in addition these materials come to us through oral traditional narratives which were not written until late in the second century.

This period needs further investigation and research

1. Al-Azraqī, Akhbār Makka, pp.81-90, 93-4, 96-100; Abū Ḥanīfa ad-Daynawarī, al-Akhbār at-Ṭiwāl, pp.8-9.

2. Al-Bakrī, al-Mu^cjam, v.1, pp.88, 335; v.4, pp.1109, 1337; Yāqūt, al-Mu^cjam, v.1, pp.112-3; Kindermann, "Taghlib", EI¹ Supp., p.223.

3. At-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, v.2, pp.56-61; Kindermann, "Taghlib", EI¹ Supp., p.223.

which will need mainly to depend on an examination of inscriptions and a comparison of the different accounts in order to elucidate the real situation of the so-called Ma^Caddite tribes in that area. Furthermore, it will be necessary for any research to take into consideration the relationship between the north-east of the Peninsula and the Persian court. In addition to this we need to determine the extent of Yemeni domination over the Ma^Caddite tribes, which will depend on the discovery of new inscriptions, and to establish the role of the two rivals in the north, the Lakhmids and the Banū Ghassān.

From Arab historical sources it would seem that Yemen had had a certain degree of jurisdiction over all the Ma^Caddite tribes. For present purposes we shall give a general survey of the relevant events and will exclude any poetry involved until the battle of Khazāz which at least is accepted among the historians as a decisive battle, as a result of which the main confrontation was no longer between Ma^Cadd and Yemen but between the constituent elements of Ma^Cadd themselves.

Taghlib was a warlike people, as was normal for a tribe who led a nomadic life, and they refused to be subdued or suppressed. When the Yemenite rulers tried to subdue the northern or Ma^Caddite tribes by force they always rebelled, although they acknowledged that Yemen had a certain degree of sovereignty over them. These northern tribes, of whom Taghlib were one, consented to pay tribute to Yemen, in order to keep Yemen away from their internal affairs.¹ Sometimes Yemen had rulers who were aggressive or authoritarian. This led to bad relations between the South and the North, who waged war after war against Yemen in order to maintain their autonomy. Yemen seems to have had the upper hand at first,

1. Abū Hanīfa ad-Daynawarī, al-Akhbār at-Tiwāl, p.52; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, pp.368-9; an-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.5, p.420; Jawād ^CAlī, al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tarīkh al-Arab, v.4, pp.493-4.

but later they weakened, and finally broke at the battle of Khazāz.

There was a series of wars which could be said to have begun with the battle of al-Baydā', about the middle of the fourth century, which was fought against Madhhij who were clients of Yemen and ended in their defeat.¹ However the real wars between Yemen and the northern tribes took place when Rabī^c a b. al-Hārith of Taghlib became the chieftain of all the Ma^caddite tribes after a vigorous campaign by the Yemenite governor, Zuhayr b. Janāb al-Kalbī,² who captured his sons Kulayb and al-Muhalhil.

After this Rabī^c a lost the battle of Jurād against Yemen, who were led by their king Zayd b. Marabb. The cause of this battle was the arrogance of a Yemenite governor named Hānī; when Hānī was drunk and his she-camel disappeared in the night because her guard was asleep, he insisted on riding on the back of one of the Taghlibites instead of on their camels. As a result of this they killed him.³ Taghlib and the tribes of Rabī^c a lost another battle, called Dhāt al-^cUrr, against Yemen under the leadership of King Duwayla b. Abī Duwayla ash-Shibāmī, which took place because Rabī^c a killed the latter's father who was their governor.⁴

At this period the tribe of Kinda comes to prominence as representative of the Yemeni kingdom in the north and de facto rulers. The Yemenite king appointed a governor named ^cAmr b. ^cUnq al-Lihya to rule Ma^cadd, who in turn appointed a deputy named Labīd b. ^cAnbasa al-Ghassānī, both of them being

1. An-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.15, p.397; Jurjī Zaydān, al-^cArab qabl al-Islam, p.254; Jawād ^cAlī, al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-^cArab, v.5, pp.345-6.

2. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, pp.368-9.

3. Al-Hamdānī, al-Iklīl, v.10, pp.12-13.

4. Ibid., pp.92-5.

subordinate to Sulayma b. al-Hārith al-Kindī. Labīd married a Taghlibī woman named Zahrā' bint al-Hārith, but began to act in dictatorial fashion. The Rabī^ca tribes refused to pay tribute and declared their defiance. Labīd then hatched a secret plot with al-Lihya and Sulayma against them, but having learned of this Kulayb killed him, for this reason and also because of his beating Zahrā'. The battle of as-Sullān then took place (c. 481 A.D.); the chief of Rabī^ca was killed, but Ma^cadd was victorious because of the leadership of Kulayb, who was chosen as chieftain in his place. The battle of as-Sullān is mentioned in these lines of al-Muhalhil:

لَو كَانَ نَاهِ لَابْنِ لِحْيَةَ زَاجِرٌ لَنَهَاهُ عَنَّا وَقَعَةَ السُّلَّانِ
اللابد If any restraint could curb Ibn Lihya, the
battle of as-Sullān would have curbed him from us.¹

أَضْحَتْ مَنَازِلُ بِالسُّلَّانِ قَدْ عَمِرَتْ تَبْكِي كَلْبِيَا وَلَمْ تَفْرَعْ أَقَامِيهَا
البريد The Dwelling-place in as-Sullān came to be
flourishing weeping for Kulayb, and their far
reaches were without fear.²

Yemen tried to seek revenge and initiated a battle at Dhū Urāt and another at ath-Thaniyya, but Ma^cadd won both of them. ^cAmr b. Kulthūm boasts of this victory in the following line:

وَنَحْنُ الْحَابِسُونَ بِذِي أَرَاطِي تَسِفُ الْجِلَّةُ الْخُورَ الدَّرِينَا

And we are they who kept their camels at Dhū Urāta,
while the old large camels, and the she-camels
abounding in milk, were eating withered grass.³

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.7a; Abū Hanīfa ad-Daynawarī, al-Akhbār at-Tiwal, pp.52-3.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.20a.

3. Ibid., f.6a; Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.660; al-Bakrī, al-Mu^cjam, v.3, p.749.

There was another battle won by the Ma^c addites called al-Kulāb, which is often confused with the al-Kulāb which took place after the death of al-Hārith al-Kindī. This confusion occurred because Sulaymā, son of al-Hārith, and as-Saffāḥ at-Taghlibī took part in both of them.¹

The most important battle was called Khazāz. This brought the end of Yemenite sovereignty and Ma^c add gained permanent independence from Yemen. Yemen gathered all their troops and equipment and attempted to launch a sudden attack on Ma^c add, particularly Rabī^c a, in Najd, in an attempt to defeat them and their leaders, Taghlib, and to suppress their revolt. When Kulayb learnt of their plans, he distributed the tribes among his bravest leaders and ordered as-Saffāḥ b. Khālid at-Taghlibī to light a fire in Khazāz, and, if the enemies attacked, to light two fires. As-Saffāḥ boasted of this in these lines:

<p>هديت كتابا متحيرات سهاد القوم اهنسب هادييات ولخم بالسيوف مشهيرات</p>	<p>وليلة بت اوقيد في خزازي ظلمن من السهاد وهن لولا فكن مع الصباح على جذام</p>
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One night when I was kindling a fire in Khazāz, I was in charge of hesitating garrisons.

They went astray because of sitting up awake, and I think they would reach their aim if people did not sit up.

They attacked Judhām and Lakhm at morning, brandishing our swords.

^cAmr b. Kulthūm also boasts of this battle in these lines of his mu^callaqa:

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f. 6a ; an-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.15, p.303. See below p.

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<p>رَفَدْنَا فَوْقَ رَفْدِ الرَّافِدِيِّنَا وَكُنَّا الْأَيْمَنُ بِهَا صُفُوفًا وَعَمَلْنَا عَوْلَةً فِيمَنْ يَلِينَا وَأَبْنَا بِالْمُلُوكِ مَصْفَدِينَا</p>	<p>وَنَحْنُ غِدَادَةٌ أُوقِدَ فِي خَزَازِي وَكُنَّا الْأَيْمَنُ بِهَا صُفُوفًا فَصَالُوا صَوْلَةً فِيمَنْ يَلِينَا فَأَبَوْا بِاللَّهَابِ وَالسَّبَايَا</p>
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And we, on the day on which the fire of war was kindled in Khazāz, helped the tribe of Nizār above the help of the helpers.

And we were the right wing of the army when we met the enemy; and the sons of our father were the left wing.

They attacked whoever approached them, and we attacked whoever approached us.

The returned with plunder and with captives, and we returned with fettered kings.¹

B. War with Bakr

1. The al-Basūs War

This was the most savage and cruel war in which Taghlib was involved, and it lasted for a long period, which is said to have exceeded forty years. This fratricidal war between Bakr and Taghlib caused a great amount of harm and damage to both. It was not surprising that it was Shaybān, a branch Bakr, who began hostilities. They had lost many interests when Rabī^c a became leader and was succeeded by his son, Kulayb, above all as they lost their own status as leaders.²

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Ḥarb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.10b; Abū^c Ubayda, an-Naqā'id, v.2, pp.1093-5; Abū^c Ubayda, al-Ayyām, pp.379-83; Ibn an-Nahḥās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.660-1; Ibn^c Abd Rabbih, al-Iqd, pp.97-8.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.2a.

The two tribes, Taghlib and Shaybān, had had some relationship by marriage,¹ but there had already been some indications that something disastrous would happen. Kulayb was very proud and ostentatious because he had become leader of all the Ma^caddite tribes, having obtained their independence for them at Khazāz, and he began to misuse his power. In particular he had a spacious himā* (a tract of pastureland reserved for the owner's family) known as Himā Dariyya. It is said that he used to have with him a pet dog - from whom he got his name, as his real name was Wā'il - and he let him wander around throughout the himā. Sometimes, if he saw shepherds at wells, he sent the pet to bite them. He gave protection to many things such as clouds, birds, wild animals, etc;²

Now it happened that Kulayb, seeing a lark's nest as he walked on his land, said to the bird, which was screaming and fluttering distressfully over her eggs, "Have no fear, I will protect thee". But a short time afterwards he observed in that place the track of a strange camel and found the eggs trodden to pieces. Next morning when he and Jassās visited the pasture ground, Kulayb noticed the she-camel of Sa^cd among his brother-in-law's herd, and conjecturing that she had destroyed the eggs, cried out to Jassās, "Take heed thou, Take heed, I have pondered something and were I sure, I would have done it! May this she-camel never come here again with this herd". "By God", exclaimed Jassās, "but she shall come" and when Kulayb threatened to pierce her udder with an arrow, Jassās retorted, "By the stones of Wā'il, fix thine arrow in her udder

1. Al-Mubarrid, at-Ta^cāzī wa al-Marāthī, p.290.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.140; Abū Tammām, al-Hamāsa (Freytag), p.420; Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, p.56.

* For more details about Himā see, Chelhod, J., EI⁴, "Himā", p.393.

and I will fix my lance in thy backbone". Then he drove his camels forth from the hima. Kulayb went home in a passion, and said to his wife, who sought to discover what ailed him, "Knowest thou any one who durst defend his client against me?" She answered, "No one except my brother Jassās, if he has given his word". She did what she could to prevent the quarrel going further, and for a time nothing worse than taunts passed between them, until one day Kulayb went to look after his camels which were being taken to water, and were followed by those of Jassās. Kulayb saw a strange young camel in his hima which he killed. On another day when their camels were waiting their turn to drink, Sa^cd's she-camel broke loose and ran towards the water. Kulayb imagined that Jassās had let her go deliberately, and resenting the supposed insult, he seized his bow and shot her through the udder. The beast lay down, moaning loudly, before the tent of Basūs, who in vehement indignation at the wrong suffered by her friend, Sa^cd, tore the veil from her head, beating her face and crying, "O shame, shame". Then addressing Sa^cd, but raising her voice so that Jassās might hear, she spoke these verses, which are known as "The Instigators" (al-Muwaththibāt):

"O Sa^cd, be not deceived, Protect thyself,
This people for their clients have no care.
Look to my herds, I charge thee, for I doubt, even
my little daughters ill may fare,
By the life, had I been in Minqar's house,
Thou wouldst not have been wronged, my client,
there,
But now such folk I dwell among that when
The wolf comes, 'tis my sheep he comes to tear."

Jassās was stung to the quick by the imputation, which no Arab can endure, that injury and insult might be inflicted upon his guest-friend with impunity.¹

Jassās tried to hold himself back but threatened that he would kill ^CUlayyān, Kulayb's famous camel, in revenge,² perhaps really meaning that he would kill Kulayb himself. A great tension and many suspicions and doubts arose between the two.³ When he heard Jassās's threats, Kulayb went further in provoking the family of Murra, father of Jassās, and barred them from coming near the wells of al-Aḥaṣṣ, Shubayth and al-Jarīb.⁴ Watering is very important for bedouins, and it seems likely that Shaybān allowed Jassās to slay Kulayb deliberately. This can be observed in Murra's off-handed and insulting reply to the Taghlibī delegation who came to demand justice: "Jassās is a reckless and rash young boy. He stabbed and flew off on his horse; by God, I do not know in which country he has been. Hammām as you know is a father of ten and uncle of ten. If I give him to you, they will come against me. As for myself, I will soon die when battle is joined. I will give a blood-wit."⁵ It may also have been that there was some incitement on the part of Yemen or of their clients, Kinda.

In any case, Jassās "having ascertained that Kulayb had gone out unarmed, he followed and slew him" with the assistance of his cousin ^CAmr and both fled in haste to their

1. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.141; Abū Tammām, al-Ḥamāsa (Freytag), pp.421-2; Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, pp.56-7.

2. Abū Tammām, al-Ḥamāsa (Freytag), p.422.

3. Abū ^CUbayda, an-Naqā'id, v.2, p.905; al-Mubarrid, at-Ta^Cāzī was al-Marāthī, p.293.

4. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.141.

5. Ibid., v.4, p.143.

own people.¹ Kulayb is said to have been murdered in al-^CAqr, as we see in al-Muhalhil's line:

وقال الحى أين دفنتموه
ف قيل له بسفح الحقر دار

الوافر

The tribe asked: where did you bury him (Kulayb)?
They were told that he was in the sloping ground
at al-^CAqr.²

This tragedy shocked some Ma^Caddite tribes who thought of Kulayb as a saviour. Some remained neutral and some became supporters of Taghlib, like an-Nimr, ^CAqīl and Ghufayla. Some on the other hand supported Shaybān, for example, ^CAnaza and Dubay^Ca.³

Taghlib could not take an immediate step in reprisal after Murra's reply because, as is habitual in such incidents, the nearest relatives must ask for their rights first. The eldest among Kulayb's brothers was al-Muhalhil, who seemed to be upset and confused because Kulayb was his patron. Al-Muhalhil started to take action after rebukes and reproaches.⁴ He became leader of Taghlib and began to attack Shaybān savagely. There were many skirmishes between them and different battles of which Taghlib won most. Those which were won by Taghlib were Wāridāt, an-Niḥy, Ḍariyya, al-Qaṣabāt (al-Quṣayba), ^CUwayriḍ, and another one also at ^CUwayriḍ. Bakr won one at al-Ḥinw (Ḥinw Qurāqir). There was another at ^CUnayza, which neither side won, which is mentioned in the following line of al-Muhalhil:

1. Al-Aghānī, v.4, pp.141-2; Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, p.57.

2. Al Bakrī, al-Mu^Cjam, v.3, pp.949-50.

3. Ibid., v.1, p.85.

4. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.34a; al-Aṣma^C iyyāt, p.174.

كَأَنَّآ غَدَوَةٌ وَسِنَى أَبِينَا
بِجَوْفِ عَنِينِزَةٍ رَحِيَا مَدِيرِ

At early morning we and the sons of our father are like the two millstones of a grinder beside ^cUnayza.¹

There were also minor skirmishes between them at al-Aḥaṣṣ, Himrān, at-Taghlamān, Fuṭayma, aṣ-Ṣi^c āb and other places.²

It was hardly to be expected that the whole of Bakr would remain inactive while their relatives Shaybān were being reduced to dire straits. Shaybān sent various appeals for help because Taghlib was trying savagely to destroy them.

Hārith b. ^cUbād a famous knight of Bakr, had refused to take part in the contest, saying in words which became proverbial, "I have neither camel nor she-camel in it" i.e. "it is no affair of mine". One day his nephew, Bujayr, encountered Kulayb's brother, Muhalhil, on whom the mantle of the murdered chief had fallen; and Muhalhil, struck with admiration for the youth's comeliness, asked him who he was. "Bujayr" said he "the son of ^cAmr, the son of ^cUbād". "And who is thy uncle on the mother's side". "My mother is a captive" (for he would not name an uncle of whom he had no honour). Then Muhalhil slew him, crying "pay for Kulayb's shoe-latchet". On hearing this, Hārith sent a message to Muhalhil in which he declared that if vengeance were satisfied by the death of Bujayr, he for his part would gladly acquiesce. But Muhalhil replied: "I

1. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.143; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-^cIqd, v.6, pp.74-6.

2. al-Mufaddaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.485; al-Aghānī, v.5, pp.191-2; Yāqūt, al-Mu^cjam, v.1, p.113; v.3, p.405; v.4, p.267.

have taken satisfaction only for Kulayb's shoe-latchet! Thereupon Hārith sprang up in wrath and cried:

"God knows, I kindled not this fire, altho' I am burned in it today.

A lord for a shoe-latchet is too dear,
To horse, To horse. Away."¹

Most of Bakr now became involved in this vicious war except for Lujaym, ^cIjl and Yashkur. Banū Hanīfa took part with their champion, al-Find b. Sahl, and seventy of their brave men.

The Banu Bakr now prepared for a decisive battle. As their enemy had the advantage in numbers, they adopted a strategem devised by Hārith. "Fight them" said he, "with your women, ... Equip every woman with a small waterskin and give her a club. Place the whole body of them behind you - this will make you more resolved in battle - and wear some distinguishing mark which they will recognise, so that when a woman passes by one of your wounded she may know him by his mark and give him water to drink, and raise him from the ground but when she passes by one of your foes she will smite him with her club and slay him". So the Bakrites shaved their heads, devoting themselves to death, and made this a mark of recognition between themselves and their women, and this day was called the "Day of Shearing". "The mothers were accompanied by their children, whose tender age did not always protect them from an exasperated foe."

1. Al-Aghānī, v.4, pp.143-5; Abū Tammām, al-Hamāsa (Freytag), p.252; Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, p.58.

"On this day the Banu Bakr gained a great victory, and broke the power of Taghlib.

It was the last battle of note in the Forty Year's war, which was carried on, by raiding and plundering."¹

There were some other skirmishes between them after Qida, such as Dayr Lubba (Lubna), the day of al-Furāt and al-Aqtānatayn.²

Taghlib tried after Qida to be reconciled with Bakr but the Bakrites refused; one of them sneeringly said: "If they want to be reconciled, they must give us their horses and we will give them our goats". This may have been to be sure that they would not attack them again. Al-Muhalhil expressed his tribe's rejection of this condition in this line:

هَزَيْتْ أَبْنَاءُنَا مِنْ فِعْلِنَا إِذْ نَبِيحِ الْخَيْلِ بِالْمِعْزَى اللَّجَابِ
الرءاء

O, our sons will mock our doings, if we sell horses for milch-goats.³

Later on Taghlib agreed to be reconciled with Bakr, but al-Muhalhil and some other Taghlibites refused. Different kings tried to arrange a reconciliation between them. Both of them at first agreed to have al-Hārith of Kinda as their king, an event which may have occurred after al-Muhalhil had fled to

1. Al-Aghānī, v.4, pp.143-5; Abū Tammām, al-Ḥamāsa (Freytag), pp.252-5; Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, pp.59-60.

2. Al-Bakrī, al-Mu^cjam, v.1, p.181; Yāqūt, al-Mu^cjam, v.2, p.530; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, pp.485-6; Ibn ash-Shajarī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.186; for a more detailed account of the ayyām Bakr see ash-Shimshatī, al-Anwār wa Maḥāsīn al-Ash^cār, pp.85, 89 and 115.

3. Ibn Durayd, al-Ishtiḳāq, p.354.

Yemen. Al-Hārith appointed his son Salama over Taghlib and another son, Ma^C dī Karib, over Bakr.¹ This reconciliation did not last, and was followed by the battle of al-Kulāb.

Al-Mundhir II b. Mā' as-Samā' also arranged an agreement between them, presumably after his return to power in 528. He stipulated that they both should leave hostages with him, and that if there was a murder in a site belonging to one of them, the owners would be responsible for it. Moreover, if there was a murder between two of their sites, then they would measure the distance and the nearer one would be responsible. This agreement was enacted in Mecca under the supervision of a man from Tamīm named al-^CAllāq.²

^CAmr b. Hind followed his father's plans and kept the same agreement with both. In an incident which occurred with ar-Rakb this accord was violated by Bakr. Then ^CAmr b. Hind announced that Bakr was not responsible for it.³ This verdict may have caused his death at the hands of ^CAmr b. Kulthūm.

2. Wars With Bakr in Islam

It seems that after Dhū Qār there was peace between Bakr and Taghlib, although a Bakrite leader of the Muslim troops attacked a group of Taghlib in Šiffīn and killed, burnt and drowned most of them in revenge for a similar incident in the Jāhiliyya.⁴ There was a slight change in their relations in the Umayyad period during the war between Qays and Taghlib,

1. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.146; v.8, p.65; al-Bakrī, al-Mu^Cjam, v.4, p.1363; Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, p.60.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.9, pp.178-9; al-Mufaddiliyat (Lyall), v.2, p.152.

3. Al-Aghānī, v.9, pp.178-9; Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p.58.

4. At-Tabarī, Tārīkh, v.3, p.476.

and Taghlib got support from their old enemy Bakr, and particularly from Shaybān, on the day of ath-Tharthār.¹ The reason for this was simply asabiyya towards their Rabī^c a kinsmen, exactly as happened on the day of Irāb, when the Taghlibī al-Hudhayl freed Bakrite women from the hands of Jaz^c ar-Riyāhī.²

Despite this change, Taghlib's hostility to Bakr was not ended, because the sad and painful memory of the war was still with them both. The feeling of emnity between the two tribes may be found in the following lines of al-Akhtal:

إذا ما قلت قد عالحت بكرا
وأيام لنا ولهم طـوال
ومهراق الدماء بـواردات
هما أخوان يصطليان نارا
أبى الأضغان لا النسب البعيد
يعجز الهام فيهن الحديد
تبيد المخزبات وما تبيد
رداء الموت بينهما جديد

الرافر

If I said I was reconciled with Bakr, my hatred would reject it and not the distant relationship, And long battles between us and them where swords struck skulls, And shedding blood in Wāridāt, which does not disappear although disgraces disappear.

They are two brothers who are blazing with fire: the cloak of death is still new between them (i.e. they will go on fighting).³

Some Bakrites, particularly their real enemies, Shaybān, tried in some cases to help Taghlib, for example when they

1. Al-Aghānī, v.11, pp.62-3; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, pp.318-9.

2. Abū^c Ubayda, an-Naqā'id, v.2, p.882.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, pp.522-3.

were approached by al-Akhtal to pay blood-money which had been incurred by Taghlib but which Taghlib were unable to pay owing to lack of money.¹ There are also however indications that there were some battles between Shaybān and Taghlib,² although these battles may only have been small clashes or skirmishes. This can be seen in the lines of al-A^Cshā directed against Mālik b. Misma^C, who had supported Taghlib on the day of ath-Tharthār.³ Al-A^Cshā accused Mālik of igniting warfare. These battles perhaps took place after Mālik's own departure to al-Yamāma and Bahrain.⁴ Al-A^Cshā's lines are:

وتعجز عن المعروف يعرف ضلالها	أبأ مسمع من تنكر الحق نفسه
بدا لنفسك ما جنى الحروب فها لها	أوقدت نار الحرب حتى إذا
قبيل مهين حيث ألت جلالها	نزعت وقد جردتها ذات منظر

الطويل

Abū Misma^C, one whose soul denies the rightful, and is weak in gratitude, will know his own error.

Have you not kindled the war until when you yourself saw and feared the consequences of wars?

You withdrew having bared it (war) with its ugly and base appearance wherever it stops.⁵

1. Ibn Sallām, at-Ṭabaqāt, v.1, pp.401-2, 416-7.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.10, p.99.

3. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, pp.318-9.

4. Al-Aghānī, v.10, p.99; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, p.318.

5. Dīwān al-A^Cshā, p.291.

C. Wars with the Lakhmids

After the battle of al-Kulāb Taghlib expelled Salama and became one of the staunchest allies of al-Mundhir. Together they invaded Kinda, and Taghlib captured forty of al-Hārith's relatives who were killed by al-Mundhir, although Kinda killed some Taghlibites in return. Taghlib also joined with al-Mundhir in attacking Bakr,¹ who were supporting Salama against the Lakhmids, meeting them on the day of Uwāra. Later on however Taghlib abandoned al-Mundhir and fought against him.²

After al-Mundhir II was murdered and his son, ^CAmr b. Hind, became king, he wished to revenge himself on the Ghassānids for the death of his father. When Taghlib refused to join him against them he punished them by making some forays against them³ such as the day of al-Husayn, which was won by Taghlib.⁴ The incident of ar-Rakb where some Taghlibites died or, as Taghlib assumed, were killed at one of Bakr's encampments, was the greatest setback to good relations between Taghlib and ^CAmr b. Hind, as he supported Bakr against Taghlib.⁵ ^CAmr b. Hind may also have tried to assert his domination over Taghlib by asking ^CAmr b. Kulthūm's mother to be a servant, and this, as well as his verdict on the incident of ar-Rakb, which went against Taghlib, may have led to his assassination. Ufnūn boasted about this murder in the following lines:

1. Al-Aghānī, v.8, p.64; v.9, p.184; Ibn Rashīq, al-^CUmda, v.2, p.216; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, pp.315, 375, 408.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.9, p.184; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.397.

3. Al-Aghānī, v.9, p.180; Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, pp.593-4.

4. Al-Maydānī, Majma^C al-Amthāl, v.2, p.442.

5. Al-Aghānī, v.9, pp.178-81.

لَتَخْدِمَ أُمِّي أُمَّهُ بِمَوْفِقِي
فَأَمْسَكَ مِنْ نَدْمَانَهُ بِالْمَخْنَقِ
بِذِي شَطْبٍ صَافِي الْحَدِيدِ رَوْنَقِي

لَعَمْرِكَ مَا عَمَرُوا بِنَ هِنْدٍ وَقَدْ دَعَا
فَقَامَ ابْنُ كَلْثُومٍ إِلَى السِّيفِ مَصْلَتَا
وَجَلَّلَهُ عَمَرُوا عَلَى الرَّأْسِ ضَرِيَّةً

الطريق

I swear that ^CAmr b. Hind was not successful when he ordered my mother to serve his mother, [^CAmr] Ibn Kulthūm stood and took the polished sword, and took him by the throat in front of his associates, And ^CAmr struck him on his head with a blow with a ridged sword of pure and shining iron.¹

His brother an-Nu^C mān (d. 585 A.D.) tried to avenge him against Taghlib but was defeated and killed by Murra b. Kulthūm.²

D. Al-Kulāb

When al-Hārith of Kinda died in 528 A.D. two of his sons ruled Bakr and Taghlib. Salama was the shaykh of Taghlib and Shurahbīl was the shaykh of Bakr. An opportunity arose for Taghlib to wage war against their old enemy Bakr, when Salama fell out with his brother Shurahbīl, while Taghlib were further incensed at the murder by Bakr of Ma^Cbid, the son of Hanash b. Mālik at-Taghlibī.

هَلَا سَأَلْتُ وَرَيْبَ الدَّهْرِ ذُو غَيْرٍ
أَنْ كَيْفَ صَفَقْتَنَا ذَعْلَ بَنِ شَيْبَانَ

البيضا

1. Abū ^CUbayda, an-Naqā'id, v.2, pp.884-6; al-Aghānī, v.9, pp.183-4; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kamil, v.1, pp.405-6.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.9, pp.183-4.

Did you not ask about our attack against Dhuhl b. Shaybān for the times change?

This enmity culminated in the battle of al-Kulāb. On this occasion Taghlib and the other forces with them managed to take possession of the water of al-Kulāb before Bakr. The Taghlibī leader, as-Saffāh, poured the water out of his men's water-skins and let their horses become thirsty in order to make it impossible for them to retreat. Bakr were compelled by lack of water to take the offensive despite being at a disadvantage, and suffered a heavy defeat. Abū Ḥanash stabbed Shurahbīl with his spear and beheaded him, and then took the head to his brother Salama. Jābir boasted that Abū Ḥanash had killed Shurahbīl in the following line:

فِيَوْمِ الْكَلَابِ قَدْ أَزَالَتِ رِمَاحُنَا
لَيَنْتَزِعَنَّ أَرْمَاحُنَا فَأَزَالَه
شَرْحِييلُ إِذْ آلَى أَلِيَةَ مَقْسِمِ
أَبُو حَنْشَرٍ عَنِ ظَهْرِ شِقَاءِ عِيْلِدِمِ
الطير

Yet our spears it was that thrust, that black day of al-Kulāb, Shurahbīl from off his horse, in spite of the oath he swore.

To pluck from our hands our lances: him Abū Ḥanash cast to the ground from the back of a steed, the tallest of all his stud.¹

E. Other Wars

A number of other wars took place just before or just after the advent of Islam. It may be that they took place after the war of al-Kulāb when Taghlib began to be involved in battles with other tribes. During this period they fought

1. Abū Ubayda, Al-Ayyām, pp.397-420; al-Mufaddaliyāt (Lyal), v.2, pp.156-8.

with Dabba, Yarbū^C, Tamīm, etc. They took part in the crucial battle of Dhū-Qār, and made some raids on other tribes. These wars may be arranged as follows:

1. Dhū-Bahdā':

Once al-Hudayl captured a woman from Dabba. After freeing her he thought to re-capture her again. With a thousand Taghlibites besides a very large troop from Iyād and al-Nimr, he invaded Dabba in Dhū-Bahdā'. Dabba received help from Sa^Cd b. Zayd-Manāt b. Tamīm. They defeated al-Hudhayl and his troops. He himself was captured with some of his sons.¹

2. Irāb:

Al-Hudhayl who was a very strong leader of Taghlib, attacked Yarbū^C at Irāb and destroyed them and captured some women. When he came to a watering place called Yusur which belonged to them, some of them agreed to allow him to get water provided that he set free the captives. He agreed to set some of them free but was hesitant about freeing the others. ^CUtayba b. Hārith and his men then attacked al-Hudhayl and defeated him.²

3. Thabra:

Taghlib defeated Yarbū^C at Thabra and killed Hazra, son of ^CUtayba b. al-Hārith. The latter however escaped.³

1. Abū Tammām, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akhtal, p.227.

2. Abū ^CUbayda, an-Naqā'id, v.1, pp.473-5; v.2, pp.703-882, 1088-9.

3. Al-Bakrī, al-Mu^Cjam, v.1, p.335.

4. Ash-Shi^c b:

Qays b. Sharfa attacked Yarbū^c at ash-Shi^c b and defeated them and captured some of them, such as Mutammim b. Nuwayra.¹

5. Zarūd:

Ḥazīma b. Tāriq invaded Yarbū^c and took their camels as plunder. Yarbū^c followed him, captured him, and recovered their camels. They set him free after cutting off some of his hair.²

6. Aṣ-Ṣulayb:

Al-Hudhayl al-Aṣghar made a foray against Nu^caym b. Qanab's camels. One of Banū Māzin hit him with an arrow while he was sitting on the well of Sifār. Al-Hudhayl fell into the well and died there.³

7. Nitā^c:

^cAmr b. Kulthūm, the poet and the powerful leader of Taghlib, went to help the tribe's relatives at Nitā^c who were being attacked by Tamīm. He made an attack on Qays b. Tha^claba and another on Banū Ḥanīfa in al-Yamāma. When their relatives, Banū Lujaym, learnt of it, they went directly to help them. Their chieftain, Yazīd, captured ^cAmr b.

1. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-^cIqd, v.6, p.93.

2. Al-Mufaddaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.203; al-Aghānī, v.19, p.145.

3. Al-Aghānī, v.9, pp.183-4.

Kulthūm but later set him free.¹

There were also some clashes between Taghlib and some other tribes such as ^CAbs, Balī and Qudā^Ca.²

8. Dhū Qār:

This battle took place during the reign of an-Nu^Cmān b. al-Mundhir who killed ^CAdī b. Zayd. His son, Zayd, intrigued against al-Mundhir until Khusraw II b. Hormizd (591-628) dethroned him and replaced him with 'Iyās b. Qabīsa.

Al-Mundhir sought refuge with Hānī b. Mas^Cūd al-Shaybānī of Bakr. This incident was a golden opportunity for Taghlib, who were allies of the Persians, to exterminate them. Khusraw, who was irritated by Bakr, was very angry at them for giving refuge to al-Mundhir and conceived the idea of attacking them. Their leader an-Nu^Cman b. Zar^Ca al-Taghlibī, intervened and asked Khusraw to wait until the very hot summer when Bakr would come to Dhū Qār in dire need of watering places.

An indication of the extreme enmity between Taghlib and Bakr is the fact that an-Nu^Cmān b. Zur^Ca was sent as the envoy of Khusraw to Bakr when they encamped at Dhū Qār. An-Nu^Cmān carried Khusraw's threats but Bakr rejected them and prepared to fight.

1. Al-Aghānī, v.9, pp.183-4.

2. See Abū ^CUbayda, an-Naqā'id, v.1, p.104; al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.24; Ibn Qutayba, Uyūn al-Akhbār, v.1, p.175; al-Aghānī, v.9, p.179; Ibn an-Nahḥas, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, pp.585, 587; Abū Tammām, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akhtal, pp.107, 145; an-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.15, p.355. For more days against other tribes see ash-Shimshatī, al-Anwār wa Maḥāsīn al-Ash^Cār, pp.77-120.

Bakr won the battle by their astute tactic of drawing the Persians into the desert and defeating them and their allies, including Taghlib, there.

Some of Taghlib fought against the Persians during the battle. This might indicate a kind of Arab sentiment or, perhaps, a desire to get booty. However, their leader, an-Nu^cmān was captured. It is remarkable that al-Akhtal boasted about this day even though his tribe was defeated in this battle, on the ground that it demonstrated the superiority of Rabī^ca over Mudar:

هَلَّا كَفَيْتُمْ مَعْدًا يَوْمَ مَضْلَعَةٍ كَمَا كَفَيْنَا مَعْدًا يَوْمَ ذِي قَارِ
الْبُرْطِ

Did you fight for Ma^cadd in their day of need as we did on the day of Dhū Qār?¹

F. WAR WITH QAYS

Paradoxically, the two firm allies in the early days of Islam became the two deadly enemies after Marj Rāhit,² and their hostility became proverbial.³ This hostility was expressed by al-Qutāmī in lines like the following:

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.638; at-Ṭabarī, Ṭarīkh, v.2, pp.192-211.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.17, p.112; v.20, p.127; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, pp.229, 308-9, 313.

3. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-Iqd, v.2, p.52.

ألم يحزنك أن حبال قيس
وتغليب قد تباينت انقطاعا
الزائر

Are you not sad because the relations between
Taghlib and Qays have been severed?¹

إني وإن كان قومي ليس بينهم
وبين قومك إلا ضربة الهادي
السير

If there is nothing between your tribe and my
tribe except the sword's blow...²

It is possible to say that politics and religion were the main reasons for their enmity. From the political point of view, it was clear that ^cAbd al-Malik especially benefited from their killing each other. However religion may have been as strong a motive as politics in inducing Qays to invade the Taghlibī territories.³ ^cUmayr b. al-Ḥubāb said to ^cAbd Allāh b. az-Zubayr, before he received a warrant from him to rule Taghlib: "No-one remains outside of our control except a tribe from Rabī^c a, most of whom are Christians".⁴ During the war they uttered some remarks about Taghlib which indicate their antipathy, using expressions like "Those Christians",⁵ "the killing of Christians",⁶ rather than referring to them by name.

It is also possible that politics may have been a motive for ^cUmayr b. al-Ḥubāb to seek support for Ibn az-Zubayr, because Taghlib were known as Marwāniyya.⁷ However the

1. Dīwān al-Quṭāmī, p.32.

2. Ibid., p.84.

3. Faysal as-Sāmīr, ad-Dawla al-Ḥamdāniyya, v.1, p.55.

4. Al-Aghānī, v.20, p.127.

5. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, pp.314, 317.

6. Ibid., v.5, p.324.

7. Al-Aghānī, v.20, pp.120, 127; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, p.314.

most important reason for their attack was "their competition for the fertile lands".¹ The following line of al-Qutāmī indicates two possible motives, the first to acquire land and the second to gain political influence, since he mentions Bakr, Kalb and Taghlib:

قتلت بكرا وكلبا واثلثت بنا
وقد أردت بأن يستجمع الوادي

البي

You killed Bakr and Kalb and you made us the third, and you wanted to control the whole valley.²

Qays lived in Diyār Mudar which is close to Diyār Rabī^ca, where Taghlib lived. ^cUmayr came with his troops and encamped in some parts of the Khābūr region which belonged to Taghlib. When Taghlib came to negotiate with Zufar and asked him to withdraw his tribesmen from their villages because these wars would not end as long as they remained their neighbours, Zufar refused to comply.³ This Taghlibī demand is expressed in al-A^cshā's line:

لا يجوز أن أرضنا مخرى
بخفير ولا بغير خفير

المخبر

No Mudarī shall cross our land, with an escort or without an escort.⁴

Qays made some inroads into Taghlib to plunder them, and Taghlib responded by attacking them. Once there had been

1. Faysal as-Sāmīr, Ad-Dawla al-Ḥamdāniyya, v.1, p.55.

2. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.85.

3. Al-Aghānī, v.20, pp.126-7; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, pp.314, 316.

4. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.343.

a number of killings on each side the conflict escalated into a full-scale war. It was possible that these wars were for Qays a kind of escape from their defeat by the government and a way of seeking other victories to counter the general feeling of defeat.

Indeed Zufar, the chief of Qays, reproaches ^cUmayr for attacking his fellow-Nizārites instead of his real enemies, the Yemenites:

رسالة عاتب عليك زار
وتجعل حرنابك في نزار
فخانته بوهي وانكسار
ألا من مبلغ عنى عميرا
أتترك حتى ذى كلب وقلب
كعتمد على إحدى يديه

الواقف

Who will tell ^cUmayr, on behalf of me, the message of one who reproaches you and feel contempt for you,

Do you leave the tribes of Kula^c and Kalb and sink your powerful fangs into Nizār?

[You are] like one who leans on one of his hands, and then it betrays him by being weak and giving way.¹

Be this as it may, Taghlib was a good choice in many ways, since they were Christians, had a tendency to support the Umayyads, were not from Mudar, and were not supporters of Ibn az-Zubayr like Qays. Once started the continuation of these wars between the two tribes "was instigated by their desire for revenge and by a feud over the murders of their kinsmen".²

1. Al-Aghānī, v.20, p.128.

2. Faysal as-Sāmīr, Ad-Dawla al-Ḥamdāniyya, v.1, p.55.

The war began with a clash between two tribes near Qarqīsiyā where Taghlib were defeated.¹ Qays agreed to pay blood money to Taghlib for their dead, but ^CUmayr b. al-Ḥubāb brought a warrant from Mus^Cab b. az-Zubayr giving him authority to rule them. When Taghlib refused, ^CUmayr attacked them savagely in the region of Khābūr.² This was the first real battle between them, being known as 'the day of al-Khābūr' or 'the day of Mākisīn'.³ It was followed by a number of other battles, including the first day of ath-Tharthār, on which Taghlib defeated Qays and many from both sides were killed,⁴ the second day of ath-Tharthār at which Taghlib was defeated,⁵ the third day of Ra's al-Athīl or al-Ayyil, from which the surviving Taghlibites fled after most of them had been killed,⁶ and the day of al-Bishr (or ^CĀjīnat al-Rahūb, Majāshin or Marj as-Ṣalawṭah). The latter battle took place about 73 A.H. when Taghlib and Qays had agreed a degree of reconciliation. ^CAbd al-Mālik held a meeting which al-Akḥṭal and al-Jahhāf attended. Al-Akḥṭal tried to make al-Jahhāf angry with these lines:

<p>بِقَتْلِي أُصِيبَتْ مِنْ سَلِيمٍ وَعَامِرٍ عَلَيْكَ بِحُورِ طَامِيَّاتِ الزَّوَاخِرِ بِهِ الْبَحْرُ تَزْهَاهُ رِيَّاحُ الصَّرَاصِرِ</p>	<p>أَلَا سَائِلِ الْجَحَافِ أَهْلُ هَوْشَائِرِ أَجْحَافٍ إِنْ تَهَيَّبْتَ عَلَيْكَ فَتَلْتَقِي تَكُنْ مِثْلَ أَبْدَاءِ الْجَبَابِ الَّذِي جَرَى</p>
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الطويل

Ask al-Jahhāf if he can revenge the murders of Sulaym and ^CĀmir.

O Jahhāf, if vast, rough seas descend upon you
and meet over you,

1. Al-Aghānī, v.20, p.127.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Aghānī, v.20, p.127; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, p.317.

4. Al-Aghānī, v.11, pp.62-3; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, p.318.

5. al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, p.320.

6. Al-Aghānī, v.11, p.58; Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akḥṭal, p.226.

You will become like foam which was carried by the sea, driven by hurricanes.

When al-Jahhāf heard these very boastful and offensive lines he left the meeting, gathered his tribe and attacked Taghlib who were seriously defeated.¹

What were the real reasons for this battle? The main reason was desire for revenge, but there are other reasons behind this. First, their reconciliation was not effected adequately,² perhaps for political purposes. Secondly, al-Akhtal thought that ^cAbd al-Malik would support him, which is implied in his reply to al-Akhtal: "I will protect you from him".³ Thirdly, it was not clear to al-Akhtal that al-Jahhāf would attack them if these lines were inflammatory or offensive. It could be that they were intended to relieve his feelings after these sad defeats, which had occurred simply because his tribe had not taken precautions against being attacked. Al-Akhtal became feverish after the departure of al-Jahhāf because he knew that the latter had misunderstood him.⁴

Al-Jahhāf justified this action later on, when he returned after having taken refuge with the Greeks. He met al-Akhtal and expressed himself in these lines:

1. Diwān al-Akhtal, v.2, pp.528-9; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, pp.328-9; al-Aghānī, v.11, pp.59-60.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.11, p.59.

3. Ibid., v.11, p.61.

4. Ibid.

أَبَا مَالِكٍ هَلْ لِمَتْنِي إِذْ حَضَضْتَنِي عَلَى الْقَتْلِ أَمْ هَلْ لَامَنِي لَكَ لِأَيْمِ
أَبَا مَالِكٍ إِنِّي أَطَعْتُكَ فِي السِّتِي حَضَضْتَ عَلَيْهَا فَعَلَّ حِرَانِ حَازِمِ
فَإِنْ تَدْعُنِي أُخْرَى أَجِبْكَ بِمِثْلِهَا وَإِنِّي لَطَبُّ بِالْوَفَا جِدِّ عَالِمِ

الطويل

Abū Mālik, did you blame me when you incited me to kill or was there anyone who blamed me?

I obeyed you at your instigation, for I was offended and determined.

If you ask me another time to do so, I will reply with a similar action; I am skilled in warfare, serious and expert.¹

Al-Akhtal's answer was: "You are a sinister old man".²

Al-Jahhāf recited these lines knowing that ^cAbd al-Malik would be very severe with him if in fact he created any more trouble, since his tribe had interceded with ^cAbd al-Malik to obtain an amnesty for him. From his own lines it is obvious that he had no real reason to start such a bloody battle, but nevertheless it was a thoughtless lapse of al-Akhtal's. Al-Jahhāf implicitly admitted that he had misunderstood al-Akhtal when later he decided to make a pilgrimage to Mecca to atone for "their faults in killing those whom he had killed".³ Zufar at a similar meeting reacted more wisely than al-Jahhāf when al-Akhtal urged ^cAbd al-Malik to treat him badly.⁴

There were other battles won by Qays such as al-Fudayn, as-Sukayr, al-Ma^cārik or al-Ḥadr, al-Balīkh and Sinjār,⁵ while

1. Al-Aghānī, v.11, p.60.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, p.331.

4. Al-Aghānī, v.7, pp.176-7.

5. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, pp.321-2.

Taghlib were victorious on the day of al-Shar^cabiyya and won the great battle of al-Hashshāk where ^cUmayr was killed.¹ They were equal in fighting on the day of Balad.² Among other battles were also the day of Tal-Majrā,³ and Hazza,⁴ one day before al-Kuḥayl. This took place because Tamīm b. al-Ḥubāb wanted to avenge his brother. He and Zufar together with some other chieftains attacked Taghlib and nearly destroyed their army,⁵ who had to escape across the Tigris.⁶

What were the reasons for these defeats if Taghlib, as has been said, were a powerful tribe and government rule was lacking in al-Jazīra? We might suggest that these defeats occurred because Qays were already armed and ready to fight at any time as a unit, while Taghlib were scattered throughout al-Jazīra and even outside it, and needed time to band together unlike Qays who marched en masse and attacked suddenly and strongly. When Taghlib gathered themselves in al-Hashshāk they defeated Qays very badly. The truth was expressed by ^cUmayr himself when he said: "Taghlib are an enormous tribe, and they have gathered to fight ... if they were scattered then we would attack them group by group".⁷

This was a major reason for these defeats. Apart from this, Taghlib had no motives for battles like those of ^cUmayr, who wanted to compensate for his feeling of defeat at Marj Rāhit.

1. Abū ^cUbayda, an-Naqā'id, v.1, p.508; v.2, p.899; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, pp.322-5.

2. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, p.322.

3. Al-Maydānī, Majma^c al-Amthāl, v.2, p.447.

4. Yāqūt, al-Mu^cjam, v.1, p.121; v.2, p.256.

5. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, p.326; Abū Tammām, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akḥṭal, p.226.

6. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, p.327; Abū Tammām, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akḥṭal, p.226.

7. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, p.324.

This long war between Qays and Taghlib shows the cruelty and savagery which was perpetrated by both sides, especially by Qays. This was shown in their stabbing the bellies of pregnant women, killing women, children and old men, besides plundering.¹ There was an idea of genocide, and Umayr once shouted: "Do not leave anybody".² "It is no wonder that this bitter party hatred survived for a long time and flared up again from time to time".³

1. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, pp.319, 323, 327; Al-Aghānī, v.11, pp.58, 59-60; v.17, p.113; v.20, pp.127-8.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.20, p.128.

3. Kindermann, "Taghlib", EI¹, Supp., p.225.

CHAPTER 2

TAGHLIB AND ISLAM

When Islam came the two major religions, Christianity and Judaism were spread among many Arab tribes. Christianity especially was spread over a large area in the north of the Arabian Peninsula. Some of these tribes were aligned with the Persians and others with the Romans. However even those who were allies of one of the two great powers were disunited and often fought among themselves. Under Islam Taghlib were stronger and more united than they had been before but they needed time to become familiar with the new situation and circumstances. Even so, their tribalism was so strong that they kept up their relations with those who were outside al-Jazīra. They were bedouins¹ who still had nomadic attitudes, a fact which is expressed in this line of al-Quṭāmī:

فَمَنْ تَكُنَ الْحَضَارَةُ أُعْجِبْتَهُ
فَأَيُّ أَنْسَابٍ بَادِيَةٍ تَرَانَا
الواقر

Whoever may admire settled life, what people of the desert do you see us to be!²

This refusal to adopt the agricultural life in al-Jazīra explains why ^cAmr b. Kulthūm and al-Hudhayl b. ^cImrān continued to make attacks on other tribes who lived far from al-Jazīra in regions such as al-Baḥrayn. We must remember here that those Arab tribes who allied themselves with Romans or Persians were not in any sense regular troops. They were

1. See below, pp.278-91.

2. Dīwān al-Quṭāmī, p.76.

like small states in which every tribe had its independence, or what is possible to call a territory. Every tribe had its chieftain and every branch of that tribe had its leader who obeyed the head of the whole tribe.

The failure to adapt to this new atmosphere had its repercussions on their Christianity also. They adapted their belief to their nomadic life and their habits of the past. This means that, even if they were Christians, they did not completely fulfil the ideals of Christianity. Al-Akhtal for instance allowed himself many pleasures which were not sanctioned by his religion.¹

On the whole, however, Taghlib found in Christianity a religion which suited them and gave them comfort and ease. Indeed, certain episodes in which individual members of Taghlib, such as al-Akhtal² and Sham^cala b. Fā'id,³ resisted considerable pressure to convert to Islam show that they were more strongly attached to Christianity than other tribes had been.

We should now ask the question whether Taghlib in fact were a particularly strong tribe or just a normal tribe, no stronger than their brothers Bakr or their allies an-Nimr? As can be seen from their wars before Islam, with Qays and with the Muslim armies at the time of the conquest, the saying: "If Islam had not come Taghlib would have eaten the people (conquered them)"⁴ is by no means true. This saying can only mean figuratively that they were very strong.

There are no indications in surviving sources that the

1. Hāwī, Al-Akhtal, pp.24-30.
2. Ibn Sallām, Jabaqāt Fuḥūlash-Shu^carā', p.490.
3. Al-Āmidī, Al-Mu'talaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.225.
4. At-Tabrīzī, al-Mu^callaqāt, p.108.

Prophet sent them any message calling them to accept the new religion; however, he did send them^{to} their brother tribe Bakr,¹ and it could be that he sent to them also, since it is mentioned that others were called.² It is known that an embassy of them came to the Prophet some of whom were Muslims,³ ^{and} that embassy made an agreement with the Prophet that they would not bring up their sons as Christians.⁴

In any case, from the beginning the relation between the Muslims and Taghlib always tended towards confrontation. It seems that they found Islam to be a threat to them. Whether their religion was true Christianity or not, however, they believed in its truth.

The influence of religion is clear in the anecdote told of al-Akhtal, who said after his punishment by the priest: "It is the religion, it is the religion". When Hishām b. ^cAbd al-Malik said, after hearing the line:

وَإِذَا افْتَقَرْتَ إِلَى الذَّخَائِرِ لَمْ تَجِدْ ذَخْرًا يَكُونُ كَصَالِحِ الْأَعْمَالِ
الذخائر

If you are in need of treasures, you will not find a treasure [greater than] good deeds.

"Bless your Islam, Abū Mālik", al-Akhtal answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, I am still Muslim in my religion".⁵

1. Ibn Sa^cd, at-Ṭabaqāt, v.1, p.281.

2. Al-Qalqashandī, Subḥ al-A^cshā, v.6, p.382.

3. Ibn Sa^cd, At-Ṭabaqāt, v.1, p.316.

4. At-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, v.4, pp.55-6.

5. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.140; al-Aghānī, v.7, p.183. Al-Akhtal uses the word "muslim" to denote the same meaning as it applies to Muslims, while he is a Christian.

Whether or not they believed in their religion, however, the general opinion remains that expressed by Brockelmann about al-Akhtal's behaviour, "He enjoyed liberty according to his religion in contrast to the strictness of Islam".¹ As a result they sometimes found themselves in a dangerous position. For instance, ^cAbd al-Malik asked al-Akhtal: "Why do not you become a Muslim, Akhtal?" He replied "If you permit me to drink and cancel Ramadān for me, I will be a Muslim". ^cAbd al-Malik answered him: "If you become a Muslim and do not fulfil anything of Islam, I will cut off your head". Al-Akhtal then said these lines:

ولست بآكل لحم الأضاحي	ولست بصائم رمضان طوعا
لدى الإصباح حتى على الفلاح	ولست بقائم كالعير يدعو
وأسجد عند منبج الصبح	ولكني سأشربها شمولا

الرافر

I will not willingly fast in Ramadān and I will not eat the meat of animals slaughtered for al-Adhā

I will not stand like a donkey saying before dawn

Ḥayya ^calā al-Falāḥ

But I will drink good wine, and bow when dawn breaks.²

They may also have found that the Central Government in Medina was not like their old allies the Persians, and that the organisation of the Government and the relation between people according to Islam did not permit them to lead their lives in accordance with their pre-Islamic nomadic habits.

1. Brockelmann, v.1, p.205.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, pp.755-6; al-Yazīdī, Shi^cr al-Akhtal, v.1, pp.153-4.

This bad relationship reached a level of an armed confrontation. This happened when one of their strong leaders, al-Jarrār at-Taghlibī refused to follow the Prophet during his lifetime. The Prophet sent against him the powerful leader Zayd al-Khayl, who defeated and killed al-Jarrār, whose people were killed and the women taken captive.¹ Al-Jarrār and his people could not have belonged to that branch of Banū Taghlib who lived in al-Jazīra, for this event took place too early for any raiding party to arrive there safely and easily from Medīna. It probably happened soon before the arrival of their embassy to Medīna in 9 A.H., by which time Taghlib had no other choice but to court the Prophet.

The Prophet's successor Abū Bakr continued his plans to spread Islam. Even at this period Taghlib showed determined hostility to Islam, although there was no necessity for them to attack the Muslims as they were not involved in the Ridda. Perhaps, however, they thought that it was a good opportunity to avenge the killing of al-Jarrār and his people or to defend Christianity or were spurred on by their tribal spirit or ʿaṣabiyya. Whatever the reason however, Taghlib, who were related to the Tamīmī prophetess Sajāh, were strong supporters of her and of her main backer, al-Hudhayl b. ^cImrān. She advanced with them and other Arabs to attack Abū Bakr in Medīna but turned back after her conciliation with the prophet Musaylima in al-Yamāma.²

Abū Bakr's plans to send armies towards the north-east of the Arabian Peninsula brought northern Arab Christians into conflict with the Muslims, since they stood firm against Khālid b. al-Walīd. The following dialogue between Khālid and an Arab Christian named Abjar is evidence of their determined

1. al-Aghānī, v.16, p.53.

2. At-Tabarī, Tārīkh, v.3, pp.269-71.

rejection of Islam. Khālīd asked him: "What is your religion, Abjar?" Abjar answered: "The religion of ^ʿĪsa b. Maryam". Khālīd asked: "Then you are in our religion. Do you believe in Muḥammad?" Abjar answered: "No, when was your religion? You have come just a few years ago".¹

Taghlib was ready to take part in any attack against Muslim armies, and repeatedly sent men to support the Persians or Arabs who were allied to the Persians, although these were either killed or fled from Khālīd. The Arab tribes of the area were proud to fight the Arab Muslims, which they did under the leadership of ^ʿAqqa b. Abī ^ʿAqqa, of the strongest allies of Taghlib, the tribe of an-Nimr, who led the battle against Khālīd. ^ʿAqqa was killed at ^ʿAyn at-Tamr and his men were defeated.² They then prepared themselves to launch another attack on the Muslims under the leadership of al-Hudhayl at al-Muṣayyakh. Al-Hudhayl was defeated and most of his people were killed.³ Taghlib with their allies tried another attack under the leadership of Rabī^ʿa b. Bujayr at-Taghlibī at ath-Thinnī and az-Zummayl in an attempt to avenge ^ʿAqqa but they were defeated and killed;⁴ they then supported the Persians at al-Firād but again they were defeated.⁵ They also fought alongside the Persians at al-Ḥaṣīd but were crushingly defeated,⁶ and supported the Persians at Kabāth under the leadership of Fāris al-^ʿUnnāb at-Taghlibī but were defeated there also.⁷ Finally, the Muslims attacked them along with an-Nimr at Ṣiffīn and killed many of them.⁸

1. al-^ʿAskarī, al-Awā'il, p.119.

2. At-Ṭabarī, Ṭarīkh, v.3, pp.376-7.

3. Ibid., v.3, pp.380-1.

4. Ibid., p.382.

5. Ibid., p.383.

6. Yāqūt, al-Mu^ʿjam, v.2, p.267.

7. At-Ṭabarī, Ṭarīkh, v.3, p.475.

8. Ibid., p.383.

It is obvious from all these events that they were the most determined Arab enemies of Islam in the North, and for this reason Khālīd swore to attack them in their homes.¹ They preferred to be under Persian dominance rather than to be under the Muslims, presumably because they were not prepared to find themselves in the same situation as other Arab tribes elsewhere in the Peninsula. Their consequent defeats obliged them to take refuge inside al-Jazīra and after this they seem to have decided that their position was rather insecure, and to have attempted to adopt a neutral position. When ^CUmar succeeded to the Caliphate they were divided among themselves, and some supported the Muslims while others stood aside.

This change in attitude towards Islam came when they came to support the Persians at the battle of al-Buwayb, but went over to the Muslims. A young boy from among them murdered one of the Persian leaders named Muhrān in the same battle.² They acted in a similar way in 16 A.H. when they fought with the Byzantines at Tikrīt, but like Iyād and an-Nimr betrayed them and went over to the Muslims.³

The Muslims now began to prepare to attack al-Jazīra itself. According to various accounts al-Jazīra yielded between 17 A.H. and 19 A.H. to a Muslim leader named ^CIyād b. Ghanm who was a subordinate of Sa^Cd b. Abī-Waqqāṣ or Abū-^CUbayda. They surrendered to the Muslims without offering much resistance, and most parts of al-Jazīra fought very little before agreeing to come to terms with the Muslims.*

^CUmar agreed to accept double sadaqa from them instead of the jizya because they did not like the latter word, saying

1. At-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, v.3, p.383.

2. Ibid., pp.460-4, 466.

3. Ibid., v.4, pp.35-6.

4. Ibid., pp.53-6.

to him: "We are Arabs and we cannot pay what non-Arabs pay".¹ ^CUmar once received some Taghlibites and said to them: "Pay the jizya". They said: "Send us back to our homes: if you impose the jizya on us we will flee to the Greeks, By God you will disgrace us among the Arabs". ^CUmar said: "You disgraced yourself and oppose your nation. By God, if you do not pay the jizya, and humble yourselves, if you escape to the Greeks I will write to them and I will take your women". They said: "Take from us anything but do not call it jizya". He said "We call it jizya, but you call it whatever you want".²

One of ^CUmar's governors, al-Walīd b. ^CUqba, insisted on their becoming Muslims, and when they refused, he wrote about this to ^CUmar. ^CUmar asked him to do what they wanted and added that they were not to prevent anyone who wished from becoming a Muslim.³

^CUthman tried to impose the jizya upon them in the form of gold and silver only, but eventually accepted ^CUmar's decision to exact double sadaqa from them.* ^CAlī's reign was relatively beneficial to Taghlib. He was related to them by marriage through Umm Habība who had been taken captive at ^CAyn at-Tamr and was bought by ^CAlī. She bore him ^CUmar and Ruqayya.⁵

According to tribal conventions this was a reason to claim a relationship, even though it was as a result of capture, and they expected some advantages from it. Taghlib had already been indebted to ^CAlī, when ^CUmar tried to impose the jizya on them, since it was he who asked ^CUmar not to do

1. At-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, v.4, pp.40, 55; al-Balādhurī, Futūḥ al-Buldān, pp.250-2.

2. At-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, v.4, p.56; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya wa an-Nihāya, v.7, p.76.

3. At-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, v.4, p.56.

4. Al-Balādhurī, Futūḥ al-Buldān, p.252.

5. At-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, v.3, p.383; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Bidāya wa an-Nihāya, v.7, p.332.

so and his opinion was accepted by ^cUmar.¹

From the geographical point of view also, if ^cIrāq was with ^cAlī, then Taghlib, who lived in al-Jazīra, were with ^cAlī also, given the long-standing hostility between ^cIrāq and Syria. Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl expressed this idea in the following line:

أرى الشام تكره ملك العراق وأهل العراق لها كارهين

المقاربت

I see that Syria hates the rule of ^cIrāq, and that the people of ^cIrāq hate Syria.²

^cAlī had not himself taken up a strong attitude towards the Christians of Taghlib. His sympathy with them when ^cUmar wanted to impose the Jizya on them was a natural thing from him. Yet on another occasion he said to them before becoming Caliph: "O pigs of the Arabs, by God if this matter (the Caliphate) comes to me I will impose the jizya on you".³

When ^cAlī became Caliph, Taghlib sent an embassy and he made an agreement with them similar to that of ^cUmar. However, Taghlib broke the agreement by teaching their children Christianity, and ^cAlī threatened that he would attack them, kill their fighters and enslave their children.⁴

During ^cAlī's travels in ^cIrāq, he came to al-Jazīra, where Taghlib like their allies an-Nimr received him.⁵ Among

1. At-Ṭabarī, Iārīkh, v.4, p.56.

2. Al-Minqarī, Waq^c at Ṣiffīn, p.63.

3. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-^cIqd, v.7, p.280.

4. Al-Minqarī, Waq^c at Ṣiffīn, p.163.

5. Ibid., p.162.

those who received him there were many Muslims,¹ and ʿAlī was happy and satisfied with this reception.² It is clear from this that at the beginning Taghlib were beside ʿAlī.³

In the events of Ṣiffīn in 37 A.H. there are indications that members of Taghlib fought for both ʿAlī and Muʿāwīya. Kaʿb b. Juʿayl, the poet of Muʿāwīya,⁴ was with him, which means that there were Taghlibis with Muʿāwīya. Those Taghlibis who fought for ʿAlī did so under the flag of the Rabīʿa.⁵ They also fought beside him in the battle of an-Nahrawān,⁶ as they had done earlier at the battle of the Camel.⁷ Later on, Taghlib came under the rule of Muʿāwīya as did other tribes.⁸

It is unclear whether Taghlib supported the Banū Marwān at Marj-Rāhiṭ or not. Taghlib was later on ascribed to the Banū Marwān and people said "Taghlib Marwāniyya" as they said about Qays: "Qays Zubayriyya".⁹ The battle of Marj-Rāhiṭ, however, was between Yemen and Muḍar. The good relations between Taghlib and Qays before the war between them, in addition to ʿAbd al-Malik's raids on them,¹⁰ seem to indicate that they did not participate in that battle. The following lines of Zufar b. al-Hārith clearly show that the war was against Yemen, among whom Judhām and Himyar are included:

1. Al-Minqarī, Waqʿat Ṣiffīn, p.163.

2. Ibid.

3. Kindermann, "Taghlib", EI¹, Supp., p.225.

4. Al-Minqarī, Waqʿat Ṣiffīn, p.632.

5. Ibid., p.556; Abū Hanīfa ad-Daynawrī, al-Akhbār at-Ṭiwāl, p.146.

6. Abū Hanīfa ad-Daynawrī, al-Akhbār at-Ṭiwāl, p.146.

7. Ibid.

8. Kindermann, "Taghlib", EI¹, Supp., p.225.

9. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, p.314.

10. Al-Aghānī, v.17, p.112; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, pp.299, 308-9.

وكنّا حسبنا كل بيضاوشحمة
ليالينا لاقينا جذام وحميرا
فلما قرعنا النبع بالنبع بعضه
يبعض أبت عيدانه أن تكسرا
ولما لقينا عصابة تغلبية
يقودون جردا للمنية ضمرا

الطويل

We thought when we faced Judhām and Himyar that everything white was fat, (i.e. that every tribe was like those we had defeated before)

But when we smote stick against stick their wood refused to be broken,

And when we met a Taghlibite group leading short-haired, slender horses to death...¹

The last line, which mentions Taghlib, must refer to Taghlib bint Hulwān, the Yemenite tribe, and not Taghlib bint Wā'il as some scholars believe.² If it is claimed that these lines refer to Taghlib bint Wā'il then they would have to have been composed during the war between them and Qays, in which these Yemenite tribes were also involved.³

The war between Ibn az-Zubayr and Marwān b. al-Ḥakam at Marj-Rāhiṭ was a chance for Taghlib to be free - for a short time - from Muslim rule. They found it a good opportunity to co-operate with Qays and they share with them in making forays against Kalb and the Yemenite tribes.⁴ This reckless behaviour may have been a result of their feeling that they were firstly Christians and secondly not from Muḍar, to whom the Caliph belonged. This was expressed during their

1. Abū Tammām, al-Ḥamāsa (Freytag), p.71.

2. Kindermann, "Taghlib", EI¹, Supp., p.225.

3. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, p.325.

4. Al-Aghānī, v.17, p.112; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, pp.308-9.

conflict with Qays when they said: "We are a Christian tribe ... Mudar is Mudar, and whichever ruler conquers will be on the side of Qays".¹

However, they acknowledged ^cAbd al-Malik b. Marwān's sovereignty and resumed their support of the Umayyads. This came about since they were now enemies of Qays, who were enemies of the Caliph himself. In order to have a good effect on the Caliph, an embassy from them took the severed head of ^cUmayr b. al-Hubāb to him in Damascus.²

Al-Akhtal, who represented his tribe Taghlib, now became the poet of the Umayyads, so that ^cAbd al-Malik said: "For every people there is a poet and al-Akhtal is the poet of Banū Umayya".³ By having al-Akhtal as a poet ^cAbd al-Malik planned to use him as a propagandist for his rule. The policy of ^cAbd al-Malik was very shrewd and subtle, because he exploited tribal enmity. He was not like the Rāshidūn Caliphs who were very cautious in making relationships with non-Muslims. Neither was he like Mu^cāwiyā who was unwilling openly to strengthen his relations with Christian tribes like Taghlib even if some of them were his supporters. ^cAbd al-Malik favoured Taghlib for their great deeds against his enemies Qays. This good relation existed not just with ^cAbd al-Malik but also with his brother, Bishr, who was praised by al-Akhtal.⁴

This tolerance of Christians was sometimes to the disadvantage of Muslims. ^cAbd al-Malik, whose preference was for Taghlib, once ordered al-Akhtal to ride on Jarīr's back. Jarīr said to him: "O Commander of the Faithful, the infidel

1. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, p.318.

2. Ibid., p.325.

3. Al-Aghānī, v.7, pp.173, 176, 181.

4. Hawī, al-Akhtal, pp.140-9.



Christian should not ride the Muslim or become higher than him".¹ Moreover, al-Akhtal sometimes used to come to ^cAbd al-Malik drunk and with a golden cross around his neck.² In addition, al-Akhtal made some jokes with ^cAbd al-Malik which showed the close relationship between them. ^cAbd al-Malik once said to him: "To what extent has drinking taken hold of you?" Al-Akhtal replied "O Commander of the Faithful, if you were to drink you would be less than my shoe-laces". ^cAbd al-Malik asked him to put this ma^cnā in poetry, or he would cut off his head, whereupon al-Akhtal composed these lines:

إذا ما نديمى على شئ ثم على شئ
شلاث زجاجات لمن هدير
خرجت أجر الذيل تيمًا كأنني
عليك أمير المؤمنين أمير
الطويل

If my drinking companion gave me a drink and gave me a drink, three cups which make a noise, I would become, dragging proudly my clothes, as though I were a Commander over you, O Commander of the Faithful.³

On another occasion ^cAbd al-Malik asked him: "What are you going to do with drink? It is sour at the beginning and makes you drunk at last". He replied: "If you say that, yet there is something between these two things in which your rule is like a spoonful of water from the Euphrates held in the fingers".⁴

^cAbd al-Malik, who showed his preference for Taghlib

1. Al-Qālī, Dhayl al-Amālī, p.44.
2. Al-Aghānī, v.7, p.178.
3. Al-Yazīdī, Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.154.
4. Al-Aghānī, v.7, p.174.

over Qays, could not accept that Taghlib would for ever be a Christian tribe. The favouring of Christians, as Jarīr had previously remarked, is not acceptable in Islam. Also the open alliance between Taghlib and their pompous Christian poet and the Umayyads to the disadvantage of Qays was not really acceptable to the Muslim community. Thus ^CAbd al-Malik tried many times to bring Taghlib into Islam by different means. ^CAbd al-Malik continuously asked al-Akhtal to become a Muslim, as on the occasion when al-Akhtal asked him to cancel Ramadān and allow him to drink. At another time ^CAbd al-Malik asked him to become a Muslim and tried to tempt him by "promising him a proportion of the fay' for him and ten thousand dinars".¹ Al-Akhtal's excuses were always based on on drink. Thus, if Christianity was a defence for Taghlib against the teachings of Islam, it also exposed them to insult. Many times the Muslims used the word "Christians" or "sons of Christian women" to reproach them.² The Dīwān of Jarīr is full of reproaches of this kind.

Because they lived among a Muslim majority and were nomads or semi-nomads while their neighbours were not they did not feel at ease with this situation, and indeed the position of Taghlib became weaker later on when their opponents, Qays, became closer to the Caliphate with the succession of Sulaymān b. ^CAbd al-Malik to the throne. Such Caliphs as ^CAbd al-Malik who had treated them generously because of their opposition to Qays, or his son, al-Walīd, who was praised by al-A^Cshā as being generous, were succeeded by Caliphs who were unfavourable to Taghlib like ^CUmar b. ^CAbd b. al-^CAzīz and Hishām, who is credited with having cut a piece out of the thigh of Sham^Cala and forcing him to eat it.

1. Al-Aghānī, v.7, p.174.

2. Ibid., v.7, p.69; v.11, pp.60-1; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, p.314.

It is possible that Taghlib were allowed to remain Christian in al-Jazīra because al-Jazīra was not considered as part of the Arabian Peninsula, whereas those who were in the Arabian Peninsula were either converted to Islam or expelled from it during the Caliphate of ^CUmar. ^CUmar depended in this action on the traditions: "I will not leave in the Arabian Peninsula two religions" and "I will not leave in it a Christian".¹ Some of those who were in al-Jazīra converted to Islam, a process which began quite early,² and some of Taghlib were prominent experts in ḥadīth.³

The question of whether al-Qutāmī was a Muslim or not, given that his poetry shows no sign of the influence of Islam, is not very important. Some of Taghlib were Muslims, but the majority were Christians. Al-Qutāmī, who lived in the desert, does not show the influence of Christianity either, and he may have been of either faith. In a somewhat cryptic comment, al-Aghānī says: "He was a Christian, and he is an Islamic poet".⁴ Cheikho gives his own explanation of this by saying "The statement of al-Aghānī that he is an Islamic poet does not mean that he was converted to Islam, rather that he lived in Islam and was not one of the Mukhadramīn who lived in the Jāhiliyya".⁵

Al-Qutāmī's conversion to Islam, if it in fact took place, could have happened after his capture by Zufar b. al-Ḥārith, who freed him and bestowed gifts on him. This kind of

1. Mālik, al-Muwatta', v.2, p.204; Abū ^CUbayda, an-Naqā'id, v.2, p.600; at-Tabarī, Tārīkh, v.4, p.55.

2. Ibn al-Kalbī, Jamharāt an-Nasab, f.230a; Ibn Sa'd, at-Ṭabaqat, v.1, p.316; Ibn Qutāyba, Uyūn al-Akḥbār, v.4, p.35; at-Tabarī, Tārīkh, v.4, pp.40-3, 54-6.

3. As-Sam^Cānī, al-Ansāb, v.3, pp.57-60.

4. Al-Aghānī, v.20, p.118.

5. Cheikho, Shu'arā' an-Nasrāniyya Ba'd al-Islam, pp.192-3.

compassion always had had a very great influence in the conversion of people to Islam. He might, on the other hand, have remained Christian like A^Cshā Taghlib.

Cheikho considers Ka^Cb b. Ju^Cayl to be a Christian. He says "We do not doubt the Christianity of Ka^Cb b. Ju^Cayl, who was from Taghlib, the Christian tribe; this poet of Taghlib is like the two other Taghlibites al-Qutāmī and al-Akhtal".¹

He repeats here the same assumption which he made in the case of al-Qutāmī, basing himself on the idea that the entire tribe was Christian. In fact as we have seen there were Muslims among Taghlib, and this assumption is simply not valid. It is clear enough that Ka^Cb was Muslim. For example, Yazīd once asked him to reply to ^CAbd ar-Rahmān b. Ḥassān, and satirise him, but he replied: "By God, my lips would not come together to satirise the Anṣār, but I will show you a clever and rude poet. He is a young man from us named Ghiyāth b. Ghawth, and he is a Christian".² On the same occasion he said to Yazīd, "Do you want me to return back to infidelity after God led me to Islam?"³

Ka^Cb once was with Sa^Cīd b. al-Āṣ, the governor of Medina, who was a friend of his, at a funeral ceremony. Also present were al-Farazdaq and al-Ḥuṭay'a with whom Ka^Cb was not on good terms and some insults were exchanged; however, neither accused him of Christianity. Nor did any of ^CAlī's poets like an-Najāshī or Abū Jahmat al-Asadī accuse Ka^Cb of Christianity when he satirised ^CAlī and his troops.*

1. Cheikho, Shu^Carā'an-Naṣrāniyya Ba^Cd al-Islam, p.204.

2. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^Carā', p.396; al-Aghānī, v.13, pp.148, 154.

3. Ibn Qutayba, ash-Shi^Cr wa ash-Shu^Carā', v.1, p.491; al-Aghānī, v.13, p.154.

4. Al-Minqarī, Waq^Ct Siffīn, pp.62-6, 336-7, 410-2; Abū Hanīfa ad-Daynawarī, al-Akhbār aṭ-Ṭiwāl, pp.160-1, 178-80.

Ka^cb was on the side of Mu^cāwīya, not of ^cAlī as al-Khaṭīb believes.¹ This error may arise from a peculiar feature of the battle of Ṣiffīn, which was that when not actually fighting the warriors used to cross freely to their opponents' camps and mingle with them.² There is a story that on one such occasion ^cAlī asked his people to get ready, and that as they leapt up to their swords and arrows, Ka^cb passed by and recited the Urjūza from which the following lines are taken:³

أصبحت الأمة في أمر عجب والملك مجموع غدا لمن غلب
أقول قولاً صادقاً غير الكذب إن غدا تهلك أعلام العرب

الرجز

The nation has become in a strange state, the rule tomorrow will be given to he who conquers,
I say a true saying and not a lie, Tomorrow the Arab nobles perish.⁴

If it is difficult to find the influence of religion in the above mentioned poets, the influence is clear in ^cUtba b. al-Waḡhl and Mālik b. ^cUwaymir. The first, who was contemporary with ^cAlī,⁵ uses the Islamic expression: sabīl Allāh

ألا في سبيل الله تغير لمتي ووجهك مما في القوارير أصفرا

الطويل

My locks have turned grey in the way of God, while your face is yellow from the contents of flasks.⁶

1. Al-Hamdānī, Al-Iklīl, v.10, p.174 (footnote).
2. Abū Hanīfa ad-Daynawarī, al-Akhbār at-ṭiwāl, p.179.
3. Ibid., p.180.
4. Al-Minqarī, Waq^cat Ṣiffīn, p.253.
5. Ibn Durayd, al-Ishtiqāq, p.337.
6. Al-Lisān, (Wala^ca).

Even in the poetry of Christian poets like al-Akḥṭal and al-A^cshā we find the influence of the vocabulary of the new religion, although of course they do not express themselves in ways which might imply that they were Muslim.

Thus, in the following two lines al-Akḥṭal mentions the Prophet and refers to the prohibition of wine by Islam and the punishment which drinkers of wine incur:

شَرِينَا فَمِتْنَا مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً مَضَى أَهْلُهَا لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا مُحَمَّدًا
حَيِّنَا حَيَاةً لَمْ تَكُنْ مِنْ قِيَامَةِ عَلَيْنَا وَلَا حَشْرَ لَنَا بِهِ وَمَوْعِدُ

الطويل

We drank and died a jāhiliyya death, whose people have passed away not knowing what Muḥammad is, We came back to life, not as a result of resurrection, and without a Day of Judgement to threaten us.¹

In another line he uses the word at-tiwal in the sense of long Sūras:

كَأَنَّهُ حِينَ يَمْتَدُّ النَّهَارُ بِهِ إِذَا اسْتَقْبَلَ يَمَانٍ يَقْرَأُ الطَّوِيلَ

البيسط

When the daylight grows long for him and he is ready to go, he is like a Yemenī reciting the long Sūras.²

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.2, p.732; Hawī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.371-3.

2. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, p.155; Qabāwa, al-Akḥṭal, p.248.

In the following two lines he speaks of the Banū Umayya as being of the Prophet's family, and refers to the Prophet as being in Paradise:

وَإِذَا وَشَى بِي أَقْوَامٌ فَأُدْرِكُنِي رَهْطَ الَّذِي رَفَعَ الرَّحْمَنُ فَارْتَفَعُوا
فِي جَنَّةٍ هِيَ أَرْوَاحُ الْإِلَهِ فَمَا يَفْزَعُ الطَّيْرُ فِي أَغْصَانِهَا فَزَعُ
الْبَيْطِ

And when some people slandered me, and the family of he whom God raised, so that they were raised, saved me...

In a paradise which is God's spirit, in whose branches the birds are not frightened by any fear.¹

The following line perhaps shows the influence of an-Nābigha, whom al-Akhtal is said to imitate.²

يَبْطُرْنَ ذَا الشَّيْبِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ هِمَّتَهُ وَيَسْتَقِيدُ لَهَا الْأَهْيَافَ الرُّوقِ
الْبَيْطِ

They tempted the grey-haired man whose concern is Islam, and the slim, tall young man obeys them.³

Here we see the image of an aged Muslim, as opposed to the image of a monk which is employed by an-Nābigha:

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, pp.364-5; Qabāwa, al-Akhtal, p.246.

2. Ghāzī, al-Akhtal, p.212; Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.599-600.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.604.

لو أنها عرضت لأشمط راهب عبد الإله ضرورة لم يعبد
الكاهل

If she were to come across a grey haired celibate monk who worships God, he would not worship.¹

We might have expected that al-Akḥṭal would have preserved the image of the Christian monk but in fact we see here that, as in the other lines quoted, the influence of the new religion proves itself too strong.

Even more striking than this is his allusion to verses of the Qurān. Thus the line:

فاليوم أجهد نفسي ما وسعت لكم وهل تكلف نفس فوق ما تسع
اليهبط

Today I make myself as tired as I can for your sake; is any soul obliged to do more than it is able?²

is a clear reference to Sūrat al-Baqara 233

"No soul shall have A burden laid on it Greater than it can bear".³

Likewise the following line:

1. Dīwān an-Nābigha, p.149.
2. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, p.366; Qabāwa, al-Akḥṭal, p.190.
3. Sūrat al-Baqara.

فَلَا تَطْعَمَن لِحْمِي الْأَعَادِي إِنَّهُ سَرِيعٌ إِلَيْكُمْ مَكَرَهَا وَنَمِيمٌ
الطَّرِيقُ

Do not feed my enemies on my flesh, for their cunning and slander will quickly find their way to you.¹

alludes to Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, 12

Would any of you like to eat The flesh of his dead Brother? ²

The influence of the commandments of Islam is clear also in the following line of al-A^cshā in which is mentioned the word iqāb:

فَمَا يَسْطِيعُ ذُو مَلِكٍ عِقَابِي إِذَا اجْتَرَمْتُ يَدِي وَجَنَى لِسَانِي
الْوَأْفَرُ

One who has rule is unable to punish me if my hand commits a crime or my tongue sins.³

In a political sense the following line of al-A^cshā reveals the existence of a new state of affairs brought about by the existence of the Islamic state. Travellers were now allowed to pass through their territory if accompanied by an escort, which is in sharp contrast to the days in which the penetration of the Himā Kulayb was enough to trigger a disastrous war.

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, p.319; Qabāwa, al-Akḥṭal, p.190.
2. Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt.
3. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.292.

لا يجوز أرضنا مـضـى
بـخـفـير ولا بـغـير خـفـير

No Mudarī shall cross our land, with an escort or without an escort.¹

Their different political status and the fact that they were a minority among a Muslim majority particularly the Arabs, in addition to the heaviness of their taxation, are factors that probably hastened their conversion to Islam, particularly in the ^cAbbāsīd period.

1. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.343.

PART II

Chapter 3: Stylistic Features in the Poetry of Taghlib

Chapter 4: Themes

CHAPTER 3

STYLISTIC FEATURES IN THE POETRY OF TAGHLIB

Expression

Taghlib, being a tribe who were involved in a continuous series of wars, and were in a state of constant movement from one area to another, found themselves in the position of having to articulate the desires and aspirations of members of the tribe in a form that was appropriate to their life-style, that is, to evoke their emotions and enkindle their passion. They must have suffered many casualties and hardships during their migrations in search of grass and water, and, therefore, had not the time to sit pen in hand or ponder over their poetic creations. The poem itself was an utterance which expressed what was in the heart. Constant wars were the background of their emotions which are expressed in poetry, particularly when the tribe is haughty and unwilling to recognise overlords within the Peninsula, be they Yemenites, Kinda or the Lakhmids. Thus their poetry was a spontaneous mirror of contemporary events. In this chapter we shall attempt to analyse some of the stylistic features of this poetry.

The most remarkable feature of the poetry of Taghlib, apart from al-Akhtal, al-Qutāmī and, to some degree, al-A^cshā, is that it reflects an immediate emotional response to events. It echoes the quick reaction to what happens when emotions are strong sometimes. If the poet is involved too much in a situation, his poetry becomes long, as was the case with some of al-Muhalhil's poems. The reason for this is that the poet cannot resist the pressure placed upon him by the event and he tries to get rid of his feelings in poetry. Poetry of this

kind inevitably becomes somewhat repetitious, and not a great deal of it survives, perhaps because it was not easy to memorise. However, there are strong grounds for believing that what does survive is authentic, since it reflects individual characteristics and is not at all imitative.

Generally though the surviving poems are quite short, being spontaneous reactions to a particular event. These poems display a violent and passionate tone which is a major feature of the poetry of Taghlib. This tone is heard from al-Muhalhil when he is weeping over his brother, and from ^cAmr b. Kulthūm when he is showing off his power by boasting and threatening. The others, such as Abū Hanash, ^cAbd Allāh, al-Aswad and ^cAbbād the sons of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl, ^cAmīra b. Ju^cal and all the rest, have shown the same features in their martial poetry, their elegies and even in their love poetry.¹ The following lines by al-Aswad b. ^cAmr show clearly these methods of expression:

عَدْتُ أَمْرًا مِنَ السَّوَابِجِ هَيْكَلٍ وَيَزِيْفُهُ تَصْدِيرُهُ إِذْ يَفِيْلُ حَرَكَتُهُ فَهَوَى حَيْشًا أَجْدَلُ وَالنَّحْرُ مِنْهُ بِالدَّمِ مَزْمَلُ فِي الْقَوْمِ أَوْلَى مِنْ يَجِيْبُ وَيَنْزِلُ	وَلَقَدْ شَهِدْتُ الْخَيْلَ تَحْمِلُ شَكْتِي أَمَّا إِذَا اسْتَدْبَرْتَهُ فَمَلْزَزُ وَكَأَنَّمَا تَهْوَى بِيَزَى كَلْمَا وَلَقَدْ تَرَكَتُ الْقَرْنَ فِي يَوْمِ الْوَعَى وَإِذَا دُعِيْتُ إِلَى النِّزَالِ فَاَنْزِنِي
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الكل

I have been present at cavalry [battles]
borne by a strong, lithe and massive horse,
one of the speedy ones.

1. See below, pp.127-221.

When you look at it from behind it is muscular, and when it is coming its advance makes it strut.

Whenever I set it in motion carrying my armour it is like a swiftly-swooping hawk.

I left the enemy in the battlefield with a neck covered with blood.

And if I am called to close combat, I am like the first among men who responds and comes to combat.¹

In this poem the poet is using a very direct mode of expression which does not differ greatly from that used by his father in his mu^callaqa. He tries to describe his horse and then to boast of his deeds. His pictures, whether of the horse or of himself, do not deepen the image and restrict themselves to superficial imagery, and differ in this way from those of al-A^csha in his poem which describes the fierce combat.²

Sometimes we find a kind of contemplative poetry, like that of Jābir and ^cAmīra b. Ju^cal,³ which depends on absorbing the event and then finding a visual expression for it instead of relying on spontaneity and directness and presenting a series of brief, simple images. It is possible to include al-Akḥṭal among these poets, since despite his imitation of the Jāhiliyya poets, his imagery is highly developed. Part of the reason for this may be that he lives under Islam, and neither he nor al-Qutāmī and al-A^cshā can follow their ancestors in acting without restraint or reflection.

Al-Qutāmī is nearer to the spontaneous poets, but even in his case either his character or the new regime has

1. Dīwān^c Amr, p.604.

2. See below, p.70.

3. Al-Mufaddaliyyāt (Lyal), v.2, pp.154-7, 200-1.

confined him. His comments in his poetry reflect calmness rather than the sharp sadness of al-Muhalhil, or the nervousness of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm. Al-Qutāmī may have been influenced in this by al-Akhtal.¹

His words seem to be carefully chosen, and his ma^cānī are well thought-out. His poem, which is included by al-Qurashī among the mashūbāt (poems with mixed themes),² is the best example of his poetry. The following lines of this poem show how his technique differs from that of his ancestors:

ولا الصدور على الأعجاز تتكىل والرياح ساكنة والظل محتدل مجنونة أو ترى ما لا ترى الأبل محنفر كخطوط السحح منسجل الا مغيرنا والمستقى العجل بطن التي نبتها الحوذان والنفل كاد الملاء من الكتان يشتعل البرط	يمشون رهوا فلا الأعجاز خاذلة فهن معترضات والحصى رميض يتبعن سامية العينين تحسبها لما وردن نيبا واستتب بها على مكان غشاش ما يقيم به ثم استمر بها الحادي وجنبها حتى وردن ركيات العوير وقد
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They walk slowly, their backs do not obstruct them and their chests do not lean on their backs.

They are eager to go even though the stones are hot and wind is calm, and the shadows are not yet long.

They follow a she-camel with its eyes raised which you would think to be mad, or that it sees what other camels cannot see.

1. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.10-11.

2. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.289.

When they arrived at Nabī and a long road led them on, smooth as lines of flowing water.

On a place in which people rarely stay, except for the one who changes our camels and quickly fetches water.

Then the camel leader continued with them and turned them aside from the place which produces hūdhān and nafal thorns.

Until they arrived at the wells of al-^CUwayr when the clothes made of flax had almost caught fire.¹

This part of the poem, which has 42 lines in all, shows how al-Qutāmī gives details in his description and tries to complete every side of his picture. Besides this, it is full of carefully-considered images such as "lines of overflowing water" and "clothes made of flax". The imagery is made yet more vivid by the smooth and melodious rhythm of his poem, and indeed he is praised as having beautiful love poetry which is raqīq (smooth);² indeed his poetry in general is regarded as beautiful.³

This difference between al-Qutāmī and others is clear from his technique of composing poetry which usually begins with the traditional nasīb and moves on to describe the she-camel and his travelling, then boasts of his tribe, or describes fighting.* This method should have lessened the intensity of his emotions as compared to the Taghlibī poets of the Jāhiliyya and besides, he did not face injury like that suffered by ^CAmr who resisted any attempt by ^CAmr b. Hind to bring him and his tribe down, or by al-Muhalhil who lost his brother unjustly.

1. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.26-7.

2. Ibn Qutayba, Ash-Shi^Cr wa ash-Shu^Carā', v.2, p.727.

3. Abū Tammām, Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa, v.1, p.129.

4. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, see poems Nos. 1, 4, 10.

This could also be said about al-A^Cshā, whose poetry, as can be seen from his Dīwān, reflects images and thinking rather than emotions. In fact, al-Akhtal is the only Taghlibī poet who completely abandons directness and emotion for contemplation and thinking deeply over his poetry. It is very clear that al-Akhtal, although he is imitating the Jāhiliyya poetry, is under the influence of those poets described as abīd ash-shi^Cr (slaves of poetry), who paid the utmost attention to their poetry by repeatedly polishing it.¹ This is clear from his long poem in praise of ^CAbd al-Malik which, it is said, he spent a whole year completing.² He also used to reject much of what he composed, and if he composed ninety lines he would only keep thirty of them.³

By contrast, the direct emotional approach helps the earlier poets to achieve a unity in their poetry. The intense feelings which are poured into the poem suffuse it from the beginning, and the poet comes to an end when he feels that he has said everything. For this reason we find that most of their poetry consists of fairly short poems, since the poet is able to get rid of his feelings quickly except in a few cases, such as ^CAmr's mu^Callaqa and some poems of al-Muhalhil, where the poets' feelings are out of control because the situation is more serious.

This leads to another fact, which is that the poetry of Taghlib, being, on the whole, martial poetry, does not pay attention to the convention of beginning with the encampment theme. Their temperament is active, and they tend to utter the poem or the lines without spending time on extending it. This is very clear in al-Muhalhil's poetry, in which the

1. Ibn Sallām, Jabaqāt Fuhūl ash-Shu^Carā', p.490; al-Aghānī, v.7, pp.171-5; Ghāzī, al-Akhtal, pp.592-604; Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.592-604.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.7, p.172.

3. Ibid., p.171; Ghāzī, al-Akhtal, pp.208-13.

encampment theme is dispensed with.¹ We also find the weakness of the convention in ^CAmr b. Kulthūm's mu^Callaqa, where he gets rid of most of the elements of the encampment theme.²

In fact the encampment theme was not strong until the time of al-Akhtal, who sticks to the tradition and gives much more of it, as does al-Qutāmī. Al-A^Cshā, at the end of the Umayyad period, shows less respect for the encampment theme and more for the celebration of the wine theme.³

Simplicity

It would not be an exaggeration to say that, if al-Akhtal and al-Qutāmī were not Taghlibī poets, the whole of the poetry of Taghlib would be simple. This simplicity is due to their tendency towards direct expression and a quick response to events. The poet composes poetry, using everyday poetic resources which suit the situation, without trying to choose words which are difficult or harsh. Their poetry in general is free from the gharīb. It is as simple as any plain speech, and the reader is not obliged to resort to any lexicon. Despite this simplicity, the poetry which belongs to the pre-Islamic era is different from that of Islam. This is clear from a comparison between any of the poems composed in the Jāhiliyya and in Islam respectively. There is no resemblance between them. The language is different, and while every poet has his own characteristics and traits, those of the Jāhiliyya practise freedom and reflect the tribal collective unconscious, whereas in Islam they show more submission to the authority and more respect for its laws. In the Jāhiliyya there is brutality

1. See below, p.205.

2. See below, pp.205-6, 372.

3. See below, p.207.

and cruelty in the display of power, as in ^CAmr b. Kulthūm's mu^Callaga, while in Islam the poets are more aware of the changes in the atmosphere. This is obvious in the following lines by al-A^Cshā in which he describes a close combat between Taghlib and Qays and which gives us a good specimen of their poetry in the later period:

أَمْكَنَ الطَّعْنَ وَمِنْ شَاءَ ضُرِبَ	وَدَنُونَا وَدَنُوا حَتَّى إِذَا
سُمُورِيَّاتٍ وَيِيْضُ كَالشَّهْبِ	رَكَدَتْ فِينَا وَفِيهِمْ سَاعَةٌ
وَمِنْ الضَّرْبِ كَتَفَيْفِ الْقَصَبِ	يَسْمَعُ السَّمْعَ مِنْ وَخْضِ الْقَتَا
وَكَيْلِ الْحَيِّينِ تَجْرِي بِحَسَبِ	مَا بَرُونَا فَفَرْنَا لَهُمْ
وَإِذَا قَامُوا جَشُونَا لِلرُّكْبِ	فَإِذَا وَلَّوْا لِحِقْنَا بِهِمْ

الرهل

We came nearer and they came nearer, until thrusting with spears was possible and whoever wished to [was able to] strike.

Spears and white swords like meteors stayed motionless for a while among us and among them.

The hearer could hear from the cutting of the spears and the smiting [a sound] like the breaking of canes.

They were patient with us and we became patient with them, and both tribes were subject to destiny.

If they fled we followed them, and if they stood we knelt (to continue fighting).¹

The poem reflects music rather than harshness, roughness and strength. It is different from ^CAmr b. Kulthūm's poem,

1. Dīwān al-A^Cshā, p.289.

in which blood is shed and severed heads are scattered around.

It is composed, from beginning to end, of simple, melodious words. The simplicity is different from that of ^CAmr b. Kulthūm or al-Muhalhil, since with these poets it is the meaning which is simple, while with al-A^Cshā there is simplicity of language and smoothness of vocabulary. The words are vibrant throughout the poem, and the mutaqārib metre is an unfamiliar one for such a subject in the poetry of Taghlib during the Jāhiliyya.

The music of the language can be found in the repetition. The softness is clear if we make a comparison between ^CAmr's repetition¹ and that of al-A^Cshā, as in danawnā (we came nearer) and danaw (they became nearer), yasma^C (hear) and as-sami^C (the hearer), and ṣābarūna (were patient with us) and ṣabarnā (we became patient).

The change in the style of the language is clear from the following line where al-A^Cshā describes two lions who are biting one another, and where he uses the wāfir metre in which the mu^Callaqa of ^CAmr is composed:

هَزَزْنَا غَابِيَةً وَقَصَا حِمَارًا فَظَلَّ حَوْلَهُ يَتَنَاهَشَانِ
الواو

Two lions of a forest have broken the neck of a donkey, and then they have started biting one another around him.²

1. See below, pp.383-94.

2. Dīwān al-A^Cshā, p.291.

Al-A^csha uses gentle language; even the image conjured up by the word waqaṣā (have broken the neck) is smooth in comparison with that given by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm in the following line where the image is more bedouin as opposed to the line quoted above, which is more urban in that the poet refers to a donkey and not a camel:

مَتَى نَعْقِدُ قَرِينَتَا بِحَبْلِ نَجْذُ الْحَبْلِ أَوْ نَقِصُ الْقَرِينَا

When we tie our she-camel with a rope to the neck of another, we break the rope or break the neck of the enemy.¹

The verb waqaṣā (broke the neck) seems to differ from the verb naqiṣ (we break the neck). The second corresponds to the violence which covers the whole of the mu^callaqa, while the first has a calmness although the description is of violence.

Descriptions of fighting by any other Taghlibī poets would have used strong expressions as in the following two lines by ^cAmīra b. Ju^cal:

يَظَلُّ بِهَا السَّبْعَانِ يَعْتَرِكُنَّ قَفَارٌ مَرُورَةٌ يَحَارِبُهَا الْقَطَا
قَمِصِينَ أَسْمَاظًا وَيَرْتَدِيَنَّ يَشِيرَانِ مِنْ نَسْجِ التَّرَابِ عَلَيْهَا

الطويل

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.657.

Deserted, smooth and bare are the places;
even the sand-grouse cannot find his way
therein; and all day long two beasts of prey
struggle together there.

The two stir up, of the weaving of the dust
upon them, two shirts made of a single piece,
and clothe themselves therewith.¹

The image conveyed by al-A^Cshā is also drawn from a different environment, for he uses the forest instead of deserted places. None of the Taghlibī poets in this study shows the impact of his surroundings as does al-A^Cshā, who describes striking and piercing as being like the breaking of canes in the line quoted earlier.

Both images may have existed in the Jāhiliyya poetry, but it is striking to find an image dealt with so differently by two poets from different periods but from the same tribe. This difference may have happened because of the change of environment. Al-A^Cshā lived in al-Jazīra, where there are woods, and ^CAmīra lived in a desert or had not absorbed the new surroundings.²

Al-A^Cshā is the only Taghlibī poet to show a very smooth tone in his poetry, and this may be due to the fact that he lived at the end of the Umayyad period when the state was stable and the new religion had imposed its decrees. We do not expect a Taghlibī who had been affronted to be calm or to discuss the matter without violence. Al-A^Cshā addresses the following lines to Abū Misma^C (a leader of Bakr, their old enemies) concerning his misbehaviour towards Taghlib:

1. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt (Lyall), v.1, p.521; v.2, p.200.

2. See below, pp.278-91.

تَمِيتَ عَلَيكُم عَتَبَهَا وَمَسَالَهَا
وَيِينكُم لِمَا قَطَعْتُمْ وَصَالَهَا
جَزَاءَ الْمُسِي سَعِيهَا وَفِعَالَهَا
وَتَعْجِزَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ يَعْرِفُ ضَلَالَهَا
بَدَا لِنَفْسِكَ مَا تَجْنِي الْحُرُوبُ فَهَالَهَا
قَبِيحَ مَهِينٍ حَيْثُ أَلْقَتْ حِلَالَهَا
وَكَانَ سَفِيحَ الْمَشْرِفِي صَلَالَهَا
مَحَارِمَهَا وَأَنْ تَمَيِّزُوا حِلَالَهَا
صُدُورَ الْعَوَالِي بَيْنَنَا وَنَصَالَهَا

بَنِي أُمْنَا مَهْلًا فَإِنْ نَفُوسُنَا
وَتَرَعَى بِلَا جَهْلٍ قَرَابَةَ بَيْنِنَا
جَزَى اللَّهُ شُكْيَانًا وَتِيْمًا مَلَامَةً
أَبَا مَسْمَعٍ مَنْ تَنَكَّرَ الْحَقَّ نَفْسُهُ
أَأْوَقَدَتْ نَارَ الْحَرْبِ حَتَّى إِذَا
نَزَعَتْ وَقَدْ جَرَدَتْهَا ذَاتَ مَنْظَرٍ
أَلْسِنَا إِذَا مَا الْحَرْبُ شَبَّ سَعِيرَهَا
أَجَارْتَنَا حُلَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَنَازَلُوا
كَذَبْتُمْ يَمِينَ اللَّهِ حَتَّى تَعَاوَرُوا

O our mothers' sons, wait for we ourselves
blame you for ending our relationship (?)

While without ignorance we ourselves keep our
relationship between us when you cut its
tie.

God reward Shaybān and Taym with the blame
due to a sinner for their deeds.

Abū Misma^c, one whose soul denies the
rightful, and is weak in gratitude, will know
his own error,

Have you not kindled the war until when you
yourself saw and feared the consequences of
wars?

You withdraw having bared it (war) with its
ugly and base appearance wherever it
stops.

Do we not when the blaze of war is kindled,
and the edge of the mashrafi sword is
heated by it (?)

Is our woman neighbour lawful to you to
assault that which is forbidden and obtain
what is permitted?

By God, you are telling lies, until you clash
the heads of the spears and their handles.¹

This poem seems to be a protest rather than a threat. The poet appears to be trying to get an explanation for this misbehaviour, and does not attack at once as his predecessors did. He uses indirect expressions, stating rather than commanding. It is also worthy of notice that the poem reflects what seems to be a religious attitude. We find expressions such as "keep our relationship", "God reward", "right", "going astray", the idea of attacking a woman neighbour, and swearing by God. Whether this attitude is purely Christian, or comes from the influence of the new religion, or had been adopted in pre-Islamic times, al-A^Cshā is the only Taghlibī poet who adopts it as such on this subject. The poem also confirms the tendency towards simplicity in his poetry, and shows how great the difference is between him and his ancestors.

The poetry attributed to pre-Islamic Taghlibī poets, on the other hand, has no Islamic features, which may help to confirm its authenticity. In addition, all the places, battles and names mentioned are different from those which we find in the poetry of the Islamic period. However, the poems of the Islamic period are different in their language. Al-A^Cshā is influenced more by the new regime, while al-Qutāmī and Ka^Cb b. Ju^Cayl reflect a position of compromise between the Jāhiliyya and Islam, the poets of the latter period tending towards contemplation rather than quick action. We do not find any poet living in the Islamic period who is similar to al-Muhalhil or ^CAmr b. Kulthūm, for example. In Islam the

1. Dīwān al-A^Cshā, p.291.

sharpness and nervousness are lost, and the language is very calm and smooth. Of course none of these poets is similar to al-Akhtal, whose language is highly polished, or al-Qutāmī, whose language is smoother than his.

In characterising the language of Taghlib as simple, the difficulty which occurs in descriptions of the she-camel, as in Jābir b. Hunayy's encampment theme¹ or in most of al-Qutāmī's difficult poems,² is acceptable, because these poets are in the position to use a special diction to portray something which is known to them by a particular vocabulary, as Tarafa does in describing the she-camel which is the most difficult part in his mu^c allaqa.³ At the same time, these descriptions are rare in their poetry, because most of their poetry is martial poetry which depends mainly on factual statements to display strength.

This simplicity does not mean vulgarity or weakness, but it does mean that this is emotional and spontaneous poetry which has not been pondered over. The best and most vivid example of this is ^cAmr b. Kulthūm's mu^c allaqa. This simplicity affects the structure of their poetry, which is composed without any complexity or ambiguity. Its sentences are joined together without leaving the meaning obscure. It is unusual for us to find difficult lines like the following:

خَلِيلِي هُوَ جَاءَ النِّجَاءِ شِمْلَةً وَذُو شَطْبٍ لَا يَجْتَوِيهِ الصَّاحِبُ
الطَّوِيلُ

My friends there were twain - a camel light-
hearted, nimble of pace, and a blade marked

1. Al-Mufaddaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, pp.421-4; v.2, pp.154-5.

2. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.25, 28, 38-44, 48-50, 94-5, 106-7, 114-5.

3. Dīwān Tarafa, pp.12-26.

with grooves, a fellow whose company none
mislikes.¹

أَمْ كَيْفَ يَنْفَعُ مَا تَعْطُونَ الْعُلُوقَ بِهِ
رَيْحَانٌ أَنْفٍ إِذَا مَا ضَنَّ بِاللَّبَنِ
الْبَيْطِ

Or how profits what a camel that smells a
young one, but refuses to yield her milk to
it, gives, showing affection with the nose,
when there is niggardliness with the milk?²

أَنْتُمْ ثَنَانَا وَأَنْتُمْ إِخْوَةٌ نَسَبًا
إِنْ الْمَنَاسِبُ تَعْلُوهَا الْخَرَاطِيمُ
الْبَيْطِ You are lower than we, even though you [our]
brothers in kinship, [just as] the noses are
over the manāsib (?)³

وَلَنْ يَرْدَ عِنَانِي مَقْرِفَ حِطْمٍ
غَمْرٌ وَلَا ضَرْعٌ مِنَ الْقَرَانِ
الْبَيْطِ An old, untrained half-bred horse, or a weak
horse with no pedigree, will never turn back
my rein.⁴

يَحْيَى كَكُوَيْلِ السَّفِينَةِ أَمْ هُمْ
الَّذِي سَلَفَ عَادَ إِذَا احْتَلَّ مَرْزَمٌ
الطَّرِيقِ

A tribe who are like a rudder, and whose
might depends on an ancestral stock beyond
praise, if there is a noise.⁵

1. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyall), v.1, p.412; v.2, p.149.

2. Ibid., v.1, p.525; v.2, p.204.

3. Al-Āmidī, Al-Mu'talaf wa l-Mukhtalaf, p.287.

4. Dīwān 'Amr, p.610.

5. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyall, v.1, p.425; v.2, p.155. (We have changed Lyall's translation).

وَأَنْتَ أَنْ يَهْمَكَ أَرِييْتَهُ
مِنْهُمْ يَلِاقِيكَ غَلَامٌ غَزِيْرٌ

السريخ

If a person of low origin of them speaks nonsense to you, a well-built youth finds you (?).¹

Such lines are the most difficult in their poetry. Their vocabulary needs the use of the lexicon in order to be understood. But they are few in proportion to the poetry as a whole, particularly if we bear in mind that most of them relate to description, and it may well be that some of them have been corrupted or misinterpreted.

While we are discussing these difficult passages, it may be remarked that al-Akhtal is said to have created two words which are not in the Arabic language. These two words are tīnān (wolf) and al-^caythūm (female elephant) which occur in the following lines:

يَعْتَقُهُ عِنْدَ تَيْنَانَ بَدْمَتَهُ
بَادِي الْعَوَاءِ ضَيْلُ الشَّخْصِ مَكْتَسِبُ

البيط

They dislike it for it is near a wolf who is in its place and barking with hunger, thin and greedy.²

وَمَلْحَبٍ خَضِلُ الشَّيَابِ كَأَنَّمَا
وَطِئَتْ عَلَيْهِ بِخَفِيهَا الْعَيْشُومُ

الكامل

A person who is wounded and whose clothes

1. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.345.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.249.

are smeared with blood, as though a female elephant had trodden on him with her foot.¹

Al-A^Cshā has a strange word, an-nīm, in the following line:

نعماني بشرية من طلاء شربة النيم من شبا الزمهرير
النيم

Give me a drink of wine which is similar to the enjoyment given by a fur against the severe cold.²

The word means "half" in Persian, and it also means "fur" in Arabic. The second seems a better choice because of the context of severe cold.

Because of their general simplicity of speech we do not find any hint of a philosophical approach, and most of their ideas about life and existence are expressed in aphorisms (hikam) or in proverbs which are derived from their own experience and are without complexity.

Sometimes we find them depending on exaggeration. This exaggeration is due to their emotions, which are mostly uncontrolled as in the line of al-Muhalhil in which he claims that if there had been no wind the people of Hajr would have heard the beating of swords,³ the line of al-A^Cshā which boasts of his tribe's generosity,⁴ or that of ^CAmr who claims

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, p.392.

2. Ibn al-Jarrāh, Risālat al-^CAmrīn f.45. Dīwān al-A^Cshā, pp.265-6, 271.

3. See below, p. 311.

4. Ma^Cāhid at-Tanṣīs, v.3, p.25.

that when they attack they spread out their war like a millstone which covers the whole of Najd and Qudā^ca.¹

Imagery

We cannot expect that a tribe whose poetry consists mainly of an immediate emotional response to specific events will show a great deal of creativity in the field of imagery. It appears that these poets' only aim is to give vent to their feelings, without making any effort to depict them or put them into images. Nevertheless there are some poets who are creative in this way, for example al-Akhtal, al-Quṭāmī and al-A^cshā.

Clearly these poets, who belong to the Islamic period and whose subjects are mostly panegyrical,² are different from their ancestors. Nevertheless we can find some elements of imagination in the earlier poetry, such as the images employed by al-Akhnas when he is seeking revenge on his enemies,³ Ufnūn's description of the murder of ^cAmr b. Hind,⁴ Ka^c b's description of the murder of ^cUbayd Allāh b. ^cUmar⁵ and his description of his beloved,⁶ the images of the attack given by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm,⁷ and al-^cIkabb's poem describing the sand-grouse.⁸ We also find other vivid images elsewhere which reflect the creative potential which the poet might have developed had he had the time, for example in the following lines of al-Muhalhil in which he gives a picture of the

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.633.

2. See below, pp.228-36.

3. Al-Buhturī, al-Hamāsa, p.19.

4. Al-Aghānī, v.9, p.183.

5. Al-Minqarī, Waq'at Ṣiffīn, p.336.

6. Al-Aghānī, v.3, pp.85-6.

7. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.632-48.

8. Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.10, pp.263-4.

Yemenite army:

وَإِذْ أَقْبَلَتْ حِمْيَرٌ فِي جَمْعِهَا
وَجَمَّعَ هَمْدَانٌ لَهُمْ لَجْبَةً
ذَٰكَ وَقَدْ عَنَ لَهُمْ عَارِضٌ
تَلْمَعُ لَمَعِ الطَّيْرِ رَايَاتُهُ
وَقَدْ عَلَتْهُمْ هَفْوَةٌ هَبْوَةٌ
وَمَذْحِجٌ كَالْعَارِضِ الْمَسْتَحِيقِ
وَرَايَةٌ تَهْوِي هَوِي الْأَنْوَقِ
كَجَنَاحِ لَيْلٍ فِي سَمَاءِ الْبُرُوقِ
عَلَى أَوَازِي لَحَجِّ بَحْرِ عَمِيقِ
ذَاتِ هَيْجٍ كُلَّهَيْبِ الْحَرِيقِ

السري

When Ḥimyar with their host and Madhḥij came like a huge rainy cloud.

And the army of Hamdān with clamour and a flag swooping like al-anūq (a vulture).

Then clouds appear to them like the night in a sky full of lightning.

Its flags - like birds - shine on waves of a very deep sea.

And they are covered by dust when they fall, a falling which is hectic like the fire's flame.¹

A further example is to be found in the following lines of Ka^c b where he draws a picture of ^cAmr b. al-^cĀṣ while Abū Mūsā was trying to win him over to his point of view during the arbitration between ^cAlī and Mu^cāwiya:

كَأَنَّ أَبَا مُوسَى عَشِيَّةً أُذْرُجٌ
يَطُوفُ بِلِقْمَانِ الْحَكِيمِ يَوَارِيهِ

1. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, pp.231-2.

يَحَاوِلُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ عَمْرًا وَإِنَّمَا
لِيَضْرِبَ فِي بَحْرِ عَرِيضٍ مَذَاهِبِهِ
دَحَا دَحْوَةً فِي صَدْرِهِ فَهَوَى بِهِ
إِلَى أَسْفَلِ الْمَهْوَى طُنُونٌ كَوَاذِبُهُ

الضوابط

It is as though Abū Mūsā at the evening of Adhruh were moving around Luqmān the wise in order to seduce him.

^CAbd Allāh tries with ^CAmr but he strikes in a sea whose sides are broad.

He pushes him in the chest and his false hopes make him fall down to the depths.¹

These are good examples of the way in which these poets create pictures. Their imagery may not be very profound, but it does give an accurate and lively image which develops throughout the poem. These images are not meant to be taken individually, but come in a sequence. Rarely do we find a developed image like that of al-^CIkabb describing the sand-grouse.²

Later on we find more creative poems such as that of al-Akhtal in his description of the drinker,³ and those of al-Qutāmī in his encounter with the old lady,⁴ the image of the pearl diver,⁵ and the ship of the prophet Nūh.⁶ We find this creativity also with al-A^Cshā in his description of the close combat between Taghlib and Qays,⁷ and in the description of the virgin by Ibnat al-Humāris.⁸

1. Al-Minqarī, Waq'at Šiffīn, pp.632-3.
2. Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.10, pp.263-4.
3. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.363-6.
4. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.46-8.
5. Ibid., pp.98-100.
6. Ibid., pp.143-4.
7. See above, p.70.
8. Al-Marzubānī, Ash'ar an-Nisā', pp.156-8.

Al-Akhtal is the most creative poet, because he gives us different pictures of the horse,¹ the encampments,² the wild ox, the wild ass, the she-camel, the crow, the wolf, the female ostrich, the sand-grouse, the falcon and the ships.³

These descriptions show the kinds of image the Taghlibī poets could provide. It is obvious that these images were already common in the pre-Islamic period,⁴ but al-Akhtal at least adds to them something personal so that his images bear his own feelings,⁵ and this is clear in his encampment theme where he speaks to himself, saying:

وَكَيْفَ يَدَاوِينِي الطَّيِّبُ مِنَ الْأَسَى وَبِرَّةٍ عِنْدَ الْأَعْوَرِ بْنِ بَيَّانِ
الطَّوِيلِ

And how can the doctor cure me of love while Barra is with al-A^Cwar b. Bayān.⁶

These images sometimes depend on tashkhīṣ (personification) and tajsīm (embodiment), although these elements are infrequent in Taghlibī poetry because of its tendency towards directness and spontaneousness. In the following line, al-Muhalhil embodies the injustice committed by Jassās as camels who are sitting, with their loads, beside his people:

1. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.329-42.

2. Ibid., pp.385-407.

3. For a full discussion of the imagery of al-Akhtal see Hāwī, pp.476-517.

4. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, p.158.

5. Ibid., pp.583-7.

6. Ibid., p.586. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.292.

حلت ركاب البغي من وائل في رهط جساس ثقال السوق

السري

The camels of the injustice put their heavy loads among Jassās's family of Wā'il.¹

^cAmr b. Kulthūm, in the following line, personifies swords, while they are striking up and down, as people who are standing and bowing:

علينا البيفر واليلب اليماني وأسيا فيقمن وينحنيا

While upon us were the helmets and Yemeni jerkin, and in our hands swords, which were straightening and were bending.²

In the following line, al-^cIkabb personifies the sand-grouse as a woman who seeks help:

فلما أتته مقدحرا تغوشت تغوش مخنوق متطفو وتغرق

And when it came to the moving [water], it screamed for help like a strangled thing and floated and sank.³

Animals and inanimate objects are used more frequently than people as metaphors in this poetry. Thus war is embodied

1. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamharat, p.230.

2. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.663.

3. Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.10, p.264.

as a she-camel or a fire, as in the following lines:

فَأَقْسِمُ إِنْ حَرِّبَ عَوَانَ تَلْقَحَتْ وَحَانَ مِنَ النَّاسِ التَّمَرُ وَالْخَطَرُ

الطويل

I swear that if a long-drawn-out war becomes impregnated and the time of anger and fury comes for people.¹

إِذَا الْحَرْبُ شَالَتْ لِلتَّلْقَحِ لَمْ تَجِدْ لَنَا جَانِبًا إِلَّا بِهِ مِنْ يَنَاءِ عَرِهِ

الطويل

If war comes on heat for impregnation, you will never find any side of us which does not contain those who come to its help.²

وَفَارِسُكُمْ إِذَا مَا الْحَرْبُ شَبَّتْ وَمَطْعَمُكُمْ إِذَا هَبَّتْ شَمَالًا

الموافق

And your horseman if war is kindled, and your feeder if the north wind blows.³

أَأَوْقَدْتَ نَارَ الْحَرْبِ حَتَّى إِذَا بَدَا لِنَفْسِكَ مَا تَجْنِي الْحُرُوبُ فَهَالِهَا

الطويل

Have you not set up the fire of war, and when you yourself realise the consequences of war it scares you.⁴

1. Dīwān al-A^Cshā, p.290.

2. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.95.

3. Dīwān^C Amr, p.604.

4. Dīwān al-A^Cshā, p.291.

Images other than those of war can be found; for example, the following line contains a description of the constellation of Gemini as she-camels around a young camel:

كَأَنَّ كَوَاكِبَ الْجُوزَاءِ عِوَضًا مَحْطَفَةً عَلَى رِجْلِ كَسِيرٍ
الزائر

The stars of Gemini are like old she-camels which are surrounding compassionately a helpless young camel.¹

These elements are more in evidence with al-Akhtal, whose tendency towards description makes his pictures a mixture of these elements. Personification is very clear in the lines in which he describes the wild ox as a person sitting under a tree all night and conducting a soliloquy with himself.² It is also clear from the following line, in which he describes dignity as a man who swears not to be an ally of Yarbū^c:

قَدْ أَقْسَمَ الْمَجْدُ حَقًّا لَا يَحَالِفُهُمْ حَتَّى يَحَالِفَ بَطْنَ الرَّاحَةِ الشَّعْرُ
البيد

Dignity swears truly that he will never become their ally until hair becomes an ally of the inside of the palm.³

We also find that in al-Akhtal's poetry embodiment is a more notable feature than personification. He uses the old image of the she-camel for war, as in the following line:

1. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.131.

2. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.476-85.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.211.

ضَجُّوا مِنَ الْحَرْبِ إِذْ عَضَّتْ عَوَارِيهِمْ
وَقِيَسْرَعِيْلَانُ مِنْ أَخْلَاقِهَا الضَّجْرُ
الْبَيْتِ

They cried when war bit their backs, and
complaint is in the character of Qays ^CAylān.¹

He also uses the she-camel to describe prosperity, in the
following line:

فَإِذَا أَتَتْكُمْ فَأَعْطَتْكُمْ بَدْرَتِهَا
فَأَحْتَلِبُوهَا هِنِيئًا يَا بَنِي الْحَكَمِ

O Banū l-Hakam, if it comes to you and it
gives you its milking, then milk happily.²

These elements are not common, however, even in al-Akḥṭal, because it needs more effort to create them and a wider imagination to give such personified portraits of people or things. There are easier ingredients of imagery to depend on, and the most popular of these is the simile.³ Their materials for the simile are things which they have known or experienced, such as animals, birds and stars. Their similes are simple, and not complex like those of Ibn al-Mu^Ctazz in the ^CAbbāsīd period, for example.⁴ Al-Akḥṭal does, however, develop the tashbīh istiṭrādī (digressive simile) to a small extent when, for example, he uses the Euphrates to describe the person whom he is praising.⁵

The following lines are examples of the type of tashbīh

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, p.205.

2. Ibid., p.225.

3. See Dayf, aṭ-Ṭatawwur wa at-Tajdīd fī ash-Shi^Cr al-Amawī, p.139.

4. See Dayf, al-Fann wa-Madhāhibuh fī ash-Shi^Cr al-Arabi, pp.267-74.

5. Ibid., pp.16-7.

which is introduced by the particles ka'anna (as though), mithl (like) or ka (like). This is used to draw attention to a similarity between what the poet wants to describe and another object, as when al-Muhalhil says:

كَأَنَّ الْجَدَى فِي مِثْنَةِ رِبْقٍ أَسِيرٌ أَوْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْأَسِيرِ

Capricorn is like a captive in double ropes
or like a captive.¹

كَأَنَّآ غَدْوَةً وَبَنِي أَبِينَا بِجَوْفِ عَنِيْزَةَ رَحِيًّا مَدِيرِ

At early morning we and the sons of our
father are like the two millstones of a grinder
inside ^CUnayza.²

It is also to be found in the following lines of ^CAmr b. Kulthūm:

وَلَمْ أَرِ مِثْلَ هَالَةَ فِي مَعْدٍ تُشَبِّهُ حَسَنَهَا إِلَّا الْهَيْلَةَ
الْوَأْتِ

I have not seen the like of Hāla in Ma^C add
except for the crescent moon to resemble her
beauty.³

1. Al-Aṣma^C iyyāt, p.174.

2. Ibid., p.135.

3. Dīwān ^CAmr, p.593.

كَأَنَّ الْخَيْلَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِ
بِجَنْبِ عَوْرِيضِ أُسْرَابِ دَبِيرِ
الواقف

The horses on the right of Ubād beside
Uwayrid are like a swarm of wasps,¹

of Abū Hanash, al-Akhnas, Jābir and Amīra b. Ju'al:

تَتَابَعُ سَبْعَةٌ كَانُوا لِأُمٍّ
كَأَجْرَامِ النِّعَامِ الْحَائِرَاتِ
الواقف

Seven persons from one mother follow each
other like the bodies of wandering ostriches.²

أَنَا هِيَ الْمَغِيرَةُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ
بِمَسْنِفَةٍ كَضُرَّةِ ذِي كِلَابِ
الواقف

I lead a plundering party against them every
day, mounted on a camel which is like a dog-
keeper's hunting bitch.³

بِجَأْوَاءٍ يَنْفِي وَرْدَهَا سَرْعَانَهَا
كَأَنَّ وَضِيحَ الْبَيْضِ فِيهَا الْكَوَاكِبُ
الطويل

A host are they, dark with steel, star-
helmeted: he who comes to water first must
leave to make for the last a place.⁴

1. Dīwān Amr, p.596.

2. Abū Ubayda, An-Naqā'id, v.1, p.456.

3. Al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Al-Ikhtiyārāyn, p.174.

4. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.419; v.2, p.151.

أَنَافَتِ وَزَافَتِ فِي الزُّمَامِ كَأَنَّهَا
الَى غَرَضِهَا أَجْلَادُ هِرْمُومِ
الهرمل

The camel goes, quickening pace, and proudly she speeds along as though by her girth there lurked an ugly, big-headed cat.¹

وَبِالشَّرْفِ الْأَعْلَى وَحُوشِ كَأَنَّهَا
عَلَى جَانِبِ الْأَرْجَاءِ عَوْدُ هِجَانِ
الطويل

And in the highest uplands of the place are wildings, looking like thoroughbred she-camels with their younglings following them in the sides of the valley.²

and of al-Aswad and Abū l-Lahhām:

وَكَأَنَّما تَهْوَى بِبِرْزَى كَلَمًا
حَرَكَتُهُ فَهَوَى حَيْثَا أَجْدَلُ
الأول

It is as though whenever I set [my horse] in motion a hawk carries me swiftly with my weapons.³

وَكَأَنَّ جَادِيًّا بِهِ وَأَرْنَدَجًا
وَيُوجِهُهُ سَفْعُ كُلُّونِ السَّنَدِسِ
الطويل

And it seems that saffron and black leather are in it (the oryx) and in its face is a darkness like brocaded silk.⁴

1. Al-Mufaddaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.423; v.2, p.155.

2. Ibid., v.1, p.521; v.2, p.201.

3. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.604.

4. Ibid., p.608.

Al-Akhtal also has some similes, such as those in the following lines:

جمالية غول النجاء كأنها بنية عقير أو قريح هجان

الطويل

It looks [as strong as] a camel, as swift as a ghūl, like the structure of a castle, or a camel which impregnates the pure she-camels.¹

مستشرف قد رماه الناس كلهم كأنه من سموم الصيف سفود

البيضا

On a high place, driven there by the people, looking like a red-hot skewer on account of the scorching winds of summer.²

وقتلنى بنى رعل كأن بطونهم على جانب الوادى بطون حمير

الطويل

And the bellies of the dead of Banū Ri^cl at the side of the valley look like the bellies of asses.³

We notice that some of these similes do not involve any imaginary leaps but make fairly obvious comparisons of like to like, since it is easy to see that a horse is similar to a dog and wild animals to a she-camel. Some, however, create a sense of excitement, because the similarity is an imaginative one which is difficult to draw, although we accept it once our attention has been drawn to it. Thus the comparison of horses

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.295. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.552-3.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.97. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.552-3.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.66. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.552-3.

to wasps, or of dead men's bellies to asses' bellies, strikes us.

The most common type of simile in their poetry is that which is known as at-Tashbīh at-Tamthīlī (exemplified simile),¹ where the poet does not satisfy himself simply with drawing our attention to a similarity between two objects but adds some details and explanations to illustrate it and make it convincing and exciting.

In a line to be quoted later,² al-Muhalhil likens the stars of Gemini to she-camels, but, in order to make his picture clearer and more vivid, he adds that they are clustered around a young camel. In the same way he likens the Pleiades, when Canopus disappears, to young camels, as though they are shaking:

كَأَنَّ النُّجُومَ فَصْلَانَ صِغَارٍ أَوَارِكٍ فِي دَجَى لَيْلٍ مَطِيرٍ

Sirius is like young camels in an arāk-forest on a dark rainy night.³

We also find Abū Ḥanash using this kind of simile when he describes horses in their reins as being like the sand-grouse "which bear dignity and honour" instead of saying only "like a group of sand-grouse":

1. Al-Īdāh, v.4, pp.44-7, 50-3, 131-8. Hāwī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.558-60.

2. See below, p.303.

3. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb bakr wa Taḡlib, f.34b. Al-Lisān "araka".

وكل سبوي في العنان مقلص كسرب القطا يحملن مجدا وسؤدا
الطويل

And very speedy and slender in the reins,
looking like a group of sand-grouse which
bear dignity and honour.¹

Al-Akhnas describes himself, lying awake at night in his
desire for revenge, as being like a person sitting alone after
being bitten by a snake. The words "cannot find a comrade"
clarify the meaning of loneliness:

أبيت إذا نام الخلى كأنني سليم أفاع لا يلاقى له أنسا
الطويل

I stay awake - while the happy person sleeps
- like a man, bitten by a snake, who cannot
find a comrade.²

He uses the idea of sickness in detail in the following
line, to show what his feelings were when he was standing
beside the encampment of his beloved:

وقفت بها أبكى وأشعر سخنة كما اعتاد محموم بخيبر صالب
الطويل

Day-long I stood there, while swept me a
tremor and burning heat, as a vehement hot
fit comes on a sick man in Khaybar town.³

1. Abū^c Ubayda, al-Ayyām, p.404.

2. Al-Buhturī, al-Ḥamāsa, p.19.

3. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.411; v.2, p.149.

He also explains in detail the similarity of the deserted encampment of his beloved to the title of a parchment ornamented by a writer, using the verb raqqasha (ornamented) to convince us that there really is a similarity between them:

لَابِنَةُ حِطَّانِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ مَنَازِلُ كَمَا رَقَّشَ الْعُنْوَانَ فِي الرِّقِّ كَاتِبٌ
الطويل

The daughter of Ḥittān, son of ^cAwf, left her dwellings plain, like lines drawn by skilled hands on a volume's opening page.¹

Al-Akhnas gives a beautiful picture in the following line, where he describes the ostriches walking around the encampment as being like female slaves bringing wood in the evening:

تَمْشِي بِهَا حَوْلَ النِّعَامِ كَأَنَّهَا رَأْمَاءٌ تَزْجِي بِالْعِشِيِّ حَوَاطِبُ
الطويل

All day feed therein dust-coloured ostriches, unafraid, as though they were handmaids homeward driven with wood at eve.²

Al-Akhnas clarifies the image, which he means to convey that they are aged and walking heavily, by suggesting that these ostriches are like slaves when they come back in the evening tired and fatigued after a hard day's work. He has an equally beautiful image when he describes horses around their camp as being like goats for whom there are not enough pens, in order to make his exaggeration of their number more

1. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.410; v.2, p.149.

2. Ibid., v.1, p.411; v.2, p.149.

convincing:

تَرَى رَائِدَاتِ الْخَيْلِ حَوْلَ بَيْوتِنَا كَمِعْزَى الْحِجَازِ أَعُوذَتَهَا الزَّرَائِبُ
الطويل

Around where our tents are pitched our
steeds roam for all to see as goats in the
high Hijāz, too many to be penned in.¹

Jābir b. Hunayy uses this sort of tashbīh when he
describes the rumbling of his she-camel as being like a timbrel
struck by a female slave, but adds that it is resounding:

وَصَدَّتْ عَنِ الْمَاءِ الرَّوَاءِ لَجُوفِهَا دَوِي كَدْفِ الْقَيْنَةِ الْمُتَمِّمِ
الطويل

She turned from the full fount, while the
water she drank within her belly resounded,
like the timbrel a singer strikes.²

He also uses it to liken his she-camel's climbing up
Bathā' ^cIrq to climbing a ladder:

تَصْعَدُ فِي بَطْحَاءِ عِرْقٍ كَأَنَّهَا تَرْقَى إِلَى أَعْلَى أَرِيكِ بِسَلَمٍ
الطويل

She mounts up the vale of ^cIrq, as though in
her upland way she rises by a ladder's rungs
to where hangs Arīk on high.³

We find examples of this type of tashbīh in al-Qutāmī,

1. Al-Mufaddaliyat (Lyal), v.1, p.418; v.2, p.151.

2. Ibid., v.1, p.424; v.2, p.155.

3. Ibid.

when he describes the expanding conflicts between Taghlib and Qays:

كَمَا الْعِظْمَ الْكَسِيرِ يَهْضُرُ حَتَّى يَبِيتَ وَإِنَّمَا بَدَأَ انْصِدَادًا
الْوَأْفَرُ

Like a broken bone which will not mend until it is amputated, which began as nothing but a crack,¹

and when he describes the taste of his beloved's mouth:

وَكَأَنَّ طَعْمَ مَدَامَةِ عَانِيَةَ شَمِيلِ الرِّبَاقِ وَخَالَطَ الْأَسْنَانَ
الْقَامِلُ

It is as though the taste of wine of ^cĀna had mingled with her saliva and mixed with her teeth.²

^cAmr b. Kulthūm's mu^callaqa is full of this type of tashbīh, as in the following lines:

كَأَنَّ ثِيَابَنَا مِنْهُمُ خَضِبَ بَأَرْجَوَانَ أَوْ طَلِينَا

As if our garments and theirs were dyed with the juice of the urjuwān or besmeared with it.³

1. Dīwān al-Quṭāmī, p.32.

2. Ibid., p.58.

3. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.642. Al-Lisān "araja".

كَأَنَّ غُضُونَهُنَّ مَتُونٌ غَدِرٌ تَصْفَقُهَا الرِّيحُ إِذَا جَرَيْنَا

As if the folds in these coats of mail were the surfaces of pools which the wind strikes, when it blows, so as to cause them to ripple.¹

وَمَا مَنَعَ الظَّعَّائِنَ مِثْلَ ضَرْبٍ تَرَى مِنْهُ السَّوَادُ كَالْقَلِينَا

Nothing protects the women like a blow, such that you will see by reason of it the arms of our foes flying off like qulats.²

In the above lines ^CAmr tries to make the images exciting when we see clothes, smeared with blood, made to appear as if they are dyed or painted with urjuwān, and the shining surface of the coats of mail likened to the surfaces of pools which are struck by the wind. The third one adds another simile to the depiction of smiting by describing arms as being like quoits, to show how strong the striking is. Al-Akhtal also uses this type of tashbīh.³

A less obvious kind of tashbīh is the one called at-Tashbīh al-Istiṭrādī, and the only Taghlibī poet who uses it is al-Akhtal; it appears in several of his poems.⁴ Al-Qutāmī has only three lines of this kind.⁵

There is another kind of tashbīh which is nearer to the

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p.665.

2. Ibid., v.2, p.677.

3. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.558-60.

4. Ibid., p. 561-3.

5. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.44-5. See also pp.111 and 133.

metaphor and is known as at-Tashbīh al-Balīgh.¹ This omits the subject of the simile and goes directly to the second element of the comparison, omitting the definite article, to give the figure of speech greater immediacy and cogency, as in the following lines:

رِيحٌ تَبَاعِدُنِي عَدُوًّا وَتَلْحِقُنِي إِذَا جَرَّتْ خِذْمَ مِنْهَا وَشَوْبُوبِ
اليسيرة

A wind which takes me away and makes me follow them if it goes, fast and speedy.²

لِقَمَانٍ مُنْتَصِرًا وَقَسْرًا نَاطِقًا وَأَنْتَ أَجْرًا صَوْلَةً مِنْ بِيهَسِ
الذمل

Luqmān when he conquers, and Qass when he utters, and you are braver in fighting than a lion.³

وَإِنْ مَكَانَكَ مِنْ وَائِلٍ مَكَانَ الْقِرَادِ مِنْ أَسْتِ الْجَمَلِ
القطار

And your place in Wā'il is the place of ticks in the anus of the camel.⁴

The above are the most striking types of simile in their poetry, used in order to make their pictures livelier and more convincing.

1. Al-Īdāh, v.4, pp.41-4, 175-6.
2. Abū Ubayda, Kitāb al-Khayl, p.153.
3. Dīwān Amr, p.609.
4. Al-Amīdī, al-Mu'talaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.115.

Ornamentation (Badi^c)

(a) Antithesis (Ṭibāq)

Antithesis is not much used in Taghlibī poetry; when it does occur it does so in a very natural and unconscious manner, as do so many other features. Thus we find a word and its opposite introduced by the poet simply because the meaning demands them, without any obvious interference from the poet in order to introduce this figure of speech artificially, as in the ^cAbbasīd period.

Al-Muhalhil's poetry is nearly empty of antithesis, and when he uses it it seems very simple. This is very clear in the following two lines where he makes an opposition between hill (lawfulness) and iḥrām (unlawfulness) and qawm (men) and niswān (women):

قتلوا كليباً ثم قالوا أربعوا كذبوا ورب الحِلِّ والإِحرام

المُحالل

They killed Kulayb and then said (to us)
"Settle down". They lied; by the Lord of
lawfulness and unlawfulness.¹

بعضيبة لا تستقال جليبة غلبت عزاء القوم والنسوان

المُحالل

With a great affliction which cannot be
tolerated, which is stronger than the
consolation of men and women.²

1. Al-Asma^c iyyāt, p.176.

2. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.389.

Al-Akhnas shows this unconscious tendency towards the use of antithesis in the following two lines; the idea which he wishes to express requires this, and the words themselves are very simple, e.g. tubā^cidunī (takes me away) and tudnīnī (brings me nearer), and tuṣdirunī (takes me away) and awradatnī (fetched me):

تَبَاعِدْنِي إِذَا مَا شِئْتُ عَنْهُمْ وَتَدْنِينِي إِذَا كَرِهُوا اقْتِرَابِي
وَتُصَدِّرُنِي كَمَا قَدْ أُورِدْتَنِي كَأَنِّي بَيْنَ خَافِيَتَيْ عِقَابِ
الواقر

It takes me away if I wish and it brings me nearer if they hate me to approach them.

It takes me away as it brought me, and I seem to be between two small feathers of an eagle.¹

We see it again in ^cAmr's mu^callaqa, in which antithesis also occurs in a completely natural way:

بِفَتْيَانٍ يَرُونَ الْقَتْلَ مَجْدًا وَشَيْبٍ فِي الْحُرُوبِ مَجْرِينًا
الواقر By reason of our youths who regard being killed in battle a glory, and our old men experienced in wars.²

بِرَأْسِ مَنْ بَنِي جِشْمِ بْنِ بَكْرٍ نَدَقَ بِهِ السَّهْوَةَ وَالْحَزُونَ
الواقر With a huge army from the Banū Jusham b.

1. Al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Al-Ikhtiyārāyn, p.174.

2. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.645.

Bakr, with whom we beat down the level
ground and the rough ground.¹

وَنَحْنُ التَّارِكُونَ لِمَا سَخَطْنَا وَإِنَّا الْآخِذُونَ لِمَا رَضِينَا
الموافق

And that we are the leavers of things when
we are displeased with them; and the takers
when we are pleased.²

Al-Akhtal is no different in this respect from his
predecessors, as can be seen from the following lines:

وَمَا بَزَمَزِمٍ مِنْ شَعَطٍ مَحْلَقَةٍ وَمَا يَبِثْرِبٍ مِنْ عَوْنٍ وَأَبْكَارٍ
المبسط

And what is in Zamzam of grey-headed people
who shave their heads, and what in Yathrib
of married and unmarried women.³

أَمَّا كَلَيْبُ بْنُ يَرْبُوعٍ فَلَيْسَ لَهُمْ عِنْدَ الْعَاكِرِمِ لَا وَرْدٌ وَلَا صَدْرٌ
المبسط

But Kulayb b. Yarbū^c have neither coming nor
going when noble qualities are being
discussed.⁴

1. Ibid., v.2, p.649. We have here emended Johnson's translation of the word bi-ra's
(p.148, line 55) which does not seem entirely satisfactory.

2. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharh al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.661.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.172.

4. Ibid., p.208.

ولا تزعموا بالوعر أن قد منعتم ولم تمنعوا بالوعر بطننا ولا ظهرا
الطويل

And do not claim that you protected in al-Wa^cr, because in al-Wa^cr you did not protect either inside or outside.¹

أخزاهم الجهل حتى طاش قولهم عند النضال فما طاروا وما وقعوا

البيط

Ignorance has disgraced them until their voice becomes in vain at the conflict and they neither fly nor come down.²

(b) Paronomasia (Jinās)

The use of paronomasia in their poetry resembles that of antithesis, in that they use it in a normal and simple way without deliberately striving to introduce it, as and when the meaning of the verse and the melody of the words dictate. The following line, in which we find similarity in form and difference in meaning between hafwa and habwa, illustrates this:

وقد علتهم هفوة هبوة ذات هياج كلهيب الحريق

And they are covered by dust when they fall, a falling which is hectic like the fire's flame.³

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, p.255.

2. Ibid., p.357.

3. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamharat, p.232.

The same thing is found in the following line by a woman from Taghlib which employs the words khatalat and ikhtiyāl:

خَتَلَتْهُ الْمَوْتُ بَعْدَ اخْتِيَالٍ بَيْنَ صَفِينٍ مِنْ قَنَا وَنِصَالٍ
 الخفيف

Death took him unawares after haughtiness
 when he was between two rows of lances and
 arrows.¹

and in the following line by al-Akhnas with taṣābī and intiṣābī:

صَحَا قَلْبِي الْغَدَاةَ عَنِ التَّصَابِي وَبَدَّلَ لَهْوَهُ طَوْلَ انْتِصَابِي
 الموافق

My heart has recovered this morning from
 love, and changed his pleasure to long
 anxiety.²

There are a few examples of paronomasia in ^cAmr b. Kulthūm and al-Akhtal, and also in al-Qutāmī. Their use of this figure of speech is not different from that of the earlier poets; thus in ^cAmr we find it with Hāla/hilāl and yaqutna/yaqulna:

وَلَمْ أَرِ مِثْلَ هَالَةٍ فِي مَعْدٍ قَشِبَهُ حَسْنَهَا إِلَّا إِلَهِي لَالَا

I have not seen the like of Hāla in Ma^c add except for the crescent moon to resemble her beauty.³

1. Al-Marzubānī, Ash^cār an-Nisā', p.151.

2. Al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Al-Ikhtiyārāyn, p.173.

3. Dīwān^c Amr, p.593.

يَقْتَنُ جِيَادَنَا وَيَقْلُن لَسْتُمْ بَعُولَتَنَا إِذَا لَمْ تَعْنُونَا

They feed our horses, and say to us, "You are not our husbands, if you do not protect us from the enemy".¹

In the following lines of al-Akhtal we find it between barq and yarqub, Ḥurāq and yaḥruq and takhāl and mukhtāl:

فَبَاتَ مَكْتَلًا لِلْبَرْقِ يَرْقُبُهُ وَكَلِيلَةَ الصَّبِّ مَا أَغْفَى وَمَا غَفَلَ
البيوط

He spent the night in watch, observing the lightening, like a man who is sick, neither dozing nor losing attention.²

وَوَظِلُّ الْحَرَاقِ يَحْرِقُ نَابِيَهُ لَمَّا قَدْ رَأَى مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَعَتَادِ
الطويل

Al-Ḥurāq remains burning his tooth, because of the power and arms he sees.³

مِنْ كُلِّ مَجْتَنِبٍ شَدِيدٍ أَسْرَهُ سَلَسِ الْقِيَادِ تَخَالَهُ مَخْتَالًا
الطامل

From every strong and obedient led horse which you think is proud.⁴

Likewise al-Qutāmī makes little use of jinās, although we

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis', v.2, p.832.
2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.151.
3. Ibid., p.175.
4. Ibid., p.109.

observe it in the following lines and between fu'ād and fādī, istannat and istanā^ca, ṭalal and ṭiyal and warraktu and Arakan.

كَنِيَّةَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ ذِي الْغَضَبَةِ احْتَمَلُوا مُسْتَحْقِبِينَ فَوَادًا مَالَهُ فَـأَدِ
البيـط

Like the aim of a group of people who set off from Dhū l-Ghadba taking with them a heart which no-one can rescue.¹

وَكَانَتْ ضَرِيَّةً مِنْ شَدَقَمِي إِذَا مَا اسْتَنْتَ الْإِبِلَ اسْتِنَاعًا
الواقـر

And it was a breed of Shadqamī camels, which, if the camels went forward swiftly, went ahead of them.²

أَنَا مَحِيوُكَ فَاسْلَمْ أَيُّهَا الطَّلَل وَإِنْ بَلِيَّتْ وَإِنْ طَالَتْ بِكَ الطَّيْلُ
البيـط

O encampments, we greet you, even if you have become ruined and long periods and have extended over you.³

وَقَدْ تَعَرَّجْتَ لَمَّا وَرَكَتْ أَرْكَا ذَاتَ الشَّمَالِ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِنَا الرَّجُلُ
البيـط

And I turned aside when they left Arak at their left side with ar-Rajul at our right.⁴

1. Dīwān al-Quṭamī, p.79.

2. Ibid., p.38.

3. Ibid., p.23.

4. Ibid., p.27.

Metaphor

Metaphor is another element which enhances the beauty of the imagery. Metaphor needs a more conscious and deliberate creativity, and we find it very dominant in the ^cAbbāsīd period, particularly with Abū Tammām. Taghlibī poetry, as it depends on spontaneity and simplicity, does not make great use of this element. The magnification and personification which the metaphor produces are very rare features of their poetry. Even al-Akḥṭal, who is unique among their poets, and al-Qutāmī do not show a marked tendency towards the use of the metaphor. Thus we find that Ghāzī and Ḥawī, who studied al-Akḥṭal thoroughly, do not give special attention to the metaphor in their stylistic studies.¹

It is clear enough that all Taghlibī poets have occasionally used the metaphor without deliberate intention. It emerges in their poetry naturally and normally. Compared to the others, al-Akḥṭal has a relatively large number of metaphors, particularly in his descriptions and praise-poetry, but even here his metaphors are as natural and normal as those of the others.

The following lines will serve as an example of how they use the metaphor.

Al-Muhalhil makes use of the concept of men being given a cup of death to mean that they died:

مَا أَرْجَى الْعَيْشَ بَعْدَ نَدَامِي قَدْ أَرَاهُمْ سَقَوْا بِالسُّرْحِ لِقَاقِ

الحقيفة

I wish no more of life after my drinking-

1. Ghāzī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.150-84. Ḥawī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.519-66.

companions, whom I see to have been given
to drink from a cup of death.¹

He also uses the picture of a camel to exemplify the
horrible time in which he lives:

يَا لَهْفِ نَفْسِي مِنْ زَمَانٍ فَاجِعٍ أَلْقَى عَلَى بَكْلِكِ وَجْهَ رَانَ
الكامل

I complain of a disastrous time which puts its
chest and neck on me.²

^cAmr b. Kulthūm's mu^callaqa has some plain metaphors
which are easy and simple to create:

نَشْرَ بِهَا رُءُوسَ الْقَوْمِ شَقَا وَنَخَلِيهَا الرِّقَابَ فَيَخْتَلِينَا

We mow them with the heads of the people,
and we cut their necks, and they are cut.³

He uses the word yukhlī, which means to cut fresh grass,
in order to convey the idea that their enemies' heads are like
grass. In the following two lines he uses the word qarā, which
means "to treat hospitably", to indicate the killing of enemies:

نَزَلْتُمْ مِنْزِلَ الْأَضْيَافِ مِنَّا فَأَعَجَلْنَا الْقُرَى أَنْ تَشْتَمُونَنَا

1. Al-Marzubānī, Mu^cjam ash-Shu^carā', p.80.

2. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.389.

3. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharh al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.638. (Johnson p.143, line 42).

You alighted at our house in the rank of
guests, and we hastened our hospitality,
fearing you would abuse us if we delayed.

قَرِينَاكُمْ فَعَجَلْنَا قِرَاكُم قَبِيلَ الصَّبْرِ مِرْدَاةَ طَحُونَا

We treated you hospitably, and we hastened
in showing you before dawn the hospitality of
a millstone which grinds exceedingly fine.¹

Halbas, in the following line, makes the threats of a
man named ^cUtba seem like barking:

وَعْتَبَةٌ يَعْوِي بِالْعِرَاقِ وَإِنْ سَكَنَ عَوَى غَرِيضًا مِنْ دَارِهِ لَا يَبِيدُ
الطويل

^cUtba barks in ^cIrāq, and if he cools down
he barks angrily in his home without leaving
it.²

Hassān uses the word ḥabl (rope) to mean the
relationship between him and his beloved, and also uses the
word tā'ir (flying) to mean being frightened, in the following
line:

أَجِدُكَ إِنْ دَارَ الرَّبَابِ تَبَاعَدَتْ أَوْ أَنْبَتَ جَبَلٌ أَنْ قَلْبِكَ طَائِرٌ
الطويل

Is it true that if ar-Rabāb's encampment
becomes far away, or the rope is cut, your
heart will fly.³

1. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.674.

2. Al-Amīdī, Al-Mu'talaf wa l-Mukhtalaf, p.119.

3. Al-Marzubānī, Al-Muwashshah, p.245.

In the following line, Ka^c b. Ju^cayl uses the words samīn (fat) and ghathth (weak) to describe political affairs:

وكل يسر بما عنده يرى غثا ما في يديه سميئا

المقارِب

And everyone is happy with what he possesses, and thinks that the weak thing in his hand is fat.¹

Al-A^cshā, in the following line, uses the word qanāt (lance) to mean "power":

ما رامنا ملك يقيم قناتنا الا استبحنا خيله ورجاله

الامل

Whenever any one of the kings tried to straighten our lances, we made his horses and their cavaliers lawful to us.²

The following line by al-Akhtal shows how he uses metaphor:

إذا طعنت ریح الصبا في فروجه تحلب ريان الأسافل أنجل

الطويل

If the east wind pierces its crevices, a bulky [cloud] with a rainy underside gives milk.³

In the above line al-Akhtal magnifies the wind and the clouds. He uses the verb "to pierce" to depict the wind as a

1. Al-Minqarī, Waq^cat Siffīn, p.63.

2. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.344.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.29.

spear, and describes the clouds as a female animal which produces milk.

In the following line he describes blood covering horses' legs as sandals which they are wearing:

فَطَحَنَ حَائِرَةَ الْمَلُوكِ بِكُلِّ كَيْلٍ حَتَّى احْتَذَيْنَ مِنَ الدَّمِ نَعِيَالًا

اللامل

They ground down an irresolute king with their chests, until they wore sandals of blood.¹

Midday and the hot wind are described by him as big bowls which cook the flesh of travellers. The verb "cooked" shows the heat of summer when the desert becomes unbearable, particularly at midday:

وَلَقَدْ تَأَوَّبَ أُمَّ جَهْمٍ جَهْمٌ أَرْكَبًا طَبَخَتْ هَوَاجِرَ لِحْمِهِمْ وَسَمُومٌ

اللامل

And Umm-Jahm visits, at night, caravans whose flesh midday and the hot winds have cooked.²

He personifies time as a person who has daughters, and magnifies poems as an animal which wounds people:

وَمَا يَبْقَى عَلَى الْأَيَّامِ إِلَّا بَنَاتُ الدَّهْرِ وَالْكَلِمِ الْعَقُورِ

الوافر

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, p.111.

2. Ibid., p.388.

And nothing remains in this life except daughters of time and wounding speech.¹

In the following line he describes his patron's generosity as a she-camel which produces milk:

فإذا درت بكفك فاحتلبها
ولا تك درة فيها غرار

الوافر

And if it gives in your hand milk, milk it, and do not leave anything when you milk it.²

He also portrays Mu^cāwiya as a snake from whose bite there is no recovery:

وبات نجيا في دمشق لحية
إذا عر لم ينم السليم وأقصدا

الطويل

And he sits up in Damascus trying to calm down a snake; if it bites, the one bitten does not recover, and is killed.³

He uses the verb takhammaṭa (to rage) to convey a picture of a raging camel which tries to make the she-camel obey him:

تخبط فحبل الحرب حتى تواضعت له
واقملاها إذا مشيب وأمردا

الطويل

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, p.272.

2. Ibid., p.279.

3. Ibid., p.306. (Daughters of time means catastrophs).

He raged like a stallion of war, until it submitted to him and he mounted it, when he was old and when he was young.¹

The same idea is repeated in the following line:

الى الحرب حتى تخضع الحرب بعدما تخمط مرحاها وتحمى قرومها
الطويل

[He guides them] to war until it submits, after those who are happy with it are enraged and its nobles are active.²

He has one famous picture which may have been suggested to him by his new environment in the settled lands of ^cIrāq and Syria. He describes the old men of Muḥārib as croaking frogs, in the following two lively and active lines:

تنيق بلا شيء شيوخ محارب وما خلتها كانت ترشش ولا تبرى
الطويل

The old men of Muḥārib croak to no effect, and I do not think that they can harm (ftetch and sharpen).³

ضفاد في ظلماء ليل تجاوبت فدل عليها صوتها حية البحر
الطويل

Frogs croaking to one another in the darkness of night; their sound guides the sea-snake towards them.⁴

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, p.308.

2. Ibid., p.318.

3. Ibid., p.181.

4. Ibid.

It is also worthy of note that he uses the words turīsh (to put feathers on an arrow) and tabrī (to sharpen it), which are derived from everyday life, as a metaphor for uselessness.

These are the kinds of metaphor which are used by al-Akhtal, and we can say in general that there is nothing new in them except for the two lines quoted above. The others depend on words or pictures which are relevant to the life of the desert, such as the camel, which are widespread among Jāhiliyya poetry.

Metonymy

Metonymy is also a feature of their way of expression which is connected to their tendency to use imagery. They use metonymy in a very simple and natural way, which often seems to be such a regular feature of their speech that they use it without any conscious intention to strive for poetical effect. This is common to all the poetry from al-Muhalhil to al-A^cshā, and the ease and fluency with which they use this figure of speech, as well as the others discussed above, clearly have a great bearing on their activity.

We find this in the case of al-Muhalhil, when he uses metonymy to convey the disastrous effect of his brother's absence,¹ and also with ^cAmr b. Kulthūm in the following lines, in which he tries to depict his tribe as warriors:

بَأْنَا نُورِدُ الرَّاياتِ بِيضًا وَنَصْدِرُهُنَّ حَمْرًا قَدْ رَوَيْنَا

To the effect that verily we take our flags

1. See below, p.308.

to the battlefield white, and we bring them back red, when they are satiated with blood.¹

This is a simple picture which states that their flags are white before the beginning of the war and smeared with blood at the end. The poet wants in this way to stress the idea of long fighting.

In the following line he makes use of an image which is widespread in Jāhiliyya poetry by showing that the enemy's dogs are frightened, while at the same time adding the image of the thorny qatād (tragacanth) to suggest an enemy bristling with arms:

وقد هرت كلاب الحى منى
وشذ بنا قتادة من يلينا

And the dogs of the tribe whined, fearing us,
when we stripped of his weapons the armed
warrior who approached to fight us.²

In the following line he shows their power and strength, when he claims that tyrants bow to their young men:

إذا بلغ الفطام لنا صبى
تخر له الجبابر ساجدين

When one of our boys reaches the age of weaning, great kings fall down worshipping him.³

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.628.

2. Ibid., p.631.

3. Ibid., p.678.

Then in the next line he indicates the vast number of his own people by saying that the land is crowded with them, and the sea is full of their ships:

مَلَأْنَا الْبَحْرَ حَتَّى ضَاقَ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ الْبَحْرَ نَمَلُؤُهُ سَفِينَا

We have filled the land until it becomes too narrow for us, and we have filled the sea with ships.¹

In the following line al-Akhnas uses the image of tethering the camel, or leaving it to wander freely, to convey caution and recklessness:

أَرَى كُلَّ قَوْمٍ قَارِبُوا قَيْدَ فَحْلِهِمْ وَنَحْنُ خَلَعْنَا قَيْدَهُ فَهُوَ سَارِبُ الطَّوِيلِ

While others in caution bind the stallion that serves their herds, our camel alone goes forth untrammelled wheresoever he will.²

Jābir b. Hunayy, in the following line, describes the injustice which a person receives if he defends his right, by using the picture of a tax-collector who pushes a person to and fro, tears his clothes off and hits him:

يَوْمًا لَدَى الْحِشَارِ مِنْ يَلْوِ حَقِّهِ يَبْزِيزُ وَيَنْزَعُ ثَوْبَهُ وَيَلَطُّ مِ

A day, too, I recall when one, delaying to pay his due, was buffeted, his clothes torn,

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.833.

2. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.421; v.2, p.151.

misused at the tax-collector's door.¹

Jābir intends in this way to show the humiliation which people suffer at the hands of tyrannous government officials.

The same can be found in the following line where ^CAmr uses the idea of blowing bellows, and making earrings, to disgrace an-Nu^Cmān, the brother of ^CAmr b. Hind:

وأجدرنا أن ينفخ الكبر خاله يصوغ القروط والشنوف بيثريا
الطويل

And his uncle most deserves to blow the bellows and make earrings in Yathrib.²

If we look at the rest of the Taghlibī poets we will find that they do not go beyond these simple kinds of metonymy. Abū Ḥanash, for example, describes a mistake as the slipping of a sandal:

ولو كنتم إذ زلت النعل زلّة ذخرتم بها عندي لقومكم يدا
الطويل

And if you had done me a favour which I would remember for the benefit of your people when the sandal once slipped.³

^CAmīra expresses the fidelity of his people's women by depicting them as having no desire for sexual intercourse with others if they find themselves in the desert:

1. Al-Mufaddaliyat (Lyal), v.1, p.426; v.2, p.155.

2. Dīwān ^CAmr, p.594.

3. Abū ^CUbayda, Al-Ayyām, p.404.

قليلًا تبغيها الفحولة غيره إذا استعلت جنان أرض وغولها

الطويل

Thou seest her desire nought of the stallion's business but from him, what time the Jinn and the Ghūls of a land become changed to demons.¹

Al-Ba^cīth indicates the ineffectiveness of his opponent's words in the following line:

إذا قلت فالمأثور ما أنا قائل وإن قلت قولاً طاع سوم العواصيف

الطويل

And if I say, my saying is what is remembered, and if you say, your saying goes away with the storms.²

Al-Akhtal and al-Qutāmī may have used metonymy³ more than the others, but their metonymy is still normal and not forced.

We find an echo of ^cAmr in the claim that the vast numbers of Taghlib cover the whole area between ^cIrāq and Manbij:

فأصبح ما بين العراق ومنبج لتغلب تردى بالردينية السمير

الطويل

And what is between ^cIraq and Manbij has become Taghlib's domain, moving swiftly with

1. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyall), v.1, p.519; v.2, p.260.

2. Al-Amīdī, Al-Mu'talaf wa l-Mukhtalaf, p.73.

3. On the metonymy of al-Akhtal, see Hāwī, pp.563-66.

their dark Rudaynī spears.¹

In the following line he shows how long the wine has been kept by using the image of the spider's web, and he also shows how precious it is for the merchant who protects it with fibres and tar:

لَهَا رِدَاةٌ نَسَجَ الْعَنْكَبُوتُ وَقَدْ لَفَّتْ بِأَخْرَمٍ لَيْفٍ وَمِنْ قَارِ
الْبَيْطِ

It has two covers: the weaving of the spider and another wherewith it is wrapped in palm-fibre and tar.²

In the following line al-Akhtal uses the tucking-up of one's clothes as a metonymy of being ready to face problems:

قَوْمٌ إِذَا حَارِبُوا شَدُّوا مَأْزِرَهُمْ عَنِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ بَاتَتْ بِأَطْمِ حَارِ
الْبَيْطِ

People who, if they fight, tie their clothes round their waist and do not touch women, even if they are not menstruating.³

All the examples given above indicate that al-Akhtal does not deliberately create metonymy, but that all his metonymies are drawn from observed experience or use material readily at hand. Al-Qutāmī is the same, and the following lines show no real change of attitude towards the use of metonymy. He describes she-camels as well-built by saying that their buttocks do not obstruct them from moving, to show that they

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.190.

2. Ibid., p.169.

3. Ibid., p.172.

are not so fatty, and that their chests do not lie on their buttocks, to show that they are not huge:

يَمْشِينَ رَهْوًا فَلَا الْأَعْجَازُ خَازِلَةٌ وَلَا الصُّدُورُ عَلَى الْأَعْجَازِ تَتَكَلَّمُ
الْبَيْطُ

They walk slowly, their backs do not obstruct them and their chests do not lean on their backs.¹

In the following line he describes how the she-camel obeys the trainer, by saying that she gives him her neck and head:

فَمَا انْقَلَبَتْ مِنَ الرِّوَاضِ حَتَّى أَعَارَتْهُ الْأَخَادِعَ وَالنَّخَاعَا
الْوَاغِرُ

And when it finishes its training, it gives its neck and head to the trainer.²

Elsewhere he uses the idea of the clinking of women's ivory or ornaments to allude to a night of enjoyment spent with women:

فَلَمَّا التَقِينَا قَامَ لِلحَاجِ رِنَةٌ وَكُنَّ صَرِيحًا مِنْ سَلِيبٍ وَسَالِيبٍ
الطَّوِيلُ

And when we met each other, there was a noise of clinking ivory, and they were felled, either stripped or stripping.³

1. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.26.

2. Ibid., p.41.

3. Ibid., p.45.

He also uses metonymy to show the influence of the girls, by saying that their speech has the same effect that water has upon a thirsty man:

فَهْن يَنْبُذْنَ مِنْ قَوْلٍ يَصْبِيحُنْ بِهِ مَوَاقِعَ الْمَاءِ مِنْ ذِي الْغَلَّةِ الصَّادِي

They utter sounds which hit the place as water meets the need of the thirsty.¹

The above sample indicates that al-Qutāmī uses metonymy to a certain extent, although he does not do this as frequently as al-Akhtal; the prevailing figure of speech in his poetry is the simile.

Repetition

Repetition, which will be widely discussed in the case of al-Muhalhil and of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, sheds a good deal of light on the techniques of the Taghlibī poets. The frequent occurrence of repetition in their poetry may be a consequence of the musical nature which it can impart to a line of poetry. Furthermore, their poetry depends on spontaneous expression, and this causes them to rely heavily on a melody of words which occurs during composition, in addition to the melody of the metre. Repetition itself strengthens the meaning and confirms it in the attention of the hearer.

Besides al-Muhalhil and ^cAmr, we find repetition in all Taghlibī poets, whether in the Jāhilyya or in Islam. This can be a repetition of exactly the same words, as in the following line of as-Saffāh in which he repeats the word suhād:

1. Diwān al-Qutāmī, p.81.

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ضَلَّلْنَ مِنَ السَّهَادِ وَهَلْنَ لَوْلَا سَهَادَ الْقَوْمِ أَحْسَبُ هَادِيَاتِ

They went astray because of sitting up awake,
and I think that they would reach their aim
if people did not sit up.¹

Ufnūn repeats the word umm:

لَعَمْرِكَ مَا عَمَرُوا بَنِي هَمْدٍ وَقَدْ دَعَا لِيَتَخَدِمَ أُمِّي أُمُّهُ بِمَوْفِقِ

I swear that ^cAmr b. Hind was not successful
when he ordered my mother to serve his
mother.²

In the following line, Ni^cma b. ^cAttāb repeats the word
samā:

سَمَوْتَ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَهْلًا لِتَسْمُوَ وَلَكِنْ دَهَرْنَا دَهْرًا نَقِيًّا لَابِ

الواقف

You rose but you do not deserve to rise, but
our time is a time of change.³

In the following lines of an-Nābigha we find hajara used
as a verb and a verbal noun:

هَجَرْتَ أَمَامَةَ هَجْرًا طَوِيلًا وَمَا كَانَ هَجْرَكَ إِلَّا جَمِيلًا

المقارِب

1. Abū ^cUbayda, An-Naqā'id, v.2, p.1095.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.9, p.183.

3. Al-Buhturī, al-Hamāsa, p.211.

You quitted Umāma for a long time, but your quitting was pleasant.¹

and bakhila used as a verb, a verbal noun and a substantive:

بَخَلْنَا لِبَخْلِكَ قَدْ تَعَلَّمْنَا فِكَيْفَ يَلُومُ الْبَخِيلُ الْبَخِيلًا

ا طتقارب

We became miserly because of your miserliness, as you may know, so how can one miser blame another?²

In this line by Shurahbil, abaynā occurs twice:

أَبَيْنَا أَبَيْنَا أَنْ تَغْنُوا بِحَامِرٍ كَمَا قَلْتُمْ زِيَانٍ فِي مَسْكِ شَعْلَبٍ

الطويل

We refused, we refused to let you sing in celebration of capturing Āmir, it was like [the proverbial expression] Zabbān [a man] in the skin of a fox.³

as does mulk in the following line by al-A^cshā:

وَالزَّقُ مَلِكِ الْمَرْءِ كَانَ لَهُ وَالْمَلِكُ مِنْهُ طَوِيلٌ وَقَصِيرٌ

السريع

The wine-skin is a man's possession, whether the possession be long or short.⁴

1. Al-Amīdī, Al-Mu'talaf wa l-Mukhtalaf, p.296.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Ashnāndānī, Ma^cānī ash-Shi^cr, p.14.

4. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.344.

Al-Akhtal shows a strong tendency towards repetition, as his forebears did, and uses it without artificiality or intention. In the following lines he repeats the words Aljām, batn, ghāb, an-Nīl, yanṭuq and yazūl:

عَوَامِدٌ لِلْأَجَامِ الْأَجَامِ حَامِيزٍ يِشْرِنُ قَطَا لَوْلَا سِرَاهُنْ هَجْدَا
الطويل

They are making for al-Aljām, Aljām Hāmiz, stirring up sand-grouse which would have slumbered but for their travelling.¹

أَيَجْعَلُ بَطْنًا مَتْنِ الرِّيحِ مَقْفِرًا عَلَى بَطْنِ خُودٍ دَائِمِ الْخَفْقَانِ
الطويل

Does he place a stinking, emaciated belly upon the quivering belly of a soft young girl?²

إِذَا غَابَ عَنَّا غَابَ عَنَّا فِرَاتُنَا وَإِنْ شَهِدَ أَجْدَى فَيُضَاهِ وَجْدَ أَوْلَاهِ
الطويل

If he disappears, our Euphrates disappears, and if he attends, his abundance and streams give.³

إِلَى فِعَالٍ لَوْ خَايَلِ النَّيْلُ أَزْحَفَتْ مِنَ النَّيْلِ فَوَارَاتِهِ وَجَدَ أَوْلَاهِ
الطويل

To a person who, if he competes with the Nile, the waves and streams of the Nile will become fatigued.⁴

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.303.

2. Ibid., p.293.

3. Ibid., p.348.

4. Ibid., p.288.

لا يسمع الصوت مستكاً مسامعُه
 وليس ينطق حتى ينطق الحجر
 البسيط

He did not hear the voice, because his ears are stopped up, and could not speak until rocks speak.¹

واللؤم حالف بيهم وفناء هم
 أبدا فما فيما ينزل ينزل
 القائل

The disgrace sticks to their house and courtyard, and never vanishes, whatever else may vanish.²

He also uses repetition by employing forms derived from the same root, e.g. azfara/zafar, qawwām/maqāwim and sāla/suyūl:

إلى امرئ لا تعربنا نوافله
 أظفره الله فليهنئ به الظفر
 البسيط

To a person whose gifts do not leave us, God makes him a conqueror and the conquest should be happy with him.³

وانى لقوام مقاوم لم يكن
 جرير ولا مولى جرير يقومها
 الطويل

I stand in places where neither Jarīr nor the client of Jarīr stands.⁴

1. Dīwān al-Akhṭal, p.203.
 2. Ibid., p.378.
 3. Ibid., p.196.
 4. Ibid., p.320.

زَحَفَ الْأَرَاقِيمَ بِالْمَجَازِ لِيُورِدَهَا كَالنَّهْيِ سِوَالِ بِأَبْطَحِيهِ سَيُولُ

Like the advance of al-Araqim in al-Majāz,
like the pond into whose sides floods pour.¹

Al-Qutāmī does the same, but he has a strong tendency to introduce repetition to increase the melody of his lines. In the following examples he does this with the words ādāt/ādī, jabal, munjiḥa/mustanjah and tarā.

مَحْمِيَةٌ وَحِفَاظًا إِنَّهَا شِيْمٌ كَانَتْ لِقَوْمِي عَادَاتٍ مِنَ الْعَادِ
الْبَيْطِ

Protecting and defending, which are qualities
belonging to my tribe as habits of their
habits.²

بَرَّالَا وَهَمَّ جِبِلَّ اللَّهِ الَّذِي قَصَّرَتْ عَنْهُ الْجِبَالُ فَمَا سَاوَى بِهِ جِبِلَّ
الْبَيْطِ

However, they are the mountains of God,
which other mountains cannot reach, and there
is no mountain which is equal to them.³

إِنْ تَرَجَعِي مِنْ أَبِي عَثْمَانَ مُنْجِحَةً فَقَدْ يَهْوَنُ عَلَى الْمُسْتَنْجِحِ الْعَمَلُ
الْبَيْطِ

If you returned successful from Abū Uthmān,
then the work would be easy for one who
wants to succeed.⁴

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.379.

2. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.89.

3. Ibid., p.29.

4. Ibid.

يتبعن سامية العينين تحسبها مجنونة أو ترى ما لا ترى الإبل

They follow a she-camel with its eyes raised
which you would think to be mad, or that it
sees what other camels cannot see.¹

1. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.27.

CHAPTER 4

THEMES

Boasting (Fakhr)

The first subject to be discussed in this chapter is boasting. It could be said that boasting is an integral part of martial poetry or that they are in fact the same,¹ but as the greater part of their poetry is of this type it is more convenient, for the purposes of the present work, to divide the poetry in this way, especially since both martial poetry and fakhr have their own characteristics which may be considered separately.

Boasting poetry deals with "what the tribe is proud of, like revengefulness, keeping enemies down, exulting in victories, speaking in glowing terms of their noble descent and origin, celebrating their patience in catastrophes, hospitality in lean times, protecting neighbours and helping the weak".²

This boasting can be divided into two types. The first is tribal boasting, which deals with the tribe and in which the poet is their mouthpiece; one of the best examples of this tribal boasting is the Mu^callaqa of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm.³ The second is individual boasting, in which the poet extols his own deeds and behaviour.

1. See, for example, Dayf, al-^cAṣr al-Jāhili, pp.202-7.

2. Ibid., pp.202-3.

3. Ibid., p.204.

A. Tribal boasting

The prominent themes in tribal boasting in the poetry of Taghlib are their pride in vengeance, victories and superiority over their enemies. They mention their pride in their revengefulness in nearly every poem. Al-Muhalhil boasts, in the following two lines, of their refusal to take blood-money from Banū Shaybān, and of the fact that they killed them instead:

فَلاَ وَأَبِي جَلِيلَةَ مَا أَفَأْنَا مِّنَ النَّعَمِ الْمُؤَبَّلِ مِنْ بَعِيرِ
وَلَكِنَّا نَهَكْنَا الْقَوْمَ ضَرَبًا عَلَى الْأَثْبَاجِ مِنْهُمْ وَالنَّحُورِ

No, by the father of Jalīla, we did not take a single camel from (their) numerous herds, But we weakened the people, striking their backs and throats.¹

^cAmr b. Kulthūm boasts that their women never mourn a murder, strengthening this by using the oath ma^cādh Allāh, with the implication that they were used to fighting and that they always got their revenge:

مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَنُوحَ نِسَاؤُنَا عَلَى هَالِكٍ أَوْ أَنْ تَضِجَ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
الظَّوِيلِ

God forbid that our women should bewail one killed, or should raise their voices because of killing.²

Al-Mutawwah b. ^cUthmān boasts that no one attacked them

1. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.135.

2. Al-Khālidiyyān, al-Ashbāh wa an-Nazā'ir, v.1, p.89.

them in their territories or expelled them from there:

وما نالنا من معشر في ديارنا ولا طردتنا عن منازلنا الحرب
الطويل

No tribe attacked us in our lands, and war did not drive us from our encampments.¹

They also exult in defeating their enemies, as in the following lines by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

ألا هل أتى بنت الثوير مغارنا على حى كلب والضحى لم ترحل
صبحناهم منا فوارس نجدة وشهباء تردى بالسهم المثل
تركناهم صرعى لدى كل مزحف تجرهم عرج الضباع بمحفل
الطويل

O has the daughter of ath-Thuwayr known about our attack on the tribe of Kalb while the late morning was not yet exhausted, Brave horsemen of ours and a regiment moving with swift arrows attacked them at morning, When we move the mill of our war we left them dead on every battlefield, the crooked hyenas dragging them in celebration.²

He also says:

1. Al-Khālidīyān, al-Ashbāh wa an-Nazā'ir, v.1, p.93.

2. Dīwān ^cAmr, pp.597-8.

جلبنا الخيل من كنفى أريك
 عوابس يطلع عن من النقب
 عبجناهن عن عرض تميم
 وأتلف ركضنا جمع الرباب
 فكم عفرن من وجه كريم
 غداة لقيتهم والنقع كباب

الوافر

We brought the horses from the two sides of
 Arīk grim-faced, looking down from the
 mountain roads,
 We brought them at morning from the side to
 Tamīm, and our swift advance caused the
 destruction of the army of ar-Ribāb,
 Many were the faces of the nobles whom they
 covered with dust on the morning when I met
 them, when the dust was falling.¹

The poetry of Taghlib, whether in the Jāhiliyya or in
 Islam, is full of exultation in their victories. They always
 remember these events throughout the history of the tribe, in
 which their ancestors achieved renown by their conquests, and
 they seem to be deeply versed in their history and ready to
 show it at any time. They start from the early days of the
 tribe when Taghlib gained the leadership of Rabī^c a and came
 into conflict with Yemen. Their poetry always places emphasis
 on killing kings and attacking famous tribes such as their
 oldest enemies Bakr, Kalb, Tamīm and, later on in Islam,
 Qays. The long wars in which they became involved were a
 strong motive for the maintenance of zeal within the tribe and
 the boosting of their morale by reminding the tribesmen of
 their heroic deeds and encouraging them to preserve these
 reminiscences for their successors and for history.

Jābir announces the rule which Taghlib always follow,
 doing so as a final warning to those who might be tempted to

1. Dīwān ^c Amr, pp.600-1.

infringe their code:

نُعَاظِي الْمُلُوكَ الْحَقَّ مَا قَصَدَ وَابْنَا وَلِيَسْرَعَلَيْنَا قَتْلَهُمْ بِحَرَمِ
الطَّوِيلِ

We deign to grant peace to kings as long as their ways are straight in handling us: not unknown the slaying by us of kings.¹

Jābir could not say this if he did not know that his tribe had acted in this way in the past and were willing to carry on the tradition if the occasion occurred again.

^cAmr b. Kulthūm, in the following two lines, confirms this rule, showing that his tribe killed many kings:

وَسَيِّدٍ مَعَشَرَ قَدْ تَوَجَّهَ بَتَّاحِ الْمَلِكِ يَحْمِي الْمَحْجَرِينَا
تَرَكْنَا الْخَيْلَ عَاكِفَةً عَلَيْهِ مَقْلِدَةً أَعْيَضَتْهَا صَفُونَا

And many a chief of a tribe, whom they had crowned with a crown of authority, and who protects those who seek refuge with them, Have we left our horses standing round him, with their reins on their necks, standing quietly.²

The famous early event of which they boast is the battle of Khazāz when Kulayb ended the dominance of Yemen over the

1. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.426; v.2, p.155.

2. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.630-1.

Ma^caddite tribes.¹ Al-Muhalhil boasts of this in the following lines:

من عرفت يوم خزازي له
عليما معد عند جذب الوثوق
إذ أقبلت حمير في جمعها
ومذحج كالعارض المستحيق
وجمعهم دان له لجة
وراية تهوى هوى الأنوق

السريحي

He for whom the most noble of Ma^cadd recognised the day of Khazāz for him, when the bonds were drawn tight, (?)

When Himyar with their host and Madhḥij came like a huge rainy cloud,
And the army of Hamdān with clamour and a flag swooping like the anūq (vulture).

The second incident connected with their war with Yemen, on which they pride themselves, is the battle of Dhū Urāt, which is celebrated in the following line by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

نحن الحابسون بذى أراطي
تسف الجلة الخور الدرينا

And we are they who kept their camels at Dhū Urātā, while the old large camels, and the she-camels abounding in milk, were eating withered grass.³

Despite their disastrous defeat in the al-Basūs war,

1. See above, pp.13-14.

2. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.231.

3. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.660.

Taghlib boast of it, as in the following line by al-Akhtal in which he boasts of Wāridāt:

ومهر راق الدماء بـوارداتٍ تبيد المخزبات ولا تبيد

And shedding blood in Wāridāt, which does not disappear although disgraces disappear.¹

The main events after their wars with Yemen and Bakr, and before their conflicts with Qays, were the battle of al-Kulāb and the murder of ^cAmr b. Hind. Jābir b. Hunayy boasts of al-Kulāb, when they killed King Shurahbīl, in the following line:

فيوم الكلاب قد أزالتماحنا شرحبيل إذ آلى ألية مقسيم

Yet our spears it was that thrust, that black day of al-Kulāb, Shurahbīl off his horse, in spite of the oath he swore.²

Abū al-Lahhām also boasts of that day, in the following line:

ربعنا بالكلاب وما ربعتم وأنهبنا الهجان بالصعيد
الوافر

We encamped in al-Kulāb, while you did not, and we made the thoroughbred camels booty in the highlands.³

1. *Dīwān al-Akhtal*, v.2, p.522.

2. *Al-Mufaddaliyāt* (Lyal), v.1, p.427; v.2, p.156.

3. Abū ^cUbayda, *an-Naqā'id*, v.1, p.458.

Ufnūn also commemorates that day in the following line, mentioning King Shurahbīl and Muḥallim ash-Shaybānī who supported him:

فسائل شرحبيلا بنا ومحلما غداة تكرر الخيل في كل خندق
الطويل

And ask Shurahbīl and Muḥallim about us, on the morning when the horses were wheeling in every trench.¹

Later on al-Akhtal boasts of this day, describing how Tamīm were bitterly defeated:

هلا منعتم شرحبيلا وقد حدثت له تميم بجمع غير أخيار
يوم الكلاب وقد سيقت نساؤهم سوق الجلائب من عون وأبكار
البيط

Why did you not protect Shurahbīl when Tamīm supported him with a throng of low people, On the day of al-Kulāb when their women, married and unmarried, were driven like camels.²

The second event is the murder of King ^cAmr b. Hind. Ufnūn describes this killing, and the reason for it, in the following lines:

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.605.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, pp.638-9.

لِتَخْدِمَ أُمِّي أُمَّهُ بِمَوْفِقِي
فَأَمْسَكَ مِنْ نِدْمَانِهِ بِالْمَخْنَقِي
بِذِي شَطْبٍ عَافَى الْحَدِيدَةَ رَوْنَقِي

لِحَمْرِكَ مَا عَمَرُو بَنَ هِنْدٍ وَقَدْ دَعَا
فَقَامَ ابْنُ كَلْثُومٍ إِلَى السِّيفِ مَصْلَتَا
وَجَلَّلَهُ عَمَرُو عَلَى الرَّأْسِ ضَرْبَةَ

I swear that ^cAmr b. Hind was not successful when he ordered my mother to serve his mother,

[^cAmr] Ibn Kulthūm stood and took the polished sword, and took him by the throat in front of his associates,

And ^cAmr struck him on his head with a blow with a ridged sword of pure and shining iron.¹

There are also some other battles of which they boast, such as their battle with the Ghassanids as in the following line of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

هَلَا عَطَفْتَ عَلَى أُخِيكَ إِذَا دَعَا
بِالشَّكْلِ وَيْلَ أَبِيكَ يَا ابْنَ أَبِي شِمْرِ
الطامل

O son of Abū Shimr, woe to your father, did you not turn to your brother when he appealed to you, warning you that you would be bereaved of him?²

The Taghlibī poets rejoice in other victories over tribes such as Kalb, Firās, Ghifār on the day of al-Atamm, Banū

1. Al-Aghānī, v.9, p.183.

2. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.602.

at-Ṭammāh and Du^cmī, as in the following lines by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

عَبَدْنَا فِي يَوْمِ الْأَتَمِ شَعَثًا فِرَاسًا وَالْقَبَائِلَ مِنْ غِفَارِ
الوافر

We brought them at morning on the day
of al-Atam with dishevelled horses, Firās and
the tribes of Ghifār.¹

أَلَا أُبْلِغُ بَنِي الطَّمَّاحِ عَنَّا وَدَعِيًّا فَكَيْفَ وَجَدْتُمُونَا

Beware, tell Banū at-Ṭammāh and the tribe of
Du^cmī, how did you find us?²

Taghlib were busy, during the Umayyad period, with
fighting against Qays. They rejoice in their victories over
them, and particularly in the murder of ^cUmayr b. al-Ḥubāb,
despite their defeat in many battles.³ Al-Akḥṭal boasts of this
in the following line:

يَوْمَ تَرْدَى الْكَمَاةَ حَوْلَ عَمِيرٍ حَجَلَانَ النَّسْرِ حَوْلَ الْجَزْزُورِ
الحقنور

On the day when the warriors were galloping
around ^cUmayr, hopping like vultures around
a slaughtered camel.⁴

Al-Qutāmī also boasts of this event:

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.599.
2. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Ṭis^c, v.2, p.673.
3. See above, p.35.
4. Ḥawī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.312-5.

الضارِبِينَ عَمِيرًا فِي بَيْوتِهِمْ بِالتِّلِ يَوْمَ عَمِيرٍ ظَالِمٍ عَادِ
 المبيط

Who struck ^CUmayr at their dwellings on the hill [of al-Hashshāk] on the day when ^CUmayr was unjust and tyrannical.¹

Al-A^Cshā likewise rejoices in their victories over Qays. He celebrates their victories over Sulaym, a branch of Qays of which ^CUmayr b. Hubāb was a member:

شَرِينَا مِنْ دِمَاءِ بَنِي سَلِيمٍ بِأَطْرَافِ الْقَنَا حَتَّى رَوِينَا
 الوافر

We drank the blood of Banū Sulaym with the edges of the spears until we were sated.²

In the following line, al-A^Cshā boasts of the killing of Muṣ^Cab b. az-Zubayr:

وَنَحْنُ قَتَلْنَا مَسْجُبًا قَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ بِمَسْكِنِ يَوْمِ الْحَرْبِ أَنْيَابَهَا حَصْرُ
 الطويل

You know that we killed Muṣ^Cab in Maskin on the day of war whose teeth are grinding.³

Al-Qutāmī gives a full description of their history during the Jāhiliyya, and boasts of it, in the following lines:

1. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.88.

2. Dīwān al-A^Cshā, p.271.

3. Ibid., p.290. Muṣ^Cab was killed by ^CAbd Allāh b. Dubyān al-Bakrī, but al-A^Cshā boasts of it because he is considered as being from Rabī^Cca, as Taghlib were.

وَمِنْ شَهِدِ الْمَلْحِمِ وَالْوَقَاعَا
 أَشَدَّ قِبَائِلِ الْعَرَبِ امْتِنَاعَا
 أَبْرْنَا مِنْ فَصِيلَتِهِ لِمَاعَا
 عَلَى النِّعْمَانِ وَابْتَدَرُوا السِّطَاعَا
 بِجَيْشٍ يَبْلُغُ النَّاسَ ابْتِلَاعَا
 نَقِيمٍ لِمَنْ يِقَارِعُنَا الْقِرَاعَا
 نَذَائِرُ جَيْشِنَا وَلَجُوا الْقِلَاعَا
 نَحْلِسُهُمُ السَّوَاهِلَ وَالتَّلَاعَا

الزَّافِرُ

وَلَوْ يَسْتَخْبِرُ الْعُلَمَاءُ عَنَّا
 بِتَغْلِيْبِ فِي الْحُرُوبِ أَلَمْ يَكُونُوا
 زَمَانَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ كُلِّ حَيَّا
 أَلْيَسُوا بِالْأَلَى قَسَطُوا قَدِيمَا
 وَهُمْ وَرَدُوا الْكُلَابَ عَلَى تَمِيمِ
 فَمَا جَبَنُوا وَلَكِنَّا أَنْ نَأْسُ
 فَأَمَّا طَيِّئٌ فَبِإِذَا أَتَاهَا
 وَأَمَّا الْحَيُّ مِنْ كَلْبٍ فَبِإِنَّا

If the people of knowledge are asked about us, and who attended the battles and fighting,

About Taghlib, are they not the strongest of the Arabs in self defence,

During the jāhiliyya we extirpated from every tribe a part of their branch,

Are they not those who were just with an-Nu^cmān of old, and pulled down the tent-pole?¹

And they came to Tamīm in al-Kulāb with an army which swallowed the people greedily,

They were not cowardly, but we are people who answer blows with blows,

Tayyi', if the front of our army comes to them, seek shelter in their castles,

The tribe of Kalb, we push them to the shores and hills.²

1. He alludes to the murder of ^cAmr b. Hind.

2. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.35-6.

They rarely celebrate their patience in catastrophes, because they are a tribe who wish to show that they are the ones who begin fights and the ones who attack others. They are above every catastrophe, and are the ones who inflict catastrophe on others. The following line by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm indicates that it is they who bring their horses to the enemy:

جلبنا الخيل من جنبى أريك^١ سواهم يعتزمن على الخبار^٢
الوافر

We brought the horses from the two sides of Arīk, lean and walking firmly on the soft ground.¹

Likewise, in the following line, he portrays war as a mill which is brought to the enemy:

متى ننقل إلى قوم رحانا^١ يكونوا فى اللقاء لها طحيننا^٢

~~When the mill of our war is moved towards a~~
tribe, they become as flour to it in meeting.²

They sometimes boast of protecting others, as in the following line by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

ونحن إذا عماد الحى خرت^١ على الأحفاز نمنع من يلينا^٢

And we, when the tent-poles of the tribe fall upon the furniture of the tents, keep back

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.599.

2. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.632.

anyone who approaches us desiring robbery.¹

There is another indication of their protection of neighbours in the following line by ^CAmr:

وَنُوجِدُ نَحْنُ أَمْعَمُ زَمَارًا وَأَوْفَاهُمْ إِذَا عَقَدُوا يَمِينًا

And we shall be found, we (I repeat), the firmest of them in keeping our word, and the most faithful of them when they bind us with oaths.²

We also find them celebrating their protection of others in their elegies, in which the poet shows the effect of bereavement on the needy, particularly in al-Muhalhil's poetry when he starts to assess the impact of the death of Kulayb upon those who cannot find refuge. Al-Muhalhil, in his elegies for his brother Kulayb, counts helping the needy as one of the things in which his brother used to pride himself during his life; we shall study this in detail when we study the elegy.³

One of the things of which they boast most frequently is their hospitality.* ^CAbd Allāh b. ^CAmr boasts, in the following line, of being generous in the chilly winter. At this time the desert becomes barren and it becomes difficult for the poor to find food to eat. Thus generosity is a great object of pride for those who are ready to undertake it, particularly when the generous person gives camels, which are highly prized by the beduin.

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p.635.

2. Ibid., p.658.

3. See below, pp.179-185.

4. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.343-57.

والمطعمين لدى الشـتاء سداًئفاً مطيباً غـرا

بجزور الطامل

And we who give in the winter the choicest
part of the fat of the humps of camels.¹

This Taghlibī diyāfa (hospitality) is again referred to in
the following line by al-A^cshā, who states that their generosity
follows the neighbour wherever he goes:

ونكرم جارنا مادام فينا
ونتبعه الكرامة حيث مالا

الوافر

And we act generously to our neighbour as
long as he remains among us, and we follow
him with generosity wherever he goes.²

Al-Akhtal illustrates clearly their generosity by showing
how his tribe slaughter the camels in the cold night for their
guests before they put down their baggage:

سأل الضيفان ليلة كل ربي
تلف البرك عازمة شمـالا

ألسنا بالقري نمشي باليهـم
سراعا قبل أن يضعوا الرحـالا

الوافر

Ask the guests on every night when the wind
blows strongly from the north and gathers the
camels,

Do we not bring them hospitality hastily

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.607.

2. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.271.

before they put down their camel-saddles?¹

Another favourite object of their boasting is their horses.² Taghlib were fond of horses, and they were very proud of them. It is difficult to find any of their poems which does not mention the horse. This love of owning horses is reflected in different aspects of their poetry, which will be discussed in detail when we analyse their use of description. The following line by al-Akhtal conveys some of their respect and love for their horses:

إِذَا مَا الْخَيْلُ ضِيَعَهَا رَجَالٌ رَظَّنَّهَا فَشَارَكَتِ الْعِيَالَا
الموافق

Although other men may neglect their horses, we tether them and they share with our families.³

They also boast of their women, a subject which will be dealt with in the section on ghazal, but the following line by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm will serve to illustrate their pride in their women:

ظَعَائِنَ مِنْ بَنِي جِشْمِ بْنِ بَكْرٍ خَلَطْنَ بِمَيْسَمٍ حَسْبًا وَدِينَا

They are the women of the tribe of Banū Jusham b. Bakr, who mix their good qualities, long pedigree and obedience.⁴

1. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, p.344.

2. Ibid., pp.327-42.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v. , p.

4. Ibn an-Nahḥās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.830. Johnson translates dīn as "true religion"; it seems that dīn means, as Ibn an-Nahḥās states, "obedience".

B. Boasting of their noble descent and origin

Taghlib consists of different branches, the main ones being Banū Jusham and al-Arāqim. Most of their famous poets are from these two branches, for example al-Muhalhil, ^CAmr b. Kulthūm and his sons, al-Akhnas, Jābir, ^CAmīra b. Ju^Cal, Ka^Cb b. Ju^Cayl, al-Akhtal, al-Qutāmī and al-A^Cshā.

Taghlib were considered to be one of the Nizārite tribes and descended from ^CAdnān and Ma^Cadd and thence from Rabī^Ca and Wā'il. Most of their tribal boasting about their noble descent and origin deals with these two branches of Taghlib and with Ma^Cadd and Nizār. They usually boast of Taghlib in general as a whole tribe, while mentioning Ma^Cadd, Wā'il and Rabī^Ca to show their noble descent. Normally they refer to this more remote descent without giving further details. It is already known that other tribes share this descent with them, but Taghlib try to show themselves as the best of all these tribes. In the following line, ^CAmr b. Kulthūm boasts of inheriting glory, and refers to Ma^Cadd:

وَرِثْنَا الْمَجْدَ قَدْ عَلِمَتْ مَعْدُ نَطَاعِنَ مِنْ دُونِهِ حَتَّى يَبِينَا

We inherited glory, as the tribe of Ma^Cadd knows, and we fight for it with our spears until it is apparent to the world.¹

In the following line, he refers to Rabī^Ca as a noble tribe:

1. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p.634.

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أُنْمَى إِلَى الصَّيْدِ مِنْ رَيْعَةِ وَالْأَخْيَارِ إِنْ حَصَلُوا نَسَبًا

المنسوخ

I am attributed to the lords of Rabī^ca and to the best of them if they get honour.¹

Al-Qutāmī likewise boasts of Rabī^ca, in the following line:

رَيْعَةُ آبَائِي الْأَسَى اقْتَسَمُوا الْعَلَا إِذَا عَدَّ بَاقِي مِزْمَانٍ سَالِفِ

الطويل

Rabī^ca are my ancestors who shared in glory if what remains of a past time is considered.²

The greatest part of the boasting is concerned with Taghlib and their branches. In the following line, al-A^cshā boasts of Taghlib as being like mountains which are difficult to climb:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ تَغْلِبَ أَهْلَ عِزِّ جِبَالٍ مَعَاوِلٍ مَا يَرْتَقِيْنَا

الوافر

Do you not see that Taghlib are the people of dignity who are mountains of protection which cannot be climbed.³

They are also proud of the branches of Taghlib, usually al-Arāqim, Banū Jusham, ^cAttāb and Mālik. ^cAmr b. Kulthūm boasts of Banū Jusham as in the above line. Al-Akhtal boasts

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.599.

2. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.54.

3. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.271.

of al-Arāqim:

فِي فَيْلِي يَدْعُو الْأَرَاقِيمَ لَمْ تَكُنْ فَرَسَانَهُ عَزَلَا وَلَا أَكْفَالَا
القائل

In an army who call "al-Arāqim" and whose horsemen are not disarmed or weak.¹

Bishr b. Sawāda boasts of ^cAttāb:

إِذَا أَخُوكَ لَوَاكَ الْحَقَّ مَعْتَرِضًا فَارْدَسْ أَخَاكَ بِعَبْءٍ مِثْلِ عِتَابِ
البيط

If your brother contests your right and makes objections, hit your brother with a weight like ^cAttāb.²

Al-Qutāmī boasts of Mālik:

ثَابِتْ لَهُ عَصَبَةٌ مِنْ مَالِكٍ رَجَحَ عِنْدَ اللَّقَاءِ مَسَارِيحَ إِلَى النَّادِي
البيط

Brave bands of Mālik rose up to face him in the fight, hastening to war.³

They also mention some of the famous warriors of their history, such as Kulayb, al-Muhalhil, ^cAlqama b. Sayf, Dhū al-Bura and ^cAttāb b. Kulthūm. The best example of all of these is ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, who boasts of them all in the following lines:

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.113.

2. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.606.

3. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.88.

أَبَاحَ لَنَا حِصُونَ الْمَجْدِ دِينَنَا
زَهَبًا نَعْمَ ذَخْرَ الذَّائِرِينَ
بِهِمْ نَلْنَا تَرَاثَ الْأَكْرَمِينَ
بِهِ نَحْمِي وَنَحْمِي الْمَحْجَرِينَ
فَأَيُّ الْمَجْدِ إِلَّا قَدُ وِلِينَنَا

وَرثْنَا مَجْدَ عُلْمَةَ بْنِ سَيْفٍ
وَرثْنَا مَهْلَهُ وَالْخَيْرَ مِنْهُ
وَعَتَابًا وَكُلْثُومًا جَمِيعًا
وَذَا الْبُرَّةِ الَّذِي حَدَّثَتْ عَنْهُ
وَمِنَّا قَبْلَهُ السَّاعِي كَلِيبُ

We inherited the glory of ^cAlqama b. Sayf,
who made lawful to us forcibly the fortress
of glory,

Inherited the glory of Muhalhil, and one who
is greater than he, that is, Zuhayr; which is
the best treasure of the treasurers,

We inherited the glory of ^cAttāb and Kulthūm
wholly, and by them we obtained the
inheritance of the most honoured ones,

And Dhū al-Bura, whom you have been told
about, through whose glory we are defended
and we defend those who seek protection of
us,

And from us, before him was Kulayb, the
endeavourer in increasing our glory, then
where there is the glory which we have not
obtained?¹

Some of them boast of their fathers, mothers and uncles
as individual sources of glory, as in the following line by
Ghazwān az-Zayd:

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.654-6.

أَرَانِي كَلِمًا نَاسَبَتْ حَيْثُ مَا
أَرَى لِي مِنْ كِرَامِ النَّاسِ خَالًا
الوافر

I see myself, when I make a relationship by marriage, as having an uncle from the nobles.¹

^cAmr b. Kulthūm also boasts of his uncles and his father. He boasts that his uncle sacrificed himself, for the sake of his comrades, to gain honour:

خَالِي بِيذِي بَقَرَ حَمِي أَصْحَابِهِ وَشَرِي بِحَسَنِ حَدِيثِهِ أَنْ يَقْتُلَا
عَمِي الَّذِي طَلَبَ الْجِدَا فَنَالَهَا بَكَرًا فَجَلَّلَهَا الْجِيَادَ بِكِنَاهِلَا
وَأَبِي الَّذِي حَمَلَ الْمِئِينَ وَنَاطَطَ قِ الْمَعْرُوفِ إِذْ عَى الْخَطِيبُ الْمَفْصَلَا

اللاصل

My uncle on the day of Dhū Baqar protected his comrades and bought good repute at the price of his life,

My uncle who searched for the enemy, Bakr, and found them, and brought them horses on the day of Kinhil,

And my father who gave hundreds of camels, and spoke seemly words when the eloquent orator was unable to speak.²

Al-Qutāmī boasts of his uncle and father in the following two lines:

1. Al-Khālidīyān, al-Ashbāh wa an-Nazā'ir, v.1, p.93.

2. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.597.

فَخَالِيَ الشَّيْخَ صَعَصَعَةَ بِنِ سَعْدٍ
أَبِي عَنْهُ وَرِثَتْ سَوَامٌ مَجْدٍ
وَتَنَمَّيْنِي لِأَكْرَمِهِمَا تَمِيمٌ
وَكَوَّلَ أَبِ سَيُورِثُ مَا يَسْـُـومُ
الوافر

My uncle is the chieftain Ṣa^cṣa^ca b. Sa^cd,
and Tamīm attribute me to their nobles,
And I inherited from my father glory that he
had won, and every father will bequeath what
he bargains for!¹

C. Self-praise

It is not surprising to find that most of the poetry of Taghlib is martial poetry. They boast of possessing power and supremacy over others. Accordingly, their main area of boasting is fighting and attacking. The tribe is the main object of this boasting, for the poet is the mouthpiece of his tribe and his own glory is part of the tribal glory. This explains why we find the pronoun "we" dominant in the Mu^callaqa of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, since he, like the others, derives most of his pride and self-confidence from his membership of Taghlib or of particular branches of it such as al-Arāqim.

Sometimes the poet becomes proud of himself and composes lines which emphasise his own glory. Most of their self-praise centres on the main object of their concern, which is war. Thus most of al-Muhalhil's self-praise consists of boasting of killing and devastation, and is full of hatred and rancour. He boasts, for example, of murdering Bujayr in Wāridāt, and disgracing the families of Banū ^cUbād, in the following two

1. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.116.

lines:

وَأَنْبَى قَدْ تَرَكْتُ بِبُيُوتِ بَنِي عُبَادٍ
بِجَيْرٍ فِي دَمٍ مِثْلِ الْعَبِيرِ
وَعَفَرَ الْقَتْلَ أَشْفَى لِلصَّدُورِ

I left Bujayr in Wāridāt in blood like
scent,

In his person I devastated houses of Banū
Ubād; some killing cures man's cares.¹

He also boasts of destroying the whole of Bakr:

لَقَدْ قَتَلْتُ بَنِي بَكْرٍ بِرِيْهِمْ
حَتَّى بَكَيتُ وَمَا يَبْكِي لَهُمْ أَحَدٌ
الْبَيْطُ

I killed, for the sake of their master, the
whole of Bakr until I wept and nobody
mourned them.²

His malice and spite are shown in the following line, in
which his love of murdering extends not only to his enemies,
Bakr, but even to his own tribe, Taghlib, whom he involved
in a protracted war:

وَأَنَا الَّذِي قَتَلْتُ بَكْرًا بِالْقَتَا
وَتَرَكْتُ تَغْلِبَ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ سِنَامٍ
الْقَامِلُ

I am he who killed Bakr by lances, and left

1. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, pp.132-3.

2. Ibn Qutayba, Uyūn al-Akhbār, v.2, p.194.

Taghlib without a hump.¹

^cAbd Allāh b. ^cAmr displays his vigour by boasting of his daring on the battlefield, and of his prowess as a horseman:

وَلَقَدْ شَهِدْتُ الْخَيْلَ تَحْتَ الدَّارِعِيِّينَ تَنْزِيلاً
نَازَعَتْ أَوْلَاهَا الْكُتَيْبَةَ مَعْجَمًا طَرَفًا طَمْرًا

مجزوء الطامل

I witnessed the horses when they were moving
with difficulty under the warriors who wore
armour,

I fought against the squadron the first, urging
on my swift young horse.²

^cAmr b. Kulthūm exults in his power to such an extent that he boasts of being pursued by the relatives of those he has killed, with the implication that they will never be able to take their revenge:

حَلَفْتُ بِرَبِّ الرَّاقِصَاتِ عَشِيَّةً
طِوَالَ اللَّيَالِي أَوْ تَزُولُ يَلْمَمُ

الطويل

I swear by the Lord of ambling camels at
evening [that] when I leave the summit of one
mountain behind another appears,

1. Al-Qādī al-Jurjānī, al-Wasāṭa, p.447.

2. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.608.

Somebody who is seeking me undertakes treachery behind my back, throughout the night, until the mountain of Yalamlam passes away.¹

Another Taghlibī poet boasts of not fleeing from death, or even thinking of it:

لَعَمْرُكَ مَا فَكَّرْتُ مِنَ الْمَيَا ^{لَا} وَلَا حَدَّثْتُ نَفْسِي بِالْفِرَارِ ^{ذَهَبَ وَرَدَ}
الوافر

I swear that I did not flee death, and I did not think of fleeing.²

Some Taghlibī poets boast of something other than murdering or fighting, which are the dominant subjects of their poetry. Drinking wine was famous among Taghlib, so their poets used to boast of it. ^cUtba b. al-Waghl is proud of drinking, and enjoying other pleasures, in different places:

وَيَوْمَ بِيَا جَسْرِي كَيَوْمَ مَقِيلَةَ ^{نَا}
وَيَوْمَ بِأَعْلَى خَانَقِينَ شَرِبْتَهُ ^ه إِذَا مَا اشْتَهَى الْغَازِي الشَّرَابَ وَهَجَرَ
وَاللَّهِ يَوْمَ بِالْمَدِينَةِ صَالِحٍ ^و وَعَلَى لَذَّةٍ مِنْهُ إِذَا مَا تَيْسَّرَ
الهُوِيل

And a day in Yājisrā like a day of siesta in the afternoon when a warrior wishes to have drinking and travelling at midday,
And I drank one day at the height of Khānaqīn and Hulwān - Hulwān of al-Jibāl

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.600.

2. Al-Buhturī, al-Ḥamāsa, p.38.

and Tustar,

And how wonderful would an excellent day in al-Medina spent in pleasure be if that were possible.¹

They also boast of being generous as individuals, which reflects personal glory. ^CAmr b. Kulthūm describes an argument between himself and his wife, who blames him for squandering their wealth:

سَفَهَا بِنْتُ ثَوَيْرِ بْنِ هِلَالٍ	بَكَرْتَ تَعَذَّلْنِي وَسَطَ الْحِلَالِ
إِبْلِي نَهْبًا لِشَرِّبٍ وَفَضِيلٍ	بَكَرْتَ تَعَذَّلْنِي فِي أَنْ رَأَتْ
كُلَّ مَا تَحْوِي يَمِينِي وَشِمَالِ	لَا تَلُومِينِي فَإِنِّي مَتْلِفٌ
وَإِذَا أَتَلَفْتَهُ لَسْتُ أَبَالِي	لَسْتُ إِنْ أَطْرَفْتُ مَا لَا فَرِحًا

الرجل

The daughter of Thuwayr b. Hilāl came early in the morning, blaming me foolishly among the encampments,

She came at early morning, blaming me because she saw my camels in the hands of drinkers of wine, and nobles,

Do not blame me for squandering all that my right and left hands contain,

I would not be glad if wealth came to my hand, and if I wasted it I would not care.²

Some of them boast of the excellence of their poetry, as in the following lines:

1. Yāqūt, al-Mu'jam, v.2, p.341.

2. Dīwān ^CAmr, p.598.

وقافية كأن السم فيها
صرفت بها لسان القوم عنى
وليس سليمها أبدا بنا مى
فخرت للسنابك والحوامى
الوافر

A poem which is as though it contains poison,
from which the person wounded by it never
recovers,

I turn by it the tongue of the people from me,
and they (?) fall down before the hoofs.¹

Some of them boast of their ability to endure difficulties,
as in the following lines by al-A^cshā:

ولا حب مثل فرق الرأس مطرد
جأوزته بكناز اللحم دوسرة
قد البسته ستور الليل جلبابا
ترى لها فى حصى المعزاء أبدا
البيط

Many a continuous desert track, like the
parting of the hair, which the curtains of
night have clothed in a gown [of darkness],
Have I crossed with a strong, fleshy camel,
of whom you see traces on the stones of the
hard ground.²

Description

We may introduce this section by quoting the words of
Shawqī Dayf:

1. Al-Lisān, "Namā".
2. Al-Amīdī, al-Mu^ctalaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.20

Description is a part of their subject in which they describe everything they see; usually they introduce their description after their encampment theme. When they describe their travelling in the desert, passing over distant steep hills on their camels ... their horses ... the birds ... the silent nature...¹

There was not a great deal of change in the style or subject matter of this description under Islam.² The main subjects which the Taghlibī poets describe have to do with the horse and wine.

a) Description of the horse:

Taghlib were famous for the horses which they bred, which were descended from the celebrated horses al-Hujjays and al-Khadhwā'.³ This love of horses is expressed by many different poets:

تَرَى رَائِدَاتِ الْخَيْلِ حَوْلَ بِيوتِنَا كَمِعْزَى الْحِجَازِ أُعوزتْهَا الزَّرَائِبُ
الطَّوِيلِ

Around where our tents are pitched our steeds roam for all to see as goats in the high Hijāz, too many to be penned in.⁴

يَقْتَنُ جِيَادَنَا وَيَقْلُنَ لِسْتُمْ بِعَوْلَتِنَا إِذَا لَمْ تَمْنَعُونَا

They feed our horses, and say to us, you are not our husbands, if you do not protect us from the enemy.⁵

1. Dayf, al-ʿAṣr al-Jāhiliī, pp.214-7.
2. Hāwī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.327-43.
3. Ibn al-Kalbī, Ansāb al-Khayl, pp.19, 45.
4. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.418; v.2, p.151.
5. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.832.

وَرثْنَا هُنَّ عَنْ آبَاءٍ صِدْقٍ وَنُورِهَا إِذَا مِتْنَا بَنِينَا

We inherited them, from our fathers renowned for sincerity, and we shall cause our sons to inherit them when we die.¹

ثَلَاثَةُ أَثْمَانٍ فَأَثْمَانُ خَيْلِنَا وَأَقْوَاتِنَا وَمَا نَسُوقُ إِلَى الْعَقْلِ
الطويل

There are three prices, for the horses, for our food, and what we pay for the bloodmoney.²

إِذَا مَا الْخَيْلِ ضِيْعَهَا رِجَالٌ رِطْنَاهَا فَشَارَكَتِ الْعِيَالَا

Although others may neglect their horses, we tether them and they share with our families,

نَقَاسِمُهَا الْمَعِيشَةَ إِذَا شَتُونَا وَنَكْسُوهَا الْبَرَاقِعَ وَالْجِلَالَا
الوافر

We share our living with them when we pass the winter, and clothe them in masks and horse-cloth.³

They refer to their horses by name, e.g. as-Salis, al-Ward, Khamīra and Nubāk:

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p.670.
2. Al-Ghalāyīnī, Rijāl al-Mu^Callaqāt, p.197.
3. Hāwī, al-Akḥṭal, p.331.

أرْكَبُ نَعَامَةً إِنِّي رَاكِبُ السَّلْسِيسِ

الْبَيْطِ

Ride Na^cāma, I will ride as-Salis.¹

لَمْ أُرْمِ عَرَصَةَ الْكُتَيْبَةِ حَتَّى اتَّعَلَّ الْوَرْدُ مِنْ دِمَائِنِي عَالَا

الْحَفِيفِ

I did not desire to leave the troops until
al-Ward wore shoes of blood.²

جَاءَتْ بِمَا تَزِي الدَّهَيْمَ لِأَهْلِهَا خَمِيرَةٌ أَوْ مَسْرَى خَمِيرَةٌ أَشْنَامُ

الطَّوِيلِ

Khumayra brought that which ad-Duhaym used
to bring to her people; Khumayra or the night-
travelling of Khumayrais more ill-omened.³

فَإِنِّي لَنْ يَفَارِقَنِي نُبَاكُ يَرَى التَّقْرِيْبَ وَالتَّعْدَاءَ دِينَا

الْوَافِي

Nubāk, who sees galloping and running as a
duty, will never leave me.⁴

The horse was the prime means of accomplishing their
victories, frightening their enemies and escaping from the
battlefield, which in peacetime, they spent much of their time
looking after.

1. Ibn al-Kalbī, Ansāb al-Khayl, p.84.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.146.

3. Ibn al-Kalbī, Ansāb al-Khayl, p.87.

4. Ibid., p.88.

They always boast of owning horses and never tire of describing them. They depend on them to attack others and to move swiftly against their enemies' encampments. Al-Muhalhil depicts his brother Kulayb leading the horsemen against the enemy, laying great stress on their speed, in the following lines:

القائد الخيل تردى فى أعتابها
من خيل تغلب ما تلقى أسننتها
زهوا إذا الخيل لجت فى تعاديبها
إلا وقد خضبوها من أعاديها

البسيط

The leader of the horses which were proudly running in their reins, when the horses make a clamour in their running.

From the horses of Taghlib whose spearheads you never find but that they are stained by their enemies' [blood].¹

They usually portray their horses as being smeared with blood in order to intensify the image of battle as in the following lines by al-Akhtal:

1. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.381.

وممّرة أشر السلاح بنحرها
فكان فوق لباتها جريالا
الامل

A strong mare on whose neck is the mark of weapons, and it is as though her chest were covered with red paint.¹

They describe their position in the battlefield, particularly in close combat. Al-Muhalhil describes the killing of Bakr as follows:

تركنا الخيل عاكفة عليهم
كان الخيل تدحرفني غدير

We left the horses standing around them, as though they were stumbling in a pool.²

A similar image is given by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm in the following line:

تركنا الخيل عاكفة عليهم
مقلدة أعنتها صفونا

We left our horses standing round him, with their reins on their necks, standing quietly.³

We find other images used to describe their horses on the battlefield.

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, p.110.

2. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.135.

3. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.631.

ولقد شهدت الخيل تحت الدارمين تزرزرا

And I witnessed horses which were moving with difficulty under the warriors who wore armour.¹

إذا سطع الغبار خرجن منه
سواكن بعد إبسا ونقرا
الوافر

If dust appears they get out of it, calm after having been spoken to and patted.²

ملح المتون كأنما ألبستها بالماء
إذ يبس النضيج جلالا
اللاصل

Their backs are salty as though you had clothed with horse-cloths of water, when the sweat had dried out.³

They often threaten their enemies by making reference to their horses, as in the following lines of al-Muhalhil and ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

ولأوردن الخيل بطن أراكا
ولأقضيمن بفعل ذاك ديوني
اللاصل

I swear that I will bring the horses within Arāka, and that I will get back my rights by doing that.⁴

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.608.

2. Ibid., p.596.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.110.

4. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.392.

أَقْبَسَ بِنَ عَمْرٍو غَارَةً بَعْدَ غَارَةٍ وَصَبَّةٌ خَيْلٍ تَحْرِبُ الْمَالَ وَالنَّعْمَ
الطويل

O Qays b. ^cAmr [there will be one] foray after another, and a rush of horses which will devastate wealth and animals.¹

لَوْ أَنَّ خَيْلِي أَدْرَكَتْكَ وَجَدْتَهُمْ مِثْلَ اللَّيْثِ بَسْتَرِ غَبِ عَرِينِ
الطامل

If our horses had found you, you would have seen them like lions in the shade behind their dens.²

They also use them to flee from their enemies as in the following line of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

وَتَحْمِلُنَا غَدَاةَ الرَّوْعِ جَرْدٌ عَرَفْنَا نَاقِئًا وَافْتَلِينَا
الطامل

On the day of battle, well-bred horses, scanty of hair, carry us, which are known as belonging to us, - horses captured from the enemy, and which were weaned from their mothers.³

In peacetime they used to exercise their horses to keep fit, as described in the following line of al-Akhnas:

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.601.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.670.

فيغيبقن أحلابا ويصبحن مثلها فهن من التعداء قب شواذب
الطويل

At even they drink our milk, at dawn they
are fed again, and, day after day ridden
forth, their bodies are lithe and lean.¹

They also used to gamble on them, as described in the
following line of al-Mawj:

جاءت بنو جشم لما نصبت لها
ولن يرد عناني مطرف حطيم
بأجنبي عن الغيات ملطوم
غمرو ولا ضرع من القرازيم
البيط

When I set up my horse against Banū Jusham
they produced a half-breed horse which could
never reach its aim,
An old, untrained half-breed horse, or a weak
horse with no pedigree, will never turn back
my rein.²

They frequently apply certain epithets to their horses
which are intended to indicate their speed and appearance;
among the frequently used comparisons are hawks, the falcon,
the swallow and the demon:

وكل سبوح في الحنان مقلهم
كسرب القطا يحملن مجدا وسوددا
الطويل

And every speedy one who runs tightly in the

1. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt (Lyall), v.1, p.418; v.2, p.150.

2. Dīwān^c Amr, p.610.

rein like a group of sandgrouse who carry
dignity and honour.¹

وَكَأَنَّمَا تَهْوَى بِبِزْي كَلِمَا
سَهْوٍ وَرَرٍ رَهْمٍ مَرٍ

It is as though whenever I set [my horse] in
motion, a hawk carries me swiftly with my
weapons.²

كَأَنِّي بَيْنَ خَافِيَتِي عَقَابٍ
تُرِيدُ حِمَامَةً فِي يَوْمِ غَمِّينِ
الوافر

I seem to be between two short feathers of an
eagle which flies after a pigeon on a foggy
day.³

نَزَائِحٌ لِلْغُرَابِ بِنَا تَبَارِي
خَوَارِجٌ كَالسَّمَامِ مِنَ الْغُبَارِ
الوافر

Descended from al-Ghurāb, competing with us
on their backs, emerging from the dust like
swallows.⁴

سَعَالِيَا تَحْمِلُ مِنَ تَغْلِبِ
أَشْبَاهِ جِنِّ كَلِيوْتِ الطَّرِيقِ
السريحي

Demons which carry [men of] Taghlib like

1. Abū^c Ubayda, al-Ayyām, p.404.

2. Dīwān^c Amr, p.604.

3. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.91.

4. Dīwān^c Amr, p.599.

Jinn and like lions of the road.¹

إذا أسهلت خببت وإن أحزنت وجبت وتحسبها جنا إذا شالت الجذم
الطويل

If they run on smooth ground they run speedily, and if they run on rough ground they run with difficulty, and you would think that they were Jinn when the whips are raised.²

They are also fond of describing them as being innumerable, as in the following line of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

كان الخيل أيمن من أبيض بجنب عيرض أسراب دبر
الوافر

The horses on the right of Ubād beside ^cUwayrid are like swarms of wasps.³

b) Description of wine:

Wine was known in the Jāhiliyya, and it was a common practice to vow to abstain from drinking it until revenge had been achieved. A well-known example of this occurred when al-Muhalhil began to seek revenge for his brother Kulayb.⁴ It seems that the use of wine was widely spread among Taghlib, so that for example we find ^cAmr b. Kulthūm making it a theme of his mu^callaqa.

1. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.233.

2. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.601.

3. Ibid., p.596.

4. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.18a.

The wine theme in the mu^callaqa of ^cAmr occurs as a psychological motif in the poem, and also casts light on the relationship of the bedouin with the town-dwellers, in that he mentions in the following two lines some towns which were presumably centres of the wine trade:

أَلَا هَبِي بِصَحْنِكَ فَاصْبِحِينَا
وَكَأْسٍ قَدْ شَرِيتَ بِبَعْلَبَكِ
وَلَا تَبْقِي خَمِيرَ الْأَنْدَرِينَا
وَأُخْرَى فِي دِمَشْقٍ وَقَاصِرِينَا

Now then, Oh cup bearer, awake, and give us
our morning draught from your goblet, and do
not keep wines of Andarūn,
And many a cup of this wine have I drunk in
Ba^c laback, and another in Damascus and
Caesarea.¹

^cAmr is clearly fond of wine, and he gives us a description of it. The first line of the above shows that they drank wine from cups, which he calls ṣahn, and that they were in the habit of drinking at early morning. He then shows how they diluted the wine with water because of its strength. The simile which he gives for its colour, i.e. huṣṣ (saffron) indicates that it was yellow:

مَشْعَعَةٌ كَأَنَّ الْحَمِيمَ فِيهَا
إِذَا مَا الْمَاءُ خَالَطَهَا سَخِينَا

Wine mixed with water - of a colour as if the

1. Ibn an-Nahḥās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.613. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.158. Johnson, p.131.

saffron was in it - when the water mixes with it and we drink it we become generous.¹

It was known among the Arabs of the Jāhiliyya that the wine drinker became generous after drinking wine: ^cAmr b. Kulthūm gives a picture of how they spent money on wine, giving the example of the miser who would never keep his money if he tasted it:

تَرَى اللَّحِيزَ الشَّحِيحَ إِذَا أُمِرَتْ عَلَيْهِ لِمَالِهِ فِيهَا مَهِينًا

You see the miserly avaricious one, when the cup is passed round to him, despise his property for it.²

^cAmr gives a very concise portrait of how wine starts to make the drinker gradually lose control of himself, even if he tries to struggle against this. He uses the word tajūr (leads away from) to suggest its effect on him in the following line:

تَجُورُ بِذِي اللَّبَانَةِ عَنْ هَوَاهُ إِذَا مَا ذَاقَهَا حَتَّى يَلِينَا

It leads the one, who has want, away from his desire, when he tastes it, until he becomes softened as to his desire.³

^cAmr then tells of the way they used to serve the wine by saying that it begins from right to left, and it is because of this that he makes his complaint against the cupbearer in

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.615.

2. Ibid., p.616.

3. Ibid.

the following line:

وَكَا نَ الْكَأْسِ مَجْرَاهَا الْيَمِينَا
صَدَدَتِ الْكَأْسَ عَنَّا أُمَّ عَمْرٍو

You turned aside the cup from us, O Umm
Amr, while the circulation of the cup was
from the right hand.¹

Another Taghlibī poet, Abū al-Lahhām, describes wine in
the following line as having been kept for two years and
brought from the mountains, in order to show its strength and
taste:

وَكَا نَ طَعْمِ مَدَامَةِ جَبَلِيَّةٍ
قَدْ عَتَقَتْ سِنَتَيْنِ لَمَّا تَنَكَّسَ
الْكَا مِلِّ

And like the taste of mountain wine which has
been kept for two years and has not been
disturbed.²

Wine became more prominent in Taghlibī poetry after the
advent of Islam. We find two of their poets in particular
expressing their pride in drinking it openly and making great
efforts to describe it. It could be said, indeed, that al-Akhtal
was the leading exponent of wine poetry during the Umayyad
period.³

In the following poem we find al-Akhtal giving details of
wine and of a wine-drinking session. In the first three lines
of the poem he celebrates what Amr alludes to in one line

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.618.

2. Dīwān Amr^c, p.608.

3. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, p.362.

when he uses the word tajūr. Al-Akḥṭal gives a striking image of the wine-drinker, who seems immovable while others try to pull him up and rouse him:

لِيَحْيَا وَقَدْ مَاتَتْ عِظَامٌ وَمَفِصَّلٌ صَرِيحٌ مُدَامَ يَرْفَعُ الشَّرْبُ رَأْسَهُ
وَمَا كَادَ إِلَّا بِالْحَشَاشَةِ يَعْقِلُ نَهَادِيهِ أحياناً وَحِيناً نَجْرَهُ
وَأَخْرُ مِمَّا نَالَ مِنْهَا مُجْبَلٌ إِذَا رَفَعُوا عِظْمًا تَحَامَلَ صَدْرَهُ

One struck down by wine, whose head his fellow drinkers try to raise to bring him back to life, and whose bones and joints are dead.

We try to calm him sometimes and we pull him sometimes, but he is scarcely conscious.

If they raise a bone, his chest becomes heavy, and another bone is shaky from what he has drunk of wine.

He talks at great length about its origin, and is not content to mention Palestine or Baysān, but depicts the way the merchants have transported it and even introduces a kind of monologue:

قِطَارٌ تَرَوِي مِنْ فِلَسْطِينَ مَشْقَلٌ شَرِيْتُ وَلَا قَانِي لِحِلِّ أَلْيَتِي
مَمْلَأَةٌ يَحْلِي بِهَا وَتَعْدَلُ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَعزَى مَسُوكِ رَوِيَّةٍ
وَمَا وَضَعُوا الْأَثْقَالَ إِلَّا لِيَفْعَلُوا فَقُلْتُ أَصْبِحُونِي لَا أَبَا لِأَبِيكُمْ
رِجَالٌ مِنَ السُّودَانِ لَمْ يَتَسَرَّلُوا أَنَاخُوا فَجَرُوا شَاصِيَاتِ كَانَهُمْ
يَعْلِي بِهَا السَّاقِي الْأَذَى وَأَسْهَلُ وَجَاءُوا بِبَيْسَانِيَّةٍ هِيَ بَعْدَ مَا
إِذَا لَمَحُّوْهَا جَذْوَةٌ تَتَاكَلُ فَصَبُّوا عَقَارًا فِي إِنْاءٍ كَانَهُمْ

I drank, and there encountered me to undo my
oath a heavily laden caravan from Palestine
full of wine,
On it full, moist skins of goats which are
raised up and arranged evenly,
I said, Give me a morning-draught - may you
lose your father - and they put down the
burdens to do so,
They brought down their camels and pulled
jars which seemed like black men who do not
put on clothes,
They brought a wine from Baysān which, after
the cupbearer gives a second draught of it,
is more delicious and easy to drink,
They poured wine into a cup which, if they
see it, is like a shining firebrand,

Al-Akhtal expands his imagery by alluding to the
Jāhiliyya idea of sāniḥ and bāriḥ (auspicious and inauspicious ,
associated with the appearance of birds from the right and
left) to indicate the movement of the cup.

تمربها الأيدي سنيحا وبارحا
وتوضع باللهم حى وتحمل

The hands pass in an auspicious and
inauspicious direction and it is put down and
raised with the utterance "Allāhumma Ḥayya",²

It seems that ^cAmr and other Taghlibī poets of the
Jāhiliyya did not enjoy their pleasures as their descendants
did, because they were involved in constant warfare and seem

to have indulged in drinking wine for the sake of drinking rather than as part of a pleasant social occasion, as in the case of ^CAmr, who is sometimes said to have drunk himself to death. We do not find any mention of singers in their poetry, as we do in that of al-A^Cshā or in the following lines of al-Akhtal:

<p>غناء مغنٍ أو شواءٍ مرعبٍ وراجعني منها مراحٍ وأخيل توابعها مما نعل ونهيل ديب نمال في نقا متهيل</p>	<p>وتوقف أحيانا فيفصل بيننا فلذت لمرتاح وطابت لشارب فما لبثنا نشوة لحقت بنا تدب ديبا في العظام كأنه</p>
--	---

And it is stopped for a while, and between it there intervenes the singing of a singer or fat grilled meat,

A happy person finds it delicious and a drinker finds it good, and happiness and imagination visit me from it,

And soon afterwards joyfulness came to us, followed by more from our repeated drinking,

It creeps smoothly in the bones like ants which crawl in a loosely-poured sand-dune.

It is not unusual for Taghlibī poets to speak at length when describing wine, as when ^CAmr refers to the way they dilute the wine, but al-Akhtal again gives more details when describing the serving of the wine:

فأطيب بها مقتولة حين تقتل
رست وري في حجرها ابن مدينة
إذا خاف من نجم عليها ظمأة
أدب اليها جد ولا يتسلسل
الطويل

I said: Kill it by diluting it and how good
it is when it is killed,
It grew up, and a townsman cared for it,
continuously digging with his spade.
If he feared that it would become thirsty on
account of a change in the weather, he led
a running stream of water to it.¹

c) The description of the oryx:

Horses and wine are the most important subjects for description in the poetry of Taghlib other than their main topic of martial poetry. There are certain other subjects which are described, such as she-camels, and women, but we will study these when we come to study the nasīb theme as they are usually part of it. We find in al-Akhtal some other subjects described such as the wild ass and its female, the crow, the wolf and the ship.² However these are not prominent elements in the poetry of Taghlib, with the exception of the oryx which we find described by Abū al-Lahhām in two lines³ and al-Qutāmī. The description of the oryx is widely spread in Jāhiliyya poetry, occurring in elegies like that of abū-Dhu'ayb or in other poems which generally stress its vigour and

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, pp.15-20. Hawī, al-Akhtal, pp.361-85.

2. Hawī, al-Akhtal, pp.452-98.

3. Dīwān ^c Amr, p.608.

compare its travelling to that of the she-camel.¹

It is very strange, therefore, to find the poetry of Taghlib, with the exception of the above, lacking this element. No Taghlibī describes it other than al-Akhtal, who is unique in describing the wild ass, and the ostrich, even though they are common features of which most of the Jāhiliyya poets make use in their poetry.²

Apart from al-Akhtal no Taghlibī refers to the wild ass with the exception to passing mentions as in the following line of Abū al-Lahhām:

جَلِيزَةٌ تَطِيرُ الْأَكَامَ نَجِيحَةً كَالجَابِ يَنْفُضُ طَلَّهُ الْمُتَشَمِّسِ
اللام

A strong and swift she-camel which treads the undergrowth and which seems like a wild ass shaking off the dew in the sun.³

Apart from this their poetry is poor in description of animals except for their beloved horses, and to some extent the she-camel which will be discussed in the nasīb theme. This fact might explain this scarcity, for if their poetry does not pay a great deal of attention to the she-camel which is the greatest friend of the bedouin, we need not expect that they will concern themselves greatly with other animals.

Al-Akhtal, who was an outstanding poet, as well as inheriting his own tribe's poetry benefited to a large extent

1. An-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi'r al-Jāhilī, v.2, pp.715-60. Al-Qaysī, aṭ-Ṭabī'a, pp.273-6, 320-4. Rumiyya, ar-Rihla, pp.205-38.

2. For a full discussion of this subject, see al-Qaysī, aṭ-Ṭabī'a, passim.

3. Dīwan Amr, p.608.

from all Arabic poetry.¹ Besides the political circumstances in which he lived, which obliged him to compose types of poetry like panegyric which were not favoured by his tribe or by the Arabs of the Jāhiliyya in general, he is the only poet who mentions desert scenes and in particular the oryx, apart from al-Qutāmī, who has only two descriptions of the oryx and the wild cow although he often mentions the she-camel.²

Al-Akhtal devotes sections of several of his poems to the oryx, giving it more attention than other desert themes and describing it even more than wine.³ On this subject Hāwī remarks: "Through this image we perceive the tenderness which the Arab poets nurture for this beast; it is as though it were a symbol of beauty as much as a symbol of strength".⁴ The oryx in al-Akhtal's poetry is always the conqueror when the dogs attack him.⁵

This is sometimes true of al-Qutāmī's poetry also, but the female oryx in other lines is described as sad because it has lost its calf. There do not seem to be any psychological dimensions to al-Akhtal's description of the oryx, but on the other hand his descriptions of the wild ass often seem to have sexual undertones, as in the following:

إذا أراد سيوى أطهارها امتنعت منه سرا عيف أمثال القنا قود
يصيف عنهن أحياناً بمنخره فباللبان وبالليتين تكدي
البيط

1. Ghāzī, al-Akhtal, pp.208-56. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.568-83.

2. Diwān al-Qutāmī, pp.41-63.

3. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, p.476.

4. Ibid., pp.476-93.

5. Ibid., pp.452-76.

If he wants those who are pregnant, with long backs and as tall as spears, they refuse him, He sometimes turns his nose aside from them with bruises on his chest and the side of his neck.¹

However, the following lines of al-Qutāmī give a clear idea of the general description of the oryx:

يرعى الدكادك من جنوب قطنانا	وكان نمرقتي فوق مولح
وكثيبتها ينتظر الحدشاننا	بعواذب القفرات بين شقيقة
هتلت عليه بديمة هتلاننا	لهيق سقته من المحرم ليلة
رهم تسييل تلاءه إمعاننا	فشنى أكارعه وبات تجمسه
كسنى الحريق ولا مبح لمعاننا	أرقا تضاحكه البروق براجيف
شئز القيام يقضب الأغصاننا	فغدا صبيحة صوبها متوجسا
صلبا يكون له الطلال دهانا	بخصيف رابية يهز مذلقنا
تقفيتان تنظمان جمماننا	فترى الحباب كأنما عبثت به
يحمون أرسلهم بنو ذكواننا	فليئما هو غافل إذ راعه
حصن تجول تجرر الأرسانا	معهم ضوار من سلوق كأنها
وغبارهن إذا التهبن دخاننا	فطلبنه شأوا تخال غباره
ذكر القتال وحين آخر حاننا	وهلا مخافتهم ثم استرده
صلب القناة كأن فيها سناننا	فما وقام يذودها برهسف
وإذا الحقن به أصاب طعاننا	فيذا خسن مضى على مضوائه
خزي الحرائر أن يكون جباننا	حرجا وكر كرور صاحب نجدة
قريما وأكثرها له غشياننا	ويكون حد سنانه لأشدها

1. *Dīwan al-Akhtal*, v.1, p.102. *Hawī*, *al-Akhtal*, pp.452-76.

الكامل

My saddle-cushion seems to be upon a
 streaked oryx who grazes the sandy plains to
 the south of Qatān,
 Awaiting its destiny in the remote arid lands
 between Shaqīqa and its dunes,
 Brilliant white, watered by a night in
 Muharram which pours heavily on him with a
 rainy cloud,
 He curved his shoulders and spent the night
 covered by steady rain which rushed
 continuously from the hills,
 Sleepless, laughed at by the lightning with
 a thunder-cloud like the blaze of fire and
 shining intensely,
 In the morning, listening fearfully to its
 downpour, he crunched the branches, rugged
 in stature,
 At the bottom of the hill brandishing a hard,
 sharp horn, the dew on which looks like oil,
 You see the bubbles on his body; as though
 two slave-women were playing with it,
 stringing pearls,
 While he was unaware, Banū Dhakwān scared
 him by urging their dogs,
 They had fierce Saluki dogs like horses which
 circle round pulling their reins,
 They raced after him and you would think his
 dust and their dust to be smoke when they
 became hot,
 He was afraid of them, but then the memory
 of fighting returned to him and a fate whose
 time had come at last,
 He rears up and begins to ward them off with
 a sharp horn which is like a strong lance
 with a spear-head,
 If they hang back, he goes on his way, and

if they stick to him, he pierces them,
He is undecided, and then returns bravely;
it is a disgrace in front of free women to be
a coward,
The edge of his spear-head is for the
greediest of them and the most eager to attack
him,
They fall back in exhaustion without
scratching his skin and he sets off with all
speed.¹

d) Description of the sand-grouse: *

Some of the Taghlibī poets deal with this kind of description, particularly al-Akhtal.² They introduce this description when they want to show how hot the weather is, and they usually describe the young of the sand-grouse above in the desert hills while summer burns them. An anonymous Taghlibī poet gives an outstanding picture of this kind, the like of which we cannot find in any Taghlibī poetry with the exception of some passages of al-Akhtal. The following lines taken from this description are a vivid proof of their ability to create pictures:

ثَلَاثُ مَرُورَةٍ يَحَارِبُهَا الْقَطَا تَرَى الْفَرخَ فِي حَافَتِهَا يَتَحَرَّقُ

Three deserts in which the sand-grouse roams,
on whose flanks you see the chicks roasting.

The poet creates a vivid simile by conjoining the

1. Dīwān al-Quṭamī, pp.61-3.

2. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.500-14.

* For more details about the sand-grouse see, Vire, F., EI⁴ "Kata", pp.743-5.

loneliness of the young sand grouse whose parents are flying around and an orphan who is sitting sadly while his relatives try to console him.

يَظَلُّ بِهَا فَرخَ القَطَاةِ كَأَنَّهُ
يَتِيمٌ يَنجِيهِ مَوَالِيَهُ مَطْرُقٌ

The young sand-grouse stays there as though he were a sad orphan whose relatives try to speak to him.

He goes on to describe the coming nightfall, and pictures the chick as nearly dead by drawing attention to the state of his eyes and his mouth:

بَدِيمومَةٍ قَد بَاتَ فِيهَا وَعِينُهُ
عَلَى مَوْتِهِ تَغْضَى مَرَارًا وَتَرْفِيقًا
لَهُ مَحْجَرٌ نَابٍ وَعَيْنٌ مَرِيضَةٌ
وَشِدْقٌ بِمِثْلِ الزَّعْفَرَانِ مَخْلُوقٌ

In a waterless desert in which he spends the night while his eyes frequently close and open upon death,

He has a protruding eyelid, a sickly eye, and the corner of his mouth looks as though it were smeared with saffron [yellow].

The poet then moves to another stage of his depiction, leaving the chick to speak of the mother, and he piles up many different adjectives to show her qualities:

تناجيه كحلاء المدام حرة
لها ذنب ساج وجيد مطوق
سماكية كدرية عريضة
شكالية عفراء سمراء سملق
إذا غادرت تبتغي ما يعيشه
كفأها رزاياها النجاء الهبنق

There whispers to him one of pure origin,
black of eye, with a drooping tail and a
ringed neck,
Dark coloured, dusty, from ^cAr^c ar, beautiful,
dust coloured brown and tall,
If she leaves him to seek for food to keep him
alive, swift running in a foolish fashion
saves her from catastrophe.

The poet now reaches the point which he was leading up to. He says that she left her offspring because she saw him nearly dying of thirst and went to a very difficult shallow water. He then describes her attempt to get water:

غدت تستقي من مهبل ليسرد ونكه
مسيرة شهر للقطا متعلق
لأزغب مطروح بجوز تنوفية
تلظى سموما قيظه فهو أرق
تراه إذا أمسى وقد كاد جلده
من الحر عن أوصاله يتمزق
غدت فاستأنت ثم ولت مغيرة
بها حين يزهاها الجناحان أولق
تيمم ضحضا من الماء قد بدت
دعا ميسكه في الماء أطحل أطرق
فلما أتته مقدحرا تغوشنت
تغوث مخنوق فتطفو وتغرق
تجر وتلقى في سقاء كأنسه
من الحنظل العامي جزء مفلق
فلما ارتوت من مائها لم يكن لها
أناة وقد كادت من الرى تبسق
وطارت كما طار السحاب الملق
ظمت طموة صعدا ومدت جرائها

الطويل

She went to bring water from a watering-place
which it takes a month to reach, and which
the sand-grouse frequent,

For a downy chick who is left in the middle
of a high place, when the heat of Summer is
burning with hot winds and because of this
he is black,

She sees him when his skin is nearly peeling
from his limbs because of the heat,

In the morning she rose in flight and then
went directly to it, proud of her wings and
swift (?)

She went straight to a shallow water, the
sand in whose water is turbid and muddy,

And when she came to the moving [water],
she screamed for help like a strangled thing
and floated and sank,

Pulling and putting water in a water-pouch
like part of an old split-open colcynt, .

When she had got enough water, she could
wait no more and nearly spat from too much
drinking,

She soared up on high and stretched her neck
and flew like lofty clouds.¹

Elegy

It is natural for a person to grieve for the loss of a relative, particularly if he depends on the person materially. For this reason we find that most of the pre-Islamic elegies are about individuals.² Shawqī Dayf has described three main categories of the elegy or rithā', which he identifies as nadb

1. An-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.10, pp.263-5.

2. Shawqī Dayf, al-^cAṣr al-Jāhilī, p.210.

(wailing), ta'bīn (commemoration) or azā' (consolation).¹ These are often introduced by the na^cy (news of death), an example of which is the line in which al-Muhalhil describes how he first received news of his brother's murder:

نَعَى النِّعَاةَ كُلَّيَا فَقُلْتُ لَهُمْ مَا لَتَيْنَا الْأَرْضَ أَوْ زَالَتْ رَوَاسِيهَا
الْبَيْطِ

The people who announced the death informed me of the death of Kulayb and I said to them: "The earth has tilted us or its mountains have vanished".²

In 'wailing' they - particularly the women - mourned the deceased and practised some customs which conveyed their deep feeling of the great loss which had befallen them, like shaving their heads and beating their faces.³ Al-Muhalhil for instance abstained from wine, women and any other pleasure as is clear from the following lines:

خُذِ الْعَهْدَ الْأَكِيدَ عَلَى عَمْرِي بِتَرْكِي كُلِّ مَا حَوَتْ الدِّيَارُ
وَهَجِرِي الْغَانِيَاتِ وَشَرِبِ كَأْسِ وَلَبَسِي جِبَةَ لَا تَسْتَعَارُ
الْوَافِرِ

Take my firm guarantee for the whole of my life that I will abandon everything which is in my encampment,
And I will give up beautiful girls and drinking, and I will wear clothing which I

1. Shawqī Dayf, al-^cAsr al-Jāhiliī, pp.207-10.

2. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.391.

3. Shawqī Dayf, al-^cAsr al-Jāhiliī, pp.207-10.

will never replace.¹

He also describes the behaviour of women after Kulayb's death in the following lines:

كنا نغار على العواتق أن تترى
فخرجن حين ثوى كليب حسرا
فترى الكواعب كالظباء عواطلا
يخمشن من آدم الوجوه حواسرا
بالأمس خارجة عن الأوطان
مستيقنات بعده بهوان
إذ حان مصرعه من الأكفان
من بعده ويعدن بالآزمان
القامل

Yesterday we were jealous of our noble women
being seen outside their homes,
They went out with uncovered heads when
Kulayb died, because they were sure that they
would be humiliated,
You see nubile girls, like gazelles, who left
off their jewellery when the time came for him
to be wrapped in his shrouds,
They scratched the skin of their faces after
his death, with their heads uncovered and
promised affliction.²

'Commemoration mainly concentrates on recounting the deeds of the deceased and his highly appreciated qualities.³ Again, the most prominent exponent of ta'bīn among Taghlib is al-Muhalhil, who spent the rest of his life speaking in glowing terms of his brother, Kulayb. Kulayb, who was the leader of Taghlib and who brought about the independence of Rabī^ca

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.20b.

2. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.389.

3. Shawqī Dayf, al-ʿAṣr al-Jāhili, p.207.

from Yemenite rule, had done many notable deeds which the Jāhilī people always considered as ideals for the generous and powerful man. The pursuit of these ideals was necessary in the desert because of the hardness of nature, especially during the arid winter season when only the strong survive. These ideals are often concerned with helping others by feeding them, particularly in winter, or protecting them against more powerful enemies. Thus we find that most of al-Muhalhil's elegies deal with these two major ideas. He chooses the image of the orphan with no provider and the generosity of his brother towards him:

عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلَيْبٍ إِذَا طُرِدَ الْيَتِيمَ عَنِ الْجَزُورِ

It is unjust of Kulayb, when the orphan is driven away from [eating] the slaughtered camels.¹

وَابْكِينَ لِأَيْتَامٍ لَمَّا أَقْطَبُوا وَابْكِينَ عِنْدَ تَخَاذُلِ الْجَبْرَانِ
الطامل

Weep for the orphans when they receive no food, and weep when people hesitate to give protection.²

He describes the hardships of winter in an allusive fashion by using the image of the cidāh (the thorn-bush), which moves when the west wind blows in winter, and bewails the absence of Kulayb:

1. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.133.

2. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.390.

على أن ليس عدلاً من كليب إذا رجف العِضاه من الدبور

It is unjust of Kulayb, when the thorn-bushes
are shaken by the west wind.¹

While in the following line his generosity is underlined
by describing how he would slaughter camels in winter, when
livestock was rare and precious:

أم من ليرتسار بالجزور إذا ربح يقطع معقد الأشطان
الكامل

And who will slaughter the camels for the
game of maysir, when the storm is raging and
snapping the ropes.²

He also expresses the great loss which he feels in that
Kulayb used to protect others from aggression and defend the
honour of the tribe. He shows his brother as a just man who
immediately offered his hand to those who sought protection and
had been abandoned by their protectors:

على أن ليس عدلاً من كليب إذا ما ضيم جيران المجير

It is unjust of Kulayb, when the neighbours
of a protector are wronged.³

His brother was, in his description, a man who solved
problems and faced difficulties with determination and

1. Al-Qalī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.133.

2. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.389.

3. Al-Qalī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.133.

resolution:

عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلَيْبٍ غَدَاةَ بَلْبَلِ الْأَمْرِ الْكَبِيرِ

It is not just of Kulayb, on the morning when
[we are] facing a great problem.¹

He uses metonymy to show that his brother had protected his tribe and had taken action against the enemy when they attacked, by describing how the women come out of their quarters after his death, in fear of the future that awaits them:

عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلَيْبٍ إِذَا بَرَزَتْ مَخْبِئَةَ الْخُدُورِ

It is unjust of Kulayb, if the concealed women
come out.²

We also see him showing his brother's leadership in time of war:

الْقَائِدُ الْخَيْلَ تَرْدِي فِي أَعْنَتِهَا رَهَوُوا إِذَا الْخَيْلُ لَجَتْ فِي تَعَادِيهَا
الْبَيْطِ

He who leads the horses who gallop smoothly
in their bridles when the horses contend in
running.³

The most important point which he wants to stress is his

1. Al-Qalī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.134.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.391.

brother's fearlessness in facing danger. This is clear in the following line in which he tries to show his brother embarking bravely upon danger:

عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلَيْبٍ إِذَا خِيفَ الْمَخُوفَ مِنَ الثُّغُورِ

It is unjust of Kulayb, when something is to be feared from the place of danger.¹

Or how dangerous a man he is to cross:

حَيْسَةَ فِي السُّجَارِ أُرِيدُ لَا تَنْفَعُ مِنْهُ السَّلِيمُ نَفْثَةَ الرُّوَاقِي
الْمَفِيهِ

He is [venomous as a] dust-coloured snake in a den of wild animals, and the person bitten by him cannot be cured by the spells of magicians.²

The elegist customarily exaggerates the importance of the deceased by claiming that what has been lost by way of dignity, generosity, and bravery will never be regained:

هَدَّتْ حَصُونَنَا كُنْ قَبْلَ مَالِؤْدَا لِيَذْوِيَ الْكَهُولِ مَعَا وَلِلشَّبَانِ
أَضْحَتْ وَأَضْحَى سُوْرَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مَتَّهَدَمِ الْأَرْكَانِ وَالْبَنِيَانِ
الْقَاطِلِ

[The loss] destroyed fortresses which had previously been shelters for the aged and the

1. Al-Qalī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.133.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.148.

young alike,

They and their walls became utter ruins after
his death.¹

Because of this the elegist wishes that everything had
vanished or feels that nothing good has been left, as in the
following lines of al-Muhalhil:

كَلَيْبٌ لَا خَيْرَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِذَا أَنْتَ خَلَيْتَهَا فَيَمَنْ يَخْلِيهَا
لَيْتَ السَّمَاءُ عَلَى مَنْ تَحْتَهَا وَقَعَتْ وَانْشَقَّتِ الْأَرْضُ فَانْجَابَتْ بِمَنْ فِيهَا
الْبَيْطُ

O Kulayb, there is nothing good in the world
or those in it since you left it with the
others.

I would that the sky had fallen on the people
beneath it and the earth had split apart and
disappeared with the people in it.²

The elegist customarily repeats particles like ka'anna
(like), man (and who will...?) or a complete hemistich like
that of al-Muhalhil, "It is unjust of Kulayb".³ The elegist also
recounts the ideals of society, like bravery, helping others and
generosity,⁴ which al-Muhalhil always stresses.

These examples from al-Muhalhil are perhaps enough to
illustrate the methods used in composing elegies. Al-Muhalhil
is the only Taghlibī poet who composes long elegaic poems and
whose surviving poetry is indeed mainly in elegy form. It is

1. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.390.

2. Ibid., v.1, p.391.

3. Bushrā al-Khatīb, ar-Rithā', pp.237-40.

4. Ibid.

in fact possible to claim that without al-Muhalhil's elegies Taghlib would be without an elegiac poetry, since apart from these we find only three fragments by Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl, two from an elegy on the death of ^cUbayd Allāh b. ^cUmar, who was killed at Ṣiffīn, and one on ^cAmr b. Sa^cīd b. al-^cĀs.¹ There are also very short fragments of three and four lines on ^cAmr b. Kulthūm,² and three fragments by women from Taghlib, ash-Shammā' and Ḥabība.³ The general themes of all these elegies deal with the same ideals enunciated by al-Muhalhil. Ka^cb's elegies, which could be expected to bear features of Islam or at least some aspects of Christianity, are empty of such. He only celebrates ^cAbd Allāh's bravery and his ferocious murder by his enemies on the battlefield. It is true that he mentions the concept of ṣabr in the following line:

فَمَا بَرِحُوا حَتَّى رَأَى اللَّهُ صَبْرَهُمْ وَحَتَّى أُتِيحتْ بِالْأَكْفِ الْمَصَاحِفِ
الطويل

They did not cease until God saw their patience, and until the maṣāḥif were raised by people's hands.⁴

but his idea of ṣabr does not differ from the Jāhiliyya concept which extols strength and endurance in itself rather than regarding it as a gift given by God.⁵ We do not find here the real conception of Islam which we find, for example, with the Khārijites.

1. Al-Minqarī, Waq^c at Ṣiffīn, pp.336-7; Sheikho, Shu^carā' an-Naṣrāniyya ba^cd al-Islam, pp.211-12.

2. Dīwān^c Amr, pp.603-4.

3. Al-Marzubānī, Ash^cār an-Nisā', pp.151, 160-2.

4. Al-Minqarī, Waq^c at Ṣiffīn, p.336.

5. H. Ringgren, "The concept of ṣabr in pre-Islamic poetry and in the Qur'^{ān}", Islamic Culture, pp.76-89.

The following line, in which he mentions a "reward", does not differ from the line to be quoted below¹ from a Jāhilī poet:

جَزَى اللّٰه قَتْلَانَا بِصِفِّينَ خَيْرَمَا جَزَاهُ عِبَادَا غَادِرَتَهَا الْمَوَاقِفَ
الطَّوِيلَ

May God reward our people killed at Siffīn with a better reward than He bestows on the Faithful who suffered the same fate elsewhere.²

Apart from these poets there is no elegiac poetry in Taghlib, even from their prominent poets like al-Akhtal,³ al-Qutāmī or al-A^cshā.

Love-Poetry (Ghazal)

We shall deal with love-poetry* separately from the themes of the deserted camp-site and of travel because of its popularity among Jāhiliyya poets and to a great extent among the Mukhadramūn and Umayyad poets. We shall here study some features of individual poets, in order to discover if it is possible to establish any general features of Taghlibī love-poetry.

Individuality is normal in this kind of poetry if it reflects a real incident or an experience which the poet

1. See below, p.232.

2. Al-Minqarī, Waq^cat Siffīn, p.336.

3. Qabāwa, al-Akhtal, p.74.

4. We here use the word ghazal as a generic term to cover all love-poetry. The terms nasīb and tashbīb also occur frequently, but we do not intend in this thesis to attempt to define the meanings of these terms.

actually had, or even imagined as an expression of agony or distress.

Ghazal poetry can be divided into two parts:-

- a) A description of the emotional relationship which reflects the passions of the two lovers and how they express their feelings.
- b) A description of the woman.

Part a:

It seems that Taghlib, who indulged in constant attacks on others, did not have time to express their passions freely to their lovers. Their love-poetry is vague and unclear, particularly in the pre-Islamic period. We can also say this about the encampment and travelling themes, since they generally tend to be mixed together. If we look at the pre-Islamic poetry we will very rarely find poetry which tries to show the passions and feelings of the poet towards his beloved or vice versa. Most of their poetry deals with the description of the beloved rather than revealing the inner feelings of the poet towards his beloved. Al-Muhalhil who was busy with the internecine war with Bakr, comes as close as any of the pre-Islamic Taghlibī poets to paying any attention to feelings when he speaks of a woman who tried to seduce him while he was in captivity as 'raising her head' as an allusion to her feeling desire:

رَفَعَتْ رَأْسَهَا إِلَيَّ وَقَالَتْ يَا عَدِي لَقَدْ وَقَّتَكَ الْأَوَاقِي
الْحَفْنَى

She raised her head to me and said, O ^cAdī,
the preservations have safeguarded you.¹

1. Al-Bakrī, Siḥḥ al-La'ālī, v.1, p.111.

^cAmr b. Kulthūm, who in his mu^callaqa asks his beloved to wait in order to tell her of fighting and killing, expresses the same feelings in all his poetry, as is clear from the two lines below. In the first he directs his speech to a woman, boasting of his deeds against Kalb:

تَاللَّهِ إِمَّا كُنْتُ جَاهِلًا مِّنْ سَعِينَا فَسَلِّ بِنَا كَلْبًا

مجزوء الطامل

By God, if you are ignorant of what we are doing ask Kalb about us.¹

In the second he expresses his desire never to sleep with another woman or win another game of maysir:

فَلَا وَضَعْتُ أَنفُسِي إِلَى قِنَاعِهَا وَلَا فَازَ سَهْمِي حِينَ تَجْتَمِعُ السُّهُمُ

الطويل

May no woman ever remove her veil for me, and may my arrow never win when the arrows are gathered together.²

The theme of abruptly breaking off a relationship is expressed by Ḥassān, who seems to be an Islamic poet, and an-Nābigha. The first expresses his willingness to forget his beloved by using the severe word amit (make to die):

أَمِيتْ ذِكْرَهَا وَأَجْعَلْ قَدِيمَ وِصَالِهَا وَعِشْرَتَهَا كِبَعْفٍ مِّنْ لَا تَعَاشِرُ

الطويل

Make her memory die, and make this long relationship and the bonds which tie us seem

1. Dīwān^c Amr, p.599.

2. Ibid., p.601.

like people with whom you have no contact.¹

An-Nābigha justifies his breaking off his relationship with his beloved as being in response to her wish which he describes as bukhl (miserliness).

بَخَلْنَا لِبَخْلِكَ قَدْ تَعَلَّمِينَ كَيْفَ يَلُومُ الْبَخِيلُ الْبَخِيلًا

We became miserly of your miserliness, as you may know, so how can one miser blame another?²

This unfriendly attitude towards love affairs appears clearly in the following line of al-Akḥṭal who accused women of infidelity and of giving free rein to their passions:

مَا إِنْ رَأَيْتَ كَمَكْرِهِنَّ إِذَا جَرَى فِينَا وَلَا كَحِبَالِهِنَّ حَبَالًا
وَإِذَا وَزَنَّتْ حُلُومَهُنَّ إِلَى الصَّبَا رَجَحَ الصَّبَا بِحُلُومِهِنَّ فَمَالًا

الطامل

I have not seen the like of their cunning when it happens among us, and I have never seen the like of their relationships.

If you consider how their minds are disposed to making love, [you find that] love rules their minds and inclines [them].³

It is also true that they respect the woman, but as a

1. Al-Marzubānī, al-Muwashshah, p.245.

2. Ibid., pp.352-3.

3. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, pp.106-7. Hāwī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.450-2.

wife and not as a beloved outside marital life. This is expressed in the following line of al-Muhalhil who shows their respect for women by expressing their jealous prohibition of women being seen outside their encampments:

كُنَّا نَخَارُ عَلَى الْعَوَاتِقِ أَنْ تَرَى بِالْأُمِّ سِرَّ حَارِجَةً عَنِ الْأَوْطَانِ
الطامل

Yesterday we were jealous of our noble women
being seen outside their homes.¹

It is also fully expressed in the mu^callaqa of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, who shows women as wives who are completely protected, as in the following line:

وَمَا مَنَعَ الظَّعَّانِ مِثْلَ ضَرْبٍ تَرَى مِنْهُ السَّوَادَ كَالْقَلِينِ

Nothing protects the women like a blow, such
that you will see by reason of it the arms of
our foes flying off like the qulats.²

They also respected them as daughters as in the following
line:

وَالْمَانِعِينَ بَنَاتِهِمْ عِنْدَ الْوَعَا حَدَّيَا وَيَسْرًا
جزء القامل

And who will protect their daughters on the
day of fighting for they love and respect
them!³

1. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.389.

2. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.677.

3. Dīwān^c Amr, p.607.

When Islam came there was a slight change in the expression of their affections. Most of them, such as Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl, al-A^cshā and an-Nābigha, seem to have been adhering to the pattern of their ancestors or the notions of the Jāhiliyya which in general were concerned with the external appearance of the woman.¹ This is clear in the poetry of al-Akhtal whose approach is pallid and traditional, without the clarity of serious tension, and even whose descriptions are superficial.²

Al-Qutāmī is not very different from al-Akhtal and his concern is with the she-camel rather than the woman. He has two lines which reveal his attitude to women:

يَقْتُلُنَا بِحَدِيثٍ لَيْسَ يَعْلَمُهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِيْنَ وَلَا مَكْنُونُهُ بِأَدَا
فَهْنِ يَنْبُذْنَ مَنْ قَوْلٍ يَصِيبُنْ بِهِ مَوَاتِحَ الْمَاءِ مِنْ ذِي الْغَلَّةِ الصَّادِي

They kill us with words which their guardians do not understand and whose hidden meaning is not clear.

They utter sounds which hit the place as water meets the need of the thirsty.³

Abū az-Zubayr who seems to belong to the Islamic period expresses his emotions in very delicate words, in which he shows his true love by saying that he adores the ground she camps on:

1. Shukrī Faysal, Ṭaṭawwur al-Ghazal, p.187.

2. Ḥawī, al-Akhtal, pp.408, 412.

3. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.81.

أَحِبُّ تَرَابَ الْأَرْضِ أَنْ تَنْزِلِي بِهِ وَذَا عَوْسَجٍ وَالْجِزْعَ جِزْعِ الْحَلَايِقِ
الطويل

I love the soil of the ground you camp on,
and Dhū^c Awsaj and Jiz^c al-Halā'iq.¹

^cUtba b. al-Waghl is the only one who shows his desire to keep up his relationship with his beloved after her departure, in the following line:

عَسَى أَنْ تَرِيحَ بِسَلْمَى النَّوَى وَيَجْمَعُ رَيْسِي شَيْتِ الْأَمَلِ
المتقارب

I wish that absence would bring Salmā back,
and God piece together broken hope.²

Part b:

Most Taghlibī love poetry deals with the external appearance of the woman, describing her limbs and other parts. It seems that this is the easiest way for them to express their desires and lusts. This also reflects the taste of the Jāhiliyya people who tend to express their immediate sensations rather than their deeper feelings. The tendency towards conciseness³ is another reason for their being satisfied with the superficial appearance, and they are more concerned with expressing themselves than with paying attention to the woman's psyche.⁴ Also it may be that their imitation⁵ of each

1. Al-Lisān (Ḥalaqa).

2. Al-Ghundi jānī, Furḥat al-Adīb, p.89.

3. Al-Hūfī, al-Ghazal fī al-^cAṣr al-Jāhilī, p.366.

4. Ibid., p.62.

5. Ibid., pp.41-2, 366-83.

other and the lack of real love were responsible for these images of their beloved.

At any rate the Taghlibī poets look at the woman from the outside and give different portraits of her from her head down to her feet. Their main means for descriptions as with all Jāhiliyya poets was the simile.¹ The Taghlibī poets relied on what Shukrī Fayṣal calls "the brief quick simile" which attempts to catch a precise but superficial similarity without going into details.²

The most famous description of the woman in the poetry of Taghlib is in the lines of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm quoted below. We can find similar details of a beloved in Abū al-Lahḥām,³ Jundub b. ^cAmr and Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl,⁴ but we must bear in mind the fact that the description of ^cAmr is symbolic⁵ and that of the others merely external and superficial.

Thus they describe the woman's eyes as similar to the eyes of the deer:

ترنو بعقلة جـوذ ربحميلة
ويعشـرق بهـج وجـيد غـزال
القامل

She looks with the eye of a wild calf in a bush, and with a shining joyful [face] and with the neck of a gazelle.⁷

1. Shukrī Fayṣal, Ṭaṭawwur al-Ghazal, pp.181-2.
2. Ibid.
3. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.608.
4. Al-Mufaddal b. Salama, al-Fākhīr, p.291.
5. Al-Amīdī, al-Mu^ctalaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.115.
6. See below, pp.365-74.
7. Dīwān al-Akhṭal, v.2, p.690.

They describe her hair as asīb (a palm branch stripped of its leaves) to show its length:

إذا تشطت عالوا لها بوسادة
ومدت عسيب العمن أن يتعفرا
الطويل

If she starts to wake they bring her a pillow, and she stretches out a palm branch stripped of its leaves so that it should not become dirty with dust.¹

They also describe her saliva as strong wine or ginger:

وكان طعم مدامة جبليّة
والزنجبيل وطعم عذب ببارد
قد عتقت سنتين لما تنكس
يعلوشناياها من المتفيس

Like the taste of a wine kept in mountains and stored for two years without being disturbed.

And ginger and cold sweet water which issues from her mouth and wafts past her nostrils.²

Taghlibī poets like most Jāhilī and Islamic poets were fond of describing the middle part of the woman - her back, waist, buttocks and legs.³ Al-Akhtal describes the movements of his beloved's buttocks as being like sand-dunes:

1. Al-Aghānī, v.3, pp.85-6.

2. Dīwān 'Amr, p.608.

3. Al-Hūfī, al-Ghazal fī al-'Aṣr al-Jāhilī, pp.55-7.

اِذَا قَامَتْ تَنْوُؤُ بِمَرْجِحِينَ كِدَعِصِ الرَّمْلِ يَنْهَالُ اِنْهِيَالًا
الواقر

If she stands she is weighed down by swaying
[buttocks] like a sand-dune which flows
down.¹

Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl gives the same description as ^cAmr in
his mu^callaqa when he describes his beloved's back as a
spear:

صَعْدَةٌ قَدْ سَمَقَتْ فِي حَائِرٍ أَيْنَمَا الرِّيحُ تَعِيلُهَا تَمِيلُ
الرملة

A spear which projects from a depression in
the ground and which inclines whenever the
wind inclines it.²

They frequently describe the woman's limbs as being
adorned with jewellery such as the dumluj (bracelet) and
khalkhāl (anklet), and prefer them to be full, as in the
following lines of Jundub b. ^cAmr and Ka^cb:

غَرَشَى الوشاحِ كَزَةَ الدَّمَالِجِ
الرهز

Slender of waist and with tight bracelets.³

فَإِذَا قَامَتْ إِلَى جَارَاتِهَا لَاحَتِ السَّاقُ بِخُلْخَالٍ زَجِيلٍ
الرملة

1. Hāwī, al-Akḥṭal, p.415.

2. Al-Amīdī, al-Mu^cṭalaf wa al-Mukḥṭalaf, p.115.

3. Al-Mufaddal b. Salama, al-Fākhir, p.291.

If she rises to go to her neighbours, the leg is seen with sounding anklet.¹

Some of them describe the beloved as very fat as in the line of Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl quoted earlier which alludes to her fatness by saying that they put a pillow under her for her to rest on.

However, the main method of describing the beloved is to compare her to the deer or the calf of the wild cow as in the line of al-Akhtal who describes her eyes as like those of the calf, and her neck as like that of the gazelle.

Al-Muhalhil also uses the image of the gazelle to describe his beloved. In the following line he describes the longness of her neck by comparing it with a gazelle stretching up to reach green leaves:

ظبيكة من ظبياء وبيرة تعطى ويديها في ناض الأوراق
المفتحة

One of the gazelles of Wajra reaches up with its forefeet to the green leaves.²

They commonly describe her as a ri'm (white antelope), as in the following line:

لا تحزننك فإنها كلبية كالرثم يهرق وجهها في الكنيس
الامل

Do not be sad for her, she is a Kalbite, who is like a white antelope whose face shines in

1. Al-Amīdī, al-Mu^ctalaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.115.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.56a.

its covert.¹

Sometimes, although very rarely, they dispense with concrete description and use more imaginative imagery, such as describing her beauty as the shining of the moon:

وَلَمْ أَرِ مِثْلَ هَالَةَ فِي مَعْدٍ شَبِيهَ حَسْنِهَا إِلَّا الْهَيْلَالَ

I have not seen the like of Hāla in Ma^cadd except for the crescent moon to resemble her beauty.²

We find a detailed simile in al-Akhtal who prefers his beloved to a green garden, and then gives details of the beauty of the garden:

مَا رَوْضَةٌ خَضْرَاءُ أَزْهَرَ نَوْرَهَا
بِهَيْجِ الرِّيحِ لَهَا فَجَادَ نَبَاتُهَا
حَتَّى إِذَا التَّتِ النَّبَاتُ كَأَنَّهُ
نَفَتِ الْمِبَاعَ عَنْهَا الْجَهَامُ وَأَشْرَقَتْ
يَوْمًا بِأَمَلٍ مِنْكَ بِهَيْجَةِ مَنْظَرِ
بِالْقَهْرِ بَيْنَ شِقَائِقٍ وَرِمَالٍ
وَنَمَتِ بِأَسْحَمٍ وَأَبِلٍ هَيْطَالٍ
لَوْنِ الزُّخَارِفِ زَيْنَتْ بِصِقَالٍ
لِلشَّمْسِ غِبْدَ جَنَّةٍ وَطِلَالٍ
بَيْنَ الْعَشِيِّ وَسَاعَةِ الْإِيصَالِ

الامل

A green garden with brilliant flowers at al-Qahr between strips of rocky ground and stretches of sand

In which springtime rejoices and whose vegetation is abundant, and grows under a

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.593.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, pp.691-2.

dark, torrential downpour
Until when the vegetation grows thickly it is
like the colour of ornaments, made beautiful
by polishing.

The gentle breeze drives the clouds away from
it, and it is exposed to the sun after the
dark clouds and dew [have gone].

Is not ever more beautiful than you, a beauty
to behold, between dusk and night-time.¹

There is a strong development of the ghazal in Taghlib during the Umayyad period towards a sexuality which none of the Jāhilī Taghlibī poets touch upon, although we find a tendency toward sensuality among other poets of the Jāhiliyya.² This tendency towards sexuality is evident in the earliest poet of this period, Ka^c b b. Ju^c ayl, who describes being in bed with a woman in the following lines:

وضجيج قد تعللت به
فإن مكان ليس فيه بكرم
طيب أردانه غير تفيل
وفراش متحال متمم ل

الرص

Many a bedmate have I enjoyed myself with
whose clothes are perfumed and not ill-
smelling.

In a place where there is no disturbance, and
a bed which is high and comfortable.²

Al-Akhtal is similarly explicit in the following line:

1. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, p.429; Sayyid Hanafī, ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī, pp.64-7.

2. Al-Amīdī, al-Mu^ctalaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.115.

وليل كساج الفارسي لهوته
بمرتجة الأرداف خماس بطونها
الأطول

On many a night which was [as dark] as a Persian cloak have I found pleasure with a woman of big buttocks, slender waist and slim stomach.¹

In fact this sexual language is not common in male poetry, and it is remarkable that female poets have played a big role in this regard. Society was not as open at that period as later during the ^cAbbāsid time, and if the lines attributed to a number of Taghlibī women, collectively referred to as the "daughter of al-Humāris", are authentic, this indicates a significant lessening of their restrictions on sex and of the hard, war-like attitudes which they had tried to show during the pre-Islamic era and which is described in the martial poetry of Taghlib as a whole.

"Ibnat al-Humāris" goes further than describing sharing her bed with another, or using explicit words to describe the vagina and the penis, in that she describes actual intercourse.² This seems excessive for a woman of that time who was probably also a Muslim.³

There is another development in Taghlibī poetry but a very limited one, i.e. narrative poetry. Al-Akhtal is the only poet who tackles the progress of a relationship between a man and a woman in his poem which starts with the following line:

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.541.

2. See al-Marzubānī, Ash^cār an-Nisā', pp.152-60.

3. Ibid., p.160.

لَأَسْمَاءٍ مَحْتَلٍ بِنَاظِرَةِ الْبِشْرِ قَدِيمٍ وَلَمَّا يَعْفَهُ سَالِفِ الدَّهْرِ
الطويل

Asmā' has a place of encampment in the high ground of al-Bishr which is old, and long past ages have not yet effaced it.¹

The poem develops through three stages:- The first is his enticement by the friendship and the beauty of the woman. In the second he describes her body and its parts. The third is his staying as a guest with her tribe and receiving a kiss from her, through her family later married her to an old man.²

Encampment and Travelling Themes

Encampment and travelling are major elements in pre-Islamic poetry. Nearly all of the poetry begins like this. There are different sub-themes of the encampment theme of which every poem should include at least some. These sub-themes are in general:-

1. Addressing the places.
2. Reminiscences of the poet about his beloved.
3. Describing the places and the wild animals which live there.

The travelling theme which comes as a result of the encampment theme should include at least one of the following elements:-

1. The howdahs of the women.
2. The she-camel.

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, pp.715-20.

2. Hawī, al-Akhtal, pp.443-6.

3. The wild animals, such as the oryx, wild ass and ostrich.¹

It is difficult to pinpoint the beginnings of the encampment theme, or who was the first poet to create this form of prelude. Furthermore, the scholars do not agree on the motive for this conception. It has been suggested that it is a defiant cry of anguish against the fact of death and disappearance.² Others believe that it is a cyclical aspect of life which represents spring-time.³ Walther Braune thinks of it as representing the problem of existence.⁴

Yūsuf Khulayf suggests that the encampment theme began in a rudimentary way with the earliest poet of the al-Basūs war. This explanation draws attention to the most famous poet of that period, al-Muhalhil, who is also a prominent poet of Taghlib. Within al-Muhalhil's poetry we find some poems which begin with the encampment theme, such as the following:

هل عرفت الغداة من أطلال رهـن ربحٍ وديمةٍ مهبطـال
الصفحة

Have you encountered ruined camps at early
morning when there was wind and heavy

1. ^c Izzat Hasan, Shi^cr al-Wuqūf^c alā al-Atlāl, pp.20-5.

2. Al-Qaysī, at-Tabī^ca, p.251.

3. Yūsuf Khulayf, "Muqaddimat al-Atlāl fī al-Qasīda al-Jāhiliyya", al-Majalla al-Miṣriyya, no.98, 100, 1965.

4. "Al-Wujūdiyya fī ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī", Majallat al-Ma^crifa as-Sūriyya, second year no.4, 1963.

rain?¹

لَمَنْ الدِّيارُ أَقْفَرَتْ بِالسَّخالِ دَارِساتِ عَفونِ مَذْ أحوالِ
الْخُفِيفِ

To whom belong the encampments in as-Sikhāl
which are ruined and erased a long time ago?²

It seems that the encampment theme goes back long before the al-Basūs war.³ As Ibn Sallām states, the poetry which is recorded does not pre-date that period,⁴ but this does not mean that al-Muhalhil had no predecessors,⁵ and indeed is unreasonable to suppose that poems as long as al-Muhalhil's and al-Muraqqish's had no poetic antecedents.

If the encampment theme seems to be preceded by various attempts until it finally becomes an established feature in the composition of love poetry, then the poetry composed during the al-Basūs war was not the starting point of the encampment theme and the latter must have been started and become a kind of traditional opening before that time.

Al-Muhalhil reveals the fact that the encampment theme was traditional in the following two lines which we will quote from the narrative of al-Aghānī as a reliable source:

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa Taghlib, f.31b. Ibn Dirhim, Nuzhat al-Abṣār, p.648.
2. Al-Bakrī, al-Mu^cjam, v.3, p.727.
3. Nabawī, ash-Shi^cr fī Ḥarb al-Basūs, pp.89-90; ^cAfīf, ash-Shi^cr wa-Ayyām al-Arab, pp.445-6.
4. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā', pp.23-4.
5. Ibid., footnote by Hārūn and Shākīr, Bidāyat ash-Shi^cr al-Arabī, pp.162-5.

أزجر العين أن تبكي الظلولا إن في الصدر من كليب غليلا
كيف يبكي الظلول من هورهن بطعان الأنام جيلا فجیلا

الضمير

I restrain my eye from crying for the encampments.

There is a thirst for revenge in my chest because of Kulayb.

How can one who is busy with killing people generation after generation weep for encampments?¹

These lines imply quite clearly that the encampment theme was an element in the composition of poetry which the poet was expected to start with. He also states that he cannot lament the erasing of the encampments, because he is engaged in a terrible war. Thus it is doubly unlikely that al-Muhalhil could have created the encampment theme himself as it already seems to have been traditional and he himself abstains from it. It may be that the poet had made previous attempts at using the encampment theme, or that he was asked by his audience to do so in the traditional manner, but there are no adequate grounds for crediting him with the introduction of the encampment theme. However, there is no doubt that every poet has his own personality, which may or may not add something to the encampment theme.²

The above two lines give an immediate indication that the mood of the poem will be restrained because the poet is depressed, since otherwise we would not expect him to reinforce the expression of grief in the second hemistich of the first

1. Aghānī, v.4, p.149.

2. Husayn ^cAtwān, Muqaddimat al-Qaṣīda al-^cArabiyya, pp.176-202.

line. This implies that the happiness of the love affair which is recalled by the encampment theme is inappropriate here. The question of whether this theme is really concerned with death and existence, or with the return of life in the spring, is one that we can leave open here. However, it is clearly associated with happiness and sexuality, and all the evidence is that it was already established as a traditional prelude at the time of the al-Basūs war.

That lamentation for the campsite and for past love is a sort of sadness, but is quite different from the real feeling of sorrow which we find in al-Muhalhil's elegies. By contrast al-Muhalhil's encampment lines leave a very different impression. They show him as looking at his beloved's encampments and remembering her, but the lines seem purely conventional in tone. Indeed at-Tulūl retains its traditional features throughout the history of Arabic poetry and the poets fill it with the elements indicated above and introduce it in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods alike.

However, the encampment theme and the travelling theme which always accompanied it did not attract the earlier Taghlibī poets. It seems that the fact that Taghlib was a warlike tribe deterred them from describing encampments. This observation might be applied to al-Muhalhil's second line above: "How can one who is busy with killing people generation after generation weep for encampments?"

There is strong evidence for this in the mu^callaqa of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, which lacks the beginning and which might have been expected to include more details of the encampment and the travelling, instead of the statuesque picture which he offers. Moreover, he does not describe a real beloved but a symbolic one, and one feels that if she had not been a symbol he might have left off mentioning her entirely.

One may see in this a kind of revolt against this kind of beginning while the tribe were busy fighting. ^cAmr may have followed his ancestor, al-Muhalhil, in refusing to do this in time of war. ^cAmr b. Kulthūm goes so far as to compress the campsite theme into a single line:

قفى قبل التفريق يا ظعينا نخبرك اليقين وتخبرينا

Stop a little longer before going, O you, who are travelling in the howdah, that we may inform you of the truth, and you may inform us.¹

The travel theme is likewise shortened into one line:

فأعرضت اليمامة واشمخرت كأسياف بأيدي صلتينا

Then Yamāma came in sight, and appeared high above us like swords in the hands of their drawers.²

This rejection of the encampment or the travelling themes by ^cAmr can clearly be seen in his other poem which starts with a nasīb³ and, in fact, in most of his poetry.

The striking fact in Taghlibī poetry which deals with these two subjects is that some of it is correlated with complaints against the tribe themselves. Al-Akhnas starts his

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.618.

2. Ibid., p.625.

3. Dīwān^c Amr, p.593.

poem in which he complains about his tribe's acceptance of oppression with five lines describing the encampments and a mention of his she-camel.¹ Jābir who complains about the injustice done to his tribe starts his poem with ten lines describing the encampments and his beloved she-camel.² ^CUmayr also describes an encampment of his tribe in al-Baradān with more details of the wild animals which live there.³

Abū al-Lahhām is the only poet in the Jāhiliyya who begins his poem with a description of his beloved and then a travelling theme whereas his real subject is a eulogy.⁴ We have also two lines by Mirdās b. Hushaysh and al-Julayh b. Shadīd which seem to be fragments of a longer poem.⁵

However, in Islam we find the popular poet al-Akhtal using the encampment and travelling themes with all their elements as a "traditional one which covers most of his poems".⁶ Besides al-Akhtal there are other famous poets like al-A^Cshā who has a few lines which look like beginnings of longer poems which start with the travelling theme,⁷ but with more freedom than al-Akhtal, and al-Qutāmī who sticks more than al-Akhtal to the tradition as in his poems nos. 1, 2 and 10 in his Dīwān.⁸

There is another important observation which is relevant to the she-camel. The pre-Islamic Taghlibī poets did not compare it in great detail with any of the wild animals like

1. Al-Mufaddaliyyāt (Lyll), v.1, pp.510-1; v.2, p.149.

2. Ibid., v.1, pp.421-4; v.2, pp.154-5.

3. Ibid., v.1, pp.520-1; v.2, pp.200-1.

4. Dīwān ^CAmr, pp.608-9.

5. Al-Bakrī, al-Mu^Cjam, v.1, p.337; Yāqūt, al-Mu^Cjam, v.3, p.84.

6. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.385-407.

7. Dīwān al-A^Cshā, pp.270-1, 344.

8. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.23-8, 31, 38-42, 78-82.

the ox or wild ass or even the ostrich, as we normally find in pre-Islamic poetry,¹ or as al-Quṭāmī does in the lines analysed below,² comparing it to an oryx. The only indication of these wild animals will occur in a very concise simile like the three lines of Abū al-Lahhām. The fullest description of the she-camel in pre-Islamic Taghlibī poetry is the five lines of Jābir b. Hunayy.³

It is said that ^CAmr b. Kulthūm does not mention the she-camel because he lived in al-Jazīra which is unlike the desert.⁴ However, if this is true, then al-Akḥṭal and al-Quṭāmī or al-A^Cshā should not have followed the general tradition of beginning with the encampment and travelling themes and composed most of their poetry with that beginning. On the other hand, if it is a matter of tradition only ^CAmr b. Kulthūm would have begun his mu^Callaqa with it. It is obvious that ^CAmr did not make his mu^Callaqa similar to the beginnings of the other mu^Callaqāt because as a warlike tribe they relied for their movements on horses and not because they only lived in al-Jazīra; indeed ^CAmr supposedly lived most of his life in the desert.

Al-Akḥṭal and his comrades followed the tradition even though they lived in al-Jazīra. We might also speculate that the she-camel was now used as a means of transport because there was political stability which allowed them to move peacefully - which had not been true for their ancestors who were always engaged in attacks - and that this encouraged them to describe the camel.

However, while Taghlib were fighting Qays they used

1. Rūmiyya, Ar-Rihla, pp.95-263.

2. See above, pp.173-5.

3. Al-Mufaddaliyyāt (Lyall), v.1, pp.421-4; v.2, pp.154-5.

4. Fariq, History of Arabic Literature, p.67.

their horses for the same purpose as in the Jāhiliyya and because of this "we find al-Akḥṭal always describing his tribal horses when they are rushing into the battle".¹

In fact it is not true that ^CAmr b. Kulthūm does not mention the she-camel. It appears that ^CAmr was following his tribal usage by mentioning it as is shown above. He, for example, uses za^C īna/za^C ā'in (howdah/howdahs, figuratively meaning women) in the following lines:

قَفَى قَبْلَ التَّفْرِقِ يَا ظَعِينَا نَخْبِرُكَ الْيَقِينِ وَتَحْبِرُنَا
وَمَا مَنَعَ الظَّعَائِنَ مِثْلَ ضَرْبِ تَرَى مِنْهُ السَّوَادَ كَالْقَلِينَا

Stop a little longer before going, O you, who are travelling in the howdah, that we may inform you of the truth, and you may inform us.

Nothing protects the women like a blow, such that you will see by reason of it the arms of our foes flying off like the qulats.²

Moreover, he indicates that they were looking after camels, which means they possessed them, in the following line:

وَنَحْنُ الْحَابِسُونَ بِذِي أَرَاطِي تَسِفُ الْجِلَّةَ الْخَوْرَ الدَّرِينَا

1. Hāwī, al-Akḥṭal, p.328.

2. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, pp.618, 677.

And we are they who kept their camels at Dhū-Urāt, while the old large camels, and the she-camels abounding in milk, were eating withered grass.¹

It seems that Taghlib as a warlike tribe used the camel for moving peacefully even in the Jāhiliyya before they started to attack and they used their horses later. These seem to have been the tactics which all pre-Islamic Arabs used during an attack.² Al-Akhtal shows these tactics in the following line:

مِنْ كُلِّ مَجْتَنِبٍ شَدِيدٍ أَسْرَهُ سَلْسَ الْقِيَادِ تَخَالَهُ مَخْتَالًا

From every strong and obedient led horse
which you think is proud.³

This love of horses and the dire need for them had been at the expense of the camels which are only mentioned incidentally before the Umayyad dynasty.

Martial Poetry

In his commentary on the Mu^c allaqāt, at-Tabrīzī quotes the saying, "If Islam had not come, Taghlib would have eaten the people",⁴ suggesting that they were likely to have conquered the other Arab tribes. While this is a gross overstatement, it is some indication of the warlike reputation of Taghlib. The history of Taghlib is full of wars and fights with other tribes in every place they went to.⁵ The bedouin life

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.660.

2. Nuwayhī, Ash-Shi'r al-Jāhili, v.2, p.592.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.109.

4. At-Tabrīzī, al-Mu^c allaqāt, p.108.

5. See above, p. 12 — 38

which they lived during their early history and which they maintained even during the Umayyad period may have had a strong bearing on their constant conflicts with others.

The martial poetry of Taghlib clearly reflects their attitude towards others and their clashes with them, and also devotes much attention to the weapons which they used. Shawqī Dayf's remarks on martial poetry in general apply with great force to the poetry of Taghlib: "It is the most valuable subject which absorbs their poems. They were affected by war and their poets provided them with exciting poetry which sang of their bravery and courage. This singing and shouting rose up everywhere until one seems to feel there is nothing except it ... It is also natural that they described their weapons, and there are many of them who gave that description ... We feel in this martial poetry the effect of hatred and rancour against their enemies".¹

The also describe their horses² and boast of their own prowess,³ but we will deal with these two subjects separately as they are important elements in Taghlibi poetry.

Martial poetry deals with war, weapons, warriors and killing. War includes forcing others to retreat, attacking them, lying in wait for them, fighting and victory. The weapons consist of swords, spears, lances, bows, helmets and coats of mail.⁴

1. Dayf, al-^CAsr al-Jāhili, pp.202-5.

2. Ibid., p.205.

3. Ibid., p.202.

4. For a more detailed description of weapons, see al-Jundī, Shi^Cr al-Ḥarb fī al-^CAsr al-Jāhili, pp.133-85, and A.S. al-Jarbū's thesis, Martial Poetry in Mecca and Medina in the late Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Periods, pp.217-273, for their weapons are similar to those of all other Jāhili poets.

(a) Retreat by the enemy

Some Taghlibī poets describe the defeat of others and how they fled from the battlefield. This throws light on how Taghlib behaved in battle and on their ability to endure it. Thus, for example, in the battle of al-Kulāb where various tribes, including ar-Ribāb and Banū al-Ḥiṣn, were fighting together with Bakr under the leadership of Shurahbīl against Taghlib, who were supporting Salama,¹ we find that the poets have their own way of expressing themselves. As-Saffāh, who was the leader of Taghlib, describes how Banū al-Ḥiṣn and ar-Ribāb left the battlefield and how they were afraid of being killed. He says that Banū al-Ḥiṣn disgraced themselves by their flight, expressing this metaphorically by saying that it made them naked, and likening it to the flight of an ostrich:

أما بنو الحصن إذ شالت نعامتهم فيخزن المرء من ثوبيه عريانا

As for Banū al-Ḥiṣn, when their ostrich fled,
and the man comes out of his garments naked
[i.e. feels shame].²

He also describes how ar-Ribāb ran away in disorder, leaving Abū Salmā and Sufyān to be slaughtered:

أما الرباب فولونا ظهورهم وأجزرونا أبا سلمى وسفيانا
البيد

Ar-Ribāb gave us their backs and left Abū
Salmā and Sufyān for us to slaughter them.³

1. See above, pp.26-7.

2. Abū^c Ubayda, an-Naqā'id, v.1, p.457.

3. Ibid.

In the same way, and speaking of the same battle, Abū Ḥanash describes how various tribes left Shurahbīl on the battlefield and escaped:

فَانْتَنَتْ عَنْهُ دَارِمٌ وَبَنُو الْفِزْرِ وَيَرْبُوعٌ وَحَيِّي الرَّيْبَابِ
الضَّفِيفِ

Dārim, Banū al-Fizr, Yarbū^c and ar-Ribāb tribes turned away from him.¹

^cAmr b. Kulthūm also describes how ^cĀmir b. Abī Ḥijr was abandoned to be pierced by spears on the battlefield while his brother ^cAmr fled on his horse:

غَادَرْتَهُ مِزْعَ الرَّمَايحِ وَأَسْهَلْتَ لَكَ وَرْدَةَ كَالسَّيْدِ طَائِمَةَ الْحَضِرِ

You left him being pierced by spears, and your [horse] Warda took the easiest way in full gallop like a wolf.²

الطَّامِلِ

We meet the same thing when we come to Islam. Some Taghlibī poets give nearly the same description of the enemy's retreat before them. Ka^c b b. Ju^c ayl describes how some branches of Tamīm and also the tribe Banū al-^cAnbar, whom he calls "al-Ja^c rā'", left the field during their battle against Mu^cāwiya:

وَفَرَّتْ تَمِيمٌ سَعْدَهَا وَرِيَابَهَا وَحَالَفَتِ الْجَعْرَاءُ فِيمَنْ تَخَالِيفِ

الطَّوِيلِ

Tamīm, both Sa^cd and Ribāb, fled and al-

1. Abū ^cUbayda, al-Ayyām, p.413.

2. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.602.

Ja^crā' had turned away with those who turned away.¹

Al-A^cshā, speaking of the war between Qays and Taghlib, also gives a description of the flight of Qays when the fighting was very hard:

تَرَكَوْا الْقَاعَ لَنَا إِذْ كَرِهُوا غَمْرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَاخْتَارُوا الْهَرَبَ
الرَّمْلَ

They left the battlefield to us when they did not like the depths of war and chose flight.²

The best of all is al-Akhtal's description of Ibn Badr.³ All these descriptions depict the fortitude of Taghlib in battle and emphasise their ability to endure the fight when other tribes as strong as Bakr, Tamim and Qays could not withstand it.

(b) Defeat

Just as some Taghlibī poets describe how their enemies escaped from the battlefield, some of them also describe how the enemy attacked them. It is important to remark here that this poetry is very small in quantity and also that these attacks were made on individuals and not on the whole tribe. Taghlib remained a strong and robust tribe throughout their history, so that it was difficult for others to attack them. On the other hand, it seems that it is not easy for any Taghlibī poet to confess to having been attacked by others, as this was

1. Al-Minqarī, Waq'at Siffīn, p.411.

2. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.289.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, pp.184-6.

not in accordance with the tribe's perception of itself.

The only line which depicts their enemies killing them is the following line by as-Saffāh, where he confesses that their enemies killed some of them and returned in safety:

مَلَأُوا مِنَ الْأَقْطَانَتَيْنِ رَكِيَّةً مِنْ أَبْوَا سَالِمِينَ وَغَنَمُوا
الطامل

They filled a well with us at al-Aqtānatayn,
and returned with booty in safety.¹

Apart from this line, the nearest any Taghlibī poet comes to describing an attack on Taghlib is al-Akhtal's poem on al-Jahhāf's raid at al-Bishr,² and, to some extent, al-Qutāmī's poem praising Zufar b. al-Hārith.³ Also, a Taghlibī poet from Taym describes how he was attacked by Banū Khashbān and had Shurahbīl's coat of mail taken from him:

وَطَارَ بِهَا بَنُو خَشْبَانَ عَنِّي بِأَفْرَاسٍ لَهُمْ حَوَّ وَشَقِيرٍ
الوافر

Banū Khashbān ran away from me with it on
dark and roan horses.⁴

Shayṭān b. Mudlij says that his mare brought two thousand warriors to him when their horses scented her and followed her to his camp:

1. Abū Tamām, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akhtal, p.43.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, pp.32-4.

3. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.37, 85-6.

4. Abū Ubayda, an-Naqā'id, v.1, p.456.

وَبَيْنَا أَرْجَى أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا بِمَغْنَمٍ أَتَتْنِي بِأَلْفِي فَارِسٍ مَتْلَمٍ
الطويل

While I was expecting her to bring booty, she brought two thousand armed warriors.¹

In the following line, Shurahbīl describes how he was attacked but was defended by men of Taghlib:

فَذُبُّكُمْ عَنِّي رَجَالٌ شِعَارُهُمْ إِذَا شُوبَ الدَّاعِي أَلَا يَا لَ تَغْلِبِ
الطويل

Men whose battle-cry when people call for their help is "O sons of Taghlib" drove you off.²

Apart from the above lines, none of the Taghlibī poets describe their losses, and none ever give details of how the enemy started attacking them. ^cAmr b. Kulthūm gives a realistic description of how Taghlib acted when their enemies attacked them:

فَأَمَّا يَوْمَ خَشِينَا عَلَيْهِمْ فَتَصَبَّحَ حِيلُنَا عِصَابًا شِينَا

But on the day of our fear for them [i.e. our sons], our cavalry become spread out [towards the enemy] in troops and squadrons.³

If we exclude what is known as al-Munaṣṣifāt (equalisation) we do not find that any of them gives his

1. Ibn al-Kalbī, Ansāb al-Khayl, p.87.

2. Al-Ashnāndānī, Ma^cāni ash-Shi^r, p.14.

3. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.647.

enemies the upper hand in war. Taghlib are always the victorious party and are always the ones who kill and capture.

It seems that they did not want to draw attention to their defeats, for fear that they would be considered cowards. This idea is expressed clearly by al-Muhalhil when he says:

لَيْسَ مِثْلِي يَخْبِرُ النَّاسَ عَنْ آبَائِهِمْ قَتَلُوا وَنَسُوا الْقِتَالَ
الْحَصْفَ

One such as I does not tell people about their fathers who were killed and forget the fight.¹

For this reason he does not say anything more than what is contained in the above line about their heavy defeat at Qida. The following line, which was also composed after Qida, is much more typical; it contains a hint of the defeat, but lays all its emphasis on the attack.

فَدَّرَ لِسَبِي الشَّقِيقَةِ يَوْمَ جَاءُوا كَأَسَدِ الْغَابِ لَجَّتْ فِي زَعِيرِ

I sacrifice myself to Banū ash-Shaqīqa when they come like the lions of forests who roar.²

(c) The Ambush

As with the previous case, we find little poetry dealing with this subject. As Taghlib were a proud and strong tribe, they had no need to deceive their enemies but attacked them at once without hesitation. However, there are occasional

1. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.146.

2. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.134.

incidents where this practice is described. Al-Akhnas, who had a score to settle with ^cĀmir, waited for five years for an opportunity to take his revenge. He describes how he kept waiting patiently for this and thinking over the matter at night. He uses the imaginative word qaṭwan (crawling) to describe his stealthy and cautious movements:

لَعَمْرِي لَقَدْ حَاوَرْتُ فِي حَيِّ عَامِرٍ
أَبَيْتُ إِذَا نَامَ الْخَلِيْفِيُّ كَأَنَّ نَفْسِي
وَلَمَّا رَأَيْتُ الثَّأْرَ قَدْ حِيلَ دُونَهُ
وَلَا حَظُّتُ ثَأْرِي فِيهِمْ لِأَنَّا لَهْ
لَأَدْرِكُ ثَأْرِي فِيهِمْ حِجْجًا خَمْسًا
سَلِيمٍ أَفَاعٍ لَا يُلَاقِي لَهُ أَنْسَا
مَشَيْتُ لَهُمْ قَطْوًا وَكُنْتُ لَهُمْ حِلْسًا
مَتَى مَا أَنَلَهُ أَشْفُ مِنْ عَامِرٍ نَفْسًا

الطويل

I swear that I manoeuvred with the tribe of ^cĀmir in order to take my revenge for five years,

Sitting up at night when the happy person slept, like a person bitten by snakes who cannot find a companion,

When I found that revenge had become difficult, I crawled towards them and became like a piece of cloth on the horse,

I was watching to get my revenge on them; when I got it I would heal my soul on ^cĀmir's account.¹

It seems strange that Taghlib themselves could not take this revenge for al-Akhnas. This may have been a very personal matter which was not regarded as serious by the tribe, or there may have been some circumstances which prevented revenge.

1. Al-Buhturī, al-Ḥamāsa, p.19.

(d) Raiding

This is the main element in the martial poetry of Taghlib. The poets always compose this kind of poetry to show their strength, force and efficiency. They like to speak proudly of their courage and their vigour. This attitude is fully expressed by ^CAmr b. Kulthūm in the following line, when he specifies the way they behave:

وَأَمَّا يَوْمَ لَا نَخْشَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَنَمْعٌ غَارَةٌ مَتَلْبِينَا

But on the day, in which we do not fear on their account, we hasten to the attack with our loins girt.¹

This means that Taghlib are always searching for opportunities to plunder and invade. ^CAmr stresses this idea when he says that he gets wealth by attacking encampments:

يَخْلِفُ الْمَالَ فَلَا تَسْتَيْسِي كَرِي الْمَهْرَ عَلَى الْحَى الْحِلَالِ
الرجل

Do not worry about the wealth, turning around my foal and attacking the encampments will replace it.²

The same idea is expressed by al-Akhnas when he depicts how he makes manoeuvres to attack invaders:

1. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p.648.

2. Dīwān^C Amr, p.598.

وَدَّهَمَ لَمْ أَرْتَهَا عَنْ صَدِيقٍ صَفَايَا مِنْ لَبُونِ بَنِي غُرَابٍ
أَنَا هَيْبَهَا الْمَغِيرَةَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ بِمُسْنِفَةٍ كَضُرُوءِ ذِي كِلَابٍ
تَبَاعِدَنِي إِذَا مَا شِئْتُ عَنْهُمْ وَتُدْنِينِي إِذَا كَرِهُوا اقْتِرَابِي
الوافر

Dark horses which I did not inherit from a
friend, good milkers from the mares of the
ghurāb breed,
Which I offer as booty to raiders every day,
with a horse leading them like a bitch
belonging to a person who has dogs,
It takes me away if I wish, and it brings me
nearer if they hate me to approach them.¹

They are fond of describing and boasting of their troops
when they launch an attack on other people. They give
descriptions of their movements and the starting-point of their
attack. Their words are full of challenge. They try to give a
complete picture of their army during the first attack on their
enemies. They usually start an attack in the morning, as is
seen in the words of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

صَبَحْنَا هُمْ مَنَا فَوَارِسَ نَجْدَةٍ وَشُهَبَاءَ تَرْدِي بِالسَّهَامِ الثَّمَلِ

We attacked them in the morning with brave
horsemen, and a sturdy detachment hastening
with arrows.²

1. Al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Kitāb al-Ikhtiyārāyn, p.174.

2. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.598.

صَبَحْنَا هُنَا عَنْ عَرَفٍ تَمِيمًا وَأَتْلَفَ رِجَالَنَا جَمْعَ الرِّبَابِ

We brought them at morning from the side to Tamīm, and our swift advance caused the destruction of the army of ar-Ribāb.¹

(e) The Battle

This is the most important part of the martial poetry of Taghlib, for most of their poets participate in giving a description of the battle and the battlefield. They boast, vaunt and try sometimes to exaggerate what has been happening there. They try to portray their enemies' situation when they are killed or are engaged in close combat. ^cAmr b. Kulthūm gives a lively picture of what takes place when they meet each other. He describes how they start fighting by using spears at the beginning, and how, when the conflict becomes close, they use their swords:

نَطَاعِنُ مَا تَرَاحَى النَّاسَ عِنَّا وَنَضْرِبُ بِالسِّيُوفِ إِذَا غَشِينَا

We fight with spears when the people are far from us, and we strike with swords when we are attacked by them at close quarters.²

Another image of the fight can be seen from the following line by al-Akhnas, who describes his people as pressing even closer when the use of swords is of no avail:

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.601.

2. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharh al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis ^c, v.2, p.637.

وَإِنْ قَصُرَتْ أَسْيَافُنَا كَانَتْ وَصَلَتْهَا
حُطَانَا إِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ نَضَارِبُ
الطويل

And if we should find our swords too short to attain the foe, we have but to press one step the closer, and strike him home.¹

^cAmr gives a forcible idea of the strength and number of their army by describing it as being like Mount Rahwa. He also describes their tactics during the battle when they divide the army into two parts; in the battle which he talks about, they took the right side as the important one.

نَصَبْنَا مِثْلَ رَهْوَةَ ذَاتِ حُدِّ
مَحَافِظَةً وَكُنَّا السَّابِقِينَ
وَكَانَ الْأَيْسَرِينَ بَنُو أَبِيْنَا
وَصَلْنَا صَوْلَةً فِيمَنْ يَلِينَا
عَلَيْنَا الْهَيْفُ وَالْيَلْبُ الْيَمَانِي
فَصَالُوا صَوْلَةً فِيمَنْ يَلِينَا

We make our troops firm as the mountain Rahwa, possessed of dignity, defending our honour, and we take precedence over the rest of the tribes in time of battle,
And we were the right wing of the army when we met the enemy; and the sons of our father were the left wing,
They attacked anyone who approached them, and we attacked anyone who approached us,
While upon us were the helmets and the Yemenite jerkin, and in our hands swords which were straightening and were bending.²

1. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt (Lyall), v.1, p.420; v.2, p.151.

2. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.644, 661, 663.

Jābir b. Ḥunayy also refers to the battle of al-Kulāb, and describes how the Taghlibī warrior Abū Ḥanash pierced the king of Kinda, Shurahbīl, with his spear and killed him:

وَيَوْمَ الْكَلَابِ اسْتَنْزَلَتْ أَسْلَاتِنَا
لِيَنْتَزِعَنَّ أَرْمَاحَنَا فَأَزالَهُ
تَنَاوَلَهُ بِالرُّمْحِ حَتَّى شَنَى لِسَهُ
فَخَرَّ صَرِيحًا لِلْيَدَيْنِ وَلِلْفِئِمِ
أَبُو حَنْشَرٍ عَن ظَهْرِ شِقَاءٍ صَلِيدِ
شَرْحَبِيلٍ إِذْ آلَى أَلِيَةَ مَقْسِمِ

Yet our spears it was that thrust, that black day of al-Kulāb, Shurahbīl off his horse, in spite of the oath he swore,

To pluck from our hands our lances: him Abū Ḥanash cast to the ground from the back of a steed, the tallest of all his stud,

He reached him with following shaft - again did he couch the spear, and down fell the prince, prone-stretched with hands out and face in dust.¹

We find very similar pictures of the battlefield in the Islamic period, as is clear from the lines of al-A^Cshā in which he describes the close combat between Taghlib and Qays,² and from the following lines by al-Qutāmī who describes the same conflict:

1. Al-Mufaddaliyyāt (Lyal), v.1., p.427; v.2, p.156.

2. See above, p.70.

وَيَوْمَ تَلَّاقَتِ الْفِئْتَانِ ضَرِيًّا
تَرَى مِنْهُ صُدُورَ الْخَيْلِ زُورًا
وَوَظَلَّتْ تَعَبُطُ الْأَيْدِي كُلُّومًا
قُورًا شَرِبًا لِرِمَاحٍ كَأَنَّ فِيهَا
ثَبْتَنَا مَا مِنَ الْحَيِّ صِينِ إِلَّا
وَوَطَعْنَا يَبِيحَ الْبَطْلِ الشَّجَاعَا
كَأَنَّ بِهِ نُحَازَا أَوْ دُكَاعَا
تَمَجَّ عُرُوقَهَا عَلَقًا مَتَاعَا
شِوَاظِنَ يَنْتَزِعْنَ بِهَا انْتِرَاعَا
يَظَلُّ يَرَى لِكُوكِبِهِ شِعَاعَا

الوافر

And on the day when the two parties met,
with a striking and piercing which fells the
bold hero,
You see the chests of the horses crooked
because of it, as though they were suffering
from an ailment of the lungs,
And the hands continue to inflict wounds,
whose veins spit dark-red blood,
Entangled with spears, as though there were
inside them ropes which are pulled strongly,
We stood our ground, and both tribes saw
their star shining.¹

In this case, Taghlib's battle with Qays seems to have
been undertaken only in self-defence. Thus al-Qutāmī says:

وَكَانَ قَوْمِي وَلَمْ تَغْدِرْ لَهُمْ ذِمَّةً
كَطَالِبِ الدِّينِ مُسْتَوْفٍ وَمُزَادٍ
البيوط

And my tribe, who never betray their
obligations, are like the one who seeks
repayment of a debt, who give full due and
more.²

1. *Dīwān al-Qutāmī*, pp.33-4.

2. *Ibid.*, p.91.

In the Jāhiliyya period, however, the main purpose of their fighting was to obtain booty. They rejoice at their victories, and express their happiness at plundering their enemies' possessions. This is clear from the following line by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, in which the women of Taghlib swear to take horses, swords and captives:

لِيسْتَلِينَ أَبْدَانًا وَيُضْفُونَ
وَأَسْرَى فِي الْحُرُوبِ مَقْرِنِينَ

That they should take as booty the coats of mail and helmets, and prisoners, and return with them, bound together with a rope.¹

The above are the most commonly repeated motifs of Taghlibī martial poetry. We may add here a brief discussion of the language which reflects the warfare and which is a part of it. The general word for war is, of course, **ḥarb**, but there are also other words like **hayjā'** and **waghā**, and metaphorical words such as **naq^c** or **ajāj**.

وَرَدْنَا الْكُلَابَ عَلَى قَوْمِنَا
بِأَحْسَنِ وَرْدٍ لِهَيْجَا شَعَارَا
الْمُتَقَارِبِ

We arrived at al-Kulāb to join our people,
with the best arrival at war as a battle-cry.²

وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْتِ الْقُرْنَ فِي يَوْمِ الْوَعْدِ
وَالنَّحْرَ مِنْهُ بِالْدِمَاءِ مَرْمَلِ
الْكَامِلِ

1. Ibn an-Nahḥās, *Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c*, v.2, p.675. Johnson's translation is "horses and swords", but he mentions the other reading as "coats of mail and helmets", which agrees with Ibn an-Nahḥās' narration.

2. Abū ^cUbayda, *an-Naqā'id*, v.1, p.457.

I left the opponent of the day of war with his
throat stained with blood.¹

قَد تَرَكْنَا أَخَاكَ فِي حَمْرِ النَّقِيعِ مَضْرُجِ الْأَثْوَابِ
الْحَمِيقِ

We left your brother in the disturbed dust
with his clothes smeared with blood.²

We also find frequent images of killing, which they are clearly fond of describing. Some of these images have occurred in lines cited elsewhere, such as those by al-Muhalhil in which he describes how he killed Bujayr and Hammām,³ and that by ^CAmr b. Kulthūm in which he describes the dead being dragged away by hyenas.⁴ The following are some further examples of this:

نَجَذُ رُؤُوسَهُمْ فِي غَيْرِ بِيَرٍ
وَنَخْلِيهَا الرُّقَابَ فَيَحْتَلِينَا
فَمَا يَدْرُونَ مَاذَا يَتَّقُونَ

We mow them with the heads of the people,
and we cut their necks, and make them cut
the necks which are cut like fresh grass,
We cut off their heads without mercy, so they
did not know how they should oppose us.⁵

1. Dīwān ^CAmr, p.604.

2. Abū ^CUbayda, al-Ayyām, p.413.

3. See below, p. 307.

4. See above, p. 129.

5. Ibn an-Nahḥās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, pp.638, 640. Johnson translates the second hemistich of the first line as "and they are cut", but he gives the other reading which accords with Ibn an-Nahḥās.

The main verbs employed are ḍaraba, nazala (to take the field), qatala and ta^cana (pierce).

كَمْ يَطِيفُوا أَنْ يَنْزِلُوا فَـنَزَلْنَا وَأَخُو الْحَرْبِ مَنْ أَطَاقَ النَّزُولَ

They were not able to take the field, but we took it; the warrior is he who is able to take it.¹

وَحَامِيَ لِرَاءِ قَدْ قَتَلْنَا وَحَامِلِ لِرِوَاءِ وَالسَّيُوفُ شُورِعِ
الْمُحْرَبِ

How many a protector of a flag did we kill, and how many a bearer of a flag did we defend while the swords were raised.²

أَسْلَمْتَهُ عَلَى الْكِلَابِ تَمِيمٍ بَعْدَ طَعْنِ الْكَلْبِ وَضَرْبِ الرُّقَابِ
الْحَفِيفِ

Tamīm left him in al-Kulāb after piercing kidneys and striking necks.³

For the flag they use the words liwā' (as in the line by al-Akhnas quoted above) or rāya as in the following line by ^cAmr b. Kulthūm:

بِأَنَّ نَوْرَ الرِّيَاطِ بَيْنَنَا وَنَمْدِ رَهْنِ حَمْرًا قَدْ رَوَيْنَا

1. Al-Muhalhil, quoted in al-Aghānī, v.4, p.149.

2. Al-Akhnas, quoted in al-Qādī al-Jurjānī, al-Wasāta, p.43.

3. Abū Hanash, quoted in Abū ^cUbayda, al-Ayyām, p.413.

To the effect that verily we take our flags to the battlefied white, and we bring them back red, when they are satiated with blood.¹

The above is a general picture of the martial poetry of Taghlib,² from which we are able to understand that Taghlib are a tribe whose poetry reflects warfare and deals with a great amount of it. Their poets depict their martial ability and their desire to raid others whenever possible. The murder of ^CAmr b. Hind and the long fratricidal war between Taghlib and Bakr, the battle of al-Kulāb, and their war against Qays, besides other skirmishes, gave them a strong motive for composing poetry on this subject, while at the same time every poet expresses his own individual character. The poetry has the overriding aim of depicting Taghlib as a victorious tribe, and to that extent they express similar ideas in the same kind of language.

The Panegyric

It seems that Taghlib, who were proud of themselves and always boasting of their deeds and their heritage of power and heroism, had haughtily rejected panegyric poetry in the pre-Islamic era. None of them had praised any king or chieftain in order to gain assistance from him, as we find in the later years of that period with Zuhayr, an-Nābigha and Hassān.³

The only eulogy which can be found is when the poet praises the chieftain for his personal qualities and

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p.628.

2. For a late collection of the martial poetry of Taghlib, see ash-Shimshātī, al-Anwār wa-Maḥāsīn al-Ash^Cār, pp.77-120.

3. Shawqī Dayf, al-^CAṣr al-Jāhilī, p.211.

particularly his bravery and hospitality.¹ Even this kind of panegyric poetry is rare in Taghlib. Their poems of eulogy are a sort of admission of the power of the opponent, and reflect also their glorification of strength and vigour. ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, for example, praises Yazīd b. ^cAmr because he captured him at the battle of Nitā^c and then released him after giving him wine. The following lines illustrate how he glorifies ^cAmr's ability to capture him:

غَدَاةَ نَطَاعٍ قَدْ عَدَّقَ الْقِتَالَ	بِأَنَّ الْمَاجِدَ الْقَرْمِ ابْنَ عَمْرٍو
إِذَا يَكْرُمُونَهَا تَفَنَّى النَّبَالَ	كَتَيْبَتِهِ مَلَمَمَةً رَدَّاحٍ
وَلَقَاهُ الْمَسْرَةَ وَالْجَمَالَ	جَزَى اللَّهُ الْأَغْرِي زَيْدٌ حَسِيرًا
يَزِيدُ الْخَيْرَ نَازِلَهُ نِيْزَالًا	بِمَأْخِذِهِ ابْنِ كَلْشُومِ ابْنَ عَمْرٍو
يُجِيلُونَ الطَّعَانَ إِذَا أَجَالَ	بِجَمْعٍ مِّنْ بَنِي قِرَانَ صَيْدٍ
يُرَوِّى مَسَدَهَا الْأَسْلُ النَّبَالَ	يَزِيدُ يُقَدِّمُ السَّقْرَاءَ حَتَّى

الوافر

The noble and the brave son of ^cAmr, at the morning of Nitā^c was fighting bravely.

His regiment is well-controlled and large; if they are attacked they are undeterred by the arrows,

God reward well the noble Yazīd, and give him happiness and prosperity

For his capturing the son of Kulthūm, son of ^cAmr. The generous Yazīd had been really fighting him

With a group of the Banū Qirrān who are brave and who keep thrusting as he does,

Yazīd leads ash-Shaqrā' until he allows the

1. Shawqī Dayf, al-^cAsr al-Jāhili, p.210.

thirsty spear-heads to drink from her breast.¹

We find the same situation with al-Hudhayl when Khālīd from Banū Salmā captured him and his sons, and then released him without one of his sons. He came to him and praised him after reciting the names of his ancestors in the following lines:

وَمَا أَبْتَغِي فِي جَنْدَلٍ بَعْدَ خَالِدٍ لَطَارِقَ لَيْلٍ أَوْ لَعَانَ مَكْبَلِ
الطويل

I do not expect anything from Jandal after Khālīd's death for the person who seeks refuge at night or who is kept captive in fetters.²

We find only one of them praising a person, one Abū Qu^cayn, because he presented a horse to him.³ That person may be from Taghlib, although his following two lines praising Abū Qu^cayn are only a sort of thanks:

فِدَاءٌ خَالَتِي وَفَيْدَى صَدِيقِي وَأَهْلِي كُلَّهُمْ لِأَبِي قَعْنَانِ
فَأَنْتَ حَبِوتِي بَعْنَانِ طَرْفِ شَدِيدِ الْأَسْرَدَى بَذَلٍ وَمَسُونِ
الوافر

My **khāla** (aunt), friend and family are to be made ransom for Abū Qu^cayn,
You presented me with a rein for a horse,
which is strong, fast and swift.⁴

1. Al-Aghānī, v.9, p.184; al-Ghalayīnī, Rijāl al-Mu^callaqāt, p.190.

2. Abū Tamām, Naqā'id Jarīr wa al-Akhtal, pp.227-8.

3. Al-Qalī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.91.

4. Ibid.

These are the only examples which can be found in the poetry of Taghlib eulogising persons outside the tribe in the pre-Islamic period. Besides these eulogies we can find a similarly small quantity in which the poets praise the nobles of the tribe itself. This sort of eulogy seems a part of the boasting ritual of the deeds of the tribe, but the only difference is that the poet here addresses his poem to individuals. It appears that ^CAmr b. Kulthūm and his family were the most frequent recipients of eulogy. Abū al-Laḥḥām, for instance, praises ^CAbd Allāh b. ^CAmr. He describes him as being as generous as a gulf of the sea, as wise as Luqmān, as eloquent as Qass and as brave as a lion, in the following lines:

المشترى حسن الثناء بماله
ولأنت أجود من خليج مرسل
لقمان منتصرا وقس ناطقنا
وإذا توجه معطيا لم يخبس
متابع التيار غير مسجس
ولأنت أجرا صولة من يهس

الامل

He buys praise with his money, and when he begins to give he does not become a miser, And you are more generous than a moving gulf whose currents follow each other without turbidity, You are like Luqmān if he conquers, and you are like Qass if he speaks and more brave in attack than a lion.¹

Mu^Cāwiya does the same when he praises ^CAbbād, son of ^CAmr, in the following lines:

1. Dīwān ^CAmr, pp.608-9.

جَزَى اللّٰهَ عَبَادَ بَنِ عَمْرٍو وَرَهْطَهُ فَرُّوا فَنَعِمَ الْقَوْمُ عِنْدَ الْهَزَاهِزِ
 هُمْ قَتَلُوا بِشْرًا وَرَدُّوا خَيْولَهُ بَطَعْنَ كَأَيْزَاغِ الْمَخَاضِ الْحَوَامِزِ

الطويل

God reward ^cAbbād son of ^cAmr and his family with joy, because they are brave in battle;

They killed Bishr and defeated his horsemen, by piercing them [and shedding their blood] like she-camels giving birth.¹

These few eulogies are the only ones composed by Taghlibī poets and it appears that they did not have the habit of indulging in such poetry.

Perhaps the starting point for panegyric poetry in Taghlib begins with Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl when he praised Sa^cīd b. al-^cĀs, the governor of al-Kūfa, and then became Mu^cāwiya's court poet.

Ka^cb openly stresses Sa^cīd's generosity. This habit did not exist in pre-Islamic Taghlibī poetry. Ka^cb uses metonymy to show his need for money by indicating that his camel has been exhausted:

تَعْلَمُ سَعِيدَ الْخَيْرِ أَنْ مَطِيئَتِي إِذَا هَبَطَتْ أَشْفَقْتُ أَنْ تَعْقُرَا

الطويل

O generous Sa^cīd you know that if my she-camel comes to you, I feel compassion at her being slaughtered.²

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.611.

2. At-Tabarī, īarīkh, v.4, p.270.

After Ka^c b, and particularly when Taghlib were exhausted by the bloody war with Qays, their declining social and political status, which had become more obvious than before, and the attraction of the wealth which had accumulated in the hands of the caliphs with their now stable governments, led to Taghlibī poets being widely known as panegyrists.

The most famous poet of Taghlib in this period is al-Akhtal. Besides al-Akhtal there are al-Qutāmī and al-A^cshā. Al-Akhtal, who may represent the whole, composed different eulogies for different people and particularly the Umayyad caliphs and princes. Also it could be said that al-Akhtal, like al-Qutāmī and al-A^cshā, paid little attention to the more modern times they were living in. The main figure which al-Akhtal uses in his poetry is the pre-Islamic hero or cavalier who is helpful, generous and proud.¹ There is one more element which he tries to stress in his eulogies: the granting of an amnesty to him by the Umayyads.

Of the Umayyads he praises Yazīd and ^cAbd Allāh (the sons of Mu^cāwiya), ^cAbd al-Malik and Bishr (the sons of Marwān), al-Walīd b. ^cAbd al-Malik, Khālid b. Usayyid, ^cUbayd Allāh and Salm the sons of Ziyād, and Khālid b. Yazīd.² His eulogies to all of those caliphs and princes except ^cAbd al-Malik are realistic poems, but also embody his personal complaints when he praises al-Walīd.³ He also praises Umayyad governors like al-Hajjāj.⁴ ^cAbd al-Malik is the only caliph who receives an imaginative and creative panegyric, because al-Akhtal admired him greatly.⁵ The following lines

1. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, p.219.

2. Ibid., pp.61-86, 93-9, 104-203; Ghāzī, al-Akhtal, pp.133-5, 147-9, 182-3.

3. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.214-5.

4. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, pp.403-9.

5. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, p.214.

are an example from the panegyric of al-Akhtal in which he praises ^cAbd Allāh and Yazīd, the sons of Mu^cāwiyā:

وَيَوْمَ شَرْطَةِ قَيْسٍ إِذْ مَنِيَتْ لَهُمْ
حَنْتٌ مَّا كَيْلٍ مِنْ إِيقَاعِكُمْ نَكَدٌ
ظَلَمُوا وَظَلَّ سَحَابُ الْمَوْتِ يَمْطُرُهُمْ
حَتَّى تَوَجَّهَ مِنْهُمْ عَارِضٌ بِرِدٍ
وَالْمَشْرِيفَةُ أَشْبَاهُ الْبُرُوقِ لَهَا
فِي كُلِّ جَمْعَةٍ أَوْ بَيْضَةٍ خَدَدٌ

المسير

On the day of the army of Qays (i.e. Marj Rāhit) when you brought doom to them, the unfortunate bereaved women yearned for their dead because of your smiting.

They stood their ground with the clouds of death raining on them, until a hail-bearing cloud detached itself from them.

And the swords looked like lightning flashes and they made furrows in every skull or helmet.¹

He praises ^cAbd al-Malik in the following lines:

مَفْتَرٍ شَافِتٍ شَا لِيْثٍ كَلِكْلِهِ
لَوْقَعَةٍ كَائِنٍ فِيهَا لَهُ جَزْرٌ
مَقْدَمٌ مَيْتِي أَلْفٍ لِمَنْزِلَةِ
مَا إِنْ رَأَى مِثْلَهُمْ جَنٌّ وَلَا بَشَرٌ
يَغْشَى الْقَنَا طَرِيْبِنِيهَا وَيَهْدِيهَا
مَسْوْمٌ فَوْقَهُ الرِّيَاةُ وَالْقَتْرُ

He sat like a lion crouching ready to launch an attack in which he will catch his food,

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, pp.444-5.

Leading to a position two hundred thousand men whose like neither men nor Jinn have ever seen.

He occupies the bridges, building and destroying them, marking his horses, with flags and dust above them.¹

For hospitality he usually uses what is called the tashbīh istiṭrādī (simile with digression)² and mainly in terms of the Tigris or the Euphrates or another piece of water,³ as in the following lines:

فَمَا الْفِرَاتُ إِذَا جَاشَتْ حَوْلَ بَيْتِهِ فِي حَافَتَيْهِ وَفِي أَوْسَاطِهِ الْعَشِيرِ
وَذَعْدَتُهُ رِيَّاحُ السَّيْفِ وَاضْطَرِبَتْ فَوْقَ الْجَاجِيِّ مِنْ آذِيهِ غَدَرٌ
مُسْحَنَفَرًا مِنْ جِبَالِ الرُّومِ تَسْتَقِرُّهُ مِنْهَا أَكَاثِفٌ فِيهَا دُونَهُ زُورٌ
يَوْمًا بِأَجْوَدَ مِنْهُ حِينَ تَسْأَلُهُ وَلَا بِأَجْهَرَ مِنْهُ حِينَ يَجْتَمِرُ
الْبَيْتِ

The Euphrates when its waters rage in its banks and its midstream bears [uprooted] trees, And when the summer winds scatter it and enormous waves are stirred up over the fronts of the ships,

As it flows from the Byzantine mountains, hidden by overhanging rocks, which turn aside before it,

Is not more generous than him, when you ask him, nor louder if he speaks loudly.⁴

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, p.199.

2. See above, p. 87.

3. Hawī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.208-11.

4. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, pp.197-8.

Sometimes we find some of them praising others, not as an appeal for money but in a similar manner to the Jāhiliyya panegyric among the Taghlib, like that of ^cAmr. Al-Quṭāmī eulogises Zufar b. al-Hārith the chieftain of Qays, their foe in Islam, because he captured and generously released him. He composes poems for him and celebrates his qualities.¹

The Political Poetry of Taghlib

It is necessary while discussing the subjects which concerned Taghlib to discuss their poetry from a political point of view and to evaluate their position accordingly; particularly as Taghlib were concerned with different political power groups whether in Jāhiliyya or in Islam.

In the Jāhiliyya they were always considered as rebels seeking their own independence. They considered themselves as equal to other kings such as those of the Yemenites or the Lakhmids.

They revolted against the Yemenite governors, killed them and later on came face to face with the kings of the Yemenites themselves under the leadership of Kulayb.² The poetry of this time is generally unreliable as documentary evidence, but some other poets like ^cAmr b. Kulthūm and al-Akḥṭal show the effect of contemporary incidents. The poetry of the battle of al-Kulāb is better authenticated because different reliable sources have referred to it.

The most celebrated verified event is the murder of ^cAmr b. Hind. This incident shows their attitude towards the political powers which they dealt with at that time, and

1. Diwān al-Quṭāmī, pp.31-42, 78-91.

2. See above, pp.9-14.

illustrates their haughtiness and refusal to be subjected to any kind of suppression. The whole mu^callaqa of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm is a manifesto of their political position and the following four lines are an announcement of that position:

بِأَيِّ مَشِيئَةٍ عَمْرُوبِ بْنِ هِنْدٍ نَكُونُ لِقَيْلِكُمْ فِيهَا قَطِينًا
بِأَيِّ مَشِيئَةٍ عَمْرُوبِ بْنِ هِنْدٍ تُطِيحُ بِنَا الْوَشَاةُ وَتَزْدَرِينَا
بِأَيِّ مَشِيئَةٍ عَمْرُوبِ بْنِ هِنْدٍ تَرَى أَنَا نَكُونُ الْأَرْدَ لِينَا
تَهْدِدُنَا وَتُوَعِدُنَا رُوَيْدًا مَتَى كُنَّا لِأُمِّكَ مَقْتُونِينَ

For what purpose, O ^cAmr b. Hind, do you wish that we should become servants to the chief you have deputed over us?

With what desire, O ^cAmr b. Hind, do you listen to our slanderers, and despise us?

With what object, O ^cAmr, son of Hind, do you think that we should be considered vile?

You are menacing us, and threatening us.

Enough, when have we been servants to your mother?¹

This was their understanding of the diplomatic relationship. They would keep their position if they were treated properly, but if anyone considered them other than as allies and attempted to exercise authority over them, then they would revolt, which indeed happened with ^cAmr b. Hind. ^cAmr in another poem expresses the nature of their alliance, which mainly depended on providing the ruling power with warriors and stabilising its position. He says:

1. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.164; Ibn an-Nahḥās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.809-10. Johnson, p.149.

أَتَنْسَى رَفْدَنَا بِعَوِيرِيضَاتٍ غَدَاةَ الْخَيْلِ تَخْفِرُ مَا حَوَيْتَنَا
وَكُنَّا طَوَّعَ كَفَّاكَ يَا ابْنَ هِنْدٍ بِنَا تَرْمِي مَحَارِمَ مَنْ رَمَيْتَنَا
الوافر

Have you forgotten our supply in ^cUwayridāt, when the horses were guarding what you gathered.

O son of Hind, we were ready whenever you asked and you sent us to attack the most precious possessions of those whom you attacked.¹

The phrase ṭaw^c a kaffika in the first hemistich of the second line, which figuratively means "under your command", has been connected with attacking in the second line to put stress on their exulting in power and their pride in being warriors.

This uncompromising role into which they felt themselves pushed and which was expressed proudly by the line of Jābir b. Hunayy,² made Taghlib unwelcome to most of the political powers of that time. They did not have peaceful relationships with the Ghassānids, one of whose princes they had killed and whom they declared their refusal to obey. ^cAmr says to al-Hārith that this murder was the result of his attempt to extend his dominion:

فَذُقِ الَّذِي جَشَمْتَ نَفْسَكَ فَاحْتَسِبِ مِنْهَا أَخَاكَ وَعَامِرَ بْنِ أَبِي حَجْرٍ
الظامل

1. Dīwān^c Amr, p.595.

2. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.155; v.2, p.426. See p. above. P. 131.

Taste what you have imposed upon yourself
and consider [the death of] your brother and
c̄Amir b. Abū H̄ijr to be a result of it.¹

This situation suddenly changed during Islam and Taghlib became second-class as Christians and were not regarded with favour by the caliphs, except for c̄Abd al-Malik who used them for his political aims.

The relationship between Taghlib and the first four caliphs was not expressed in their poetry, but later on they "soon became followers of the Umayyads".² Taghlibī poets had become a mouthpiece of the government either by their panegyrics or as propagandists during the period. Their poet Ka^{c̄}b b. Ju^{c̄}ayl stood firmly beside Mu^{c̄}āwiya. He was his mouthpiece³ and the official poet of Syria.⁴

He defended the rights of Mu^{c̄}āwiya to the caliphate and his demand for revenge for the murder of c̄Uthmān. He called the caliphate the inheritance of Muḥammad which Mu^{c̄}āwiya, or Ibn Hind, as he called him, was most deserving of. Revenge should also have been exacted for az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥa, but Mu^{c̄}āwiya did not demand it in spite of the injury he felt. The victory of Mu^{c̄}āwiya at Ṣiffīn after the judgement was determined by Fate, and God directed Fate. He expresses these ideas in the following lines:

1. Dīwān c̄Amr, p.602.

2. Kendermann, "Taghlib", EI¹, Supp., p.225.

3. Al-Minqarī, Waq^{c̄} at Ṣiffīn, p.632; al-Marzubānī, Mu^{c̄}jam ash-Shu^{c̄}arā', p.233.

4. Al-Minqarī, Waq^{c̄} at Ṣiffīn, p.410.

فَلَمَّا تَلَقَوْا فِي تَرَاثِ مُحَمَّدٍ نَمَتَ بَابِنِ هِنْدٍ فِي قَرِيْشِ مُضَارِيهِ
سَعَى بَابِنِ عَفَّانٍ لِيَدْرِكَ شَأْرَهُ وَأَوْلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ بِالتَّأْرِ طَالِبُهُ
وَقَدْ غَشِيْتَنَا فِي الزَّيْرِ غَضَاضَةً وَطَلْحَةَ إِذْ قَامَتْ عَلَيْهِ نَوَادِيُّهُ
فَرَدَّ ابْنُ هِنْدٍ مَلِكُهُ فِي نَصَابِيهِ وَمَنْ غَالَبَ الأَقْدَارَ فَاللَّهُ غَالِبُهُ

الطويل

When they came to battle to dispute the heritage of Muhammad, Ibn Hind's roots in Quraysh were deeper.

He strove for revenge for Ibn ^cAffān, and the one most entitled among God's people to carry out revenge is the claimant,

We felt sadness for az-Zubayr, and Ṭalḥa when the women were bewailing him,

Ibn Hind returned his rule to its rightful place;

Whoever seeks to overcome Fate, God will overcome him.¹

Ka^cb claims in support of Mu^cāwiya that God was with Mu^cāwiya and his troops. His reason for holding up the Holy Book was to show their adherence to Islam. He expresses this as follows:

فَمَا بَرَحُوا حَتَّى رَأَى اللَّهُ صَبْرَهُمْ وَحَتَّى أُتِيحتْ بِالأَكْفِ الصَّاحِفُ

They did not cease until God saw their patience and the Holy Books were held up in their hands.²

1. Al-Minqarī, Waq'at Ṣiffīn, p.632.

2. Ibid., p.336.

He asks Mu^cāwīya to not hesitate or retreat, telling him to expect degradation if he does so:

مَعَاوِي لَا تَنْهَضْ بِغَيْرِ وَثِيْقَةٍ فَإِنَّكَ بَعْدَ الْيَوْمِ بِالذَّلِّ عَارِفٌ
الطَّوِيلِ

O Mu^cāwīya, do not come without proof; [if not], you will know degradation after today.¹

He extends his expression of the enmity between ^cAlī and Mu^cāwīya to include the hatred between Syria and Iraq, saying that Syria had agreed to be subject to Mu^cāwīya and refused to have ^cAlī as their Imām. It is obvious from his opinions that he believed in the incompatibility of the two countries:

أَرَى الشَّامَ تَكْرَهُهُ مَلِكُ الْعِرَاقِ وَأَهْلُ الْعِرَاقِ لَهُمْ كَارِهِيْنَا
وَكُلُّ لِسَابِحِهِ مَبْغُضٌ يَرَى كُلَّ مَا كَانَ مِنْ ذَاكَ دِينَنَا
فَقَالُوا عَلِيُّ إِمَامٌ لِنُنَا فَقُلْنَا رَضِينَا ابْنَ هِنْدٍ رَضِينَا

المُبَارَرِ

I saw that Syria hates the rule of Iraq, and the people of Iraq hate that of Syria.

Each one hates the other, and each one sees everything that happened as the right thing.

They said: We accepted ^cAlī as our Imām, we said: We have accepted the son of Hind.²

To prove that Syria was not with ^cAlī but with Mu^cāwīya, he said that Mu^cāwīya deserved it, because he was the one

1. Al-Minqarī, Waq'at Şiffīn, p.410.

2. Al-Mubarrad, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.191.

who had been living there since Khālīd's conquest. It was a matter of Fate:

فَلَوْ سَأَلْتِ دِمَشْقَ وَأَرْضَ حِمَيْصٍ وَيَصْرِي مَنْ أَبَاحَ لَكُمْ قَرَاهَا
فَسَيْفُ اللَّهِ أَدْخَلَهَا الْعَنَابِيَا وَهَدَمَ حَصْنَهَا وَحَمَى دِمَاهَا
وَأَسْكَنَهَا مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنَ حَرْبٍ وَكَانَتْ أَرْضُهُ أَرْضًا سَوَاهَا
الوَاقِرِ

If Damascus, the land of Ḥims and Buṣrā were asked who delivered their villages to you, [They would have replied] The Sword of God (Khālīd) brought doom to them, destroyed their forts and brought them under his protection. He settled Mu^cāwīya b. Ḥarb there, whose home was elsewhere.¹

In the following line he exhorts Mu^cāwīya's people to be patient and not to be afraid of death:

أَلَا يَا لِقَوْمِي اصْبِرُوا إِنْ صَبَرْنَا أَغْفَ وَأُحْجَى عَفَا وَتَكْرَمًا
الطَوِيلِ

O my people be patient in continence and nobility, for patience is the best and wisest course.²

Ka^c b, who was involved in the battle of Siffīn on the side of Mu^cāwīya, tries to convince us that ^cAmr b. al-^cĀṣ had not deceived Abū Mūsa al-Ash^carī, but had won the argument because of his sagacity and wisdom. The attempt at

1. Al-^cAskarī, Jamharat al-Amthāl, v.2, p.386.

2. Al-Minqarī, Waq^c at Siffīn, p.337.

deceit was made not by ^cAmr but by Abū Mūsa himself:

كَأَنَّ أَبَا مُوسَى عَشِيَّةَ أَذْرَحَ يَطُوفُ بِلُقْمَانَ الْحَكِيمِ يُوَارِيهِ
يَحَاوِلُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ عَمْرًا وَإِنَّا لَهُ لِيَضْرِبَ فِي بَحْرِ عَرِيضٍ مَذَاهِبُهُ

Abū Mūsa on the evening of Adhruh,¹ was like somebody going round the wise Luqmān trying to beguile him.

^cAbd Allāh attempted to convince ^cAmr but he was floundering in a vast sea.²

In supporting Mu^cāwiya, Ka^cb attempted to justify his refusal to be reconciled with ^cAlī. Ka^cb went even further in his support when he began to attack ^cAlī himself. Ka^cb relied in his attack on the assertion that ^cAlī was protecting the rebels and murderers of ^cUthmān, and drew a portrait of ^cAlī which shows him as weak, hesitant and without authority:

وَمَا فِي عَلِيٍّ لِمَسْتَحْتَبِيبٍ مَقَالَ سَيُورِي ضَمَهُ الْمَحْدِثِينَ
وَإِشَارِهِ الْيَوْمَ أَهْلَ الذُّنُوبِ وَرَفَّحَ الْقِصَاصِ عَنِ الْقَاتِلِينَ
إِذَا سَيَّلَ عَنْهُ حُدَا شَبَهَةَ وَعَمَى الْجَوَابَ عَنِ السَّائِلِينَ
فَلَيْسَ بِرَاضٍ وَلَا سَاخِطٍ وَلَا فِي النُّهْيَةِ وَلَا فِي الْأَمْرِينَ
وَلَا هُوَ سَاءٌ وَلَا سَرُّهُ وَلَا بَدٌّ مِنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْ يَكُونَنَا

الْحَقَّاقِدُ

There is nothing that one seeking to reproach

1. A village on the borders of Syria where the judgement took place. (Yāqūt, al-Mu^cjam, v.1, p.129).

2. Al-Minqarī, Waq^cat Şiffīn, p.632.

^cAlī can say about him except that he has attached the criminals to himself, And that today he has preferred the sinners and has removed punishment from the murderers.

If he is asked about it he gives an ambiguous answer, and makes the answer obscure to the questioners.

He is neither contented nor angry, and he neither forbids nor commands.

He was neither made unhappy nor happy by it even though one or the other of these is inevitable.¹

Mu^cāwīya, who was famous for his diplomatic skills, did not allow further disturbances to take place once the nation had become united under his rule, except when it was politic to kindle tribal rivalry. However it seems that Taghlib were somewhat dissatisfied with his policy, perhaps because he did not favour them as much as they expected after Ṣiffīn. Ka^c b expresses this feeling in the following line, when he asks Mu^cāwīya to treat Taghlib with justice or to leave them to fight with whoever is willing to fight with them:

مَعَاوِيَةَ أَنْصِفِ تَغْلِبَ ابْنَةَ وَائِلٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ أَوْ دَعْبَا وَحْيَا تَضَارِيهِ
الطَّوِيلِ

O Mu^cāwīya treat Taghlib bint Wā'il with justice, or leave them to fight any other tribe.²

The relationship between Taghlib and the Banū Umayya

1. Al-Minqarī, Waq^cat Ṣiffīn, pp.63-4.

2. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā', p.487.

was strengthened when al-Akhtal became their poet and mouthpiece. Ka^c b, who by now was old,¹ first introduced al-Akhtal to Yazīd.²

Al-Akhtal was a resourceful thinker and he turned to Yazīd to save his tongue from being cut out by Mu^cāwīya at the instigation of the leader of the Anṣār whose people he had satirized harshly.³ Al-Akhtal expresses his feelings about that event in the following line:

أَبَا خَالِدٍ دَافَعَتْ عَنِّي عَظِيمَةٌ وَأَدْرَكَتْ لِحْمِي قَبْلَ أَنْ يَتَبَدَّدَا

الطويل

Father of Khālid, you saved me from a disaster, and you saved my flesh from being cut into pieces.⁴

The relationship between al-Akhtal and Yazīd was strong: they frequently took their ease together in friendship.⁵

This alliance between Taghlib and the Umayyads continued for various reasons. As the great majority of Taghlib were Christians and the balance of the war was in the hands of the Umayyads, Taghlib was one of the supporters of the Umayyads, particularly during the reigns of Yazīd and ^cAbd al-Malik b. Marwān. The Umayyad rule was nearer to the tribal system than that of the first four caliphs. ^cAbd al-Malik treated them as Arabs in the same way as he treated the other Arabs without too much discrimination. ^cAbd Allāh b. az-

1. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā', p.485.

2. Ibid., pp.397-8.

3. Ibid.

4. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.306.

5. Al-Bayhaqī, al-Maḥāsin wa al-Masāwi', pp.286-7.

Zubayr's revolt was a kind of return to the previous system which was opposed to most of their religious and worldly interests.

Al-Muhallab b. Abī Sufra called upon Taghlib to acknowledge the rule of ^cAbd Allāh b. az-Zubayr while they were fighting against Qays but this invitation was disregarded. Al-Qutāmī illustrates in the following lines the refusal of his tribe to be under any power except that of their chieftain, al-Hudhayl at-Taghlibī.

أَتَانِي مِنَ الْأَزْدِ النَّذِيرَةَ بَعْدَ مَا تَنَاشَدَ قَوْلِي بِالْحِجَازِ الْمَجَالِسِ
فَقَالُوا عَلَيْكَ ابْنُ الزَّبَيْرِ فَعُدَّ بِهِ أَبِي اللَّهِ أَنْ أَخْزَى وَعَزَّ خُنَابِسِ
وَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْمُهَلَّبَ فَارِسًا وَلَكِنْ أَمْثَالَ الْهَذِيلِ الْفَوَارِسِ

الطويل

A warning came to me from al-Azd after meetings in Hijāz had recited my poetry.

They said: Seek refuge with Ibn az-Zubayr's side, but God and high dignity will not allow me to suffer disgrace.

God did not make al-Muhallab a warrior, but those who are like al-Hudhayl are warriors.¹

During the period between Marj Rāhit and the death of Ibn az-Zubayr Taghlib tried to maintain a policy of neutrality, but thereafter ^cAbd al-Malik sent his brother Muhammad to fight Jidār b. ^cAbbād at-Taghlibī in al-Jazīra. Jidār was reconciled with Muhammad and acknowledged ^cAbd al-Malik as sovereign.² Al-Akhtal expresses his anger at az-Zubayr in the

1. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, v.5, p.299.

2. Ibid., p.328.

following line:

ولما تبينا ضلالة مصعب
فتحننا لأهل الشام بابا من النصر
الطويل

When we learnt of the error of Muṣ^cab, we opened the door of victory for the people of Syria.¹

Al-Akhtal became the successor of Ka^cb b. Ju^cayl in the Umayyad royal court and his tribe's new spokesman, defending their policy and denigrating their opponents. He repeats exactly the same ideas as Ka^cb when he deals with the battle of Siffīn,² enlarging it slightly with a description of the bravery of Mu^cāwīya in the battle and attributing his victory to God just as Ka^cb had done, as in the following lines:

وأبوك صاحب أذرع إذ أبى الحكمـان غير تهايب وضرار
لما تبوحثت الضغائن بينهم أفصى وسار بجحفل جـرار
وأهل إذ غنظ العدو وبفيلق تحت الأشياء عريضة الأثار
حتى رأوه بجانب مسكن معلما والخيل جاذية على الأقتار
حتى إذا علم الإله نكاله وتصاغروا للحرب أى صغار
حقن الدماء ورد ألفتهم لهم وجزاهم بالعرف والانسكار
القائل

And your father, the hero of Adhruh, when the two arbiters did not accept any [kind of settlement] except enmity and fighting.

When hatreds were exchanged between them,

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.189.

2. Ghāzī, al-Akhtal, p.176.

he showed himself and moved with a large and numerous army,

And he appeared, while the enemy were downhearted, with a large army bearing spears and heavy of impact.

When they saw him ready to fight (lit., wearing his distinguishing mark) at Maskin with the horses standing on the edges of their hooves in readiness, And when God knew the bitterness of his fighting, and the enemy felt their inferiority, He saved their blood, regained their friendship, and rewarded them according to their gratitude and ingratitude.¹

Besides praising Mu^cāwiya's strength, al-Akhtal also stresses more than Ka^cb the religious effect of the victory at Siffīn. He claims that God provided Mu^cāwiya with help because they were seeking to avenge the blood of the wronged ^cUthmān:

وَيَوْمَ عِيفِينَ وَالْأَبْصَارُ خَاشِعَةٌ
أَمْدَهُمْ إِذْ دَعَوْا مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ مَدَدَ
عَلَى الْأُلَى قَتَلُوا عُثْمَانَ مَظْلَمَةً
لَمْ يَنْهَبْهُمْ نَشْدَ عَنْهُ وَقَدْ نَشَدُوا
فَثَمَّتْ قُرَّتْ عَيُونَ الثَّائِرِينَ بِهِ
وَأَدْرَكُوا كُلَّ تَبَلٍ عِنْدَهُ قَسْوَدَ

الْبَيْتُ

In the day of Siffīn when their eyelids were heavy, God provided them with help when they called upon Him,

Against those who killed ^cUthmān wrongly.

No appeals prevented them, although appeals were made to them,

1. Diwān al-Akhtal, v.2, pp.415-7.

Then the eyes of the avengers were gladdened and gained every reprisal for which punishment should be fulfilled.¹

Al-Akhtal indulged in politics more than Ka^cb because he was contemporary with ^cAbd al-Malik, who was mainly occupied with internal affairs.

He persists in supporting the right of the Umayyads to rule. He refers to "seeking for power" as ḥaqq, which implies that the opposite is bāṭil (false), thus implying that others like the Banū Hāshim or the Zubayrites are mistaken in striving for the caliphate. In the following line he directs his words to the Qaysite tribe of Banū Muḥārib, exclaiming that they oppose what he calls the ahl al-ḥaqq (the people of the truth):

تسامون أهل الحق يا بني محارب وركب بني العجلان حسبك من ركب!
الطويل

O you two sons of Muḥārib and you of Banū al-^cAjlān - enough of you - you are competing with the people of the truth.²

This ḥaqq becomes reality for ^cAbd al-Malik despite his enemies, and thus he says:

ولكن رآك الله موضح حقه على رغم أعداءه وعدادة كذبه
الطويل

But God saw you in His place of truth despite

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.2, pp.445-6; Ghāzī, al-Akḥṭal, p.177.

2. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, p.49.

your enemies and opponents who are liars.¹

If this haqq can come to be admitted by his enemies and opponents, it will give Umayyad rule a firm base which will be able to resist any opposition. Thus he says:

ان تك للحق أسباب يمد بها ففى أكتهم الأرسان والسبب
اليسيط

If the truth can be secured with ropes, the straps and the ropes are in your hands.²

This is the claim of al-Akhtal in support of the Umayyad dynasty. He adds that the whole of Quraysh are interested in the sovereignty of the Umayyads, who save the people from danger.

أبوك أبو العاصى عليكم تعطف قريش لكم عرينها وصميمها
الطويل

Your father is Abū al-^cĀsī and Quraysh have been gathering around your people, and you have their highest and their innermost core.³

There are signs, however, that the relationship between Umayyads and Taghlib could worsen after the disastrous defeat of Taghlib at al-Bishr; al-Akhtal threatens in this line to find a people other than the Umayyads:

فلا تغيرها قريش بملكها يكن عن قريش مستراد ومرحلك
الطويل

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.51.

2. Ibid., p.85.

3. Ibid., p.318.

If Quraysh does not change it (this situation)
by their rule,
There is a place and settlement other than
theirs.

When ^cAbd al-Malik asked him in reply to this line:
"Where are you going, o son of a Christian woman?" he replied
sadly but wisely: "To Hell". Al-Akhtal knew from bitter
experience of the past, when the Greeks expelled Christian
Arab refugees in the time of ^cUmar, that there was no
alternative other than to accept the present situation, a choice
of evils which he expressed as "Hell".¹

^cAbd al-Malik once threatened the chieftain of Taghlib,
^cAbd Yasū^c b. Harb, during their war with Qays, and the
latter answered him proudly: "God and the sons of Wā'il reject
this".²

From these incidents it is clear that Taghlib were not
treated favourably, even by their allies. Their relationship
with the Umayyads is described thus by al-Akhtal:

فَسَائِلُ بَنِي مَرْوَانَ مَا بِالذِّمَّةِ وَحَبْلٌ ضَعِيفٌ لَا يَزَالُ يُوَسِّلُ
الطَّوِيلِ

Ask the sons of Marwān about our agreement,
and why a weak rope still connects us.³

However, they kept their good relationship with ^cAbd al-
Malik, especially as he to some extent disliked the chieftains
of their enemies, Zufar, who was once treated badly in

1. Al-Aghānī, v.11, p.60.

2. Ibn al-Kalbī, al-Jamhara, f.229a.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.32; al-Aghānī, v.7, pp.176-7.

Damascus,¹ and al-Jahhāf, who escaped to the Greeks.²

^CAbd al-Malik started gradually at the end of his reign to change his attitude towards the Christians,³ and when his son al-Walīd ascended to the throne, neither he nor his successors favoured the Christians. The enmity between Qays and Taghlib after al-Jahhāf gave the blood money⁴ became less important, but nevertheless Taghlib became of inferior status.

The disregard of the late Umayyad caliphs for them and the diminished importance of their enmity with Qays, who were Muslims, made the position of Qays stronger than that of Taghlib, who insisted on keeping their Christianity. The cool relationship between Taghlib and al-Walīd is clear in the following account. It is said that al-Akhtal and Jarīr were with al-Walīd. Al-Akhtal quoted the opening lines of ^CAmr b. Kulthūm's famous mu^Callaqa:

أَلَا هَبِّي بِصَحْنِكَ فَاصْبِحِينَا

Oh cup-bearer, awake, and give us our morning draught from your goblet.

Al-Walīd was annoyed and asked Jarir to recite the poem of Aws b. Maghrā' as-Sa^Cdī who was from Mudar. Al-Akhtal knew that the caliph wanted to show his ^Caṣabiyya against him and said: "Are you showing ^Caṣabiyya against me, Prince of the Faithful?"⁵

In the words of Ḥawī, "al-Akhtal had five poems on al-

1. Al-Aghānī, v.7, pp.176-7.
2. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, pp.329-31.
3. Ghāzī, al-Akhtal, p.135.
4. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, v.5, p.331.
5. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^Carā', p.410.

Walīd which show the tough and proud tone beside the begging and entreating tone. His poem rhyming in dāl starts with this line:

وَحَاجِلِيَّةِ الْعَيُونِ طَوَى قَوَاهَا شِهَابِ الصَّيْفِ وَالسَّفَرِ الشَّدِيدِ
الوَافِرِ

Many a [she-camel] with sunken eyes which was fatigued by the blazing summer and the hard journey.

We see him appealing very earnestly to the caliph to lift the taxes and jizya from his tribe".¹

The following lines are an example of this:

وَإِنَّا مَعْشَرٌ نَابَتْ عَلَيْنَا غَرَامَاتٌ وَمَعْضِلَةٌ كَثُودٌ
وَعَضْرُ الدَّهْرِ وَالْأَيَّامِ حَتَّى تَغْيِرَ بَعْدَكَ الشَّعْرَ الْجَدِيدَ
الوَافِرِ

We are a people upon whom exactions and a heavy disaster have descended,
And the erosion of the days and of time, so that the fresh hair [of youth] has changed [to grey] after my time with you.²

If we compare these two lines with the line in which he threatened to leave the caliph, we will find a big difference between the past and the present. The conclusion which we

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.629; Hāwī, al-Akhtal, p.49.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.630; Ghāzī, al-Akhtal, pp.136, 141-3.

draw, at least from al-Akhtal, is that Taghlib was favoured by the Umayyads when they needed them to fight against those who opposed their rule. When there was no need for Taghlib's help, Taghlib were put aside.

Al-A^c shā took his share in producing propaganda for the Umayyad dynasty, but his fervour was less than al-Akhtal's. This may be due to the declining impact of Taghlib on political affairs.

He praises Maslama b. ^cAbd al-Malik and others,¹ but the influence of politics is weak in his poetry. Al-Qutāmī, who seems not to be bothered with politics, praises ^cAbd al-Wāhid but without any real propagandising.²

The coldness worsened when Hishām and ^cUmar b. ^cAbd al-^cAzīz became caliphs. Al-A^c shā describes this in the following lines:

كَأَنَّ بَنِي مَرْوَانَ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِهِ جَلَامِيدٌ لَا تَتَدَى وَإِنْ بَلَمَهَا الْقَطْرُ
وَكَانُوا أَنَسًا يَنْفَحُونَ فَأَسْبَحُوا وَأَكْثَرُ مَا يَعْطُونَكَ النَّظْرَ الشَّرِيْرَ

الطويل

Banū Marwān after his (al-Walīd's) death are like rocks from which water never comes even though rain moistens them.

They used to be people who gave generously, but now the most they give you is an angry look.³

1. Al-Amīdī, al-Mu^ctalaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.20; al-Aghānī, v.10, p.99.
2. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.29-30. ^cAbd al-Wāhid was an Umayyad prince.
3. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.290.

Hishām showed his hostile attitude to Taghlib when he demanded that their chieftain Sham^cala b. Fā'id should become a Muslim, and vowed that he would cut off a piece of his thigh if he did not do so. Sham^cala refused to be a Muslim under pressure. Hishām implemented his vow and cut off a piece of his thigh, roasted it and gave it to him to eat.

Sham^cala who knew that there was no other choice than Umayyad rule repeated the answer which al-Akhtal had uttered ("to Hell") but in different words. In the following two lines he showed his yielding to Hishām and expressed his pain which could not be overcome when he portrayed Hishām as acting like Time

أَمِنْ حِزَّةٍ فِي الْفَخْدِ مِنْي تَبَاشَرْتِ عِدَاتِي فَلَا نَقْضَ عَلَيَّ وَلَا وَتْرَ
وَأَنْ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَفَعَلَهُ لَكَالْدَّهْرِ لَا عَارَ بَعْدَ فَعَلِ الدَّهْرِ

الطويل

Are my enemies glad, if a piece of my thigh was cut out, when I have neither broken a compact nor committed an act which entails vengeance.

The Prince of the faithful and his deeds are like Time: there is no shame in the acts of Time.¹

Al-A^cshā expressed the bitter reaction of his tribe to this deed, reminding the Umayyads of what he had done to Sham^cala and of Taghlib's previous help of the Umayyads:

1. Al-Āmidī, al-Mu^ctalaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.207.

أَلَمْ يَكْ غَدْرًا مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِشَمْعِلِّ
وَكَمْ قَدْ دَفَعْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِنْ مَلَمَّةٍ
فِي أَنْ تَكْفُرُوا مَا قَدْ فَعَلْتُمْ فَرِيضًا
فَمَا رَبُّ ذَاكَ الْفَعْلِ كَأَسْرَعَيْنِيهِ
وَقَدْ خَابِعْنَ كَانَتْ سِرِيرَتَهُ الْغَدْرُ
وَلَكِنْ أَبَيْتُمْ لَا وِفَاءَ وَلَا شُكْرَ
أَتِيحَ لَكُمْ قَسْرًا بِأَسْيَافِنَا النَّصْرُ
هَشَامٌ وَلَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ وَلَا بَشِيرُ

الطويل

Was it not treason what you did against Sham^cal?

Those whose behaviour is treason will fail.

Many a difficulty did we ward off from you, but you have refused to acknowledge this, without faith or thanks.

Even though you may deny what you have done, victory was given to you by force, by means of our swords.

The doer of those deeds will not be forced to lower his gaze by Hishām or ^cAbd al-^cAzīz or Bishr.¹

It was natural for the pious caliph ^cUmar b. ^cAbd al-^cAzīz to refuse to receive Christian poets or to have Christians near him. He said to al-^cAshā when he visited him: "There is nothing in the treasury for poets, and even if there was something there would be nothing for you because you are a Christian".² ^cUmar repeated the same saying when al-Akḥṭal visited him and said: "By God he will not tread on my carpet for he is an infidel".³

However, there were some Umayyad princes who had

1. Dīwān al-A^cshā, p.290.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.10, p.99.

3. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-Iqd, v.1, pp.319-20.

sympathy with Taghlib, like ^cAbd al-Wāhid b. Sulaymān who was praised by al-Qutāmī,¹ and Maslama b. ^cAbd al-Malik who was praised by al-A^cshā, but generally speaking, Taghlib was not fortunate after ^cAbd al-Malik died.

Proverbs and Aphorisms²

It is natural to find proverbs and aphorisms in early poetry as they reflect the ideas of the people on life and human nature. There are many books in Arabic which deal with the proverb, for instance the K. al-Amthāl of ad-Dabbī, the K. al-Amthāl of al-Maydānī, and the al-Mustaḡṣā of az-Zamakhsharī.

Taghlibī poets also made use of proverbs and aphorisms, which are derived from what they had experienced in their lives. They are generally confined to one line or part of a line, and we cannot find long parables in their poetry like the story of the snake and the two brothers in the poetry of an-Nābigha for example.³ Furthermore their proverbs and aphorisms, apart from those of al-Qutāmī, are not abundant. It seems that their life, which depended on warfare, did not leave space for contemplation and since they were a warlike and not a peaceful tribe, we cannot find aphorisms like those of Zuhayr, which are against war.⁴

1. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, pp.29-30.

2. For the purpose of this study we will consider the distinction between proverbs and aphorisms to be that the proverb is a saying about something which happened in the past and which has become part of the stock of culture of the people. It sometimes has a story or fable associated with it.

The aphorism is derived from a particular experience of the poet himself which is expressed by him in his poetry.

3. Dīwān an-Nābigha, pp.164-7.

4. Dīwān Zuhayr, pp.26-8.

Before the time of al-Qutāmī proverbs are fewer in number than aphorisms, possibly because they depend upon a shared cultural heritage and are by nature allusive while the aphorism comments upon a specific event and can easily be understood by everybody.

Proverbs in the poetry of Taghlib are usually based on the simile. Al-Akhnas uses the proverb aṭwa^c min Thawāb (more obedient than Thawāb) in the following line to show how he has become less reluctant than before:

وَكُنْتَ الدَّهْرَ لَسْتَ تَطِيْعُ أَنْثَى فَمِثْرَتِ الْيَوْمِ أَطْوَعُ مِنْ ثَوَابِ
الْوَأْفَرِ

You used never to obey a woman but today
you have become more obedient than Thawāb.¹

Shayṭān b. Mudlij refers cryptically to the story about the she-camel ad-Duhaym in the following line to show how his horse brought him to disaster:

جَاءَتْ بِمَا تَزِي الدَّهْمَ لِأَهْلِهَا خَمِيرَةٌ أَوْ مَسْرَى خَمِيرَةٌ أَشْأَمُ

Khumaṣra brought that which ad-Duhaym used to bring to her people; Khumaṣra or the nighttravelling of Khumaṣra is more ill-omened.²

Shurahbīl uses the proverb of the evasiveness of the fox to give a short answer to his enemies:

1. Al-Lisān (Thawb).

2. Ibn al-Kalbī, Ansāb al-Khayl, p.86.

أَبِينَا أَبِينَا أَنْ تَغْضُو أَبْعَامِيرَ كَمَا قَلْتُمْ زِيَانِ فِي مَسْكِ شَعْلَبِ

We refused, we refused to let you sing in celebration of capturing ^c Āmir; You would have said that it was as though Zabbān were in the skin of a fox.¹

Al-A^c shā uses the story of al-Qartha^c of Aws, who is said to have asked greedily for more gifts, in the following line:

إِذَا مَا الْقَرْثُحِ الْأَوْسِيِّ وَأَفْسَى عَطَاءِ النَّاسِ أَوْسَعَهُمْ سُوَالًا
الوافر

If al-Qartha^c of Aws got abundant gifts from people, he asked them for more.²

Al-Akhtal uses proverbs in the same way, for example saying that speech penetrates more than needles:

حَتَّى اسْتَكَانُوا وَمِنْ مَنَى عَلَى مَضْفِرٍ وَالْقَوْلُ يَنْفِذُ مَا لَا تَنْفِذُ الْإِبْرَ
البيط

They were subdued in pain because of me, because speech pierces where needles do not pierce.³

The above are examples of their proverbs, and the following lines are examples of their aphorisms. Jābir b. Hunayy uses an aphorism to state that power is the most

1. Al-Ashnāndānī, Ma^cānī ash-Shi^cr, pp.13-14.

2. Al-^cAskarī, Jamharat al-Amthāl, v.1, p.532.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.202.

important thing:

وكانوا هم البانين قبل اختلافهم ومن لا يشد بنيانه يتمدم
الطويل

Before their dissension, the great pile they designed to build - who coats not his building well with plaster, one day it falls.¹

Habība justifies her father's teaching her to distribute food, by saying that all food is ultimately finished:

وسلى به جدي وعلمني أبي نفض الميعاء وكل زاد ينفد
المطامل

My grandfather commended it and so my father taught me to empty the pot, as all food gives out in time.²

Another woman states the truism that every being will die no matter what enjoyment he has in life:

كل حي وإن تصنعت الدنيا له ميتت على كل حال
المنقمة

Every living being will die whatever he is even if life is pleasant for him.³

Ni^cma's aphorism is derived from his experience with camels when the bad camel impregnates a noble but disobedient she-camel. It means that the lower becomes higher than the

1. Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt (Lyall), v.1, p.422; v.2, p.155.

2. Al-Marzubānī, Ash^cār an-Nisā', p.162.

3. Ibid., p.151.

noble:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ فَحْلَ السُّوءِ يَسْمُو
فِيضْرِبُ خَيْرَةَ الْإِبِلِ الصَّعَابَا
الوَاقِرُ

Did not you see how the bad camel
impregnates the good but disobedient she-
camel?¹

^cAmīra b. Ju^cal uses the aphorism that everything depends on the person: if he makes the problem light, it becomes very light and if he makes it difficult, it becomes very difficult:

إِذَا ضَيِّقْتَ أُمْرًا ضَاقَ جَدًّا
وَإِنْ هَوَّنْتَ مَا قَدْ ضَاقَ هَانَ
الوَاقِرُ

If you make the matter hard it becomes very hard, and if you make what has become hard easy, it will become very easy.²

The following lines of ^cAmīra b. Ju^cal are the longest series of aphorisms in the poetry of Taghlib, for he gives them as a piece of advice which is part of their beliefs, for instance that the person of pure origin is better than the slave, for the former has inherent good qualities and lives in the best manner, while the latter, even if he has some good qualities, has not the ability to use them well:

1. Al-Buhturī, al-Hamāsa, p.211.

2. Al-Marzubānī, Mu^cjam ash-Shu^carā', p.75.

توثق من إخاء الحر أنسى رأيت العبد في الحالات عبدا
 يزيد الحر خيرا كل يوم وخير العبد قد يزداد عبدا
 إذا جرى لغاية مكرمات كبا هذا وكرز ذاك شادا
 الوافر

Make your brotherhood close with the man of pure origin, for I see the slave is always a slave,
 The man of pure origin gets better every day, but the good of the slave recedes,
 If they both run to the good, the latter falls down, and the former wins well.¹

Al-Akhtal uses similar aphorisms, as in the following lines:

إن الشباب لمحمود بشاشته والشيب منصرف عنه ومصداود
 البسيط

The time of youth is desired, and the time of old age is unwelcome and undesired.²

والناس همهم الحياة وما أرى طول الحياة يزيد غير خبالا
 القائل

People like life, but I have not seen that great length of life gives anything except senility.³

1. Al-Marzubānī, Mu^cjam ash-Shu^carā', p.75.
 2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.96.
 3. Ibn Qutayba, ash-Shi^cr wa ash-Shu^carā', v.1, p.503.

وَإِذَا افْتَقَرْتَ إِلَى الذَّخَائِرِ لَمْ تَجِدْ ذَخْرًا يَكُونُ كَسَالِحِ الْأَعْتَمَالِ
الطَّامِلِ

If you are in need of treasures, you will not find a treasure greater than good deeds.¹

However al-Qutāmī is the only Taghlibī poet who has been praised by critics for his many proverbs.² The following lines are an example of his proverbs:

قَدْ يَدْرِكُ الْمُتَأَنِّي بَعْضَ حَاجَتِيهِ وَهِيَ لَوْ رَوَى رَوَاهُ
وَقَدْ يَكُونُ مَعَ الْمُسْتَعْجِلِ الزَّلَلُ وَهِيَ لَوْ رَوَى رَوَاهُ
الْبَيْطِ

The slow may get a little of their work done right, but the quick may make mistakes.³

وَلَا بُدَّ أَنْ الضَّيْفَ مَخْبِرٌ مَا رَأَى مَخْبِرٌ أَهْلٍ أَوْ مَخْبِرٌ صَاحِبِ
الطَّوِيلِ

The guest will tell what he sees, he will tell his family or a friend.⁴

وَنَصْرُ ذَوِي الْأَبْصَاعِ مِنْكَ رَيْثٌ وَأَحْشَاءُ ابْنِ عَمِّكَ تَسْتَطَارُ
الْوَأْفَرِ

Helping strangers delays you when your cousin's body lies broken.⁵

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, p.140.

2. Ibn Qutayba, ash-Shi' r wa ash-Shu' arā', v.2, pp.728, 730; Abū Tamām, al-Ḥamāsa, v.1, p.129.

3. Diwan al-Qutami, p.25.

4. Ibid., p.46.

5. Ibid., p.147.

The Satire

Satire deals with their ideals which are concentrated around the idea of murū'a, which means for them their noble qualities like bravery, hospitality, protecting their neighbours, faithfulness, helping, and seeking revenge. The poet in his satire divests the tribes and their leaders of those qualities and what is connected with them, such as, for instance, that the tribe does not respect its neighbour or protect him; running away from battles; and inability to get revenge. The satirists also mention the disgraces of the tribe in their wars, and the days on which they were defeated. They also mention ḥird (honour), for example claiming that a person is not from his tribe.¹

During Islam satire developed some other elements as a consequence of the satire between Jarīr and al-Akḥṭal and the war between Taghlib and Qays. Al-Akḥṭal in his satire on Jarīr concentrates on "his clothes, his food, and his poor dwelling, besides his work like driving camels and looking after animals. He describes his mother and other women of his tribe as prostitutes, whose sons do not respect her and who is a miser. He describes all of the family in a picture more appropriate to slaves".²

His satire on Qays concentrates "on describing them in a picture similar to their slaves, reproaching them for driving donkeys, not protecting their women, moving into the barren desert, eating donkeys, wolves, and boiled blood in bowls, and describing their women as having buttocks like sharp knives. Their colour is like that of black slaves and he repeatedly describes the murder of ^CUmayr."³

1. Shawqī Dayf, al-^CAsr al-Jāhili, p.201.

2. Ḥawī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.250-1.

3. Ibid., pp.275-6.

Satire was not widespread among Taghlib during the Jāhiliyya period. Al-Muhalhil was busy lamenting his brother and threatening Bakr rather than satirising them. Other poets like al-Akhnas, Abū Ḥanash, as-Saffāh and others were engaged in the battle of al-Kulāb. It seems that there was no strong motive for them also or even for their successors like ^cUmayra b. Ju^c ayl, Ufnūn or other Jāhiliyya poets to compose satires. This may be due to the power of Taghlib who merely attacked their enemies without wasting time satirising or commemorating them. If we set aside the seven lines of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm satirising ^cAmr b. Hind and the mother of his brother an-Nu^c mān, whom Taghlib did not immediately attack like the others, then we will find only two lines satirising other tribes.

^cAmr b. Kulthūm, when he was on his way to attack Tamīm, composed a short urjūza, from which the following line is extracted:-

بنو لـجـيـم وجعاسيس مضر
بجانيب الدويدهدون العكر
الرهب

Banū Lujaym and the excrements of Mudar are moving herds of camels in the desert.¹

He describes them as 'excrement' and 'moving herds of camels' to make them appear as inferior to the rest of Mudar and to reproach them for work which the Jāhilī bedouin disdains haughtily. He satirises the tribe of Qutayba as not being from Wā'il in the following line:-

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.592.

زَعَمْتَ قَتَيْبَةَ أَنهَامِنِ وَائِيلٍ نَسَبٌ بَعِيدٌ يَا قَتَيْبُ فَأَصْعِدِي
الْأَمَلِ

Qutayba claim that they are from Wā'il,
O Qutayba, it is a distant relationship, find
your origin.¹

Those are the only two lines satirising other tribes. He
satirises ^cAmr b. Hind in lines which seem to antedate his
murder of him:-

لَحَا اللّٰهُ أَدْنَانَا إِلَى اللُّؤْمِ زَلْفَةً وَأَعْجَزْنَا خَالًا وَالْأَمْنَا أَبَا
وَأَجْدَرْنَا أَنْ يَنْفَخَ الْبَكِيرُ خَالَهُ وَيَصْوِفُ الْقُرُوطُ وَالشَّنُوفُ بَيْشِرًا
الطَّوِيلِ

May God disgrace the one of us who is nearer
to ignominy and the one whose uncle is
weaker, and whose father is more ignoble.
And whose uncle is more fit to blow the
bellows and make earrings in Yathrib.²

It seems that these two lines are not a real satire but
an indirect allusion to the low status of ^cAmr b. Hind's
mother, as her brother was a goldsmith and not from a noble
Arab strain. It seems likely that ^cAmr b. Kulthūm is still
regarding ^cAmr b. Hind as a powerful ruler.

^cAmr is openly satirical in the following lines in which
he directs his satire to an-Nu^cmān's mother after war had been
declared between them. ^cAmr here mentions an-Nu^cmān's mother

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.597.

2. Ibid., p.594.

as Sulaymā and imagines her divested of all her servants and wealth, and then describes her as carrying the two weights of ignominy and inferiority like a person who is shackled and walks as if carrying yanbūt and hāj (two types of thorny bush):

حَلَّتْ سَلِيمَى بِخَبْتٍ أَوْ بِفِرْتَاجٍ
إِذْ لَا تَرْجَى سَلِيمَى أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهَا
وَلَا يَكُونُ عَلَى أَبْوَابِهَا حَمْرَسٌ
تَمْشِي بَعْدَ لَيْلٍ مِنْ لَوْمٍ وَمَنْقَصَةٍ
وَقَدْ تَجَاوَرَ أَحْيَانًا بَنِي نَاجٍ
مَنْ بِالْخَوْرَنَقِ مِنْ قَيْنٍ وَنَسَاجٍ
وَلَا تَكْفِفُ قَبْطِيَا بِدَيْبِيَا
مَشَى الْمَقِيدِ فِي الْيَبُوتِ وَالْحَاجِ
الْبَيْطِ

Sulaymā encamped at Khabt or Firtāj, sometimes becoming a neighbour of Banū Nāj,

Since Sulaymā had no hope of the slaves and weavers of Khawarnaq.

Or of having guards at her doors, or of stitching Coptic cloth with brocade.

She walks with two balanced loads: ignominy and inferiority, like the one who walks with yanbūt and hāj tied to her.¹

These are the most obvious satires in Taghlib before the Umayyad dynasty.

There is another kind of satire which is widespread, but it is unlike that which deals with outsiders. This kind of poetry deals with the poet's own tribe. It is strange to find tribal poets satirising their own kinsmen, and this poetry was not in evidence during the al-Basūs war, when the tribe was

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, pp.595-6.

united. It seems that this sort of poetry began when the tribe moved from Najd and particularly after the battle of al-Kulāb. Thus we hear Jābir b. Ḥunayy unhappy with the situation in which his tribe finds itself. He mentions that Taghlib were dominant before their schism while now their spears have stirred up evil among themselves:-

لَتَغْلِبَ أَبْيَى إِذْ أَثَارَتْ رِمَاحُهَا غَوَائِلَ شَرِّبَيْنَهَا مَتْلَمٌ
الطويل

For Taghlib I mourn, whose spears have stirred up an evil brood of mischiefs to plague her, breaking forth to bring low her strength.¹

The most famous satirical poem within the tribe is the poem of ^cAmīra b. Ju^cal. In one poem he reviles Taghlibī men as degenerate. The last line of the following explains the nature of their quarrel over leaving the place where they had received unjust treatment:-

كسى الله حىي تغليب ابنة وائيل من اللوم أظفارا بطيئا نصولها
فما بييم أن لا يكونوا طروقفة هجانا عفرتها فحولها
ترى الحاضن الخراء منهم لشارف أخى سلة قد كان منه سليلها
قليلاً تبغيها الفحولة غويره إذا استسعلت جنان أرض وغولها
إذا ارتحلوا من دارضيم تحاذلوا عليهم ورد وا وفد هم يستقبلها
القول

1. Al-Mufaddaliyat (Lyall), v.1, p.424, v.2, pp.154-5.

May God fix in the two tribes of Taghlib,
daughter of Wā'il, claws of vileness that
shall be slow to relax their grip,

It is not the case that they have not a good
strain on the mother's side: it is the
stallions that have abased them to the dust,

Thou seest the chaste woman with a bright
fair face among them wedded to a worn out
old man who has stolen his ancestry, and of
him is the child she bears,

Thou seest her desire nought of stallion's
business but from him, what time the Jinn and
the Ghūls of a land become changed to
demons,

When they journey forth from a place where
they are oppressed, one blames another for
the move, and they send back their deputation
(to their oppressor) to ask pardon for it.¹

It seems that this poem is not a pure satire but a sort of protest and complaint against his tribe. He claims that their women are pure in origin and describes them as chaste women. The contrary claim of the illegitimacy of their men has come about because the poet is angry at them for their acceptance of injustice. It seems also that this poem is an echo of al-Akhnas b. Shihāb's poem, in which he expresses his unhappiness with their living in ^cIrāq. This disagreement within the tribe can be found also in the lines of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm condemning al-Lahāzim and al-Qu^cūr for their ingratitude for what had been done for them.²

1. Al-Mufaddaliyāt (Lyall), v.1, p.519, v.2, pp.199-200.

2. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.602; Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.532.

As-Saffāh and his family were subjected to the accusation that they were not from Taghlib but from Nahd. The defamation was harmful for an Arab because it implied their ejection from the tribe and the denial of their honour, and treating them as mawālī. Bishr b. Suwāda stresses the idea of as-Saffāh's constantly manipulating his origin as between Nizār and Yemen. He asks him to prove his origin in front of the people, after which, he says, he will be known as a mawlā to Taghlib and not as one of them:-

أَنه ديار إذا ما جئت نهـدا
 وتـدعى بالجزيرة من نـزار
 ألا تغني كنانة عن أخيهـا
 زهير في الملمات الكبار
 فيبرز جمعنا ويـنى عـدى
 فيعلم أيننا مولى صحـار
 الواقـر

Do you belong to Nahd when you go to Nahd,
and claim you are from Nizār in al-Jazīra?

Do not Kināna suffice for their brother Zuhayr
in problematic matters,

When our people and Banū ^cAdiyy take the
field, of Suhār, it will be known which of us
is a mawlā.¹

^cAbbād, the son of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, calls as-Saffāh's family, the Banū Ghanm b. Dawdān, Yemenites. He also accuses them of being oppressors in the following lines:-

هـلا سألت بنى السفاح هل سعـدا
 بأمرهم أن غب الأمر خـوان
 ما أورث البغي قوما قبلهم رشـدا
 بل يهلكون به في كل أزـمان
 يا موعدي باسمان الخيول ومـا
 يرشى المصاب لهم زول ولا وان
 البيـط

1. Al-Bakri, al-Mu^cjam, v.1, p.40.

Why do you not ask Banū as-Saffāh whether they are conscious of what they are doing, for the outcome of oppression is treachery.

Oppression has not bequeathed good results to any people before them, in fact they were destroyed every time,

O you who threaten me by keeping your horses well-fed, the one who is injured does not lament for the emaciated or the feeble.¹

^cAmr b. Kulthūm and his family were also the objects of that kind of satire, when one Taghlibī poet satirised them and also ^cAmr b. Mālik and the family of Abū Shi^cr, because they did not help them:-

مَا ضَرَّنَا خِذْلَانِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ مَالِكٍ
قَبَائِلُ لَا يَجْزُونَ مَجْزَى قَبِيلَةٍ
وَعَمْرٍو بْنِ كَلْثُومٍ وَرَهْطِ أَبِي شَعْرٍ
وَإِنْ فَزَعُوا كَانُوا أَفْرًا مِنَ الْجُزْرِ
المطويل

The desertion of ^cAmr b. Mālik, ^cAmr b. Kulthūm and the family of Abū Shi^cr did not hurt us,

They are tribes who are not equal to a single tribe of ours, and if they are alarmed they will flee faster than small goats.²

We find a situation similar to this after the battle of al-Kulāb with the advent of Islam before the tribe united once again in their war against Qays. Thus ^cUtba b. al-Waghl

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.606.

2. Ibid., p.611.

satirises Ka^c b b. Ju^c ayl as being a lowly member of Taghlib by using his names "ka^c b" (heel) and "Ju^c al" (scarab) to mock him:-

وَسَمِيَتْ كَعْبًا بِشَرِّ الْعِظَامِ وَكَانَ أَبُوكَ يَسْمَى الْجَعَلَ
وَإِنْ مَكَانَكَ مِنْ وَائِلٍ مَكَانَ الْقِرَادِ مِنْ أَسْتِ الْجَمَلِ
الطَّوِيلِ

You were called Ka^c b after the worst bones,
and your father was called the scarab,
And your place in Wā'il is like the place of
the ticks in the buttocks of the camel.¹

Al-Ba^c īth of Taghlib considers Zur^c a b. ^c Abd ar-Rahmān as being not originally from Taghlib. He describes him as the riff-raff of Taghlib, because he was stuck on to them:-

أَيَا زَرْعِ عَدِّ الْفَخْرَانِكَ مَلْصَقٍ وَلَيْسَ صَمِيمِ الْقَوْمِ مِثْلَ الزَّعَانِفِ
الطَّوِيلِ

O Zur^c a, leave off boasting, you are merely
stuck on to them, and a pure person is not
like the riff-raff.²

Al-Mawj b. Zamān reviles Banū Jusham, a major branch of Taghlib, by denying them the status of being the leaders of Taghlib in former times:-

1. Al-Ghundi jānī, Furḥat al-Adīb, pp.89-90.

2. Al-Āmidī, al-Mu'talaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.73.

تَاللَّهِ مَا جِشَمَ قَدَمَا وَإِنْ زَعَمْتَ
 مِنَ النَّوَاصِي وَلَا الشَّمِ الْخِرَاطِيمِ
 البسيط

I swear by God that Jusham were not in the old times from the forelock or the exalted [of the tribe], even if they claimed to be so.¹

Al-Akhtal also takes part in this satire within the tribe when he satirises al-Lahāzim, the family of Ibn Ju^cayl, as being not from Banū Taym, a branch of Taghlib, but from their mawālī:-

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَأْزِمُ لَنْ تَنْفِكَ تَابِعَةَ
 هُمُ الذَّنَابِيُّ وَشَرِبَ التَّابِعَ الْكَدْرَ
 مَحَلُّهُمْ مِنْ بَنِي تَيْمٍ وَأَخْوَتِهِمْ
 حَيْثُ يَكُونُ مِنَ الْحِمَارَةِ الشَّفَرِ
 البسيط

The Lahāzim are still mawālī, they are tails, and the drinking of the mawlā is muddy water.

They and their brothers have their place in Tamīm where the strap goes under the tail of the she-ass.²

Al-Akhtal harshly satirises Ka^c b b. Ju^cayl, when he mentions his mother in such lines as the following:-

هَجَا النَّاسَ لِيَلِيَّ أُمِّ كَعْبٍ فَمَزَقْتِ
 فَلَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا نَفْنَا أَنَا رَاقِعُهُ
 الخويل

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.610.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.532.

The people satirised Laylā the mother of Ka^cb and she was torn apart.

Nothing remains [to be said about her] except a steep hillside which I am going to cover.¹
(i.e. I am going to complete her disgrace).

a) Al-Akhtal and Jarīr:

The satires of al-Akhtal and Jarīr could be called the beginning of Taghlibī satirical poetry. Al-Akhtal engaged in satire with Jarīr for a long time. Hāwī, as is mentioned above, has analysed the main elements of their satire. The following lines may illustrate the use of these elements in his poetry. Al-Akhtal accuses Jarīr's tribe Yarbū^c of being weak, as the other people did their work for them:-

مُخْلِفُونَ وَيَقْضِي النَّاسُ أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ بَغِيْبٌ وَفِي عَمَاءٍ مَا شَعَرُوا

They are left at the back of the people, and the people do their work for them while they are unknown, blind and without feeling.

He reproaches them for their food and for being unaware of what is happening, by which he means weak:-

الْأَكْلُونَ حَيْثُ الزَّادِ وَحْدَهُمْ وَالسَّائِلُونَ بظَهْرِ الْغَيْبِ مَا الْخَبْرُ
الْبَيْطُ

They who eat bad food alone, and they who ask, having been absent, what has happened.²

1. Al-Aghānī, v.7, p.170.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, pp.208-9.

He also reproaches him that his father is very poor with lice in his shabby clothes:-

وَأَبُوكَ ذُو مَحْنِيَّةٍ وَعَبَاءَةٌ
قَمَلٍ كَأَجْرِبٍ مَتَسَى مَرُودٍ
الطامل

Your father, with his crooked stick and gown,
has lice like a mangy camel who is walking
apart and red with fever.¹

He also reproaches him because his father possesses donkeys, which is not respectable for Arabs, and calls him "Ibn al-Marāgha" ("son of a she-ass"):-

وَابْنُ الْمَرَاغَةِ حَابِسٌ أَعْيَاهُ
قَذْفُ الْغَرِيبَةِ مَا يَذْقُنْ بِاللَّالِ
الطامل

And Ibn al-Marāgha keeps his asses without
water, and does not have a she-camel.²

Ibn Rashīq says that the most stinging satire against Jarīr is the following two lines in which he describes Jarīr's family in mocking words as a miser who keeps her urine to extinguish the fire because she dislikes guests:-

قَالُوا لِأُمِّهِمْ بُولِي عَلَى النَّارِ
وَمَا تَبُولُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا بِعَقْدَارِ
قَوْمٍ إِذَا اسْتَبِيحَ الْأَضْيَافَ كَلْبِهِمْ
فَتَمْسِكُ الْبُولَ بَخْلًا أَنْ تَجُودَ بِهِ
البيط

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.521.

2. Ibid., v.1, p.117.

The people who, if their dog barks to
announce the guests, tell their mother to
urinate on the fire,
She keeps her urine because she is mean, and
she only gives it slowly.¹

Satires on Qays:

If the war between Taghlib and Qays was fought with
weapons, Taghlibī poets like al-Akhtal and al-A^cshā waged
another war with poetry. Al-A^cshā has various poems on the
war,² and al-Akhtal was the strongest representative of
Taghlib in the Royal Court and among the Arabs.

The description of the elements of satire given by Hāwī
gives the best picture of their satire. The following lines may
serve as examples. Thus he accuses them of being slaves and
not of pure Arab stock:-

وَكُنْتُ إِذَا لَقَيْتُ عَبِيدَ تَيْمٍ وَتَيْمًا قَلْتُ أَيُّهُمَا الْعَبِيدُ
الوافر

I used to say if I met Taym and their slaves:
Which are the slaves?³

He also upbraids them with driving asses in Najd after they
were expelled from al-Jazīra:-

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.636; Ibn Rashīq, al-Umda, v.2, p.175; Ghāzī, al-Akhtal,
pp.185-208; Hāwī, al-Akhtal, pp.224-51.

2. Al-Āmidī, al-Mu'talaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, p.20.

3. Hāwī, al-Akhtal, p.253.

يُزْجِنُونَ الْحَمِيرَ بِأَرْضِ نَجْدٍ وَمَالِهِمْ مِنَ الْأُمْرِ الْخِيَارُ
الوافر

They were driving the asses in Najd, and they have no choice in the matter.¹

He also scolds them for their defeat in their battle with Taghlib, describing how they abandoned the women and fled from the battlefield while ^cUmayr was murdered:-

لَحَا اللَّهُ قَيْسًا حِينَ فَرَّتْ رِجَالُهَا عَنِ النِّصْفِ السُّودِ وَالْكَأِيبِ الْبِكْرِ
وَوَضَعَتْ تَنَادِيًا بِالشَّدَى نِسَاءُؤُهُمْ طَوَالِحَ الْعُلْيَاءِ مَائِلَةَ الْخُمُرِ
فَإِنْ يَكُ قَدْ قَادَ الْمَقَانِيبَ مَرَّةً عُمَيْرٌ فَقَدْ أَضْحَى بِدَاوِيَةَ قَفْرِ
تَظَلُّ سِبَاعُ الشَّرْعِيَّةِ حَوْلَهُ رِيحًا وَمَا كَانُوا أَجْنُوهُ فِي قَبْرِ
الطويل

May God disgrace Qays because their men fled and left the black women and the young girls, And their women were screaming in ath-Thudī, climbing the hills with their veils pulled aside. Though ^cUmayr once led troops of horsemen, he now finds himself in a desolate desert, The wild animals of ash-Shar ^cabiyya are standing around him, for he was not put in a grave.²

He also reviles Zufar, the chieftain of Qays, for his shameful

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, p.28.

2. Ibid., v.2, p.670; Ghāzī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.185-208; Hāwī, al-Akḥṭal, pp.251-76.

fleeing from battle:-

لَعَمْرُ أَبِيكَ يَا زُفَرَ بْنَ عَمْرٍو
وَرَكُضِكَ غَيْرِ مَلْفُتٍ إِلَيْنَا
لَقَدْ نَجَاكَ جَدُّ بَنِي مُعَاذٍ
كَأَنَّكَ مَسَّكَ بِجَنَاحِ بَعِازٍ
الواقف

I swear that the luck of Banū Mu^cāz has saved you, O Zufar, son of ^cAmr, And your fleeing without turning your head towards us was [as fast] as if you were holding the wing of a falcon.¹

Desert and Settled Life in
the Poetry of Taghlib

Taghlib, during their movements within and from Arabia, did not portray any sort of urban life in their poetry. Their poetry of that period reflects only nomadic living. Attacking, invading, capturing and killing are the dominant features of the poetry. They did not stay long enough in their sites in al-Qasīm to adopt the agricultural life of that region, which contains the fertile ar-Rumma valley and the scattered woods in the highlands of Najd. In any case, they were involved in battles which would not have allowed them to benefit from cultivating the area. Beside this, Taghlib as a bedouin tribe who claimed descent from ^cAdnān as pure Arabs did not look on sedentary occupations as respectable work. ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, who is a relatively late poet in the Jāhiliyya, expresses this view when he reproaches an-Nu^cmān because his uncle is a jeweller.

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.2, p.421.

We might expect Taghlib, after settling in al-Jazīra, to have changed their views, but in fact they kept to the customs and conventions of the Jāhiliyya despite their Christianisation, and despite their living in real agricultural lands.

Al-Akhtal reproaches Tamīm for working on date-palms in the following lines:-

تَرْقُوا فِي النَّخِيلِ وَأَنْسِئُونَا دِمَاءَ سَرَاتِكُمْ يَوْمَ الْكَلَابِ
الزَّافِرِ

Climb the date-palms and postpone avenging
upon us the blood of your nobles which was
shed on the day of al-Kulāb.¹

He also accuses the Anṣār of working as peasant farmers and for this he divests them of any noble qualities:-

فَذَرُوا الْمَكَارِمَ لِسْتَمِّ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا وَخِذُوا مَسَاحِيكُم بِئِنِّي النَّجَّارِ
إِنَّ الْفَوَارِسَ يَعْرِفُونَ ظُهُورَكُمْ أَوْلَادَ كُلِّ مَفْسُوحٍ أَكَّارِ
الْقَاصِلِ

O Banū an-Najjār, leave aside honours for you
are not worthy of them, and take up spades.
The horsemen know your backs, O you who are
sons of every bandy-legged peasant.²

Al-Akhtal, who reflects his tribe's views, looks on cultivation as being a non-Arab activity and because of this he rebukes Zayd b. Mundhir an-Nimrī, who was the chief of

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.367.

2. Ibid., v.2, p.484.

Hishām b. ^cAbd al-Mālik's guards, for being an illegitimate son, because his mother Jurthum had been with a non-Arab peasant from al-Hidnayn:-

لَكِنِ إِلَى جُرْثُمِ الْعَقَاءِ إِذْ وُلِدَتْ عَبْدًا لِعَلِجٍ مِنَ الْحَضَنِينَ أَكْرَارِ
الْبَيْتِ

But his mother is Jurthum, she with the wide vagina, and she bore a slave to a non-Arab peasant from al-Hidnayn.¹

Their view of non-Arabs as inferiors and their own claim to pure Arab origin is shown in the following line, where he pretends that Jarīr's mother was not an Arab:-

وَلَا وَجَدُوا أُمَّهُ عَرَبِيَّةً وَلَا أَسْهَرَتْهَا مِنْ خِتَانٍ كُلُّومَهَا
الطَّوِيلِ

They did not find an Arab mother for him, and she was not kept awake by the wounds of circumcision.²

This view of cultivation as not respectable and only suitable for non-Arabs as a lower ethnic group, is supported by their claim to Arab bedouin origin and their pride in this. Al-Akhtal expresses disdain of urban women, considering his own tribeswomen as not being from urban Damascus but bedouin Arabs:-

مِنَ الْعَرَبِيَّاتِ الْبَوَادِي وَلَمْ تَكُنْ تَلُوحِهَا حَمَى دِمَشْقٍ وَمَوْمَهَا
الطَّوِيلِ

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.479.

2. Ibid., v.1, p.321.

They are of the bedouin Arabs and the fever and the smallpox of Damascus has not changed their looks.¹

This is also clear in the following line when he describes women in their howdahs as pure Arabs while women of mixed race are not even worth flirting with:-

إذا شئت أن تلهو لبعضِ حديثها
رفعن وأنزلن القطين المولى
الطويل

If you want to enjoy yourself dallying with them, they will send down their half-breed slaves and travel quickly.²

In the above lines, al-Akhtal puts stress on bedouin origin and shows his disdain of urbanites. Taghlib, even under Islam, was known as a bedouin tribe,³ and for this reason their views did not change towards the new life in the new area. Al-Qutāmī (d. A.H. 101) writing in a proud tone as a bedouin, describes their life at that time and makes a clear differentiation between urban and rural life. Urban life, in his view, is living in towns and rural life is being a bedouin. The symbol of urban life is keeping donkeys and the symbols of rural life are long lances and beautiful horses. We find these ideas in the following lines:-

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.316.

2. Ibid., v.1, p.303.

3. Al-Aghānī, v.11, p.62, v.17, p.113.

وَمَنْ تَكُنَ الْحَضَارَةُ أُعْجِبْتَهُ
فَأَيُّ أَنْسَابِ بَادِيَةِ تَرَانَا
وَمَنْ رُيِّطَ الْجَحَاشُ فَاِنْ فِينَا
قَنَا سُلْبًا وَأَفْرَاسًا حِسَانَا
الوافر

And those who admire town-life, what do you think of the people of the desert?
And those who tie up donkeys, we have long lances and beautiful horses.¹

The same idea of bedouinism is repeated in the following line:-

تَكْثُرُ بَادِيَنَا عَلَى كُلِّ مَنْ بَدَا
قَدِيمًا وَأَغْنَى مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ حَاضِرُهُ
الطويل

Those of us who were bedouins in the past had more horses than all other bedouins, and the present ones are rich likewise.²

It seems that their only occupations were launching attacks on others, possessing horses and breeding camels. Al-Akhtal mentions one of their branches, Banū al-Jawwāl, who traded with camels:-

وَمَوْقِحِ أَثَرِ السَّفَارِ بِخَطْمِهِ
مِنْ سَوْدِ عَقَّةِ أَوْبَنِ الْجَوَّالِ
العامل

And many a camel whose nose is chafed by the bridle as a result of travelling, one of the black camels of ^cAqqa or Banū al-Jawwāl.³

1. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.76.

2. Ibid., p.96.

3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.144.

Their attitude towards involvement in battles did not change despite the restrictions of Islam and for this reason we find al-Akḥṭal boasting of capturing women:-

نَسَبِي النِّسَاءِ فَمَا تَنفَكُ مُرْدَفَةً قَدْ أَنهَجْتَ عَنْ مَعَارِيهَا السَّرَاوِيلَ
 الْمِبْرِطِ

We capture women with torn clothes uncovering their loins and mount them behind us.¹

The war between Qays and Taghlib is a good example of their attacks. This idea of ghazw (attacking for booty) is expressed boastingly in the following lines of al-Quṭāmī:-

وَكُنْ إِذَا أَغَرْنَا عَلَى خَبَابِ وَأَعْوَزْهُنْ كَوْزَ حَيْثُ كَانَا
 أَغَرْنَا مِنَ الضَّبَابِ عَلَى حِلَالِ وَضَبَابَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ حَانَ حَانَا
 وَأَحْيَانًا عَلَى بَكْرٍ أَخِينَا إِذَا لَمْ نَجِدْ إِلَّا أَخَانَا
 الْوَافِرِ

When our horsemen attacked Khabāb but could not attack Kūz anywhere, They attacked those from ad-Dibāb who were encamped, and Dabba and anyone they came across, And sometimes they attacked our brother Bakr, if we could not find anyone else.²

It is difficult then to assume that Taghlib had changed their life or habits or to find any influence on them of modernising changes in al-Jazīra brought by Syriac or Greek

1. Dīwān al-Akḥṭal, v.1, p.63.

2. Dīwān al-Quṭāmī, pp.76-7.

culture. Their poetry which reflects their life is a part of a Jāhiliyya which exists in Najd as a nomadic and not a part of an urban life. Al-A^c shā is the only one who shows a slight change in his style which is different even from his contemporary, al-Qutāmī.

Thus their poets reflect no change in their thinking and in what they inherited from their forefathers. It is also difficult to see why the old philologists do not accept Taghlib as desert Arabs. It seems that the only reason for this is that they settled in al-Jazīra near the non-Arabs, but that their poetry is not different from any other Jāhiliyya poetry which they accept.¹

However, despite the preference for the bedouin life among the Taghlib, their poetry shows indications of urban materials like clothes, planted trees, building, and seafaring.

The mentioning of seafaring is the oldest non-bedouin theme in their poetry, and we find it in al-Muhalhil in the following line:-

قَدْ دَرَّ رُكُوبَ الْبَحْرِ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ ذَا مَصْدَرٍ مِنْ مَهْلِكَاتِ الْغَرِيقِ
مَرَانِ رُكُوبَ الْبَحْرِ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ ذَا مَصْدَرٍ مِنْ مَهْلِكَاتِ الْغَرِيقِ
السَّريحِ

Sailing on the sea is dangerous for a drowning man if there is no way to get out of it.²

We also find it in ^cAmr b. Kulthūm in the following line:-

1. As-Suyūtī, al-Muzhir, v.1, p.128.

2. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.230.

مَلَأْنَا الْبَحْرَ حَتَّى ضَاقَ عَنَّا وَنَحْنُ الْبَحْرَ نَمْلُؤُهُ سَفِينَا

We have filled the land until it becomes too narrow for us, and we have filled the sea with ships.¹

We find it later in al-Akhtal, as in the following line:-

سَوَاهِمٍ مِّنْ طُولِ الْوَجِيفِ كَأَنَّهَا قَرَا قِيرِ يَغْشِيهِنَ آذِيَهُ الْبَحْرِ
الطويل

They are thin from running quickly like large ships which the sea covers with its waves.²

Al-Akhtal also gives us two beautiful pictures of the sailors struggling against the waves in the Euphrates and in the sea.³

Al-Muhalhil mentions Coptic clothes in the following line:-

وَابْكِينَ سَيِّدِ قَوْمِيهِ وَانْدَبْنَاهُ شَدَّتْ عَلَيْهِ قِبَاطِي الْأَكْفَانِ
الاصل

Weep and mourn for the chief of his tribe who was wrapped in a Coptic shroud.⁴

And in the following line^c Amr b. Kulthūm also mentions silk:-

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.833.
2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.213.
3. Ibid., v.1, pp.310-11, 326-8.
4. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.390.

وَلَا يَكُونُ عَلَى أَبْوَابِهَا حُرْسٌ وَلَا تَكْفُفُ قَبْطِيًّا بِدَيْبِجٍ

Or having guards at her doors, or of stitching Coptic cloth with brocade.¹

Al-Akhtal likewise mentions Persian cloaks and Berber garments:-

وَلَيْلِ كَسَاجِ الْفَارِسِيِّ لَهْوَتِهِ بِمَرْتَجَةِ هَيْفِ خِمَاصِ بَطُونِهَا

On many a night which was [as dark as] a Persian cloak have I found pleasure with a woman of big buttocks, slender waist and slim stomach.²

كَأَنَّ ثِيَابَ الْبَرْبَرِيِّ تَطِيرُهُ أَعَاصِيرُ رِيحٍ حَرَجَفَ زَفِيَانِ الطَّوِيلِ

Like the garments of a Berber horseman which are blown by strong chill storms.³

^cAmr b. Kulthūm mentions ivory and marble in the following line:-

وَسَارِيَّتِي بِالْإِطِ أَوْ رُخَامِ يَرْنُ خَشَا حَرَلِيمَا رَنِينَا

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.595.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.541.

3. Ibid., v.1, p.301.

And two legs, white as ivory or marble, the jingling or ornaments upon which makes a low noise.¹

While al-Akhtal mentions a bridge of gypsum, bricks and tiles:-

كَأَنَّهَا بَرَجٌ رُومِيٌّ يَشِيدُهُ وَتَنْ وَوَيْدَانٌ وَأَجْرٌ وَأَحْجَارٌ
الْبَيْطُ

Like the tower of a Greek which he builds, and constructed of gypsum, bricks and stone.²

Date-palms are the most common trees in their poetry, as in the line of al-Akhtal:-

طَفَّتْ فِي الضُّحَى أَحْدَاجُ أَرْوَى كَأَنَّهَا قَرْيٌ مِنْ جَوَاثِي مَحْزَلِ نَخِيلِهَا
الطُّوَيْلُ

The howdahs of Arwā appear in [the mirage] of the morning like villages of Juwāthā with clusters of date-palms.³

Likewise al-Qutāmī mentions the difference in ripening time between Syria and Hajr, which is hotter, so that dates in Hajr ripen sooner:-

وَلَا التَّمْرُ الْمَكْمُ حَوْلَ حِمَيْمٍ إِذَا مَا حَانَ مِنْ هَجَرَ الْجَزَارِ
الْوَأْفَرُ

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharh al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis', v.2, p.787.

2. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.163.

3. Ibid., v.2, p.624.

And not the dates which are being tied together at Hims when it is already time to gather dates in Hajar.¹

Al-Qutāmī also mentions olive trees:-

كَمَا الزَّيْتُونَ لَا يَمَازُ نَخْلًا وَلَا الْجِبَارُ تَبْدِيلَهُ الصَّحَارِ
الوَافِرِ

As olive trees cannot be turned into date-palms, and deserts cannot be changed for tall date-palms.²

Al-Akhtal also mentions vines:-

مِمَّا تَخْلَاهُ التَّجَارُ غَرِيبَةً // وَلَهَا بَعَانَةٌ وَالْفِرَاتُ كَرُومِ
الْقَامِلِ

Foreign [wine] which the merchants sell dear, and which comes from vines in ^CĀna and the Euphrates region.³

Al-Akhtal is the only one who mentions animals like frogs, cocks and hens:-

ضَفَادِعُ غَرَّتْهَا عَرَاةٌ فَقَلَمَتْ // مِنَ الْبَحْرِ عَنْ آذِيهِ الْمَتَدَارِكِ
الطَّوِيلِ

Frogs which were tempted by muddy water and quickly left the rough waves of the river.⁴

1. Dīwān al-Qutāmī, p.147.
2. Ibid.
3. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.383.
4. Ibid., v.2, p.502.

تَرَى الْعَرْمِيسَ الْوَجْنَاءَ يَضْرِبُ حَاذَهَا ضَيْئِيلٌ كَفَرُوجٍ الدَّجَاةَ مَعْجِيلٌ
الطويل

You see the strong, tough she-camel whose two sides are being kicked by an offspring which will soon be born, weak as a chick.¹

Al-Akhtal also mentions pearls and gold:-

مَنْ كُلُّ بَيْضَاءٍ مَكْسَالٍ بَرْهَرَةً زَانَتْ مَعَاظِلَهَا بِالذَّرِّ وَالذَّهَبِ
البيوط

From each pale-skinned woman who is leisured and radiant and who ornaments her body with pearls and gold.²

Al-Akhtal mentions the incense Yalanjūj in the following line:-

لَا يَصْطَلِبِينَ دُخَانَ النَّارِ شَاتِيَةً إِلَّا يَبْعُودُ يَلْنَجُوجٍ عَلَى فَحْمٍ
البيوط

They do not sit beside the fire in winter unless they use Yalanjūj on the embers.³

He also mentions lamps which are fuelled with oil in the following line:-

رَأَتْ بَارِقَاتٍ بِالْأَكْفِ كَأَنَّهَا مَسَابِيحٌ سَرِيحٌ أَوْقَدَتْ بِمِدَادِ
الطويل

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.23.

2. Ibid., p.242.

3. Ibid., p.222.

She saw shining in our palms [swords] which looked like lamps fuelled with oil.¹

Al-Akhtal also mentions writing with a pen:-

فَهِيَ إِذَا ذُكِرَتْ عِنْدِي وَإِنْ قَدِمَتْ يَوْمًا حَدِيثًا كَخَرِيفِ الْكَفِّ بِالْقَلَمِ
الْبَسِطِ

It is a thing, which, if it is mentioned in my presence, is as fresh as if it were written by hand with a pen, old though it is.²

Writing is mentioned by a Jāhili poet from Taghlib in the following line:-

لَأَبْنَةُ حِطَّانَ بْنِ عَوْفٍ مَنَازِلَ كَمَا رَقَشَ الْعُنْوَانُ فِي الرِّقِّ كَاتِبِ
الطَّوِيلِ

The daughter of Hittān son of 'Awf left her dwellings plain like lines drawn by skilled hands fair on a volume's opening page.³

These are the features of urban life which have infiltrated into Taghlib's poetry, but which do not reflect an urban lifestyle even if they benefit sometimes from their images.

It seems strange that al-Akhtal is the only one who mentions any of the diseases of al-Jazīra:-

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.1, p.174.

2. Ibid., p.226.

3. Al-Mufaḍḍiliyyāt (Lyall), v.1, p.410, v.2, p.149.

فَظَلَّ حِرْيَاؤُهُمَا لِلشَّمْسِ مُصْطَخِدَا ۚ كَأَنَّهُ وَارِمُ الأُودِاجِ مَخْتَنِقٌ
البنيط

The chameleon stands basking in the heat like a person who has swelling veins and is unable to breathe.¹

He also mentions mosquitos in the following line:-

يَغْنِيهِ بِالْفَيْفْرِ البَعُوضُ كَأَنَّهُمَا ۚ أَغْنَانِي عَرَسٌ صَنْجَةٌ وَجَلَّالَةٌ
الطويل

The mosquitoes sing to him in the flooded land like the songs of a wedding party singing with cymbals and bells.²

1. Dīwān al-Akhtal, v.2, p.605.

2. Ibid., v.1, p.345.

PART III

THE TWO MAJOR POETS OF TAGHLIB IN THE JĀHILIYYA

A Detailed Analysis of the Poems of al-Muhalhil
and the Mu^callaqa of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm

Chapter 5: The Poetry of al-Muhalhil

Chapter 6: Some Observations on the Mu^callaqa
of ^cAmr b. Kulthūm

CHAPTER 5

THE POETRY OF AL-MUHALHIL

1) Textual and Critical Analysis
of a Poem by al-Muhalhil¹

This poem was composed after the defeat of Taghlib at ^cUwayrid or ^cUnaysa. After a long series of victories this disaster came as a great blow, which had a profound effect upon a sensitive poet such as al-Muhalhil. In the following analysis we shall attempt to give a detailed discussion of the style and content of this poem the text of which is given in full in the appendix to this thesis. In the first line we find him sitting alone during a long and dark night, in which he tells of his grief:-

أَلَيْتَنَا بِذِي حُسُومٍ أَنْ يَرِي إِذَا أَنْتِ انْقَضَيْتِ فَلَا تَحْسُورِي

O our night in Dhū Ḥusum, grow bright; when
you come to an end, do not return.²

He starts his poem with this sorrowful call for the night to become light. Clearly he sees daylight as a release from his loneliness and misery; possibly he also sees the light as a

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.33a-34a. Ibn Shabba, al-Jamhara, 71b-72b; Waṣāya al-Mulūk, f.150a-154b; al-Aṣma^c iyyāt, pp.173-5; al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, pp.116-32; al-Ḥamāsa al-Baṣriyya, v.1, pp.82-5; al-Qalī, al-Amālī, v.2, pp.130-5.

2. al-Aṣma^c iyyāt, p.173.

symbol of Taghlib's recovery and ability to resume warfare once again. The end of the night will restore his self-confidence, which has been undermined by the night and the feeling of defeat which has been increased by the darkness. This is the reason for his appeal to the night to not return.

The sad atmosphere of this line is emphasised by the use of long vowels, the long ā in laylatanā and idhā, the long ī in dhī and anīrī and the long ū in taḥūrī, while the short vowels in Husum add to the sad atmosphere.¹ Certain of the consonants increase the effect, like the guttural ḥā' in Husum and taḥūrī and the qāf in inqaḍayti, both of these being back sounds which require a strain in their utterance.²

فَإِنْ يَكُ بِالذَّنَائِبِ طَالَ لَيْلِي فَكَيْدُ أَبِكِي مِنَ اللَّيْلِ الْقَسِيرِ

If my nights at adh-Dhana'ib have been long,
well may I weep for short nights [in the past
that were so pleasurable that they passed too
quickly].

In the darkness of this night and after the bitter defeat in this battle he is aware of the contrast between his feelings and the happy past when his brother Kulayb was alive. Thus if this night is made long by his grief, he had once been very happy and had found the nights too short. He brings out the contrast by the use of the word abkī (or according to another reading yubkā),³ since the weeping referred to here is

1. An-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī, v.1, p.257; v.2, pp.680-3, 699.

2. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shi^cr, pp.29, 33; an-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī, v.1, pp.85, 95, 133, 136; v.2, pp.674, 687.

3. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.131.

4. Al-Aṣma^c iyyāt, p.173.

not a grief which can be compared to his present grief, but simply indicates that his happiness went by too quickly. We see also the contrast between the long night of grief and the short night of happiness.

It seems rather strange that al-Muhalhil first refers to Dhū Husum and then speaks of adh-Dhanā'ib. This may be because the two places were close together or because he was weeping at Dhū Husum after he lost the battle, and at adh-Dhanā'ib he was weeping for his brother who provided for him and looked after him.

In this line also we see the use of long vowels to convey his feelings, particularly in the word tāla. We should also notice his omission of the nūn from the word yakun which adds to the lightness of the verse. The consonants bā', dhāl and fā' add to the softness and beauty of this line.¹

According to the version of this poem given by al-Qālī in his Amālī the next line is as follows,² although some authorities do not mention the line at all:³

وَأَنْقَذَنِي بِيَاضِ السَّجْحِ مِنْهَا لَقَدْ أَنْقَذْتَنِي مِنْ شَرِّ كَيْبِيرِ

The daylight has saved me from that [night]; I
have been saved from a great evil.

If we accept this line as genuine, it seems much more likely that its proper place is after the next line as given by

1. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shi^cr, pp.27, 31, 36; an-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī, v.1, p.84; v.2, pp.758, 831.

2. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.1, p.131.

3. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.33a.

Amālī al-Yazīdī and al-Hamāsa al-Baṣriyya:-

كواكب ليلة طالّت وغمّت فهذا السبب راغمة فخرى

O Stars of a long and gloomy night, this is
the morning, so disappear unwillingly.¹

The justification for this amendment is that it seems illogical for him to announce that he has been rescued by the morning while in the next line he is still urging the stars.

The imagery of this line, in which his griefs are described as a great evil which he can scarcely withstand, and the morning appears as his saviour, is very striking, and vividly indicates the magnitude of his sadness.

The first hemistich of the following line has another reading which is: "نَجَّوْمُ اللَّيْلِ قَدْ شَبَّهَتْ رَأْسِي" "O stars of the night, you have whitened my hair".² It seems that there have been some alterations in the order and the wording of these lines. This is not unusual in pre-Islamic poetry, in which we rarely find a poem which does not exist in more than one version.

In the second hemistich, which is the same in all versions, we notice that he uses the letter ghayn twice, three times with the ghammat of the first hemistich. This guttural sound suggests the hoarseness and exhaustion caused by a sleepless night spent in misery, and impression reinforced by the long vowels which accompany these sounds.³ The way in

1. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.119.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Iaghlib, f.33a.

3. An-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi'r al-Jāhilī, v.2, pp.676-83, 694, 699.

which he addresses the stars personally gives an idea of the close affinity to the natural world which he feels at this time.

In the following line some versions give Rakb¹ instead of Udh, which makes no difference in the metre but a very great difference in the meaning.

كَأَنَّ كَوَاكِبَ الْجُوزَاءِ عَزُودٌ عُرْسَاتٍ وَوَدَّعٍ مَعْطَفَةٌ عَلَى رِجْلِ كَسِيرٍ

The stars of Gemini are like old she-camels which are surrounding compassionately a helpless young camel.²

Udh are she-camels which have produced a young camel in spring, and which cannot leave their young because the latter are entirely dependent on them. Rakb on the other hand is a word which does not have any of these connotations, in addition to which it is grammatically masculine singular so that the objective should be mu'attaf; thus the word Udh is in every way more suitable. Al-Muhalhil probably chose this word to symbolise his feelings of injury significantly, and he continues in this line to direct his speech to nature. Nature seems to be the objective correlative for his feeling, and in these lines he asserts his relationship with nature.³ Nature for al-Muhalhil is not like the nature of most other poets which includes plants, rocks, animals, deserts etc.; it is largely confined to the night sky with its different stars, the reason for this being that he finds an outlet for his feelings of sadness and grief in contemplating this kind of nature. His description of the stars comes in the form of a series of similes, each one

1. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.131.

2. Bushrā al-Khatīb, ar-Rithā', pp.214, 222, 227.

3. Vivas, Creation and Discovery, pp.175-189.

introduced by the word ka'nna. In this case the mushabbah is Gemini and the mushabbah bih is the word ^cūdh. The implication of this line is that al-Muhalhil, who likens himself to a helpless (kasīr) camel foal, feels unable to bear this huge responsibility even though he is surrounded by his strong tribe who are like the she-camels which protect their young.

This pessimism is clearly a result of the defeat which has had a strong impact on al-Muhalhil's sensitive feelings. The misery caused by this defeat causes al-Muhalhil to repeat again and again the word ka'nna. Thus this section of his poem consists of a series of simple similes consisting of mushabbah and mushabbah bih, none of which are developed in any detail. The effect which this technique gives is of a flood of uncontrolled emotions, which are poured hastily into a series of similes rapidly following one another.

In some versions of this poem the following line is separated from this one, but in Arab meterological lore (anwā') Canopus always comes with Gemini, and there seems little doubt that the two belong together.

تَحَرَّرَتْ وَأَسْتَقَلَّ لَهَا سَهِيلٌ وَيُوحِ كَقَمَةِ الْجَمَلِ الْهَدِيرِ

Canopus is revealed and becomes brilliant,
and seems to be like the hump of a camel
which is not on heat.¹

Wherever these two lines may belong, the significance of this line is that al-Muhalhil now identifies himself with Canopus, which always stands alone while the other stars are gathered together. Al-Muhalhil on that night at Dhū Ḥusum was

1. Al-Yazīdī, al-Anālī, p.117.

alone too. Besides referring to his loneliness, this line carries another implication; just as Canopus was unable to join the other stars, al-Muhalhil could not associate with other people. If we bear in mind that the stars of Gemini are female, then al-Muhalhil's inability to indulge in sex, despite his desire to do so, may be seen as another consequence of this war. There are two variant readings for the adjective qualifying the camel in the second hemistich of this line. The first is ghadūr¹ or ghadīr,² which means "deceitful", and the second is fadīr which means "the camel who avoids the she-camel, and keeps away from it".³ The second version seems to be more in keeping with the sense of the line because it reinforces the idea of his inability to engage in sexual relations.

The word mu^cattafa in the line before this is full of an emotion which suits the atmosphere of the poem. It is derived from the word a^ctafa, but the doubled emphatic consonant tā' requires an effort in pronunciation,⁴ and the conjunction with the guttural a^cayn and the fā' produces a marked effect of a sigh.⁵ In addition the nuances of the word itself give an atmosphere of mother love and compassion:

وتحنو الشعران إلى سهييل كفعيل الطالب القذ في الحبور

The two Dog stars incline to Canopus like a lagging camel who is trying to overtake the others.⁶

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.34b.
2. Al-Ḥamāsa al-Basriyya, v.1, p.83.
3. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.117.
4. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shi^cr, pp.26-7.
5. An-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī, v.1, p.94; v.2, pp.671, 676.
6. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.119.

Al-Muhalhil further develops his poetical imagery when he turns to the image of the two Dog stars inclining to Canopus. This image is personified by his use of the word tahnū which can only really be applied to persons. The fact that he knows that this inclination will be in vain makes his feeling of sadness all the more clear. Despite this feeling he tries to give an impression of virility in the previous line by his use of the two words ta^carraḍa and istaqalla which give an impression of self-sufficiency and independence. He then uses the verb yalūḥu in the present tense in order to provide a parallel between his present situation and that of Canopus. The use in this line of the word tahnū indicates that it is the two Dog stars who want Canopus and not the other way round. This is reinforced by the introduction of the simile of: "a lagging camel who is trying to overtake the others".

The second hemistich of this line is given in another reading as: " فَتَعَبَبَ لِلْغَمِيمِ وَالْعَبَبِ " "and you wonder at the Lesser and Greater Dog stars".¹ The hemistich "a lagging camel who is trying to overtake the others" seems appropriate in that it indicates the position of Canopus with regard to the two Dog stars and conveys a feeling of sorrow and loneliness, while the other version merely gives the specific names of these two stars without much benefit to the poem.

This example is one of many which indicate that al-Muhalhil's poetry has undergone considerable changes, at least in some versions, which tend to weaken the effect of his style.

Al-Muhalhil's relationship with nature, especially night and the stars, is deeply expressed in this poem as it is in others. In this he is able to make use of his cultural

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, 33a.

background, in that the Arabs were well-informed about the stars and able to give a full description of the sky. Here he is probably thinking about the stars in summer or autumn, when the desert sky is clear and brilliant.

كَأَنَّ بَنَاتِ نَعَشٍ تَلِيَّاتٍ قَطَارِ عَامِدٍ لِلشَّمَامِ زُورِ

The stars of Ursa Major which follow one another are like a caravan which is curving away to Syria.¹

The word tāliyāt occurs in another version as mu^criḏāt.² Both words are acceptable as they depict the stars of Ursa Major as curving or following each other. In a later line the same thing happens again when the word az-zahāra³ occurs in another version as al-mahāra⁴ when either word seems possible.

The second hemistich of the first line is also given as: " وَفَرَّقْدَهُنَّ مَجْتَسِبَ الْأَسِيرِ ", "Ursa Minor is in an isolated place like a captive".⁵ This could apply to al-Muhalhil himself if we suppose that Ursa Minor is al-Muhalhil, remembering that he referred to himself as a fragile young camel in earlier lines.

However, the word captive occurs in another line which makes this reading weaker, although it is not unusual for the same word to be repeated as a rhyme in al-Muhalhil's poetry.

These similes all reflect al-Muhalhil's impotence and

1. Al-Ḥamāsa al-Basriyya, v.1, p.83.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, 33a.

3. Al-Ḥamāsa al-Basriyya, v.1, p.83.

4. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.33a.

5. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.119.

weakness. In the following line he recollects the gestures of a gambler:

كَأَنَّ الْفَرْقَدَيْنِ يَدَا مَفِيضٍ
أَلَى عَلَى رَافِضَتِهِ قَمِيرٍ

The two stars of Ursa Minor are like the hands of somebody gesticulating, whom his fellow-gambler encourages in his gesticulation.¹

The gambler could be al-Muhalhil too, who spent his time in enjoyments before the war. The other version, which is about drinking,² does not go far from this atmosphere.

The image of gambling or drinking may suggest a desire to have these pleasures once again, but if so it is soon suppressed when he goes on to give another simile about a star in captivity:

كَأَنَّ النُّجُومَ فِي مِثْلَةِ رِبْتٍ
أَسِيرٍ أَوْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْأَسِيرِ

Capricorn is like a captive in a double rope or in the position of a captive.³

The following lines are very similar to lines which occur earlier in the poem. They consist of a series of similes introduced by the word ka'anna, and all refer to stars. These similes reinforce our feeling that al-Muhalhil finds in the night sky a major vehicle for the expression of his own

1. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.119.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.34b.

3. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.131.

feelings. It is striking that most of those similes are the same as earlier ones, or merely repeated in other words.

Thus:

كَأَنَّ النُّجُومَ فِيهِ لَانَ صِغَارٍ أَوَارِكٍ فِي دُجَى لَيْلٍ مَطِيرٍ

Sirius is like young camels in an arāk- forest on a dark rainy night.¹

is similar to:

كَأَنَّ كَوَاكِبَ الْجُوزَاءِ عَوْدٌ مَعْطِيفَةٌ عَلَى رِيحِ كَسِيرٍ

The stars of Gemini are like old she-camels, which are surrounding compassionately a helpless young camel.

The next line:

كَأَنَّ الْمَشْتَرِيَّ حَسَنًا ضِيَاءً بَنِيَّ قَاهِرٍ مِنْ فَوْقِ قُورٍ

Jupiter who is beautiful and bright, seems to be [looking from] a rough, high place.²

is reminiscent of:

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.34b.

2. Al-Ḥamāsa al-Baṣriyya, v.1, p.84.

تَعْرِضُ وَاسْتَقِلْ لَهَا سَهِيْلٌ
يَلُوْحُ كَقِمَةِ الْجَمَلِ الْفَدِيْرِ

Canopus is revealed and becomes brilliant,
and seems to be like the hump of a camel
which is not in heat.

While the next line:

كَأَنَّ مَجْرَةَ النَّسْرِيْنَ نَهْجٌ
لِكُلِّ حَزِيْقَةٍ تَحْدِي وَعِيْرِ

The Milky Way is like a highway for every
led he-camel and she-camel.¹

is similar to the two lines:

كَأَنَّ بَنَاتِ نَعْرِ تَالِيَاتٍ
تَتَابِعُ مَشِيَّةَ الْإِبِلِ الزَّهَارِي
قِمَارُ عَامِدٍ لِلشَّامِ زَوْرٍ
لِتَلْحَظَنَّ كُلَّ تَالِيَةٍ عَبْرٍ

The stars of Ursa Major which follow one
another, are like a caravan which is curving
away to Syria,
They are going like white camels who want to
catch up with the one at the front.²

However, these similarities and repetitions may merely
mean that some additions to the original have occurred. If it
is as easy to name stars and similes for them as we may

1. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.118.

2. Al-Ḥamāsa al-Baṣriyya, v.1, p.83.

assume, we can say that the plagiarist only needed to be skilled enough to identify and imitate the characteristics of al-Muhalhil. In any case, the various versions of the second hemistich of these earlier lines are proof enough that different hands have played with his poetry.

There is one question which arises here relating to these lists of stars, which is whether al-Muhalhil had a deep personal knowledge of astronomy or whether he is merely making use of the common beliefs of the Jāhiliyya period about the stars. Thus, according to al-Lisān, "we read in the Arabic myths that Canis Minor used to be together with Canopus and Canis Major, but Canopus went to Yemen and Canis Minor stayed alone crying for her love until she became bleary-eyed".¹ However, it would be difficult to claim that al-Muhalhil was merely making use of a myth and had no first-hand knowledge of the stars. Furthermore, as A.K. Zakī points out, in the late Jāhiliyya poetry these myths may have lost their mythical meaning and come to us with their literal meanings.²

Another interesting fact is that we see many stars in this poem, but we do not see the moon. We may speculate that this is because al-Muhalhil thinks that the moon is a competition to himself, or because the moon was regarded as something sacred by the people of the Jāhiliyya on the eve of Islam. We know that in Mecca it was regarded as the chief of the gods and was symbolised by the idol Hubal.³

His long, tense, and vigilant wait is given expression in the following line which describes the whole of time as being compressed into three nights:

1. Al-Lisān: (ghamaṣa); Ahmad Kamāl Zakī, al-Asāṭir, p.49.
2. Ahmad Kamāl Zakī, al-Asāṭir, p.50.
3. Ibid., p.104.

كَأَنَّ الدَّهْرَ يَجْمَعُ فِي لَيْلٍ ثَلَاثِ خَلَوْنَ مِنَ الشَّهْرِ

Time seems to be gathered in three nights
which had passed.¹

Life seems to al-Muhalhil empty and without any purpose except fighting, killing and sitting up contemplating the death of his brother. In the following line he begins to awaken from his contemplation when he sees a streak of lightning flash from the direction of Tihāma.

أُرْقَتُ وَمَا حَبَى بِجَنُوبِ شَعْبِ لِبَرْقٍ فِي تِهَامَةِ مُسْتَطِيرِ

I and my friend spent a sleepness night south
of Shi^c b on account of lightning which flashed
in Tihāma.²

It is worth noticing here that he mentions that a friend was with him that night, but the place now is south of Shi^c b, a new place in addition to Dhū Ḥusum and adh-Dhanā'ib but probably close to them.

In the following lines he now begins to boast of his tribe's deeds against Bakr, particularly his new and powerful enemy al-Hārith b. ^cUbād.

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.34a.

2. Ibid.

فَانِيسَ قَدْ تَرَكْتَ بـِـوَارِدَاتِ
وَعَمَّامَ بِنِ مَرَّةٍ قَدْ تَرَكْنَا
يَنْوُ بَسْدَرَهُ وَالرَّمِيحَ فِيهِ
بِجَيْرِ فِي دَمٍ مِثْلِ الْعَبِيرِ
عَلَيْهِ الْقَشْعَمَانِ مِنَ النَّسْرِ
وَيَعْلُوهُ خَيْدٌ كَالْبَعِيرِ

In Wāridāt I left Bujayr in blood like perfume,
Hammām b. Murra also we left, the huge old vulture on top of him.
He was moving his chest while the spear was in it, and a large sword like a camel in him.¹

The striking image here is his description of the battle when Bujayr was smeared with blood. The present verb yanū' (moves) makes that image vivid and alive.² These lines also reveal that al-Muhalhil was rejoicing about these killings when he compared blood to perfume, and indeed he openly declared his rejoicing in the following line:

هَتَكْتُ بِهِ بِيوتَ بَنِي عِبَادِ
وَيَعْفِرُ الْقَتْلَ أَشْفَى لِلصَّدُورِ

By this deed I have destroyed families of Banū ^cUbād, and some killing gives comfort.³

However, all of these subjects, whether addressing the stars or boasting of himself or his tribe, are not as powerful as his lamentation for his brother. This is a favourite subject

1. Al-Asma' iyyāt, p.174.

2. An-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi'r al-Jāhilī, v.2, p.766.

3. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.119.

into which he could pour his feelings. In the course of this poem he repeats the hemistich: "عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدُوًّا مِّنْ كَلَيْبٍ" "It is unjust of Kulayb" seventeen times, although the number of repetitions varies slightly in different versions.¹ Whether all or most of these lines are in fact by him, it is worth noticing that this type of repetition is normal for al-Muhalhil,² especially when he brings out the favourite name "Kulayb". In any case, the variation in the number of these lines proves the simplicity of imitating his style.

Most of these lines are intended to show the harmful effect of his brother's death on his tribe, referring as they do to his hospitality in times of hardship, how he fought his enemies, faced troubles, helped others, brought justice. The poet expresses himself freely and without consciously paying great attention to his style except in certain lines where we find a number of metaphorical expressions referring to hardship:

إِذَا رَجَفَ الْعِضَاءُ مِنَ الدَّبُورِ

When the thorn-bushes are shaken by the west wind.

إِذَا هَبَّتْ رِيَّاحُ الزَّمْرِيرِ

When the wintry winds blow.

إِذَا طُرِدَ الْيَتِيمَ عَنِ الْجَزُورِ

When the orphan is driven away from eating the slaughtered camels.

إِذَا مَا ضَمِيمٍ جِيرَانُ الْمَجْبُورِ

When the neighbours of a protector are wronged.³

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.34a-b.

2. Ibn Nubāta, Sarḥ al-Uyūn, p.100.

3. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.34a-b; al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.133.

A noticeable characteristic of the poetry of al-Muhalhil is the use of declarative sentences which always have the sense of regret. We rarely find exclamatory sentences except for those which begin with a vocative particle or the interrogative man. Nearly all of his poetry consists of declarative sentences like those discussed above, usually in the form of similes. His purpose in using this kind of sentence is to hold our attention and sympathy as regards the calamity which has overtaken his brother and in respect of his own bereavement or at least to raise our anger and resentment against the injustice caused by a person who attacked Kulayb when he had sole responsibility for his people and family.¹

In the next two lines we find him using alliteration and repeating the letter mīm. Generally, al-Muhalhil has a tendency to make considerable use of gutturals, but here he prefers the labial sound m because he is directing his speech to a girl who needs consolation for losing her father in the battle. He makes use of words with light sounds in order to refer to this sudden loss in a gentle way, and all letters in these two lines contribute to this effect.

وما تدري أميمة ما ضميرى
من النعم المؤبل من بعير
تسألنى أميمة عن أبيها
فلا وأبى أميمة ما أبانا

Umayma is asking me about her father, but
Umayma is not aware of my inner feelings,
I swear by the father of Umayma that we did
not get a single camel in blood-money [for
his death].²

1. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shi'r, p.31.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.34a; al-Yazīdī, al-Awālī, p.122.

It is clear from his next lines in which he acknowledges that Bakr are equal to his own tribe, that they are still a great threat and that the war and the killing will go on for a long time, even if he uses friendly words like banū-abīnā (sons of our father).

كأننا غدوة وبنى أبينا
بجوف عنيزة رحيا مديرا

At early morning we and the sons of our father are like the two millstones of a grinder inside ^cUnayza.¹

One of his most beautiful and striking images occurs in this line:

كان رماحهم أشطان بيئر
مخوف هد عرشها جروير

Their spears are like ropes inside a deep, crumbling well whose sides are caving in.²

In this line he skilfully describes spears piercing bodies, and waving in the battlefield. The word 'crumbling' gives the image of fighting a horrifying impact, and the line conveys a vision of the movement of spears and the battlefield with many dead and much blood. The following reminds us of his rejoicing at killing:

تظل الخيل عاكفة عليهم
كان الخيل تدحرف في غديرا

1. Al-Aṣma'iyāt, p.174.

2. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.121.

The horses are standing on them, as if they were sliding around in a pool.¹

It is rare to find aphorism in al-Muhalhil's poetry because he is too busy with war and the death of his brother to think of this kind of subject which we usually find in elegies.² However, we now find an aphorism which is used to encourage perseverance in the war:

وَمَا يَبْكِي عَدُوَّكَ إِذْ تَعَادَى بِمِثْلِ الصَّبْرِ فِي ضَنْكَ الْأُمُورِ

Nothing will make your enemy cry when you are at war like patience when there is a difficulty.³

Finally we may note an important element of al-Muhalhil's poetry which has been noticed by many critics, i.e. his use of hyperbole. This hyperbole probably arose because of uncontrolled emotion.

فَلَوْلَا الرِّيحُ أَسْمَعُ مِنْ بِحَجَرٍ صَلِيلِ الْبَيْضِ تَقْرَعُ بِالذِّكُورِ

If there had been no wind, people in Hajr would have heard the rattle of swords beating helmets.⁴

This poem, like most of his poems, is a mixture of different subjects but the common tone which unites them is

1. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.121.
2. Bushrā al-Khatīb, ar-Rithā', p.189.
3. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.4a.
4. Al-Asma'iyāt, p.175.

regret and sorrow as in most elegiac poetry.

II) The Characteristics of his Poetry

a) Repetition

Repetition is a feature which can be readily noticed in the poetry of al-Muhalhil, and which occurs in most of his long poems. We might regard this as being a product of al-Muhalhil's state of mind when he composed this poetry, when he suddenly found himself an elder of a fighting tribe and in charge of avenging his brother's murder. This repetition seems to be an outlet for his grief, coming in his poetry like shrieks or sighs which follow each other. This repetition can be found as letters or words or as complete sentences.¹ Sometimes the effect of this repetition is dulled when he repeats the same part of a line so often that we feel that he gains nothing from the repetition and that a little would have been enough. Sometimes, indeed, this kind of repetition seems to be nothing more than a favourite stylistic habit, although repetition is not unusual in Arabic poetry as the Arabs were accustomed to do this when speaking of great calamities² and repetition may seem to be psychologically necessary if the catastrophe is very heavy.^{3*}

In al-Muhalhil's case this very frequent repetition of entire lines, may be related also to the distortion of the transcribers or the narrators, although it is very difficult sometimes to be sure of this. An extreme example is the way in which he repeats the following first hemistich about 18 times:

1. Bushrā al-Khatīb, ar-Rithā', pp.238-42.

2. Ibn Nubāta, Sarḥ al-Uyūn, p.100.

3. Al-^cAskarī, aṣ-Ṣinā'atayn, p.194.

* Al-^cAskarī's statement is: " لِعِظَمِ الْخَطْبِ وَشِدَّةِ وَقْعِ الْفَجِيعَةِ ", "For the great calamity and the effect of catastrophe".

" عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلَيْبٍ " , "It is unjust of Kulayb".¹

He also repeats the following hemistich about 17 times:
" عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ يُوفَى مِنْ كَلَيْبٍ " , "Nothing will compensate for Kulayb".²

It is clear that he uses this method in these lines to show the value and the status of his brother Kulayb and to arouse feelings of hatred and anger against those who murdered him. He also wants to express his strong emotions and close relationship with his brother. On the other hand he tries to blame his brother perhaps for leaving him, as a way of expressing his own feelings of inadequacy to fill his brother's place and to act as he used to.

At other times this repetition is less frequent than in the above examples, as when he tries to recount as far as he can the great deeds of his brother in courage, hospitality and helping the weak. For example he repeats this first hemistich 7 times: " ذَهَبَ الصَّلْحُ أَوْ تَرَدَّ وَكَلَيْبٌ " , "The reconciliation will not take place until you bring Kulayb back".³

This repetition is necessary because he wants to reinforce his threats to Bakr by demanding something impossible, while it also expresses his deep sorrow for his brother. He sometimes repeats certain hemistichs to express his deep feeling of loneliness and despair after the loss of Kulayb, as with the following first hemistichs which are repeated three times:

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taḡhlīb, f.34a-b.

2. Ibid., f.55b.

3. Ibid., f.21b.

" أَجِبْنِي يَا كَلَيْبُ خَسْلَاكَ ذِمَّ ", "O Kulayb, you without fault, answer me".¹

" أَتَخْدُو يَا كَلَيْبُ مَعِيَ إِذَا مَا ", "O Kulayb, could you accompany me at morning when " ²

As can be seen, each of these lines contain the name of Kulayb. He was fond of his brother Kulayb and therefore he always repeats his name as something in which he takes delight. This repetition stresses this faithfulness and sincere love of his brother, and the effect is reinforced by the way in which he often addresses Kulayb directly, using the vocative particles a³ and yā; a-Kulayb or yā Kulayb. Other times he omits the particle but the word Kulayb⁴ will still have the vocative sense.

However, if (Kulayb) is not part of the repetition, then it seldom occurs more than three times consecutively. When his mood switches to anger at the Banū Bakr over the killing of Kulayb their name begins to occur in place of that of Kulayb. The emotion in these lines is a firm and strange one which is very unlike the previous weak, soft and sorrowful tones.⁵

He also repeats some phrases to express his griefs, such as the following which occurs twice:

" إِنَّ تَحْتَهُ الْأَحْجَارَ ", "under the stones".⁶

The following sentences and words are always repeated in his poetry and we rarely find a long poem without one of

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.19b.

2. Ibid., f.19a.

3. Ibid., f.23b.

4. Ibid., f.20a.

5. Ibid., f24a, 38a.

6. Ibid., 21a-b.

them:

" وَرَبِّ الْحَلَالِ وَالْإِحْرَامِ ", "by the God of making lawful and unlawful".¹

" شَفَيْتَ نَفْسِي ", "My spirit gained satisfaction".²

" قَتَّرْتَ الْعَيْنَ ", "The eye is refreshed".³

" حُذِّذُوا شِفَارَكُمْ لِحَزِّ الْحُلُوقِ ", "Sharpen your swords to cut throats".⁴

" رَبَّهُمْ ", "Their master".⁵

Apart from these, there are words which are repeated in various grammatical forms, such as:

" أَبْكِي ", "cry"; " قَتِيلٌ ", "murdered";

" اسْقِنِي ", "Give a drink"; " أَوْقِدِ النَّارَ ", "Kindle a fire".

This repetition is not confined only to sentences or words, but occurs also in single letters which are rich in suggestiveness and nuances. His words are always full of meanings which spring from his own injured feelings.

Thus these repetitions in sentences, words and letters reflect his deep sorrow, strong anger, hatred and long mourning, and are a key feature of his elegies which concentrate on the theme of the bravery, boldness, hospitality and generosity of his brother.

In general, it is easy to notice that there were two kinds of Arabic poetry, the simple and the

1. Al-Aṣṣmā'iyāt, p.176.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.23b.

3. Ibid., f.36a.

4. Ibid., f.25a.

5. Ibid., f.39b.

difficult. There are many famous poets who make use of this simple language, some of them being contemporary with al-Muhalhil like al-Muraqqish al-Akbar. These poets can be placed in the category of the popular or non-professional poets, as Hanafī called them.¹ Al-Muhalhil may indeed have been the first of them and he is creative enough to avoid language which is strange, uncouth and difficult, and to make his poetry easy and simple,² and similar to the common language. This simplicity is noticed according to al-Aghānī when his poems are sung³ which is a result of their smooth and emotional language.

The most important thing about his language is that this language has the straightforwardness which suits the spirit of martial poetry,⁴ and that the atmosphere is not urban but bedouin, which reflects the habits and conventions of his society. Moreover, it reflects the conventions of elegiac language, which is not meant to be rough or uncouth,⁵ although there are for the modern reader some difficult words though they are comparatively few, like:

athbāj⁶ (the arteries of the neck),
athbattu⁷ (injured),
ḥazīqa⁸ (she-camel),
Isfanṭa⁹ (wine),

1. See Sayyid Hanafī, ash-Shiʿr al-Jāhilī, pp.35-99.

2. Al-Marzubānī, al-Muwashshah, p.106.

3. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.149.

4. See below, p. ; al-Yūsuf, Maqālāt fī ash-Shiʿr al-Jāhilī, p.338. For a general discussion of martial poetry see also Bowra, Heroic Poetry, pp.215-53.

5. Mustafa Badawi, "From Primary to Secondary Qasidas; Thoughts on the Development of Classical Arabic Poetry", J.A.L. XI, 1980, p.1.

6. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.135.

7. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.35a.

8. Al-Yazīdī, al-Amālī, p.118.

9. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.36b.

khanfaqīq¹ (sharpened sword),
khanshalīl² (headstrong),
tawbīl (punishment),
wusūq (heavy loads).³

The spirit of martial poetry can be found in his boasting and threatening, his description of fighting, and his commemoration of his courage and generosity.

The most important matter is not simply the use of rough, difficult or uncouth words, but his use of these words in the given poetical context. These words stem from his imagination, feelings and artistic style. Every word in any of his generally accepted poems is similar in its shades of meaning from one poem to another. The repeated words, or repeated sounds or even repeated sentences, are a proof that his language is unchanging. The stress laid on similes, particularly by means of the word ka'anna, and the images which he draws to illustrate his brother's hospitality and bravery, are another assurance that the language forms a synthesis and is consistent. The loud tones of his lamentation for his brother which are maintained throughout, and the despair and lack of hope which pervades the whole poem are a strong proof that he is reflecting in the elegy his deep griefs and grievances.

It is strange then to find Ṭahā Ḥusayn describing his language as being, as well as simple, "archaic and commonplace".⁴ There is no evidence to support this remark, particularly in the lines which he cites as an example of this

1. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.232.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.38a.

3. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, pp.232, 230; ^c Alī al-Jundī, Shi^cr al-Ḥarb fī al-^cAsr al-Jāhilī, pp.393-5; Bushra al-Khatīb, ar-Rithā', p.238.

4. Ṭaha Ḥusayn, Fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī, p.216.

archaism and commonplaces. Perhaps all that he means by this is that "his poetry is corrupt and the correct version is mixed with the forged..."¹

There are, however, some general remarks which can be made about the language of his poetry. Some of its features are:

1. The use of unadorned declarative sentences as opposed to the use of metaphor, simile, etc., in which he states his brother's respected and honourable deeds. Such sentences can easily be found in any of his poems.
2. Use of a redundant mā, as in the following lines:

ضخم الكتائب محمود لِقَاءِ هُم مِثْلَ اللِّيْوِثِ كِرَامٍ غَيْرِ مَا نَكِسِ

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They have large regiments whose fighting is praised, like lions, noble, who do not retreat.²

قَتِيلٌ مَا قَتِيلُ الْمَرْءِ عَمْرُو وَجَسَّاسٌ بِنُ مَرَّةٍ ذُو ضَرِيرِ

He was murdered, he was murdered by the man ^cAmr, and Jassās the son of Murra is an accomplice.³

لَوْ بِأَبَانِينَ جَاءَ يَخْطِبُهَا ضَرَجَ مَا أَنْفَ خَاطِبِ بِيَدِمِ

1. Tahā Husayn, Fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī, p.216.
 2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.48b.
 3. Al-Qālī, al-Amālī, v.2, p.135.

If he comes to Abānān asking for her hand in marriage, the suitor's nose will be smeared with blood.¹

طَفْلَةٌ مَا ابْنَةُ الْمَجَالِدِ بِيضَاءُ لِعُوبٍ لَذِيذَةٌ فِي الْعِنْسَانِ

The daughter of al-Majālid is delicate and pale-skinned, flirtations and delightful to embrace.²

3. The use of apocopation in cases where this is not allowed, as in the following lines:

قُلْ لِحَارٍ وَأَشْيَاخٍ لَهُ حَضْرُوا وَرَتُّوهُ وَسُورُوا
قُلْ لِحَارٍ وَعَبْدِ الْقَيْسِ كُلِّهِمْ سَيِّرُوا فَإِنَّكُمْ لَا بَدَّ فِي تَعْسِ

Tell Hārith and the aged people who attend his assembly, go and you will find bad luck.

Tell Hārith and all ^cAbd al-Qays, "ride Na^cāma,"* and I will ride my horse.³

وَشَفِينَا النَّفُوسَ مِنْ قَوْمِ حَارٍ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ بِلْعَا قِسَارٍ

1. Al-Qalī, Al-Amālī, v.2, p.148.

2. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.146.

3. Ibn Ishāq, Wāṣayā al-Mulūk f.181a-181b.

* Na^cāma is the name of the horse of al-Hārith b. ^cUbād.

We have gained satisfaction from the tribe of Hārith, and we left him groaning(?)¹

The apocopation of Hārith to Hār is permissible in the munādā (vocative) but not elsewhere as above.

The above are the most noticeable features in his language, but he adopts the habit of repeating single words or single letters to create a special effect. Thus he repeats the interrogative particle man to express the disappointment and despair which resulted from Kulayb's murder. He also wants with this interrogative to indicate to others the reality that none of them can replace Kulayb² as in the following lines:

وَيَقْلَنَ مَنْ لِّلْمَسْتَضِيْقِ إِذَا دَعَا
أَمْ مَنْ لِّسَبَاقِ الدِّيَاتِ وَحَمْلِهَا
أَمْ مَنْ لِّخَيْلٍ لَا تَزَالُ مَغِيرَةً
أَمْ مَنْ لِّخَضْبِ عَوَاسِلِ الْمِرَانِ
أَمْ مَنْ لِّكُشْفِ حَوَادِثِ الْحَدَثَانِ
بِالْبَيْفْرِ وَالرَّيَاثِ وَالْأَبْدَانِ

They said: Who will look after the needy if he asks, or who will smear the pliant spears with blood?

Or who will give blood-money and be responsible for it, or who will help in disasters?

Or who will look after the horses which are still engaged in the attack with swords, flags and coats of mail?³

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.56a.

2. ^cAlī al-Jundī, Shi'r al-Ḥarb fī al-^cAsr al-Jāhilī, pp.393-5; Bushrā al-Khatīb, ar-Rithā', pp.238-42.

3. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.55a.

In another poem he repeats the word hattā to show the extent of the deeds which he will execute when the war begins against Bakr. This word is full of anger and enmity particularly when he begins the line with it. The desire behind this repetition is that nothing will be left except desolation and annihilation:

<p>وَيَحِلُّ أَسْرَامَ عَلَى أَسْرَامٍ وَعِظَامَ رُؤْسٍ هَشَمَتْ بِعِظَامِ مِمَّا يَرَى عَلَى الْإِبْرَاهِيمِ</p>	<p>حَتَّى تَلْفُ كَتَيْبَةَ بِكَتَيْبَةٍ حَتَّى تَرَى غُرًّا تَجْرُ وَجْهَةً حَتَّى يَعْضُ الشَّيْخُ مِنْ حَسْرَاتِهِ</p>
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Until one detachment crushes the other, and
one faction falls on the other,
Until you see foreheads and scalps dragged
off and skulls crushed against others,
Until the old man bites his thumb with grief
at what he sees.¹

We may draw particular attention to his use of the letters ayn, hā, khā', kāf, qāf, rā', sīn and tā'. The majority of these letters are gutturals or back sounds which need an effort to utter them,² while rā' and sīn are usually used when the words became gentle.

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.35a; Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-Iqd, v.6, p.76.

2. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shi^cr, pp.27, 29, 30-1, 33, 37.

b) Metre*

A remarkable feature of al-Muhalhil's poetry is his violent emotion. In it we find him shouting, crying, threatening and mourning. Thus, every word of his poetry is a part of his badly injured feelings. Nothing, it seems, can assuage this regret and grief but pouring them out in poems composed during this long period of hard fighting.

He seems to find in the long metres the best means of expressing what he feels in his heart and in his conscious mind. His subconscious is uncontrolled, for his emotions are too strong.

The long metres, particularly wāfir and basīt, give him more scope to express his feelings about the disaster which has befallen him. They allow him an uninterrupted flow of words and do not impose any abrupt breaks of meaning. In addition he finds in the ziḥāfāt (variants) of these two metres further opportunities to move freely through the poem.¹ Thus most of his poems are composed of these two metres. Examples are the following:

أَلَيْتَنَا بَدَى حُسْمٌ أَنْبِيرِي إِذَا أَنْتِ انْقَضَيْتِ فَلَا تَحْزُرِي

Our night in Dhū Ḥusum, grow bright; when
you come to an end, do not return.

* For a more detailed discussion of the role of metre in Arabic poetry see Kamal Abu Deeb, Fī al-Binya al-Īqq'iyya li-ash-Shi'r al-Arabī.

1. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shi'r, pp.62-3; an-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi'r al-Jāhili, v.2, p.569; Bushrā al-Khatīb, ar-Rithā', pp.242-7.

الدار قفر عفاها بعد ساكنها بالريح بعد ارتحال الحى عافيتها

The encampment is desolate and erased by wind after its inhabitants have left.¹

Another common metre is khafif, of which there are four examples in his poetry.²

Here he tries to stress his words as groups, and to express his emotions with every group of words, which rises and falls according to the different patterns of syllables. In the Khafif he can pause for a while and then allow his emotions to come flooding back. The khafif consists of two feet which are similar fā^c ilātun, while between them there is mustaf^c ilun. The difference between the feet, as well as the ziḥāf which sometimes occurs to any one of them makes the rhythm intentionally or unintentionally different. This reflects his emotions which vary between intense and subdued, and calm and aroused. The long vowels play a particular role in the creation of the elegiac atmosphere and seem to mirror the range of his feelings.

The next most prominent metre in his poetry is the kāmil. There are two poems in this metre,³ and the reason for choosing a rhythm of this sort seems to be its length and the variation in the feet which allows him to express himself freely without being greatly restricted by shortness or difficulty in the metre. The kāmil has several different varieties which occur because of the ziḥāfāt in every foot of hemistich.⁴ The poem of

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.20a; al-Aghānī, v.4, pp.146, 148-9.

2. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-Iqd, v.6, p.73; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, pp.396-7.

3. Al-Asma^c iyyāt, p.176.

4. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shi^cr, p.145; an-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhili, v.2, p.569.

which the following is the first line is a good example of this:

كُنَّا نَغَارُ عَلَى الْعَوَاتِقِ أَنْ تَرَى بِالْأَمْسِ خَارِجَةً عَنِ الْأَوْطَانِ

Yesterday we were jealous of our noble women
being seen outside their encampments.¹

The tawīl is represented by a number of single lines² which are apparently remnants of poems.³ We might surmise that the difficulty and lengthiness of this metre makes its tones dull and monotonous which give the impression that these poems were presumably short. In addition the option of using ziḥāfāt in this metre is very restricted, since it only occurs in the second foot fa^cūlun of each hemistich. Another reason for the relative lack of poems in tawīl may be connected with his state of mind. He wants a rhythm which will reflect his emotions directly and without hesitation. The tawīl takes time to compose and in any case the atmosphere of war does not encourage a lengthy composing time⁴ but rather immediate expression.

There are other poems which are composed in other metres. The first of these is the sarī^c which is used for one of his famous long poems, i.e. the qāfiyya.⁵ He perhaps chose this rhythm for its simplicity and softness,⁶ which is

1. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, p.389.

2. Al-Bakrī, al-Mu^cjam, v.3, pp.968, 949.

3. Afīf, ash-Shi^cr wa-Ayyām al-Arab, p.88.

4. An-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī, v.1, p.613.

5. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, pp.230-3.

6. Bushrā al-Khaṭīb, ar-Rithā', p.244. For a different view, see Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā al-Shi^cr, p.88.

emphasised by his decision to use a vowelless rhyme. Also the subject of this poem - an extended threat which is different from most of the other long poems - may have affected his choice of metre. However his emotion here is calm and controlled, moving from one line to another smoothly and cleanly.

The poem, of which the following line is the first, is in al-Munsariḥ metre which does not have a clearly-marked rhythm,¹ and which he probably used in a very difficult time when he fled the battle and was living alone.

نَهْنَهْنِي صَاحِبِي فَقُلْتُ لَهْ اِنْ الْحِظْوِظَ جَعَلِنَ بِالْقِسْمِ

My friend tried to calm me, but I said to him: It is my destiny.²

The only poem which is in al-madīd is:

يَا بَكْرَ اَنْشِرُوا لِي كَلِيْبًا يَا بَكْرَ اَيِّنْ اَيِّنْ الْفِرَارِ

O sons of Bakr bring Kulayb back to life,
O sons of Bakr where is your refuge?³

It seems likely according to Anīs that this poem was originally composed in khafīf metre as this would fit the way al-Muhalhil selects his metres and "This metre [al-madīd] is seldom used in Arabic poetry".⁴ We can consider al-madīd as "an old metre

1. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shiʿr, p.93.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.45b; al-Aghānī, v.4, p.146; Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shiʿr, pp.92-3.

3. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.24a.

4. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shiʿr, p.97.

which is no longer used and it is a part of the ramal."¹ This changing of the metre from al-madīd to ar-ramal² and al-khafīf supports this idea.

Zihāfāt occur often in his poetry but all of these zihāfāt are normal and do not affect the music of his poetry or the poetic pleasure.

c) Rhyme

Just as the metres of his poetry frequently reflect the poet's state of mind, so too do the rhymes. The elegy as a whole needs words which make a strong impression and sounds which produce the effect of crying and wailing. The poem analysed above rhymes in rā', having a final vowel (waṣl) in ī and a preceding vowel (ridf) in ū or ī. The use of this rhyme throughout the poem aids the expression of the sorrowful atmosphere,³ as we have seen above.

In another poem of al-Muhalhil's, the rā' is marfū^c with a preceding alif, giving a rhyme in ārū:

أَهْجَ قَذَاةَ عَيْنِي الْإِذْكَارِ وَوَدَّ سُدَّ وَوَدَّ رِ هَدَوْا فَالدموع لها انجدار

Reminiscences made me feel that I had dust
in my eyes at midnight, and the tears found
a way out.*

This long vowel gives the quality of a sigh and the damma

1. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shi^cr, p.97.
2. Al-Mubarrid, at-Ta^cāzī wa al-Marāthī, p.289.
3. An-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi^cr al-Jāhilī, v.2, pp.663, 676.
4. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.18a.

comes as the end of that sigh.¹ It is in fact noticeable that he usually makes use of the long vowels before the rhyme-letter to reflect his sad situation.

The rhyme-letters themselves convey a similar sense. The qāf also has a very sad tone² in his poetry reflecting despair and depression as in the two poems which start as follows:

جَلَّلُونِي يَا آلَ تَغْلِيْبٍ حَرِيْبًا جَعَلَ النَّفْسَ عِنْدَهَا فِي التَّرَاقِيْبِ

O Taghlib, they impose a war on me, which brings my heart into my throat.³

جَارَتْ بَنُو بَكْرٍ وَلَمْ يَعِدُوا وَالْمَرْءُ قَدْ يَعْرِفُ قَصْدَ الطَّرِيْقِ

Banū Bakr are hostile and unjust, but everyone knows the right way.⁴

Al-Muhalhil makes the nūn which is generally a light,⁵ beautiful sound into a sound of groaning and moaning because the long vowel preceding it aids that impression.⁶ The elegy is really an echo of sadness and sorrowfulness, as in this poem which starts with the following lines:

1. An-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi'r al-Jāhili, v.2, pp.663, 676.

2. Ibid., pp.663, 687, 694, 699.

3. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.56a-57b; al-Aghānī, v.4, p.148.

4. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, pp.230-3.

5. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā ash-Shi'r, p.31; an-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi'r al-Jāhili, v.2, p.580.

6. An-Nuwayhī, ash-Shi'r al-Jāhili, v.2, p.580.

أثبت مرة والسيوف شواهـر
وصرفت مقدمها إلى همـام

I injured Murra while the swords were
drawn, and I guided the head of [my
horse] to Hammām.¹

بات ليلي بالأنعمين طويلا
أرغب النجم ساهرا أن يزولا

My night in al-An^c amān is long, as I watch
Sirius wakefully waiting for it to vanish.²

There are of course some poems which do not use these
long vowel rhymes, but they are very few and comparatively
short such as:

نهمني صاحبي فقلت له
إن الحظوظ جعلن بالقسم

My friend tried to calm me, but I said to
him: It has come through destiny.³

Thus al-Muhalhil was sufficiently skilled to make use of
sounds which reflected his disaster-laden circumstances. His
poems also make use of rhymes at the end of each of the
hemistichs of the first line of every poem which makes the sad
atmosphere more impressive and the poem more technically
attractive.

There are some poems which do not follow this pattern

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.35a; al-Aṣma^c iyyāt, p.176.

2. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-Iqd, v.6, p.73.

3. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.146.

but they are very few, for example these two poems:

أَثَبْتُ مِرَّةً وَالسُّيُوفَ شَوَاهِرَ
وَصَرَفْتُ مَقْدَمَهَا إِلَى هَمَامِ

I injured Murra while the swords were drawn,
and I guided the head of [my horse] to
Hammām.

يَا ابْنَةَ آلِ زُهَيْرٍ اذْكُرِي حَسَبِي
وَابْكِي زُهَيْرًا فَمَا خَانُوا وَلَا عُنْدُوا

O daughter of Zuhayr, remember my honour,
and cry for Zuhayr who were not treacherous
or refractory.¹

His use of rhyme also has some defects, for example repetition. It is generally agreed among the prosodists that repetition of a rhyming word (*iṭā'*) should not occur unless some lines have intervened,² but in al-Muhalhil's poetry this rule is not always observed. Thus in the following poem he repeats the word diyār in two subsequent lines:

يَصْدُرُ الْقَوْلُ فِي اللَّقَاءِ بِضَرْبِ
مُسْتَبِيحِينَ عِنْدَ هِنِ الدِّيَارِ
رَأْنَا مَعْشَرَ إِذَا مَا غَضِبْنَا
ضَاقَتْ الْأَرْضُ ثُمَّ عَفِينَا الدِّيَارِ

We fulfil our promise on the battlefield by
fighting; and then we destroy the

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taḡhlīb, f.35a.

2. At-Tabrīzī, al-Kāfī, p.163.

encampments.

We are such people that, if we become angry, the earth cannot contain us and we destroy the encampments.¹

In another poem he repeats the word ahad within four lines:

فَقَدَّ قَتَلْتُ بَنِي بَكْرٍ بِرَبِّهِمْ
حَتَّى بَكَيْتُ وَهِيَ يَبْكِي لَهُمْ أَحَدٌ
كَمْ قَدْ قَتَلْتُ بَنِي بَكْرٍ بِسَيِّدِنَا
وَلَيْسَ يُوْفِي كَلِيْبًا مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ

I killed Banū Bakr in revenge for their master, so I cried, but no one will cry for them.

How long have I been killing Banū Bakr in revenge for our master, but there is no one of you who can compensate for Kulayb.²

This repetition can be found clearly in the poem starting:

بَاتَ لَيْلِي بِالْأَنْعَمِينَ طَوِيْلًا
أَرْقُبُ النِّجْمَ سَاهِرًا أَنْ يَكْزُولَا

My night in al-An^c amān is long, as I watch Sirius wakefully waiting for it to vanish.

In this poem he repeats the following rhyme words twice: jīlā, khuyūlā, fuḥūlā and khuyūlā.³

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.56b.
2. Ibid., f.36a.
3. Ibid., f.38a-39b.

This repetition may occur because he wants to stress the same meaning as in previous lines, or because the meaning itself calls forth these words and al-Muhalhil has had no time to think over his poetry and amend or to replace the lapses. This repetition may also be ascribed to the corruption and forgery of his poetry.

In addition to repetition we find iqwā'.¹ In the following line he uses a rhyme which is maḍmūma when the rest of the poem is maksūra.

أَكْلِيْبُ ضَاةَ الْجَارِ بَعْدَكَ وَالْحِمَى وَعَلَا الْكِرَامِ مِنَ النَّهَامِ الْأَبْحَسِ

O Kulayb the neighbours and the protected places have gone to waste [because of your absence] and the lowly have become greater than the nobles.²

This feature is also evident in the following line of which the poem as a whole is maksūra while it is necessary to make the rhyme here manṣūba as a hāl which is connected to a previous one by the conjunction wa:

وَلَقَدْ بَكَتْ بَيْضُ الصَّفَائِحِ وَالْقَتَا وَيَكِي السَّاءِ عَوَاطِلًا وَعَوَانِي

The white swords, the spears and the women, unadorned and adorned, cried for you.³

This also can be ascribed to the corruption and forgery

1. At-Tabrīzī, al-Kāfī, p. 160.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Iaghlib, f.23b.

3. Ibid., f.56b.

of his poetry, alternatively it may be because the language itself was not clear-cut in making a differentiation between these features in its early stages.

III) The Authenticity of the Poetry of al-Muhalhil

The strongest implicit criticism of al-Muhalhil's poetry may be found in Ibn Sallām whose highly respected book Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā' does not include a single line of al-Muhalhil's. This may mean that he does not consider his poetry to really belong to the Jāhiliyya period. In spite of this he states that al-Muhalhil was "the first who made the Qaṣīda and mentioned battles".¹

Moreover, he emphatically states that "he was bombastic and claimed more than he in fact had done".³ He also mentions that "al-Muhalhil was the first of the poets of Rabī^ca in the Jāhiliyya".³

These statements, however, have not impelled Ibn Sallām to include any of al-Muhalhil's poetry, even under the heading of aṣḥāb al-marāthī.² This seems to indicate that his attitudes were very divided as between al-Muhalhil's role as a poet and the value of his poetry.

Thus Ibn Sallām, who is a respected critic, concedes that there was a poet named al-Muhalhil, but cannot give specimens of his poetry as he normally does for other famous poets. We can only guess at the reasons for this, among which we may suggest the following:

1. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā', p.33.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.34.

4. Ibid., pp.169-93.

1. Al-Muhalhil's poetry does not fit his criterion of absolute authenticity, that the poetry should be widely accepted. This is clear from his statement: "The ^Culamā' have disagreed about some poetry just as they have agreed about other poetry, but what they have agreed with everyone should follow",¹ or as he says elsewhere: "It is not possible for anyone to reject anything which has been accepted by the ^Culamā', but we should not accept anything written by a transcriber or contained in a transcript".²
2. Ibn Sallām finds that some ^Culamā', e.g. al-Asma^Cī, had some reservations about al-Muhalhil's poetry.
3. Ibn Sallām feels that his poetry relates to an early period which it is difficult to authenticate.
4. The reason for which he was given his name, al-Muhalhil, which according to Ibn Sallām refers to his poetry, and is derived from an expression meaning "shabby clothes", because it is uneven and changeable,³ was a strong incentive not to include any of his poetry in his book which was intended to include only respected poems.
5. He may have observed that Ibn Ishāq is one of the sources which relate al-Muhalhil's poetry much of which occurs in his work Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib. He strongly accuses Ibn Ishāq of corruption and misunderstanding poetry.⁴

1. Ibn Sallām, Ibaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^Carā', p.6.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.33.

4. Al-Asma^Cī, Fuḥūlat ash-Shu^Carā', p.12.

Other commentaries give a similar opinion of his poetry. Thus al-Asma^c ī says: "He is not an outstanding poet (fahl), but if he had composed more poems like the poem:

أَلَيْتَنَا بِذِي حُسْمٍ أَنْسِيرِي

O night in Dhū Husum, grow bright

he would have become a most outstanding poet. However, most of his poetry is forged".

On the other hand, there are books whose authenticity we may accept, like al-Aghānī,¹ which quote some of his poetry. In addition to this book most historical works, like al-^cIqd al-Farīd² by Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-Kāmil³ by Ibn al-Athīr and Nihāyat al-Arab⁴ by an-Nuwayrī, give some extracts from his poetry.

Be this as it may, the poem which has been analysed above was accepted by most of the ^culamā', like al-Asma^c ī who quotes a section from it,⁵ and al-Qālī who quotes the entire poem.⁶ In fact this poem occurs in many versions with greater or lesser textual differences. Nevertheless as seen above it exhibits well-defined features which can be taken as criteria for judging the authenticity of other poems attributed to him, bearing in mind the reality that most of his poetry is lost and what remains is corrupt. We find in the poetry

1. Al-Aghānī, v.4, pp.142-50.

2. Ibn ^cAbd Rabbih, al-^cIqd, v.6, pp.73-8.

3. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, v.1, pp.386-97.

4. An-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.15, pp.400-5.

5. Al-Aṣma^c iyyāt, pp.173-5.

6. Al-Qālī, Al-Amālī, v.2, pp.130-5.

quoted in other respected sources, like al-Aghānī, some of the stylistic features noted in the study above. In addition, the comments made by the 'ulamā' may shed some light on his poetry:

1. He was the first to make the Qasīda.¹
2. He was the first to mention battles.²
3. His poetry is smooth (raqīq).³
4. He avoids uncommon and uncouth words.⁴
5. His poetry was sung by the Arabs,⁵ which suggests that it was emotional and flowing.
6. His poetry is among the best poetry of the ancient poets,⁶ but al-Muhalhil was not as good as those outstanding poets whom al-Asma^cī called the fuḥūl.
7. Repetition is normal for the Arab poets when dealing with great calamities and al-Muhalhil follows this habit.⁷
8. He uses hyperbole in his poetry.⁸
9. Al-Muhalhil is bombastic and boastful.⁹
10. His poetry is uneven and confused.¹⁰
11. Most of the extant poetry is forged.¹¹

We may add here two further points which may support the above in estimating the authenticity of his poetry:

1. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā', p.39.
2. Ibid.
3. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.149.
4. Al-Marzubānī, al-Muwashshah, p.106.
5. Al-Aghānī, v.4, p.149.
6. Ibn Nubāta, Sarḥ al-^cUyūn, p.100; al-Qalqashandī, Ṣubḥ al-A^cshā, v.1, p.292.
7. Al-^cAskarī, aṣ-Ṣinā^catayn, p.194; Ibn Nabūta, Sarḥ al-^cUyūn, p.100.
8. Al-Aghānī, p.149; Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā', p.33.
9. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā', p.33.
10. Ibid.
11. Al-Asma^cī, Fuḥūlat ash-Shu^carā', p.12.

- a. We cannot accept the lengthy poems because the circumstances of al-Muhalhil's life would not have accorded with such composition, besides there is the problem of their preservation from a distant period.¹
- b. The inclusion of his poetry in a respected source indicates that these fragments or sections belong to al-Muhalhil, but we are in doubt about the authenticity of the whole poem.²

It also seems unwise to accept the rejection by Ibn Sallām of Ibn Ishāq's narratives, in his account of the Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, as regards al-Muhalhil's poetry, although we accept his rejection of the poetry of the ancient tribes like ^CĀd, Thamūd and Tubba^C.³

The admission of Ibn Sallām that there was such a poet as al-Muhalhil means that he knows of him but is not certain of the authenticity of his poetry. His above statements indicate that he had taken note of these traditions about al-Muhalhil but had decided because of the various problems to exclude his poetry entirely. Alternatively, it might be argued that there is nothing in his book which indicates that he believes that the poetry was forged, and that his failure to quote any of al-Muhalhil's poetry was caused by his desire not to make his book too large, or for some other reason not connected with forgery.⁴

Finally, we may observe that the comment of al-Aṣma^Cī, "most of his poetry is forged" does not mean the whole of his poetry but only a large part of it, and indeed confirms the

1. ^CAfīf, ash-Shi^Cr wa Ayyām al-Arab, pp.435, 444.

2. Ibid., p.432; Nabawī, Harb al-Basūs, p.13.

3. Ibn Sallām, Ībaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^Carā', pp.9-11, 24.

4. Ibid., p.5-6.

idea that some of it is authentic.

There are some indications that Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib was not the only source for his poetry. The following sources which are no longer extant are also mentioned by various writers:

1. A Dīwān al-Muhalhil which is mentioned by Ibn an-Nadīm.¹
2. Two books named Ash^cār Banī Taghlib which were collected by two respected ^culamā', as-Sukkarī and Abū ^cAmr ash-Shaybānī,² and which would presumably have included some of his poetry.
3. Many lexicographical, geographical and astronomical books quote a line or more from his poetry, which is a strong indication that either there was a Dīwān or something to refer to and to select from.
4. Many historical books, in addition to al-Aghānī, mention most of the details found in Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, but there is no evidence that it was the only source of this information. Moreover, if we accept details of the war, we have to accept that there was some poetry composed by him.

We may finally observe that if the Dīwān of al-Muhalhil had been lost, there would have been no other access to the whole of his poetry. The remnants which are scattered among the references seem to prove that a collection of his poetry existed at one stage, although it is now lost. However, we cannot expect to find his poetry represented in every source, although the Basūs war was important in the Jāhiliyya, because some reference works, for example Ṭabarī, scarcely

1. Ibn an-Nadīm, al-Fihrist, pp.157-8.

2. Al-Āmidī, al-Mu'talaf wa al-Mukhtalaf, pp.114, 296; al-Baghdādī, al-Khizāna, v.2, p.15; v.1, p.33.

deal with this episode.

Ṭāhā Husayn, followed by some other modern scholars, has suggested that his poetry was forged by Taghlib during the Islamic period.¹ It seems however that this idea has little basis. His poetry consists of elegies for Kulayb and commemorates his character, his deeds, his murder and the lamentation for him. It depicts the condition of a person seeking something unattainable. At first this person appears comfortably at rest, and then suddenly starts forth alone, mourning and lamenting not only for the loss of this rest or comfort but for the loss of the cause of these things. He seeks a replacement for this person, and because it is not possible to find one, he resorts to a substitute, attacking the cause of his loss, namely Jassās and his tribe. He then directs his feelings and emotions against these people. His hatred and enmity are put to effect when he leads his people in a long and savage war against Bakr.

We can easily observe the matching of emotions and subjects because they do not change. Mourning, weeping, yelling, moaning and groaning are the outstanding features of this poetry. The boasting is also necessary in order to raise his own morale and that of his tribe during a period of depression.

The poems to be discussed below may have been attributed to al-Muhalhil on the ground that they fit his character and the nature of his poetry. If they are not by al-Muhalhil then we are forced to say that they display the characteristics of a similar poet throughout in a highly consistent way. Furthermore, if these poems belong to the Islamic period, some traces of Islam should appear in them. Taghlib indulged in bloody wars with Qays, and this would

1. Ṭāhā Husayn, Fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī, pp.214-7.

have provided a good opportunity for them to fabricate poetry against Qays which we do not find to be the case in these poems, nor do we find it used to boast of their victories against Qays. In addition, Taghlib fought the Muslims at the beginning of the conquests, and were not very happy about their rule, and if these poems were forgeries, we might have expected to find some trace of the influence of Christianity, which is, however, totally absent.

Thus, the simplicity of the language may, as discussed above,¹ reflect the style of popular poetry. The subject matter itself does not rule out this sort of language, especially as it derives from the poet's injured feelings and sadness. The organic and psychological unity, the poetical structure and the desert atmosphere of fighting, hospitality and bravery, which are a part of the nomadic life, strengthen the case for attributing these poems to al-Muhalhil.

It is only to be expected that additions would be made to the original corpus on subjects like stars, Qays or Islam. This is not strange because it is easy to accuse any of the Jāhiliyya poetry of having been corrupted and distorted in this way.

Yet, it is clear that the language of al-Muhalhil is a special one which can be easily identified. This observation can be based not on one poem but on the whole of his poetry. Every poem is similar to the others in psychological atmosphere and language. The poet's emotive language has special forms and features which can be related to an individual poetic diction and an individual emotion. The structure of his poetry also has a special form and content which is clear in rhythm, rhyme, form and in imagination. If there are some defects, then these defects are common among the Jāhiliyya poets and

1. See above, pp.69-80.

not individual, particularly as al-Muhalhil was one of the early poets.

If we take into consideration all the aspects and features of style discussed above and, in addition the complicated circumstances in which he was involved, we can divide his poetry into three groups:

The first group: (the poetry which is more or less accepted):-

The poems which start with the following lines might be attributed to him, bearing in mind that some additions and changes have occurred to them and that a few of their lines are in fact unintelligible.

شَفِيَتِ النَّفْسُ مِنْ أَبْنَاءِ بَكْرِ
وَحَطَّتْ بِرُكْبَانِ بَنِي عَبَّادِ
المؤفر

1. My spirit has gained satisfaction from the sons of Bakr, and it has descended on the sons of Ubād.¹

يَا ابْنَةَ آلِ زُهَيْرٍ اذْكُرِي حَسْبِي
وَابْكِي زُهَيْرًا فَمَا خَانُوا وَلَا عُنْدُوا
البيط

2. O daughter of Zuhayr remember my honour, and cry for Zuhayr who were not treacherous or refractory.²

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.54a-55b.

2. Ibid., f.36b-37b.

جَلَلُونِي يَا آلَ تَغْلِبِ حَرْبًا جَعَلَ النَّفْسَ عِنْدَهَا فِي التَّرَاقِي

الْحَفِيفِ

7. O sons of Taghlib, they impose a war on me which brings my heart into my throat.¹

جَارَتْ بَنُو بَكْرٍ وَلَمْ يَعِدْ لَنَا وَالْمَرْءُ قَدْ يَعْرِفُ قَصْدَ الطَّرِيقِ

السَّرِيعِ

8. Banū Bakr are hostile and unjust, but every one knows the right way.²

يَا جَلِيلَةَ ابْنَةِ الْكِرَامِ الْحِجَالِ لَمْ تَمَلِي وَتَكْثِرِينَ السُّؤَالَ

الْحَفِيفِ

9. O Jalīla, daughter of nobles who are camping, you have not enough and you are asking too much.³

إِنْ تَحْتَ الْأَحْجَارِ حَزْمًا وَعِزْمًا وَقَتِيلًا مِنَ الْأَرَاقِيمِ كَهَلَا

الْحَفِيفِ

10. Determination and boldness are buried under the stones and a murdered old man of al-Arāqim.⁴

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.56a-57b.

2. Ibid., f.25b-a.

3. Ibid., f.43b.

4. Ibid., f.21b-a.

بَاتَ لَيْلِي بِالْأَنْحَمِينَ عَوِيلاً أَرْقُبُ النُّجْمَ سَاهِرًا أَنْ يَزُولَا
الْقَيْفِ

11. My night in al-An^c amān is long, as I watch
Sirius wakefully waiting for it to vanish.¹

أَثَبْتُ مِرَّةً وَالسُّيُوفَ شَوَاهِرَ وَعَصْرَفْتُ مَقْدَمَهَا إِلَى هَمَامِ
الْأَمَلِ

12. I injured Murra while the swords
were drawn, and I guided the head of [my
horse] to Hammām.²

فَمَهَنْتَنِي صَاحِبِي فَقُلْتُ لَهْ رَأَى الْهَضْرَاطَ جَعَلَنِي بِالْقِسْمِ
الْمَنْشَرِ

13. My friend tried to calm me, but I said to him:
It is my destiny.³

الِدَارُ قَفَرَتْ عَفَاها بَعْدَ سَاكِنِها بِالرِّيحِ بَعْدَ ارْتِحَالِ الْحَيِّ عَافِها
الْبَيْطِ

14. The encampment is vacant where the strong
wind has erased it after its inhabitants have
left.⁴

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Ṭaghlib, f.38b, 39b.

2. Ibid., f.35a.

3. Ibid., f.45b.

4. Ibid., f.20b, 21b.

The second group: (the poetry which is not adequately authenticated):

It is also possible to accept the poems which start with the following lines, but with some reservations:

أما هاج شوقك بالوارد وأنت لبكر على الراصد
المنقارب

1. Has not your nostalgia been evoked while you are at the water, and while you are watching Bakr.¹

رب هيجاء قد ركبته اليها قاصدا ما أردت عنها ازورا
الحنيف

2. Many a fighting there was to which I directly rode, and not wishing to turn aside from it.²

يا بني ذهل لقد هيجتم لبني بكر حروبا كالحرير
الرمل

3. O sons of Dhuhl, you have kindled wars like a fire for the sons of Bakr.³

كنا نغار على العواتق أن ترى بالأمس خارجة عن الأوطان
الظامل

4. Yesterday we were jealous of our noble women

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.55b-a.

2. Ibid., f.56b-a.

3. Ibid., f.26b.

being seen outside the encampments.¹

The third group: (the poetry which is mostly or completely false):

It is better to present some details for this group of poems in order to show the reasons why they should be deemed non-authentic, and for this reason we will discuss them poem by poem.

a. The poem which starts with this line:

هَلْ عَرَفْتَ الْغَدَاةَ مِنْ أَطْلَالٍ رَهْنِ رِيحٍ وَدَيْمَةٍ مُهْطَالٍ
الْخَفِيفِ

Have you known ruined camps at early morning, when there was wind and heavy rain.

This poem was said to be a retort to the poem of al-Hārith b. ^cUbād which starts with the line:

قَرِيبًا مَرِيضًا النَّعَامَةَ مِئْنِي لَقِحَتْ حَرْبٌ وَائِيلٌ عَنِ حِيَالٍ
الْخَفِيفِ

Bring close the tethering-place of al-Na^cāma to me; the war of Wā'il has become pregnant after having been barren.

Our reasons for not accepting this poem are the following:

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.55a-56b.

1. Its length is unreasonable because it is about 160 lines, which presents difficulties of memorisation. The circumstances of al-Muhalhil could hardly have allowed him to compose this quantity of lines. However, part of the poem may have been added to an original to make its length equal to the poem of al-Hārith which it opposes and which is found in some respected sources,¹ which also seems to have been considerably extended although some lines, quoted in the Aṣma^c iyyāt and al-Ḥamāsa al-Baṣriyya, seem to be genuine.² Fairly long poems (up to about thirty lines) may indeed have been a feature of the Rabī^c poets particularly Bakr and Taghlib, but there is no evidence for the existence of longer poems at this period. The statement of Ibn Sallām that "al-Muhalhil was the first who made the qasīda long" should probably be taken as referring to a length of up to thirty lines.
2. It is clear that there are some features of his poetry in this poem such as repetition, simplicity of language, threats and boasting about his tribe, but the most notable thing is that the emotion is very weak and subdued, although some lines of the poem may belong to him. We can find some similar points between this poem and some of his good authenticated poems, like these lines:

وَسَاوَرْتُهُمْ كَمَا سَاوَرْتُهُمْ
ثُمَّ قَالُوا سَفِينَا غَيْرَ خَالِي
تَرْتَجِعُ الْخَيْلَ بَيْنَ تِلْكَ السَّبَالِ
مُوجِعِ الْقَلْبِ دَائِمِ الْبَلْبَالِ
قَتَلُوا رَبَّهُمْ كَلِيْبًا سَفَاهَا
كَذَبُوا وَالْحَرَامَ وَالْحَيْلَ حَسْتِي
يَا كَلِيْبَ أَجِبْ لِدَعْوَةِ دَاعٍ

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.31b-33b; Nabawī, Ḥarb al-Basūs, p.513.

2. Al-Aṣma^c iyyāt, p.69; al-Ḥamāsa al-Baṣriyya, pp.59-60.

They killed their master Kulayb foolishly and then said: "Our foolish man has full responsibility".

They lied, swearing by the lawful and the unlawful until the horses were pastured among those people.

O Kulayb, reply to a call from a person who is down-hearted and always confused of thought.

1. The non-authenticity is clear however in these lines which do nothing except detail parts of the body without any poetical advantages.

مَاءَ عَيْنِي لَكَ الْفِدَاءُ وَنَفْسِي
وَيَمِينِي وَمَنْكِبِي ثُمَّ صَدْرِي
وَجَبِينِي وَحَاجِبِي وَقَذَالِي
ثُمَّ مَا بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ غَيْرَ اعْتِرَالِي

O tears of my eyes, I sacrifice to you, my self, my forehead, my eyebrows and my hair, for your safety.

And my right hand, my shoulder and my chest, and everything else without excuses.

Once again, it is very difficult to sort out every line from the whole body of the poem, but it is clear that the forger was very skilful in imitating and aping everything except the emotion

- b. The following poem which starts with this line:

يَا قَوْمِي لِيَزْفِرَةَ الزَّفِيرَاتِ وَاخْتِلَافِ الْأَحْزَانِ وَالْعَبْرَاتِ
الْحَقِيفِ

How stricken is my tribe with their loud
sighing, various griefs and tears.¹

The reasons for the rejection of this poem are:

1. This poem has not the poetic feeling nor the organic form that we associate with al-Muhalhil's poetry.
 2. It is difficult to accept any part of this poem since its imagery and use of metaphor are far below the standard which we normally expect of him.
 3. The language is very commonplace, particularly the first lines.
 4. The repetition of Yā Kulayb and the mention of his hospitality and bravery, although characteristic features of al-Muhalhil seem in this poem to have been introduced unskilfully in an attempt to make it seem genuine.
- c. The poem which has been accepted as more or less authentic and which starts with this line:

يَا ابْنَةَ آلِ زُهَيْرٍ اذْكُرِي حَسَبِي وَابْكِي زُهَيْرًا فَمَا خَانُوا وَلَا عُنْدُوا

O daughter of Zuhayr, remember my honour,
and cry for Zuhayr who were not treacherous
or refractory.

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.28b-a.

We can apply to this poem the idea of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn that "Taghlib forged their poetry..."¹ but it is difficult to reject the poem as a whole. Most of the poem boasts about Taghlib and denigrates the tribes of Bakr, but in fact this is not strange in al-Muhalhil's poetry; it is rather the extensive insistence on such exposition which makes us feel uneasy about these passages.

What has been said about the artistic norms of some of his long poems can also be applied to some of his short poems such as the poem which starts with this line:

بَاشَرْتُ قَوْمَ زُهَيْرٍ غَيْرِ مُقْتَصِرٍ وَاللَّهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ الْحَلِيقُ
الْبَيْرُطِ

I joined the tribe of Zuhayr without misgivings, and God knows what the she-camel (al-Ḥalaq) bears.²

The reason for rejecting this poem is that it is already known that the whole of Taghlib took part in the war, and especially that Kulayb was their master and that all of them were fond of him. This poem may have been forged to emphasize his cleverness.

We can find evidence of forgery also in some lines like these:

1. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, Fī al-Adab al-Jāhili, p.215.

2. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.40a.

The story is that "Banū Taym of Taghlib did not join them in their war against Bakr. Al-Muhalhil killed some Bakrites and put their heads on al-Ḥalaq the she-camel who descended at the encampments of Banū Taym. Therefore, Banū Taym were obliged to take part in this war".

سائلوا جهرة إيادا ولخما
إذ ذلّفناهم وكرّا جميعا
وقتلنا قيس عيلان حتى
والحليفين حين سارنا وساروا
فأسرنا سرّاتهم حين ساروا
أمعنوا في الفرار حيث الفرار

Ask openly Iyād, Lakhm and the two allies,
when all of us have gone.

We killed all of them with Bakr, and captured
their nobles when they came.

We killed Qays ^cAylān until they fled to any
refuge.

It seems here that the forger gathered together all the tribes who were enemies of Taghlib and tried to invent material to show that they had achieved victories against those tribes. There is no historical indication that Taghlib fought against these tribes during or before al-Muhalhil's time. Besides that, Qays ^cAylān were their allies at that time. It seems that these lines were forged in the Islamic period when Taghlib really did fight these tribes. It is also clear that the repetition of the word sārū and the completion of the third line with this phrase hayth al-firār is proof that the forger was unable to maintain the structure of the poem. The metre which is apparently meant to be Khafif but contains hemistichs in Rama and Madid² supports the idea that these lines have been forged. The attempt to change these lines becomes clear if we compare this version with that found in al-Yazīdī's narrative, which is different.

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.24a. Al-Mubarrid, at-Ta'āzī wa al-Marāthī, p.289.

2. See above, p. 325.

Further, if we apply this critical criticism, it is possible to add to the third group the poems which start with these lines:

إِنْ فِي الصِّدْرِ مِنْ كَلِيبٍ شَجُونًا هَاجَسَاتٍ نَكَانَ مِنْهُ الْجِرَاحَا
الْخَفِيفِ

1. There are sorrows in my heart for Kulayb, which are restless, and opening the wounds I feel [on his behalf].¹

عَجِبْتُ لِقَوْمٍ يَسْلُكُونَ إِلَى الْكِبَرِ وَكَانُوا قَدِيمًا سَاكِنِينَ عَلَى الصَّغَرِ
الطَّوِيلِ

2. I am amazed at the people who now feel proud but who in previous days dwelt in humiliation.²

حَلَّتْ سَلِيمِي بِشَطَى خَزَازِي لَقَدْ طَالَ عَلَى سَلِيمِي اعْتِزَازَا
الطَّقَارِبِ

3. Sulaymā had camped on the slopes of Khazāzā, O Sulaymā you have been scorning me for a long time.³

هَاجَ الْفُؤَادُ وَعَادَ الِهْمُ وَالْوَجَعُ وَهِيَجَ الشَّوْقُ مِنْى الذِّكْرِ وَالْوَلْوَجُ
الْبَيْطِ

4. My heart is aroused and pain and sorrow have returned, and my nostalgia has been

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.46a-47b.

2. Ibid., f.23a.

3. Ibid., f.50a.

evoked by reminiscence and love.¹

يا ابن أخٍ وأَيُّ قَتِيلٍ لَمْ تَرَعَهُ بِمَحْدَثَاتِ الصُّقَالِ
الضَّفِيفِ

5. O son of a brother [who died], is there any slain warrior who was not frightened by your sharp [sword]?²

رَمَاكَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ بِمَشْحُودٍ مِنَ النَّبِ
الرَّاجِرِ

6. O Mule, God send a sharpened arrow to you.³

غَدَا الْخَلِيطَانِ إِذْ جَدَّ الْخَلِيطَانِ عَنَّا بِأَحْدَاجِ أَجْمَالٍ وَأَظْعَانِ
الْبَيْطِ

7. The two groups have already left quickly with their howdahs and luggage on their camels.⁴

بُنَى تَغْلِبٍ شَدَّ وَالْمَأَازِرِ وَانْدَبُوا كَلَيْبًا وَهَيُوا لِلْعَدُوِّ الْمَذَاكِي
الطَوِيلِ

8. O sons of Taghlib gird your loins and cry for Kulayb, and prepare your horses for the enemies.⁵

Apart from criteria based on the poetic and stylistic

1. Ibn Ishāq, Kitāb Bakr wa-Taghlib, f.49a-50b.
2. Ibid., f.50a-51b.
3. Ibid., f.45a.
4. Ibid., f.21a-22b.
5. Ibid., f.22a.

forms, there should be much caution in dealing with the extant manuscripts. It is convenient, however, to compare the different versions of the same poems found in these manuscripts in order to establish a general attitude about their authenticity. It is also difficult to accept other poems, apart from those dealt with above, unless we apply to them the same criteria of poetic and artistic form. This applies equally to the authenticity of poems from which quotations appear in respected sources. For example the following lines given in respected sources are not in doubt but this alone does not authenticate the entire poem as found in the manuscripts.

أُنَادِي بِرَكْبِ الْمَوْتِ لِلْمَوْتِ غَلَسُوا فَاِنَّ تِلَاعَ الْعَمَقِ بِالْمَوْتِ دَرَّتِ
الطويل

- a. I call out to those going to die, go quickly to death at midnight, for the grounds of al-^cAmq are waiting to give you death.¹

وَعَجْنَا عَلَى سَفْحِ الْأَحْسِ وَدُونِهِ غَرِيبَانِ مَسْهُورَانِ ضَمَّيْهُمَا قَبْرَ
الطويل

- b. We passed along the slopes of al-Aḥṣṣ where there are two unknown, forgotten men in one grave.²

1. There exist a small number of separate lines which have been attributed to both al-Muhalhil and to other poets like al-Hārith b. ^cUḇād, ^cAbīd and Shurahbīl b. Malik at-Taghlibī. But as these fragments are difficult to attribute conclusively without embarking on a detailed

1. Ibn Shabba, al-Jamhara, f.79a. Al-Bakrī, al-Mu^cjam, v.3, p.968.

2. Ibn Shabba, al-Jamhara, f.70a. Al-Bakrī, al-Mu^cjam, p.949.

analysis of the styles of these other poets, which would be superfluous to the present study, we will merely quote the major examples here for the sake of comprehensiveness:

مَا كَانَ جَمْعُهُمْ فِي عَرْضِ سَوْرَتِنَا إِلَّا ذُبَابًا هَوَىٰ فَاقْتَمَهُ الْأَسَدُ
الْبَيْتِ

- a. They gathered around us when we were angry like flies which dropped down dead and the lion devoured them.¹

وَخَيْلٌ تَكْدُسُ بِالدَّارِ عِينِ كَمَشْيِ الْوَعُولِ عَلَى الظَّاهِرِ
الْمُقَارِبِ

- b. Horses which are walking heavily with armed warriors, like stags on rough ground.²

خَلَعَ الْعُلُوكَ وَسَارَ تَحْتَ لَوَائِيهِ شَجَرُ الْعَرَى وَعَرَا عِرَاقَ الْأَقْمِ
الْقَاطِلِ

- c. He revolted against the kings, and the urā trees and the nobles followed his flag.³

2. If the respected sources attribute some of his poetry to another poet, we can accept this, particularly if the incidents support this attribution as, for example, the following two lines which are attributed to al-Muraqqish the elder and even contain a story supporting the attribution. In the extant manuscripts, however, they belong to al-Muhalhil and a similar story is given about their attribution there.

1. Al-Khālidiyyān, al-Ashbāh wa an-Nazā'ir, v.2, p.198.

2. Al-Lisān (kadasa).

3. Ibid. (^cArā).

لِلَّهِ دَرَكَمَا وَدَرَأَبِيكُمْ
أَنْ أَفَلَتِ الْغَفْلَى حَتَّى يَقْتَتِلَا
مَنْ مَبْلِغُ الْأَقْوَامِ أَنْ مَرَقَشَا
أَمْسَى عَلَى الْأَسْحَابِ عِبْنَا مُثَقَلَا

الطاهر

Great will be the virtue of you twain and
your father if the man of Ghufaylah escapes
being slain!

Who shall tell my people how Muraqqish has
become to his companions a troublesome
burden? ¹

1. Al-Mufaddaliyyāt (Lyal), v.1, p.485; v.2, p.169. Ibn Nubāta, Sarḥ al-Uyūn, p.99.
Nabawī, Harb al-Basūs, p.50.

CHAPTER 6

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE
MU^CALLAQA OF ^CAMR B. KULTHŪM

The existing text of the mu^Callaqa differs relatively little in the various recensions preserved by such scholars as Ibn al-Anbārī, Ibn an-Nahhās, at-Tibrīzī and az-Zawzanī. It is remarkable however that Johnson, who translated the mu^Callaqa in his book "The Seven Poems" in 1894 gives three additional lines which are discussed in the following analysis. Clearly Johnson was relying upon a manuscript which is not available at the present, and whose reliability we are unable to judge. Thus Johnson says in his preface about these lines: "Lines which have been found in some copies and not in others are marked with asterisks for the sake of distinction".¹ However, there seems to be no real reason for rejecting these lines, for a number of reasons.

The first of these is the existence of traditions that the poem was originally much longer. Thus al-Bayhaqī mentions ^CAmr b. Kulthūm as one of the three poets who wrote long odes,² which implies that the mu^Callaqa, which in its present version is of average length, must have had many more lines. The modern writer al-Ghalāyīnī refers to accounts that it originally had one thousand lines, without however mentioning any source;³ this, however, does not seem very probable. Whether or not the poem was originally longer, however, even the older recensions add or omit lines; thus az-Zawzanī mentions the following line which is not found in other

1. Johnson, The Seven Poems, the preface.

2. Al-Bayhaqī, al-Mahāsīn wa al-Masāwī', p.408.

3. Al-Ghalāyīnī, Rijāl al-Mu^Callaqāt, p.107.

versions (although it occurs in Johnson):

وَأَخْرَى فِي دِمَشْقٍ وَقَاصِرِينَ وَكَأَيِّ قَدْ شَرِبْتَ بِبَعْلَبَكِ

And many a cup of this wine have I drunk in
Ba^c laback and another in Damascus and
Caesarea.¹

Al-Qurashī introduces a line which is not found in any
other version, even that of Johnson:

فَمَا بَرَحَتْ مَجَالُ الشَّرْبِ حَتَّى تَخَالُوهَا وَقَالُوا قَدْ رَوَيْنَا

It continued to be passed around amongst the
drinkers until they thought it too precious
(to drink any more) and said, "We have had
enough".²

The most interesting fact is that, alone among the earlier
sources, al-Jamhara gives the first line of Johnson's passage
(although not, of course, the other three). If, as argued
below, we accept that these lines belong together this would
be strong evidence for the authenticity of these three lines, or
at least for their antiquity.

The third point, however, is that as will be seen from
the coming analysis of the poem, there is nothing in these
lines from the point of view of structure and imagery which is
incompatible with the rest of the mu^callaqa, and indeed they
seem to be an integral part of the poem.

1. Az-Zawzanī, Sharḥ al-Mu^callaqāt as-Sab^c, p.119.

2. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.158.

The present writer has made considerable efforts to locate Johnson's manuscripts, but without success. The India Office Library manuscripts of the mu^callaqāt which might have been consulted by Johnson do not contain these lines, nor do the British Museum manuscripts.

However, in the light of the above arguments these lines have been accepted, particularly as they show a psychological coherence with the attitude of the mu^callaqa as a whole, and in our view they should be accepted unless further evidence for their rejection is forthcoming.

The poem was extremely popular among Taghlib, each of whom was said to keep it by heart because it embodied their feeling of power and glory as an unconquered tribe, to the extent that another of their poets felt impelled to rebuke them for being too concerned with such thoughts:

أَلْهَى بَنِي جِشْمٍ عَنِ كُلِّ مَكْرَمَةٍ
قَصِيدَةَ قَالِهَا عَمْرُو بْنُ كَلْثُومٍ
يَفَاخِرُونَ بِهَا مَذْكَانَ أَوْلَاهِمُ
يَا لِلرَّجَالِ لِشِعْرِ غَيْرِ مَسْئُومِ
السُّبْحِ

Banū Jusham were distracted from every dignity by a poem which ^cAmr b. Kulthūm recited,

They have boasted of that since their very beginnings

O shame on people who do not get sick of that poetry.¹

Ibn Sallām regards him as being among the sixth class,

1. Dīwān ^cAmr, p.610.

which he defines as poets each of whom composed one famous ode.¹ The poet al-Kumayt considers him to be the best poet ever. His mu^callaqa consists mainly of fakhr and for this reason it was regarded as one example of what the Arabs boasted of,³ or at least one of the best examples of what the Arabs had said on this subject.⁴ Ibn ^cUmar went further, regarding this mu^callaqa as the best of all seven,⁵ and better than most other Arab poetry.⁶

The mu^callaqa has three major subdivisions; the wine theme, the nasīb theme and the fakhr against ^cAmr b. Hind and the tribes of Bakr, Du^cmī and Banū at-Tammāh.

The following are some observations concerning the beginning, the nasīb and the main theme of the mu^callaqa, i.e. the fakhr. The discussion will attempt to deal with these by analysing the main issues and to find an overall regularity by analysing the poem. We hope to prove that the poem is unified in content and form in its internal and external relationships. This is followed by an additional section dealing with the repetition which is a prominent technical element of ^cAmr's style. The reason for a detailed discussion of the mu^callaqa is that it is his most important poem historically and literarily, especially as there is little other available poetry that belongs to him.

1. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl ash-Shu^carā', p. 127.
2. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.75.
3. Al-Marzubānī, Mu^cjam ash-Shu^carā', p.7.
4. An-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, v.3, p.200.
5. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.68.
6. Ibid.

The Thematic Analysis

A. The Wine Theme

The main intention of the poem is the glorification of the tribe, and it exemplifies the idea of the "We" or collective personality of the group. The fakhr unites the poem from the beginning to the end while the other themes are interwoven and interlocked in it. Outwardly, the poem appears at first glance to be united and coherent in structure and meaning, because we hear the poet's own voice above the echoes of his lofty language. Yet the power and charm of this voice are used for the expression of various themes. Nicholson's comments on the poem may be quoted here:

^CAmr's mu^C allaqa is the work of a man who united in himself the ideal qualities of manhood as these were understood by a race which has never failed to value, even too highly, the display of self-reliant action and decisive energy ... in ^CAmr's poem these virtues are displayed with an exaggerated boastfulness..."¹

^CAmr begins his poem "with a strain perfectly Anacreontic... there is some mixture of complaint on the departure of his mistress, whose beauties he delineates with boldness and energy ... the rest of his work consists of menaces, vaunts and exaggerated applause of his own tribe for their generosity and prowess, the goodness of their horses, the beauty of their possessions, and even the number of their ships".²

If we look deeply into the mu^C allaqa, we will encounter some problems of apparent internal inconsistency, particularly

1. Nicholson, Literary History of the Arabs, p.111.

2. Arberry, The Seven Odes, p.197.

the opening section. "Critics led by Ahlwardt and even tentatively followed by the cautious Blachere have proposed that the first eight (or nine) couplets of ^CAmr's ode are a later accretion and that the poem originally commenced with the rhymed couplet:

قَفِي قَبْلَ التَّفَرُّقِ يَا ظَعِينَا نَخْبِرُكَ الْيَقِينِ وَتُخْبِرُنَا

Pause yet before the parting, litter-borne
lady,
And we'll declare you the truth and you'll
declare it.¹

Nicholson suggests that "the first eight verses seem to have been added to the poem at a very early date, for out of them arose the legend that ^CAmr drank himself to death with unmixed wine..."²

This judgement is rather questionable. If we accept that the poem should begin with the traditional theme of the encampment, then the versions beginning with the wine theme might be erroneous. However there is no strong reason for rejecting the wine theme as being an integral part of the poem. The reputed death of Amr from over-indulgence in wine³ might support this in that it confirms that he was fond of wine and that the habit had a strong influence on him, even on his poetry in which he boasts of his capacity for wine.

1. Arberry, The Seven Odes, p.198.

2. Nicholson, Literary History of the Arabs, pp.110-1.

3. Ibn Habīb, al-Muḥabbar, p.471.

There is another story about the following two lines. It is said that ^CAmr composed them when he was young, because his mother turned the cup of wine from him when she was serving his father and others.

وكان الكأس مجراها اليمين
بصاحبك الذي لا تسبحيننا
صددت الكأس عنا أم عمرو
وما شر الثلاثة أم عمرو

You turned aside the cup from us, O 'Umm
^CAmr, while the circulation of the cup was
from the right hand.

O Umm ^CAmr, your friend, to whom you do not
give to drink, is not the worst of the three.¹

These lines are also attributed to the earlier poet Judhayma,² in which case ^CAmr might have used them as part of his cultural heritage.

If the mu^Callaqa was written as a result of anger and in order to redress the wrong done to him, the poet might well have been impelled to recall the event from his subconscious. There is an obvious psychological connection between the name Umm ^CAmr and the name of his enemy ^CAmr b. Hind, although surely there is no connection between ^CAmr b. Hind's mother and the woman in the poem, who is not identified, unless one claims that the name of Umm ^CAmr was recalled because of the importance of ^CAmr b. Hind's mother receiving his mother in her³ tent. But this is contrary to ^CAmr's way of expression, which mostly depends on directness. Besides, the truth of this

1. Al-Baghdādī, al-Khizāna, v.3, pp.161-2.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibn Qutayba, ash-Shi^Cr wa ash-Shu^Carā', v.1, pp.240-1.

event is contested.¹ It should also be noticed that there is no connection between these two and the line later in the poem, in which the word ummika also occurs, which refers to his quarrel with ^CAmr b. Hind.

However, the wine theme appears to be a part of the mu^Callaqa. It is a kind of introduction to the central issue, fakhr, described in balāgha as al-khurūj min an-nasīb ilā al-madīh wa ghayrih.² For this he uses the vocative interjection alā which is here an adequate transitional and connecting element.

The language in the wine theme is similar to the diction of the rest of the mu^Callaqa in which the poet, aided by his choice of the wāfir metre tends to make use of the long syllable ā the short a or fatha.³ If we consider the wine theme separately from the rest of the poem we find that it shares common linguistic features with the rest of the poem.

All of these facts suggest that the wine theme, which has sometimes been criticised as an extraneous theme, is in fact a part of the mu^Callaqa in consistency and coherence.

A comparison between the wine theme here and the other poems in ^CAmr's Dīwān shows that it coincides in mood with the central feeling and significance of the mu^Callaqa while differing greatly from others. Indeed its main significance lies not at the surface level but in the underlying way in which it expresses life by the vigour, rejoicing in manly pursuits, and the exuberant self-confidence which we find in the mu^Callaqa as a whole.

1. Arberry, The Seven Odes, pp.192-6.

2. Al-^CAskarī, Aṣ-ṣinā^Catayn, p.452.

3. A detailed study of certain of the mu^Callaqāt from a linguistic point of view

It has been argued¹ that the wine theme was introduced here because wine was famous among Taghlib. However, this idea lacks any conviction since wine-drinking was general among the Arabs of the Jāhiliyya while these lines of ^CAmr b. Kulthūm are unique among pre-Islamic long poems. If we accept that the wine theme is an integral part of this poem, however, its position at the beginning of the poem raises questions, since every other qaṣīda from this period starts with the nasīb. This fact led Ahlwardt and others to reject the opening lines and begin with the nasīb.

B. The Nasīb Theme

The poet expresses his emotions towards his beloved as a part of the nasīb theme, beginning with his asking her to wait. Here Johnson introduces some lines part of which act as a kind of monologue.² He later turns to painting a picture of his beloved in a series of physical images. These images are as follows: Her shoulders are like those of a long-necked she-camel. Her bosom is like a bowl of ivory. Her two sides are like two sides of an arrow.³ Her buttocks are heavy and also her hips.⁴ Her legs are like pillars of ivory or marble.⁵

It is true that the encampment theme and the nasīb had

Cont'd: (M.C. Bateson, Structural Continuity in Poetry) has convincingly established the stylistic unity of these works. A similar study of the mu^Callaqa of ^CAmr b. Kulthūm would we believe produce comparable results, but lies outside the scope of the present study.

1. M.H. ^CAbd ar-Rahmān, Al-Madhhab al-Fannī li-Shu^Carā' al-Mu^Callaqāt, p.123.

2. Johnson, The Seven Poems, pp.132-6, lines 9-22. An exhaustive study of MSS has not revealed a single MS which quotes these lines, and as Johnson does not mention his source their provenance is a mystery.

3. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p.622.

4. Az-Zawzanī, Sharḥ al-Mu^Callaqāt as-Sab^C, p.121.

5. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p. 787.

already become conventional and traditional as an introduction for the long poems at this stage of Arabic poetry. It could be asked whether the poet was in love or not and if so, whether his love entailed a real emotional involvement. Is the name given by al-Jamhara (Laylā),¹ a real character or only a conventional term? And what should be say about the following three lines which show sorrow and sadness?

أضلتُه فرجعت الحنينيَا
لها من تسعةٍ إلا جنينيَا
رأيت حمولها أصلا حدينيَا

فما وجدت كوجدى أم سقيب
ولا شماء لم يترك شقاها
تذكرت الصبا واشتقت لميَا

The she-camel, the mother of a male foal, did not grieve with a grief like my grief when she lost her foal, and she raised an affectionate yearning cry.

Nor did the middle-aged woman grieve, whose evil fortune did not leave her from nine children, except buried ones.

I remembered my youth, and I became desirous for that time when I saw her camels being guided away in the evening with songs.²

This agony and frustration seem somewhat incongruous from a psychological point of view, because of the general attitude of the poem which expresses indignation and boastful panache arising from anger and resentment of insult. Expressions like rajja^c at al-ḥanīnā and wa lā shamṭā' convey

1. Al-Qurashī, Al-Jamhara, p.159.

2. Az-Zawzanī, Sharḥ al-Mu^callaqāt as-Sab^c, p.122.

almost audibly the effect of a groan.

The assumption that the whole theme is merely introduced because it is traditional and nothing more¹ is a matter of question, especially if we consider these three lines which show real feelings of despair and despondency. The first question to ask is whether this picture of his beloved is genuine, or whether these three lines are merely symbolic. Is the picture shown in these lines a reflection of a psychological state similar to the pictures drawn by an-Nābigha of the ox, of the wild cow by Labīd, the eagle and the fox by ^CAbīd,² or the wolf by ash-Shanfarā,³ where there is at least a consistency between the psychological attitude of these lines and that of their poems as a whole?

The poem as a whole expresses a powerful threat to Bakr and a warning to ^CAmr b. Hind for treating Taghlib as of low worth, and contains complaints, as Arberry notes,⁴ and fakhr, which represents an element of self-defence, which conceals a feeling of fear while suggesting to others the idea of strength and domination.⁵ It may therefore be asked whether these lines are compatible with the mood of the poem as a whole. The picture of the woman, which is an extraordinary one, may, as al-Yūsuf says, seem to be "suitable and appropriate to the attitude of the mu^Callaqa which employs strength, i.e. the idea of power and invulnerability". The poem depicts the Jāhiliyya at its highest level of power and for this reason the poet stresses the hugeness and protectiveness of the woman.⁶

1. Al-Yūsuf, Buḥūth fī al-Mu^Callaqāt, p.261.

2. Ibid., pp.71-87, 207-11.

3. Al-Yūsuf, Maqālāt fī ash-Shi^Cr al-Jāhili, p.225.

4. Arberry, The Seven Odes, p.197.

5. Al-Yūsuf, Buḥūth fī al-Mu^Callaqāt, pp.65-258.

6. Ibid.

It is important therefore to establish whether the nasīb theme is closely linked to the psychological attitude of the poem as a whole or not. The poet explains that Taghlib were superior to Bakr during their wars in Khazāz and Dhū Urāt and that they displayed their power in their battles and conquests. This is intended as a demonstration to the king that he was mistaken when he listened to slander and treated Taghlib badly, as is clear from the following line:

بِأَيِّ مَشِيئَةٍ عَمَّرُو بَنَ هِنْدٍ تَطِيحُ بِنَا الْوُشَاةَ وَتَزْدَرِينَا

With what desire, O ^cAmr b. Hind, do you listen to our slanderers, and despise us?¹

Analysis of the nasīb images will show two main things:

1. The theme of virginity expressed through words denoting whiteness like "white", "marble", "the light of the moon", the description of the breasts as a bowl of ivory and guarded from others, and the image of a young she-camel, as in the following lines:

ذِرَاعِي عَيْطِلٍ أَدْمَاءٍ بَكْرِ
وَنَحْرًا مِثْلَ ضَوْءِ الْبَدْرِ وَافِي
وَشَدِيًّا مِثْلَ حَقِّ الْحَاجِّ رَحْمًا
وَسَارِيَّتِي بِلَاطِ أَوْرُخِيَامِ
هَجَانِ اللَّوْنِ لَمْ تَقْرَأْ جِنِينَا
بِأَتْمَامِ أَنْسَاءٍ مَدْلِجِينَا
حَمَانًا مِنْ أَكْفِ اللَّامِسِينَا
يَرْنُ خَشَاشِ حَلِيهِمَا رَيْنَا

The arms as fat and fleshy as those of a long-necked she-camel, white, young, pure

1. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharh al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.809.

white in colour, who has not been pregnant.¹

And a neck like the light of the moon at the last day of the month when a group of people saw it in the midnight.²

And she will show you a bosom like a bowl of ivory, soft, guarded from the hands of the touchers,

And two legs, white as ivory or marble, the jingling of ornaments upon which makes a low noise.³

In addition there is no hint of a marital commitment, which perhaps explains why he puts stress on the virginity which occupies his thoughts.

2. Seclusion and penetration, as in the following line:

تريـك إذا دخلت على خـلاءٍ وقد أمنت عيون الكاشحينـا

She will show you, when you enter in upon her privately, and she is safe from the eyes of her enemies.⁴

This emphasis on virginity and seclusion suggest that his beloved was really a virgin. He describes her as his beloved, but does not reveal anything else. This leads us to believe that she was a symbolic figure and not a genuine mistress. In any case the mu^c allaqa was composed very late in his life when he had sons and daughters.⁵

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.620.

2. Al-Qurashī, Al-Jamhara, p.160.

3. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.782, 785, 787.

4. Ibid., v.2, p.620.

5. Al-Marzubānī, Mu^c jam ash-Shu^c arā', p.7.

The description, then, is a description which projects his feelings on to other subjects. If we go further and consider the following lines:

وَإِخْوَتَهَا وَعَمَّ لِي ظَالِمُونَا	أَفِي لِي لِي يِعَاتِبُنِي أَبُوهُنَا
لِفَضْلِ قَرَابَةِ حَبْلَا مَتِينَا	وَلَكِنَّا وَإِيَاهُمْ مَدَدْنَا
وَإِنْ نَزَلُوا بِدَارِ رِضَى رَضِينَا	هُمُ الْإِخْوَانُ إِنْ غَضِبُوا غَضِبْنَا
إِلَى الْأَعْدَاءِ بِالْمَعَدِّ رِينَا	وَلَسْنَا فِي مَوَدَّتِنَا أَخَانَا

Do the father of Laylā and her brothers reproach me about her, while they treat me unjustly in doing so?¹

But we and they extended to each other, for the sake of kindredship, a strong rope of friendship.

They are our brothers, and their sympathies are perfectly with us, so that if they are angry we are angry; and if they lodge in a place pleasing to them, we are pleased with the same.

In befriending our brothers, we are far from apologising to their enemies.²

we will find that the same complaints against Bakr are repeated here. Laylā or his beloved is a close relative, since he says "... for the sake of kindredship, a strong rope of friendship". Bakr at the same time are close relatives of Taghlib, but ^cAmr tries to hint indirectly that Bakr do not

1. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.159.

2. Johnson, The Seven Poems, pp.133-4, lines 14-16.

have the same status as Taghlib, though he confesses in the following line that Bakr are brothers of Taghlib:

وَكُنَّا الْأَيْمَنِينَ إِذَا التَّقِينَا وَكَانَ الْأَيْسَرِينَ بَنُو أَبِيْنَا

And we were the right wing of the army when we met the enemy; and the sons of our father were the left wing.¹

This confirms that the poem was composed after the reconciliation² with Bakr, and that the incident of ar-Rakb³ and the false rumours following it were the main reason for this poem.

The line

وَلَسْنَا فِي مَوَدَّتِنَا أَخَانَا إِلَى الْأَعْدَاءِ بِالْمَعْذِرِينَا

In befriending our brothers, we are far from apologising to their enemies.⁴

is a reflection on how Bakr treated Taghlib by helping others against them, and confirms that the line which shows aggression and hostility within the nasīb theme is a reflection of this hostility and aggression towards Bakr. It displays the same attitude as those lines in which he belittles Bakr and shows how they were not as strong as Taghlib. These lines reveal how the poet felt towards Bakr, expressing disappointment and sorrow. This feeling can be found in the

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis', v.2, p.661.

2. See above, pp.21-2.

3. See above, pp.22, 25.

4. Johnson, The Seven Poems, p.134, line 16.

nasīb theme when the poet asks his beloved if she would like to terminate their relationship:

قَفِي نَأَلِكِ هَلْ أَحَدْتِ عَرْمًا لَوْ شِئْتَ الْبَيْنَ أَمْ خَنْتِ الْأَمِينَا

Stop, that we may ask you whether you cut off communication with us to hasten separating, or whether you deceived the trusted one who never deceived you?¹

In fact it refers to his relations with Bakr, not to those with his beloved. The poet always tries to show Taghlib as an honest people and thus uses the word al-amīna (trusted one) to describe them, while in contrast he uses the word khunti (you deceived) in connection with Bakr. This therefore offers a further explanation for our finding these three lines full of agony and frustration, for the poet declares that everything is now over because of his strong reaction against Bakr.

This explanation would confirm that the nasīb theme as a whole is used in a way which is relevant to the mu^callaqa and not something external or merely traditional. It thus becomes part of the mu^callaqa in every respect and maintains the organic unity of the poem, and is not merely a collection of disparate themes.

It also explains why the encampment theme is absent from this mu^callaqa while it is commonly found in other long poems such as those of Zuhayr, Labīd, etc. Because the poet was not composing under the influence of real love, he used the nasīb theme as a symbolic one² and then moved directly to balance

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.619.

2. Rūmiyya, ar-Riḥla fī al-Qaṣīda al-Jāhiliyya, pp.308-11.

this theme with the fundamental message of the mu^callaqa by giving monumental descriptions of his beloved and complaint against his kin which fits with it.

If we take his picture of his beloved as a framework for further discussion, we will find that it has been criticised as being too statuesque, or merely dull.¹ In fact the only description of this kind is in the following lines:

هَجَانِ اللُّونِ لَمْ تَقْرَأْ جَنِينَا	ذِرَاعِي عَيْطَلٍ أَدْمَاءُ بَكْرِ
رَوَادٍ فِيهَا تَنْوَبِيمَا وَلِينَا	وَمَتْنِي لَدُنَّةٍ سَمَقَتْ وَطَالَ كَتِّ
يَرْنُ خَشَاشٍ حَلِيمَا رَيْنِيَا	وَسَارِيَتِي بِبِلَاطٍ أَوْ رَخَامِ

Two arms as fat and fleshy as those of a long-necked she-camel, white, young, pure white in colour, who has not been pregnant.²

And she will show you the waist of her supple body, which is tall and long, while her buttocks move with difficulty with what adjoins them.³

And two legs, white as ivory or marble, the jingling of ornaments upon which makes a low noise.⁴

There is no comparable description in Jāhiliyya poetry. They used to describe, for example, the buttocks as heavy or large but not as sticking in the door, as in the following

1. Al-Yūsuf, Buḥūth fī al-Mu^callaqāt, p.260.

2. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.782.

3. Az-Zawzanī, Sharḥ al-Mu^callaqāt as-Sab^c, p.121.

4. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.787.

line:

وَمَا كَمَّةٌ يَضِيقُ الْبَابَ عَنْهَا وَكَشْحًا قَدْ جَنَنْتَ بِهِ جَنُونَ

And she will show you a big hip, for which
the door is too narrow; and a waist, at the
sight of which I have become mad.¹

This may be a kināya for largeness, but it is part of the tendency in the poem towards exaggeration. This could equally be said of the description of the arms and the legs, which gives further evidence that it is an imaginary woman who is being described, not a real one. Indeed we feel contradictions in his picture, because there is much evidence that the poet is only drawing a picture without real experience. He draws a picture of a cow, as al-Yūsuf says,² but, under the influence of his subconscious, chooses the breasts of a virgin as small as a bowl of ivory for his huge statue.

However, if we accept his picture of the woman as a symbolic one and not a real one, we can suggest that the picture represents Bakr and not a woman. Bakr is a large tribe and so the woman is pictured as large also. In his subconscious there is Bakr even though in the nasīb there should be a woman.

C. Threats and Fakhr

When the poet has finished the wine theme and the nasīb

1. Az-Zawzanī, Sharḥ al-Mu^callaqāt as-Sab^c, p.121.

2. Al-Yūsuf, Buḥūth fī al-Mu^callaqāt, p.259.

theme, which exist in all the recensions, he turns to the central focus of the mu^callaqa. He states, in the following line, the position of Taghlib at the beginning of the war:

بَأْنَا نُوْرِدُ الرَّاْيَاتِ بِيْضًا وَنُصْدِرُهِنَّ حَمْرًا قَدْ رُوَيْنَا

To the effect that verily we take our flags to the battlefield white, and we bring them back red, when they are satisfied with blood.¹

He also explains unequivocally to ^cAmr b. Hind how Taghlib killed kings like him. It is an indirect threat to ^cAmr, that he will suffer the same outcome if he goes ahead with his humiliation of Taghlib. This threat may be a reference to the wars with Yemen when Kulayb revolted against them, and killed some of their rulers, besides killing Shurahbīl, son of al-Hārith al-Kindī. These events are made clear in the following lines:

وَأَيَّامَ لَنَا وَلَهُمْ طِيَّالٌ عَمِينَا الْمَلِكِ فِيهَا أَنْدِينَا

And we inform you of many of the celebrated days of our wars, the history of which is long, wherein we rebelled against the king, not willing that we should obey him.²

وَسَيِّدٍ مَعَشَرَ قَدْ تَوَجَّهَ بَتَّاجِ الْمَلِكِ يَحْمِي الْمُهَاجِرِينَ

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.628.

2. Ibid., p.629.

And many a chief of a tribe, whom they had crowned with the crown of authority, and who protects those who seek refuge with him.¹

He then continues this display of his tribe's valour by describing how they wage war:

وَشَذَبْنَا قِتَادَةَ مَنْ يَلِينَا	وَقَدْ هَرَّتْ كِلَابُ الْحَيِّ مِنَّا
يَكُونُوا فِي الْلِقَاءِ لَهَا طَحِينَا	مَتَى نَنْقُلُ إِلَى قَوْمِ رِحَانَا
وَلِهَوْتَهَا قِضَاعَةَ أَجْمَعِينَا	يَكُونُ ثِفَالُهَا شَرْقَى نَجْدِ

And the dogs of the tribe whined, fearing us, when we stripped of his weapons the armed warrior who approached to fight us.

When the mill of our war is removed towards a tribe, they become as flour to it in meeting.

Its meal cloth is spread east of Najd, and its supply of grain is the tribe of Qudā^ca, the whole of it.²

All of the above lines try to make the king reconsider whether it would be wise to attack Taghlib. He later tells him that no one can attack them, because they protect themselves valiantly and defeat their enemies:

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.630.

2. Ibid., pp.630-3.

وَنَحْنُ إِذَا عِمَادُ الْحَيِّ خَرَّتْ عَلَى الْأَحْفَافِ نَمْنَحُ مَنْ يَلِينَا

And we, when the tent-poles of the tribe fall upon the furniture of the tents, keep back those who approach us desiring robbery.¹

He asserts that any kind of attack, even a fierce one, will not harm them, and that they are not concerned about it and will resist vigorously. He gives an example of such an attack, and describes how they defend themselves by piercing with spears, striking with swords, cutting off heads, and fighting in close combat; and at the end there is rejoicing over their victory, for their people have long experience of fighting.

This emotive and atmospheric description is meant to stress the idea which the poet is concerned with, i.e. to deter the king from fighting.

After the section describing their ability to defend themselves and defeat others, he turns to ^cAmr b. Hind, who is threatening them, and gives him more examples of this kind of fighting. He gives him the precise example of Taghlibīs who revolted against and killed their kings.² It implies the same result for him if he attempts to harm them.

All this description and vaunting, which implies killing the king, has two meanings:

1. ^cAmr b. Kulthūm was not ready to fight the king openly and face to face, perhaps as ^cAmr b. Hind was a king who

1. *Ibid.*, p.635.

2. See above, pp.11-12, 26-7.

supposedly was in a better position than they were,¹ and because Taghlib were already exhausted by fighting the long, disastrous war of al-Basūs² and another, lesser, campaign in al-Kulāb.³

The threats which the poet utters are a way of giving himself more confidence and equanimity, besides instilling courage in his people to be ready to face any trouble. The poet at that time had a strong influence on his people, and moreover ^CAmr as a chieftain was responsible for their victory. The lines which are the so-called "munaṣṣifāt" (equalising lines)⁴ may reflect their inability to withstand a long war. The following line gives a description of their manner of defending themselves, and conveys a particularly terrifying image:

وَنَحْبِنُ إِذَا عَمَادَ الْحَيِّ خَسَّرَتْ عَلَى الْأَحْفَاضِ نَمْنَعُ مِنْ يَلِينَا

And we, when the tent-poles of the tribe fall upon the furniture of the tents, keep back those who approach us desiring robbery.⁵

Thus the following lines of the munaṣṣifāt give the feeling of mere resistance without making a display of their power by reference to attack:

1. See above, p.25.

2. See above, pp.14-22.

3. See above, pp.26-7.

4. Al-Mulūhī, al-Munaṣṣifāt, p.7.

5. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, p.635.

كَأَنَّ سَيْوفَنَا فِيهَا وَفِيهِمْ
مَخَارِيقُ بِأَيْدِي لَاعِبِينَ
كَأَنَّ ثِيَابَنَا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهُمْ
خَضَبٌ بَأَرْجْوَانٍ أَوْ طَلِينٍ

As though our swords and theirs were sword-sticks in the hands of players.

As if our garments and theirs were dyed with the juice of the urjuwān or besmeared with it.¹

This defending position in the face of the expected offensive by the king is clear from the repetition of the word nakhshā (for fear of) in that section.

2. The expectation of danger might have led ^CAmr b. Kulthūm to get rid of ^CAmr b. Hind by assassinating him. Assassination might have been the easiest way to avoid direct armed conflict. The story according to which they met in the desert and then ^CAmr b. Kulthūm killed the king² may be supported by the probable intention of ^CAmr to kill the king as his forefathers had done. At the same time the poem reveals indirectly their fear of being attacked. After the assassination there is the flight to al-Jazīra³ where they can face anyone who wants to avenge him.

However, the following line, which comes directly after the boasting theme, shows that their relations with the king were on the brink of severance:

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qasā'id at-Tis^C, v.2, pp.641-2.
2. See above, p. 25.
3. Ibn Qutayba, ash-Shi^Cr wa ash-Shu^Carā', v.1, p.241.

مَتَى تَعْقِدَ قَرِينَتَنَا بِحَبْلٍ نَجْزُ الْحَبْلَ أَوْ نَقْصِرَ الْقَرِينَا

When we tie our she-camel with a rope to the neck of another, we break the rope or break the neck of the enemy.¹

On the other hand, the line that follows it stresses their power and their willingness to maintain fairly good relations with others who were in alignment with them.

وَنُوجِدُ نَحْنُ أَمْنَعُهُمْ ذِمًّا مَارًا وَأَوْفَاهُمْ إِذَا عَقَدُوا يَمِينَنَا

And we shall be found, we (I repeat), the firmest of them in keeping our word, and the most faithful of them when they bind us with oaths.²

The meaning of these lines is to show the king that they were more powerful, trustworthy and sincere than Bakr. For this reason he gives details of the wars in which Bakr took part under the leadership of Taghlib.³

He then intermingles the boasts with threats to Bakr, Banū at-Tammāḥ and Du^cmī, where the pronoun "we" nahnu/nā is dominant as no other tribe except theirs has had such a history of suffering.

The poem seems to arrive at its closure after this theme by using the following lines which are given following each

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.657.

2. Ibid., p.658.

3. See above, pp.11-12, 14.

other by az-Zawzanī and by the rest of the recensions with different arrangements, and which are agreed upon by all the recensions:

أَبِينَا أَنْ نَقِرَ الذَّلَّ فِينَا	إِذَا مَا الْمَلِكُ سَامَ النَّاسِ خَسْفَا
وَنَحْنُ الْبَحْرُ نَمْلُؤُهُ سَفِينَا	مَلَأْنَا الْبَحْرَ حَتَّى ضَاقَ عَنَّا
تَخِرُّ لَهُ الْجَبَابِرُ سَاجِدِينَ	إِذَا بَلَغَ الْفِطَامَ لَنَا صَبِي

When that the king treats the people with indignity, we refuse to honour submission amongst us,

We have filled the land until it becomes too narrow for us, and we have filled the sea with ships,

When one of our boys reaches the age of weaning, great kings fall down worshipping him.¹

Badawī comments on the simplicity of the language of this section, particularly "the latter part dealing with the more urgent theme of his recent humiliation and vengeance in which characteristically the language becomes more spontaneous and direct with the result that this whole section sounds less stylised than the rest of the poem and comes closer to the nature of the qit'a. (Is it mere coincidence that at-Tabrizī

1. Ibn an-Anbārī, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id as-Sab' at-Jiwāl, pp.425-7; Ibn an-Naḥḥās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis', v.2, pp.333-5; al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.170; az-Zawzanī, Sharḥ al-Mu'allaqāt as-Sab', p.135.

The final line is omitted from the modern edition of the Mu'allaqāt of Ibn al-Anbārī, but is introduced in one of the manuscripts: see the footnote of the editor, Ibn al-Anbārī, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id as-Sab' at-Jiwāl, p.425.

omits this whole section from his edition of the poem?)".¹

We might observe here that these lines are not in fact omitted by at-Tibrizī, since those lines which are given by Ibn al-Anbārī, Ibn an-Nahhās and az-Zawzanī at the end of the mu^callaqa beginning with the expression bi-anna are included in at-Tibrizī's recension except that they occur in the middle of the poem. All the recensions agree on giving the structure of the lines but as happens not infrequently the number of actual lines varies.

We might also query whether this part of the poem is a "more urgent theme". If we accept that these are agreed by all recensions, and consider them in the context of the poem as a whole, we may well conclude that these lines consist simply of boasting like the rest of the poem and that there is no reason to regard them as anything special or in any way more similar to a qit^ca. In fact if we want to look for lines of this sort we may find them in the lines which are directed to the king mentioning his name or status and which may have been added later after his murder.²

The other lines which are introduced by Johnson³ can be accepted, for they have the same features as the rest of the poem. There is no reason, on the other hand, to maintain the belief that the mu^callaqa originally had more than 1,000 lines,⁴ because it seems that it served its purposes by its thematic coherence, despite some variations which may be referred to the oral tradition.

1. M.M. Badawī, "From Primary to Secondary Qasidas; Thoughts on the Development of Classical Arabic Poetry", J.A.L., XI, 1980, p.2.

2. Hibat Allāh, al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya, f.289, 125b.

3. Johnson, The Seven Poems, pp.133-4, lines 14-6.

4. Al-Ghalāyīnī, Rijāl al-Mu^callaqāt, p.197.

D. Repetition

^cAmr's use of repetition is somewhat different from the repetition of his ancestor al-Muhalhil. There we hear the echo of sadness, agony and complaint. Here the opposite holds true. ^cAmr's voice is loud, swaggering and triumphant, and his high spirits dominate the whole poem except for three lines of the nasīb theme. He shouts, threatens and displays vigour and violence. When he repeats a phrase or word, he wants to make the hearers aware of his strong reactions and harsh challenge to them. He uses repetition where he wants his enemies, or those who are thinking of attacking Taghlib, to listen attentively to what he is saying. ^cAmr's repetition is like the sound of a hammer which makes enemies or slanderers alert and frightened. Thus he makes much use of repetition, which in his hands becomes impressive and effective.

He uses repetition for several purposes. Here he repeats the word ka's because it is the axis of the conversation. On the other hand, he repeats the name Umm ^cAmr as a kind of accusation, but a protesting accusation because of the anger which is demonstrated by the word sharr:

وَكَاَنَّ الْكَأْسَ مَجْرَاهَا الْيَمِينَا صَدَدَتِ الْكَأْسَ عِنَّا أُمَّ عَمْرٍو
بِمَا جَبَّكَ الَّذِي لَا تَصْبِحُنَا وَمَا شَرَّ الشَّلَاثَةِ أُمَّ عَمْرٍو

You turned aside the cup from us, O Umm ^cAmr, while the circulation of the cup was from the right hand.

O Umm ^cAmr, your friend, to whom you do not give to drink, is not the worst of the three.¹

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.775-6.

This repetition of a particular word also makes the meaning of that word clearer and stronger, as in the following line:

كُنَّا الدُّنْيَا وَمَنْ أَوْحَىٰ عَلَيْهَا وَنَبَطِشْ حِينَ نَبَطِشْ قَادِرِينَ

The world is for us, and for him who is above it, and we attack with violence, being powerful, when we are attacked.¹

The repetition is not confined only to nouns and verbs, but sometimes includes prepositions. Repetition here makes the exact meaning of the preposition quite clear. The repetition of fī, for instance, gives the impression of relentless killing with swords, as in the following line:

كَأَنَّ سَيُوفَنَا فِيْنَا وَفِيهِمْ مَخَارِيقَ بِأَيْدِي لَاعِينِينَ

As though our swords and theirs were swordsticks in the hands of players.²

Min is repeated in the following line to give the impression of how their clothes are covered with blood:

كَأَنَّ ثِيَابَنَا مِنَّا وَمِنْهُمْ خَضِبِينَ بِأَرْجَوَانَ أَوْ طَلِينِينَ

As if our garments and theirs were dyed with the juice of the urjuwān or besmeared with it.³

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.678.

2. Ibid., p.641.

3. Ibid., p.642.

The repetition of ^calā gives the impression of how dear their sons are to them in the following two lines:

فَأَمَّا يَوْمَ خَشِينَا عَلَيْهِمْ
وَأَمَّا يَوْمَ لَا نَخْشَى عَلَيْهِمْ
فَتَصْبِرُ خَيْلُنَا عَمْبَا شِينَا
فَنَمْعُنْ غَارَةَ مَتَلْبِينِنَا

But in the day of our fear for them (i.e. our sons) our cavalry become spread out towards the enemy in troops and squadrons.

But on the day, in which we do not fear on their account, we hasten to the attack with our loins girt.¹

He sometimes repeats the whole hemistich, because he is very angry with ^cAmr b. Hind. He asks him forcibly about his arrogance towards Taghlib. It is a kind of emphatic question:

بَأَى مَشِيئَةَ عَمْرٍو بْنِ هِنْدٍ
بَأَى مَشِيئَةَ عَمْرٍو بْنِ هِنْدٍ
تَطِيحُ بِنَا الْوَشَاةَ وَتَزْدَرِينَا
نَكُونُ لِقَيْلِكُمْ فِيهَا قَطِينِنَا

With what desire, O ^cAmr b. Hind, do you listen to our slanderers, and despise us?
For what purpose, O ^cAmr b. Hind, do you wish that we should become servants to the chief you have deputed over us.²

1. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, pp.647-8.

2. Ibid., pp.809-10.

He repeats the words to dwell on statements of fact for the purpose of boasting. There is also a connotation of contrast, showing the opposing side their inferiority to Taghlib. This is clear in the following lines when he repeats the words kunnā/kāna and ābū/ubnā. He usually puts these words together in the same line for the purpose of contrast.

وَكُنَّا الْأَيْمَنِينَ إِذَا التَّقِينَا وَكَانَ الْأَيْسَرِينَ بَنُو أَبِيْنَا
فَأَبَوْا بِالنَّهَابِ مَحَّ السَّبَايَا وَأَبْنَا بِالْمَلُوكِ مَهْفَدِينَا

And we were the right wing of the army when we met the enemy; and the sons of our father were the left wing.

They returned with plunder and with captives, and we returned with fettered kings.¹

We can find contrast also in the following line in which he shows the others as cowards while Taghlib are brave:

وَنَحْنُ النَّازِلُونَ بِكُلِّ مَخْرَبٍ يَخَافُ النَّازِلُونَ بِهِ الْعُرُونَ
وَنَحْنُ النَّازِلُونَ بِكُلِّ مَخْرَبٍ يَخَافُ النَّازِلُونَ بِهِ الْعُرُونَ

And we are those who settle in every dangerous place where people are afraid to settle for fear of death.²

He also repeats words for emphasis when they appear in a hemistich accompanied by the emphatic particle inna, as in the following line:

1. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis', pp.661-2.

2. Al-Qurashī, al-Jamhara, p.363.

وَأَنَّ الضَّغْنَ بَعْدَ الضَّغَنِ يَفْشُو ۖ عَلَيْكَ وَيُخْرِجُ الدَّاءَ الدِّينِيَا

And verily hatred after hatred will disclose itself against you, and will make apparent the concealed disease.¹

This emphasis is obtained also by repeating both the word and the accompanying inna.

وَأَنَّ غَدًا وَإِنَّ الْيَوْمَ رَهْمَنٌ ۖ وَعَدَّ غَدًا بِمَا لَا تَعْلَمِينَ يَا

For, verily, tomorrow and today and the day after tomorrow are pledged to that which you do not know.²

The repetition of a word in the same hemistich sometimes bears the overtone of a threat and a warning to be aware of the result of creating trouble for Taghlib. The following line, in which he repeats the word ilaykum, shows this clearly:

رَايِكُمْ يَا بَنِي بَكْرٍ إِلَيْكُمْ ۖ أَمَا تَعْلَمُوا مِنَّا الْيَقِينَ يَا

Beware, O Banū Bakr, beware of quarrelling with us; do you not know with certainty concerning our bravery.³

However, the repetition is most powerful when he repeats words of cognate or similar-sounding roots (jinās). This kind

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, p.634.

2. Ibid., p.625.

3. Ibid., p.821.

of repetition is used for several purposes:

He sometimes uses it in the form of a cognate accusative to strengthen the meaning, as in the following lines:

يَرِنُ خَشَا شُحْلِيهَا رَيْنَا
وَنُخْلِيهَا الرُّوسُ فَيُخْتَلِنَا
رَفَدْنَا فَوْقَ رَفْدِ الرَّافِدِينَا
وَسَارِيَتِي بِإِلَاطِ أَوْرُخَامِ
نَشَّقُ بِهَا رُءُوسَ الْقَوْمِ شَقَا
وَنَحْنُ غَدَاةُ أَوْقِدِ فِي خَزَايِ

And two legs, white as ivory or marble, the jingling of ornaments upon which makes a low noise.

We cleave with them the heads of the people, and we cut their necks, and they are cut.

And we, on the day on which the fire of war was kindled in Khazāz, helped [the tribe of Nizār] above the help of the helpers.¹

He occasionally uses the cognate noun not as an object but in a prepositional construction with the particle of comparison ka, to leave the image resounding in the memory, as in this line:

أَضَلَّتْهُ فَرَجَعَتْ الْحَنِينَا
فَمَا وَجَدْتُ كَوَجْدِي أُمِّ سَقْبِ

The she-camel, the mother of a male foal, did not grieve with a grief like my grief when she lost her foal, and she raised an

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, pp.787, 803, 818.

affectionate yearning cry.¹

The best example of a cognate noun can be found in the following lines, where he repeats it twice as an object together with the repetition of the verb:

نزلتم منزل الأضياف مني
قريناكم فاجلنا قراكم
فاجلنا القرى أن تشتمونا
قبيل الصبح مرداة طحونا

You alighted at our house in the rank of guests, and we hastened our hospitality, fearing you would abuse us if we delayed.

We treated you hospitably, and we hastened in showing you before dawn the hospitality of a millstone which grinds exceedingly fine.²

The jinās can also be found in verbs with different inflected forms to put more emphasis on the meaning, as in the following lines:

قفى قبل التفرق يا طعيننا
وذا البرة الذي حدثت عنه
نعم أناسنا ونعد عنهم
نخبرك اليقين وتخبرنا
به نحمل ونحمى المحجريننا
ونحمل عنهم ما حملونا

1. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis', v.2, p.626.

2. Ibid., pp.673-4.

Stop a little longer before going, O you who are travelling in the howdah, that we may inform you of the truth and you may inform us.

And Dhū al-Burah, whom you have been told about, through whose glory we are defended and we defend those who seek protection of us.

We make our favours universal amongst our own people, and we abstain from asking favours from them, and we bear from them, on their account, what liabilities they ask us to bear.¹

This tendency to use jinās can also be found in the lines where he repeats ka's and Umm ^cAmr. There he repeats the words ṣāhibiki and taṣḥabīnā.² He also repeats words containing the same phonemes at the beginning of the wine theme when he repeats ṣaḥn and taṣbaḥīna:

أَلَا هَبِّي بِصَحْنِكَ فَاصْبِحِينَ ۖ وَلَا تَبْقِي خُمُورَ الْأَنْدَرِينَا ۖ

Now then, O cup-bearer, awake and give us our morning draught from your goblet, and do not keep the wines of 'Andaroon.³

He also repeats adverbial expressions to show their influence, as in this line:

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.618, 655, 819.

2. Ibid., p.776.

3. Ibid., p.613.

وإننا سوف ندركننا المنايا مقدرة لنا ومقدريننا

And as for us, surely death will overtake us;
for it is fated to us, and we are fated to
him.¹

Repetition can also be found in his choice of lexical items. This is evident from his constant use of words from the same root, such as ḥaddath, ra'ā, waritha, ṭa^cana, daraba, ḥamā. In addition, in several lines he uses nouns, such as majd, umm, bīḍ, nās, malk, ra's, a^cdā', Bakr, ^cAmr and Hind. He also has a noticeable preference for the preposition bi, the conditional article 'idhā or 'idhāmā, and the conjunctive word wa. He has a strong predilection for the pronoun "we", as nā/nahnū and the pronoun hā, and for using the particle of comparison ka'nna.

Although not as frequently repeated as the words above, several other words are also worth noting. For example he repeats the following words at least twice: aṣḥibhīnā, nukhabbir, ^cajjala, abṭal, qifī, ghadāt qawm and ṣa^cā'in.

His use of repetition also involves the repetition of sounds which are dominant throughout the poem, such as "n", "r", "m", "l", "q", "d" and "j" and the repetition of vowels such as the long vowels "ā" and "ay", and the short vowel "a". The repetition of words consists of long syllables which dominate his metre (al-wāfir), such as "ā", "ī", "ay" and "ū". The following two lines show an abundance of this kind of repetition of sounds:

1. Ibn an-Nahās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Ṭis^c, v.2, p.617.

فَصَالُوا صَوْلَةَ فَيَمْنٍ يَلِيهِمْ
وَصَلْنَا صَوْلَةَ فَيَمْنٍ يَلِينَا
أَلَا لَا يَجْهَلُنَّ أَحَدٌ عَلَيْنَا
فَتَجْهَلُ فَوْقَ جَهْلِ الْجَاهِلِينَا

They attacked anyone who approached them,
and we attack anyone who approaches us.

Be careful, no one must act foolishly with us,
lest we should have to act foolishly with him
above the folly of the foolish ones.¹

Repetition can also be found in the sense that he constantly repeats the same ideas to try and focus attention on them.

1. The poet tries to spread the idea of horror and panic by his description of fighting and weapons and by repeating certain words which are significant as threats.
2. He focuses on describing their swords and spears and how they cut and pierce.
3. One of his favourite images is the shedding of blood and the killing of people on the battlefield, and how they act there.
4. The idea of Taghlib's superiority over others by boasting of their qualities.

The repetition, on the other hand, shows how^c Amr had no choice in repeating those words which are full of wrath, threats and violence, and for this reason he had no time to refine his style. This tendency towards repetition, despite the

1. Ibn an-Nahhas, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis^c, v.2, pp.661, 679.

disparity and multiformity of the recensions, seems to confirm that the poem may be ascribed to one person and implies that he had suffered some kind of injury.

It also gives the impression that the poem has also been recited, and that if it was not actual improvisation, and composed on the spot, as some would maintain, then it is a similar technique. This repetition, moreover, confirms that each word of the poem is absolutely relevant to the original emotion which inspired it.

If we agree that the repetition is a strong element in his stylistic technique, this may have some bearing when considering the variant readings provided by every recension. Thus in the following line there is a variant reading ḥarb in place of the second majd.

وَرثْنَا مَجْدَ عَلْقَمَةَ بْنِ سَيْفٍ أَبَاحَ لَنَا حِصُونَ الْمَجْدِ دِينَا

We inherited the glory of ^cAlqama b. Sayf,
who made lawful to us forcibly the fortress of
glory.

Equally in the following lines ta^crifū occurs in place of ta^clamū.

أَلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي بَكْرِ الْيَكْمِ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا مِنَّا الْيَقِينَا
كُتَائِبَ يَطْعِينٍ وَبِرْتَمِينَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا مِنَّا وَمَنْكُم

Beware, O Banū Bakr, beware of quarrelling
with us; do you not know with certainty
concerning our bravery?

Do you not know about the bands from us and
from you, when they were fighting together
with lances, and shooting arrows?

Equally in the following line ghudūnahunna occurs in place of
mutūnahunna:

كَأَنَّ مَتُونَهُنَّ مَتُونُ غُدْرٍ وَرِيثُهُنَّ رِيثُ رِيثِ
تصفقها الرياح إذا جرينا

As if the surfaces of these coats of mail were
the surfaces of pools which the wind strikes,
when it blows, so as to cause them to
ripple.

Equally in the following line dhulla occurs in place of khasfa:

أَبِينَا أَنْ نَقِرَ الْخَسْفَ فِينَا إِذَا مَا الْمَلِكُ سَامَ النَّاسَ خَسْفًا

When the king treats the people with
indignity, we refuse to honour submission
amongst us.¹

1. Ibn an-Nahhās, Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id at-Tis', v.2, pp.654, 662-3, 825, 833.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to concentrate on a tribe, a tribe which had a long tradition of poetry and whose members had played a critical role in the tribal history of Arabia. Having fought Yemen and achieved independence for the Northern Arabian tribes they are also credited with pioneering the qaṣīda, that most prominent of the longer Arabic poetic forms. However with the exception of al-Akḥṭal, the lives of these poets are shrouded in the mists of the dawn of Arabic literary history. It has been the purpose of this study to shed whatever light is available upon these obscure figures, and to determine more clearly the position of Taghlib as producers of a literary tradition from al-Muhalhil to their most recent and last poet, A^cshā Taghlib.

Throughout its history, this tribe manifested a remarkable unity and almost all its members are referred to as Taghlibī even if they were from the branches of al-Arāqim or al-Qu^cūr or, more generally, from Banū Jusham. They preserved their tribal name and held tenaciously to their particular characteristics long after the advent of Islam.

What evidence there is suggests that they were noted for their spirit of hostility rather than compromise, rebelliousness rather than submission to authority, and individualism rather than conformity to the dominant mores of Arabian society. These characteristics may be observed in the series of wars which they waged with peoples of different origin, with Yemen, for instance, and with a tribe with whom they were supposed to be the most closely related, Shaybān of Bakr. While victorious at first, latterly they were defeated and found refuge in al-Jazīra, where they enjoyed an astonishingly long period of

peace from the battle of al-Kulāb (c. 540 A.D.) till the outbreak of the war with Qays (after the day of Marj Rahit 64 A.H./685 A.D.). Taghlibī poets emerged as proponents of war and the chief expression of opposition to peaceful settlements. Indeed even in situations where they had no vested interests, we find the Taghlibī poets taking sides, in the case of Mu^cāwiya in his dispute with ^cAlī.

It seems that warfare and the history of Taghlib were inextricably bound together, and wars provided the main inspiration for the poet. The poetry of Taghlib is no less than a record of the events which make up their tribal history. As most of their history is spent in war, so do we find that most of their poetry comes as a quick response to the challenge of an enemy, with the exception of al-Akhtal, and to some extent, al-Qutāmī, whose words display evidence of contemplation. Simplicity, then, is the result of the poetic instant reaction to events. Simplicity and belligerence were the touchstone of the authenticity of their poetry. If there is difficulty in discerning these features, then either the line in question will refer to a particular situation (e.g. the description of a horse, camel, etc.) or the difficulty lies in the expression itself. Of course, simplicity and belligerence lie beneath their manner of expression. Just as Taghlib were ready to fight all enemies so were their poets ready to express themselves without hesitation, and therefore, without contemplation. Moreover, the demands imposed by these basic elements of their poetry led them to abandon creativity; in a sense they were recreating pictures as they beheld them from their standard stock of composition and imagery without attempting finer detail or stylistic polish. Ornamentation is not a prominent feature in their poetry and when it does exist it is in its most primitive form, such as Tibāq and Jinās. However when these features are used they are natural to the scheme and not merely exploited to demonstrate virtuosity.

Taghlibī poets express themselves on many of the subjects common to Arabic poetry, such as Fakhr, Ghazal and Rithā'. That the last subject should feature at all in the repertory of a tribe so devoted to avenging its dead without accepting blood money is somewhat surprising, but is however rare and to be found only in the works of al-Muhalhil. Fakhr, on the other hand, being a subject appropriate to war, features prominently in the poetry of Taghlib, and is the expression of tribal integrity rather than individual prowess. Ghazal, like Rithā', is rare, to be found in the works of the last of their famous poets, and even there merely as an introduction to the long poems. As for the bulk of the poetry, there is very little love to be found.

This tribe played a prominent role in the history of Arabia, be it in the period of the Jāhiliyya or during the time of ᶜasabiyya after Marj Rāhit, and acted as an arm of government during the reign of ᶜAbd al-Malik. It is to be expected, therefore, that their political poetry would mirror the events of the time, and indeed every single Taghlibī poet does this to a lesser or greater degree. Indeed some acted as court poets, the most prominent being Kaᶜ b b. Juᶜ ayl who supported Muᶜ āwiya and was called the poet of ahl ash-Sham, and al-Akhtal who was to be called the poet of the amir al-Mu'minīn for his devotion to ᶜAbd al-Malik.

What is not to be expected, however, is that this tribe, having left its nomadic existence in the deserts of Arabia and moved into a fertile agricultural area, should maintain intact their old attitudes and the same ethos which had prevailed during the warring years of the ᶜasabiyya. Taghlib were frequently accused of bedouinism, and indeed they thought of themselves as a tribe of Rabīᶜa who belonged to the desert rather than the town, an idea fully expressed by al-Qutāmī.

It is in the light of the particular conditions in which

the poets of Taghlib composed their works that this study investigates the poetry of al-Muhalhil. This poet has been ignored by many scholars or otherwise regarded merely as a popular poet, particularly because of the various popular narratives about him called az-Zīr. In order to analyse his authenticated poem, ar-Rā'iyya, and establish criteria to distinguish what is forged from what seems to be authentic, it has been necessary to go through all the basic elements in his poetry, besides examining the opinions of all former critics.

The poet ^cAmr b. Kulthūm, similarly, has not been studied in a sufficiently vigorous manner, in particular as regards his wine theme and the nasīb theme, and moreover the length of his mu^callaqa. An attempt has been made here to analyse the poem in its various aspects by using various methods.

It is hoped that the research which has gone into this study will make a contribution to the appreciation of pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry. The continuity of the tradition and the unity of its members are the main characteristics of the tribe, which found its corporate voice in its poets. The poets of Taghlib were no different, and their poetry expressed this continuity, a continuity which can be found to some extent even in their late major poets, al-Akhtal and al-Qutāmī.

APPENDIX

رائية المهلهل

رواية أبي على القالسي

إذا أنتِ انقضيتِ فلا تحسوري
 فقد أبكى من الليل القصير
 لقد أنقذت من شر كبير
 معطفة على ركب كبير
 أسير أو بمنزلة الأسير
 فقال جلن في يوم ملير
 كأن سماعها بيدي مدير
 فهذا الصبح راغمة فخور
 ولم تعلم بديلة ما ضمير
 فيخبر بالذائب أي زبير
 وكيف لقاء من تحت القبور
 بجيرا في دم مثل العبير
 وعطر القتل أشفى للسرور
 عليه القشعمين من النسور
 إذا طرد اليتيم عن الجور
 إذا رجف العضاء من الدبور
 إذا ما غيم جيران المجير
 إذا حيف المحوف من الشور
 غداة بلابل الأمر الكبير

أيلتنا بذى حسم أنير
 فمان يك بالذائب طال ليل
 وانقذني بياض النبح منها
 كأن كواكب البوزاء عمود
 كأن الجددي في متنة ربي
 كأن النجم إذ ولي سحيرا
 كواكبها زواحي لا غبات
 كواكب ليلية بالمت وغمات
 وتألني بديلة عن أيهما
 فلر نيش المقابر عن كلي
 بيوم الشعثمين لقر عيننا
 وإنني قد تركت بواردا
 هتكت به بيوت بني عبدا
 وهمام بن مرة قد تركنا
 على أن ليس عدلا من كلي
 على أن ليس عدلا من كلي
 على أن ليس عدلا من كلي
 على أن ليس عدلا من كلي
 على أن ليس عدلا من كلي

إِذَا بَرَزْتَ مَخْبَأَةَ الْخُدُورِ
إِذَا عَلِنَتْ نَجِيَاتُ الْأُمُورِ
كَأَسَدِ الْغَابِ لَجَّتْ فِي زَيْبِ
بِعِيدِ بَيْنَ جَالِيهَا جَرِيرِ
مِنَ النَّعَمِ الْمُؤَبَّلِ مِنْ بَعِيرِ
عَلَى الْأَشْبَاجِ مِنْهُمْ وَالنَّحُورِ
وَجَسَارِ بْنِ مَرَّةٍ ذُو ضَرِيرِ
كَأَنَّ الْخَيْلَ تَدْحُضُ فِي غَدِيرِ
بِجَنْبِ عَنِيْزَةَ رَحِيًّا مَدِيرِ
عَلِيلِ الْبَيْضِ تَقْرَعُ بِالذُّكُورِ

عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلِيْبِ
عَلَى أَنْ لَيْسَ عَدْلًا مِنْ كَلِيْبِ
فِدَى لِبَنِي الشَّقِيْقَةِ يَوْمَ جَاءُوا
كَأَنَّ رِمَاحَهُمْ أَشْطَانُ بِيْبِ
فَلَا وَأَبِي جَلِيْلَةَ مَا أَفَانَا
وَلَكِنَّا نَهَكْنَا الْقَوْمَ ضَرِيْبَا
قَتِيْلُ مَا قَتِيْلُ الْمَرْءِ عَمُورِ
تَرَكْنَا الْخَيْلَ عَاكِفَةً عَلَيْهِمْ
كَأَنَّ غَدَوَةً وَبَنِي أَبِينَا
فَلَوْلَا الرِّيحُ أَسْمَحَ أَهْلُ حَجَرِ

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