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## HEBREW ANDALUSIAN AND ARABIC POETRY: DESCRIPTIONS OF FRUIT IN THE TRADITION OF THE “ELEGANTS” OR *ZURAFĀ’*

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It is commonly known that during the eleventh century of our era, the Arabic Andalusian poetry developed more independently from Oriental Arabic models.<sup>1</sup> In this very century there existed a school of Jewish poets who lived in Andalusia and who constituted virtually the only Jewish community in the Arabic world which succeeded in developing their own form of non-religious poetry in the Arabic manner.<sup>2</sup> However, the Jewish poets followed in the footsteps of their Oriental Arabic colleagues, poets from the East, such as al-Mutanabbī (915-955), Abū Tammām (806-846) and Abū Nuwās (750-815).<sup>3</sup> They

<sup>1</sup> See on this problem, G. Schoeler, “Ibn Kattāni’s *Kitāb at-Tashbīhāt* und das Problem des ‘Hispanismus’ der andalusisch-arabischen Dichtung”, *ZDMG* 129 (1979) 43-97 and J. C. Bürgel, “Man, Nature and Cosmos as intertwining Elements in the poetry of Ibn Khafājah”, *JAL* 14 (1983) 31-45.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. D. Pagis, *Secular Poetry and Poetic Theory; Moses ibn ‘Ezra and his Contemporaries* (Jerusalem (Bialik) 1970 (in Hebrew)) and I. Levin, *The Embroidered Coat: the Genres of Hebrew Secular Poetry in Spain* (Tel Aviv 1980 (in Hebrew)). About the special position of the Jews in Spain, see E. Ashtor, *Qorot ha-Yehudim bi-Sfarad ha-Muslimit* (The Jews of Moslem Spain) (Jerusalem 1960-6), I-II. In other Arabic countries Hebrew imitators of the Andalusian examples were soon considered as epigones, and almost nothing of their poetry has survived, cf. Yehudah al-Harīzī (c. 1175-1230), *Sēfer Taḥkemoni (Iudae Harizii Macamae)*, ed. P. de Lagarde (Hanover 1924), 18ff. = no. 3 (*maqāmat shu‘arā’ al-Andalus*), and especially pp. 86ff. = no. 18 (*maqāmat ‘aṣr ash-shu‘arā’ al-ibrāniyyīm*); cf. H. Schirmann, *Ha-shirah ha-‘ibrit bi-Sfarad u-bē-Provence* (Jerusalem (Bialik) 1960), II:1, 103ff. and 131ff.; cf. A. Navarro, L. Vegas, “Los poetas hebreos de Sefarad: capitulo III del Taḥkemoni de Al-Harīzī”, *Sefarad* 41 (1981) 321-38, and id., “La poesía hebrea: capítulo XVIII del Taḥkemoni de Al-Harizī”, *Sefarad*, 140-71.

<sup>3</sup> At first sight we find many borrowings from oriental Arabic poets. In the case of *muwashshahāt* Andalusian examples have been followed. In most cases the Oriental models had more prestige, but sometimes Andalusian

adopted Arabic rhyme and metre, plus the ornate style of contemporary Arabic poetry. They learnt the difficult and complicated figures of speech; they wrote treatises on aspects of literary theory, and they even tried to compete with the Arab courts by creating Hebrew courts with poets in Hebrew.<sup>4</sup> They also attempted to compete with the Arabic language by using pure, Scriptural Hebrew, and by demonstrating that there already existed in the Hebrew Scriptures a fullness of expression which had many figures of speech.<sup>5</sup> To accomplish all this, the poets had to be learned men, scholars of both the Jewish tradition and of the Arabic language, and poetry. The poets must have been continuously aware of the Arabic models; profane Hebrew Andalusian poetry could only survive as long as the Jews in Spain were part of or in close contact with a milieu in which Arabic poetry was much appreciated.<sup>6</sup>

Among these Jewish poets, whose main activities can be dated to the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth century, four poets attained an eminent position. These are Shemuel ha-Nagid (993-1056); Shelomo ibn Gabirol (1021-1055); Moshe ibn 'Ezra (1055-1138) and Yehudah ha-Levi (1074-1141). They are the four most important representatives of the Hebrew Andalusian school.

In the poems of these four Hebrew Andalusian poets, there are isolated descriptions of fruit, for example of apples and pears. The apple was a very popular motif, as it was regarded as the symbol of love. In this short article we will therefore deal with only this one aspect of Hebrew Andalusian poetry, namely its imitation of the description of fruit as developed within the tradition of the "elegants", or the *zurafā*.

The style of poetry which uses various descriptions of fruit came to prominence during the time of Abū Nuwās (750-815).

influence is probable, see A. Schippers, "Two Andalusian poets on exile: Reflexions on the poetry of Ibn 'Ammār (1031-1086) and Moses ibn Ezra (1055-1138)", in I. A. El-Sheikh, C. A. van de Koppel, Rudolph Peters, *The Challenge of the Middle East* (Amsterdam 1982), 113-21.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Moses ibn 'Ezra in his *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍarah wa-l-Mudhākarah*, a treatise on Hebrew poetry according to the Arabic method.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, especially MS. Oxford Neubauer 1974: 118b-161a = ed. A. S. Halkin (Jerusalem 1975), 224ff.

<sup>6</sup> After Yehudah ha-Levi (1074-1141) only epigones are found, of which Todros ben Yehudah Abu 'l-Āfiyah (1247-1298), who lived at the courts of Alphons X (1252-84) and Sancho IV (1284-95), is the most remarkable poet. See also the *maqāmabs* of Yehudah al-Ḥarīzī referred to in n. 2.

He is well known because of his wine poems in which he lists everything that was written is this genre before him.<sup>7</sup> Akin to the wine poetry are the poems with love and garden themes; these can perhaps also be seen as developments of the various genres of court poetry.

In the descriptive poems concerning fruit, we find reminiscences of the wine scene during which fruit is served, which were also scenes popular in love poetry – usually part of the wine scene because the cup bearer, a young boy or girl, often denoted as a gazelle or roe, is the object of someone's love passion. Descriptions of nature scenes, gardens, and flowers commonly served as a background of the drinking scene.

Less than a century after Abū Nuwās the author of the *Book of the Embroidered Cloth*<sup>8</sup> entered the realm of Arabic literature. He was called Abu ṭ-Ṭayyib Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ishāq ibn Yahyā ibn al-Washshā' and he lived between 855 and 936. He flourished during the period in which the power of the Baghdad caliphate was gradually diminishing. His book contains a form of code which deals with the manners and customs of the so-called *ẓurafā'*. In his book a number of anecdotes and stories are recorded which reflect the mentality of various highly educated people who lived at court. These anecdotes and stories date not only to the author's own time; some of them reflect also the court life of earlier times, when the caliphate had not yet lost its glorious splendour. The "elegants" are portrayed as a class of men who had a special refinement in their manners, in their clothing, and in their eating and drinking habits. The book also contains prescriptions in order to regulate the way they had to follow in love affairs.

In order to illustrate the background behind the ideas and themes of the apple poems in Hebrew Andalusian poetry, we will first give some examples from Abū Nuwās' poetry, indicating some of his descriptions of apples; subsequently we will deal with apple descriptions from the *Book of the Embroidered Cloth* and finally we will occupy ourselves with some apple descriptions as represented in the *Race Course of the Red Wine* by

<sup>7</sup> See J. E. Bencheikh, in *EI*<sup>2</sup>, V, 1004 (s.v. *khamriyya*).

<sup>8</sup> *Kitāb al-Muwashshā' aw aḡ-Zarf wa-ḡ-Zurafā'*. We use the Beirut 1963 edition.

Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan an-Nawājī (1383-1455). Its author is a collector of poetry of earlier centuries.<sup>9</sup>

In many cases the apple functioned as a go-between in love affairs.<sup>10</sup> One of the poetic lines by Abū Nuwās illustrates this theme and reads as follows:<sup>11</sup>

[sarī<sup>c</sup>]

تُفَاحَةٌ جَاءَتْ إِلَى غَادَةٍ    تَحْكِي لَهَا قَوْلَ مُجَبِّهَا  
مَا مَسَّهَا طَيْبٌ وَلَكِنَّهَا    طَيِّبَةٌ مِنْ طَيْبِ مُهْدِيهَا

1. An apple came to a young girl to tell her the words of her lovers.
2. The fragrance of [the apple] was not its own, but its scent was that of the one who had given it to her as a present.

In the language of love, a bite into the apple signifies a kiss. The metaphor was sometimes reversed: a kiss signifies a bite. The similarity of the red cheek of the shy, beloved person and the cheek of an apple is responsible for this exchange of metaphors. Compare the following fragment of Abū Nuwās:<sup>12</sup>

[raml]

وَعَدْتَنِي قُبْلَةً مِنْ جِبَّتِي    فَتَقَاضَتْ جِبَّتِي عَشْرَ قُبُلٍ  
مَا رَأَيْتُ الْعَضَّ فِي تُفَاحَةٍ    بَعْدُ إِلَّا هَاجَ لِي مِنْهَا خَبَلٌ  
لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ الْعَضُّ مِنْ عَيْبِهَا    إِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ رَسُولٌ لِلْقُبُلِ

4. (The apple) promised me a kiss of my beloved. Thus my beloved owed ten kisses.
5. Never I saw the biting in an apple without becoming greatly disturbed.
6. Such a bite is not a shame for (the apple), but it is a forerunner of kisses.

<sup>9</sup> *Ḥalbat al-Kumayt fi al-Adab wa-n-Nawādir al-Muta'alliqah bi-l-khamriyyāt*. We use the Cairo 1299/1882 edition.

<sup>10</sup> See E. Wagner, *Abū Nuwās, eine Studie zur arabischen Literatur der frühen Abbasidenzeit* (Wiesbaden 1965), 326-7.

<sup>11</sup> Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, Bibliotheca Islamica 10.20, ed. G. Schoeler, IV (Wiesbaden 1972), 6 (ch. 10: no. 6). See for a poem in the same vein, with the same formulas: *Ḥalbat al-Kumayt*, 255.

<sup>12</sup> Abu Nuwas, *Dīwān*, IV, 5 (ch. 10: no. 4).

A love apple was not allowed to be eaten. We will see below how this theme was also introduced in the poetry of Shemuel ha-Nagid. The following passage is by Abū Nuwās:<sup>13</sup>

[sarī<sup>c</sup>]

جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَأْكُلُ تَفَاحَةً أَنْ يَبْتَلِيَهُ اللَّهُ فِي فِيهِ  
 أَوْ أَنْ يَرَى النُّقْصَانَ فِي نَفْسِهِ حَاشَاكَ يَا مَنْ لَا أَسْمِيَهُ  
 لَرَدُّهَا أَحْسَنُ مِنْ أَكْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ حَوْلًا حِينَ يَأْتِيهِ  
 لَا بَارَكَ الرَّحْمَانُ فِي عَاشِقٍ يَأْكُلُ تَجْمِيشَ مُجَبِّبِيهِ

1. May God punish the man who eats an apple;  
 may God afflict him in his mouth.
2. Or that the man admits his insufficiency,  
 with the exception of you whose name I do not want  
 to mention.
3. Yes, giving it back is better than eating  
 it, even when it came to me a year ago.
4. May God withhold his blessing from any  
 lover who eats the caresses of his beloved.

The *Book of the Embroidered Cloth* mentions several small poems in which the apple has the symbolic function of the beloved. Special chapters have been dedicated to apples or to writings on apples.<sup>14</sup> There is also a passage which tells that educated people shrink from eating apples.<sup>15</sup> When the cupbearer, who is the young boy with whom the poet is in love, is serving wine, the poet is comforted by the quality of a fragrant apple, which resembles the boys's cheeks. In another case the lover received an apple from a girl. Before giving the gift, the girl had bitten into the apple. This is considered as equal to a kiss from her. It was also a custom to exchange messages which were written in gold and silver on apples. Only beloved persons were allowed to cut apples. Apples were exclusively sent to lovers or beloved ones; other people had to be content with white fruit. The red colour of the apple and the colours of other fruit gave occasion for the poet to make comparisons which are based on colour, and to relate these colours to love. From some poems we can deduce that apples

<sup>13</sup> Abu Nuwas, *Dīwān*, IV, 5-6 (ch. 10: no. 5).

<sup>14</sup> *Kitāb al-Muwashshā*, 249.

<sup>15</sup> *Kitāb al-Muwashshā*, 207.



show the colours green and red, which means that they are "composed from roses and myrtles" (*wa-rukkibat bi-l-wardi wa-l-ʿāṣī*).

Nawājī's *Race Course of the Red Wine* gives some examples in which the apple with its red and green colour is said to include both the colours of the lover (i.e. green) and the beloved (i.e. red). We give here two examples of the same motif:<sup>16</sup>

[sarī<sup>c</sup>]

تفاحة يحكى لنانصفها \* وجنة حبي حين عانقته  
ونصفها الأنرشبهته \* بلون وجهي حين فارقته

[tawīl]

وتفاحة من سوسن صيغ نصفها \* ومن جلنار نصفها وشقائق  
كان الهوى قدضم من بعدفرقة \* بهاخذ معشوق الى خد عاشق

1. An apple, one half of it resembles to us  
the cheek of my beloved, when I embrace him;
  2. I compare its other half with the colour of  
my face when I take leave of him.
1. An apple, half of it is forged from a lily;  
its other half is formed of pomegranate blossom and  
anemones;
  2. It is as though, even after the departure,  
love has combined in it the cheek of the beloved  
with the cheek of the lover.

The green colour of the apple refers to the sickly green of the lover who suffers from the cruelty of his beloved; the red colour has to do with the beloved who becomes ashamed when the lover kisses him on his cheeks. We will see how Moshe ibn ʿEzra adopted this motif and made an almost literal translation of the second hemistich of line 2 of the second poem.

In his book on Arabic poetry in Spain during the eleventh century Pérès quotes passages about golden and silver apples which are used as a decoration of the dome of a mosque.<sup>17</sup> The book gives an impression of the decorative use of fruit in daily life. Nature was petrified in precious metals and stones; hence the same tendency in poetry. Pérès<sup>18</sup> also lists occasions in

<sup>16</sup> *Ḥalbat al-Kumayt*, 257. See p. 259 for the same motif referring to a *khawkbah* or peach.

<sup>17</sup> See Henri Pérès, *La Poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris 1953<sup>2</sup>), 325.

which fruit, such as apples and pomegranates, has been offered to friends: Ibn ʿAmmār compares the fruit with a fiancée; with the breasts of a girl or the cheeks of a boy. In another of his poems the apples are compared with cheeks and precious stones; Abu ʿl-Ḥasan al-Ḥājj also sends apples as cheeks full of love, in the hope that they will return burned by passion.

In the poetry of the first of our Hebrew-Andalusian poets, Shemuel ha-Nagid, we notice the influence of the *ḡurafā*<sup>18</sup> codes and ideas. This influence is not surprising, since the environment of the court of Granada inspired him to live in a style which was not very different from the manner of living associated with the educated and refined people of the Arabic courts. At these courts we find plates and dishes of gold and silver, or fruit made of the same precious metals, which bore inscriptions in the form of Arabic poetry lines. Also, some of the Hebrew-Andalusian poets, such as Moshe ibn ʿEzra and Yehudah ha-Levi, wrote poetic lines which were intended to be inscribed on plates and dishes. In the case of Shemuel ha-Nagid, the poet drew his inspiration from an inscription in Arabic on a plate for apples. The Arabic line goes as follows:<sup>19</sup>

[kāmīl]

למכאפתי מן כל נאף עצה      צורת נפסי הכדא מן פצה.

1. For fear of the bite of any lout, I made myself, as you can see, of silver.

The introductory line above the poem, which is probably a heading written by the editor of the *Dīwān* (i.e. Yosef, the son of the poet), states that this poem was inspired by: "One of the persons in his presence [who] had expressed the same motif in the Hebrew language". There then follows a translation of the Arabic line into Hebrew:

[wāfir]

כמו כסף מזקק נעשיתי.      ומגורי נשיכת לץ ופתי

1. Because of my fear for the bite of a bore or simpleton, I am made of pure silver.

<sup>18</sup> See Henri Pérès, *op. cit.*, 189-90.

<sup>19</sup> Shemuel ha-Nagid, *Dīwān* (Ben Tehillim), ed. Dov Yarden (Jerusalem 1966), 274 (no. 114).



According to the *dīwān*, Shemuel ha-Nagid asked the poet to repeat the same motif in other words, but then suddenly he himself recited the following line:

[tawīl]

אָנִי, כְּאֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה, יִצְוִקִי זָהָב,      לְמַעַן וְשִׁיכָה מִחֶסֶר לֵב אֶרְהֵב.

1. My cast is, as you can see, made of gold,  
because I am afraid of the bite of a heartless  
person.

Shemuel ha-Nagid then gives some fourteen other versions of the concept of biting into an apple.<sup>20</sup> In one of these poems,<sup>21</sup> he describes a silver apple covered with gold, which lies next to the other apples:

[wāfir]

וְתַפּוּחַ מְלֵא רְאֲשֵׁי בְשָׂמִים,      עֲשׂוּי כֶסֶף וּבְזָהָב מְצֻפָּה,  
וְתַפּוּחִים אֲשֶׁר צָמְחוּ בְּפֶרְדִּים      אֶלֵּי צִדּוֹ, כְּמוֹ אָדָם מִיָּפֶה,  
שְׂאֵלְתִיהוּ: עָלַי מָה לֹא תְהִי לְךָ,      כְּאֵלֶּה, רֶךְ וּמַעוֹר לֹא מְחַפָּה?  
הֲשִׁיבֵנִי בְּלִי אִמָּר: לְמַעַן      לְכָל חֶסֶר וְנִבְּל שֵׁן בְּתוֹךְ פֶּה.

1. An apple full of a choice of fragrant scents, made of silver, covered with gold.
2. Apples which have grown in the garden lie next to him. They are like rubies which embellish him.
3. I asked him: Why do you not have, like the others, a thin skin and why are you not covered with a rind?
4. He answered me without words: Because every simpleton and rogue has teeth in his mouth.

Many of the poems which were improvised at this time by Samuel ha-Nagid relate the apple to love-passion, or forbid the act of eating an apple. A decorated apple has an eye as of a woman who languishes from love-passion;<sup>22</sup> apples are created to be kissed and because of their fragrance; it is not right that

<sup>20</sup> Shemuel ha-Nagid, *Dīwān*, 274-8 (nos. 115-28).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 116.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 117.

they should be bitten.<sup>23</sup> We give two more examples of this motif:<sup>24</sup>

בְּכַתְּלֵיהֶם וּמְקִיא עַל פְּנֵיהֶם,  
בְּתַפּוּחַ – גְּדוּלָהּ מִשְׁנֵיהֶם.

לְרַעִים אֵין בְּחֶבְרָה כְּעוּן רַק  
וְחֻטְאֵת מְעַבֵּיר אֶת מִלְתְּעוּתִי

וְדוּמָה לְתַפּוּחַ מְהֵלֵל בְּמַעְגָּהוּ:  
חֶלְקָה כְּמוֹ גִּלְדוֹ, וְיִפְסָה כְּמִרְאָהוּ.  
כְּאֶסוּר לִיד וְלִפָּה אֲשֶׁר לוֹ וְלֹא לוֹ הוּא.

בְּחֶר לָךְ לְמִשְׁכַּב חִיקָךְ אֶת יְרֵאת אֵל  
רְקוּחָה כְּמוֹ רִיחוֹ, מִתּוֹקָה כְּמוֹ טַעְמוֹ,  
וְאִם הִיא לְכַף אִישָׁה וְפִיהוּ כְּשֶׁרָה הוּא

1. For friends in companionship there is no sin as bad as someone who spits on their walls and vomits in their faces.
2. But the sins of someone who sets his teeth into an apple, are greater than those two.
1. Choose a God-fearing woman to lie in your arms, who resembles in essence a splendid apple.
2. Perfumed she is like its fragrance, sweet as its taste and beautiful as its appearance.
3. If she is in the arms of her husband, his mouth is allowed to kiss her, but the apple is forbidden for his hand and mouth, and does not belong to him.

Thus fourteen small poems by Shemuel ha-Nagid are connected with love by the use of the apple motif, all according to the customs of the *zurafā*.<sup>25</sup> Another poet of the Hebrew Andalusian school, Shelomo ibn Gabriol, also wrote love poems in which use was made of the apple motif. In one of his poems the colours red and green come together in one apple. The poem belongs to a chapter “Descriptions of Nature”, which can be found in the *Dīwān* edited by Dov Yarden.<sup>25</sup> The Arabic introductory lines say that this chapter is dedicated to the description of the beauty of an apple (*wa-la-hu fī tuffāḥah yaṣīf fī ḥusn jamāli-bā*); in the alphabetically arranged *Diwan* of Brody/Schirmann with only: *wa-qāla ‘aydan*.<sup>25</sup> In a way, the poem is a riddle, because the apple is only spoken of metaphorically. The poem consists of seven lines and runs as follows:

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., no. 122.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., nos. 126, 128.

<sup>25</sup> Shelomo ibn Gabirol, *Shirē ha-Hol*, ed. Dov Yarden (Jerusalem 1975), 341-2 (no. 183).

[wāfir]

---○---○  
 כְּמוֹ בֶרֶק וּבְרָקֶת  
 וְעַתָּה אַחֵר יִבְרָקֶת  
 בְּיִרְקוֹן וְדִלְקֶת  
 וּבְנֶהֱב מְחַשְׁקֶת  
 וְשִׁדְיָהּ כְּמִינֶת  
 לְהַכּוֹתָהּ לְמַפְרָקֶת  
 וְשִׁפְתֵיהֶם מְנַשְׁקֶת.

---○---○  
 אֲכַל גִּזְרָה מְשַׁחֲקֶת  
 אֲשֶׁר תִּרְא אֲדָמָה עֵת  
 וְתִתְהַפֵּף כְּמוֹ חוּלָה  
 כְּאֵלוֹ הִיא גְלִיל כְּסֶף  
 בְּתוֹלָה לֹא יִדְעָה אִישׁ  
 וּכְרִצּוֹת שׁוֹלְפֵי חָרֵב  
 אֲנִי תִפֹּל לְרַגְלֵיהֶם

1. Eat a laughing beauty like an emerald or agate
2. Which seems at one time red, at another time green
3. Which again and again changes like a woman in labour, tormented now by green sickness and then by inflammation.
4. As though it was a sphere of silver, overlaid with fillets of gold.
5. A virgin is she, who has known no man, but whose breasts are like a suckling mother.
6. When people who unsheathe their swords want to slay her on the neck,
7. She throws herself beseeching at their feet, while their lips are kissing her.

We see here a poem full of paradoxes: the apple is a virgin because nobody has yet bitten her. But on the other hand the shape of the apple is like the breast of a suckling mother, and its colours are changing from red to green and vice versa like those of a woman in labour. The emerald and the agate, the silver and the gold, are the precious metals and stones with which the green-red alternations are compared. But these changes are not only compared with positive ideas; they are also linked to negative points like sickly green and red-coloured inflammation. In the last two lines there are combined metaphors: people want to slay the apple, but it beseeches and kisses them, throwing itself at their feet. What happened in reality? They are cutting the apple at the stalk, so that the apple falls to the ground. Then they begin to eat the apple: she

<sup>26</sup> Shelomo ibn Gabirol, *Shirē ha-Hol*, ed. H. Brody and H. [J.] Schir-mann (Jerusalem 1974), 112 (no. 187).

is kissing their lips. So the poet creates a new fantastic imagery with its own causality, which corresponds, although in a different way, with the various facts which happen in reality.

Two other apple descriptions by Shelomo ibn Gabirol show the same colour contrasts.<sup>27</sup> In the first poem the poet says that the apple is of gold on the outside and of silver on the inside.<sup>28</sup> We found the same motif in the poems of Shemuel ha-Nagid. The contrast between red and white is also mentioned. The apple is personified with a girl, who blushes with shame, because men are wooing her. In the other poem the juvenile Shelomo presents an apple to rabbi Yiṣḥāq.<sup>29</sup> The apple is introduced here to symbolize a friendly relationship. The apple, because of its fragrance, makes a man forget his longing for someone's love. It looks like a blushing bride, who is touched for the first time by her husband. It is an orphan child, because it is torn away from its branch, while her girl companions, the other apples, are crying and saying that she should send their greetings to rabbi Yiṣḥāq. Here an apple denotes friendship, as in the poems of Abū Nuwās:

[wāfir]

וְתָרִיחַ וְתִשְׁכַּח הַתְּשׁוּקָה  
בְּבוֹא רֵאשִׁית יָדַי בְּעֵלָה בְּחִיקָה  
וְגַם מֵעַל אֲמִירֶיהָ רְחוּקָה  
הִלִּיכְתָּה וְצִעְקוּ לָהּ צִעְקָה:  
וְאַשְׁרֵךְ שְׂבִפּוֹ תִהְיֶי נִשְׁוֹקָה!

אֲדוֹנָי, קַח בְּכַפְּךָ מִתּוֹקָה  
אֲשֶׁר תִּבּוֹשׂ לְכָל עֵינַי כְּכֹלָה  
יְתוּמָה הִיא וְאֵין לָהּ אֵב וְאַחֹת  
וְעַת שֶׁנִּלְקַחְתָּה מִמְּדוֹ תִּבְרוֹת  
שְׂאֵי שְׁלוֹם לְרַב יִצְחָק אֲדוֹנֶךָ

1. My lord, take into your hand a sweet one,  
and smell it in order to forget your longing,

<sup>27</sup> *Shirē ha-Hol*, ed. Dov Yarden, 50, 344 (nos. 25 and 187) / ed. H. Brody and H. [J.] Schirmann, 106, 54 (nos. 178 and 98).

<sup>28</sup> *Shirē ha-Hol*, ed. Dov Yarden, 344 (no. 187) / ed. H. Brody and H. [J.] Schirman, 54 (no. 98). The poem runs as follows:

[wāfir]

סְגוּר מְחוּץ וְכִסְף מְפֻנְמָה?  
בְּצִינֵינוּ יְעֻטְנוּהָ כְּלָמָה  
וְנִהְפְּכָה לְרַב בְּשֵׁתָה אֲדָמָה.

הַיֵּשׁ כְּזֹאֵה בְּצִמְחַת הָאֲדָמָה  
רְאִינוּהָ וְלִבְנֹתָהּ כְּאֵלֵינוּ  
כְּעֵלְמָה שְׂרָדְפוּהָ אֲנָשִׁים

<sup>29</sup> *Shirē ha-Hol*, ed. Dov Yarden, 344 (no. 187) / ed. H. Brody and H. [J.] Schirmann, 106 (no. 98).

2. [A sweet one], which is ashamed of every eye; just as a bride, when the hands of her husband touch her bosom for the first time;
3. She is an orphan: she has no father or sister and is far away from her branches,
4. When she was plucked, her girl-friends envied her going and they shouted to her:
5. "Bring greetings to rabbi Yishaq your lord; you are lucky, because you will be kissed by his mouth!"

In Hebrew, the word for apple is *tappu(a)h*, which is usually masculine; nevertheless we see from the above that apples are commonly associated with women. Undoubtedly this reflects the influence of the Arabic word *tuffāḥah*, which is feminine.

Another Hebrew Andalusian poet, Moshe ibn 'Ezra stresses the contrast of colours and the function of the apple as a symbol of love, In his *Kitāb Zahr ar-Riyād (Sēfer ha-(a)naq)*, there are two examples: in the first poem<sup>30</sup> he compares the white face of the gazelle (the boy), when he blushes, with an apple. In the second poem,<sup>31</sup> he describes an apple which lies besides another piece of fruit (an orange or a pear). The poem reads as follows:

[kāmīl]

--/---/---/---/---/---  
 אֵין בְּטֶסֶבֶה לָךְ כְּתַפְּוֹחַ / יָפִיו לְשׁוֹן כָּל-אִישׁ לְבַד הָדָר  
 עָרֹךְ פְּנֵי חֲשׂוֹק וְאֶל-צֵדוֹ / יִדְטֶה לְאִישׁ חֲשֵׁק פְּרִי הָדָר.

1. There is for you nothing in the company which is as beautiful as an apple, the beauty of which is sung by every human tongue.
2. It looks like the (blushing) face of a beloved, while the fruit of majesty beside him looks like a (pale green) lover.

<sup>30</sup> Moses Ibn 'Ezra, *Dīwān*, I, ed. H. Brody (Berlin 1935/5695), 331; III (= comm.), ed. D. Pagis (Jerusalem 1977/5738), 78 (*Sēfer ha-(a)naq*, ch. II: no. 13). The poem runs as follows;

[kāmīl]

--/---/---/---/---  
 מִרְאָה לְתַפְּוֹחַ כְּמוֹ מִרְאָה / לְבִגְתָּ פְּנֵי-עֶפֶר בְּעֵת הוֹבִישׁ  
 אֲבִבָּה פְּרִידַת זֶה עַל-יְהוּדָה / עַד כִּי-יִקַּד נִגְדוֹ בְּכִי הוֹבִישׁ.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 15.

Descriptions of apples were regarded as belonging to love poetry and wine poetry. The introductory note to a poem of Moshe ibn 'Ezra<sup>32</sup> confirms this. The poem has also been attributed to Yehudah ha-Levi.<sup>33</sup> Hamori thinks that the poem belongs to the *wasf* or description genre.<sup>34</sup> He tries to demonstrate how two contrasting notions can be brought together in one description. The poem and our translation, which is slightly different from that given by Hamori,<sup>35</sup> goes as follows:

[wāfir]

---∪/---∪/---∪/---∪/---∪/---∪  
 וְתִפּוּחַ אֵל לֹא-בָּו / לְבַד עֲנַג לְמַרְיַח וְנִשְׁק  
 חֲשַׁבְתִּיהוּ בְּשׁוּר יֶרֶק וְאֵדָם / קְבוּצִים בּוֹ פְּנֵי חֲשׂוֹק וְחִשְׁק.

1. In truth, God did not create apples merely  
 as a decoration for those who smell them or kiss  
 them
2. As I observe an apple in which red and  
 green are joined, I think I see the faces of lover  
 and beloved.

Here we notice again the contrast between red and green, which is compared with the faces of respectively the (sick and pale) lover and the (red and blushing) beloved. The second hemistich of line 2 clearly appears to be a translation of the poem which is mentioned in Nawājī's anthology and quoted above.<sup>36</sup>

The fourth poet, Yehudah ha-Levi, received from his friends two apples as a token of their friendship. In one of his poems<sup>37</sup> he writes:

<sup>32</sup> Moses Ibn 'Ezra, *dīwān*, I, 232 (no. 227): *wa-min bāb al-ghaḥal wa-l-khamriyyāt qawlu-bu fī tuffāḥah wa-buwa*.

<sup>33</sup> Yehudah ha-Levi, *dīwān*, ed. H. Brody, II, (Berlin 1904/5664), 227 (*shonot* nr. 77).

<sup>34</sup> A. Hamori, *On the Art of Medieval Arabic Literature* (Princeton 1974), 90. The chapter is called "Two Views of Time". On his ideas about the role of Time, see the review of W. Heinrichs in *JNES* 36 (1977) 1, 60-1; see also A. Giese, *Wasf bei Kuṣāgim* (Berlin 1981), 9-11.

<sup>35</sup> I translate *noshēq* with "kiss"; Hamori with "leave [in them] the mark of their teeth", which is more the meaning of *noshēkb*. However, *noshēq*/*noshēkb* is a common word-play in Hebrew Andalusian poetry.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Qēbuṣim bo pēnē ḥashuq we-ḥoshēq* with *Bi-bā kbaddu ma'shūqin 'ilā kbaddi 'āshiqi* (see n. 16).

<sup>37</sup> Yehudah ha-Levi, *dīwān*, II, 266-7 (*shonot* nr. 39, lines 5-6 [= 3]).



[ṭawīl]

כְּמוֹ שֶׁדָּה צִלְקָם וּבְרִיקַת וְרִיחָם  
וְנִפְתַּת צוּרָה טַעְמָם וְאַבְרִיקַת מִלֵּךְ רִיחָם

3. Their shapes are like breasts, their splendour like an emerald, their taste like honey, and their fragrance like myrrh.

The four Hebrew Andalusian poets referred to above, used the same imagery as the Arabs. Their work marks an important development in the Hebrew Andalusian poetical tradition. Although they imitated each other, in an attempt to embellish and improve upon the same motifs, I find the poem of Shelomo ibn Gabirol the most charming, due to his use of paradoxes and a fantastic aetiology. In his other poem, I was also struck by the way it served as a kind of *takballus*, that is, transitional passage, as if a laudatory passage about Rabbi Yiṣḥāq was following.