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**DOI**

[10.1163/157006486X00049](https://doi.org/10.1163/157006486X00049)

**Publication date**

1986

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

Journal of Arabic Literature

[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

Schippers, A., & Mattock, J. (1986). Love and war: a poem of Ibn Khafājah. *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 17, 50-68. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006486X00049>

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## LOVE AND WAR: A POEM OF IBN KHAFĀJAH

Although the conceit of the 'battlefield of love' is not uncommonly encountered in Arabic literature, and although the combination of a number of themes in the same poem is quite standard, the particular manner in which Ibn Khafājah divides his poem 278 (in Ghāzī's edition)<sup>1</sup> into a martial scene and an erotic scene, with apparently only the most tenuous connexion between the two, is most unusual, if not unique. The poem exists, at any rate in its fullest form, only in the British Library MS 416, and was virtually unknown until it appeared in Ghāzī's edition.<sup>2</sup> The extracts from it that are included in anthologies such as *al-Dhakhīrah* of Ibn Bassām<sup>3</sup> and *Nafḥ al-ḥib* of al-Maqqarī<sup>4</sup> comprise only lines 33-34, 36-44 and 48, and it is consequently only from this section that modern anthologists such as Jawdat al-Rikābī<sup>5</sup> and Henri Pérès<sup>6</sup> have quoted. Pérès even concluded—perhaps from line 44—that the subject of the poem was a girl, rather than a boy. The complete poem makes it quite clear that this is not so. It is a piece of considerable poetic merit, but one requiring fairly close attention for the appreciation of precisely what the poet is attempting.

Ibn Khafājah (1058-1139), an inhabitant of the neighbourhood of Valencia, is considered to be one of the most original of the poets of al-Andalus, which began in the 11th century to develop its own characteristic poetic styles. Although he says, in the preface to his *Dīwān*, that he is largely dependent on Eastern models, he has very much his own style, as evidenced in the present poem. His poetry has attracted a good deal of attention in recent years;<sup>7</sup> part of his *Dīwān*, however, preserved in a Leiden MS, still remains unpublished.<sup>8</sup>

The text of the poem is given in an appendix to this article. Here we shall first offer a translation, followed by a detailed commentary and a general discussion of its nature and structure.

<sup>1</sup> *Dīwān Ibn Khafājah*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghāzī, Alexandria 1960, 346-9.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, *muqaddimah*, 23.

<sup>3</sup> ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Beirut 1979, III (2), 588-9.

<sup>4</sup> ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Beirut 1969, I, 689-90.

<sup>5</sup> *Fī l-adab al-Andalusī*, Cairo 1970, 145.

<sup>6</sup> *La poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XIe siècle*, Paris 1953, 403-4.

<sup>7</sup> e.g., Gregor Schoeler, "Ibn Kattānī's *Kitāb at-Taṣbīḥāt* und das Problem des 'Hispanismus' der andalusisch-arabischen Dichtung", *ZDMG* 129 (1979), 43-97; J.C. Bürgel, "Man, Nature and Cosmos as intertwining Elements in the poetry of Ibn Khafājah", *JAL* XIV (1983), 31-45.

<sup>8</sup> MS. Or. 14.056. Arie Schippers proposes to publish an edition of the poems contained in this MS in the near future.

*Translation:*

1. An incisiveness as of a sharp sword drawn from the scabbard, and a resolution as of sparks flying from the steel;

2. A firm decision on which you would make as much impression as on the side of a solid hill, and courage in speaking of which you might be speaking of a tawny lion—

3. With young men like these I satisfy my desires, and with the sudden shock of lance on hand and hand on wrist.

4. Youths upon Arab horses—if there is a fight, speak of “beardless ones upon short-haired ones”!

5. When they cross their legs over their lances on the night of the raid, you look at their lances: tender ones upon tender ones;

6. Brown and quivering, and lean and brave—the dwelling of death is between the lion-like horsemen.

7. They give drink to one another, but the only wine that circulates is blood, and the only ones who come to drink are the lance-heads.

8. The only trees are the straightened lances, and the only river is the ridged Indian swords.

9. There are flowers, but they are not good to pluck; there is water, but it is not sweet to drink.

10. They have been set as a necklace on the throats of roan mounts, and every one of them is a middle pearl—what a fine necklace is produced!

11. My life be the ransom for all of them!—admirable and glorious, of noble character, with no adulterated additions to their good coinage!

12. There is not one of them who is not thoroughbred [lit. with a white blaze and white legs], with a high heaven of glory and a streaming rain of giving—

13. Returning to the charge, with the upper part of his lance quivering with power; and going on, with the sheath of his sword revealing good fortune.

14. Striking has bent the sword in his hand; but the claws of the tawny lion are not straight.

15. Although I am not the upper part of their lances, I am the friend of nobility, the companion of generosity and the coeval of glory.

16. I face (the clash of) swords whose whiteness becomes dark in the dust; and I encounter red Death in ash-coloured garments.

17. I thrust with my determination, which is more penetrating than a lance, and I glory in my resolution, which is more protective than a mail-coat.

18. I appear to the enemy from any direction in which they head, as the forehead of the sun appears to bleared eyes.

19. But I have a heart possessed by passion; to love belongs what it (the heart) conceals and to desire what it reveals [or: love has things that it conceals and desire has things that it reveals].

20. A tender youth, on whose cheek the down had appeared [or: Many a tender youth, on whose cheek the down has appeared], like a line written with camphor on ambergris,

21. I selected [or: I have selected] as my lord from the young men of the tribe, created between the sun and the auspicious moon—

22. When they read the Surah of Morning from his face, they read and read again the Surah of Praise from his generosity.

23. I would go to him in the evening and then in the morning—I deviate from glory only towards an encounter of passion—

24. To where I might meet, as a lance, a straightened breast, and drive the horses of kissing on the jousting-ground of the cheek;

25. To where I might pluck the daisy from a desired mouth and bend the bamboo of a well-proportioned body.

26. He walked swaying like a green bough, and I asked him to let me pluck the fruit of union—or the flowers of promise.

27. He turned away, not inclining towards me, as though, when I was calling to him from nearby, I was calling to him from far off—

28. Trailing the train of his robe in vanity and swaying as the myrtle swaggers in its boughs.

29. But when the morning had brought to an end the darkness of the night, and came, exciting admiration as a beautiful striped robe would excite your admiration,

30. It looked down on the silver tears that he [or: it] was shedding—wholesome water may issue from hard ground—

31. And it advanced, more desirable than rest after a long journey, than sleep after wakefulness, than relaxation after effort.

32. May rain fall upon a land that united us! Even though I have left it, it is the Garden of Eternity.

33. There was a [or: many a] night when we gave each other wine and exchanged conversation like the breeze blowing upon roses.

34. We returned to it again and again, while the cup retained a scent of musk; but sweeter than it was what we did for the first time and what we did again.

35. I drank it (the wine) from his hand, and such was its brightness and purity that it was as though it came from his kindness and my love—

36. My accompanying relish consisted of the daisies of the teeth or of the lily of the neck; of the narcissi of the eyelids or of the roses of the cheeks—

37. Until the wine and sleep invaded his body; they made his shoulders droop, and he leant against my arm.

38. I proceeded to ask as a present the cold that was between his teeth for the heat that was between my ribs.

39. I embraced him, being stripped of his figured robe; I embraced in him a sword drawn from its scabbard—

40. Softness of chest and straightness of body; quivering of sides and splendour of blade.

41. In him I was fondling a bough in the planting-place of the sand-hill, and (in him) I was kissing the face of the sun in the rising-place of the auspicious star.

42. If he was not it (the sun), or it was not he, at any rate he was its brother, just like sandal-straps cut from one piece of leather.

43. Both my hands journeyed over his body, now to a waist and now to a breast.

44. One hand went down to Tihāmah of his flanks, and another went up to Najd of his breasts.

45. I inclined from the kissing of a cheek to a mouth, acknowledging preference for the daisy to the rose.

46. By plucking out the hairs I altered the camphor of his cheek; my loin-cloth remained chaste and my robe unsullied.

47. And, but for a debility that touched me—while there was a freshness in him—the moon would have spent the night envying me alone.

48. After I had parted from him, I was still kissing the places where those cheek-hairs of myrtle had fallen.

49. O morning of misfortune, may you be accursed as a morning! O night of good fortune, will you ever return?

*Commentary:*

1-2: the parallelism in the first two lines, as indeed in subsequent lines, is striking; it is a stylistic feature which developed in the poetry of the *Muḥdathūn*, and give rise to a whole series of theoretical speculations concerning the various figures such as *taqsīm*, *tashīm*, *muqābalah*, and others that involve some kind of parallelism within the same line. It is, of course, particularly common in the first line or lines of a poem, where an arresting effect is desired. Poets such as al-Mutanabbī frequently used it here in association with *ḥikmah*, and there is perhaps an echo of this in Ibn Khafājah's opening lines, with the four abstract nouns apparently being given concrete comparisons.<sup>9</sup> Here, however, although presented

<sup>9</sup> cf. i.a. one of the most famous openings of a poem of al-Mutanabbī: *Dīwān*, ed. Dieterici, Berlin 1861, 548-56; Beirut (Dār Ṣādir) 1964, II, 202-10; Cairo 1308 A.H., II, 264-74.

with no syntactical connection to what follows, it becomes clear that, rather than comprising sententious utterances, they are attributes of the *fityah* of line 3. The four hemistichs are at first sight exactly parallel, but in fact they are subtly varied, in the clauses that provide the comparisons: the types of verb, their forms, and their voices differ; furthermore, the kinds of action involved in the verbs are different, as are the ways in which the attributes mentioned are associated both with the subjects of these verbs and with the objects of comparison.

Lines 3-6: the *fityah* or *fityān*, in a *Jāhili*, or generally martial, context, are simply the young warriors of the tribe, or indeed, the poet's peers; the word often seems to be almost a synonym for "men". In later poetry, especially Abbasid wine-poetry, it appears to connote somewhat dissolute young men who form the poet's circle of drinking-companions. In this sense, it is probably connected with its rather more technical use to mean "canaille", "riff-raff", and so forth. The use of the word here does not appear to refer in any way to its specifically Andalusian sense of "upper servant". It is picked up in line 21, in almost the identical position vis-à-vis the second section as it here occupies vis-à-vis the first. The sense of the second hemistich is not altogether obvious, but it appears to refer to the transmission of the shock of impact when the rider strikes home with his lance. The syntactic connection of line 4 with the previous line is again tenuous. This somewhat impressionistic approach appears characteristic of Ibn Khafājah's style. The semantic parallel between the beardlessness of the young men and the shorthairedness of their horses is quite common in early Arabic poetry,<sup>10</sup> and is certainly an allusion to this style of poetry, if not an actual quotation. The same kind of congruence, between the young men and their lances, occurs in line 5, and the effect intended here may be seen both as an intensification of *murdan* 'alā *jurdi* and a gentle mocking of it (again, it may be a quotation, but we have been unable to identify it). The repetition of *al-khaṭṭī*, incidentally, seems rather clumsy, and indeed pointless. It seems probable that the first two adjectives in line 6 refer to the lance and the second two to the young man; again the syntactic connection with what has gone before is very loose. The concept of Death dwelling among the horsemen as referring to their bravery can be paralleled from al-Mutanabbī, among others.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> e.g., a poem of 'Amr b. Ma'dīkarib, *al-Aṣma'īyyāt*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir and 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, Cairo 1963, no. 34, p. 121, begins with these words.

<sup>11</sup> cf. al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān*, Berlin, 485-60; Beirut, II, 96-8; Cairo, II, 387-90, lines 5-6.

Lines 7-9: The use of the wine-metaphor to describe the events of battle<sup>12</sup> anticipates the drinking-scene in the latter section of the poem, lines 23-27, as the extension of this into a garden-metaphor—gardens being so frequently associated with drinking-scenes—anticipates the copious nature-imagery to come, lines 25-26, 28, 37, etc. The wine-metaphor is actually somewhat muddled; if they give drink to one another, how is it that the lances are the only ones to come to drink? The description of blood as wine, although not uncommon, is a reversal of the usual wine-poem description of wine as blood (of a gazelle, or a bunch of grapes); the description of swords as a river is also a reversal, in this case of the more common description of a river as a sword. There is a further semantic parallelism in line 9: the flowers of the garden and the water of the river are, we may suppose, respectively the blood on the lances and the blood on the swords; blood, of course, may not lawfully be drunk, in any case.

Line 10: This is somewhat isolated in sense from its surroundings. It picks up the close association between the young men and their horses, but again the metaphor is somewhat confused; it is not clear quite how they can compose a necklace on the necks of individual horses, especially while on their backs. The general concept is clear enough, but the details seem not to have been fully thought out. The point of “middle-pearls” of course, is that these are the largest and finest. The line seems to be summing up the battle-sequence in preparation for a more general description of the young men; however, the martial imagery reappears almost immediately, in lines 13-18.

Lines 11-12: The *fadaytu* formula is well-known in the erotic poetry of Abū Nuwās and others.<sup>13</sup> The *min* has an explicative function (Wright II, pp. 137-8). The description of the young men in terms applicable to horses again serves to associate them very closely, if not to equate them, with their steeds.

Lines 13-14: The quasi-equation of the young men and their horses is taken further in line 13, with its reminiscence of line 48 of the *Mu‘allaqah* of Imru‘ al-Qays, where he describes his horse as “wheeling, retreating advancing, withdrawing at once (*mikarrin mifarrin muqbilin mudbirin ma‘an*)”. However, this concept is quickly abandoned again, in favour of a return to further mention of the warriors’ deployment of their weaponry, which is continued in line 14. The aphoristic second

<sup>12</sup> For this image, cf. Ṣalāh Khāliṣ, *Muḥammad b. ‘Ammār al-Andalusī*, Baghdad 1957, II (*Dīwān*), 209-19 (no 9), line 66.

<sup>13</sup> e.g., *Dīwān*, IV, ed. G. Schoeler, Wiesbaden 1972, 180-1, line 6.

hemistich, which also supplies a comparison, indicates, as so frequently happens, a transition. The description of the young men comes to an end here.

Lines 15-18: The poet now introduces himself, having thus far appeared only in line 3, and indicates in more detail his position in relation to the young men. Line 15 appears to be an allusion to his advancing years (cf. line 47, below). It must, clearly, imply that he is no longer able to take part in martial activities in the company of the young men to the same extent as of old, but that he nevertheless does the best that he can. His actual identification of himself (negatively) with their lance-points is curious; it is almost as though he is now equating them with these, rather than their horses. The idea of relationship with virtues is not infrequent in eulogy (cf., for example, Abū Tammām, IV, 9 (no. 180), line 5,<sup>14</sup> where he describes Khālid b. Yazīd al-Shaybanī as *shaqīq al-nadā*, “full brother of generosity”; Ibn Khafājah quotes from this passage elsewhere in his oeuvre). In line 16, the image of the white swords becoming dark with dust is not perhaps one of the more common; more usually the brightness of the swords is referred to as lightning, which contrasts with the darkness of the dust. In addition, the “ash-coloured garments” seem also to allude to the dust of conflict; in this case, however, the dust is surely, implicitly, grey or white? Perhaps we should think of the dust as being dark compared with the brilliance of the swords but as light compared with the blood-red garments of Death. There are several other poems of Ibn Khafājah in which we find parallels to the battle-imagery used in this poem; for example, in no. 1, lines 11-12:

ودون طروق الحمي خوضة فتكة      مورسة السريال دامية الظفر  
تطلع في فرع من النقع أسود      وتسير عن خد من السيف محمر

“Before I come to the tribe at night, I have to wade through violence, red of clothing and bloody of claws,  
Which comes forth in black tresses of dust and smiles to reveal a red cheek of the sword.”

Again, in no. 279, line 1a:

أما وابتسام النقع عن صفحة النصل

“Verily, by the smiling of the dust that reveals the blade of the sword...”  
(i.e. the shining sword makes the dark dust disappear).

And in no. 81, line 22:

يسرى فيمسح الدجى عن صفحة      غراء تصدع كل ليل مظلم

“It [?] travels by night and wipes away the darkness from a gleaming blade that cuts through any dark night.”

<sup>14</sup> ed. Muḥammad ‘Abduh ‘Azzām, Cairo 1951.



And, finally, in no. 130, line 34:

يوم تراءى الموت أحمد قانيا      به واستطار النقع أريد أفتنا

“On a day when Death reveals itself as dark red, and the dust rises as an ash-coloured dusty (cloud).”

We find here not only the verb *khāḍa*, “to wade through”, and also “to face (death, the desert or darkness)” being used in a pertinent sense, but also the idea of death as being red-clad, the image of dust being both dark and light (though not in the same line); in addition the phrase *yusfiru ‘an khaddin* may encourage us to see in line 13, above, a pun on both *khadd* and *ḥadd*.

In line 17, *‘azm* and *ḥazm*, clearly used for parallelism, seem to be distinguished,<sup>15</sup> in that *ḥazm* is thought more appropriate for the steadfast resisting of an attack. This does not seem quite to agree with its use in line 1, where one might think that the suddenness implied in the image of the sparks was better suited for attack. It is, in any case, not clear what exactly the poet has in mind here. In line 18, the idea of the eyes being bleared is perhaps intended proleptically, the blurring being the result of the sun’s appearance, although it is just possible that the enemy may be thought of as not having fully woken up at this early hour. In either case, his appearance dazzles and discomfits them. The *ḥamāsah* section of the poem ends here. The transition seems, perhaps, a little abrupt; line 18 gives no indication that any such radical shift of subject is imminent.

Lines 19-23: the *ghazal* section begins, appropriately enough, with the introduction of three words indicative of erotic feelings. *Hawan* is normally thought of as synonymous with *ḥubb*, so it is not immediately obvious what the point is that is being made in this line. We have, probably, to take it here as a more general concept, which subsumes both *ḥubb* and *shawq*, love being something that the heart may conceal, and indeed should, since *kitmān al-sirr* is part of the lover’s duty towards the beloved, whereas desire is something that it cannot conceal, since it can be seen on the face, and in the demeanour, of the one who suffers it.<sup>16</sup> This, at any rate, is the sense that the reader would most probably draw from the line, at this stage; further discussion of it will be postponed until we come to consider the poem as a whole.

<sup>15</sup> al-Buḥturī’s pun in poem 425, *Dīwān*, ed. al-Ṣayrafī, Cairo 1972-8, II, 1082, line 8a, is perhaps of interest here:

ما الحزم إلا العزم في كل موتان

<sup>16</sup> For love-terminology and casuistics, especially *shawq*, *maḥabba* and *‘ishq*, see J.-C. Vadet, *L’esprit courtois en Orient dans les cinq premiers siècles de l’Hégire*, Paris 1968, 401, nn. 15-6. Cf. also other works dealing with love-terminology: Alois Giffen, *Theory of Profane Love*, Albany 1977; Joseph N. Bell, *Love Theory in Later Hanbalite Islam*, Albany 1979.

In line 20, the description of an amorous adventure with an *aghyad*, “tender youth”, begins; at least, it may be the description of one such encounter, or the *wa-* may be a true *wāw rubba* and signify that there were many such encounters. We encounter the same problem in line 33; it is almost impossible to resolve it, but the balance of probabilities lies with the single encounter. They youth’s most important characteristic, to Ibn Khafājah, is immediately mentioned: the downy hair that has appeared on his cheeks. The poet seems to have a particular predilection for this *‘idhār*; it frequently features in the scheme of his colour-based metaphors. For example, in poem 158, line 2, he describes how the white hair of old age on the cheeks is bent by contact with the sword and is coloured black by the dark blood (*najī*) so that it seems to become *‘idhār*; in poem 98, he compares the smooth cheek of a young boy with a page of paper on which his new hair flows like ink—he is grieved by the loss of his youth and has put on this hair as a mourning-garment; in poem 76, he speaks of the *‘idhār* as the outline of a *mihrāb*, while the boy’s face is the *qiblah* (line 1)—the hair on his cheek is also a dark cloud urged on by the lightning of his teeth (line 3); in other poems, Time permits a night to look down like *‘idhār* (99, line 33), and the smoke of a fire is compared with it (133, line 7). Here, the boy’s face is compared with the page of a book: in line 20 his cheeks are written on and in line 22 people can read from his face. The contrast between camphor and ambergris, used for that between black and white, is a common one, although one does not normally think of ambergris as black, but grey, as the name suggests. In older poetry, the contrast is generally between camphor and musk, camphor being white and musk black.<sup>17</sup> In Andalusian poetry the contrast can be either between camphor and ambergris, standing metonymically for white and black respectively, as in Ibn ‘Ammār’s famous *rā’iyyah* (1, line 2):<sup>18</sup>

والصبح قد أهدى لنا كافوره      لَمَّا استردَّ الليل منَّا العنبر

“The morning bestowed on us its camphor, when the night claimed back (its) ambergris from us.”

or between ambergris and musk, standing metonymically for white and black respectively, as Ibn ‘Ammār has in another poem (40, line 3):

بتنا فيه والليل والفجر عندي      عنبر أشهب ومسك أحمر

“There (sc. in the Dimashq palace) we spent the night, and for me the night and the dawn were [chiastically] grey ambergris and black musk.”

In line 21, the poet describes this youth (or, of course, succession of youths) as a *sayyid* whom he has elected from the *fityah* of his tribe, clear-

<sup>17</sup> See A. Dietrich’s article “*Kāfir*”, in *E.I.*<sup>2</sup>, IV, 417.

<sup>18</sup> Khālīs, *op. cit.*, II (*Diwān*), 189-194 (no. 1) line 2.

ly, it seems, referring back to the young men with whom he goes campaigning in line 3. The allusion to his horoscope may or may not have any specific astrological reference; it seems to indicate, in a general way, simply some auspicious conjunction, as does line 41.

Line 22, as has been indicated, continues the writing-metaphor of line 20. The references to the Qurʾān emphasise the splendour of his face. In addition, mention of *Sūrat al-Duḥā* (93) is probably intended to suggest v. 5, *wa-la-sawfa yuʿtī-ka rabbu-ka fa-tardā*, implying that he will be generous (with his favours); there is no *Sūrat al-Ḥamd*, but it is likely that *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* (1) is meant, the first verse of which is: *al-ḥamdu li-Lāhi rabbi l-ʿālamīn*, thus implying that men praise God both for the beauty of the boy's face and for the generosity that he has shown.

In lines 23-28, in which the poet describes his assiduous courtship of the youth, we find, at first, an obvious reference back to the *ḥamāsah* section: *majd* is contrasted with *wajd*, and then the youth's "straightened" breast is equated with a lance, and his cheek with a jousting-ground, or, possibly, a polo-field. As far as the breast is concerned, it is difficult to see how the description *muthaqqaf* can be applied to it; it seems likely that the epithet is merely transferred. The likening of the upper-part of the body of the beloved youth to a lance is not uncommon, cf., for example, Abū Nuwās: *fa-mā tahta-hu diʿsun wa-mā fawqa-hu rumḥu* ("what is below it is a round sand-hillock, and what is above it is a lance").<sup>19</sup> It is usual to include the contrast of the ample buttocks with the slender upper-part, and the metaphor or simile for the upper-part is more commonly a branch or sapling, which fits more naturally into the context of the sand-hill, as in line 40 below. The image in the genitive metaphors in 24b can be paralleled in Ibn Khafājah's *Dīwān* in poem 82, line 4, where he describes his tears of joy as yellow horses which occupy a position on his cheek, which is being charged by red horses (tears of sorrow). In line 25, we find nature-images again succeeding martial ones, just as in the first section, but this time as part of the description of the youth. The *uḡhuwānah*, usually taken to be the camomile, seems to be here the daisy or marguerite;<sup>20</sup> "plucking the daisies of the mouth" is easily interpreted, but the precise connotations of "bending the bamboo of the well-proportioned body" are not quite so immediately obvious, and perhaps are not intended to be so. The swaying (26) and trailing of the train (28) are common-places for indicating the beloved's pride; his seeming to be far off, even when he is near, is a rather more unusual

<sup>19</sup> *Dīwān*, IV, 183, line 3b.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Pérès, *op. cit.*, 168: "le mot *uḡhuwān* semble bien désigner en Occident musulman la marguerite ou la pâquerette plutôt que la camomille."

conceit (the syntax of this, incidentally, is somewhat strange, but the intended sense is quite clear). In line 26, the correspondence in the two genitive metaphors between the declining gradation (in value) of fruits/flowers with that of union/promise, which implies the expected refusal on the part of the beloved, contrasts with the natural chronological order, in which flowers precede fruit and promises precede fulfilment. The mention of the myrtle (28) as a comparison for the boy—*fī aghṣāni-hi* presumably suggests “in the midst of its branches”, i.e. surrounded by them as by garments—anticipates its mention in line 48, but in a totally different context.

Lines 29-31: The coming of the morning is seen as that of a kind of comforter or redeemer. There is some ambiguity in these lines, since it seems, at first sight, that the youth is the subject of *jā'a*; however, the image *namnamatu l-burdi* can surely apply only to the morning, as, we think, can the series of similes in line 31, and the youth's yielding is referred to only implicitly, in line 30. There is, in this line too, the problem of the referent of *-hu* in *'inda-hu*; a case could be made for its applying to either the youth or the morning, since *faḍāḍah* might be the former's tears of repentance of the latter's dew-drops, which would still symbolise these tears. Seeing that the second hemistich has somewhat less force if we adopt the second interpretation, we are, on balance, inclined to favour the first; the practical difference, however, is slight.

Lines 32-36: The benediction formula, which introduces the climactic subsection of the poem, is familiar as being directed towards the land in which the beloved or the Maecenas is now living, being separated from the poet. Here, it is applied somewhat differently; the poet is indeed, by implication, separated from the object of his passion, but it is the scene of the love-making, rather than the present abode of the beloved, that is the recipient of the benediction, and the poet speaks of himself as having parted from this scene. The use of the reference to Paradise to express the beatitude of the poet's earthly passion can be paralleled elsewhere in Arabic (and, in European literature, in some troubadour poetry).<sup>21</sup> The whole seduction scene, which now follows, consists of

<sup>21</sup> cf., for Arabic literature, Jean-Claude Vadet, *op.cit.*, 255 (on al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf): “En tout cas, il préfère la Dame à tous les biens célestes que peut lui procurer la piété. «Si l'on me donnait le choix entre elle et une éternité de délices, mon cœur la choisirait et ce n'est pas l'éternité que mon cœur choisirait»”. [*Diwān ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf*, ed. Hazragi, Cairo 1953, 92, line 13].

In wine- and love-poetry, religious terminology is used in a more blasphemous way, e.g. by the Caliph al-Walīd II and Abū Nuwās (cf. Vadet, *op. cit.*, 253-4, n. 109; Ewald Wagner, *Abu Nuwas, eine Studie zur arabischen Literatur der frühen ʿAbbasidenzeit*, 110 sqq.).

cf., for the troubadours, Raymond Gay-Croisier, *Religious elements in the secular lyrics of the Troubadours*, Chapel Hill, 1971, e.g. 81: “Raimon Jordan ..... goes as far as placing a night with his beloved above paradise.”

common-places, and it might be attributed to any of the poets who wrote on similar themes. As frequently happens, we have the problem of the *wāw rubba*, just as in line 20 above: is the poet describing only one particular night, or is he fusing many such nights into his description? The “breeze over roses”, expressing the sweetness and intimacy of the conversation over the red wine, is a pretty conceit, as is that of the wine’s brightness reflecting the purity of the youth’s kindness and the poet’s love. The apparently reversed order of *mā nu‘īdu wa-mā nubdī* is, presumably, caused by the exigencies of the rhyme-scheme. Line 36 is one of the best-known and most frequently quoted lines of the poem, on account of the semantic parallelism into which it is divided. This was a characteristic of later poetry, and works on stylistics display increasing concern with such parallelism in individual verses. The principal device here is the genitive metaphor, which is a great favourite of Ibn Khafājah’s. Sometimes, as Schoeler points out, he makes it the principal device of a whole poem. The genitive metaphors here are explicit, referring by flower-identities to the colour of the various parts of the body mentioned; the flowers, of course, tie the scene in with the nature- and garden-imagery elsewhere in the poem.<sup>22</sup> The significance of the *aw* dividing each hemistich, in contrast to the *wa*-dividing the line, is not obvious, unless the implication is that he would now concern himself with mouth and eye-lids and now with neck and cheeks, indicating a shift from front to side.

Lines 37-46a: The action now turns to the sexual activity to which the seduction-scene has been leading up, appropriately enough in the longest single unit in the poem. The convention whereby the seduced one falls asleep, through the joint effects of weariness and intoxication, which we find so frequently in such poetry, from Abū Nuwās onwards, is a curious one; it might be thought rather to detract, by its manifest inconvenience, from the pleasure anticipated. However, it must have mirrored some quirk of the current attitude towards paederasty—perhaps an (unexpressed) desire to ravish innocence, which was the better satisfied if the “victim” was in no state actively to participate. Can we detect here a further manifestation of what seems to be a self-conscious “naughtiness” in poetic gratification of lusts that were perhaps not always so easy to gratify in actuality?

In line 39, *min-hu* is to be considered as a kind of genitive of *tajrīd* (see Wright, II, p. 138, and cf. line 41 below), rather than an anticipated genitive exponent plus possessive suffix. At the same time, it seems probable that the poet intends the meaning that would result from taking

<sup>22</sup> On the imagery in this passage, cf. Pérès, *op. cit.*, 172, 176 and 375 (*nuql*).

it as the latter, "I embraced his sword, drawn from the scabbard", to be in the minds of his readers as well; the same possibly applies to line 41.

In line 40, we have another example of syntactic and semantic parallelism; the accumulation of abstract nouns in *idāfa* with concrete nouns, rather loosely connected with the previous line, is reminiscent of lines 1 and 2. It seems that the characteristics mentioned here are capable of referring both to a sword and to a body; *majass*, with reference to a sword, would presumably indicate the hilt.

The points that arise in line 41 have been dealt with in the remarks on lines 21, 24 and 39 above.

The reciprocity of *aw takun-hu*, in line 42, seems unnecessary, and rather clumsy, especially as the line resumes with *fa-inna-hu*, indicating concentration on the youth rather than the sun. The simile based on a verbal sentence is, again, reminiscent of lines 1 and 2. The metaphor of his being the sun's brother is somewhat like the series of metaphors in line 15b above.

The conceit of the roaming of the poet's hands over the youth's body constituting a journey to places that are elevated and low-lying is one that is not unknown elsewhere in such poetry. Ibn Khafajah frequently uses the names Tihāmah and Najd as concrete examples of places so situated, together with the associated verbs, *athama* and *anjada*. *Nahday-hi* would be more appropriate, one might think, to a girl; indeed it would seem likely that it was this line that caused Pérès so to interpret the poem.

In line 45, a preference in kissing is likened to the *tafdīl* of one kind of flower to another. This is a reference to a genre of poetry, the *munāzarah*, or dispute, between different kinds of flowers as to their superiority over one another (the western *disputatio inter flores*). Perhaps the most celebrated example of this is Ibn al-Rumī's poem rhyming in *dāl*, no. 470, II, p. 643.<sup>23</sup> Usually the dispute takes place between roses and narcissi, with Andalusian poets generally favouring the former. The introduction of this theme here appears somewhat careless; it fits well enough with line 36, but hardly with line 38.

In line 46, the camphor metaphor recurs, although here, where it might have been expected, there is no contrasting substance specified to represent the black hairs that are plucked out. In fact, *ghayyartu ... kāfūra*

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<sup>23</sup> *Dīwān*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār, 4 vols, Cairo 1973-8. Further references to the *disputatio* are to be found in: Ewald Wagner, *Die arabische Rangstreidichtung und ihre Einordnung in die allgemeine Literaturgeschichte*, Mainz, Wiesbaden (Akad. d. Wissenschaften u. d. Literatur. Abhandl. d. Geistes- u. Sozialwissenschaftl. Klasse, Jahrgang 1962, Nr 8) 1963; Said Boustany, *Ibn ar-Rumī. Sa vie et son œuvre*, Beirut 1967, 339 sqq. (on the political value of the dispute in Abbasid society).

*khaddi-hi* is a rather odd phrase, since, from Ibn Khafājah's point of view, it would be the hairs that would change (for the worse) the camphor of his cheek, whereas by plucking them out, he is restoring it to its virgin whiteness.

In 46b, the poet appears to boast of his self-restraint in remaining chaste, but it becomes clear in line 47 that this was in fact involuntary. In another poem (no. 45, p. 84), we find a similar situation, this time during an amorous encounter with (probably) a slave-girl:

ولم تك الا رشفة واعتناقة      ويصجيني اني اعف ازار

“There was only a smacking kiss and an embrace, and I was proud that I remained chaste of loin-cloth.”

Ibn Khafājah's old age, and consequent impotence, seem to have been of considerable concern to him, for we find him complaining in another poem again (no. 40, p. 81), on a slave-girl, that fifty-one years have already passed since his childhood (line 7); he wishes that he was only fourteen again, so that the girl would not call him “uncle” and he would not have to call her “daughter” (line 9). The clear reference to his impotence in line 47 seems to be parallel to his somewhat more indirect reference to his failing prowess in warfare in line 15.

In line 48, after the conclusion of the encounter, *fāraqtu-hu* reminds us of *fāraqtu-hā* in line 32, immediately before the beginning of the description of the encounter. It is perhaps significant that, although the theme of separation, and thus of deprivation (as is clear from line 49), is being emphasised here, the poet is still self-centred enough to use the first person, rather than the third; it was he who effected the separation. 48b requires some commentary. What the poet appears to be doing is kissing the actual hairs that he has plucked from the boy's cheeks, where they have fallen; in likening them to “myrtle”, he is probably alluding to the unripe white berry of this plant, which is speckled with small black spots, comparable with the small black hairs.<sup>24</sup> In line 28, the allusion is of course to the foliage. The final line contains the familiar *alba* motif, in which the all-too-rapid coming of the dawn announces the end of the night of love. It contrasts spectacularly with the idea of the dawn's appearing as a redeemer-figure after a night of sleeplessness in lines 29-31.

The scheme behind the construction of the poem is a fairly simple one; the general progression from a shorter first section (lines 1-19; 15-19 may, perhaps, be regarded as more of a bridge-passage, but they are

<sup>24</sup> cf. Pérès, *op. cit.*, 168: “La baie, blanche d'abord, noire à la maturité, ponctuée de noir dans l'intervalle, est, pour un poète, «de jais (*sabağ*) ou d'étoffe de soie (*sundus*) colorée».” The myrtle is referred to as *ās* here, rather than *rand*.

more closely connected with 1-14 than with 20-49) to a longer second section is complemented by the detailed progression from shorter units to longer. In these terms, the poem divides as follows:

- 1-3. Of the three-line units, one may say that 1-2 go closely together and are rounded off by 3; 4-5 go quite closely together and are summed up by 6; 7 leads into 8-9, which go closely together; 10 is somewhat isolated; 11 leads into 12-13, which go together, with 14 rounding the unit off and marking a kind of transition with an aphoristic hemistich.
- 15-19. 15 leads into 16-18, which go together; 19 really belongs to both sections, as is not uncommon with lines marking important transitions. It certainly relates back, as is indicated by *‘alā anna*, but its sense introduces that of the second section and, indeed, that which, as we proceed to discover, underlies the whole poem. It may be considered the key-line of the poem.
- 20-32. This is a more or less homogeneous passage, apart from the two slight digressions of 23-25 and 29-31.
- 33-48. This is clearly one unit; it may be subdivided thus: 33 leads into 34-35, with 36 somewhat parenthetical; 37-39 go together, with 40 expanding on 39b; 41-46 go closely together (42 is parenthetical), rounded off by 47, which is, in a sense, explanatory of 46b, and 48.
49. This, with its two apostrophes, constitutes the *envoi*.

*Interpretation of the poem:*

A prominent feature of the poem is the repetition of words, and of roots, by way of reference back to earlier lines; at all events, it occurs so frequently that it is unlikely to be anything but deliberate, especially in a piece that depends so greatly, although not excessively, on artifice and conceits. Time and again, words and phrases from the first section are picked up in the second, thus giving new significance to them in their earlier context. For instance:

- From 1. *sulla mina l-ghimdi* recurs in 39;  
from 3. *fityah* recurs in 21, and *kaff* (also in 14) recurs in 35 and 44;  
from 5. *sry* (root) recurs in 37;  
from 8. *muthaqqaf* recurs in 24;  
from 9. *zahr* recurs in 26 (with different vocalisation), and *jny* (root) recurs in 25;  
from 11. *mjd* (root) (also in 12 and 15) recurs in 23;  
from 13. *rumh* recurs in 24 (we have already had *qnu* (root) in 3, 8, 15 and 17, and *khaffi* twice in 5), *jfn* (root) recurs in 36, *sayf* in 39 (we have already had *husām* in 1 and 14, and *zuban* and *bīd* in 16), and *hzz* (root) recurs in 40;  
from 18. *shams* recurs in 21 and 41 (there is further correspondence, in that *l<sup>c</sup>* (root) also recurs in 41, as does *sa<sup>c</sup>d* from 21).



There is also a good deal of repetition within the individual sections, the intent of which is not so obvious, although it certainly serves to bind the poem together in a tighter whole. Some instances have already been mentioned, in passing, in the foregoing list. Of those that have not already been noticed, we may point out:

- From 1. *zand* recurs in 3 (in a different sense), and *ḥazm* recurs in 17;
- from 2. *asad ward* recurs in 14;
- from 7. *wird* recurs in 9 (in rather a different sense) [cf. also 2 and 14 above, and 33, 36 and 45].
  
- from 13. *ṣadr* recurs in 15;
- from 16. *rumd* recurs in 18 (in a different sense);
- from 20. *khadd* recurs in 24, 36, 45 and 46, and *kāfūr* recurs in 46;
- from 23. *nkb* (same form—different tense) recurs in 27;
- from 24. *nahd* recurs in 43 and 44, and *lhm* (root) recurs in 41;
- from 25. *thny* (root) recurs in 26 and 28, *fam* recurs in 45, and *shhw* (root) recurs in 31;
  
- from 28. *ghṣn* (root) recurs in 41, and *rand* recurs in 48;
- from 31. *qbl* (form IV) recurs in 38 [cf. also 45 and 48];
- from 32. *fāraqtu* recurs in 48;
- from 33. *ward* recurs in 36 and 45 [cf. also 2 and 7];
- from 37. *jism* recurs in 43, and *myl* (form I) (2) recurs in 45 [*tusāfiru* ... *rāhatayya* in 43 may also be intended to recall *sarat* ... *al-rāhu* here];
- from 45. *qbl* (form II) recurs in 48 [cf. also 31 and 38].

There are other quasi-repetitions, that is, of words of similar sense, but from different roots, such as: *thaghr* (36)—*thanāyā* (38), tying up with *fam*, *uqḥuwānah*, *aqāḥ* and *qarāḥ*; repetitions of roots within lines, e.g. 34 *nu<sup>ʿ</sup>āwidu* ... *nu<sup>ʿ</sup>idu*—(this is normal *tajnīs*) and 39 *ʿānaqa* and *salla*. We also find some *ṭibāq*, e.g. 23 *arūḥu*—*aghdū* and 44 *tahbiṭu*—*tas<sup>ʿ</sup>adu* and *Tihāmatan*—*Najdi*.

The apparently genuine heroic tone of the first section is, of course, with hind-sight to be seen as mock-heroic. The ubiquitous double-meanings are very cleverly disguised in what appears at first to be a thoroughly banal, if neatly executed, exercise in rehearsing the *topoi* of early martial poetry. Without the existence of the second section it would be difficult to penetrate this disguise. We may with certainty identify these double-meanings as informing lines 3, 5, 13, 14a and 17; it is probable that they are to be found also in lines 7-10, 15-16 and 18. The reason for a certain amount of the repetition of words and themes becomes apparent, when one considers the first section in the light of the second; it is, for instance, hardly necessary to dwell at length on the new significance taken on by the emphasis on weapons, except perhaps to comment that the repetition of *al-khattī* in line 5, when thus viewed, loses much of its seeming clumsiness.

It is clear from a close reading that the poem is intended to be a unity, so intimately (in all senses) are the sections connected, in both form and content. There can be scarcely any doubt that the diction is very carefully calculated to effect this. At first glance, even perhaps, after a casual reading of the whole poem, the two sections appear to be separate, and the choice of words almost ineptly repetitive; on further consideration, the intertwining of all the elements, and the degree of artistry with which this is brought about, become evident. There may remain some doubt as to the existence of a double-meaning in certain individual aspects of the extended martial metaphor in the first section. Again, the separate metaphors employed there cannot always, with certainty, be supplied with a referent, and the metaphors are not always consistent in their application across the two sections; for example, whereas *rumh* (line 24) and *sayf* (line 39) in section 2 certainly refer to the torso, in the first section (e.g. lines 3, 5, 13 and 15) they clearly do not.

It is amply evident, then, that the first section, taken in the light of the second, is an extended metaphor for some kind of sexual activity, but it is still not immediately obvious what the precise nature of this activity is. Quite possibly Ibn Khafājah preferred to leave a certain amount to his audience's imagination, and quite possibly, also, he did not intend all the details of his metaphor to have definite connotations. However, it seems probable from the nature of the metaphor, that some kind of communal sexual indulgence is involved (see, in particular, lines 7-10), in which Ibn Khafājah participates with more success than in the individual amatory encounter of the second section (see lines 15-18), although we may perhaps interpret his qualifications in line 15 as implying that he is no longer capable of playing a fully active part in such activities, and that he involves himself more in an ancillary, and even voyeuristic, capacity. Once again, line 19 seems to be crucial. It is not clear (see the commentary, *ad locum*) what the subject of the verbs *yukhfī* and *yubdī* is: *qalb* may be the subject of both; alternatively, *ḥubb* may be the subject of *yukhfī* and *shawq* that of *yubdī*. This, however, may not be of vital importance. What is important, assuming that the hemistich is not merely the aphoristic utterance that, at first sight, it appears to be, and was no doubt intended to appear, is the direction in which either verb refers. This ambiguity is perhaps deliberate. We have to assume, in order to understand the line at all, let alone the whole poem, that *hawan* subsumes both *ḥubb* and *shawq* (as suggested in the commentary). We are left with the problem, however, of which of these is the emotion that is relevant to which section. It would seem, on the face of it, probable that "concealment" implies the metaphorical disguise of the first section, and that Ibn Khafājah is saying that he feels "love" for the youths with

whom he associates in this section and "desire" for the individual boy whom he attempts to seduce in the second section. It is, nevertheless, equally possible, and perhaps more likely, that the situation is precisely reversed, and that *yukhfī* and *yubdī* refer to actual physiological manifestations of these emotions, which are conspicuously wanting in the apparently propitious circumstances of the second section, when the "loved" one is readily available. Thus "love" fails to be consummated, whereas "desire" leads to physical fulfilment, of a sort; this success, however, is "concealed" by the metaphor, whereas the failure is "revealed".

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APPENDIX

*The Arabic text*

وحزم كما طار الفرار من الزند	مضاء كما صل الحمام من الغمد
وبأس كما حدثت عن أمـد ورد	وحكم كما زاحمت منكب هـمـة
وفتك القنى بالكف والكف بالزند	بامخالهم من فتية أقتضى المنى
جلاد فقل في بأس مرد على جـرد	شباب على خيل عراب فان يكن
نظرت الى الخطي ملدا على ملـد	إذا اعتقلوا الخطي في ليلة الصرى
ومشوى الردى بين الاساورة الامـد	فامر عمال وأخمم بأصل
تدار ولا غير الامنة من ورد	تماقوا وما غير النجيع مـلـة
ولا نهر الا مشطبة الهند	ولا فجر الا مشقة القنى
وماء ولكن غير مستعذب الورد	فزهـر ولكن غير مستحسن الجنى
وكلهم وسطى فناهيك من عـد	قد انتظموا في نحر فخر قلادة
كريم السجايا لا يزيـف الى النقد	فديتهم من كل أروع ماجـد
رفيع سماء المجد هامي حيا الرفـد	وما منهم الا أغر محجـل
ويمضى وجفن الصيد يسفر عن جـد	مكر وصدر الرمح يهتز عـزة
وغير قويم برثن الامـد الورد	وقد عطف الحرب الحمام بكفه
لخدن العلى شرب الندى لدة المجد	وإنى على أن لست صدر قناتهم
فالقى المنايا الحمر في الحلل الرمـد	أخوض الطبى تخضر في النقع بيضها
وأعتز من حزمي بأوفى من الصـرد	فأطمن من عزمي بأمضى من القنى
طلوع جبين الشمس للامين الرمـد	وأطلع للأعداء من حيث تنتحـى

على أن لي قلبا تملكه الهوى  
وأغيد قد صار العذار بخوده  
تخيرته من فتية الحي سيـدا  
إذا قرءوا من وجهه سورة الضحى  
أروح إليه ثم أغدو وإنمـا  
الى حيث ألقى الريح نهدا مشقفا  
الى حيث أجنى الاقحوانة من فـم  
مفر يتخنى خوطة فمالتـه  
فنكب لا يلوي على كانبـا  
يجر ذبول الربيط زهوا فينخدني  
فلما أزال الصبح محلوك الدجى  
أناف على ما عنده من فـاضلة  
واقبل أهسى من قرار على نـوى  
فسقيا لأرض الفتنا فإنـها  
وليل تماطينا المدام وبيندنا  
نعاوده والكاس تمبىق مكـة  
وأشربها من كفه وكانـها  
ونقلي أقاح الخمر أو مومن الطلى  
إلى أن سرت في جسمه الراح والكرى  
فأقبلت أمتهدي لما بين أضلـمى  
وعانقتة قد مل من وشى بـرده  
ليان مجى واستقامة قامـة  
أغازل منه الفصن في مفرى النقى  
فإن لم يكنها أو تكنه فإنـه  
تصافر كلتا راحتى بجـمـه  
فتهبط من كشحيه كف تهامة  
وقد ملت من تقبيل خد الى فـم  
وغيرت بالتجميى كافور خـده  
ولولا ذبول معدني وغضـارة  
وإنى وقد فارقتة لمقبـل  
فيا صبحه البساء قبحت صبحه

فللحب ما يخفى وللشوق ما يبـدى  
كما خط بالكافور سطر من الخـد  
تكون بين الشمس والقمر العمـد  
تلوا فتلوا من جوده سورة الحمد  
أنكب عن مجد الى ملتقى وجـد  
فأطرد خيل اللحم في ملعب الخـد  
شهي وأشنى الخيزرانة من قـد  
قطاك شمار الوصل أو زهر الوعد  
أناديه من قرب أناديه من بـمد  
كما ماس في أعماه حجر الرنـد  
فجاء كما راقته نعمة البـرد  
وقد ينبع الماء النخير من الصلـد  
وغمض على مهد وروح على جهـد  
وان أك قد فارقتها جنة الخـلـد  
حديث كما هب النسيم على الـورد  
وأطيب منها ما نعيد وما نبـدى  
منا وصفاء من مناه ومن ودي  
ونرجسة الأجنان أو وردة الخـد  
ومالا بمطغفيه فمال على عـظـدي  
من الحر ما بين الثنايا من البـرد  
فعانقت منه السيف صل من الفـمد  
وهزة أعطاف ورونق إفرنـد  
والشم وجه الشمس في مطلع السـمد  
أخوها كما قد الشراك من الجلـد  
فطورا الى خصر وطورا الى نهـد  
وتصمد من نهديه أخرى الى نجـد  
أقول بتفضيل القراح على الـورد  
وإنى لعف مثزري طاهر بـردى  
عليه لبات البدر يحصدني وجـدي  
مواقع هانيك السوالف من رنـد  
ويا ليلة النعماء هل لك من رد