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Mary St. Germain

al-Azdī's *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī*: Placing an Anomalous Text within the
Literary Developments of its Time

Mary St. Germain

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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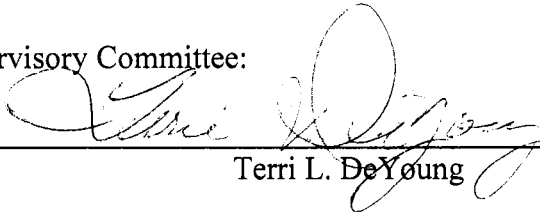
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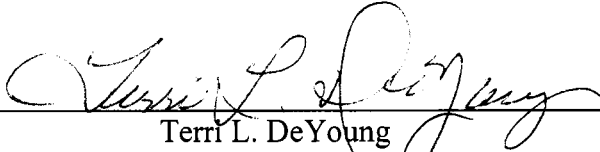
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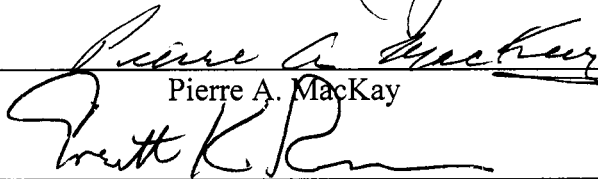


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Abstract

al-Azdī's *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī*: Placing an Anomalous Text within the
Literary Developments of its Time

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The *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī*, by Abū al-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azdī, is a narrative, seemingly fictional prose work written in the late 4th/10th or early 5th/11th century. Although two editions of it have been published, it has generally been passed over by researchers due to its obscurity, the difficulty of its language and its apparent deviation from the standard literary forms of its period.

Al-Azdī specifies that his work is a *ḥikāya*, or imitation, of a typical Baghdadi man. A vagrant, Abū al-Qāsim, is the representative Baghdadi whose phrases and idioms are to illustrate the moral character, classes, and customs of the people of that city. He is introduced as educated and skilled, but without morals or restraint. He enters the gathering uninvited and satirizes the attendees according to their professions. He ends that subject by informing the Isfahanis that they are deficient in cultured manners and linguistic and literary skills. After describing typical attendees of a gathering, he moves on to describe high quality material goods and excellent behavior at a gathering as represented by Baghdad and the matching negative phenomena as represented by Isfahan. He embeds a *qaṣīda*'s structure in prose to shape the discussion. Abū al-Qāsim begins with a prose *nasīb* praising Baghdad as his beloved.

He treats the *raḥīl* as a journey through a gathering. First he contrasts the high and low quality material goods used by the literate classes of Baghdad and Isfahan. He then recites a variety of examples from anecdotal literature performed at gatherings in Baghdad, but which are not found in Isfahan. In the third section of the *qaṣīda*, he provides an example of desirable behavior by participating in the gathering as though he were a guest. When he does not receive a large reward, he reverts to his confrontational behavior. He alternates *fakhr* (boasting) on his lifestyle and *hijāʾ*? (satire) on the attendees. Finally, he passes out drunk. He arises the next morning, recites the same pious phrases which gained him entrance the night before and leaves, apparently to repeat the process.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>al-Aghānī</i>	al-Iṣbahānī. <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i>
Agius	Agius, "Muqaddasī's Information on Types of Ships"
AQM	al-Azdī, <i>Abulḳāsim ein bagdāder Sittenbild</i> , ed. Mez
AQSH	al-Azdī, <i>al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya</i> , ed. al-Shālījī
Arab navigation	al-Saʿdī. <i>Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the Coming of the Portuguese, being a Translation of Kitāb al-Fawāʿid fī Usūl al-Baḥr wa al-Qawāʿid</i>
Arberry1	Arberry, "A Baghdad Cookery-Book." <i>Islamic Culture</i> , 13, no. 1 (Jan. 1939): 21-47.
Arberry2	Arberry, "A Baghdad Cookery-Book." <i>Islamic Culture</i> , 13, no. 2 (Apr. 1939): 189-214
<i>al-Baṣāʿir</i>	Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, <i>al-Baṣāʿir wa-al-dhakhāʿir</i>
<i>al-Bayān</i>	al-Jāḥiz, <i>al-Bayān wa-al-Tabyīn</i>
Bosworth	Bosworth, <i>The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld</i>
al-Buḥturī	al-Buḥturī, <i>Dīwān</i>
<i>al-Buldān</i>	Yāqūt. <i>Kitāb muʿjam al-buldān</i>
al-Damīrī	al-Damīrī, <i>Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā</i>
de Goeje, <i>Indices</i>	de Goeje, <i>Indices, Glossarium et Addenda et Emendanda ad Part. I-III. Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum</i> , pars 4
de Goeje, Review	de Goeje, "Review of Hikayat Abi al-Qasim al-Baghdadi"
Dozy	Dozy, <i>Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes</i>
Dozy, <i>Vêtements</i>	Dozy, <i>Dictionnaire détaillé des noms des vêtements</i>
Durra	al-Aṣṭurlābī, <i>Durrat al-Tāj</i>
EI2	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> . New ed.
Freytag	Freytag, <i>Arabum Proverbia</i>
GAL	Brockelmann, <i>Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur</i>
Hava	Hava, <i>al-Faraid Arabic-English Dictionary</i>
Ibn al-Muʿtazz	Ibn al-Muʿtazz. <i>Dīwān Ashʿār</i>
<i>al-Imtāʿ</i>	al-Tawḥīdī, <i>Kitāb al-Imtāʿ wa-al-Muʿānasa</i>
Kindermann	Kindermann, "Schiff" im Arabischen
Lane	Lane, <i>An Arabic-English Lexicon</i>
LeStrange, <i>Baghdad</i>	LeStrange, <i>Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate</i>
LeStrange, <i>Lands</i>	LeStrange, <i>The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate</i>
<i>Lisān</i>	Ibn Manẓūr. <i>Lisān al-ʿArab</i>
al-Majlisī	al-Majlisī. <i>Biḥār al-Anwār</i>
Malti	Malti-Douglas, <i>Structures of Avarice</i>
<i>Maqāmāt</i>	al-Hamadhānī. <i>Maqāmāt</i>
Marin, <i>Kanz</i>	Manuela Marin and David Waines, ed., <i>Kanz al-Fawāʿid fī al-Mawāʿid</i>
<i>al-Matālīʿ</i>	al-Ghuzūlī. <i>Matālīʿ al-Budūr</i>
Maydani	al-Maydānī. <i>Muʿjam al-Āmthāl</i>

Moreh	Moreh, <i>Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World</i>
al-Mubarrad	al-Mubarrad. <i>The Kamil</i>
Pellat	Pellat, <i>The Life and Works of Jahiz</i>
Serjeant	Serjeant, Serjeant. <i>Islamic Textiles</i>
Siggel	Siggel, <i>Arabisch-deutsches Wörterbuch der Stoffe</i>
Steingass, Persian	Steingass, <i>Persian-English Dictionary</i>
Stillman	Stillman, <i>Arab Dress</i>
al-Warrāq	al-Warrāq, <i>Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh</i>
Wehr	Wehr, <i>A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic</i>
Wiedemann	Wiedemann, <i>Aufsätze zur arabischen Wissenschafts-Geschichte</i>
WKAS	<i>Wörterbuch der Klassischen Arabischen Sprache</i>
Yatīma	al-Thaʿālibī, <i>Yatīmat al-Dahr</i>
Zahr	al-Ḥuṣrī, <i>Zahr al-Adāb wa-Thimār al-Albāb</i>

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Introduction

The *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī*, by Abū al-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azdī, is a narrative, seemingly fictional prose work written in the late 4th/10th or early 5th/11th century. Based on its content and style, it should be an important scholarly source for the development of Arabic formal prose fictional literature and an important source of information on the material culture of its period. However, although it has been available to scholars since 1902 in an edition by Mez, and since 1980 in a second, easier to read edition by ʿAbbūd al-Shālījī under the title *al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya*, very little has been written about it. Certainly, no substantive work has been published. The *Ḥikāya* has generally been passed over by researchers. Its extreme obscenity, which is still beyond acceptable usage, was for a long time a major deterrent to further examination of the text. In fact, both reviews of Mez's edition questioned the value of a text so replete with obscenity, scatology and representation of the seamy side of life.¹ The difficulty of its language and its highly topical allusions to contemporary events are extremely challenging and its structure is quite unusual. Although the *Ḥikāya* includes techniques and content tantalizingly similar to those of the innovative literary works of its period, as a whole it is sufficiently different from any other work that it has not been possible to situate it satisfactorily within the literary continuum.

Since the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī* is unfamiliar to most readers, a short summary of its content is in order. The *Ḥikāya* begins with an

¹ Carl Brockelmann, "Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Abulmuṭahhar al-Azdī, Abulqâsim ein bagdâder Sittenbild," *Literarisches Centralblatt*, 1902, no. 47, 1568-9; M.J. de Goeje, "Review of Hikayat Abi al-Qasim al-Baghdadi by Adam Mez," *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1902, no 9, 723.

invocation spoken by Abū al-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azdī, who specifies that he will use selections from pre-Islamic and contemporary Arabic literature in his text. He specifies that his work is a *ḥikāya*, or imitation, of a typical Baghdadi man, whose phrases and idioms will be used to illustrate the moral character, classes, and customs of people from Baghdad. That fictional man, Abū al-Qāsim, is introduced as educated and skilled, but without morals, without restraint, and of little social value. He is a professional parasite who invites himself to an Isfahani evening gathering. After satirizing the attendees' skill in their professions, he informs the Isfahanis that they are deficient in cultured manners and linguistic and literary skills, and asks them if they would like to improve. They assent. Abū al-Qāsim begins to recite selections from Arabic literature on a variety of topics. He begins by speaking of his love for Baghdad and how he mourns his separation from her. He then compares the high quality material goods found in Baghdad with their low quality equivalents found in Isfahan. The specific goods are horses, textile furnishings, perfumes, food, wine, cupbearers, male singers, singing girls, and slave boys—the possessions and individuals that were essential to the life of the educated urban upper classes, and which, excluding the horses, were found at evening gatherings. He then draws attention to the fact that he will begin telling anecdotes. The length and form of the anecdotes vary, but they are all about slave girls, mostly singing girls. At the end of the anecdotes, Abū al-Qāsim declares that he is tired from his journey and asks for a meal. He interacts with the other attendees more politely. He plays chess, praises most of the dishes served for dinner, and demonstrates his knowledge of nautical terminology. He gets increasingly drunk. The attendees seek a way to be rid of him and settle on

encouraging him to drink himself into a stupor. He alternates between satirizing the attendees and boasting of his own skills. He finally passes out, only to get up in the morning and recite the same pious phrases that had convinced the gathering to admit him the night before. Unrepentant, he leaves, apparently to repeat the cycle.

Determining the *Ḥikāya*'s place in the development of Arabic fictional prose literature depends on when it was written in relationship to other works of its time. Unfortunately, the date the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī* was written is not recorded in its single extant manuscript, nor is it mentioned in contemporary works. On the basis of the birth and death dates of authors whose works are quoted in the text, it must have been written between approximately 379-80/990 and 411/1020. It is unlikely the *Ḥikāya* was written earlier because, near its beginning, al-Azdī mentions that he has written *maqāmāt*,² the short, anecdotal stories presented largely in *sajʿ*, or rhymed prose, which form the first openly fictional prose genre acceptable in formal classical Arabic literature. The *maqāma* genre developed between 379-90/980 and 398/1008,³ which makes it improbable that the *Ḥikāya* was written before 390/1000.

The choice of quotations also provides some information relevant to dating the *Ḥikāya*. The text includes quotations by many authors who lived during the 4th/10th century, with all but a few of them dying by the beginning of the 5th/11th century. Since quotations by authors representative of all earlier periods of Arabic literature, from the pre-Islamic period up until the 4th/10th century, were also included, al-Azdī was not

² Abū Ḥayyān ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya*, ʿAbbūd al-Shālījī, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 1980), 42.

³ J. Hämmeen-Anttila, "Al-Hamadānī and the Early History of the Maqāma," in *Philosophy and Arts in the Islamic World: Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants held at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (September 3-September 9, 1996)*, ed. by U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998), 88.

arbitrarily limiting himself to a single century. If the *Ḥikāya* had been written much later than 411/1020, it would be logical to expect that additional highly reputed authors who lived primarily in the first half of the 5th/11th century would also have been quoted.

Not only is the dating of the *Ḥikāya* open to discussion, but so is its authorship. Much of the small quantity of published research on the work attempts to identify al-Azdī with some better known author of his time. Because the name found at the beginning of the invocation, who is normally the author of the work, cannot be identified in contemporary sources, it is assumed to be fictitious and an author whose works are quoted extensively in the *Ḥikāya* is then suggested as the “real” al-Azdī. The authors most frequently proposed as the “real” al-Azdī are Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, d. 414/1023, a prose writer famous for anecdotal works depicting the social and intellectual life of his times,⁴ and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, 313-84/925-84, a poet known for the obscenity of his poems.⁵ These suggestions are supported by arguing that Abū al-Qāsim and the “real” author have the same character traits. These arguments give circumstantial proof at best. There is no strong evidence for the use of pseudonyms in the 3-4/9-10 centuries. Since there are very few printed works on the history of Isfahan or on the biography of its inhabitants in this period, there may be a reference to al-Azdī in unexamined manuscripts. Since authors of classical Arabic works were expected to quote other works, quotations are not evidence of authorship. Identifying

⁴ AQSH, 5-41; Azartāsh Azarnūsh, “Namāyishnāma dar yik pardah-i Shāhkārī ‘Nākhāndanī’, az qarn-i panjam-i hijrī,” *Nashr-i Danish* 14, no. 6 (Abān 1373): 22-30; *Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī* (Tehran: Markaz-i Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī, 1373), s.v. “Abū Muṭahhar Azdī”; Muṣṭafā Jawwād, “Ḥikāya Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī: hal hiya li-Abī Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī,” *al-Ustādh* (Baghdad), 12:300-10.
⁵ Abd al-Laṭīf al-Rāwī, “A hiya al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya am Ḥikāya Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī,” *Majallat Ma’had al-Makhṭūṭāt al-‘Arabiyya*, 34, no. 1-2: 229-39.

an author with his characters is a fallacy. Thus, although al-Azdī's existence cannot be verified, there is no reason to believe he is not the author.

Although the *Ḥikāya* is fictional prose using a continuous narrative from the early 5/11th century, it is not clear to what type of literature it belongs. It contains obvious elements from several types. Fictional prose with a continuous narrative is a technique generally found in popular tales rather than in formal prose literature. The *Ḥikāya*'s continuous narrative consists of Abū al-Qāsim interacting with the other attendees at the gathering. It alternates with Abū al-Qāsim's recitations of selections of literature in a manner similar to the way the *Arabian Nights*' frame tale alternates with individual tales. However, the *Ḥikāya* cannot be a popular tale because, unlike true frame tales, the *Ḥikāya*'s narrative does not have a plot, and neither do Abū al-Qāsim's recitations, except for one anecdote about the singing girl Zād Mihr. In addition, the *Ḥikāya* does not consist of tales including only a few elements of formal literature, but rather contains a mixture of types of literature, such as horse poetry, love poetry, *madīḥ* or praise poetry, *hijā'* or satire, *fakhr* or boasting, excerpts from geographies, anecdotes, selections from the *Qur'ān*, *ḥadīth*, aphorisms, and proverbs, that is more typically found in *adab* literature.

The combination of a protagonist from the fringes of society and a fictional prose narrative found in the *Ḥikāya* suggests the *maqāma* genre. The *Ḥikāya* was written not long after Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (358-398/968-1008) wrote his *Maqāmāt*, the first examples of the genre. It is unlikely that much variation had developed within the genre by the time the *Ḥikāya* was written. The structure of the two works is thus not sufficiently similar for them to be related. However, the quotation of extensive

sections of al-Hamadhānī's *al-Maqāma al-Dīnāriyya* and *al-Maqāma al-Sāsāniyya* demonstrates that the *Maqāmāt* had some influence on the *Ḥikāya*. The *Maqāmāt* frequently depict an individual engaging in an illegal or immoral act. The *Ḥikāya* depicts eloquent recitations and behavior at evening gatherings. The *Ḥikāya* has a continuous narrative, but narrative in the *Maqāmāt* is continuous only within each short episode. Abū al-Qāsim's equivalent in the *Maqāmāt* is Abū al-Fatḥ, the trickster from the margins of society. Abū al-Qāsim's recitations are bounded by his conversations with the attendees. Generally, Abū al-Fatḥ's speeches occur within another narrator's story. Abū al-Fatḥ behaves in a pleasant way that encourages people to give him something of value. In contrast, Abū al-Qāsim is rude, obscene, highly critical of his listeners and generally unpleasant.

Al-Azdī gives the impression in the *Ḥikāya*'s invocation that it will be a character study, a genre popular in Arabic formal prose literature. He states he will organize his depiction of the Baghdadi moral character in a manner similar to that used by al-Jāḥiẓ, an eminent prose writer of the 3rd/9th century, and quotes an example from his works depicting a man who imitates donkeys. This statement is particularly important because, although al-Jāḥiẓ earned a reputation for a broad range of prose works, his character depictions are and have always been among the best known of his works and are a major reason why he is still a popular and renowned author. Depiction of characters concentrates on the qualities that distinguish the character from other characters. The depiction of Abū al-Qāsim creates ambiguity about which character is being depicted. Al-Azdī states that it is the character of Baghdadis. However, Abū al-Qāsim is shown performing activities typical of a professional parasite: entering a

gathering uninvited, entertaining the gathering and seeking and consuming the highest quality foods and beverages. Unlike the behavior of a parasite and further compounding the ambiguity, his recitations concentrate more on standards of eloquence and cultured behavior than on obtaining as much food as possible with as little effort as possible. If the character depicted is intended to be a Baghdadi representing the quintessence of eloquence and elegance, Abū al-Qāsim's importuning behavior, rudeness and use of obscenity are the opposite of what his behavior should be.

Abū al-Qāsim's qualities are typical of the individuals found in *mujūn* literature. *Mujūn*, a term which has been only roughly defined, means jesting as opposed to seriousness, but specifically it means types of jesting depicting, without shame, debauchery, vulgarity, bad manners, and obscenity, i.e. activities that are generally socially inappropriate.⁶ *Mujūn* was particularly popular in literature in two periods: around the time of the caliphs al-Ma'mūn 190/813-218/833 and al-Mutawakkil, 232/847-247/861, and again during the Būyid period, 320/932-445-1062. In general, *mujūn* literature tends to reverse the values of the highly refined court society and includes obscenity, scatology, the representation of debauchery, licentiousness and vulgarity, and not infrequently represents the hero of a work as an anti-hero.⁷ The *Ḥikāya* frequently quotes Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, whose poetry is considered the culmination of the *mujūn* trend towards obscenity, and thereby sets the standard of vulgarity for Abū al-Qāsim.

⁶ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by H.R. Gibb (et. al.) New ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1960-), s.v. "Muḍjūn."

⁷ Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld: the Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 1:63-7. Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: the Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age*, 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 15-6.

The most unusual aspect of the *Ḥikāya*'s structure is that it parallels the construction of a *qaṣīda*, the predominant genre in Arabic poetry prior to the 20th century. An evening gathering is shown as the setting of the *Ḥikāya*, much as the desert is the setting of many *qaṣīdas*. After a critique of the setting, Abū al-Qāsim mentions his love for Baghdad, expresses his longing for her and mourns being parted from her. In essence, his relationship to Baghdad is described in a manner parallel to the poet's longing for his absent beloved in the *nasīb*, or first section of a *qaṣīda*. He promptly continues with a long section of horse poetry typical of the *raḥīl*, the second section of a *qaṣīda*. The *raḥīl* has two common variants. One depicts the poet traveling across the desert on a camel or horse to a patron's court. The other depicts animals, frequently donkeys, traveling to a water-hole. In both cases, the surrounding desert is often described. In the *Ḥikāya*, a description of the gathering follows the horse poetry. Abū al-Qāsim describes the material goods and entertainers that would be present at a gathering and recites selections of the poetry and anecdotes used as entertainment. To end this section, he states, "Bring us our breakfast, for we certainly have found fatigue in this our journey."⁸ In a *qaṣīda*, the poet reaches a patron's court. Abū al-Qāsim now participates relatively politely in the gathering and receives his reward, a meal. After the meal, he speaks well of Isfahan and entertains by alternately praising and satirizing the individuals sitting next to him. He is attracted to a singing girl but cannot have her. He becomes angry and recites *hijā'* on the attendees. They tire of him and offer him a small gift. He responds that he does not want a trifling gift and gives some examples of the excessively large gifts he would accept. He then alternates *hijā'* on the attendees

⁸ AQSH, 274.

with *fakhr*, or boasting, on his own prowess until he finally passes out, drunk. *Hijāʿ* and *fakhr* can both serve as the third section of a *qaṣīda*.

The *Ḥikāya* employs one more technique in an unusual manner. Prosification of poetry and versification of prose was an accepted artistic device in the 3rd/9th century, and became very popular in the 4th/10th century, and works explaining the technique became available in the 5th/11th century.⁹ The techniques of prosification that are described all involve changing one or a few lines of poetry into a line or even a page or so of prose. Although it appears that the structure of a *qaṣīda* has been applied to the *Ḥikāya*, a prose work, this is not a technique described in the prosification manuals published so far.

⁹ Amidu Sanni, *The Arabic Theory of Prosification and Versification: on Ḥall and Nazm in Arabic Theoretical Discourse*, Beirut Texts and Studies, Bd. 70 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 12-15.

Dating the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī*

The date the *Ḥikāya* was written is unknown. The only existing manuscript is obviously not the original copy. A note on folio 83b records the tenth of Shawwāl, 727 (Aug. 29, 1347) as the date when the copy was read, but there is no indication of when the text was originally written. The text contains the date 306, i.e. 918 or 919, in a description of Karkh at that time. This cannot be the date it was composed, since many of the individuals mentioned and the poets quoted lived many years later. The best that can be done is to estimate an approximate date from other evidence.

The elements within the text that can be dated most clearly are the names of the individuals mentioned, and the authors of the quotations that can be identified. Those whose death dates are known, and whose dates potentially bracket the date the *Ḥikāya* was written, are listed in the chart below. The largest cluster of death dates comprises individuals who died at the end of the 4th/10th century and very beginning of the 5th/11th. Because such a large concentration of these men lived in the second half of the 4th/10th century, the author must have chosen them because his audience would perceive them as contemporary figures. The text must have been written relatively close in time to the lives of this group of individuals or the immanency of humor applied to “contemporary” individuals would have been lost. Their birth and death dates in particular help determine the approximate date of composition of the *Ḥikāya*. Badīf al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī is quoted extensively, but anonymously, near the end of the *Ḥikāya*, during Abū al-Qāsim’s long boast to the attendees of the *majlis* (gathering). His birth date, 358/368, is the latest that could be identified. It is unlikely he could have

Table 1. Dating of individuals mentioned or quoted in the *Ḥikāya*

Individual	Birth date	Death date
Bishr b. Hārūn		373-3/983
Abū Sulaymān Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir b. Bahrām al-Sijistānī al-Mantiqī	319 or 20 /932	374-5/985
Ibn al-Warrāq		380-1/991
Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Faḍl b. Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Jarrāḥ, known as al-Khazzāz		381/992-1
Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās Khwārazmī	323/934-5	383/993-4
al-Muḥassin b. ʿAlī Tanūkhī	329/941	384/994
Abū ʿAbd Allah al-Marzubānī	296-7 /909-10	384/994
Abū Tammām al-Zaynabī	299-300 /912	386-7/997
Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Yūsuf b. Yaʿqūb b. Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Nasafī		388/998-9
Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad		391/1001
Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jurjānī		392/1002
Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī	358/968	398/1008
Abū al-Faḥ ʿAbd b. Muḥammad al-Bustī		400-1 /1010-1
Abū Naṣr ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad b. Nubāta	327-8/939	404-5/1014
Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī Ḥuṣrī		413/1022
Abū Ḥayyān al-Ṭawḥidī	310-20 /922-32	414/1023
Ibn Ghaylān al-Bazzāz	355/957-8	440/1048-9

achieved a reputation as an author much before age twenty, or around 388-9/989. That would set the earliest possible date for the *Ḥikāya* to have been written at around 389-90/990.

In terms of the latest date the *Ḥikāya* could have been written, the concentration of death dates in the 380s/990s and the first decade of the 5th/11th century is significant. Because there is such a concentration, it seems probable that these individuals were personally known to the author of the *Ḥikāya* and potentially to

its audience. There is only one individual with a later death date, Ibn Ghaylān al-Bazzāz, an expert in *ḥadīth*, or short anecdotes about the prophet Muḥammad, who appears as one of the men mentioned as in ecstasy over singing girls. It must be noted that his life was unusually long--he died in 440/1048-9, nearly thirty years later than the other individuals mentioned or quoted in the text. For the anecdotes in the *Ḥikāya* to have had functioned like jokes in a 20th century “roast,” the personalities and habits of many of the individuals, rather than only their works, would have had to have been known to the work’s audience. For the memory of the individuals who died around the 380s/990s to have remained relatively fresh, the *Ḥikāya* could probably not have been written after 411/1020 at the very latest. Despite Ibn Ghaylān’s death date, if the *Ḥikāya* had been written much after 411/1020, there would have been no logical reason for al-Azdī to ignore other authors with death dates later than 400/1010.

Considering the number of references in the *Ḥikāya* to specific items of daily use, and the specific places where they are said to be found, it would seem they could be used to narrow the date range established from birth and death dates above. Unfortunately, this has not proven possible. In point of fact, the *Ḥikāya* establishes what many of the daily items were. Geographical works have similar lists of daily items, but these texts are not correlated to a narrow date range.

Shortly after Abū al-Qāsim’s satirization of the guests, he compares Baghdad and Isfahan by contrasting lists of names of their respective farming districts, canals, neighborhoods, and monuments.¹⁰ The names relating to Baghdad existed before, during and after the likely date range for the *Ḥikāya* and so are not helpful in dating the

¹⁰ AQSH, 91-108.

work. Out of the parodies of Isfahani names, only the name of one farming area, Adhār,¹¹ and the name of one neighborhood, Wargān,¹² could be found in works written in the century or so after the *Ḥikāya*. There was no mention of the time period during which the names were used. There is a possibility that they are a play on place names in the Jewish dialect of Isfahan, although that could not be verified with available sources.¹³ The only use of a place name in the *Ḥikāya* that limits its date is a reference to praying in the Mosque at Barāthā.¹⁴ This Mosque is mentioned in a list of mosques in Baghdad, followed by two poems that mention praying there. Although the author of the *Ḥikāya* frequently writes looking back at the relatively recent past, he regards the Mosque of Barāthā⁷ as a currently functioning mosque. This Mosque was not used after 451/1059-60. These references indicate that the *Ḥikāya* must have been written before 451/1059-60, a date later than the period indicated by the birth and death dates discussed in the preceding paragraphs.

The remaining potential means of dating the *Ḥikāya* would be correlating the most extensive identifiable quotations against the dates of their authors and estimates of when the works from which they were excerpted were written. Among the four authors from whose works extensive quotations have been drawn, three are quoted anonymously: Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khwārazmī,¹⁵ d. 383/993, Badīʿ al-

¹¹ AQSH, 93.

¹² AQSH, 107.

¹³ Tafaddālī, Aḥmad, “Iṭṭilāʿāt-i Darbārah-yi Lahjah-yi Pīshīn-i Iṣfahān,” *Nāmāh-ʿi Mīnuvī: Majmuʿah-ʿi Sī va Hasht Guftār dar Adab va Farhang-i Irān-i bih Pās Panjāh Sāl-i Tahqīqāt va Mutālāʿāt-i Mujtaba Mīnuvī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sanāʿī, 1995?), 85-103.

¹⁴ AQSH, 106.

¹⁵ Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khwārazmī was a poet and writer who sought positions with many of the leading men of his time, usually with only temporary success. He settled in Nishapur and is perhaps best known for losing a literary competition with Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī. EI2, s.v. “al-Khwārazmī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās.”

Zamān al-Hamadhānī,¹⁶ d. 398/1008, and Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī,¹⁷ d. 414/1023. Only the fourth, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj,¹⁸ d. 391/1001, is named in connection with the quotations from his works.

One passage in the *Ḥikāya* has extensive similarities with a passage in Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khwārizmī's *Rasāʿil*.¹⁹ Approximately 40% of the passage in the *Ḥikāya* is found in the *Rasāʿil* and the whole passage is approximately two thirds as long as the passage in the *Rasāʿil*. The *Ḥikāya* must draw on the *Rasāʿil*, since it places phrases from the latter in more complex structures. For example, the *Rasāʿil* contains a list of phrases in the form “O (object) of (person): Yā ṭaylasān Ibn Ḥarb, wa ḍarṭat Wahb, yā qadaḥ al-lablāb fī kaffi al-marīd,”²⁰ (“O ṭaylasān of Ibn Ḥarb, and fart of Wahb, O cup of thick laxative in the hand of a sick person”). The same phrases appear in the *Ḥikāya*, but each is preceded by a comparative adjective: “Yā akhlāq min ṭaylasān Ibn Ḥarb, yā ashʿam ʿalā nafsi-hi min ḍarṭat Wahb, yā abghaḍ min qadaḥ al-lablāb fī kaffi al-marīd,”²¹ (“O one more tattered than the ṭaylasān of Ibn Ḥarb; O more inauspicious to his soul than Wahb’s fart; O more detestable than a cup of thick laxative in the hand of a sick person”). It is more likely that a simple phrase like “O ṭaylasān” would be inserted into a more complicated grammatical structure, such as “O one more tattered than the ṭaylasān of Ibn Ḥarb,” than that the more complex phrase would be simplified.

¹⁶ Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī was a writer known for his prose more than for his poetry. He was particularly known for his *Maqāmāt*, which were short, overtly fictional depictions of mendicants. EI2, s.v. “al-Hamadhānī, Aḥmad Badīʿ al-Zamān.”

¹⁷ Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī was an author and philosopher. He traveled in search patronage, with only temporary success. His works are important for their depiction of the activities of contemporary literary circles and for their summation of philosophical conversations. EI2, s.v. “Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī.”

¹⁸ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was a poet who found it highly profitable to write obscene poetry and produced large quantities of it. EI2, s.v. “Ibn al-Ḥadjjadj.”

¹⁹ Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khwārizmī, *Rasāʿil*, 199-202; AQSH, 342-7.

²⁰ Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khwārizmī, *Rasāʿil*, 199.

²¹ AQSH, 346.

For another example, the simple phrase “yā kūz ḥānūt ḥajjām”²² (“O jug of a cupper’s shop”) in the *Rasāʿil*, appears in a more complex, paired phrase in the *Ḥikāya*, “yā ablad min ḥaḍīḍ al-ḥammām, wa-antan min ḥānūt al-ḥajjām,” (“O stupider than the depth of the bath; and rottener than a cupper’s shop”). Therefore, the evidence points to the *Ḥikāya* being a later work that drew material from al-Khwārazmī’s *Rasāʿil*.

Not only do extensive quotations from Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī’s *Maqāmāt* appear in the *Ḥikāya*, but al-Azdī mentions in its Invocation that he has written *maqāmāt*. Al-Hamadhānī received credit for writing the first noteworthy collection of *maqāmāt*, and there is no known mention of *maqāmāt* prior to his. It is unlikely that al-Azdī could have written *maqāmāt* before those by al-Hamadhānī become known, or if he wrote prose resembling a *maqāma*, he would not have called it by that name.

Two strongly parallel sections of text are found in the *Ḥikāya* and in Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī’s *Maqāmāt*. One section is found in *al-Maqāma al-Dīnāriyya*, or the *Maqāma of the Dīnār*.²³ The variations between the two passages indicate that al-Azdī borrowed from al-Hamadhānī. The *Ḥikāya* adds to or deletes from the text found in *al-Maqāma al-Dīnāriyya* so that rhyme letters are repeated more consistently, or so that the rhythm and rhyme in the rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) becomes more consistent. For example, this is the beginning of the selection in *al-Maqāma al-Dīnāriyya*.²⁴

Yā bard al-ʿajūz, yā kurbat Tammūz, yā wasakh al-kūz, yā dirhaman lā
yājūzu, yā ḥadīth al-mughannīn, yā sanat al-būs, yā kawkab al-nuḥūs, yā
waṭʿa al-kābūs, yā tukhmat al-ruʿūs, yā Umm Ḥubayn, yā ramad al-ʿayn, yā
ghadāt al-bayn, yā firāq al-muḥibbayn (“You old woman’s cold; you
torment of July; you filth on a water bottle, you uncirculatable dirham;
you singers’ conversation; you unfortunate year; you unlucky star; you

²² Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khwārizmī, *Rasāʿil*, 200.

²³ Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī. *Maqāmāt Abī al-Faḍl Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī*, Muḥammad Abduh, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1973), 217-222.

²⁴ *Maqāmāt*, 218.

nightmare's oppression; you indigestion of the heads; you stinking lizard; you eye disease; you morning of parting; you separation of lovers!")

This is the same excerpt in the *Ḥikāya*.²⁵

Yā bard al-ʿajūz, yā kurb Tammuz, yā dirhaman lā yajūzu, yā wasakhan fī maghābin al-badīn, yā khajalat al-ʿinnīn, yā ḥadīth al-mughannīn, yā waṭʿa al-kābūs, yā tukhmat al-ruʿūs, yā ramad al-ʿayn, yā firāq al-muḥibbayn (“You old woman’s cold; you torment of July; you uncirculatable dirham; you dirt in the armpits of a fat man; you shame of the impotent one; you singers’ conversation; you nightmare’s oppression; you indigestion of the heads; you eye disease; you separation of lovers.”)

Specifically, the *Ḥikāya* expands the phrase, “yā ḥadīth al-mughannīn” to: “yā wasakhan fī maghābin al-badīn, yā khajalat al-ʿinnīn, yā ḥadīth al-mughannīn,” so that there are 3 repetitions of the rhyme “īn.” This type of process is typical of the difference between the two works.

A later part of the excerpt in the *al-Maqāma* appears as,²⁶

Yā qarārat al-makhāzī, yā bukhī al-Ahwāzī, yā fuḍūl al-Rāzī, wa-Allāh law waḍaʿta iḥdā rijlay-ka ʿalā Arwand, wa-al-ukhrā ʿalā Damawand, wa-akhadhta bi-yadi-ka qaws quzaḥa wa-nadafta al-ghaym fī jibāb al-malāʾikā mā kunta illā ḥallājan, wa-qāla al-ākhar: Yā qarrād al-qurūd, yā labūd al-yahūd (“You pit of shame; you miserliness of an Ahwāzī; you busybodiness of a man from Rayy; by God, if you were to put one foot on Arwand, and the other on Damawand, and take the rainbow in your hand and card the clouds into angels’ garments, you would (still) be nothing but a carder. Then the other said, “you monkey trainer; you Jews’ felt (hats).”

In the *Ḥikāya*,²⁷ from “wa-Allāh” through “wa-qāla al-ākhar,” which does not have the even length of phrases or the strong rhymes found in the surrounding *sqjʿ*, is left out.

This leaves a consistent series of epithets beginning with yā, with a first group of rhymes ending in -āzī and a second ending in -ūd: Yā qarār al-makhāzī, yā fuḍūl al-Rāzī, yā bukhī al-Akhwāzī, yā qarrād al-qurūd, yā labūd al-yahūd. Thus, the *sqjʿ* is

²⁵ AQSH, 379.

²⁶ *Maqāmāt*, 219-20.

²⁷ AQSH, 380.

strengthened and it can be concluded that al-Azdī borrowed from al-Hamadhānī instead of vice versa.

Another of the parallels is a poem found in the *al-Maqāma al-Sāsāniyya* with twelve lines and in the *Ḥikāya* with fourteen lines.²⁸ Nine lines, lines 1-5, 7-8, 11 and 12, of the poem in the *al-Maqāma al-Sāsāniyya* are also found in the *Ḥikāya*, although the second bayts of lines 2 and 3 have been exchanged. In the poem in the *Ḥikāya*, there are six additional lines, 6-11:

Urīdu daydāna murdī
Wa-lastu arḍā ṭafifā

Immā jawādan ʿatīqan
Yaziffu taḥtī zafifā

Aw musmiʿātin ṣawāfī
Yaqumna dūnī ṣufūfā

Urīdu khashfan rashīqan
Urīdu khaṣran naḥifā

Ka-l-badri hashshan laṭīfan
ʿAlā l-qulūbi khafifā

Urīdu ridfan thaqīlan
Urīdu ayran laṭifā

I want a *daydān*²⁹ of stew³⁰
And I will not be satisfied with just a little

Either a fine fast steed that
Speeds along under me

Or singing women of pure (beauty)
Standing in rows before me

I want an elegant young gazelle

²⁸ *Maqāmāt*, 93-4 (al-Sāsāniyya); AQSH, 274-5.

²⁹ Presumably a quantity or perhaps a dish, but the word is not identifiable.

³⁰ A combination of breadcrumbs and broth. Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librarie du Liban, 1980), s.v. "Mard."

I want a thin waist

Like the full moon, smiling, pleasant
Making the heart lighter

I want a full butt
I want a graceful penis

Poems consisting of phrases beginning with *urīdu* are not unusual. Although there is a possibility that the poems were both based on some other, earlier poem, since nine of the lines are the same, it is unlikely. The extra lines, 7 through 11 in the poem in the *Ḥikāya*, express sentiments typical for that work, but not for the *al-Maqāma al-Sāsāniyya*. In the common lines, a *ṭufaylī* asks for food and other gifts, as would be expected. However, in the additional lines, he asks for a horse, multiple women and a boy for sex, which goes far beyond an acceptable request. The excessiveness of these requests and the explicitness of the request for sex are typical of the *Ḥikāya* and indicate that it is a further development of the original poem in the *al-Maqāma al-Sāsāniyya*.

The *Maqāmāt* were most likely written between 380/990-1 and 398/1007/8³¹ and al-Hamadhānī died in 398/1008.³² Based on these dates, the *Ḥikāya* could not have been written before 379/990 at the very earliest. Since the *Maqāmāt* were written over a period of time, it is more likely that al-Azdī drew on them closer to 398/1008 than to 380/990-1.

The third of the authors frequently quoted in the *Ḥikāya* is Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. It is difficult to verify whether the quotations annotated in the *Ḥikāya* as being by him

³¹ J. Hämeen-Antilla, "Al-Hamadānī and the Early History of the *Maqāma*," in *Philosophy and Arts in the Islamic World*, U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet, ed. (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998), 88.

³² *EI2*, s.v. "al-Hamadhānī, Aḥmad Badī' al-Zamān."

appear in his *Dīwān*, which is preserved only partially, and of which only two later abridgements have been edited.³³ Equally, there is no way to verify whether all the quotations of poetry by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj have been identified. Three poems in the *Ḥikāya* are attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by the narrator,³⁴ but twenty-eight more can be confidently ascribed to him as well. Of the latter, Mez identified eight on the basis of manuscripts of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *Dīwān* which were not available to me. I have identified the remaining twenty on the basis of manuscripts of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poems accessible to me. Five of these are exactly the same in the *Ḥikāya* as in the manuscripts. Another ten have very minor changes such as variants in the prepositions that are a matter of style, or in dotting. The other five have somewhat greater changes.

One of the examples is the sixteen line poem Abū al-Qāsim recites when he first addresses the majlis to identify himself as a Shi'ite.³⁵ The same poem is found in the *Durrat al-Tāj*,³⁶ a selection of al-Ḥajjāj's poems made by al-Badī' al-Aṣṭurlābī³⁷ (d. 510/1116-17). Thirteen of the lines are common to the poem in both works. The poem in the *Durrat al-Tāj* has a final line that also refers to 'Alī as the wazir of Aḥmad, i.e.

³³ The two edited abridgements are: *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shi'r Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Nubata, compiler, Najm 'Abd Allah Muṣṭafā (Sūsā: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 2001) and the section on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in al-Tha'ālibī's *Yatīmat al-Dahr*. According to the GAL, his complete *Dīwān* exists in one manuscript held in Baghdad. Parts of his *Dīwān* exists in manuscripts in various libraries. Those available to me are: Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Dīwān* (m-y), Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 3782; Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Dīwān* (m-y), Istanbul University A3177, photo. Uppsala 4052. Those not available to me are: British Library, Mss. ADD 19913, Ref. AC 1127; British Library, Mss. OR 4591 (d-r); Göttingen Arab, 76/2 (t-i); DK adab 7342; DK adab 10446z; Taymur shi'r 606 (b); Taymur shi'r 468; Taymur shi'r 657; Baghdad Awqaf 5730 (m-y); Zāhiriyya 'amm 8563 (t-h); Vehbi 1516, foll. 51a-80b. Other works are: Asturlabī, *Durrat al-Tāj*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 5913; Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shi'r Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Nubata, compiler, Der Kongelige Bibliotek København, Codex Arabicus 260; Ibn Ḥajjāj, *Laṭā'if al-Talṭīf*, Gotha; 2235/1, 4b; anon., *Mulah min Shi'r Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, Zāhiriyya 'amm 5861.

³⁴ AQSH, 55.

³⁵ AQSH, 55.

³⁶ *Durra*, 175b-176a.

³⁷ EI2, s.v. "al-Badī' al-Aṣṭurlābī."

Muḥammad.³⁸ This line is not present in the *Ḥikāya*. Al-Badī al-Aṣṭurlābī compiled the *Durrat al-Tāj* for his own pleasure. He had no need to add a line if it had not existed in the original. On the other hand, since the poem is quoted anonymously in the *Ḥikāya*, there would have been no need to include a line that depicts ʿAlī as Muḥammad’s wazir when the point of the poem was to express Abū al-Qāsim’s devotion primarily to ʿAlī.

Anā mawlā wazīri Aḥmada yā man
Qad ḥabā mulka-hu li-khayri wazīrī

I am a follower of the wazir of Ahmad—oh (what glory to) the one
Who gave his sovereignty to the best wazir

The other example contains a change that appears to be an adaptation to the setting of the *Ḥikāya*. The second line is the same in both the *Ḥikāya* and the *Yatīmat al-Dahr fī Maḥāsīn Ahl al-Aṣr*. The first line in the latter work is:

In ʿāba Thaʿlabu³⁹ shiʿrī
Aw ʿāba khiffata rūḥī⁴⁰

If Thaʿlab finds fault with my poetry
Or with the lightness of my soul

In the *Ḥikāya*, the subject has been changed to “*mawlāya*,” (“my master.”) Changing this one word changes the setting of the poem from Thaʿlab criticizing a poem to Abū al-Qāsim interacting with the host of the gathering.

In ʿāba mawlāya qawlī
Wāʿghtābanī bi-qabīḥī⁴¹

³⁸ AQSH, 55; Durra, 176a-b.

³⁹ Thaʿlab, 200/815 or 16-291/900, a grammarian of the Kūfan School.

⁴⁰ al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat al-Dahr fī Maḥāsīn Ahl al-Aṣr*, edited by Mufīd Muḥammad Qumayḥa (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿIlmiyya, 1983), 3:37. Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Thaʿālibī, 350/429-961/1038, was a writer whose works are primarily compilations of Arabic poetry, prose, anecdotes, or philological discussions. He was a student of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khwārazmī. EI2, s.v. “al-Thaʿālibī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl.”

If my lord finds fault with what I say
And speaks much evil of me behind my back

The number of accurate quotations, and, in particular, the two-line poem in which the name Tha^llab is changed to the word *mawlāya*, are indications that these poems were altered to enhance the overarching plan of the *Ḥikāya*.

The fourth author, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, is the author most extensively quoted in the *Ḥikāya*. On that basis, he has been proposed as its real author. The quotations from al-Tawḥīdī are from two of his works: *al-Baṣāʾir wa-al-Dhakhāʾir*, and *Kitāb al-Imtāʿ wa-al-Muʿānasa*. There are eight anecdotes that appear in both *al-Baṣāʾir wa-al-Dhakhāʾir* and in the *Ḥikāya*. They have essentially the same content, but are told in different words in the two works. Thus, they appear to be funny anecdotes commonly known at the time and used independently in both works, rather than anecdotes copied directly from *al-Baṣāʾir wa-al-Dhakhāʾir*.⁴² The following anecdote is the form found in *al-Baṣāʾir wa-al-Dhakhāʾir*. “Suʿīla Mūlūn: ‘Wa-kāna ṭabbakhan min Siqilliyā wa-qad faragha min al-alwān: ilā mādhā taḥtāju?’ Qāla ilā qawm jiyāʿ.” (“Mūlūn, a Sicilian cook, was asked, when he had finished the dishes: ‘What do you need?’ He said, ‘Hungry people.’”) This is the form found in the *Ḥikāya*.⁴³ “Wa-kāna idhā faragha min al-alwān, fa-yuqālu la-hu: ‘Yā Nāranj, ilā ayyi shayʿ taḥtāju?’ Fa-yaqūlu, ilā qawm jiyāʿ.” (“When he finished the dishes and someone asked: ‘O Nāranj, What do you need?’ He would say, ‘Hungry people.’”) Although this anecdote is very simple and short, the Arabic wording of the two versions is generally different and therefore it was probably not borrowed.

⁴¹ AQSH, 57.

⁴² al-Tawḥīdī, Abū Ḥayyān ʿAlī b. Muḥammad. *al-Baṣāʾir wa-al-dhakhāʾir*. Edited by Wadād al-Qādī. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1988, pt. 2:130, anecdote 386.

⁴³ AQSH, 299

The longest excerpt is a series of boasts. The series begins with the form: I am ___; then moves on to: I do ____; then: if ___ happened to me, I would do _____. Approximately 75% of the excerpt in the *Ḥikāya* is the same as in *al-Baṣāʾir wa-al-Dhakhāʾir*. The selection in the latter⁴⁴ is more than a third again as long as the similar material in the *Ḥikāya*,⁴⁵ so the common material makes up only about 55% of it. Over a third of the common material is the exactly the same. The rest is very similar, with only minor variants. The biggest difference between common material in the two variants is the order in which the phrases appear. The *Ḥikāya* adds to or deletes from the text found in the *al-Baṣāʾir wa-al-Dhakhāʾir* so that rhyme letters are repeated, or so that the rhymed prose (*ṣajʿ*), becomes more consistent. For example, part of this excerpt from the latter work is: “Anā Hāmān, anā Firʿawn, anā ʿĀd,⁴⁶ anā al-Shayṭān al-aqlaf, anā al-dubb al-aklaf, anā al-baghl al-ḥarūn, anā al-ḥarb al-zabūn,”⁴⁷ (“I am Hāmān, I am Pharoah, I am ʿĀd, I am the uncircumcised devil, I am the bear who fights without weapons, I am the obstinate mule, I am the cruel war.”) Ideally the last word of each phrase should rhyme with the last word of at least one other consecutive phrase. There should not be any final words that do not rhyme with some other final word. In the above selection, Hāmān and Firʿawn rhyme in “n.” ʿĀd does not rhyme with anything. *Aqlaf* rhymes with *aklaf*, and *ḥarūn* rhymes with *zabūn*. In the *Ḥikāya*, the rhyme has been regularized: “Anā Firʿawn, anā Hāmān, anā Nimrūd b. Kanʿān, anā al-

⁴⁴ *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 4:157-160, anecdote 538.

⁴⁵ AQSH, 376-377.

⁴⁶ An ancient tribe mentioned frequently in the Qurʾān, which describes them as existing immediately after the time of Noah, as being haughty due to its prosperity, and as being mostly destroyed by a violent storm after failing to heed the prophet Hūd, who had been sent to them as Muḥammad was sent to the Meccans. *EI2*, s.v. “ʿĀd.”

⁴⁷ *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 4:157-160, anecdote 538.

Shayṭān al-aqlaf, anā al-dubb al-akshaf, anā al-baghl al-ḥarūn, anā al-ḥarb al-zabūn,”⁴⁸ (“I am Pharoah, I am Hāmān, I am Nimrūd b. Kanʿān, I am the uncircumcised devil, I am the bear who fights without weapons, I am the obstinate mule, I am the cruel war”). The phrase “anā Nimrūd b. Kanʿān” has been added, so there are now three words in a row that rhyme in “n,” Firʿawn, Hāmān and Kanʿān. The phrase “anā ʿĀd,” which did not rhyme with anything, has been deleted. *Aqlaf* and *akshaf*, the final words of the next two phrases, rhyme. The final words of the last two phrases also rhyme: *ḥarūn* and *zabūn*. Clearly al-Azdī has modified al-Tawḥīdī here, rather than the other way around.

There are thirty-nine quotations from the *Kitāb al-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa* in the *Ḥikāya*. All but one of the quotations are found within a twenty-page section of the *Kitāb al-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa* dealing with singing girls, their owners, their admirers, and in some cases an example of their songs. The single quotation from a different section is a short anecdote about al-Jamayz.⁴⁹ He is asked what he desires and answers that he wants fried, boiled and grilled meats.⁵⁰ Jammayz is a well known figure and the response is typical of any discussion of eating. This anecdote is as likely to be in the common repertoire as it is to have been borrowed.

Of the twenty-page section of the *Kitāb al-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa* from which most of these quotations are drawn, around 75% reappears in the *Ḥikāya*. In the *Kitāb al-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa*, thirteen anecdotes out of fifty-one are not found in the *Ḥikāya*. In the *Ḥikāya*, there is almost no unique material—only three sets of an introductory sentence

⁴⁸ AQSH, 375.

⁴⁹ Jammayz, which may have been spelled Jummayz, was a poet who died in 204 or 5/820 or 1. al-Ābī, *Nathr al-Durr*, ed. by Muḥammad ʿAlī Qurnah (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-Kitāb, 1980-), 3:252.

⁵⁰ AQSH, 276.

plus a short poem, two additional sentences and one additional paragraph. Some sequences of two or three anecdotes remain in the order in which they are found in the *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-al-Mu'ānasa*, but generally the anecdotes have been reordered. Twenty-two of the common selections consist of an introductory sentence or sentences specifying the names of a singer, her owner and a famous admirer, plus a few bayts of poetry. Seven selections consist of only the introductory sentence(s). Five selections consist only of short poems of two or three bayts. There are also four other anecdotal selections that are not simple introductions of singers. These four anecdotes will be discussed separately.

Among the material on singing girls, there is one consistent change. In the *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-al-Mu'ānasa*, many anecdotes start with “wa lā ṭarab,” because the whole section is showing the difference between appropriate and inappropriate display of enjoyment. Needless to say, these anecdotes are not the ones to emulate. In the *Ḥikāya*, the same anecdotes begin with “aw ṭarab,” because Abū al-Qāsim is describing the effects of great enjoyment. Although there are some variations between names, and some small variations in word order in the same selection in both works, a large part of the other differences appear to be errors from copying. For example, one name appears as al-Qaṣariyya⁵¹ and al-Baṣariyya.⁵² If a source manuscript for the copyist was not dotted and the handwriting had narrow loops, this would be a very possible variation. In one poem,⁵³ the variant is a single word: nihākā versus liḥākā. The letters n and l could be mistaken for each other, although h and ḥ would be a little more

⁵¹ AQSH, 249.

⁵² Abū Ḥayyān °Alī b. Muḥammad al-Tawḥīdī, *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-al-Mu'ānasa* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayyā, 1980?), 2:172.

⁵³ AQSH, 254; al-Imtā', 2:170.

difficult to mistake. In yet another poem, the variant word is: ta^ʿāwat and ta^ʿādat.⁵⁴

One detailed example with an introductory sentence and two bayts of poetry should be sufficient. The poetry is the same. In the *Kitāb al-Imtāʿ wa-al-Muʿānasa*, the introductory sentence is: “Aw ṭarab Ibn Ma^ʿrūf, Qāḍī al-Quḍāh, ʿalā ghināʿ ʿUlayya idhā rajja^ʿat laḥna-hā fī ḥalqi-hā al-ḥilw al-shajī bi-shiʿr Ibn Abī Rabīʿa” (“Or the ecstasy of Ibn Ma^ʿrūf, the Chief Judge, over the singing of ʿUlayya when she sings the poetry of Ibn Abī Rabīʿa, her melody vibrating with feeling through her sweet throat.”) In the *Ḥikāya* the same sentence appears with very minor differences as: “Aw ṭarab Qāḍī al-Quḍāh Ibn Ma^ʿrūf, ʿalā ghināʿ ʿUlayya idhā rajja^ʿat fī ḥalqi-hā al-shajī wa-ghannat” (“Or the ecstasy of the Chief Judge Ibn Ma^ʿrūf, over the singing of ʿUlayya when she sings with feeling vibrating through her throat.”)

Of the four separate anecdotes, one describes how the audience cries when the singer reaches a certain phrase.⁵⁵ This must have been a common anecdote, since few words are the same or in the same place in both anecdotes, although the story is clearly the same. The other three anecdotes are predominantly the same.

To be this close, one of the texts must have copied the other. Based on the sequencing of the selections, the *Ḥikāya* borrowed from the *Kitāb al-Imtāʿ wa-al-Muʿānasa*. As in the borrowing from al-Hamadhānī, the borrowed material has been reordered to make it more succinct. When the author of the *Ḥikāya* came to singing girls in his progress through all aspects of court life, it appears that the *Kitāb al-Imtāʿ wa-al-Muʿānasa* was a ready source for approximately the right amount of material on singing girls of the right time, from the right place. To a large extent, it supplied

⁵⁴ AQSH, 259; *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:173.

⁵⁵ AQSH, 247; *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:172.

anecdotes into which al-Azdī could insert the names of famous slave girls from Baghdad, their owners and admirers whom he wanted to depict. In addition, the anecdotes were already in appropriate groupings. Thus, the *Ḥikāya* is a later work than either *al-Basāʾir wa al-Dhakhāʾir* or the *Kitāb al-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa*. Neither of the two latter works can be dated exactly, so they do not provide a limit for the earliest possible date the *Ḥikāya* could have been written.

Authorship of the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī*

Doubts have been raised about al-Azdī's identity. He is not identified in any of the sources of his time, even though the quality of his writing is equal to that of major writers such as al-Tawḥīdī and al-Hamadhānī. Apparently out of disbelief that such a skilled writer was not noted in his time, some scholars have felt a need to identify al-Azdī with one of the major writers of the late 4th/10th or early 5th/11th century. In an alternative interpretation, the impossibility of confirming al-Azdī's existence, along with the appearance of fictional characters in the *maqāma* genre, and an expectation of fictional characters by 20th century readers deriving from the preeminence of fiction in contemporary literature, have led to a construal of al-Azdī as a fictional character.

The description of al-Azdī as “late,” just before he gives the rest of the invocation in direct speech in the first person as if he were alive, further reinforces doubts as to whether he was a real person. However, it is possible that “late” could have been added sometime after his death during the copying of a manuscript. Thus, the word “late” can not lead to any conclusion as to whether al-Azdī was real, or alive or dead when the *Ḥikāya* was written.

In response to doubts about al-Azdī's identity, Arab and Persian scholars have written critical articles investigating the “real” identity of the author of the *Ḥikāya*. Although pseudonyms were not a tradition in the classical Arab world, one justification offered in support of the use of a pseudonym is that the *Ḥikāya* is a *ḥikāya* and therefore not serious literature. The underlying assumption is that a serious author concerned for his reputation would use a pseudonym rather than his real name if he wrote a work that did not conform to the strictures of formal Arabic literature. However, neither

determining that *Ḥikāya* is a popular *ḥikāya*, nor suggesting that al-Azdī is a pseudonym, is sufficient to prove that any specific one of the suggested “real” authors wrote the work. Therefore, authorship will be discussed here, and the *Ḥikāya*’s place in Arabic literature, including whether it is *adab* literature or a popular tale, will be discussed later.

Suggestions for al-Azdī’s “real” identity have been made based on a combination of the quantity of quotations from the proposed author, and a conflation of assumptions about the author’s life based on facts in the *Ḥikāya*, and of Abū al-Qāsim’s character traits, all with those of the proposed author. The two main candidates who have been proposed for al-Azdī’s “true” identity are Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī⁵⁶ and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.⁵⁷ Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī was an outstanding and prolific writer born between 310/922 and 920/932. He spent much of his life in Baghdad, where he worked as a scribe, secretary and less successfully as a courtier. He was in Rayy from 357/968 until 360/971, employed at the court of Abū al-Faḍl b. al-ʿAmīd, at least until he died in 359/970. Al-Tawḥīdī returned to Baghdad, but later worked again in Rayy, this time for the wazir Ibn ʿAbbād from 367/977 into 370/980. He was disappointed in being employed as an amanuensis, a position he considered beneath his talents. He was employed by Ibn Saʿdān in Baghdad from 370/980 until the latter was executed in 374/984. During this period, al-Tawḥīdī was finally able to serve as a courtier and also finally received the patronage he so desired. Following Ibn Saʿdān’s death, he

⁵⁶ AQSH, 5-41; Azartāsh Azarnūsh, “Namāyishnāmah dar Yik Pardah-i Shāhkārrī ‘Nākhāndanī’, az Qarn-i Panjam-i Hijrī,” *Nashr-i Danish*, 14, no. 6 (Abān 1373), 22-30; *Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī* (Tehran: Markaz-i Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī, 1373), s.v. “Abū Muṭahhar Azdī”; Muṣṭafā Jawwād, “Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī: hal hiya li-Abī Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī,” *al-Ustādh* (Baghdad), 12:300-310.

⁵⁷ Abd al-Laṭīf al-Rāwī, “A hiya al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya am Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī,” *Majallat Maʿhad al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya*, 34, no. 1-2: 229-239.

apparently remained without a patron and eventually retired to Shiraz, where he lived in poverty and complained of his lack of friends for some twenty years. Near the end of his life he burned his works, ostensibly in reaction to the neglect he had been experiencing. He died in 414/1023.

In terms of his character traits, al-Tawḥīdī was a sharp observer, which should have ensured him patronage and a good position at court. However, he had a difficult personality which usually kept him in lower positions. He was consistently pessimistic and critical of those around him, especially his social superiors. In essence, he felt superior to the work offered him and showed it, while his employers felt he did not behave with sufficient respect. The character similarities between al-Tawḥīdī and Abū al-Qāsim are: they feel their literary skills are far superior to those of the men around them, they are highly critical of others, use obscenity heavily and display an interest, if not participation in, activities that are not entirely respectable. On that basis, it would be equally possible to argue that Abū al-Qāsim was not a character invented by al-Tawḥīdī, but instead was patterned after him. Also, al-Tawḥīdī would hardly have behaved in the rude and uncultured manner Abū al-Qāsim employs throughout the gathering.

Abū al-Qāsim's admission of longing for Baghdad from Isfahan⁵⁸ suggests that the text was written in Isfahan by a person exiled from Baghdad. The *Ḥikāya* contains many very specific references to both Baghdad and Isfahan, such as the names of districts, buildings, markets, etc. It would have been quite difficult to write such a work without extensive personal extensive knowledge of both cities. It is commonly

⁵⁸ AQSH (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 1980), 273.

suggested that al-Tawḥīdī was the “real” author because he grew up in Baghdad and worked in Isfahan and therefore would have had the requisite detailed knowledge of both cities.⁵⁹ In particular, al-Tawḥīdī lived for some years in the Baghdad neighborhood called Karkh and associated closely with musicians and singing girls.⁶⁰ Also, al-Tawḥīdī was familiar with evening gatherings--the setting of the *Ḥikāya*. Although al-Tawḥīdī had the requisite knowledge to write the text, he could hardly have been the only author with that knowledge.

Another argument for identifying the author of the *Ḥikāya* as al-Tawḥīdī is based on the assumption that Abū al-Qāsim has the same interests as the author’s. For example, al-Tawḥīdī frequently wrote about moral qualities and friendship. When moral qualities are referred to in the *Ḥikāya*, one scholar considers it evidence that al-Azdī was really al-Tawḥīdī.⁶¹ Al-Tawḥīdī was also a philosopher, and this is linked to al-Azdī through his use of al-Jāḥiẓ’s anecdote in the *Ḥikāya*’s introduction,⁶² which is labelled “philosophical.” This type of argument is so vague that it could just as well apply to any other philosopher with equal lack of credibility.⁶³

Aside from the issue of conflation of Abū al-Qāsim with a proposed “real” author, the number and length of quotations are not sufficient to prove authorship. The shorter quotations from *al-Basāʾir wa al-Dhakhāʾir* are stories in the common repertoire. The longer quotation from the same work, consisting of a series of boasts,

⁵⁹ AQSH (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 1980), 9-10.

⁶⁰ ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Rāwī, “A hiya al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya am Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī,” *Majallat Maʿhad al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya*, 34, no. 1-2: 234.

⁶¹ Muṣṭafā Jawwād, “Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī: hal hiya li-Abī Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī,” *al-Ustādh* (Baghdad), 12:301.

⁶² AQSH, 43-4.

⁶³ Azartāsh Azarnūsh, “Namāyishnāmah dar Yik Pardah-i Shāhkārī ‘Nākhāndanī’, az Qarn-i Panjam-i Hijrī,” *Nashr-i Danish*, 14, no. 6 (Abān 1373), 24.

draws on a single section, but rearranges the borrowed material into more consistent *sajʿ* with fewer extra phrases between matching rhyme words. Basically, this borrowed material serves as source material for a long list of boasts. The quotations from the *Kitāb al-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa*, consist of one story in the common repertoire, and most of a twenty-page section on singing girls. Al-Azdī worked through all the aspects of the life of a wealthy nobleman and his inner circle. When al-Azdī came to write about singing girls, the twenty-page section from the *Kitāb al-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa* provided ready made anecdotes listing the names of generally contemporary singing girls, their owners, and fans. Sometimes, al-Azdī substituted more contemporary names, or added to or removed poetry from an introductory line. Quotations of anecdotes on a specific subject found in a very small number of pages in two of al-Tawḥīdī's works are not strong evidence that he wrote the *Ḥikāya*. It is instead evidence that al-Azdī found convenient, very specific material in an outside work.

One of the most consistent factors put forth in favor of al-Tawḥīdī as the “real” al-Azdī is the resemblance of the style of the *Ḥikāya* to his style, especially in its use of colloquial Arabic and obscenity. However, the use of colloquial Arabic and obscenity was hardly limited to al-Tawḥīdī's works. These usages were particularly common at that time. The wazir al-Ṣāhib Ibn ʿAbbād (d. 385/995) actively encouraged the collection and use of everyday language and the language of dissolute characters.

The other author proposed as the “real” al-Azdī, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, worked in Baghdad as a censor and a market inspector under the Būyids. He was an excellent poet and earned a much larger income from writing and selling obscene poetry and by selling praise poems to notable figures who feared he would satirize them than he did

from his civil service position. He was an ardent Shi'ite. He died in 391/1001. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's work as a market inspector would have given him the necessary knowledge of Baghdad, but as far as is known, he did not work in Isfahan.

It can equally be argued that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is the "real" al-Azdī, based on the many anonymous quotations of his poetry found in the *Ḥikāya*.⁶⁴ Thirty-one quotations of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry are found in the *Ḥikāya* and, as far as can be verified, generally vary only in minor ways from the versions in manuscripts. Because these poems, only a few of which are explicitly attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, are so prominent, they are cited as evidence that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was the author of the *Ḥikāya*. The most significant quotation from his poems is the one Abū al-Qāsim recites when he first addresses the *majlis*, which states that he is a follower of 'Alī, i.e. a Shi'ite. The poem is significant because it helps create the impression that Abū al-Qāsim's piety is false, but it is not proof that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj wrote the *Ḥikāya*.

At the end of the *Ḥikāya*'s introduction there are some *bayts* of poetry by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj that equate obscenity with wit, thereby indicating that the rest of the work will be obscene.⁶⁵ The rest of the quotations from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj are also obscene or scatological, which is a major element of his style. This obscenity is common to both works and is another factor used to argue that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is the "real" al-Azdī, since this extreme level of obscenity is not commonly found in formal classical Arabic literature. The obscenity is important in showing the character of a sponger and the type of humor used in his entertaining. The ideal suitability of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry for

⁶⁴ 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Rāwī, "A hiya al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya am Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī," *Majallat Maḥad al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya*, 34, no. 1-2: 229-239.

⁶⁵ AQSH, 45.

this function is not equivalent to proof that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is the author of the *Ḥikāya*. Therefore, it is not logical that he wrote the *Ḥikāya*.

The same fallacious approaches described in connection with al-Tawḥīdī are used to show that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was al-Azdī. For example, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was an enthusiastic Shiʿite. When Abū al-Qāsim first addresses the *majlis*, his recitation of a Shiʿite poem by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is considered evidence that the *Ḥikāya* was written by a Shiʿite, namely the poem’s author, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. This idea that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was Shiʿite and wrote the poem is extrapolated to show he must have written the whole work.⁶⁶ Abū al-Qāsim’s qualities are again being fallaciously transferred to the author of the *Ḥikāya*.

Mez does not suggest that al-Azdī is a pseudonym for a more famous author, but it may be for an equally fallacious reason. He believed he had found a biography of al-Azdī in al-Bākharzī’s *Dumyat al-Qaṣr wa-ʿUṣra Ahl al-ʿAṣr*.⁶⁷ The name given in the biography is Abū al-Muṭahhar al-Iṣfahānī. Unfortunately, both the name and the information in the biography are too vague to provide a conclusive identification. Abū al-Muṭahhar is part of the author’s name as found in the Invocation of the *Ḥikāya*, and it is likely the work was written in Isfahan. However, these coincidences are not sufficient to prove the person in the biography is the same person as al-Azdī. There were surely many individuals named Abū al-Muṭahhar in Isfahan. The information provided in the biography does not provide any information about the man’s life. It consists of parts of two *qaṣīdas*. The first excerpt is preceded by: “Anshada-nī al-

⁶⁶ ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Rāwī, “A hiya al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya am Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī,” *Majallat Maʿhad al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya*, 34, no. 1-2: 237.

⁶⁷ Bākharzī, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan, d. 1975, *Dumyat al-Qaṣr wa-ʿAṣrat Ahl al-ʿAṣr*, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥulw, ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1969) 1:434-436.

Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Rāzī, qāla “Anshada-nī Abū al-Muṭahhar li-nafsi-hi, min *qaṣīda* fī al-Shaykh al-Imām al-Muwaffaq,” (“Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Rāzī related to me, Abū al-Muṭahhar related to me on his own behalf, from a *qaṣīda* about the Shaykh Imam al-Muwaffaq”). Presumably, a poet is praising someone who is not a poet. The *qaṣīda* itself states how great the poet’s skill is, that his greatness lends greatness to those near him, that it makes those near him believers, that his friends seek his love and presence, and that he makes his friends grow and improve. The sentiments of this *qaṣīda* are generic and could be applied to anyone. The second excerpt is introduced by: “Wa-la-hu min *qaṣīda* ukhrā,” or “and also by him from another *qaṣīda*,” and it consists of seven *bayts* which praise someone’s skill and generosity. These *bayts* are also generic.

Although both al-Tawḥīdī and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj were obviously major sources used by the author of the *Ḥikāya*, the arguments described above are entirely circumstantial and do not prove that either writer was al-Azdī. The similarities between Abū al-Qāsim and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and al-Tawḥīdī are strictly circumstantial. Although an author must know about subjects he writes on, there is no reason to assume any of his characters are created in his image. The existence of extensive quotations from their works in the *Ḥikāya* is no reason to think either of them is the work’s true author, either. Quoting from other authors, often anonymously, was a standard component of Arabic literature. More than fifty authors are quoted anonymously in the *Ḥikāya*, and three of them are quoted approximately as extensively as either al-Tawḥīdī or Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. The arguments for either of them being the “real” author are circumstantial and certainly too general to be incontrovertible proof. The fact that the same arguments can be used

in favor of either of them indicates that the arguments are not precise enough to be valid. Thus, there is no reason to think al-Azdī is not the author of the *Ḥikāya*.

Summary of the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī*

Invocation

The invocation of the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī* begins with the phrase *Bi-sm Allāh al-Raḥman al-Raḥīm*, than continues: “After thanking God and praising him appropriately, and after bestowing blessings upon our Lord Muḥammad the Prophet and his family, the late scholar Shaykh Abū al-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azdī said...”⁶⁸ The phrase ends in what should be the author’s name. The rest of the invocation is given by al-Azdī in direct speech. It presages the overarching themes and structures of the body of the text. Al-Azdī begins by summarizing the literary techniques he will use: “selections from Bedouin oratory and pre-Islamic poetry... and uncommon vocabulary and rare anecdotes of contemporaries...”⁶⁹. By mentioning these characteristics first, he privileges form and skill in manipulating literary genre above all other aspects of his work.

By specifying the particular forms of literature mentioned in the preceding paragraph, al-Azdī also signals his intended audience. Bedouin oratory and pre-Islamic poetry are the two earliest known forms of Arabic literature and as such signify identification with Arab culture and values. Uncommon vocabulary and rare anecdotes are essential components of prose literature of the Būyid period, 930-1062. A great literary fascination of the time is the vocabulary, slang and idioms of the lower classes and of the unlawful professions, and to a lesser extent, forms of spoken Arabic.⁷⁰ Despite the comparative continuity of genres and techniques in Arabic literature, for

⁶⁸ AQSH, 42.

⁶⁹ AQSH, 42.

⁷⁰ Adam Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam* (London Luzac, 1937), 236-7.

writers of the early 11th century, Bedouin literature would have been an acquired taste. Only a member of the secretarial class, well trained in all periods of Arabic literature, would be sufficiently knowledgeable to make use of characteristics of pre-Islamic literature within his own writing.

After mentioning the genres he will include, al-Azdī states that his work is “the story of a Baghdādī man.”⁷¹ For “story,” he uses the word *ḥikāya*. Although modern readers expect *ḥikāya* to mean the genre “story,” or “tale,” al-Azdī does not include it in his list of genres. This is not surprising, because the meaning of *ḥikāya* changed over time. In the 3rd/9th century, the verb *ḥakā* is recorded as meaning to imitate someone, including for satirical purposes.⁷² Even in the late 5th/10th century, *ḥikāya* referred to mimicry. It did not stabilize as the name of a genre until early in the 7th/12th century, when the word could be used to refer to any type of story. The *Ḥikāya* is not the straightforward mimicry of the 5th/10th century, but on the other hand, unlike a story, it does not have a truly narrative plot. Also, although fictional material seems to appear in classical formal Arabic literature, particularly from the 5th/10th century on, authors of formal Arabic prose literature almost never represent their work as fiction.⁷³ As will be discussed in more detail later, the use and status of fiction in classical prose Arabic literature must be considered in interpreting the meaning of *ḥikāya* and the genre of *Ḥikāya*.

⁷¹ AQSH, 42.

⁷² Stephen Leder, “Conventions of fictional narration in learned literature,” in *Story-telling in the framework of non-fictional Arabic literature*, ed. by Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 39.

⁷³ Gustave von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam: a Study in Cultural Orientation*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); H.A.R. Gibb, *Arabic Literature: an Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); A. F. L. Beeston, ed., et al., *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

After stating that his work is the story of a Baghdādī man, al-Azdī, still using direct speech, describes his Baghdādī man as someone he knows personally. He emphasizes that he has recorded the phrases and idioms the man uses. When al-Azdī says he is factually portraying the way a specific person from Baghdad speaks, he is following the traditional approach to Arabic prose literature and creating an edited selection of examples to illustrate the aspects of society he wishes to discuss. He further emphasizes his intention to depict real conditions by stating that he will use the phrases and idioms he has observed to illustrate the moral character, classes, and customs of people from Baghdad: “My mind recorded them that they may testify to the (differing) moral character of the Baghdādīs, according to their different classes, and that they may (serve as) samples of their customs.”⁷⁴ It should be noted that classes, or *ṭabaqāt*, are not equivalent to modern social classes, which are frequently defined by level of income, but instead, are more likely to be defined according to profession, chronological periods, skill level, or moral values.⁷⁵

Next, al-Azdī specifies the way he will arrange the linguistic data he has collected to depict the different classes of Baghdadis: “Thus I have arranged them in a single (harmonious) picture, within which the general type of each of them is shown and the characters comprising (their respective) type participate in the story following a single criterion, varying only according to rank and domicile.”⁷⁶ By “single (harmonious) picture, within which the general type of each of them is shown,” he

⁷⁴ AQSH, 42-3.

⁷⁵ Hilary Kilpatrick, “Criteria of Classification in the *Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shuʿarāʾ* of Muḥammad b. Sallām al-Jumaḥī (d. 232/846),” in *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union Européenne des arabisants et islamisants, Amsterdam, 1st to 7th september 1978*, ed. by Rudolph Peters, Publications of the Netherlands Institute of Archaeology and Arabic Studies in Cairo, 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 141-152.

⁷⁶ AQSH, 43.

means that he is depicting Baghdādīs as a type or character. A character means depicting a single character trait by describing all its aspects as embodied in individuals and their behavior.

Al-Azdī supports the arrangement he has just described by citing an anecdote by al-Jāḥiẓ. The anecdote both confirms al-Azdī's intention to depict Baghdādīs as a type and identifies the single criterion, language, that he will use to describe the type.⁷⁷

So I have proceeded in this as Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ said in a section of his work, “Nevertheless, we can find someone among the people who can mimic the dialect of the residents of Yemen, and do so flawlessly in their articulation, not deviating in any respect, and likewise he can imitate Maghribis, Khurasanians, Ahwazis, Sindis, and Zanjis. Yes, you will find him even more natural than they. If he imitates the speech of a stutterer, it is as if he had combined each distinctive item in the speech of every stutterer in the world into one way of speaking. (M. p. 2) If you find him imitating a blind man, he will create a picture (of the man) through (changing) the appearance of his face, eyes and limbs; among a thousand blind men you can hardly find one who combines all these peculiarities. It was as if this person had united the peculiarities distributed among them, and condensed all the inimitable characteristics of stories about blind men into one blind man. There was a person who used to stand at the Karkh Gate, in the presence of the donkey drivers, and bray. There wasn't a donkey that was sick, worn out, or overworked, which wouldn't bray (with him). One might hear a real donkey's bray and not be drawn to it or move toward it like he would be toward the voice of this mimic. It is as if he had united every sound that resembles the bray of a donkey into the bray of one donkey, and the souls of all donkeys would be soothed by hearing it. This is why the Ancients claimed that it should rather be said that “man is called a ‘small world’: a microcosm of the large world, only because he can depict with his hand every image and can imitate with his mouth every sound, and because he eats plants as do the cattle, eats meat as do the beasts of prey, eats grain as do the birds, and because in him are aspects of all the species of animals.”⁷⁸

⁷⁷ al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-al-Tabyīn*, ed. ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1985), 1:69-70; Charles Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jahiz: Translations of Selected Texts*, trans. D.M. Hawke (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) 101.

⁷⁸ *al-Bayān*, 1:69-70. Pellat, 101.

The use of the above quotation by al-Jāḥiẓ is particularly significant because he was the first author who, it can be argued, employed such types in Arabic literature⁷⁹ and has remained the best known author in this field. The type depicted in the above anecdote is the professional imitator of speech. The anecdote's emphasis on speech further supports al-Azdī's earlier statement that it is through their use of language that he intends to depict the Baghdādīs and their morals and customs. In the true tradition of depicting types, the full range of speech is imitated--both human and animal.

The invocation moves towards its end with al-Azdī's statement that his *ḥikāya* will depict a day and a night, followed by an apology to the audience in case the work does not please them. Such apologies are common in classical Arabic literature. In this case, the apology is rather oblique: "so that whoever is intent on hearing it and does not consider the length of its digressions and its details as a burden on his heart, nor consider the level of language⁸⁰ in repeating Baghdadi idioms to be a deficiency of knowledge with which I should be reproached..."⁸¹ The invocation ends with a quotation from an unspecified rhetorician: "The wit of an anecdote is in its idiomatic language; its charm is in the usage of its language; and its effectiveness is in the brevity of text..."⁸² In both quotations, the emphasis is on language. The statement clearly indicates that at least some of the humor will derive from the language used in the text.

The invocation ends with three short selections of poetry by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.⁸³

Beginning in the early 3rd/9th century, the quantity of scholarly works in the Islamic

⁷⁹ *al-Bayān*, 1:69-70. Pellat, 101.

⁸⁰ *Laḥn*. Johann Fück, *ʿArabiyya: recherches sur l'histoire de la langue et du style arabe* (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1955), 13.

⁸¹ AQSH, 44.

⁸² AQSH, 44.

⁸³ EI2, s.v. "Ibn al-Ḥadjdjādī."

empire expanded greatly, due to the incorporation of scholarly materials translated into Arabic from Greek, Persian and Hindi, among other languages, and through a steady increase in the amount of prose produced in all areas of Islamic culture, including religious, legal, philological, and historical writings. In order to reflect their overall intellectual prowess in prose literature, authors increasingly followed a section of prose with a short section of poetry emphasizing the meaning of the prose. The choice of poems by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, who is known for composing the largest body of obscene poetry in Arabic literature, in and of itself indicates that the text will use obscenity and scatology. Two *bayts* (stanzas) in particular point out that al-Azdī will violate propriety.

Lā budda an taghfula ʿan lafẓatin
Ṭarīfatin yaʿtī bi-hā sukhfī

You must ignore the strange vocabulary
Which my obscenity presents.⁸⁴

Arsaltu nafsī ʿalā sajīyati-hā
Wa-qultu mā qultu ghayra muḥtashimī

I let myself go completely
And said what I said without shame.⁸⁵

As well as describing the literary elements that will be included in the text, the Invocation also sets up two structural patterns that are repeated in other sections of the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī*. One pattern is related to the use of language. As mentioned above, al-Azdī states in the invocation that he has chosen rare vocabulary and anecdotes from contemporary literature. Repeatedly in the text, a

⁸⁴ AQSH, 44. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, in Durra, 189.

⁸⁵ AQSH, 45. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.

topic is described first by rare vocabulary used in rhetorical phrases, then by an anecdote or story on the same topic. The repetition of this pairing demonstrates it is significant. For example, in the invocation, al-Azdī explains how he has collected examples of Baghdadi speech and how he will arrange it. This is followed by the anecdote by al-Jāhīz describing imitators of Arabic dialects, blind men and donkeys. In summary, a description of certain characteristics is followed by an example of an individual with those characteristics engaged in an activity that displays them. As will be discussed later, this practice will appear in the depiction of the gathering and also in the material Abū al-Qāsim relates to the gathering. The other practice is the contrasting of high-brow and low-brow elements. For example, in the Invocation, al-Azdī mentions that he has chosen to use Bedouin oratory and pre-Islamic poetry, which are certainly elements of formal Arabic literature. He then lowers the level by saying he will arrange his material in the form of a *ḥikāya*, which at this period is not part of formal Arabic literature.

The Improvisation

(The division of the text into sections in what follows is not indicated in the manuscript, but it is introduced here to clarify the structure of the text.)

Introduction of Abū al-Qāsim

The body of the *Ḥikāya* begins with a repetition of the phrase “Bi-sm Allah al-Raḥman al-Raḥīm.” The text is narrated in the third person by an unidentified narrator, assumedly al-Azdī, since he narrates the invocation. Immediately following the *basmalah*, where an author’s name would normally appear, al-Azdī’s Baghdādī man is introduced: “This exiled man, who is known as Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-

Tamīmī al-Baghdādī...”⁸⁶ “Exiled man” appears right at the beginning, emphasizing that Abū al-Qāsim’s exile from Baghdad, his native city, is a very important aspect of his identity. In light of al-Azdī’s statement in the invocation explaining that he will include selections from pre-Islamic poetry, this mention of exile suggests a parallel between Abū al-Qāsim’s exile and a theme of pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas*. In many pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas*, the hero does not behave in an adult, responsible manner, but rather, by a series of socially illicit acts, shows that he remains outside the adult life of his tribe. Similarly, through exile, Abū al-Qāsim is separated from the life of his city, which by the early 6th/11th century has replaced the tribe as the object of protagonist’s loyalty.

The description of Abū al-Qāsim that immediately follows his name lists quite a few illicit activities that establish him as immoral and therefore outside normal society: “...(he) was an old man with a white beard gleaming in a face so red that unadulterated wine almost trickled from it ... He was a rogue, a man who does not restrain his natural desires.”⁸⁷ The phrase “face so red that unadulterated wine almost trickled from it” intimates that Abū al-Qāsim drinks, and the second phrase “a man who does not restrain his natural desires” intimates that he eats and drinks substances forbidden by Islam and engages in illicit sex. He is described not as an individual person, but as a type of moral character. In conformity with the way characters are normally depicted, the description, except for the red face, consists primarily of actions or character traits, not of the unique physical characteristics that would identify a specific person.

Following the phrases mentioned in the above paragraph is an extremely long string of descriptive attributes referring to Abū al-Qāsim. They comprise rare

⁸⁶ AQSH, 46.

⁸⁷ AQSH, 46.

vocabulary, a literary device al-Azdī specifies as one of his main compositional elements. The string begins with pairs of single words, of which one is a positive and the other a negative descriptor, such as, “a sponger and a charmer.”⁸⁸ The style of these pairs is abnormal because the paired words generally have opposite meanings, when traditionally they should be synonyms. The pairs are followed by a list of phrases that generally indicate things of minimal value, such as, “he was a note in a little box in a saddlebag in a (lonely) tower,” and “a handful of (ashes) from the palm of a stoker.”⁸⁹ The list ends by equating Abū al-Qāsim’s nature with “the characters of cross-dressers and monkey trainers, and learned in the science of great deceivers and conjurers.”⁹⁰ The former two professions are among the very lowest and the latter two are associated with the Banū Sāsān, or mendicant caste. The rare vocabulary portion of the description of Abū al-Qāsim ends with five short selections of increasingly obscene bayts of poetry, which basically state that he is a foolish old man who is dedicated to sin, particularly fornication.

In conformity with the pattern appearing in the invocation of using a section of descriptive rare vocabulary and then a section of illustrative anecdotes, the list of attributes is followed by an anecdote in which the unidentified narrator portrays Abū al-Qāsim’s customary method of entering evening gatherings. The anecdote shows him entering a gathering uninvited, pretending to be pious, and indicates that this behavior is habitual. From the beginning, Abū al-Qāsim’s position in society is unclear. The narrator points out that he wears a *ṭaylasān*, a type of headgear worn only by

⁸⁸ AQSH, 47.

⁸⁹ AQSH, 49.

⁹⁰ AQSH, 50-1.

theologians or specialists in religious law. However, no religious or legal profession would excuse Abū al-Qāsim's socially unacceptable behavior. It is not clear whether the *ṭaylasān* is part of his pretense or whether it truly denotes his profession. Despite entering the gathering without an invitation, he goes directly up to the host and says, "May God grant you long life and enhance your generosity."⁹¹ Asking God to grant long life is a normal, polite greeting, but asking God to enhance generosity is decidedly rude and is far too direct a way to request a gift, especially when Abū al-Qāsim has not yet provided any service. Next, he sits down and reads from the *Qurʾān*. He breathes unusually heavily so that his sinuses bleed as evidence of his extreme piety. He notices one of the attendees smiling, apparently realizing that he is performing. Abū al-Qāsim distracts him by accusing him of impiety, "O hard-hearted one, (how can you show) such joy after the death of the martyred Ḥusayn?"⁹² He states that his audience is engrossed in pleasure while Muḥammad's family is not safe and recites a short selection of poetry about Muḥammad's family being in danger among the Muslim populace. A basic requirement of Islam is that Muslims treat other Muslims well. By intimating that his audience, with whom he apparently is not acquainted, is not concerned with the safety of Muḥammad's family, Abū al-Qāsim raises doubts that they are good Muslims. He recites a second selection of poetry that indicates he himself is a very dedicated Shiʿite. A short paragraph of prose follows the poetry. It states clearly that Abū al-Qāsim deliberately plays on the emotions of the audience and deliberately deceives them about his piety.

⁹¹ AQSH, 53.

⁹² AQSH, 53.

In this short introduction, al-Azdī introduces conflicting evidence as to which of the social groups depicted meet or fall below social standards. This ambiguity will continue throughout the text. He establishes Abū al-Qāsim as a man who is outside the upper level of society represented by an evening gathering. By clearly showing him to be immoral, deceptive in pretending to be pious, and openly in search of gifts, al-Azdī also establishes him as outside the norms of society in general. However, one of Abū al-Qāsim's attributes is being a sponger, or *ṭufaylī*. As will be discussed shortly, a sponger's normal behavior was to enter gatherings uninvited and obtain as large a reward as possible for the entertainment he provided. Specifically, one method of obtaining entry was by reciting the *Qur'ān*,⁹³ the method used by Abū al-Qāsim. Although social stigma was attached to being a *ṭufaylī*, their specific socially unacceptable behaviors, such as attending gatherings uninvited and begging openly, were accepted because the behaviors were an integral part of the profession. Simultaneously, by raising doubts about how well his audience conforms to the mores of Islamic society, Abū al-Qāsim suggests that they too are outside society, although the extent or form of their deviation from social standards is not clear.

Introduction to the Setting of the Gathering

The next topic begins within the same prose section that ends the description of Abū al-Qāsim's entrance. It is signaled by a jarringly obscene comment from an attendee who "catches onto him and says, 'Relax, Abū al-Qāsim. There is nobody here who doesn't drink and fuck.'" Both the change of topic within a single unit of prose and the level of obscenity of the comment are unusual. Abū al-Qāsim is squatting with a

⁹³ al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Taṭfīl wa-Ḥikāyat al-Ṭufayliyyīn wa-Akhhāru-hum wa-Nawādir Kalāmi-him wa-Ash'āri-him*, (al-Najaf: al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 1966), 47-51.

piece of cloth wrapped around him as a support, a common position for men lecturing or giving judgments in mosques. He responds with a comment that categorizes the attendees as immoral and gluttonous: “Pimps, slap-takers, the children of (illicit) embraces and feather bolsters, followers of roast and fried meat, worshippers of the goblet and liter wine bottle, brothers of sandwiches and fried food, are all of them like them? Yes.”⁹⁴ The relative social position of Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees is shown as reversed. Abū al-Qāsim is represented as pious. The attendees are represented by the phrases “followers of roast and fried meat, worshippers of the goblet and liter wine bottle, brothers of sandwiches and fried food,” which form a description of parasites, or spongers.

Abū al-Qāsim bounds up out of his squat and, as is required of a parasite, begins entertaining the gathering. First, he goes up to each attendee to ask who he is and what he does. The attendees are described in terms of their professions and skills, rather than by individual characteristics. Thus, they, like Abū al-Qāsim, are described as characters. Although categorizing the attendees is part of his performance, it serves the purpose of establishing the identity of the type of men in his audience and also defines the kind of group that has the education to understand the literary techniques al-Azdī specifies he is using. In a more general sense, this is the beginning of an overall description of typical gatherings of the late 4th/10th and early 5th/11th century in Isfahan, a description that is presented in segments interspersed with *hijāʿ* on the types of entertainment that normally take place at gatherings.

⁹⁴ AQSH, 56.

The first man Abū al-Qāsim approaches is “a man of outstanding culture and refinement, a writer...”⁹⁵ A writer is expected to be expert in the use of language. Abū al-Qāsim undermines this expectation. He describes the writer with subversive phrases such as “a dung-seller whose name is nose-gay,”⁹⁶ in which a worthless object is called by a pleasant name, thereby giving the impression that the writer has poor literary skills that are falsely labeled as better than they are. Abū al-Qāsim also describes the writer as studying books, like “Delaying Knowledge,”⁹⁷ whose titles suggest their opposite--that in this case study does not produce learning. It is clear the writer is described as a type, not as an individual, because he is described only by activities refuting his education and by epithets that denigrate his worth. The section on the writer generally consists of prose followed by poetry, but again contrary to a common pattern, ends with an extra short segment of prose.

The next attendee is a secretary. He is represented as abusive to writers:

Kātibun yaṣfa`u bi l-na`
Li qafā kulli adībī

(He is) a scribe who slaps every literary person
Upside the head with a sandal⁹⁸

Another attendee points out that the secretary is an important person who is a colleague of the head of the *Dīwān*, or chancery. Abū al-Qāsim responds that this is irrelevant and equates the *Dīwān*'s worth with the value of excrement. He repeats this equation in regard to the secretary's perfume, to his ink, and to other famous civil servants' responsibilities. The secretary is described as not only antagonistic toward

⁹⁵ AQSH, 56.

⁹⁶ AQSH, 56.

⁹⁷ AQSH, 56.

⁹⁸ AQSH, 58.

literary skill, but associated with excrement, a socially unacceptable commodity handled only by the very lowest professions.

The third type described by Abū al-Qāsim is a *nadīm*, or drinking companion. A *nadīm* was expected to eat and drink with his patron, to perform small tasks such as writing letters, and, sometimes, to entertain him. Although Abū al-Qāsim mentions that the *nadīm* is a confidant of leaders, he uses the *nadīm*'s companionship duties to associate him with a socially undesirable character type, "(He is) a sponger who attends even when he is not invited."⁹⁹ Much of the rest of the section on the *nadīm* describes the qualities of a sponger, for instance, being a gourmand who knows the best foods. The poetry in this section shows a sponger's ability to find food no matter how far away it is. It also lists many gourmet foods and describes a sponger eating them. Near the end of this section, Abū al-Qāsim again summarizes the *nadīm*'s qualities: "The nature of a rooster is imprinted on him, thank God: he eats, drinks and screws."¹⁰⁰

The fourth type to be described is a *ṭanbūr*¹⁰¹ player. A particular point is made about how much this character eats and drinks, "He eats an elephant and a pachyderm, drinks (as much as) the Euphrates and the Nile!"¹⁰² Such consumption is typical of a sponger, even though there is no indication the *ṭanbūr* player invited himself to the gathering. *Ṭanbūr* players were expected to be skilled at both singing and composing songs, an ability that required linguistic and literary skills. Abū al-Qāsim denigrates

⁹⁹ AQSH, 64.

¹⁰⁰ AQSH, 65.

¹⁰¹ A stringed instrument of the lute family with a small body and a long thin neck approximately three times the length of the body. Muḥammad Maḥmūd Sāmī Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārīkh al-mūsīqā wa al-Ghinā' al-ʿArabī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣriyya, 1971), 24-6.

¹⁰² AQSH, 68.

this characteristic of the *ṭanbūr* player only in passing: “For men like the gentlemen of (our) company, only such a singer is suitable.”¹⁰³

The fifth person Abū al-Qāsim describes is a man who jokes and jests.¹⁰⁴ This profession requires substantial linguistic knowledge in order to formulate the jokes. Not far into this description, two pages of the manuscript are missing. In the text up to the two missing pages, Abū al-Qāsim does not satirize the man’s linguistic knowledge, although he does satirize him as disgusting and too low on the social scale to be considered respectable.

The text after the missing two pages satirizes someone as a sponger. It is impossible to tell whether the person satirized as a sponger is the person who jokes and jests, or whether Abū al-Qāsim is addressing another member of the gathering.

Kulla yawmin yadūru fī ʿarsati l-miṣ
Ri yashammu l-quḍūra shamma l-dhubābī

.....

Lam yurawwaʿ dūna l-dukhūli wa-lam yar
Hab ʿalā l-bābi lakzata l-bawwābī

Every day he roams the town square
Sniffing at the cooking pots as a fly does

.....

He does not stand on ceremony before entering
And at the door does not fear the doorman’s blow¹⁰⁵

The next person Abū al-Qāsim describes is the host’s steward. This is the only person who does not write or perform literature as part of his job. The attendees

¹⁰³ AQSH, 68.

¹⁰⁴ *Yamzaḥu wa yataṭayibu*.

¹⁰⁵ AQSH, 73.

specify that “he arranges for the requisite food, drink, and singing girls.”¹⁰⁶ Abū al-Qāsim recasts these qualities into their socially unacceptable equivalents. The food the steward supplies is the food of scavengers: “He whose cook is dried goat droppings, his cuisine is shit,” and his role in arranging for singing girls is that of a pimp:

Amrī ʿalā mā arā-hu qad zādā
Kuntu raqīban fa-ṣirtu qawwādā

My power over what I see has increased
I was a guardian, then I became a pimp¹⁰⁷

The final person described is a beardless youth. Abū al-Qāsim’s description of him is short. It essentially points out that he is attractive as a sex object and is dedicated to providing that service.

Abū al-Qāsim begins to sum up his assessment of the attendees with the phrase, “Among them, by God, is nothing but a fraudulent scale.”¹⁰⁸ It is clear that he does not consider any of them competent in their professions. He has barely started his summary when the host points out that Abū al-Qāsim has not described him. Abū al-Qāsim avoids responding fully to his hint. He relates only a few proverbs and anecdotes to describe the host, all of which mean that a man is known by his company. Specifically, he identifies the common characteristic of the host and the attendees as an infirmity, or a flaw.

The types Abū al-Qāsim describes are all standard members of a wealthy, probably upper class, gathering. Since the *Ḥikāya* does not specify the rank of the host or of his guests, it probably describes the court of a noble or high ranking civil servant

¹⁰⁶ AQSH, 76.

¹⁰⁷ AQSH, 77.

¹⁰⁸ AQSH, 80.

rather than that of a ruler. The types described can be divided into two groups: those employed in the government and those providing entertainment. The first category consists of the writer and the secretary. These professions required expertise in language and extensive knowledge of literary writings. Abū al-Qāsim satirizes them in terms of literary expertise, which is another reminder that literary skill is a major topic in the *Ḥikāya*. The other types, the *nadīm*, the *ṭanbūr* player, the man who jokes, the sponger(?) whose description is probably in the lacuna, the steward, and the beardless youth are treated as of lower status than the writer and secretary. Their professions are necessary to holding a successful party--a venue in which literature is often part of the entertainment. Abū al-Qāsim emphasizes their social function by satirizing all but two of them as spongers, whose primary function is to participate in parties by eating and entertaining. Of the two who are not clearly satirized as spongers, the one who jokes and jests is satirized as very low class and a musician, and the beardless boy is satirized as a prostitute. Both carry out a "social" rather than a literary function. The *nadīm* serves as a bridge between the two groups because his education must be similar to that of the writer and the secretary, although the first requirement of his job, partying with his patron, is used to place him more solidly with the second group.

The *Qaṣīda*

The *Ḥikāya* is a prose text, and as such cannot be a *qaṣīda*. However, al-Azdī mentions in his invocation that the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* genre will play a prominent role in the work. Characteristics of the *qaṣīda* play a major and atypical role in the structure of the *Ḥikāya*.

The *Nasīb*

In the *Ḥikāya*, the section similar to the *nasīb*, the first section of a *qaṣīda*, begins in the paragraph following that in which Abū al-Qāsim describes the attendees of the gathering by calling them infirm. He stares at and addresses two of them, who are noted to be friends, saying, “One is not offered food, nor victuals, nor friendliness, nor cordiality—it is all unripe fruit. Your city is cold, dry, just like death, and your characters are just the same.”¹⁰⁹ The opening features of a *qaṣīda* are subtly introduced in this short beginning. Abū al-Qāsim serves as the main character of the *qaṣīda*, who traditionally asks two friends to stop at a deserted campsite to mourn his departed beloved. The two attendees provide the two friends, and the city of Isfahan supplies an urban version of a deserted campsite. Abū al-Qāsim calls it dry, like the image of a campsite with sand blowing over it in pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas*. Without inhabitants, a deserted campsite does not have social interactions, and Abū al-Qāsim points out the Isfahanis’ failure to engage in the standard social interactions of offering food, victuals, friendliness, and cordiality. Abū al-Qāsim also lacks the solicitousness of the two friends who commiserate with the protagonist in the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda*.

¹⁰⁹ AQSH, 81.

Abū al-Qāsim begins a conversation with the audience in which he asks them whether they would like to do noble deeds. In response, an attendee asks what they should do. Abū al-Qāsim advises that they become people of quality and begins to point out what is lacking in their behavior. One of the most telling comments is made in these verses:

Qad ḍayyaʿa ʿllāhu mā jammaʿtu min adabin
Bayna l-ḥamīri wa-bayna l-shāʿi wa-l-baqarī

.....

Qawmun idhā jtamaʿū ḍajjū ka-anna-humū
Ṣakhbā l-ḍafādīʿi bayna l-māʿi wa-l-shajarī

Allah has made what I had gathered of *adab* go to waste
Among donkeys and among sheep and cows

.....

(They are) a people, who when they gather make a din as if they
Were frogs (sitting) croaking between the water and the trees¹¹⁰

The point of these lines is that, according to Abū al-Qāsim, the Isfahanis are deficient in cultured manners and linguistic and literary skills. By asking them if they want to do noble deeds, he is indicating the possibility of altering their current state to the preferred state. A transformation will have to take place if the Isfahanis are to eliminate the disparity. A process of transformation has been discussed by some modern scholars in association with pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas*. Suzanne Stetkevych in particular has suggested that the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* describes a “psycho-social rite of passage from immaturity through a solitary quest for self-knowledge to the integration

¹¹⁰ AQSH, 82-3.

of the poet into the mature, heroic warrior aristocracy of his tribe.”¹¹¹ At this point in the *Ḥikāya*, it appears that the audience is immature in respect to lingual, literary and cultural skills, and that they are on the verge of seeking a transformation to the mature state of eloquent, cultured people who can do noble deeds.

Abū al-Qāsim has indicated which of the attendees’ skills need to be improved. Next he indicates the setting in which these skills may be improved. With one comment that is particularly jarring in its obscenity, he advises the attendees, “Busy yourselves with gourmandizing, drinking alcohol, listening to chanteuses performing well, and fucking dancers and fucking female singers.”¹¹² The venue in which individuals could come closest to engaging in all these activities was the evening gathering—the setting in which the *Ḥikāya* takes place and a primary setting in which linguistic and literary skills were showcased in Abbasid society.

The last of the activities in which Abū al-Qāsim suggests the audience participate, sexual relations with female dancers and musicians, is a variety of love, a common theme of a pre-Islamic *nasīb*. In pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas*, the theme of love can be illicit. In discussions of transformation within a *qaṣīda*, illicit love is associated with the failure of the immature protagonist to fully integrate himself into society. Abū al-Qāsim expands on potential sexual partners and practices in extensive detail. Not only is the total lack of restraint that he suggests in regard to sex socially unacceptable, but the graphic nature of his statement is socially unacceptable. It is as though he plays on the illicit love for a small number of women found in some pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas*,

¹¹¹ Susanne Pinckney Stetkevych, “Stop and We Will Weep,” in *Middle Eastern Literatures and Their Times*, Joyce Moss, World Literature and Its Times, 6 (Detroit: Thompson Gale, 2004), 518; For more detail, see Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual, Myth and Poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

¹¹² AQSH, 83.

exaggerating it into unrestrained promiscuity. The result of Abū al-Qāsim's advice to engage in rampant sexual activity would be to divert the attention of both the attendees and the singing girls away from the highly regarded literary activities of composing and reciting poetry and speech to illicit love.

After his description of how to enjoy wine, women and food fully, Abū al-Qāsim teases one of the attendees, who has been sitting silently with a glazed look on his face, about his lack of reaction. A different attendee attempts to move the conversation back to a perennially neutral topic, "The weather today is nice, and the air is clear."¹¹³ Abū al-Qāsim assesses the quality of his speech accurately, "By God, we don't hear (anything) from you except trite and primitive speech."¹¹⁴ Emphasis has returned to the lack of eloquence in the attendees' speech. Abū al-Qāsim fails to develop the theme of transformation he had introduced first.

The poetry that is paired with Abū al-Qāsim's latest criticism of Isfahani speech again refers to Isfahan, where the gathering is taking place, in terms similar to those used to describe the ruined campsite of the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda*. This allows progression to another component reminiscent of the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda*.

Yā sā'ilī 'an Iṣfahāna wa-ahli-hā
Ḥakama l-zamānu bi-naḥsi-him wa-kharābi-him

O you who ask me about Isfahan and her people
Time decreed their misfortune and her ruin¹¹⁵

The deserted campsite is generally the stimulus for the pre-Islamic poet to remember his absent beloved. Within a few sentences of the above line of poetry, Abū al-Qāsim

¹¹³ AQSH, 89.

¹¹⁴ AQSH, 89-90.

¹¹⁵ AQSH, 90.

recalls his beloved. In this case, the beloved is recast from a woman to a city, “By God, I will never forget my city and her soil, nor would I be willing (to exchange) for Baghdad the garden of Paradise, even if it granted me immediately a city that is all one could hope for and desire and make one’s ultimate goal!”¹¹⁶ He continues praising the natural features of Baghdad, as a poet would normally describe the physical features of his beloved.

In pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas*, the names of other geographic features are often mentioned near the description of the deserted campsite and the introduction of the beloved. In the *Ḥikāya*, after introducing Baghdad as his beloved, Abū al-Qāsim launches into listing the farming areas, neighborhoods, canals, mosques, and shrines of Baghdad. Clinching the link between these lists and the *qaṣīda* genre, the final segment of prose in this listing shows him crying over these places as though they were deserted campsites, “What does Abū al-Qāsim possess except tears (shed) over these deserted places, like buckets of the water-carrying camels, and breaths that burn the ribs and show resignation?”¹¹⁷

Al-Azdī mentioned in the invocation that he would use Bedouin oratory in the *Ḥikāya*. Within the description of Baghdad, the main principle of Bedouin oratory, the defense of one’s tribe and the disparagement of the other tribe, emerges. In the urban setting of the Abbasid period, individuals are often loyal to cities instead of tribes.¹¹⁸ Abū al-Qāsim pairs his positive description of Baghdad with a derogatory description of Isfahan, “I do not see in your city, by God, a location like hers. Rather, I see a city off on

¹¹⁶ AQSH, 90.

¹¹⁷ AQSH, 106.

¹¹⁸ G.E. Von Grunebaum, “Aspects of Arabic Urban literature Mostly in Ninth and Tenth Centuries,” *Islamic Studies*, 8 (1969), 288.

the flanks of the earth, dry-aired, coarse-pastured...”¹¹⁹ He pairs his listing of Baghdad’s neighborhoods and other features with a similar listing of Isfahan’s neighborhoods. However, he mispronounces Isfahan’s features in a way that allows him to extract an obscene meaning from each name. He continues to alternate describing Baghdad as beautiful and at the height of its elegance and sociability, with derisive descriptions portraying Isfahan as rude, crude and impoverished.

In a *qaṣīda*, weeping over the deserted campsite and the mention of other places sometimes gives way to praise of the beloved. Similarly, the contrastive listing of places in Baghdad and Isfahan gives way to a long series of selections of poetry in which Abū al-Qāsim first expresses his longing for Baghdad then praises its beauty. The next to last selection consists of part of a *qaṣīda* that in turn contains a *raḥīl* and part of a *madiḥ*, which in this case is a description of the lush countryside sought by the poet.

These are the main *bayts* of this minimal *raḥīl*:

Wa-athnī min ʿinānī in
Qaḍā ʾllāhu wa-najjānī

Ilā arḍin janā-hā min
Janā jannati Riḍwānī

And I will turn with my reins,
If God decrees and delivers me—

To (head for) a land whose harvest is from
The fruits of the Garden of Paradise¹²⁰

These *bayts* signal the upcoming change to a long section that serves as a *raḥīl* within the *Ḥikāya*. The partial *madiḥ* that follows the minimal *raḥīl* praises a land that is the

¹¹⁹ AQSH, 90-1.

¹²⁰ From a poem Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ḥasan, the Wazir of Baghdad, d. 296/908-9. *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 3:159-161. al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi l-Wafiyāt*, Wadād al-Qādī, ed. Bibliotheca Islamica, 6p (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982), 16:648-51. The poem also appears in *Yatīma*, 141-2, with variations.

soul's desire, which allows Abū al-Qāsim to end with one more selection of poetry appropriate for a *nasīb*. Its last *bayt* in particular accentuates Baghdad's role as the beloved.

Idhā dhukarat Baghdādu nafsī taqattāʿat
Min al-wajdi aw kādat tadhūbu bi-hā wajdā

When Baghdad is mentioned, my soul is rent by grief
Or almost melts with love for her¹²¹

This mixing of *raḥīl* in the *nasīb* is another example of an atypical place to change topics. Previously, changes of topic occurred within a prose section instead of at the completion of the normal pattern of a section of prose followed by a section of poetry. Here, the new topic, the *raḥīl*, is briefly introduced even before the section of poetry ends.

The *Raḥīl*

A common form of the pre-Islamic *raḥīl* is the description of the excellent qualities of the steed, either a camel or a horse, followed by a description of the desert he traverses and what the rider may see or experience on his journey, including a description of the steed's exhaustion by the final stages of the journey. Before he begins to describe the steed, Abū al-Qāsim indicates how he will recast his *raḥīl* from the pre-Islamic experience of a desert journey to the Būyid literary environment of an evening gathering. He informs the attendees that he will tell them something new: "Truly I say, you have no noble origin among the kings, not in your public events, nor in your accoutrements, nor in your drink, nor in your food, nor in your clothing, nor in

¹²¹ Lines from a poem by Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, one of the best musicians and composers of the late 8th and early 9th centuries. *al-Aghānī*, 5:94. EI2, s.v. "Iṣḥāk b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī."

your steeds.”¹²² He is listing the types of material goods that are the outward sign of the social status and taste of the types and individuals attending the gathering. These qualities are the Būyid period’s equivalent of the pre-Islamic period’s knowledge of the desert that was a key component of an individual’s ability to succeed.

Consistent with the sequence of many pre-Islamic and later *qaṣīdas*, Abū al-Qāsim begins his *raḥīl* with steeds, “Despite all my comings and goings, I haven't seen a noble man on a smooth-running race horse, spirited, eager, noble, faster than the blink of an eye, surpassing description, his nature magnificent and his noble descent manifest.”¹²³ The nobility of the horse and the nobility of the man, or rider, are expressed as parallel qualities. When Abū al-Qāsim praises or satirizes the horses, he is also praising or satirizing their riders. For example, when he begins describing the excellent horses he does not see in Isfahan, he is making an oblique slur on the Isfahani attendees of the gathering. In the first, very short prose section, he strings together phrases describing noble horses, such as, “(It is) as if he were veiled with a star, shod with hard stone, had vied with the falcon’s stoop, were shot farther than the archers’ arrows...”¹²⁴ Abū al-Qāsim continues with a very long sequence of selections of horse poetry culled from poetry written from pre-Islamic times through the 4th/10th century. They describe the physical beauty, speed and endurance of noble horses, as in the following *bayts*:

Taṭbaʿu ṣumma l-ḥaṣā ḥawāfiru-hū
Ṭabʿa l-khawātīmi layyina l-ṭīnī

His hooves imprint hard rock

¹²² AQSH, 114.

¹²³ AQSH, 114.

¹²⁴ AQSH, 114.

(As easily as) seals imprint soft clay¹²⁵

Ḥadīdu l-qalbi wa-l-nāzi-
Ri wa-l-^ʿurqūbi wa-l-ṣalbī

Iron of heart and gaze
And hamstring and spine¹²⁶

The borrowings from older horse poetry, including that of Imru' al-Qays,¹²⁷ are additional reminders of an intentional influence of pre-Islamic poetry on the *Ḥikāya*. Also, they demonstrate Abū al-Qāsim's knowledge of a broad range of literature and of quite specialized poetry and vocabulary. In a sense, Abū al-Qāsim is providing his Isfahani audience with an example of the type of literary knowledge they should have in order to satisfy the standards he claims to espouse.

In a single section of paired prose and poetry describing a superior mule, the poetry on noble horses transitions to poetry about decrepit nags.¹²⁸

"Or (she is) a swift, fleet mule; it is as if she were stitched to a breeze, hairless tailed, full-girthed, long necked, sharp eared. Half of her belongs to the neighers and half of her belongs to the brayers. (She has) paternal uncles in the Ghāfiq (tribe) and maternal uncles in Khazraj (tribe).

Patience of the mule and strength of the horse

She speeds over the earth on a hoof
Like hard rock"

Ṣabr al-ḥimāri wa-qūwatu al-farasī

Tansābu fī l-arḍi ^ʿalā ḥāfirin
Ka-^ʿanna-hū min ḥajarin ṣaldī

¹²⁵ AQSH, 117.

¹²⁶ A variation of this *bayt* is attributed to Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī, a pre-Islamic poet famous for his horse poetry, in Ibn Qutayba, *Adab al-Kātib*, Max Grünert, ed., 115. AQSH, 118.

¹²⁷ Imru' al-Qays, d. ca. 550 C.E., was a pre-Islamic Arab poet who wrote one of the *Mu'allaqāt*, which were frequently numbered at seven and which were the most revered poems of the pre-Islamic period. EI2, s.v. "Imru' al-Qays b. Ḥudjr."

¹²⁸ From a poem by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj describing a mule. *Yatīma*, 3:115; *Durra*, 86; AQSH, 127.

The steed is no longer a horse, but half horse and half mule. No matter how superior the mule is, it is substantially inferior to the best horses.

The section on decrepit nags parallels the content of the section on noble horses. It begins with a prose section that expresses the parallel between the poor quality of the steed and the quality of the rider, "...a goat on a donkey, or a bastard on a mule, or an ape on a nag..."¹²⁹ It continues with a string of phrases describing defects of horses, such as, "He's either gaunt, like an *alif* from thinness, or like a worn out waterskin from illness."¹³⁰ Selections of poetry follow, some of which describe physical defects, as in this example,

Aʿmā, aṣammu, ḥarūnun, arjalun, dukhasun
Wāhī l-qawāʿimi, maḥṭūmu l-qarā, jaradū

(He is) blind, deaf, refractory, white socked, fat
Weak legged, sway backed, with little hair¹³¹

Others describe the horse's desire to eat, in a way reminiscent of descriptions of one type of defective men, spongers.

Yalzamu bāba l-ʿallāfi mukhtalifan
Ilay-hi wa-l-mustamīḥu yakhtalifū

He repeatedly returns to the fodder seller's door
Like a beggar asking for a gift¹³²

The description of horses ends with an extra section of prose. "Asking God for help, I wish I knew how one can compare the one who plants to the one who guards (the plants), and compare the infantryman to the cavalryman."¹³³ This is a comment on relative social status. The guard is closer to the nobility than the farmer, and the

¹²⁹ AQSH, 127.

¹³⁰ AQSH, 127-8.

¹³¹ AQSH, 129.

¹³² AQSH, 129.

¹³³ AQSH, 132.

cavalryman is of a higher social level than the infantryman. The saying links the relative status of noble horses and decrepit nags to the broader issue of nobility of character in relation to social standing.

After the description of the horse, the pre-Islamic *raḥīl* frequently continues with a description of the desert through which the horse travels. In essence, this is a description of the surroundings of the protagonist during his journey. The *Ḥikāya* takes place in an urban setting. The attendees of the gathering are not going to travel across the desert on a horse. Instead, they will “travel” through the duration of the gathering, experiencing performances demonstrating different kinds of literary skills. Thus, in the same spirit as the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda*, after the description of the horse, the *Ḥikāya* describes the surroundings of the attendees during their evening’s “travel.” The rest of the *raḥīl*, in conformance with the pattern described and first used in the Invocation, consists of two sections, one descriptive, displaying rare vocabulary, and one utilizing anecdotes.

As was mentioned above, Abū al-Qāsim begins the *raḥīl* by saying that there is no nobility in the attendees’ public events, accoutrements, drinks, food, clothing, or steeds. Once the section on the horse is finished, he works his way backward through this list, first describing the fine quality goods he does not see in Isfahan and then the low quality Isfahani goods. Abū al-Qāsim begins with the textiles used for clothing, household linens, carpets, and cushions that he does not see used by the Isfahanis. Not only are textiles part of the surroundings in a gathering, their names are specialized vocabulary that can be considered rare, just as the vocabulary describing desert fauna and flora in the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* is considered rare by the late Abbasid period. It is

also significant that clothing and household furnishings made of textiles are places where verses of poetry are written,¹³⁴ generally with perfume. Describing these items made of textiles does more than provide substantial information about the daily life of the secretarial classes. Because these items are a site for displaying literary quotations, they serve as a reminder that the main focus of the text is language and literature.

Next, Abū al-Qāsim describes the perfumes that he does not see used by the Isfahanis. It seems significant that the material with which poetry was written on household object appears right after textile furnishings, the first group of objects described. He lists all kinds of perfumes, from natural materials like sandalwood through specially compounded perfumes. These names are specialized vocabulary.

The two previous sections on high quality textiles and perfumes are paired with a single section describing the goods used by Isfahanis. Most of the section lists the low quality fabrics the Isfahanis wear. A single sentence ends the section by referring to smells, the opposite of perfumes, “(As for) the people in the bazaar, if one of their shirts were wrung, an entire jug of fat would flow out, and (likewise) the smells of bath unguents and frankincense emerging from your houses and your clothes are like the smell from bath houses, and the scents of African rue.”¹³⁵

Abū al-Qāsim moves on to describing the food set on Iraqi tables. He starts by listing simple dishes. Gradually, the dishes become tastier and more complicated until they are gourmet dishes. After describing these dishes, Abū al-Qāsim describes the dishes he sees on Isfahani tables. He lists the simplest, least appetizing foods like

¹³⁴ al-Washshāʿ, *al-Muwashshāʿ aw al-Zarf wa-al-Zurafāʿ* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965), 256-69. al-Washshāʿ, d. 325/937 C.E., was a grammarian and expert on good manners. EI2, s.v. “al-Washshāʿ.”

¹³⁵ AQSH, 150.

onions, garlic, and cucumbers first, then rather disgusting cooked dishes, “And (I see) rice, and Indian peas, and lentils, and beans, and sardines, and sea-locusts, which are (among the things) eaten by bath stokers and garbage sweepers.”¹³⁶ Nearly all of these foods are cooked in some way. Abū al-Qāsim continues with a listing of fresh fruits, dates and scented plants that he does not see in an Isfahani setting.

The transition from food to drinks and accoutrements begins with a short description by Abū al-Qāsim of the type of nicely decorated soiree room that is not found in Isfahan. The description clearly depicts drinking: “we see the full moons of cups revolving among the lightning-bolts of the wine, and the suns of the goblets.”¹³⁷ It also lists the performance of literature, beginning with the esteemed practices, “Nor do I see elegant, dapper drinking companions reciting verses to each other, relating historical anecdotes and engaging in deep discussions of the fine points of literature.” Abū al-Qāsim switches to the negative description of an Isfahani soiree room immediately thereafter, “Rather, I see a soiree room in which are the vile and the despicable, the descendents of louts, the reprehensible among the populace whose sociability is so dull they doze off, look at each other like sheep glancing sideways at each other in *azbān*(?), and debating over sects and doctrines.” Abū al-Qāsim returns to a description of low quality Isfahani beverage containers before progressing to discussing wine. “Before them are vessels of Isfahani glass, which look like donkeys’ testicles, and cups like cuppers’ cups in their round form, and containers suitable (only) for striking blows with...”¹³⁸

¹³⁶ AQSH, 168.

¹³⁷ AQSH, 175.

¹³⁸ AQSH, 176.

Consistent with the descriptions mentioned so far, Abū al-Qāsim first describes the wine the Isfahanis do not serve and then the wine they do drink. The high quality wine is described in *bayts* of typical wine poetry, such as,

Wa-rāḥin min al-shamsi makhlūqatin
Badat la-ka fī qadaḥin min nahārī

(It is a) wine created from the sun,
Which appears to you in a cup (made) of the noonday sun

Wine is a motif often included in descriptions of love. Obviously, drinking wine is an entertainment available to lovers, and there is always the excuse of loss of control due to drinking that allows that lover to approach a potential beloved. Wine is served by a cupbearer, who is sometimes treated in classical Arabic poetry as a beloved and is generally treated as a potential sexual object. At the end of the poetry about good wine, a cupbearer is mentioned.

Ka-anna-hū wa-l-ka'su fī kaffi-hī
Badru l-dujā qad qārana l-mushtarī

It is as though he, with the cup in his hand
Were the moon of darkest night in conjunction with Jupiter¹³⁹

The description of the apparently repellent wine served by the Isfahanis follows the same pattern of describing the wine and mentioning the cupbearer at the end of the description. However, the complete description of rot-gut wine is much shorter. This is an example of one *bayt*.

Idhā ṣubba muswaddatun fī l-zujāji
Fa-ka'su l-nadīmi bi-hi miḥbara

If its black liquid is poured into the bottle
The drinking companion's cup (becomes) an inkwell¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ AQSH, 179.

The description of the cupbearer is also negative.

Ka-anna-hū wa-l-ka'su fī kaffi-hī
Idhā tamashshā jamalun yasbahū

It is as though he, with the cup on his palm
When he strolls, has the gait of a walking camel¹⁴¹

Abū al-Qāsim's mention of a cupbearer leads naturally from a description of the objects found at a gathering to a description of the activities taking place at gatherings. The first type of entertainment Abū al-Qāsim describes is that provided by the kind of skilled *nadīm* represented as not found in Isfahan. As an exemplar of literary skill, he serves as "a fund of bon mots...the substance of sociability" and he "recites poetry describing a female singer, a cup, hunting, or a pleasure outing." In contrast, the unskilled Isfahani *nadīm* is "long winded, with a guttural voice, he tries over and over to pronounce speech in the best way—whether with outlandish vocabulary or by parodying (based on his knowledge of the (fine) points of grammar)."¹⁴² Again, linguistic and literary skills are key requirements for individuals expected to participate in gatherings.

The next participant described, and an important entertainer at gatherings, is the male singer. A good male singer is "one who expresses himself well in Arabic, a naturally talented poet, an ingenious person, who recites poetry and garbs it with a proper tune, and sings it to the accompaniment of a well-tuned stringed instrument."¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ al-Buḥturī, *Dīwān al-Buḥturī*, Ḥasan Kāmil al-Ṣayrafī, ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif bi-Miṣr, 1963-), 2:899; AQSH, 179. al-Buḥturī, 206/821-284/897, was a poet known for his panegyric poems and the brilliance of his poetic images. EI2, s.v. "al-Buḥturī."

¹⁴¹ AQSH, 180.

¹⁴² AQSH, 186.

¹⁴³ AQSH, 187.

The untalented Isfahani singer does not stay in the correct rhythm, is broken throated, and “screeches and brays as if he were a donkey.”¹⁴⁴

The last of the entertainers Abū al-Qāsim describes are the female singer and the slave boy. First, the ideal singer is described in great detail as beautiful, chastely veiled, a fascinating conversationalist, and a sweet-voiced singer. Abū al-Qāsim describes the physical beauty of singers, then their skills in conversation and singing. Linguistic skill is clearly considered an asset.

Tarā khadda-hā l-maṣqūla wa-l-khālu fawqa-hū
Ka-wardin ʿalay-hi ṭāqatun min banafsajī

You would think her polished cheek and the mole on it
Were a rose with a bunch of violets against it¹⁴⁵

.....

Mantiqun ṣāʿibun wa-talḥanu aḥyā
Nan wa-khayru l-ḥadīthi mā kāna laḥnā

Correct diction, though she sometimes errs in grammar
And “the best of speech is that which is incorrect”¹⁴⁶

In contrast, Abū al-Qāsim describes the Isfahani singing girls as ugly, misshapen, old, wanton, and dirty, for example, “Rather, I see a female monkey, like a broad pillow, or a ghoulish arisen from the desert, with silver hair and gold teeth, with disheveled hair like fluffy wool, a face like a dug-up corpse, and chewed up extremities that would be offensive to toothbrushes.”¹⁴⁷ The description does not describe any ability to sing or any kind of linguistic skill, but focuses mainly on physical deformity, which was important because a person’s appearance was believed to mirror his mind, and on

¹⁴⁴ AQSH, 189.

¹⁴⁵ AQSH, 195.

¹⁴⁶ AQSH, 200.

¹⁴⁷ AQSH, 200.

socially unacceptable sexual habits. The first example below illustrates the *bayts* depicting physical deformity, and the second is one of the less graphic depictions of sexual wantonness.

Wa-thadyāni ammā wāḥidun fa-ka-mawzatin
Wa-ākharu fī-hi qirbatun lil-musāfirī

And two breasts, but one is a small unripe summer round squash¹⁴⁸
And the other (would hold) a traveler's waterskin¹⁴⁹

.....

Imraʿatun bi-kussi-hā
Taghlibu alfay rajulī

A woman who, by her genitals
Conquers two thousand men¹⁵⁰

Abū al-Qāsim continues with a very similar, but much shorter, pair of descriptions of a slave boy. Slave boys are also treated as potential sexual objects. As can be seen in the following example, he is described in terms very similar to those used to describe singing girls, “His cheeks have bloomed with pomegranate blossoms, and his eyes narcissi; his mustaches are emerald, his lips coral or carnelian, his front teeth pearls, and his saliva wine. It is as if he were an engraved *dīnār*, or a mouthful of honey.”¹⁵¹ The description of Isfahani slave boys is equally negative, “He is (like) a goat, who perfumes the gathering with his body odor, (it is) as if he were a mule released from its bridle, fat and stinky, like a pile of elephant dung.”¹⁵²

At the end of the description of ugly slave boys, Abū al-Qāsim complains about how terrible it is to see ugly Isfahani slave boys instead of beautiful Iraqī slave boys. He

¹⁴⁸ A variant of a line by Ismāʿīl b. ʿAmmār. al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Shaʿb, 1969-), 10:138.

¹⁴⁹ AQSH, 208.

¹⁵⁰ AQSH, 213.

¹⁵¹ AQSH, 218.

¹⁵² AQSH, 221.

recites several selections of poetry. The first is a description of a beautiful slave to whom the poet is enslaved by love. The next selection begins with longing for the neighborhood of Karkh in Baghdad and the beautiful faces seen there. In the Abbasid period, Karkh is noted as a major entertainment district of the city. The rest of the selections in this grouping depict longing for Baghdad and the pleasure that is found in drinking with and listening to her slave girls sing. These selections of poetry are a short reprise of the material found in the *Ḥikāya*'s *nasīb*. In essence, the description of the slave boy completes the material to be included in the *raḥīl*.

In the *Ḥikāya* the content of the *raḥīl* is a description of the objects and activities generally encountered as an individual “passes through” an evening gathering, instead of the aspects of nature encountered in a pre-Islamic trip across the desert. If al-Azdī intends to continue shaping his text via the components of a *qaṣīda*, he must either move into the third and final part of a *qaṣīda*, or provide a clearly recognizable signal to his audience that he is choosing a different direction. As was mentioned above in the discussion of the Invocation, sometimes topics are described first in prose and poetry, and then illustrated in anecdotes. In this case, the reprise of material from the *nasīb* serves as an indication that the text is about to reprise the *raḥīl*, but by using anecdotes

The poetry reprising the *nasīb* ends with a description of pretty singing girls. Abū al-Qāsim accuses his audience of having no sense of entertainment, then asks, rhetorically, “Where are those pretty singing girls?” He uses his question to introduce the pleasures of anecdotes, “certainly a single exceptional anecdote from one of them on a single day would atone for what one hears from your filthy, crude singers.”¹⁵³

¹⁵³ AQSH, 227.

Abū al-Qāsim immediately begins his recital of anecdotes by speculating on what the attendees' reaction would be to such witty singing girls, "Would that I knew what you would do and how you would be enchanted if you saw an eloquent female singer whose interpretations choke one up, and whose conversation is engrossing, (who is) roguish, sportive, playful--one of the slave girls of Baghdad..."¹⁵⁴ One of the attendees asks him to tell some anecdotes and states that thereby he will become their master.

In response, Abū al-Qāsim relates a series of anecdotes about the slave girl Zād Mihr and her master, Ibn Jumhūr. Abū al-Qāsim introduces the two in a way that indicates that she is eloquent and cultured and her master is crude. "This Zād Mihr, Abū 'Alī b. Jumhūr's slave girl, was extraordinarily beautiful, excellent at singing, highly ranked among male and female companions. But this master of hers was among the most stupid and brutal of the people and continuously dispensing reproaches, causing break-ups, and displaying impertinence and peevishness." Early in the anecdote, Abū 'Alī asks Zād Mihr to sing for a friend of his, whom she does not like, and instructs her not to behave lasciviously. She refuses, on the basis of feeling unwell. The friend reiterates his request anyway and she refuses again, emphasizing her illness more emphatically. On a later day, a poor young man with no outer garment over his thin shirt enters Abū 'Alī's gathering after dinner is finished. The host goes through the motion of offering him food, but the young man declines in order to appear elegant. The wine goes to his head quickly, and he begins eating the roses set out as decorations. Zād Mihr, who is present, privately advises her master to feed him, but her master only

¹⁵⁴ AQSH, 227.

makes a perfunctory offer of food. Once the young man is completely drunk, he tells Zād Mihr he wants to sleep with her. She tells him he needs an outer garment more than a liaison. Over time, he continues sending her messages about his love. When she does not respond, he finally asks that she send her specter to satisfy him. She responds that she will visit him in person for two *dīnārs*.

Eventually Abū ʿAlī finds Zād Mihr and his wife both too demanding. He sends the former to Baṣra, the latter to Wāsiṭ, and himself goes to Baghdad, where he enjoys himself without restraint. Zād Mihr writes him to complain about being left on a ruined estate with insufficient income. She threatens to go out, sing and fornicate to earn her living. Although she threatens to outdo Abū ʿAlī in debauchery, her main complaint is his neglect. She reproaches him for his neglect of his wife, too. “You have forgotten us, and occupied yourself without us! Send your dear lady some spending money and have her brought to you from Wāsiṭ, so that she is not depressed. And prepare for me, by my life, an ʿūd with teak edging inset with ivory, and let its back be set with jewels, so that I may come sing with it.”¹⁵⁵ The contrast between Zād Mihr, the cultured, reasonably fair person of low social status, and Abū ʿAlī, the crude, self-centered person of high social status, is parallel to the contrast set up between Abū al-Qāsim, the sponger, who is skilled in culture and literature, and the inelegant attendees of the gathering.

Abū al-Qāsim follows the anecdote about Zād Mihr with several short anecdotes about buying slave girls, such as the following. “Another one said, “I was inspecting a pretty slave girl, but hesitated over buying her because of her lameness. She said, ‘If

¹⁵⁵ AQSH, 238.

you want a camel to (ride) on the pilgrimage (to Mecca), I will not be suitable for you, but if (you want) a slave girl for pleasure, lameness won't hinder you."¹⁵⁶ The socially inferior slave girl is superior from the standpoint of wit and elegance.

The next anecdote describes a willowy girl from Baghdad, from among the kings' girls, who combines cleverness with beauty and brains with eloquence.¹⁵⁷ It is meant to describe the quickness and licentiousness of the Baghdadis. The anecdote is about the progress of a love affair. The girl treats her lover haughtily until he is completely devastated. At that point, she feels sorry for him and visits him often. Although she is his lover, it is her eloquence that pleases him most. "She confides in him with her stories that delight him, and fulfill his desire, more than her staying longer and his attaining her favors."¹⁵⁸ Yet again, linguistic and literary skills are given precedence over beauty.

Abū al-Qāsim next imagines the attendees in a more prestigious and challenging social context. "What I would like to know is, given these circumstances, how you would be if you were to associate with the fashion-plates of Baghdad and its kings, and to hear the singing of their beautiful slave girls, who steal away the senses, charm the hearts, enflame the breasts, and hasten their lovers to their graves?"¹⁵⁹ He asks, for example, "What if you could see Qahwa, Ibn al-Ruṣāfi's slave girl, singing?"¹⁶⁰ In each example, Abū al-Qāsim gives a real slave girl's name, then specifies her master and a few lines of a song she sings. After the first few anecdotes, he begins to show the peculiar behavior of an obsessive fan listening to her singing. Abū al-Qāsim's

¹⁵⁶ AQSH, 240.

¹⁵⁷ AQSH, 242.

¹⁵⁸ AQSH, 242.

¹⁵⁹ AQSH, 244.

¹⁶⁰ AQSH, 244.

familiarity with the repertoire of anecdotes about singing girls demonstrates that the author of the *Ḥikāya* is well versed in contemporary anecdotal literature. In addition, the anecdotes show the power of the sung poems to affect listeners with a literary education.

Even though these anecdotes are part of formal Arabic literature, as evidenced by their appearance, frequently close to verbatim, in al-Tawḥīdī's *al-Baṣā'ir wa-al-dhakhā'ir*, they subvert social mores and status. The listeners and slave girls depicted in the anecdotes told by Abū al-Qāsim are from the uppermost echelons of society. Nevertheless, the listeners are reacting to an attractive slave girl's song, frequently in an over-emotional and quite undignified manner. Those who should be role models for ideal social behavior in terms of culture, language and literature are not, whereas in other anecdotes, individuals of lower social status, like the slave girl Zād Mihr, point out appropriate behavior. Frequently, when there are more details about the fan than his name, the lyrics of the song are relevant to the way the fan is behaving. For example, in one anecdote when Khāwab sings of destroyed reason, her fan rolls around on the ground like a madman.

“Or if you could see Khāwab, Abū Ayyūb al-Qaṭṭān's slave girl, when she held a party, and raised her voice, then sang,

Fa-yā la-ki naẓratan awdat bi-ʿaqlī
Wa-ghādara saḥmu-hā minnī jarīhā

.....

O what a glance you are! One that has destroyed
My reason and whose arrow has left me wounded

.....

Then you could see Abū ʿAbd Allah al-Marzubānī,¹⁶¹ who, having heard this singing, rolled on the ground, agitated, frothing, bellowing, thrashing, biting his fingers, kicking with his feet, and slapping his face a thousand times an hour; he came out looking in the story as if he were ʿAbd al-Razzāq, the madman at Bāb al-Ṭāq...¹⁶²

The last anecdote in the *raḥīl* is a description of a group of famous poets from around the time the *Ḥikāya* was written, enjoying a picnic near Wāsiṭ. It shows them drinking, listening to singing girls and, finally, reciting poetry. Their poetry consistently expresses desire for Baghdad.

Yā sufna Baghdāda rūḥī jidda ʿālimatin
Bi-anna qalbiya fī-ki l-yawma qad rāḥā

Yā sufna mā ḍarra fī-ki l-muṣʿidīna wa-qad
Maddū-ki law jaʿalūnī fī-ka mallāḥā?

Taḥdūki min nafasī rīḥun musāʿadatan
Maʿa l-ḥabāʿibi aʿmsāʿan wa-aṣbāḥā

O ships of Baghdad, go briskly, knowing well
That today my heart, has gone with you

O ships, what harm would it have done those traveling up(stream) on you
Having stocked you up, if they had made me a sailor on you?

With a wind from my sighs, that drives you along upstream
With those I love, evenings and mornings¹⁶³

At the end of the anecdote, Abū al-Qāsim relates the longing for Baghdad to his own desires, ““This, by God, is a desire from Wāsiṭ for Baghdad, then how (much desire) from Isfahan for Baghdad?” He also indicates that he has reached the end of the *raḥīl*,

¹⁶¹ al-Marzubānī, 297/910-394/994, was a Shiʿite theologian and a prolific *adab* author who wrote on traditions, collected poetry and wrote biographies of poets. EI2, s.v. “al-Marzubānī.” al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, Bayard Dodge, editor and translator (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 288-95; Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, 67.

¹⁶² AQSH, 245-6.

¹⁶³ AQSH, 270-1.

by saying to his host, “You have given us a headache! Bring us our breakfast, for we certainly have found fatigue in this our journey.”¹⁶⁴ He expresses his exhaustion over his “journey” through the gathering and asks for a reward, breakfast, for completing the journey.

In summary, the part of the *Ḥikāya* that is shaped by components of a *raḥīl* begins with Abū al-Qāsim’s complaint that he does not see any nobility among the nobles, horses and household goods associated with his audience of Isfahanis. He goes on to describe the noble and then the ignoble forms of horses, household textile furnishings, perfumes, food, the room in which gatherings are held, wine, cupbearers and singing girls, which are respectively the items not found and found in Isfahan. These descriptions are one type of literature performed at gatherings. Following the descriptions of material goods, Abū al-Qāsim quotes some selections of poetry that reprise the closing sentiments of a *nasīb*. He then works his way through a variety of types of anecdotes about singing girls: a long anecdote about a real singing girl named Zād Mihr, anecdotes about the banter between potential buyers and slave girls at the slave market, an anecdote about a slave girl who treats her lover haughtily and then makes it up to him, and finally a long string of anecdotes in which a devoted fan reacts excessively when his favorite singing girls sings. Anecdotes are another type of literature performed at gatherings. The section ends when Abū al-Qāsim asks for breakfast as his reward.

¹⁶⁴ AQSH, 274.

The Final Section: *Madīḥ*, *Hijā'* and *Fakhr*

The theme of the third section of a *qaṣīda* can vary considerably. However, the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* frequently employed one of three options: *madīḥ*, *hijā'* or *fakhr*. The third section may also show the protagonist reaching the destination suggested in earlier sections. The *Ḥikāya* uses both techniques. Abū al-Qāsim's comment, "Bring us our breakfast, for we certainly have found fatigue in this our journey,"¹⁶⁵ begins the final section of the *qaṣīda* as well as ends the *raḥīl*. As will be seen, the third section has two parts, each of which provides a resolution to a different aspect of the earlier two sections. The first part of the third section resolves the progress of the Isfahani attendees towards participating in a gathering. The second part clarifies Abū al-Qāsim's social acceptability in relation to the attendees. Unlike most *qaṣīdas*, the third section of the *Ḥikāya* contains all three options for a third section mentioned above.

The first part of the third section begins with the host asking Abū al-Qāsim what he would like for breakfast. In a poem, Abū al-Qāsim specifies a variety of foods, water, alms, a steed, singing girls in a row, a young "gazelle," which is clearly a reference to a young sexual partner, and clothing. This list of desired objects is similar to the list of objects Abū al-Qāsim discussed in the *raḥīl*: food, drink, steeds, public events, accoutrements, and clothing. In fact, he is leading into a series of depictions of different aspects of gatherings from yet another standpoint. In earlier depictions, although he is present at a gathering, Abū al-Qāsim interacts minimally with its attendees. Once in a while he asks if they want him to talk about a specific topic and once in a while they ask him to expand on what he has just said.

¹⁶⁵ AQSH, 274.

In the first part of the third section, a gathering is progressing successfully. Abū al-Qāsim behaves politely and interacts reasonably pleasantly with the other attendees of the gathering, as though he were one of them. After he makes his excessive requests for food and other gifts, he converses with the attendees about food. When the attendees indicate that providing these foods is too difficult, he suggests locally produced cheese and pickles. Having received them, he complains about them in quite mild terms and “tells stories and jokes about the two of them for an hour.”¹⁶⁶ He continues to point out that he would like a full meal.

Daʿwatun yantasibu l-qaḥ
Tu ilay-hā wa-l-muḥūlū

An invitation (to dinner) that one could dub:
Famine and barrenness¹⁶⁷

Refraining from more demands for the best food, Abū al-Qāsim continues to entertain the gathering and interact with attendees. He asks for a chessboard and an opponent. The attendees show reluctance to play, but after further urging by Abū al-Qāsim, one of them agrees to play. For each move, Abū al-Qāsim makes a quip or recites a poem. Many of his comments continue to be either derogatory sexual references or scatological. The match ends with Abū al-Qāsim’s opponent overturning the chess board before either player wins.

As soon as the match ends, Abū al-Qāsim returns to the subject of food, “Are we fasting today?”¹⁶⁸ The meal is brought out. Abū al-Qāsim displays one of a sponger’s primary roles: the evaluation and criticism of food. Since spongers were so concerned

¹⁶⁶ AQSH, 278.

¹⁶⁷ AQSH, 278.

¹⁶⁸ AQSH, 292.

with obtaining the best foods in large quantities, they were often gourmets. Abū al-Qāsim overturns one dish that apparently does not meet his standards, but praises another. “This, by God, is a beautiful thing; this, by God, is real hospitality; it is as if it were, by God, a palm spadex layered in rows; as if it were embroidered brocade; as if it were a field of carnations; as if it were spring flowers, or the ornamentation of a finely woven rug; as if it were, by God, meadow flowers.”¹⁶⁹ Each time a dish is brought to the table, he praises its quality. If the taste is not satisfactory, he criticizes it. He also urges the attendees to eat, and comments on the polite method of eating certain foods. He justifies his own gluttony by linking it to the quality of the specific dish he wolfs down. He fulfills the social role of commenting on the food and goes so far as to point out to the other attendees that they are not participating satisfactorily, “Yes, what are you all doing? You are chomping with (your) canine teeth, indeed, you are too busy (gobbling down the food) to take time to describe it eloquently.”¹⁷⁰

Abū al-Qāsim expands the conversation from the meal in progress to food in general. He describes an exceptional cook, his skills and the principles on which he bases his choice of menu. He then asks the attendees why they do not make similar eloquent comments and answers his own question by saying that they are too busy gobbling down food.

Abū al-Qāsim goes beyond simply socializing with the attendees and reverses his earlier praise of Baghdad and disparagement of Isfahan. He asks for water, drinks it, and praises the water, “...May God make Isfahan thrive! Its water is sweet water, and its

¹⁶⁹ AQSH, 292.

¹⁷⁰ AQSH, 300.

ice is cool crystal; (and) then, by God, there are its two vessels and its abodes.”¹⁷¹ Two men from Baghdad are mentioned in the conversation at the table. Abū al-Qāsim is asked about one of them and praises him. He is then asked about the difference between the two men. He describes them as opposites, one excellent and the other vile, much as he had compared Baghdad and Isfahan earlier. Abū al-Qāsim resumes praising the rest of the dinner, including desert, fruit, and wine.

At this point, one of the attendees points out the reversal of Abū al-Qāsim's attitude, “...all you used to do was find fault with the people of Isfahan!” Abū al-Qāsim tries to brush off the comment, “O our lord, (these are) camels that have passed by, whose loads are negligence...”¹⁷² He follows up with excerpts from poems that describe Baghdad as an unpleasant place with fleas, gnats, and an unpleasant climate.

Another attendee asks Abū al-Qāsim what he knows about swimming, thereby prompting him to list the swimming strokes he knows. Another attendee asks him about sailors and their lingo. These are requests that give Abū al-Qāsim a chance to display his knowledge of rare, specialized vocabulary and of specialized professions. He lists types of boats, describes the deck of a boat, the objects found on it, and a pilot guiding a boat. Abū al-Qāsim's final statement emphasizes that the point of performing these orations has been their language, “If you were to see these situations, then you would be aware that sailors too have expressions that are not to be sneezed at, even if they aren't of the top ilk.”¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ AQSH, 300.

¹⁷² AQSH, 308.

¹⁷³ AQSH, 322.

The above part of the third section depicts Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees of the gathering interacting in a relatively pleasant way. It is the final portion of a series of descriptions of gatherings. The series starts with 1) the derogatory description of some attendees of the gathering according to their professions and skills, 2) the paired positive and negative descriptions of horses, plus the material objects and performers at a gathering, which are really examples of the types of literary quotations an attendee should know, 3) the different types of anecdotes, mostly about singing girls, that an attendee should know, and 4) the description of Abū al-Qāsim interacting with the attendees instead of instructing them. The series forms a progression that shows individuals whose skill is not sufficient for them to participate in gatherings, then provides them with examples of literary quotations illustrating rare vocabulary and general linguistic and literary knowledge, and with examples of anecdotes, which demonstrate the skills they should have; finally, the interaction with Abū al-Qāsim demonstrates how to apply the knowledge appropriately in a social setting. In essence, this series demonstrates appropriate literary knowledge for any individual attending an evening gathering.

The completion of the progression just described is not the end of the *Ḥikāya*. An attendee asks Abū al-Qāsim a personal, inappropriate question: where his residence in Baghdad is located. The latter responds that it is located in Jeweler's Lane and also points out that the question is inappropriate, "This is ill-manners and prying!"¹⁷⁴ The exchange shifts the focus of the text from appropriate behavior at a gathering back to

¹⁷⁴ AQSH, 322.

Abū al-Qāsim and his social status. His description of his house indicates his low social status.

Fa-mā aliftu l-shuṭūṭa illā
Li-anna ma'wā l-kharā l-shuṭūṭū

I only feel at home at the bank
Because the bank is the abode of shit

and

Bi-baytin qirā ḍifāni-hā kulla laylatin
Baghīyun wa-khinzīrun wa-khamrun wa-maysirū

...In a house whose entertainment for its guests every night
Is a whore, and a pig, and wine, and an arrow game¹⁷⁵

Abū al-Qāsim resumes praising aspects of Isfahan, specifically its wine.

However, his praise soon wanders from wine as proof of Isfahan's splendor to the excellent effects of wine on the body, and then to his fondness for it,

Kam aradtu 'l-tuqā fa-mā tarakat-nī
Khandarīsun yudīru-hā ṭāwūsū

How much did I want to be pious, but old wine
Which the peacock passes around, would not forsake me¹⁷⁶

He drinks several goblets, after which his behavior becomes even more erratic.

He recites a series of excerpts of poetry intended to indicate his devotion to the host, although many of the excerpts are in dubious taste due to derogatory sexual references. Noticing an attendee who does not have a good opinion of the host, he reveals his true feelings to him, "He says to (the other) privately, "O our lord, who is that? He is nothing but a plague in the respiratory system..."¹⁷⁷ Although Abū al-Qāsim

¹⁷⁵ AQSH, 322.

¹⁷⁶ AQSH, 325.

¹⁷⁷ AQSH, 326.

has been praising the host and Isfahan, he clearly is not sincere. He returns to praising the host and also praises the other attendees, but again reveals his real feelings confidentially,

Ḥasaltu min-hum fī sharri ṭāʾifatin
Athkalanī-him rabbu l-samāwātī

With them I have ended up with the worst (possible) group
May the Lord of the Heavens deprive me of them (through their deaths)¹⁷⁸

The host reminds Abū al-Qāsim about his earlier praise of Baghdad. In response, Abū al-Qāsim describes Baghdad as a miserable, disagreeable place to live. He then begins to converse with the attendees seated at his right and left. He pays some attention to the guest on the right and praises him profusely, then turns to the guest on his left and criticizes him harshly. Abū al-Qāsim repeats the process three times. Since there is no apparent difference between the guests, it would appear that this is an exercise in contrasting *madīḥ* and *hijāʾ*.

Abū al-Qāsim ceases his conversation with his neighbors when the singer finishes singing. He then praises the *ṭanbūr* player, the lute player and the singer. He breaks off his praise to say the gathering will continue in the morning and to instruct the servants on how to serve the morning beverage, but then wanders back to the musicians. He approaches a female singer, reciting poetry to her. He encounters first one and then a second guardian protecting her. He satirizes the second one briefly. When it becomes clear he will not be able to approach her, he recites a long section of *hijāʾ* in poetry, prose and then more poetry. His comments are quite vituperative. He ends by calling them praise,

¹⁷⁸ AQSH, 328.

Hādhā thanāʾī wa-thanāʾu l-warā
 ʿAlay-ka yā nuṭfata qurnānī

This my praise and the praise of mankind (for you)
 Are, O drop of sperm, two horns on you(r head)¹⁷⁹

One of the attendees laughs at him, so Abū al-Qāsim addresses his *hijāʾ* to that man. The attendees begin to ask each other how they can get rid of him and decide to serve him wine until he passes out. He gets drunker and approaches individual after individual to revile them with *hijāʾ*. Even though he almost passes out, he manages to address his offensive remarks to most attendees. He eventually recites excerpts from poems that appear to request help from the sultan.

Finally, although Abū al-Qāsim seems to pass out, he still manages to recite poetry as though he were seducing the singing girl he had been eyeing earlier. She spends a little time with him, but not enough for him to seduce her. One of the attendees asks him whether he would like a gift from among the small articles on the table. Abū al-Qāsim declines and instead asks for larger items, such as money, a horse, hawk or clothing. He is distracted from potential gifts by the Daylamī youth, with whom he flirts for some time. It becomes apparent that the youth is not going to submit to Abū al-Qāsim.

Abū al-Qāsim sings, dances, and has the attendees form a circle so they can pass a goblet of wine around. He dances again until he is worn out. The singer is disgusted with him and asks, “Who is this plague with whom you have afflicted us tonight?”¹⁸⁰ Abū al-Qāsim responds with more *hijāʾ* against him. He then switches to *fakhr*, or boasting, about his own strengths. He ends his *fakhr* by asking a man whether he now

¹⁷⁹ AQSH, 349.

¹⁸⁰ AQSH, 349.

knows him. He does not give the man a chance to respond, but returns to spouting *hijā'*. He eventually drifts off towards sleep again, but manages to recite a little more poetry intended to attract the Daylamī youth. He soon falls asleep completely, but is the first person at the gathering to awake in the morning. He immediately speaks about God, as though demonstrating his faith. Another attendee calls his bluff by repeating the accusation Abū al-Qāsim had levied against the attendees the night before, “Woe to you, (do you indulge in) all this revelry after the killing of the slaughtered Ḥusayn, peace be upon him and upon his illustrious forefathers?!¹⁸¹” Abū al-Qāsim is described by an anonymous narrator as repeating the same *bayts* of poetry with which he introduced himself at the beginning of the *Ḥikāya*, and then puts on his *ṭaylasān* and leaves.

The second part of the third section of the *Ḥikāya* depicts Abū al-Qāsim returning to his original, idiosyncratic behavior. Instead of interacting politely with the attendees, he gets increasingly drunk, shows that his praise for Isfahan and the host is false, attempts to flirt with a singing girl and then a Daylamī youth, sings and dances. He displays his literary skill in reciting *madīḥ*, *hijā'* and *fakhr*, as though the display makes him superior to the attendees.

His final performance brings an end to a second theme of the *Ḥikāya*, in which individuals of a lower social status are consistently represented as more eloquent than those with a higher social status. In order to understand Abū al-Qāsim's performance, the attendees must be well educated, competent in eloquence and manners and most of them from a high social class. However, they are depicted exclusively through Abū al-

¹⁸¹ AQSH, 390.

Qāsim's narrative, which means that only his subjective evaluation of their abilities is shown. For the purposes of his narrative, which will be discussed below, Abū al-Qāsim inverts social order throughout the text. Between the invocation and the section resembling a *nasīb*, where both Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees are introduced, he depicts the attendees as spongers and as failing to achieve the eloquence their professions require. He demonstrates his own skillful eloquence in the process. In the *nasīb*, Abū al-Qāsim claims that the Isfahanis are, like animals, incapable of eloquence. He goes on to criticize Isfahan viciously. The lack of verbal response on their part in essence proves his allegation. In the *raḥīl*, Abū al-Qāsim demonstrates his knowledge of literature and how to perform it, by describing noble and substandard steeds, clothing, food, drink, furnishings, and entertainment, with no response from the attendees. He demonstrates his superiority through his eloquence, and his eloquence prevails over his social inferiority. He then relates anecdotes about singing girls, in which the girls demonstrate their superiority over their masters and social superiors through their eloquence. In the second part of the third section of the text, Abū al-Qāsim continues his solo performance of literature while he drinks, dances and flirts with the entertainers. Due to his eloquence, he is shown as a dominant factor at the gathering, despite the desire of the attendees to get rid of him. They are unable to vanquish him by their own speech, or by that of other entertainers, but instead have to silence his voice by getting him so drunk he passes out.

The *Ḥikāya* ends with a final paragraph in the third person by an unspecified narrator. It states that the work is about Abū al-Qāsim and how he was a disgrace who

had both good and bad qualities. It states that he combines flippancy and seriousness and represents the morals of the people of Baghdad.

The *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī* in Arabic Literature

Adab Literature or Popular Tale?

The *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī* has characteristics in common with several types of formal classical Arabic literature. No single type is dominant. Since the late 4th/10th through the early 5th/11th centuries were a time of comparatively rapid development in Arabic prose literature, it is important to determine as specifically as possible how the *Ḥikāya* is related to those types of literature with which it shares characteristics.

Setting the *Ḥikāya* within a gathering of members of the secretarial class, the satirization of representatives of educated professions, and the emphasis on eloquence suggest that the work is part of *adab* literature. At the same time, the *Ḥikāya*'s continuous narrative and obviously fictional elements suggest it has a connection to popular tales. In terms of literary status, *adab* literature and popular tales were at opposing ends of a scale. *Adab* literature was a formal, court literature that could only be fully appreciated and understood by individuals with an extensive education. Popular tales were enjoyed by all classes of individuals, but were considered suitable only for women, children and the uneducated. Determining to which of the two categories the *Ḥikāya* belongs will identify its intended audience and begin to clarify how the work fits within literary developments of its time.

The word “*adab*” was applied in different ways over several centuries. This resulted in ambiguity as to its exact meaning. Each new application retained some, but not all, elements of the earlier meanings. Simultaneously, each specific usage of “*adab*” might emphasize only one out of all the pre-existing elements of meaning. These two

facets result in ambiguity in both the overall meaning of the word and its meaning per specific usage, making the concept difficult to define clearly at a remove of around a thousand years.

Prior to the 2nd/8th century, the term “*adab*” appeared in contexts where it meant a good upbringing or a good education. It could also mean social graces and ethical virtues. Early in the 2nd/8th century, *adab* appeared in the meaning of literary skill. Following the move of the capital of the Islamic empire from predominantly Arab Damascus to predominantly Persian Baghdad after 145/762, its meaning and application increasingly echoed developments in Arabic literature and culture. The move of the capital, and the end of the deliberate discrimination against non-Arabs under Umayyad rule, generated a need for documentation of the existing forms of Arabic language and literature both for use in teaching and to preserve Arab culture. Understanding the Qurʾān required an excellent knowledge of the form of Arabic spoken by Bedouins in the pre-Islamic period. However, the spoken Arabic of the Abbasid empire had changed to reflect urban society, with the result that, without structured study, even native speakers of Arabic no longer fully understood earlier forms of the language. Non-Arabs wanted to study Arabic language and literature in order to be upwardly mobile. A process of collecting, recording and analyzing as many examples of Arabic language and literature as possible continued into the early years of the 3rd/9th century.

Translation and the incorporation of the intellectual heritage of other cultures into Arabic literature were encouraged during the Abbasid period. In the early 3rd/9th century, the caliph founded the Bayt al-Ḥikma, or House of Knowledge, where scholarly

materials in Greek, Persian and Hindi, among other languages, were deliberately translated into Arabic. The new information thus garnered was gradually incorporated into Arabic scholarship and literature. Through the 3rd/9th century, there was an increase in the amount of prose written in all areas of Islamic culture, including religion, law, philology, and history. The need to convey this new information and its new concepts resulted in an extensive development of specialized Arabic vocabulary and a much greater flexibility in Arabic usage to express fine shades of meanings and detailed analysis of concepts. The proliferation of knowledge and increased sophistication of the style of written Arabic required writers to be familiar with more and more information, including grammar, rhetorical constructs, archaic and modern poems and prose, the *Qurʾān*, *ḥadīth*, histories, biographical information, anecdotes, and aphorisms and proverbs of the Arabs and non-Arabs. As more types of information were included in Arab prose literature, there was more of a tendency for a section of prose to be followed by a short section of poetry emphasizing the meaning of the prose.

As the knowledge and literary skills expected of an educated individual increased, *adab* increasingly referred to literary as well as social elegance.¹⁸² Nallino suggests that *adab* refers to the combination of literary erudition and social graces that developed in reaction to the demands of a highly civilized society. Under literary erudition, Nallino includes all literary compositions of style and distinction and all non-religious knowledge, including proverbs, histories, anecdotes, tales, and verses.¹⁸³ By

¹⁸² S.A. Bonebakker, "Adab and the Concept of *Belles-Lettres*," in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, ed. by Julia Ashtiany et al., *The Cambridge history of Arabic literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 19-22.

¹⁸³ Carlo Alfonso Nallino, *La littérature arabe des origines à l'époque de la dynastie umayyade*, 20-1.

the 3rd/9th century, *adab* literature was a very broad category within classical Arabic prose literature.

Although there is generally consensus about which works of literature qualify as *adab* literature, as Fedwa Malti-Douglas notes, the content of *adab* works has not been defined.¹⁸⁴ The structure of *adab* works has not been defined, either. Bonebakker describes *adab* as “the literary scholarship of a cultivated man,” a definition neither sufficiently conclusive nor sufficiently tangible. He specifies that *adab* literature frequently consists of miscellanies or encyclopedic works, and is didactic in scope, and that *adab* works can be monographs or anthologies, entertaining or serious and intellectually demanding, or factual or fictional.¹⁸⁵ In an article examining the difference between *adab* and popular tales, Joseph Sadan describes *adab* works as prose, including excerpts from multiple genres such as poetry, quotations from ḥadīth, geographical stories, and descriptions of historical events, but excluding works consisting entirely of a single one of these genres.¹⁸⁶ In general, *adab* works present their content in a positive light, except for a variation that can be called *al-maḥāsin wa l-masāwī* (excellent qualities and despicable qualities), in which both the positive and negative qualities of the content are described.¹⁸⁷

An important aspect of *adab* literature was that, as a combination of literary and scholarly material, it was the preserve of highly educated individuals, such as rulers, the nobility, dignitaries, intellectuals and secretaries, trained in Arabic language,

¹⁸⁴ Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Structures of Avarice: the Bukhalāʾ in Medieval Arabic Literature*, Studies in Arabic Literature, vol. 11 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 10.

¹⁸⁵ S.A. Bonebakker, “*Adab* and the Concept of *Belles-Lettres*,” in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 27-30.

¹⁸⁶ Joseph Sadan, “Hārūn al-Rashīd and the Brewer: Preliminary Remarks on the *Adab* of the Elite versus *Ḥikāyāt*,” in *Studies in Canonical and Popular Arabic Literature*, S. Ballas and R. Snir, ed. (Toronto: York Press Ltd., 1998), 1-2.

¹⁸⁷ Malti-Douglas, 15.

culture and Islamic materials and interested in various branches of knowledge. These individuals held assemblies in which they read and discussed all types of literary and scholarly information. *Adab* literature drew on both written sources and the oral discussions of their assemblies. In turn, written literature was discussed in the assemblies, so that there was a continual interchange between oral and written materials.¹⁸⁸

The boundary between *adab* literature and popular tales can be ambiguous. Both categories can include elements of spoken language and elements of written language. Both can include fictional and narrative elements. In fact, *adab* literature borrows from popular tales and popular tales borrow from *adab* literature.¹⁸⁹ For the purpose of comparison of techniques in *adab* and popular literature, a reasonable approach is to consider stories from the *Arabian Nights* representative of the use of literature in popular tales. Although written versions of popular tales from the 4th/10th century have generally not survived, the fragment of a papyrus containing selections from the *Arabian Nights* from the 3rd/9th century found by Nabia Abbott¹⁹⁰ demonstrates that this work was already circulating in written form by the time the *Ḥikāya* was written. The existence of a section on collections of tales in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* is further evidence that such collections of tales had already been written down in the 3rd/9th century.¹⁹¹ There are a number of factors that must be considered in

¹⁸⁸ Joseph Sadan, "Hārūn al-Rashīd and the Brewer: Preliminary Remarks on the *Adab* of the Elite versus *Ḥikāyāt*," in *Studies in Canonical and Popular Arabic Literature*, S. Ballas and R. Snir, ed., 2-4.

¹⁸⁹ Mia I. Gerhardt, *The Art of Story-Telling: a Literary Study of the Thousand and One Nights* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), 380-1.

¹⁹⁰ Nabia Abbott, "A Ninth-Century Fragment of the 'Thousand Nights': New Light on the Early History of the *Arabian Nights*," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 8, no. 3 (July 1949), 129-164.

¹⁹¹ al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, Bayard Dodge, ed. and trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

determining where the *Ḥikāya* falls between *adab* literature and popular tales. For one thing, the presence of non-fictional, scholarly material in tales is very limited in comparison to *adab* works. In popular literature, a frame tale with its own plot frequently unites a collection individual tales. Also, individual popular tales are primarily openly fictional and have a plot whereas *adab* literature is generally anecdotal and episodic. Additional characteristics of popular tales are: purposeful repetition of words;¹⁹² thematic patterning;¹⁹³ and a tendency for things to come in threes, i.e. three similar characters or telling three tales on the same subject to illustrate a single point.¹⁹⁴

The *Ḥikāya* corresponds more closely to *adab* literature than to popular tales. It includes a much wider range of non-fictional literature than is typically found in tales. Abū al-Qāsim's first recitations consist of a *mujūn* style description of each type of attendee by profession. This content is reminiscent of the Mirror for Princes genre, a genre which already existed in the 3rd/9th century.¹⁹⁵ Where a Mirror for Princes work would lay out the desirable qualities of the professions present in a court setting, Abū al-Qāsim takes the core skills of the professions and describes them in undesirable terms. For example, in describing the scholar, he does not praise his learning but rather indicates his ignorance, "He has (M. p. 7) read the book *Delaying Knowledge*, and a book *On Forgetting Learning*, and studied the collection *Defective Understanding*."¹⁹⁶ The lists of geographic names pertinent to Baghdad, Isfahan and their surrounding regions

¹⁹² David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*, Studies in Arabic Literature (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 21-2.

¹⁹³ David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*, Studies in Arabic Literature, 22-30.

¹⁹⁴ Muhsin Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 144-63.

¹⁹⁵ C.E. Bosworth, "An Early Arabic Mirror for Princes: Ṭāhīr Dhū l-Yamīnain's Epistle to his Son ʿAbdallāh . (206/821)," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 29:1 (1970), 25-41.

¹⁹⁶ AQSH, 57.

are similar to information that appears in classical Arabic geographical texts. It is in the section on names that the *Ḥikāya* begins to use the *al-maḥāsin wa l-masāwī* approach. The Baghdadi names are listed correctly, but the Isfahani names are deliberately corrupted for the purposes of *mujūn*. Unlike many *al-maḥāsin wa l-masāwī* works, the *Ḥikāya* does not show the good and bad points of the same quality, but consistently shows the good points of the Baghdadi entity and the bad points of the equivalent Isfahani entity. Of course, geographic texts, which are factual rather than humorous, do not corrupt place names.

Later in the text, the *Ḥikāya* lists materials goods: textile furnishings, perfumes, food, drinks, and soiree rooms. These goods are also described using the *al-maḥāsin wa l-masāwī* approach and the Baghdadi objects are always of good quality and the Isfahani objects of bad quality. Similar lists of materials goods also appear in geographical works, again, without the deliberate juxtaposition of high quality objects with deliberately and falsely disparaged inferior objects.

The *Ḥikāya* also makes use of selections from literature. The first major group of selections from poetry is representative of the *nasībs* of *qaṣīdas*. However, unlike most pre-Islamic and Umayyad *nasībs*, which depict longing for a woman, the selections depict Abū al-Qāsim's longing for the city Baghdad as though it were his beloved. The substitution of a city for the beloved is a development of urban society of the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries.¹⁹⁷ Selections of horse poetry, which are representative of the *raḥīls* of *qaṣīdas*, follow. The text then describes cupbearers, male singers and female singers in alternating prose and poetry. These characters are typically depicted in love

¹⁹⁷ G.E. Von Grunebaum, "Aspects of Arabic Urban literature Mostly in Ninth and Tenth Centuries," *Islamic Studies*, 8 (1969), 281-8.

poetry. A whole section of the *Ḥikāya* is devoted to anecdotes about slave girls. Although anecdotes were popular in all periods of Arabic literature, anecdotal compilations flourished particularly in the late 4th/10th and early 5th/11th century, around the time the *Ḥikāya* was written. Abū al-Qāsim ends his recitations with praise (*madīḥ*) of Isfahan and satire (*hijāʾ*) on Baghdad. He also boasts (*fakhr*) about his own skills. In addition, short quotations from the *Qurʾān*, *hadīth*, aphorisms, and proverbs are scattered through the text. Thus, the *Ḥikāya* includes selections from enough types of literature and non-fictional writings that it clearly corresponds with *adab* rather than popular literature.

Another indication that the *Ḥikāya* belongs to *adab* literature is its setting and emphasis on language. It depicts an evening gathering--the elegant, highly educated environment in which *adab* literature flourished. Abū al-Qāsim describes the types of individuals who attended and the types of discussions/entertainment that occurred during the course of the gathering. Not only is the environment depicted, but Abū al-Qāsim emphasizes the refined speech and behavior appropriate during a gathering, even though he does so more through his recitations of negative examples typical of *mujūn* than through positive examples, in his own behavior. The material goods relevant to the setting are also listed. As has been discussed above, the structure of the text requires its audience to be knowledgeable about the formal, classical poetic genre of the *qaṣīda*. He recites poetry and anecdotes, critiques dinner, plays chess, demonstrates knowledge of rare vocabulary, dances, sings, and drinks. In essence, the *Ḥikāya* could only be fully appreciated by highly educated individuals who would recognize the setting and activities depicted, and, most of all, recognize all the literary

allusions in the recitations. The complexity of the language and range of quotations would be beyond the understanding of a person without an extensive education. Based on content, structure and the knowledge its audience would need to understand it, the *Ḥikāya* is consistent with *adab* literature, and as such, its audience must consist of the nobility, and the highly educated upper classes and secretaries.

The *Ḥikāya* appears to use some of the techniques of popular tales as exemplified by the *Arabian Nights*. However, the usage in the *Ḥikāya* is not entirely consistent with the usage as found in popular tales. The *Ḥikāya* starts as though it will have a frame tale consisting of Abū al-Qāsim interacting with the attendees. He has entered the gathering, criticized the attendees in terms of their professions, told them they are infirm in terms of speech and manners and asked them whether they want to become people of goodness and quality. They respond that they do. His interaction with the attendees has established a problem and created a setting where it would be appropriate for him to tell moralistic stories between his conversations with the attendees. However, the extent of his interaction with the attendees is not sufficient to form framing tales. Instead, it represents a different technique from popular tales, repeated conversations. Abū al-Qāsim's conversation repeats two main patterns. One consists of warning the attendees that he is going to tell them something about themselves, after which an attendee concurs that he should proceed. This is an example of that pattern which leads into the “*nasīb*” on longing for Baghdad.¹⁹⁸ Abū al-Qāsim says:

If I were to pass on to you (what he said), as is my duty, would you permit it?”

¹⁹⁸ AQSH, 90.

One says, “Speak, O Abū al-Qāsim.”

This pattern also appears where the *nasīb* ends and the *raḥīl* begins, at the transition to the anecdotes about singing girls, and at the transition from those anecdotes to Abū al-Qāsim asking for his reward and beginning to participate politely in the gathering. This pattern marks the main divisions of *nasīb*, *raḥīl*, anecdotes and the third section of the *qaṣīda*. The divisions can also be categorized as establishing the contrast between Baghdad and Isfahan and between Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees, and as establishing the boundaries between the major types of literature, poetry and anecdotes, suitable for reciting at a gathering and Abū al-Qāsim’s participation in the gathering as though he were an attendee.

The other conversation that is repeated consists of a single comment made by Abū al-Qāsim, “I do not see...” Each time Abū al-Qāsim starts a new example of a different type of material goods, he prefaces it with this phrase. This very simple, relatively unremarkable language plays a significant role in the *Ḥikāya*’s structure by emphasizing the parallel nature of the different goods Abū al-Qāsim describes. In essence, the short phrases unite the examples in the *raḥīl* by their repetition. When Abū al-Qāsim reaches the anecdotes about real singing girls, he changes the phrase to “or if you could see...,” which changes the emphasis to the behavior of the singers’ devoted fans.

The repeated conversations are too limited to support any progression in the relationship between Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees, or any change in the skills of the attendees. However, once the initial interaction of Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees sets up the “problem,” i.e. the attendees’ deficiency in eloquent language and elegant

manners in comparison to Baghdadis, the repeated conversations divide his advice into separate “lessons.” Each of his monologues gives the attendees examples from Baghdad that they should emulate and examples of the defective equivalents found in Isfahan. Each of his monologues covers an important aspect of formal Arabic literature. The first covers *nasībs*, the next *raḥīls* and materials goods, and the next anecdotal literature. The last section of the *Ḥikāya* focuses on manners as well as literature by showing Abū al-Qāsim participating in the gathering in an appropriate and then an inappropriate way. As in collections of popular tales, there are multiple examples within each grouping.

Another difference between the *Ḥikāya* and a collection of popular tales is that Abū al-Qāsim’s speeches are not fictional like framed tales would be. In general, Abū al-Qāsim’s recitations are really a demonstration of eloquence. Even within the section on anecdotes, all but two are episodic and too short to have a plot. This is undoubtedly because the anecdotes are intended to make a point about either eloquent language or elegant behavior. For example, the following short anecdote is pertinent for the wit of its punch line. “Someone said to a slave girl, (formerly) a vagrant, ‘If only you spent the evening under me.’ She said, ‘Yes, my lord, yes. With three others--that is, when you are on (your funeral) bier.’”¹⁹⁹ The following example shows inappropriate behavior in reaction to beautiful singing; unlike a tale, there is no plot and no resolution to the inappropriate behavior:²⁰⁰

Or the ecstasy of Ibn Ghaylān al-Bazzāz, over the warbling of
Rayḥāna, Ibn al-Barīdī’s slave girl, when she sang ...

¹⁹⁹ AQSH, 241.

²⁰⁰ AQSH, 252-3; *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:167.

At this point someone says to him, “What did Ibn Ghaylān used to do during this singing, such that you would be astonished by him?”

He says, “O our lord, when he heard this, his eyes rolled back in their sockets and he fell in a faint, and (they had to bring) camphor and rose water, and someone to recite the *Qurʾānic* Verse of the Throne²⁰¹ and the two last chapters of the *Qurʾān* in his ear, and he had to be treated with the spell formula “O Living (One), O Eternal (One).” What’s he up to, your dummy?’ (This) is how he acts.

Even the long narrative anecdote narrated above about the slave girl Zād Mihr does not have a plot. It contrasts the elegant behavior of Zād Mihr, despite her low social status, with the coarse behavior of her rich master. The uppity attitude of Zād Mihr and the general obscenity of the anecdote do not convey a moral lesson, but rather simply contrast elegant and inelegant behavior in elegant, witty language.

Another of the more complex anecdotes depicts several literary figures from the end of the 4th/10th century having a picnic. It, too, is only descriptive. It describes the garden where the picnic takes place, mentions the poets drinking and listening to music, complete with a short example of a song, shows them falling asleep, and ends with poetry expressing longing for Baghdad. There is no plot, and no clear moral lesson.

The comparisons that would be considered *al-maḥāsin wa l-masāwī* styles in *adab* literature would be considered thematic patterning in popular tales. In the *Ḥikāya*, after describing the attendees of the gathering in derogatory terms, Abū al-Qāsim suggests that “(They) could (try to) be people in whom are goodness and courtesy, and not be beasts!”²⁰² Many of his recitations show the same contrast between elegance and coarseness. For example, he contrasts elegant horses, “...I haven't seen a noble man on

²⁰¹ *Qurʾān*, 2 (al-Baqara): 255.

²⁰² AQSH, 82.

a smooth-running race horse, spirited, eager, noble, faster than the blink of an eye, surpassing description..."²⁰³ with decrepit horses, "...all I see, by God, is a goat on a donkey, or a bastard on a mule, or an ape on a nag, restive and galled, fractious, stumbling, abject, shying, balky, hammer headed..."²⁰⁴ He contrasts singing girls similarly, "...as if she were the mid-morning sun, the full moon in the black (of night), a plaything of purified silver, a white cloud, an egg hidden²⁰⁵ in a sand dune, a wild cow, a peacock, an effigy in a niche..."²⁰⁶ with "...I see a female monkey, like a broad pillow, or a ghoulish arisen from the desert, with silver hair and gold teeth, with disheveled hair like fluffy wool, a face like a dug-up corpse..."²⁰⁷ The same contrast of elegant versus crude appears over and over. Since this one contrast fits perfectly well in both *adab* and popular literature, its iterations sustain a level of ambiguity rather than committing the text to one category or the other.

In summary, the *Ḥikāya* is *adab* literature but in some ways resembles a popular tale. It includes selections from too many types of non-fictional literature and quotations from too broad a range of formal literature to be a collection of popular tales. In addition, its setting, a gathering, and its emphasis on linguistic skills both suggest an audience consisting of the highly-educated secretarial class. The interactions between Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees frame his recitations in a way reminiscent of a frame tale. However, unlike a true frame tale, the interactions do not form a fictional tale. Like a frame tale, the interactions establish the theme of the work—contrasting elegant speech and manners with their opposites. Unlike a frame

²⁰³ AQSH, 114.

²⁰⁴ AQSH, 127.

²⁰⁵ A hidden egg signifies purity. *Qurʾān*, 37 (al-Ṣāffāt): 49.

²⁰⁶ AQSH, 191.

²⁰⁷ AQSH, 205.

tale, Abū al-Qāsim is the protagonist of the frame tale as well as of the framed material. The repeated contrast of elegant/inelegant speech and manners throughout the text can be interpreted as *al-maḥāsin wa l-masāwī* in *adab* literature or thematic patterning in popular tales. Although the *Ḥikāya* is *adab* literature, its elements are combined throughout the text in a way that creates a pervasive sense of ambiguity between their potential function in *adab* literature and in popular tales.

Fictionality of the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī*

Al-Azdī states in the Invocation of the *Ḥikāya* that he has recorded specific phrases and idioms from the speech of a Baghdadi man whom he knew well in order to depict a typical Baghdadi. With that statement, he establishes that he is not representing his text as fiction. Nevertheless, as discussed in the previous section, the text uses techniques found in popular tales and also has similarities with an openly fictional work, al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt*. This contrast between al-Azdī's claim that he is using factual observations and the recognizably fictional aspects of the *Ḥikāya* demonstrates the late 4th/10th century tension between highly valued formal prose literature and very enjoyable but less esteemed popular literature.

Authors of formal classical Arabic literature almost never represented their work as fiction, even though fictional material appeared in classical formal Arabic literature, particularly from the 4th/10th-century on.²⁰⁸ Von Grunebaum confirms the lack of fiction in formal Arabic literature when he writes that fiction is not recognized in classical Arabic literary theory and goes on to say that, in particular, by fiction he

²⁰⁸ Gustave von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam: a Study in Cultural Orientation*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); H.A.R. Gibb, *Arabic Literature: an Introduction*, 2nd ed; Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1 *The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); A. F. L. Beeston, ed., et al., *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

means the concepts of plot and action.²⁰⁹ Popular literature, which existed at the same time, was fictional, generally had a plot and frequently included fantastic elements. It was enjoyed by all social classes, even though it was considered suitable only for a socially unsophisticated audience such as young people, women, and the uneducated.²¹⁰ By the late 4th/10th century, there was a great demand for entertaining literature, which resulted in a greater incorporation of fictional elements into formal prose literature.

The expectation of fictional characters by twentieth century readers, deriving from the preeminence of fiction in contemporary literature, leads to an immediate construal of the *Ḥikāya* as fiction and of Abū al-Qāsim as a fictional character. Recognizing fiction in the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries does not seem to have been equally simple. For example, the use of “*ḥikāya*” may or may not have indicated that a work was intended to be fictional. At the very beginning of the 5th/11th century, *ḥikāya* meant an imitation, not a popular fictional story. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī²¹¹ (392/1002-463/1071) titled his work on spongers *al-Taṭfīl wa-Ḥikāyat al-Ṭufayliyyīn wa-akhbāru-hum wa-nawādir kalāmi-him wa-ashʿāri-him* (Sponging, and Stories of the Spongers, and Reports about Them, and Anecdotes Showing Their Speech, and Their Poetry. Even though the word “*ḥikāya*” appears in his title, his work consists of anecdotes that greatly resemble ḥadīth and that cannot be considered fiction.

²⁰⁹ Gustave von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam: a Study in Cultural Orientation*, 2nd ed., 287.

²¹⁰ Stefan Leder, “Conventions of Fictional Narration in Learned Literature,” in *Story-Telling in the Framework of Non-Fictional Arabic Literature*, ed. by Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 40.

²¹¹ A ḥadīth scholar and literary author best known for his biographical encyclopedia on Baghdad, *Tārīkh Baghdād*. EI2, s.v. “al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.”

Ibn al-Khashshāb al-Baghdādī (d. 567/1172),²¹² discussed the presentation of reality in literature. He began by dividing literature according to whether the matter portrayed could be real, or whether it could not be real. He stated that animal fables were clearly allegorical because talking animals could not be mistaken for reality. Thus, the representation of reality in fables was not deceptive because the reader was not required to decide whether or not it was true. In contrast, Ibn al-Khashshāb considered the status of *maqāmas* unclear in regard to truthfulness. In essence, their content was not far enough removed from reality to be categorically untrue, like fables. It was potentially possible that a person with the same name as the protagonist of a *maqāma* could exist in the town in which the work was set. The activity depicted in a *maqāma* could potentially take place, too. In Ibn al-Khashshāb's opinion, an author's claim that he invented his work meant the work should not depict reality and therefore was not consistent with *adab* literature, even though it might still have appeared realistic. The fact that Ibn al-Khashshāb analyzed the "truth, i.e. fiction" of prose in such black and white terms a good century after the *Ḥikāya* was probably written is a strong indication that formal *adab* literature was expected to be and normally was represented as a depiction of reality.²¹³

In his introduction, al-Azdī clearly states that he is depicting a real person. Although Abū al-Qāsim's behavior is not entirely plausible, it is possible that a man with that name existed and managed to gain entrance to a gathering to make a pest of himself. A person could behave inappropriately at a gathering. In response to

²¹² A highly educated teacher who lived in Baghdad. He taught influential scholars but wrote little himself. EI2, s.v. "Ibn al-Khashshāb."

²¹³ Rina Drory, *Models and Contacts: Arabic Literature and its Impact on Medieval Jewish Culture*, 26-7. Ibn al-Khashshāb, "al-ʿIṭirād ʿalā al-Ḥarīrī," in his *Sharḥ Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*, 1908: reprint, (Beirut: Dār al-Turāth, 1968), 4-5.

arguments like Ibn al-Khashshāb's about the inconvenience of having to decide the truthfulness of a depiction, one method of placing *maqāmas* more soundly into *adab* literature was to provide evidence that the fictional protagonist was a real person. Such evidence tended to be presented in the form of biographical information, such as the person's name, profession, city of residence, physical characteristics, and teachers and associates. In contrast, al-Azdī does not give biographical information about Abū al-Qāsim, but simply states that he knew and observed him.

At the most basic level, the *Ḥikāya* recounts how a man attended a gathering and spent most of the evening reciting selections of literature or listing specific material goods. If the literary selections were all serious and the text did not have a *mujūn* nature, it would undoubtedly be considered formal *adab* literature. However, Abū al-Qāsim's offensive behavior, his use of obscenity, and his derogatory recitations make it hard for 20th-century readers to believe such a person would be taken seriously or even tolerated by attendees of the gathering. It is also hard to believe someone would deliberately behave as he does. Therefore, it seems that the work must be fiction. However, two trends in Arabic literature may counterbalance this interpretation. During late 4th/10th and early 5th/11th century, the depiction of socially unacceptable classes and their vulgar speech and manners was in vogue in serious literature. Inappropriate behavior and obscenity are normal in *mujūn* literature, and that aspect of the *Ḥikāya* contributes substantially to interpreting it as fiction. In analyzing the *Ḥikāya*, it would be helpful to know how *mujūn* literature was regarded within formal Arabic literature when the work was written. It should be noted that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj

wrote a voluminous amount of exceedingly obscene poetry in approximately the same time period and it is considered formal literature.

Little research has been carried out on *mujūn* literature, its function or its reception. Most literary authors, one example of whom is al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī and Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, include selections of *mujūn* literature in their literary compilations and do not treat them any differently than non-*mujūn* selections. Arabic works consistently refer to *mujūn* literature as amusing and humorous. In fact, there are anecdotes showing that recitations of single *mujūn* poems were funny enough to protect poets from moral censure. Based on the extremely minimal available analysis, *mujūn* literature seems to invert the content of standard formal Arabic literature. However, inverting the conventions does not seem to prevent *mujūn* literature from being considered formal literature. Medieval discussions of *mujūn* literature do express embarrassment about the topic.²¹⁴ A contemporary assessment of how a *mujūn* approach affected the perception of a work in relation to its fictionality is not available. Since fiction was not a well-established genre in formal literature, and since *mujūn* literature is not labelled as fictional, assuming the *Ḥikāya* is fiction largely because of its *mujūn* approach may be inappropriate until more analysis of *mujūn* literature has been done.

There were other factors that influenced whether a work was considered fiction. Although some works, for example, *maqāmas*, were entirely fictional, in most classical Arabic literature context played a part in determining whether fictional

²¹⁴ Julie Scott Meisami, "Arabic *Mujūn* Poetry: the Literary Dimension," in Frederick De Jong, ed., *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry and in the Representation of Women in Arabic Literature* (Utrecht: M.Th. Houtsma Stichting, 1993), 13-20.

material was read as factual or fictional. In types of narrative texts where the context emphasized a factual report, such as historical texts, instructive texts, or texts with *isnāds*, the fictional material was more likely to be read as factual. When the context was, for example, joking and amusement or short and witty stories suitable for *samar* (evening conversation), there was a higher likelihood that the narrative would be read as fictional. The *Ḥikāya* is certainly full of joking, amusement and wittiness. Although this tendency would normally support interpreting the *Ḥikāya* as fiction, there is no way to know for sure whether this tendency is consistent with the conventions of the relatively unanalyzed *mujūn* literature.

Preceding a narrative with a depiction of the narrator communicating with his listener tended to indicate a fictional narrative. Depicting the act of narration called attention to the narrator's existence and negated the illusion that the anecdote was true because it was related by someone who originally witnessed the event. If an anecdote was not narrated by an eye-witness, it was not inherently truthful.²¹⁵ The technique of showing the same person relating anecdotes and conversing with his audience appears very prominently at the beginning of the *Ḥikāya*. When Abū al-Qāsim is first introduced, an anonymous narrator depicts him entering the gathering, sitting down and reading parts of the *Qurʾān*. The narrator shows him raising his voice deliberately to attract the attendees' attention to his recitation, and shows the reaction of the attendees. The pattern of Abū al-Qāsim reading followed by the audience's reaction appears twice. Then Abū al-Qāsim recites a long poem expressing his supposed Shiʿite devotion. At this point, an attendee lets on that he knows Abū al-

²¹⁵ Stephen Leder, "Conventions of fictional narration in learned literature," in *Story-telling in the framework of non-fictional Arabic literature*, ed. by Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 43-51.

Qāsim is putting on a show. The narration changes from a third party, assumedly al-Azdī, describing Abū al-Qāsim speaking to his audience with occasional responses from them. Abū al-Qāsim's fictionality is first established by showing him talking with his audience. The technique appears only once in a very long work.

A factual anecdote was usually introduced by an *isnād*, or list of individuals who had passed it on from the original witness to the present. Fictional anecdotes were more likely to have a very brief *isnād* consisting of individuals whose existence could not be verified, or no *isnād*.²¹⁶ In the *Ḥikāya*, al-Azdī is introduced in the first sentence and he cannot be established as real. Although he may have been known in his time, he is no longer identifiable and has not been for many centuries. Thus, whether it was the author's intention or not, his identity is now questioned by some readers and, for them at least, adds a fictional element. Abū al-Qāsim is also introduced without an *isnād* or any other information that would verify either his existence or the authenticity of the narrative in which he appears. The fact that he is old, poor, exiled and apparently a vagrant is even stronger evidence that he and his narration are fictional, since there is nothing about his life that would aid in identifying him.

Attributing lower morals to an individual than he has is another way of undermining the factuality of narration.²¹⁷ When a narrator depicts a scene too private for him to have observed, there is a greater likelihood that it is fictional.²¹⁸ The last three examples describe scenarios that cannot be observed in normal social settings or

²¹⁶ Rina Drory, *Models and Contacts: Arabic Literature and its Impact on Medieval Jewish Culture*, 11-2

²¹⁷ Stephen Leder, "Conventions of fictional narration in learned literature," in *Story-telling in the framework of non-fictional Arabic literature*, ed. by Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 55.

²¹⁸ Abdallahi Cheikh-Moussa, "Réalité et fiction dans Le livre des avares d'al-Ġāhiz" in *Story-Telling in the framework of non-fictional Arabic literature*, ed. by Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 208.

that depict mental processes that cannot be directly observed at all, and because they are not observable, they must be fictional.

Another signal that can indicate fictionality is portraying events, in such a manner that at least one of the characters appears as less savory in terms of morals than he might. Determining the standard of an individual's morals is a subjective interpretation. If the narrator depicts a person with a negative bias, it is probable that the narrator has supplied at least some of the details of his behavior.²¹⁹ In essence, he has lied. One of the reasons openly fictional works were avoided in classical Arabic literature was that fiction was equated with lies because both are untrue.²²⁰ Abū al-Qāsim is depicted as immoral and dishonest from the beginning. The following sentence, from the derogatory description by which Abū al-Qāsim is introduced, establishes his immorality: "He was one who was in the habit of coming and going, a storehouse of depravities, a bucket of sins, a sack of mange, famine's dress, a handful snatched from the basket of a junk seller, a handful of (ashes) from the palm of a stoker, and sweepings on a dung heap."²²¹ He then behaves as though he is devout and his falseness is soon pointed out in this statement, "He recites this, saddening those present and playing on the emotions of the listeners, and he maintains this deceptive state..."²²² These opposing stances are indications that Abū al-Qāsim is a fictional character.

Towards the end of the *Ḥikāya*, Abū al-Qāsim is again shown as exceeding the bounds of decent behavior. Quite outrageous content is acceptable within *mujūn*

²¹⁹ Stephen Leder, "Conventions of fictional narration in learned literature," in *Story-telling in the framework of non-fictional Arabic literature*, ed. by Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 55-56.

²²⁰ *Qurʾān*, 26 (al-Shuʿarā): 221-6.

²²¹ AQSH, 49.

²²² AQSH, 55.

literature. During most of the work, Abū al-Qāsim recites *mujūn* selections, some of which parody the attendees, but it is clear that this is part of his performance. However, once he become sufficiently frustrated with not receiving a large award, he begins to address the attendees directly in very coarse language, such as: “O son of pimps, O viler than a bedbug?, O lower than a prison mouse, O viler than lettuce, and rottener than celery fart[s], O more ruinous than Dīnawarī²²³ cheese and cauliflower.”²²⁴ His behavior also worsens and he unsuccessfully attempts to act on lascivious ideas about a singing girl and the Daylamī youth. Although much of his inappropriate behavior and speech can be attributed to *mujūn*, the instances such as those just mentioned above are more typical of techniques undermining a character’s reliability.

The fictionality of the *Ḥikāya* is entangled with the predominance of a *mujūn* approach throughout the text. The obscenity and generally unacceptable social behavior associated with *mujūn* make it hard for 20th century readers to believe the text is not fiction. The assessment that it is fiction depends strongly on its *mujūn* nature. *Mujūn* has been very little studied and how it affected the relationship of literature to fiction in the classical period is not clear. Classical works that include *mujūn* do not categorize it as fiction. The *Ḥikāya* does employ other techniques used to indicate a text was fiction, such as showing Abū al-Qāsim as dishonest and immoral and showing him acting rudely outside of the performance of literature. There remains a contradiction between a reasonable belief that the *Ḥikāya* is fiction and a lack of evidence that its predominant technique, *mujūn*, was considered fictional.

²²³ Noted earlier.

²²⁴ AQSH, 351.

Character Studies

In the case of the *Ḥikāya*, the kind of character study to be examined is prose literature which deliberately depicts all aspects of a character trait in a single person without depicting physical or mental traits unrelated to that character trait. The specific trait depicted is a *ṭufaylī* or sponger. To see how the *Ḥikāya* relates to this technique and this topic in Arabic literature, it will be necessary to look at the tradition and techniques of character studies in Arabic literature and at other works on spongers.

This kind of character study is generally traced back to Theophrastus,²²⁵ d. 287 B.C.E., a Greek philosopher. In his *Characters*, Theophrastus depicts a character trait, usually a moral trait, such as cowardice or miserliness, or a profession, such as a merchant, by projecting all the aspects of that character trait onto a single person. Any type of description that would identify the person as an individual is avoided in favor of descriptions of a full range of actions and sayings typical of any and all individuals who have the character trait.²²⁶ Although some of Theophrastus's works are known to have been translated into Arabic in the Abbasid period, his *Characters* are not recorded among them.²²⁷ On the other hand, nearly all of the material by and on Theophrastus in Arabic is currently found only in works obviously compiled from earlier Arabic translations that no longer exist. There is no way to know whether Theophrastus's *Characters* once existed in an Arabic translation.

²²⁵ Gale Literature Resource Center, s.v. "Theophrastus, by Paul T. Keyser" http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/LitRC?vrsn=3&OP=contains&locID=wash_main&srchtp=athr&ca=1&c=1&ste=6&tab=1&tbtst=arp&ai=109422&n=10&docNum=H1200007676&ST=theophrastus&bConts=12593343 (accessed July 26, 2005).

²²⁶ J. W. Smeed, *The Theophrastan Character: the History of a Literary Genre* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 1-19.

²²⁷ Dimitri Gutas, "The Life, Works, and Sayings of Theophrastus in the Arabic Tradition" in *Greek Philosophers in the Arabic Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2000), 80-2.

In Arabic literature, character studies became especially popular in the early Abbasid period, when the great, innovative prose writer, al-Jāḥiẓ²²⁸ (ca. 159/776-273 or 4/868 or 9) created a new kind of Arabic prose literature which used short, amusing anecdotes to educate readers. Although al-Jāḥiẓ was a prolific author whose works span a wide range of topics, his unique contribution to prose literature was depicting types of people, or characters, and their position in society. He crafted the quintessential likeness of a single character trait by writing many anecdotes that illustrate the appearance of all its aspects in individuals. For example, his *Kitāb al-Bukhālāʾ*, or *The Book of Misers*, consists of anecdotes that depict misers and all their behaviors. That al-Jāḥiẓ wrote “characters” about vices, using a psychological approach, an approach consistent with Theophrastus’s *Characters*, only a generation after the steady translation of Greek works into Arabic began, would seem indicative of some level of awareness of Greek works, even if they were not acknowledged as sources.²²⁹ However, there is a significant difference in format between the characters of Theophrastus and those of al-Jāḥiẓ. Theophrastus describes his unnamed representative, who displays all aspects of a character trait, whereas al-Jāḥiẓ depicts a character trait by presenting episodic anecdotes about many individuals. The material covered by each author is very similar, but is presented via a different method. Also,

²²⁸ Pellat; “al-Jahiz” in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 311, *Arabic Literary Culture, 500-925*, ed. Michael Cooperson, Shawkat M. Toorawa and Roger Allen, A Bruccoli Clark Layman Book (Detroit: Gale, 2005), 231-243. Gale Literature Resource Center, s.v. “al-Jahiz, by James E. Montgomery” http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/LitRC?vrsn=3&OP=contains&locID=wash_main&srchtp=athr&ca=1&c=1&ste=6&tab=1&tbst=arp&ai=110891&n=10&docNum=H1200012402&ST=jahiz&bConts=4194975 (accessed June 26, 2005).

²²⁹ Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1 *The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 466.

since Greek and Arabic cultures were not the same, the exact behaviors and values associated with a specific vice are not exactly the same.²³⁰

As far as is known, al-Jāḥiẓ did not write a work specifically about spongers. Out of all of his works about characters, his *Kitāb al-Bukhalāʾ*²³¹ has been analyzed in the most detail and so will be used as a representative example of his techniques. He depicts a single character type in a single work, predominantly by telling many anecdotes. The anecdotes al-Jāḥiẓ uses show an activity or attitude characteristic of an individual or group of people who have the moral characteristic being written about. Each anecdote adds some information about the character type. Groups of anecdotes are arranged according to different patterns. They may be about different individuals and without other unifying elements, may be about a single individual with or without other unifying elements, or may be about different individuals but with some unifying elements.²³¹ Al-Jāḥiẓ organizes the sections somewhat randomly, so that their sequence is not predictable and boring.²³² He may use poetry and other types of prose in addition to anecdotes, but such material is a smaller portion of the whole. Although al-Jāḥiẓ is not specified as the narrator of the *Kitāb al-Bukhalāʾ*, he narrates the whole text in the first person. For each anecdote, he either specifies that he observed it take place, or he gives the name of the person who told him the anecdote. Even though al-Jāḥiẓ provides only short *isnāds* and some of the individuals to whom anecdotes are attributed cannot be identified, the general impression is that that anecdotes are or are intended to be truthful.

²³⁰ Malti-Douglas, 164-6.

²³¹ Malti-Douglas, 47.

²³² Malti-Douglas, 42-55.

Some two hundred years later than al-Jāḥiẓ wrote his character studies and some decades later than the *Ḥikāya* was written, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī wrote a work called *al-Taṭfīl wa-ḥikāyāt al-ṭufayliyyīn wa-akhbāru-hum wa-nawādir kalāmi-him wa-ashʿāri-him*. Literally, the work states that it was related by al-Khaṭīb in 458/1066. The work is organized on a different basis than al-Jāḥiẓ's character studies. Al-Khaṭīb organizes his anecdotes in groups by a unifying element, for example, anecdotes about *ṭufaylīs* who join a group of people and end up at a banquet, or *ṭufaylīs* who are asked to judge which is the better of two dishes. Most anecdotes begin with the phrase “akhbāra-nā (so and so),” (“so and so informed us”) although a small number of paragraphs begin with “qāla al-Khaṭīb” (“al-Khaṭīb said”). Both opening phrases are reminiscent of opening phrases in collections of *hadīth*. The anecdotes consistently begin with an *isnad*, frequently a long *isnad* that may extend through half or more of the anecdote. In approximately the first two-thirds of the work, the spongers depicted are completely anonymous. Many of the anecdotes have only a single line of speech that expresses the point of the anecdote. Even in those anecdotes that feature a conversation, the speeches are frequently very short. The anecdotes about spongers were selected to show the Prophet Muḥammad's opinion of them, to show the interaction of intellectual classes with them, and to provide comments from *hadīth* about them. Al-Khaṭīb makes use of poetry as well as anecdotes. The poems either describe spongers or are recited by spongers in praise of their lifestyle. Among the poems that describe spongers, many are recited following an *isnad*, as though they serve the same function as an anecdote. The last third of the work depicts a single real *ṭufaylī*, Banān. Within the two sections, organization of the anecdotes quickly becomes predictable. The anecdotes use

structures that offer the maximum proof of their veracity and have exceedingly long *isnāds* in comparison to the shortness of the content of the anecdotes. In other words, al-Khaṭīb's anecdotes about spongers closely imitate the format of *hadīth*. The "punch lines" of some of the anecdotes are moralistic instead of witty. Even the wittier responses are a restatement of the moral of the anecdote rather than, as in al-Jāḥiẓ's anecdotes, an example of an unusual practice that clearly demonstrates an individual's creativity in practicing his profession of being a *ṭufaylī*. The arrangement of the anecdotes is similar to the formatting of *hadīth* compilations, as well. *Al-Taṭfīl* starts with anecdotes featuring the Prophet Muḥammad, then continues to anecdotes featuring others close to him, then anecdotes by later religious scholars and anecdotes about an unidentified sponger and finally anecdotes about a single real sponger. The focus on morality, the standardization of the format of each anecdote, and the long *isnāds* result in a text that is less witty and less entertaining than al-Jāḥiẓ's work. Unlike the narrative in the *Ḥikāya*, the interaction that occurs between a sponger and the host or other diners is not depicted. Thus, the emphasis remains on the moral qualities of the sponger, not on his behavior.

The techniques al-Azdī uses to depict Abū al-Qāsim in the *Ḥikāya* are different from those used to depict spongers in *al-Taṭfīl* or those used in al-Jāḥiẓ's character studies. The *Ḥikāya* does not use the composite image created by using many anecdotes about different individuals to depict a sponger, but rather states that he will depict the character of all Baghdadis by using a single representative to show the speech and morals of a wide range of exemplars. Unlike either of the authors just discussed, he does not restrict his content primarily to anecdotes and does not use those anecdotes

to describe his sponger, Abū al-Qāsim. Rather, he uses a continuous narrative, spoken by Abū al-Qāsim, throughout his work. At the very beginning of the *Ḥikāya*, al-Azdī describes Abū al-Qāsim's habits and moral qualities in a paragraph consisting of *sajʿ*, in the *al-maḥāsin wa l-masāwī* style, followed by selections of mainly obscene poetry describing an immoral old man. "... (he) was an old man with a white beard gleaming in a face so red that unadulterated wine almost trickled from it ... He was a rogue, a man who does not restrain his natural desires."²³³

Around the Mediterranean, the existence of spongers and their appearance in literature goes back to Greek and Roman times. Again, no direct link can be made from Greek and Roman customs or literature with Arabic literature in the Būyid period, but there are similarities. In Roman times, there was a tradition of parasites, or spongers, who were men who made their living by entering gatherings without an invitation in order to eat and drink as much as possible and to attempt to obtain additional rewards. Their stock in trade was expert knowledge of the finest foods and material goods, a willingness to entertain at gatherings, and a complete lack of shame in attempting to obtain maximum recompense either in money or in kind. Their knowledge of luxury consumer goods enabled them to serve as an advisor for the procurement of material goods and for entertainment.²³⁴

Since there are few classical Arabic texts on parasites, it is impossible to determine the full range of a parasite's activities and whether they were consistent with the Roman tradition or not. In al-Khaṭīb's *al-Taṭfīl*, the qualities of *ṭufaylīs* are

²³³ AQSH, 46.

²³⁴ Cynthia Damon, *Mask of the Parasite: a Pathology of Roman Patronage* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 27-30.

limited. In the first part of this work, they are shown entering a gathering uninvited, entering uninvited with the prophet Muḥammad and five other invitees, or following a group of people and finding themselves at banquets. Another variation is that *ṭufaylīs* recite *hadīth* or sing for their meal. A group of anecdotes showing tricks whereby *ṭufaylīs* get free food appear: when asked to judge which of two dishes is better, *ṭufaylīs* eat both and declare them equal; they do not eat when offered food, with the result that the host cooks more dishes; or they get into a party by pretending to have left something behind. The remaining groups of anecdotes explain that *ṭufaylīs* eat everything, that they consider anything an invitation and that the only verse they remember from the *Qurʾān* says to visit others.

In the second part of al-Khaṭīb's *al-Taṭfīl*, the anecdotes are about Banān, a real *ṭufaylī*. He gives advice about how to praise the person one serves, how to position oneself to obtain the most food, how to decide which table is best to eat at, and how to enter and leave. He lists the tastiest foods and specifies the best place to sit. At the end, there are some anecdotes that show a little of the conversation appropriate to passing dishes back and forth, and a few anecdotes that show a *ṭufaylī* sometimes getting slapped and sometimes being treated kindly. In al-Khaṭīb's work, *ṭufaylīs* are concerned with getting free meals and not much else.

Abū al-Qāsim carries out the normal activities of a sponger. He pretends to be a *Qurʾān* reciter in order to gain entrance to the gathering. As discussed above, *ṭufaylīs* had two roles: eating and secondarily, entertaining in exchange for what they consumed. In the *Ḥikāya*, Abū al-Qāsim spends much more time entertaining than being involved with food. In response to an attendee's first remark to him, Abū al-

Qāsim leaps up and begins to describe the attendees as immoral and/or spongers. From that point, he establishes his own character by his recitations. He employs a *mujūn* approach and describes the categories of attendees as the opposite of the skills required by their professions. The language Abū al-Qāsim uses is ornate and shows a high level of eloquence. He consistently describes the attendees as unskilled in language and manners and greedy for sensual pleasures, such as food, wine, women and entertainment, for example, “(He is) a cat which has made a habit of uncovering cooking pots,²³⁵ and does not stay away²³⁶ from the neighbor's (cooking) fire. (He is) a sponger who attends even when he is not invited.”²³⁷ When he informs the attendees that they “...should try to be people of goodness and courtesy, and not be beasts...” and offers to help them improve, he advises them to consume food and wine, and enjoy entertainment and especially sex whenever possible.²³⁸ Although Abū al-Qāsim expands on his advice and describes a variety of consumables in detail, the greater part of his recitations comprises entertainment. He briefly reemphasizes his status as a *ṭufaylī* when he suspends his recitations to ask for a reward,²³⁹ of the finest food, alms, a horse, singing girls, and clothing. He goes on about food for some time, until it becomes clear it will not appear immediately. He returns to entertaining until dinner eventually arrives. Since *ṭufaylīs* were so interested in food, they usually were gourmets. When dinner arrives, he shows his ability as a gourmet by critiquing each of

²³⁵ *Idhā taʿawwada al-sinnawr kashf al-quḍūr fa-lam anna-hu lā yaṣbiru ʿan-hā*. G.W. Freytag, *Arabum Proverbia* (Osnabruck: Biblio Verlag, 1968), 1:138, proverb 439.

²³⁶ *Yashruḍu ʿalā*. There seems to be a word missing here. al-Shālji's solution is to change the verb to *yathruḍu*, to dip into, which matches the sense of the proverb. However, *ʿalā* is then superfluous. I would suggest that the copyist left out “*lā*.” Since *ʿalā* with *sharada* means to depart from, adding “*lā*” would make the phrase grammatically correct and parallel to the syntax of the proverb.

²³⁷ AQSH, 64.

²³⁸ AQSH, 83-8.

²³⁹ AQSH, 274.

the dishes. He returns to entertaining, with occasional requests for a large reward. He eventually passes out drunk, and in the morning recites the same pious statements he had used the night before to enter the gathering, thereby indicating that he will repeat his actions. There is very little narration in the *Ḥikāya* other than his. He is depicted entering and leaving in the same way a sponger would, and in between he attributes the habits of a sponger to his audience and describes them in language used to describe a sponger. His expertise on spongers and sponging is too great to be chance.

On the other hand, Abū al-Qāsim's recitations are not fully consistent with what is known about the role of a Arab sponger. Although entertaining was part of a sponger's role in the Roman tradition, it appears to be only a very minor part of the role in the Arabic tradition. Also, Abū al-Qāsim's recitations are largely unrelated to food, whereas entertainment in the Roman tradition of spongers and in *al-Taṭfīl* was more often related to food and eating. The lack of available texts on *ṭufaylīs* makes it impossible to determine whether records of the Arabic tradition are simply insufficient, or whether the depiction of Abū al-Qāsim is unusual or perhaps represents something in addition to a sponger.

It appears that Abū al-Qāsim has a more complex role than simply being a sponger. When he depicts the attendees in the main professions required at a court as unskilled in language and manners, and depicts the lower status professions as having the characteristics of *ṭufaylīs*, he is reversing the normal social order at the gathering. He distinguishes between two categories of guests, the court officials who are satirized in terms of literary skills, and the lower level entertainers who are satirized as

parasites. Thus, by his choice of the characteristics he satirizes and by his division of the attendees into two social classes, the lower class attendees who are primarily entertainers and the upper class government employees, he replicates the conflict between himself as a sponger and the respectable attendees. The attendees are all shown as in need of literary education. Abū al-Qāsim's recitations are an education for them on the ideal literary exposition of the first two sections of a *qaṣīda*, the *nasīb* and the *raḥīl*, excerpts from geographies, lists of the finest material goods, descriptions and poetry about entertainers and singing girls, and anecdotes about singing girls. Although as a sponger he is outside the respectable echelons of society, his literary skill in describing supposedly virtuous members of society as lacking literary skills or behaving like parasites allows him to control the gathering and marks him as more skilled in literature and its presentation than the socially superior attendees. In order to perform his recitations, Abū al-Qāsim must have the same knowledge of literary genres and must have memorized the same repertoire of poetry and anecdotes as the well educated classes that held gatherings and made up the audience he was entertaining. The majority of his narration consists of his literary recitations, not of his comments on spongers. Despite being a sponger, Abū al-Qāsim speaks with great skill on topics that were of prime interest to the cultural elite. It appears that through the juxtaposition of his actions with his identity, an equivalency between spongers and the highly educated classes is set up.

The *Ḥikāya* depicts eloquence and questions the ability of different social classes to use it. The work is organized to emphasize ambiguity about which social class achieves eloquence. Unlike either *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'* or *al-Taṭfīl*, the *Ḥikāya* has a

continuous narrative, a technique normally used in popular tales, and a protagonist who is a low class professional sponger who is nevertheless more eloquent than his upper class audience. Throughout the text, this combination sustains an ambiguity as to whether the low class sponger is really noble because he is eloquent, or whether the upper class attendees are really ignoble because they do not achieve eloquence. Also unlike the other two works, there are many indications that the *Ḥikāya* is fictional: Abū al-Qāsim is shown conversing with his audience and there are no *isnāds*. Abū al-Qāsim's moral characteristics are shown more through his own recitations and behavior than they are by a series of anecdotes narrated by an observer.

The section in which Abū al-Qāsim is characterized as a sponger coincides with the sections in which he is portrayed using fictional elements. The sections in which his interests more strongly correspond to those of secretaries use a comparatively low level of fictional elements. As a sponger, he is characterized as unreliable. As a secretary, his literary skills are not represented as questionable. Since both characters are present in the same person, the qualities of the two characters tend to merge. The depiction of characters in the *Ḥikāya* coincides with the distribution of fictional elements, and strengthens the tension between the roles of sponger and secretary.

Genre of the *Ḥikāya*

The genre of the *Ḥikāya* is perhaps the most ambiguous aspect of the work. Mez considered it to be a *Sittenbild*, an anthology describing life, both in terms of material goods and behavior. Shmuel Moreh, who has written on theater in the medieval Arab world, considers it a script for a play and evidence that theater existed in classical Arabic literature. Its resemblance to character studies was discussed above. The *Ḥikāya*

has also been mentioned as being related to al-Hamadhānī's *al-Maqāmāt*. Al-Azdī states that the important components of his work are Bedouin oratory, pre-Islamic poetry, uncommon vocabulary and rare anecdotes, which are the oldest forms of Arabic literature and the highly fashionable type of literature from his own period. In a sense, excluding the script for a play, the text is partly, but not exclusively, each of these things.

Of the scholars who discuss the *Ḥikāya*, only Mez, in the introduction to his edition, looks at the *Ḥikāya* as a whole. He considers the work a *Sittenbild* because it contains extensive lists of material goods used by the upper levels of society, and describes an evening gathering with all its activities, including representative selections of the types of literature recited as entertainment. However, for a description of reality, the *Ḥikāya* reflects a very specialized and limited slice of life. Not very many gatherings would have been entirely dominated by someone like Abū al-Qāsim. It is not likely that a work intended to be an accurate reflection of reality would have been written using a *mujūn* viewpoint that reverses the values of the times. As will be discussed below, the progression of the gathering is very carefully crafted—too much so for the work to be a literal description.

Mez soon contradicts his own identification of the *Ḥikāya*'s genre. He makes a very interesting and significant observation that the descriptions of material goods are a triviality and the value of the work resides in its form.²⁴⁰ Unfortunately, he does not go on to explore that idea. Instead, he briefly summarizes changes in culture and the corresponding development of Arabic literature from the time of the caliphs Hārūn al-

²⁴⁰ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Abū al-Muṭahhar al-Azdī, *Abulqāsim, ein bagdāder Sittenbild = Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1902), vi.

Rashīd and al-Maʿmūn. He returns to the *Ḥikāya* when he reaches the 4th/10th century and its experimentation with new forms of literature. Mez discusses the *Ḥikāya* in terms of three literary developments of that period. In the later 4th/10th century, the representation of the lowest classes and their languages became popular. Mez compares the use of Baghdadi jargon in the *Ḥikāya* to the use of mendicants' slang in *al-Qaṣīda al-Sasāniyya*, a long poem describing the practices of mendicants. The latter was written by Abū Dulaf, a poet valued by the Būyid wazir al-Ṣāhib Ibn ʿAbbād for his knowledge of such vocabulary. Another development was the extensive use of obscenity, such as that in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry, which also appears in the *Ḥikāya*. The third development Mez introduces is al-Hamadhānī's creation of the *maqāma* genre and the similarities between the *Ḥikāya* and the *Maqāmāt*, which will be discussed below. Mez eventually identifies the sections of the *Ḥikāya* that represent different styles of literature: the entry of the hero (*Maqāmāt*), satirization of the guests (Mirror for Princes), comparison of the neighborhoods of Baghdad and Isfahan (geographies), a symposium, and a finale consisting of a satirical speech which includes some *fakhr*. Although Mez did not draw any conclusion from the existence of these multiple genres and styles, he identified enough elements of different genres to show that the *Ḥikāya* is *adab* literature.

The third development discussed by Mez is al-Hamadhānī's creation of the *maqāma* genre. A *maqāma* is a short, anecdotal story which is openly fictional and is presented largely in *saqʿ*. The exact sources leading to the development of the genre

are not clear, although *maqāmas* can be quite similar to anecdotes.²⁴¹ Anecdotes are usually given the appearance of truth by making the individuals in the anecdotes historical figures, and by making the setting realistic and preceding them with an *isnād*. *Maqāmas* use an unknown, obviously fictional narrator, whose characteristics may vary inexplicably from *maqāma* to *maqāma*. Although there are exceptions, they generally utilize *saḡf* far more than anecdotes do. *Maqāmas* frequently revolve around an apparently lower class, poor character who is not what he seems. He generally turns out to be far more clever and eloquent than could be expected from his appearance.²⁴² In some *Maqāmas*, the activities depicted are swindlers. The *Maqāmāt* are examples of literature that show the fascination of the Būyid period for the seamy side of life. It is likely that they parody the types of literature whose elements they include.²⁴³

Although he compares the *Maqāmāt* and the *Ḥikāya*, Mez has a rather short list of similarities. In terms of technique, he notes that al-Hamadhānī uses short, general conversation, whereas al-Azdī uses true dialogue. In terms of subject, he notes that Abū al-Qāsim is a sponger and Abū Faṭḥ is a con man, that both works are satirically witty, and that both feature concern with material goods. More recently, Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila has revisited the relationship between the *maqāma* genre and the *Ḥikāya*.²⁴⁴ He recognizes that both are related to mendicant literature, and, for that reason there can be confusion as to whether the *Ḥikāya* is related to the *maqāma* genre.

²⁴¹ A.F.L. Beeston, "The Genesis of the *Maqāmāt* Genre," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 2 (1971), 1-12; J.N. Mattock, "The Early History of the *Maqāma*," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 15 (1984), 1-18; Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqama: a History of a Genre*, Diskurse der Arabistik, Bd. 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002).

²⁴² A.F.L. Beeston, "The Genesis of the *Maqāmāt* Genre," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 2 (1971), 7-9.

²⁴³ A.F.L. Beeston, "Al-Hamadhānī, al-Ḥarīrī and the *Maqāmāt* Genre," in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 130.

²⁴⁴ Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqama: a History of a Genre*, Diskurse der Arabistik, Bd. 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002), 84-87.

Since his purpose is to discuss the *maqāma* and its development, he says little more about the *Ḥikāya*. Both Mez and Hämeen-Anttila recognize that although the two works seem similar because they are related to mendicant literature, they are not directly related to each other. Neither author goes into much detail about the differences between the two works.

To go beyond Mez and Hämeen-Anttila's observations, the similarities between al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt* and the *Ḥikāya* are relatively superficial. In both works, the main characters--Abū al-Qāsim in the *Ḥikāya*, and, when he appears, Abū Faḥ al-Iskandarī in al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt*--are from the lower classes and seem to be vagrants. Neither makes a living by working. Both works are witty and use eloquent language with a high proportion of *sajf*. The differences between the two works are more substantial. The *Ḥikāya* has a continuous narrative; the *Maqāmāt* are episodic. Abū al-Qāsim recites literature and makes witty comments to earn his reward. He is described in terms of his morals before he appears for the first time and his character never changes. He is continually present in the *Ḥikāya*. Abū al-Faḥ generally thinks up a trick that allows him to collect a reward from the person or persons fooled by his trick. He is not described in advance, and, in fact, there is no consistency in his appearance. He is not present throughout the *Maqāmāt* or even in all of the *maqāmās*. The text of the *Ḥikāya* points out eloquent language as one of its main focuses. Although elegant language has been identified by critics as the main point of the *Maqāmāt*, the text of the *Maqāmāt* does not regularly talk about its own use of eloquent language. Each *maqāma* talks about the trick it depicts and not the eloquence of its own language. The *Ḥikāya* is definitely not a *maqāma*.

Shmuel Moreh examines the performance aspects of the *Ḥikāya*, but with a predetermined view towards demonstrating that the text is a type of play.²⁴⁵ He argues that the *Ḥikāya* is a repertoire of theatrical scenes played in tenth-century Baghdad.²⁴⁶ Moreh makes the point quite well that the term *ḥikāya* could refer to a performance, ranging from a short imitation to a staged play. He argues that the continuous dialogue that appears in the text represents a type of acting in which one person does most of the talking and the other actors are primarily silent. Indeed, Abū al-Qāsim is performing for the *majlis* and he does most of the talking during the evening. However, there is no indication that his words constitute a script or that he is playing a role as an actor. As a sponger, he would need to be entertaining, but this would be part of his effort to obtain and consume food or in response to comments from other guests, not from a script. Moreh does not adequately take into account the phrase that forms the transition from the description of Abū al-Qāsim to the depiction of his entry into the gathering, “Kāna min ʿādāti-hi an...,”²⁴⁷ or “It was his custom to...” This phrase shows that Abū al-Qāsim repeats the same activity night after night. He would not be tolerated if he were not able to vary his presentations, or improvise suitable content to keep each audience entertained. With no record of drama in the period of the *Ḥikāya*, the description of Abū al-Qāsim is more probably a description of a spontaneous performance or typical selections from spontaneous performances, rather than an actor’s script. For this reasons, I have translated *Ḥikāya* in the title of the work as Improvisation.

²⁴⁵ Shmuel Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 94-100.

²⁴⁶ Moreh, 96.

²⁴⁷ AQSH, 53.

Another of Moreh's assertions concerns Abū al-Qāsim's frequent use of "mathalan," "for example." Moreh believes that this indicates a place in a script where an actor could improvise. He suggests that this kind of script shows a single actor speaking and other actors being brought to him so he can talk to them.²⁴⁸ Presumably, the troupe would perform the same type of act over and over, not alternate between different types of drama. In theory, the lead "speaking" actor would learn how to address the "audience" quickly. Therefore, a script intended for the lead actor to use as a prompting mechanism would only need to include the poetry and prose he would speak, and could dispense with depicting his short conversations and movements. In contrast to a script, a work depicting a sponger entertaining an audience would need to include his movements and speeches to the audience. Moreh's argument that the *Ḥikāya* is a script fails on this point. It carefully introduces Abū al-Qāsim at the beginning and carefully keeps the reader aware of him rather than only recording his speeches. It consistently depicts the short speeches between him and the other attendees. Finally, Moreh argues that the use of selections from the *Ḥikāya* in later plays shows that it is a script.²⁴⁹ This is not a valid argument, since plays are not limited to quoting other plays.

Al-Azdī does not identify the *Ḥikāya* as belonging to a genre. In the very first sentence that he narrates, he makes a point of mentioning that he has particularly chosen Bedouin oratory, pre-Islamic poetry, uncommon vocabulary and rare anecdotes when planning his text. This is significant for two reasons. The first is that he has chosen antiquated forms of two genres and the second is that at least one of them is

²⁴⁸ Moreh, 97.

²⁴⁹ Moreh, 97-99.

instrumental in shaping the *Ḥikāya*'s structure. Bedouin oratory and pre-Islamic poetry are the two earliest known forms of Arabic literature and as such signify identification with Arab culture and values. Bedouin oratory was the main pre-Islamic prose genre. It was used to praise the orator's tribe and its deeds and noble qualities, or to point out the faults of the tribe's enemies. It sometimes included *sajf*. Despite al-Azdī's claim, almost no Bedouin oratory appears in the *Ḥikāya*. It is possible that the praise of Baghdad and the satirization of Isfahan may be a reflection of the praise of an orator's tribe and his criticism of other tribes and the *Ḥikāya* includes a good deal of *sajf*. However, comparison of cities and *sajf* were both common by the time the *Ḥikāya* was written.

Of al-Azdī's other choices, uncommon vocabulary and rare anecdotes are essential components of prose literature of the Būyid period, 320-454/932-1062. A great literary fascination of the time was the vocabulary, slang and idioms of the lower classes and of the unlawful professions, and to a lesser extent, forms of spoken Arabic.²⁵⁰ The *Ḥikāya* includes plenty of uncommon vocabulary on a variety of topics. Although al-Jāḥiẓ popularized long anecdotal compilations in the first half of the 3rd/9th century, the 4th/10th century was the golden age of such compilations. Some scholars have suggested that production of anecdotal collections soared because of the period's great demand for entertaining works.²⁵¹ The *Ḥikāya* includes a nice selection of anecdotes, but is not only a compilation of anecdotes.

Among pre-Islamic Arabic poetic forms, the *qaṣīda* is the predominant form and it remains so through the Umayyad period, the Abbasid period, and even after. Despite

²⁵⁰ Adam Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam* (London Luzac, 1937), 236-7.

²⁵¹ H.A.R. Gibb, *Arabic Literature: an Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 97.

extensive discussion, which continues to this day, it has not been possible to craft a concise, fully satisfactory definition of the *qaṣīda* that irrefutably fits all *qaṣīdas*. In terms of formal properties, the *qaṣīda* is polythematic, has three sections, each of which leads into the next, employs a single meter and a monorhyme, is of some length, and has verses that are divided into two hemistiches. There is too much variation in the subject of *qaṣīdas* for this factor to define them. The *qaṣīda* is not a narrative, although it may allude to historical events.²⁵² Ibn al-Qutayba, 213/828-275 or 6/289, the author of one of the earliest books in Arabic on literary criticism, *Kitāb al-Shiʿr wa-al-Shuʿarāʾ*, wrote the earliest extant definition:²⁵³

...a poet should begin a *qaṣīda* by remembering deserted dwelling places, and asking his two companions to stop at one of them with him to weep and express his grief over his absent beloved. From this, the poet should lead into the *nasīb*, where he speaks about the intensity of his love. Next, he should present the *raḥīl*, a description of his arduous camel ride through the desert to his patron, mentioning some combination of his and the camel's fatigue. The third section, in which he reaches the patron, expresses the intent of the poem, either praise (*madīḥ*), boasting (*fakhr*), or satire (*hijāʾ*).

It should be noted that the *raḥīl* frequently describes the flora, fauna and general surroundings seen by the poet while traversing the desert. Despite the definition, the actual number and combination of sections varies a great deal from poem to poem. Many of the motifs used in *qaṣīdas* are conventional. Over time, traditional motifs were adapted to a broad range of contexts and the resulting multiplication of intertextual associations further enhanced their meanings. Because the *qaṣīda*'s structure is created from no more than three sections whose connotations are standard, and from largely

²⁵² *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, vol. 2, *Eulogy's Bounty, Meanings's Abundance, an Anthology*, ed. by Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle, *Studies in Arabic literature*, 21 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 2, 44.

²⁵³ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shiʿr wa-al-Shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif bi-Miṣr, 1966), 1:14-5.

conventional motifs, the way in which the poet arranges those elements is particularly important in enabling him to express himself in original and unique ways. The motifs can be combined within and across the sections. The way in which the elements agree and contrast with their traditional meanings is a major component in creating unique meanings.²⁵⁴

Although its structure remained stable, the *qaṣīda* adapted to changing conditions.²⁵⁵ Some modern scholars have suggested that, in addition to serving a literary function, the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* was a ritual recital of common tribal values intended to encourage members to face the difficulties of surviving in the desert. Many pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas* were recited to praise the tribe, to urge it to war, or to denigrate its enemies. By the Abbasid period, the *qaṣīda* had assumed a strictly literary function intended to show literary skill. In terms of specifics, where pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas* included realistic descriptions of the desert, Abbasid *qaṣīdas* frequently employed the same or similar motifs, but used them in a figurative sense to convey sentiments that reflect the experience of the Abbasid urban environment. A poet's identification with a tribe was replaced by identification with a city. In general, Abbasid poets used the same elements as pre-Islamic poets, but figuratively, and in support of their patron's needs and beliefs, whether or not they matched their own. Despite the comparative

²⁵⁴ *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, vol. 2, *Eulogy's bounty, meaning's abundance, an anthology*, ed. by Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle, *Studies in Arabic literature*, 21 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 8-15; Julie Scott Meisami, "The Uses of the Qaṣīda: Thematic and Structural Patterns in a Poem of Bashshar," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 16 (1985), 40-60.

²⁵⁵ M.M. Badawi, "Abbasid Poetry and its Antecedents," in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, ed. by Julia Ashtiany et al., *The Cambridge history of Arabic literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); M.M. Badawi, "From Primary to Secondary Qaṣīdas: Thought on the Development of Classical Arabic Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 11 (1980), 1-31.

continuity of genres and techniques in Arabic literature, for writers of the early 5th/11th century, mimicking Bedouin literature would have been an acquired skill.

Al-Azdī does not include much pre-Islamic poetry, but he does seamlessly embedded a *qaṣīda*'s structure within the *Ḥikāya* so that it informs and shapes it. It is not the sole and blatantly obvious "genre" of the work, but it is the strongest genre in terms of structure. It is interesting that the version of a *qaṣīda* that al-Azdī uses very closely approximates Ibn al-Qutayba's definition, which is quoted above. The way the structure of a *qaṣīda* is embedded should be clear from the lengthy summary above.

In the *nasīb*, Abū al-Qāsim manipulates components of a *qaṣīda* to subvert both social status and social values. Although, as a sponger, he is outside respectable society, Abū al-Qāsim sets himself up as the representative of the standards of intellectuals in court society in the Būyid period. He depicts the attendees of the gathering as outside of society, on the basis of his assessment that they have inadequate cultural, linguistic and literary skills. By asking whether they would like to do noble deeds, he sets up an expectation that they will transform themselves based on his advice. Normally, a transformation in a *qaṣīda* would occur on the part of a single person, not a group. Also, the transformee is usually transformed through his own actions, rather than through a third party's instruction. In addition, by the use of the *mujūn* style, Abū al-Qāsim appears to promulgate activities that are the opposite of social mores.

Anticipation of the form and the standard tropes of the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* helps forge an identification between the urban images in the *Ḥikāya* and pre-Islamic images. For example, there is an expectation that the *qaṣīda*'s protagonist will mourn over an absent beloved. When Abū al-Qāsim mourns his absence from Baghdad, the

anticipation of mourning over an absent beloved causes Baghdad to take on the identity of the beloved. An expectation that the protagonist might engage in illicit love affairs allows Abū al-Qāsim to substitute a list of illicit sexual liaisons possible in the urban Abbasid environment. The expectation that geographic features near the deserted campsite might be mentioned gives Abū al-Qāsim an opportunity to mention a variety of geographic features around Baghdad and Isfahan, although he proceeds to satirize some of them in a way impossible in pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas*.

The use of the *qaṣīda* structure allows al-Azdī to combine otherwise unrelated elements into an integrated whole. Equating Isfahan with the deserted campsite establishes the idea that something about Isfahan is lacking, and the lack is transferred to the Isfahani attendees in the form of inferior linguistic skills. Their inferiority sets up the need for a transformation, which will lead to the *raḥīl*. The expectation of an absent beloved allows the introduction of Baghdad. Linking Isfahan to the campsite and Baghdad to the beloved sets up a disparity between the quality of the two cities right from the start. The comparison of the geographic sites of Baghdad and Isfahan is the recasting of the Bedouin oratory mentioned by al-Azdī in the invocation into an urban Abbasid rivalry between cities. The comparison of Baghdad and Isfahan and the identification of respectively Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees with them reinforces the indicated disparity in their linguistic skills. Thus, the *nasīb* establishes eloquent language as a focus of the *Ḥikāya* and makes it the reason for the journey in the upcoming *raḥīl*, and it confirms the reversal of the relative social ranks of Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees that was set up by the former's depiction of the attendees by profession prior to the introduction of the *qaṣīda*.

The *raḥīl* begins where Abū al-Qāsim says that he does not see any nobility among Isfahan's horses and other material goods. In essence, Abū al-Qāsim's presentations from that point through the anecdotes about singing girls recast the trip across the desert of the pre-Islamic *raḥīl* into a "trip" through an evening gathering. The experience the protagonist gains in his "travels" is in the literary use of language. Abū al-Qāsim's descriptions of persons, horses and objects in the *mujūn* style provides examples of vocabulary and its usage, and of selections from literature that are appropriate and then inappropriate during participation in such gatherings. These descriptions maintain the relative status of Baghdad and Isfahan established in the *nasīb*. Abū al-Qāsim, who as a sponger is not quite socially acceptable, is identified with the description of Baghdad and socially and economically superior conditions. The socially and economically inferior descriptions represent the attendees, who, as invitees, should be pillars of society. The descriptions of materials goods are followed by a variety of anecdotes about singing girls. These anecdotes also subvert the roles of the upper and lower classes. The anecdote about Zād Mihr shows her as more eloquent and sensible than her rich master. The slave girls in the market give witty responses at the expense of potential purchasers. The haughty slave girl satisfies her master more by her eloquence than by her love. Finally, each devoted fan shows his enthusiasm for a specific slave girl's singing, including her lyrics, in excessive, socially peculiar ways. In each case, by means of their speech, a singing girl in an inferior social position appears more rational and eloquent than her superiors.

Situating the *raḥīl* as a journey through a gathering makes it possible to describe things that were present at gatherings, both material goods and literary entertainment

and entertainers. It also equates the linguistic skills required in that setting with the skills to navigate the desert and thereby foregrounds eloquence. The description of material goods provides a detailed picture of the life-style of the social strata that attended gatherings--information that was not usually recorded. The description also provides extensive lists of vocabulary sorted by subject, which at least links rare, hard to define words to an appropriate subject. The selections of poetry are examples that were highly regarded during the period the *Ḥikāya* was written. The alternating descriptions of high quality Baghdadi goods and low quality Isfahani goods continue the reversal of the status of Abū al-Qāsim the Baghdadi sponger and the upper class, supposedly highly educated Isfahani attendees. Finally, the anecdotes show witty prose and appropriate and non-appropriate behavior at gathering. Since his performance must demonstrate skill, it must provide examples of superior literature and an excellent manner of sequencing them.

In the *Ḥikāya*, the third section of the *qaṣīda* structure begins with the phrase “Bring us our breakfast, for we certainly have found fatigue in this our journey.”²⁵⁶ The statement makes it obvious that al-Azdī through Abū al-Qāsim wants to mark the end of a *raḥīl*. The structure of the third section of the *Ḥikāya* is atypical for a third section of a *qaṣīda*, and not just because it contains a substantial quantity of prose. The third section should show the poet reaching his destination, generally a patron’s court, and it should employ either *madīḥ*, *hijā’*, or *fakhr*. Instead, it employs all of them.

The third section is normally the culmination of a journey. For Abū al-Qāsim, it is a culmination. He changes from an outsider to a participant in the gathering, at least

²⁵⁶ AQSH, 274.

for a time. It is also the culmination of the examples of eloquent speech that were provided in the earlier sections. In the third section, these recitations are no longer presented by Abū al-Qāsim about a hypothetical gathering to the attendees, but are shown as part of the proceedings of a gathering. Abū al-Qāsim's first description of the attendees by profession transferred his identity as a sponger to them and his attribution of poor literary skills to them moved him into the position of representing intellectual and literary standards. In the third section, his praise (*madīḥ*) of Isfahan is consistent with a poet's arrival at his patron's court and necessary for him to receive a reward. His *hijā'* against the attendees, who block him from acting on his desire to engage in immoral behavior, plus his boasting (*fakhr*) of his own strength and prowess, undo the reversal of their social roles created in the *nasīb*. The attendees now defend appropriate behavior at the gathering, even though there is no evidence that they have become eloquent. Abū al-Qāsim takes back his role as sponger.

Prosification and the *Ḥikāya*

Using structural elements of a *qaṣīda* to shape the *Ḥikāya* suggests the technique of prosification. There is a tradition in Arabic literature of both prosification of poetry and versification of prose. For example, the prose work *Kalīla wa-Dimna* by Ibn al-Muqaffa⁶ was recast into Arabic verse three times over several centuries. The first version, which has not survived, was composed by Abān al-Lāḥiqī, probably in the second half of the 2nd/8th century. Around 592/1100, Ibn al-Habbāriyya composed a second version entitled *Natā'ij al-Fiṭna fī Nazm Kalīla wa-Dimna*. A third version was composed by Abd al-Mu²min b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣaghānī in 640/1242. *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was translated into Persian verse by the Persian poet Rūdhakī before 303-4/916. Another

poetical Persian version was composed by Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd Ṭūsī Qānī²⁵⁷ in Konya sometime during the period 641-661/1244-63.²⁵⁷ Examples of complete works converted from poetry into prose are not available, although the conversion excerpts ranging from single lines to a page are discussed in Amidu Sanni's *The Arabic Theory of Prosification and Versification*.²⁵⁸

Examination of versification and prosification does not confirm the transfer of structural elements, but only the transfer of motifs and eloquent phrasings. The techniques of prosification and versification were not often used to recast complete works. Thus, it is unclear whether recasting complete works reflected skills generally learned by authors or whether the idea came from some external influence or whether it was an innovation. Knowing whether the two techniques were taught in the educational system might clarify expectations about their application.

Rhetoric was a major topic in Greek education and since the Islamic Empire included large geographical areas in which the classical Greek education system had been prevalent, it seems logical that there might have been some influence on Arab education. Greek language had a central role in Greek society similar to that of Arabic language in Arab society. Correct usage, rhetoric and oratorical skills were essential in public life and in many parts of private life.²⁵⁹ The same thing can be said about Arab life in the classical period. The grammatical and rhetorical exercises used to teach Greek language that have survived lead progressively to the ability to recast complete works from prose to poetry and vice versa. The simplest Greek exercises focused

²⁵⁷ EI2, s.v. "Ibn al-Muqaffa"

²⁵⁸ Amidu Sanni, *The Arabic Theory of Prosification and Versification: on Ḥall and Nazm in Arabic Theoretical Discourse*, Beirut Texts and Studies, 70 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998).

²⁵⁹ Theresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 190.

strictly on simple grammar. For example, students might take a saying or single sentence anecdote and rotely vary it by changing it from singular to plural, or from active to passive and so forth. Students progressed to a short text, such as a fable, and elaborated on it, for example, by writing direct speech for the characters to recite or by expanding descriptive passages. Eventually students might paraphrase a major literary text and experiment with exercises such as reordering the narrative or approaching the story from a different viewpoint. In this way, students learned to manipulate individual elements of rhetoric.²⁶⁰ An example of such paraphrasings that still survives recasts part of Homer's *Iliad* in prose.²⁶¹ The last type of paraphrasing is the type of process that occurs in the *Hikāya*.

Although there is no documented proof that such exercises were incorporated into Abbasid Arabic education and no direct link can be proven, it might be a reasonable assumption that examples of such exercises were available in the Islamic empire during the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries, especially since many Greek works had been translated into Arabic by that time. However, the emphasis on linguistic skill in the Arabic education system stems from more than the use of rhetoric in public and private life. The *Qurʾān*, *ḥadīth* and legal sciences were the most important subjects in classical Arabic education, and an understanding of them relied heavily on a thorough knowledge of the grammatical and literary aspects of the Arabic language. Students began with a thorough study of grammar, syntax and lexicography, and progressed to the study of eloquence (*balāgha*) and rhetoric, which were central to every usage of

²⁶⁰ Ruth Webb, "The Progymnasmata as Practice," in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, Yun Lee Too, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 298-300.

²⁶¹ Theresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*, 204-8.

formal written and spoken Arabic, notably oratory, official government paperwork, and/or literary writings.²⁶² Advanced students engaged in disputation, or asked new and difficult questions to elicit reasoned, analytical answers. Finally, they might write commentaries on works they studied.²⁶³ The use of pen and notebook by Arab students and their eventual progress to disputation and commentaries does hint that the composition and paraphrasing of existing texts was a way of learning to manipulate aspects of rhetoric.

However, although examples of prose works completely converted to poetry exist, extant manuals on prosification or versification focus on the recasting of elements of prose or poetry, not the recasting of whole genres, their structures or complete works.²⁶⁴ The manuals show examples of prosification as simple as a single new sentence that includes a single unaltered old sentence. The more complex examples consist of a few paragraphs that include the sentiments and perhaps reworked phrases from a couple *bayts* of poetry by each of five or six different poets. None of the examples show the transfer of structure. In all but the easiest examples, it would be very difficult to determine what the source quotations were. Although discussion of versification and prosification rarely appears in analyses of classical Arabic literature written either recently or in the classical period, it was a common technique. To this point, discussions of cross-genre play have not been located in classical works. The lack of information could be due to several factors: either the

²⁶² George Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West with Special Reference to Scholasticism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 120-9, 141-7.

²⁶³ George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 99-105.

²⁶⁴ Amidu Sanni, *The Arabic Theory of Prosification and Versification: on Ḥall and Nazm in Arabic Theoretical Discourse*, *Beiruter Texte und Studien*, Bd. 70 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998).

technique was not common, or, much less likely, it was so common it did not need discussion, or discussions are not in the works that have so far been examined, which again is unlikely since the works that have been edited and published were well known in of the classical period. Perhaps the deciding factor is that since classical Arabic literature emphasized theme and excellence of expression more than a structure uniting a complete work, it is likely that the discussion of the recasting of short thematic units would have seemed sufficient to explain the recasting of a complete work.

Conclusion

Abū al-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azdī's *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī* survives in a single manuscript held in the British Library. Based on a consideration of the birth and death dates of the individuals who either appear or whose works are quoted in the text, it must have been written between 380/990-1 and 411/1020. Al-Azdī is not mentioned in the biographical and historical works of his time that are still extant and have been edited and published. As a result, most of the comparatively little research on the *Ḥikāya* has attempted to discover al-Azdī's "real" identity. Arguments in favor of other authors being the "real" al-Azdī are circumstantial at best and are based on a conflation of the skills and personality of Abū al-Qāsim, the main character, with the proposed real author, or on the quantity of quotations in the *Ḥikāya* by the proposed author—both fallacious approaches. There is no solid evidence that someone named al-Azdī was not the real author of the *Ḥikāya*.

Scholars have been reluctant to engage with the *Ḥikāya* because of its obscenity and its representation of seamy aspects of society. Both types of content suggest that

the text should not be considered a worthwhile work of formal prose literature.

Mez focused on its lists of material goods and its activities and called it a *Sittenbild*, or anthology describing life. The work has been associated with al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt*, because of significant textual parallels and other similarities that appear because both are varieties of mendicant literature. However, closer examination reveals that their structures are not the same.

The *Ḥikāya*'s structure is unique, at least in terms of works on which research has been published. It is carefully constructed to include and balance elements of opposing categories of literary and social values, so that it sustains an ambiguity throughout the text as to its genre and as to exactly what it portrays. It plays with genre but without calling attention to that fact. Thus, the play must be a technique used to support the depiction of Abū al-Qāsim and his attitudes.

Nevertheless, looking at the ambiguities does point to the significant issues discussed in the *Ḥikāya*. The broadest layer of ambiguity lies in determining whether the work is *adab* literature or a compilation of popular tales. After examination, it would appear that the *Ḥikāya* is definitely *adab* literature. It includes a mix of selections from the broad range of literary and non-literary, prose and poetical works usually included in *adab* literature. Helping point out more obviously that the work is *adab* literature, it is set in a gathering, the venue in which *adab* literature was performed. It depicts the people, material objects, literary performances and entertainment that used to be present at such a gathering. It is similar to collections of popular tales in that it begins as a frame tale would begin. It shows Abū al-Qāsim entering the gathering and interacting with the attendees to set up discussions of issues concerning

eloquence and manners that will be revisited throughout the text. However, this beginning does not develop into a frame tale shaping the rest of the text. The *Ḥikāya* uses other techniques employed in collections of popular tales. Short conversations repeated nearly verbatim appear at significant points where the text turns in a different direction. Thematic patterning appears repeatedly in the comparisons of high and low quality material goods.

Another ambiguity in the *Ḥikāya* is its fictionality. Al-Azdī is careful to introduce the text as non-fictional. He states that Abū al-Qāsim is based on his observations of a real Baghdadi man and his speech. The *mujūn* nature of the work, however, is a major factor in establishing its fictionality. Abū al-Qāsim's consistent use of socially inappropriate behavior and use of obscenity make it hard for a modern reader to believe he is not fictional. Whether that is a valid assumption depends on how *mujūn* was regarded in the classical period. The exceedingly little research done so far indicates that, while its content was sometimes regarded as morally objectionable, the technique itself was not treated less seriously than other formal techniques of Arabic literature. In addition to its *mujūn* approach, the text consistently presents anecdotes and recitations in a manner consistent with fictional texts. Besides the narrator's claim, there is no objective evidence that Abū al-Qāsim is a real person. His conversation with his audience is described by an anonymous narrator before the text becomes a direct conversation between him and members of his audience. This is frequently a sign of a fictional narrative.

The *Ḥikāya* clearly depicts Abū al-Qāsim in the context of a character study. This technique is particularly important because it creates a major ambiguity. Abū al-

Qāsim is first described as a sponger. As soon as he is categorized as a sponger, he describes the attendees by profession as either unskilled in their professions or as spongers. He uses eloquent language in his descriptions, the sort of language that should be used by the attendees and that he accuses them of being unable to produce. Via his depiction of the attendees in this manner, he assumes the role of a highly educated writer who defends eloquent language and also relegates the attendees to a low status like that of a sponger. At the end of the *Ḥikāya*, Abū al-Qāsim again denigrates the attendees and praises himself for his baser qualities. This reverses their roles again, so that Abū al-Qāsim's status is that of a sponger and the attendees are the defenders of fine manners and speech, even though they have not exhibited those skills. One unresolved ambiguity is whether Abū al-Qāsim represents a low class sponger or a highly educated writer who should have a much higher social status. Another aspect of the same ambiguity is the overall unclear nature of social mobility in Muslim society of the period, which is certainly greater than society mobility in Europe up to that time.

The *Ḥikāya* does not correspond to a recognized genre. Much of it is a prose *qaṣīda*, which is an oxymoron. Abū al-Qāsim's emphasis on the excellence of Baghdad and its speech and the inferiority of Isfahan and its speech as evidenced by the attendees sets the primary topic of the *qaṣīda* as eloquence. Although it is the attendees who need to make a journey to become eloquent, it is Abū al-Qāsim who actively travels through and experiences the gathering. During the *raḥīl*, Abū al-Qāsim compares the fine quality horses, material goods and entertainers found at a Baghdadi gathering with the low quality equivalents found at an Isfahani gathering. He continues with a section

presenting many types of anecdotes about singing girls. The *raḥīl*, which traditionally described the desert the poet traveled through, describes the setting of the gathering and its interactions. The final section shows Abū al-Qāsim participating in the gathering, in other words, he shows how the elements he described in the *raḥīl* should be used. However, the final section is unusual in that one of the three possibilities, *madīḥ*, *hijāʿ*, and *fakhr* does not predominate. However, it is the alternation of *hijāʿ* on the attendees and *fakhr* on Abū al-Qāsim near the end of the section that returns the latter to his status as a sponger and the attendees to their elite status.

It is only possible to speculate on why the *Ḥikāya* manipulates genres and appears to sustain so many ambiguities deliberately. The reversal of roles between Abū al-Qāsim the indigent sponger and highly educated writers found in the luxurious setting of the evening gathering indicates that the work is probably a comment on the conditions of the writers, possibly civil servants or secretaries employed by the wealthy, in the early 5th/11th century, perhaps with specific reference to Isfahan. The *Ḥikāya* was written in a period in which eloquence and literary pursuits, in contrast to previous centuries, were no longer the means by which individuals from any background could become upwardly mobile and possibly wealthy. Although there were a greater number of courts than in earlier periods, rulers were generally extremely short of cash, with the result that rewards for literary creations were much smaller. For example, Hārūn al-Rashīd sometimes gave 50,000 *dīnārs* for a single poem at the beginning of the 3rd/9th century, but in the late 4th/10th century, Ibn ʿAbbad generally

could only give between 100 and 500 *dirhams*.²⁶⁵ By the time the *Ḥikāya* was written, literary writers had to hold jobs, for example as civil servants, in addition to their literary activities in order to make a living. The economic and cultural situation of the Būyid period seems to have similarities with that of the Italian city states during the Renaissance. It seems plausible, as is described in an article by R.S. Lopez and H.A. Miskimin entitled “The Economic Depression of the Renaissance,”²⁶⁶ that although there were more available jobs, there was a large pool of unemployed writers and so the pay level was low. One reason each court hired a corps of litterateurs seems to have been to create the impression of an imposing court when, in reality, such a court could not be supported under the existing economic conditions. It has already been established that during the gathering the social status of Abū al-Qāsim and the attendees is reversed. This equalizes a writer with a sponger. The sponger’s status is raised and that of the writers is lowered. As the protagonist of a *qaṣīda* Abū al-Qāsim should represent the ideal of morality and masculine virtues by the end of the work. However, he is the same sponger with low morals when he leaves in the morning as he was when he arrived the previous evening. Similarly, the attendees, who need to transform themselves into eloquent men, have had no opportunity to change. The conflation of the sponger and writers suggests that the situation of writers is beyond improvement. So far, a modern history of Isfahan has not been written.²⁶⁷ Existing research on the economic and social conditions in Isfahan in the late 4th/10th and early

²⁶⁵ Mafizullah Kabir, “The Sahib Isma‘il Ibn ‘Abbad, 326 A.H./938 A.D.-385 A.H./996 A.D.,” *Islamic Culture*, 30:194.

²⁶⁶ R.S. Lopez and H.A. Miskimin, “The Economic Depression of the Renaissance,” *The Economic Series Review*, n.s., 14, no. 3 (1962), 408-26.

²⁶⁷ Jürgen Paul, “The Histories of Isfahan: Mafarrukhi’s Kitāb Maḥāsin Iṣfahān,” *Iranian Studies*, v. 33, no. 1, 1.

5th/11th centuries is insufficient to move beyond speculation. Also, it is extremely difficult to find financial data expressed in comparable units that can be compiled into a comprehensive analysis of the economic conditions of the period. Without the publication of considerable further research on the history, economic and social conditions of Isfahan and Iran during the late 4th/10th and early 5th/11th centuries, it will be impossible to conclusively determine how the *Ḥikāya* relates to those issues.

There are two other major aspects of literature that would need much more research before too much more progress can be made on the *Ḥikāya*. One is reworking of traditional literary genres. Unusual uses are not going to appear in mainstream literary works, since the technique did not become a generative form. There is no way to locate texts based on unusual applications of genres. There is no such category in indexes or manuscript catalogs. Thus, very little research has been done on texts that use genres in unusual ways, or texts which seems to start in one genre and finish in a different form. Instead, such texts are treated as anomalies and set aside. A complex interaction of multiple genres is used in the *Ḥikāya* to strengthen its message. The late 4th/10th and early 5th/11th were a period of literary innovation. The *maqāma* genre, for instance, was innovative because it was openly fictional in the sense that authors stated their compositions were created from their imaginations. Despite their assertions, a hundred years after the genre became widely publicized via al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt*, there were still questions as to how recognizable entirely fictional works were. In my opinion, it is unlikely such a complex work as the *Ḥikāya* could have been written unless there were previous examples of genres used in what appear to be unusual ways. Genre plays from earlier periods have not come to light. *Yūsuf al-Shirbīnī's Kitāb Hazz al-*

Quḥūf bi-Sharḥ Qaṣīd Abī Shādūf,²⁶⁸ written around 1686, is constructed in the form of commentary on a *qaṣīda*. It is a play on the genre of a text and a commentary and allows the author to critique the social conditions of his time. Two other texts have received some attention, but not from the standpoint of genre. In the 18th century, an Ibn Hamadush wrote a travelogue representing himself as consistently unlucky and blaming his condition on a miserly and uneducated wife. Following one particularly unsuccessful trip, his writing ceases to follow the format of a travelogue.²⁶⁹ Muhammad Fathallah al-Bailuni, d. 1632, wrote two works, one a notebook collecting material for a biographical dictionary and the other a *dīwān*. After he had to abandon his career and flee Istanbul, both works become quite individualistic.²⁷⁰ These examples were written some 600 years later than the *Ḥikāya*. Their works raise the question of whether the intent in works like the *Ḥikāya* is to play with genre, or whether such works are simply individualistic reactions to events in the author's life, with some authors creating well written but unusual responses and others failing to maintain customary standards of writing. However, Ibn al-Ashtarkūnī's *Maqāma Qayrawaniyya* appears to recast the poetic genre of the *rithā'* (elegy).²⁷¹ Both options may be employed, but it is

²⁶⁸ Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Shirbīnī, *Yūsuf al-Shirbīnī's Kitāb Hazz al-Quḥūf bi-Sharḥ Qaṣīd Abī Shādūf = Brains Confounded by the Ode of Abu Shaduf Expounded*, ed. by Humphrey T Davies, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 141 (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005-)

²⁶⁹ Carol Wittwer, "Ibn Hamadush und al-Warṭhilani beschreiben ihr Leben: Individuelle Selbstdarstellungen in Reiseberichten des 18. Jahrhunderts aus Algerien," in Stefan Reichmuth and Florian Schwarz, ed., *Horizonte des Individuums in der arabischen Schriftkultur des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, forthcoming).

²⁷⁰ Florian Schwarz: "Ich erzähle nichts als die Wahrheit!" Erlebnis und Erinnerung im Notizheft und im Diwan von Muhammad Fathallah al-Bailuni aus Aleppo (st. 1632)," in Stefan Reichmuth and Florian Schwarz, ed., *Horizonte des Individuums in der arabischen Schriftkultur des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, (forthcoming).

²⁷¹ Alexander E. Elinson, "Tears Shed Over the Poetic Past: the Prosification of *Rithā'* al-Mudun in al-Saraqustī's *Maqama Qayrawaniyya*," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, vol. 36 (2005), no. 1, 1-27.

nevertheless important to attempt to define the situations in which such practices occur.

The other major aspect is *mujūn* literature. Very little research has been done on *mujūn* literature and its reception. It is quite important to determine conclusively whether it was accepted as part of *adab* literature and how a *mujūn* approach relates to fiction. It is also important to determine whether a *mujūn* approach was acceptable only in certain kinds of literature and in certain social situations, or whether it could be used as entertainment in all situations. So far, the term *mujūn* in relation to literature is very loosely defined, so that exactly what belongs in the category is not perfectly clear. The difference between *mujūn* and other styles of humor, such as *hazl*, remains unclear.

History of Publication

The *Ḥikāya* has a relatively limited publishing history. It survives in one manuscript, which has been published in two editions. The single manuscript of the *Ḥikāya* is held in the British Library.²⁷² The leaf preceding the text provides a title: *Ḥikāya min al-ʿAjāyib wa-l-gharāyib ʿalā mā jumiʿat min al-Ḥikāyā* (The Improvisation of Abū al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī from among the Wonders and the Novelties collected from the Improvisations), and also has a second note identifying the owner: “Among the books of the insignificant servant (of God) Muḥammad b. Šāliḥ b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf.” These notes appear to be in a different handwriting than the main text. On folio 83b, there is a note in the margin, in yet a different handwriting, that says: “We ask Allāh, and this was on the date of the night whose morning dawned on Sunday, the tenth of Shawwāl, 727, which is equivalent to the sixth of Nasī in the Coptic year 1043, when Allāh was asked to commend ʿAlī al-Sarī al-Rīfī al-Ḥusaynī al-Nasī(?) al-Nūrānī after the...may Allāh protect his servant and his all-embracing sagacity and generosity.” This date is Aug. 29, 1347. Although it is tempting to think that the manuscript was copied around the date mentioned above, the different handwriting and the position of the note in the middle of the text raise doubts. The notes on the first leaf would have been added by the first owner. The note on p. 83 must have been added by a later owner. The manuscript has Coptic leaf numbers, which are proof that the manuscript was copied in Egypt, and the Coptic date on p. 83 is further proof that the manuscript remained in Egypt.

²⁷² *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī*, British Library, Codex bombycinus in 4to. Ff. 132. The manuscript number is ADD 19913, the reference number is AC 1127 and the microfiche number is 31262-64.

The handwriting is consistent and generally legible. Although the ends of sentences are not marked, the ends of prose paragraphs are generally marked with a round circle with a dot in the middle. This mark usually does not appear between prose and lines of poetry. The text is partially vowelled. Usually, it is either common or particularly difficult words that are left undotted. Frequently the first letter in a present tense verb conjugation, which is the letter that distinguishes the person, is undotted. This can cause the meaning to be ambiguous. More letters are dotted than not, except for the *tā' marbūta*, which is rarely dotted. When letters are dotted, frequently the dot is not right over the letter to which it belongs. This too can lead to ambiguities if multiple dotted letters are next to each other. *Hamza*, the sign of the glottal stop, is frequently but not always omitted at the end of a word. The few examples of the Isfahani dialect of Persian are not written differently than the Arabic, and are not dotted appropriately for Persian.

The text is complicated by only a few identifiable mistakes. There are a small number of omissions that were corrected by the original scribe writing the missing word in the margin beside the appropriate line. Once or twice in the text, a line is written twice. There are a very small number of words that have been written twice in a row by mistake. However, there are four lacunae in the text. The Coptic numbering goes directly from leaf 12 to leaf 15, indicating two missing leaves. On leaf 40b, there is a blank space between two paragraphs which is the size of one line. There is no way to tell how much the scribe omitted. On leaf 63b, there is a paragraph mark between two *bayts*, or stanzas, of poetry, which marks missing material. On leaf 123a, there is a word missing at the end of the first line of a *bayt* of poetry, because the line does not make

sense and the meter does not scan. There is no indication in the text that a word is missing.

The first printed edition²⁷³ was edited by Adam Mez, whose research focused on the time period of the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī*. Astonishingly, he did not identify the manuscript from which he worked. He does not discuss his method of annotation and it fails to communicate itself to readers. However, since his layout of the text matches the layout in the British Museum's manuscript, and since there is only one known manuscript, it can be safely concluded that he used that manuscript. He reproduces the manuscript perhaps too faithfully, by formatting the prose in the same blocks as are found in the manuscript and including the same dotted circles that serve as paragraph markers. He adds all dotting and *shaddas*, but does not include vowelling. He does not mark the ends of sentences. The result is that the prose is a little easier to read than in the manuscript, but not much. Mez does indent many *bayts* of poetry and clearly separates their halves, which makes those lines much easier to read. However, he does not identify all the poetry included in the manuscript. Mez marks leaf numbers of the manuscript in the margins. He provides a limited number of notes which identify quotations from the *Qur'ān*, words that he corrects, and words which differ from the same passage found in another work. Unfortunately, these few notes give the illusion that he records all his emendations of the original. Generally, he does not do so.

Mez's notes take up thirty-eight pages. These notes explicate concepts, difficult words, and terms that would fall under the category of "cultural literacy" of the time,

²⁷³ AQM.

and identify quotations from other works, individuals referred to in the text, and examples of similar usages in other works. Mez concentrates on the kind of information that is pertinent to the study of literature. Unfortunately, he does not link these references to the text in a clear way. Utilizing often cryptic abbreviations, he gives a page number for a book and a folio number for a manuscript, then lists the Arabic phrases dealt with, along with his explanation, in the sequence the phrases occur in the text. The sources which he refers to frequently, other than the *Qurʾān*, are: Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān*, Abū Tammām's *Dīwān*, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, al-Buḥturī's *Dīwān*, G.W. Freytag's *Arabum Proverbia*, al-Ghuzūlī's *Maṭāliʿ al-Budūr fī Manāzil al-Surūr*, al-Hamadhānī's *al-Maqāmāt* and *al-Rasāʿil*, al-Ḥuṣrī's *Zahr al-Ādāb wa-Thimār al-Albāb*, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, several manuscripts of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *Dīwān*, Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Dīwān*, al-Iṣbahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, al-Jāḥiẓ's *al-Bayān wa-l-Tabyīn*, al-Khwārazmī's *Rasāʿil*, the *Muʿallaqāt*, al-Mutanabbī's *Dīwān*, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabāʾ wa-Muḥāwarāt al-Shuʿarāʾ wa-al-Bulaghāʾ*, al-Raḳīq al-Nadīm's *Quṭb al-Surūr fī Awṣāf al-Khumūr*, al-Thaʿālibī's *Yatīmat al-Dahr fī Maḥāsin Ahl al-Aṣr*, and Yāqūt's *Kitāb Muʿjam al-Buldān*.

Mez also provides a glossary, p. lxi-.xix. Some of his definitions are not helpful, such as those that say something generic, like “a type of date,” or, “a type of ship,” which is already obvious from context. Others, citing a secondary work, do provide new information. Words defined in the glossary are those which Mez could not find in the dictionaries and glossaries he used regularly: *Tāj al-ʿArūs*, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, “Indices, Glossarium et Addenda et Emendanda ad Part. I-III” in vol. 4 of the *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, the glossary by De Goeje to al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, Ibn Abī

Uṣaybiʿa's *Kitāb ʿUyūn al-Anbāʿ fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbāʿ*, Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer's *Studien über Dozy's Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, Alfred Von Kremer's *Beiträge zur arabischen Lexikographie*, Von Kremer's *Notice sur Shaʿrāni* and Herman Napoleon Almkvist's *Kleine Beiträge zur Lexikographie des Vulgärarabischen*.

Mez's edition was reviewed twice shortly after it was published. He is criticized for not citing the manuscript from which he worked.²⁷⁴ Both reviews summarize the plot, then register disapproval of its obscenity, scatology and representation of the seamy side of life. At the same time, the work is recognized as a unique attempt to depict the life of its times in a realistic manner, including the use of the Arabic dialect spoken in Baghdad.²⁷⁵ Because of its obscenity, the text was considered to have low artistic merit, with its value residing in its lexicographic aspects.²⁷⁶ Despite Mez's editing, other experts still found the text hard to read and only partly intelligible.²⁷⁷ De Goeje believed that dotting was reversed in many of the words that did not make sense. In order to clarify Mez's edition, his review proposes over two hundred corrections to single words or very short phrases. Although he provides citations for about a quarter of his corrections, the rest are simply speculative.

The second printed edition²⁷⁸ is edited by ʿAbbūd al-Shālījī, who renames the text *al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya*. Like Mez, he fails to identify the manuscript from which he worked. Again, it matches the single British Museum manuscript. Shālījī does not format the text to match the manuscript, but starts new paragraphs where appropriate,

²⁷⁴ de Goeje, Review, 724.

²⁷⁵ Carl Brockelmann, "Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Abulmuṭahhar al-Azdī, Abulḳāsim ein bagdāder Sittenbild," *Literarisches Centralblatt*, 1902, no. 47, 1568-9.

²⁷⁶ de Goeje, Review, 723.

²⁷⁷ de Goeje, Review, 724; Francesco Gabrieli, "Sulla "Ḥikāyat Abī l-Qāsim" di Abū l-Muṭahhar al-Azdī," *Rivista degli Studi orientali*, 20, 37.

²⁷⁸ AQSH.

separates all lines of poetry from the prose, and adds modern punctuation. This makes the text much easier to read. Shālījī dots the text and marks *tanwīn* thoroughly and consistently, but only very rarely provides any vowelling.

Like Mez, Shālījī emends the text, but does not always annotate the changes. He footnotes the text extensively, but, often idiosyncratically. Shālījī adopts no more than half of Mez's changes. His footnotes explain concepts, terminology, and rare words or gives alternate examples of their use, identify and explain proverbs, identify places and individuals referred to in the text and quotations from other works, and summarize recipes. One serious flaw is that Shālījī equates the lexicon of the *Ḥikāya* with usages of colloquial Arabic in modern Baghdad. With a nearly a thousand years between the 5th/11th century and the 20th century, it is hard to believe that customs and usage are still the same. At least a quarter of his footnotes are not supported by a citation. He attributes quotations in the text to authors other than al-Azdī without citing his source. It is impossible to assess the accuracy of such identifications without replicating Shālījī's research. Shālījī sometimes fails to cite his source when he annotates the meaning of a word. When the word is rare, it would be helpful to know his sources; when it is common, the annotation is unnecessary.

Unlike Mez, Shālījī includes a bibliography of the books he uses as sources. He uses approximately the same sources as Mez, except that he fails to consider Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's works. In addition, he consults al-Tanūkhī's *Nishwār al-Muḥāḍara wa-Akhhār al-Mudhākara*, and al-Tawḥīdī's *Akhlāq al-Wazīrayn*, *al-Baṣā'ir wa al-Dhakhā'ir*, and *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-al-Mu'ānasa*. He also created indexes for names of individuals, places and culturally significant terms, which make it easier to consult the text.

Translation of the *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī*

(Sh. p. 42) Preface to the Letter

In the name of God the Beneficent and the Merciful

After thanking God and praising him appropriately, and after bestowing blessings upon our Lord Muḥammad the Prophet and his family, the late scholar Shaykh Abū al-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azdī, said:

From literature, I have chosen Bedouin oratory and pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. Then too, I have chosen the rare vocabulary conceived by our contemporary eminent literary figures, and the rare anecdotes devised by the instinctive talents of notable modern²⁷⁹ poets. It is this which I have obtained and acquired from literature by others and (this) with which I have adorned myself; (it is) what I have claimed as my own and have transmitted from among the (elegant) wittiness that they (all) have desired and by which they have competed. My evidence attesting to its truth consists of: my own poems which I have written down, letters I have circulated, and *maqāmāt* I have prepared.

This is a story²⁸⁰ of a Baghdadi man with whom I was on intimate terms for a time. I encountered from him refined and uncouth phrases and idioms characteristic of the people of his city, (both) high-brow and low-brow. My mind recorded them so that they might testify to the (differing) moral character of the Baghdadis, according to their different (Sh. p. 43) classes,²⁸¹ and that they might (serve as) samples of their customs. Thus I have arranged (Baghdadis) in a single (harmonious) picture, within

²⁷⁹ The term for the poets of the ʿAbbasid period in opposition to those of earlier periods. See EI2, s.v. “*Muḥdathūn*.”

²⁸⁰ *Ḥikāya*.

²⁸¹ *Ṭabaqāt*.

which each (general) type of them is shown and the characters comprising (their respective) type participate in the likeness according to a single criterion, varying only according to rank and domicile. So I have proceeded in this as Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ said in a section of his work:²⁸²

Nevertheless, we can find someone among the people who can mimic the dialect of the residents of Yemen, and do so flawlessly in their articulation, not deviating in any respect, and likewise he can imitate Maghribīs, Khurasanians, Aḥwazīs, Sindīs, and Zanjīs.²⁸³ Yes, you will find him even more natural than they. If he imitates the speech of a stutterer, it is as if he had combined each distinctive item in the speech of every stutterer in the world into one way of speaking. (M. p. 2) If you find him imitating a blind man, he will create a picture (of the man) through (changing) the appearance of his face, eyes and limbs; among a thousand blind men you can hardly find one who combines all these peculiarities. It was as if this person had united the peculiarities distributed among them, and condensed all the inimitable characteristics of stories about blind men into one blind man. There was a person²⁸⁴ who used to stand at the Karkh Gate,²⁸⁵ in the presence of the donkey drivers, and bray. There wasn't a donkey that was sick, worn out, or overworked, which wouldn't bray (with him). One might hear a real donkey's bray and not be drawn to it or move toward it like he would be toward the voice of this mimic. It is as if he had united every sound that resembles the bray of a donkey into the bray of one donkey, and the souls of all donkeys would be soothed by hearing it.²⁸⁶ This is why the Ancients claimed that it should rather be said that man is called a 'small world': a microcosm of the large world, only because he can depict with his hand every image and can imitate (Sh. p. 44) with his mouth every sound, and because he eats plants as do the cattle, eats meat as do the beasts of prey, eats grain as do the birds, and because in him are aspects of all the species of animals.

Having presented this statement, I will say: this is a story made commensurate with the conditions of one day, from its beginning to its end, and of a night likewise.

Indeed, it is possible to present it in detail and (still have) it run its full course in such a

²⁸² *al-Bayān*, 1:69-70. Pellat, 101. The translation cited is by D.M. Hawke.

²⁸³ The Zanjīs were the black slaves of southern Iraq. EI2, s.v. "Zandj."

²⁸⁴ Abū Dabbūba al-Zanjī, a poet and client of the Ziyād family. *al-Bayān*, 1:69.

²⁸⁵ Karkh was a neighborhood of Baghdad located on the west bank of the Tigris River. EI2, s.v. "Karkh."

²⁸⁶ The original includes the sentence: It was likewise with the barking of dogs. *al-Bayān*, 1:70.

period. For the kind of person who is intent on hearing it and does not consider the length of its digressions and its details as a burden on his heart, nor consider the level of language²⁸⁷ in repeating Baghdadi idioms to be a deficiency of knowledge with which I should be reproached--especially when he ultimately reaches the literary Bedouin story which I put last, and assents to the comment by one of the rhetoricians that, “The wit of an anecdote is in its idiomatic language; its charm is in the usage of its language; and its effectiveness is in the brevity of text”—to him I have dedicated myself to (creating) an elaboration exhausting to me when some other option would have pleased him more. Truly, I have a precedent--which I borrowed and then plundered--in the poetry of Abū ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥajjāj.²⁸⁸

O sir, (this is) a request from one whose poetry
Flows according to custom and convention

You must ignore the strange vocabulary
Which my obscenity presents.²⁸⁹ (Sh. p. 45)

There is another precedent (from) among his compositions, which is:

Sir, being gracious, (please) take my hand
For I have been stumbling in my shit (M. p. 3)

I formed a (turd) that sits upright and brought it
So all of you might see the rarity in the pot

It is like an egg which has just been gathered
I was charged with making it stand upright in the bowl

When Bishr b. Hārūn²⁹⁰ hears about it
He is amazed at it and al-Bustī²⁹¹ laughs

²⁸⁷ Laḥn. Laḥn, or incorrect usage, was noted as charming in anecdotes as early as Muʿāwiya's reign. Johann Fück, *ʿArabīya: recherches sur l'histoire de la langue et du style arabe*, 13.

²⁸⁸ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, d. 1001. A poet of the Būyid period. Although he was employed as a secretary and particularly as *muḥtasib*, or censor, in Baghdad, he specialized in and earned most of his income from obscene poetry, satire and praise poetry. EI2, s.v. “Ibn al-Ḥadjjādī.”

²⁸⁹ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Durra, 189.

²⁹⁰ Bishr b. Hārūn appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 1:139, but he is not identified further.

O sir, listen to a strange rare anecdote
On which I have spent my time.²⁹²

(Also,) from among his requests for himself, (I repeat) a fulfilled entreaty which I claim
after him:

O sir, all of my conversation is entertainment
Abandon yourself to hearing this entertainment of mine²⁹³

Here I begin the text, after apologizing for it in the poet's words:

With shyness and deference; but when
I encounter loyal and generous people

I let myself go completely
And said what I said without shame.²⁹⁴ (Sh. p. 46)

The Baghdad Letter

In the name of God the Beneficent and the Merciful

This exiled man, who is known as Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad b. ʿAlī²⁹⁵ al-Tamīmī al-Baghdādī, was an old man with a white beard gleaming in a face so red that unadulterated wine almost trickled from it. His eyes seemed as if he were looking through green glass. They glowed as if encompassing quicksilver. He was a rogue, a man who does not restrain his natural desires. He had a shrill voice, a (raucous) voice that drives animals away--he was a brayer. (Sh. p. 47) He was a sponger and a charmer, urbane and peculiar, decorous and a voluptuary, a flatterer and a slanderer, elegant and crude, eminent and an intellectual midget, a relative and a stranger, staid and impetuous, trustworthy and hypocritical. He was a good conversationalist and an

²⁹¹ al-Bustī, 971-1010. An Arab poet who spent most of his career in Bust, near present day Kabul. EI2, s.v. "al-Bustī." C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1943), Suppl. 1:445.

²⁹² Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.

²⁹³ Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.

²⁹⁴ Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.

²⁹⁵ The text is inconsistent. This much of the name appears as "Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī b. Muḥammad" at the end of the work (below, p. 390).

adversary at gambling, a pederast and a catamite, a quarreler and a mocker, a backbiter and a libeler, (Sh. p. 48) a vilifier²⁹⁶ and a faultfinder, an abuser and one who attributed vices to others, a quarrelsome drunk and one who exposed people's faults. He was scrupulously truthful and an unbeliever,²⁹⁷ an ascetic and a rake, a shining example and a disgrace, a good example and a phony, abraded and worn out, a pimp and (Sh. p. 49) a panderer. He was a note in a little box in a saddlebag in a (lonely) tower, sealed with ambergris, swathed in green silk, more contaminated than the mud of fish sellers' (stalls), and stinkier than the stench of tanners. He grew up among Dakūl,²⁹⁸ and Daqaysh, and Qamūr and Zankalāsh. He was one who was in the habit of coming and going, a storehouse of depravities, a bucket of sins, a sack of mange, famine's dress, a handful snatched from the basket of a junk seller, a handful of (ashes) from the palm of a stoker, and sweepings on a dung heap. He was more pocked than much peed-on earth, (Sh. p. 50) older than Muḥammad's outer garment,²⁹⁹ more noxious than well-aged cheese, more damaging than large rats. He was the son of an uncircumcised woman with grey hair, the son of a widow whose loins had been active during her period. He was a disaster among disasters and a knot in the manacle rope. He had become a close companion of gamblers and wine sellers, and was molded in the

²⁹⁶ *Humuza*, also translated as traducer. This is the title of Sura 104, in which the traducer is described as "slandering." *Qur'ān*, 104 (al-Humuza): Introduction, 1.

²⁹⁷ *Zindīq*. Specifically, a believer in dualism, i.e. a Zoroastrian or Magian. EI2, s.v. "Zindīq."

²⁹⁸ The meanings of Dakūl, Duqaysh, Qamūr and Zankalāsh could not be determined. Shālījī suggests they may be the names or nicknames of members of the lower classes. AQSH, 49.

²⁹⁹ An oblong piece of woolen cloth used as a cloak during the day and at night as a blanket. During this period Muḥammad's *burda* was preserved in the treasury of the Abbasid caliphs. EI2, s.v. "Burda."

characters of (Sh. p. 51) cross-dressers³⁰⁰ and monkey trainers,³⁰¹ and learned in the science of false astrologers³⁰² and conjurers.³⁰³ (M, p. 4)

(He is) an old man in the fire of Hell
Who had warmed himself (even) before death

You encounter him as bold, nimble
Comprehensive in iniquity

Trained in law,³⁰⁴ a theologian
One who examines and investigates

(He is) either a leader in
Transgression or a prophet sent

If you are eager to reproach him--
And his (standard) path is to be blamed--

And you want to be disdainful of
The foolish old man and embarrass him,

You will address him as a foolish old man
Like a donkey (who is) not cognizant

(When) he is urged to forsake iniquity
He seeks protection from (such) adversity.

Another:

³⁰⁰ *Mukhannathūn*, sing. *mukhannath*. During the Umayyad period, the *mukhannathūn* seem to have been male professional musicians who publicly wore women's clothing, were noted for wit and charm and were disapproved of by some who saw these traits as indications of immorality and irreligion. They were admitted to the women's quarters and acted as matchmakers. Later anecdotes depict the *mukhannathūn* as having ambiguous sexual identify as well as ambiguous gender identity and by the Abbasid period they were regarded as homosexual. Everett Rowson, "The Effeminates of Early Medina," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 111:4 (1991), 681, 686. Although *mukhannathūn* has been translated as effeminates, I am choosing to translate it as cross-dressers, because that better represents the ambiguity of the gender and sexual identities, the cross-dressing, the interest in wittiness/style and a "party" lifestyle.

³⁰¹ Monkey trainers were looked down on as being of an unclean class, probably because monkeys were considered excessively libidinous. Bosworth, 265.

³⁰² *Zarrāq*. A person who sits at the side of the road and tricks people, primarily by giving false information he pretends to read in the stars. al-Khafāji, *Shifā' al-Ghalīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1998), 171.

³⁰³ *Mushaʿbidh* means juggler, conjurer, or one who practices legerdemain, usually involving trickery. Its etymology indicates an aspect of controlling spirits. Bosworth, 333.

³⁰⁴ *Fiqh*, jurisprudence.

He is an old man, who, whenever blame clings to him, lashes out
Events have wised him up, so he has become well-tryed (Sh. p. 52)

(Experience) smelts him through sin, then molds him
Depravity strips and rends his intelligence
So he has become wanton, absorbed in sin

Another:

(He is) an old man (who is) impudent, hypocritical, foolish
Flaws gather in such as him

The nights have whitened his hair
And sins have blackened his face

Another:

He is a despicable old man, hypocritical
In their foolishness, the big-humped riding animals wear themselves out
coming to him³⁰⁵

The nights have whitened his hair
And sins have blackened his face

Another:

He is a fornicator, over his chin is (something) like a bandage
(Protecting him) from the perfume of assholes and vulvas

A Mālikī³⁰⁶, every day his penis
Churns its butter in the space of anuses

These are some of the old man's characteristics; now listen to stories about him,
and the delicious tidbits we (will) reveal about him.

Listen to an explanation of a story in which
I plunged into various strange disciplines

And to a tale like pearls from which I have
Strung a string of sapphires and small pearls

³⁰⁵ This *bayt* seems to imply a double entendre which it is impossible to resolve.

³⁰⁶ Maliki's are frequently represented in poetry of this period as exhibiting "*mujūn*" or dissolute behavior. The linkage of anal sex to members of the Maliki school of law is recorded in Shahāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī, *Nuzhat al-Albāb fī-Mā lā Yūjid fī Kitāb*, ed. Jamāl Jum'ā (London: Riad al-Rayyes, 1992), 223-5.

(Sh. p. 53) (M. p. 5) He made a habit of entering some notable personage's house, pretending to be weak from fasting and acting righteously, like pious people. He would wear a *ṭaylasān*,³⁰⁷ its edge drawn over his temples, half-covering his face. Whenever he would see a gathering³⁰⁸ attended by notables, he would start reciting the *Qurʾān* in a whisper, during which he would greet people in a soft, melodious, sorrow-laden voice. He would approach the master of the house and say, "May God grant you long life and enhance³⁰⁹ your generosity."³¹⁰ He would sit reading (the *Qurʾān*) half-audibly for a long time, then he would raise his voice a little above a whisper, to quote, "Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguile from remembrance of God and performing prayer and giving alms; who fear the day in which hearts and eyes will be turned topsy-turvy; that Allāh may reward them with the best of what they did, and increase them from His bounty. Allāh will provide for whomever he pleases without reckoning."³¹¹ At that point, the people would think that he had finished the lesson--during which he would sigh so deeply as to make his (nasal) passages bleed--but he would continue this affectation and display of humility until he noticed one of the people beginning to smile. Then he would say, with that (same) humility, abasement and submissiveness,

³⁰⁷ A veil placed over the turban and hanging down the back. In later times it was placed on the shoulders. A *ṭaylasān* was worn by a specialist in theology or religious law. Dozy, *Vêtements*, s.v. "*Ṭaylasān*."

³⁰⁸ An assembly or council of a tribe's notables; a public audience with a ruler, in which plaintiffs, petitioners, poets and scholars might participate; evenings of entertainment in which social barriers fell, and in which poetry played a major role; literary salons. EI2, s.v. "*Madjlis*."

³⁰⁹ *Ḥayyā Allāh dhā al-wajh bi l-salām wa ḥabā-hu bi l-ikrām*. There is a play between the standard practice of wishing graces on the host and a socially unacceptable strong suggestion of a larger reward. The latter indicates Abū al-Qāsim is beginning his sponging routine.

³¹⁰ Generosity was one of the most valued virtues in pre-Islamic times and was considered proof of genuine nobility. Excessive generosity was even more impressive. Under Islam, generosity came to mean giving according to a pious motive in a controlled way. Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qurʾān*, McGill Islamic Studies, 1, 76, 78.

³¹¹ *Qurʾān*, 24 (Nūr): 37-38.

shedding abundant tears and with a series of sighs welling up from deep within his breast, “O hard-hearted one, (how can you show) such joy after the death of the martyred Ḥusayn?³¹² There is no power and no strength except (Sh. p. 54) in God. You are absorbed in your amusement and entertainment while the Prophet’s family suffers death and war.” Then he weeps and says:

May God curse whoever among both the rabble
And imams³¹³ act like enemies to ʿAlī and Ḥusayn

The gazelle is safe, and the pigeon, but the
Prophet’s family is not safe at the shrine³¹⁴

May you be happy and your people be happy
As people of the Prophet’s House³¹⁵ and of Islam

May God's mercy and peace be upon them
Whenever someone stands up saying “Salām ʿalaykūm.”³¹⁶

He rubs the tears from his eyes, heaves a sigh and says:³¹⁷

I am purer than any one who harbors treachery
Against the pact of the Legatee the day of Ghadīr³¹⁸

³¹² Ḥusayn was the second son of ʿAlī, Muḥammad’s cousin and son-in-law and Fāṭima, Muḥammad’s daughter. He was killed by Umayyad soldiers at Karbalāʾ in 680 C.E. Shiʿites consider Ḥusayn to have been the rightful caliph and mourn his death as a martyr. EI2, s.v. “Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī Abī Ṭālib.

³¹³ The significance of rabble and imams is that, respectively, they represent the common people and the *ulamāʾ* or religious scholars.

³¹⁴ Literally, standing place. Lane, s.v. “*Maqām*.” Here, this means the Maqām Ibrahīm, located by the Kaʿba. It is a stone on which Abraham stood at the building of the Kaʿba and in which he left his footprint. *al-Bayān*, 3:360, n2. The poem is attributed to the poet ʿAbd Allāh b. Kathīr b. al-Muṭṭalib b. Abī Wadāʿa al-Sahmī, d. 160/776-7, and is recorded as having been recited when the caliph Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Mālik, 104/724-125/743, wrote to his governor in Mecca to have him arrest the supporters of Zayd b. ʿAlī, a great-grandson of ʿAlī, who was instigating a revolt in Kūfa around the end of 121/739. *al-Bayān*, 3:359, n5.

³¹⁵ The term *Ahl al-Bait* is ambiguous, although in this context it is clearly Shiʿite. The Shiʿites apply it only to ʿAlī, Fāṭima and their descendents. Sunnis generally consider the term to include Muḥammad and ʿAlī and their wives and descendents. However, the term is sometimes extends to include some branches of the Hashimites. EI2, s.v. “*Ahl al-Bayt*.” Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*, 19.

³¹⁶ “*Salām ʿalaykum*” means “Peace be upon you all.” These lines are by ʿAbd Allāh b. Kathayyar b. al-Muṭṭalib b. Abī Wadāʿa al-Sahmī, d. 120 H. *al-Bayān*, 3:359-60. The *bayts* in al-Jāhīz have the following differences from their form in AQSH: in the first *bayt*, *yasubbu* (abuse) appears instead of *yuʿādī*. In the third *bayt*, *baytan* (house) appears instead of *nafsan*. *al-Bayān*, 3:360.

³¹⁷ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. Durra, 175-6.

I am a follower³¹⁹ of Muḥammad and ʿAlī
And of the two imams, Shabbar and Shabīr³²⁰

I am truly a follower of the Virgin³²¹
Without corruption, quibbling or falseness

(Sh. p. 55) I am a follower of one for whom the sun was held back³²²
And a follower of the partitioner of Hell fire³²³ (M. p. 6)

I am a follower of one by whom faith is
Divided between permitted and forbidden³²⁴

I am a follower of the one who spoke with the wolf³²⁵
In Babylon,³²⁶ among a group who were present with him

And of one whom the dead man's skull addressed³²⁷

³¹⁸ According to Shiʿite belief, on his Farewell Pilgrimage, Muḥammad appointed ʿAlī as his successor during a rest stop at Ghadr Khumm. Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, S. M. Stern, ed. (Chicago: Aldine, 1971), 2:113.

³¹⁹ EI2, s.v. "Mawlā."

³²⁰ Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. Shabbar and Shabīr were the names of Aaron's sons. The relationship between ʿAlī and Muḥammad was likened to that of Moses and Aaron, so that ʿAlī's sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were sometimes referred to as Shabbar and Shabīr. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, ʿAlī Shīrī, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥayyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1988), s.v. "Shabara."

³²¹ *Batūl*. Fāṭima, Muḥammad's daughter became associated with miracles, particularly in the Shiʿite tradition. She was considered absolutely pure, without menstruation, with her sons born through her left thigh. In recognition of this, she was honored with the title virgin. Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muḥammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*, 18.

³²² One example of a Shiʿite *ḥadīth* on this topic is: Muḥammad prayed the ʿaṣr prayer and the sun set. Then ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib came and sat down beside him. Allāh brought the sun back up and both men prayed the ʿaṣr prayer together. al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Wafāʾ, 1983), 41:167. Other versions of this *ḥadīth* appear in the same work, 41:167-191.

³²³ In a Shiʿite *ḥadīth*, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib states that he will assign the dead to Heaven or Hell. al-Majlisī, 41:234.

³²⁴ *Mubāḥ* and *maḥzūr*. There are five categories of acts recognized under Islamic law: *farḍ* or *wājib* = required; *sunna*, *masnūn*, *mandūb* or *mustaḥabb* = recommended but not required; *jāʿiz* or *mubāḥ* = indifferent, neither rewarded nor punished; *makrūh* = disapproved but not punished or forbidden; *ḥarām* = forbidden and punished. Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 223-4.

³²⁵ Similar stories are told about more than one person. This poem is clearly about ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. A Shiʿite *ḥadīth* exists in which a speaking wolf approaches ʿAlī when he is walking through the street of a city with his sons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. A hairy wolf catches up to them, puts its muzzle on the ground and gestures to ʿAlī with its paw. ʿAlī asks Allāh to free the wolf's tongue. After appropriate greetings and introductions, the wolf relates that he and his kin had once sworn allegiance to the Israelites, but now were called a second time from the heavens to swear allegiance to Islam, specifically to ʿAlī. The latter asks whether the wolf is from the jinni. The wolf responds that no, he is honorable, because he is of the party of the Shiʿites. However, the city in which this occurs is not identified. al-Majlisī, 41:238-9.

³²⁶ *Arḍ Bābil*. This term is used mostly for Iraq, but Yāqūt, at least, considers the area to be more limited--the area equivalent to the Sawād. The term can also refer to the district of Upper Bihqubādh, which includes Bābil and ʿAyn al-Tamr. EI2, s.v. "Bābil" or "Biḥqubādh."

In the land of Babylon, about various affairs

I am a follower of the one who spoke to the eagle in Kūfa
On the day of his famous beneficence

I am a follower of the one who will have the banner
Of praise around his shoulders on the day of the Resurrection

I am the follower of the one who returned to battle on the day of Ḥunayn³²⁸
When the sword blades had lodged in the upper chests,

And spear points in armored hands
Broke as they pierced breasts

In the din of a battle that would leave behind
Only killed, fugitives or prisoners

I am the follower of the one through whom Islam conquered
Two forts: Qurayza³²⁹ and al-Naḍīr³³⁰

And of the one who shook the gate of Khaybar³³¹ until
All the people knew for sure of its destruction

And of the one who taught the widows
Of the polytheists at Badr to crop their hair³³²

The one whose victims, as the Night of Harīr³³³ passed, were all

³²⁷ ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib prayed the *zuhr* prayer, then turned and addressed a skull opposite him. They had a long conversation during which the sun disappeared before ʿAlī could pray the ʿaṣr prayer. ʿAlī asked the sun to return, but it refused. Allāh had 70,000 angels with iron chains pull the sun back up until ʿAlī finished his ʿaṣr prayer. *al-Majlisī*, 41:166.

³²⁸ During the Battle of Ḥunayn, there were many new troops in the Muslim army and they fell back in confusion under a concerted attack by the Hawāzin. The enemy's standard bearer was mounted on a camel. ʿAlī and a companion hamstringed the camel and led a counterattack. Gulzar Ahmed, *The Battles of the Prophet of Allāh*. (Lahore: Islamic Publications, Ltd., 1975-), 2:193, 196-197.

³²⁹ ʿAlī was the standard bearer in this battle. Ḥassan al-Amīn, *Islamic Shiʿite Encyclopaedia*, 1:218, s.v. "Qurayza."

³³⁰ ʿAlī was the standard bearer in this battle. Gulzar Ahmed, *The Battles of the Prophet of Allāh*, 1:301, "al-Naḍīr."

³³¹ In the battle of Khaybar, one of the Jews fighting ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib knocked his shield out of his hand. He picked up a door or gate that was lying nearby and used it as his shield for the rest of the battle. al-Ṭabarī, *The Victory of Islam*, trans. by Michael Fishbein, *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 131.

³³² The women cut their hair as a sign of mourning. It is an indication that ʿAlī killed many enemies.

³³³ During the Night of Ḥarīr, which occurred during the Battle of Siffin, ʿAlī spread his prayer cloth and prayed among the battle, ignoring arrows whipping by him. After praying, he returned to battle and his call of "Allāhu Akbar" is said to have resounded every few minutes, each call meaning the death of a foe. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, *Nahjul Balagha: Peak of Eloquence* (Elmhurst, N.Y.: Tahrike Tarsile Quran, 1984), 87.

Smitten by calls of “God is great” as if felled by pebbles

He recites this, saddening those present and playing on the emotions of the listeners. He keeps up this deception until someone catches onto him and says, “Relax, Abū al-Qāsim. There is nobody here who doesn’t drink and fuck.” When he hears this, he begins to smile and says, (Sh. p. 56) “You don’t say, by God? Pimps, slap-takers, the children of (illicit) embraces and feather bolsters, followers of roast and fried meat, worshippers of the goblet and the liter wine bottle, brothers of sandwiches³³⁴ and fried food, are all of them like them? Marvelous!”

Then, having untied the knot in his *ḥubwa*,³³⁵ he bounds up out of his squat, throws the edge of his *taylasān* back from his forehead, straightens up, and says, “May you have a fine morning, one neither unpleasant nor scandal-revealing.” He looks at one of those present, then approaches the host and says, “Sir, who’s this? What’s his name? May God grant me the pleasure of his absence.” The host responds in the same vein, “This is a man of outstanding culture and refinement, a writer, known as Abū Bishr.”³³⁶ Abū al-Qāsim says, “He frowned and turned away.³³⁷ There is no God but Allah! He’s a bore whose *kunya*³³⁸ is Father of Desire; a dung-seller whose name is nosegay; a female beggar³³⁹ called Queenie; a sewer pipe called Father (Sh. p. 57) of

³³⁴ Bazmāward. Meat and herbs sandwiched with bread. Arberry2, 202.

³³⁵ *Ḥubwa*. A piece of cloth with which a man draws his legs up to his chest, then continues wrapping it around his back, thereby confining himself in a tight squat. It offers support when there is nothing to sit or lean on. Lane, s.v. “*Ḥubwa*,” “*Ḥṭabʿa*.”

³³⁶ Cheerful or with an open, pleasant face. Lane, s.v. “*Bishr*.”

³³⁷ *Qurʿān*, 80 (Abasa): 1.

³³⁸ The *kunya* is an honorific given men and women after the birth of their first child. It includes respectively, Abū plus the name of the oldest son, or Umm plus the son’s name. The name of the oldest daughter is used until a son is born. EI2, s.v. “*Kunya*.”

³³⁹ *Mukaddiya*. AQSH, 56. A beggar, particularly one who stands over a dead man he does not know and begs for money to buy a shroud, or who stands over a dead riding beast on a pilgrimage route and begs for money ostensibly so that he can complete the pilgrimage. Bosworth, 1:40.” It appears as *Mukarriya* in AQM, 6.

Cleanliness; a black woman swathed in veils,³⁴⁰ a lock on a ruin. He has (M. p. 7) read the book *Delaying Knowledge*, and the book *On Forgetting Learning*, and studied the collection *Defective Understanding*. Pay his pasturage fee at the Wednesday cattle market. Thanks to God, only the minor aspects of ignorance escape him. He is courageous; the old man has no idea how oblivious he is.

If my lord finds fault with what I say
And maligns me badly behind my back

I will shit on the chapter 'Verb form *af'altu*'
In the *Book of Pure Language*³⁴¹

And this book in his hand which he reads--it is as if he were increasing his perspicacity; no, rather he wants to distinguish himself from the masses by being cultured,³⁴² by (saying) 'I am me.'

The mockers said, 'A literary youth,'
At which he raised his eyes to her and preened himself

He lowered his head, applying himself to the problems
He has no idea--by your right!--how to unravel them"³⁴³

(Abū al-Qāsim says,) "When I see the old man moving onto the straight and narrow, I know he wants to scale the Pearly Gates. No, rather he wants to fight the angel of death. What a bore, by God! Brrr, bring me a glowing brazier.

³⁴⁰ Veils are meant to hide beauty, but it was generally assumed that black women were not beautiful. For a discussion of ethnic stereotypes under medieval Islam, see Bernard Lewis, *Race and Color in Islam* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). Pages 11-15 are particularly pertinent for this situation.

³⁴¹ *Kitāb al-faṣīḥ*. A book by Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Tha'lab, 199/815-291/904, an Arab grammarian, on Arabic language and rhetoric. EI2, s.v. "Tha'lab."

The lines are by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Yatīma*, 3:37.

The first bayt in the appears in the *Yatīma* as:

In 'āba Tha'lab shi'rī /Aw 'āba khiffat ruḥī

If Tha'lab finds my verse flawed /And blames my soul's levity

There is an undetermined obscene double entendre in the second bayt, which is at least partly based on *bāb* meaning both chapter and gateway.

³⁴² *Bi l-adab*. *Adab* is discussed in the introduction. For further information, see S.A. Bonebakker, "Adab and the Concept of Belles-Lettres," in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 18-20, 23, 30.

³⁴³ *Wa mā ṭaḥā-hā*. *Qur'ān*, 91 (al-Shams):6.

Someone says, “He is closely connected with the head of the Dīwān³⁴⁸ and is a person of consequence.” Abū al-Qāsim says, “What’s that to me? A load of camel shit! Since the Prophet and his Companions, there has been no one who in and of himself (evokes) reverence (upon sight).

May Allah mount every stud alive today
On the Head of the Dīwān’s mother

To me he is like a dog or like dog shit
When it has dried up—the two are equivalent³⁴⁹ (M. p. 8)

Which is the bedbug and which is its bite? Should I be afraid the Head of the Dīwān will take my livelihood away, or attack my water reservoir? If your hand is not in somebody’s platter, don’t worry about his bald spot.” He gazes at him suspiciously for a while, then says, “By my life, he is nothing if not elegant! Just look at the width of his sleeves and the beauty of his burrakān’s³⁵⁰ embroidery! (Sh. p. 60)

I said when I saw him sitting (there)
With his two rings and two embroideries³⁵¹

In my opinion, how the fool needs
A teacher who will box his ears!”

³⁴⁷ This individual cannot be conclusively identified. It is probably Abū Qurra Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Qunnāʾī, who was first a tax farmer in the Wāsiṭ area, but between 350/961 and 360/971 was highly influential in the entire financial administration of Baghdad and the Sawād. He was closely associated with Abū al-Faḍl al-ʿAbbas b. al-Ḥusayn al-Shīrāzī, who served the Būyid amīrs Muʿizz al-Dawla and his son Bakhtiyār as though he were their wazīr. Ibn Miskawayh, *Kitāb Tajārib al-Umam* (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1965?), 2:260-365. Mafizullah Kabir, *The Buwayhid Dynasty of Baghdad, 334/946-447/1055* (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1964), 19-21. John J. Donahue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq, 334 H./945 to 403 H./1012: Shaping Institutions for the Future*, *Islamic History and Civilization*, 44 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 148-152, 189.

³⁴⁸ *Ṣāhib al-Dīwān*. Head of the ʿAbbasid chancery. EI2, s.v. “Dīwān.”

³⁴⁹ Lines by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in a manuscript entitled *Jamharat al-Islām* held in Leiden, 78. AQSH, 59, n2. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Dīwān*, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 3782.

³⁵⁰ A type of black outer garment. A. de Biberstein Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français* (1860; reprint, Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1970), s.v. “Burrakān.”

³⁵¹ *Ṭirāz*. This appearance of woven or embroidered writing was called *ṭirāz*. The caliph had the right to wear garments with *ṭirāz* or to reward those whom he wished to honor by authorizing them to wear *ṭirāz*. It may be this individual has been honored with the privilege of using two *ṭirāz* but it is probably a description of an individual who is overdressed and does not realize it. R.B. Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles: Material for a History up to the Mongol Conquest* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1972), 7.

Then he looks at him a second time and the (unfortunate) is confounded, his brow breaking out in sweat from his ignominy. Some one says, “Abū al-Qāsim, he has beautiful handwriting and eloquence, too.” He responds, “Then why does he perfume his fingertips with Jew shit, or rather with the shit of black dogs?³⁵² No, by God, he must simply perfume himself with a bathhouse owner’s fart, one ripe with frankincense, or he must enter the vulva of a cow that has eaten fumitory³⁵³--a cow that has strange tastes.” Some one says, “He is (engaged in) weighty matters.” Abū al-Qāsim says, “Tell me more about him. It's as if he were Umm Mūsā's³⁵⁴ treasurer of chicken shit (Sh. p. 61) or the steward of the Shaṭṭ,³⁵⁵ who guards duck shit, or the one in charge of the Tigris, who squeezes the post-flooding debris.³⁵⁶

What's this black (slave) attending on him?” Someone says, “His servant. He has a corps of slaves and servants.” Abū al-Qāsim says, “Of course he'd show me his servants and slaves. Yes, by my life, if it weren't for servants, the rank of kings wouldn't be apparent, and there wouldn't be any apparent distinction between the rich and the destitute. My Mistress has no part of servanthood except while taking her time in the privy and sitting on the pot while speaking to the stewards. Arise, Mr. Cloves, stand next to your master with your sandals (ready to slap his neck).

³⁵² *Salḥ*. This is a play between ink and excrement. For a discussion of ink equated with excrement see Alan Dundes, *Life is Like a Chicken Coop Ladder: a Portrait of German Culture through Folklore* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 67-8, 115-8.

³⁵³ *Shāṭranj* or *shāḥṭrak*. *Fumaria officinalis*: a plant formerly used to treat biliary problems, i.e. increase intestinal function or counteract gallstones. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Najīb al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, *al-Aqrābādihīn ʿalā Tartīb al-Asbāb* (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, 1994), 109, 197.

³⁵⁴ Umm Mūsā was a household manageress of the caliph al-Muqtadir, from the year 299/912-310/922. Her position involved carrying letters from the caliph to individuals in the administration and serving high ranking prisoners housed in the palace. Ibn Miskawayh, *Kitāb Tajārib al-Umam* (Baghdād: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1964), 1:20, 63-4, 74..

³⁵⁵ The Shaṭṭ al-ʿArab, which is the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. LeStrange, *Lands*, 26.

³⁵⁶ *Yashuddu al-mābāqāt bi l-ḥawḍ*. *Al-mābāqāt* is not conclusively identifiable. *Ḥawṣ* is emended to *ḥawḍ*. The translation “who squeezes the post-flooding debris” is a conjecture.

Among the people the only praise for eunuchs is that
They have intense patience for penetration of their asses

They are a community that resembles apes
But they differ from them in their high spirits

May I be a ransom for everything about him. (For) an elegant man like him, anything that doesn't resemble his master is a disgrace. Why is he like that? (He is) a bear who acts coquettish in a felt³⁵⁷ dress. (He is) an elegant man who fell from the shoulder of his nursemaid into the privy. He doesn't eat shit except with coconut³⁵⁸--which have entered the drain pipe where the water (flows) in. (Sh. p. 62) O Abū Khālid, what is this bluster?" Then he puffs his cheeks, stares (at him), and says:

"Today an excessively hot (man) put on
A shirt over a woolen tunic

I can only compare him to
A drum sounding over a songstress³⁵⁹ (M. p. 9)

Who can (supply) me with a youth
Who will straight away fart in his beard?

And he says,

O scribe, his servant, about whom
We have no doubt, (is) ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd,³⁶⁰

Your beard is in my ass and in the ass of my people
Can anything more be said in regard to this?

Yes, my Lord, and this other, who is he? He has had his turban made large, his jubba³⁶¹ embroidered with many colors³⁶² and his beard molded through excessive

³⁵⁷ J.G. Hava, *al-Faraid Arabic-English Dictionary* (Beirut: Catholic Press, 1964), s.v. "Lubūd."

³⁵⁸ This is entirely unclear. The dotting in the manuscript is lacking. Al-Shālījī reads the script as *nārjīn* and without substantiation equates *nārjīn* with *nārgīla*, meaning coconut, as found in ʿAbbūd al-Shālījī, *Mawsūʿat al-Kināyāt al-ʿĀmiyya al-Baghdādiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 1982), 1:313. I have chosen this reading arbitrarily. Mez reads the script as *nār jubn*. AQM, 8.

³⁵⁹ *Kurrāʿa*. A female singer who sings with a small drum. al-Khafājī, *Shifāʿ al-Ghalīl*, 262.

³⁶⁰ ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib.

combing. How large his insignia-marked³⁶³ turban is! It is as though he were a porter with a huge bundle on his head.

On his head is a turban wrapped
To hang long over the eyebrows

As if, on his head, it
Were a pot on a quince

Another:

(Either) you put on this striped cotton (turban)
Or are you a Nihāwandī³⁶⁴ pear

Rather you are a *mishqā*³⁶⁵ whose impetus
Truly resembles that of a soldier

O Lord, how white his outer garment is and how black his expression! (Sh. p. 63)

It is as if, when he appeared to the people
Veiled in his clothes of cotton cloth,
(He were) a donkey's prick wrapped in a sheet of paper³⁶⁶

And this other, who is he? And why is he silent, not speaking? Do you believe he thinks about who the caliphate will go to? Isn't our Lord concerned with (discovering) who ended up with Khusraw's sword? His rowboat must have sunk in the

³⁶¹ A long outer garment which is open in front and has wide sleeves. Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. by J. Milton Cowan. 3rd ed. (Ithaca: Spoken Language Services, 1976), s.v. "Jubba."

³⁶² For a cultured man, clothing of good quality soft linen in pure colors was considered appropriate. It was not considered correct to wear clothes of various colors, since that was typical of women's clothing. al-Washshā', *Kitāb al-Muwashshā'*, ed. R.E. Brünnow (Leyden, 1886), 124-7.

³⁶³ Lane, s.v. "Musawwama."

³⁶⁴ Nihāwand is a town in the Hamadhan region of Iran. Yāqūt, *Kitāb mu'jam al-buldān*, Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, ed. (Tehran, 1965), 4:827. A Nihāwandī pear has an especially large body and a long, very narrow neck. This line could be paraphrased as: Or do you have a mountainous belly with a little pin head.

³⁶⁵ Unidentifiable word.

³⁶⁶ Attributed to Jarīr in al-Jāhiz, "Fakhr al-Sūdān 'alā al-Bīdān," in *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1964-), 1:183. Only the first and third lines appear in the *Rasā'il*. They describe a black man dressed in a white garment for a festival. The lines do not appear in Jarīr's *Dīwān*. Jarīr, d. 110/728-9, was one of the most important writers of *hijā'* in the Umayyad period. EI2, s.v. "Djarīr."

Dāwūdiyya.³⁶⁷ Poor fool, he is of two minds: one thinks about the beginnings and the other the results. Woe to you all, who is he?" Someone says, "A man who is familiar with notables, and a confidant of leaders." He says, "Woe. A vile drinking companion. He takes and does not give--like a wary waterfowl,³⁶⁸ which when it sees good (things), swoops down, and when it sees evil, retreats. He is like a mosque, to which (something) is carried but from which (nothing) is carried. (He is) an ^ʿAlid, whose hands one takes, but from whose hands (Sh. p. 64) one does not take. (He is) a Sufi, who seeks from us, but from whom we do not seek. (He is) a single drum among the holiday drums. (He is) a cat that had made a habit of uncovering cooking pots,³⁶⁹ and does not stay away³⁷⁰ from the neighbor's (cooking) fire. (He is) a sponger who attends even when he is not invited.

When they desire pleasure, they head for) a church
When they desire benefit, (they head for) a mosque³⁷¹

Another:

His only desire in the world is a boy to fuck
And his only ambition is gobbling goat meat plus strip steak

His worldly desire is date wine³⁷² to drink and a young thing to stuff. O lord, one who accustoms himself to bread (M. p. 10) from the dining table, date wine from the

³⁶⁷ Ḥawḍ Dāwūd. A reservoir in southern Baghdad near the al-ʿAṭash Market in the Ruṣāfa quarter, on the east bank by the bridge crossing the Euphrates. *al-Buldān*, 2:312.

³⁶⁸ The *qirillī* is a small, shy waterfowl which watches the depths of the water for good things to eat and watches the sky with the other eye for danger. The proverb referred to begins: *Kun hadhiran ka l-qirillī...* Another proverb, "*atmaʿ min qirillī*" signifies a man whose sole interest is searching out food. *al-Damīrī, Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Albāb, 1980), 2:187. See also *Akḥṭaf min qirillī* in *al-Maydānī, Muʿjam al-Amthāl*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1978?), 1:459, proverb 1378.

³⁶⁹ *Idhā taʿawwada al-sinnawr kashf al-quḍūr fa ʿlam anna-hu lā yuḍbiru ʿan-hā*. Freytag., 1:138, proverb 439.

³⁷⁰ *Yashrudu ʿalā*. There seems to be a word missing here. *al-Shālījī*'s solution is to change the verb to *yathrudu*, to dip into, which matches the sense of the proverb. However, *ʿalā* is then superfluous. I would suggest that the copyist left out "*lā*." Since *ʿalā* with *sharada* means to depart from, adding "*lā*" would make the phrase grammatically correct and parallel to the syntax of the proverb.

³⁷¹ From a *qaṣīda* by *al-Sarī al-Raffāʿ*, who was a poet from Mosul. *Yatīma*, 2:177.

wineskin, and mounting one conscripted³⁷³ without recompense will never do well.

(One like him) smells the aromas of food while still several days' travel (from reaching it).

If a pot were cooked underground in Rūm³⁷⁴
Or at the farthest bounds of the frontiers

And if you were in China, you would manage to reach it
O you who know the unseen³⁷⁵--pertaining to what's in cooking pots

Another:

(He is) determined. If he sees a table,
He attacks its edge (Sh. p. 65)

He descends like a plague on
Fried foods and fat, suckling goats

(He finds) bread delicious
Only with both meat and fat

(He finds) date pudding³⁷⁶ delicious only
When prepared like *fālūdhaj*,³⁷⁷ with saffron

To the extent that, without henna, you see
His palms and fingers (ornamented) with dye

He loves banquets--to frequent their tables, to range among their stews,³⁷⁸ to
pasture freely on their delicacies, and to dart between their marvels, heading only for

³⁷² *Nabīdh*. A partly fermented drink. The amount of time the mixture was allowed to ferment is not known, but it was frequently considered insufficient to create enough alcohol to be intoxicating. EI2, s.v. "*Nabīdh*."

³⁷³ Either being forced to do something one does not want to, or being required to labor without pay. Lane, s.v. "*Sukhra*."

³⁷⁴ Byzantium. Wehr, s.v. "al-Rūm."

³⁷⁵ Invisible world, i.e. spiritual world. Wehr, s.v. "*Ālam al-ghayb*."

³⁷⁶ *Khabīṣ*. A sweet made by boiling sesame oil, then mixing in bread crumbs, and, optionally, adding a well-cooked fruit, such as dates, or a vegetable. Once the dish was cooled and set, it was topped with sugar. Arberry2 : 210. This dish was typical of desert life and in Baghdad would have been part of a poor man's diet. David Waines, *In a Caliph's Kitchen* (London: Riad el-Rayyes, 1989), 104.

³⁷⁷ *Fālūdhaj*, also known as *fālūdh* or *fālūdhaq*. A common sweet made from wheat or starch with water, honey and sometimes saffron. Lane, s.v. "*Fālūdh*." This dish would have been more typical of middle class urban tastes. David Waines, *In a Caliph's Kitchen*, 104. A different recipe would result in molded pieces of almond paste, created by making a sugar fondant then kneading in more sugar with ground almonds. Arberry2, 211.

the dishes that are the most haute-cuisine, the most delicious to chew, have the highest price in the market, and are the smoothest (going down) the throats.

He falls upon the fat partridges and doesn't
Pay attention to the wild chicory or the lettuce

He is faint-hearted from his pleasures
With penetrating fang and impatient molar

He has a hand that grabs right for the food
And doesn't play around handling the platters (Sh. p. 66)

Another:

He (attacks) lambs like a roaring beast
He swallows goat better than an oven (does)

Another:

(His fingers) stick to grilled meat better than a skewer³⁷⁹
He works over roast meat and jerky
With fingers formed from iron

His fingers are like a net for catching fish.³⁸⁰

A companion, the fringe of his conviviality is gossamer
(And) the glass of his refinement is unclouded

Notes from him(self) to him(self) inviting
Him to (his) masters (keep) him busy

O my lord,

Why is one who likes suckling kids
Free of charge not slapped (upside the head)?³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ Crumbled bread moistened with broth, then piled up with some pieces of meat. Lane, s.v. "Tharīda, pl. Tharā'id."

³⁷⁹ al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-Adāb wa Thimār al-Albāb*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī, (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bāb al-Ḥalabī, 1970), 910, (in prose).

³⁸⁰ *Zahr*, 910, (in prose).

³⁸¹ This line is from an anecdote. A host recites the line when a kid is served. One of his guests responds that he does not like goat. The host apologizes, but nevertheless remains shamed. The significance of the line is that a host should not discourage any guest from eating. Abū Hilāl al-Sābī, *al-Hafawāt al-Nādira* (Riyad: Dār al-Sharīf, 1998), 19.

Yes, sir, (M. p. 11)

In the morning, he appears hale and hearty from (last night's) food
In the evening, he appears haggard from (guzzling) wine

The nature of a rooster³⁸² is imprinted on him, thank God: he eats, drinks and screws.

He isn't good at—bless his soul--(anything) except this: his hand travels (*tusāfir*) over

the table and his face lights up (*yusfir*) at the variety of (Sh. p. 67) dishes.³⁸³ He visits Alī

because of his power³⁸⁴ (*qadr*) and Mu'āwiya because of his cooking pot (*qidr*).³⁸⁵ He does

mischief with the wolf and (then) calls for help with the shepherd. (If) barley inflates

his belly,³⁸⁶ then the goblet does not inflate it. (He has) three (fingers) like hearth

stones³⁸⁷, a molar like an awl, and a stomach like a desert.³⁸⁸ You (f. sing.) will

(eventually) get your breakfast, even if you have to wait a while.³⁸⁹

Eat it, you blockhead, for those who gorge
Until they are sick will come to you

And this other, who is he? (He is) the elevated fever of an abscess. It is as if he

were a beardless young man, who neither sings nor gets penetrated, as if he were a

³⁸² A rooster is the most sensual and self-satisfied of the birds and is also stupid. EI2, s.v. "Dīk."

³⁸³ *Maqāmāt*, 74 (al-jāhīziyya).

³⁸⁴ For examples of 'Alī's power, see p. 9-11 above. In one of those examples, during the battle of Khaybar, 'Alī used a gate as a shield. 'Alī's power is evident, because in different versions of the story it took either eight or forty other men to pick up the gate after 'Alī put it down. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *History of the Caliphs*, trans. By H.S. Jarrett (Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1970), 172.

³⁸⁵ Mu'āwiya's *maḍīra* was so well prepared that even at the time of the Battle of Siffīn, Abū Hurayra, one of 'Alī's staunch supporters, would go over to Mu'āwiya's side to eat it. al-Tha'ālibī, *The Book of Curious and Entertaining Information, The Laṭā'if al-ma'ārif of Tha'ālibī*, trans. and ed. by C.E. Bosworth (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1968), 46.

³⁸⁶ The vowel *ling* is unclear. al-Shālījī records the word as *hīhī*. Mez records the word as *ḥabājī*. Neither word is found in the dictionaries. *Ḥabaja* can mean to inflate the belly and I am choosing this since it gives the phrase an intelligible meaning. On the other hand, *hīhī* is similar to *ḥawḥay*, the syllables called out to urge a horse on, and *hīh hīh*, the syllables used to drive sheep. A. de Biberstein Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français* s.v. "Ḥabaja," "Ḥawḥay" and "Ḥīh hīh."

³⁸⁷ The noun modified by three cannot be conclusively determined, but it was polite to eat with only three fingers. Food would have been cooked on hearth stones before being served. Thus, if his fingers are like hearth stones, they would get the food first. *Athāfī* generally signified three bright stars in Ursa Minor indicating the passing of an era. al-Khafājī, *Shifā' al-Ghalīl*, 66. Although it is not mentioned overtly, the three fingers of a sponger indicate the end of the food.

³⁸⁸ Absorbent.

³⁸⁹ The women usually ate after the men were finished.

ṭanbūr whose strings had been broken. O sirs, by your lives, tell me, who is he?"

Someone says, "This very person is a *ṭanbūr* player." (Abū al-Qāsim) says, "This is a drum whose sound we must hear. We cannot attest to what is not present, (and) we cannot attest to prophecy until we see the evidence. If his proof becomes clear, we will believe him, otherwise we will declare him corrupt." Then he looks (back) at (the man) again, as if he had regretted the consequences of his attack and says: (Sh. p. 68)

I consider that he's good for only one thing:
He drinks an amphora and denudes a table

He's the biggest *ʿaṣīda*³⁹⁰ eater in God's creation
And he chews up meats with bread and gravy

He is inscribed with a long mustache
Like the long wing of a starling

Then whenever he rises from his lunch,
Having filled his stomach with food

He takes the plectrum and the *ṭanbūr*
And makes the great and low laugh

"(He is) a good-for-nothing, may God curse him. He eats an elephant and a pachyderm, drinks (as much as) the Euphrates and the Nile!" Then he takes the *ṭanbūr* and begins a lament:

It is as if his *ṭanbūr* were a rowboat
Whose oar is his plectrum

By God, he eats more than fire, and is more destructive than a rat. The devil of his stomach is neither refined nor merciful.

If he ate an elephant, it would not suffice him
Or if he drank an ocean, it would not slake him³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ *ʿAṣīda*, pl. *ʿaṣāyid*. A sweet dish made from flour cooked with butter and a little sugar. Lane, s.v. "*ʿAṣīda*." Also, a boiled mixture of cooked rice, flour, sesame-oil that sets when cooled and is topped with ground walnuts, pistachios and honey syrup. Arberry2, 214.

May God give him his book in his left hand,³⁹² his shit in his right hand, and
may God make his eyes burn. (Sh. p. 69)

A sandal wants to slap him on the carotid arteries
And, if he sings, slap him on the jugulars (for good measure)

By God, only someone like him is suitable for you. For men like those in (our) crowd,
only a singer like him is suitable. The monkey looked into the privy and said, 'This
mirror is suitable for this face'³⁹³--birds of a feather flock together.³⁹⁴ (M. p. 12)

This other, who is he? By God, his good looks are arrows in the hearts. May God
grant him long life via his ascendant—let him ascend from the lion's thicket!³⁹⁵

He is lean, lurking, disowned, wild

May God veil him as (he) veils these (men). May God protect him. (He is) a Damascene
bath bucket, whose handle is of a piece with it. (He is) a dog's penis soaked in unclean
curds and (left) in the pit of a toilet for seventy years. (He) is dog shit sitting at the
bottom of (a pool of) bitch's urine on a pile of garbage. (He is) the son of an adulteress
in oil.³⁹⁶ This, by God, is someone to make the eyes burn (but) cool the buttocks.³⁹⁷ I

³⁹¹ *Zahr*, 910, (in prose). *Al-Nīl* appears instead of *al-baḥr*.

³⁹² *Qurʾān*, 69 (al-Ḥāqā): 25. This is a reference to the record of a person's actions during life that will be given him on Judgment Day. A good record will be put in the right hand and a bad record in the left hand.

³⁹³ Freytag 2:56, proverb 103. al-Maydānī, *Muʿjam al-Āmthāl*, ed. by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1978?), 2:307.

³⁹⁴ *Wāfiq Shann Ṭabaqa*. Shann wandered from town to town looking for a woman whose thoughts were like his own. On the road, he ran into a man who was headed for the same town. They traveled together. The man did not understand Shann and thought him stupid. However, out of politeness when they arrived, he had to ask him to stay at his house. He warned his daughter about Shann's stupidity, upon which the daughter explained the sense behind Shann's conversation. Since the daughter and Shann thought alike, the man married his daughter to him immediately. Hence the meaning, two like minds will find each other no matter how slim the chance. al-Maydānī, 3:418-9.

³⁹⁵ Pun on the technical meaning of *ṭāliʿ*.

³⁹⁶ A phrase meaning a person considered corrupt, deceitful, fraudulent. al-Ṭāḷqānī, *Risālat al-Amthāl al-Baghādādiyya allatī Tajrī bayna al-ʿĀmma* (Baghdad: Dār al-Shuʿūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-ʿAmiyya, 1990), 57-8.

³⁹⁷ Literally, cool the buttocks, *qurrat ist*. The construction is parallel to *qurrat al-ʿayn*. Wehr, s.v. "Qurrat."

don't know which of his attributes is more amazing: his glance or his elegance, his finery or (his) beard?

If they drew (a picture) of him on the side of the privy
Cockroaches would flee³⁹⁸ from it (Sh. p. 70)

By God, this (man) is more useful in social relations than a viper in a house: any house he's in is safe from wealth!

You have a face like
An unknown proverb

And a nape still perceived
As a target for a leather pillow

Another:

I wish I knew--who are you? Tell us,
Come on, for you have made us doubt ourselves

May the Merciful bring you out from under his veil (of security)
Amen, O God of the throne, amen

This (one), who is he, by God?" Someone says, "A person who jokes and jests with others." Abū al-Qāsim says, "Go on! What have you got (there)? An abraded black leather boot with no sole. He had stayed overnight in the rain with shit in his beard and a falcon on his wrist. The falcon flies, the shit remains."³⁹⁹ Let him be until we have time to deal him.

A friend of mine in Baghdad related to me, 'I was passing through the 'Akkī Arcade,⁴⁰⁰ (Sh. p. 71) and I stepped in something warm. I touched it--it was soft; I

³⁹⁸ The word appears as *lafarra* in AQSH, 69 and *sāfara* in AQM, 12. *Tusāfir*, which does not fit the meter, appears in the manuscript.

³⁹⁹ In dreams, a falcon represents power. When it flies and leaves something in the person's hand, that thing indicates the person's future. *al-Damīrī*, 1:139. Although excrement was not mentioned as a residue in *al-Damīrī*, it certainly does not denote an upwardly mobile future.

⁴⁰⁰ The first arcade built in Baghdad, running southwest through the Round City between the Baṣra Gate and the Kūfa Gate. *al-Buldān*, 3:489.

smelled it--it stank; I tasted it--it was bitter; I looked at it under the lamp and it was yellow. I showed it to my brother Abū Mūsā al-Kalwādhānī and (suddenly it was obvious) it was shit, but I had not recognized it.⁴⁰¹⁴⁰² Then I turned to him and said:

O evil without good
And disfigurement without beauty

O most hateful (one) who walks
The earth with two legs

O more disgusting than the face
Of a creditor owed a debt

O more ponderous than Raḍwā⁴⁰³
And Thahlān⁴⁰⁴ by two pounds⁴⁰⁵

O more stinking than the aroma
Of a privy between two houses (Mez p. 13)

God's truth, look me over thoroughly
Look at the face of doom

I have spices for you
Making the eye water (Sh. p. 72)

(I have) a blade, a "foot-sword"
With braided straps

When it passes over your head
You end up without ears

And if it rings on your skull
You will end up eyeless

⁴⁰¹ The ending phrase appears as "Wa lā mā lā a'rafu-hu" in the manuscript and in AQM, 12 and as "Wa anā lā a'rifu-hu" in AQSH, 71.

⁴⁰² The same anecdote appears in *al-Baṣā'ir*, pt. 6, 59, anec. 172. There are two differences. This iteration of the anecdote begins: "Dakhaltu Ṭāqāt al-'ilz" ... and ends ..."fa-araytu-hu Abā al-Shīṣ fa-idhā huwa kharā, wa anā lā a'rifu-hu". It seems equivalent to modern sayings such as, "He knows what end is up."

⁴⁰³ The name of the crags west of Medina. EI2, s.v. "Raḍwā."

⁴⁰⁴ Thahlān. A large mountain in Najd. *al-Buldān*, 1:941.

⁴⁰⁵ Literally two *raṭls*. A *raṭl* is a measure used in several Middle Eastern countries that varies from half a kilogram to around three kilograms. Wehr, s.v. "Raṭl."

The man says, “(First,) preserve your (reputation) and recognize (respectable) people (for what they are)--then let yourself go!” Abū al-Qāsim says, “You--what makes you one of the (respectable) people? You talk about them but you aren’t one of them. Sirs, (this is) the (truly) amazing thing—he considers himself one of the (respectable) people!

O louse among the rows of shit
Who crawls in a street cleaner’s pubes

If you are a person, then (I’ll shove it) up the anus of anyone’s mother
Who doesn’t consider a dog a member of respectable society!

Another:

(He is) a cross-dresser (who grew up)
Among tambourine, flute and drum

(He is) one of the people of an exalted
House—(that is,) overlooking the privy!

Another:

O shit on the gateway of the anus of
A monkey which had washed its face with pee

Your beard in my anus, and likewise the beard of anyone
Who does not say what I say about this”

Everyone in the gathering says, “Your beard in my anus!” The man gets angry. Abū al-Qāsim says, “Poor fellow, he’s furious! He is a noble Persian (and is treated this way)! His heart⁴⁰⁶ is in his stomach and he has the haughty air of kings. Kistrā⁴⁰⁷ has no successor but him! (Sh. p. 73)

An old man who exalted himself haughtily
So I slapped him down flat

⁴⁰⁶ Literally, liver. Arabs consider the liver the seat of emotions. EI2, s.v. “Kabid.”

⁴⁰⁷ The Arabic form of the Persian name Khusraw. It was the name of two Persian kings and came to be a generic term for Persian kings. EI2, s.v. “Kistrā.”

Amongst his mustache hair is
My anus and mine alone”

The man gets up to leave. Abū al-Qāsim says, “May God strengthen him, our man is leaving, pissed off.⁴⁰⁸ He is nothing if not a well-respected man; his soul is on the tip of his nose and if he doesn’t turn up his nose ****⁴⁰⁹

Every day he roams the town square⁴¹⁰
Sniffing at the cooking pots as a fly does

Whenever he finds the traces of a wedding
Or a circumcision, or (finds) food in snatching range

He does not stand on ceremony⁴¹¹ before entering
And at the door (M. p. 14) does not fear the doorman’s blow

This is more desirable than shelling out money or going into debt
Or provoking the anger of the grocer and butcher⁴¹²

He decides it is worth (joining) the pony express in his quest for a stew,⁴¹³ He travels to all parts of the country, until he comes to rest at the bowl of the generous (man). He had learned to take care of himself, insinuating (himself) into the houses of the great and making their large bowls his goal.

O base one, O most skilled of slaves at that
Which combines ignobility and disgrace!”

Abū al-Qāsim looks at him a third time and says, “His trousers,⁴¹⁴ dirt (carefully) brushed off, are of Daylami⁴¹⁵ style,⁴¹⁶ too. May God inflame my eyes over you, no,

⁴⁰⁸ *Ḥardān*.

⁴⁰⁹ The numbering on the manuscript leaf 13/15 indicates that two leaves are missing here. Because the leaves are numbered with European Arabic numbers, the leaves must have been lost after it reached Europe.

⁴¹⁰ This word appears as *ʿarsah* in AQSH, 73, and as *ʿarḍah* in the manuscript and in AQM, 13.

⁴¹¹ *Lam yurawwaʿ*. Literally, is not apprehensive.

⁴¹² Similar verses appear in Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Taṭfīl wa Ḥikāyāt al-Ṭufaylīyīn wa Akhbāru-hum wa Nawādir Kalāmi-him wa Ashʿārī-him* (al-Najaf, al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 1966), 69.

⁴¹³ *Tharāʿid*.

⁴¹⁴ *Sarāwīl*. Very full pants reaching to the ankle, gathered at the waist and the ankle, often with a low crotch. Dozy, *Vêtements*, s.v. “*Sirwāl*.”

rather, the eyes of those who love you. (He is) naked, but on his feet are Indian sandals;⁴¹⁷ (Sh. p. 74) hungry, but with *ṭirāz*⁴¹⁸ on (his) collar;⁴¹⁹ (he is) naked in a *ṭaylasān*; a hungry (man) but (well) clothed. Sell some of your clothes⁴²⁰ and satisfy your hunger.

(He is like) an old woman with henna dyed palms
Toothless, she has earrings and necklaces

(Or like) perfume in an ointment jar closed with palm fibers
Or a privy with a lock on its door

And that one standing up, is he his servant? It's not possible for him to be present without a servant accompanying him. (He is like) a mouse: the hole wasn't big enough for it, so it attached a broom to its tail. A precious person like that must have a protector and a guardian. He is a well-respected gentleman who must have servants and followers. (He is like) a woman with a large (uncircumcised) clitoris who does not have a slave. She calls her clitoris 'Bilāl,' so that she is called 'Mistress of Bilāl.'⁴²¹ By my life, (one) more skilled at the embroidery⁴²² of ill-omen than you, has not been

⁴¹⁵ The Daylamis were a Persian speaking tribe from the mountainous regions of Gilan. EI2, s.v. "Daylam."

⁴¹⁶ Daylam was famous for producing silk textiles, of one or several colors, including a type of silk called "khazz." *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, trans by V. Minorsky. E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, n.s. 11 (London: Luzac, 1937), 133, quoted in Serjeant, 71. At around this period, khazz-silk trousers were stylish. al-Tanūkhī, *The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge, being the First Part of the Nishwār al-Muḥāḍara, or Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh of Abū ʿAlī al-Muḥassin al-Tanūkhī*, ed. and trans. by D.S. Margoliouth. Oriental translation fund, n.s., vol. 27-28 (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1921-22), 1:137, quoted in Serjeant, 61.

⁴¹⁷ Indian sandals of twisted rope named after the Indian town of Cambaye. R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (1991; reprint: Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1881), s.v. "Kanbātiyya."

⁴¹⁸ Bands of embroidered writing. When applied to clothing, *ṭirāz* conferred great honor. EI2, s.v. "Ṭirāz."

⁴¹⁹ The phrase "with *ṭirāz* on (his) collar" is a guess at the meaning of words that appear to be: *yafuttu ḥurūf*. Disregarding the dots, this could be read as *bi-qaff ḥurūf*, which fits the context and which I am accepting.

⁴²⁰ A generic term for a piece of clothing or a term for a specific piece of clothing used as a coat and enveloping the entire body. Dozy, *Vêtements*, s.v. "Kisāʿ."

⁴²¹ A play on moisture and a black slave, since Bilāl, Muḥammad's muezzin, was originally a slave. EI2, s.v. "Bilāl b. Rabāḥ."

⁴²² *Ṭirāz*.

imported from Tinnīs or Damietta⁴²³.” Someone says, “Abū (Sh. p. 75) al-Qāsim, would you like to meet him?” Abū al-Qāsim replies, “No, by God. (He’s) a bundle of shit⁴²⁴ with its end firmly tied. Don’t pry into it, don’t start it moving! One who crushes a sewer pipe won’t reap a profit. What does a man who stirs up a privy smell? May God lengthen his (life) by the longevity of a well-ripened apricot on a hot day.”

One of them says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, you’ve gone too far in regard to him.”

He says, “His attributes exceed this, sir. What should I say? This man whom the clan⁴²⁵ of the Arabs come to,⁴²⁶ thank God, is a great man in whose wise experience people find salvation.⁴²⁷ May God have mercy on Adam, that is, on the descendents he left behind. May God stuff him with blessings from the front and the back.

God's mercy on Adam
Mercy on the commoner and the distinguished

If he had understood that one like you would issue
From (his) penis, he would have castrated himself⁴²⁸

This, by God, is coarse hair between the lips and chin—which is valued by people's guts (as an ass-wiper).”

Then he says, “And why does he take precedence (M. p. 15) in the seating (arrangements), may God elevate him? Advance, sir, downward! Restore him to his

⁴²³ Tinnīs and Damietta were two small islands between the salt and sweet water at the mouth of the Nile. Damietta was a town just south of the mouth of the eastern arm of the Nile. The most expensive fabrics in the 10th century were produced there. They consisted of fine linen. Tinnīs produced striped cloaks and materials with gold thread. Damietta exported fine white linen cloth, sometimes with gold thread and silk worked in. The industry reached its peak during Fatimid times. Serjeant, 141. EI2, s.v. “Dimyāt.”

⁴²⁴ This appears as *rizma* in the manuscript and in AQSH, 75, and as *zirna* in AQM, 14.

⁴²⁵ Also translatabe as “guts.” EI2, s.v. “Buṭūn.”

⁴²⁶ A pun on: The beard which the guts of the Arabs come to.

⁴²⁷ A pun on: “A hulking lout with whose chin people wipe their asses.”

⁴²⁸ Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān Abī Nūwās al-Ḥasan bin Hāni’ al-Ḥakami*, Ewald Wagner, ed. (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta’līf wa al-Tarjuma wa al-Nashr, 1958), 1:48. Abū Nuwās, d. 198-200/813-15, was a very famous *muḥdathūn*, or “modern” poet, so called because his poetry mocked the images of pre-Islamic Bedouin poetry. He is particularly skilled at wine poems and poem about homosexual love. There is an element of *mujūn* in much of his poetry. EI2, s.v. “Abū Nuwās.”

position--to the row of the sandals."⁴²⁹ Then he turns to the master of the house and says, "O sir, this man didn't come to say hello to you, rather (Sh. p. 76) he is here out of neediness. Get him his dinner (quickly), or else he'll join the "pain in the neck" set."⁴³⁰

If he were in hellfire on the day of a banquet
The scent of bread and the cooking pots would fetch him

Can it be hidden from him, when he is surer of his path to the fragments of food
Than the grouse⁴³¹ or the mummy (passing through the veins to the site of disease)"⁴³²

(Abū al-Qāsim) looks at a man waiting on the people arriving and welcoming them. He says, "Sirs, and this one too, what is he? I see him in the center, grilling his fish.⁴³³ I see it's well-done—a little more and I fear it will burn. Tell me, who is he?"

They say, "This is the host's steward. He directs everything right in front of him and arranges for the requisite food, drink, and singing girls."

He says, "Bravo, bravo. This is Noah's dove. This is the master of right guidance and the carrier of the message; this is the one who unites two heads⁴³⁴ and joins two different hearts. (Sh. p. 77)

My power over what I see has increased

⁴²⁹ The attendees' sandals are lined up at the back of the room. Ibrāhīm Aḥḍab, *Kashf al-Maʿānī wa al-Bayān ʿan Rasāʾil Badīʿ al-Zamān* (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kāthūlīkiyya, 1890), 63.

⁴³⁰ Literally, *ahl al-balā*, or people of disaster. This fits the basic behavior of a parasite in the Roman tradition. Cynthia Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite: a Pathology of Roman Patronage* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 105-107, 147-148.

⁴³¹ al-Damīrī, s.v. "Qaṭā."

⁴³² In Arabic medicine, an unhealthy part of the body was treated by using juice extracted from the corresponding part of a healthy body. By the Abbasid period, mummy taken from Egyptian mummies was used. Material from all parts of the mummy was mixed into a drink which was considered a universal cure, which moved to the unhealthy part of the body. EI2, s.v. "Mūmiyāʿ."

⁴³³ An allusion to the phrase "*shawā samakata-hu fī ḥādhā al-ḥarīq*" ("he grills his fish in this fire"), which means a person who turns harm to another to his own advantage. al-Ṭāḷqānī, *Risālat al-Amthāl al-Baghḍādiyya allatī Tajrī bayna al-ʿĀmma*, 223.

⁴³⁴ A variant of a phrase used in a poem by Abū Nuwās. Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān Abī Nūwās al-Ḥasan bin Hānīʿ al-Ḥakami*, Ewald Wagner, ed., 2:90.

I was a guardian, then I became a pimp

Sir, this is the pole-star of happiness and the pinnacle of bliss.

With his urbanity and artifice he moves almost
(As smoothly) among the people as the blood in their veins

He is quicker than Iblīs⁴³⁵ in deception
(And) more of a procuress than Zūlma⁴³⁶

A residence in the mountain goat's peaks
Would not preserve the virgin from his snare”

Then he looks at him closely and says, “It is out of the question that a face (like this) could ever succeed. Only someone just like him would follow him. He whose guide is an owl (finds) refuge in a ruin. He whose cook is dried goat droppings,⁴³⁷ has shit for cuisine.

(As for) one whose guide is the crow⁴³⁸ it never
Fails to bring him directly to the rotting cadavers

This by God, is in contrast to what ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa⁴³⁹ said,

A clever woman, learned, we sent (to her)
Sometimes mixing seriousness with play

She raises her voice when she is friendly to her
And lowers (it during) an outburst of anger

She continually coaxes her to change her mind
She acts patiently with her, gently and politely”⁴⁴⁰ (M. p. 16)

⁴³⁵ The personal name of the Devil. EI2, s.v. “Iblīs.”

⁴³⁶ This is a variant of the phrase: “*aqwad min Zūlma*.” Zūlma of the Hudhayl was a libertine from her youth until she got too old. Then she pimped until she was restrained. Then she got a goat to hire out for stud. When asked why, she responded that she got some consolation from listening to it rut. *al-Maydānī*, 2:530-1.

⁴³⁷ The manuscript is undotted and so is unclear. It appears as *Jaʿr* in AQSH, 77 and as *jafr* in AQM, 15.

⁴³⁸ The crow is an inauspicious bird. *al-Damīrī*, s.v. “Ghurāb.”

⁴³⁹ Ibn Abī Rabīʿa, 644-712 or 721. A poet known for his love poetry, who is the most famous of the poets of the wealthy, pleasure-oriented urban society of the Hijaz during the first half of the Umayyad period. EI2, s.v. “ʿUmar (b. ʿAbd Allāh) b. Abī Rabīʿa.”

⁴⁴⁰ The poem parallels Ibn Abī Rabīʿa, *Sharḥ Dīwān ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa al-Makhzūmī* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1960), 386, but the poem has several variations.

Then he brings his gaze back to him and says, “Our lord, may God exalt him, is a particle which gets its meaning (Sh. p. 78) from other words. Sir, (he is) one who walks with a sway⁴⁴¹ and a procurer.⁴⁴² Why should I stretch out the story? Our lord is a pimp, may God exalt him, yes, by my life. He who leads⁴⁴³ holds the reins.”⁴⁴⁴ Then he turns to those present and says, “Sirs, one of the most beautiful descriptions of (the) madame is:

She brings the mountain goats⁴⁴⁵ down genteelly from their sanctuaries
She takes the fish out of the depth(s) of a whirlpool

If she addresses a rock, its sides will soften
Hard as rock, she blunts the points of pickaxes

Due to the heat of what she spits out, it is as if there are
Stinging hornets in the heart of one who listens to her speech

He looks at a beardless youth in the gathering and says, “That one, who is he? His type would excite the blind! He sells himself to libertines; he’s the Bowman’s quiver, the crow⁴⁴⁶ who hides his brother’s pudenda.⁴⁴⁷ My dear, you want something which begins in a field (of hair) and whose end is nozzle (glans)—but it is not an eggplant, nor a pumpkin!⁴⁴⁸ Or, you want something whose origin⁴⁴⁸ is a truffle, whose

⁴⁴¹ This could be *muhayyis* or *muhayyish* or possible *mumayyis*, none of which can be verified. I’ve chosen *mumayyis*, since at least I could find a meaning for the root. Shālji believes it means pimp.

⁴⁴² *Muṭawriḥ*. AQSH, 78, n1. The word is unidentifiable, so I have accepted Shālji’s guess.

⁴⁴³ Double entendre between the two meanings of *qāda*: to lead and to pimp.

⁴⁴⁴ A play on a saying by ʿAlī b. Ṭālib: *Man ṣabara qadara*. Rudolf Sellheim, “Vier Miszellen zur arabischen Sprichwörterkunde” *Oriens*, 31 (1988):356.

⁴⁴⁵ Double entendre between mountain goats and virgins (ʿ*usm*).

⁴⁴⁶ A play on *Qurʾān* 5:31 (al-Māʾida). When Cain killed Abel, Allāh sent a crow to show him how to scratch up the ground and hide the corpse, thereby causing Cain to repent.

⁴⁴⁷ Expressions for the passive homosexual partner.

⁴⁴⁸ The same phrase appears in Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabāʾ wa Muḥāwarāt al-Shuʿarāʾ wa al-Bulaghāʾ* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1980), 2:262.

middle is a cucumber, and on whose neck is a nosebag!⁴⁴⁹ You love one who blows a pipe⁴⁵⁰--a “Zuhayrī,” (as in): (Sh. p. 79)

I saw Zuhayr beneath Khālīd's chest...⁴⁵¹

He drags (his) status in (the) dust.⁴⁵²

He opens (his) anus (*mīm*) to the pricks (*lāms*) of mankind.⁴⁵³

He hides the rod⁴⁵⁴ in the most distant passage. My dear, you want a large headed one; you carry your paternal uncle; you favor the ram (over the ewe)⁴⁵⁵; you hide the rod.

Our lord has his finger in the latch hole; he sells a fig⁴⁵⁶ for a cucumber.”⁴⁵⁷

I beg God's forgiveness, for that is what
Lot feared (might come to pass) in his community”

Someone says, “O, Abū al-Qāsim, do you know this (man)?”

⁴⁴⁹ al-Ghuzūlī, *al-Maṭālīf al-Budūr fī Manāzil al-Surūr* (Egypt: Maṭbaʿat Idārat al-Waṭan, 1881 or 82-83), 1:273, with small variants: ...*fī raʿsi-hi kumāh wa waṣṭ-hu qanāh wa fī asfali-hi mikhlāh*.

⁴⁵⁰ *Būq*, meaning penis.

⁴⁵¹ The *bayt* is by Warqāʾ b. Zuhayr b. Jadhīma b. Rawāḥa al-ʿAbsī. The second half of the *bayt* is: *Fa-aqbaltu asʿa ka-al-ʿujūl ubādir*. al-Jurjānī, *al-Muntakhab min Kināyāt al-Udabāʾ wa-Ishārāt al-Bulaghāʾ* (Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1983), 110-1. The same *bayt* appears in Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥādarāt al-Udabāʾ wa Muḥāwarāt al-Shuʿarāʾ wa al-Bulaghāʾ*, 2:164. More lines of the poem and the story appear in al-Jāhīz, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (Beirut: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿilmī al-ʿArabī al-Islāmī, 1969), 3:97-98.

⁴⁵² The manuscript is unclear. I am reading it as “*rātīb*.”

⁴⁵³ For a similar usage of “*mīm*” and “*lām*,” see Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Bustī al-Kātib in *Yatīma*, 1:519 and al-Jurjānī, *al-Muntakhab min Kināyāt al-Udabāʾ wa-Ishārāt al-Bulaghāʾ* (Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1983), 119. al-Bustī, d. 400 or 1-1010 or 11, was admired for the rhetorical skills demonstrated in his poetry and for the state letters he wrote during his various positions as a secretary. EI2, s.v. “al-Bustī.”

⁴⁵⁴ al-Jurjānī, *al-Muntakhab min Kināyāt al-Udabāʾ wa-Ishārāt al-Bulaghāʾ*, 113. Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Kāhir b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jurjānī, d. 471/1078, was a grammarian who did sophisticated work on syntax, stylistics and poetics. EI2, s.v. “al-Djurdjānī.” Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥādarāt al-Udabāʾ wa-Muḥāwarāt al-Shuʿarāʾ wa al-Bulaghāʾ*, 2:254. Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī was a religious and literary scholar who died in the early 5th/11th century. EI2, s.v. “Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī.”

⁴⁵⁵ *Tataʿaṣṣabu l-ḥamal*. For the complete expression and variations, see: al-Thaʿālibī, *Kitāb al-Nihāya fī Fann al-Kināya* (Damascus: Dār al-Ḥikma, 1994), 62.

⁴⁵⁶ Anus. Lane, s.v. “*Tīn*.”

⁴⁵⁷ Penis. al-Thaʿālibī, *Kitāb al-Nihāya fī Fann al-Kināya*, 31.

He says, “Yes. I came to know him when he was a child, peeing but not (yet) talking. This is my son. I raised him under my (care) and I gave him to suck from (my wife’s) breasts.

His mother, although neither full-breasted
Nor a virgin, (is) among the beauties

In the group of those brought in to me
She stands firm at the top of the list

I soaked my sausage in her shit
So that the meat mixed with the broth”⁴⁵⁸

Then he goes back to the first (man) and says, “Sir, you mutterer, is this one of your imports? Is your stock in trade like this? I’m amazed that (anything but) this kind of (stuff) would come from this direction. (Sh. p. 80) A handful (of chaff) from the threshing floor (M. p. 17) would do you for a sample.”

One of the (attendees) says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, his beard (is) in your ass!”

He says, “No by God! Isn’t it in his anus—(and) nothing in the world is more desolate than that? Or in the corner of his mouth—(and) nothing on earth smells rottener than that?”

Then he says, “Now I’ve seen (what we’ve got): A real hodgepodge: a garden entirely of celery, all the same, like donkey’s teeth.

(One would say they are) beasts, if it weren’t for their human forms and you would say this (one)—(no)--rather, that (one) is worse.

Among them, by God, is nothing but a fraudulent scale; empty hazelnuts of which one rolls to (the) other;⁴⁵⁹ rotten fruit in short measure;⁴⁶⁰ a short bushel and a one-eyed

⁴⁵⁸ *Tharīda*.

steward; a *Qurʿān* school that inflicts pain⁴⁶¹ and a blind teacher; a lame (man) and a one-eyed man;⁴⁶² the key to the monastery⁴⁶³ and another who has no good in him. A hornet rode on the back of a scorpion that entered a snake's burrow, and said, 'I (want to) see which is the carrier and which the carried and (look at) what house they alight in.'

The hedgehog rubbed its paws
On what it had given birth to

It said, you are (all) nothing but quills!
I won't raise (even) one of you!"

The master of the house says, "O Abū al-Qāsim, there's nobody left in the gathering whom you haven't mentioned but me."

(Abū al-Qāsim) says, "O our lord, what could I say about you except what the Prophet said, may God bless and preserve him (Sh. p. 81), 'A man is judged by the company he keeps,⁴⁶⁴ so let (each) one of you look to the one whom he treats as a friend,' and as the poet said:

Don't look at the man, rather look at his friend
For each person gravitates to one of like nature

⁴⁵⁹ A saying meaning two individuals closely resembling each other in their clothing. al-Muʿayyidī al-Ṭāḷqānī, *Risālat al-Amthāl al-Baghdādiyya allatī Tajrī bayna al-ʿĀmma*, 56.

⁴⁶⁰ al-Maydānī, *Muʿjam al-Amthāl*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 367. Freytag 1:368-9, proverb 83.

⁴⁶¹ Unclear. *Kuttāb wajūʿ*. The form *wajūʿ* and its meaning cannot be verified, but based on Wright, 1:135, it may mean inflicting pain.

⁴⁶² Freytag 2:339, proverb 72. al-Maydānī, 3:30, proverb 3052.

⁴⁶³ Christian monasteries could legally make wine. Taverns were frequently attached to monasteries, and in more densely populated areas, other types of socially unacceptable entertainment would be located nearby. EI2, s.v. "Dayr." Although it is speculation, this phrase could be an allusion referring to a person leading others into debauchery, just as a key to a monastery opens its wine cellars. Alternately, if monasteries were never locked, the key to one would be useless, just like the rest of the items in the list.

⁴⁶⁴ Literally, a man conforms to the norms of his friend. AQSH, 81.

What can be said about the man whose drinking buddies are these gentlemen, friends as close as brothers, and intimates? By my life, al-Dāmānī wouldn't get together with such as you⁴⁶⁵

There's an angel in the heavens named al-Qufundar who unites (similar) types. Someone noticed a parrot, a crow and an owl in one place and was amazed that they came together. (Then) he looked at them closely and (saw that) the crow was one-eyed, the parrot lame and the owl broken-winged. He said, 'Infirmity gathers you (together).'⁴⁶⁶

He stares at two of them who are friends and says, "There is no God but God! Bad luck is added to misfortune just as onion is added to garlic. The monkey looked in the privy and said, 'This mirror is suitable only for a face like this.'⁴⁶⁷ Woe, what's this? What are you all holding in? Why don't you fart or let a sneaker? Woe, where is the kitchen in your houses? All one sees of them, by God, are the arch and the porch, (all one gets is) pleasant talk, (that is, nothing more than) farting in a chicken coop. There's no offer of food or victuals, nor friendliness, nor cordiality—(M. p. 18) it is all unripe fruit.⁴⁶⁸ Your city is cold, dry, just like death, and your characters are exactly the same. Woe, haven't you heard what God the great said, 'There is no blame on the

⁴⁶⁵ Attributed to al-Ṣarīf. *al-Buldān*, 2:538-9. This is al-Ṣarīf al-Ghawānā, who is also known as Muṣlīm b. al-Walīd, d. 823 or 4. Although his poetry makes use of the *badī'* style, which was then new, his poetry is also relatively traditional. The line is present in Muṣlīm b. al-Walīd, *Sharḥ Dīwān Ṣarīf al-Ghawānī Muṣlīm ibn al-Walīd al-Anṣārī*, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1970), 343, poem 195.

⁴⁶⁶ This means "Birds of a feather flock together," see, al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā*, 1:332.

⁴⁶⁷ Freytag 2:56, proverb 103. *al-Maydānī*, 2:307.

⁴⁶⁸ Isfahanis had a reputation for a miserly character. *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, M.J. De Goeje, ed., vol. 5, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, by Ibn al-Fakīh al-Ḥamadhānī (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1885), 229.

blind or the lame or the sick or on yourselves if you eat,' etc., up to what the great and powerful (God) said, '...with a greeting from God, blessed and sweet.'"⁴⁶⁹ (Sh. p. 82)

Then he says, "Woe, aren't you inclined to do noble deeds?"

There is absolutely no shame to be found among you
Neither of the Arab nor of the non-Arab variety!"

Someone says, "O Abū al-Qāsim, what should we say, what should we do?"

He says, "You could (try to) be people in whom are goodness and courtesy,⁴⁷⁰
and not be beasts!"

Someone says, "O Abū al-Qāsim, how can we be people (of quality)?"

He says, "By living the life of wise (men)--and accepting my advice,⁴⁷¹ so you can
achieve that!"

(Those present) say, "O Abū al-Qāsim, spell it out for us."

He says, "But revelations and warnings do not avail people who do not
believe,⁴⁷² 'Lo you cannot make the dead hear, nor the deaf hear the summons when
they have turned, fleeing.'⁴⁷³

You would have been heard if you had called to one who was living
But there is no life in the one you summon!

⁴⁶⁹ No blame is there upon the blind nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick nor on yourselves if ye eat from your houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or (from that) whereof ye hold the keys, or (from the house) of a friend. No sin shall it be for you whether ye eat together or apart. But when ye enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allāh, blessed and sweet. Thus Allāh maketh clear His revelations for you, that haply ye may understand. *Qur'ān*, 24 (Nūr): 61.

⁴⁷⁰ *Muruwwa*. The meaning is imprecise. It means a summation of a man's physical qualities and moral values, with the understanding that the balance between the two varied. EI2, s.v. "Murū'a."

⁴⁷¹ A literary form for transmitting instructions and advice. EI2, s.v. "Waṣiyya."

⁴⁷² *Qur'ān* 10 (Yūnus): 101.

⁴⁷³ *Qur'ān* 26 (Niml), verse 80 or *Qur'ān* 30 (Rūm): 52.

I sell pearls among the makers of baked bricks, 'As if they were frightened donkeys, fleeing from a lion,'⁴⁷⁴ 'deaf, dumb, blind, they have no sense.'⁴⁷⁵

Allah has made what I had gathered of adab go to waste
Among donkeys and among sheep and cows (Sh. p. 83)

They do not listen to the words I bring
But then, how can livestock listen to man?

(They are) a people, who when they gather make a din as if they
Were frogs (sitting) croaking between the water and the bushes”

Someone says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, tell us the culmination of this.”⁴⁷⁶

He says, “Will you accept it from me?”

They say, “Yes.”

He says, “Accept what I order you to do and abstain from that which I forbid you. Receive my words obediently, for I am a (sincere) advisor to myself and all others. As for those of you who have property, do not hold it in reserve against a sudden reversal and do not leave it to an heir who wouldn't ask God's mercy for him. As for those of you who are poor, ask for loans and buy on credit, without being disturbed by a (horde) of debt collectors and creditors. Busy yourselves with gourmandizing, boozing, listening to songstresses' fine renditions, and fucking dancers and fucking singing girls. Fuck standing and pray sitting. Fuck the free born ones and don't abstain from the slaves. Fuck privately and publicly, fuck the owned and the free, the whore and the chaste, fuck as long as your pricks rise, for getting them up won't last. Fuck the small (M. p. 19) and the large, fuck cunts and buttholes, fuck blossoming young girls and decrepit old women, and pretty young boys and ugly old men.

⁴⁷⁴ Qur'ān 74 (Muddathir): 50 and 51.

⁴⁷⁵ Qur'ān 2 (Baqara):171.

⁴⁷⁶ This could be translated two ways. If vowelled as ākhar, it means another. If vowelled as ākhir, it means conclusion, which is my preference.

The transmitted news has come to us concerning
A stallion--that the stallion has no limits

Don't turn your nose up at anything you see,
Mind you,⁴⁷⁷ even if it is a dog on a garbage heap

Enjoy slave girls and slave boys, revel in young women and young men, only
adopt (Sh. p. 84) (as your own) a brother who continually throws off all restraint and
doesn't waver from debauchery⁴⁷⁸ night or day, who has no lady protectress to shelter
him, nor a wife to hinder him and annoy him, who wields his prick left and right,
fucking in forbidden and lawful (ways). For that is the discerning, resourceful one--the
high-born youth! Select him as your friend, and take him as a brother, and an intimate.
Get together with him to fuck slave boys with small penises, (and) large anuses, and
every boy in a short belted tunic, fresh, not fickle, plucked, not depilated.⁴⁷⁹

(He is) like the moon as (it is) on a full-moon night
My patience is tried by the beauty of his face

If I were to say, 'Hey, where is it,' when the prick
Had pushed into his shit, he would say, 'Up my ass!'⁴⁸⁰

This, by God, is the advice of a man who wishes you well.

If you all agree, you will advance toward it
For your advisor is a hard worker from behind

Until, tomorrow, he drives you
To Mālik⁴⁸¹ battalion by battalion"

⁴⁷⁷ Shālījī emends way-ka to wa nīk, meaning, And fuck. AQSH, 83.

⁴⁷⁸ *Mujūn*. EI2, s.v. "Mudjūn."

⁴⁷⁹ Depilation was part of bathing. According to common belief, the depilatory paste was an aphrodisiac. Muhammad Manazir Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids, 170-289 AH/786-902 AD* (London: Longman, 1979), 199.

⁴⁸⁰ Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal. Shālījī omits this line, although it appears in the manuscript.

⁴⁸¹ The angel of Hell, which means to go to Hell. EI2, s.v. "Malā'ika."

One of those at the gathering laughs and Abū al-Qāsim says, “He is a slaughtering of a sacrificial animal; an extraction of a (barbed) spear; citron thorns,⁴⁸² and a fever together with lasciviousness; gall and vitriol, and teak slivers; and plague (buboes) of the Zanjis under the (Sh. p. 85) jugular (veins). (Did) I say (Allah was the) second of two, (or the) third of three?⁴⁸³ Did I try to refute the *Qurʾān* with poetry?⁴⁸⁴ Did I break the incisors of the prophet of God?⁴⁸⁵ Did I dig up the grave?⁴⁸⁶ Did I erect the mangonel against the Kaʿba,⁴⁸⁷ or hit it with menstrual rags? Did I shit in the well of Zamzam?⁴⁸⁸ Did I hamstring (Sh. p. 86) Sāliḥ’s she camel?⁴⁸⁹ Did I say about Allah what the Jews and Christians say?⁴⁹⁰ Did I fornicate between the grave and the pulpit? Did I

⁴⁸² The manuscript is unclear. It appears to be *shark*. Mez emends it to *as-sharb*.

⁴⁸³ This is blaspheming by referring to the Manichaean belief in dualism and then the Christian belief in the Trinity.

⁴⁸⁴ A passage parallel to this section from refuting the *Qurʾān* through hamstringing Sāliḥ’s camel occurs in Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq al-Wazīrayn*, ed. Muḥammad b. Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī (Dimashq: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿilmī al-ʿArabī, 1965), 493.

This specific sentence refers to *Qurʾān* 11 (Hūd):13. In defense of the inimitability of the *Qurʾān*, this verse challenges unbelievers to produce ten Suras equal to the *Qurʾān*. *Qurʾān* 221 (al-Anbiyāʾ):5. This verse records an argument refuting Muḥammad’s: that he was a poet who composed the *Qurʾān* rather than a prophet, because he did not provide a miracle as God’s earlier prophets did. The concept of *ifʿjaz*, literally, rendering incapable, came to mean the inimitability of the content and form of the *Qurʾān*. Unsuccessful attempts at imitation (*muʿāraḍa*) were made, leading to the additional argument that God prevented the competent from imitating the *Qurʾān*. EI2, s.v. “*fʿjāz*,” or “*Muʿāraḍa*.”

⁴⁸⁵ A man hit the Prophet Muḥammad’s face so that blood flowed down it. He asked Allah to bless them. al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrahīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1960), 2:515 and 2:519

⁴⁸⁶ This refers to the caliph al-Mutawakkil exhuming Ḥusayn and having the buildings around his grave leveled. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965), 7:55.

⁴⁸⁷ ʿAbd Allāh b. Zubayr had declared himself caliph during the confusion following the caliph Muʿāwiyā’s death and opponents of the Umayyads supported him. al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, the governor of Iraq from 120/738-126/744 under the Umayyads, attacked Mecca and the Kaʿba with mangonels in 72/692 in order to defeat Ibn Zubayr. al-Dīnawarī, *Kitāb al-Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* (Leiden: Brill, 1888), 319-21.

⁴⁸⁸ The sacred well at Mecca which provides drinkable water. Muslim tradition holds that it was created by the angel Gabriel to save Muḥammad’s ancestors Hagar and Ishmael from dying of thirst in the desert. EI2, s.v. “Zamzam.”

⁴⁸⁹ *Qurʾān* 11 (Hūd):61-8. Sāliḥ was a prophet to the tribe of Hūd. God created a camel as a miracle to prove his existence to the tribe. The tribe hamstrung it. Sāliḥ and those who believed were saved, those who hamstrung the camel were to be condemned to Hell.

⁴⁹⁰ *Qurʾān* 5 (al-Māʾida):64, reports that the Jews said Allāh’s hands were fettered. *Qurʾān* 9 (al-Tawba):30, reports that the Jews considered Ezra to the son of Allāh and that the Christians considered the Messiah to be the son of Allāh.

shit on the Black Stone?⁴⁹¹ Did I cut off Ḥusayn b. Alī's head?⁴⁹² Did I cut off the hand of Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib?⁴⁹³ Did I eat the liver of Ḥamza?⁴⁹⁴ Did I tear the skin (Sh. p. 87) of the one whom the hand of Allah blessed?⁴⁹⁵ O Murr b. Murr,⁴⁹⁶ what are you laughing at? I only said, (M. p. 20)

Eat chicken and young poultry and
Small goats and grill small suckling lambs

And drink the wine that (had remained) in its jar (for so long that
It had) witnessed (the age) of ʿĀd⁴⁹⁷ and met the kings of Yemen⁴⁹⁸

In (its dark) vats, the hands of the nights
Died its clothes intense gold

As for pleasant singing, listen to the (part) of it
That will drown out the sound of *taḥṣīl*⁴⁹⁹

Enjoy young girls, don't be
Of the people who forbid pleasures

Every (girl) who presents you with a swelling breast
Which fills the palm, and with a voracious cunt (Sh. p. 88)

Avoid the one with the gray-haired snatch

⁴⁹¹ The black stone in the Kaʿba. EI2, s.v. "Kaʿba."

⁴⁹² Ḥusayn's head was cut off after he was killed at the Battle of Karbalāʾ and sent to the Caliph Yazīd. EI2, s.v. "Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib."

⁴⁹³ Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib was ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's brother. In the battle of Muʿta, 629 C.E., in which the Muslim Arabs opposed the Byzantines and Christian Arabs near the Dead Sea, he was the second man to carry the standard. He carried the standard in his right hand, until it was chopped off, than took it in his left hand, which was also chopped off. He held it in both arms until he was killed. EI2, s.v. "DJaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib."

⁴⁹⁴ Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, Muḥammad's paternal uncle, killed Hind bint ʿUtba's father at the Battle of Badr in 2/623-4, in which the Muslims first defeated the Meccans. Ḥamza was killed in the Battle of Uḥud which occurred during the Meccan expedition against the Muslims of Medina in 3/624-5. Hind is said to have eaten his liver in revenge for his killing of her father. EI2, s.v. "Hind bint ʿUtba."

⁴⁹⁵ This refers to the stabbing of Umar, the 2nd caliph, by Abū Luʿluʾa, a Christian slave. EI2, s.v. "ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb." The phrase comes from a marthiyya, or elegy, which can be found in al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1962-), 22:464-5.

⁴⁹⁶ Literally, Bitter, son of Bitter. Mez and Shālījī both emended this to *mudabbir* (loser), but a name would fit the context better. The copying wrote over what he originally copied, making the word unclear.

⁴⁹⁷ An ancient, but unsubstantiated, tribe frequently mentioned in the *Qurʾān*. EI2, s.v. "ʿĀd."

⁴⁹⁸ The name Tubbaʿ was believed to refer the rulers of Yemen between the late 3rd and early 6th century C.E., but in fact referred to an important family. EI2, s.v. "Tubbaʿ."

⁴⁹⁹ Literally, to sort out the chaff from the grain, or to distinguish the intellectually valuable from the intellectually unsound. Lane, s.v. "Taḥṣīl." In this context, *taḥṣīl* would seem to refer to students reciting religious lessons.

Between whose buttocks⁵⁰⁰ you see a speckled crow

Leave the pregnant one who has become swathed in fat
Don't desire her nor one with milk-filled breasts, brats trailing behind

Every hairy (faced and armed) woman, her anus
Dressed in veils of hair constituting a burqa⁵⁰¹

Fuck!⁵⁰² Don't neglect lusty stroking with a penis
That pounds the dregs deep in the intestines

Fuck with it as long as (it) remains hard wood⁵⁰³, for
Tomorrow when you get worn out, you will see it (like) soft wood⁵⁰⁴

Eat, and divest (yourself) of all that you own
Don't leave (anything) for the person to covet

Woe, accept, O my brother, my advice
Indeed, I have enough of it to convince you

Rush into pleasure to the extent
That the foremost returns from it limping

Before you fall on evil (days), (such that) if your mother
Were resurrected, she would not say "May God revive you"

When you see people saying
The white-breasted crow also alit"⁵⁰⁵

Then he approaches one who is silent in the gathering, and says to him, "And
you, O beast of Allah, why don't you speak?"

Your brother is like the feverish (one): heated
And you are like the palsied (one): shivering

⁵⁰⁰ *Kusyān*. *Wörterbuch der Klassischen Arabischen Sprache* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970-), k-s-y.

⁵⁰¹ A veil of light cloth attached to the head covering at the top of the forehead and hanging to the knees, leaving only the eyes exposed. R. P. A. Dozy, *Vêtements*, s.v. "Burqa."

⁵⁰² In the mss. and Mez. this word appears to be "bal." However, with "bal," the bayt has no punch line. Shāljī changes it to "nīk," which I have also chosen.

⁵⁰³ The tree *Chadura Tenax*. Hava, s.v. "Nab."

⁵⁰⁴ The tree *Palma Christi*, noted for soft heart wood. Hava, s.v. "Khirwa'."

⁵⁰⁵ Meaning of the bayt is unclear.

O idol-like mandrake, what's up with you that you don't speak? O picture on a wall,
are you inanimate, or animate? (Sh. p. 89)

O present one, who is (nevertheless de facto) absent,
O [one who is] not dry (*nākhushk*), forwards and backwards,

And O cuckold (*kushkhān*), in (my) heart
And I won't contort you in torture⁵⁰⁶

Woe to you, sirs, awaken him, he is sleeping, isn't he? Our master is not here.

O one who (makes) movements
That weigh heavy on (my) heart (M. p. 21)

There isn't meaning in you, by God,
Shortness is superior to its length

When I sit next to you
You arouse a burning fever in me

Woe to you! Look at him! And at the (glassy) stare of his eyes and at the dryness of his
lips.

Say something before they decide
You are (made) of plaster and baked brick⁵⁰⁷

If you are not noble or clever
Then you are the misrepresentation of a 'slave of the vulva'⁵⁰⁸

One of them says, "Enough of Abū al-Qāsim and his nattering. The weather
today is nice, and the air is clear. We must drink (a toast) to the sky three times."

(Abū al-Qāsim) says, "You have nothing (to say) in any situation, O people of
Isfahan, except this hackneyed, threadbare praise, which we've heard over and over:
the land, Isfahan, the air and the water. I hear nothing else, and find nothing cut-rate
(in the market of eloquence) except this contemptible yakking. By God, we don't hear

⁵⁰⁶ These two lines are a play on the fact that "*kushkhān*" is *nākhushk* written backwards.

⁵⁰⁷ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Yatīma*, 3:93, where the first line is the last line of a 3 line poem, but the second line does not appear.

⁵⁰⁸ "Slave of the vulva" ("*fata hirrin*") is a misreading of "noble youth" ("*fatan hurrin*").

(Sh. p. 90) (anything) from you except trite and primitive speech. (It is) insipid; there is no flavor to it, and no meaning in it.” He licks the water (off) his finger. “Woe to you! You sit with the people and are not guided by their refinement. O our sir, (these people are like) the thorny tree: if you poured forth 1000 copper (vessels) of rose water on its roots, only a khurnūb⁵⁰⁹ would result. Backwardness keeps you from affecting elegance.

O you who ask me about Isfahan and her people
Time decreed their misfortune and her ruin

Her youths are like her middle-aged, her middle-aged
Are like her old and her old are like her dogs

She is my city, but I left her as a child
So I was not sullied by the baseness of her soil

By my life, one of your (fellow) citizens has treated you fairly and mentioned (nothing) about you except what is true about you. If I were to pass on to you (what he said), as is my duty, would you permit it?”

Someone says, “Speak, O Abū al-Qāsim.”

He says, “By God, I will never forget my city and her soil, nor would I be willing (to exchange) Baghdad for the garden of Paradise, even if that immediately granted me a city that is all one could hope for and desire and make one’s ultimate goal! Beloved of (her) residents, her air is pure, her star is vigilant, her pebbles are (like) jewels, her breeze is (like) ambergris, her earth is (like) pungent musk, her day is (fresh like) early morning, her night⁵¹⁰ is (like the) time before daybreak, her food is wholesome, her

⁵⁰⁹ A short thorny tree used as fuel, with bad tasting fruit that is only eaten in times of hunger. Lane, s.v. “*Kharrūb*.”

⁵¹⁰ Emended from *nasīmu-hā* to *laylu-hā*.

drink is healthy⁵¹¹ and her air is pure. No, by God, her earth is (like) ambergris, her stones are (like) carnelian, her air is (like) a breeze, and her water is (like) wine. (It is) an extensive region, a pleasant place, as if the beauties of the world were strewn across her, and a picture of heaven were painted on her. (She is) the biggest jewel in the necklace of cities, its navel, its face and its blaze. I do not see in your city, (Sh. p. 91) by God, a location like hers. Rather, I see a city off on the flanks of the earth, dry-aired, coarse-pastured (M. p. 22). Her air⁵¹² is (like) dust, her earth is (like) mire, her water is (like) clay, her soil is (like) manure,⁵¹³ her August is (like) October, her October is (like) December and January. Her people are (like) wolves in clothing--their conversation is (like) abuse, and their joking is (like) wallops. They carry their shit to their gardens on their heads and on the backs of their riding beasts, (so that) they defile the rivers with it and with it they raise the fruit they eat. So indeed, by my life, it is undeniably their shit, that starts with them and returns to them, and they have the best claim on it! It is a city whose privies are the water channels and whose roads are like garbage heaps, where neither a generous person nor a benefactor is to be found.”

Someone says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, woe to you, you have gone too far--only some of this (is fair).”

He says, “May God mar you. I summon you all before a witness who will give me a fair hearing. I will first talk about (place) names, until we arrive at the real(ity of) their meanings, (and) then we will talk about them. I will begin with Baghdad and Isfahan, (specifically) with the names of their farming areas and estates, (and) then

⁵¹¹ “Beloved...healthy” is closely paralleled in *al-Buldān*, 1:690.

⁵¹² Emended from *ḥurru-hā* to *jawwu-hā*.

⁵¹³ “Her air...manure” is closely paralleled in *al-Buldān*, 1:690.

(continue) with the names of their neighborhoods and locales. (Among) the farming areas of Isfahan, have you (ever) heard of anything resembling (Baghdad's) al-Baradān and al-Rādhān, (Sh. p. 92) al-Nahrawān and Ḥulwān, Ṣarīfīn, Awānā, ʿUkbarā and Kalwādhā, Quṭrabbul, Bādurayā, al-Anbār, (Sh. p. 93) al-Daskara and Bāʿqūbā, Shahrābān and Darzījān, Buṣrā, Dujayl, and al-Nīl?⁵¹⁴ All I hear about (among) your farming areas are (places like): Sārmarna⁵¹⁵ (that is, with camel shit), Kālmīrāi⁵¹⁶ (that is, with goat shit), Adhār⁵¹⁷ (that is, it comes and farts in their beards), Kūasmān⁵¹⁸ (that is, solid shit and moist, runny shit), Kūrishān⁵¹⁹ (that is, shit in the beard), Kūristān⁵²⁰ (that is (Sh. p. 94), tombs), and Mūshkābādh⁵²¹ (that is, the place of mice). And, God's blessing upon you, (among) the neighborhoods of Isfahan, do I (ever) hear of any resembling, (taking first) if you like, the eastern (part) of Baghdad: al-Ruṣāfa, Bāb al-Ṭāq, Sūq Yaḥyā, Shāriʿ (Sh. p. 95) al-Burdān, Darb al-Rayḥān, Darajat Yaʿqūb (Sh. p. 96), the banks (of the river near) al-Jisrayn, Bayna al-Qaṣrayn, al-Zāhir, al-Shamāsiyya, Marbaʿat al-Khurasī, Sūq al-Thulāthāʿ (Sh. p. 97), Bāb al-Azaj, al-Zarrādīn, al-Maʿmūniyya, and Dār al-Khalīfa; (Sh. p. 98) or, if you like, (how about) the western

⁵¹⁴ For information on Baradān through al-Nīl, see LeStrange, *Lands*, except for Ṣarīfīn, for which see *al-Buldān*, 3:384 and for Darzījān, for which see *al-Buldān*, 2:567.

⁵¹⁵ This could be read as Sārmry(?)h. *Sār* = combining form of camel. An area near Isfahan is called Sarmāy. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *Kitāb-i Nuzhat al-Qulūb or The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, ed. G. Le Strange, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1915), 23, 193.

⁵¹⁶ *Kil* = goat; *mīrāi* = garbage.

⁵¹⁷ This name is recorded in al-Māfarrūkhī, *Kitāb Maḥāsīn Isfahān* (Tih-rān: Maṭbaʿat Majlis..., 1933), 45. This text was written between 1072 and 1092 C.E. *wā* = to do back; *dhāʿr* = refractoriness. It is also a Jewish month that would have been used among the Jewish population of Jayy, one of the two original districts of Isfahan. Roubéne Abrahamian, *Dialectes des Israélites de Haman et d'Ispahan et dialecte de Baba Tahir* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1936), 137.

⁵¹⁸ *Gūh* = shit; *rasm* = form; *ān* = dual, i.e. two kinds of shit.

⁵¹⁹ *Gūh* = shit; *rishān* = beards.

⁵²⁰ *Guristān* = cemetery.

⁵²¹ By using a form that can appear incorrect, the author creates a word-play. *Mūsh* = mouse; *mūshk* = musk; *abād* = place. The ambiguity between mouse and musk creates a play between mistaking mouse turds for musk, another body secretion.

(part) of (Baghdad): al-Najmī,⁵²² al-Raqqā,⁵²³ the ʿĪsā Canal, the (Sh. p. 99) Ṭābiq Canal,⁵²⁴ Sūq al-ʿUrus, Şaff al-Tawzī, Darb ʿAwn,⁵²⁵ Şīniyat al-Karkh which is called Sūq al-Nahḥāsīn,⁵²⁶ Ṭāq al-ʿAkkī,⁵²⁷ al-Sharqiyya,⁵²⁸ Sūq al-Raffāʿīn, Sūq al-Ḥalāwīyīn, Qaṭīʿat (Sh. p. 100) al-Rabīʿ, the unenclosed Qaṭīʿa, Suwayqat Ghālīb, Bāb al-Muḥawwal, Ṭāq al-Ḥarrānī, Qarn al-Şirāh, (M. p. 23) Bāb (Sh. p. 101) al-Başra, al-Ḥarbiyya, (Sh. p. 102) Shāriʿ Dār al-Raqīq, al-Ḥarīm al-Ṭāhirī. And if you like, (how about) the canals: (Sh. p. 103) the Mārī Canal, the Malik Canal, the ʿĪsā Canal, and the Mūsā Canal, and (Sh. p. 104) al-Khalīs, al-Hārūnī, the Şarşar Canal, and al-Nahrawān. And if you like, (how about) her mosques, the Mosque of al-Manşūr, the Mosque of al-Ruşāfa, the Mosque of (Sh. p. 105) al-Qaṭīʿa, the Mosque of Barāthā, the Mosque of al-Qaşr?⁵²⁹ And if you like, (how about) her famous shrines: the Shrine of Karbalāʿ, and the Shrine of al-Kūfa,⁵³⁰ and the Quraysh (Sh. p. 106) Cemetery?⁵³¹

O my Lord, by the right of an imam
Who prayed (superegatory) morning prayer in Barāthā,

Guard a great leader from whom
I parted on Tuesday

Another

⁵²² For information on al-Ruşāfa through Dār al-Khalīfa see Gaston LeStrange, *Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), except for Marbaʿat al-Khurasī, for which see *al-Buldān*, 4:485, and except for al-Najmī, for which see *al-Buldān*, 1:460.

⁵²³ Although this would appear to be the city higher up the Euphrates, it is a garden in Karkh, so named because “*raqqā*” describes low-lying land. LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 261.

⁵²⁴ For these two places, see LeStrange, *Baghdad*.

⁵²⁵ v, 352.

⁵²⁶ *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, M.J. De Goeje, ed., vol. 7, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, by al-Yaʿqūbī (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 245.

⁵²⁷ LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 130.

⁵²⁸ Sharqiyya, as well as being a name for Eastern Baghdad, refers to a neighborhood west of the Tigris, somewhat outside the Başra Gate. LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 90-1.

⁵²⁹ For al-Rabīʿ through the Mosque of al-Qaşr, see LeStrange, *Baghdad*.

⁵³⁰ For these two cities, see LeStrange, *Lands*.

⁵³¹ LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 158.

O my Lord, by the right of every prayer
Prayed on Friday at Barāthā

Preserve it for me and for the weak one
When fate overtakes him and he seeks help

What does Abū al-Qāsim possess except tears (shed) over these deserted places,
like buckets of the water-carrying camels,⁵³² and breaths that burn the ribs and show
resignation?

O northern breeze (coming) from Sūq Yahyā
You have a rendezvous soon with one I love (Sh. p. 107)

By one beloved to me, by whom I,
I swear to God, am also beloved

Each of us has a heart that, from the grief of care
And the longing of separation, is sad

No happiness is to be hoped for him or for me
Since we parted, nor any pleasant life

Anything that has come to me--for him there are
Rights, a share and a profit in it

He said to me, 'You two are like that (to be sure), but
He is among his people while you are a stranger'

In fact, all I hear of the neighborhoods of Isfahan is: Wargān⁵³³ (that is, the (Place of)
Wolves), Kalmānāw⁵³⁴ (that is, the Place of Lepers), Kū-yi Karān⁵³⁵ (the Lane of the Deaf),
the Kū-yi Kūrān⁵³⁶ (the Lane of the Blind), Kīr Bār⁵³⁷ (that is, a load of penises), the
Mosque of Ḥūzhīr,⁵³⁸ (may God) inflame (your) eyes. Do I see, by God, the Tigris laden

⁵³² Emended from *al-shāniyya* to *al-sāniyya*.

⁵³³ *Wargān* = wolves. This could be a play on *Warāngān*. Paul Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter nach den arabischen Geographien* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), 646.

⁵³⁴ *Kalm* = wound; *na'w* = going far, i.e. spreading.

⁵³⁵ *Kū* = lane; *karān* = deaf.

⁵³⁶ *Kū* = lane; *kūruān* = blind.

⁵³⁷ *Kīr* = penis; *bār* = load.

⁵³⁸ Literally, The Mosque of Acquiring a Catamite.

with boats and row boats, bordered by palaces and villas, (M. p. 24) with the sounds of song rising among them, the tremolo of flutes and water wheels, the voices of sailors, and the cries of the muezzins? If you saw them, you would see, by God, beauty and perfection and you would hear 'permitted magic' in their moving melodies.

From whichever of their regions you come
You will see Beauty, bewildered (at being outshone by) everything around it

This is aside from the bank(s) of the *Şirāh* (Canal), and the sources of the *Furāt*, and the Mills at *al-Zubd*,⁵³⁹ (Sh. p. 108) and *al-Zubaydiyya*, and the *Mu'izziyya* Palace Dyke,⁵⁴⁰ and *Bazūghā*, and *al-Ghurūb* and *al-Nawā'ir* and *al-Duwālīb*.⁵⁴¹ (Sh. p. 109)

O people of Baghdad, my separation from you (appears)
O Sirs, (as) my exile from people (altogether)

The pleasure of good living on the Tigris
Among the singing and the goblet pleases you

(As does) proximity to my lord--for he is
A youth--my desire for whom stops my breath

(He has) a face like the full moon in the dark night
And a scent like the fragrance of apples and myrtle

Rather, all I see (in Isfahan) is a streamlet in a wasteland, which flows through it as if it were a poor man's pee. When it flows, it runs with mud and scum, and when it is dry, it becomes piles of dung and wind-blown dust. In their foolishness, they call it *Zandarūdh* (that is, the River of Life) and when speaking extravagantly, they call it *Zarīn Rūd* (that is, River of Gold (dhahab)), may God take away (adhab) your senses and make your eyes burn. If this river-valley of yours, of which you are so proud,

⁵³⁹ For this form of the name, see *al-Buldān*, 2:759. For a description of the bridges, see LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 148.

⁵⁴⁰ For these two names, see LeStrange, *Baghdad*.

⁵⁴¹ For the last four names, which are waterwheels, see *al-Buldān*.

(were) in Iraq, they would not consider it fit (to water the land of) two villages, nor would they irrigate two fields from it.

Do I see among you any craftsmen and tradesmen, comparable to those I see in Baghdad, among the booksellers, calligraphers, tailors, woodworkers, armorers, gilders, cooks, millers and perfumers, (Sh. p. 110) and countless numbers of the miraculously skilled? Rather, all I see (are) people with shovels in their hands, digging over the courtyards of their houses, and (street) sweepers perfuming (people's) nostrils in the streets, fighting each other over a turd, and breaking their heads open over it, and louts screaming, 'Shit-eaters!'⁵⁴² They explain (its) role: 'What is next to the penis only lower?'⁵⁴³ He screams, 'Hey, lady, I will reap your shit, that is, I will shove your shit, O Lady!'⁵⁴⁴

Would that a long night in Isfahan
Were a ransom for my nights in Iraq

How can musk be compared to mire, or incense
To foul vapors, or purity to filth? (M. p. 25)

(Look at) the City of Peace, the Dome of Islam, the Mother-Lode of the Caliphate, the Abode of Mercy and Compassion, the Seat of Gentility and Civility, and the Pleasure-ground of Sociability and Elegance.⁵⁴⁵

(It is) a land (which abides) as if its soil
Has ever been irrigated with rose water (Sh. p. 111)

And (abides) as if, when garden blossoms perish,

⁵⁴² *Kā* = colloquial for shit; *Khwārah* = eating.

⁵⁴³ This Persian sentence is entirely unclear. Any attempt to decipher it can only be speculation. *Chah* = what; *bar kardan* = next to; *dul* = child's word for penis.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ay* = hey; *dībānuā* = O high society lady; *guhāt* = your shit; *kisham* = I reap, *ay* = hey; *ajurur* = drag; *khurāki* = your shit; *yā sittī* = O lady (Arabic). Tafaddālī, Ahmad, "Iṭṭilāʿāt-i Darbārah-yi Lahjah-yi Pīshīn-i Iṣfahān," *Nāmah-ʿi Mīnuvī: Majmuʿah-ʿi Sī va Hasht Guftar dar Adab va Farhang-i Irān-i bih Pās Panjāh Sāl-i Tahqīqāt va Mutālāʿāt-i Muṭaba Mīnuvī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sanāʿī, 1995?), 102.

⁵⁴⁵ These epithets all refer to Baghdad.

Its blossoming will remain as long as you wish

And it (abides) as if the dust of its earth
Has been suffused with (fragrant) camphor root

Another

How I long for Baghdad--as a residence!
It was a shield for me from griefs

It is as if on the day of my separation from her
I were Adam when he departed from Heaven⁵⁴⁶

Another

By my life, I left her unwillingly, and
Neither cheerful of soul at that nor content

O my regret, when my regrets do not avail me
O my prudence, when caution does not serve me

She said: 'What is it that took you far away from them?'
I said to her, 'I don't know, ask fate!'⁵⁴⁷

Another

O summation of beauty, O Baghdad, O my native city
It is not nice to endure abstaining from you and your residents!

O best abode of pleasure, to which I was accustomed,
May your abode continue to be watered with rain as (a fine) fatherland!

How many lovers we have left with you, and among the residents
Of your abode how many residents do I have today--

(Such as) every beautiful woman (resembling) the full moon and by whose voice
I am seduced⁵⁴⁸--and beautiful women are a mother-lode of enchantment

⁵⁴⁶ A variant of a verse by Ibn Ḥamdīs al-Ṣiqillī, d. 527/1132-3, found in *Matāliḥ*⁶, 2:294. EI2, s.v. "Ibn Ḥamdīs, ʿAbd al-Djabbār Abū Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Azdī." I did not find the lines in Ibn Ḥamdīs, *Dīwān ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. Abī Bakr Ibn Ḥamdīs al-Ṣiqillī al-Sarqūsī*, Celestino Schiaparelli, ed., Pubblicazioni scientifiche del R. Istituto Orientale in Napoli, t. 1 (Roma: Tip. della Casa Editrice Italiana, 1897). Ibn Ḥamdīs was an Arab poet from Sicily who spent his life in Sicily, Andalusia and North Africa. EI2, s.v. "Ibn Ḥamdīs."

⁵⁴⁷ The first and third lines in this group appear in a poem attributed to Abū Nuwās. *al-Aghānī*, 18:27. They are not present in his *Dīwān*.

O my lord, and the soul's place in my body
And my support and my helper against (the vicissitudes of) time” (Sh. p. 112)

Then he opens his eyes as if awakening from a faint and says:⁵⁴⁹

I will call upon my fortitude
Indeed it is among the best of my helpers (Sh. p. 113)

And I will remove the anxiety from my heart
For you have emaciated my body

And I will turn with my reins,
If God decrees and delivers me—

To (head for) a land whose harvest (*janā*) is from
The fruits (*janā*) of the Garden of Paradise⁵⁵⁰

To my land (*ardī*), where I am content (*ardā*) with my living
And it is content with me⁵⁵¹

(Its) air (*hawāʿ*) is (pure) like the soul's desire (*hawā*)
(When) two best friends exchange it sincerely (M. p. 26)

And (its) water is (thirst-quenching)⁵⁵² like the lover's heart:
Frightened (*murtāʿan*) of separation

(Its) gentle breezes (*rukhāʿ*) are like ease (*rakhāʿ*)⁵⁵³
(Which) dispels worry from the distraught

For if Allah protects me
And bestows on me his grace

And grants me (*aʿṭāniyya*) my fatherlands (*aʿṭānī*) to go to⁵⁵⁴
And leaves me (*khallānī*) and my dear friends (*khullānī*) private and
undisturbed⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁴⁸ Emended from *yaqtulunī* to *yaftinunī*.

⁵⁴⁹ From a poem by Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ḥasan, the Wazir of Baghdad, d. 296/908-9. *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 3:159-161. al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi l-Wafiyāt*, Wadād al-Qādī, ed. Bibliotheca Islamica, 6p, 16:648-51. The poem also appears in *Yatīma*, 141-2, with variations.

⁵⁵⁰ A pun between harvest and fruits.

⁵⁵¹ A pun between “my land” and “to be content.”

⁵⁵² A pun on *rāʿa*, meaning both to frighten and thirst-quenching. Hava, s.v. “*Rāʿa*.”

⁵⁵³ A pun between “gentle breezes” and “ease.”

⁵⁵⁴ A pun between “grants me” and “fatherlands.”

⁵⁵⁵ A pun between “leaves me” and “my dear friends.”

Then I will not return (*a'ūdu*), ever,
As long as night follows (*'āda*) day,⁵⁵⁶

To exile for a matter and
A concern which I suffer

But if I return to that someday
May my jailer (*sajjānī*) enshroud (*sajjā-nī*) me⁵⁵⁷ (Sh. p. 114)

Then he strikes his chest with his hands, cries and moans, and recites:

Do you cry over Baghdad when she is near?
So what (will it be) tomorrow when you are farther from her?

By your life, I did not leave Baghdad from hatred (of her)
(And would not have) if (only) I had found any alternative to separation

When my soul remembers Baghdad, it is rent by grief
Or almost melts with love for her⁵⁵⁸

He is quiet for a while, then says, "By God, I will say something else, even if you hate it."

Someone says, "Tell (us)."

He says, "Truly I say, you have no noble origin⁵⁵⁹ among the kings, not in your public events, nor in your accoutrements, nor in your drink, nor in your food, nor in your clothing, nor in your steeds. It is as though you were created pointlessly."⁵⁶⁰

Someone says, "How is that?"

He says, "Despite all my comings and goings, I haven't seen a noble man on a smooth-running race horse, spirited, eager, noble, faster than the blink of an eye,

⁵⁵⁶ A pun between "return" and "follows."

⁵⁵⁷ A pun between "jailer" and "enshroud."

⁵⁵⁸ Lines from a poem by Abū Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, one of the best musicians and composers of the late 8th and early 9th centuries. *al-Aghānī*, 5:94. EI2, s.v. "Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī."

⁵⁵⁹ Emended from *aşlan* to *aşl*.

⁵⁶⁰ *Qur'ān*, 23 (al-Ḥajj): 115.

surpassing description,⁵⁶¹ (his) nature magnificent and (his) noble descent manifest. (It is) as if he were veiled with a star, shod with hard stone, had vied with the falcon's stoop, were shot farther than the archers' arrows, and had exhausted the cheetah's breaths, as if he were a high mountain, or a torrent pouring forth violently, or a falling star, or lightening (Sh. p. 115) bursts, or a flaming coal, or a cloud pouring down torrents, long cheeked, sure-footed, broad-chested, as if he were night pulling over morning, or a body lent the benefit of wings, a terrestrial ship, a wind embodied, his course is his bridle, and the (entire) expanse of the earth his racing ground.

(He is) a descendent of a wind made pregnant by lightening.

If he is calmed, he becomes restive and if (his reins are loosened), he flies. It is as if when (M. p. 27) jumping (he is) a locust, and in leanness a thorny plant (tragocanth), with sound legs, a short back, and a long stride. He gazes with two rubies, and flies on two under-wing feathers. (It is) as if his neck were a banner, and (as if) his ears were (like) a saddle horn or a reed pen. His forehead is broad, like the back of a shield,⁵⁶² and (his) eyes are wide-apart, haughty, his neck is flexible, and (his) cheek is smooth, even.

His neck is like the trunk of a tall palm tree
Pruned by a talented artist

And his eye is round, glancing quickly
(As if) the inner corners of his eyes were detached (from their sockets)⁵⁶³ (Sh. p. 116)

⁵⁶¹ These two phrases appear as parallel phrases in al-Ḥuṣrī. They are cited by Ibn Qirriyya, an eloquent man from Kūfa killed in 83-4/703, as possibly by al-Ḥajjāj, to describe a horse al-Ḥajjāj gave to the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān. *Zahr*, 304. EI2, s.v. "Ibn al-Ḥirriyya." Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-ʿArab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo: al-Muʿassasa al-Miṣriyya, 1964-), 10:69.

⁵⁶² Imruʿ al-Qays, *Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-Thamīn fī Dawāwīn al-Shuʿarāʾ al-Jāhiliyyīn*, W. Ahlwardt, ed. (1879; reprint, Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1972), 127.

⁵⁶³ Imruʿ al-Qays, *Dīwān Imruʿ al-Qays*, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif bi-Miṣr, 1969), 166.

Another:

And (he has) a nostril like a bellows, his breaths
Do not trouble him and he does not have to catch his breath from tiredness⁵⁶⁴

He exhales (breaths) as south winds⁵⁶⁵ and he
Inhales the north winds⁵⁶⁶ to a throbbing heart

He appears to be sitting when you approach him from the front
Until when you approach him from the back, you would say his head was
lowered⁵⁶⁷

He splits the girth by expanding his waist, and the earth trembles with his neighing.

(It is as though) he were sewn up after, in distress, he drew his deepest breath
And he did not revert to slimness or lankness in the belly⁵⁶⁸

Another:

He neighs as if at the bottom of a stone well
A neigh that shows the purity of his Arabic (speech)⁵⁶⁹

(As if) they were a flat surface, his rib cartilage⁵⁷⁰
To his penis sheath, and beyond to his naval region

⁵⁶⁴ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān Ashʿār al-Amīr Abī al-ʿAbbās ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Muʿtazz bi-Allāh al-Khalīfa al-ʿAbbāsī*, Muḥammad Badīʿ Sharīf, ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1977), 1:233. Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 247/861-296/908, was a son of the caliph al-Muʿtazz. He was a talented poet who avoided politics until the death of the caliph al-Muktafī. There was a failure to agree on a satisfactory successor. Ibn al-Muʿtazz was convinced to become caliph. He was murdered the next day by an opposing political group.

⁵⁶⁵ *Janāʾiban*. South winds which have warm, fecundating influences. Lane, s.v. “Junūb.”

⁵⁶⁶ *Shamāyilan*, meaning north wind, a cool wind. Lane, s.v. “Shamāl.”

⁵⁶⁷ The point seems to be that both his head and his rump are large and seem to be the dominant half when approached. The same usage of *akabb* appears in al-ʿAkawwak, *Shiʿr ʿAlī bin Jabala al-Mulaqqab bi-al-ʿAkawwak*, ed. Ḥusayn ʿAṭwān (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif bi-Miṣr, 1972), 33. Al-ʿAkawwak, 160/776-213/828, was apparently an admired poet until some of his excessive eulogies on court figures offended the caliph al-Maʾmūn. The latter had al-ʿAkawwak’s tongue torn out, which killed him. Some of his poems survive in anthologies. The same 2nd half of the bayt appears in al-Shimshāṭī. *al-Anwār wa Maḥāsīn al-Ashʿār*, Ṣāliḥ Mahrī al-ʿAzāwī, ed. (Baghdad: Dār al-Ḥurriyya lil-Ṭibāʿa, 1976), 148. Al-Shimshāṭī was employed by the Ḥamdānids in Mawṣil. He was a philologist, anthologist and poet.

⁵⁶⁸ By al-Nābigha al-Jaʿdī. Ibn Qutayba, *Adab al-Kātib*, Max Grünert, ed. (1900: reprint, Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1967), 120. The last line appears in al-Nābigha, *Shiʿr al-Nābigha al-Jaʿdī* (Damascus: Manshūrāt al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1964), 156 as line 27 of a 39 line poem. Al-Nābigha, d. ca. 79/698 or 9, was a mukhadramūn (he lived during the pre-Islamic period and survived into the Islamic period) poet.

⁵⁶⁹ By al-Nābigha al-Jaʿdī, al-Mubarrad, *The Kamil of El-Mubarrad*, William Wright, ed. (1892: reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1992), 2:456. Respectively, these bayts are lines 32, 30 and 31 in a 64 line poem. al-Nābigha, *Shiʿr al-Nābigha al-Jaʿdī*, 22-3. The original is slightly different.

⁵⁷⁰ Emended from *maqadd* to *maqatt*.

Are glued to a shield of strong hide
Over unpierced walnut (wood)

Another

Vehement voiced when bridled as if
His windpipe closed around a bell (Sh. p. 117)

(He has) a mane like a lowered veil,⁵⁷¹ is full sided, large flanked, has a rounded
rump, like a blacksmith's forge, and a tail like a bride's train.

He has a tail like a bride's train
It fills the space between his legs⁵⁷²

And legs like columns and hooves like platters, as if it were boulders they shod
He throws out rocks with a pounding rock.⁵⁷³ (M. p. 28)

It is as if his shank muscles⁵⁷⁴ when returning (from battle)
Are dyed—although he was never dyed⁵⁷⁵

(Like) rocks of a pebbly stream
Clothed in a coat of moss

Another:

He walks on (hooves) as hard as rocks
But their frog is deep and hollowed

Another:

His hooves imprint hard rock
(As easily as) seals imprint soft clay (Sh. p. 118)

⁵⁷¹ al-Buḥturī, 3:1746.

⁵⁷² Imru' al-Qays, *Dīwān Imru' al-Qays*, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, ed., 164.

⁵⁷³ The galloping horse throws out pebbles with his hard hooves the way a pounding rock shatters the object pounded and hurls out bits of it. By Ru'ba b. al-ʿAjjāj. al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa al-Masāwī*, Friedrich Schwally, ed. (Giessen: J. Rickersche, 1902), 239. I do not find the lines in al-ʿAjjāj, *Dīwān al-ʿAjjāj*, ʿAbd al-Malik b. Qurayb al-Aṣmaʿī, ed. (Beirut: Maktabat Dār al-Sharq), 1971. Ru'ba b. al-ʿAjjāj was a poet of the late Umayyad and early Abbasid period. He is noted for *raḡaz qaṣīdas*, which are difficult to read because they contain exceedingly rare vocabulary. He sometimes employs an unusual theme of pride in his own poetry. EI2, s.v. "Ru'ba b. al-ʿAjjāj."

⁵⁷⁴ Ḥawamay. Hava, s.v. "Ḥamāh."

⁵⁷⁵ Colored red with henna or the blood of battle. The *bayt* is by al-Nābigha al-Jaʿdī. ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿUmar al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab* (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-ʿArabī, 1967-), 3:162. al-Nābigha, *Shiʿr al-Nābigha al-Jaʿdī*, 20.

Another:

It is almost as if his fieriness burns him
It is almost as if he would fly except for his martingale

Another:⁵⁷⁶

It is as if, at the fastest gallop, he
Plays backgammon with his pasterns

Another:

At the gallop his hind legs are (like) one leg and his forelegs (too)
His action is what the (rider's) palm and feet intend⁵⁷⁷

Another:

(He has) a blaze splitting his forehead
And ears (pricked straight up) like an upright spear

And an eye like a frightened (person's)
And a rump round and full-tailed⁵⁷⁸

Another:

(He is) like a well-constructed temple except that
In his beauty he is like an image in a temple⁵⁷⁹

Another:

Iron of heart and gaze⁵⁸⁰
And hamstring and spine⁵⁸¹ (Sh. p. 119)

He has between his hoof walls
A frog like a date pit⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁶ Emendation separating two unrelated bayts.

⁵⁷⁷ al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān Abī al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, ed. Friedrich Dietrich (Leiden: Institutii Francogallici, 1861), 483. Al-Mutanabbī, 303/915- 354/955, was one of the most skilled and influential Arab poets. He specialized in panegyric poems. He traveled extensively in search of a satisfactory patron, which he found only during his time with Sayf al-Dawla the Ḥamdānid ruler. EI2, s.v. "al-Mutanabbī."

⁵⁷⁸ I emended *raw'atin* to *ghurratin* to match the *Dīwān*. Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 1:233.

⁵⁷⁹ al-Buḥturī, 3:1744.

⁵⁸⁰ Iron of gaze should mean sharp-sighted, although this cannot be verified.

⁵⁸¹ This is one of two bayts attributed to Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī, a pre-Islamic poet famous for his horse poetry in Ibn Qutayba, *Adab al-Kātib*, Max Grünert, ed., 115.

⁵⁸² Attributed to ʿUqba b. Sābiq al-ʿAnbari, who is not identifiable, in al-Mubarrad, 2:496.

(He is) broad cheeked and browed
And (broad) backed and sided

Another:

(She is) like the wind except that she has a form
That soars (on the wind) when she gallops and canters (M. p. 29)

Another:

His rider still hides the whip from him
(It is) as if he were a copper kettle which fire has brought to a boil

Another:

And it is as if he were a wave breaking when you urge him
Or when you hold him back, he freezes

And it is as if he were a white antelope on a hill
Who stretches his neck, (topped) with two beautiful cheeks--(such) cheeks!

Another:⁵⁸³

(He is like) water--he pours forth obediently and compliantly
But if he is asked to gallop—then he is fire

When you turn him on the battle-field
You turn him as if he were a compass⁵⁸⁴

If the horse did not have his own pedigree
The birds would imagine he were one of them

“Imru’ al-Qays skillfully said, (Sh. p. 120)

Ready to charge, ready to flee, advancing, retreating at once
(His speed) is (that of) a rock boulder washed down from above by the torrent⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸³ By Kushājim. *Zahr*, 310. Kushājim, *Dīwān Kushājim*, al-Nabawī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid Sha‘lān, ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1997), 152-3. The three bayts in this group are lines 3, 4, and 9 of a nine line poem. I emended *istadall* to *ustudirr* in the first line in the *Ḥikāya* to match line 3 of the *Dīwān*. In line 9, I emended *al-khayl* to *al-ṭayr* to match his *Dīwān*. Kushājim, d. ca. 350/961, was a poet who excelled in descriptions of nature. He was also Sayf al-Dawla’s cook. Alma Giese, *Wasf bei Kuṣāḡim: eine Studie zur beschreibenden Dichtkunst der Abbasidenzeit*, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1981), 62:15-26. EI2, s.v. “Kushājim.”

⁵⁸⁴ A draftman’s compass.

He has a gazelle's flanks and an ostrich's legs
The wolf's lope and the fox's trot

And one of the moderns of our age skillfully said:

He is short between the rump and the back
He is long between the lowest rib and the leg tendon

It is as if Gemini were in his pasterns
And the Pleiades appeared in his blaze

Sometimes roan like a shooting star, or gray like a phantom, or black like a
crow, or dark bay like the sun behind a fragment of cloud, or buckskin like molten gold,
or piebald like a sword half unsheathed.

A roan horse, and pre-eminence always
Stands out in the faces of roan horses

It is as if silver ore had flowed
Over pure gold to form his blaze and face

When he appears with his rider mounted on him
It is as if his rider were sitting on a castle

He travels at night with his rider
As (far as) Burāq⁵⁸⁶ travels in a month

Another:

Gray, unblemished, you would consider him
A wasteland mirage materialized in the sun

Another: (Sh. p. 121)

Gray, unblemished, you would consider him
Summer clouds gleaming in the light (M. p. 30)

Another:

⁵⁸⁵ Imru' al-Qays, "Qaṣīda Imri' al-Qays" in *Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id al-Sab' al-Ṭiwāl al-Jāhiliyya*, ṢAbd al-Sallām Muḥammad Hārūn, ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1963), 83.

⁵⁸⁶ Burāq was the fabulous animal which, in Muḥammad's vision, carried him from Mecca to Jerusalem and then to Heaven in one night. EI2, s.v. "al-Burāq."

Or gray or white, (his) rump shining
Behind him like a surging deep sea wave⁵⁸⁷

Another:

Unblemished as if, given the smoothness of his face,
Burnishers had cared for him by polishing it (like a sword)⁵⁸⁸

Another:

What consolation is there when the light gray
Has passed on his way and said goodbye to us?⁵⁸⁹

And you passed by with a jingling bridle, as if
A cymbal were striking on each of your limbs

Another:

Gray, with kohl-colored eyes, tall
As if his back were the glimmer of a mirage

Another:

And a black horse, from whom the night borrows (its darkness)
And between whose eyes the Pleiades rise

Another:

(A horse) with a blaze, in whose face is the full moon
And whose body is (of) the dark inkiness of night

⁵⁹⁰White socked, his pasterns shine
As if they were stars in their night

Another:

(His coat is) a silk brocade of (all) the colors of horses although
Only the black (horse) has been compared (previously) to brocade (Sh. p. 122)

It is as if he were saddled with the Big Dipper

⁵⁸⁷ al-Buḥturī, 1:403.

⁵⁸⁸ I emended *ʿabīqat la-hu bi-ṣafāʾ* to *ʿuniyat bi-hi li-ṣafāʾ* on the basis of al-Buḥturī, 3:1747.

⁵⁸⁹ By Ibn al-Zayyāt. *al-Aghānī*, 20:52. From about 221/833 until 233/847, Ibn al-Zayyāt was a wazir under the caliphs al-Muʿtasim, al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil. EI2, s.v. "Ibn al-Zayyāt." For another article on Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Zayyāt, see *al-Aghānī*, 20:46.

⁵⁹⁰ The next three bayts are omitted from AQM.

It is as if he were bridled with the Pleiades

Another:

And I have my eye on the ears (of a horse with) a blaze,
(One that is like) a remnant of the night with a star between his eyes⁵⁹¹

Another:

His shirt has been buttoned on him with jet-black pearls
And the white at his elbow is of silver

And he has two eyes as if they had been given to drink,
(And) had drunk their fill of water from a blue glass

Another:

You see him in the color midnight black
(His) face is not splotched nor white on one side

Like a night whose Gemini does not appear
In its face when the weather clears

Proud-necked, as if his ears incline
To (hear) the conversation of the heavens

He cannot be saddled unless
You place a ladder on his withers (M. p. 31)

(He is) of the progeny of the Saydān
According to the learned among the Magians⁵⁹² (Sh. p. 123)

Another:

Dark bay, he is made to outpace a breeze
(He is) long-legged and lively

Another:

Dark bay, as if on his back were
Ingots of melted golden fragments

⁵⁹¹ By al-Mutanabbī. *Zahr*, 315. al-Mutanabbī, *al-ʿArf al-Ṭayyib fī Sharḥ Dīwān Abī al-Ṭayyib*, Nāṣif al-Yāzājī, ed. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1964), 2: 336.

⁵⁹² Zoroastrians.

Another:

Dark bay, like the slingshot of Walīd b. Jurshu^ƒ
 (He is) long necked; his color resembles the sun at midmorn

When the hand spurs him to travel quickly
 You would imagine that the ground were racing along as he does

Another:

Like the color deep red with which leather is twice-dyed⁵⁹³

Another:

Deep chested, his beauty arouses admiration from beholders
 Dark bay, like the color of dates, white legged, white nosed

Or (he is) sorrel,⁵⁹⁴ as if he were rubbed with oil, or dressed in flies' wings.

Dappled,⁵⁹⁵ deceiving the eyes so you see
 His dapples as gold dust filings (Sh. p. 124)

The tint of the horizon between the end of the waning night
 And the beginning of dawn (is) his (complexion)

The eye delights in his attractive image
 And the soul takes pleasure in his compact form

Giving him free rein to gallop has trimmed him of
 Excess flesh and made him (taut) like a twisted rope

Another:

He is yellow, as if he were an egg yolk
 Smooth as if he were the handle of a bow

His neck is the trunk of an *arāk*⁵⁹⁶ (tree) and
 What is behind his back is a planted rock

Saffron almost flows in the sweat of his sides
 And yellow perfume is collected from his back

⁵⁹³ By al-Kalḥaba. *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, Charles James Lyall, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), 174.

⁵⁹⁴ *Aṣḍā*, rust but inclining to black. Lane, s.v. "*Aṣḍā*."

⁵⁹⁵ *Shīya*. Mixed colors. Hava, s.v. "*Shīya*." Spotted (bull). Hava, s.v. "*Ashya*."

⁵⁹⁶ A type of thorny tree.

His genus is refined, he reached its limit
So he is in a class all by himself

He is coated with his color and it is as if
The sun were eclipsed in his skin⁵⁹⁷

Another:

She was lent a chrysolite hoof by the wind
Her body is gold, her anklets silver

As if the East wind threw me her reins
She ambles with my saddle once, then runs (M. p. 32)

Another: (Sh. p. 125)

His pasterns are black like the night
And his body like shining gold

(It is) as if his pasterns, when they appear,
Together with his color were burning gold

Another:

Part black like the black of midnight
Part white like the (white) of parchment⁵⁹⁸

The white feet flowed like water to low ground
Flowing apart then together

Another:

Rather, he is piebald, when he appears, a bit
Of every color meets the eye--an attractive sampler⁵⁹⁹

Another:

Some of his limbs are swords
And some of his limbs are poles

⁵⁹⁷ Abū Tammām, *Dīwān Abī Tammām bi-Sharḥ al-Khaṭīb li-Tabrīzī*, Muḥammad ʿAbduḥ ʿAzzām, ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif bi-Miṣr), 2:228. Abū Tammām, 188/804-231 or 2/845 or 6, was an Arab poet and anthologist. He was famous for panegyric poetry and as a leader in the development of the then new *badīʿ* style. EI2, s.v. "Abū Tammām."

⁵⁹⁸ By Abū Tammām. *Zahr*, 308. Abū Tammām, *Dīwān Abī Tammām bi-Sharḥ al-Khaṭīb li-Tabrīzī*, 2:414. Lines 16 and 17 of a 40 line poem.

⁵⁹⁹ al-Buḥturī, 1:404. The last phrase is literally, *muʿjib bi-namūdhaj*.

Or a well-bred mare like a gazelle or the silhouette of a statue

(My mare is) long bodied like a tall tree, large
With prominent shoulders, well-proportioned (Sh. p. 126)

Her neck is (so long it is) half of her, and her tail fills the space between her legs.

She has sharp-pointed ears in which one can discern good breeding and two wide eyes
like mirrors. She gazes from deeply set eyes like two pools in deep hollows, she
breathes passionate sighs through wide nostril(s).

It is as though her nature were a locust's
Her rider considers her a devil
He keeps his fingertips light in controlling her

Another:

Wide mouthed, with light, whose flash you would imagine to be
The drawing of a sword, dividing the forelock on her head

If she pursues (something), she gets (it), and if she is sought, she escapes; if she
is tied in the courtyard she adorns (it) and if she bears a colt, she helps.⁶⁰⁰

And for war, I mount a locust(-like horse)
A spread-out forelock drapes her face⁶⁰¹

If my hooved one had flown before her
Then she would have flown--but none did⁶⁰²

Another:

She has a gazelle's flank and an ostrich's legs
And a tiger's pounce and an antelope's glance⁶⁰³ (Sh. p. 127) (M. p. 33)

And more beautiful than this is: Anytime a hoof descends
It inscribes a crescent moon behind a crescent moon

⁶⁰⁰ Meaning unclear.

⁶⁰¹ By Imru' al-Qays. *Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-Thamīn fī Dawāwīn al-Shuʿarāʾ al-Jāhiliyyīn*, W. Ahlwardt, ed., 127.

⁶⁰² Although al-Shālījī attributed these bayts to Imru' al-Qays, I did not find them in: Imru' al-Qays, *Dīwān Imru' al-Qays*, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, ed.

⁶⁰³ By Imru' al-Qays, *al-Aghānī*, 7:127. I do not find the lines in his *Dīwān*.

Or (she is) a swift, fleet mule; it is as if she were stitched to a breeze, hairless tailed, full-girthed, long necked, sharp eared. Half of her belongs to the neighers and half of her belongs to the brayers. (She has) paternal uncles in the Ghāfiq⁶⁰⁴ (tribe) and maternal uncles in Khazraj (tribe).⁶⁰⁵

Patience of the mule and strength of the horse

She speeds over the earth on a hoof
Like hard rock⁶⁰⁶

Rather than this, all I see, by God, is a goat on a donkey, or a bastard on a mule, or an ape on a nag, restive and galled, fractious, stumbling, abject, shying, balky, hammer headed,⁶⁰⁷ snappish, kicking, awkward and gelded. I see a gem of creation⁶⁰⁸--a leader among your great men on a pot-bellied nag, coarse necked, very noisy; coughing and farting at the same time, from every step a fart, and a cough and a turd.

(He is) a horse that kicks with his (hind) legs, presses with his chest
Snaps with his mouth, (is) unruly, contorted

His stomach is bloated with straw, so that he is like a sack. A female donkey outstrips him at the gallop; (Sh. p. 128) a mouse's voice makes him bolt. He's either gaunt, like an alif from thinness, or like a worn out waterskin from illness. He stops to sneeze and trips on dung. A hair fetters him. Mange has eaten his skin, and the hair of his tail and forelock have fallen out.⁶⁰⁹ He has an ulcer on his pastern like a cucumber

⁶⁰⁴ Emended from ^ʿ*Āmid* to *Ghāfiq*. A tribe in Egypt whose founder was from *Ghāfiq*. al-Sam^ʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, 10:6-8.

⁶⁰⁵ A tribe which dwelt around and to the north of Medina at the time of the beginning of Islam. Along with the al-Aws tribe, due to their role in the rise of Islam, they are called the "*Ansār*," or Helpers. *EI2*, s.v. "*Khazraj*." The sentence is from al-Buḥturī, 1:405.

⁶⁰⁶ From a poem by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj describing a mule. *Yatīma*, 3:115. Durra, 86.

⁶⁰⁷ *Kabūs*. To have the upper part of the head prominent. Hava, s.v. "*Kabisa*."

⁶⁰⁸ This phrase is unclear. I am reading *ārā dr ḥlq* as *ārā durra khalqin*.

⁶⁰⁹ Literally, to shave the hair. Hava, s.v. "*Ḥaṣṣa*."

and (a) swelling on the thin part of the foreleg like a quince, and a hoof tumor like a watermelon--it is as if he were of the fruits of the garden, not a horse!

In driving and in the halter it's as though
He is a ship propelled by boathooks

Another:

Eyes mismatched,⁶¹⁰ dust-colored, an affliction
Droopy-faced, floppy eared

Watery eyed, every time he walks in the street
House walls bump into him

His mane has a bushel⁶¹¹ of ticks
Like tiny⁶¹² seeds

When he is bridled, his ticks crawl
Like ants along the length of the reins (Sh. p. 129)

Another

(He is) blind, deaf, refractory, white socked, fat
Weak legged, sway backed,⁶¹³ with little hair

Filling his life span to the utmost; a term
That even Lubād⁶¹⁴ failed to reach (M. p. 34)

Night-traveling--for he falls into a cavern
When you lead him and he leans against walls

When you force him to walk, he, poor one
Doesn't have the endurance to walk a single span

Another:

⁶¹⁰ *Akhyaf al-ʿayn* meaning one blue, one black. Lane, s.v. "Akhyaf."

⁶¹¹ Literally, two of a measure used in Iraq, which weighs 5 3/4 lb. Lane, s.v. "Kilaja."

⁶¹² A plant similar to the poppy but without value, or a plant with a disagreeable taste, whose head can be cooked and eaten. Lane, s.v. "Fasā."

⁶¹³ *Maḥṭūm al-qarī*. Broken, infirm due to age. Lane, s.v. "Ḥaṭama."

⁶¹⁴ Luqmān b. ʿĀd is a legendary hero and sage of pre-Islamic Arabia. He is known for his wisdom and is credited with being one of the architects of the Maʿrib Dam in Yemen. He was granted a long life and chose the duration of the lives of seven vultures. The last of the eagles was named Lubād, or enduring. EI2, s.v. "Luqmān."

He repeatedly returns to the fodder seller's door
Like a beggar asking for a gift (Sh. p. 130)

(Each time), from outside, he smells aromas
Of what is within the store and goes away

(Thinking perhaps) sniffing the scent of barley
May dispel the affliction that besieges him

Another:

White legged, dark bodied, one eye light, one dark, he has a pain
In the withers, his front and back legs are slack

Another:

Between his thighs and his flank
Muʿtasim's⁶¹⁵ brand is on his side

Another:

Jacob⁶¹⁶ owned him when he was a foal
With a blaze, at the time the good news came to him⁶¹⁷

He was a blotchy bay, a dun
Time had bleared his eyes

Varied in form, in terms of proportion⁶¹⁸
His limbs are asymmetrical

One side is high, tall
And one side is lame, short

(The horse) wails all along the road under me
Like the moaning wail of an old man with asthma⁶¹⁹

He has no spirit except for farting
From which sound donkeys flee

And the crux is (his) saddle
The decoration of its sides is (nothing but) leather thongs

⁶¹⁵ Al-Muʿtasim was caliph from 218-227 to 833-842 .

⁶¹⁶ Jacob. The son of Isaac and father of Joseph in the Bible.

⁶¹⁷ Qurʾān, 12 (Yūsuf): 96.

⁶¹⁸ *Takāfuʿ* with *hamza* lightened to *takāfi*.

⁶¹⁹ *Zahīr*, literally breathing problems. Hava, s.v. "Zaḥāra."

I don't know--when he appears to me
Shiny and gleaming in it-- (Sh. p. 131)

Whether his gilded, ornamented bridle
Is more beautiful or his spotted saddle

(He is) tied up all day and cursed with galls(?).

In the manger, there isn't anything except a cloud of dust
And his head has a scanty forelock; (he is) dry mouthed, thirsty

Another:

May God protect him, that lively horse
With the knight of Shaddān as his groom

His bones stick out everywhere
Like dry firewood (M. p. 35)

Or I see a rider swaying on a donkey, as if he were the deputy of the anti-Christ⁶²⁰--a stumbling, foul donkey, black like ink, like a worn out waterskin, (Sh. p. 132) or a syrupskin. If (the rider) stops it at a group, it gets an erection, and if he leaves it alone, it runs off. If he reins it in tightly it tires his hands, and if he urges it on it dislocates his legs from the hip socket. If he ignores it, it stands, and if he greets an on-comer, it lies down under him and sleeps.

You see in its pasterns and shins
Hereditary and acquired faults

You see legs as dry as firewood, they fluctuate
Between being too thick here and too thin⁶²¹ there

They are short and have different lengths
If the rider (stops kicking with) his legs, (the horse) stops

If he flicks the whip over its ears, it snorts and raises its head
And if the rider intends to gallop, it kneels and has a nosebleed⁶²²

⁶²⁰ *Khalīfat al-dajjāl*. The *dajjāl* is a figure in Islamic eschatology. He is to appear at the end of time. His reign is to last forty days before his power disappears before Jesus and the Mahdi, who will slay him. *EI2*, s.v. "Dadjdjal."

⁶²¹ Emended from *qaṭaf* to *qaḍaf*.

And if he intends to go, it won't budge

Another:

A donkey that is completely worn out
The state of his outside indicates that of his inside

One day he saw fodder⁶²³ and sang it
A song of one desirous of his enchantress

'You stole my heart from its refuge
And you disturbed its peace'

Asking God for help, I wish I knew how one can compare the one who plants to the one who guards (the plants), and compare the infantryman to the cavalryman. (Sh. p. 133)

I do not see, by God, on the body of a single one among you, (a garment of) red Dabīqī (cloth), nor of Dabqāwī,⁶²⁴ nor of Qīrātī Zuhayrī,⁶²⁵ nor of thin Qushayrī white cotton, nor (do I see) a cloak from Aden, nor garments of twisted silks,⁶²⁶ nor clothing of linen,⁶²⁷ nor tapestry-like cloth,⁶²⁸ nor Dasīsī,⁶²⁹ nor Tinnīsī, nor Dimyātī,⁶³⁰ nor Majallalī, either, nor figured⁶³¹ embroidered brocade, woven with gold, and intermingled with ambergris, beautifully striped, as though it were woven of spring blossoms. Nor (do I see) Sīnīzī⁶³² gauze, like delicate (Sh. p. 134) air, or like the mirage, or napkins⁶³³ of

⁶²² Either to have a nosebleed or to outstrip the other horses. Hava, s.v. "Ra'afa."

⁶²³ Hava, s.v. "Qatt."

⁶²⁴ For these two terms, see Serjeant.

⁶²⁵ A fabric embroidered with patterns in the shape of the qīrāt, a small round coin and made in the Zuhayrī Quarter of Baghdad. Serjeant, 212.

⁶²⁶ Tākhtaj and rākhtaj. Both mean fabric of twisted silk. Serjeant, 91.

⁶²⁷ Linen, often decorated with gold or silver. Serjeant, 39.

⁶²⁸ Cloth embroidered with a needle. The embroidery sometimes resembles a tapestry. Joseph Karabacek, *Die persische Nadelmalerei Susandschird* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1881), 20.

⁶²⁹ A variant form of Damsīsī. Damsīs is a village in the Nile Delta. Serjeant, 153.

⁶³⁰ Serjeant, 141.

⁶³¹ Serjeant, 32.

⁶³² Sīnīzī is a town in Fārs. *al-Buldān*, 3:231-2.

⁶³³ Serjeant, 212.

unbleached linen with a border all the way around which are used to wipe the mouth at gatherings, nor striped material,⁶³⁴ nor (material) ornamented with Maghribī gold, nor ʿAttābī Dabīqī with its gold-embroidered border.⁶³⁵ Nor do I see among your houses and residences a (single) house whose ceilings are lined with teak, and whose railings are ornamented with ebony and ivory, with an elegant portico or a side-chamber, or two sanctums⁶³⁶ with two passages, (M. p. 36) containing an *īwān*⁶³⁷ with two salons on its sides, or a high cornered gallery overlooking its courtyard. Nor do I see your drawing rooms (Sh. p. 135) furnished with Maghribī rugs, nor with velvet-like Kharshani⁶³⁸ carpets, carpet strips⁶³⁹ from Andalusia and Cordoba, Armenian (Sh. p. 136) carpets, Byzantine velvet and Tustarī cushions,⁶⁴⁰ Maghribī leather mats (Sh. p. 137) embroidered with gold, gold-embroidered pillows of Dabīqī (cloth), throw pillows from Cyprus, *sūsanjird*,⁶⁴¹ peacock cloth,⁶⁴² or cushions, a house-full of which look like a field (sown) with poppies and carnations. Nor (do I see) among you a *Sāmānī* reed mat, nor an ʿAbbādānī mat that folds down the middle, as clothes are folded, more splendid than carpets and softer than (Sh. p. 138) *Sūsī*⁶⁴³ silk, delicately worked, wondrously crafted, finely woven, nor red cushions picked out with gold, nor cushions of (cloth interwoven)

⁶³⁴ Serjeant, 160.

⁶³⁵ Serjeant, 28.

⁶³⁶ M.J. De Goeje, *Indices, Glossarium et Addenda et Emendanda ad Part. I-III*, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, pars 4, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1879), 221.

⁶³⁷ An oblong arched or vaulted chamber or portico. Lane, s.v. “*īwān*.”

⁶³⁸ The region around a river in the east of Farghāna. Serjeant, 98, 103.

⁶³⁹ *Nakhhk*. Serjeant, 168.

⁶⁴⁰ Tustar is a small town in Khuzistan north of the head of the Persian Gulf. Serjeant, 41.

⁶⁴¹ Cloth embroidered with a needle. The embroidery sometimes resembles a tapestry. Joseph Karabacek, *Die persische Nadelmalerei Susandschird*, 69-70.

⁶⁴² Cloth of violet threads woven with crimson and green, giving it an iridescent effect like peacock feathers. The color of the cloth changes under different lighting. Serjeant, 142-3.

⁶⁴³ It is unclear whether this is *Sūs* in Khuzistan or *Sūs* in North Africa.

with gold-wrapped threads,⁶⁴⁴ nor gold brocade worked in images of elephants and horses, nor throw pillows stuffed with the feathers of the red-headed Indian sparrow, nor Tustarī brocade embroidered with gold.

Nor do I see, by God, among your perfumes Baramakī tri-essence⁶⁴⁵--sugary, (Sh. p. 139) gem-like, or *ʿammari*,⁶⁴⁶--nor rose *dharīra*,⁶⁴⁷ nor Ṭaylūnī *dharīra*, nor *ghāliyya* of ambergris,⁶⁴⁸ nor *ghāliyya* with camphor,⁶⁴⁹ nor the yellow (colored *ghāliyya*) that doesn't leave a residue in clothing, (Sh. p. 140) nor the *sāmīriyyāt* perfumes⁶⁵⁰ which use ambergris oil and citron oil, nor (do I see) a sandalwood ball, nor black or yellow (colored) balls, nor imperial cucumber perfume,⁶⁵¹ nor perfume⁶⁵² of blossoms, nor *nadd*-perfume⁶⁵³ processed gradually,⁶⁵⁴ nor (Sh. p. 141) Ṭahmānī *nadd*, nor Nihāya *nadd*, nor the Caliph al-Muqtadir's *nadd*,⁶⁵⁵ nor totally fresh, oily Indian aloe wood,⁶⁵⁶ nor choice (aloewood) from Mandalā,⁶⁵⁷ which has been rubbed with Soghodian or Tibetan musk,⁶⁵⁸ nor Ṭūmanī (aloewood), nor Nepali, nor Khawjīrī,⁶⁵⁹ nor Khuṭanī,⁶⁶⁰ nor sea-

⁶⁴⁴ Joseph Karabacek, *Die persische Nadelmalerei Susandschird* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1881), 20.

⁶⁴⁵ A combination of ambergris, musk and aloe. Alfred Siggel, *Arabisch-deutsches Wörterbuch der Stoffe*, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Institut für Orientforschung, Veröffentlichung, nr. 1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1950), 67.

⁶⁴⁶ This is named for either a type of date palm or a type of myrtle. Eilhard Wiedemann, *Aufsätze zur arabischen Wissenschafts-Geschichte*, Collectanea VI/2 (Hildesheim: Georg Olm, 1970), 2:420.

⁶⁴⁷ According to *Maṭāli*^ḡ, 1:64, a basic recipe for *dharīra*, which is a powder, consists of cinnamon bark, carnation, xanthoxylax, spikenard, Costus sandalwood, aloe, pepper, rose water, carnation water, thyme, and myrtle water with a later addition of camphor and musk.

⁶⁴⁸ A boiled mixture of musk, ambergris and oil of *ban*. Lane, s.v. "*Ghāliyya*."

⁶⁴⁹ The basic mixture of musk, ambergris and oil of *ban* could also contain other ingredients, such as camphor. Lane, s.v. "*Ghāliyya*."

⁶⁵⁰ Emended from the plural to match the singular form of the verb.

⁶⁵¹ Siggel, 46.

⁶⁵² Based on a mixture of ambergris, musk and aloe. Siggel, 71.

⁶⁵³ A kind of perfume made of aloe wood scented with musk and ambergris and used for fumigation. Lane, s.v. "*Nadd*."

⁶⁵⁴ Wiedemann, 421.

⁶⁵⁵ The Caliph al-Muqtadir, 295-320/908-932.

⁶⁵⁶ Wiedemann, 421.

⁶⁵⁷ Mandal is a place in India famous for aloe wood. *al-Buldān*, 4:660.

⁶⁵⁸ Wiedemann, 421.

⁶⁵⁹ This could be a variant of *khargiri*, or Kirghiz. Wiedemann, 421, ft. 4.

aloe, nor Chinese musk, nor Māhī saffron, nor Syrian (saffron), nor (Sh. p. 142) camphor--the splendid Rubāʿī that is like sea salt, or the scaly qayṣārī, or Tabrīzī, or raqraq (camphor), or Āzād, or Mahrasān, or Sarukhān. So, now show me some oily blue ambergris of Shalāhatī,⁶⁶¹ or the rare, gray (ambergris) from Shiḥr,⁶⁶² (Sh. p. 143) or the white (ambergris) from Africa,⁶⁶³ or (ambergris) from fish innards, of which a fragment thrown onto the fire boils as a pot boils and simmers as a clay pot simmers, and smoke rises from it like the smoke of a conflagration. Nor (do I see) Indian (aloewood), nor Samandūrī, nor Sakālī, nor Qamārī, (M. p. 37) nor Indian incense wood, nor saltwort, nor Barbarī nor a mixture of perfumes,⁶⁶⁴ nor large trees, nor licorice root, nor bark cuttings, nor Kalāhī⁶⁶⁵ (aloewood)--not to mention Mānṭāʿī, or Lawāʿī? (aloewood), or Rintāʿī, or Jallāʿī (aloewood), or Karafīnī, nor Qufṣī Dīnawayh, which resembles them-- (Sh. p. 144) nor musk--Tibetan, or apple-like, or Indian, or Chinese, or Wadāʿī, or Tashmīrī, or marine, or Qawārīrī; nor *filāfil* ambergris with Zanjī *nadd*, nor rose water from the red rose, harvested in its time, (when) newly rooted, which sinks into the pores (Sh. p. 145) of the hair--its scent lasts a week. Nor (do I see) white sandalwood,⁶⁶⁶ nor white⁶⁶⁷ (sandalwood), (Sh. p. 146) nor red (sandalwood), with a little Indian aloewood and safflower crushed in it, nor sparrow's spikenard, nor a highland saffron (blend), nor purchased incense, nor saffron water, nor sandalwood water, nor sweet

⁶⁶⁰ Adjectival form of the name of a town in Chinese Turkistan. *EI2*, s.v. "Khotan."

⁶⁶¹ Emended from Balāḥatī to Shalāhatī. Shalāhatī is an island off Ceylon. *al-Buldān*, 3:312.

⁶⁶² Shiḥr is a place on the Indian Ocean between Oman and Yemen. It is famous for ambergris. *al-Buldān*, 3:363.

⁶⁶³ Literally, Zanjī ambergris. *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, M.J. De Goeje, ed., vol. 7, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, by al-Yaʿqūbī (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 366.

⁶⁶⁴ From *fitāq*, with a plural of *aftiqa*, whose plural could be *afātiq*.

⁶⁶⁵ Kalāh is a remote place in India famous for aloe wood. *al-Buldān*, 4:297.

⁶⁶⁶ *Maqāṣirī*. Either white or yellow sandalwood. Dozy, s.v. "Maqāṣirī."

⁶⁶⁷ Emended from *ḥūdhī* to *jūrī*.

Cyperus rotundus,⁶⁶⁸ nor (Sh. p. 147) carnation, nor *ladanum rhyrobalan*, nor *Prunus mahaleb*,⁶⁶⁹ nor aloewood in the incense burners, nor *nadd* (Sh. p. 148) in the meeting rooms. You see it thicken like mist; its spreading is more pleasant than the sight of loved ones.

And expensive (perfumes) and Indian ambergris
And musk are on the heads and beards like dye

I don't see candles scented with ambergris, or with camphor, which burn by themselves, with no fire except for that burning their tips.

I don't see among the luxuries of your houses and furnishings, among the things (needed) for your receptions and gifts,⁶⁷⁰ neither single-soled shoes,⁶⁷¹ nor Sindhī sandals,⁶⁷² nor Haythamiyya⁶⁷³ (Sh. p. 149) scissors, nor Ṭāhiriyya⁶⁷⁴ combs, nor penknives, nor richly colored Chinese porcelain bowls--local (celadon) imitations.

Rather, (all) I see, by God, are houses in wasteland tracts, (on) squalid sites, whose walls have (become) surrounded by dirt and stained with dung, and (whose) furnishings are wool coverlets from Ruwaydasht,⁶⁷⁵ (Sh. p. 150) velvets from the Sawād, Kurdish haircloth, and Jārūwānī cushions. In (both) the summer and the winter, you sit on wool rugs and coverlets. Furthermore, on your bodies (you wear) rude cotton (cloth) from Marv, rough, home-spun--a fart for every strand (spun), and (of) two-ply yarn--of which your shirts are (made), and (of which) your turbans are (made). On the head, they hang in ruins over the sides of the cheeks, and dip down over the ears. (And

⁶⁶⁸ Wiedemann, 422.

⁶⁶⁹ Siggel, 67.

⁶⁷⁰ The meaning of this phrase, *al-ma'āriḍ wa-al-ʿawāriḍ*, is unclear.

⁶⁷¹ de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 292.

⁶⁷² Thick soled sandals that tap audibly as their wearer walks. Pellat, 128.

⁶⁷³ *al-Buldān*, 4:998.

⁶⁷⁴ *al-Buldān*, 3:494.

⁶⁷⁵ Emended from Ruwandashiyya. *al-Buldān*, 2:875.

you wear) *balānī* (toweling), and short layered shirts,⁶⁷⁶ and violet (colored cloth).

When you want to look elegant, you wear a garment with padded shoulders,⁶⁷⁷ and your youths (wear) striped garments (M. p. 38) and dark blue cotton turbans with red and green threads hanging in their fringes. (As for) the people in the bazaar, if one of their shirts were wrung, an entire jug of fat would flow out, and (likewise) the smells of bath unguents and frankincense emerging from your houses and your clothes are like the smell from bath houses and the scents of African rue. (Sh. p. 151)

I don't see in front of even one of you a table⁶⁷⁸ with legs which are a part of it, (made) of Khurasanian *khulanj* wood,⁶⁷⁹ without a joint or break, variegated red in white, as if it were a platter of poppies and carnations, or a crystal ring, or iridescent silk clothing. The sight of it distracts a person from eating. Tamarisk loaves are on it: full moons speckled with stars, baked from the flour of Fā'iq al-Hawīdī and al-Ṭansīrī, milled by al-Gharūb, white with (a tinge of) yellow. Its dough is like gum, stretchable like mastic that clings to the fingers; a cup⁶⁸⁰ of it could absorb the Tigris, and a rolling pin⁶⁸¹ could roll out (an acre of) it. (Sh. p. 152) (Its) wheat is like filings from princely gold and its bread crackles under the teeth and (must be) chewed until it makes the jawbone hurt. A look at it sates and a bite of it makes the heart attain its utmost desire. And (on the table are) porcelain and metal platters, white and lapis lazuli, and wine-red, and brass yellow, and brick red; on them are pungent Dīnawarī⁶⁸² cheese which

⁶⁷⁶ Lane, s.v. "Sanad."

⁶⁷⁷ *al-Katifi*. This is unidentifiable, but does seem related to shoulders.

⁶⁷⁸ For a full discussion of tables, see J. Sadan, *Le mobilier au proche Orient medieval* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 59-99.

⁶⁷⁹ A type of wood generally used to make bowls and beams. Lane, s.v. "Khulanj."

⁶⁸⁰ A measure variously defined as two to eight pints. Lane, s.v. "Makkūk."

⁶⁸¹ *Mishtaḥ* is emended to *masṭaḥ*.

⁶⁸² *al-Buldān*, 2:712.

stimulates the appetite and arouses the stomach, and smoked Daqūqī⁶⁸³ olives mixed with blanched almonds and thyme. Divide an olive over the loaf and it will soak it with oil then (the pieces) will roll away like pellets of ambergris. And (on the table is) fried Byzantine cheese, resembling pieces of fat-tailed sheep's tail or cow's butter. Tasting its pungency makes the eyes water, as though one were parting from his loved ones, white, tinged with yellow, smooth, newly formed. You (can) eat a (whole) cheese on a loaf (of bread) without getting gassy or thirsty, and you cannot detect a foul smell from it. It purifies the stomach, and absorbs phlegm, as if it were young myrobalan; by taking a *dirham* weight of it one can drink down a cask of date wine. And (on the table is) the young white skinned almond whose flavor (when eaten) with Dīnawarī or Byzantine cheese is pleasanter than appetite in the body. And (on the table is) a turnip, white and red, as if it were the soft inner part of *farānī*⁶⁸⁴ cakes, or the fat tails of suckling lambs; it preserves the light of eyesight, (Sh. p. 153) stimulates sexual appetite, and decreases yellow bile (when) marinated in wine vinegar, imported from Sarīfīn⁶⁸⁵ and ʿUkbarā.⁶⁸⁶ (There is) also cucumber in vinegar, and asafetida root, and pickled eggplant, and filled cookies with pomegranate juice, and distillation of oleander, unmixed with unripe dates,⁶⁸⁷ whose sourness makes the bird in the heart of the sky alight, and draws the yellow bile from the stomach. You (can) smell its scent from three miles⁶⁸⁸ away. It sets the teeth on edge even before it is eaten. And (on the table)

⁶⁸³ *al-Buldān*, 2:581.

⁶⁸⁴ Singular = *furnī*. A coarse type of bread that includes milk, butter and sugar as ingredients. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Khwārazmī, *Kitāb mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 166.

⁶⁸⁵ *al-Buldān*, 3:384.

⁶⁸⁶ *al-Buldān*, 3:705.

⁶⁸⁷ F. Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), s.v. "Kharak."

⁶⁸⁸ Literally, a *farsakh*.

are well-wrought⁶⁸⁹ crystal bowls, and crystal pitchers filled with lemon juice, (M. p. 39) and unripe grape juice, and red currant juice, and snow-white salt, white, pure, like smelted silver, a bowl of which is eaten with a loaf of bread in which there is neither asafetida, which gives the mouth bad breath, nor silphium,⁶⁹⁰ which wears out the teeth, but (which is baked) with crushed almonds, blanched pistachios, seeds (Sh. p. 154) of leguminous plants, hemp seeds, toasted sesame seeds, Kirmānī cumin, Sarakhsī⁶⁹¹ silphium, for this makes it (both) a snack and a condiment and is visually appealing. And (on the table are) onions from Marāgha, and platters of cold cuts, which were all used for Kaskarī⁶⁹² chicks, and the livers of fattened chickens, duck breasts (cooked) in apple juice and pomegranate juice, and Syrian mulberries, and oven-baked dishes, and *zīrbāj*,⁶⁹³ *mamqūriyya*⁶⁹⁴ with rose water, and (Sh. p. 155) hazelnuts, and almonds, and caraway, and aged *murrī*,⁶⁹⁵ and citron pulp, and lemon pulp. The scent of its spices can be smelled three miles⁶⁹⁶ away. (On the table) are bowls with fried *bunnī*⁶⁹⁷ fish, and salted *ṣahnāh*⁶⁹⁸ fish, and *rubaythā*,⁶⁹⁹ and large bowls containing salted *qāsh*⁷⁰⁰ fish, and salted caviar,⁷⁰¹ and *mālīḥ nā'im*⁷⁰² (made) from shad and *bunnī* fish, (Sh. p. 156)

⁶⁸⁹ Emended from *wa maḥkam* to *ḥukm*.

⁶⁹⁰ *Lisān*, s.v. "Maḥrūt."

⁶⁹¹ *al-Buldān*, 3:71.

⁶⁹² *al-Buldān*, 4:274.

⁶⁹³ A stew of meat cooked with cinnamon, chickpeas, salt, wine-vinegar, sugar, ground almonds, rose-water, coriander, pepper, mastic and saffron. Arberrī1, 36.

⁶⁹⁴ Emended from *manqūriyya* to *mamqūriyya*. A stew of meat cooked with coriander, cumin, cinnamon, mastic, pepper, chopped onion, wine-vinegar and *murrī*. Arberrī1, 40.

⁶⁹⁵ Bread made of penny royal and flour, rotted until it turns black, dissolved in water and then spiced with cinnamon and aromatic spices. Arberrī1, 36.

⁶⁹⁶ Literally, *farsakh*.

⁶⁹⁷ Emended from *bunn*.

⁶⁹⁸ A seasoning made of small sardine-like fish, which increases appetite and soothes the stomach. Lane, s.v. "Ṣahnā'."

⁶⁹⁹ A type of small fish. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Abū 'Abdallāh al-Khwārazmī, *Kitāb mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm*, 169.

⁷⁰⁰ A fish found in the Nile with a long nose resembling a bird's beak. Dozy, s.v. "Qāsh."

⁷⁰¹ *Lisān*, s.v. "Sirra."

and fried *ṭirriḳh*⁷⁰³ with egg, and (chicken) livers scrambled with fresh egg,⁷⁰⁴ all this cooked with fresh coriander (cilantro) and saffron, and soused fish,⁷⁰⁵ and sour pickled fish, and fried lamb, and *awsāt*,⁷⁰⁶ *bazmāward*, and triangular meat pies,⁷⁰⁷ cooked with chicken breasts and francolins, and (Sh. p. 157) chicks, marinated in sumac water and lemon juice, and on the edge of the table, among the loaves are gathered herbs, on a folded thin loaf.

Among the types of roast meat, are Kaskarī ducks; and *Ṣarṣarī*⁷⁰⁸ goats; and fattened Indian chickens; and Turkoman suckling lambs—(they are) round, their length and their width is the same, with the udders of their mothers in their mouths, well browned, as if they were nests of hornets--and fattened poultry more pleasant than appetite, and further down *jūdhāba* Khakhāshiyya,⁷⁰⁹ and *jūdhāba* made with thin bread; and rice with milk,⁷¹⁰ garnished with saffron, combined (Sh. p. 158) with chick peas, and sprinkled with fine sugar; and *Ja^fariyya*,⁷¹¹ fresh and delicious, Byzantine (in origin), adapted to Baghdādī (taste); and tripe (browned) like a stick of royal myrtle. (There is) a table like a bride raising her veil and surrounded by all (kinds of) rare objects: there

⁷⁰² Fresh fish, salted thoroughly, wrapped in cloth and left in a hot place for half a day, give or take, until the flesh is soft under the skin. It is then washed, spiced with cumin, coriander and cinnamon, covered with sesame oil and baked until it has absorbed the oil. Arberry1, 203.

⁷⁰³ Anchovy. Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. “*Ṭariḥ*,” “*Tirriḥ*.”

⁷⁰⁴ Probably *mufarraka*. Arberry2, 201-2.

⁷⁰⁵ Fish fried in sesame oil, then put into a sauce of wine-vinegar and *murri*. Arberry2, 203.

⁷⁰⁶ Meat and fish layered on pita bread fragments with green herbs, cheese, olives, nuts, more herbs and more pita bread fragments on top. Manuela Marin and David Waines, ed., *Kanz al-Fawā'id fī al-Mawā'id*, Bibliotheca Islamica, 40 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1993), 58.

⁷⁰⁷ *Sanbūsaj*. Arberry2, 201.

⁷⁰⁸ Two villages, Upper *Ṣarṣar* and Lower *Ṣarṣar*, on the banks of the *ʿĪsā* Canal near Baghdad. *al-Buldān*, 3:381.

⁷⁰⁹ *Jūdhāb*, pl. *jūdhāba*. A cake made of sugar syrup, white break crumbs and poppy seed, hung under meat to catch the drippings. Arberry2, 208-9.

⁷¹⁰ *Aruzz bi-laban ḥalīb*. Rice cooked with milk, mastic, camphor, and cinnamon until the milk is thickened. Marin, *Kanz* 47.

⁷¹¹ This might be identified with *Bārīda li-Ibn Ja^far al-Barmakī*, a chicken stew with coriander, pepper, cumin, and cinnamon. Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq, *Kitāb al-Ṭabīḳh*, Kaj Öhrnberg and Sahban Mroueh, ed., *Studia Orientalia*, 60, (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 1987), 70.

is (a dish colored) blood red, (one) bright yellow facing it, and (another) deep black with (another) dazzling white opposite it;⁷¹² the goat is red as rose anemones, and the (illegible) is white as sesame cakes(?). A mouthful drowns in its oil before joining the rice. In the stomach, (there is formed) a foundation of white and red from the meats of these (M. p. 40) goats and their fat. When the balista's rock is sent (down) to them, that is, an (iced) drink, it bounces off and does not mix with them. Furthermore, (there are) pigeon *maḍīra*,⁷¹³ thickened, immersed in its oil; cranes baked in a clay oven; roasted ring doves; quail; partridges; baby chicks; *ṭabāhīj*;⁷¹⁴ fattened chickens, big breasted, golden-skinned, (with) silver meat, Indian, or Barhindiyya, or qalṭiyya, (with) shiny shanks, thick thighs, heavy breasted, with juice in their fat; they have been fed with barley meal, and the filtered oil--(Sh. p. 159) they are pressed with oils. And (there are) a basket of dates;⁷¹⁵ sausages; braided sausages; thin slices (of meat); Rashīdī kababs; spiced sausage; pigeon; *jalābī* birds still being fed by their mother; and the young of francolins; geese; sides of roast meat (served) dripping, by God, with juices; and whose *jūdhāb* is streaming with fat and gravy drippings; *shawarma*; *nārsūd*;⁷¹⁶ (...) ⁷¹⁷ *sikbāj*,⁷¹⁸ cooked in distilled wine vinegar, with the meats of young lambs; baby chicks; water birds; domestic yellow birds, stuffed with ground almonds, Khurāsānī raisins, Jurjānī jujube, and Ḥulwānī (Sh. p. 160) figs, and decorated with citron leaves. And next a dish

⁷¹² *Maqāmāt*, 74. With some differences in the order: *Fa-min ḥālik bi-izā'i-hi nāsi'*. *Wa min qān tilqā-hu fāqi'*.

⁷¹³ *Maḍīra*. Meat stewed with onions, leeks, coriander, cumin, mastic and cinnamon, then folded into thickened yogurt, as though it were an aspic dish. Arberry1, 41-2.

⁷¹⁴ *Tabāhaja*. Meat stewed with saffron, onion, mint, and celery, then with dried coriander, cumin, caraway, cinnamon, ginger, wine-vinegar, and grape juice. Arberry1, 37.

⁷¹⁵ *Lisān*, s.v. "*Ṭardīna*."

⁷¹⁶ Pomegranate and vinegar.

⁷¹⁷ Illegible.

⁷¹⁸ Meat stewed with fresh coriander, and cinnamon, then with dry coriander, onions, and carrots, then made sweet and sour with wine-vinegar and date juice, and garnished with almonds, raisins and figs. Arberry1, 34.

called *ʿarūs*;⁷¹⁹ one called *maʿqilī*; and (one called) *Sulaymānī*, all of them made with tender lamb meats, taken from the breast and ribs; and following this are all sorts of other dishes, including *Maʿmūniyya*,⁷²⁰ *Rukhāmiyya*,⁷²¹ *Ibrāhīmiyya*,⁷²² *Muʿtaḍidiyya*,⁷²³ *Khālidiyya*; *fustaqiyya*;⁷²⁴ *mishmishiyya*,⁷²⁵ *qishmishiyya*; *banafsajīyya*;⁷²⁶ *ḥubayshiyya*;⁷²⁷ *ʿinabiyya* made with the juice of large *Rāziqī* grapes,⁷²⁸ *miskiyya*,⁷²⁹ and *summāqiyya*.⁷³⁰ And then (there are) *Nūbiyya*; (Sh. p. 161) *ṣaʿtariyya*;⁷³¹ *nirjisiyya*;⁷³² *khashkhāshiyya*;⁷³³ *fākhitiyya*;⁷³⁴ *ḥummādiyya*;⁷³⁵ *ʿanbariyya*;⁷³⁶ *ṣāʿidiyya*; *ṣaʿdiyya*; *dīkbarājah*;⁷³⁷ *mamqūriyya*;⁷³⁸

⁷¹⁹ Literally, the Bride.

⁷²⁰ Rice cooked with rose water. Marin, *Kanz*, 31, 37.

⁷²¹ Rice cooked with milk until the mix is thick, topped with fried meatballs, and seasoned with cinnamon. Arberry1, 44.

⁷²² Meat cooked with coriander, ginger, pepper, cinnamon, mastic and chopped onion, then grape juice and ground almonds were added, plus sugar to taste. Arberry1, 34.

⁷²³ Presumably named for the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Muʿtaḍid, 279-289/892-902.

⁷²⁴ Chicken breasts boiled until they can be shredded into threads, and cooked with a 50/50 mixture of ground pistachios and sugar until set. Arberry2, 197, 211.

⁷²⁵ Meat stewed with cinnamon, with meatballs containing a whole almond, coriander, cumin, mastic, ginger and more cinnamon. Vinegar and ground almonds were added to taste. Arberry2, 189.

⁷²⁶ Emended from *banafshiyya* to *banafsajīyya*. Heat a violet leaf, marinate it in rose water and musk, dry it slowly, and keep it in a bottle. Marin, *Kanz*, 236.

⁷²⁷ Meat stewed with chopped onion, carrots, coriander, cumin, cinnamon, mastic and pepper, and sauced with black raisin juice, vinegar and ground walnuts. Arberry1, 40.

⁷²⁸ Dozy, s.v. “*Rāziqī*.”

⁷²⁹ A dish made either with Muscat grapes or with musk. Dozy, s.v. “*Miskī*.”

⁷³⁰ Meat stewed with beets, carrots, onions, leeks, eggplant, sumac, and optionally, chicken and meatballs, all spiced with coriander, cumin, pepper, ginger, cinnamon and mastic, plus some ground walnuts. Arberry1, 39.

⁷³¹ Literally, with thyme.

⁷³² Meat stewed with coriander, garbanzo beans, onions, carrots, meatballs, cumin, mastic and cinnamon. Arberry2, 192.

⁷³³ Meat stewed with coriander, cinnamon, ginger, and a broth of water, sugar and poppy-flour to thicken until set. Poppy seed is then stirred in. Arberry2, 195-6.

⁷³⁴ Small slices of red meat fried, then stewed with meatballs, onion, cumin, coriander, pepper, mastic and cinnamon. Yogurt, sumac juice, and walnuts are added later. Arberry2, 190.

⁷³⁵ Meat is stewed with coriander, ginger, pepper, cloves, and cinnamon, then with meatballs, then with citron juice and grape juice, then sauced with ground almonds and sugar. Arberry1, 35.

⁷³⁶ Ground meat stewed in water containing sumac and white bread pulp, then seasoned with coriander, cumin, pepper, mastic and cinnamon, then the meat was fried. Arberry2, 189.

⁷³⁷ Meat stewed with garbanzo beans, coriander, onions, leeks, then flavored with wine-vinegar, *murrī*, and sweetened with a little sugar. Arberry1, 35-6.

⁷³⁸ Meat stewed with coriander, cumin, cinnamon, mastic, pepper and chopped onion, then sauced with wine-vinegar, *murrī* and coriander. Arberry1, 40.

isfīdbāj;⁷³⁹ *zīrbāj*;⁷⁴⁰ *darūbāj*; and (all) types of delicacies, raising the souls' desires, made with lamb meats, and fat goats, and enhanced with cinnamon, and silphium, and sauce of ground raisins and pomegranate juice. How excellent is *maḍīra* with young lambs' tails--that pinnacle of civilization which trembles on the platter! The eye is dazzled among the beauty of all these dishes (Sh. p. 162); the proof of (the host's) elegance is obvious from them; they are impossible to describe: they have been enhanced with filtered oil, galingale, the juice of Syrian leeks, cloves, cinnamon, musk, and fruit juice. (M. p. 41) They are surrounded with roasted (dishes) like fresh aloewood; and *al-maghmūmāt*,⁷⁴¹ which assuage the affliction of the hungry; *ṭabāhajāt*, or side dishes, worthy of kings; with rooster combs; minced meats; *muṭajjanāt*,⁷⁴² enhanced by *murrī*; *ṭabāhaja* known as composite; *ʿaṭariyya*,⁷⁴³ prepared with mulberry juice and grape juice; followed by a glazed *khabīṣ* enhanced by rose water and royal camphor; or (*khabīṣ*) *murammal*,⁷⁴⁴ made with semolina flour in which Sulaymānī sugar had been melted with honeycomb, and (over which) had been sprinkled sieved rock sugar; *lawzīnaj*⁷⁴⁵ stuffed into the thinnest of thin (pastry leaves), enhanced with rose water (Sh. p. 163) and musk, thin crusted, thickly stuffed, fried in almond oil, with a wafting aroma--it melts like gum (even) before it is chewed; by dry, musky, Caliphal *lawzīnaj*;

⁷³⁹ Meat stewed with coriander, cumin, pepper, onion, garbanzo beans, and dill, and optionally with meatballs and chicken, then mixed with water and ground almonds to make a broth. Arberry1, 46.

⁷⁴⁰ Meat stewed with cinnamon, garbanzo beans, then additionally with wine-vinegar, sugar, ground almonds, coriander, pepper and mastic. Arberry1, 36.

⁷⁴¹ Alternating layers of meat, onions, eggplant, sprinkled with coriander, cumin, caraway, pepper, cinnamon, and ginger, then stewed in water and a little vinegar. Arberry1, 39-40.

⁷⁴² Suckling kid quartered, boiled in vinegar, dried, then fried in sesame oil with coriander, cumin and cinnamon, and doused in *murrī*. Arberry2, 200.

⁷⁴³ Literally, perfumed.

⁷⁴⁴ *Al-Khabīṣ al-murammal*, A sweet made of oil, flour and a lot of sugar. al-Warrāq, 258.

⁷⁴⁵ Almond baklava. Arberry2, 211.

and Abbasid *lawzīnaj*; *fālūdhaj*,⁷⁴⁶ tender with the choicest wheat and honey, and mellow wine⁷⁴⁷ thickened with a large quantity of saffron and (ground) almonds, pearly with fat, as if the particles of almond were stars sparkling in a carnelian sky; *fālūdhaj* prepared in a clay oven, and almond *khabīṣ*; poppy *khabīṣ*; the dry Ahwāzī⁷⁴⁸ *khabīṣ*; Maṣūrī *ʿaṣīda*, famous among us in Baghdad; the Barmakī *ʿaṣīda*, which is made of dates and honey; and *qatāʿif*,⁷⁴⁹ a fried delicacy, soaked in (Sh. p. 164) rose water arranged in oval crystal bowls, and solid, smooth and colored Chinese dishes.

The laughing faces of rock sugar (have poured) over them
The crying eyes of the oil pressed out

And a sweet Cairene pancake⁷⁵⁰ and a sweet pancake filled with pistachio oil

The food is removed and afterwards a servant comes (in), with beaming face, clean clothes, good character, (and) charming (personality). In his hand are well-honed Sulṭānī toothpicks like silver poles, from among the work of Najāh the Black, or a scented Maʿmūnī toothpick, which he presents to the group graciously, and follows them with genuine mahleb cherry,⁷⁵¹ incensed, sweet, from the shop of Sharika the Perfume Merchant. After they have rubbed it on, he places on their hands white alkali with powdered cedar, Khurāsānī earth,⁷⁵² a little frankincense, (Sh. p. 165) cypress, Maqāṣīrī⁷⁵³ sandalwood, pastilles of violet and musk, musk face powder, camphor, and

⁷⁴⁶ Almond marzipan scented with camphor and rose water. Arberry2, 211.

⁷⁴⁷ Lane, s.v. "Salsal."

⁷⁴⁸ The capital city of Khūzīstan. LeStrange, *Lands*, 233-4.

⁷⁴⁹ A sweet pastry stuffed with almonds and sugar, and sauced with sesame oil, syrup, rosewater and pistachios. Arberry2, 213.

⁷⁵⁰ *Zalābī*. Although a Cairene *zalābī* is not mentioned, several recipes for *zalābī*'s appear in al-Warrāq, 267-273.

⁷⁵¹ *Prunus mahaleb*, also spelled *mahleb*. A very small, barely 1 cm., thin-fleshed cherry whose stone is used as a spice. It has a delicate cherry scent dominated by a strong bitterness. Gernot Katzer's *Spice Pages*. <http://www.uni-graz.at/~katzer/engl/>. (Accessed Dec. 22, 2005)

⁷⁵² Edible earth, made so by its content of siliceous remains of marine organisms. EI2, s.v. "Tīn."

⁷⁵³ Sandalwood of either a white or yellow color. Dozy, s.v. "Maqāṣīrī."

red rose buds thrown in--all very sultanlike and kingly. It foams like soap, and froths like the lotus tree. From it and with it, the hand becomes like squeaky Indian sandals from (M. p. 42) the shop of Ben-Ezra the Jew. Indeed (Sh. p. 166) (the servant) selects only white alkali like sparrows' shit, (which) he prepares one by one, then crushes them like powder. Furthermore, he proffers a brass bowl, without peer, like a flaming brand, or a piece of gold. And (he proffers) a silver pitcher, of one piece, antique in shape, in Mu^ʿtaḍīd style,⁷⁵⁴ slender-(necked), with a pretty handle and a spout that is of a piece with it; it neither drips nor pours (uncontrollably), and in spite of its slightness, it holds 100 *ratls* of water--it is of wondrous workmanship! The people wash their hands and (the servant) hands them a Dabīqī towel, velvety, Mutawakkilī,⁷⁵⁵ a covering,⁷⁵⁶ with a *ṭirāz* border, made in Egypt, with two distinguishing marks, two bands, and two colors,⁷⁵⁷ with fine thread, perfect length, superior width, curly nap, decorated with split fringe, softer than *qazz*-silk and more pliable than *khazz*-silk. These are descriptions of the Iraqī tables, of which, by God, I do not see any (iota) among you. Rather, I see a table without vinegar or herbs, like an old man without understanding or insight, spread out on a Ruwaydashtiyā⁷⁵⁸ table cloth--the carpet of the earth is cleaner. On (the cloth), in place of *bawārid*⁷⁵⁹ are a bunch of onions, a bunch of garlic, a bunch of chives,⁷⁶⁰ a bunch of eggplants, a bunch (Sh. p. 167) of turnips, a

⁷⁵⁴ It is likely that “*Sulṭānī*” was a style named after the Būyids, “*Ma^ʿmūnī*” a style named after the caliph Ma^ʿmūn, 198-219/813-833 and Mu^ʿtaḍīd style after the caliph Mu^ʿtaḍīd, 279-289/892-902.

⁷⁵⁵ A fabric with silk warp and the weft of some other type of thread, noted for its popularity under the caliph al-Mutawakkil, 847-861. Serjeant, 18.

⁷⁵⁶ Literally *khafī*, which means hidden, disguised. Thus, its meaning is unclear.

⁷⁵⁷ Emended from *ribārīn* to *zanārīn* and from *ṣī^ʿatīn* to *ṣībghatīn*.

⁷⁵⁸ Emended from Ruwandashiyā

⁷⁵⁹ The singular is *barad*. A white flour dumpling cooked in sesame oil and soaked in a honey syrup. Arberry2, 211.

⁷⁶⁰ *Mūsīr*. Muḥammad Mu^ʿīn, *Farhang-i Farsī Mutavassit* (Tih-rān: Mu^ʿassasat-i Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1983), s.v. “*Mūsīr*.”

bunch of cucumbers (*khiyār*), a bunch of other cucumbers (*qithāʾ*),⁷⁶¹ a bunch of medlars, and a bunch of God-blasted⁷⁶²--so how many bunches of (vegetables are we going to get)? It's the grilled meat that the guests' hearts are set on, by God!

Then I see pots in which were cooked anchovies, Blacks' molars and poor mans' food, *al-waskatja*, that is, tripe, may God make your eyes burn and slit the bellies. I have never thought tripe was suitable food except for dogs and cats. I have never seen the people and (their) chiefs eating it. I also see pots in which are cooked big chunks of beef (meant to be) snapped up as lynxes do, and eaten as beasts of prey do: its meat is not torn (into bites) with the hands. One of you takes a piece of meat in his hand and worries on it with his teeth, spattering his face and beard and clothing. This meat is mixed with (so much) gravy (that) a rowboat put in it would row around. A person (would have to) plunge his hand in to the elbow in order to find the meat! There is also cooked crab,⁷⁶³ beans, beets, cabbage, and turnips. Large bowls (of them) exude an odor when they are offered (Sh. p. 168), like the scent of a fevered man's fart, or the belching of a dyspeptic person. And (I see) rice, and Indian peas, and lentils, and beans, and sardines, and sea-locusts, which are (among the things) eaten by bath stokers and garbage sweepers. All this was capped off by black grapes and a sweet kneaded by hand like *nāṭif*,⁷⁶⁴ and *al-bubrīnaj*.⁷⁶⁵ After this comes an elderly Sawād villager the size of a

⁷⁶¹ Cucumbers were not considered appropriate food for those moving in better social circles. *al-Washshāʾ, al-Muwashshāʾ* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965), 194.

⁷⁶² From "bunch of onions" through "bunch of God-blasted," the specific food in each bunch is a Persian word.

⁷⁶³ *Kark*. This could also be *karak*, quail. Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. "Kark." However, this list consists of unappetizing food, so quail can be ruled out. Crab would seem appetizing, but it could be old or could have been considered less than ḥalāl at the time, as it was by the Nuṣayrīs at a later date. Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. "Kark." EI2, s.v. "Ghidāʾ."

⁷⁶⁴ A sweet made of sugar, water, pepper, cloves, dried fruits, nuts and sesame paste. *al-Warrāq*, 60, 278-80.

⁷⁶⁵ This is probably some sort of dish made from *bubrin* (pumpkin). Dozy, s.v. "Bubrin."

camel, with a thick gray beard, and his accoutrements poor (and) worn, pieces of firewood in his hand, which he hands around as toothpicks, then (M. p. 43) leads them to the courtyard of the house and gathers them together to wash their hands at a drain that, by God, hurts the noses with the smells of garbage collected in it, may God blast these ideals of manhood.

Nor do I see, by God, among your fruits, a banana, nor a *jalmūz*, nor chestnuts, nor coconut, nor fresh pistachios, nor sugar cane, nor musk peaches, nor waxy peaches, which are like red gold with a scent like the scent of the most pungent musk. (Sh. p. 169)

Time gave us peaches; their appearance
Is an elegant one

They have two skins, one of them ox-eye
To the beholder and the other carnelian

Like a cheek garbed in perfume⁷⁶⁶
From which it is rubbed off here and there⁷⁶⁷

Nor (do I see) a Narmishī melon, nor a Qufṣī⁷⁶⁸, nor a Khurāsānī melon, (its flesh) spotted red and black, dyed by God,⁷⁶⁹ as if it were anemones. Even with effort, man can hardly pick one up; (its skin) is an inch thick, its seeds float in its middle like sorrel; it is sweeter than honey, and tastier than rock sugar.

More delicious than peaches and apricots

⁷⁶⁶ *Khalūq* was a perfume with a thick consistency, based on saffron. Its was predominantly of red and yellow colors reminiscent of a peach's skin.. Lane, s.v. "*Khalūq*."

⁷⁶⁷ al-Ṣanawbarī, *Dīwān al-Ṣanawbarī*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1970), 426.

These are the first, fifth and sixth lines of a six line poem. al-Ṣanawbarī, ca. 275/888- 334/945, was a poet and librarian to Sayf al-Dawla the Ḥamdānid ruler. He is famous for his *qaṣīdas* on nature. EI2, s.v. "al-Ṣanawbarī."

⁷⁶⁸ *al-Buldān*, 4:147.

⁷⁶⁹ This may be a reference to *Qurʿān*, 2 (al-Baqara): 138, *Ṣibghata Allāhi wa man aḥsanu min Allāhi ṣibghatan wa naḥnu la-hu ʿābidūna*. It refers to God pouring faith into man as a dyer pours dye into clothing. *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1991), 21.

Our Narmishī melons are a marvel

As if their center were filled with
Rock sugar, *fālūdhaj* and *lawzīnaj*

Nor (do I see) Razīqī grapes, as if they were treasuries of crystal, vessels of light,

(Sh. p. 170) receptacles of happiness, sources of nectar, and balls of carnelian.⁷⁷⁰

Razīqī (grapes), lean-(waisted)
As if they were treasuries of crystal

That have been half-filled with musk
And in the upper (halves) is red rose water

If they were to last eternally they would serve
As earrings on the ears of beautiful houris⁷⁷¹

Nor (do I see) Wazīrī figs, as if they were orrison bags wrapped around honey,⁷⁷²

like poppy *khabīṣ*, round, compact, aged.

As if its Wazīrī figs
Were saffron soaked in white honey

And the Razīqī grapes were something
Which the connoisseur's soul contemplates

Nor do you have musk apples, ribbed like a Narmishī melon--an apple (M. p. 44)

neither hand nor eye has touched, not scabbed,⁷⁷³ nor speckled; nor (do you have)

Dāmānī apples, red like coral or anemones, which have combined the description of the
timid lover and the shy beloved.

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⁷⁷⁰ The passage beginning with "as if," and ending with "carnelian" is found in *Zahr*, 297.

⁷⁷¹ By Ibn al-Rūmī. *Zahr*, 296. These lines appear as lines 1, 2 and 4 in a 19 line poem, with small variations. Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī*, sharḥ Qadrī Māyū (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1998), 3: 164. Ibn al-Rūmī, 221/836-283/896, was a poet and philosopher.

⁷⁷² *Zahr*, 297.

⁷⁷³ Literally, with eye-shaped marks.

⁷⁷⁴ There is a blank line in the mss. that probably represents a missing line of poetry.

Nor (do you have) quinces, which unite scent and appearance, as if they were the nap of dark *khazz*-silk on yellow brocade, and have the fragrance of ambergris and the taste of sugar;⁷⁷⁵ nor (do you have) alabaster pomegranates, like purses filled with jewels or red rubies; nor apricots, like (Sh. p. 171) gold skins filled with honey; nor pears—(not) Syrian, nor Sulṭānī, nor Zarjūn, nor Nihāwandī, nor Khazarī,⁷⁷⁶ nor Sijistānī, nor Ḥusaynī; nor unripe “sugar water,”⁷⁷⁷ dates that crumble⁷⁷⁸ in the mouth, like *Khazāʿinī*⁷⁷⁹ slab cane sugar,⁷⁸⁰ of which an unripe date is better than (an entire) palm tree, and a stalk is better than an (entire) palm field; nor *Sukkar*⁷⁸¹ dates, *Jīsawān*,⁷⁸² *Ṭabarzad*,⁷⁸³ *Āzād*,⁷⁸⁴ *Qarashah*, *Khāstawī*,⁷⁸⁵ *Mushammas*,⁷⁸⁶ *ʿAbdasī*, *Ḥarkān*, *ʿArūsī*,⁷⁸⁷ *Hilbāth*,⁷⁸⁸ *Ḥamrān*, *Hīrūn*,⁷⁸⁹ *Bādhinjān*,⁷⁹⁰ *Mādhīyān*,⁷⁹¹ *Mishān*,⁷⁹² *Ṣaʿtarī*, *Maʿqalī*--(all these) unripe dates (then) being cooked--nor (Sh. p. 172) the processed dates: the *Ibrāhīmī*,⁷⁹³

⁷⁷⁵ This passage, beginning with “which unite” and ending with “sugar” appears in *Zahr*, 297, without attribution and with some differences:

...yajmaʿ ṭīban wa manẓaran [...] ka-anna-hu ziʿbar al-khazz al-aghbar, ʿalā al-dībāj al-aṣṣfar, la-hu nasīm al-ʿanbar, wa ṭaʿm al-sukkar...

⁷⁷⁶ *al-Buldān*, 2:436.

⁷⁷⁷ *Māʿ Sukkar*. *Sukkar* are the *dactylorum dulcissimum*, a variety of sugar date grown in the Baṣra Province. de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 262.

⁷⁷⁸ Emended to *infatt* from *inqatt*, since I do not find evidence of form VII of qtt.

⁷⁷⁹ DOZY, s.v. “*Khazāʿinī*.” defines this as a type of pomegranate. Cone sugar, which is a solid block like a slab of sugar would be, has a rough, porous-looking surface rather like pomegranate skin.

⁷⁸⁰ Edmund O. von Lippmann, *Geschichte des Zuckers, seiner Darstellung und Verwendung, seit den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Beginne der Rübenzuckerfabrikation* (Magdeburg: A. Rathke, 1890), 100.

⁷⁸¹ See ft. 490.

⁷⁸² A palm which produces especially long clusters of dates. *Lisān*, s.v. “*Jasā*, i.e. *Jasū*.”

⁷⁸³ Rock sugar. de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 287.

⁷⁸⁴ *Dactylorum nobilis*. de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 176.

⁷⁸⁵ Also called *Khastawāʿī*. de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 225.

⁷⁸⁶ Literally, sun dried.

⁷⁸⁷ de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 298.

⁷⁸⁸ A date grown in the Baṣra region. *Lisān*, s.v. “*Hilbāth*.”

⁷⁸⁹ A large date. al-ʿAskarī, *Kitāb al-Talkhīṣ fi Maʿrifat Asmāʿ al-Ashyāʿ* (Dimashq: Majmaʿ al-Lughā al-ʿArabiyya bi-Dimashq, 1969), 495.

⁷⁹⁰ A date from the Baṣra region with a form similar to an eggplant. de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 185.

⁷⁹¹ This is probably a very sweet white date. *Mādhīya* means white honey and I suspect this is a variant. *Lisān*, s.v. “*Mādhīya*.”

⁷⁹² Or *mushān*. A small black date from the Kūfa region. *Lisān*, “*Mushān*.”

⁷⁹³ de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 175-6.

the *Şirfān*,⁷⁹⁴ the *Barnī*,⁷⁹⁵ the *Mulʿaq*, the *Şīhānī*,⁷⁹⁶ the *ʿUmri*,⁷⁹⁷ the *Badālī*, nor the *Qurashī*,⁷⁹⁸ the *Barband*,⁷⁹⁹ nor the chewy sticky *Āzād*, which is like rock sugar, or (like) honeycomb condensed until it is carnelian (colored). All I see are a *malo cydonia alia*,⁸⁰⁰ a quince⁸⁰¹ pear, a *malo punica*,⁸⁰² and bergamotte⁸⁰³--all these (“*rūds*”)⁸⁰⁴ are a pain, by God—they are food (fit for) Nimrod (Namrūd).⁸⁰⁵

Nor do I see among your aromatic plants *Sūsī*⁸⁰⁶ citron, *Khutāʿī*⁸⁰⁷ citron, *Milāşī*⁸⁰⁸ citron, nor shriveled (citron), which is like gold fingers, nor bitter orange, orange-lemon,⁸⁰⁹ Chinese lemon, myrtle,⁸¹⁰ mandrake,⁸¹¹ nor *pyrocanthus*,⁸¹² (Sh. p. 173) which is like golden balls (whose) stems are emerald--like the scent of musk and saffron, it calms headaches and heals pains; nor the double narcissus,⁸¹³ the Damascene, the *lilium candidum*,⁸¹⁴ the wild rose, calendula, *Mymphaea lotus*,⁸¹⁵ *ocimum basilicum*,⁸¹⁶ nor

⁷⁹⁴ A firm red date. *Lisān*, s.v. “*Şirfān*.”

⁷⁹⁵ A round, very sweet red date. Lane, s.v. “*Barnī*.”

⁷⁹⁶ A firm black date from the Medina region. *Lisān*, s.v. “*Sīhānī*.”

⁷⁹⁷ *al-Sijistānī*, *Kitāb al-Nakhl* (: *Dār al-Liwāʿ*?,), 91, 132.

⁷⁹⁸ A date from the Baṣra region. de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 322.

⁷⁹⁹ Emended from *barbanā*. *al-Sijistānī*, *Kitāb al-Nakhl* (: *Dār al-Liwāʿ*?,), 61, 113.

⁸⁰⁰ *Sāfamrūd*. de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 257.

⁸⁰¹ Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. “*Bahm*.”

⁸⁰² *Bahmrūd*. de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 257.

⁸⁰³ Emend to *shāhmurūd* from *salamrūd*. de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 257.

⁸⁰⁴ The four preceding plant names are in Persian and end in “*rūd*.”

⁸⁰⁵ Nimrod was one of the three or four legendary kings credited with ruling the whole world. After a religious discussion with Abraham, he attempted to fly to Heaven in a chariot pulled by eagles in order to kill Abraham’s God. He later built the Tower of Babel for the same purpose. He never reached heaven and was eventually killed by a gnat. *EI2*, s.v. “*Namrūd*.”

⁸⁰⁶ A city near the Karkhah River in northern Khūzistān. LeStrange, *Lands*, 240.

⁸⁰⁷ A place between Kūfa and Syria. *al-Buldān*, 2:453.

⁸⁰⁸ A castle in the Jazīra. *al-Buldān*, 4:628.

⁸⁰⁹ Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. “*Murakkab*.”

⁸¹⁰ *al-Khafājī*, *Shifāʿ al-ghalīl*, s.v. “*Rāmishna*.”

⁸¹¹ Siggel, 66, or a male palm flower, according to: Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. “*Luffāh*.”

⁸¹² DOZY, s.v. “*Hawli*.”

⁸¹³ de Goeje, *Indices*, pars 4, 362.

⁸¹⁴ Or the blue iris. Siggel, 44.

⁸¹⁵ For the last three terms, see respectively Siggel, 71, 12, and *Bashnīn*, 20.

⁸¹⁶ Siggel, 30. Or bugloss or oxtongue, Hava, s.v. “*Ḥamāḥim*.”

lavender,⁸¹⁷ (over) which the south wind had blown, (Sh. p. 174) nor the water lily,⁸¹⁸
 artemisia,⁸¹⁹ red anemones, carnations, *celandine*,⁸²⁰ wild thyme, *qalaṭī*, goosefoot, like
 forget-me-nots⁸²¹ (M. p. 45) among the sultan's palm fields at al-Najmī.⁸²² Nor (do I see)
 thyme,⁸²³ nor a white rose,⁸²⁴ nor chamomile,⁸²⁵ nor mimosa,⁸²⁶ nor carnations, nor
 violets. (Sh. p. 175)

If the east wind moves it
 "When he spreads the perfume,"⁸²⁷ he says

"In my view, Syria bestows its apples
 But Iraq (bestows) its citron

Rather, all I see in every house is something crooked and curved resembling
 Dārin musk⁸²⁸ called *sīyāv dāran*--may God blacken the face of *sīyār vāran* in the
 stomachs.

By God, I don't see among you a soiree room in which a carpet has been spread,
 a tablecloth has been laid out, and mats have been spread, with (them) myrtle
 branchlets, roses set out in rows, a (cool) tapped keg,⁸²⁹ a *nāy* and an *ūd*;⁸³⁰ (a room)
 whose clear wine is hyacinth, whose blossoms are pearls, whose bitter oranges are
 golden, whose narcissi are a *dīnār* and a *dirham* supported on chrysolite; (a room) in

⁸¹⁷ *Lavandula spica* or *viola odorata*. Siggel, 32.

⁸¹⁸ Or *nenuphar*. Hava, s.v. "Ḥūdhān."

⁸¹⁹ Siggel, 51.

⁸²⁰ *Ḍaymīrān*, emended from *ḍaymirān*. Siggel, 51.

⁸²¹ Siggel, 12.

⁸²² An area to the west of Baghdad. *al-Buldān*, 1:460, s.v. "Bādūrriyā."

⁸²³ *Thymus serpyllum*. Siggel, 71.

⁸²⁴ *Marzanjūsh*. Emended from *Marzajūsh*. Or mouse ear or purslane. Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. "Marzangūsh."

⁸²⁵ *Anthemis chrysanthemum*. Siggel, 22.

⁸²⁶ Siggel, 19.

⁸²⁷ This line appears in the manuscript as:

Yaqūlu 'idhā ḥarakat-hū l-ṣībā/Kadhā nasharah wa ladā 'arjah

I emended the line to:

Yaqūlu 'idhā ḥarakat-hū l-ṣībā/Ladā nasharah wa kadhā 'arjah

⁸²⁸ Emended from *al-rādiyā*. Steingass, *Persian*, "Dārī."

⁸²⁹ The previous three phrases parody *Qur'ān*, 56 (*al-Wāqī'a*): 28-30.

⁸³⁰ A flute and a lute.

which a cloud of incense rises above an earth of roses, in which narcissus eyes open, in which braziers diffuse the aroma of citron, and musk bags are ripped open, in which lute tongues orate and the orator-strings arise, the invoker--*nāys* raise their voices, a blossom breaks open its seal and unfurls its banners; breezes waft over the company, whose lightning-bolts are wine, whose clouds are goblets, and whose thunder-claps are the (*ʿūd*) strings. By God, we don't see⁸³¹ the full moons of cups revolving among the lightning-bolts of the wine, and the suns of the goblets.⁸³² I don't see, by God, in your soiree rooms, graceful glass bottles, some of them shaped crystal, others solid and polished, and (others with) green glaze, and other *Qāṭūl*⁸³³ golden bowls; nor (do I see) white silver mirrors that rival gold ingots, *Baghdādī* objets d'art, some glazed and others gilded, nor chinaware, rectangular boxes, flowerpots, rosewood (curios), colanders, flasks (both) octagonal and conical, (nor) perfume (bottle)s, (nor) statuettes of ambergris kneaded together with pungent musk and saffron, (nor) cones of camphor in colored Chinese bowls, (nor) a sitting room filled with incense whose scent reaches the (open) air and crosses (Sh. p. 176) to the neighbors' houses, nor camphor (and) ambergris candles, nor a kingly lantern (looking) as though it were made from molten gold, of a single piece, without break, join, or soldering, whose lamp shines with five wicks in imported olive oil which is neither styptic (M. p. 46) nor bitter and is suitable for kettles, baking pans, and sauté pans. Nor do I see elegant, dapper drinking companions reciting verses to each other, relating historical anecdotes and engaging in deep discussions of the fine points of literature. Rather, I see a soiree room in which

⁸³¹ "illā" is omitted here.

⁸³² With variations, *Zahr*, 456-7.

⁸³³ *Qāṭūl*. A place on the Tigris River. *Lisān*, "Qāṭūl."

are the vile and the despicable, the descendents of louts, the reprehensible part of the populace, whose hospitality is so dull they doze off, look at each other like sheep glancing sideways at each other in *azbān*,⁸³⁴ and debating over sects and doctrines. Before them are vessels of Isfahani glass, which look like donkeys' testicles, and cups like coppers' cups in their round form, and containers suitable (only) for striking blows; and a lantern at the side of the soiree room that looks like a fig branch in its ugliness and contortedness; and a dark lamp burning with stinking oil, whose smoke flies into the brain and confuses it.

By God, I don't see, among your types of wine, the 'Irāqī, the Sūriyya, (Sh. p. 177) the Bābiliyya, or the Ṣarīfniyya: like anemones, carnelian, flame, brazil wood, ruby, pure gold, light, fire, rose, pomegranate blossom, penetrating flame, and molten gold-- wine like the soul's essence, repose and ease.

Its still body is like gold
And its bubbly surface like precious pearls

Another

It is as though its small and large bubbles
Were pellets of pearl scattered on a ground of gold⁸³⁵

It is as if (the wine) were pressed from the sun's cheeks. Time had smelted their (gold) ore and purified it (so that it is) purer than rain water, than the tear of a sore-eyed beloved, and gentler than the breeze from the east, and (than) the time of childhood.⁸³⁶

(A wine) red before mixing (and) yellow after
It appears in clothing of narcissus and anemones

⁸³⁴ Unidentifiable.

⁸³⁵ Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān Abī Nūwās al-Ḥasan bin Hānī' al-Ḥakami*, Ewald Wagner, ed., 3:36.

⁸³⁶ *Zahr*, 458.

Unmixed, it imitates the beloved's cheek,⁸³⁷ then when they force
Mixture on it, it dresses in the lover's color⁸³⁸ (Sh. p. 178)

In a goblet like a white pearl's skin, plain and engraved, as if it were turned from
the halo of the moon, or (in) a cup of praiseworthy crystal, with a polished rim, well-
formed, not a scratch or a spot on it, emerging from a cover as it is pulled back, white in
black, of Baṣran work, the sheen of red in its body like red anemones, its head
Solomon's seal and its base garden flowers; wine is poured into it from a matching
bottle, a linen strainer of fine thread moistened with rose water over its mouth; it dyes
the hand and the clothing (of the one holding it) with its purity and its rays. (M. p. 47)

(It is a) wine created from the sun,
Which appears to you in a cup (made) of the noonday sun

(It is) air, but it is still
And water, but it does not flow

It is as though one who passes it around,
When he leans to pour to the right or the left

Has put on clothing of jasmine which
Has a single sleeve of pomegranate⁸³⁹

You see a ruby in a white pearl and a sun in a shift made of mirage.

She pours the color of daylight over the night⁸⁴⁰

⁸³⁷ Blushing.

⁸³⁸ Pale from pining. By Ibn Mu'tazz, according to al-Raqīq al-Nadīm, *Quṭb al-Surūr fī Awaṣāf al-Khumūr* (Damascus: Maṭbūʿat Majmaʿ al-Luġha al-ʿArabiyya bi-Dimashq, 1969), 651. By Ibn Durayd, according to al-Maʿarrī, *The Letters of Abu l-ʿAlāʾ of Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān*, D.S. Margoliouth, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 74, 77. By al-Ḥakamī (Abū Nuwās) according to Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Fuṣūl al-Tamāthīl fī Tabāshīr al-Surūr*, 50.

⁸³⁹ According to al-Raqīq al-Nadīm, *Quṭb al-Surūr fī Awaṣāf al-Khumūr*, 585, these are lines 1-2 and 3-4 of a five line poem by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. I did not find them in his *Dīwān*. According to *Maṭāliʿ*, 1:185, the lines are by al-Tanūkhī.

⁸⁴⁰ According to Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Fuṣūl al-Tamāthīl fī Tabāshīr al-Surūr*, 53, this is by Abū Nuwās. I did not find it in his *Dīwān*.

Veiled by bubbles (like) scattered pearls, there wafts from (the wine's) breeze the
 fragrances of *ʿabīr*-perfume.⁸⁴¹

A wine whose bouquet is like
 The wafting of al-Muqtadir's *nadd*-perfume

Another

If a drinker among the group gulps down (some) of the wine, you would imagine
 him

Kissing a star in the dark of the night⁸⁴²

(It is) better, by God, than health in the body, and more pleasurable than a life of
 joy. (Sh. p. 179) It is the antidote to poison and soap for affliction.

In the hand of one slender about the loins, slim,
 Thin like a branch, skinny,

Who had shared his saliva with the grapevine
 And his eyes and neck with the gazelle

He passes (the wine) in a well-made bowl
 Blue and white, like shaven snow

Another

A young, slender (cupbearer) passes their wine
 His two hands are dyed from the cup⁸⁴³

Another

It is as though he, with the cup in his hand
 Were the moon of darkest night in conjunction with Jupiter

⁸⁴¹ A perfume of mixed scents mainly compounded from saffron. Lane, s.v. "*ʿAbīr*."

⁸⁴² By Abū Nuwās. al-Raqīq al-Nadīm, *Quṭb al-Surūr fī Awṣāf al-Khumūr*, 518. Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān Abī Nuwās al-Ḥasan bin Hānīʿ al-Ḥakamī*, Ewald Wagner, ed., 3:41.

⁸⁴³ The second half of the line matches a *bayt* by Abū al-Shīṣ. al-Raqīq al-Nadīm, *Quṭb al-Surūr fī Awṣāf al-Khumūr*, 714. The second half also appears in Abū al-Shīṣ, *Ashʿār Abī al-Shīṣ al-Khuzāʿī*, ʿAbd Allāh al-Jubūrī, ed. (Baghdad: Wizārat al-Tarbiyya ʿalā Nashra, 1967), 100. Abū al-Shīṣ, d. ca. 915, was a poet at the court of Hārūn al-Rashīd for some years. EI2, s.v. "Abū al-Shīṣ."

Rather, I see (in your gatherings) date wine, black and frothy⁸⁴⁴ or yellow,⁸⁴⁵
like grape syrup, or ink, acrid like dirt, a cup of (which) greets you like an inkwell or a
cow's eye.

(It comes) in a Black's color and a fragrance of halitosis.

Another

If its black liquid is poured into the bottle
The drinking companion 's cup (becomes) an inkwell⁸⁴⁶

Another

Or wine, red in color
Resembling a monkey's anus (M. p. 48)

It is put down before you, in a pottery or fired pitcher, of Iṣfahānī (Sh. p. 180) or
Qāshānī⁸⁴⁷ porcelain. Maybe they (are decorated with) patterns of flying (birds or
animals), that is to say, I am an owner of objets d'art, may Allah not make your eyes
water.

A cupbearer passes (the cup), who has
A knee like a cotton cleaner's tool⁸⁴⁸

In his hand a large jug
As if it were a bootmaker's glue pot

Another

It is as though he, with the cup on his palm
Has the gait of a walking camel when he strolls --

He is good for screwing—but as for
Anything else, he is of no use

⁸⁴⁴ Mez notes this word as parallel to *Qurʾān*, 55 (al-Raḥmān): 44, or *Qurʾān*, 88 (al-Ghāshiyya): 5, meaning boiling.

⁸⁴⁵ Emended to *ziryābiyyan*.

⁸⁴⁶ al-Buḥturī, 2:899.

⁸⁴⁷ LeStrange, *Lands*, 209.

⁸⁴⁸ Blocky, not graceful, and rough.

Sometimes (the cupbearer) was an old man, white headed and bearded, as if he were a muezzin or cupper; the taste of the cup in his hand is (like) food from the *zaqqūm* tree,⁸⁴⁹ --God help us!--may Allah provide rain for the monasteries of Kaskar and the dwellings of Khusraw and Caesar! (Sh. p. 181)

Peace be upon the taverns of Buṣrā
And Awānā and Qufṣ⁸⁵⁰ and Baradān (Sh. p. 182)

I wish I knew (the amount) at which the sellers fixed
The price of the wine jugs since I parted from them

Among the wine sold in Dār Rūm⁸⁵¹
Every day at economical prices

In cups like lily of the valley
Leaves, in them anemones (Sh. p. 183)

In cups like fresh pearls in which are
Pieces of gold ingots

And female singers who have full hips and legs,
Unique in their beauty and generosity

Another

As for every low place, we stop at a tavern
And (as for) every high place, we go up to its pub

By God, among the courses (of your meals) and among your snacks, I do not see Ṭāʾifī raisins (Sh. p. 184) like bags of purified honey, Ahwāzī lotus fruit like colored silk buttons, superior Sulaymānī sugar like pieces of camphor, pistachio (Sh. p. 185) nuts like onyx pearls, Khurāsānī (edible) earth like pieces of grey ambergris, blanched almonds, Ṭabarzad sugar, nor chopped sugar cane cleansed with rose water. I (only)

⁸⁴⁹ The tree in Hell that provides bitter fruit as food for the damned. Wehr, s.v. "Zaqqūm."

⁸⁵⁰ A village between Baghdad and ʿUkbarā renowned for the pleasures of its entertainment. *al-Buldān*, 4:150-1.

⁸⁵¹ A neighborhood in eastern Baghdad noted for particularly fine homes. *al-Buldān*, 2:662.

see roasted wheat⁸⁵² from Qāshān, because it, due to its value, is carried from Qāshān by cart, by God!--and dried apricots, dried peaches, black raisins (M. p. 49) like goat droppings, toasted sesame seeds and puffed beans. (Sh. p. 186)

Nor do I see, by God, among your companions, an elegant man, handsome, with a splendid bright face, sumptuously dressed, a fund of *bon mots*, with an engaging nature, without faults, he has a nature like clear water or fragrant musk, pleasanter than rain water, sweeter than honey, more fragrant than the season of roses. (He is) the food of life, the soul's nourishment, the breath of life, and the substance of sociability; he is the drinking companion of kings, (his) character is (pure) like smelted gold. If he is to be treated gently, his jokes make (you) laugh and if he is (to be) treated roughly, his sallies hit the mark. He recites poetry describing a singing girl, a cup, hunting, or a pleasure outing. Rather, I see (a man) dirty, stinking, scrawny, worthless, insipid, crude, scented with Umm al-Aṣmaʿī's⁸⁵³ shit, long winded, with a guttural voice, who tries over and over to pronounce speech in the best way—whether with outlandish vocabulary or by parodying based on his knowledge of the (fine) points of grammar, may God subject him to errors, and not forgive him for them!--with (his) nose in the air as if he smelled shit--he sticks in your craw and (is as annoying as) a thorn between the sole and the sandal.

May God put a seal on (one) so tongue-tied
For there is no skill in (his) speech (Sh. p. 187)

When he wants to speak, you would imagine his tongue (to be)

⁸⁵² The equivalent of corn-nuts, i.e. drinking snacks. al-Washshāʿ, *al-Muwashshā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965), 196.

⁸⁵³ I have not been able to identify Umm al-Aṣmaʿī. Al-Aṣmaʿī, d. 213/828, was an Arabic philologist and transmitter of poetry who frequented the court of Hārūn al-Rashīd. Although he owned considerable property, he insisted on living like a poor man. Hence his mother, who would have lived at the same level if she lived with him, would fit in a string of adjectives describing a beggar.

A piece of meat, which he dangles before a reluctant prey at the hunt

If he happens to get a word right, he is mightily pleased with himself and sticks his nose in the air.

If Sībawayh⁸⁵⁴ found fault with me, I would say to him
 “May the shit of al-Kisāʾī⁸⁵⁵ be in al-Farrāʾī’s⁸⁵⁶ beard!”⁸⁵⁷

In your gatherings, I do not see, by God, a singer who expresses himself well in Arabic, (who is) a naturally talented poet, an ingenious person, who recites poetry and arrays it in a suitable melody, and sings it to the accompaniment of a well-tuned string(ed) instrument--a song that lifts the veil (from) the ears, captivates the hearts, and mingles with (all) the parts of the soul; a song that moves souls, makes heads dance, urges on (the drinking of) cups, fills the ears with joy, and sparks light in hearts. (Spirits)⁸⁵⁸ are restored by his singing, and he keeps the cups circulating with his singing and music making; his effeminacy teases and his voice delights. (With) a melodious voice he sings,

O northern breeze, from the direction of Buṣrā, I would ransom
 My father for you, (but) not the (for) the southern breeze

You, when I fell ill, gave my heart medicine
 O eastern breeze with the beloved’s scent

Then I recovered from my distress, for which
 My doctor used to cry over me every day

O girl, whose youth—may God grant her beauty long
 Residence in her—is the enemy of my old age (M. p. 50)

Indeed, you are (nothing but) a gazelle hiding in a covert,

⁸⁵⁴ Sībawayh, d. 177/793 or 4, the eminent grammarian of the Baṣran school. *EI2*, s.v. “Sībawayhi.”

⁸⁵⁵ al-Kisāʾī, d. ca 189/805, grammarian and one of the seven canonical readers of the Qurʾān. *EI2*, s.v. “al-Kisāʾī.”

⁸⁵⁶ al-Farrāʾī, d. 206-7/822, one of the greatest of the Baṣran grammarians. *GAL*, 1: 116.

⁸⁵⁷ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Der Kongelige Bibliotek Kobenhavn, Codex Arabicus 260*, 46b.

⁸⁵⁸ Emended to: ...yashfī bi-ghināʾi-hi (al-arwāḥ) by al-Shālji in AQSH, 49.

That does not graze (on anything) except the fruits of hearts

Indeed, you are (nothing but) a sun in a dark cloud above
A nosegay of myrtle planted in a sand dune⁸⁵⁹

Fear God and have mercy on the misery of an old man
Who has inherited his misery over you from Job

And has gone blind from crying, O Joseph (you with the beauty⁸⁶⁰
Of Joseph) will you not provide a remedy for blind Jacob?⁸⁶¹ (Sh. p. 188)

Look, can you see (anything) except a lover
Complaining of his passion to the beloved?

This, by God, is poetry whose singing is, in the (hearer's) hearts...,⁸⁶² by God,
hearts themselves are in danger from his singing, much less the collars!⁸⁶³ Drunkenness
is a witness to (the quality of) his voice, which drops onto the heart (like) the dripping
of a (rain)drop in a drought.

He sang, and no limb of mine remained
But that I wished it were an ear

Rather, all I see is a distorted face that kills(?) the tame, departing from the
proper rhythm, dark featured, broken throated, dissolute, depraved,⁸⁶⁴ old, desperately
trying to be a pretty-boy, dampening joy, and making souls listless. There is no
significance (when) taken as a whole, nor benefit when examined in detail: a Khuldī,
one who get slapped, but with a dyed or salt and pepper beard. (Sh. p. 189) (If) he
plucks (a lute), it is necessary to strike him; when he sings, he torments.

⁸⁵⁹ The sun is a face in a dark cloud of hair and the myrtle represents a swaying of the body above the sand dune, or fleshy lower part of the body.

⁸⁶⁰ To Joseph was an angel's beauty. *Qurʾān*, 12 (Yūsuf): 31.

⁸⁶¹ Jacob went blind from sorrowing over the loss of Joseph, but regained his sight by the application of Joseph's shirt. *Qurʾān*, 12 (Yūsuf): 84, 93.

⁸⁶² Copyist's error. Something was left out between the two repetitions of *al-qulūb* and cannot accurately be reconstructed.

⁸⁶³ Collars would be torn open due to the emotional intensity arising from good singing.

⁸⁶⁴ It is possible that *ṭabbāla* and *ʿathʿathiyya* indicate respectively the active and passive partners in immoral sexual acts.

He has, when he sings in counterpoint to the *ṭanbūr*
A voice in Egypt and a voice in Khurasān

(Like) the howling of a dog responding to the strings of a carding tool
With a monkey's ugliness and Haman's⁸⁶⁵ pride

He screeches and brays as if he were a donkey. There is no skill in him, (just) a mountain goat running—may a flood run away with you and woe settle on you, you wretch, yes indeed: the rise of water this year wasn't from snow—you snow, you anvil, you dog--what does this have to do with the definitions of song! You wretch, insipid (man), a whore's spouse!

A singer who rattles⁸⁶⁶ in the throat when singing
As if you had gargled with boxthorn (juice)

Is it because there are so few birds that whistle
That you all have had recourse to the privy's cockroach?!

By God, I don't see a Baghdādī singing girl, an Iraqi dancer,⁸⁶⁷ a Zunāmiyya⁸⁶⁸ flute-player like a polished mirror, an ^ʿAth^ʿathiyya⁸⁶⁹ drummer, (Sh. p. 190) a castanetist from Samarra, a dancer from al-Ubulla,⁸⁷⁰ a Radhdhā⁷iyya⁸⁷¹ lute-player, a protégé of Shāriyya,⁸⁷² named Rarity, Coral, Daisy, Gardens, Blossom, Wine, Temptress (M. p. 51) Desirée, Desire, Maidens, Longed For, Longing, Deceiver, Tyrannical, Charming, Flirt, as if she were the mid-morning sun, the full moon in the black (of

⁸⁶⁵ The man commanded to build a tower to Heaven. *EI2*, s.v. "Hāmān."

⁸⁶⁶ The sand-grouse has such a voice. *al-Damīrī*, 2:193.

⁸⁶⁷ This word can mean professional singer, dancer or loose woman. *WKAS* s.v. "Karrāʿa."

⁸⁶⁸ Zunām was an expert flute player. He is mentioned here because he would have been emulated. *al-Sharīshī*, *Sharḥ al-Maqamāt al-Harīriyya* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1300 (1882)), 1:282-3.

⁸⁶⁹ ^ʿAth^ʿath was a black drummer and singer belonging to Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Mu^ʿādh. *al-Aghānī*, 13:30-3.

⁸⁷⁰ *al-Buldān*, 1:96-7.

⁸⁷¹ Radhdhāh. A singer who often sang with ^ʿAth^ʿath. *al-Iṣfahānī*, *al-Imāʿ al-Shawāʿir* (Beirut: Dār al-Niḍāl, 1984), 121.

⁸⁷² A singing girl born in Baghdad, owned by ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī. *al-Aghānī*, 14:109-10.

night), a plaything of purified silver, a white cloud, an egg hidden⁸⁷³ in a sand dune, a wild cow, a peacock, an effigy in a niche, a bright new (Sh. p. 191) *dīnār*, dawn stars, a diver's pearl, with long tresses, a cool, (refreshing) mouth, full breasts, swaying stature,⁸⁷⁴ the (upper) half of her a (slender) lance, and the (lower) half of her a solid sand dune.

When she stands, her (upper) half is a straight spear
And her (lower) half is a sand dune that rocks and sways

She advances on two delicate feet, above them two rounded legs like papyrus stalks. She trips along, like an Arab filly, a partridge, (Sh. p. 192) a wild sand grouse, or a *Rāʾibī*⁸⁷⁵ dove. She resembles the gentle flow of a pool and the swaying of a verdant branch, as if she were walking on eggs or long necked bottles, narrow waisted, with puffy⁸⁷⁶ sleeves, weighed down by the largeness⁸⁷⁶ of her buttocks.

When she hoists herself up, her buttocks weigh her down
The way a weak one rises who is weighed down by cargo⁸⁷⁷

Another

The girl's rump is baker's dough
While her front is a condiment of bread and cheese (Sh. p. 193)

It is as if her neck were a gazelle's neck, her throat were an ingot of silver or of pearl, and her two breasts were ivory containers⁸⁷⁸ dabbed with musk.

O my killer, with (your) languid eyelids
And two perky (breasts) (floating) in a rain cloud

⁸⁷³ A hidden egg signifies purity. *Qurʾān*, 37 (al-ṣāffāt): 49.

⁸⁷⁴ The manuscript adds *wa qadd nahīd*. It appears that the copyist wrote a few words twice.

⁸⁷⁵ A type of dove especially popular because of its large body. al-Jāhīz, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (Beirut: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿilmī al-ʿArabī al-Islāmī, 1969), 3:163.

⁸⁷⁶ This word could not be conclusively identified.

⁸⁷⁷ By al-Ḥārith b. Khālid. *al-Aghānī*, 10:61. al-Ḥārith b. Khālid, *Shiʿr al-Ḥārith b. Khālid al-Makhzūmī*, Yaḥyā al-Jubūrī (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Andalus, 1972), 76.

⁸⁷⁸ ʿAmr b. Kulthūm, *Muʿallaqat ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm bi-Sharḥ Abī al-Ḥasan ibn Kaysān* (Cairo: Dār al-ʿIṭṣām, 1980), 52. A pre-Islamic poet who died around 568 C.E.

Like two caskets of camphor water
With two points of ambergris on their two tips

Another

It is as if the two pomegranates of her bosom
In beauty and scent are two small perfume pots

Another

(Their) buttocks and breasts prevent her dresses
From touching the(ir) bellies or touching the(ir) backs⁸⁷⁹

Below the (breasts) is a slim stomach, white like well-turned ivory, surrounded by folds of fat (Sh. p. 194) like rolled up scrolls, rolled like knotted belts; and the flanks are like a strong rope; and a compact navel, deep, as if it were oiled with *ghāliyya*-perfume. Below it, by God, are full thighs, like those of Bactrian camels: tender, delicate-skinned, (M. p. 52) smooth like silver, soft, without a single downy hair on them; between which, by God, is a thing like the world when it favors you; like a spath swollen at the touching point, (the center) thick lipped, (with) flowing sides,⁸⁸⁰ as if it were a bride enthroned in her bridal pavilion.

Clean, the tweezers have plucked
The growth of hair on it, so it is bald

It is as if it were the fat tail of a fattened ram, in (its smoothness) solidity and softness. Behind it is a rump—ah, then ah!--like a sand dune, or a small leather bag of musk, or fuller's paste, or a white linen pillow.

Her anus, above the arch of her thick-lipped pubis
Is like a cupola over an arched colonnade

⁸⁷⁹ An anonymous verse. al-A^llam al-Shantamarī, *Sharḥ Ḥamāsāt Abī Tammam* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu^ṣāṣir, 1992), 778. The verse is also found in: Ibn ^ṣAbd al-Rabbih, *Kitāb al-^ṣIqd al-Farīd* (Beirut: Dār al-Kātib al-^ṣArabī, 1982), 3:462.

⁸⁸⁰ Emended from *jubayn* to *janbayn*.

Slender in the waist but fleshy in the thighs, she looks through an eye of one
with beautiful, wide-spaced eyes; she wounds with a kohled glance and blooms with a
smooth cheek; the lassitude of her look sickens hearts and glamorizes sins.

When she gazes (it is) as if she were sleepy
Or were a sick person who has not yet recovered

Ah, those figures and breasts!

Fine-breasted women in whom you see no flaw
Except their preventing the lover from embracing (them)

(Sh. p. 195) On her right cheek is a mole which infatuates hearts; it is like a point
of vitriol on an ivory leaf.

You would think her polished cheek and its mole
Were a rose with a bunch of violets against it

(She has) front teeth like chamomile, lips like coral or red dye, and mustaches
like green basil

(She has) mustaches like chrysolite, and front teeth
Like chamomile and saliva like strong wine

Smiling, she reveals front teeth like hail or lightning in the clouds; her breath is
musk sprinkled over grape juice.

Her breath is ambergris and *ghāliyya* perfume
And her front teeth are like pearl and camphor

Another

A singing girl, white,
Like silver, black browed

She advanced proudly, amidst
Wild cows with wide black eyes

No enervating sickness has afflicted her--

Except for the eyelids⁸⁸¹

Alas for me due to those collarbones and cheeks, and curling black braids. (Sh. p.

196) (M. p. 53)

ʿUmar the profligate, who before me
Captivated beautiful woman with his poetry

If he had seen her face when they opened the door
And "enter" (f) was said and they lifted the veil

She, wearing a kerchief fabric whose pattern
Of hyacinth beans was woven by the weaver in Egypt

And pulling aside her veil with fingers
Which are iridescent, resembling the jujube

Fingers delicate, like hairpins
And which she had darkened with dye (Sh. p. 197)

While virgin Greek slave girls cut out
Clothing for her before the dawn

(Herself) eclipsing the splendor of the new moon when it
Appears and taking its place when it disappears--

He would not have preferred Thurayyā and (would have)
Prayed to God that time might suppress al-Rabāb⁸⁸²

She enters the gathering, perfuming it with the scent of strong musk, camphor
and ambergris.

A raw Chinese silk shirt hangs loosely on her
Saffron-colored, (like) pomegranate blossom

(It is) beneath a violet cloak
(That is) thin, light, like dust

⁸⁸¹ Sick eyes, i.e. languorous eyes, were a sign of beauty.

⁸⁸² ʿUmar Ibn Abī Rabīʿa, *Sharḥ Dīwān ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa al-Makhzūmī*, 412. Thurayyā and al-Rabāb were women friends of Ibn Abī Rabīʿa. Thurayyā was famous for her elegies. For Thurayyā, see *al-Aghānī*, 1:84-5. For al-Rabāb, see *al-Aghānī*, 19:79.

Or she comes wearing a gown flowing like water, and alluring⁸⁸³ pants (Sh. p. 198) and a green silk *Salqiyya*⁸⁸⁴ waistband, made from diaphanous wings, slave girls' work; she is turbaned in a striped cloth (like) brocade with embellishments, of fine pattern and *ṭirāz*, its decorations more beautiful, by God, than Chinese ornaments; (it is) folded in four layers, over a shiny golden cap (which has) the roundness of a millstone and is studded with green emeralds, and red rubies; and on her neck is a rosary of ambergris from the Shiḥr coast,⁸⁸⁵ and royal sandalwood, jointed into large grains worth a thousand *dīnārs* (each), and slave girls carry her clothing and bear her trains. She is breathless from the softness of her flesh, the opulence of her fat, the jiggling of her buttocks, and the plumpness of her legs; she is like a shapely *bān*⁸⁸⁶ twig on a sand dune, or a branch in a small hill of sand, or a golden twig. She walks like a gazelle frightened by the hunter and has craned her neck to charm him.

The way the wild cow walks to the meadow
Or the sand grouse to the pool

As if her sole were sandaled with thorns

(It is) as if the sparkle of the jewelry on her breast were an exchange of lightning in clouds, lamps shining in darkness, spring flowers which have burst from their buds, or the stars of Gemini shining, (it is) as if the Pleiades were suspended on her throat, as if her bracelet were a new moon shining, and her anklet were a circle of fire. (M. p. 54)

⁸⁸³ Literally, *shaqqa al-marāra* (to split the gall bladder). The phrase is said to have originated with al-Ṣanawbarī. al-Sarī al-Raffāʿ, *al-Muḥibb wa al-Maḥbūb wa al-Mashmūm wa al-Mashrūb* (Damascus: Majmaʿ al-Lughā al-ʿArabiyya bi-Dimashq, 1986), 1:299.

⁸⁸⁴ Green, like the plant bugloss. DOZY, s.v. "Salq."

⁸⁸⁵ The coast of the Arabian Peninsula along the Indian Ocean between Yemen and Aden. The area is famous for perfume production. *al-Buldān*, 3:363.

⁸⁸⁶ *Salix aegyptus*, Egyptian willow. Hava, s.v. "Bān."

If her leg weren't (made) of hail
It would burn from the fire of her anklet

She sits and spreads a fine white brocade shawl over her face. From behind it, she appears to be in a blue veil, until the hearts reach the throats, at which point her guardian (Sh. p. 199) closes the shawl around her, and she appears veiled, no part of her being seen except for her eyes under the turban, and Sukayna⁸⁸⁷-style bangs, the sidelocks of hair like black reed flutes in the hands of the flutist, or coiled snakes, or braided rope, or bunches of dates, or bunches of grapes, and the lovelocks like scorpions, appearing on her white cheeks like jet (set) in ivory: more beautiful than health in the body. So, love struck hearts appeal to her abjectly (Sh. p. 200) and with souls afire, while she feigns distress and acts coy, with words like the delight of intoxication, the garden's flowers, the cloud's rain, or the bee's harvest--sweeter than pure water and more fascinating to souls than lawful magic.⁸⁸⁸

Her speech would be lawful magic, if it were not
Guilty of killing the inviolate Muslim⁸⁸⁹

If it is long, it is not boring, and if she is concise
The listener wishes she were not so concise

(She is) a snare for souls and a pleasure garden without equal
For calming the mind and constraining the nervous⁸⁹⁰

Another

And a speech, the most delightful of which
Is weighed out from what charms the lovers⁸⁹¹

⁸⁸⁷ Sukayna was a daughter of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī. Her hair style was sensational enough that the Caliph ʿUmar forbade its use. Jean-Claude Vadet, "Une Personnalité féminine du Ḥiǧāz au Ier/VIIe siècle: Sukayna, petite-fille de ʿAlī," *Arabica*, v. 4, fasc. 3 (Sept. 1937), 276.

⁸⁸⁸ Poetry was called lawful magic. Johann Christoph Bürgel, *The Feather of Simurgh* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 60.

⁸⁸⁹ By Ibn al-Rūmī. *Zahr*, 9. Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī*, sharḥ Qadrī Māyū, 3:474.

⁸⁹⁰ By Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1973), 3:1164, or Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān al-Maʿarrī*, 1:242.

Correct diction, though she sometimes errs in grammar
And "the best of speech is that which is incorrect"

Another

A speech so "hot" that if meat were set over it raw,
When its cooks returned, it would be well cooked

Another

We stayed (all) night in spite of envy and between us
Conversation was like the scent of musk; wine aged during it

A conversation (such that) if part of it summoned a dead man (Sh. p. 201)
He would return whole (even) after the grave had embraced him

Another

Her conversation is like the drop a herdsman hears
Who has kept watch through drought years following one after another

He listens, hoping this is (the beginning of)
A real rainfall and says joyfully, "O God..." (M. p. 55)

Another

When they drop one story after another, you would imagine them to be
Like the fall of coral beads from the palm of a necklace stringer⁸⁹²

(This continues) until she nearly cuts the hearts' strings, then she removes the
veil from the mother of pearl; no, rather it is as if the clouds are stripped from the sun,
God help us.

Is it from the full moon at evening
That those curtains have been drawn aside?

Or is it from the sun in the morning
That a veil or scarf has been removed?

⁸⁹¹ By Mālik b. Asmā' al-Fazārī, a poet of the late 6th/early 7th century. *al-Bayān*, 1:147. *al-Aghānī*, 16:40-46.

⁸⁹² By al-Rā'ī in *Zahr*, 1:15. The *bayt* is not found in al-Numayrī, *Dīwān al-Rā'ī al-Numayrī*, Reinhard Weipert, ed., *Beiruter Texte und Studien*; Bd. 24 (Weisbaden: Franz Steiner, 1980). al-Rā'ī was a poet who lived in the 1st/7th century. He excelled in describing camels, oryxes, wild asses and other desert animals. EI2, s.v. "al-Rā'ī."

Do these earrings hang
Against the gazelle's neck?

Does death show me what the people
Who still stand do not see?

Indeed the judgment of the large eyed-ones
Has unjust (power) over my heart

Another

Do not display yourself while the sun shines
For the earth's people may doubt (which of you) is the sun (Sh. p. 202)

Then she removes the veil from a cheek like roses, wine, apples, anemones,
pomegranate blossoms, Jupiter at daybreak, and roses on the bushes.

(With) my soul as the ransom
On a cheek like wine and yogurt

She looks at the drinking companions with eyes blurred from sleepiness, or
whose gaze is weakened by drunkenness.

Languorous, eyes which have ophthalmia
And which have a cure for sick eyes

And it is as if she were sleepy when she gazes
Or an emaciated person not yet recovered

Another

And it is as if she, among the women was lent
Contrasting eyes by a wild calf with contrasting eyes like those from Jāsim⁸⁹³

Sleepy, drowsiness pierces him; sleep
Blurs his eyes though he is not asleep⁸⁹⁴

Under two eyebrows like two plumes, are a hook or the stroke of an "n"

⁸⁹³ *al-Buldān*, 2:8.

⁸⁹⁴ By Ibn al-Riqāʿ. *al-Aghānī*, 8:181. Ibn al-Riqāʿ, *Dīwān shiʿr ʿAdī ibn al-Riqāʿ al-ʿĀmilī* (Baghdad: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿilmī al-ʿIrāqī, 1987), 122-3. ʿAdī b. al-Riqāʿ was a poet who wrote panegyric poems for the Umayyads. EI2, s.v. "ʿAdī b. al-Riqāʿ."

And her forehead is large, and her brow
Slender, the line is arched, elongated

She shows a wrist like a star that shines, a palm like a palm heart or a silver ingot, and she picks up an *ʿud* of aloe or teak wood, inscribed with ivory, in a brocade drawstring pouch, (Sh. p. 203) and she sounds its strings with fingertips like *iṣḥil*⁸⁹⁵ wood plectrums, edged with jujubes, or (like) a pigeon's forefeathers, pearl canes, two silver poles, or silver pens, tipped with carnelian. (M. p. 56)

Branches bear fruit; her palms
Are jujubes in harvesting beauty

Another

She has fingers (such that) if you wanted
To bind them to your palm, the bond would be strong

Another

Slim waisted, she rests her lute
On a rounded prominence on the expanse of her breast

When she bends over in her sheer fabric, her brilliance
Illuminates her and reveals a smith's ingot

A view that catches at the heart of its observer and the *ʿūd* that calls for help to its carver. Then she sounds it with fingertips (white) like crystal, tipped with coral.

On a slave girl's palm, whose fingertips
Are like silver tipped with jujube⁸⁹⁶ Sh. p. 204)

And when she plays with it, it is as if
She were marking the rhythm on her left hand

A female singer begins to sing more sweetly than the Euphrates's flow during flood time, a trilling singing she calls down from her head, and meets it with a broad

⁸⁹⁵ A tree used to make toothpicks. Lane, s.v. "*iṣḥil*."

⁸⁹⁶ These two bayts are by *ʿUkkāsha al-ʿAmmī*. *al-Aghānī*, 3:75-6.

chest, passes it through the pipes of her throat and breaks it into the streams of her breath.

Her breaths are not hidden; indeed they are
The breaths of someone slim-waisted and slender

Then she begins a song:

O one to whom one flees from the injustice she inflicts
The least you must do is give me back my heart

Give me back my heart if you wish to behave justly
Then be content or angry with me, as you please

O one against whose (account) will be the weight of my blood
If I die, and in whose hands are (my) life and death

You sought my death, but I did not anticipate (your desire)
Praise to One who fulfills desires in advance

And she follows it with (a poem) in *basīṭ* (meter),⁸⁹⁷

O sound-hearted one, because of you
My heart is wounded, sick

O greatly treacherous one, my patience (with your absence)
While you have been absent, has withered

O dear one, to whom, as long as I live
I will be a servile slave

For each thing I have from you, there is
The opposite as a substitute

Then she goes on to recite: (M. p. 57)

If I so not see you when you oppress (me)
Allāh, your lord, (still) sees you (Sh. p. 205)

May I be your ransom, do what you like
You will continue to find (me), a person who loves you

God knows where my heart (is)

⁸⁹⁷ The poem is really in the meter *ramal*.

From passion for you and where your heart (is)

Then she follows it with (a poem in) *hazaj*.⁸⁹⁸

A gazelle fawn, whose physical form is evidence among us
For the power of the All-Wise (in creating such beauty)

He does with the sun in its early morning
What the sun does with the clouds

He passed by us, and morning
Dawned under the jet black darkness

He teaches the branch when he walks,
To sway like a branch in the breeze

There, by God, you don't hear, (anything) except a penetrating braying, nor see
(anything) except a bloodshot eyeball, nor (anything) except a torn shirt front,⁸⁹⁹ or a
heart that flies, palpitating.

I don't see these conditions in Isfahan. Rather, I see a female monkey, like a
cloth⁹⁰⁰ pillow, or a ghoulish arisen from the desert, with silver hair and gold teeth, with
disheveled hair like fluffy wool,⁹⁰¹ a face like a dug-up corpse--and (which even)
toothpicks avoid cleaning and polishing.

If she spit saliva on an asp,
It would feel stung the whole night (Sh. p. 206)

Another

And if she breathed on solid rock
It would split

Another

Wide-mouthed, an old woman has some
Of her dung trembling in her saliva

⁸⁹⁸ The poem is really in the meter *basīṭ*.

⁸⁹⁹ *Qurʾān* 12 (Yūsuf):26.

⁹⁰⁰ Lane, s.v. "ʿArḍī."

⁹⁰¹ *Qurʾān* 101 (al-Qārʿa):5.

Another

The penises in her ass
Push the shit up to her throat

It is as if she were a bunch of narcissi.”⁹⁰²

Someone says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, where are you going with this?”

He says, “Have I made a mistake or have I hit the mark?”

Someone says, “And how have you hit the mark?”

He says, “Yes, her hair is white, her face yellow, and her leg green,⁹⁰³ (Sh. p. 207)

Her nose is pushed inward in her face
But her clitoris protrudes (M. p. 58)

Woe to you, does this please you? There is nothing, by God, of laudable beauty, of which she does not have some similarity or characteristic. From the moon she has its freckles, from the pearl its shell, from the *dīnār* its smallness and yellowness, from the cloud its darkness, from the lion the smell of its (bad) breath, from the rose its thorns, from the donkey its voice and braying, from fire its smoke and flame, from the camel its teeth, from the bull the largeness of its tongue, from the peacock its legs and its scream, from the lynx its form and shyness, from the water its foam and muddiness, from the tiger its rashness and impertinence, from wine its hangover, from the house its toilet and wells, God help me! “Don't ask about things which, if they were made known to you, would trouble you!”⁹⁰⁴ She looks with needle-(point sized) eyes, with a pupil like a withered grape, leprosy is on its brow, and a white secretion inside it.

Every day in her eye is medicine
A water which spreads decay (Sh. p. 208)

⁹⁰² al-Tha^ʿālibī, *al-Kināya wa al-Ta^ʿrīd* (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Sīnā, 1992), 54.

⁹⁰³ al-Tha^ʿālibī, *al-Kināya wa al-Ta^ʿrīd* (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Sīnā, 1992), 54.

⁹⁰⁴ *Qurʾān* 5:101 (al-Māʾida).

Another

And she can't put on kohl due to her eye's narrowness
And if she manages it, it is outside the eye

Her eyes (look out) below eyebrows from which one could weave grain sacks,
and whose hair could be knotted into braids.

And in her two brows, if you shear (them), is a gunny sack
And if the two were shaved, there would be three gunny bags

And (she has) a collarbone like a sheep's manger, and breasts, one like a
brimming waterskin and the other like a parched acorn.

And two breasts, but one is a banana
And the other (like) a traveler's waterskin

Another

One (hangs to) the tip of her knee
Like a waterskin among waterskins

The other (hugging) her breastbone
As if it were a red-headed sparrow without a tail

Below them is a stomach the size of a wine jug, enclosed by folds of flabby fat,
like the wrappings of a worn out wineskin; slack, they cover her thighs, as if they were
the stomach of a pregnant cow.

And a stomach soft like milkskins,
Bigger than a potbelly's belly⁹⁰⁵

It is as if the warts on her face
When she unveils were scattered currants (Sh. p. 209) (M. p. 59)

(She has) narrow hips, as if she were a frog, as if a wolf devoured her from
behind, or whips and thongs had eaten the meat of her buttocks.

⁹⁰⁵ A variant of a line by Ismā'īl b. 'Ammār, a poet who lived in Kūfa during the end of the Umayyad and the beginning of the Abbasid period. *al-Aghānī*, 10:139.

Narrower hipped than a skinny frog
Croaking beside the catchpole⁹⁰⁶

Another

With a skinny butt, her anus at the end of her tailbone
It is as if it were a drain pipe in a broken-down wall

She has a pudenda like a gazelle's cloven hoof and a leg so thin and emaciated it

bends.

She has a thick pudenda like a gazelle's cloven hoof
It is a brighter yellow than apricots

And a leg whose ankle is slender
Like the leg of a locust, or thinner

Another

She is not rent by fucking doggie-style--
One just switches from (one) hole to the other

One gets two knocks at her insides: one is al-Shanfarā's⁹⁰⁷
And the other that of the youth ʿAmr b. Barrāq⁹⁰⁸

Yes, and she shows a palm like the palm of a lizard, its claws like a falcon's

claws, and she takes up a tambourine like an old wineskin, and shows a forearm like the
handle of a teaspoon, or rather the handle of a ladle.

For I see such as these
Gathered together in the *zawāyā*⁹⁰⁹ (Sh. p. 210)

That one with an eye smeared with kohl
And a glance as sharp as sword blades

⁹⁰⁶ A variant of a line by Ismāʿīl b. ʿAmmār. *al-Aghānī*, 10:139.

⁹⁰⁷ For al-Shanfarā's jumps, see al-Iṣbahānī, *al-Juzʿ al-Ḥādī wa al-ʿashrūn min Kitāb al-Aghānī*, ed. by Rudolph E. Brünnow, 21:138.

⁹⁰⁸ ʿAmr b. Barrāq was a *suʿlūk* poet, which means a person exiled from their tribe who lives by brigandage. Such individuals who wrote poetry frequently emphasized their own bravery, solitude and ability to surmount danger. *al-Bayān*, 2:138. Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Man Ismu-hu ʿAmr min al-Shuʿarāʾ* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1991), 81-2. *al-Aghānī*, 21:174-7.

⁹⁰⁹ Buildings with cells arranged around a courtyard. They are frequently associated with Ṣūfī brotherhoods. EI2, s.v. "Zāwiya, pl. *zawāyā*."

But then she raises her veil to reveal
An old woman, (brightly) painted

An old woman with a face
Ravaged and pock marked

A lass of ninety (years) by counting
And of ten (more when) marked by writing

In letting her cheat death, it is
A grave that discards (the ten years)⁹¹⁰

And with a creased forehead
And broken front teeth

With saliva green like pond scum
And a uvula as green as verdigris

And breath like the dung
Of a poorly fed horse

And a pussy like an elephant's
Ear shorn of its hair⁹¹¹

Another

Rather I see a thorn which broke from dryness
Above it a shaven mouse's face (M. p. 60)

Another

Hemolagic, it swells out on one side
And squeezes out the last dregs of oil on the other

Another

You see her grey hair under the veil as if it were
Braids of palm fiber in a pilgrim's gift

Another

A lass of seventy times eighty times
Sixty times forty times seventy (years) ⁹¹²(Sh. p. 211)

⁹¹⁰ The grammar of this *bayt* is entirely unclear, so the translation is speculative.

⁹¹¹ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *London* 169f.

Another

Her eye has been narrowed, but her mouth has been widened,
And the hole of her ass, and the hole where (she) pees

She is the sort of thing, that it is as if Allāh made its like only
For slapping upside the head or on the neck

Another

(She is) withered, her coccyx
Emaciated by mange

Hungry for cock
(When) she sees one, she comes running

In her cunt is an oil press
In which grapes are pressed

And her ass has a sack
In which fresh dates are collected

Another

(She is like) a tick, a nard-playing piece, a pebble, a date pit
A head of garlic, an owl, old dry bones

Another

(She is nothing but) bones; if you were to see her
You would say, 'This is a sack full of sticks.'

Another

A prostitute, she doesn't distinguish people in screwing
She loves the foreigner like the relative

Her falcon in her ass, she hunts (everything) from the crane
When she's in heat, to the nightingale (Sh. p. 212)

Another

(She is) a bitch, a whore, enduring, a snorter

⁹¹² By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*. Collected by Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Nubāta, edited by Najm ʿAbd Allāh Muṣṭafā. Sūsa, Tunisia: Dār al-Maʿārif, 2001, 233.

When she meets the penises piercing her kidneys

Another

(Her pussy is) like a sheep's turd but she has
A clitoris that would cover a camel's neck (M. p. 61)

Another

(She is) a whore whose ass's beard
Is fumigated with her noiseless farting

Her cunt is a *qibla*⁹¹³ for penis heads
And her clitoris is a minaret⁹¹⁴

Another

Shit is (like) perfumed incense when she smiles⁹¹⁵
In the house and an ape, beside her, is a full moon

An ambling nag, she yields to the bridle when
The crupper is stuffed up the hole of her ass

Another

Her saliva is hot as fire
And her anus is cold as ice

And the hemorrhoids, which have sprouted liberally
On the vine of her anus, had (produced) bunches of grapes⁹¹⁶

And her head is dyed with henna also to boot.

Over her head, whose (hairs) make the reeds of a reed hut look like nothing,
Is a faded cloak like the color of earth

I imagined, from afar, her head to be
A cage in which is a striped bird

She has a big butt⁹¹⁷ with a spacious drill field

⁹¹³ The direction of Mecca, or the specially marked wall in a mosque that marks the direction. EI2, s.v. "Kibla."

⁹¹⁴ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *London* 121a.

⁹¹⁵ A play on bad breath.

⁹¹⁶ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *London* 31b.

⁹¹⁷ Emended from *wajh* to *ʿajz*.

In which the penis plays polo

With a pussy in whose soft flesh the arrowheads
Of javelins and arrows are pounded⁹¹⁸

Another

The hair of her pubis is salt and pepper
As though sheep and goats were mixed

Another

And her anus is bearded
Like a lowered curtain (Sh. p. 213)

It is as though, due to its bulk
It were the beard of a fat old man

With a big clitoris like
The handle on top of a cooking pot

And hammered with many little strokes
Like the hinge of a closed door

And pubic hair like the head
Of a ripe ear of green wheat

And a gut (which) chirps half
The night like the nightingale

And her clitoris is like
The beak of a pickax head

She doesn't crave broiled (meats)
Other than the camel's sausage-- (M. p. 62)

A woman who, by her pussy
Conquers two thousand men

An evil old woman, her anus is like
A worn, deteriorated waterskin

She is close to 80 years [old]
Plus a handful of instants⁹¹⁹

⁹¹⁸ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Gotha*, 4b 2d and 4th lines.

Another

A woman with a large clitoris walks in the street with her foot
Stumbling on the rope fiber of her ass hair⁹²⁰

Another

You see her, when she hurries, with her steps
Tripping on her dragging clitoris

Another

(She is) bald, but her ass
Through its shit has a fattened braid

The essence of her ass is fat that puts
The oil of *harīsa*⁹²¹ to shame in its dishes

Another

Down the sides of her anus flows
A spring of shit murmuring 'The long way'

It runs as far as the hairs of her (pubic) beard
As if she were shitting a fountain

She pees from a cistern, but she
Farts from the flute's hole (Sh. p. 214)

When the manly adulterers take (her) on
She (brings forth) grunts that resound all night

It is as if her legs, when raised,
Were sheep's trotters on a butcher's hook

Another

She farts noiselessly, and shit runs
From her ass like a fine sieve

Another

⁹¹⁹ Literally *khardal*, or mustard seed.

⁹²⁰ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj* (Sūsa), 129.

⁹²¹ Hot sauce.

She shits on her leg from the ass
Like a hanging sewer pipe

Another

Her hole is (like) a bowl of pudding, but
Her cunt is a quiver for long penises

And this lady has other qualities that increase her (in) perfection.

She has a thick pussy like a gazelle's hoof
And a clitoris like a camel's hoof

And (she has) two eyes, in this one a star sparkles
And in that (one) is the scent of rain

And (she has) two legs woven from
A spider's legs and a neck like a dung beetle (M. p. 63)

And (she has) an armpit whose smell resembles that of
Of sweat were cutting through the whiteness of an onion

Swollen-waisted, her buttocks complain
Of emaciation and thinness of the rump

A female singer is a sight for sore eyes
(At the sight of whom) the strings of bellies come untied

When she sings in two four⁹²²
We fart along in three four⁹²³ (Sh. p. 215)

Another

She pees from the crack of a thin (pussy)
Upon which her clitoris bursts with fat

Its corners foam and froth as they oscillate
It is like the mouth of a paralytic sipping milk⁹²⁴

Another

⁹²² *Thānī thaqīl*. A rhythmic cycle that should be called *al-thaqīl al-thānī*. O. Wright, *The Modal System of Arab and Persian Music, A.D. 1250-1300*, 217-8.

⁹²³ *Ramal khafīf*. A rhythmic cycle that should be called *khafīf al-ramal*. O. Wright, *The Modal System of Arab and Persian Music, A.D. 1250-1300*, 217-8.

⁹²⁴ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Yatīma*, 3:85.

She has a grey vulva with a beard
Thick-braided in the Kurdish (manner)

And (she has) white shining pubic hair
Lightly polished (like) silver

(And it is) as if it, above her hips
Were a Meccan sheep on a camel litter

It is as if she, when she is on her back
Were a chicken roasting on a fire

(She has an) open anus, as if her ass
Were a door turned away⁹²⁵

Another

She has signal (behavior) at both ends: her farting (from the anus)
(To the accompaniment of) her cymbal after dinner and her snorting (from the
mouth)

Her shit refused to answer at the proper time
But then her attack of dysentery sends it toward the privy

Another

The black hair of her ass cries out, when
It hungers for meat, the name Jacob

It is as if the hair of her ass, when she
Farts, were a nest in which is crow's shit

Another

In her seam is a rip that increases because it
Is a weakly sewn seam, not firm

She shits two pounds of oil sediments and presses out her husks
With her dysentery, then pees two *manns* of sesame oil

Her coccyx guards her anus from penis tips,
Its overhang surrounded by boxthorn (Sh. p. 216) (M. p. 64)

⁹²⁵ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*. Collected by Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Nubāta. Der Kongelige Bibliotek Kobenhavn, Codex Arabicus 260, 121a, line 3-5, 11, 12 on the page.

Another

Her large pudendum has an arch, and in the arch is a window,
Whose apex, with its extra (bit of) clitoris, is a gable

Another

(Her) menstrual blood along with the hair of her ass
Resembles cotton with *murrī* poured over it

Another

She walks with a labia (like) ink
And with pure silver pubic hair

As if she were a (white) *shahmurg*⁹²⁶ chick
Above two wings of a (black) crow of parting

Another

She is soft, with her *khafshalanju* sticking to
Her two belly veins, (and she produces) delicate turds.

Another

She is squat, ugly as an owl, (she) faints during sex
(She has) a chattering ass, garrulous, barking

Another

Her hair, around the gate of her anus
Is like mustaches on a mouth with bad breath

Another⁹²⁷

She has a grey haired wrinkled vulva
It has gone grey and does not stop giving suck

With inverted labia, a butt of jokes
It is (like nothing so much as) the neckline of a *darrāʿa*⁹²⁸ (Sh. p. 217)

Another

⁹²⁶ A mythical bird who was the king of the birds. al-Damīrī, 1:533. A long-legged wading bird. al-Jahīz, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (Cairo: M. al-Bābī al-Ḥalābī), 3:322.

⁹²⁷ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *London*, 125a.

⁹²⁸ Yedida Kalfon Stillman, *Arab Dress from the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times* (Boston: Brill, 2000), 47.

She has a graying vulva, gone quite white on top,
Upon which is a long clitoris, circular in form

It is as if it were a man who had come from Aleppo
An old man, a conical hat on his shaven head

Her withered ass has the penis's ring
Squeezed in its grasp all day and all night

From it flee the penises of men with erections
As birds fleet the trap⁹²⁹ from terror

Another

It is as if her anus, at the root of her pubic hair
Is a breach (in a dyke) for which they prepare thorns and firewood⁹³⁰ (M. p. 65)

But the important point is that she, with a herniated pudenda, is a singer
Whose singing, while she farts, dries up pleasure

Another

She has a weakness for drinking wine,⁹³¹
Because she, the one with a clitoris, is a demoness⁹³²

Her name is Şafiyya, or ʿĀʾisha, or Khadīja,⁹³³ as if she were of the Prophet's

house, may God protect her.

If Bilqīs⁹³⁴ were to witness her
She would come to her as an abject slave girl

And she sings, '(O) dolled up (one), when saying no, be brave,'⁹³⁵ that is, 'You
shouldn't have done that.'

⁹²⁹ Emended from *al-fajja* to *fazaʿ*.

⁹³⁰ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*. Collected by Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Nubāta. Der Kongelige Bibliotek København, Codex Arabicus 260, 5a-6b. Lines 7 and 18 of a 50 line poem.

⁹³¹ Emended from *rāj* to *rāḥ*.

⁹³² By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*. Collected by Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Nubāta. Der Kongelige Bibliotek København, Codex Arabicus 260, 121b.

⁹³³ All three of these women were Muḥammad's wives. EI2, s.v. "Şafiyya bint Ḥuyayy," "ʿĀʾisha bint Abī Bakr" and "Khadīdja."

⁹³⁴ The name for the Queen of Sheba in Arabic literature. "EI2, s.v. "Bilqīs."

⁹³⁵ This sentence is in Persian and is very unclear, so that this is largely a guess.

You uncircumcised woman! You talk of formal definitions in logic!--may
God impose on you the blights of the Market of Riding Animals!”⁹³⁶

Someone says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, what are the blights of the Market of Riding
Animals?” (Sh. p. 218)

He says,⁹³⁷ “A punch, a clash, a shove, a box on the ear, an arrowshot, a stab, a
knock--from which tears well up, and whose damages, by God are great. How long will
you take up my time, you fool, asking me about trivialities and interrupting my talk
with what⁹³⁸ will not benefit you?

I don’t see, by God, in attendance on any of you, a clean slave boy with
coquettish movements, a sweet movements, sweet nature, an effeminate silhouette,
and Babylonian⁹³⁹ eyes, (so radiant) he confuses light (itself) and outshines everyone
else; he walks with slim flanks and a heavy rump, (people) sing his praises far and wide,
and he is living testimony to the beauty of the Creator’s workmanship. His cheeks have
bloomed with pomegranate blossoms and his eyes with narcissi; his mustaches are
emerald, his lips coral or carnelian, his front teeth pearls, and his saliva wine. It is as if
he were an engraved *dīnār*, or a mouthful of honey. If he were hung up, he would drip,
and if one of his limbs were pulled, it would break off. He is more delicate than a breath
of air, and more delicious than water after thirst. It is as if he were a bunch of basil, a
ban twig, a reed stalk, or a bunch of succulent myrtle. It is as if his forehead were a new
moon, his eyebrows a pen stroke, his eyes the eyes of a wild calf, his nose a sword’s
edge, and his cheek wine and milk, or wine-colored and apple-red, more beautiful than

⁹³⁶ Sūq al-Dawābb. LeStrange, *Lands*, 227.

⁹³⁷ Emended from *yakūnu* to *yaqūlu*.

⁹³⁸ Emended from *mimmā* to *bi-mā*.

⁹³⁹ Bewitching, enchanting. Dozy, s.v. “Bābilī.”

the blossoms of early spring flowers on a fresh branch, more beautiful than a rain-watered garden. It is as if his mustaches were violet embroidery on a harvest rose: (M. p. 66)

Two roses unfolded in his cheeks from shyness,
Their adornment enhanced by the two bands of down alongside them (Sh. p.

219)

It is as if his mustaches were the nap⁹⁴⁰ of green silk, and his peach-down a border of strong musk on red roses. When he speaks, a veil of emerald and carnelian is pulled back to reveal pretty pearls.

Consider! You see, from greenness of the mustache,
Above the red lips and the sweet mouth

A green emerald above a carnelian,
Embellishing them, two strings of precious pearls

It is as if his lovelock were a pendant of musk against the full moon's cheek:
His mustache has been inscribed above the veil of the pearls
Like half a *ṣād* and the twist of the lovelock is like a *nūn*

It is as if his mouth were the circle of a seal, and as if his front teeth were hail or chamomile under a cloud, and as if his mouth were wine in which pearls have grown. It is as if his neck were a silver ewer and the sides of his neck were a polished sword, as if he dressed his body in pearly scales. It is as if he were (of) silver touched with gold, as if his belly were of Egyptian linen, his leg a papyrus stalk, his foot (slim like) a snake's tongue. And in summation, it is as if his face were (like) the sun, as if he were the halo of the moon, as if he were Jupiter, Venus, a pearl, a cloud, purer than clear water, more delicious than embracing a specter,⁹⁴¹ brighter than fire, and better than the ground

⁹⁴⁰ Emended from *za'ir* to *za'bar*.

⁹⁴¹ *al-Khayāl* refers to the dream (*ṭayf*) of the beloved that visits the lover at night.

which grows violets and roses, with witty prose and remarkable elegance,
 sweetness that does not change, and perfection that is not transmuted, like the naive
 gazelle, the shining moon, the blossoming branch, and the wild cow at the pond. He
 has a rump like dough from the best (Sh. p. 220) semolina which has been fried in the
 butter from *fālūdhaj*. When you put the penis in his ass it slides in and finds itself up his
 belly.

When he walks away, it's a wave of the sea and when he approaches, it's a full
 moon;

He does at night what the dawn does⁹⁴²

His eyelashes painted with enchantment,

And on his cheek are scorpion locks that lie still;
 (They are) of jet, inscribed with perfume

Another

With a forelock dripping with ambergris
 And with a veil, which he removes to reveal a gem⁹⁴³

And with a rump that occupies a surplus of waist-wrapper
 His eyes inform (you) of a secret depravity

Beauty is what is above his buttons, and goodness is what is under his loincloth:

(M. p. 67)

Sexually mature, with a mustache a year old
 Concealing the full moon of the horizon in his veil

Another

A gazelle whose chrysolite mustache
 Is located between pearl and carnelian

⁹⁴² The meaning of the second line is: He's beautiful as the dawn in bed. Ibn al-Mu^ctazz. *Dīwān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1980), 234.

⁹⁴³ A pun on mouth. The forelock is the mustache, ambergris is sweet breath, the veil is the upper lip and the gem is the teeth.

His name is Tempter, Purity, Wonder, Breeze, Servant, (or) Basil:⁹⁴⁴

He is delicate, for if a (single) ant walked on him
(With) sandals of rose petals on its leg

It would tear the two brocades on his cheek
Without traveling (all the way) across (his) skin

Another

The look of the gazing eyes almost
Sheds from his cheek the blood of shyness⁹⁴⁵ (Sh. p. 221)

Rather, I see, by God, a Harthamī bear--tall as a minaret, wide as a gunny sack--
he cannot carry himself properly and staggers to the right and to the left.⁹⁴⁶ He is (like)
a goat, who perfumes the gathering with his body odor, (it is) as if he were a mule
released from its bridle, fat and stinky,⁹⁴⁷ like a pile of elephant dung. He frowns, as if
he had bitten into an onion, or eaten a radish: his face frowns as if he were sniffing
mustard, frowns as if his face had been splashed with vinegar. He has a face that looks
as if it is veiled by darkest night, or covered in dung beetle scales--it is uglier, by God,
than days of misfortunes and nights of calamities, and evil consequences.

His creation is an argument for heretics⁹⁴⁸
Their claims are proven by his (existence)

His creator formed him by making dung speak
Not from a shaped lump of flesh⁹⁴⁹

He is ashen colored, his color is that of gray sheep
It is as if (he spends his) nights blowing on charcoal

⁹⁴⁴ All of these names are typical names for slaves.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 2:300. These three lines are lines two, three and seven of a seven line poem.

⁹⁴⁶ This sentence appears in *Zahr*, 441.

⁹⁴⁷ Reading *zakhim* instead of *al-Shāljī's wakham* or Mez's *rakham*.

⁹⁴⁸ Zandaqa or Manichaeism. Manicheans believed that the world was created from demons' bodies. *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Lindsay Jones, ed. 2d ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), s.v.

"Manichaeism: overview."

⁹⁴⁹ *Qurʾān*, 22 (al-Ḥajj): 5.

He has freckles that cover his face
It is as if flies had shat on it

His teeth are stained yellow; when he shows them it is
As if someone with diarrhea had shat on him

They have acquired from scum and plaque (at the roots)⁹⁵⁰
Streaks,⁹⁵¹ as if they were the arch of a rainbow

He is more oppressive than Mount Abū al-Qubays⁹⁵²
His side has a rottenness like a goat's rottenness

Any sensible person would flee the sight of him
Because he is more unfortunate than Ṭuways⁹⁵³ (Sh. p. 222)

He licks up the pus from his eye
And his snot that flows over his carpet

And he fells the lion with his activeness
Due to the stench (coming) from his mouth and armpits.

It is as if his armpits' smell were the smell
Of onions; the eyes water from it (M. p. 68)

A cataract had been born in his eye
So he sees a needle as having the length of the mast

Everyone who thrusts into him has a stuffy nose (from the smell)
And everyone who comes near him catches a cold

United in him are smells that make (one) sick:
The anus and armpits, the nose and the mouth

The hair of his armpits joins up with his pubic hair
Like the knotting of his nose hair with his beard

One hears the sound of walnuts when he walks

⁹⁵⁰ Literally, the extremities. In light of the following line, I take this to mean the upper extremities of the teeth, where they met the gum line.

⁹⁵¹ Read as *ṭarā'iqan*.

⁹⁵² A mountain to the east of Mecca. *al-Buldān*, 1:101-2.

⁹⁵³ This proverb appears in more than one form: *ʿAshʿam min Ṭuways* and *ʿakhmath min Ṭuways*. Ṭuways was the first great singer under Islam and a *mukhannath*. The proverb cited here arose because he was born on the day Muḥammad died, weaned the day Abū Bakr died, circumcised the day the caliph ʿUmar was assassinated, married the day the caliph ʿUthman was murdered, and blessed with his first son the day ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib died. Imīl Badīʿ Yaʿqūb, *Mawsūʿat Amthāl al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1995), 2:221, 285.

From the bits of shit⁹⁵⁴ hanging from his anus

A disgusting scent emanates from his sleeves
As if he had bitter myrrh at his side

When it is spread out, his washed clothing
Has the smell of an overcooked egg when it is broken

Another

A face such that when apes are compared to it
We see the apes as being as (beautiful) as moons (Sh. p. 223)

(A mix) of black and yellow--that has led people
To nickname him "shit of bitter plants"⁹⁵⁵

Another

He has a form so ugly that if it isn't an ape,
(At least) it's been poured into the mold of one

It is as if he is chewing shit when he pronounces
His words indistinctly or unintelligibly

He isn't purposely strutting, rather
He just feels a tickling in his lower parts

In an anus that functions as a dye works for a penis
Not sending a big prick away until it has (properly) dyed it

A stick gives no pleasure as long as
It is not buried up to the hilt

Three things that do not have a fourth:
This lad, the privy and the tannery⁹⁵⁶

Another

With gluey, armpit-smelling gums and
With foul meat and sour spit

⁹⁵⁴ Emended from ʿas to ʿabas. Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. "Abas."

⁹⁵⁵ *Salḥ al-marāra*. A play on the phrase "*shaqqa al-marāra*" which means alluring and is said to have originated with al-Ṣanawbarī. al-Sarī al-Raffāʿ, *al-Muḥibb wa al-Maḥbūb wa al-Mashmūm wa al-Mashrūb*, 1:299.

⁹⁵⁶ These six lines are respectively lines 17, 18, 24, 9, 11, and 13 in the twenty-six line poem numbered 321, with some variations. al-Ṣanawbarī, *Dīwān al-Ṣanawbarī*, 362-4.

Badly spaced, his gums flow with blood
And it is as if his lips were a menstruating vulva

Another

A killjoy, who (when he laughs) reveals the eyeteeth of
An old camel bawling under the weight of the load

It is as if his breaths are breezes
Which carry the scent of a corpse on a damp day (Sh. p. 224)

Another

In the dark you consider his mouth a hoopoe's nest
And you consider him a monkey that swallowed a hedgehog (M. p. 69)

He is smellier, by God, than a dead hoopoe in a moldy sock, more unpleasant
than the weight of debt, more bitter than pain in the eye: his name is Aḥmad the Lāq,
or Maḥmūd al-Ruwaydashtī,⁹⁵⁷ or Ḥasan the Kurrajī.⁹⁵⁸

His prick, by my head,
Is longer than the latch of my house door

He would work well either as a foot messenger
Running to Rayy,⁹⁵⁹ or as a donkey-renter

Another

He is asking for someone to plug him, (with) an anus (like a purse) without a
string
When he farts while asleep, he shits

Another

(He is) spacious inside, and seeks penises to penetrate
An inflated belly like that of a donkey

Another

⁹⁵⁷ *Ruwaydast* is a Persian term meaning wrestler.

⁹⁵⁸ *Kurrajī* refers to a type of performance generally associated with a *mukhannath*, or effeminate, possibly homosexual male, in which he rides around on a hobbyhorse. A sufficient description of the performance has apparently not survived, but it may have been associated with the theater or with pre-Islamic shamanistic practices from Persia and Central Asia. Moreh, 27-37.

⁹⁵⁹ *al-Buldān*, 2:892-3.

Prostrate, with the white tufts of his beard
Plucked out with tweezers

Another

Then a prick that appears to you, when the night is dark, as
A bunch of grapes, more droopy than testicles and a camel's hump (Sh. p. 225)

Another

(It is) firm as long as his shaft is up
And his testicles lift up and his hardness⁹⁶⁰ increases

He raises a head as if it were a wine jar's pointed bottom
And lets hang testicles like a traveler's pouch

What is this leanness and unhealthiness? How awful, by God, are these sights
making sore eyes substitutes for the full moons which ascend for us in Iraq, how
terrible these base oafs of barbarians to (our) hearts and eyelids as compensation for
those (Iraqi) boys and gazelle fawns.

O extraordinary one, with whom beauty has gone way too far
And whose beauty overstepped bounds and then so did he

Resembling the gazelle and the full moon and the branch
Altogether via the neck and the face and the physique

Wearing carnelian over the pearls of his mouth--
Spreading rose beneath the narcissi of the eyes

If he showed himself in the dark, it would be lit up
Or if he strolled on stone, it would be bedewed

Don't blame me, for I am not the first nobleman
To become a slave, from love, to the beloveds

O, may God water the city of Baghdad! (M. p. 70)

He remembered Karkh, the one distant from his homes,
Then cried from longing when the time was too late

⁹⁶⁰ Emended from *burnus* to *qawnas*.

I have no one to cheer me up and help me with
My desire for the beautiful faces there

The women who go down to the *Ṣarāh*⁹⁶¹ in Karkh
Or to the riverbank with its nearby palaces

Then days I went out to the *amīr*'s gates
And evenings to the houses of the singing girls

Another

O my nights, at *Maṭīra*⁹⁶² and Karkh⁹⁶³
And *Darb al-Sūsī*! By God come back again! (Sh. p. 226)

To me you were samples of heaven
But they were not eternal

Another

Indeed, my night at Karkh is a short night
In which there is only a cup that circulates

And the voices of singing girls entertaining my companions
How lovely is this pleasure and joy

Another

Indeed, how lovely are the cups and strumming of the strings
And *Qutrubbāl*⁹⁶⁴ (that village) of the gardens and flowers

So ask about me there, if you are looking for me,
And especially when the roses laugh in the pre-dawn

After a village muezzin⁹⁶⁵ has called to invite us
(Standing) on a high hill (and) flapping (his wings) from wantonness

He has the crown *Khusraw* wore on his drinking day
When he clapped (his) hands with boisterous delight (Sh. p. 227)

And Christian girls who had adorned (themselves) with striped

⁹⁶¹ *Yāqūt* wrote that there was once a Big *Ṣarāh* and a Little *Ṣarāh* Canals, but that he knew the location only of one *Ṣarāh*, which flowed out of the *ʿIsā* Canal near Baghdad. *al-Buldān*, 3:377-379.

⁹⁶² A village near *Sāmarrā*. *al-Buldān*, 4:598.

⁹⁶³ This context points to Karkh *Sāmarrā*. *al-Buldān*, 4:256.

⁹⁶⁴ A village located between Baghdad and *ʿUkbarā* where people went to drink wine. *al-Buldān*, 2:133-5.

⁹⁶⁵ In this case, a rooster.

Garment(s) circulated cups of wine among us

And under belts whose knots they had tightened, there were
(Other) belts of wrinkled fat, whose knots were navels”

Then he says, “And by God, I have something else to say.”

Someone says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, “Say it.”

So he says, “By God, you have no sense of entertainment. Where are those
shameless singing girls? Where are those witty sayings? Where are those pretty faces?
By God, certainly a single exceptional anecdote from one of them on a single day would
atone for what one hears from your filthy, crude singers, especially if they engage in
repartee, so that the heart is doused with ice, to the point that you won’t see, by God,
anyone laughing, or asking for encores. Peace be upon the female residents of Iraq!

Alas for the resident of the Ṣarāh’s bank
My love for him has made life bitter for me

Conversation is not good in my hearing,
Nor are water and wine pleasant in my mouth

God forbid that I should let my heart rest
Having left my sociable habitation (M. p. 71)

Would that I knew what you would do and how you would be enchanted if you
saw an eloquent female singer whose interpretations (of songs) choke one up, and
whose conversation is engrossing, (who is) roguish, sportive, playful--one of the slave
girls of Baghdad, (even) one of the prostitutes of its commoners, to say nothing of its
kings’ paramours Then (if) you could (only) hear her rare anecdotes which flowed
along during the singing (Sh. p. 228) (as evenly) as a waterwheel draws water, like Ibn

Jumhūr's⁹⁶⁶ slave girl, Zād Mihr,⁹⁶⁷ and others from (among) the licentious women of Baghdad, (in) whom were gathered the beauty of form (Sh. p. 229) and disposition. How can one compare their grace to your crudeness and their smoothness to your coarseness and their tenderness to your roughness?"

Someone says, "O Abū al-Qāsim, if you would be so kind as to (tell) some of those stories, then you will bring (our) sociability to perfection through your conversation."

He says, "My lord, are you after poking some fun? Are you looking for someone to laugh at: a buffoon-buddy? No, my lord, find for yourselves someone other than me to laugh at?"

That one says, "O God, God, O Abū al-Qāsim, if you would be gracious, we would thank you and you would be (our) honored master, not someone we could order about. And if you refuse, we will not ask anything resembling this of you, and you will (still) be a great, respected (man) among us."

He says, "This Zād Mihr, Abū 'Alī b. Jumhūr's slave girl, was extraordinarily beautiful, excellent at singing, highly ranked among male and female companions. But this master of hers was among the most stupid and brutal of the people, continuously dispensing reproaches, causing break-ups, and displaying impertinence and peevishness. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Dawraqī came by to see him to propose that he have her sing for him. So he wrote to her--this was at a time when she was pretending to be angry with him: O mistress of her master, today I have my friend Abū al-Ḥasan with me and he is here solely to listen to you. Therefore, I would like you to be so kind as to

⁹⁶⁶ Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Jumhūr, a secretary, poet, and expert in *adab* from Baṣra. al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-Muḥāḍara wa-Akḥbār al-Mudhākira*, ed. by al-Shālījī, 3:258; al-Shābushtī, *al-Diyārāt*, ed. Kūrki's 'Awwād (Beirut: Dār al-Rā'id al-'Arabī, 1986), 265-69.

⁹⁶⁷ Zād Mihr is also mentioned in al-Shābushtī, *al-Diyārāt*, ed. Kūrki's 'Awwād, 265-69.

attend. But do not indulge in any lascivious behavior, for this man is not the type to go in for lasciviousness.

She wrote in answer: I can just see him--(one of those) with clipped mustaches: a real cistern of shit. And I, by God, have such a headache I cannot open my eyes. And my throat is closed from the eggplant I ate last night.

He wrote to her: By God, I have apprised him of the excuse, but he wasn't satisfied with it, and he said: Do (Sh. p. 230) this today for free as a form of *zakāt*--a charitable contribution in thanks for receiving the blessing of the talent--of your singing.

She wrote on the back of the note: May God make your eyes burn. If our lord Abū al-Ḥasan, may God make him great, proposed something additional and asked for an affair, saying, 'Make it a tax on your widely shared vulva,' should I give it? Please accept my excuses. By God, I can't open my eyes. How many times do I have to say it? Shame! Leave me along! Save me (from this), and may God save me from you!"

One day he said to her: O mistress of her master, take some of these shelled almonds, incense them with good (smelling) incense (for indeed the mahleb cherry from the market is not good), and throw (M. p. 72) some ground rice and Khurāsānī earth and a little frankincense into the alkali sticks.⁹⁶⁸

She said to him: May your eyes burn! You who talk but don't act, you who curse a lot. You're the only person I know whose bread is barley, and whose fart is (from) white food.⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶⁸ A mixture of alkali and other sweetening ingredients served as a cleaning agent. LeStrange, *Lands*, nr. 1, 14.

⁹⁶⁹ The phrase "barley and white food" refers to cheap food used to feed animals. The food causes gas.

This Abū ʿAlī had dropping lips, a wide mouth, and a rough tongue while this poor girl had a narrow mouth. He said to her one night: Please let (me put) my tongue in your mouth.

She said: Why? Has the Resurrection come, so that the camel will pass through the eye of the needle? (Sh. p. 231)⁹⁷⁰

He used, when he had relations with her, to practice coitus interruptus. She got angry one night and pushed him off herself. She said: What need does the toothless woman have for a toothbrush?⁹⁷¹

One day a young man who pretended to be an aristocrat of Baghdad came to him, in the winter, wearing a *ghilāla*⁹⁷² instead of a *jubba*. (Abū ʿAlī) trapped him (in the gathering) while she sang. They had (already) eaten, so food was offered to him in a very perfunctory fashion. He refrained, in pretense of elegance, from eating, although he was nearly dead from hunger and he was completely absorbed in the slave girl's (singing). He began drinking sweet date wine and got drunk quickly, and bright as it was, the world seemed dark in his eyes. He came up to some roses at the gathering, and began to devour them greedily. The slave girl observed him and noticed what was up. She said to her master, whispering behind her tambourine, 'By God, I beg of you, call for something for this (young man) to eat, or else his shit will become honeyed rose jam!'⁹⁷³ When the lad was thoroughly drunk, and night chilled him, he began to shiver from cold and his teeth chattered, since he was dressed only in a brocade robe. Despite being in such misery, he said to the slave girl, 'I want to embrace you.' She said to him,

⁹⁷⁰ *Qurʾān*, 7 (al-ʿArāf): 40.

⁹⁷¹ *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 1, 230, anecdote 720.

⁹⁷² *Ghilāla*: A thin undershirt worn against the body. It was one of three layers a boon companion was expected to wear. Stillman, 46-7.

⁹⁷³ *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 1, 186, anecdote 572.

‘You poor thing, you are more in need of embracing an outer garment than of embracing me, if you had any sense!’ The lad left, deeply wounded by (Sh. p. 232) the slave girl’s words. He began to try winning her with letters and messages, but the slave girl was from Baghdad, and understood only material things. In his messages, he began to describe to her his love and his follies, and his insomnia at night, and his tossing and turning as if he were lying on a hot frying pan, and his inability to eat and drink, and such like of vacuous drivel, which has no use or benefit. When he had run out of things to try with her, and he had given up hope of gaining her fondness for him, he wrote to her in a note: Since you have forbidden me to visit you, or to ask you to visit (me), then order, by God, your specter to visit me at night, and quench the heat of my heart.⁹⁷⁴

Guide me to your specter so that
I may claim a rendezvous with it (M. p. 73)

Another

If your abstinence is flirtation
Show your specter the way to me⁹⁷⁵

She said to his messengeress, ‘Woe upon you. Say for me to this fool, you poor thing, I’ll do something for you that is better for you than my specter visiting you at night. Put two *dīnārs* in a purse and I’ll come to you and that will be that.’ (Sh. p. 233)

This Abū ‘Alī b. Jumhūr was, in truth, one of the prominent merchants. O our lord, to him gave the One--Who, when He gives, is not stingy in His giving--to him He gave property, which if it were on a donkey, would be a thorn, and which would break

⁹⁷⁴ This refers to a literary tradition in which the specter (*ṭayf*) of the beloved visits the lover in his dreams (*khayāl*). Julie S. Meisami and Paul Starkey, ed., *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, s.v. “*Khayāl*.”

⁹⁷⁵ The root d-l-l can mean flirtation or to direct someone. There is a pun here between “*dall*” meaning flirtation or a woman directing the man, and letting the specter flirt with him, or the commoner meaning of directing the specter to him.

the spine of an excellent horse.⁹⁷⁶ (Sh. p. 234) And He (God) made it easy for him (to get) what He made difficult for others (to get) of both cash and animal wealth. Zād Mihr was his slave girl, and he had one of his paternal uncle's daughters as his wife. From the two, he was between two embers, one burning him with her fire and the other branding him with her heat, while he was in a continual (state of) affliction. He conveyed the slave girl to Baṣra, the wife to Wāsiṭ, and he himself went to Baghdad—Baghdad: the paradise for the prosperous and the torment for the indigent. He set out to conquer the heights and to keep the (pots) of his pleasure boiling, and to drink deep from the wine jugs, and to listen to singing girls, and to attend to his pleasure non-stop, and to meet up with full moons,⁹⁷⁷ among myrtle and ox-eyes, and goblets and strong wine, and ringing strings and a plaintive oboe, and “bring a full (one) and take away an empty (one)”--and he withdrew his companionship from both (slave and wife) and got along quite well--and just as he liked--on his own. Zād Mihr, (abandoned) in Baṣra, got angry and wrote messages to him--it's a long story, but here's a sample:

I am writing to you from Baṣra, where I am well, in spite of (you and) your Qāṭūlī nose, which is like the nose of a camel-thorn⁹⁷⁸-(eating) goat. I have written a number of letters, (and) have not read an answer to one of them. Is this due to your wisdom and feelings, or due to meanness of your spirit? Tell me, to whose care did you leave me in your ill-omened house in Baṣra? Have you consigned my support to your ruined estates, or to your base steward? By God, I can't compare your house to anything but

⁹⁷⁶ The grammar in this sentence is problematic.

⁹⁷⁷ The phrase “full moons” refers to beautiful young boys or girls.

⁹⁷⁸ *Alhagi Maurorum*, a low very spiny bush. Siggel, 51.

the Hizqal Asylum⁹⁷⁹ in which I am imprisoned like a madman! I have no income except (Sh. p. 235) a pittance in rent from your houses--35 *dirhams* per month--it is as if (I were selling) a fragment of glass, or chicken feed.⁹⁸⁰ The equivalent to that in barley beer would not satisfy me, and the equivalent in bird lime would not suffice me. Or perhaps you would like me to leave it with its “feathers” for you, not plucking it, until you return to it and get your mitts on it, reassured that nobody has touched it except you--(in that case my response is): May a javelin pierce your heart! Or do you want me to let (M. p. 74) its braids get long? (To which I reply): May (a sword) stab your liver. It absolutely must be cleaned (of hair), especially since you have left me in need of it and forced me to depend on it.⁹⁸¹ For this I (will have to) go out to sing, which is (inevitably) followed up with fornication. If there is anything left over from my fee after my expenses, I’ll tuck it away for you. And if, after covering my cost of living, any part of the prostitution fee is left over, I’ll sock it away for you. By the life of your kohl-(lined eyes)! Months will not pass before one to be swaddled and oiled arrives, one whose hand I will put in saffron and (to announce whom) I will dispatch a letter. May God bless (Sh. p. 236) you in your pen and us in our inkwell, and may the loser get a stick up the ass.

She also wrote to him: O Ibn Jumhūr, send me living expenses that will meet my needs, and clothing that will content me, and if not, by God, I will go out and sing, taking the initiative on my own and with ten others. And you know well that when a

⁹⁷⁹ A large building located between Baṣra and ʿAskar, which functioned as an insane asylum. *al-Buldān*, 2:706.

⁹⁸⁰ Literally chicken shit.

⁹⁸¹ Beginning from “feathers,” this paragraph refers to removing hair from the private parts of the body, which was customary. EI2, s.v. “*Shaʿr*.” A woman who had removed such hair would be sexually attractive, one who had not would not be attractive. Thus, Zād Mihr is signaling her intent to go out and fornicate even before saying so.

slave girl goes out to sing, an adulterer will enter into her knickers. I hereby inform you--and you're no fool--if you want someone to screw me, I will not give you trouble, but will satisfy you fully. O Ibn Jumhūr, stick to prostitutes who are just like you; indeed, each week they get a slap. If you rise from one, you rise with twenty farts in your sleeve. They boast of you and say, 'We were with Abū ʿAlī the merchant of power!' You, the great, the important, what suits you is (someone) like the stupid female donkey who is in your house: you crack walnuts over her head and she doesn't dare talk (back) to you, but believes that you are the wazir Ibn al-Zayyāt⁹⁸² or Ibrahīm b. al-Mudabbir.⁹⁸³ (But) as for Zād Mihr, who can pound you (finely) as *kishk*⁹⁸⁴ is pounded, and humiliates you the way one "humiliates" flax, she isn't one of your spices! By God, I can only compare your house in Baṣra to the Hizqal Asylum, with me one of its imprisoned madmen. May God release me from my sins as he has released me from you and from having to look at you. I have become the happiest of people by being far from you, even if I am in this hardship! But from accepting this hardship, indeed I am wearing out my body and wasting my youth through waiting for you (Sh. p. 237) while you are distracted from me by your joking with your fellow reprobates,⁹⁸⁵ who, like you, are in Baghdad, while I am in Baṣra, with my sizing brush and a painted mat.

Woe to you, O Ibn Jumhūr! May your eyes burn! You have become a sodomite, chasing after boys and the beardless. I take refuge in God from insolence. Indeed 'The weaver, when he has it too good, calls his daughter Queenie.' By your life, I shall go out

⁹⁸² Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Abān b. Abī Ḥamza al-Zayyāt was a poet in Baghdad. *al-Aghānī*, 20:46-60.

⁹⁸³ Abū Ishāq Abū Yusr Ibrāhīm, d. 893. A boon companion of the caliph al-Mutawwakil. EI2, "Ibn al-Mudabbir."

⁹⁸⁴ *Kishk*, a dough made of bulgar and yogurt. Wehr, s.v. "Kishk."

⁹⁸⁵ Emended from *al-madānī* to *al-madābir*.

singing and get fucked in Baṣra, while your boys in Baghdad hire themselves out, and you will be (stuck) in the middle, (like) Ibn Hamdūn,⁹⁸⁶ the ever-complaisant. But I don't have to submit to your whims, sometimes going after boys and sometimes going after women. By the life of your crooked nose and your kohl(-lined eyes) and your bangs: (M. p. 75) I'll pay you back in equal measure. If you take up with boys, I will take up with young men, and if you take up with women, I will enjoy myself with a lesbian. But I will surpass you because you aren't desired unless you are giving gold, whereas I am wanted and given gold--may the loser get a stick up the ass. May God not bless you in what you have chosen for yourself. By the life of your trimmed mustaches (Sh. p. 238) and your neatly set lovelocks and the beauty of the kohl on your eyes and wide bwāʿl/k and t/nmshi!⁹⁸⁷ I wouldn't expect anything else from you but that you would be busy away from me, and I would be busy away from you. If you fall in love, I will court one who is more beautiful than you and if you marry, I will marry one who is more elegant than you. Woe to you, it is as if 'your salt were on your knee.'⁹⁸⁸ You have forgotten us, and occupied yourself without us! Send some spending money to your dear lady and have her brought to you from Wāsiṭ, so that she is not depressed. And prepare for me, by my life, an 'ud with teak edging inset with ivory, and let its back be set with jewels, so that I may come sing with it. May you be disfigured, O Ibn Jumhūr! How quickly you have forgotten that which you used to say, 'Sleep does me no good until I grab it with my hand and fall asleep'--or perhaps you have met with a bigger one

⁹⁸⁶ The name of members of a family of boon companions to the caliphs. They lived mainly in the first half of the 9th century. EI2, s.v. "Ibn Ḥamdūn."

⁹⁸⁷ Bwāʿl/k and t/nmshi are unidentifiable.

⁹⁸⁸ *Milḥū-hu ʿalā rukbati-hi*. This proverb means one who flies off the handle at any little thing, as salt easily falls off the knee when one stands up. al-Maydānī, *Muʿjam al-Amthāl*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 3:252-3, proverb 3795.

and a softer, (Sh. p. 239) and a hotter, and narrower, so you are distracted by that from it. Woe to you, by my life, believe me sincerely about this, even if you don't have a sincere bone in your body.

This is a little bit from the abundance of her talk.

Someone told the following story: I entered Darb al-Za^ʿfarān⁹⁸⁹ and lo, there before me was a slave girl singing: (Sh. p. 240)

A plethora of rebukes (came from him), so I said (to myself), 'If I Rebuke him, the rebuke will be the ruination of his love (for me)

But I hoped that the love between us would Remain intact, so I gave this for that'

Then she said, 'What grief! What loss! What yearning!' and then she turned and saw me. She said, 'It isn't for such as you.'

Someone else told me (a story), saying 'I saw a grossly fat black slave girl in Darb Baghdad.' I said to my buddy, 'There isn't in the world (anyone) who farts more than a black woman.' She quickly said, 'In your beard, old man!'⁹⁹⁰

Another one said, 'I was inspecting a pretty slave girl, but hesitated over buying her because of her lameness. She said, 'If you want a camel to (ride) on the pilgrimage (to Mecca), I will not be suitable for you, but if (you want) a slave girl for pleasure, lameness won't hinder you.'

Another one said, 'I was inspecting a beautiful slave girl, and her feet were big. Her owner quoted five thousand *dirhams* (for her).' I said, 'With those feet?' I got up (to go). She said, (M. p. 76) 'These feet at the time of need will be behind you.'

⁹⁸⁹ An area in Karkh, Baghdad, where traders and some poor people lived. *al-Buldān*, 2:562.

⁹⁹⁰ *al-Baṣā'ir*, pt. 7, 160, anecdote 500.

Another one said, 'I was standing at the Karkh Gate and lo, there was a woman like a Bactrian camel, whose slender silver flanks break (against her rib and hip bones).' I said to my friend, 'If only those slippers were placed on my shoulders.' She turned to me and said, 'O our lord, without shoes.'⁹⁹¹ (Sh. p. 241)

Someone said to a slave girl, (formerly) a vagrant, 'If only you spent the evening under me.' She said, 'Yes, my lord, yes. With three others!'--that is, when you are on the bier.

And the quickness of the Baghdadis, and their licentiousness, is more than can be enumerated, and is too well known to relate. What can one say about a willowy girl from among the kings' girls, who combined cleverness with beauty and brains with eloquence?

A coddled woman whose wet nurse deposits her
Milk in containers of emerald and ruby

And her bed was made of aloe wood, (so priceless) that
A *dirham* weight of it costs a full one thousand *dirhams*

The *dīnārs* which are her dowry are measured by *qafizes*⁹⁹²
(Even at a time) when dowries for respectable young ladies are lower

Youth has cut off her sidelocks, haughtiness contracts her brow, coquetry softens her speech, luxury has made her glances languid, elegance has thinned her sides, and ease has smoothed her limbs. Her mouth is pleasant for the one sipping, and her ankles are choked by her anklets. The water of luxury flows uninterrupted among the gardens of her cheek, and the golden wine of youth overflows her cheek. Her cheek is rosy from the dye of bashfulness, and her body quivers from the bloom of youth. Her

⁹⁹¹ This is a pun between *khaff* meaning shoe and *khaff* meaning camel's foot.

⁹⁹² A measure of grain, some 500 dry liters. LANE, s.v., "*qafiz*."

bosom (Sh. p. 242) swells with freshness, her buttocks jiggle from fat and her collarbones are impregnated with the lights of beauty. Then we see her angry at her lover, haughtiness furrowing her brow and pride tilting her nose in the air. And she begins to count up her lover's sins on her henna-dyed fingers and scorns to approve his false excuses, until when her lover has reached the point of utter resignation and submission and wet his sleeves from the flow of (his) tears, she reveals scattered pearls with (her smile) and sprinkles quenching water with the graciousness of her speech on that fire and heat. Then her narcissus-eyes begin to shed tears out of pity for her suffering lover, and then you see, by God, the bubbles of tears with the wine⁹⁹³ of shame, and a dying soul that she resurrects with a supply of kisses. After that, she undertakes to visit him in a veil of darkness and she appears to him, when he is lost in dreaming, and the fragrance of a ripped musk bag flows before her and the air (around) her is fragrant with the scent of old wine. She bends, (M. p. 77) leaning, fatigue having wet her gown and tiredness exhausted her joints, passion having made the flesh below her shoulder blades tremble, and walking made the soles of her feet stumble. She begins to favor him with (short) furtive visits and claim an increase in her ardor. She confides in him with her stories that delight him, and fulfill his desire, more than her staying longer and his attaining her favors. She sickens by her glances and heals by her speeches, and she slays with her eyes and resurrects (Sh. p. 243) with her kissing, and the poor lover recites:

May I be a ransom for the one who visited me
At night until she fulfilled my vow for me

So I said, while my eyes

⁹⁹³ An allusion to blushing.

Coursed a circuit of her beauties

How is it that I see the sun has
Begun to travel in the dark of night?

She said, 'You pretend to be stupid when I am far away
But you know my excuse (good and well)

Night keeps my secret
But the dawn tears off my veil'

Then she turned to complain
To the ten maids (with her)

Saying, 'Hold me up!
Weight has crushed my (slender) waist

And the pomegranates of my breasts
Have bent down the fresh *ban* branch (of my torso)

What is the matter with the one who used to complain
To you all of an excess of my standoffishness?

Since he has begun to do without me
My endurance of him has forsaken me

I have come to him when he is inattentive
In his house, quite unaware (of me)'

Then the two begin to complain, and they stretch out an intimate conversation,
and they extinguish the fire of desire with embracing and hugging.

Then the longing lover stocked up on
Embracing and kissing and hugging

He took revenge on the past years (of dearth)
Indeed, he provisioned himself for the remaining (years of his life)

Then he recites a poem, delighting in mentioning her, and attempting to thank her:

She visited while the guardian was inattentive,
Her right hand cajoling her loose necklace into place

And I spent the night embracing her like a young gazelle
Who diffused musk and fragrant ambergris

If I wanted I would create night from her
Locks of hair and dawn from the light of her face (Sh. p. 244)

This (poetry) is, by God, brocade fit for royalty, as you see.

What I would like to know is, given these circumstances, how you would be if you were to associate with the fashion-plates of Baghdad and its kings, and to (M. p. 78) hear the singing of their beautiful slave girls, who steal away the senses, charm the hearts, enflame the breasts, and hasten their lovers to their graves? What if you could see Qahwa, Ibn al-Ruṣāfi's slave girl, singing:

May you abandon me, then never talk to me
If I have ever deceived you in any way

Leave me to (my) fate(?), that I (may) live by it
Then hold back (your) gift(s), so long as you permit me to hope⁹⁹⁴

Or if you could see Ṣalifa, Abū 'Ā'idh al-Karkhī's⁹⁹⁵ slave girl, when she is caught up in her joking, and ignited by her fire, and sings:

Buthayna said, when I came to visit her,
'Glory to our Creator! How faithful you have been!

You made us a promise, that you would come to see us frequently
But then a year passed by without us seeing you

If you were on a quest(?), or sick or suffering
From any other lack, we would pardon you⁹⁹⁶ (Sh. p. 245)

Or if you could see the agitation of Ibn al-Harīrī, the (professional) witness, over Bint Ḥasanūn's singing, and his passion for her, when she sings:

The Messengers of love follow one another to you
Limping and weary with desire

⁹⁹⁴ These are the first and third lines of a four line poem found in *al-Imtā'*, 2:176. The poem is also found in *al-Aghānī*, 13:8, but with variations. The poem is attributed to Ibn Qanbar.

⁹⁹⁵ al-Karkhī is mentioned in *al-Imtā'*, 2:176, but there is no further information on him.

⁹⁹⁶ The introductory line and poem appear *al-Imtā'*, 2:176. The poem is by Jamīl. *Dīwān Jamīl Buthayna*, Ashra Aḥmad 'Adrah, ed. (Beirut: 'Ālim al-Kutub, 1996), 151.

Ardent love has left me
Nothing except an emaciated body

My eyes have not been dry from flowing (tears)
Since you (left me), O Delight of (My) Eye

Or if you could see Khāwab, Abū Ayyūb al-Qaṭṭān's slave girl, when she held a party, and raised her voice, then sang:

O what a glance you are! One that has destroyed
My reason and whose arrow has left me wounded

If only my queen were generous with another (glance)
Even if it scraped the scab on my sores

Then either my cure would be from it
Or else I would die, and thus find rest⁹⁹⁷

(Sh. p. 246) Then you could see Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Marzubānī,⁹⁹⁸ who, having heard this singing, rolled on the ground, agitated, frothing, bellowing, thrashing, biting his fingers, kicking with his feet, and slapping his face a thousand times an hour; he came out looking in the story⁹⁹⁹ as if he were ʿAbd al-Razzāq, the madman at Bāb al-Ṭāq. Or you could hear ʿAlam the *qaḍīb*¹⁰⁰⁰ player when she pretended to be worn out when raising her voice to sing. Ibn Khayrūn heard her, then tore his rags and threw off all restraint, and banged his head on the walls."¹⁰⁰¹

Someone says to him, "O Abū al-Qāsim, does all this comes from listening to singing?!"

⁹⁹⁷ The poem is paralleled in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:177 except that "Even if it scraped the scab" appears as "wa ʿalam anna-hā tanka?" (and know that she scrapes).

⁹⁹⁸ al-Marzubānī, 297/910-394/994, was a Shiʿite theologian and a prolific *adab* author who wrote on *ḥadīth*, collected poetry and wrote biographies of poets. EI2, s.v. "al-Marzubānī." al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, Bayard Dodge, editor and translator (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 288-95; Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 67.

⁹⁹⁹ This phrase has been used to mean impersonating someone in a satirical sketch. Moreh, 131-8.

¹⁰⁰⁰ The *qaḍīb* was a stick-like instrument used to mark the beats in a song. Henry George Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century* (London: Luzac, 1967), 14, 74.

¹⁰⁰¹ The same story appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:167 except the names are given as Abū al-Wazīr al-Ṣūfī al-Qāṭin in Dār al-Quṭn and Qalam al-Qaḍībiyya.

He says, “O Sir, this is an entertainment (M. p. 79) such that when it takes control of the people of a gathering, you will find it has a contagiousness to it that can't be mastered, and an extent that can't be apprehended, because it is a rare man that is free of childish passion or ardent longing, or nostalgia, or daydreaming about something desired, or fear (Sh. p. 247) of rejection, or hope of something (long) awaited, or sorrow for some (present) condition, so that people are as if they are all of one ilk in this situation.

“Or you may see the ecstasy of Ibn Ṣabr,¹⁰⁰² the judge, over the singing of Durra, Abū Bakr al-Jarrāhī's¹⁰⁰³ slave girl, at Darb al-Za^ʿfarānī, when she sings:

I will never forget her night visit; she came
To us at night and approached us, walking with a sway

This gazelle of Ruṣāfa came to us at night
She is the sweetest one who ever touched an ^ʿūd and sang

How many nights we spent enjoying and amusing ourselves
And having our wine poured and singing

(Now) she has abandoned us and there is no way to get
Her back, except that we say ‘It was and we were’¹⁰⁰⁴

So you see, by God, when she gets to, ‘It was and we were’ (in her singing) a marvel in the middle of *Rajab*,¹⁰⁰⁵ (to elicit) tears pouring down and crying from agitation and a hidden secret which being revealed, and evidence of love (which has been) unmasked, and proclaiming the one suffering from it.¹⁰⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰² He is mentioned in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:171, but there is no further information on him.

¹⁰⁰³ Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Faḍl b. Ja^ʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Jarrāh, known as al-Khazzāz, d. 381 /992-1. al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-Muḥāḍara wa-Akḥbār al-Mudhākara*, ed. ʿAbbūd al-Shālījī (1971), 4:40.

¹⁰⁰⁴ This phrase is used in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:171-2.

¹⁰⁰⁵ The seventh month of the Muslim lunar year. EI2, s.v. “*Radjab*.”

¹⁰⁰⁶ This anecdote appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:172.

Or the ecstasy of the Chief Judge Ibn Ma^ʿrūf,¹⁰⁰⁷ over the singing of ^ʿUlayya, when (Sh. p. 248) she sings with feeling vibrating through her throat:

Shine out in place of the moon if the moon sets
And take the place of the sun when dawn is delayed

For you have from the brilliant sun, its light
But it does not have your eyes and teeth¹⁰⁰⁸

Or the ecstasy of Abū Ishāq al-Jurjānī, over the voice of Durra the Baṣran, when she sings,

May I be the sacrifice for one who visited and didn't visit
As if he were just borrowing fire

He stood at the door of the house in a great hurry
It would not have harmed him if he had entered the house

May I be your ransom; you (who were a) visitor
Who no sooner got there than it was said, 'He has left.' (Sh. p. 249)

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj the poet, over the singing of Futuwwa al-Qaṣriyya,¹⁰⁰⁹ who was his neighbor and lover. He exchanges some conversations with her and some witticisms (between them) that have got out and with her husband wonderful things and nagging accusations and correspondence and taunts ... when she recites:

If only I could live on their nearness
And if I lost them, I would simply die.

And she follows that up with her other song, (M. p. 80)

Suppose me to be a man who is either innocent and you've wronged him
Or has done something offensive, but then repented and made it up

And I was like someone with a disease, who sought for its remedy

¹⁰⁰⁷ Abū Muḥammad ^ʿUbayd Allah b. Aḥmad b. Ma^ʿrūf, a poet. *Yatīma*, 3:125-7.

¹⁰⁰⁸ This introductory line and poem appear in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:172, although IM adds this phrase at the end of the introductory line: in the poetry of Ibn Abī Rabīʿa.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:172, gives her name as Qinwa al-Baṣriyya.

A doctor, and when he could not find him, he (tried to) treat himself¹⁰¹⁰

Or the ecstasy of Ibn Nubāta¹⁰¹¹ the poet, over the song of Khāṭif, when she sings:

(Sh. p. 250)

The cup blazes with (wine's) flame
And the eye is worn out by looking at it closely

It is as if a fire were stirred up in her (sometimes)
She¹⁰¹² stands (apart) in awe of it and sometimes she approaches it

Sometimes we seize it and sometimes it seizes us
So we are its riders and its victims¹⁰¹³

And she sings in *hazaj*:¹⁰¹⁴

The critic says to me, 'Get over her'
So I said to him, 'Do you understand what you are saying?'

She is the soul that I cannot do without
So how can I abandon her or leave her?"¹⁰¹⁵

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Azraq al-Kalwadhānī, over the singing of Sundus, the slave girl of Ibn Yūsuf,¹⁰¹⁶ the head of the Sawād Bureau, when she (pretended) to be in deep grief and behaved coquettishly and walked with a sway and affected languor. She said, 'I, by God, am listless, my heart is troubled by evil dreams, and (by) a fortune that (flows) evenly (always) ebbs, and by a hope that whenever it appears (always) vanishes.'

Then she burst out singing:

A meeting of two lovesick lovers

¹⁰¹⁰ "Or the ecstasy... treat himself" following it are found in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:172 except that "and witticisms (between them) that have got out" is missing and "and spreading jokes" is added after "taunts."

¹⁰¹¹ Abū Naṣr ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad b. Nubāta, 327/939-405/1014. A poet serving the Buyid ruler Sayf al-Dawla. *Yatīma*, 2:447-466. GAL, I:95.

¹⁰¹² The wine.

¹⁰¹³ The introductory line and the poem appear in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:170 except that the "cup" appears as "the palm."

¹⁰¹⁴ *al-Hajaz*. A rhythmic cycle. O. Wright, *The Modal System of Arab and Persian Music*, A.D. 1250-1300, 217-8.

¹⁰¹⁵ The two lines of poetry appear in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:171.

¹⁰¹⁶ Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Yūsuf, a secretary in the caliph ʿAdud al-Dawla's chancery and a poet. al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīma al-Dahr fī Maḥāsīn Ahl al-Aṣr*, ed. Muḥīd Muḥammad Qumayḥa, 2:369-82.

Who are not free of love

They have made their souls one
Divided between two bodies

The two snatched a cup back and forth with pleasure
A cup the two had mixed with two tears (Sh. p. 251)

And the cup is not appropriate except when
You pass it around between two lovers¹⁰¹⁷

Or the ecstasy of Abū Muḥammad al-Baradānī, over the singing of ʿAlwa, Ibn ʿAlluwayh's slave girl, in Darb al-Silqī¹⁰¹⁸ in Karkh, when she raised her voice and sang the lines by al-Sabrawī:¹⁰¹⁹

By the roses in your cheeks, who slapped you?
Whoever poured you the wine has done you wrong:

He has left you not sobering up from drunkenness
And giving a sound beating and a stream of verbal abuse to your servants

Curly side-locked, you have gotten drunk,¹⁰²⁰ so what
Prevents your lovers from kissing your mouth

By God, O chamomile of his mouth
Who set you in place around the carnelian tongue¹⁰²¹ (Sh. p. 252) (M. p. 81)

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Mutayyam al-Ṣūfī, over the singing of Nihāya, al-Sulamī's¹⁰²² slave girl, when she raised her (voice quavering with) emotion, and crooked her eyebrows in flirting, and made eyes (at him), and sang:

¹⁰¹⁷ The anecdote and lines of poetry appear in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:173, except that al-Kalwadhānī is given as al-Jarjarāʿī.

¹⁰¹⁸ *al-Buldān*, 2:563.

¹⁰¹⁹ Emended from al-Sarawī to al-Sabrawī on the basis of the following works. Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Sabrawī, a poet from Tabaristān, *Yatīma*, 4:56-8. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih bi-tahrīr al-mushtabih* (Cairo: Dār al-Miṣrīya lil-Taʿlīf wa-al-Tarjama, 1964-5), 2:732.

¹⁰²⁰ Emended to *thamalti* from a blank, in accordance with *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:165-6 and *Yatīma*, 4:58.

¹⁰²¹ The introductory line and poem appear *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:165-6, except that "Abū Muḥammad" is omitted and in the second half of the second line of the poem, "a sound beating and a stream of verbal abuse" appears as "a stream of verbal abuse and a quarrel." The poem describes a drunken slave boy. The lines cited here are lines one, two, three and six in IM and in *Yatīma*, 4:58.

I commend to God in Baghdad a crescent moon of mine
In Karkh that rises from the celestial spheres of the bottoms (of his tunic)

I bade him farewell, but I would have preferred if my life's soul
Had said farewell to me, but I had not said farewell to him¹⁰²³

Or the ecstasy of Ibn Ghaylān al-Bazzāz,¹⁰²⁴ over the warbling of Rayḥana, Ibn al-
Barīdī's slave girl, when she sang, (Sh. p. 253)

Give youth its share
As long as you can be excused because of youth

And enjoy the days of youth
And throw off your shame in loving passionately¹⁰²⁵

At this point someone says to him, "What did Ibn Ghaylān used to do during this
singing, such that you would be astonished by him?"

He says, "O our lord, when he heard this, his eyes rolled back in their sockets
and he fell in a faint, and (they had to bring) camphor and rose water, and someone to
recite the *Qurʾānic* Verse of the Throne¹⁰²⁶ and the two last chapters of the *Qurʾān* in his
ear, and he had to be treated with the spell formula 'O Living (One), O Eternal (One).'¹⁰²⁷
What's he up to, you dummy?' (This) is how he acts.¹⁰²⁸

¹⁰²² Probably Abū ʿAmr Ismāʿīl b. Najīd b. Aḥmad b. Yūsuf b. Khālīd al-Sulamī, died 365/975 or 6. al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, 7:181-185.

¹⁰²³ The introductory line and poem are in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:166 except the men's names are given as Ibn al-Fahm al-Ṣūfī and Ibn al-Mughannī.

¹⁰²⁴ Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrahīm b. Ghaylān al-Bazzāz. Born 346/957 or 8, died 440/1048 or 9. al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, 1: 119, no. 27..

¹⁰²⁵ In *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:166-7 except that Billawr appears instead of Rayḥāna and al-Yazīdī al-Muʿallif instead of Ibn al-Barīdī.

¹⁰²⁶ *Qurʾān*, 2 (al-Baqara): 255.

¹⁰²⁷ *Bashrāhiyā marāhiyā*. *Ruqya* (spell formula) refers to pronouncing a magical formula to produce an enchantment. Since Muḥammad used beneficial *ruqyas*, the practice expanded enormously. This process is used to cure the sick. EI2, s.v. "Ruqya."

¹⁰²⁸ "When he heard this ... in his ear" appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:167.

Yes, O sir, or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Şūfī, when he heard the singing of Taraf al-Şabbāba, in her song, with her energy and joy, and her love (for him) being tangibly present, and her glance directed at him:¹⁰²⁹ (Sh. p. 254)

Respond to love whenever it summons you
And revile in love whoever prohibits you (from it)

Whoever rebukes (your) for love, or insults you
Increase (for) him in (your) persistence wrong headedness!

If you are not in love like that
Then indeed its possessors are people other than you!¹⁰³⁰

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Bukhārī,¹⁰³¹ over the singing of Uḡḡuwān, Ibn al-Aʿmā's slave girl, between the two walls, at her gathering crowded with nobles, when she sang:

O! By the location of the memory of you on my tongue
And in my heart, when I am alone with my desires,

I have come to envy every thing
Your gaze falls upon, and I am happy (for having) seen it.¹⁰³²

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Warrāq¹⁰³³ the grammarian over the singing of Rawḡa, the slave girl of Ibn al-Raḡī in Ruṣāfa when she sang:¹⁰³⁴

When I wanted solace, my heart was your champion
So am I (supposed to) take revenge on my (own) heart?

So increase or decrease your ill-treatment (of me)

¹⁰²⁹ The introductory line appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:170 except the names are given as Ibn al-ʿAwdhī and Taraf al-Şābiʿa.

¹⁰³⁰ The poem is paralleled in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:171 except that “prohibits you” from the first line and “insults you” from the second line are switched and in the third line, “Indeed its possessors” is replaced with “It bestows that.”

¹⁰³¹ Abū al-Muʿālī b. Abī Naşr b. al-Bukhārī al-Baghdādī, a religious scholar. He is the father of Ibn Ghaylān mentioned above. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Muʿjam al-Shuyūkh*, 1:107-8, no. 114. .

¹⁰³² The introductory line and poem are in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:176 except that Abū ʿAbd Allah al-Başrī is given instead of Ibn al-Bukhārī, Rawʿa instead of Uḡḡuwān and Ibn al-Raḡī instead of Ibn al-Aʿma, and in the first line of the poem “O! By” appears as “By the right of.”

¹⁰³³ Muḡammad b. ʿAbd Allah b. al-ʿAbbās b. al-Warrāq, d. 991 M./371 H. Imīl Yaqūb, *al-Muʿjam al-mufaṣṣal fi al-lughawīyīn al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿilmīya, 1997), 327.

¹⁰³⁴ This line has been emended from Ibn al-Ruṣāfa to Ibn al-Raḡī in Ruṣāfa on the basis of *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:176. It seems to be a copyist's error. Ibn al-Raḡī is unidentified.

For all that is ascribed to fate

I have laid down my cheek to the lowest of those who surround you
To the point that I have become despised--and the likes of me is no one to be
despised¹⁰³⁵ (Sh. p. 255) (M. p. 82)

O our lord, because of these and similar (verses) by Ibn al-Aḥnaf,¹⁰³⁶ al-Wāsiṭī found fault with him and attacked his religion, and raised suspicion about him, and thought backbiting attacks on his honor lawful, and nicknamed him 'Repeller from the School,' and 'Highwayman (assaulting) the one seeking right guidance.' And I myself have seen this al-Wāsiṭī, when he (once) came to an inn, and heard someone singing the words of al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf:

So increase and decrease your ill treatment (of me)
For all this is ascribed to fate¹⁰³⁷

He went crazy and asked for help and tore the breast of his robe, and pronounced 'There is no might or power except in God,' and apologized and said, 'O people, do you not see how al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf is not content just to act profligately, but goes so far as to go against religion altogether?! When have scandalous acts and sins and shames been ascribed to fate? And when has Allāh foreordained these things when He has prohibited them?! If he had foreordained them possible, then he would approve them, and if he approved them, then he would not punish them. And if he had foreordained them for his servant, and then punished (him) for them, it would be injustice--which is morally repugnant for one of (God's) creations, and how (much

¹⁰³⁵ The poem appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:177. These are lines 10, 4 and 15 from the sixteen line poem "Lā āra fī l-ḥubbi," al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf*, 141.

¹⁰³⁶ al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf, *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 1, 36. al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf, *al-Aghānī*, 8:15-27. He is famous for love poetry, EI2, s.v. "al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf."

¹⁰³⁷ al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir; Dār Bayrūt, 1965), 141.

more so) for the Creator! We are God's! May God curse love poetry,¹⁰³⁸ when it is mixed with licentiousness, and may He curse licentiousness when it is combined with what offends against religion.' He went on until Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Hāshimī said to him, 'Take it easy, old man, for all this is not in accordance with what you believe. Fate comes to every thing, is attached to every thing, flows over every thing, and through every thing; it is God's hidden secret, and the science that encompasses every thing. All that it is possible for science to encompass, it is possible for fate to proceed by, and when this is possible, it is possible for news of it to spread.¹⁰³⁹ So what is (all) this uptightness and annoyance? (Sh. p. 256) The poet sometimes jokes and sometimes is serious, and approaches and goes away, and is right and errs, and is not to be attacked for what the God-fearing man is attacked for, or the eloquent scholar.'

Yes, O our lord, or the ecstasy of Ibn Maḥdī, over the (singing) of Muntazim and 'Alwa, Bint Khāqān's two slave girls, when they sang:

I am delighted when the messenger comes to me
And I am sad when a messenger does not come to me

I hope for you but know that my heart
Will always have its desires for you thwarted¹⁰⁴⁰

Or the ecstasy of Ibn Ghassān al-Naṣrānī, the belletrist, when he heard Abū Tammām al-Zaynabī's¹⁰⁴¹ slave girl, Ḥabbāba, when she sang: (Sh. p. 257) (M. p. 83)

¹⁰³⁸ Literally *ghazāls*.

¹⁰³⁹ This passage appears in *al-Imtā'*, 2:178-9, except that "And if he had foreordained ... with licentiousness" is omitted. This is an example of *'ilm al-kalām*, which is the application of discursive arguments to formulate proofs firmly establishing religious beliefs. Arguments start by assuming there is an opponent who must be won over. The specific arguments and methods of presenting them vary according to the nature of the opponent. EI2, s.v. "*'ilm al-kalām*."

¹⁰⁴⁰ The introductory line and poem are paralleled in *al-Imtā'*, 2:178, except that "over the (singing) of Muntazim and 'Alwa" is omitted, "but know that my heart" is replaced with "And I had made sure," and "Will always have its desires for you thwarted" is replaced with "I thwart my false desires."

¹⁰⁴¹ A *qaḍī* or judge. Yāqūt, *The Irshād al-Arīb ilā Ma'rifat al-Adīb, or Dictionary of Learned Men of Yāqūt*, ed. by D.S. Margoliouth, 6:305.

By the life of the one I love because I
Have never been one to swear falsely on his life

Indeed I will oppose those who blame me for my pleasure
And indeed I will help my brother to (attain) his pleasure”¹⁰⁴²

At this point someone says to him, “This Ibn Ghassān, tell us more, what kind of man was he, O Abū al-Qāsim?”

He says, “This Ibn Ghassān was a handsome, elegant youth, well educated, skilled among the doctors, and he is the one who said about Abū Muḍar the governor,¹⁰⁴³ having treated him for a disease, but who had not sought him out (afterwards) and not paid him what he owed him:

Grant that you give the poets deeds
That are forged: word for word

(Still), why should the reward for the doctor be forged
When he has given the cure for the disease

I was amazed at the one produced by a load of baseness
And miserliness, how can he be considered one of the generous?

But the earth of Isfahan bestows ill fortune
And baseness rooted in the bones

To you is attributed liberality, for no other reason
Than the excess of your baseness among the base (men)¹⁰⁴⁴

The end of his business, poor man, was that he drowned himself in the Kalwādhā whirlpool, for reasons that accumulated against him, from poverty and

¹⁰⁴² The introductory line and poem are in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:169 except that the names are given as Ibn Ghassān al-Baṣrī and Ibn al-Raffāʿ instead of Ḥubbāba, Abū Tammām al-Zaynabī’s slave girl.

¹⁰⁴³ Emended from Abū Naṣr al-ʿĀmil to Abū Muḍar, the governor, on the basis of *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:169; and *Yatīma*, 3:428.

¹⁰⁴⁴ The anecdote and lines 1-3 and 5 of the poem are paralleled in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:169, except that “was a handsome, elegant youth, well educated, skilled among the doctors” is omitted. In the second half of the third line, “how can he be considered one of the generous” appears as “he will not revert to being generous.” In the second half of the fifth line, “excess” appears as “decrease” and “among base (men)” by “under veiling.”

penury to mange that ate (Sh. p. 258) his body and love that burned his heart for the apprentice of al-Amīdī, the confectioner at Bāb al-Ṭāq, and confusion by which his mind was taken away, and his judgment removed, to the point that he pulled the time of his death to himself (ahead of time) by what he undertook to do--we ask God the Great for a positive outcome, in achieving our desires. Nothing (that happens to) a person is (really) within his power. Whatever comes to him, he is under (its) control, (free) to behave as it behaves in him, even though he believes that (his actions) come from his (own) direction. By my life! He who is made to err, errs, and he who is misled, misleads himself, but talking of this is disturbing, and going into it in depth is disconcerting, and liberation from it is more conducive to sociability, and more likely to lead to a heart safe from anxieties and apprehensions. How excellent is what the speaker says:

If I seek freedom from my slavery from nights
Then you release me, then my captivity is in my liberation¹⁰⁴⁵

And Ḥubbāba, this (woman) whose position and singing I mentioned, used also to lament in Karkh. She was alone, without a sister or a peer--May God entertain the assembly and those present and protect them from every evil!--The people in Iraq were fans of her and her lamenting. A Khurāsānī, (one) of the people of Tashkent,¹⁰⁴⁶ had come to Baghdad and he bought her for thirty thousand ^ʿIzzī¹⁰⁴⁷ *dirhams*, and took her away to the east. It was said that she did not live even a year (out) there, due to grief that overtook her and a lover she had (M. p. 84) (back in) Baghdad, from which she died. I saw a sister of hers who was called Ṣabbāba, and was in loveliness and beauty

¹⁰⁴⁵ "The end of his business" through the line of poetry appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:169-70, but with many variations.

¹⁰⁴⁶ *al-Buldān*, 3:233-4.

¹⁰⁴⁷ ^ʿIzz al-Dawla Bakhtiyār, Buyid amir ruling in Iraq, 356-372.

above her, but in artistry and skill below her. This (woman) rocked Baghdad in her time. The people could speak of nothing but her, of her anecdotes, and her quick retorts, and the passionateness of her nature, and the quickness of her movements, without frivolousness or immoderation. These good qualities, when they are combined in one slave girl, or indeed even in a number of singing girls, overwhelm the ears (Sh. p. 259) and hearts.¹⁰⁴⁸

Or the ecstasy of Ibn Samʿūn the Ṣūfī,¹⁰⁴⁹ over (the singing of) Ibn Bahlūl, when he took the qadīb, and played (it) with his agile fingers, then shook the world with his mellifluous voice, his mellow vibrato, his captivating gestures, his provocative string tickling, his outstanding elegance, and his sweet gentleness, and sang:

If a seedling were to please me, then its fruit would please me
And if (what happens) in my absence were all right with me, then (what happens) in my presence would be all right

I practiced asceticism in the world, yet, I am (still) desirous--
I find my desire mixed with my abstention

O soul, the world is not worthy of love (of it)
So leave her to people who contend with each other over her¹⁰⁵⁰

Or the ecstasy of Abū Saʿd al-Bādirānī, over the singing of Ghulām al-Umarāʾ, when he sang:¹⁰⁵¹

He came to me concealed by night's cloak
Stepping quickly from fear and caution

The light of the crescent moon shone, almost revealing us,

¹⁰⁴⁸ "And Ḥubbāba ... immoderation" appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:181-2, with numerous variations.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl b. ʿAnbas b. Samʿūn, Abū al-Ḥusayn, 300-387/912-997. He was an ascetic and a preacher, and was known for his eloquent wisdom. al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, 3rd ed. (Beirut?: Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, 1969) 6:204.

¹⁰⁵⁰ The anecdote and poem are in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:173-4, except that in the last half of the last line, "contend with each other" appears as "get used to each other."

¹⁰⁵¹ The introductory sentence is paralleled in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:174, except that Abū Saʿd al-Bādirānī is replaced by Ibn Ḥayyawayh and the word "singing" is omitted.

Like a shaving that has been cut from a fingernail¹⁰⁵²

(Sh. p. 260) This Ghulām al-Umarā' is the one about whom someone has said:

Abū al-ʿAbbāsī has made the pilgrimage
And has returned and has sung

And has hung an effeminate's drum (around his neck)
So this 'is also like we were'

Our masters the Baghdadis find their saying 'Also like we were' witty, and
consider it a kind of "elegant inarticulateness."¹⁰⁵³

Or the ecstasy of Abū Sulaymān al-Manṭiqī,¹⁰⁵⁴ when he heard the singing of this
Mawṣilī youth,¹⁰⁵⁵ who charmed the world and filled it with rowdiness and destruction;
and who made scandals of the masters of asceticism and dignity and all classes of
people among the lowly and the great, with his beautiful face, his teeth (revealed) in his
smile, his bewitching¹⁰⁵⁶ conversation, his languid look, (the way) his figure affects a
sway (when he walks), his sweet pronunciation, his beguiling coquetry, his ensnaring
unassailability, his elusive seductiveness, his keeping you dangling between union and
separation, his mixing rejection and compliance, and his position between no and yes.
If you speak forthrightly to him, he speaks in allusions, if you speak in allusions (M. p.
85) to him, he speaks forthrightly. He steals you from yourself, and returns you to
yourself. (Sh. p. 261) He knows you when you don't acknowledge him, and he disowns
you when you know him. His state, O our lord, (consists of) many (different) states and

¹⁰⁵² Lines seven and nine from a seventeen line poem called the Dayr ʿAbdūn. Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 2:250-1. The poem is discussed in: Renate Jacobi, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz: Dair ʿAbdūn, a Structural Analysis" in *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 6 (1975), 35-56.

¹⁰⁵³ From "This Ghulām" through "inarticulateness," *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:174. "Ham" is Persian for also. Here it has been borrowed into Baghdādī Arabic vernacular. The wittiness is its insertion into a *fuṣḥā* Arabic verse.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Abū Sulaymān Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir b. Bahrām al-Sijistānī al-Manṭiqī, born ca. 932, died ca. 985. A philosopher who lived in Baghdad. Joel L. Kraemer, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986).

¹⁰⁵⁵ The *Imtāʿ* names the youth: al-Ṣabī al-Mawṣilī al-Nābigh, who is unidentified.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Emended from *sājir* to *sāḥir* on the basis of *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:174.

his guidance of errors, with a charm (that affects both) the settled people and the nomads, and a desirability that works on the lustful¹⁰⁵⁷ and the rightly guided--with his song which is one of those for which he is famous, (namely):

You know what is up with me, so do not upbraid me--
The ignorant man is not like the one who knows--

If I had seen anyone (I considered) like him
Then I would blame myself along with the blamer

I used to threaten to call God's wrath down on him
For I feared for his sinning

But when he persisted in his oppression
I gave up cursing the tyrant¹⁰⁵⁸

Or the ecstasy of Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Baṣrī,¹⁰⁵⁹ over the percussion playing of Ibn al-Qaṣabānī,¹⁰⁶⁰ when he would strike his *qaḍīb* and sing:

Have you forgotten the union when we spent
The night on a bed of roses

And we embraced like a sash (embraces)
And we strung (ourselves together like) a string (of pearls)

And we inclined to (each other) like two branches
Our two torsos being like one¹⁰⁶¹

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Muqannaʿī Abū Ṭāhir al-ʿAdil,¹⁰⁶² over ʿAllūn, Ibn ʿUrs's¹⁰⁶³ slave, for indeed when (the latter) arrived, he used to throw off his (outer)

¹⁰⁵⁷ Read as *al-shābiq*.

¹⁰⁵⁸ The anecdote and poem are in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:174-5, but the second and third lines of the poem are reversed.

¹⁰⁵⁹ An influential Muʿtazilī theologian and Ḥanafī judge, b. ca. 905-6, d. 19 June 980 in Baghdad. EI2, Supplement, fasc. 1-2:12, s.v. "Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Baṣrī, al-Djuʿal." He also appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 3:213.

¹⁰⁶⁰ al-ʿAṣabī appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:175. I did not find either form elsewhere.

¹⁰⁶¹ The introductory line and poem are in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:175.

¹⁰⁶² *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:178 has al-Muʿaddil instead of al-ʿAdil. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Jawharī al-Muqannaʿī, 363/973-454/1062. al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, 1:402-4.

¹⁰⁶³ Yāqūt, *The Irshād al-Arīb ilā Maʿrifat al-Adīb, or Dictionary of Learned Men of Yāqūt*, ed. by D.S. Margoliouth (Cairo, Maṭbaʿa Hindiyya, 1968), 5:164. He is mentioned writing letters for ʿIzz al-Dawla, which places him in an appropriate time period.

clothing, and say to the people at (Sh. p. 262) the gathering, 'Select a song and I'll get started, for I am your son, even your slave, who will serve you through my singing and I will encourage you (in your choice) of cheap and expensive (requests of me). Who wants me once, I want him a thousand times; who loves me hypocritically, I love him sincerely; and who dies because of me, I will die for him. I have not withheld my beauty and my elegance from (all of) you, and have not caused you difficulties, indeed, I was created for you, and I have not been insolent, for tomorrow I will be in need of you when my beard sprouts, my mustaches (grow until they) droop, my beauty flees, my cheek becomes wrinkled, and my body becomes bent. By God, my need for you tomorrow will be greater than your need for me today. May God revile bad morals, quarrelsome natures, lack of protectiveness and guardianship (of bonds of amity), and the approval of treachery.'

He continues along in this (vein), and the like, at length, until no one remains in the group whose veins do not throb, whose nature is not set afire, and whose spirit is not stirred, (each of them) throws him kisses, makes eyes at him, singles him out for special greetings, promises him a gift, approaches him with praise, guarantees him an elegant rare present, says a charm for him, prefers him over his peers, and considers him as the singular person of his time. You would see Ibn al-Muqannaʿī, flying through the air, hovering in the sky, gathering (M. p. 86) stars with his fingertips, and approaching the group with cheerful joy and a happy smile. He says, 'What do you think of my choice? How superior is my perception to the perceptions of others? May God will what adorns me and does not dishonor me; enhances my beauty, and does not impair my state; makes me glad and breaks my enemy's back. O Boy! Fetch that (Sh. p.

263) Dabīqī clothing, that Shaṭṭawī¹⁰⁶⁴-style *ridāʾ*¹⁰⁶⁵, that Byzantine *farajiyya*,¹⁰⁶⁶ that perfumed handkerchief, and the incense preserved in its container. And fetch in addition the *dīnār* which has a hundred units of weight, for indeed it is (the way) we like it: a well-struck coin, beautifully inscribed, and it should be sufficient for him for this week, until we do what is necessary. And hurry O boy, with whatever is ready of the chicken and poultry, the *bawārid* and *bawāridāt*,¹⁰⁶⁷ the condiments, and add to that a *qīrāt* of grilled meat,¹⁰⁶⁸ cheese and olives from Kīkī the grocer in Karkh, *qaṭāʾif* from Ḥabish, *fālūdhaj* from ʿUmar, and *fuqqāʿa*¹⁰⁶⁹ from Zurayq, and Khurāsānī hash(?)¹⁰⁷⁰ from Ibn Zunbūr. If we were drinking, we would order Ṣarīfīnī¹⁰⁷¹ wine from Ibn Sarīyīn, but if you all want, I will bring it specifically for you and because of you, for it isn't hospitable for the soberness of my spirit and the poverty of my support to keep you from your pleasures. May God curse being a professional witness,¹⁰⁷² for it has closed me off from all (objects of) longing and desire, and I see nothing in the notaryship except the absence of what(ever) is pleasurable. How well expressed is the line by the ancient (poet):

(Real) life is only in the madness of youth,

¹⁰⁶⁴ A village close to Damietta in Egypt that produced fine cloth similar to that from Damietta. *al-Buldān*, 3:288.

¹⁰⁶⁵ A cloak. Stillman, 43-45.

¹⁰⁶⁶ An ample outer robe large enough to wear over a short coat. Stillman, 69.

¹⁰⁶⁷ This is a type of sauce used on meat. One example is: Mix coriander juice, rue juice, purslane, vinegar, water, salt, pepper, galingale, caraway, ground pistachios and sugar. Serve it over roasted chicken.

¹⁰⁶⁸ A *qīrāt* is a weight based on the weight of a grain of the carob tree. It varies between a twentieth and a twenty-fourth of a *dīnār*. LANE, s.v. "Qīrāt."

¹⁰⁶⁹ A drink made of bread soaked in a mix of water, sugar, pomegranate juice and sometime some lemon juice, until it dissolves, with spices or flavorings such as pepper, ginger, mint, musk, rose water, and/or quince juice. It could be made from flour or bread. Marin, *Kanz*, 146-50.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Makhlāṭ*, which mean a mixture. It would probably be a dish mixing either styles of cooking or whatever ingredients were on hand. Two chapter headings in Ibn al-Warrāq say they include recipes with *makhlāṭ* in the recipes, but none of the specific recipes have it in the title. al-Warrāq, 149, 196-8.

¹⁰⁷¹ *al-Buldān*, 3:383-4. The article mentions good wine made in Ṣarīfīn.

¹⁰⁷² ʿAdl.

And if that has passed, it is the madness of wine

All this happens, as well as what is beyond this (in terms of being) affecting,
delicate, wonderful (Sh. p. 264) and novel. Then ʿAllūn bursts into (a) song from the
stanzas of Bashshār:¹⁰⁷³

Indeed, people, leave me and my business alone
For I am not about to give up loving pretty women

They forbade me, O Umāma, from loving you
But I did not accept what those who forbade me had to say

If you don't make (me) happy, give me false promises and hopes¹⁰⁷⁴
From (my) separation (from you) so I do not die¹⁰⁷⁵

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-ʿAbbāsī, over the singing of Madhkūr, when he
energetically sang:

The vows of (youthful) love today to me (seem ever) more painful in terms of
lovesickness

And (so also) the memory of Sulaymā--when the memory is useless

It is as if we did not live a day in the best state
In (the) land in which time called forth our youth

In a land in which passion's shade was luxurious
Over us and the branch of life was straight and fresh

Yes, but then time divided us--
And what union does time not divide?¹⁰⁷⁶ (M. p. 87)

Or the ecstasy of Abū Saʿd al-Raqqī, over the singing of Dalāl, Ibn Qahwa's slave
girl, when she sang:

I was happy with the separation from you when
I learned that indeed your heart was happy with it (Sh. p. 265)

¹⁰⁷³ The following lines of poetry appear in Bashshār b. Burd, *Dīwān Bashshār ibn Burd*, Ḥusayn Ḥamawī, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1996), 2:550.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Emended from *khalāʿān* to *khadāʿan*.

¹⁰⁷⁵ "Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Muqannaʿī ... so I do not die" is paralleled in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:178-181, except that there are numerous small variations, especially in the first prose paragraph.

¹⁰⁷⁶ The poem appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:182, except for several small variations.

And were it not for your happiness, it would not have made me happy
And my heart would not have been able to endure without you

But I consider everything that grieves me
If it pleases you--easy and trivial (to bear)¹⁰⁷⁷

Or her song for which she is (so) famous:

We turned away as if there were no love between us
Although the eye's glance certainly (gave) us away

The secret enemies turned their eyes upon us
But that which the hearts embrace did not appear from us

I greeted (every)one other than her whom I met in the house
But all my love was for the one whom I did not greet¹⁰⁷⁸

Or the ecstasy of Ghulām Bābā, over the slave girl of Ṭalḥa,¹⁰⁷⁹ the professional
witness, in the ʿAṭash Market,¹⁰⁸⁰ when she sang: (Sh. p. 266)

I wish I knew, have you learned
That I am miserable because of you?

For I hid that from you
But let my hopes run free

I imagined you in my mind
And my tongue whispered to you

We came together and separated
In accordance with my hopes, in a place¹⁰⁸¹

But if I were to mention (all) these ecstasies of the listeners, and the songs of the
men and the youths, and the slave girls and the free born, then (the tale) would drag
out and be boring. I would be like the competitor of the one who compiled a book on

¹⁰⁷⁷ The poem appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:181.

¹⁰⁷⁸ This poem appears in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:181.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ṭalḥa b. Muḥammad al-Shāhid, a ḥadīth authority and Muʿtazilite. al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdad aw Madīnat al-Salām* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1966), 9:351, no. 4908.

¹⁰⁸⁰ One of the largest neighborhoods in Baghdad. *al-Buldān*, 3:194.

¹⁰⁸¹ The introductory line and poem appear in *al-Imtāʿ*, 2:182.

songs and melodies.¹⁰⁸² Indeed, I got to know all this, in the year 306 (918 or 919),¹⁰⁸³ when I and a group in Karkh counted (among the professional musicians), 460 slave girls on both sides (of the Tigris), ten free girls, and 75 youths like full moons,¹⁰⁸⁴ who combined beauty, intelligence and elegance, exceeding (Sh. p. 267) the limits of description. This is aside from those who remained unobtainable and unreachable by us because of their status, their escorts and their guardians, and aside from those we used to listen to who did not publicly display their singing and playing unless they happened at a given time to work up enthusiasm, or at another to be in a drunken state, when they would throw off all restraint, in a passion that had allied with them and exhausted them, and they would sing, stamp their feet and shake their head, and their breaths heaved, and they confided in their attendees, and put aside what separated them (from the audience), and maintained their trust in those present, and their reliance on their discretion.¹⁰⁸⁵ This, O our lord, is their habit and these are their manners: an appearance that dazzles you, revelry that delights you, lyrics (M. p. 88) that charm you, melodies that fill you with longing, and situations that make it clear to you that they, by God, are in gardens of pleasure, and that others are in the midst of hellfire. Then he says, ‘Ah,

O my two companions, (my) desire has exceeded all limits
So joke in preferring rebuke or be serious!

With my father (I would ransom) the young gazelle, who shames the full moon
With his light and embarrasses the branch with his figure

¹⁰⁸² Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī wrote a *Kitāb al-Ghināʾ*. Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schriftums* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 1:370-1.

¹⁰⁸³ Shālījī emends the date to 360 (970-1), probably because many of the individuals mentioned in the anecdotes lived around 360 or even a bit later.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *al-Imtāʾ*, 2:183 gives the numbers as 460 slave girls, 120 free girls and 95 youths.

¹⁰⁸⁵ This paragraph is paralleled in *al-Imtāʾ*, 2:183, but there are many small differences.

What kind of cheek did I see on my beloved,
From which a glance of my eye harvests roses

What kind of mouth of a beloved have I come to know?
Kissing which gives (welcome) chill to (my) limbs

What kind of fragrance do I smell that rips the musk bag with musk
And makes the *nadd* (bag) redolent with the (scent) of *nadd*

O my companion, was this our experience in Baghdad
With one we love to be expected?

O my two beloveds, leave me to enjoy a song
The pleasantness of whose improvisation is too exalted to define

They claim that whoever experiences a separation thinks (of the beloved) no
more
But I have felt passion more and more since I separated (from him)

Another

May God preserve a time in which
I was in Awānā¹⁰⁸⁶ (Sh. p. 268)

(As) a guest of people who buy praise
(Whether it be) for what is great or trivial

With people there who
Are diverse in (their) lifestyles,

Who, when they breakfast on hunger
Reach evening stuffed

Who start the day on camel saddles
But end it with wine jugs

In gardens where, when we
Enter them, we enter paradises

A town that brings together wine
And whores and singing girls'

¹⁰⁸⁶ *al-Buldān*, 1:395-6.

I recall a day when we were in ʿUmr (a monastery) in the area of Wāsiṭ,¹⁰⁸⁷ and with us were Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, and Abū Muḥammad al-Yaʿqūbī,¹⁰⁸⁸ and Abū al-Ḥasan b. Sukkara,¹⁰⁸⁹ and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Jurjānī.¹⁰⁹⁰ We looked out over a garden of narcissi, with banners flying and necklaces, strung together, among cypress trees and date palms; our sky was date palms, and our earth basil and herbs. (Sh. p. 269)

Nearby were lush narcissi and cypresses looking like
Figures of slave girls departing in green shawls

Trees (looking) as if the houris had lent them their figures, clothed them in their *burdas*, and adorned them with their necklaces; (M. p. 89) their blossoms diffused (their scent like) bags of musk and their birds exchanged marvels of eloquence.

You see a thousand parks in which we are
In gardens linked yet more gardens

(There are) fresh jasmine and plucked roses,
Bright yellow and blood red

It is as if we, and whomever we love, have shaken off
The dye of our complexions on the branches

The one who sees this and that does not doubt
That the dyer's thread is in the garden

¹⁰⁸⁷ This is the same place as ʿUmr Kaskar. It is famous for a Christian monastery surrounded by gardens. Kaskar is near Wāsiṭ. *al-Buldān*, 3:724-726.

¹⁰⁸⁸ al-Yaʿqūbī is mentioned as a poet, but without further information in Ibn al-Athīr, *Ibn al-Athīr, al-Lubāb fī tahdhīb al-Ansāb* (Cairo: Maktabāt al-Qudsī, 1936 or 7-), 3:311.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Emended from al-Sukkar to Sukkara. Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allah b. Muḥammad b. Sukkara al-Hāshamī, a poet contemporary with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Yatīma*, 3:3-34.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jurjānī, a judge and poet. *Yatīma*, 4:3-29.

We were pouring the Babylonian wine to the accompaniment of the singing of the nightingales, the drumming of Ibnat al-ʿUmayy,¹⁰⁹¹ and the ʿūd of Mawāhib,¹⁰⁹² about whom Ibn al-Ḥajjāj said:

I am a rejecter of God
In regard to God, I am a liar

Indeed, the Lady of the singing girls
And my Lady--is Mawāhib

She is the radiant full moon at dusk
And they are the stars

She is (like) the north wind in pleasantness
And they are (like) the south winds

She is the sea of song
From which marvels arise

I ransom you, and ransoming you
With (one's own) soul is a (moral) obligation! (Sh. p. 270)

And he says about her,

Completion of the pilgrimage is that riding beasts stop
At a house in which Mawāhib resides

And if it weren't that someone would say: He is infatuated, we would
Have said (there are) wonders (such that things) short of the least of them are
(still) wonders¹⁰⁹³

And (then) we slept at the end of the day among the scented plants; the scents of these gardens refreshed us. Abū ʿAbd Allāh¹⁰⁹⁴ was drunk, sleepiness having clouded

¹⁰⁹¹ This could also be vowelled ʿAmī.

¹⁰⁹² A singer mentioned in an anecdote told by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-Muḥāḍara wa-Akhhār al-Mudhākara*, ed. ʿAbbūd al-Shālījī (1971), 1:277-8, no. 148.

¹⁰⁹³ Although these verses are recited by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, and so might be taken as his poetry, they appear elsewhere as verses by Nuṣayb in the following two works. In *al-Aghānī*, 14:174, they are recited by Sukayna bint al-Ḥusayn. The same verses, recited by Maḥmūda, also appear in Abū Muḥammad Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad, al-Sarraj, *Maṣāʾir al-ʿUshshāq* (Constantinople: Maṭbaʿat al-Jawāʾib, 1884), 273.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.

his eyes, when all of a sudden there appeared a ship¹⁰⁹⁵ traveling up to Baghdad. He observed it in this state, then recited:

O ships of Baghdad, go briskly, knowing well
That today my heart has gone with you (Sh. p. 271)

O ships, what harm would it have done those traveling up(stream) on you
Having stocked you up, if they had made me a sailor on you

With a wind from my sighs, that drives you along upstream
With those I love, evenings and mornings

You would borrow my tears so that they could lift you up
If you went aground when the water was shallow.

O ships, (this is) the appeal of one in love who yearned
When he saw the plain path to those he loves, and was happy (M. p. 90)

O ships, say to those who are distant for us to visit
And (thus) have dispersed the union of proximity and destroyed (it)

I am the stranger for whom the dove mourns
When it cries, and the bird mourns if it coos

Then sleep flowed over him, although he awoke at one point during the night,
and he heard the cooing of a dove on a branch, and he felt desire, called out, and
recited:

The doves of life filled me with desire by their cooing
And kept me awake--after we had slept--a long time

It supported me in (my) griefs for a while--
And if I die, mourn me as one slain

And say to the wind what the emaciation of my
Extremely weak body prevents me from saying:

O north wind, by the right of one who does not
Surprise you with tranquility, stand still a little

Indeed, if you blow gently on my heart

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Kār*. A sea-faring ship that carried wheat. Kindermann, 87.

You will heal a sick heart of passion

O south wind, pass by me
Perhaps you will be a messenger for me

To people who have lodged in the Sūq Yaḥyā
And in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's house,

To people who have left my heart
Pining away, and who have left my body emaciated

They have concealed sleep from me, and said
'The flood of tears prevents him from arriving.'" (Sh. p. 272)

Abū al-Qāsim said, "Then I said to him, 'What is this weakness which saps the strength?' He recited:

You told us truly, that desire weakens the strength of my steadfastness
For this isn't from the weakness of my liver

But in addition to me, there are my two sons, for ...
If it weren't for them, there would be no increase in number in my family

When I extend my steps to depart, they are shortened by
Three who belong to me: my wife and my sons.

As for the oldest, he is (as dear as) my eye; for which there is no substitute
For as long as I live, and beyond that, (as dear as) my legs and my hands

And (as for) my younger son, his residence is in my entrails
How could my liver reside elsewhere than in (my) entrails?

And above and beyond this, I have a wife, who, when(ever) I was separated from
her,

I was amazed how my body continued (to survive) apart from her

Three to whom I hurry for fear that they be made miserable
By a fate lying in wait for them after I have departed.

Then he began to recite, his tears streaming down his cheeks, as though he were
remembering a young son,

It is an extraordinary thing, that I
Removed my (heart) from the hollow of my chest (M. p. 91)

And that there sinned against my soul
The hands of the catamites of passion in my matter--

On fate's part an ugly intent toward me--
May God be between me and my fate (Sh. p. 273)

And he recites, and it is as if he were remembering a friend of his, whose name
was Ya^ʿqūb b. Ishāq

O You who kill and resurrect all of creation
With omnipotence and Who is still the remaining heir

Just as you restored his Joseph to Jacob
So restore Ya^ʿqūb b. Ishāq to al-Faḍl

For indeed I, since the parting became serious (?) and they departed
Am very full of longing for him--may my soul ransom him."

Here Abū al-Qāsim says, "This, by God, is a desire from Wāsiṭ for Baghdad, then
how (much desire) from Isfahan for Baghdad? O my grief!

One is more likely to find the phoenix than is
The yearner to get what he longs for¹⁰⁹⁶

Another

I do not despair that God may reunite us
In a situation like the best we ever had

Another

How able is God to bring close together, despite the distance
One whose home is in al-Ḥazn¹⁰⁹⁷ with one whose home is in al-Ṣūl¹⁰⁹⁸ (Sh. p.
274)

Allāh rolls up the carpet of the earth between the two
Until its grazing ground is seen to be populated."

¹⁰⁹⁶ al-Mutanabbī, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Mutanabbī*, ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Barqūqī (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1970?), 1:307.

¹⁰⁹⁷ The road between al-Madīna and Khaybar. *al-Buldān*, 2:260.

¹⁰⁹⁸ A town in the country of the Khazars. *al-Buldān*, 3:435.

Then he approaches the master of the house and says, “You have given us a headache! Bring us our breakfast, for we certainly have found fatigue in this our journey.”¹⁰⁹⁹

He replies, “Yes, what do you suggest, O Abū al-Qāsim? You have put us in fear of you (and) of what you snuff up.”

He says, “It doesn’t matter. I won’t give you trouble about food, God forbid.”

Someone says, “Tell us, O Abū al-Qāsim,” so he says:

I want a round (loaf) of bread from you
Set on a clean table

I want coarse salt
I want sour vinegar

I want well-cooked meat
I want plucked greens

I want a suckling goat
Or (if) not, then a suckling lamb

I want water with ice
Covering a rare vessel

I want a *daydān*¹¹⁰⁰ of stew¹¹⁰¹
And I will not be satisfied with just a little (M. p. 92)

Either a fine fast steed that
Speeds along under me (Sh. p. 275)

Or singing women of pure (beauty)
Standing in rows before me

I want an elegant young gazelle
I want a thin waist

Like the full moon, smiling, pleasant

¹⁰⁹⁹ Qurʾān, 18 (al-Kahf): 62.

¹¹⁰⁰ Presumably a quantity or perhaps a dish, but the word is not identifiable.

¹¹⁰¹ A combination of breadcrumbs and broth. LANE, s.v. “Mard.”

Making the heart lighter

I want a full butt
I want a graceful penis

I want a shirt from you
And an overdress and a turban

How beloved am I as your guest
And you as a host!

I am content with this from you
And I don't want to impose¹¹⁰²

Someone says, "O Abū al-Qāsim, do you want all this? By God, it's a tall order.

No, by God, be more restrained!"

He says:

Indeed, I love *harīsa* and it pleases me
But my heart is seriously in love with *bahaṭṭa*¹¹⁰³

And if you mention mutton, it will arouse rapture in me
And if (only) two courses come after it, it will satisfy me

And the rice pudding¹¹⁰⁴ has a special place in my heart
When it appears before¹¹⁰⁵ us, white and creamy

And *zīrbāj* is a food no one puts off eating
Among all creation, except for (all) madmen

This is all of what is in our host's house
Indeed my opinion about it is not in error (Sh. p. 276)

And he says, "It was said to Jammayz, 'What do you desire?' He said, 'The sizzle of a frying pan, amidst the boiling of a pot as well as the scent of grilled meat.'"¹¹⁰⁶

Someone said to him, "Which fresh fruit do you like best?"

¹¹⁰² *Maqāmāt*, 93-4 (al-Sāsāniyya). There are substantial variations.

¹¹⁰³ Rice pudding, i.e. rice cooked in milk. *Lisān*, s.v. "Bahaṭun."

¹¹⁰⁴ *Aruzza*.

¹¹⁰⁵ Emended from *qaṣadat* to *taṣaddat*.

¹¹⁰⁶ The anecdote appears in *al-Baṣā'ir*, 5:164, anecdote 549. Paralled in the *al-Imtā'*, 3:102 except that "Ay shay" is replaced by "Mā".

He said, “Kabab.”

Someone said, “And what about dried (fruit)?”

He said, “Jerky.”

Someone said, “Indeed, here is a Bedouin who says, ‘Singing is the provision of the rider.’ He replied, ‘He says (this) only because he is not acquainted with semolina bread, the grilled meat of Bāb al-Karkh, herbs from the ice cellar, and Egyptian *fālūdhaj*.’”

He says, “Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Durustawayh¹¹⁰⁷ recited to us: ‘Abū al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad,¹¹⁰⁸ on the authority of al-ʿUqayshir,¹¹⁰⁹ recited to us (these verses):’

O ʿAmr, indeed our satisfaction is with a gathering
Where there are served its grilled meats and its chicken

And a well-aged wine that has been kept away from the fire, out of respect
Like a sacrifice’s blood gushing from its jugulars,

The beginnings of whose pregnancy were among the grape vines
And in wine jugs was the completion of its term and its accouchement (Sh. p.
277)

Someone says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, you put us off more and more with these
preambles.”

He says, “God forbid.”

Someone says, “Speak, then.”

¹¹⁰⁷ Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Durustaway b. al-Marzubān, 871-958. al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, 4:204. A specialist in language and Persian poetry. EI2, s.v. “Ibn Durustawayh.”

¹¹⁰⁸ Abū al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Akbar al-Thamālī al-Azdī al-Mubarrad, 826-899. was the Baṣran philologist whose discussions with al-Thaʿlab led to the founding of the Baṣran and Kūfan schools of grammar. He collected extensive quantities of Arabic prose and poetry that illustrated interesting philological points and used them in his *adab* works. EI2, s.v. “al-Mubarrad.”

¹¹⁰⁹ D. 700. A poet from Kūfa, who wrote satire. al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, 8:200.

He says, “Woe to you all. A soft loaf, briny cheese, dried meat from among the specialties of your city, cheerful, smiling, and something from the ready-made (foods) of the market, and some of whatever bits of munchies you happen to have around (M. p. 93) such as, strips of pickles. Why do you complicate [matters] so? This is hardly a royal feast (I am proposing).”

So there is carried in, for example, a plate on which is (what he has called for) of cheese, and some pickles, so he says, when he sees it:

Cheese is nothing but harm to the body through illness
And to the heart is a torture of delusions

Substitute for it two bites of *sikbāj*
Or grilled meat separated from (the) bones

And he says:

My hair has turned gray and my bones become gnarled
From the long time I have been dipping bread in vinegar sauce (Sh. p. 278)

For it is so hateful to me that
It is equivalent to the black snake’s poison

He tells stories and jokes about the two of them for an hour, and amuses

(himself), and he says when recounting:

An invitation (to dinner) that one could dub:
Famine and barrenness

There is only killing thirst
And unpalatable water

A gathering in which the
Foul mouthed (men) chatter

And there is farting sounding like
The ripping of smooth *Dabīqī* (cloth)¹¹¹⁰

¹¹¹⁰ These are lines four through seven of an eleven line poem by Ibn Sukkara. *Yatīma*, 2:179-80.

Then he washes his hands and says, “Where is Abū al-Jalab?¹¹¹¹ Where is Abū al-Ṣannāj?”¹¹¹²--meaning, backgammon and chess. So a chessboard, for example, is brought in.

He says, “Who is eager (for a game)? Who is the wretch who will forfeit his blood?” They shun (Sh. p. 279) playing chess with him, and he says, “Yes, when the governor emerges, their slaves hide!” until (finally) one responds to his challenge. He looks at him and says, “May God unite flea-bane seeds¹¹¹³ and the pharmacists. Isn't this “Mr. Terror”¹¹¹⁴ going to become “Mr. Timidity”¹¹¹⁵ shortly?”

Then he says, “How does Abu Mushkāḥal¹¹¹⁶ play?”

Someone says, “He is a good player.”

He says, “The old mule is not scared by the sound of the bell.”¹¹¹⁷ He approaches him and says:

O one who exposes to me his honor
You have united fire with ^ʿ*arfaj*¹¹¹⁸

With the one whose skin you are rubbing against
You are rubbing against boxthorn

He begins by advancing his pawns. He recites as a beginning quip:

We went out in the morning at dawn, at night,
In the evening after the day was half over

¹¹¹¹ Literally, father of the imported goods or slaves; or clamor.

¹¹¹² Literally, father of the castanets player.

¹¹¹³ An ingredient used in salves to create erections. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Najīb al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, *al-Aqrābādihīn ʿalā Tartīb al-Asbāb*, 90-1, 163. It is also said to counteract thirst. Gerrit Bos, *Quṣṭā ibn Lūqā's Medical Regime for the Pilgrims to Mecca: the Risāla fī Tadbīr Safar al-Ḥajj*, Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 129-30, 149.

¹¹¹⁴ *Abū al-Hawl*, literally Father of Fear.

¹¹¹⁵ *Abū al-Fazʿ*, literally Father of Timidity.

¹¹¹⁶ Since the word is undotted, it could be Mushkājal. Apparently a mocking name. For instance, see Dozy, s.v. “*Mishkāl*,” meaning a wretch.

¹¹¹⁷ *al-Baḡhl al-harīm lā yufziʿu-hu ṣawt al-juljul*. Freytag 1:207, Ch. 2, proverb 209.

¹¹¹⁸ A highly flammable thorny plant. Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. “^ʿ*Arfaj*.”

We pursued rabbits and jackals
 We took the wolf but the ass escaped (Sh. p. 280) (M. p. 94)

Then his opponent advances (his) pawns, and he says, “O Abū Mushkāḥal, bite by bite, so that you don't choke.¹¹¹⁹ Two squares at a time, so you don't end in the black.¹¹²⁰ One bishop¹¹²¹ at a time, so that the litters aren't broken. I say, ‘Enough,’ but he slips in (another move). Your basket is not ripped, O sir! Don't hurry, sir! Hurry is the work of a tom cat. He takes two pawns of mine with one pawn, what a bargain!

Whenever he sold a beard
 I sold a shining asshole

(He is,) by God, an elegant man.

I recited to him a set of (verses) on love
 But, when it disgusted him, he coughed

If someone were to say (to him), “Put the bulk of that beard of yours
 In the center of my hole--he wouldn't hold back, but would do it!

He seeks help from the queen's pawn,¹¹²² and says, ‘Back up a square to go around a piece¹¹²³ and back up and cut off¹¹²⁴ his move,’¹¹²⁵ and he says, ‘In Umm al-Falak's crack, for (my penis) is definitely of stone,’ then he recites:

A gift from me had been stuffed
 In you, drenched in myrtle and basil

Beneath it is a peach and on its tip
 Is a knob of apple and pomegranate

If that unsettles his opponent and ruins (the game) for him, he says:

¹¹¹⁹ This comment is in colloquial Arabic.

¹¹²⁰ It could be: One pair of moves at a time, so you don't get yourself in a black position?

¹¹²¹ Literally *jamal*, or camel. H.J.R. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 424.

¹¹²² Reinhard Weiber, *Das Schachspiel in der arabischen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Walldorf-Hessen: Verlag für Orientkunde Dr. H. Vorndran, 1972), 275-6, 321-2.

¹¹²³ Reinhard Weiber, *Das Schachspiel in der arabischen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 308, 331.

¹¹²⁴ Reinhard Weiber, *Das Schachspiel in der arabischen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 284.

¹¹²⁵ H.J.R. Murray, *A History of Chess*, 228.

He slept, but I slapped him at once
With a shitty sandal until he came around (Sh. p. 281)

Look at his neck vein, how it has become
From slapping, without the slightest palpitation”

His rival puts a knight in the center, after the advancing of the pawns. Then (Abū al-Qāsim) says, “You did that well. We have progressed from dice to tops.” He says, “We keep at things from evening to morning. We continue at something until we master it. O our lord, shit and play with it, so you perform two acts. Sit on the bank and bundle that water into bouquets.” Then he says, (Sh. p. 282) “In my opinion, (you should) move the rest (of the pieces), you loser, your bread is smeared with (some) condiment. If it weren't that you desire evil, then you wouldn't have eaten your bread by yourself.”

When his opponent takes hold of one of his pawns with his hand, and moves it as though to pick it up, (he says),¹¹²⁶ “If you see the hen peck the rooster's butt, then know that she is saying to him, ‘Fuck.’” Then the opponent desists ...¹¹²⁷ and he says, “What an ass! The blind man shits on the roof and believes that the people are unaware of him.¹¹²⁸ You loser, the one who farted in your beard has never yet eaten beans. Your hand is closer to the sky than to this (pawn?). He who (attempts to) impress his mark on the wind is farting in his mustache.”

And he says (M. p. 95) to one of those present, “Why don't you watch this game, for you might observe miracles?” This attendee gets a little enthusiastic, and says something offensive to him, alerting his opponent. He says, “O our lord, I said to you,

¹¹²⁶ Emended to add *yaqūlu*.

¹¹²⁷ The text is unclear. It might be “the error between them.”

¹¹²⁸ al-A^ṣmā yakhrā fawq l-saḥi wa-yahsibu al-nāsa lā yarawna-hu. Freytag 2:169, Ch. 18, proverb 296.

‘Watch!’ I didn’t say to you, ‘Stumble!’ Leave him alone until he gets his finger caught in the door latch. Then I’ll show you how I’ll slap him.”

His opponent is distracted, and he says, “Woe to you all. What do you all want with him? The flutist doesn’t distract Ibn Murra from splitting Dabīqī,¹¹²⁹ even when he sings (something welling) out of his sorrow.”

Then he says, singing, “He sang the song the hornet [sings when] it stings. He finished his work, and sat crying over his (dead) mother-in-law. How long will he go on raving--may God make him great--as if he were a divorced Sindī woman?!” (Sh. p. 283)

If someone says to him, “Take this pawn with one of your pawns,” but he sees that it could not help, he leaves it and says, “If it were a monkey for a monkey, better the sociable one.”

Then he takes hold of one of the edge pawns and says:

If you lack roses
Then smell the ^ʿ*artanīth*¹¹³⁰

Many a thing do you disdain, but then it turns out to be (of) unmatched (value).”

Then his opponent takes one of his pawns. Someone says, “Woe to you, Abū al-Qāsim, why did you give that one up for free?” He says, “Go to hell--and to the rushes¹¹³¹ of Dābiq!”¹¹³²

¹¹²⁹ Emended from *saff daqīqī* to *shaqq Dabīqī*. As was mentioned above, “splitting Dabīqī” means farting.

¹¹³⁰ Cyclamen. Dozy, s.v. “*ʿArtanīth*.”

¹¹³¹ Siggel, 29.

¹¹³² Dābiq was a small village extremely close to Aleppo. A fast-growing grass called *ḥalfāʿ* grows in its vicinity. However, the point is that in the last year of his life, the Umayyad caliph Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik, 96/715-99/717, moved to Dābiq, which was the staging area for a major campaign to take Constantinople. He died and was buried there. Thus, the suggestion to go to the grassy fields of Dābiq is a suggestion to die and be buried in an-out-of-the-way place. Sulaymān is represented in literature as a glutton, voluptuary and unjust ruler. Especially the first two traits are pertinent in the *Ḥikāya* because they are major elements used to symbolize the behavior of eminent literary figures versus that of figures with considerably lower skills. *al-Buldān*, 2:513.

Then he takes, opposite (the pawn), a queen or bishop, and says, “O our lord, a blow with a blacksmith’s sledge hammer¹¹³³ is better than three thousand blows with a small mallet.” His opponent says, “A mere nothing.” He says, “If you heard [that] in war [it would be] nothing, but know that the shit is [hanging] over your head.”

Then his opponent errs in the rules of his play, then realizes what he has done, and begins correcting it; then he says, “After the fart, he tightens his ass.” (Sh. p. 284)

His opponent then wants to move his bishop to one side but he sees him preventing it, and (Abū al-Qāsim) says, “O loser, if they let you make the Pilgrimage, then take the road to Ctesiphon.”¹¹³⁴ So he puts it back¹¹³⁵ in its place, and (Abū al-Qāsim) says, “The grain goes round and round, then gets ground in the mill.”¹¹³⁶ (Sh. p. 285)

Then his opponent hums something indicating some annoyance and irritation and deceit, and (Abū al-Qāsim) says,

“O one whose anger has led him to start pressing
The oil cake of my ass with his canine teeth

How much do you grieve, how much do you gnash your teeth,¹¹³⁷ how much are you annoyed? How much?” Then he says, “Poor thing, what can he do? He disperses his flour in the thorn bushes and cannot regather it.”

He makes a move, then his opponent blocks it. He screams, “Woe. He’s got me cornered, by God, with ... and fire.”¹¹³⁸ What can I do?”

¹¹³³ *Faṭṭālīs. Lisān*, s.v. “*Faṭṭalasa*.”

¹¹³⁴ *al-Buldān*, 4:445-7.

¹¹³⁵ Emended from *fa-radda* to *fa-yaruddu*.

¹¹³⁶ *al-Ḥabba tadūru wa ilā al-rahā tarjaʿu*. Freytag 1:419, Ch. 6, proverb 251.

¹¹³⁷ *Tadradu* means “you lose your teeth,” but that does not make sense in English, so I have substituted “gnash your teeth.”

¹¹³⁸ There appear to be a copyist’s error. The last words look like *bi l-stlā lā wa l-ḥrq*.

Then his opponent errs in (M. p. 96) play, and surrenders some pieces to him, and he says to him, “I outdid you, O meal¹¹³⁹ without bones,¹¹⁴⁰ your beard is up my ass.”

His opponent takes hold of a piece, then sees the mistake and puts it back. But Abū al-Qāsim requires him to take it, and says, “O God, You'll take it whether you want to or not.”

Someone says, “What will he do with it?”

He says, “What the slave girl of al-Sukkarī¹¹⁴¹ did.”

Someone says, “And what did she do?”

He says, “She took it with her hand and put it in her cunt.”

Then he approaches him and recites to him:

After the night prayer the one bent over contended with you
In the depths of my black haired ass (Sh. p. 286)

Be content with the bitterness of the truth and endure
But if you are upset by what I say, then don't endure!

And if you get angry today, then do tomorrow
What the slave girl of al-Sukkarī did

Then he says, “This, by God, is the way it was long ago at (the time of) the invention of this game, until it bore the fruit that it did. Yes, the donkey driver dies while still hiring out his donkey. Too much straw splits open the sacks.”

¹¹³⁹ Emended from *bāwala* to *yā zulla*.

¹¹⁴⁰ The phrase “meal without bones” may mean “spineless.”

¹¹⁴¹ al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿUbaydallah al-Sukkarī. An Arabic philologist who collected, edited and commented on *dīwāns* of pre-Islamic poets and also tribal *dīwāns*. EI2, s.v. “al-Sukkarī.” Yāqūt, *The Irshād al-Arib ilā Maʿrifat al-Adīb*, or *Dictionary of Learned Men of Yāqūt*, ed. by D.S. Margoliouth, 3:62-64, no. 17.

Then his opponent tempts him to take a piece, so he stretches out his hand to take it, and he thinks he can get it for free, then the error in this becomes apparent to him. He mutters and shouts and recites,

“O son of one (in whom) my penis, sauce bowl¹¹⁴² (sized),
Comes and goes in the avenue of her ass

Another

O one who, whenever he comes to visit me,
Speeds on his two legs to (his) destruction

Don't you see how the rook in my hand wanders about freely
And how the king of your ears is exposed?

O loser, who(ever) jumps over two tent pegs: one of them goes up his ass!”

Then (the opponent) turns to someone as if asking for advice and (Abū al-Qāsim) says,

“If the tortoise needs a boat, it's a goner.” (Sh. p. 287)

This attendee indicates a move, and (Abū al-Qāsim) turns to him and says, “Take (as advisor) someone whose mind (is so small it fits) in a palm leaf container. You extended, O my penis, until you came out of my sleeve.” Then he recites,

What tribulation has my time (now) brought (to me)?
All of them have trampled on my chessboard

They were donkeys, stupid in perception,
But they all wised up (by observing) my fortune

I do not favor the (venerable) old men among them
All those beards are in my ass!

Except for the friend whose claim (on me as a friend)
I respected-- for I gave him a break for a time

(That is, the host.)

¹¹⁴² *Musarkaja*. This form could not be verified. The closest form is LANE, s.v. “*Sukarja*,” meaning sauce bowls, deriving from Persian *sukarchah* meaning saucer.

Someone says to him, “Woe to you. Ask advice of whomever you want, and don't be impudent to people.”

He says, “May the back of the ass of the mother of the one who needs to eat beans in order to fart, (M. p. 97) be cut off!”

His opponent checks him by forking his king and bishop,¹¹⁴³ and he says, “O our lord, by God, take a piece of advice (from me)!”

Then he says, “What’s that?”

He replies: (Sh. p. 288)

Gather all your whiskers together, for you have
Fallen in the sea of my neighbor's shit

A sea that has in my anus a river
That looks as if it were drawn by a compass”¹¹⁴⁴

And he says, intoning:

Father of al-Ḥusayn and son of al-Ḥasan
You’ve grown larger in head, body,

And wide beard--
If only it were in my ass¹¹⁴⁵

And he raves, saying:

Umm Razīn shat
One day in some flour

We asked her (about that) and she said
That is yeast for the dough

Then he says, “What does it matter to this cuckold? He has a hard head and healthy horns,” and he recites:

¹¹⁴³ H.J.R. Murray, *A History of Chess*, 225; Reinhard Weiber, *Das Schachspiel in der arabischen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 311. In chess, to fork means attacking two pieces simultaneously with one piece.

¹¹⁴⁴ Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.

¹¹⁴⁵ “My ass” is in Persian.

O husband of the one
Who sells her ass on credit

The shaft of my penis¹¹⁴⁶
And at its tip something lentil-shaped

Don't you see how my sandal
Is flexible, from Daybul

I will bring it to you,
And fill your tight neckbands

Another

O youth, whose black beard is
Flowing like silk

(The head of my penis)¹¹⁴⁷ reached
With joys and rapture for me

A sheath of your mother's shit
Sealed with a fart (Sh. p. 289)

Another

O vilest of mankind, and to me the lowest
Of God's servants, in rank, indisputably

How many a one who want to be slapped have I beaten with my sandal;
Between his eyelids, the stipulations of those who come entreating!

He continued to be pillaged-of-neck, exposed-to-depredation-
Of precinct-of-head, destroyed of ears and shoulders (M. p.98)

Under hands which hold power, that administer
Slipper slaps on the head, (and) not lightly

Fear God (for the sake) of the gristle of your
Ears and the weak muscles of your neck jugulars

His king and castle fall in line with the bishop--an admirable elegant (play), at
which his opponent jumps up¹¹⁴⁸ in surprise. He mouths nonsense, humming, and

¹¹⁴⁶ The beginning of the line looks like: f-r-d-d and is unintelligible.

¹¹⁴⁷ Words are missing in the manuscript. This is a guess by Shālījī.

saying, “O our lord, this is among the uncommon qualities of noble characters; this is of the innovation¹¹⁴⁹ of Bab al-Ṭāq; this is (one) of the wonders of (coincidence).” Then he says, “When he was on the point of death, a chess player advised his son, ‘Be wary, O my son, of (an attack from) the direction of the castle, and fear the knight’s jumping, and watch out for the bishop’s leaps, and sitting on a donkey’s prick is better (for you) than sitting in an exposed position’; then he gave up the ghost. “(This is) sound advice, and by God, a required religious duty, and a claim he fulfilled for his son, and an inheritance he left behind him. May God not have mercy on his corpse, and not water the soil (of his grave).”

The round ends with the soul of his opponent in the whirlpool, and he says, “Woe to you, (Sh. p. 290) this youth, may God make him great, is (here) at my invitation today, but, do you know what he eats?”

They say, “No.”

He says, “A thousand penis heads in a (single) loaf of bread.”

The opponent answers him with uncouth, rasping speech. He stomachs it, and says, “You there, it’s up to the loser to shrug it off and make light (of the loss), and up to the winner to be tolerant and gracious. (But) I don’t reproach him, by God, for at this problem the carpenter farted.”

Then the opponent’s king gets into a tight spot, and someone says, “Woe to you, will you get out of this dead-end?”¹¹⁵⁰ Then he recites, sneering at him:

And he said, ‘Turn it around.’ But I said, “Fuck that!”
If, O our master, it were turning!

¹¹⁴⁸ Emended from *yafghuru* to *yaqfazu*.

¹¹⁴⁹ EI2, s.v. “*Badā*?”

¹¹⁵⁰ I have chosen to read this as “*zanaqa*,” but it would be possible to read it as “*ribqa*,” or noose.

The opponent's pawns are scattered, and he does his best in (trying to) gather them and put them in order; then (Abū al-Qāsim) says, “When the shepherd dies, the sheep scatter.”

Someone says, “Has the shepherd died, O Abū al-Qāsim?”

He says, “Half of him has died, and the other half is at death’s door.”

Someone says, “How is he really, O our lord?” (Sh. p. 291)

He says, “(He is) in shit up to the neck, with dogs as his guards; his situation is that of chard in hot water. He has shat, by God, in the basin--rather in the chamber pot--even shat on the bier; rather, the best departed, and the dregs remained.”

His opponent flees from him with one of his pawns, and hurries it. Someone says, “How quickly he brings his pawn! “ He says, “It was said to a tent peg, ‘How fast you penetrate (the ground),’”¹¹⁵¹ then it said, “If you knew what (hammering is on) my rear, you would forgive me.”

Then he banter with them, saying, “I have seen him more hurried than (M. p. 99) a penis half inserted, and (faster) than a (gazelle) in flight with its fawn before it.” (Then) his opponent blocks him, and he says, “Night blindness during the day is perpetual blindness.”

He says, “O our lord, we slapped an ape, until we became blind,” and he recites:

Your shit comes out smelling like incense to me
This, by my life, is an act of aggression

One of them says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, yes, there is no alternative to making peace, it is as the poet says:

¹¹⁵¹ Albert Socin, *Arabische Sprichwörter und Redensarten* (Wiesbaden: M. Sändig, 1967), 5, 15, proverb no. 203.

The reconciliation, to which there was
No alternative in the circumstances, occurred

But it was *ṣalḥ* with a *sīn* in his beard
And the *sīn* is vowelled with a *fathā*¹¹⁵²

He considers checkmating his opponent's king with his knight. But (the opponent) takes it and he (Abū al-Qāsim) says, "(May you) be happy, take it, as white as charcoal, you rifferaff!" and he (the opponent) overturns the chessboard. (Sh. p. 292)

Someone who wasn't present when the wager was made asks him about what was between them. He says, "We had slapped each other, and he complains about the weakness of his jugulars to you."

Then he approaches the group and says, "Are we fasting today?"

A slave comes, and says, "Dinner is served." He (Abū al-Qāsim) stands up and says, "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished away; lo, falsehood is bound to vanish."¹¹⁵³

The (dinner) table is brought, and he settles at it. He sees, for example, how its cold cuts have been painstakingly prepared and decorated. He overturns the platter and moves to another dish, as if he would take it instead, and he contemplates it a while. Then he turns to the one next to him and says, in a voice audible to the master of the house, "This, by God, is a beautiful thing; this, by God, is real hospitality; it is as if it were, by God, a palm spadex layered in rows;¹¹⁵⁴ as if it were embroidered brocade; as if it were a field of carnations; as if it were spring flowers, or the ornamentation of a finely woven rug; as if it were, by God, meadow flowers."

¹¹⁵² *Ṣalḥ* means reconciliation. *Salḥ* means shit, i.e. it is shit in his beard.

¹¹⁵³ *Qurʾān*, 17 (al-*Isrāʾ*): 81.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Qurʾān*, 56 (al-*Wāqīʿa*): 29.

Then the lamb is put out (on the table), and he says, “O our lord, we had a friend in Baghdad who (used to) say, ‘Lamb is good only when the sun is in Aries,’ and he used to say, ‘There is no softer couch for date wine than grilled lamb.’” (Sh. p. 293)

When the goat is put out (on the table), he says, “That friend used to say, when he saw a goat like this one, ‘Poor four (legged thing still) with (its) milk teeth, (it is) a martyred suckling child.’”

Then he stretches out his hand, after scrutinizing the saucer, and pulls off its skin, and says, “(It’s like a) *Dabīqī* (garment), by God, covered with *khalūq* perfume. (It has a) golden outer layer and a silver-white inner layer, as if silk were combed into it.” He takes its kidney and says, “Do you know to what Ibn al-Rūmī compared goat kidney?” Someone says, “No.” He says, “He compared its kidney to a bean. He looked at a donkey’s udder and said, ‘It is as if it were a clay pot with one of its three legs broken.’ (M. p. 100) He looked at a black girl who was crying and said, ‘It is as if she were a leaky cooking pot.’¹¹⁵⁵ (Sh. p. 294) He looked at another (black girl), a silver anklet on her ankle and said, ‘It is as if her leg were a silver-coated donkey prick.’ He looked at clouds scattered across the sky and said, ‘It is as if it were cotton combed over blue clothing.’ Look at the sensitivity of Ibn al-Rūmī and the excellence of his similes.”

Then he looks at someone who (is abstemious)¹¹⁵⁶ in dining and doesn't indulge in it, and says, “Woe to you. Did this goat’s mother nurse you, that you make an effort to abstain from it?--while she butted us, so we took our revenge. Woe to you, what is this restraint? It isn't Abraham's ram,¹¹⁵⁷ or the cow of the Children of Israel,¹¹⁵⁸ or

¹¹⁵⁵ The manuscript looks like *yaluffu*. I prefer Shālji's emendation to *yakuffu*.

¹¹⁵⁶ A word is missing here and this is a guess.

¹¹⁵⁷ *Qurʾān*, 37 (al-Ṣāffāt): 101-108.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Qurʾān*, 2 (al-Baqara): 67-71.

Jonah's (Sh. p. 295) whale,¹¹⁵⁹ or the Golden Calf,¹¹⁶⁰ that you should declare it taboo for yourself.”

Then the *sikbāj*, for example, is brought out and he says, “This, by God, is the softest resting place for the stomach!” But (then) he finds it sour and says, “O our lord, the pungency of this vinegar is something to make the brow sweat, and give the person with a nasal problem¹¹⁶¹ a nosebleed. It, by God, is more sour than a slap with snow on a shaved head on a cold morning.”

Then he says, “This cooked¹¹⁶² food was one of the things which was unobtainable in the days of Anūshirvān,¹¹⁶³ except by his express order, because it is a dish the upper class is skilled in (preparing), and of which the lower class can't make a coarse imitation. By my life, indeed, *sikbāj* is the easiest thing to take pains with for a guest, and the most delicious thing which can be eaten in (both) winter and summer--it satisfies the hungry man's craving for meat and induces the appetite of the person without one. The town dweller prefers it, and the traveler is provisioned with it.”

Then the *tharā'id* is brought out and it adorns the table. It is delicious (either) hot (Sh. p. 296) or cold, and one addicted to it is never bored with it; its perfume is saffron and its color is glorious.

He says about its eggplants, “It, by God, is, as the lower (class) says, ‘Butter in the container.’ It isn't as a very stupid friend of ours, who was on intimate terms with us in Baghdad, said (when) grilling eggplant: ‘Its color is the color of scorpions, and its

¹¹⁵⁹ *Qur'ān*, 37 (al-Ṣāffāt): 139-147.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Qur'ān*, 7 (al-A'rāf): 148.

¹¹⁶¹ Emended from *majnūn* to *makhnūn*.

¹¹⁶² Emended from *baṭikh* to *ṭabikh*.

¹¹⁶³ Khusrau I Anūshirvān, Sasanian ruler, 531-578? His reign was extremely prosperous. If only Khusrau can afford this food, it must be impressive. Arthur Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1936), 358-435.

tips are (like) the tips of cupping glasses, and its taste is the taste of the *zaqqūm*¹¹⁶⁴ in the throats.’ Then we said to him, ‘But, it is stuffed with meat.’ and he said, ‘(Even) if it were stuffed with piety and forgiveness, then it would still not be a success.’”

Then he plunges into eating it, wolfing it down like a slob, and, he shrinks in his place, like someone (ashamed) of his bowl getting empty so quickly. (But), he says, “However, one can only infer the tastiness of the dish by how fast it disappears.”

Then the *dūghbāj*, for example, is brought in and he has things to say about it-- he says, “That friend, with whom we were on intimate terms in Baghdad, used to say about (things) like this *dūghbāj*, ‘It is as if it were camphor dripping with milk, or a bride in a blue gown over a white (shift),’--referring to the blue of the grease.” (M. p. 101)

He plunges into eating it, then says, following (his) previous custom in putting a good face on his gluttony: “There is no cooked food whose beginning is not better than its end, except for *dūghbāj*, for indeed its end is better than its beginning!”

Then a *shūrbā*¹¹⁶⁵ is brought in and he says, “(If eaten) bit by bit, which is its habitual (way of being eaten), it is a marvel.” Then he says, “Someone said to a Bedouin, ‘Which food is your favorite?’ He said, ‘Stew with lots (Sh. p. 297) of barley seeds,¹¹⁶⁶ and peppered with beans, with (only) small¹¹⁶⁷ (amounts) of meat.’¹¹⁶⁸ Someone said to him, ‘What’s your (method) for eating it?’ He said, ‘I split it with these two things, (that is, the index and middle fingers,) and push it with this, (that is, the

¹¹⁶⁴ A tree in hell, whose fruit resembles the heads of devils or serpents, or, a desert tree with stinking and bitter leaves. LANE, s.v. “*Zaqqūm*.”

¹¹⁶⁵ Cut up meat and brown it. Cover it with water and simmer it with salt, chickpeas, cinnamon and dill. Add coriander, ginger and pepper at the end and serve with rice. Arberry1, 44.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Tharīda daknā*’ meaning *tharīda* with a large quantity of grain in it. LANE, s.v. “*Adkan*.”

¹¹⁶⁷ Emended from *ḥiqāq* to *ḥifāf*.

¹¹⁶⁸ This anecdote is paralleled in *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 8, 188, anecdote 694, except “barley seeds” is replaced by “pepper,” and following “(amounts) of meat” the phrase “with bones to pick on both sides,” and the phrase “and wipe up its remnants with this, (that is, the little finger,)” have been omitted.

thumb,) and subdue what has been pushed from the main part with this, (that is, the ring finger,) and wipe up its remnants with this, (that is, the little finger,) then I wolf it down as an evil guardian wolfs down an orphan's property.”

Someone said to this Bedouin, ‘How do you go about eating a head?’

He said, ‘I tear off its jaws, pluck out its eyes, pull off its cheeks, and toss the brain to one who needs it more than I do.’

Someone said to him, ‘You are stupider than a spring camel calf.’¹¹⁶⁹

But he said, ‘And what is the spring camel calf's stupidity? By God, it avoids colic-producing ground, favors grassy pastures, and alternates between teats, so where is its stupidity, O you?!’” (Sh. p. 298)

Then a *baqrī*¹¹⁷⁰ or a *hişrimiyya*¹¹⁷¹ is brought out and he says, “Kushājim used to say, ‘Don't subject yourself to (eating) cooked *baqrī*, except during eggplant season, or to cooked *hişrimiyya* except during pumpkin season.”

Then a *ṭabāhaja*¹¹⁷² simmering in its pot is brought out and he recites:

The empire of the fritters has approached
With the army of meat and a large body of troops

It advances slowly on the frying pans
Among the earthenware pots to the iron (pot)

They cooked it well until the meat falls off the bone
And right here is the place to kneel in prayer

¹¹⁶⁹ *Aḥmaqu min al-rubaʿ*. G.W. Freytag, 1:405, Ch. 6, proverb 180. al-Maydānī, *Muʿjam al-Amthāl*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 1:399, proverb 1196.

¹¹⁷⁰ Beef meat. Dozy, s.v. “*Baqrī*.”

¹¹⁷¹ Cut up meat and chicken and cook it in a pot with coriander, cumin and juice of unripe grapes. Add mint and thyme, then lemon juice, rose water, leeks, onions, carrots, yogurt and cook until it is done. Marin, *Kanz*, 18.

¹¹⁷² Mix meat with mint and fry it. Add honey, hazelnuts, saffron, pepper, then vinegar. Marin, *Kanz*, 40. Another recipe is found in Arberry1, 37.

And he says, “O our lord, these are fritters of lamb that increase when spices are added at just the right moment...”¹¹⁷³

Or a *harīsa* is brought out and he says, “A precious *harīsa*, it is as if it were woven silken threads, as if it were a moon clothed in sun(light), as if the *murrī* (poured) over it were extract of musk (Sh. p. 299) over a gold ingot.”

Or a *tannūriyya*¹¹⁷⁴ is brought out and he says, “Welcome, O signs of blessings! This, by God, is the *mahrūj* of the stomach, and its perfume. Why does the oven (also) bring out such tasty foods as grilled meats, *jawādhīb*,¹¹⁷⁵ *ṣalāʿiq*,¹¹⁷⁶ precious *jizrīyāt*,¹¹⁷⁷ and pistachio *jūdhābah*?”

Then he begins to talk about the cook and what combination of characteristics he must have, and says, “By God, in Baghdad I have seen, in the Banī Maʿn’s¹¹⁷⁸ houses, an Ethiopian cook whose name is Nāranj.¹¹⁷⁹ I don’t believe that I (have ever) witnessed (a cook) like him. He was, by God, a model of merits and an interpretation of virtues, and a doctor for satisfying (appetite). He is the most skilled one seen among the people of (his) craft, purer than water (in terms) of cleanliness, (M. p. 102) and the one among them with the sharpest knives, and the best of them at cutting up (meat), and the one with the hottest fire, and the one with the most delicious spicing. It is as if the tables that he loads (with food), and the casseroles that (Sh. p. 300) he brings close, and is

¹¹⁷³ The grammar is problematic at this point. Either there is a copyist’s error or there may be words missing.

¹¹⁷⁴ Boil meat with salt, cinnamon and coriander. Add ground wheat, cover with water and bake overnight. Arberry2, 199.

¹¹⁷⁵ Mix bread crumbs with sugar syrup and allow to set. Depending on the type of *jūdhāb* being made, this base mix is layered with some combination of dried fruit and/or nuts. Then mix in ground nuts and let it sit. Arberry2, 208-9.

¹¹⁷⁶ Roasted lambs. LANE, s.v. “*Ṣalīqa*.”

¹¹⁷⁷ The undotted word could be read as *al-ḥarirīyāt*.

¹¹⁷⁸ A tribe which ruled the Emirate of Shūf in southern Lebanon. Their political history begins with the Turkish conquest of that area. Thus, this is a very early mention of the tribe. EI2, s.v. “Maʿn.”

¹¹⁷⁹ *Nāranj* means orange.

fastidious about, are (like) flowered meadows, or (like) white-striped garments; he does not combine two types (of dishes), and does not combine two flavors (in one dish). He distinguished food (served) in the morning and (served) in the evening and distinguished summer and winter foods. He needed only a glance (to understand his clients' requests), understood from a (simple) gesture and anticipated desires. It is as if he were privy to the heart, (both) of the visitor and of the visited. He used, by God, to cook what revives the appetite of the sleepy (man), of the one bereaved of a child, of the drunk, and of the afflicted, and, when he finished the dishes, and someone would say to him, 'O Nāranj, What do you need?', he would reply, 'Hungry people!'"¹¹⁸⁰

Once he set some of his dishes before us: a *zīrbāj* like brocade and a *sukbāja* like a flirting slave girl, and cooking pots more fragrant than reddish musk with gray ambergris, (and) a steaming bird with a delicious aroma, that bubbles like a camel-stallion and exudes scent like the torn musk (bag).

May God grant rain to (bless) our days, under the patronage of those kings. Woe to you, why don't¹¹⁸¹ you cite something (like) this from your own (eloquence)? Yes, what are you all doing? You are chomping with (your) canine teeth, indeed, you are too busy (gobbling down the food to take time to describe it eloquently)."

He sends for some water during this and drinks it, then says, "By God, indeed I do injustice to the people of Isfahan, in some circumstances. May God make Isfahan thrive! Its water is sweet water, and its ice is cool crystal; (and) then, by God, there are its vessels and its abodes. (Sh. p. 301)

Its flowing air caresses the skin

¹¹⁸⁰ The anecdote is paralleled in *al-Baṣā'ir*, pt. 2, 130, anecdote 386, except that the cook is named Mūlūn.

¹¹⁸¹ Emended from *li-mā* to *li-mā lā*.

And its cool water is sweet to the taste

How can I not single her out for (my) passion
When her summer is like an Iraqi winter

By God, the poet of (these verses) spoke truly--(it is) a land whose pebbles are (like) jewels, whose soil is (like) musk, and whose flowing waters are (like) wine.”

Then there comes up the mention of two men, for example, in Baghdad, at table, and someone asks (Abū al-Qāsim), “How is so-and-so of the two?”

He says, “What is the significance of ‘how is such and such?’ Is the moon hidden, so that you (must) ask (someone) for a report (about) it?

The morning sun is too remote to be covered up

He is a necklace, praise God, on the breast of time, a crown at the crossroads of the days, a *qibla* for praise-worthy actions, and a *kaʿba* to glories. (He is) a man bare of bad language; drunk from excess of shame; a man who flows (with generosity) more than abundant rains, and is braver than lions. In him, by God, is a stage for good qualities, the praise for the results of his deeds.”

Someone asks, “How does so-and-so compare to him?” He says, “Woe to you! What are you saying? By God, (the contrast within him is) a yawning chasm; the distance between Gemini and rough ground; between Capella (Sh. p. 302) and the plain;¹¹⁸² the sword (M. p. 103) and the staff; pearls and pebbles; and the (intact) male and the eunuch. The distance between the two of them is that between the uplands and the lowlands; between the brayer and the neigher, and the too little and the too much; what is between the stallion and the she donkey, and the sun and the wick; what is between the pearl and the coral, and the herb and the eggplant; what is between the

¹¹⁸² Emended from *al-ʿanūq* to *al-taʿnūq*.

sweet and the bitter; and the pearl and the mote; and the shame(ful) and the finest; and the true and the false; and the adorned and the unadorned; what is between the fat and the scrawny; and the new and the worn out; and the arrow-wood tree and the soft-wood tree; and the hawk and the bustard; and colocynth and white honey; (Sh. p. 303) what is between a beautiful free-woman and an ugly slave-girl; what is between the lush garden and a dusty salt-land. The clouds are not close to you, and (in the same way) that man is not one of the horses of that race course. O our lord, how far is the camel's hoof from (its) hump; the dross¹¹⁸³ from the gold; the castor oil plant from the arrow-wood tree; the feathers of the back of the wing from the feathers of the front of the wing; the abandoned places from inhabited ones; ditch water from spring water; the ebb tide from the rising tide; acceptance from denial; and (lover's) union from rejection. Who, O our lord, treats (two people) as equal (when one is) a man more bountiful than the sea and more expansive than the dawn, and (the other is) drier than the wasteland,¹¹⁸⁴ and more desolate than the grave? Who compares sheep to livestock? One(of them), by God, is finer than a ruby, and the other is lower than a dusty coffin; one is lighter than the breeze and the other is more burdensome than the goodwill of a vile person; one is more sociable than a gracious lover and the other is more abominable than a harassing creditor; one is more desolate than a foreign country of exile, and the other is more welcome than (winning) a bet at a racetrack; one is rougher than daggers at throats and the other is more beautiful than eyes above veils; one is a bright blaze, and the other is shameful vice; one is sweet water and the

¹¹⁸³ Emended from *al-jubn* to *al-khabath*.

¹¹⁸⁴ Emended from *faqr* to *qafr*.

other is bitter salt; one is the stars of *saʿūd*¹¹⁸⁵ and the other is the stars (Sh. p. 304) of *dhābiḥ*;¹¹⁸⁶ one is cold water after thirst and the scent of roses (wafting) over dew (on them), (and)¹¹⁸⁷ one is a bitter tree¹¹⁸⁸ mixed with colocynth and one of Hell's sighs; one is a piece of wood cut (to build) the places of worship and the other is piece of wood hewn for the toilet of the Jews; this is more decorative than a blaze on the face of a black horse and this is more disfiguring than the smile of someone with broken front teeth; this, by God, is moister than a (single) drop and this is solider than rock; this is dearer than gold and this is more contemptible than dung, and dirtier than the dung beetle. Can (someone so celebrated that he is like) a ringing of bells in Iraq, whose fame has flown to the horizons, be compared to an obscure man not distinguishable from the crowd, and mention of whom has gone no further than the toilet's (wall)?! May Allāh tear his veil! He is more lustful (to get fucked) than the thimbles, than the needles of the tailors, and than the copyists' inkwells sought out (M. p. 104) by the lances of the eunuchs, grabbing the heads of penises (as if) grabbing the stick; an effeminate who winnowed his father's blessings in the winds of backwardness, and began to compete with his own lords in affectation."

He continues tucking up his robe and rolling along on this topic until one of the people at (Sh. p. 305) the gathering says, "Who is this (person) whom the Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim is describing with these shameful things?" He (Abū al-Qāsim) hears and says, "What are you going to do with this (person), that you inquire?"

¹¹⁸⁵ A pair of stars, one strong and one weak, one of which rises in the left shoulder of Aquarius and one of which rises in the tail of Capricorn. LANE, s.v. "Saʿd."

¹¹⁸⁶ A pair of stars, one strong and one weak, in one of the horns of Capricorn. They are so called because they are the sheep which is about to be slaughtered. LANE, s.v. "Saʿd."

¹¹⁸⁷ Emended to add *wa*.

¹¹⁸⁸ A type of colocynth. Siggel, s.v. "ṣāb."

The husband of one who has eighty penises in her ass
From the leavings of the penises of the people of Lot

Do you recognize him or not?"

The man says, "This is not enough for me (to figure out whom you're talking about)"--(and keeps pressing) until (Abū al-Qāsim) says (explicitly whom he's talking about)--and then resumes describing the table and its dishes. He says, "These meats which you see: which is the tastiest among them?"

One says, "Do you know them?"

He says, "Cold servings of it in the morning will hint at the drink (that I'll want you to serve me!)."¹¹⁸⁹

Then he says, "O boy, (some) beer."

Give me the ṣnbr drinking bowl
To drink in its j^ṣlfūn"¹¹⁹⁰ (Sh. p. 306)

And place rue in the form of branches
Wrapped around it

For its uppermost parts serve as a strainer
And its inner part [flavor it] like musk

When he sips it, he says, "al-Sarī b. Aḥmad al-Mawṣilī"¹¹⁹¹ recited to me from his own poem:

When he complained of the pain of the hangover
I poured for him the shaken buttermilk"¹¹⁹²

¹¹⁸⁹ Freytag 2:103, Ch. 18, proverb 69. al-Maydānī, *Muʿjam al-Amthāl*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 2:348, proverb 2451.

¹¹⁹⁰ ṢNBR and J^ṣLFŪN are unidentifiable.

¹¹⁹¹ al-Sarī al-Raffāʿ, d. 366. *Yatīma*, 2:127-214. The following poem does not appear in his *Dīwān* ed. Karam al-Bustānī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1996) or in the *Yatīma*.

¹¹⁹² This half line is corrupted:

Min-hā makhīḍa labāni-hā al-mutarajararaja

. *Makhīḍ* (buttermilk) is not dotted in the manuscript. There is no antecedent for *hā*. I am accepting al-Shālījī's emendation to *al-mutarajararaj*, because a 5th form verb is required and because buttermilk normally needs to be shaken before it is used.

Whose mouth unsheathes a tongue of water, expelling
The heat of his burning hangover with (its) cold

Like a scepter of silver that you find
Looming over a ball of turquoise

This is more beautiful than what Abū ʿAlī al-Qarmatī said:

(As for) black girls' swelling breasts,
Their orifices continue to flow with pure milk

A black girl's swelling breasts--he (the poet) presented them (in his poem), by
God, as well as he could.

When it comes to the final course and the desert, he begins to taste it, finds it
delicious and says, "This, by God, is a blessing through and through, and a well-
concocted pleasure, bringing the savor of good health, and completing (the meal) with
a fine conclusion, and through its deliciousness, permeating to the (diners') very souls.

If the hearts could be a resting place for food, our
Hearts would contend with the bowels over it

We had with us in Baghdad, from among those of the lower class of the bazaar, a
man who could say of such sweets, 'Indeed I place them in my mouth, then I feel their
sweetness all the way down to my ankles, by God.'" (Sh. p. 307)

Then he washes his hand(s), the gathering (room) is well set up--there are put
out, for example, aromatic plants. He says, "These are wholesome greetings, (such
that) when a troubled person spreads them, (M. p. 105) and he breathes deeply, (his)
chest muscles loosen."

Then the fruit is served. He takes one of them, and sniffs it, and says, "Fruit
from among what they desire,¹¹⁹³ by God," and he says, "The spring is for the eyes, and

¹¹⁹³ *Qurʾān*, 77 (al-Mursalāt): 42.

the autumn is for the mouth.” Then he eats one of them, and says, “Your autumn, by my life, is for (both) the eyes and the mouth, and your companion is among those who are set right by it.” Then he says, “In them, by God, is what the souls desire, and (what) delights the eyes,¹¹⁹⁴ and you all (will be) immortal¹¹⁹⁵ in (those goblets), O lords of Isfahan. If you would count God’s blessings, you cannot reckon them;¹¹⁹⁶ they are neither out of reach, thank God, nor forbidden.”¹¹⁹⁷

Then the (wine) vessels are set out, and he looks at them and recites

Look at those bottles and you will find
That they have high-raised heads and handles

They get a nosebleed when they lie down, even if healing charms are said¹¹⁹⁸
They feed young birds, who then rise, with their thirst quenched

They laugh from the like of the gazelle's jugulars
They circulate among us as a mill turns

They rid themselves of the brothers of futility,
People who see nobility¹¹⁹⁹ lengthening their beards

They have no knowledge of the world, nor any piety, and
All of them in (regard to) knowledge, move in retrograde

They were neglected¹²⁰⁰ as children, then they were left to their fate
With the heedlessness of ignorance and the discipline of women (Sh. p. 308)

If you were to see their old man when he sits with his legs drawn up,
And begins to describe something when it appears

Whether it be the cheapness of a price¹²⁰¹ and of an excess of high cost
And they raise their voices, saying ‘Yes indeed!’

¹¹⁹⁴ *Qurʾān*, 43 (al-Zukhruf): 77.

¹¹⁹⁵ *Qurʾān*, 43 (al-Zukhruf): 71.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Qurʾān*, 16 (al-Nahl): 18.

¹¹⁹⁷ *Qurʾān*, 56 (al-Wāqīʿa): 33.

¹¹⁹⁸ Emended from *raqā* to *dafaʿ*.

¹¹⁹⁹ Emended from *Nīl* to *nubl*.

¹²⁰⁰ Emended from *ʿadū* to *ʿudū*.

¹²⁰¹ Emended from *shiʿr* to *saʿr*.

You would consider them sheep, calling to each other (by) bleating
Or a flock of ducks, replying to a flock of sand grouse

The intellect just gets rustier and rustier
Through being near them and knowledge slips away faster and faster”

Someone says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, you weren't saying anything along these lines
about Baghdad until now--all you used to do was find fault with the people of Isfahan!”

He says, “O our lord, (these are) camels that have passed by, whose loads are
negligence. God knows that I say:

Indeed, I find a *nāb*¹²⁰² tree in the region of Isfahan
And (land) among stony hills, unploughed

More desirable to me, and sweeter, while I live there
Than Baghdad's Karkh of the pomegranates and berries

The night has two halves, one half for worries
So I can't get to sleep, and one half for fleas

I continue to jump when their bites pierce the skin
And I mix wailing with calling for help

Have you not heard--Woe to you--(this verse) about Baghdad: (M. p. 106)

Let not your heart turn to Baghdad for protection--for indeed
It is deception to one hoping for it, and its near is far

May God cool Ibn al-Muʿtazz's bones, since he said: (Sh. p. 309)

How can I sleep, when I have stopped in Baghdad
Lingering in her land, not departing

A place over whose wells
Wreaths of gnats swarm,

Whose air in the winter and spring and¹²⁰³ summer
Is steam and its water is black¹²⁰⁴

¹²⁰² The *chadara tenax*, a tree with very hard wood which is used to make arrows. Hava, s.v., “Nabʿ.”

¹²⁰³ Emended from *fī* to *wa*.

¹²⁰⁴ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 2:463.

And he said:

Fate has stretched out my worry in Baghdad
And the traveler may be miserable or escape

I stayed in it unwillingly, remaining
Like one impotent embraced by an old woman¹²⁰⁵

Woe to you, indeed do you not see how Abū al-Shīṣ¹²⁰⁶ said:

To hell with Baghdad! May (God) make the clouds'
Downpour not water its courtyards

May God populate its dwellings
With howling bitches”

He didn't fall short (in these lines), by God! Then he said: (Sh. p. 310)

My night in Baghdad was prolonged; when one spends the night
In Baghdad he spends his night without sleeping

(It is) a city (such that) when the day ends,
Its fleas jump in twos and ones--

(Like) chestnut horses, gray stomached, as if they were
Post mules given free rein with the provision bags

And as the Bedouin says:

By morning I had made peace with the fleas, after
A night passed, which to me seemed an eternity

Settling down with me, as long as the sun rises in Baghdad,
Are the native inhabitants and slaves of the villages

Woe to you, what is there to please me in a city (depicted in) these descriptions?

By God, tell me, does this (city) please, by God, or (or is it) its suburbs (that please):

Qaṭī'at al-Kilāb,¹²⁰⁷ Nahr al-Dajāj,¹²⁰⁸ and Darb al-Ḥamīr?¹²⁰⁹ (Sh. p. 311) Or, by God, its

¹²⁰⁵ Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 2:187.

¹²⁰⁶ EI2, s.v. "Abū al-Shīṣ."

¹²⁰⁷ Fief of the Dogs. The area along the Nahr al-Kilāb, the canal in the very south of both Baghdad and Karkh, so named because so many dogs lived there. Since dogs were frequently wild, there must have been enough uninhabited space and food, i.e. garbage, for them to live on. LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 78; Jacob

suburbs¹²¹⁰: Ba^ʿqūbā,¹²¹¹ and Shafaṭīthā,¹²¹² and Bākusāyā,¹²¹³ and Ṭīznābādh,¹²¹⁴ and Nahr Būq,¹²¹⁵ and Dayr al-^ʿĀqūl,¹²¹⁶ and Ṭassūj al-Bazbūn, and al-Saqāṭiyya,¹²¹⁷ and Dimimmā,¹²¹⁸ places (Sh. p. 312) of ‘Nabataeans,’ and residences of rabble and low-lives. What can one say about a city whose water cannot be drunk until it has been hung up (to cool), and whose *nabīdh* (cannot be drunk) until it has been beaten, that is to say, (mixed with) *dādhī*?”¹²¹⁹

Someone says, “O Abū Qāsim, what is the point of *dādhī*?”

He says, “*Dādhī*--it is the thing (about) which the Baghdadī raves,--saying, (M. p. 107) ‘It is to the *nabīdh* like galingale is to the cooking pots,” and saying, ‘You should take some *dādhī*, (which is) like musk; its fine parts are better than its coarse parts, like bunches of grapes, bunches of grapes, curly-haired, white, rose-colored, fat, good-smelling, with no raisin stems in it, nor soakers' dregs, nor pomegranate rinds, only

Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 72.

¹²⁰⁸ Canal of Chickens. A region of Baghdad on the western side of Karkh where many poulterers lived and worked. *al-Buldān*, 4:838-9.

¹²⁰⁹ Donkey Neighborhood. This exact name is not recorded. There are two possibilities for emending this name to one that is recorded. It could be Darb al-Ḥayr. *al-Buldān*, 2:517. The second is more probable because retains the same meaning: Dawwārat al-Ḥimār. LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 78.

¹²¹⁰ Emended from *kūratu-hā* to *kūwaru-hā*.

¹²¹¹ A city around 10 miles north of Baghdad which was the capital of the Upper Nahrawān District. *al-Buldān*, 4:797.

¹²¹² Emended from Shaqaṭīnīnā to Shafaṭīthā based on Alī b. Yūsuf Qiftī, *Ibn al-Qiftī's Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā'* (Leipzig: Dieterichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903; reprint, Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1965), 189. One of the large estates near Baghdad to which the caliph al-Ma'mūn, 198/813-218/833, took guests to entertain them.

¹²¹³ A place between Baghdad and Wāsiṭ, near Nahrawān. *al-Buldān*, 1:477.

¹²¹⁴ Emended from Ṭīzānā to Ṭīznābādh, which is between Kūfa and Qadisiyya. It was a stop on the pilgrimage route to Mecca and was also known for its entertainment. *al-Buldān*, 3:570.

¹²¹⁵ A tract in the Sawād of Baghdad, to the northeast of Baghdad, north of the Kalwādhā District. LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 50 and Map 3. *al-Buldān*, 4:836.

¹²¹⁶ A village a few miles along Tigris River from Baghdad, between Kisrā and Nu^ʿmāniyya, which was known for its markets. *al-Buldān*, 2:676-7.

¹²¹⁷ Emended from al-Saqāṭ to al-Saqāṭiyya. An area by Kaskar near Wāsiṭ. *al-Buldān*, 3:100.

¹²¹⁸ A large village on the Euphrates near Baghdad where a bridge crossed the Euphrates. *al-Buldān*, 2:600.

¹²¹⁹ St. John's Wort. The reference is to date wine infused with St. John's Wort. Dozy, s.v. “*Dādhī*.”

dādhī, picked from the shrub; then you beat it into (the) clear pure date juice,¹²²⁰ and filter it, and expose it to the sun; then it emerges, by God, pure, liquid,' as one of them said about those who drink it: (Sh. p. 313)

Before them, I have not seen people drinking
Shit by the *ratl* in a gathering”

Someone says to him during the conversation, “O Abū al-Qāsim, do you know anything about swimming?” He says, “You fool, is there a Sawādī who does not know how to ride a cow, or a Turk who doesn’t know how to draw a bow? I, by God, am a better swimmer than a frog, or than a sea serpent. I know types of swimming (neither the fish (nor) the duck know in any way. Among them I know the “split,” the stretched arm, the *ghamr*,¹²²¹ the backstroke, the sidestroke, the *shaqlabī*, the *ṭāwūsī*,¹²²² the *‘aqrabī*,¹²²³ the *muqarfaṣ*,¹²²⁴ the evenly-balanced, the *kāmil*, the *ṭawīl*, and the *muqayyad*.¹²²⁵ My teacher for all of them, in Baghdad, was Ibn al-Ṭawwā’ and al-Zanābīrī.”

Someone says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, I want to know something about the lingo and customs of sailors and their uses.”

¹²²⁰ A description of the process matching the description in the text and linking it with Damascus. J.G. Wetzstein, “Der Markt in Damaskus,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 11:524.

¹²²¹ Based on the root of *ghamr*, a guess is swimming in deep water.

¹²²² Literally, peacock.

¹²²³ Literally, scorpion.

¹²²⁴ The word means to put the hands and feet together.

¹²²⁵ It appears that with the final three terms, Abū al-Qāsim has trailed off into vocabulary unrelated to swimming, as though he were talking past the point of having anything to say. *Kāmil* and *ṭawīl* and poetic meters.

He says, “(First) you need to know the types of boats,¹²²⁶ *sufun*,¹²²⁷ *sumayriyyāt*,¹²²⁸ (Sh. p. 314) *marākib al-‘ummāliyyāt*,¹²²⁹ *zabāzib*,¹²³⁰ *ṭayyārāt*,¹²³¹ *shadhāwāt*,¹²³² *burmāt*,¹²³³ *ḥarrāqāt*,¹²³⁴ (Sh. p. 315) *zallālāt*,¹²³⁵ (Sh. p. 316) *mālashat*,¹²³⁶ *kumandūriyyāt*,¹²³⁷ *bālū*,¹²³⁸ *ṭabtāb*,¹²³⁸ *jaddī*,¹²³⁹ *jāśūs*,¹²⁴⁰ *warḥiyyāt*,¹²⁴¹ *qawārib*,¹²⁴² *khayṭiyyāt*,¹²⁴⁴ (Sh. p. 318) *shalmaī*,¹²⁴⁵ and *jaʿfariyyāt*.¹²⁴⁶ One day, by God, I saw, while I was slandering him(?), Ibn Dabīs al-Maʿbarānī¹²⁴⁷ and with (him) were Makīn al-Hammānī, and Raqṭāʾ al-Nuʿmānī, and Salūqā b. al-Rummānī, with a ...¹²⁴⁸ on his head,

¹²²⁶ *Marākib*; singular: *markab*. Hans Kindermann, “*Schiff*” im Arabischen (1934) Diss. (Ph.D.) Philosophischen Fakultät, Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn, 95-6. Cargo ship or galley from the Mediterranean. Dionisius A. Agius, “Muqaddasī’s Information on Types of Ships,” in *Across the Mediterranean Frontiers: Trade, Politics and Religion, 650-1450*, ed. by Dionisius A. Agius and Ian Richard Netton (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 325.

¹²²⁷ Singular: *safīna*. Transport ships. Kindermann, 40-1. Transport ship; ocean-going ship or pontoon from Iraq, the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. Agius, 326.

¹²²⁸ A row-boat, used in the region around Baṣra and Baghdād. Kindermann, 42-3.

¹²²⁹ Working boats. Kindermann, 67-8.

¹²³⁰ Singular: *zabzab*. A boat that was small or large and that was used in the Bridge of Boats in Baghdad. Kindermann, 33-4. A small and large warship. Agius, 328.

¹²³¹ Singular: *ṭayyār*. A small fast boat from the Baghdad and Baṣra regions. Kindermann, 60-1. A warship or swift vessel from Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Agius, 327.

¹²³² Singular: *shadhā*. A small transport ship similar to the *sumayriyya*. Kindermann, 48-9. A small vessel or war ship from Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Agius, 327.

¹²³³ Singular: *burma*. A small boat or freighter with a rudder. Kindermann, 12-3. A row boat from Iraq. Agius, 323.

¹²³⁴ A fireboat or a *felucca*. Kindermann, 22-3.

¹²³⁵ This term is used for a boat or barque in the Tigris region. Kindermann, 35-6.

¹²³⁶ A boat, in the Tigris region. Kindermann, 94.

¹²³⁷ A small boat in the pattern of those from the Maldives. Kindermann, 90-1.

¹²³⁸ A speedy boat with two large oars. Kindermann, 56.

¹²³⁹ At this point, *al-mālashat* is repeated, probably a scribe’s error.

¹²⁴⁰ A boat with one deck. Kindermann, 16.

¹²⁴¹ A reconnaissance ship. Kindermann, 15. A reconnaissance ship. Agius, 324.

¹²⁴² Mentioned, but without a definition. Kindermann, 107.

¹²⁴³ Singular: *qārib*. A small boat or ship’s boat on sea-going ships. Kindermann, 76. An escort boat, small ship, pontoon, ferry or coastal boat from the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. Agius, 326.

¹²⁴⁴ Singular: *khayṭiyya*. A boat that sails to China. Kindermann, 26. An ocean-faring boat from the Arabian/Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and China. Agius, 325.

¹²⁴⁵ A small warship or a Byzantine ship. Kindermann, 51.

¹²⁴⁶ This ship is known to have sailed on the Tigris, but it is unclear whether that was all or only a part of its natural range. The sailors were frequently Nabatians, whose dress made them look like monkeys. Kindermann, 17.

¹²⁴⁷ The manuscript does not make sense. It could be: ...*ʾishtara bi-hi min Dubays al-Maʿrānī wa-ʿinda Makīn...* al-Shālījī emends it to: ...*Ishtarba b. Dubays al-Muʿbirānī and ʿinda-(hu) ...*

¹²⁴⁸ The manuscript looks like *farāfaqa*. al-Shālījī emends it to *muraqqaʿa*.

and wearing a *zurmānaqa*¹²⁴⁹ of two colors without a neck binding and without sleeves. Beside him was a ship's captain,¹²⁵⁰ round-headed, with clay vessels--like the biggest (kind) that (comes) from the shops--and wearing a *māshūka*, and he had with him a large basket for bread,¹²⁵¹ and turbid oil,¹²⁵² and a tarred oar,¹²⁵³ *mahār*, (Sh. p. 319) javelins, *shikka*, bitumen,¹²⁵⁴ *baladī*, red lac, *hawād*, oars, *sharārīf*, and he was busy repairing the work, and inserting the rope¹²⁵⁵ in it, and mounting the oars on it. Under him he had a worn-out *dī*¹²⁵⁶ and above him (Sh. p. 320) a gray mat, seeking its shade beside the *qurqūr*,¹²⁵⁷ with his companions sitting opposite him in the *mankūr*. He had grown proud,¹²⁵⁸ and began to praise God, and say "God is great," and say "Glory to God," (M. p. 108) and he said, "He has caused me to pass along (get through?) the cradle of the channel, and adorned me with "cowry shells" of a compass point,¹²⁵⁹ and brought me safe into the Mediterranean,¹²⁶⁰ and brought me to the strand/caused me to raise the sail.¹²⁶¹ (I swear) by the right(s) of our venerable (masters)." Then he looks out over

¹²⁴⁹ A wool *jubba*, or robe. R. P. A. Dozy, *Vêtements*, "zurmānaqa."

¹²⁵⁰ *Lisān*, s.v. "Ashtiyām." Aly Mohamed Fahmy, *Muslim Naval Organisation in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Seventh to the Tenth Century A.D.*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: National Publication & Printing House, 1966), 139.

¹²⁵¹ *Kanūr*.

¹²⁵² *Kadal*. Abū Maṣṣūr al-Jawālīqī, *al-Muʿarrab min al-Kalām al-Aʿjamī ʿalā Ḥurūf al-Muʿjam* (Cairo: Matbaʿat Dār al-Kutub, 1969), 332.

¹²⁵³ This could be a pole rather than an oar. Muḥammad Yāsīn al-Ḥamawī, *Tārīkh al-Uṣṭūl al-ʿArabī* (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-Turqī, 1945), 50.

¹²⁵⁴ James W. Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon* (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1978), s.v. "Qafr."

¹²⁵⁵ *al-Shall*. *Lisān*, s.v. "Ashl."

¹²⁵⁶ The word *dī* is not identifiable.

¹²⁵⁷ A long boat. Kindermann, 79-81.

¹²⁵⁸ Steingass, *Persian*, s.v. "Qufr."

¹²⁵⁹ Aḥmad b. Mājid al-Saʿdī, *Arab navigation in the Indian Ocean before the coming of the Portuguese, being a translation of Kitāb al-Fawāʿid fī Usūl al-Baḥr wa al-Qawāʿid*, G.R. Tibbetts, tr. (London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1971), 322-4, 521. Includes an explanation of how courses were set.

¹²⁶⁰ *Zuqāqan*. The Bahr al-Zuqāq is the Mediterranean. *Arab navigation*, 209.

¹²⁶¹ Read as *sayālan* for "brought me to the strand," as *shiyālan* for "caused me to raise the sail." *Arab navigation*, 282, 530; 531.

the Hawr,¹²⁶² and looks at the shoals, and hears the singing of the shipbuilders, and calls to them, ‘O pilot,¹²⁶³ forward, forward, get all those who are with you in the boats going, as long as you are at this *shartā*,¹²⁶⁴ (so) you’ll start getting higher?, before a southwest wind stirs, when it will not be easy for you all to rise (Sh. p. 321) to the Waterwheels and you will all remain in the blue Hawr. Get past, woe to you, this “cradle” and these undercut shores!’ While he is going on like this, suddenly they find that they have arrived at Ṭabṭāb and Hālis, and to Misfar, and the water had almost entered the stern of the boat, and the sailors had revealed their *baṭakāt*? (Then) he says to the one among them who is rowing in the straight, (while) standing at the head of the captain’s chair: ‘O two ferrymen, throw the anchors,’ but he refuses to do it and he says, ‘You losers, you have destroyed both yourselves and others, indeed, in obedience is heavenly thanks, and in disobedience is the Yemeni she-wolf. Your rowboat has been abandoned in the central (area), with a Kurd on one side, and a Fāmī on the other, an *ūtā* in front, and behind an armored lion. If you left them to those ferrymen, then they have ganged up on them, you loser, you’ve *taharwaqta*, it’s coming from both sides, and from opposite. No, by God, it makes more sense from the front, you losers, you want a light load, and a heavy wage; thin rope, and a companionable, energetic rower, and a generous passenger, and many provisions--you may find that in heaven, but not in the Ṣalīq Canal.’¹²⁶⁵ (Sh. p. 322)

¹²⁶² The series of navigable lagoons formed when the Tigris River flows into the Great Swamp below Wāsiṭ. LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 8.

¹²⁶³ Captain or coastal pilot. *Arab navigation*, 60-61, 525.

¹²⁶⁴ A truss binding the yard to the mast. It holds the yard from sweeping across the ship and possibly unstepping the mast. *Arab navigation*, 54, 390, 530.

¹²⁶⁵ Ṣalīq is an area in the swamps of Wāsiṭ. *al-Buldān*, 3:415.

If you were to see these situations, then you would be aware that sailors too have expressions that are not to be sneezed at, even if they aren't of the top ilk."

One (guest) says to him, "O Abū al-Qāsim, where is your residence in Baghdad?"

He replies, "My residence is in Jeweller's Lane.

You (can) see the sandal in it selling the nape for
The one who considers the price too high and doesn't buy

And it slaps the skull of the sickly, suspicious one
(So hard) the eye of the healthy pure (one) gets dislocated¹²⁶⁶

What business is my house to you, woe to you? This is ill-manners and prying! It is (in fact) a house founded upon something other than piety,¹²⁶⁷ thank God!

A house of mine on the bank (of the canal), my joy
Is dependant on it, even if it is less than spacious

I only feel at home at the bank
Because the bank is the abode of shit

It is a house (with the following) written on its door:

He who enters the house is safe
From everything except screwing (M. p. 109)

Another

...In a house whose entertainment for its guests every night
Is a whore, and a pig, and wine, and an arrow game¹²⁶⁸

It is a house, God's truth, as was (described),

If you desire a house of debauchery and sin
And a den of refractoriness and sins (Sh. p. 323)

And a residence of maladies and shames
Then turn toward it and you will obtain your desire

¹²⁶⁶ Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, London 154b, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.

¹²⁶⁷ An negation of a verse from the *Qurʾān*, 9 (al-Tawba): 109.

¹²⁶⁸ *Maysir*, the gambling game using arrows.

You will not hear (there), by God, so and so pounding a lance into so and so
 (else), except in the most honorable meaning, and (nothing) besides that, except farting
 like slingshots, which resound from the Darb al-Ḥarashī to the Sūq al-Dawwāb.

Farting (sounding) like the splitting
 Of smooth Dabīqī cloth--

--And slapping as I described,

He sends with it, for the neck, each sharp (sword)
 Broad-necked, sharp of two straps, Daybulī

Another

There you see--by your rights--I have swords
 With straps, given full power over necks--

Swords that hardly hurt, except
 That which the collars of outer garments encompass”

Then he resumes praising Isfahan and its inhabitants, and he pours his wine
 into the goblet, and says, “(This is) a light, by God, whose heart is fire. (Sh. p. 324)

Fire and light fettered in a container,
 A Gemini of pearls in a carnelian sky

By God, a fire by which the hand is seared breaks out from the cup.

It stands upright in the hand without a vessel,
 The soul of hope and the soul's repose

It is clearer than a rooster's eye and than a spurned lover's tear;¹²⁶⁹ more
 delicate than Abū Nuwās's religion; stronger-scented than musk; and more beautiful
 than saffron. The first cup makes (you) drunk, the second makes you dizzy, and (after)
 the third (you) head for the door without a *ṭaylasān*.

It has a (certain) appearance to the eyes (such that) its beauty

¹²⁶⁹ *Aṣfa min al-damʿa w-min al-māʾ wa-min ʿayni al-ghurābi wa-min ʿayni al-dīki wa-min luʿābi al-jundabi.*
 Freytag 1:747, Ch. 14, proverb 108. al-Maydānī, 2:256, proverb 2191.

Testifies to a significance that guides happiness to the heart

But I have never seen anything so (highly) regarded by the soul as it
Its scent is merely inhaled, and (then) is met with frowning and scowling

It is saffron-colored in its sparkle; fragrant of scent to the breath; it jumps in its cup, like a snake on sun baked ground; it burns like a firebrand in the dark. In all the (M. p. 110) world, by God, there is no antidote to equal it: it escorts food to the depth(s) of the body, purges the body from putrefying humors; and protects the stomach from small¹²⁷⁰ illnesses; (it is) the nourishment of the soul; the sibling of the spirit; then it delivers its drinker to the (point of falling into) the softness of the bed and the pleasure of sleep, which is relaxation for the limbs, and rest for the ribs, and comfort for the senses. With it (Sh. p. 325) the acts of nature become perfected, and the digestion goes well; youths grow up, and the old men are rejuvenated. It restores equilibrium to people, by God, and in the four humors¹²⁷¹ there is a resemblance to it! Its moisture is similar to the phlegm;¹²⁷² and its form and color are like the form and color of blood: and the (part of it that) floats like butter is equivalent to yellow bile; and its lees, which are like sediments, are equivalent to black bile. Every drink in the world is one of its dependents!" Then he recites out of his enthusiasm over it:

Iblīs trained my soul until it started acting like a child
And for a long time now souls have been obeying him!

How much did I want to be pious, but old wine
Which the peacock passes around, would not forsake me

(It is) the wine of sacrifice, which the deacon tells the guardian
Of its home to tend carefully--and the priests do (too)

¹²⁷⁰ This word is unclear in the manuscript.

¹²⁷¹ It was considered there were four humors or bodily fluids that needed to be in balance to maintain health. They are blood, phlegm, choler (yellow bile) and melancholy (black bile). Manfred Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978), 57-60.

¹²⁷² Emended from *al-ruṭūba* to *al-balgham*.

It is Jesus's blood to the Christians, and
The Magians consider it fire without heat

But to me it is different from what they believe:
It is an auspicious star, from which misfortunes have withdrawn

What beauty the tuns conceal with the wine,
And (what) beauty do the goblets reveal!

O my two companions, give me to drink! For
Morning has appeared and the church bells have rung

(Serve me a wine) that is chestnut-colored, as if
It were a ground of gold around which pearls are set¹²⁷³

And he drinks (several) goblets, and he gets merry, then he approaches the host
of the gathering and says:

My lord, O you with whom and for whom so long as I live
My soul will be satisfied and vexed (respectively)

(May the) wife of the one who doesn't love you as I do
Have the bottom of the cauldron of her ass split

(May the) wife of one who doesn't love you as I do
Have the walls of her ass' door hamstrung

(May the) wife of one who doesn't love you as I do
Have her ass' udder milked in bed

(May the) wife of one who doesn't love you as I do
Be crucified on the stakes of pricks

(May the) wife of one who doesn't love you as I do
Have the saddlebow of her ass's saddle kneaded? (Sh. p. 326)

Another

O one, the levels of whose rank
And intellect are exalted (M. p. 111)

May there continue to be a drink-deliverer
(Passing) from my ass to the jawbones of your enemy

¹²⁷³ Lines 1, 2, 5-10 of poem 422 in Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 2:272-3.

Another

O king, whose traditions I relate
As does a perceptive, skilled (man)

It is as if I were reciting the *ḥadīth* of the
Prophet Muhammad on the authority of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq¹²⁷⁴

Another

Nature doesn't produce anyone like you, unless
Cucumber seeds emerge from carrots

(As for) every one who does not ...,¹²⁷⁵
My prick is in his mother's vulva every night

It enters after the night prayer and it comes out (only) at
The time when the bath houses are fueled, at daybreak

What can I say?

Every day, I have from his generosity
First fruits fresher than roses

It is as if there were a breeze in which there was
(Ambergris and)¹²⁷⁶ violet, perfumed with incense

Another

Thank God for a benefit by which
Fate has fulfilled its promise

I have acquired what I have, for some time,
Continued to desire by way of good omens

The benefit from the master to his slave is
Through his act when he bought his slave”

He continues to meet him with these praises, by which he conveys the sincerity
of friendship, the virtue of being faithful, the intimate and loyal, until he detects in one

¹²⁷⁴ Abū ʿAbd Allah ʿJaʿfar b. Muḥammad, 699/700-702/993, called *al-Ṣādiq*, the Trustworthy. He was the sixth Shiʿite imam. EI2, s.v. “DJaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.”

¹²⁷⁵ Words are missing here.

¹²⁷⁶ Emended to fill in missing words.

of them a bad opinion about this master whom he praises with the likes (of these verses). He says to (the other) privately, "O our lord, who is that? He is nothing but a plague in the respiratory system. I would rather have had a fever all year than to have met him. He is only--by God--O our lord, as the poet said: (Sh. p. 327)

His breaths are a lie, and the binding of his heart is trickery
And his face is a sickness of the soul

We are--by God--O our lord, we are--by God--only as the poet says:

We were afflicted (although) the wine was good, and its strength
Ignited a fire of animation in the youths

By (a companion) colder than a day of north wind in December
And farting more than the winds of February (M. p. 112)

Another

O woe to the basil with which you greet
And woe to the cup that you pour for him

By God, I don't know, and indeed I am telling the truth,
Whether he is a *ḥadīth* narrator or a shitter through his mouth?

He is only as another said,

(He is) more painful to the heart than a creditor
Who keeps importuning a poor man

And than an abscess on the body of a (man) tossed
Onto a camel's back who shakes (as if shaken by the camel's gait)

Without provisions or drink
Or a close friend, or a companion"

Then he turns to him and recites:

May I meet God my lord
On the day I meet him--as a Jew

(And then) may I have no brothers other

Than apes in the contract of my religion¹²⁷⁷

Or, may I be associated with Yazīd¹²⁷⁸
And Yazīd is quite enough (for you to get the point)

Indeed he is my master by right
And my sirs are my witnesses,

He is my idol, and if you don't think so
Then look where my prostration is!

Then he says, "O our lord, may God give you enjoyment of these good qualities,
and of those worthy men (your guests) who (Sh. p. 328) are shining stars!¹²⁷⁹ O our lord,

Take good care of your drinking buddies, for they are a group
(Whose company) resembles an outing (to) a garden

Including mature men such as whom are not seen
In terms of beauty, and juveniles and youths

If they were on intimate terms with Khusraw despite his nobility,
Then they would adorn Khusraw b. Sāsān"

Then he turns to them and says:

By God, life has no flavor after you (are gone)
Nor do gatherings for pleasures

He makes a man a master of (his) house and the house a palace, but, while he is
praising the group, there is heard in his confidential talk, his comment, secretly and
hypocritically,

A people who are the trouble of life and its illness
Being afflicted by them has come at me from all sides

Another

¹²⁷⁷ *Qurʾān*, 7 (al-Aʿrāf) 159-166. These verses explain how God inspired Moses' people, the Jews. As some of them took pride in what had been forbidden them, they were turned into apes.

¹²⁷⁸ Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya, the second Umayyad caliph and first caliph named Yazīd. Although he was very affable, he ordered Ḥusayn and the ʿAlid partisans kept from Kūfa, which resulted in their death at Karbalāʾ. He also attacked Medina, which had declared him deposed, and invested Mecca in an attempt to suppress Ibn al-Zubayr. EI2, s.v. "Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya."

¹²⁷⁹ *Qurʾān*, 7 (al-Aʿrāf) 159-166.

A meal pleases them and loss of another
Annoys them in all circumstances

113) With them I have ended up with the worst (possible) group
May the Lord of the Heavens deprive me of them (through their deaths) (M. p.

(The host) says to (Abū al-Qāsim), while he is pretending to be satisfied with Isfahan, and praising (the host's) friends, "O Abū al-Qāsim, you have forgotten your brothers in Baghdad."

He smiles¹²⁸⁰ and says, "May God wipe out Baghdad and its inhabitants, and be quick about it,

When God waters some earth with a downpour of early morning rain,
Let him not water it, nor refresh it with rain (during the day?)¹²⁸¹

And may the wind blow dust in their faces until,
When they cannot see a thing, or even its trace (Sh. p. 329)

He sets hostility and hatred between them
Until they become the slaughtered victims of those who show them enmity

They are thieves whenever night veils them
And then they study the *Qur'ān* whenever morning dawns

They abstain from their wives
And fuck cows on both banks of the Tigris"

Then he says, "(This is) not against Baghdad, but rather against its people,

(Blessings of) water to Baghdad and may (God) keep her (well)!
But may a downpour of rain not "water" its people

My astonishment at low people like them
Is how can they have been allowed a paradise like (Baghdad)"

¹²⁸⁰ The manuscript is unclear.

¹²⁸¹ Lines 1, 3-5 of this poem appear in *al-Buldān*, 4:326 in the order: 1, 5, 4, 3. The poem is attributed to al-Najāshī, a poet of the 1st/7th century. EI2, s.v. "al-Nadjāshī."

During the conversations, he turns to one who is on his right, confers with him, and listens to some of his conversation, and cheers up at it, and says, “O our lord, this--by God--isn't human speech, rather it is sorcery completely distracting the hearts and the ears; speech--by God--like the coldness of wine, and the *burda* of youth; rather, like comfort at hand, radiant youth,¹²⁸² the cutting of bouquets of flowers, and sorcery's knots. It is like nothing so much as good tidings of (the birth of) a generous son to the ears of a childless old man; beautiful in its brocade; clear (like) glass; sweet sliding down the throat; the ill one is cured by it; and the broken (leg) is restored by it; it guides its listener to worship; and flows as water flows in a stem. The ‘way to water’ of prolixity has been made broad for him, and the path of long-windedness has been cleared away from him, so he scatters pearls (handful after handful).”

Then he says to the one on his left, “What's up with you?”

Then he winks his eye at him, turns to him and says, “O our lord, I am suffering from a ‘bald’ affliction, without a single tuft of hair; from speech heavier than stone, and more bitter than colocynth; (like) the raving of the feverish, and the melancholy of the anxious (man); from such as him, the mute is consoled for his lack of a word (to speak), and the deaf (man) rejoices in his deafness.¹²⁸³ (It is) speech, by God, that rusts¹²⁸⁴ the mind, even if it does not blind the sight; the ears stumble on its hard ground, and imaginations are confused with its roughness;¹²⁸⁵ it has no easy entry in the ears, nor reception in the dispositions.” (M. p. 114)

¹²⁸² A similar passage appears in *Zahr*, 121.

¹²⁸³ From “heavier” through “deafness” appears in *Zahr*, 629.

¹²⁸⁴ Read as *yūṣaddi*?

¹²⁸⁵ *Zahr*, 629.

Then he turns a second time to his right, where the person occupying it recites poetry to him, (Sh. p. 330) to which he says, "I commend him to God, how clear is his vision, how white his pearl(y teeth), how abundant his sea (of generosity) and how wise his nature and his mastery.¹²⁸⁶ (He is) a downpour to the intellectuals; and a blaze on the foreheads¹²⁸⁷ of prominent poets; if he were made a robe of honor for time, then it would be ostentatiously adorned by it, and be displayed proudly in it (as a bride); (this is) poetry, by God, that mingles with parts of the soul; (these are) ears, by God, that become shells for these pearls."

Then he turns from him again to the (person on the) left and says, "O our lord, haven't you been hearing this rapidly articulated poetry, (with) clunky metaphor, and this shallow allusion? O our lord, (it is) without sweetness or freshness; it is nothing but erroneous rhyme, repetitive rhyme words, unchanging in meaning, and (other) errors; if he were aware, may God make him great, of his deficiency, then he would not poeticize."

Then he approaches the (person on the) right a third time and begins to praise him, saying, "Our lord, thank God, has a generous nature and abilities; glory is the tongue describing him; and honor is the lineage of his ancestors. He did not inherit his merits from distant relatives (but directly), nor did he win them by mistake. (He is like) a good tree, (with) its roots in water, and its branches in the sky. Then he, praise God, in generosity and liberality is a sea--those who drink from it do not thirst, and its coolness is always accessible; if the sea were his support, and the clouds his extension,

¹²⁸⁶ Read as *nahr*.

¹²⁸⁷ Emended from *thughr* to *ghurra*, although that is a questionable solution. The manuscript has a single tooth, and *ayn* and a *r*, or at least those forms. However, *thughr* does not fit well, whereas *ghurra* is a typical description.

and the mountains his gold, then they would fall short of what he gives, and in (terms of his) knowledge, the sea extends to seven seas. It is as if his day, praise God, is (equivalent) to the lives of seven eagles.¹²⁸⁸ (He is) a tree of virtue, whose trunk is refinement, whose branches are knowledge, and whose fruit is wisdom. (Sh. p. 331) This, praise God, along with a nature like a breeze redolent with flowers over the tops of trees, when it wafts at dawn; (and) morals as aromatic as saffron perfume; (and) good qualities as clear as wine. (He is) more fragrant than the movements of the wind among scented herbs; (in) serious (matters he is) like an excess of good fortune; and (in) light (matters) like a garden of roses; an ascetic's rosary and a profligate's apple¹²⁸⁹ and sociability whose juice almost drips and whose sunniness almost rains from freshness. Then (there is his) outward appearance, whose radiance dazzles the eyes, veiled, by God, in marvelous beauty, taking refuge from the (evil) eye of (too much) perfection, always to be found where his worthy peers congregate;¹²⁹⁰ (he is) sweeter, by God, than a downpour over the neighborhood; his nature is radiant and his character is pleasant, and his superiority is resplendent. (These are) beauties, by God, among which I am in a garden (with) a pool, or rather, in a garden and silk attire."¹²⁹¹

Then he turns from him to the left and says to the one sitting next to him, (continuing his now) customary hypocrisy and malice, "This (person), by God, is burning to the eyes, a profusion of wickedness, in a spring of depravity: like a truffle that has no permanent root and no growing branch. If the nighttime, by God, were pelted by his wickedness, then the lights of its stars would be extinguished. No water

¹²⁸⁸ This refers to Luqmān b. 'Ād.

¹²⁸⁹ Emended from *bi-tāḥah* to *tuffāḥa*. Zahr, 582.

¹²⁹⁰ Emended from *amthāl* to *iqbāl*.

¹²⁹¹ Qur'ān, 76 (al-Insān): 12.

comes from his stone,¹²⁹² and his (M. p. 115) trees do not bear fruit. (He is) evidence that isn't transmitted and a flint that doesn't spark. A model of stupidity hidden in clothing, he trips (Sh. p. 332) on the bridle of his ignorance, and falls over the hems of his clumsiness. (He is like) an eroded rock that doesn't make it easy for the climber; (like) a deaf snake that doesn't hear spells. It is as if I, when I discuss views with him, am whipping up an old camel, or shaking a mountain. Grave-faced, odious (in) part and whole, he has dull, repetitive conversation and tramples on the eyes and livers. He, by God, is a mote in the eye, and a pebble between the sandal and the sole (of the foot). It is as if his face, truly, were the terror of Judgment Day; misfortune shows on his brow, and vinegar drips from his cheek. It is a face which grieves the eyes, and a speech which is unpleasant to the ears. I didn't understand, by God, whether he was shitting or speaking; the place where he inserts his food is filthier than where he excretes his waste. He doesn't differentiate, by God, between his mouth and his anus.”

He keeps on this way (until) the singer's turn¹²⁹³ ends, then he is transported (with delight) and turns to the *ṭanbūr* player, saying:

Every singer with every *ṭanbūr*
Falls short of you, until the last trumpet is blown

Then he turns to the lute player, saying:

Perfected for my lord is the excellence of his standing
Among the songs and the lowest and highest (lute) strings

When the lutes come to you (with alacrity)
The faces of the *ṭanbūr* players turn (to frowns)

(You are) a turtledove, while the female singers,¹²⁹⁴ when

¹²⁹² *Zahr*, 582.

¹²⁹³ Emended from *tūr* to *dawr*.

¹²⁹⁴ This word is incorrect, although it is clear in the manuscript. The word is clearly feminine, but the following verb is masculine.

They make noise with their voices are (like) sparrows

He says to the female singer: (Sh. p. 333)

All her clothing is a display of beauty
And everything she sings is the audience's request

And he says, "It is from God that (I) seek help.

She sang, so that no limb of mine remained
Except that it wished it were an ear

Another

When she sings, it is as if she is not singing, because
Her joints are so still--but in fact, she sings excellently

A sufficient breath extended across the range of her song's (phrasing)
Extended, like the breaths of her lovers

(She has) a face like the morning, and a song that is exquisitely choice.

When she sang, I felt that she had bestowed
Her soul on my soul as a robe of honor (M. p. 116)

Another

A *nāy* and an *ūd* and a throat
Are all as perfect as they could be

And (as for) Gharīra, when she sings,

Her good qualities are consummate and a nay, which
Was tender to the heart, and an *ūd* assisted her wailing

So it was as if we were in Paradise, being
Served cool wine and it was as if she were David"¹²⁹⁵

And one of his friends answers, "The poet quoted, appositely, (Sh. p. 334)

We have fish, a favorite, roasted
And our slave has a side of spiced lamb

And two chickens which had (together) pecked

¹²⁹⁵ King David was given the gift of singing by God. *Qurʾān* 21 (al-Anbiyāʾ): 79.

The best of the land in the region¹²⁹⁶ of Kaskar

And a pot, which as long as it boils, produces
An aroma whose scent is (like) musk and ambergris

And wine, aged in the jug, whose
Vine Khusraw and Qayṣar picked out

And a beautiful girl like the sun's light, who sings
And another, colored like the night, who plays the flute

So be (yourself) a response to this letter of ours
For we are on the verge of being drunk from the festivities”

Then he says, “O our lord,” with a passionate voice:

Made equal in good scent are youths who were
Created from gray ambergris and camphor

(They are) the ultimate for whom there is no substitute
For a person fond of and reveling in listening

They have (...) lyrics, as if you
Were, among their variety, in a field of gillyflowers (Sh. p. 335)

O my lord, listen to the request of a youth
Who is softer than bread with seasonings

And go among them, drunk from the wine
And hasten to them in the mornings, drunk

And don't be remiss, for if someone like you
Is remiss in (taking) pleasure, he is not excused

Then he says, “Tomorrow, by God, we will resume this gathering and pleasure,”

and he says, “^Ulayya bint al-Mahdī¹²⁹⁷ used to say, ‘Whoever gets up in the morning
and has *ṭabāhija*,¹²⁹⁸ and a skimpy bottle, and an apple with a bite out of it, and doesn't

¹²⁹⁶ Emended from *wuldān* to *buldān*.

¹²⁹⁷ ^Ulayya bint al-Mahdī, 160/777-221/825, was the daughter of the caliph al-Mahdī and a professional singer. She trained singing girls for the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and was known for her intelligence, with taste and elegance. EI2, s.v. “^Ulayya bint Mahdī.”

¹²⁹⁸ Dissolve tail fat in a little boiling water and add saffron. Add the meat, onion, mint, celery and cook until the juices dry. Add coriander, cumin, caraway, cinnamon and ginger. From time to time add wine-

have a morning drink, he is not to be counted among the youths,¹²⁹⁹ (because of his) negligence.' How elegant is the thing she said!"

Then he says to one of them, "Do you understand how one serves the morning drink correctly?"

He says, "No."

He says, (Sh. p. 336)

Indeed the proper way to have the morning drink is that you
Triumph over the world with the beating of the drums among the flutes

Between dancing that follows (the best of) the bottom string
And flute-playing that follows intensely the (plucking of the) second strings (M.
p. 117)

Performed by beauties like full moons, most excellent
And skilled and beautiful female singers

The perfection of their rhythm is complete, but
Only with the clamor of the strings on the lutes

Then he, having almost gotten drunk, approaches the (male) singers and recites:

And (many) a song of the nobles' offspring,
A people of excellent comportment,

Melancholy, overwhelming the strings
Until they are all involved

(So that) I don't know (whether it is) my left hand
With which I pour, or the right

We said to its singer
Who had sung on the second string

'Truly, oh if only this song
Would (never) perish throughout time'

vinegar, grape juice, lemon juice and sumac juice. Remove the vegetable and sprinkle with *murri*.
Arberry1, 37.

¹²⁹⁹ *Maṭāli*^ḥ, 1:139.

For it has awakened to pleasures
An eye that had continued to slumber

I do not understand what
Its singer sings when he sings

But I, from my love of him
Am delighted with its meaning

He looks at the singing girl, between whom and himself a person had stood,

then he says:

May I be a ransom for one who came (to me) in the morning, and the evening
Veiled with the guardian's face

(She is) distant, but she is nearer than my
Jugular in place, in relation to me, and closer¹³⁰⁰

He then takes a goblet and approaches her, looks at her for a time, and recites:

A creator strewed beauty across her face
Who made sway her branch under the full moon¹³⁰¹ (Sh. p. 337)

And he recites what the poet said:

Distributed between a sand hill and a branch
Envied, triumphing by beauty

Another

(I would ransom) with my father one who
In passion charged me with more than I could do

(She is) tender, her saliva is
Musk, honey and nectar

Another

There was created for me, just as I wish (her to be)
A singing girl who shames the gazelle fawn

Her beauty dazzles the old man

¹³⁰⁰ Qurʾān, 50 (Qaf): 16.

¹³⁰¹ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 1:367.

And it suits me to be dazzled (M. p. 118)

Another

(She is) a girl of ten and three (years)
Filling the robe of ten cubits (of cloth)

(As for) her cheek, a glance plucks the blossom
Of the pomegranate from it

Here I ruined my wealth
Here I sold my property

Then he notices another (guardian), on her other side, and says:

Between two guardians who forbid (from each other)
A charmer in love and one charmed

It is as if she were a date that had stuck to
A scorpion and a hornet above it

Another

Neither pleurisy nor gout
Creeping from one joint to another, (Sh. p. 338)

Nor the hurt of a molar after sleep
Nor the sting of a boil in a vulnerable spot

Nor a drink from a cupper's vessel¹³⁰²
From which the harmful (substance) is not washed

Nor the snow which remains in Marj al-Qilā¹³⁰³
For those returning (from a journey) and stopping there

Nor a pregnancy exceeding nine months
Heaving and pressing down on the vagina

Nor (heavy) rocks carried on the heads
Nor the walking of the barefoot on stone(s)

Nor the ascent of a lofty mountain

¹³⁰² Emended from *qūr* to *tūr*.

¹³⁰³ A large walled city on the road from Baghdad to Khurāsān, at the Ḥulwān Pass. The caliphal stud farm was located in this area. *al-Buldān*, 4:488.

For the timid, fearful traveler

Nor a month's journey through a desert
Without water or a place to stop

Nor a fever whose victim is
Deprived of sleep night after long night

Nor captivity among the Qufṣ¹³⁰⁴ or in Kabul
In fetters, which, (once) they tighten, do not loosen

Is more oppressive than his face in appearance
Nor a quartan fever that comes on with tremors

And his soul is heavier than his face
So if you haven't been informed about him, just ask!

So, O lowest of people and friends
And O lowest of earnings and edibles (Sh. p. 339)

God created you as a sign for us
And made the highest of you assemble with the lowest

You don't have it in you to enjoy listen to joking
Nor to take the truth seriously

(Even) if you were of the two ancestors of Hāshim¹³⁰⁵
And of ʿAbd Shams, and of Nawfal¹³⁰⁶ (tribe)

And you possessed the heritage of the Banū Ṭāhir¹³⁰⁷
And gave it to us and weren't stingy

And (if) we used to (enjoy) the rain of the clouds on your face
(So that) whenever we missed you it didn't fall (M. p. 119)

You would still be the hateful one and the loathsome one

¹³⁰⁴ The Arabic name for a Persian people, the Kufichis, who inhabited the Kirman and western Baluchistan region. The Islamic sources of the 10th and 11th centuries stigmatized them as being nominally Muslim, but predatory and inhumanly cruel to travelers. EI2, s.v. "Ḳufṣ."

¹³⁰⁵ Hāshim b. ʿAbd Manāf. The great grandfather of the prophet Muḥammad. EI2, s.v. "Hāshim b. ʿAbd Manāf."

¹³⁰⁶ Nawfal was the father of a clan of the Quraysh tribe. ʿAbd Shams was his brother. The clan, along with most of the Hāshim tribe, at first opposed Muḥammad. However, when the latter planned to reenter Mecca, the Nawfal tribe granted him their protection. The Nawfal at first boycotted the clan of Hāshim when Muḥammad was preaching, but helped end the boycott. EI2, s.v. "Nawfal, Banū."

¹³⁰⁷ A line of governors in Khurāsān and high ranking officers in Iraq, who flourished in the 3rd/9th century and were active in and supportive of cultural activities. EI2, s.v. "Ṭāhirids."

So turn back (being) blameworthy and don't approach!

Then he bows (his head in silence) for a while, but anger boils up in him a second time, and he resumes his first tack, saying:

O lack of water on the night of a conflagration

O load of a debt on someone in financial straits
O recurrence of being robbed on the road

O capsizing of a rowboat in December
O ongoing straitened circumstances of the indebted

O distressing gathering and O lousy shackles
And perpetual distress of the destitute

O repentance of one squeezed beneath the lion
O distress of the gardener on a day with hail

O silent farting of the elephant when it has indigestion
O leaky (roof) of a house that was dilapidated and broken down (Sh. p. 340)

O delight to the eyes of the envious ones
O grief of the poor men on holidays

O kick of the mule on the spleen
O slap of the sandal on the back of the neck

O sting of the hornet in the corners of the eye
O early morning separation to the lovers

O pain of the free-born (woman) over a divorce
O lack of ink for the copyist

O choking from the pressure of strangling
O bite of the viper without antidote

O everything (that is) desolate and terrible
O pig's head and ghoulish face

O shame of white hair appearing on heads
O grief of dismissal on the (official) dismissed

Another

O laxative¹³⁰⁸ drink, O house rent
 O disagreeable face of an enemy¹³⁰⁹

O waking-up of the heedless beloved
 Who is informed of an approaching departure

O return of the deprived one from a journey
 In which he did not succeed at getting what he was after

O letter that came from one who broke
 His promise, laden with a long excuse

O doctor who had left early in the morning
 To take a sick person a herbal potion

O thorn in a tender foot
 Which there is no way to get out

O one keeping company with a leper on a journey
 O fly in a container of cool wine

O embarrassment of the one distressed in his business
 O increasing price(s) for a bread winner with a large family¹³¹⁰ (Sh. p. 341)

Another

O lion's brow and O target's face
 O elephant dung and O oyster meat (M. p. 120)

O house rent paid in advance
 O night in an inn with a leaky roof (Sh. p. 342)

O wit, O backbiter in whose mouth is putridity
 O attack of fever and O age of senility

Always may you remain in the worst position
 Having, in your hatred, no successor when you die

¹³⁰⁸ Hava, s.v. "Ayārāja."

¹³⁰⁹ Zahr, 442.

¹³¹⁰ A poem by Jaḥẓa al-Barmakī, but with numerous variations. Jaḥẓa, a famous musician and litterateur, was a descendent of the famous al-Barmakī family that was highly influential under the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, 170/786-193/809, up until 187/803, when he executed most members of the family. Jaḥẓa was a grandson of Mūsā, the member who survived the executions. He was a companion of the caliph al-Muqtadir, 295/908-329/932. Jaḥẓa al-Barmakī, *Dīwān Jaḥẓati al-Barmakī*, Jean Tuma, ed. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1996), 139-40.

O beginning of the night of the stranger, when he is far from the beloved; O guise of the guardian; O Wednesday at the end of Şafar;¹³¹¹ O meeting the nightmare at the (dark) moment before dawn; O heat of August (Sh. p. 343-5) among the residents of Iraq; O land tax without profit; O journey connected with sickness; (Sh. p. 346) O one more tattered than the *ṭaylasān* of Ibn Ḥarb;¹³¹² O more inauspicious to his soul than Wahb's fart;¹³¹³ O more detestable than a cup of thick laxative¹³¹⁴ in the hand of a sick person; and more reprehensible than the appearance of a bankrupt person before the loathed creditor; O rottener than the privy in a summer dawn; and more oppressive than the appearance of a loathsome one before the guest; O face of an extortioner on Saturday; O breaking a fast with nothing but bread; O colder than the north wind in December; O dirtier (Sh. p. 347) than the couch of a mangy (dog) with indigestion; O dirtier than a fly on wet shit; and more contemptible than a flea in a dog's ear; O dirtier than dog shit; O more putrid than tanners' vats; and rottoner than the odor from a butcher; O stupider than a guard¹³¹⁵ of the bath; and rottoner than a cupper's shop; O dirtier than the mud of fish sellers' [stalls]; O more brutal than a tyrant in the eyes of

¹³¹¹ The learned feel that the faithful should spend this day in a sorrowful mood and praying, since Şafar is filled with mischief which is likely to erupt on its last Wednesday. However, the populace spends the day riding, picnicing and partying. C. Snouk Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), 45-6.

¹³¹² *Zahr*, 442 and 550. *Yatīma*, 3:3. Ibn Ḥarb's *ṭaylasān* represents something worn out and torn. The occurrences of this phrase in literature are discussed in: Josef van Ess, *Der Ṭaylasān des Ibn Ḥarb: "Mantelgedichte" in arabischer Sprache*, Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 1979 no. 4 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1979).

¹³¹³ Wahb b. Sulaymān b. Wahb b. Sa'īd was the head of the city mail. He farted in a crowded majlis held by ʿUbayd Allāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khākān, who served as wazir from 236/851- 248/862 under the caliph al-Mutawakkil and from 256/870- 263/877 under the caliph al-Mu'tamid. al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-Qulūb fī al-Muḍāf wa-al-Mansūb*, 1:340-4, no. 282.

¹³¹⁴ This phrase appears in a proverb: *Abkhaḍu min qadaḥi al-lablāb wa-min al-shaybi ilā al-ghawānī wa min riḥi al-sadhābi iā al-ḥayyāti wa-min sajjādati al-zāniyati wa-min wujūhi al-tujjāri yawma al-kasādi*. Freytag, 1:199, Ch. 2, proverb 165.

¹³¹⁵ Emended from *kh-ṣ-ṣ* to *khafīz*.

the tyrannized; and more hated than the owl's cry¹³¹⁶ when it strikes the fevered man's ear; O more agonizing than the anxiety from debt; and more intense than pain in the eye; and lonelier than morning on the day of separation; O traveler's night in January (spent) on a wretched straw-stuffed pad in severe cold; O humbler than a cloak weaver, a hide tanner, and a monkey rider, and a donkey trainer; O harder to bear than a sponger who quarrels with the drinking companions, requests a variety of songs, and also craves, after lunch and supper, summer dishes in the winter, fondling¹³¹⁷ the cup bearer, interrupts the singer, pounces and fornicates; O one more grievous against respectable men than extended cooling one's heels, the doorkeeper's frowning, the chamberlain's roughness, and the unpleasantness of having to turn around and go home; O worse than the worry of a man whose merchandise sells badly; and more anguished than the heart of an envious secret enemy; and more oppressive than listening to an untalented singer; O more hateful than separation from a friend, than looking at a stepfather on an empty stomach, and the rough spots in the road, or indeed than the evil of the upshot (of something), the strain of misfortune, the spite of enemies, the envy (M. p. 121) of relatives, the tenaciousness of strangers, the faithlessness of partners, and observing bores, hanging around with fools, petitioning misers, and antagonizing poets.¹³¹⁸ (Sh. p. 348)

You are such a jinx that the palm
Rebounds from slapping you

And that, if you were to keep company with the clouds

¹³¹⁶ The owl is unlucky, since when a person dies or is killed, his soul may appear over his grave in the form of an owl. Seeing an owl during the day is a portent of death. al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā*, s.v. "būm."

¹³¹⁷ Emended from *mujashshim* to *mujammish*.

¹³¹⁸ This section parallels Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khuwārizmī, *Rasāʿil* (Qustantiniyya: Maṭbaʿat al-Jawāʿib, 1880), 199-202, but with many variations.

The clouds would give no rain

And that horses, if you were
To mount them, would turn from gray to black

And that if your nature were to appear physically,
(It would make) the bear look beautiful

And that if your disposition were
To take over ʿUrwa,¹³¹⁹ he would not have fallen in love

And that if you were to keep company
With the wasteland, grass wouldn't grow on it

And that if you were to go stay with the Bedouins,
The wolf and the lizard would die

And that if the people of al-Khuld were to see you
They would not stop cursing one another (in order to curse you)¹³²⁰

And you are separation and debt
By which the enamored (man) is surprised

And you are lack of food in the house of a man
Whom the drinkers have _____¹³²¹

You are the privy whose shit had
Overflowed to fill the cistern

And you are the leak that has
Poured forth all night on brocade

And you are the dire straits of poverty
And you are the unboundedly spacious (ass)¹³²²

When you were designated a person
Humanity was insulted

For if you are one of the people

¹³¹⁹ ʿUrwa b. al-Ward. A pre-Islamic *ṣuʿlūk* poet. Tradition has it he divorced his wife Salmā, or Laylā, while drunk and regretted it upon becoming sober. EI2, s.v. “ʿUrwa b. al-Ward.”

¹³²⁰ Khuld could be either the neighborhood of Baghdad where the caliph al-Manṣūr build his palace, or it could be Paradise, i.e. the afterlife. Neither the residents of the palace nor those of Paradise would be cursing under normal circumstances. EI2, s.v. “al-Khuld.”

¹³²¹ The manuscript looks like ʿazzama or possibly ʿgharrama, which do not fit the context.

¹³²² Since this last word is omitted, this is only one possible interpretation.

Then there is not a dog on earth (Sh. p. 349)

O you whose right guidance is error
And O you whose veracity is lying

If it weren't for your exhibiting yourself
Cursing wouldn't be known, nor blame

If it weren't for your body,
Beating wouldn't take place, nor crucifixion

If it weren't for your deficiency,
Books wouldn't be composed beyond *The Deficient*

Another

This my praise and the praise of mankind (for you)
Are, O drop of sperm, two horns on you(r head)

And if I have made it too short,
Consider it a (brief) stroll in a garden

One of the people laughs, so he looks at him and says, "The laughter of the snake in the bag¹³²³ of depilatory paste; the laughter of the bear among the dogs; the head at the head seller's (butcher shop) laughed as the mule laughed (when) the farrier twisted his lip but his companions were not cheered up by him;¹³²⁴ his laughter is like the squeaking of a waterwheel, (M. p. 122) the laughter of the whore when the midwife rebukes her! Do you laugh at me, O son of the thick-witted malicious woman who shits and stirs (it around), and sells it for the price of an acorn? May God blacken your face, O son of the randy--in heat--sodomizee, the loud-voiced, the blind, the wide-cunted, the artificially narrowed (cunt), the one who likes to fuck, (Sh. p. 350) the *mushabbaka*, the flowing one, the brayer, the woodpecker,¹³²⁵ the flighty--may God make my ass a

¹³²³ Emended from *kharāb al-nuwayra* to *jirāb al-nūra*. The proverb means to make one wakeful and attentive. Imil Badī' Ya'qūb, *Mawsū'at Amthāl al-ʿArab*, 4:290.

¹³²⁴ "But his... by him" is unclear in the manuscript.

¹³²⁵ *al-Saqrāqa*. The woodpecker was a bird of ill omen. *al-Damīrī*, 1:542-3.

flint, and your beard tinder. The pock-marked monkey keeper in Baghdad by the Khuld¹³²⁶ precinct is cloaked in your wife's legs with his prick inside her stomach (all the way) to the farthest point of its core! O son of a woman ploughed and driven through like a ship through the waves, if your Hashimite mother's labia were trimmed to a Hashimite style forelock, then I would pluck their mustaches in the mosque in Medina in the *maqṣūra*!¹³²⁷ By the life(-blood) of her salt and pepper anus,¹³²⁸ and the hair of her Khafshalinjī vulva, and the center of her stork-like clitoris, and the black-and-white-magpie-like hair of her ass, then I will pluck your mustaches.¹³²⁹

O son of a woman with a large clitoris, whose ass
Has become a (worn-out) loser back in (its) dotage

The prick plays in her ass with
Her shit, vigorously”

The group is united in confusion, and they say, “What can we do to escape from him?” (Sh. p. 351) The consensus settles on his being served goblets in friendly toasts until he falls asleep. So those from among the people with whom he has not, out of his drunkenness, been quarreling, with cups in their hands, approach him, then he looks at them and says, “Easy does it, O cattle of Allah; camel by camel (so) the camel litters aren't broken, may you remain one group.

The gazelles scattered from Khidāsh¹³³⁰
And now Khidāsh doesn't know what to hunt”¹³³¹

¹³²⁶ An area of Baghdad between the Khurāsān Gate and the Tigris River. The location of the sumptuous Khuld palace built by the caliph al-Manṣūr, 136/754-158/775. The palace was a favorite of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, and his son the caliph al-Amīn, 158/775-198/813. After the latter's brother al-Ma'mūn, 198/813-218/833, defeated him and became sole caliph, it was abandoned and fell into disrepair until the Būyid amīr ʿAḍud al-Dawla chooses it as the site of his hospital, the Bīmāristān. Jacob Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages*, 149-50.

¹³²⁷ A box or stall reserved for the ruler, located near the *miḥrāb* in a mosque. Lane, s.v. “*Maqṣūra*.”

¹³²⁸ Literally: looking like a *khalarj* tree.

¹³²⁹ The word *khirqī* appears at the end of the line but is omitted in the translation because it does not seem to fit grammatically or semantically.

¹³³⁰ ʿUmāra b. Yazīd, a leader of the early Hashimiyya movement in Khurāsān. EI2, s.v. “Khidāsh.”

He approaches one of them and says, “O husband of a thousand prostitutes,
shitters, (this is) a dinner party like the Dinner Party of Sincerity.

Oh son of that (woman) whose clitoris has a cyst
As if it were the foundation of a camel's hump

Pour for me, come on; come on, pour for me
Fifty (drinks), not a jot less!

Another

O one in the depths of whose beard graying has done its
Ablutions, but who has the intellect of a youth

My old man sits on his shit for in
His sitting is a rest from toil”

He approaches someone else, saying, “O son of pimps, O viler than a bedbug?, O
lower than a prison mouse, O viler than lettuce, and rottoner than celery fart(s), O
more ruinous than Dīnawarī cheese and cauliflower. (Sh. p. 352) (M. p. 123)

O son of a woman the entrance to whose ass
Is next to a belvedere and an arcade

The prick doesn't see a path through it
Unless it walks with an oil lantern

Come here, pour for me!” But (the cupbearer) sees a speck of dirt in (the wine)
and sticks his finger in to extract it. Abū al-Qāsim says, “Yuck! You filthy person, what
you are putting in (the wine) is dirtier than what you are extracting from it! May God
not cut off your hand, except with a hoe in the source of the oil.”

Then he approaches another, saying, “O effeminate, O feminine (one), O unclean
(one), O moist (one), O small drum, O tambourine,

Would that someone would arrange for me to meet you alone

¹³³¹ Attributed to Ibn Mu‘āwiya. *al-Aghānī*, 11:74.

Even if you were Dubays¹³³² when he was in al-Ḥilla¹³³³ (Sh. p. 353)

Then I would be (as fast as) lightning to shit along
The length of your beard, by the right of God!

Another

O son of a bastard, and O son of two thousand fathers
O son of the traveler, (progeny) of (every) one who comes and goes on the road

On you there is no spot for a gnat's bite
Except that a drop of (some)one's sperm is in it

Another

O son of (a woman) who reveals such sweet labia
As a pointed face with long cheeks

And who doesn't love the penis unless
It (acts) crazy and out of its mind"

He drinks goblets until no vein remains in his body that doesn't flow with date wine, and sleepiness blurs his eyes, then he opens them from time to time (to look) at those present, and he notices one he had been quarreling with, who, out of fear of him, escaped to the edge of the gathering, and he says:

I am pleased by your keeping aloof from me
May God confirm my pleasure by (making it last) all week

Another

Greetings--but with a 'ḥā' instead of a mīm¹³³⁴
To your beard from my anus (Sh. p. 354)

For you have put me in a very bad spot
And have exceeded all bounds in oppressing me

And I have firmly resolved to

¹³³² Nūr al-Dawlāl Abū al-Aʿazz Dubays b. ʿAlī, founder of the city of Ḥilla, which was located halfway between Baghdad and Kūfa. EI2, s.v. "Mazyad, Banū."

¹³³³ A town on the Tigris River between Baghdad and Kūfa. Although the lifespan of Nūr al-Dawlāl Abū al-Aʿazz Dubays b. ʿAlī, 408/1017-474/1082, he is generally associated with its founding. *al-Buldān*, 2:322-3.

¹³³⁴ Substituting mīm for ḥā changes the word "salām (greetings)" to "salḥ (shit)."

Slap you tomorrow with a sandal

O one whose beard is in my ass
And (in) my mother's up to the sideburns

(It is) thus you mistreat one who loves
You, you jerk, innocently" (M. p. 124)

And he notices another one, who is also avoiding him, keeping away from him,
withdrawn to a (back) room, and says:

O absent person, indeed my anus
Greets your beard

O one with long mustaches, O one over whom
My ass has gone mad and crazy with passion

This nose of yours which, I see, has been perfect
In beauty and been straight in form

If it were to take charge of the state council of my anus,
It would return the greeting to your beard

Then he approaches the rest of the people in the gathering and says, "O dogs, O
wolves, O flies, O drops of drunkards' semen in the wombs of whores,¹³³⁵ O monkeys, O
apostates, O Jews, O remnants of ʿĀd and Thumūd!¹³³⁶

O lowest of the people and their most riff raff-like
From slap-takers to farters

And whose usual coming and going
Is from a place of eating to (one of) shitting

May God forsake you, may God take you, may God shame you!

May God recompense you from me
With the mispointing of "recompense"¹³³⁷

¹³³⁵ This appears as "*Wa-mā ʿaṣīfu min qawmin hum nuṭfu al-sukkārī fi ʿarḥāmi al-qiyanī*," in Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khuwārizmī, *Rasāʾil* (Constantinople: Maṭbaʿat al-Jawāʾib, 1880), 138.

¹³³⁶ In the *Qurʾān*, two legendary tribes destroyed by God because they denied the sign sent to them by God through, respectively, the prophets Hūd and Ṣāliḥ. *Qurʾān*, 26 (al-Shuʿarāʾ): 123-159.

¹³³⁷ Taking the dot off the *jīm* and the *zā* in the word "*jazā* (recompense)" turns it into "*kharā* (shit)."

O billy goats, whose horns are in (the) ascent
 And (O) dogs, whose souls are in (the) descent

O bed of fire, and refuse of the house, and collections of impurities, and tanners'
 dogs, (Sh. p. 355) in the lowness of (your) status, you have all insulted me, robbed me,
 abused me, oppressed me! Between me and all of you will be this (entire) realm
 tomorrow, O sons of whores.

O my lord, you are my master
 If the guard of my lane

Were in a condition such as mine, he
 Would make my eyes weep for him and my heart

O lowest in the world, if you all make me drunk, then who will fornicate with
 the mother of this cuckold in whose house I am, and (with) your mothers...up to his
 saying, 'Those (women) you entered unto.'¹³³⁸ My desire with respect to you won't be
 healed by anyone but this sultan for whom I ask God, by the right of Muḥammad and
 his family, that He may lengthen his life and strike the fire of his flint."

And he recites, as if he were addressing the sultan, asking him for help against
 them, and requesting aid:

O brother of glory and excellence
 Stop among the brothers of monkeys

Your property is ready in their houses
 So hasten (to procure) what is ready and waiting (M. p. 125)

Hurry to the nearby spring
 That is close and easy to reach

The thing is there to be found, so hurry!
 Non-existence of a thing is not like (its) existence

¹³³⁸ An excerpt from *Qur'ān*, 4 (al-Nisā'): 23, which lists all types of female relatives, i.e. he goes in to all his relatives.

O assemblage of (people) hearing me,
Both those standing and those sitting,

I have said what I said as advice
You will all be my witnesses to it tomorrow (Sh. p. 356)

Another

O my lord, listen to the words of a youth
Who is more sincere in what he says than Abū Dharr¹³³⁹

The people have property gathered there
In quantities exceeding the rain drops

And among it, too, are deposits
That have been transported, filled with silver and gold

Grab it before it escapes and don't
Be afraid, by God, of the burden of sinning

Then he says, “(No one has) oppressed me--by Gabriel¹³⁴⁰ and the revelation with
which he descended--except this pimp who pimps his wife around, the cuckold at
whose banquet I am an invited guest.

O ʿAḍud al-Dīn, move quickly to grab the spoils
From the one who has deceived and hoodwinked the king(ship?)

(Shedding) his blood is legitimate and (so is seizing his) property
If you examine the appearance of his circumstances

The only correct decision is to kill him
With the sword, and seize every last bit of his properties”

Then he pretends to sleep (a bit) and recites, as if he has gained influence over
the sultan, and is addressing him:

O my lord, if you undertake to help me (well and good), but if not,
I will not have strength in a war with my adversary

¹³³⁹ Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī. al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn wa-al-Masāwī*, Friedrich Schwally, ed. (Giessen: J. Rickersche, 1902), 412-2. A companion of Muḥammad. EI2, s.v. “Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī.”

¹³⁴⁰ Gabriel is called the angel of revelation because he passed on revelations from God to Muḥammad. *Qurʾān*, 2 (al-Baqara): 97.

He has rank and *dirhams* and property
 And I don't have anyone (to support me) against him except you

In the heart of his house he has a million
Dirhams--Why can no one knock on their door?

They are the emir's *dirhams*, and God protects
 Everything in which there is a livelihood for him

(Another)

O my lord, indeed this dog's
 Iniquity has become overweening

(He is) drunk from the sight of wealth,
 Not from that of chilled (wine)

Whenever pure *dirhams* make him drunk
 Then he gets belligerent (Sh. p. 357)

Then a woman comes out to him, saying, "O old man, what's with you that
 sometimes you cry and other times you scream?" He says:

O sister, if you had seen my condition
 You would have cried over what you had seen of me

(Another) (M. p. 126)

Ah! (It is) a hardship into which I have stupidly fallen--
 What an awful slip!

I (find) no strategy (to get out of) it
 Even if my mother were wanton

(Another)

They beat me--and the old man cries
 And shits when he is beaten

Then sleep conquers him, except that he babbles (in his sleep) the poet's words--
 -and it is as if he has in mind that female singer whom he used to love and has hopes of
 conquering during the gathering:

Woe to you, my lady, speak to me
Before I am seen as a torture victim

Catch me and help
Me with kisses upon the cheek

I desire¹³⁴¹ from you that which no
Noble woman is reluctant to grant:

The hair of your ass' gate is lank
Pluck me from it a lock

Dally at night, by God,
With my penis, O Raṭalla

Here is my penis, look at it
Bestow honor on the *shaykh* of the neighborhood!

It has, in fucking my lady,¹³⁴²
One campaign after another (Sh. p. 358)

And he says,

(She is) a *hourī* who has drunk
The water of the Kawthar River¹³⁴³ by the *ratl*

(She acts) obscenely in (dealing with) my way (of fucking)
She farts if I don't snort!

He goes on fascinating her and charming her, saying:

Behave nicely to me,¹³⁴⁴ for indeed in me there is the greatest
Honor for the one who offers the likes of me sustenance

Another

Forget about that above which is my turban
For indeed my beauty is behind my waistband¹³⁴⁵

¹³⁴¹ Emended from *abkī* to *abghī*.

¹³⁴² The manuscript has an extra *alif* here.

¹³⁴³ The name of the River that runs through Heaven. EI2, s.v. "Kawthwar."

¹³⁴⁴ Emended from *ilā* to *lī*.

¹³⁴⁵ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Yatīma*, 3:65.

The woman says, “Woe to you, why don’t you realize that you’re an old man?” But he says:

An old man whose eye we see
Is ransomed--but by souls!

Another

(He is) an old man but he has a prick
For whose length (his) underpants are too short

Another (M. p. 127)

It is an organ better than a spoon on which
At night, is moist baklava

O my lord, is it aught but a peg
That I pound to the hilt in a(n ass)hole

O my lord,

(It is) a prick that has, (uniquely)
Among pricks, the taste of sugar candy

It pours into the guts something
Sweeter than rosewater (Sh. p. 359)

Someone says, “What are you up to with her, O Abū al-Qāsim?” He says:

My prick has got to the point that it asks her for whatever it wants--
May Allah strengthen it--without shrinking (from doing so)¹³⁴⁶

Someone says, “O Abū al-Qāsim, why this flippancy?” He replies, “O our lord,

This is a stupidity from me--and (indeed), since I was born,
I have displayed a stupidity that is truly Ḥumṣī¹³⁴⁷
And in me, when I fuck, is goatish”¹³⁴⁸

¹³⁴⁶ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Copenhagen 57a.

¹³⁴⁷ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, selected by Jamāl al-Rīn Muḥammad b. Nubāta; Najm ʿAbd Allah Muṣṭafā, ed., 317. Ḥumṣī is the adjective that refers to inhabitants of Hum.

¹³⁴⁸ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Yatīma*, 3:83 and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, selected by Jamāl al-Rīn Muḥammad b. Nubāta; Najm ʿAbd Allah Muṣṭafā, ed., 318.

Then he drinks to her and says, “May God be with you, drink while I am present,” then she takes the glass and he asks (God for) help and recites:

It is as if she, when the goblet is in her hand, is
A full moon in darkness, with Venus in its hand

And he says, “O

My soul is anguished with love, by the fact that she
Is beside me, her ass¹³⁴⁹ crack can be entered

Another

(I would ransom) with my father the one whom I adore, while I, compared to her shit,
Am viler than the vulva of a woman who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca”

Then he says, “What should I do?

Love for her rose in my stomach
Like a domed nail

Love for her--by God--in my
Heart, is date wine with bubbles on top”¹³⁵⁰ (Sh. p. 360)

And she remains by him while he plays with her, until he betrays a certain restlessness, and lets out a resounding one; then the woman says, “May God make your eyes burn, you old farter,” and he says:

My lady has gotten angry and reacted negatively to
An explosion that popped out of my back

I have no offense except that I
Fart during the night without knowing it

If only I knew, when she is exasperated
Am I farting from her ass or mine?”¹³⁵¹ (M. p. 128)

Then he turns back from her to his place and recites:

¹³⁴⁹ Emended from *ishtihā* to *istihā*.

¹³⁵⁰ al-Khafājī, *Shifāʾ al-Ghalīl*, 150.

¹³⁵¹ By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in *Yatīma*, 3:88, with variations.

(She is) a virgin, in my opinion, even if she can not
Be swayed either by joking or (by) seriousness

She dismissed me, as the hand cleaner
And the sedge dismissed (the residues of) dinner

His companion says to him, "O Abū al-Qāsim, What was that long tête-à-tête
about?"

He says, "I was laying down a stone-course of affection between them, (but)
then she shunned me and avoided me."

He says, "What did I say to her that would force her to shun (you)?"

He says, "I said that, too," when¹³⁵² I said:

What's with you? Why did you flee O my lady?
What would happen to you if you spent the night?

Your father is of my generation, and you are (like) a daughter to me
So don't be disobedient to your father O my girl¹³⁵³

His companion says, "What did she say to you in answer to this?" He says: (Sh.

p. 361)

She said, You are (you, you are not my father)
I am afraid you will screw me in the ass

I said to her, so act, (and I will act--should
You spend the night)--as if what you said were true

Khusraw screwed his daughter¹³⁵⁴ before I (proposed such a thing)
And who am I (compared to) him and who are you?¹³⁵⁵

Then he says:

¹³⁵² Emended from 'aw to 'idh.

¹³⁵³ Ibn al- Ḥajjāj, *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shi'r Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, 24a.

¹³⁵⁴ In Sasanian Persia, marriage was acceptable with all relatives on the paternal side. Incestuous marriages were entirely acceptable. For example, Ardashīr I, 226-241, was married to his sister, and Shāpūr I, 239 or 241 to 270 or 273, was married to his daughter. *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 3, pt. 2, *The Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian periods* / edited by Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: University Press, 1968-), 644.

¹³⁵⁵ Ibn al- Ḥajjāj, *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shi'r Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, 24a.

May God not protect her--what a haughty one
Who confronts me with dispute and slander

What harm would it do her under the blanket if
I teased the cotton of her ass with my carding hook

He says, "May God curse her, some women are silent farters, others are just
(loud) farters in gowns."

Someone says to him, "Having reached a peak of emotion, what will you
propose? What would you like (as a gift) from the nice things here?" (It is as if he were
referring to (something like) a handkerchief or perfume.) He says, "O our lord,

To speak the truth, I don't
Want a handkerchief or perfume

Nor a trifling favor,
Rather I want *dīnārs*,

And *dirhams* covering a bowl
Of gold and silver,

Riding beasts and clothing
For adornment and glory,

And ambling grey (horses)
And blacks and chestnuts,

And a cheetah and a falcon
And an Indian falcon and a hawk" (Sh. p. 362) (M. p. 129)

Then he notices a Daylamī youth and says, "May God be with you, who is this? It
would seem that Riḍwān¹³⁵⁶ slept, then this one escaped from Paradise!" and he recites:

It is as if the choicest wine is from the (sheen) of his cheek
And its bunches of grapes are clipped from his curly hair

And indeed I forget my eyelids when he appears
For I continue to (stare) amazed at him, not blinking¹³⁵⁷

¹³⁵⁶ The Guardian of Paradise. EI2, s.v. "Riḍwān."

He says, "Taking refuge in God,

My killer is a gazelle fawn, marvelously coquettish
A Persian in passion, pure of speech

Another

(He is) aflame with beauty--is the one I see a human being?
He reveals hail-stones, that, were they not frozen, would drip

Another

The garment of his cheek is a fresh-plucked rose
And the *nūn* of his side curl is dotted with a mole¹³⁵⁸

Another

(He is) effeminate in nature, (but) his heart is a stone
(But he) is sweet whenever the gaze tastes him

Another

His garments are fastened over reddish white heaps of sand

Another

A breeze whose tails the dawn has thinned, sets in
Motion the branch between the two of them,
If it weren't for the frowning of pride, a sign
Of his coquettishness would be seen in his glance" (Sh. p. 363)

And he says:

I see a night of (black) hair
Above a human sun

Are you content that my hope of success
With you end in hopelessness?"

And he says,

What rose is in the cheek of this gazelle?

¹³⁵⁷ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 2:280. These bayts are the last two lines in an eight line poem.

¹³⁵⁸ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 2:296. This bayt is the next to last line of an eleven line poem.

What swaying is in his figure, and what straight stance?

What pearl does he reveal when he smiles;
And (what) beguilement and coquetry in his glance?¹³⁵⁹

The Daylamī (youth) approaches and comes toward him with a goblet (of wine),
and Abū al-Qāsim goes up to him and says, "The poet said:

If only I knew, is it in sleep that I see
A moon which visits me without (having) promised

Isfahan's earth became musk and camphor and
Nadd incense, and her water (became) rosewater (M. p. 130)

Another

It is a moon which carries a sun
Welcome to the sun and moon

Gold inside gold
(Carried by) a silver branch

Another

Woe to the hearts from the eyes--they have
Experienced the Resurrection in this world

Another

His temple-curls have leaned over his cheek
Like bunches of grapes over roses

Another

Over the garden of his two cheeks
Are circlet-curls¹³⁶⁰ of jet¹³⁶¹ (Sh. p. 364)

Another

They transformed his cheek (by putting)
Musk on smooth cheek(s)

¹³⁵⁹ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 1:374. The first two lines of a five line poem.

¹³⁶⁰ Sidelocks formed into a ring. Lane, s.v. "Zarḥīn."

¹³⁶¹ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 1:331.

(Which are) under his two temple-curls
Which point to a pretty face

Another

It is as if the black clusters (of grapes) of his curl
Gave their choicest wine undiluted to his mouth

Another

A young gazelle whose cheek(s) and eyes
Are my roses and narcissi

If you generously grant me the wine of his
Mouth, my party will have been made complete”

And he recites as though sighing with regret:

His blossom hovers close, and his touch
Is soft, how impossible (it is) one might find him

(His mouth is) a watering place whose approaches are easy
(And) in whose wine his hailstones are frozen

He is my sickness when I am deprived of him
And the soul's cure if I could find him

The youth stretches out his hand for (Abū al-Qāsim) to drink the cup (of wine),

and (the latter) recites:

The palm is ivory, and the bubbles are pearls
And the wine is gold, and the glass is emerald

And he says:

The moon in the deep dark has been adorned with Jupiter's earring

And he seeks refuge (in God) and says: (M. p. 131)

O company of onlookers, who (of you)
Has ever seen violets rising from roses? (Sh. p. 365)

And the youth sips from the goblet, and (Abū al-Qāsim) recites:

I said to the glass while he was sipping from it

And he recites the poet's words:

A slender boy whose qualities are so perfect
That they surpass the soul's desire

I regarded him when the cup was
Between his mouth and his five fingers

It is as if he, when the cup was at his mouth,
Were the moon kissing the sun's cheek¹³⁶²

Another

He (a boy) greeted you from his eyelids with narcissi
And from his hand, gave you the souls' life to drink

It is as if he were a moon giving you to drink with his palm
A sun around which constellations of cups revolve

And (Abū al-Qāsim) stares at (the boy), who trips out of timidity, and recites:

He is embarrassed when he sees me, as though I
Were dotting his cheek with pomegranate blossoms¹³⁶³

Another

The dyer of shame continually and doggedly dyes his cheek
Sometimes with saffron, and sometimes with roses¹³⁶⁴

Another

With my soul (I would ransom) one who, when seeing me,
Becomes as if the pomegranate blossoms were his cheeks

I do not understand whether he is ashamed because of his tyranny to me
Or his shame is due to my looking at him

Another

By my father (I would ransom) one, if I looked at him
In whose two cheeks the water of shame fluctuates

¹³⁶² By Ibn al-Rūmī, with variations. Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī*, 3:136. Lines 1, 3 and 4 of a four line poem. *Zahr*, 417.

¹³⁶³ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 2:257.

¹³⁶⁴ Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 1:343.

(He is) a moon, my glance at whom overcame me--
If only I had not looked at him (Sh. p. 366)

Someone says, "What are you going on about, O Abū al-Qāsim?" He says, "I'm
(pre)occupied with a person who is not rightly guided to be charitable (to me)!" and he
approaches him, saying:

O one witty of coquetry, O peach fuzzed of cheek
O one in whose presence I am dying

O one in whom are the sources of every
Goodness and beauty, from head to foot

Then he approaches the 'ud player and says, "God be with you, play for me (this
song) upon the highest string," and he sings out lustily: (M. p. 132)

O my (little) brother--indeed fate is fleeting
Between the third and the second strings

(It is) a single thing, but what meaning
Does it garner from the elegant meanings?

The singer picks it up from him, and repeats it. Then (Abū al-Qāsim) bellows a
second time, saying:

He sang, and kindled the fire of passion in
The heart of one passionate (and) yearning of heart

Then we mingled, so that the drinker was not distinguished
By us from the cup-bearer in my gathering

And he recites:

We had found (a moment of) negligence on the part of the guardian
And we stole a peek at a beloved

And we saw there a pretty face
(Which) we found a valid excuse for sins¹³⁶⁵

¹³⁶⁵ Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 1:316.

Then he says to the company, “God be with you, line up, embrace closely,
form a circle!” And he says to the cup-bearer:

Pass the cup around among us
They are (all), like us, present

Indeed it is the best of days
On which to drink wines

Indeed it is the best of days
For paying out pimps’ fees (Sh. p. 367)

He says, “O people, we have reached the limits of drunkenness, which requires the *ḥadd* punishment, but the sins of drunkenness are deflected onto the back of the wine (itself), and the activity of drinking covers its offense.”¹³⁶⁶

He makes a show of being stupid without being so, and says, “Know that too much frivolity leaves the old men like children--but then (real) life (only comes) with frivolity.”

And he looks at one who isn't drinking and says, “Perhaps our lord has made a contract with the group to share some of their snacks, and laugh at their mind(s)--and is doing no less than his best at both.”

He returns his glance once more to the Daylamī (youth) and recites:

His saliva is ambergris and wine
And his face in the darkness is morning

An army brat, he is a non-Arab,
The weapon of the whose ass’ hair is shit

Another

A young gazelle, whose ass is softer
And pleasanter than grapes (Sh. p. 368)

¹³⁶⁶ al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ al-Jawāhir fī al-Mulāḥ wa-al-Nawādir*, ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1987), 189.

(Another)

My prick (in) the gate of his ass
Was wound about with shit

The pricks have continued to pierce
His ass until they collapsed (M. p. 133)

Another

A young gazelle, from the pebbles of whose
Ass' dung I have strung a rosary

Whenever a night visitor knocked
At the gate of his ass crack, he opened!

Another

(My) prick awakens his ass
With farting, whenever it dozes off

It is an asshole--I would be its ransom!--
That almost never holds its breath!

Another

His (beautiful) face is (my) excuse against
The one who blames (me) for love (of him), or warns

And he has an eye that disturbs
My mind when he regards (me)

Another

Every distinct (sort of) beauty
Is combined in him

He cut the link between us
Truly he desires "cuts" (coins)

Another

Lean-flanked, his anus
Bursts with grease

The prick is milked in his ass

(Giving) two *ratls* of milk a day

Another

His ass, due to his splendor
Is full of pride and glory

He has an ass (in) whose laughter
In the tail end of the night, is a guffaw (Sh. p. 369)

He continues reciting such poetry as this, and when someone (finally) says to him, “Woe to you, how long is this idiocy going to go on, O old man, have you no shame?” He says, “O our lord,

He is a foolish old man, but yet
He brings a witty foolishness”

Then he says to the singer, “Take *khafif* as the meter, over the rhythm *mākhūrī*,¹³⁶⁷ and he jumps up and begins to dance, and he recites:

The hardness of the prick and the softness of the shit
In the ass: the two together are what please me

O affliction, O the evil of my luck--but how
Sweet are the two to me when they get together?

My prick’s insistence has refused to
Waver in its versatility in fucking (M. p. 134)

And he asks (God) for help during this, and says:

The one asked for help is (my lord)
From my lady’s pussy and my prick

The two who have burdened me with fucking
Which had almost broken my back

But I say in regard to what
You see in my heart’s preoccupation:

¹³⁶⁷ Emended from *mājūrī* to *mākhūrī*. A rhythm used in Arabic music in early times, or a rhythm used in the Iraqi *maqām*. Ḥusayn ʿAlī Maḥfūz, *Qāmūs al-Mūsīqī al-ʿArabiyya* (Baghdād: Dār Ḥurriyya, 1977).

In my opinion, there is no reason
For rebuking the pussy

Nor can it be blamed for a sin
(Not) even for a day of time¹³⁶⁸

It is the prick--my prick--that you should curse!
For indeed it is a dog's prick!

A prick that yearns to fuck
Every hairy pussy

It is as if it were a head of an old camel
A big strong one

Today is the day of my profligacy
And the day of my dancing and my playing¹³⁶⁹ (Sh. p. 370)

And he continues dancing until he falls to the ground from breathlessness and too much drinking, and, in his breathlessness and sorry condition, he says to the singer, "By God, cure my thirst with a moving song."

The singer is annoyed and says in Persian, "Who is this plague with whom you have afflicted us tonight?"

(Abū al-Qāsim) understands what he means by "the plague" and goes up to him, saying, "You dog, I'm a plague! Do you know me?"

Do you impugn my status?
Get up, you effeminate, and sing!

Don't lord it over me
Like a rich person

For (even) if you reached the Pleiades
You would be nothing but a singer"

And he says:

¹³⁶⁸ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Talṭīf al-Mizāj min Shī'r Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, Copenhagen 9a.

¹³⁶⁹ Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.

When you showed off wittiness with this song
I found my heart to be unhappy

I was on the brink of breaking every *ṭanbūr*
Because of (the) ugliness of what you make me hear

Another

Neither the beauty of a nice song
Nor of an extremely mellifluous voice

Does he resemble when he sings--(that is)
When a hoopoe screeches

Or an owl of a privy or an owl
Or a black crow (Sh. p. 371) (M. p. 135)

Another

And it is as if the striking of his fingers (on the strings) were the striking (of
swords) on necks
And as if his rhythm were a punch in the nose”

Then he too becomes quarrelsome and says, “O son of (a woman) distant¹³⁷⁰ from
good; wide from (repeated pounding by) a prick; you destroyer¹³⁷¹ of lute players’ lutes
and necks of *ṭanbūr* players’ *ṭanbūrs*; and all the tambourine players’ tambourines; and
the joints of the frames of the drums of the people of low condition and the flutes
raised and lowered, on the shelves¹³⁷² of storerooms of women who (try to) stick their
clitorises in the asses of the women of your family, paternal and maternal aunts and
mothers! O son of a woman with a deformed vulva, according to all reports.

The vileness of this singing testifies to me
That you(f), since you were born, have been rifferaff

O drain pipe that flows without cleansing
And O toilet filled without a (retaining) wall

¹³⁷⁰ Emended from *al-sa‘ā’a* to *al-shāsi‘a*.

¹³⁷¹ Emended from *maḥaqa* to *māhiq*.

¹³⁷² Emended from *rifāf* to *dafāf*.

(All) the pricks of Baghdad are in your mother's cunt
Together with the heads of erect penises in Wāsiṭ!

Another

And each who finds contradiction of my words allowable
And whose views on that exceeded my own--

May his beard and the beard of each low life
Who agrees with him be deep in the hollow of my ass"¹³⁷³

And one of the people at the gathering says, "Woe to you, what has this poor
man done, that you confront him with all this?" (Sh. p. 372)

Then he says, "O lord, look at how he sides with him against me!

I'm disgusted with my humiliating state--
For indeed I have become a monkey among monkeys

Another

O son of those (women) with whom, in the
Darkness, the husbands want to couple

O rhinoceros with a horn--
With whose horn(-like member) the mountain goats butt

You wanted to benefit by my foolishness
But getting there is by an unhealthy passage

O spouse of the one whose fuckers' beards
Get long along with her ass cheeks' hair

(She has) long had a rotten womb
She menstruates double what she pees

You see the menstrual blood when she walks,
Flowing onto her hamstrings

Her soil is fertile--every day
Palm shoots are planted in her ass

¹³⁷³ Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, London 127b, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.

She has a vulva that is so putrid
It seemed to me it was dead (M. p. 136)

Above it (the vulva) is an arch that is too narrow (for
Anything) except a camel mare with a weaned foal behind her

And a rectum (the length of) a thousand *ashls*¹³⁷⁴
And just look how many cubits there are in an *ashl*!

Are you among those who are overbearing to me too,
Along with the vicissitudes of time?

You deemed yourself above me--yes, by my life
You are nothing else but a splendid youth?!

The evidence of glory in you is ***¹³⁷⁵
And its witnesses, all of them, are honest (Sh. p. 373)

(You have) a horn of honorable extent and a soul
Which obscurity affixes to the earth

And an ass that burns with the fire of conflagration
And whose thirst cannot be assuaged

Your noble companions recite accounts
Of (your ass) to us at night

They include everyone with an unruly prick head
Whose violent motion in the guts produces a clattering

The repulsive qualities of the dog are gathered in you
You may abandon them but they will not cease¹³⁷⁶

And the dog is loyal (but) in you is treachery
And you are even lower than it!

A (dog may) guard the cattle
But you neither defend nor attack (anyone)

Anyone seated (with you) who looks at you staring
Is a very patient one, long suffering under injury

¹³⁷⁴ Emended from *asl* to *ashl*. An *ashl* was sixty "cubits" in length. A *cubit* was the length of a forearm and thus was a variable length. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī, *Kitāb Mafitīḥ al-ʿUlum*, 66.

¹³⁷⁵ Something is missing here.

¹³⁷⁶ This line, the two lines following it and the line beginning "It is a bayt" are lines 9, 12, 13, and 28 in a poem by Ibn al-Rūmī. Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī*, 5:230.

Mustaf'ilun fā'ilun fa'ūlun
Mustaf'ilun fā'ilun fa'ūlun

(That is) a verse that means just what you do:
 There is nothing in it, it is completely superfluous!

O shit which a sick person with indigestion
 (In) his abdomen squeezed out gently

And before that hadn't shit
 Or peed for about a month

Take it before breakfast for in it
 Is a myrobalan electuary¹³⁷⁷ with ginger!"

And he approaches a person and says:

Regard how I have been accosted by one
 Contemptible in branch and root

Without a soul or perception
 Without understanding or intellect

This dog came from afar
 In order to be slapped with a sandal

And with a rope and a whip
 And with the hand and the foot

Then he says, "You have done well! (Sh. p. 374)

Whenever you want to pierce me, may my ass continue
 Covering and pressing into the depths of your beard" (M. p. 137)

Then he says:

O son of the (woman) whose coccyx is busy
 And whose bottom quivers

And you whose ass grills the sinews
 At night but doesn't fry (them)

You have pricked up your ears
 So you may be slapped with a sandal!

¹³⁷⁷ Astringent powder in a sweet base. Lane, s.v. "Aṭrīfāl."

Another

O son of the fucked woman, the penetrated
The farther, pounding, the repentant tribode

(I have a penis) I stuffed in you until
The pressure of the choking made its saliva flow

And a sausage that was grilled in the oven of ass
And then you tossed some *jūdhāba* under it

You dog, the wall you pierced (in order to burgle) turned out to be the wall of a privy; you've mixed the waters of a sewer with those of a freshly dug well; stare at me with your eyes and incline your ears to me; don't move your hands or your shoulders; alert one deemed weak. Woe to you! My friends are more numerous than palm leaves in Basra, and oaks in Jabal,¹³⁷⁸ the mustard of Egypt, the lentils of Syria, the pebbles of al-Jazīra,¹³⁷⁹ the thorns of al-Qāṭūl,¹³⁸⁰ wheat of (Sh. p. 375) al-Mawṣil, lotus fruit of al-Ahwāz, and the olives of Palestine. Woe to you! My¹³⁸¹ friends are Ṭafisa, Zaybaqī, Ṣabāḥ al-Ṭāq, Sukḥṭa b. Abī al-Baḡhl,¹³⁸² Mūsā (b.) Salḥa,¹³⁸³ Ju'ayfar b. al-Kalba,¹³⁸⁴ Kurdawayh,¹³⁸⁵ Zurayq b. Wardān,¹³⁸⁶ ʿĀqūl the Armenian, Ghulayba the brother of Ḥarba b. al-Salqī, ʿUlwān the grocer, and Rukawayh the donkey-renter, and Ḥarmal b. Khardal the cousin of al-Samāṭ the Slav. Woe to you! Do you know me or not? I eat sand and shit rock; I swallow date pits and shit palm trees. Woe to you! I am a muddy wave; I am a difficult lock; I am fire; I am a brigand; I am a mill when it turns; I walked

¹³⁷⁸ The district located between Isfahan, Zinjan and Qazwin. *al-Buldān*, 2:15.

¹³⁷⁹ The region between the upper Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers. *al-Buldān*, 2:72.

¹³⁸⁰ A canal dividing out of the Tigris River near Samarra. *al-Buldān*, 4:16.

¹³⁸¹ From "my" through "dumb man," this section closely parallels *al-Baṣāʿir*, pt. 4, p. 157-160, anecdote 538.

¹³⁸² Literally, Discontent, the son of the Father of the Mule.

¹³⁸³ Literally, Mūsā, son of Shit.

¹³⁸⁴ Literally, little Ja'far son of a Bitch.

¹³⁸⁵ From "Mūsā" through "Kurdawayh" is paralleled in *al-Baṣāʿir*, pt. 4, p. 158, anecdote 538.

¹³⁸⁶ Cockroach, Wehr, s.v. "Wardān."

two weeks without a head; I am the one who established thuggery, or wrote the rules for brigandage. I am Pharoah; I am Hāmān,¹³⁸⁷ I am Nimrod b. Kanʿān,¹³⁸⁸ I am the uncircumcised devil; I am the bear who fights without weapons; I am the obstinate mule; I am the cruel war; I am the angry camel; I am the lustful elephant; I am the destructive time; I am the pinch of necessity; I am the tyrannical lion; I am the trumpet of war and the drum of discord;¹³⁸⁹ I am Allah's wall parting the Red Sea; I am fate; I am caution; I am prohibition; I break up (prayer) rows; I beat up (M. p. 138) both armies (in a battle); I am famous to the ends of the earth for beheading; I am spring when the people are in drought; I am a rich person when bankruptcy appears; I am more celebrated than a festival; I am stronger than iron; I am the Salār;¹³⁹⁰ I am Mirdās b. ʿAmr;¹³⁹¹ I am al-Ashtar;¹³⁹² I am al-Julandā b. Karkar;¹³⁹³ I am Abū ʿAlī al-Aʿwar; when he sees me, Iblīs flees; I am a skillful shrewd fellow; I am an uprooter of arched bridges; I am a better guide than the grouse; and more cautious than the magpie; more persistent than a fly; and more stubborn than a dung beetle; sharper than depilatory lime; more

¹³⁸⁷ A companion of the pharaoh who opposed Moses. Hāmān called Moses a lying sorcerer. Pharaoh asked him to build a mud-brick tower so he could survey Moses' God. *Qurʿān*, 28 (al-Qaṣaṣ): 38 and *Qurʿān*, (al-Muʿmin or al-Ghāfir): 24, 36.

¹³⁸⁸ A legendary tyrannical king who used a litter drawn by eagles to try to attack Abraham's God up in Heaven. EI2, s.v. "Namrūd."

¹³⁸⁹ From "I am Hāmān" through "drum of discord." appears in *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 4, p. 157, anecdote 538.

¹³⁹⁰ The name of the king of a people in Azerbaijan called the Lanjar, who were said to be of Arabic extraction. Abū Ishāk al-Fārisī al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Viae Regnorum*, M.J. De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, pars 1, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1927), 191.

¹³⁹¹ Abū Ishāk al-Fārisī al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Viae Regnorum*, M.J. De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, pars 1, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1927), 142. EI2, s.v. "Mirdās b. Udaiya Abī Bilāl." Mirdās b. Udaiya, d. 61/680-1, was a very moderate Kharijite who left Baṣra in protest of its governor's oppression and settled in Fārs. The governor sent men after him and they cut his head off while he was praying. The unjust treatment of a pious, moderate man became a symbol for future rebellions against the Umayyads by those who considered their rule unjust.

¹³⁹² al-Ashtar b. al-Hārith al-Nakhʿī. Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī, *Kitāb al-Buldān* (Beirut: ʿAlam al-Kitāb, 1996), 258-9. EI2, s.v. "al-Ashtar." al-Ashtar, d. ca. 37/658, consistently and uncompromisingly opposed the caliph ʿUthmān and the ruling class and supported the rights of the troops.

¹³⁹³ An unidentifiable member of the Āl-Julandā, which were a seafaring people who sailed between Yemen and Fārs for the purposes of trade. Abū Ishāk al-Fārisī al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Viae Regnorum*, M.J. De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, pars 1, 140.

valuable than snake bite antidote; more bitter than colocynth; and more conspicuous than the giraffe. I was confined in a thicket, so I ate the lions that were in it, and made the grass my vegetable (course);¹³⁹⁴ (Sh. p. 376) my food is myrrh, my drink is blood and my candy is vipers' brains. I have cut my veins with every dagger, and crushed my bones in each sieve; I make the rounds of (both) salons and dungeons, and in them I upset creatures with (my) patience. I witnessed the ghoul giving birth; I carried the devil's bier;¹³⁹⁵ I broke the tiger's jaw; and I attacked the lion with a saddle. I have killed a thousand, and I am in pursuit of a(nother) thousand. This is my means to the hereafter. I take bribes: Do you need anything from Mālik the treasure-keeper of Hell? Woe to you! Do you know me? This Ḥamdūn was brought up in my bosom, he committed a capital offense and for it was nailed to a cross. And Ḥamdān was raised by me too. I was struck with a thousand whips but did not scowl. I was banished, by God's light, to al-Shāsh¹³⁹⁶ and Farghāna,¹³⁹⁷ then brought back to Tangier and Europe and Andalusia and Africa, and to the mountains at the edge of the world, and beyond Byzantium, and to Gog and Magog's wall,¹³⁹⁸ and to every place Dhū al-Qarnayn¹³⁹⁹ did not reach and al-Khiḍr¹⁴⁰⁰ did not know.¹⁴⁰¹ I was not apprehensive over them, nor attached to them. One of my eggs, by God's light, is equal to a thousand. If it were hatched, a thousand devils would emerge from it. If I were beheaded, I would not die, by my Lord's predestination, (even) after a year. If a man addressed me whose head

¹³⁹⁴ From "I was" through "vegetable" is paralleled in *al-Baṣā'ir*, pt. 4, p. 158, anecdote 538.

¹³⁹⁵ These two phrases appear in *al-Baṣā'ir*, pt. 4, p. 158, anecdote 538.

¹³⁹⁶ Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. EI2, s.v. "Tashkent."

¹³⁹⁷ The Farghāna Valley, now in southeast Uzbekistan. It was a frontier area, but nevertheless was well-developed under the Sāmānids. *al-Buldān*, 3:878-80.

¹³⁹⁸ Two peoples who will waste the land at the end of the world. Alexander created a barrier which contained them. *Qur'ān*, 18 (al-Kahf): 93-97.

¹³⁹⁹ Alexander the Great.

¹⁴⁰⁰ al-Khidr, the green man, is considered to have been granted God's wisdom. EI2, s.v. "al-Khaḍir."

¹⁴⁰¹ From "I was banished" through "did not know" is paralleled in *al-Baṣā'ir*, pt. 4, p. 158, anecdote 538.

was above Capella and whose feet played about in bird-lime, I would not give him a punch lighter than one with which I would disperse his bones so completely they would take months to re-assemble, (Sh. p. 377) or I would slit his nose, place it in his sidelock, and slap him on his bald head with the two of them, along with two *ratls* of shit. If a man spoke to me whose head was of iron, his body of copper, and his legs of lead, then I would slap him with a slap that would send his nose flying from the back of his head. If a man who extinguishes fire with his mustaches spoke to me, then I would knit his nose hair to his underarm hair, and I would turn him around so that he would smell the soundless farting of his ass's (M. p. 139) gate. If I were to snort a snort, then Christian monks' cells would collapse and the palaces of the Banī Isrāʾīl would be destroyed.¹⁴⁰² Woe to you! I am Zurayq¹⁴⁰³ al-Jinnī. It is not possible for pharaoh to scowl in my face, or to remain near me, or to argue word for word. My head is an anvil, my beard a dagger, my mustache is a *nāfrūt*, my canine tooth is a butcher's knife, and my hand is a smith's hammer. Does anyone perhaps have something to say? O Son of the Slapped Woman, O Son of the Cast-Out Woman, perhaps you have something to say, O Son of the Much-Married Woman, the Quarrelsome Woman, the Charwoman, the Woman who Hoards. You dog, bark! Fill your eyes with me, and you will fill them with a devil whose name is Saqlāb,¹⁴⁰⁴ and he who plays shuttlecock with you as the shuttle, and farts soundlessly on you with the fart of a small-headed one at a pendulous breast.¹⁴⁰⁵ If it weren't that I fear for the earth, I would snort (Sh. p. 378) with a snort that is half lightning and half earthquake. Woe to you! By God, indeed I will put you in my pocket,

¹⁴⁰² This sentence is found in *al-Baṣāʾir*, pt. 4, p. 158, anecdote 538.

¹⁴⁰³ A crow or a jay. *Hava*, s.v. "Zurayq."

¹⁴⁰⁴ Voracious.

¹⁴⁰⁵ This could be read as: a red-headed sparrow in a milkskin.

and forget you until you rot. I will cut off your head and make it a button on my shirt. I will snuff you up but not sneeze you out except in hellfire. I will drink you but only pee you (while crossing) the Straight Path,¹⁴⁰⁶ when Adam shouts, ‘O lost one! I will drink you, then fart you, then I will return you to what is bad for you.’ Woe to you! Do you know me?

I am the one who, if the sea were mixed with me
The depths of the sea would be roiled by me

I am the one who, if the Nile tripped over me
The water of the Nile would cease to flow

I am the one who, if they laid me to rest in the earth
The graves of the people would raise howls of protest about my grave

And if the devil at night _____¹⁴⁰⁷ me,
The devil would take refuge from my evil

And (as for) the lion, if I boxed his ears (with my) bare (hands)
My fingernail would notch the tip of his claw

And if I received the “breast” (points) of spears
I would break them by their piercing of my breast

And the sword, if you so much as mentioned me to it
It would turn tail, mention of me having shattered it

I am the one who shits but then
With the beard of such as you wipes myself

Woe to you, do you know me? If the elephant spoke to me, it would become mute; if the sea embraced me, it would become dry; if the lion were to bite me, its teeth would become dull; if Nimrūd were to see me, he would not stand his ground. You dog, I am I, who are you? You plague, you malady, you mange, you shit in a sack, you discarded bad dates; you Jew shit; you reheated *fālūdh*; you tip of a scroll; you donkey

¹⁴⁰⁶ *Qurʾān*, 1 (al-Fātiḥa):6.

¹⁴⁰⁷ This word or phrase is not clear: *wa-la-wqdʿa*.

tail;¹⁴⁰⁸ you mouse shit; you blackness of tar; you dregs of one who presses oil; (Sh. p. 379) you fuller's mallet; you collection of impurities; you cooking pot (M. p. 140) without spices; you carpenter's borer; you cloth maker's basket; you moth-eaten nags; you dolt; you fickle man; you braided rope; you patched¹⁴⁰⁹ wall; you shackled bear; you obstacle in the course; you stuffing of the privy; you truffle leaves; you slimy dirt; you roughness of sandpaper; you bucket without a rope; you¹⁴¹⁰ 'old woman's cold';¹⁴¹¹ you torment of July; you uncirculatable *dirham*; you dirt in the armpits of a fat man; you shame of the impotent one; you singers' conversation; you nightmare's oppression; you indigestion of the heads; you eye disease; you separation of lovers; you sops of the *zaqqūm* tree; you ostracized one from his baseness; you stench of garlic; you fear of the threats (of Hell); you who repeatedly tells the same story; you uglier than "ḥattā" in various places; (Sh. p. 380) you toilet's sewer pipe; you host's cough when the loaf is turned over; you drunkard's burp; you trembling of one with a respiratory disease; you tent peg of the houses; you Wednesday that doesn't pass (recur?);¹⁴¹² you millstone on top of a millstone; you disease without a remedy; you blindness on top of blindness; you roof without a gutter; you *ūd* without a plectrum; you thunder without clouds; you shirt without buttons, and you river without a channel; you calamity on top of a calamity; you viper's head in the road; you Armenian primate's cloak; you eunuch's pee; you grief of being forgotten; you boys' Saturday; you dinner (date) with blind men;

¹⁴⁰⁸ al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-Qulūb fī al-Muḍāf wa-al-Manūsub* (Damascus: Dār al-Baghāʿir, 1994), 1:558, no. 572.

¹⁴⁰⁹ al-Mawsūl. Literally joined.

¹⁴¹⁰ From "you (*yā bard*)" through "less than a penny (*fals*)," this section is closely parallel to al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* (al-Dīnāriyya), 217-222.

¹⁴¹¹ There are multiple anecdotes. One describes an old woman who informs her tribe that the end of winter and beginning of spring will be very cold. When the cold weather arrives as predicted, the tribes call it "the old woman's cold." al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-Qulūb fī al-Muḍāf wa-al-Mansūb*, 1:483-5, no. 473.

¹⁴¹² The last Wednesday in each month. *Maqāmāt* (al-Dīnāriyya), 219.

you rejection of witnessing; you pit of shame; you busybodiness of a man from Rayy; you miserliness of an Ahwāzī; you monkey trainer; you Jews' felt (hats);¹⁴¹³ you silent farting of a black (man); you lions' bad breath; you farting upon prostration; you non-existence in existence; you dog sic'ed (on people); you tick in the mattress; you pumpkin with Indian peas; you smoke from oil; you armpit odor; you granting of divorce and withholding of dowry; you street mud; you (drink of) water on an empty stomach; you yellow teeth; you ear wax; you more awful than vomiting; (Sh. p. 381) you less than a penny; you more damaging than locusts; you more desolate than ashes; you more hateful than a creditor who arrives for a payment on time; you more disgusting than conversation that is repeated; you more tiresome than snow on ice; you more desolate than pus surrounded by pus; you

Cucumber buried in dry ground
On a day of north wind in Nihāwand

O more bitter than the flavor of begging, O more harmful than the enmity of men; O more disgusting than a bunch of thorns in a garden of narcissi; and more ignorant than someone asking for a Friday speech from a dumb man. (Sh. p. 382-3)

You tick in the a monkey's ass
You shit (which is) donkey's musk

You black man's body odor at the base of
The testicles of a tanner of skin (M. p. 141)

Another

You monkey's tail and you flea
At the base of the anus of one whose anus is mangy

Another

¹⁴¹³ "You monkey...black (man)" appears in the *Maqāmāt* (al-Dīnāriyya), 220

O tumor that has festered in the heart
From killing sorrow and from grief¹⁴¹⁴

And O Spring flowing to (water), the heaviness
Of the soul without limit or end

And O youth whose feeble, (cold) anecdotes have
Reduced the price of snow and hail

O labor pains of a pregnant woman having twins
Who died in labor, without giving birth

O tumor in the intestines which indicates
The coldness of the temperament of the spleen and the liver

O stab in the vein that makes a hole
By pliantly and continually being shaken (while stabbing)

O blow on the aorta, which cuts with
A sharp edge, one without crookedness

Against which wearing an ample coat of mail did no good
(A coat of mail) with creases, its links closely meshed

Answer me back, but I do not think you
Have the vigor and steadfastness to answer

But if you want to flee, then escape, (or)
If you are inclined to return after that, then return (Sh. p. 384)

Another

O scumbag, indeed in my view the ugly one's
Pox is present and spreading

O son of a (woman) for whom the eunuchs spread out
At night the variegated garment of her ass

O son of a (woman) for whom the eunuchs strike
In the night the ivory jaw of her ass

O son of a (woman) for whom the eunuchs bite
In the night into the cooked-rare meat of her ass

¹⁴¹⁴ Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, London 21a, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.

O son of a (woman), pieces of the black-and-white cotton
Of whose ass are on the tip of my penis

An evil old woman, who walks with an asshole
That when it walks to the toilet, it ambles

Take her, for in her is the fire of a fucking
Which had roared above her mother's vulva

And expect after that a slapping with
A shitty sandal that comes in both units and pairs

Then he shouts, saying,

O community of people who are present,
By your Imam, on the Day of the Pool¹⁴¹⁵

And by the apple of his eye,
Who is buried in the Qabr al-Nudhūr¹⁴¹⁶ (Sh. p. 385)

Hearken to me and complete my joy
By listening to my recitation

This one who pressed shit with lime
In the hollow of his beard (M. p. 142)

Has--the cowardly cuckold--
Become angry at my presence

But in my opinion, rudeness after loyalty
Is like silent farting after incense

So be kind enough to say to him,
'O silent lentil (induced) farting, fly (away)!

O silent lentil fart, watch out!
You have stumbled onto an expert!"

O son of enthusiasm for whoring
O son of recalcitrance in debauchery

O son of one who invites

¹⁴¹⁵ Ghadir Khumm.

¹⁴¹⁶ Grave of Vows. The tomb of ʿUbayd Allah b. Muḥammad al-ʿAlawī, around half a mile from Baghdad, *al-Buldān*, 4:28-9. ʿUbayd Allah b. Muḥammad b. ʿUmr b. Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was the grandson of the fourth Shiʿite Imam, ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn. LeStrange, *Baghdad*, 205.

The pricks to her shit in battalions

So you see the fornicators (descending) on her ass
Like *ghāzīs* on the frontiers

but) But the frontier of the sacred space of her ass is attacked, (not by holy warriors,

But by hard-headed one-eyed (pricks)

This one says 'Open up under me'
And that one says 'Turn around'

People, when they knock on her ass
In the night in large crowds

Milk (their) pricks on the couch of
The old man your jealous father--

Riders who did not churn for him
Any of this plentiful milk

O son of (a woman) whose vulva's labia
Are sealed with opaponax-gum

One fears for them as
One fears for a small child

O diarrhea that befell the old
Man, lame, paralyzed and blind

He shits and his anal tissues stick out
Two hand spans from the pain of (his) dysentery

O son of one in whose guts
Are gathered entire troops of pricks

O indigestion after dinner during fasting like the
Indigestion one gets after the last meal before dawn in Ramadan

O rottenness of the smell of the shit
Of the bow-legged(?) Jews on 'Īd al-Fitr (Sh. p. 386)

And the farting of the Christians during the
Chomping before their great fast

O smell of mule dung

Which is mixed with donkey pee

O stench of the smell of cooked food
When it goes bad in the cooking pots

O stumbling of the spattering pen
Between lines

O Wednesday which never ends
And O dark night at the end of the month

O abscess in an eye which
They erred in treating with collyrium

So it peels (off) along with what was next
To it on the eyelids in the way of pimples (M. p. 143)

O length of the dizzying fever which
Destroys the strength of the powerful old man

And then when it passes into a continuous (fever)
It burns him in the heat of hellfire

O vexation of the fevered man at
Barley water for breakfast

O sharpness of the eye disease which
Is not cured by drops (of medicine)

O defeat of long hope
Deceived by a short life

O sweeper's¹⁴¹⁷ grief at
The fragrance of scented powders and perfume

O sitting by the Tigris
When the wind plays with the bridges

O sitting in the sun in August
On the ground without a mat

Beneath the sky, while the sun's fire
Ignites the midday heat

¹⁴¹⁷ Emended from *kabbās* to *kannās*.

O each tedious thing
Entangled with difficult trouble

O son of menstruating whores
Who had kept their distance from cleansing

O high-mindedness of the vile monkey
And bad breath of the lion

O poisonous viper's bite
And the voracious dog's bite

O humiliation of a bound captive
Fettered in chains--a prisoner

Whom the Banū Kilāb attacked
When the unfortunate man was without a guard (Sh. p. 387)

O humiliation of the wronged one who found himself
Without anyone to defend him

O suddenness of the hated thing
On the gloomy inauspicious day¹⁴¹⁸

O appearance of retreat and
Failure and destructive bad luck

O confusion of the deaf old man
And affliction of the blind young one

O burning of the thirsty one at midday
In the middle of the midday heat

O obstruction in the flow of pee that cleaves to a
Poor palsied (and) crippled man

O desolation of the dead when
They come to the darkness(es) of the graves

O funeral at which the faces of the
Mistresses of the women's quarters are uncovered

In which the female mourners' scissors
Became dull from shearing hair

¹⁴¹⁸ Qur'ān, 76 (al-Insān):10.

O wretched luck of a miserable woman who
Has had her life prolonged like that of eagles (M. p. 144)

The midwives split her crack to (give birth to)
Nine (sons) like full moons (in their beauty)

Until, when they grew to young manhood for her
And followed in succession like falcons

A curtain fell over them
Lengthwise on a day of rain

And she saw them with their flesh swept away
In the house by the vicissitudes of fate

May your mother be bereaved of you, do you sense
What you have committed through naive stupidity?

May the one you ignorantly opposed
--As if you were his equal!--Show you (Sh. p. 388)

A slap from him (is so violent) that
The nape of Bahrām Gūr¹⁴¹⁹ would be cut open from it

(One) whose door isn't swept
Except with Ardashīr's beard

One than whose slave boy, the lord of Khawarniq
And the Sadīr (palaces) is two ranks lower

One whose sword transported the sinful ones
From the palaces to the graves

Like a government record, his book
Will remain until the day of Resurrection

(It is) a virgin presented to her suitors
In embroidery and silk

I want you to be graced with her
So in her I came out from my shell(s)"

Then he says:

¹⁴¹⁹ Bahrām V, a Sasanian king who ruled 430-438 A.D. EI2, s.v. "Bahrām."

He who springs at the lion with exertion
Will be killed by the lion without exertion

Or tramples the viper and intentionally
Will be killed by the viper unintentionally

Then he goes up to the people at the gathering and says, "O people, by God,

My patience has been stretched by the ups and downs of
(Fortune) and such trials which afflict me as trials do

(But) I do not consider my patience with (any) trial
(To match) my patience with this vile youth

For neither the (extract) of Spanish fly that I (you?) have taken early in the
morning

(Mixed) with the water of (other) medicines and colocynth

Nor a laxative that remains (all) night on my (your?) heart
And even in the morning has not worked

Nor your taking as medicine aloes and myrobalan
Crushed (together) and poured through the sieve (Sh. p. 389)

Is more horrible than he--nor (even) a scalpel
(Applied to) a boil or an abscess

Another

If I say to my lady, 'Where is it?'
She would say, 'In the hollow of my vulva'

I shout to her in my fucking
Go forward! Go back! (M. p. 145)

You're doing great! Wonderful! Do it! That way!
Stretch (and) press and squeeze!

How pleasant this is!
O heart's blood, O my sight!

For such time pluck your (pubic) hair
Or shave (it) or depilate (it)"¹⁴²⁰

¹⁴²⁰ *Yatīma*, 3:48.

Then he drifts off a second time, as if he were picturing that Daylamī by whom he had been charmed in the gathering, and says:

O my life, happy the one who comes to you:
The enemies have protected you against me, so I don't find you

Your figure is a (willowy) branch without doubt, just as
Your face is a sun, whose daylight is your body

Another

His (face) is more beautiful than all (faces)
(Even) the nape of (his) neck is more beautiful than the moon's face

(One) like to him in the monastery before dawn
(Is) a blessing that dislodges the mote in the eye

Another

(He is) the proviso of whoring, with the splendor of sodomy:
Soft, effeminate, white, like Egyptian linen

He came with a beardless hairless ass
In which the tune of a fart buzzes (Sh. p. 390)

And he recites, and it is as though he were addressing him:

I alone am the imam of Lot's people
So spare me your great amount of foolishness

At night the gate of your ass fears
My snorting, my shouting, and my snorting

My hairless prick will make you forget at night
Any talk of?

My penis is like the softness of silk in softness
And my saliva is like waxy cream

Then he falls completely asleep, then the first thing heard in the early morning is his outcry, saying, "We have awakened and this morning the kingship is (still) God's. Hello to the new day and the martyred writer. Write: In the name of God the merciful,

the beneficent. Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Tamīmī al-Baghdādī says, ‘I witness that there is no God but Allah alone, without partner, and that Muḥammad is his servant and his messenger.’ O our lord, we believe in that which you have revealed¹⁴²¹ and so forth. (M. p. 146) In the name of God the merciful, the beneficent, *alif, lām, mīm*, the revelation of the scripture whereof there is no doubt is from the Lord of the Worlds,¹⁴²² who whispers among them, and proclaims among them, through His saying be he Exalted, ‘Who forsake their beds’¹⁴²³ ... and so forth.”

Then one at the gathering smiles, then (Abū al-Qāsim) says, “Woe to you, (do you indulge in) all this revelry after the killing of the slaughtered Ḥusayn, peace be upon him and upon his illustrious forefathers?!

May God curse the man who is hostile to ʿAlī
And Ḥusayn, whether among the rabble or the imams”

And he recites the lines in the same order as (given) in the beginning of the *Risāla*, and in the same way described there, then he gets up and puts on the *ṭaylasān* as when he first appeared, and says, “Peace be upon you.” (Sh. p. 391)

This is the story of Abū al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī, and his state of affairs, which make clear to you that he was a disgrace of the time, and tantamount to a devil, a collection of good and bad qualities, exceeding (all) extremes and limits, combining (all) flippancy and seriousness, abounding¹⁴²⁴ in sincerity and hypocrisy, in both clothing himself in the morals of the people of Iraq, and thanks to God alone, and His prayers for our lord Muḥammad his prophet and his people, and peace.

¹⁴²¹ *Qurʾān*, 3 (Āl ʿImrān):35.

¹⁴²² *Qurʾān*, 32 (al-Sajda): 2.

¹⁴²³ *Qurʾān*, 32 (al-Sajda): 16.

¹⁴²⁴ An alif is missing in the manuscript.

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al-Yaʿqūbī. *Tārīkh*. Ed. by M. Th. Houtsma. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969. 2 vol.

Yāqūt. *The Irshād al-Arīb ilā Maʿrifat al-Adīb, or Dictionary of Learned Men of Yāqūt*. Ed. by D.S. Margoliouth. London, Luzac, 1923-1925.

----- *Kitāb muʿjam al-buldān*. Ed. by Ferdinand Wüstenfeld. Tehran, 1965. 6 v.

Young, M.J.L, J.D. Latham and R.B. Serjeant, ed. *Religion, Learning and Science in the ʿAbbasid Period*. Cambridge History of Arabic Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

al-Ziriklī. *al-Aʿlām*. 3rd ed. Lebanon: Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, 1969. 11 v.

Curriculum Vitae

Mary St. Germain

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

5/98- Head, Near East Section, University of Washington.

Served as Coordinator (a rotating position), International Studies, i.e. Slavic and Eastern European Section, Near East Section, South Asia Section, and Southeast Asia Section, June 15, 2000-Sept. 30, 2002.

7/96-5/98 Acting Head, Near East Section, University of Washington, 50%; International Studies Cataloger, Cataloging, University of Washington, 50%

2/87-6/96 International Studies Cataloger, Cataloging, University of Washington.

12/83-1/87 Head, Authority Control Section, Bibliographical Records Management Division, University of Washington.

5/83-11/83 Head, Catalog Support Section, Bibliographical Records Management Division, University of Washington.

10/81-4/83 Slavic Cataloger, Original Cataloging Section, University of Washington.

10/80-9/81 Visiting Assistant Librarian, University of Lancaster Library and Visiting Head, Comenius Library, University of Lancaster, England.

5/79-9/80 Head, Input and Edit Section, University of Washington.

10/73-4/79 South Slavic and Russian Librarian, Slavic Section, University of Washington.

EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Ph.D., (ABD) Interdisciplinary Program for the Ph.D. in Near and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Washington, June, 1999.

Dissertation topic: Translation and commentary on the *Hikayat Abi al-Qasim al-Baghdadi*, by al-Azdī, a satire from the early 11th century, written in Baghdad (working under Prof. Everett Rowson)

M.A. in Arabic Literature, 1991.

M.B.A., 1978.

M.L.S., 1973.

Double **B.A.** in Slavic Languages and Literature, and in Ethnomusicology 1972.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Private tutoring in Arabic at the Goethe Institute in Damascus, Syria, summer, 1992.

Arabic Teaching Institute for Foreigners in Damascus, Syria, summer, 1990.

Summer Serbo-Croatian program in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, 1974.

10th Intl. Seminar on Bulgarian Language and Literature, University of Sofia, Bulgaria, Aug. 1972.

PUBLICATIONS AND EDITING

Middle Eastern Literatures and Their Times / Joyce Moss, ed. Gale Group, 2003. (*Western Literatures in their times*) Assisted with editing.

Edited Works & Collections on the Middle East. A searchable index to authors and titles of articles in monographs produced under editorial direction.

<http://green.lib.washington.edu/script/mesa/searchform.html>.

"A Report on a Trip to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan," in *MELA Notes*, 73-74 (Fall 2001-Spring 2002), 23-44.

Website and database: *A Survey Catalogue and Brief Critical History of Iranian Feature Film (1896-1975)* by Reza Talachian; at:

<http://lib.washington.edu/neareast/cinemaofiran/default.html>

"A Central Asian Odyssey: Renewing Connections," in *Library Directions*, v. 12, no. 2, winter 2002, p. 4-5.

"The Central Asian Collections at the UW Libraries," in *REECAS Newsletter* (Autumn 2001/Winter 2002), p. 9-10.

The Committee, by Sonallah Ibrahim; trans. by Mary St. Germain and Charlene Constable. Syracuse University Press, 2001.

Reviewed in: Booklist; Library Journal; New York Times Book Review; Publishers Weekly; SUP catalog

Ancient Near East Photography Collection. An image database on Middle Eastern Archaeology: <http://content.lib.washington.edu/neareastweb/index.html>.

Denny Slides Handlist web index. <http://content-dev.lib.washington.edu/islamicartweb/index.html>

For the University of Washington's Day of Reflection, Oct. 2001 (on911), compiled two web bibliographies:

Islam <http://www.lib.washington.edu/neareast/islam.html>

Public Opinion: Middle East vs U.S.?
<http://www.lib.washington.edu/neareast/pubopsept11.html>

"Bab El Oued City: a film review," in *MELA Notes*, no. 63, Spring 1996, p. 61.

The C.A. Macartney Collection. University of Lancaster, 1981.

List of Accessions to the Comenius Library, no. 23, Mar. 1980-Feb. 1971. University of Lancaster, Central and South-Eastern European Studies, 1981.

Book review: "Bibliografiia Stran Afriki i Arabskogo Vostoka," in *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*, Sept., 1981.

CONSULTING AND FOREIGN TRAVEL

Uzbekistan Educational Partnerships Program in Cultural and Comparative Religious Studies. The Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization applied for the above grant, and was awarded just under one million dollars from the U.S. Dept. of State. My assignment was an assessment of the needs of the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies' manuscript repository.

OACIS for the Middle East (Online Access to Consolidated Information on Serials), July 2002-, a Dept. of Education Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access Program grant received by Yale University to create a union catalog of Middle Eastern serials. The University of Washington is a partner and I am a member of the Advisory Board.

Acquisitions trip to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, June 1-July 10, 2001.

Mar. 1995-Mar. 1996. Served as a consultant to the Kyrgyz-American School in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan under an IREX grant. I evaluated their library, identified necessary equipment, supplies and a basic collection, and provided training for their librarian at the University of Washington.

SELECTED SERVICE

YBP Implementation Team (switch approvals and orders from Blackwell to YBP), Oct. 2004-

Acquisitions/Accounting Standards Workgroup (acquisitions record standards), April 2004-

Task Group on Media Workflows, April 2003-present.

Allen Grants Review Committee (distributes endowment funding), Nov. 2001-Spring, 2003.

Member, Visioning Team, Strategic Planning Aug. 1999-May, 2002.

Member, Public Workstation Steering Group, July 1999-June, 2002.

Member, Quick Cataloging of International Studies Materials Task Group, Mar.-July, 1997

Member, Task Force to Reduce the Frontlog, 1990.

Chairperson, Cataloging and Catalog Maintenance in a Manual (Card) Environment Task Group, 1986.

Cataloging and Catalog Maintenance in Transition Period Task Group, 1986 (transition to an OPAC).

Member for Technical Services, Online Catalog Subgroup of the Online Systems Group (the Online Systems Group wrote the RFP for the University of Washington's first OPAC), 1983.

Representative for Technical Services to the Subgroup to Recommend Specifications for Management Reports and Statistics, a part of the Online Systems Group (OSG), 1983.

Committee to Rewrite the Authority Document, 1983

Committee to Draft Bibliographic Control Procedure to Remove Catalog Cards, 1982.

Member, Area Studies group of the Collection Development and Management Council, 1978-1980, 1981-1991.

Chairperson, ALUW Travel Fund Subcommittee, 1977-1978

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

20es Assises de la Traduction Litteraire en Arles "Mediterranees," 7-9 Nov. 2003. Invited to and participated in a Round Table of Sonallah Ibrahim and five of his translators.

"Hot Spots and Cold Reference Trails," a presentation on Middle Eastern resources for the Jackson School's Summer Seminar for Educators (grades 6-14, June 24).

Presentation on Near Eastern news sources available to English speakers for the campus Time of Reflection's (anniversary of 911) Session on Alternative News Sources relevant to the crisis in Iraq, Apr. 23, 2003

A short presentation on Middle East Librarianship in the iSchool's class on International Librarianship, Mar. 3, 2003

Book Buying in Central Asia, a presentation at Inforum, Jan. 13, 2003

Talk on book buying and libraries in Central Asia for the Central Asian Student Association, Jan. 31, 2002

A Report on a Trip to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, Middle East Librarians Association, San Francisco, Nov. 17, 2001

Recent Trends in Middle East Research Methods, Greater Pacific Northwest
Regional Middle East Seminar, University of Washington, Feb. 26, 2000

In conjunction with the 1997 annual meeting of the American Association for the
Advancement of Slavic Studies, demonstrated a low cost cataloging/circulation
software, Winnebago, to 10 librarians from the Soviet Far East, in Russian. Nov. 26,
1997

MEMBERSHIPS AND OFFICES

Central Eurasian Studies Society, 2002-present

Library Committee, 2002-present. I was asked to be on the Committee before I
joined.

Middle East Microform Project, Executive Board, 1999-2003

Member, Elections Committee, 2002

Middle East Studies Association, 1991-present

Middle East Librarians Association, 1989-present

Secretary, 1995-1998

Association of College and Research Libraries, Jan. 1984

subgroups: Slavic and Eastern European; University Libraries

American Library Association, 1981-89

Resources and Technical Services Division, 1983-1989

LANGUAGES

Arabic and Russian: Reading: excellent; Speaking: adequate

Turkish, Persian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian: Reading: Good; Spoken: Limited

Reading knowledge only: French, Spanish, German, Romanian, Czech