al-Azdi’s Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādi: Placing an Anomalous Text within the Literary Developments of its Time

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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

Mary St. Germain

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
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The Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī, by Abū al-Muṭḥahhar Muḥammad b. ʿAḥmad 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 obscenity, 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 *fākhār* (boasting) on his lifestyle and *ḥijāʾ* (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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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-Shāljī 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

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invocation spoken by Abū al-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Ṭḥāfi 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 Isfahani 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-Baḥḍādi al-Tamīmi 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-Azdi mentions that he has written maqāmāt, the short, anecdotal stories presented largely in saj, 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, 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-Azdi was not

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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-Tawhīdī, d. 414/1023, a prose writer famous for anecdotal works depicting the social and intellectual life of his times, and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, 313-84/925-84, a poet known for the obscenity of his poems. 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

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

Although the Hikāya 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 Hikāya’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 Hikāya cannot be a popular tale because, unlike true frame tales, the Hikāya’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 Hikāya 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, madīh or praise poetry, hijā or satire, fakhr or boasting, excerpts from geographies, anecdotes, selections from the Qur’an, hadīth, 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 Hikāya suggests the maqāma genre. The Hikāya 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 Hikāya 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 Baghdādi moral character in a manner similar to that used by al-Jāḥīz, 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-Jāḥīz 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 Baghdādis. 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. 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. The
Hikāya 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.

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7 Clifford Edmund Bosworth, The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld: the Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature
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 rahlī, the second section of a
qaṣīda. The rahlī 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.”⁹ 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 hijād 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 hijād on the attendees

⁹ AQSH, 274.
with *fakhir*, or boasting, on his own prowess until he finally passes out, drunk. *Hijā* and *fakhir* 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. 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.

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Dating the Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīnī

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. Badi‘ 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Birth date</th>
<th>Death date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishr b. Hārūn</td>
<td></td>
<td>373-3/983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Sulaymān Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir b. Bahrām al-Sijistānī al-Manṭiqī</td>
<td>319 or 20/932</td>
<td>374-5/985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn al-Warrāq</td>
<td></td>
<td>380-1/991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Bakr Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Faḍl b. Ja’far b. Muḥammad b. Jarraḥ, known as al-Khazzāz</td>
<td></td>
<td>381/992-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās Khwārazmī</td>
<td>323/934-5</td>
<td>383/993-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Muhassin b. ʿAlī Ṭanūkhī</td>
<td>329/941</td>
<td>384/994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū ʿAbd Allah al-Marzūbānī</td>
<td>296-7/909-10</td>
<td>384/994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Tammām al-Zaynabī</td>
<td>299-300/912</td>
<td>386-7/997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn al-Hajjāj, al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad</td>
<td></td>
<td>391/1001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jurjānī</td>
<td></td>
<td>392/1002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bādiʿ al-Zamān al-Ḥamadhānī</td>
<td>358/968</td>
<td>398/1008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū al-Fath ʿAbd b. Muḥammad al-Bustī</td>
<td></td>
<td>400-1/1010-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī Ḥusrī</td>
<td></td>
<td>413/1022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Ḥayyān al-Ṭawḥīdī</td>
<td>310-20/922-32</td>
<td>414/1023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ghaylān al-Bazzāz</td>
<td>355/957-8</td>
<td>440/1048-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 hadīth, 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 Hikāya 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 Hikāya could probably not have been written after 411/1020 at the very latest. Despite Ibn Ghaylān’s death date, if the Hikāya 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 Hikāya 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 Hikāya 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 Hikāya 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 Barāṭhā\(^7\).\(^{14}\) 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 Barāṭhā\(^7\) 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-\(^{5}\)Abbās al-Khwārazmī,\(^{15}\) d. 383/993, Badi' al-

\(^{11}\) AQSH, 93.
\(^{12}\) AQSH, 107.
\(^{13}\) Tafaḍḍalī, Aḥmad, "Iṣṭīlā'a-t-i Darbārah-yi Lahjah-yi Pīshīn-i Isfahān," Nāmah-\(^{7}\)i Mīnuvī: Majmu'a-\(^{7}\)i Sf va Hasht Guftar dar Adab va Farhang-i Irān-i bish Pāds Panjāb Sāl-i Tahāqaqt va Mutalā'a-\(^{7}\)at-i Mujtahāda Mīnuvī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sanā'i, 1995?), 85-103.
\(^{14}\) AQSH, 106.
\(^{15}\) Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-\(^{5}\)Abbās 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 Badi' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī. Eli2, s.v. "al-Khwārazmī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-\(^{5}\)Abbās."
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-Khwārazmī’s Rasāʾīl.19 Approximately 40% of the passage in the Ḥikāya is found in the Rasāʾīl and the whole passage is approximately two thirds as long as the passage in the Rasāʾīl. The Ḥikāya must draw on the Rasāʾīl, since it places phrases from the latter in more complex structures. For example, the Rasāʾīl contains a list of phrases in the form “O (object) of (person): Ḥār, Ḥār, Ḥār” (O Ḥār of Ḥār, and fart of Ḥār, Ḥār 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 Ḥār, yā ashʿām ʿalā nafsi-hi min ḍarrat Ḥār, yā abghad min ṭaylasān al-lablāb fī kaffī al-maṛīḍ,20 (“O one more tattered than the ṭaylasān of Ibn Ḥār; O more inauspicious to his soul than Ḥār’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 Ḥār,” than that the more complex phrase would be simplified.

16 Bāḍīʿ al-Zāmān 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, Ahmad Bāḍīʿ al-Zāmān.”
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-Ḥajjāj.”
20 Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Khwārazmī, Rasāʾīl, 199.
21 AQSH, 346.
For another example, the simple phrase “yâ kûz ḥânūt ḥajjâm”22 (“O jug of a cupper’s shop”) in the Rasâ’il, appears in a more complex, paired phrase in the Ḥikâya, “yâ ablad min haḍīḍ al-hammām, wa-antar min ḥânūt al-ḥajjâm,” (“O stupider than the depth of the bath; and rottener than a cupper’s shop”). Therefore, the evidence points to the Ḥikâya being a later work that drew material from al-Khwârazmî’s Rasâ’il.

Not only do extensive quotations from Badi‘ al-Zamân al-Hamadhânî’s Maqâmât appear in the Ḥikâya, but al-Azdî mentions in its Invocation that he has written maqâmât. Al-Hamadhânî received credit for writing the first noteworthy collection of maqâmât, and there is no known mention of maqâmât prior to his. It is unlikely that al-Azdî could have written maqâmât before those by al-Hamadhânî become known, or if he wrote prose resembling a maqâma, he would not have called it by that name.

Two strongly parallel sections of text are found in the Ḥikâya and in Badi‘ al-Zamân al-Hamadhânî’s Maqâmât. One section is found in al-Maqâma al-Dînâriyya, or the Maqâma of the Dînâr.23 The variations between the two passages indicate that al-Azdî borrowed from al-Hamadhânî. The Ḥikâya adds to or deletes from the text found in al-Maqâma al-Dînâriyya so that rhyme letters are repeated more consistently, or so that the rhythm and rhyme in the rhymed prose (sa‘î) becomes more consistent. For example, this is the beginning of the selection in al-Maqâma al-Dînâriyya.24

Yâ bard al-sajûz, yâ kurbat Tammûz, yâ wasakh al-kûz, yâ dirhaman lâ yajûzu, yâ ḥâdhîth al-mughannîn, yâ sanat al-bûs, yâ kawkab al-nuḥûs, yâ waṭ‘a al-kâbûs, yâ tukhmat al-rû‘ûs, yâ Umm Ḥubayn, yâ ramad al-sayn, yâ ghadât al-bayn, yâ firaq al-muḥîbbayn (“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

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22 Abu Bakr Muḥammad b. al-‘Abbâs al-Khwârazmî, Rasâ’il, 200.
24 Maqâmât, 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 *Hikāya.*

Yā bard al-ṣajūz, yā kurb Tammuz, yā dirhaman lā yajūzu, yā wasakhan fī maghābin al-badīn, yā khajalat al-ṣinnīn, yā ḥadīth al-mughannīn, yā waṭṭa al-kābūs, yā tukhmat al-ruʿūs, yā ramad al-ṣayn, 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 *Hikāya* expands the phrase, “yā ḥadīth al-mughannīn” to: “yā wasakhan fī maghābin al-badīn, yā khajalat al-ṣinnīn, 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,

Yā qarārat al-makhāzī, yā bukhīl al-Ahwāzī, yā fuḍūl al-Rāzī, wa-Allāh law wadāʿa taʿādā rījlīy-kaʿ alā Arwand, wa-al-ukhrah ʿalā Damawand, wa-akhabdha bi-yadi-ka qaws quzaха wa-nadafta al-ghaym fī jībāb al-malāʿikā 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 *Hikāya,* 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 saj’, 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 bukhīl al-Akhwāzī, yā qarrād al-qurūd, yā labūd al-yahūd. Thus, the saj’ is

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25 AQSH, 379.
26 *Maqāmat,* 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:

Urūdu daydāna murdī
Wa-lastu ardā ṭaṭīfā

Immā jawādan ṣatīqan
Yazīffu taḥṭī ṭaṭīfā

Aw musmiʿātin ṣawāfī
Yaqumna dūnī ṣufūfā

Urūdu khashfān rashīqan
Urūdu khaṣṭān naḥīfā

Ka-l-badri hashshan laṭīfān
ʿAlā l-qulūbi khāfīfā

Urūdu ridfān thaqīlan
Urūdu ayyān laṭīfā

I want a daydān29 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

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

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32 EI2, s.v. “al-Hamadhānī, Aḥmad Bāḏī al-Zamān.”
appear in his Dīwān, which is preserved only partially, and of which only two later abridgements have been edited.\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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 Shīʿite.\textsuperscript{35} The same poem is found in the Durrat al-Tāj,\textsuperscript{36} a selection of al-Ḥajjāj’s poems made by al-Badīʿ al-ʿAstūrābī\textsuperscript{37} (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 ʿAlī as the wazir of Aḥmad, i.e.

\textsuperscript{33} The two edited abridgements are: Tālīf al-Mīzāj min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Nubata, compiler, Najm ʿAbd Allah Muṣṭafā (Sūsā: Dār al-Maʿārif, 2001) and the section on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in al-Thaʿalībī’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. Uppsalas 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 104462; Taymur shīr 606 (b); Taymur shīr 468; Taymur shīr 657; Baghdad Awqaf 5730 (m-y); Zāhirīyya ʿamm 8563 (t-h); Vehbi 1516, foll. 51a-80b. Other works are: Astūrābī, Durrat al-Tāj, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 5913; Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Tālīf al-Mīzāj min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Nubata, compiler, Der Kongelige Bibliotek Kobenhavn, Codex Arabicus 260; Ibn Ḥajjāj, Latāʿif al-Tālīf, Gotha: 2235/1, 4b; anon., Mulah min Shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Zāhirīyya ʿamm 5861.

\textsuperscript{34} AQSH, 55.

\textsuperscript{35} AQSH, 55.

\textsuperscript{36} Durrat, 175b-176a.

\textsuperscript{37} EI2, s.v. “al-Badīʿ al-ʿAstūrābī.”
Muḥammad. This line is not present in the Ḥikāya. Al-Badri al-Aṣṭurlabī 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 wazīrī Ahmada yā man Qad ḥabā mulka-hu li-khayrī 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 fi Maḥāsin Ahl al-ʿAṣr. The first line in the latter work is:

In ʿāba Thaʿlabu ʿāshīrī Aw ʿāba khiffata rūḥī

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-qabīrī

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 Thā'lab 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-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasā. 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.41 The following anecdote is
the form found in al-Baṣāʾir wa-al-Dhakhāʾir. “Suʾila Mūlūn: ‘Wa-kāna ʿaṭbakhān min
Siqillīyā wa-qad faragha min al-alwān: ilā mādhā taḥṭāju?’ Qāla ilā qawm jiyyāʾ.”
(“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.42 “Wa-kāna
idhā faragha min al-alwān, fa-yuqālū la-hu: ‘Yā Nāranj, ilā ayyi shay taḥṭāju?’ Fa-
yaqūlū, ilā qawm jiyyāʾ.” (“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-Qāḍī. Beirut:
Dār Sādir, 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-Britānīr wa-al-Dhakhāiīr. 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-Britānīr wa-al-Dhakhāiīr so that rhyme letters are repeated, or so that the rhymed prose (saj'), becomes more consistent. For example, part of this excerpt from the latter work is: “Anā Hāmān, anā Firāawn, 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 Pharaoh, 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 Firāawn 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 Firāawn, anā Hāmān, anā Nimrūd b. Kanīān, anā al-

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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.”
Shayṭān al-aqlaf, anā al-dubb al-akshaf, anā al-baghl al-ḥarūn, anā al-ḥarb al-żabūn,“48 (“I am Pharaoh, I am Hāmān, I am Nimrūd b. Kan‘ān, 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. Kan‘ān” has been added, so there are now three words in a row that rhyme in “n,” Fir‘awn, Hāmān and Kan‘ān. The phrase “anā Šād,” 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-Imtā’ wa-al-Mu‘ānasā* in the *Hikāya*. All but one of the quotations are found within a twenty-page section of the *Kitāb al-Imtā’ wa-al-Mu‘ānasā* 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-Jammayz.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-Imtā’ wa-al-Mu‘ānasā* from which most of these quotations are drawn, around 75% reappears in the *Hikāya*. In the *Kitāb al-Imtā’ wa-al-Mu‘ānasā*, thirteen anecdotes out of fifty-one are not found in the *Hikāya*. In the *Hikāya*, there is almost no unique material—only three sets of an introductory sentence

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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 ‘Alī Qurnah (Cairo: al-Hay‘a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma 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-Qašāriyya⁵¹ and al-Bašariyya.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 lihākā. 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 ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Tawḥīdī, Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-al-Mu‘ānasa (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-
difficult to mistake. In yet another poem, the variant word is: taʾāwat and taʾādat.\textsuperscript{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-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa, the introductory sentence is: “Aw ṣarab Ibn Maʾrūf, Qāḍī al-Quḍāḥ, ‘alā ghināʾ ‘Ulayya idhā rajjaʿat lahna-hā fī ḥalqi-hā al-ḥilw al-shajī bi-shīr Ibn Abī Rabīʿa” (“Or the ecstasy of Ibn Maʾrūf, the Chief Judge, over the singing of ‘Ulayya 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 ṣarab Qāḍī al-Quḍāḥ Ibn Maʾrūf, ‘alā ghināʾ ‘Ulayya idhā rajjaʿat fī ḥalqi-hā al-shajī wa-ghannat” (“Or the ecstasy of the Chief Judge Ibn Maʾrūf, over the singing of ‘Ulayya 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.\textsuperscript{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-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa. 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-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasa 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

\textsuperscript{54} AQSH, 259; al-Imtāʾ, 2:173.

\textsuperscript{55} AQSH, 247; al-Imtāʾ, 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-İmtāʾ wa-al-Muʾānasāa. 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 Hikāya is a popular hikāya, 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 Hikāya’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 Hikāya, 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-Ṣamīd, 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 was able to serve as a courtier and also finally received the patronage he so desired. Following Ibn Saʿdān’s death, he


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 Isfahan 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

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suggested that al-Tawḥīdī was the “real” author because he grew up in Baghdad and worked in Isfahān 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-Basāʾīr wa al-Dhakhāʾīr are stories in the common repertoire. The longer quotation from the same work, consisting of a series of boasts,

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\(^{59}\) AQSH (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 1980), 9-10.


\(^{62}\) AQSH, 43-4.

draws on a single section, but rearranges the borrowed material into more consistent saj‘ 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-Imtā‘ wa-al-Mu‘ānasa, 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-Imtā‘ wa-al-Mu‘ānasa 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-Šāhīb 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'iite. He died in 391/1001. Ibn al-
Hajjāj'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-Hajjāj is the "real" al-Azdi, based on the
many anonymous quotations of his poetry found in the Ḥikāya.⁶⁴ Thirty-one quotations
of Ibn al-Hajjāj'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-Hajjāj, are so prominent, they are cited
as evidence that Ibn al-Hajjāj 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 ʿAlī, i.e. a Shi'iite. 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-Hajjāj wrote the Ḥikāya.

At the end of the Ḥikāya's introduction there are some bayts of poetry by Ibn al-
Hajjāj 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-Hajjāj 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-Hajjāj is the "real" al-Azdi, 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-Hajjāj's poetry for

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.\(^\text{66}\) 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-Bākhrūzī’s Dumyat al-Qaṣr wa-ʿUṣra Ahl al-Ṣaḥr.\(^\text{67}\) 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-


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-Ḳāsim al-Baghdādi al-Tamīmī

Invocation

The invocation of the Ḥikāyat Abī al-Ḳāsim al-Baghdādi 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-Azḍī said...”68 The phrase ends in what should be the author’s name. The rest of the invocation is given by al-Azḍī in direct speech. It presages the overarching themes and structures of the body of the text. Al-Azḍī 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-Azḍī 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 AQS, 42.
69 AQS, 42.
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-Azdî 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-Azdî 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
73 Gustave von Grunebaum, Medieval Islam: a Study in Cultural Orientation, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of
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.” 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.

Next, al-Azdī specifies the way he will arrange the linguistic data he has collected to depict the different classes of Baghdādīs: “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.” By “single (harmonious) picture, within which the general type of each of them is shown,” he

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74 AQSH, 42-3.
76 AQSH, 43.
means that he is depicting Baghdādis 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 Baghdādis as a type and identifies the single criterion, language, that he will use to describe the type.  

So I have proceeded in this as Abū ʿUṯmān 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.”  

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The use of the above quotation by al-Jāḥīz is particularly significant because he was the first author who, it can be argued, employed such types in Arabic literature 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 Baghdādis 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 language in repeating Baghdadi idioms to be a deficiency of knowledge with which I should be reproached...” 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...” 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-Hajījāj. Beginning in the early 3rd/9th century, the quantity of scholarly works in the Islamic

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81 AQSH, 44.
82 AQSH, 44.
83 EI2, s.v. “Ibn al-Ḥadjdjādji.”
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-Azīdī will violate propriety.

Lā budda an taghfula ʾan lafžatin
Ṭarīṯatin yaʿtī bi-hā sukhfī

You must ignore the strange vocabulary
Which my obscenity presents.⁶⁴

****

Arsaltu nafsī ʾalā sajīyati-hā
Wa-qultu mā qultu ghayra muḥtashīmī

I let myself go completely
And said what I said without shame.⁶⁵

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 Hikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tarnīmī. One pattern is related to the use of language. As mentioned above, al-Azīdī states in the invocation that he has chosen rare vocabulary and anecdotes from contemporary literature. Repeatedly in the text, a

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⁶⁴ AQSH, 44. ibn al-Ḥajjāj, in Durra, 189.
⁶⁵ 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-Jāḥīẓ 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 hikāya, 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 Hikāya begins with a repetition of the phrase “Bism 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."\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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
bāyts 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

\textsuperscript{88} AＱＳＨ, 47.
\textsuperscript{89} AＱＳＨ, 49.
\textsuperscript{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 Shi’ite. 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 Qurʾān, 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

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 ḥijāʔ on the types of entertainment that normally take place at gatherings.

⁹⁴ AQS, 56.
The first man Abū al-Qāsim approaches is “a man of outstanding culture and refinement, a writer...”\textsuperscript{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 nosegay,”\textsuperscript{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,”\textsuperscript{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 sandal\textsuperscript{98}

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

\textsuperscript{95} AQSH, 56.
\textsuperscript{96} AQSH, 56.
\textsuperscript{97} AQSH, 56.
\textsuperscript{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 tanbūr101 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 tanbūr player invited himself to the gathering. Tanbūr 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 Ḥāfīz, Tārīkh al-mūslīm wa al-Ghīnā’ al-‘Arabī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjūl al-Mişriyya, 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.”

The fifth person Abū al-Qāsim describes is a man who jokes and jests. 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 yadhūru fī ʿarsati l-miṣ  
Rī yashammu l-quḍūra shamma l-dhubābī

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Lam yurawwā l-dūna l-dukhūlī 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 blow

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.  
\[104\] Yanzahu wa yataṭayibu.  
\[105\] AQSH, 73.
specify that “he arranges for the requisite food, drink, and singing girls.” 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-ṣīrtu qawwādā

My power over what I see has increased
I was a guardian, then I became a pimp.¹⁰⁷

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 *Hīkāya*. The other types, the *nādīm*, 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 *nādīm* 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-Azdi 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Qad ḍayya'a 'Ilāhu mā jamma'tu min adabin} \\
\text{Bayna l-hamīrī wa-bayna l-shā'rī wa-l-baqarī}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Qawmūn idhā jṭama'ū ḍajjū ka-anna-humū} \\
\text{Ṣakhbā l-ḍafādī'ī bayna l-mā'ī wa-l-shajarī}
\end{align*}
\]

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 trees

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 qasīdas. Suzanne Stetkevych in particular has suggested that the pre-Islamic qasīda describes a “psycho-social rite of passage from immaturity through a solitary quest for self-knowledge to the integration

\[110\text{AQSH, 82-3.}\]
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,


^{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.” Abū al-Qāsim assesses the quality of his speech accurately, “By God, we don't hear (anything) from you except trite and primitive speech.” 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'īlī 'an Isfahāna wa-ahli-hā
Hākama l-zamānu bi-naḥsi-him wa-kharābi-him

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

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

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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 IFIEDA, 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 IFKĀ. 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.
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 ṛaḥīl and part of a mādīh, which in this case is a description of the lush countryside sought by the poet. These are the main bayts of this minimal ṛaḥīl:

Wa-athnī min ʿinānī in Qāḍāʾ ʿIlāhu wa-najjānī

Īlā arđīn 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 ṛaḥīl within the Ḥikāya. The partial mādīḥ that follows the minimal ṛaḥīl praises a land that is the

119 AQSH, 90-1.
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.

\[
\text{Idhā dhukarat Baghdādu nafṣī taqāṭṭa'at} \\
\text{Min al-wajdi aw kādat tadhūbu bi-hā wajdā}
\]

When Baghdad is mentioned, my soul is rent by grief 
Or almost melts with love for her\textsuperscript{121}

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

\textsuperscript{121} Lines from a poem by Išāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawsīlī, one of the best musicians and composers of the late 8\textsuperscript{th} and early 9\textsuperscript{th} centuries. \textit{al-Aghānī}, 5:94. EI2, s.v. “Išāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawsīlī.”
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 rāhīl 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:

Taṭba’u șumma l-hașā hawāfiru-hū  
Ṭab’a 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 clay\textsuperscript{125}

\textit{Ḫadīḍu l-qalbi wa-l-nāzi-}
\textit{Rī wa-l-ʿurqūbi wa-l-ṣalbī}

Iron of heart and gaze
And hamstring and spine\textsuperscript{126}

The borrowings from older horse poetry, including that of Imruʿ al-Qays,\textsuperscript{127} are additional reminders of an intentional influence of pre-Islamic poetry on the Ḥīkāya. 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.\textsuperscript{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 neighbors 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"

\textit{Ṣabr al-ḥimārī wa-qūwat al-farasī}

\textit{Tansābu fi l-ardaʿi ʿalā ḥāfirin}
\textit{Ka-ʾanna-hū min ḥajarīn șalı́}

\textsuperscript{125} AQSH, 117.
\textsuperscript{126} A variation of this bāyṭ is attributed to Abū Duʿād al-iyādī, a pre-Islamic poet famous for his horse poetry, in Ibn Qutayba, \textit{Adab al-Kātib}, Max Grünert, ed., 115. AQSH, 118.
\textsuperscript{127} Imruʿ al-Qays, d. ca. 550 C.E., was a pre-Islamic Arab poet who wrote one of the \textit{Muʿallaqāt}, which were frequently numbered at seven and which were the most revered poems of the pre-Islamic period. EI2, s.v. "Imruʿ al-Ḵays b. Hudjr."
\textsuperscript{128} From a poem by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj describing a mule. \textit{Yatīma}, 3:115; \textit{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...”\textsuperscript{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.”\textsuperscript{130} Selections of poetry follow, some of which describe physical defects, as in this example,

A’mā, aşammu, ḥarūnun, arjalun, dukhasun Wāḥī l-qawāʾîmi, maḥṭūmu l-qarā, jaradū

(He is) blind, deaf, refractory, white socked, fat Weak legged, sway backed, with little hair\textsuperscript{131}

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

Yalzamu bāba l-ṣallāfī mukhtalifān ʿIlay-hi wa-l-mustamīḥu yakhtalīfū

He repeatedly returns to the fodder seller’s door Like a beggar asking for a gift\textsuperscript{132}

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.”\textsuperscript{133} This is a comment on relative social status. The guard is closer to the nobility than the farmer, and the

\textsuperscript{129} AQSH, 127.  
\textsuperscript{130} AQSH, 127-8.  
\textsuperscript{131} AQSH, 129.  
\textsuperscript{132} AQSH, 129.  
\textsuperscript{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
close 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, 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.”

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

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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,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Wa-rāḥin min al-shamsi makhlūqatin} \\
\text{Badat la-ka ġī qadaḥin min nahārī}
\end{align*}
\]

(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.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ka-anna-hū wa-l-ka\text{'}su ġī kaffi-hī} \\
\text{Badru l-dujā qad qārana l-mushtarī}
\end{align*}
\]

It is as though he, with the cup in his hand Were the moon of darkest night in conjunction with Jupiter\textsuperscript{139}

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.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Idhā ṣubba muswaddatun ġī l-zujāji} \\
\text{Fa-ka\text{'}su l-nādīmi bi-hī miḥbara}
\end{align*}
\]

If its black liquid is poured into the bottle The drinking companion’s cup (becomes) an inkwell\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{139} AQSH, 179.

\textsuperscript{140} AQSH, 179.
The description of the cupbearer is also negative.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ka-anna-hū wa-l-ka'su fi kaffā-hī} \\
\text{Idhā tamashshā jamalun yasbahū}
\end{align*}
\]

It is as though he, with the cup on his palm
When he strolls, has the gait of a walking camel\(^{141}\)

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, Diwān al-Buḥturī, Hasan 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.”

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.

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Tarā khadda-hā l-maṣqūla wa-l-khālu fawqa-hū} \\
&\text{Ka-wardin ʿalay-hi ṭāqatun min banafsajī}
\end{align*}
\]

You would think her polished cheek and the mole on it
Were a rose with a bunch of violets against it\(^{145}\)

\[\text{---------------------------------------------}\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Manṭiqun ʿaṣibun wa-talḥanu ahyā} \\
&\text{Nān wā-khayru l-ḥadīthī mā kāna laḥnā}
\end{align*}
\]

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 ghoul 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

\[\text{---------------------------------------------}\]

\(^{144}\) 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-musāfīrin

And two breasts, but one is a small unripe summer round squash\(^{48}\)
And the other (would hold) a traveler’s waterskin\(^{49}\)

 Imra'atun bi-kussihā
Taghlibu alfay rajulī

A woman who, by her genitals
Conquers two thousand men\(^{50}\)

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.”\(^{51}\) 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.”\(^{52}\)

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 Iraqi slave boys. He

\(^{49}\) AQSH, 208.
\(^{50}\) AQSH, 213.
\(^{51}\) AQSH, 218.
\(^{52}\) 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 rahīl.

In the Ḥikāya the content of the rahīl 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 rahīl, 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.”

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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...” 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 Ṣalī 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 Ṣalī 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 Ṣalī’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

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354 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 dinārs.

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.”\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.”\textsuperscript{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?”\textsuperscript{159} He asks, for example, “What if you could see Qahwa, Ibn al-Ruṣāfī’s slave girl, singing?”\textsuperscript{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
familiarity with the repertoire of anecdotes about singing girls demonstrates that the author of the *Hikāya* 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-Baṣāʾir wa-al-dhakhāʾir*, 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 Mīhr, 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-ʿaqīli
Wa-ghādara saḥmu-hā mimni jariḥā

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-Tāq...”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 Wāṣīt. It shows them drinking, listening to singing girls and, finally, reciting poetry. Their poetry consistently expresses desire for Baghdad.

Yā sufna Baghdāda rūḥī jidda ʿalimatin
Bi-anna qalbiya fi-ki l-yawma qad rāḥā

Yā sufna mā darra fi-ki l-muṣīdīna wa-qad
Maddū-ki law jaʿalūnī fi-ka mallāhā?

Taḥdūkī min nafasī rihun musāʿadatan
Maʿa l-ḥabāʾībi aʿmsāʾan 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 mornings

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 Wāṣīt for Baghdad, then how (much desire) from Isfahan for Baghdad?” He also indicates that he has reached the end of the raḥīl,

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.” 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 Hikāya that is shaped by components of a rahīl 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: *Mādīḥ, Hijā' and Fakhr*

The theme of the third section of a *qašīda* can vary considerably. However, the pre-Islamic *qašīda* frequently employed one of three options: *mādīḥ, 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 *qašīda* 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 *qašīdas*, 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.”

He continues to point out that he would like a full meal.

Da‘watun yantasibu l-qāḥ
Tu ilay-hā wa-l-muḥulū
dub

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

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?” 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

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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.” 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.”

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

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169 AQSH, 292.
170 AQSH, 300.
ice is cool crystal; (and) then, by God, there are its two vessels and its abodes.”

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...” 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.”

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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 aliftū 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 qifāni-hā kulla laylatin
Baghīyun wa-khnīzīrun wa-khamrun wa-maysia

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

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
Khandaṛīsun yudīru-hā tāwūsū

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

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...” 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,

Hasaltu min-hum Ŧi sharri ṭaʔifatin
Athkalanî-him rabbu l-samawätî

With them I have ended up with the worst (possible) group
May the Lord of the Heavens deprive me of them (through their deaths)\textsuperscript{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 hijā\textsuperscript{2}.

Abū al-Qāsim ceases his conversation with his neighbors when the singer
finishes singing. He then praises the tanbūr 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
hijā\textsuperscript{2} in poetry, prose and then more poetry. His comments are quite vituperative. He
ends by calling them praise,

\textsuperscript{178} AQSH, 328.
Hādhā thanāʔ wa-thanāʔu l-warā
'Alay-ka yā nuṭfata qurnāni

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

One of the attendees laughs at him, so Abū al-Qāsim addresses his hijāʔ 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 hijāʔ. 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?”\textsuperscript{180} Abū al-Qāsim responds with more hijāʔ against him. He then switches to fakhr, or boasting, about his own strengths. He ends his fakhr by asking a man whether he now

\textsuperscript{179} AQSH, 349.
\textsuperscript{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 Husayn, peace be upon him and upon his illustrious forefathers?!” 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 Hikāya, and then puts on his taylasān and leaves.

The second part of the third section of the Hikāya 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 mādīh, hijā' and fakhir, as though the display makes him superior to the attendees.

His final performance brings an end to a second theme of the Hikāya, 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-

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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 Hikāya 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-Tamīnī in Arabic Literature

**Adab Literature or Popular Tale?**

The Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī al-Tamīnī 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 2\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th} 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 2\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th} 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 Qur\textsuperscript{ān} 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 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th} century.

Translation and the incorporation of the intellectual heritage of other cultures into Arabic literature were encouraged during the Abbasid period. In the early 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th} 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 Qur'an, hadith, 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.  

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.  

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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,

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\(^ {185}\) S.A. Bonebakker, “*Adab* and the Concept of *Belles-Lettres*,” in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 27-30.


\(^ {187}\) 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 4\(^{th}/10^{th}\) century have generally not survived, the fragment of a papyrus containing selections from the Arabian Nights from the 3\(^{rd}/9^{th}\) century found by Nabia Abbott\(^ {190}\) demonstrates that this work was already circulating in written form by the time the Hikāya 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 3\(^{rd}/9^{th}\) century.\(^ {191}\) There are a number of factors that must be considered in


determining where the Hikāya 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; thematic patterning; 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.

The Hikāya 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 mujān 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. 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." The lists of geographic names pertinent to Baghdad, Isfahan and their surrounding regions

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196 AQSH, 57.
are similar to information that appears in classical Arabic geographical texts. It is in the section on names that the Hikāya begins to use the al-maḥāsīn wa l-masāwī approach. The Baghdadi names are listed correctly, but the Isfahani names are deliberately corrupted for the purposes of mujiūn. Unlike many al-maḥāsīn wa l-masāwī works, the Hikāya 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 Hikāya lists materials goods: textile furnishings, perfumes, food, drinks, and soiree rooms. These goods are also described using the al-maḥāsīn 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 Hikāya also makes use of selections from literature. The first major group of selections from poetry is representative of the nasīfs of qaṣīdas. However, unlike most pre-Islamic and Umayyad nasīfs, 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. Selections of horse poetry, which are representative of the rahlīs 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

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poetry. A whole section of the *Hikāya* 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 *Hikāya* was written. Abū al-Qāsim ends his recitations with praise (*madīḥ*) of Isfahan and satire (*hijā*) 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 *Hikāya* includes selections from enough types of literature and non-fictional writings that it clearly corresponds with *ʿadab* rather than popular literature.

Another indication that the *Hikāya* belongs to *ʿadab* literature is its setting and emphasis on language. It depicts an evening gathering—the elegant, highly educated environment in which *ʿadab* 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 *qasīda*. He recites poetry and anecdotes, critiques dinner, plays chess, demonstrates knowledge of rare vocabulary, dances, sings, and drinks. In essence, the *Hikāya* 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 Hikāya is consistent with adab literature, and as such, its audience must consist of the nobility, and the highly educated upper classes and secretaries.

The Hikāya appears to use some of the techniques of popular tales as exemplified by the Arabian Nights. However, the usage in the Hikāya is not entirely consistent with the usage as found in popular tales. The Hikāya 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.\footnote{AQSH, 90.} Abū al-Qāsim says:

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

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:

Or the ecstasy of Ibn Ghaylān al-Bazzāz, over the warbling of Rayḥāna, Ibn al-Barīdī’s slave girl, when she sang ...
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 Qur’ānic Verse of the Throne\(^{201}\) and the two last chapters of the Qur’ān 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 4\(^{th}/10\(^{th}\) 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

\(^{201}\) Qur’ān, 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 hidden\(^{205}\) 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 ghoul 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 Hikāya 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-mahāsin wa l-masāwi 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

means the concepts of plot and action. 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. 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-Baghdādī\(^{11}\) (392/1002-463/1071) titled his work on spongers al-Taṭfil wa-Ḥikāyat al-Ṭuṭayliyyīn wa-akhbāru-hum wa-nawādir kalāmi-him wa-ashārī-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 hadīth and that cannot be considered fiction.

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\(^{211}\) A hadīth scholar and literary author best known for his biographical encyclopedia on Baghdad, Tārīkh Bahgād. EI2, s.v. “al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.”
Ibn al-Khashshāb al-Baghdādī (d. 567/1172),

112 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.

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

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

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-Īṣfahānī and Abū Hilāl al-Ṣaḥrā’ī, 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 a 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

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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 Shi'ite devotion. At this point, an attendee lets on that he knows Abū al-

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 Hikāya, 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

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216 Rina Drory, Models and Contacts: Arabic Literature and its Impact on Medieval Jewish Culture, 11-2
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. 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. 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.” 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…” These opposing stances are indications that Abū al-Qāsim is a fictional character.

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

220 Qur’ān, 26 (al-Shu’ārā): 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 beings 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 ruined than Dīnawārī cheese and cauliflower." His behavior also worsens and he unsuccessflly 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.

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223 Noted earlier.
224 AQSH, 351.
Character Studies

In the case of the *Hikāya*, 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 *Hikāya* 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 sorners.

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.

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In Arabic literature, character studies became especially popular in the early Abbasid period, when the great, innovative prose writer, al-Jāḥīẓ²²⁸ (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-Jāḥīẓ 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 Miser, consists of anecdotes that depict misers and all their behaviors. That al-Jāḥīẓ 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-Jāḥīẓ. Theophrastus describes his unnamed representative, who displays all aspects of a character trait, whereas al-Jāḥīẓ 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,

since Greek and Arabic cultures were not the same, the exact behaviors and values associated with a specific vice are not exactly the same.\textsuperscript{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-Bukhālāh 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.\textsuperscript{231} Al-Jāḥiẓ organizes the sections somewhat randomly, so that their sequence is not predictable and boring.\textsuperscript{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-Bukhālāh, 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.

\textsuperscript{230} Malti-Douglas, 164-6.
\textsuperscript{231} Malti-Douglas, 47.
\textsuperscript{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-Taqfil wa-hikāyāt 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 “akhabara-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-Jāḥiz’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-Taṣfīl 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-Jāḥiz’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-Taṣfīl or those used in al-Jāḥiz’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 saj', 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.”

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.

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-Khaṭîb’s al-Tatfîl, the qualities of țufaylîs are

233 AQSH, 46.
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 ʿufaylīs recite hadīth or sing for their meal. A group of anecdotes showing tricks whereby ʿufaylīs get free food appear: when asked to judge which of two dishes is better, ʿufaylīs 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 ʿufaylīs 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-Tafṣīl, the anecdotes are about Banān, a real ʿufaylī. 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 ʿufaylī sometimes getting slapped and sometimes being treated kindly. In al-Khaṭīb’s work, ʿufaylīs 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, ʿufaylīs had two roles: eating and secondarily, entertaining in exchange for what they consumed. In the Hīkāya, 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 away\(^{236}\) 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

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\(^{236}\) Yashhrūdū ʿalā. There seems to be a word missing here. al-Shāljī’s solution is to change the verb to yathraḍa, 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-Taffūl 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 rahīl, 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 Hikāya 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-Bukhalāʾ or al-Taffīl, the Hikāya 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 *Hīkāya*, only Mez, in the introduction to his edition, looks at the *Hīkāya* 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 *Hīkāya* 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 *Hīkāya*’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.\(^{260}\) 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-

Rashīd and al-Maʿmūn. He returns to the Hikāya when he reaches the 4th/10th century and its experimentation with new forms of literature. Mez discusses the Hikāya 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 Hikāya to the use of mendicants' slang in al-Qaṣīda al-Sasānīyya, 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 Hikāya. The third development Mez introduces is al-Hamadhānī's creation of the maqāma genre and the similarities between the Hikāya and the Maqāmāt, which will be discussed below. Mez eventually identifies the sections of the Hikāya 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 Hikāya 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 saj. The exact sources leading to the development of the genre
are not clear, although maqāmas can be quite similar to anecdotes.\textsuperscript{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 saf\textsuperscript{a} 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{243}

Although he compares the Maqāmāt and the Hīkāya, 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 Fath 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 Hīkāya.\textsuperscript{244} He recognizes that both are related to mendicant literature, and, for that reason there can be confusion as to whether the Hīkāya is related to the maqāma genre.


\textsuperscript{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 Häméeen-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 Häméeen-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 Faṭḥ 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 *saṣī*”. 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-Faṭḥ 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 ḍādati-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.

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-Azdi 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 saj. 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 saj. However, comparison of cities and saj 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. 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. 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

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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. Ibn al-Qutayba, 213/828-275 or 6/289, the author of one of the earliest books in Arabic on literary criticism, Kitāb al-Shīr wa-al-Shuʿarāʾ, wrote the earliest extant definition:

...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 (mādīḥ), boasting (fakhhr), or satire (ḥijā').

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

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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


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 mujān 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 rahīl. 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 rahīl, 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 ṭahīl 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 ṭahīl 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 ṭahīl 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 qāṣīda structure begins with the phrase “Bring us our breakfast, for we certainly have found fatigue in this our journey.” The statement makes it obvious that al-Azīdī through Abū al-Qāsim wants to mark the end of a rahīl. The structure of the third section of the Ḥikāya is atypical for a third section of a qāṣīda, 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, hijāz, 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

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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 (fakhīr) 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-Dīmnā by Ibn al-Muqaffa is 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-Fītana fī Naẓm Kalīla wa-Dīmnā. A third version was composed by Abd al-Muʾmin b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣaghānī in 640/1242. Kalīla wa-Dīmnā 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 Qāni’ī in Konya sometime during the period 641-661/1244-63. 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.*

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. 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’”
strictly on simple grammar. For example, students might take a saying or single sentence anecdote and routinely 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.\textsuperscript{260} An example of such paraphrasings that still survives recasts part of Homer’s \textit{Iliad} in prose.\textsuperscript{261} The last type of paraphrasing is the type of process that occurs in the \textit{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 4\textsuperscript{th}/10\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th}/11\textsuperscript{th} 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 Qur’\textsuperscript{ā}n, hadīth 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 (\textit{balāgha}) and rhetoric, which were central to every usage of


\textsuperscript{261} Theresa Morgan, \textit{Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds}, 204-8.
formal written and spoken Arabic, notably oratory, official government paperwork, and/or literary writings.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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


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 Hikāya’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 Hikāya. 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 Hikāya 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 *Hikāya*, 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 *Hikāya* does not correspond to a recognized genre. Much of it is a prose *qasīda*, 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 *qasīda* 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, *madīh*, *ḥijār*, and *fākhr* does not predominate. However, it is the alternation
of *ḥijār* on the attendees and *fākhr* 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 *ḥīkāya* 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
*ḥīkāya* 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. By the time the Hikāya 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,” 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. Existing research on the economic and social conditions in Isfahan in the late 4th/10th and early

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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, 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. 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. 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 rithāʾ (elegy). Both options may be employed, but it is

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268 Yusuf b. Muḥammad al-Shirbīnī, Yusuf al-Shirbīnī’s Kitāb Ḥazz 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.)
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 is 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-ʿAjāʿib wa-l-gharāʾib ʿalā mā jumīfat min al-Ḥikāya (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. Ṣāliḥ 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-Rīf 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-Tamīnī, 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 tāʾ 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. Ḥamza, 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 edition 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 Qurʾān, 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.

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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-Buḥṭurī’s Dīwān, G.W. Freytag’s Arabum Proverbia, al-Ghuzūlī’s Maṭāliʿ al-Budūr fi Manāzil al-Surūr, al-Hamadhānī’s al-Maqāmāt and al-Rasāʾīl, al-Ḥuṣrī’s Zahr al-Ādāb wa-Thimār al-Albāb, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih’s al-Iqd al-Farīd, several manuscripts of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj’s Dīwān, Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s Dīwān, al-Iṣbahānī’s Kitāb al-Aghānī, al-Jāḥiz’s al-Bayān wa-l-Taḥyīn, al-Khwārazmī’s Rasāʾīl, the Muʿallaqāt, al-Mutanabbi’s Dīwān, al-Rāghib al-Īṣfahānī’s Muḥādarāt al-’Udbāʾ wa-Muḥāwarāt al-Shuʿarāʾ wa-al-Bulaghāʾ, al-Raqīq al-Nadīm’s Quṭb al-Surūr fi Awṣāf al-Khumūr, al-Thaʾālibī’s Yatīmat al-Dahr fi Maḥāsin Ahl al-ʾAṣr, and Yāqūt’s Kitāb Muḫjam 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

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

Like Mez, Shālji emends the text, but does not always annotate the changes. He footnotes the text extensively, but, often idiosyncratically. Shālji 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 Shālji 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 Shālji’s research. Shālji 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, Shālji 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-Hajjāj’s works. In addition, he consults al-Tanūkhī’s Nishwār al-Muhādara wa-Akhbār al-Mudhākara, and al-Tawḥīdī’s Akhlāq al-Wazīrayn, al-Baṣāʾir wa al-Dhakhāʾir, and Kitāb al-Imtāʾ wa-al-Muṭānasa. 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-Tanīmī

(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 blessngs 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 modern\textsuperscript{279} 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 story\textsuperscript{280} 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,\textsuperscript{281} and that they might (serve as) samples of their customs. Thus I have arranged (Baghdadis) in a single (harmonious) picture, within

\textsuperscript{279} The term for the poets of the ‘Abbasid period in opposition to those of earlier periods. See EI2, s.v. “Muḥdathūn.”
\textsuperscript{280} Ḥikāya.
\textsuperscript{281} Ţabaqāt.
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-Jāḥiz 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, Āhwāzīs, 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 person 284 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

283 The Zanjīs were the black slaves of southern Iraq. EI2, s.v. “Zandji.”
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 language 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 ascerts 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:

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. (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. Hārūn hears about it
He is amazed at it and al-Bustī laughs

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287 Lauh. Laḥn, or incorrect usage, was noted as charming in anecdotes as early as Muʿāwiya’s reign. Johann Fück, ʿArabiya: 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-Ḥadjdjāj.”
289 Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Durra, 189.
290 Bishr b. Hārūn appears in al-Intāʾ, 1:139, but he is not identified further.
O sir, listen to a strange rare anecdote
On which I have spent my time.\textsuperscript{292}

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

\textit{O sir, all of my conversation is entertainment}
\textit{Abandon yourself to hearing this entertainment of mine}\textsuperscript{293}

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.\textsuperscript{294} (Sh. p. 46)

\textbf{The Baghdad Letter}

In the name of God the Beneficent and the Merciful

This exiled man, who is known as Abū al-Qāsim ʿAḥmad b. ʿAlī\textsuperscript{295} 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

\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{292} Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.
\textsuperscript{293} Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.
\textsuperscript{294} Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.
\textsuperscript{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 vilifier\(^{206}\) 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

\(^{206}\) *Humuza*, also translated as traducer. This is the title of Sura 104, in which the traducer is described as “slanderer.” *Qurān*, 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, Daqaysh, Qamūr and Zankalāsh could not be determined. Shāāfī suggests they may be the names or nicknames of members of the lower classes. AQSH, 49.

\(^{299}\) An oblong piece of woollen cloth used as a cloak during the day and at night as a blanket. During this period Muhammad’s *burda* was preserved in the treasury of the Abbasid caliphs. EI2, s.v. “*Burda*.”
characters of (Sh. p. 51) cross-dressers\textsuperscript{300} and monkey trainers,\textsuperscript{301} and learned in the science of false astrologers\textsuperscript{302} and conjurers.\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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:

\textsuperscript{300} Mukhannath\={u}, sing. mukhannath. During the Umayyad period, the mukhannath\={u}n 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 mukhannath\={u}n as having ambiguous sexual identify as well as ambiguous gender identity and by the Abbasid period they were regarded as homosexual. Everett Rowson, “The Effeminate of Early Medina,” Journal of the American Oriental Society, 111:4 (1991), 681, 686. Although mukhannath\={u}n has been translated as effeminate, 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.

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

\textsuperscript{302} Zarraq. 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-Kha\={f}r\={i}, Shif\={a}‘ al-Ghal\={i}l (Beirut: D\={a}r al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998), 171.

\textsuperscript{303} Muska‘ bidh means juggler, conjurer, or one who practices legerdemain, usually involving trickery. Its etymology indicates an aspect of controlling spirits. Bosworth, 333.

\textsuperscript{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-tried (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 him.\textsuperscript{305}

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 Mālikī, 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

\textsuperscript{305} This bayt seems to imply a double entendre which it is impossible to resolve.
\textsuperscript{306} Malikī’s are frequently represented in poetry of this period as exhibiting “mujūn” or dissolute
behavior. The linkage of anal sex to members of the Malikī school of law is recorded in Shahāb al-Dīn
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 taylasān, its edge drawn over his temples, half-covering his face. Whenever he would see a gathering 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 enhance your generosity.” 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.” 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 taylasān was worn by a specialist in theology or religious law. Dozy, Vêtements, s.v. “Taylasān.”
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. “Majlis.”
309 Ḥayyā Allāh dhā al-wajh bi l-salām wa habah-hu bi l-ikrām. There is a play between the standard practice of wishing graces on the host and a socially unacceptably 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. Toshiihiko 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? 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 imams act like enemies to Ḥusayn

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

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

May God’s mercy and peace be upon them
Whenever someone stands up saying “Salām ʿalaykum.”

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

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

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312 Ḥusayn was the second son of ʿAlī, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law and Fāṭima, Muhammad’s daughter. He was killed by Umayyad soldiers at Karbalā in 680 C.E. Shi’ites 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 ulamā’ or religious scholars.

314 Literally, standing place. Lane, s.v. “Maqām.” Here, this means the Maqām ibraḥīm, located by the Ka’ba. It is a stone on which Abraham stood at the building of the Ka’ba and in which he left his footprint. al-Bayān, 3:360, n.2. The poem is attributed to the poet Ṣubḥ Allāh b. Kathīr b. al-Muṭṭalib b. Abī Wadā’ah al-Sahmi, 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 Kūfah around the end of 121/739. al-Bayān, 3:359, n.5.

315 The term Ahl al-Bayt is ambiguous, although in this context it is clearly Shi’ite. The Shi’ites apply it only to ʿAlī, Fāṭima and their descendants. Sunnis generally consider the term to include Muhammad and ʿAlī and their wives and descendants. 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 Ṣubḥ Allāh b. Kathayyar b. al-Muṭṭalib b. Abī Wadā’ah al-Sahmi, d. 120 H. al-Bayān, 3:359-60. The bayts in al-Jāḥiẓ have the following differences from their form in AQSH: in the first bayt, yasubhu (abuse) appears instead of yu’ādī. In the third bayt, baytan (house) appears instead of nafsan. al-Bayān, 3:360.

I am a follower of Muḥammad and ʿAlī And of the two imams, Shabbar and Shabīr

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

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

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

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

And of one whom the dead man's skull addressed

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

319 EI2, s.v. “Mawāla.”

320 Hasan and ʿUsayn. 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 Hasan and ʿUsayn were sometimes referred to as Shabbar and Shabīr. Ibn Manẓūr, Liṣān al-ʿArab, ʿAlī Shīrī, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥāyya’ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1988), s.v. “Shabara.”

321 Batūl. Fāṭima, Muḥammad’s daughter became associated with miracles, particularly in the Shi‘ite 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 Shi‘ite ḥadīth on this topic is: Muḥammad prayed the ṣaʿr prayer and the sun set. Then ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalīb came and sat down beside him. Allāh brought the sun back up and both men prayed the ṣaʿr prayer together. al-Majlīsī, Bihār al-Anwār (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Wafā’, 1983), 41:167. Other versions of this hadīth appear in the same work, 41:167-191.

323 In a Shi‘ite hadīth, “ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalīb states that he will assign the dead to Heaven or Hell. al-Majlīsī, 41:234.

324 Mubāh and maḥzūr. There are five categories of acts recognized under Islamic law: fard or wājib = required; sunna, māṣnūn, mandūb or mustahabb = recommended but not required; jāʿiz or muḥbāh = indifferent, neither rewarded nor punished; makrāh = 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 hadīth stories exist in which a speaking wolf approaches ʿAlī when he is walking through the street of a city with his sons, Hasan and ʿUsayn. 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 Shi‘ites. However, the city in which this occurs is not identified. al-Majlīsī, 41:238-9.

326 Ard Bābil. This term is used mostly for Iraq, but Yaqūt, 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 Bihqubād, which includes Bābil and ʿAyn al-Tamr. EI2, s.v. “Bābil” or “Bihqubād.”
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 Ḫunayn\(^{228}\)
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: Qurayṣa\(^{229}\) and al-Naḍīr\(^{230}\)

And of the one who shook the gate of Khaybar\(^{231}\) 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 hair\(^{232}\)

The one whose victims, as the Night of Ḥārīr\(^{233}\) passed, were all

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\(^{227}\) ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb prayed the zuhr prayer, then turned and addressed a skull opposite him. They had a long conversation during which the sun disappeared before ‘Alī could pray the ʿasr prayer. ‘Alī asked the sun to return, but it refused. Allāh had 70,000 angels with iron chains pull the sun back up until ‘Alī finished his ʿasr prayer. Al-Majlisī, 41:166.

\(^{228}\) During the Battle of Ḫunayn, there were many new troops in the Muslim army and they fell back in confusion under a concerted attack by the Ḥawāzin. The enemy’s standard bearer was mounted on a camel. ‘Alī and a companion hamstrung the camel and led a counterattack. Gulzar Ahmed, *The Battles of the Prophet of Allāh*. (Lahore: Islamic Publications, ltd., 1975-), 2:193, 196-197.

\(^{229}\) ‘Alī was the standard bearer in this battle. Hassan al-Amīn, *Islamic Shi‘ite Encyclopaedia*, 1:218, s.v. "Qurayṣa."

\(^{230}\) ‘Alī was the standard bearer in this battle. Gulzar Ahmed, *The Battles of the Prophet of Allāh*, 1:301, "al-Naḍīr."

\(^{231}\) In the battle of Khaybar, one of the Jews fighting ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb 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.

\(^{232}\) The women cut their hair as a sign of mourning. It is an indication that ‘Alī killed many enemies.

\(^{233}\) During the Night of Ḥārīr, which occurred during the Battle of Ṣifīn, ‘Alī 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. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb, *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 sandwiches and fried food, are all of them like them? Marvelous!”

Then, having untied the knot in his ḥubwa, 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.” Abū al-Qāsim says, “He frowned and turned away.” There is no God but Allah! He’s a bore whose kunya is Father of Desire; a dung-seller whose name is nosegay; a female beggar called Queenie; a sewer pipe called Father (Sh. p. 57) of

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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,” “Iṭab’a.”
336 Cheerful or with an open, pleasant face. Lane, s.v. “Bishr.”
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. El2, 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, 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'alu'  
In the *Book of Pure Language*¹⁴¹

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,²⁴² 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.

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¹⁴⁰ 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.
¹⁴¹ *Kitāb al-faṣīḥ*. A book by Aḥmad b. Yahyā 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-Hajjāj. *Yatīma*, 3:37. The first bayt in the appears in the *Yatīma* as:

in ʿāba Tha‘lab shī ‘rī/ Aw ʿāba khīfīt 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 būb meaning both chapter and gateway.
²⁴² *Bl i-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.
I was amazed at him, by God, how he isn’t
Struck by paralysis from his chill (Sh. p. 58)

How clean his clothes are, and how dirty his skin! If his clothes weren’t white,
I’d consider him a dog! It’s as if he were a whitewashed toilet, or stacked dung.

And this other one, who is he? It’s as though he were a picture on a bathhouse
door!

The master of the house responds, “This is So-and-so the Secretary.” Abū al-
Qāsim says:

(He is) a scribe who slaps every literary person
Upside the head\textsuperscript{344} with a sandal

\textsuperscript{345}

(He is) a scribe who, whenever he seats himself officially
Farts noiselessly in the noses of the notables

\textsuperscript{346}

(He is) a scribe who slaps \textsuperscript{3}Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib\textsuperscript{346}
Upside the head with his sandal

\textsuperscript{347}

(He is) a scribe who, when he smells shit,
Gets aroused like an attacking soldier

\textsuperscript{348}

No by God,

(He is), rather, a scribe whose doorman’s turd
Is a better writer than Abū Qurra’s\textsuperscript{347} beard (Sh. p. 59)

\textsuperscript{344} Qofan.
\textsuperscript{345} Stanzas separated by this symbol are all from separate poems.
Someone says, “He is closely connected with the head of the Diwān” 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 Diwān’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 Diwān 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 Qorra Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Qunnāṭ, who was first a tax farmer in the Wāṣīt 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-Ḥaḍīr al-ʿAbbas b. al-Ḥusayn al-Shirāzī, who served the Būyid amīr Muʿīzz al-Dawla and his son Bakhtiyār as though he were their wazir. Ibn Miskawayh, Kitāb Taḍārib al-Umam (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1965?), 2:260-365. Mafizullah Kabir, The Biwayhid Dynasty of Baghdad, 334/946-447/1055 (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1964), 19-21. John J. Donahue, The Biwayhid 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.


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


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?” 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 fumitory— 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’s treasurer of chicken shit (Sh. p. 61) or the steward of the Shaṭṭ, who guards duck shit, or the one in charge of the Tigris, who squeezes the post-flooding debris.

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).

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532 Saih. 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.

533 Shaṭṭraŋ or Shaṭṭraḵ. Fumaria officinalis: a plant formerly used to treat biliary problems, i.e. increase intestinal function or counteract gallstones. Muḥammad b. ’Alī Najīb al-Dīn al-Samarqandi, al-Aqrābāḥīn al-Tarīḥ al-Asbāb (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshīrūn, 1994), 109, 197.

534 Umm Mūsā was a household manageress of the caliph al-Muqtaṣar, 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-Umay (Baghdād: Maktabat al-Muthannah, 1964), 1:20, 63-4, 74.

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

536 Yaḥṣuddu ʿal-mābdāṭ bi l-hawd. Al-mābdāṭ is not conclusively identifiable. Hawf is emended to hawd. 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 felt\textsuperscript{357} dress. (He is) an elegant man who fell from the shoulder of
his nursemaid into the privy. He doesn't eat shit except with coconut\textsuperscript{358}--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 songstress\textsuperscript{359} (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,\textsuperscript{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
jubba\textsuperscript{361} embroidered with many colors\textsuperscript{362} and his beard molded through excessive

\footnotesize{
\textsuperscript{358} This in 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, 
\textit{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 jumnh. AQM, 8.
\textsuperscript{359} Kurraḍa. A female singer who sings with a small drum. al-Khafājī, \textit{Shifaṭ al-Ghalīf}, 262.
\textsuperscript{360} ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kāṭib.
}
combing. How large his insignia-marked 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 Nīhāwandī 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 paper

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

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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-Muwasishā’, ed. R.E. Brünnow (Leyden, 1886), 124-7.
363 Lane, s.v. “Musawwama.”
364 Nīhāwand is a town in the Hamadhan region of Iran. Yāqūt, Kitāb mu’jam al-buldān, Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, ed. (Tehran, 1965), 4:827. A Nīhāwandī 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. El2, s.v. “Djarīr.”
Dāwūdiyya. 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, 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 ‘Alid, 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, and does not stay away 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 mosque

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 wine 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

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367 Hawd Dāwūd. A reservoir in southern Baghdad near the al-‘Aṭash 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 ḥadhiran ka l-qirillī... Another proverb, “atma min qirillī” signifies a man whose sole interest is searching out food. al-Damirī, Hayāt al-Hayawan al-Kubrā (Beirut: Dār al-Albāb, 1980), 2:187. See also Akhtaf min qirillī in al-Maydānī, Mu‘jam al-Amithāl, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Fadl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Tisā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1978?), 1:459, proverb 1378.
370 Yashrudu ‘alā. 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, ‘alā is then superfluous. I would suggest that the copyist left out “lā.” Since ‘alā 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-Sārī al-Raffā, who was a poet from Mosul. Yatīma, 2:177.
wineskin, and mounting one conscripted 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 Rūm
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 unseen—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 pudding delicious only
When prepared like fālūdhaj, 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, to pasture freely on their delicacies, and to dart between their marvels, heading only for

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372 Nabīdḥ. 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. "Nabīdḥ."
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. "ʾĀlam al-ghayb."
376 Khabīs. 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. Arberry 2: 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 fālūdhaj. 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. Arberry 2, 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 skewer
He works over roast meat and jerky
With fingers formed from iron

His fingers are like a net for catching fish.

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)?

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378 Crumbled bread moistened with broth, then piled up with some pieces of meat. Lane, s.v. “Tharīda, pl. Tharā'id.”
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 Ḥilāl al-Sābī, al-Hafāwīt al-Nādira (Riyad: Dār al-Šarīf, 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 rooster 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. He visits Alī
because of his power (qadr) and Muʿāwiya because of his cooking pot (qīdr). He does
mischief with the wolf and (then) calls for help with the shepherd. (If) barley inflates
his belly, then the goblet does not inflate it. (He has) three (fingers) like hearth
stones, a molar like an awl, and a stomach like a desert. You (f. sing.) will
(eventually) get your breakfast, even if you have to wait a while.

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

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382 A rooster is the most sensible and self-satisfied of the birds and is also stupid. EI2, s.v. “Dik.”
383 Maṣqāmāt, 74 (al-jāḥiṣiyya).
384 For examples of All’s power, see p. 9-11 above. In one of those examples, during the battle of Khaybar,
All used a gate as a shield. All’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 All put it down. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, History of
385 Muʿāwiya’s madhira was so well prepared that even at the time of the Battle of Siffin, Abū Hurayra, one
of All’s staunch supporters, would go over to Muʿāwiya’s side to eat it. al-Thaʿlībī, The Book of Curious
and Entertaining Information, The Latin of al-Maṭāriz of Thaʿlībī, trans. and ed. by C.E. Bosworth (Edinburgh:
The University Press, 1968), 46.
386 The vowel īī is unclear. al-Shālī records the word as ḥīḥī. Mez records the word as habajī. Neither
word is found in the dictionaries. Habaja can mean to inflate the belly and I am choosing this since it
gives the phrase an intelligible meaning. On the other hand, ḥīḥī is similar to hawhay, the syllables called
out to urge a horse on, and ḥīḥī, the syllables used to drive sheep. A. de Biberstein Kazimirski,
Dictionnaire arabe-français s.v. “Habaja,” “Hawhay” and “Ḥīḥī ḥīḥī.”
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-Khaḍjīfī, Shīfāʾ al-Ghalīlī, 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.
\(\tanbûr\) whose strings had been broken. O sirs, by your lives, tell me, who is he?"

Someone says, “This very person is a \(\tanbûr\) player.” (Abû al-Qâsim) 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 ‘asîda\footnote{\textit{‘Asîda}, pl. ‘asîyid. A sweet dish made from flour cooked with butter and a little sugar. \textit{Lane}, s.v.} 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 \(\tanbûr\)
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 \(\tanbûr\) and begins a lament:

It is as if his \(\tanbûr\) 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 him\footnote{\textit{‘Asîda.” Also, a boiled mixture of cooked rice, flour, sesame-oil that sets when cooled and is topped with ground walnuts, pistachios and honey syrup. \textit{Arberry}, 214.}.
May God give him his book in his left hand, 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’—birds of a feather flock together. (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 thickets!

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. This, by God, is someone to make the eyes burn (but) cool the buttocks.

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392 Qur’ān, 69 (al-Hāqa): 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, Mu’jam al-Āmthāl, ed. by Muḥammad Abū al-Fadl Ibrāhīm
394 Wāfaq Shann Tabaqa. 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 tālīf.
396 A phrase meaning a person considered corrupt, deceitful, fraudulent. al-Tālqānī, Risālat al-Āmthāl al-
Baghdādiyya allati Tajri bayna al-‘Amma (Baghdad: Dār al-Shu’un al-Thaqafiyya al-‘Amliyya, 1990), 57-8.
397 Literally, cool the buttocks, qurrat ist. The construction is parallel to qurrat al-‘ayn. 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 flee\(^{398}\) 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

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\(^{398}\) The word appears as lafarra in AQSH, 69 and safara in AQM, 12. Tusāfīr, 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 Kūfā 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."\(^{401}\) 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 Raḍwā\(^{403}\)
And Thahlān\(^{404}\) by two pounds\(^{405}\)

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 tā a’rafi-hu” in the manuscript and in AQM, 12 and as “Wa anā lā a’rafi-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 ṯaḏāt al-‘īz”... and ends ...“fa-araytu-hu Abā al-Shīs fa-ṣidhā huwa ḥanā, wa anā lā a’rafi-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 raṭlīs. 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 heart\footnote{Literally, liver. Arabs consider the liver the seat of emotions. El2, s.v. "Kabid."} is in his stomach and he has the haughty air of kings. Kisrā\footnote{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. El2, s.v. "Kisrā."} has no successor but him! (Sh. p. 73)

An old man who exalted himself haughtily
So I slapped him down flat
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.” 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

Every day he roams the town square
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 ceremony before entering
And at the door (M. p. 14) does not fear the doorman’s blow
This is more desirable than shell ing out money or going into debt
Or provoking the anger of the grocer and butcher
He decides it is worth (joining) the pony express in his quest for a stew. 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, dirt (carefully)
brushed off, are of Daylami style too. May God inflame my eyes over you, no,
rather, the eyes of those who love you. (He is) naked, but on his feet are Indian sandals;\textsuperscript{417} (Sh. p. 74) hungry, but with \textit{fīrāz}\textsuperscript{418} on (his) collar;\textsuperscript{419} (he is) naked in a \textit{ṭaylasān}; a hungry (man) but (well) clothed. Sell some of your clothes\textsuperscript{420} 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.'\textsuperscript{421} By my life, (one) more skilled at the embroidery\textsuperscript{422} of ill-omen than you, has not been

\textsuperscript{417} The Daylamis were a Persian speaking tribe from the mountainous regions of Gilan. El2, s.v. "Daylam."

\textsuperscript{418} Daylam was famous for producing silk textiles, of one or several colors, including a type of silk called "khazz." \textit{Hudūd al-ʾĀlam}, 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, \textit{The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge, being the First Part of the Nishwâr al-Muhādara, or Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh of Abū Ḥâmid al-Muhāassin 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.


\textsuperscript{419} Bands of embroidered writing. When applied to clothing, \textit{fīrāz} conferred great honor. El2, s.v. "Ṭirāz."

\textsuperscript{419} The phrase "with \textit{ṭirāz} on (his) collar" is a guess at the meaning of words that appear to be: \textit{yafīṭu ḥurāfī}. Disregarding the dots, this could be read as \textit{bi-qaff hurāfī}, which fits the context and which I am accepting.

\textsuperscript{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, \textit{Vêtements}, s.v. "Kisā.""  

\textsuperscript{421} A play on moisture and a black slave, since Bilāl, Mūḥammad's muezzin, was originally a slave. El2, s.v. "Bilāl b. Rabāḥ."

\textsuperscript{422} \textit{Ṭirāz}. 
imported from Tinnīs or Damietta. 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 shit 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 clan of the Arabs come to, thank God, is a great man in whose wise experience people find salvation. May God have mercy on Adam, that is, on the descendants 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 himself

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

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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. El2, s.v. “Dimyāṭ.”

424 This appears as rizma in the manuscript and in AQSH, 75, and as zirmā in AQM, 14.

425 Also translatable as "guts." El2, s.v. "Buṭṭān."

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, Diwān Abī Nūwās al-Ḥasan bin Hānī al-Hakami, 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 muhdathūn, 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 mujān in much of his poetry. El2, 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 grouse 431 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 heads 434 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 Aḥdab, Kashf al-Ma‘āmī wa al-
Bayān ‘an Rasā’il Bādī’ al-Zamān (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kāthul‘kiyya, 1890), 63.
430 Literally, ahl al-balā‘, or people of disaster. This fits the basic behavior of a parasite in the Roman
431 al-Damīrī, s.v. “Qatā’h.”
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. El2, s.v. “Mūmiyā‘.”
433 An allusion to the phrase “šawā‘ samakata-hu ʾl ḥādāh al-ḥarīq” (“he grills his fish in this fire”), which
 means a person who turns harm to another to his own advantage. al-Ṭālqānī, Risālat al-Anthāl al-
Baghdādiyya allatī Tajrī bayna al-‘Āmma, 223.
434 A variant of a phrase used in a poem by Abū Nuwāṣ. Abū Nuwāṣ, Diwān Abī Nāwās al-Hasan bin Ḥanīf al-
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 Iblîs\(^{425}\) in deception
(And) more of a procuress than Zulma\(^{426}\)

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 crow\(^{438}\) it never
Fails to bring him directly to the rotting cadavers

This by God, is in contrast to what ‘Umar b. Abî Rabî‘a\(^{439}\) 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)

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\(^{425}\) The personal name of the Devil. EI2, s.v. “Iblîs.”

\(^{426}\) This is a variant of the phrase: “aqwad min Zulma.” Zulma 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-Maydânî, 2:530-1.

\(^{437}\) The manuscript is undotted and so is unclear. It appears as Ja‘r in AQSH, 77 and as jafr in AQM, 15.

\(^{438}\) The crow is an inauspicious bird. al-Damîrî, s.v. “Ghurâb.”

\(^{439}\) Ibn Abî Rabî‘a, 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. “‘Umar (b. ‘Abd Allâh) b. Abî Rabî‘a.”

\(^{440}\) The poem parallels Ibn Abî Rabî‘a, Sharh Diwân ‘Umar b. Abî Rabî‘a al-Makhzûmî (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijâriyya al-Kubrâ, 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 gently 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 origin is a truffle, whose

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⁴⁴¹ This could be muḥayyīs or muḥayyīsh or possible muṃayyīs, none of which can be verified. I’ve chosen muṃayyīs, since at least I could find a meaning for the root. Shālījī believes it means pimp.
⁴⁴² Muṭawrīh. AQSH, 78, n1. The word is unidentifiable, so I have accepted Shālījī’s guess.
⁴⁴³ Double entendre between the two meanings of qāda: to lead and to pimp.
⁴⁴⁵ Double entendre between mountain goats and virgins (‘usm).
⁴⁴⁶ A play on Qur’ān 5:31 (al-Mā’īda). 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 Rāghīb al-‘Isfahānī, Muḥādarāt al-Udabā’ wa Muḥāwarāt al-Shu’ārah’ wa al-Bulagā’ (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥaylāt, 1980), 2:262.
middle is a cucumber, and on whose neck is a nosebag! You love one who blows a pipe—a "Zuhayrī," (as in): (Sh. p. 79)

I saw Zuhayr beneath Khālid's chest...

He drags (his) status in (the) dust.

He opens (his) anus (mīm) to the pricks (lāms) of mankind. He hides the rod 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); you hide the rod. Our lord has his finger in the latch hole; he sells a fig for a cucumber."

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)?"

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449 al-Ghuzūlī, al-Matālī al-Budūrī al-Manāṣīl al-Surūr (Egypt: Matbā'at Idārat al-Waṭan, 1881 or 82-83), 1:273, with small variants: ...fr ra'ṣi-hi kumāh wa waṣṭ-hu qanāh wa fi asfāli-hi mikhlāḥ.

450 Bāq, meaning penis.


452 The manuscript is unclear. I am reading it as "rātib."

453 For a similar usage of "mīm" and "lām," see Abū al-Fath al-Bustī al-Kātib in Yatīma, 1:519 and al-Jurjānī, al-Muntakhab min Kināyāt al-Usbā' wa-Iṣhrār al-Bulaghā' (Hyderabad: Matbā'at Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya, 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. Elz, s.v. "al-Bustī."


455 Tāt' aṣṣabu l-hamal. For the complete expression and variations, see: al-Tha'labī, Kitāb al-Nihāya fī Fann al-Kināya (Damascus: Dār al-Ḥikma, 1994), 62.

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."438

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

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438 Tharīḍa.
steward; a Qurʾān school that inflicts pain\textsuperscript{461} and a blind teacher; a lame (man) and a one-eyed man;\textsuperscript{462} the key to the monastery\textsuperscript{463} 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,’\textsuperscript{464} so let (each) one of you look to the one whom he treats as a friend,’ and as the poet said:

\begin{quote}
Don’t look at the man, rather look at his friend
For each person gravitates to one of like nature
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{461} A saying meaning two individuals closely resembling each other in their clothing. al-Mu‘ayyidī al-Ṭālqānī, Risālat al-Amthāl al-Baghdādiyya allātī Tajrī bayna al-ʾAmma, 56.
\textsuperscript{462} al-Maydānī, Muṣṭam al-Amthāl, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 367. Freytag 1:368-9, proverb 83.
\textsuperscript{463} Unclear. Kuttāb wajīf: The form wajīf and its meaning cannot be verified, but based on Wright, 1:135, it may mean inflicting pain.
\textsuperscript{464} Freytag 2:339, proverb 72. al-Maydānī, 3:30, proverb 3052.
\textsuperscript{465} 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. Elz, 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.
\textsuperscript{466} 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 you.\footnote{Attributed to al-Šarīʿ. al-Buldān, 2:538-9. This is al-Šarīʿ al-Ghawānā, who is also known as Muslim b. al-Walīd, d. 823 or 4. Although his poetry makes use of the ṣadī style, which was then new, his poetry is also relatively traditional. The line is present in Muslim b. al-Walīd, Sharḥ Dīwān Šarīʿ al-Ghawānī Muslim ibn al-Walīd al-Anṣārī, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿārif, 1970), 343, poem 195.}

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).’\footnote{This means "Birds of a feather flock together," see, al-Damīrī, Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā, 1:332.}

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." 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.\footnote{Freytag 2:56, proverb 103. al-Maydānī, 2:307.} 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
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.’” (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, 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,” 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,” ‘Lo you cannot make the dead hear, nor the deaf hear the summons when
they have turned, fleeing.”

You would have been heard if you had called to one who was living
But there is no life in the one you summon!

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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 Murūj. 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. E12, s.v. “Murūj.”

471 A literary form for transmitting instructions and advice. E12, s.v. “Waṣliyya.”


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’an 74 (Muddathir): 50 and 51.
⁴⁷⁵ Qur’an 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, 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 debauchery night or day, who has no lady protectoress 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.

(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!'

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 Mālik battalion by battalion”

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477 Shālīf emends way-ka to wa nīk, meaning, And fuck. AQSH, 83.
478 Mudjin. EI2, s.v. "Mudjīn."
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. Shālīf omits this line, although it appears in the manuscript.
481 The angel of Hell, which means to go to Hell. EI2, s.v. "Malāʾika."
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,\footnote{The manuscript is unclear. It appears to be shark. Mes emends it to as-sharb.} 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?\footnote{This is blasphemying by referring to the Manichaean belief in dualism and then the Christian belief in the Trinity.} Did I try to refute the Qurʾān with poetry?\footnote{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-ʾImām al-ʿArabī, 1965), 493. This specific sentence refers to Qurʾān 11 (Ḥūd):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 ʾi ḥāz, 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. Eiz, s.v. “ʾi ḥāz,” or “Muʿāraḍa.”} Did I break the incisors of the prophet of God?\footnote{A man hit the Prophet Muḥammad’s face so that blood flowed down it. He asked Allah to bless them. al-Ṭabarī, Tārikh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, ed. Muḥammad Abū al- Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1960), 2:515 and 2:519} Did I dig up the grave?\footnote{This refers to the caliph al-Mutawakkil exhuming Ḥusayn and having the buildings around his grave leveled. Ibn al- Ṭabarī, al-Kāmil fi al-Tārikh (Beirut: Dār Šādir, 1965), 7:55.} Did I erect the mangonel against the Kaʿba,\footnote{“Abd Allāh b. Zubayr had declared himself caliph during the confusion following the caliph Muʿāwiyah’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-Akhbār al-Tiwāl (Leiden: Brill, 1888), 319-21.} or hit it with menstrual rags? Did I shit in the well of Zamzam?\footnote{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 Išmael from dying of thirst in the desert. Eiz, s.v. “Zamzam.”} Did I hamstring (Sh. p. 86) Sāliḥ’s she camel?\footnote{Qurʾān 11 (Ḥūd):61-8. Sāliḥ was a prophet to the tribe of Ḥūd. 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.} Did I say about Allah what the Jews and Christians say?\footnote{Qurʾān 5 (al-Māʾidah):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.} Did I fornicate between the grave and the pulpit? Did I
shut on the Black Stone? Did I cut off Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī's head? Did I cut off the hand of Jaʿfar b. ʿAbī Ẓalīb? Did I eat the liver of Ḥamza? Did I tear the skin (Sh. p. 87) of the one whom the hand of Allah blessed? O Murr b. Murr, 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 ʿAḍī and met the kings of Yemen

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 tahsil

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

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491 The black stone in the Kaʿba. E12, 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. E12, s.v. "Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ẓalīb."
493 Jaʿfar b. ʿAbī Ẓalīb was ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ẓalīb'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. E12, s.v. "Djāfīr b. ʿAbī Ẓalīb."
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 Uhud 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. E12, s.v. "Ḥind bint ʿUtba."
495 This refers to the stabbing of Umar, the 2nd caliph, by Abū Luʿluʾa, a Christian slave. E12, s.v. "ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. " The phrase comes from a marthiyya, or elegy, which can be found in al-Ṣafadī, Kitāb al-Wafī bi-al-Wafayār (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. E12, s.v. "ʿAḍ."
498 The name Tubbaʾ 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. E12, s.v. "Tubbaʾ."
499 Literally, to sort out the chaff from the grain, or to distinguish the intellectually valuable from the intellectually unsound. Lane, s.v. "Tahsil." In this context, tahsil would seem to refer to students reciting religious lessons.
Between whose buttocks 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 burqa

Fuck! 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 wood, for
Tomorrow when you get worn out, you will see it (like) soft wood

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

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

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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. Shālījī changes it to “nik,” which I have also chosen.
503 The tree Chadura Tenax. Hava, s.v. “Nab.”
504 The tree Palma Christii; 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 torture

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 brick

If you are not noble or clever
Then you are the misrepresentation of a 'slave of the vulva’

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

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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 hurrún”).
(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 khurnūb\textsuperscript{509} 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 night\textsuperscript{510} is (like the) time before daybreak, her food is wholesome, her

\textsuperscript{509} A short thorny tree used as fuel, with bad tasting fruit that is only eaten in times of hunger. Lane, s.v. “Khurrūb.”

\textsuperscript{510} Emended from nasīmu-ḥā to laylu-ḥā.
drink is healthy\textsuperscript{511} 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 air\textsuperscript{512} is (like) dust, her earth is (like) mire, her water is (like) clay, her soil is (like) manure,\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{511} "Beloved...healthy" is closely paralleled in \textit{al-Buldān}, 1:690.
\textsuperscript{512} Emended from \textit{ḥurr}u-ḥā to \textit{jaww}u-ḥā.
\textsuperscript{513} "Her air...manure" is closely paralleled in \textit{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, Šarīfīn, Awānā, Ṣukbarā
and Kalwādghā, Qutrabbul, Bādurayā, al-Abārā, (Sh. p. 93) al-Deskara and Bāʾqūbā,
Shahrābān and Darzīyān, Buṣrā, Dujayl, and al-Nīl?\textsuperscript{514} All I hear about (among) your
farming areas are (places like): Sārmarna\textsuperscript{515} (that is, with camel shit), Kālmīrā\textsuperscript{516} (that
is, with goat shit), Adhār\textsuperscript{517} (that is, it comes and farts in their beards), Kūrasmān\textsuperscript{518} (that
is, solid shit and moist, runny shit), Kūrishān\textsuperscript{519} (that is, shit in the beard), Kūristān\textsuperscript{520}
(that is (Sh. p. 94), tombs), and Mūshkābādāh\textsuperscript{521} (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-Rūṣāfā, Bāb al-
Ṭaq, Sūq Yahyā, Shāriʿ (Sh. p. 95) al-Burdān, Darb al-Rayhān, Darajat Yaʾqūb (Sh. p. 96),
the banks (of the river near) al-Jisrayn, Bayna al-Qaṣrayn, al-Zāhir, al-Shamāsiyya,
Marbaʿat al-Khurasān, Sūq al-Thulāthāt (Sh. p. 97), Bāb al-Azaj, al-Zarrādān, al-
Maʾmūniyya, and Dār al-Khalīfa; (Sh. p. 98) or, if you like, (how about) the western

\textsuperscript{514} For information on Baradān through al-Nīl, see LeStrange, Lands, except for Šarīfīn, for which see al-
Buldān, 3:384 and for Darzīyān, for which see al-Buldān, 2:567.
\textsuperscript{515} This could be read as Sārmṛ(y)?h. Sār = combining form of camel. An area near Isfahan is called
Sarmāy. Ḩamd Allāh Mustawfi Qazväni, Kitāb-i Nuzhat al-Qulūb or The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat al-
\textsuperscript{516} Kāl = goat; mīrāt = garbage.
\textsuperscript{517} This name is recorded in al-ṣāfarrūkī, Kitāb Maḥāsin Isfahān (Tihrān: Maṭbaʿat Majlis..., 1933), 45.
This text was written between 1072 and 1092 C.E. Wā = to do back; dīḥār = refractoriness. It is also a
Jewish month that would have been used among the Jewish population of Jāyy, one of the two original
districts of Isfahan. Roubéne Abrahamian, Dialectes des Israélites de Haman et d’Isphahan et dialecte de Baba
Tahir (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1936), 137.
\textsuperscript{518} Gūḥ = shit; rasm = form; ān = dual, i.e. two kinds of shit.
\textsuperscript{519} Gūḥ = shit; rūshān = beards.
\textsuperscript{520} Gūristān = cemetery.
\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{522} al-Raqqa,\textsuperscript{523} the ʿĪsā Canal, the (Sh. p. 99) Ṭābiq Canal,\textsuperscript{524} Sūq al-ʿUrus, Ṣaff al-Tawzī, Darb ʿAwn,\textsuperscript{525} Ṣīnīyat al-Karkh which is called Sūq al-Nahḥāsīn,\textsuperscript{526} Tāq al-ʿAkkī,\textsuperscript{527} al-Sharqīyya,\textsuperscript{528} Sūq al-Raffāʾīn, Sūq al-Ḥalāwīyīn, Qatīf at (Sh. p. 100) al-Rabi,\textsuperscript{5} the unenclosed Qaṭīf a, Suwayqat Ghālib, Bāb al-Muḥawwal, Tāq al-Ḥarrānī, Qarn al-Ṣīrah, (M. p. 23) Bāb (Sh. p. 101) al-ʿAṣra, 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-Khalis, al-Hārūnī, the Șarṣar Canal, and al-Nahrawān. And if you like, (how about) her mosques, the Mosque of al-Manṣūr, the Mosque of al-Ruṣāfa, the Mosque of (Sh. p. 105) al-Qaṭīf a, the Mosque of Barāthā, the Mosque of al-Qaṣr?\textsuperscript{529} And if you like, (how about) her famous shrines: the Shrine of Karbalāʾ, and the Shrine of al-Kūfa,\textsuperscript{530} and the Quraysh (Sh. p. 106) Cemetery?\textsuperscript{531}

O my Lord, by the right of an imam
Who prayed (suppigeratory) morning prayer in Barāthā, guard a great leader from whom I parted on Tuesday

Another

\textsuperscript{522} For information on al-Ruṣāfa through Dār al-Khalīfa see Gaston LeStrange, Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), except for Marbaʿat al-Khurashi, for which see al-Buldān, 4:485, and except for al-Najmī, for which see al-Buldān, 1:460.

\textsuperscript{523} Although this would appear to be the city higher up the Euphrates, it is a garden in Karkh, so named because "raqqa" describes low-lying land. LeStrange, Baghdad, 261.

\textsuperscript{524} For these two places, see LeStrange, Baghdad.

\textsuperscript{525} V. 352.


\textsuperscript{527} LeStrange, Baghdad, 130.

\textsuperscript{528} Sharqiyya, as well as being a name for Eastern Baghdad, refers to a neighborhood west of the Tigris, somewhat outside the Basra Gate. LeStrange, Baghdad, 90-1.

\textsuperscript{529} For al-Rabi through the Mosque of al-Qaṣr, see LeStrange, Baghdad.

\textsuperscript{530} For these two cities, see LeStrange, Lands.

\textsuperscript{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: Wargān\(^ {533}\) (that is, the (Place of)
Wolves), Kalmānāw\(^ {534}\) (that is, the Place of Lepers), Kū-yi Karān\(^ {535}\) (the Lane of the Deaf),
the Kū-ŷi Kūrān\(^ {536}\) (the Lane of the Blind), Kīr Bār\(^ {537}\) (that is, a load of penises), the
Mosque of Ḥūzḥīr,\(^ {538}\) (may God inflame (your) eyes. Do I see, by God, the Tigris laden

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\(^{532}\) 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 Geographen (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), 646.

\(^{534}\) Kalm = wound; na‘w = going far, i.e. spreading.

\(^{535}\) Kū = lane; karān = deaf.

\(^{536}\) Kū = lane; kūrān = 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 Șirāh (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-Nawārīr and al-Duwalib.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 (adhhab) your senses and make your eyes burn. If this river-valley of yours, of which you are so proud,
(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!’ They explain (its) role: ‘What is next to the penis only lower?’ He screams, ‘Hey, lady, I will reap your shit, that is, I will shelve your shit, O Lady!’

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.

(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,

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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; dibānaḏ = O high society lady; qahat = your shit; kisham = I reap, ay = hey; ajurur = drag; khurāki = your shit; yā sīṭṭ = O lady (Arabic). Tafaḏdalī, Ahmad, “İtilā′at-i Darbārah-yi Lahjāh-yi Pishān-i Isfahān,” Namah-′i Mīnuvi: Majmu′ah-′i Si va Hašt Guftar dar Adab va Farhang-i Irān-i bih Pās Panjāb Sāl-i Tahqīqat va Mutālā′at-i Mīnuvi (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sanāʾi, 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 Heaven\textsuperscript{546}

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!’\textsuperscript{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 seduced\textsuperscript{548}—and beautiful women are a mother-lode of enchantment


\textsuperscript{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 Diwān.
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 (hawā) 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 (murtā’an) of separation

(Its) gentle breezes (rakhā) are like ease (rakhā)553
(Which) dispels worry from the distraught

For if Allah protects me
And bestows on me his grace

And grants me (a’ṯāniyya) my fatherlands (a’ṯāni) to go to554
And leaves me (khallāni) and my dear friends (khullāni) private and
undisturbed555

549 Emended from yaqṭulunī to yaqṭinunī.
549 From a poem by Abū Ja’far Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ḥasan, the Wazir of Baghdad, d. 296/908-9.
al-ʿAṣāʾir, pt. 3:159-161. al-Ṣafādī, Kitāb al-Wādī fi l-Wafqyāt, Wādād al-Qāḍī, ed. Bibliotheca Islamicc, 6ρ,
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. “Rāʾa.”
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 (aḏū), 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) me\(^{557}\) (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 her\(^{558}\)

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 origin\(^{559}\) 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 mycomings 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 ʿIṣḥāq b. Ṭabrān b. ʿIbrāhīm al-Mawṣīlī, one of the best musicians and composers of the late 8th and early 9th centuries. al-Aghānī, 5:94. EI2, s.v. “Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣīlī.”

\(^{559}\) Emended from ašlan to ašl.

\(^{560}\) Qurʾān, 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
(tragacanth), 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)

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\(^{561}\) These two phrases appear as parallel phrases in al-\(\text{-Husry}\). They are cited by Ibn Qirriyya, an eloquent
man from Kufa killed in 83-4/703, as possibly by al-Hajjaj, to describe a horse al-\(\text{-Hajjaj}\) gave to the caliph

\(^{562}\) Imruʾ al-Qays, Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-Thamīn ft Dawāwīn al-Shuʿāraʾ al-Jāhiliyyīn, W. Ahlwardt, ed. (1879: reprint,
Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1972), 127.

\(^{563}\) Imruʾ al-Qays, Diwan Imruʾ al-Qays, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif 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 tiredness

He exhales (breaths) as south winds and he
Inhales the north winds 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 lowered

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 belly

Another:

He neighs as if at the bottom of a stone well
A neigh that shows the purity of his Arabic (speech)

(As if) they were a flat surface, his rib cartilage
To his penis sheath, and beyond to his naval region

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564 Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Diwan Ash'ar al-Amir Abu 'Al-Abbas 'Abd Allah ibn Muhammad al-Mu'tazz bi-Allah al-Khalifa al-Abbasi, Muhammed Badr Sharif, ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1977), 1:233. Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 247/861-296/908, was a son of the caliph al-Mu'tazz. He was a talented poet who avoided politics until the death of the caliph al-Muktasif. There was a failure to agree on a satisfactory successor. Ibn al-Mu'tazz was convinced to become caliph. He was murdered the next day by an opposing political group.

565 Janatibn. South winds which have warm, fecundating influences. Lane, s.v. “Junub.”

566 Shamaylan, meaning north wind, a cool wind. Lane, s.v. “Shamal.”

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-'Akawwak, Shi'r 'Ali bin Jabala al-Muqawqab bi al-'Akawwak, ed. Husayn Awtan (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif bi-Misr, 1972), 33. Al-'Akawwak, 160/776-213/828, was apparently an admired poet until some of his excessive eulogies on court figures offended the caliph al-Ma'mun. The latter had al-' Akawwak’s tongue torn out, which killed him. Some of his poems survive in anthologies. The same 2nd half of the bayt appears in al-Shimshigfi, al-Anwar wa Ma'tasin al-Ash'ar, Sahih Mahrif al-Azawi, ed. (Baghdad: Dar al-Hurriyya lil-Tibaa, 1976), 148. Al-Shimshigfi was employed by the Hamdanids in Mawzil. He was a philologist, anthologist and poet.

568 By al-Nabigha al-Ja'di, Ibn Qutayba, Adab al-Kattib, Max Grunert, ed. (1900: reprint, Beirut : Dar Sadir, 1967), 120. The last line appears in al-Nabigha, Shi'r al-Nabigha al-Ja'di (Damascus: Manshurat al-Maktab al-Islami, 1964), 156 as line 27 of a 39 line poem. Al-Nabigha, d. ca. 79/698 or 9, was a mukhaydranmun (he lived during the pre-Islamic period and survived into the Islamic period) poet.


570 Emended from maqadda 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, 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 legs

And legs like columns and hooves like platters, as if it were boulders they shod
He throws out rocks with a pounding rock. (M. p. 28)

It is as if his shank muscles when returning (from battle)
Are dyed—although he was never dyed

(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)

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571 al-Buhturi, 3:1746.
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-’Ajjājī, al-Bayhaqī, Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa al-Maṣāwi, Friedrich Schwally, ed. (Giessen: J. Rickersche, 1902), 239. I do not find the lines in al-’Ajjājī, Diwān al-’Ajjājī, ’Abd al-Malik b. Qurayb al-’Aṣma’ī, ed. (Beirut: Maktabat Dār al-Sharq), 1971. Ru’ba b. al-’Ajjājī was a poet of the late Umayyad and early Abbasid period. He is noted for rajaz qaṣīdas, which are difficult to read because they contain exceedingly rare vocabulary. He sometimes employs an unusual theme of pride in his own poetry. Elz, s.v. “Ru’ba b. al-’Aḍḍājī.”
574 Ḥawamay, Hava, s.v. “Hamāh.”
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-Mutanabbi, Diwān Abī al-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi, ed. Friedrich Dietrich (Leiden: Instituti Francogallici, 1861), 483. Al-Mutanabbi, 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 Hamdānid ruler. El2, s.v. “al-Mutanabbi.”
579 al-Buḫtūrī, 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 Duʿād al-Iyāḍī, 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 compass ⁵⁸⁴

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 torrent ⁵⁸⁵


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:

586 Burāq was the fabulous animal which, in Muḥammad’s vision, carried him from Mecca to Jerusalem and then to Heaven in one night. El2, s.v. “al-Burāq.”
Or gray or white, (his) rump shining
Behind him like a surging deep sea wave.\(^{587}\)

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

\(^{590}\)White 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-Buhturî, 1:403.

\(^{588}\)I emended "abiqat la-hu bi-şafâ" to "uniyat bi-hi bi-şafâ" on the basis of al-Buhturî, 3:1747.


\(^{590}\)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 eyes²⁹¹

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 Magians²⁹² (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

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²⁹² Zoroastrians.
Another:

Dark bay, like the slingshot of Wali'd b. Jurshu
c(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-dyed

Another:

Deep chested, his beauty arouses admiration from beholders
Dark bay, like the color of dates, white legged, white nosed

Or (he is) sorrel, as if he were rubbed with oil, or dressed in flies' wings.

Dappled, 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 arak (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

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594 Asha, rust but inclining to black. Lane, s.v. “Asha.”
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 skin\(^{597}\)

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 parchment\(^{598}\)

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 sampler\(^{599}\)

Another:

Some of his limbs are swords
And some of his limbs are poles

\(^{597}\) Abū Tammām, Dīwān Abī Tammām bi-Sharḥ al-Khāṭīb li-Tabrīzī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh 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 bāḍīʿ style. EI2, s.v. “Abū Tammām.”


\(^{599}\) al-Buḥturī, 1:404. The last phrase is literally, muʿjīb bi-namādhaj.
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 face\(^{601}\)

If my hooved one had flown before her
Then she would have flown--but none did\(^{602}\)

Another:

She has a gazelle’s flank and an ostrich's legs
And a tiger’s pounce and an antelope’s glance\(^{603}\) (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.


\(^{602}\) Although al-Shālījī attributed these bayts to Imru’ al-Qays, I did not find them in: Imru’ al-Qays, Diwān Imru’ al-Qays, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ḥabrānī, ed.

\(^{603}\) By Imru’ al-Qays, al-Aghānī, 7:127. I do not find the lines in his Diwān.
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\textsuperscript{604} (tribe) and maternal uncles in Khazraj (tribe).\textsuperscript{605}

Patience of the mule and strength of the horse

She speeds over the earth on a hoof
Like hard rock\textsuperscript{606}

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,\textsuperscript{607} snappish, kicking, awkward and gelded. I see a gem of creation\textsuperscript{608}--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.\textsuperscript{609} He has an ulcer on his pastern like a cucumber

\textsuperscript{604} Emended from 'Āmid to Ghāfiq. A tribe in Egypt whose founder was from Ghāfiq. al-Samā'ānī, al-Ansāb, 10:6-8.

\textsuperscript{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. El2, s.v. “Khazrāj.” The sentence is from al-Buḥūtī, 1:405.

\textsuperscript{606} From a poem by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj describing a mule. Yatīma, 3:115. Durra, 86.

\textsuperscript{607} Kābūs. To have the upper part of the head prominent. Hava, s.v. “Kabīsa.”

\textsuperscript{608} This phrase is unclear. I am reading ārā dr ḥlq as ārā durra Khalqīn.

\textsuperscript{609} Literally, to shave the hair. Hava, s.v. “Haṣṣa.”
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,\textsuperscript{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 bushel\textsuperscript{611} of ticks
Like tiny\textsuperscript{612} 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,\textsuperscript{613} with little hair

Filling his life span to the utmost; a term
That even Lubād\textsuperscript{614} 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:

\textsuperscript{610} Akhyaf al-\textsuperscript{ayn} meaning one blue, one black. Lane, s.v. “Akhyaf.”
\textsuperscript{611} Literally, two of a measure used in Iraq, which weighs 5 3/4 lb. Lane, s.v. “Kilaja.”
\textsuperscript{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.”
\textsuperscript{613} Maḥtīm al-\textsuperscript{qarī}. Broken, infirm due to age. Lane, s.v. “Haṭama.”
\textsuperscript{614} Luqmān b. ʾĀd 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 Maʿrīb 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. EL2, 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) sniffling 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
Mu'tasim's\textsuperscript{615} brand is on his side

Another:

Jacob\textsuperscript{616} owned him when he was a foal
With a blaze, at the time the good news came to him\textsuperscript{617}

He was a blotchy bay, a dun
Time had bleared his eyes

Varied in form, in terms of proportion\textsuperscript{618}
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 asthma\textsuperscript{619}

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

\textsuperscript{615} Al-Mu'tasim was caliph from 218-227 to 833-842.
\textsuperscript{616} Jacob, the son of Isaac and father of Joseph in the Bible.
\textsuperscript{617} Qur'\textsuperscript{an}, 12 (Yūsuf): 96.
\textsuperscript{618} Takāfū' with hamza lightened to takāfī.
\textsuperscript{619} Zāhīr, literally breathing problems. Hava, s.v. "Zāhara."
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-
Christ\textsuperscript{620}—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 thin\textsuperscript{621} 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 nosebleed\textsuperscript{622}

\textsuperscript{620} Khalīfāt al-dājiāl. The dājiāl 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. “Dājiāl.”

\textsuperscript{621} Emended from qatf to qadaf.

\textsuperscript{622}
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 fodder 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, nor of Qīrāṭī Zuhayrī, nor of thin Qushayrī white
cotton, nor (do I see) a cloak from Aden, nor garments of twisted silks, nor clothing of
linen, nor tapestry-like cloth, nor Dasīṣī, nor Tinnīṣī, nor Dimyāṭī, nor Majallālī,
either, nor figured embroidered brocade, woven with gold, and intermingled with
ambergris, beautifully striped, as though it were woven of spring blossoms. Nor (do I
see) Sīnīzī gauze, like delicate (Sh. p. 134) air, or like the mirage, or napkins of

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621 Either to have a nosebleed or to outstrip the other horses. Hava, s.v. “Rā'afā‘a.”
622 Hava, s.v. “Qatt.”
623 For these two terms, see Serjeant.
624 A fabric embroidered with patterns in the shape of the qīrāṭ, a small round coin and made in the
Zuhayrī Quarter of Baghdad. Serjeant, 212.
626 Linen, often decorated with gold or silver. Serjeant, 39.
627 Cloth embroidered with a needle. The embroidery sometimes resembles a tapestry. Joseph
628 A variant form of Damsīṣī. Damsīṣ is a village in the Nile Delta. Serjeant, 153.
629 Serjeant, 141.
630 Serjeant, 32.
631 Sīnīzī is a town in Fārs. al-Buldān, 3:231-2.
632 Serjeant, 212.
unbleached linen with a border all the way around which are used to wipe the mouth at gatherings, nor striped material,\textsuperscript{634} nor (material) ornamented with Maghribī gold, nor ʿAttābī Dabīqī with its gold-embroidered border.\textsuperscript{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 sanctums\textsuperscript{636} with two passages, (M. p. 36) containing an ʾīwān\textsuperscript{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 Kharshani\textsuperscript{638} carpets, carpet strips\textsuperscript{639} from Andalusia and Cordoba, Armenian (Sh. p. 136) carpets, Byzantine velvet and Tustārī cushions,\textsuperscript{640} Maghribī leather mats (Sh. p. 137) embroidered with gold, gold-embroidered pillows of Dabīqī (cloth), throw pillows from Cyprus, sūsarjīrd,\textsuperscript{641} peacock cloth,\textsuperscript{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 ʾAbbādānī mat that folds down the middle, as clothes are folded, more splendid than carpets and softer than (Sh. p. 138) Sūst\textsuperscript{643} silk, delicately worked, wondrously crafted, finely woven, nor red cushions picked out with gold, nor cushions of (cloth interwoven)

\textsuperscript{634} Serjeant, 160.
\textsuperscript{635} Serjeant, 28.
\textsuperscript{637} An oblong arched or vaulted chamber or portico. Lane, s.v. "ʾīwān."
\textsuperscript{638} The region around a river in the east of Farghāna. Serjeant, 98, 103.
\textsuperscript{639} Nāḥkh. Serjeant, 168.
\textsuperscript{640} Tustār is a small town in Khuzistan north of the head of the Persian Gulf. Serjeant, 41.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{643} It is unclear whether this is Sūst in Khuzistan or Sūs in North Africa.
with gold-wrapped threads, nor gold brocade worked in images of elephants and horses, nor throw pillows stuffed with the feathers of the red-headed Indian sparrow, nor Tustarı brocade embroidered with gold.

Nor do I see, by God, among your perfumes Baramaćī tri-essence—sugary, (Sh. p. 139) gem-like, or "ammari,"—nor rose dharīra, nor Taylūnī dharīra, nor ghāliyya of ambergris, nor ghāliyya with camphor, nor the yellow (colored ghāliyya) that doesn't leave a residue in clothing, (Sh. p. 140) nor the sāmirīyyāt perfumes, which use ambergris oil and citron oil, nor (do I see) a sandalwood ball, nor black or yellow (colored) balls, nor imperial cucumber perfume, nor perfume of blossoms, nor nadd-perfume processed gradually, nor (Sh. p. 141) Tahmānī nadd, nor Nihāya nadd, nor the Caliph al-Muqtadīr's nadd, nor totally fresh, oily Indian aloe wood, nor choice (aloewood) from Mandalā, which has been rubbed with Soghidian or Tibetan musk, nor Tūmanī (aloewood), nor Nepali, nor Khawjīrī, nor Kuṭanī, nor sea-

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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 Olms, 1970), 2:420.
647 According to *Maḥālī*, 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.
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 Rubāṭī that is like sea salt, or the scaly qaysārī, or Tabrīzī, or raqraq (camphor), or Āzād, or Mahrasān, or Sarukhān. So, now show me some oily blue ambergris of Shalāḥatī,661 or the rare, gray (ambergris) from Shīhr,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 Sakāli, 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 Mānṭārī, or Lawāṭī (aloewood), or Rintārī, or Jallārī (aloewood), or Karafīnī, nor Qufṣī Dīnawayh, which resembles them—(Sh. p. 144) nor musk—Tibetan, or apple-like, or Indian, or Chinese, or Wadārī, or Tashmīrī, or marine, or Qawārī; nor filāfīl ambergris with Zanjī naddī, 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. El2, s.v. "Khotan."
661 Emended from Balāḥatī to Shalāḥatī. Shalāḥatī is an island off Ceylon. al-Buldān, 3:312.
662 Shīhr is a place on the Indian Ocean between Oman and Yemen. It is famous for ambergris. al-Buldān, 3:363.
664 From fitāq, with a plural of afīqa, whose plural could be afītāq.
665 Kalāhī is a remote place in India famous for aloe wood. al-Buldān, 4:297.
666 Maqāṣīrī. Either white or yellow sandalwood. Dozy, s.v. "Maqāṣīrī."
667 Emended from hūdhī 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-maʿārid wa-al-ʿawārid, 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 Ruwandashliyya. 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 khūlanj 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-Hawīidi and al-Ṭansirī, 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.
⁶⁷⁹ A type of wood generally used to make bowls and beams. Lane, s.v. "Khulanji."
⁶⁸⁰ A measure variously defined as two to eight pints. Lane, s.v. "Makkāk."
⁶⁸¹ Mistāḥ is emended to masřāḥ.
⁶⁸² al-Buldān, 2:712.
stimulates the appetite and arouses the stomach, and smoked Daqūqī\textsuperscript{683} 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 myrobolan; 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\textsuperscript{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 Sarīfīn\textsuperscript{685} and 'Ukbarā.\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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 miles\textsuperscript{688} away. It sets the teeth on edge even before it is eaten. And (on the table)

\textsuperscript{683} al-Buldān, 2:581.
\textsuperscript{685} al-Buldān, 3:384.
\textsuperscript{686} al-Buldān, 3:705.
\textsuperscript{688} Literally, a farsakh.
are well-wrought\footnote{Emended from wa mahkam to hukm.} 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,\footnote{Lisān, s.v. "Maḥrūt."} 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, Sarakhsi\footnote{al-Buldān, 3:71.} 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 Kaskari\footnote{al-Buldān, 4:274.} 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,\footnote{A stew of meat cooked with cinnamon, chickpeas, salt, wine-vinegar, sugar, ground almonds, rose-water, coriander, pepper, mastic and saffron. Arberry1, 36.} mamqūriyya\footnote{Emended from mašqūriyya to mamqūriyya. A stew of meat cooked with coriander, cumin, cinnamon, mastic, pepper, chopped onion, wine-vinegar and murrī. Arberry1, 40.} with rose water, and (Sh. p. 155) hazelnuts, and almonds, and caraway, and aged murrī,\footnote{Bread made of penny royal and flour, rotted until it turns black, dissolved in water and then spiced with cinnamon and aromatic spices. Arberry1, 36.} and citron pulp, and lemon pulp. The scent of its spices can be smelled three miles\footnote{Literally, farsakh.} away. (On the table are) bowls with fried būnī\footnote{Emended from būnī.} fish, and salted šahnāh\footnote{A seasoning made of small sardine-like fish, which increases appetite and soothes the stomach. Lane, s.v. "Şahna."} fish, and rubaytha,\footnote{A type of small fish. Muhammad b. Ahmad Abū ʿAbdAllāh al-Khwārazmī, Kitāb mafātīh al-ṣulām, 169.} and large bowls containing salted qāš\footnote{A fish found in the Nile with a long nose resembling a bird’s beak. Dozy, s.v. "Qāš."} fish, and salted caviar,\footnote{Lisān, s.v. "Sirra."} and mālih nāʾim\footnote{(made) from shad and būnī fish, (Sh. p. 156)}
and fried ʿṭirrīkh\(^{703}\) with egg, and (chicken) livers scrambled with fresh egg,\(^{704}\) all this cooked with fresh coriander (cilantro) and saffron, and soured fish,\(^{705}\) and sour pickled fish, and fried lamb, and awsār,\(^{706}\) 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 jūdīḥāba Khakhāshiyya;\(^{709}\) and jūdīḥāba 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 Jaʿfariyya,\(^{711}\) fresh and delicious, Byzantine (in origin), adapted to Baghdādi (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

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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. “Ṭarīḥ,” “Ṭirīḥ.”


705 Fish fried in sesame oil, then put into a sauce of wine-vinegar and murrī. 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-Fawāʾid fi al-Mawāʾid, Bibliotheca Islamica, 40 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1993), 58.

707 Sanbūṣaj. Arberry2, 201.

708 Two villages, Upper Ṣarṣar and Lower Ṣarṣar, on the banks of the ʿĪsā Canal near Baghdad. al-Buldān, 3:381.

709 Jūdīḥāb, pl. jūdīḥāba. 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 hālīb. Rice cooked with milk, mastic, camphor, and cinnamon until the milk is thickened. Marin, Kanz 47.

is (a dish colored) blood red, (one) bright yellow facing it, and (another) deep black with (another) dazzling white opposite it;\textsuperscript{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 \textit{madīra};\textsuperscript{713} thickened, immersed in its oil; cranes baked in a clay oven; roasted ring doves; quail; partridges; baby chickens; \textit{tābāhīj};\textsuperscript{714} fattened chickens, big breasted, golden-skinned, (with) silver meat, Indian, or Barhindiyya, or qalṭīyya, (with) shiny shanks, thick thighs, heavy breast, with juice in their fat; they have been fed with barley meal, and the filtered oil\textemdash(Sh. p. 159) they are pressed with oils. And (there are) a basket of dates;\textsuperscript{715} sausages; braided sausages; thin slices (of meat); Rashīdī kababs; spiced sausage; pigeon; jālābī 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 \textit{jūdhāb} is streaming with fat and gravy drippings; \textit{shawarma}; nārsūd;\textsuperscript{716} (...) \textit{sikbāj};\textsuperscript{717} 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 Ḫūlwanī (Sh. p. 160) figs, and decorated with citron leaves. And next a dish

\textsuperscript{712} \textit{Maqāmāt}, 74. With some differences in the order: \textit{Fa-min hālik bi-izāb-i-hi nās}. \textit{Wā mīn qān tīqlā-hu fīqī}.\textsuperscript{715} \textit{Madīra}. Meat stewed with onions, leeks, coriander, cumin, mastic and cinnamon, then folded into thickened yogurt, as though it were an aspic dish. \textit{Arberry1}, 41-2.\textsuperscript{714} \textit{Tabāhājā}. Meat stewed with saffron, onion, mint, and celery, then with dried coriander, cumin, caraway, cinnamon, ginger, wine-vinegar, and grape juice. \textit{Arberry1}, 37.\textsuperscript{715} \textit{Lisān}, s.v. “\textit{Tardīnā}.”\textsuperscript{716} Pomegranate and vinegar.\textsuperscript{717} Illegible.\textsuperscript{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. \textit{Arberry1}, 34.
called 'arūs;719 one called ma‘qili; and (one called) Sulaymāni, all of them made with tender lamb meats, taken from the breast and ribs; and following this are all sorts of other dishes, including Ma‘mūniyya;720 Rukhāmiyya;721 Ibrāhīmiyya;722 Mu‘taḍidiyya;723 Khālidīyya; fustaqiyya;724 mishmishiyya;725 qishmishiyya; banafsajyya;726 ḥubayshiyya;727 𬭳 inabiyya made with the juice of large Rāziqī grapes;728 miskiyya;729 and summaqīyya.730

And then (there are) Nūbiyya; (Sh. p. 161)  LIABILITY tariyya;731 nīrisiyya;732 khashkhāshiyya;733 fākhiyya;734 hummadīyya;735 个赛季 anbariyya;736 ซะ ำdiyya; ซะ ำdiyya; 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 'Abbasid caliph al-Mu'tadid, 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 banafsajyya to banafsajyya. 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.
isfīdabāj;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 maḏīra 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, galangale, 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; ṯābāhajāt, or side dishes, worthy of kings; with rooster combs; minced meats; muṭajjanāt,742 enhanced by murrī; ṯābāhaja known as composite; ʿatariyya,743 prepared with mulberry juice and grape juice; followed by a glazed khabīs enhanced by rose water and royal camphor; or (khabīs) murammal,744 made with semolina flour in which Sylvania sugar had been melted with honeycomb, and (over which) had been sprinkled sieved rock sugar; lawzīnaj745 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 lawżīnaj; 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 khabīš; poppy khabīš; the dry Aḥwāzi748 khabīš; Manṣūrī ʿaṣīda, famous among us in Baghdad; the Barmakī ʿaṣīda, which is made of dates and honey; and qatāʾif;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 Sulptānī toothpicks like silver poles, from among the work of Najāh the Black, or a scented Maʾmūnī 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,751 a little frankincense, (Sh. p. 165) cypress, Maqāšīrī753 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. “Salāṣ.”
748 The capital city of Khūzistān. 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. El2, s.v. “Ṭīn.”
753 Sandalwood of either a white or yellow color. Dozy, s.v. “Maqāšīrī.”
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 squeeky 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'taḍid 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 ratsls of water—it is of wondrous workmanship! The people wash their hands and (the servant) hands them a Dabiqi 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 Iraqi 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 bawārid759 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 "Sultaṇī" was a style named after the Bāyids, "Maṭ mũiṭ" a style named after the caliph Maṭ mhūn, 198-219/813-833 and Mu'taḍid style after the caliph Mu'taḍid, 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 khaft, which means hidden, disguised. Thus, its meaning is unclear.
757 Emended from ribārin to zaṇārīn and from šāṭīn to šīghatān.
758 Emended from Ruwandashīyya
759 The singular is barad. A white flour dumpling cooked in sesame oil and soaked in a honey syrup. Arberrv 2, 211.
bunch of cucumbers (khiyār), a bunch of other cucumbers (qithā?), a bunch of medlars, and a bunch of God-blasted—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, 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 nātif, and al-bubrīnaj. After this comes an elderly Sawād villager the size of a

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641 Cucumbers were not considered appropriate food for those moving in better social circles. al-Washshā', al-Muwashshā (Beirut: Dār Šādir, 1965), 194.
642 From "bunch of onions" through "bunch of God-blasted," the specific food in each bunch is a Persian word.
643 Kark. This could also be kark, 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." El2, s.v. "Ghidā."
644 A sweet made of sugar, water, pepper, cloves, dried fruits, nuts and sesame paste. al-Warrāq, 60, 278-80.
645 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 Khalāq 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. “Khalāq.”
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 qaṣidas on nature. EI2, s.v. “al-
Ṣanawbarī.”
768 al-Buldān, 4:147.
769 This may be a reference to Qurʾān. 2 (al-Baqara): 138, ʿibghata Allāhi wa man ahsanu min Allāhi ʿibghatan
wa nabhū la-hu ʿābidāna. It refers to God pouring faith into man as a dyer pours dye into clothing. Tafsīr
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.\textsuperscript{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 houris\textsuperscript{771}
Nor (do I see) Wazīrī figs, as if they were orrision bags wrapped around honey,\textsuperscript{772}
like poppy khabīš, 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)
nor hand nor eye has touched, not scabbed,\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{770} The passage beginning with “as if,” and ending with “carnelian” is found in Zahr, 297.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{772} Zahr, 297.
\textsuperscript{773} Literally, with eye-shaped marks.
\textsuperscript{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 ambergis
and the taste of sugar;\textsuperscript{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 Nihāwāndī, nor Khazarī,\textsuperscript{776} nor
Sījistānī, nor Husaynī; nor unripe “sugar water,”\textsuperscript{777} dates that crumble\textsuperscript{778} in the mouth,
like Khazā‘īnī\textsuperscript{779} slab cane sugar,\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{781} dates, Jīsawān,\textsuperscript{782}
Tabarzad,\textsuperscript{783} Āzād,\textsuperscript{784} Qarashah, Khāstāwī,\textsuperscript{785} Mushammās,\textsuperscript{786} ʿAdbāsī, Ḥarkān, ʿArūsī,\textsuperscript{787}
Hilbāth,\textsuperscript{788} Ḥamrān, Hīrān,\textsuperscript{789} Bādīhīnǧān,\textsuperscript{790} Mādiyān,\textsuperscript{791} Mishān,\textsuperscript{792} Ṣaṭarī, Maʿqalī--(all these)
unripe dates (then) being cooked—nor (Sh. p. 172) the processed dates: the Ibrāhīmī,\textsuperscript{793}

\textsuperscript{775} This passage, beginning with “which unite” and ending with “sugar” appears in Zahr, 297, without
attribute and with some differences:
...yajmaʿ ṭīban wa manzaran [...] ka-anna-hu ziʿbar al-khazz al-aghtar, ṣalā al-dībāj al-ašfar, la-hu nasīm
al-ʿanbar, wa ṭaʿm al-sukkar...
\textsuperscript{776} al-Buldān, 2:436.
\textsuperscript{777} Maʿ Sukkar. Sukkar are the dactylorum dulcissimorum, a variety of sugar date grown in the Baṣra
Province. de Goeje, Indices, pars 4, 262.
\textsuperscript{778} Emended to infaṭ from inqatt, since I do not find evidence of form VII of qṭt.
\textsuperscript{779} DOZY, s.v. “Khazā‘īnī,” defines this as a type of pomegranate. Core sugar, which is a solid block like a
slab of sugar would be, has a rough, porous-looking surface rather like pomegranate skin.
\textsuperscript{780} Edmund O. von Lippmann, Geschichte des Zuckers, seiner Darstellung und Verwendung, seit den ältesten
Zeiten bis zum Beginne der Rübenzuckerfabrikation (Magdeburg: A. Rathske, 1890), 100.
\textsuperscript{781} See ft. 490.
\textsuperscript{782} A palm which produces especially long clusters of dates. Līsān, s.v. “Jasū, i.e. Jasū.”
\textsuperscript{783} Rock sugar. de Goeje, Indices, pars 4, 287.
\textsuperscript{784} Dactylorum nobilis. de Goeje, Indices, pars 4, 176.
\textsuperscript{785} Also called Khastawī. de Goeje, Indices, pars 4, 225.
\textsuperscript{786} Literally, sun dried.
\textsuperscript{787} de Goeje, Indices, pars 4, 298.
\textsuperscript{788} A date grown in the Baṣra region. Līsān, s.v. “Hilbāth.”
\textsuperscript{789} A large date. al-ʿAskari, Kitāb al-Talkhis fi Maʿrifat Asma’ al-Asyha (Dimashq: Majma’ al-Lughah al-
ʿArabiyya bi-Dimashq, 1969), 495.
\textsuperscript{790} A date from the Basra region with a form similar to an eggplant. de Goeje, Indices, pars 4, 185.
\textsuperscript{791} This is probably a very sweet white date. Mādiyā means white honey and I suspect this is a variant.
Līsān, s.v. “Mādhīya.”
\textsuperscript{792} Or mushān. A small black date from the Kūfa region. Līsān, “Mushān.”
\textsuperscript{793} de Goeje, Indices, pars 4, 175-6.
the Şirfān,\(^{794}\) the Barānī,\(^{795}\) the Mūlfaq, the Shīhānī,\(^{796}\) the ʿUmrī,\(^{797}\) 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 quince\(^{801}\) pear, a malo punica,\(^{802}\) and bergamotte\(^{803}\)—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, Khutā\(^{807}\) citron, Milāṣī\(^{808}\) 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. Līsān, s.v. “Şirfān.”
\(^{795}\) A round, very sweet red date. Lāne, s.v. “Barānī.”
\(^{796}\) A firm black date from the Medina region. Līsān, s.v. “Shīhānī.”
\(^{797}\) al-Sūjīstānī, Kitāb al-Nakhl (Dār al-Liwa‘), 91, 132.
\(^{798}\) A date from the Basra region. de Goede, Indices, pars 4, 322.
\(^{799}\) Emended from barbarā. al-Sūjīstānī, Kitāb al-Nakhl (Dār al-Liwa‘), 61, 113.
\(^{800}\) Sāf amrūd. de Goede, Indices, pars 4, 257.
\(^{801}\) Steingass, Persian, s.v. “Bahm.”
\(^{802}\) Bahmūrūd. de Goede, Indices, pars 4, 257.
\(^{803}\) Emend to shāhmarūd from salamūrūd. de Goede, 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. El2, s.v. “Namrūd.”
\(^{806}\) A city near the Karkhāh 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-Khaḥāfī, Shīfā al-ghallīf, 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 Goede, 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 ox tongue, Hava, s.v. “Hamāhim.”
lavender,\textsuperscript{817} (over) which the south wind had blown, (Sh. p. 174) nor the water lily,\textsuperscript{818} artemisia,\textsuperscript{819} red anemones, carnations, celandine,\textsuperscript{820} wild thyme, qalatī, goosefoot, like forget-me-nots\textsuperscript{821} (M. p. 45) among the sultan's palm fields at al-Najmī.\textsuperscript{822} Nor (do I see) thyme,\textsuperscript{823} nor a white rose,\textsuperscript{824} nor chamomile,\textsuperscript{825} nor mimosa,\textsuperscript{826} nor carnations, nor violets. (Sh. p. 175)

If the east wind moves it
"When he spreads the perfume,"\textsuperscript{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 musk\textsuperscript{828} 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,\textsuperscript{829} a nāy and an ʿūd;\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{817} Lavandula spica or viola odorata. Siggel, 32.
\textsuperscript{818} Or nenuphar. Hava, s.v. "Hūḏān."
\textsuperscript{819} Siggel, 51.
\textsuperscript{820} ḍaymirān, emended from ḍaymirān. Siggel, 51.
\textsuperscript{821} Siggel, 12.
\textsuperscript{822} An area to the west of Baghdad. al-Buldān, 1:460, s.v. "Bāḏārriyā."
\textsuperscript{823} Thymus serpyllum. Siggel, 71.
\textsuperscript{824} Marzanjūsh. Emended from Marzajūsh. Or mouse ear or purslane. Steingass, Persian, s.v. "Marzangūsh."
\textsuperscript{825} Anthemis chrysanthemum. Siggel, 22.
\textsuperscript{826} Siggel, 19.
\textsuperscript{827} This line appears in the manuscript as:
Yaqūlū ʿidhā ḥarakat-hū l-šibā/Kadhā nasharah wa ladā ṭarjah
I emended the line to:
Yaqūlū ʿidhā ḥarakat-hū l-šibā/Ladā nasharah wa kadhā ṭarjah
\textsuperscript{828} Emended from al-ḫādiyyā. Steingass, Persian, "Dāri."
\textsuperscript{829} The previous three phrases parody Qurʾān, 56 (al-Wāqīʿā): 28-30.
\textsuperscript{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 ("ūd) strings. By God, we don't see\(^{831}\) 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, Baghdadī 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

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\(^{831}\) "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 cuppers’ 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 ʿIrāqī, the Sūriyya, (Sh. p. 177) the Bābiliyya, or the Ṣarīfīniyya: 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.
836 Zahr, 458.
Unmixed, it imitates the beloved's cheek, then when they force Mixture on it, it dresses in the lover's color (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 pomegranate

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 night.

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837 Blushing.
839 According to al-Raṣīq al-Nadīm, Qutb al-Surūr fī Awṣāf al-Khumūr, 585, these are lines 1-2 and 3-4 of a five line poem by Ibn al-Muʿtazz. I did not find them in his Diwān. According to Maṭāliʿ, 1:185, the lines are by al-Tanūkhī.
840 According to Ibn al-Muʿtazz, Fūṣūl al-Tamāthil fī Tabāṣhīr al-Surūr, 53, this is by Abū Nuwās. I did not find it in his Diwān.
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-Muqṭadīr'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 night 842
(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 cup 843

Another

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

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841 A perfume of mixed scents mainly compounded from saffron. Lane, s.v. "ʿAbīr."
843 The second half of the line matches a bayt by Abū al-Shīṣ. al-Raqqīq al-Nadīm, Qūṭ al-Surār fī Awsāf al-Khumūr, 714. The second half also appears in Abū al-Shīṣ, Aṣḥāb Abī al-Shīṣ al-Khużāʿī, ʿAbd Allāh al-Jubūrī, ed. (Baghdad: Wizārat al-Tarbīyya 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. "ʿAbū al-Shīṣ."
Rather, I see (in your gatherings) date wine, black and frothy\textsuperscript{844} or yellow,\textsuperscript{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 inkwell\textsuperscript{846}

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 Qāshānī\textsuperscript{847} 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 tool\textsuperscript{848}

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

\textsuperscript{844} Mez notes this word as parallel to Qur'ān, 55 (al-Raḥmān): 44, or Qur'ān, 88 (al-Ghāshiyya): 5, meaning boiling.
\textsuperscript{845} Emended to ziryābīyyan.
\textsuperscript{846} al-Buhturi, 2:899.
\textsuperscript{847} LeStrange, Landa, 209.
\textsuperscript{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 Qufū\(^{850}\) 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 Rūm\(^{851}\)
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 Tāʾifī 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 Ukbarā 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 wheat\textsuperscript{852} 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 \textit{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-Asma\textsuperscript{î}’s\textsuperscript{853} 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.

\begin{quote}
May God put a seal on (one) so tongue-tied
For there is no skill in (his) speech (Sh. p. 187)
\end{quote}

When he wants to speak, you would imagine his tongue (to be)

\textsuperscript{852} The equivalent of corn-nuts, i.e. drinking snacks. \textit{al-Washshāj}, \textit{al-Muwashshāh} (Beirut: Dār Şādir, 1965), 196.

\textsuperscript{853} I have not been able to identify Umm al-Asma\textsuperscript{î}. Al-Asma\textsuperscript{î}, d. 213/828, was an Arabic philologist and
transmitter of poetry who frequented the court of Ḥārūn 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 Sībawayh found fault with me, I would say to him
“May the shit of al-Kisā’ be in al-Farrā’s beard!”

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) 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,

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854 Sībawayh, d. 177/793 or 4, the eminent grammarian of the Baṣrān school. El2, s.v. “Sībawayhi.”
855 al-Kisā’ī, d. ca 189/805, grammarian and one of the seven canonical readers of the Qur’ān. El2, s.v. “al-Kisā’ī.”
856 al-Farrā’, d. 206-7/822, one of the greatest of the Baṣrān grammarians. GAL, 1: 116.
858 Emended to: ...yashfi bi-ghinā’ti-hi (al-arwāh) by al-Shālīf 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 dune

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 beauty Of Joseph) will you not provide a remedy for blind Jacob? (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,... by God, hearts themselves are in danger from his singing, much less the collars! 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, 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 Khulā, 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.

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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 ṭath’athiyya 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’s 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 rattles 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, a Zunāmiyya flute-player like a polished mirror, an Ṭath’athiyya drummer, (Sh. p. 190) a
castanetist from Samarra, a dancer from al-UbuLLA, a Radhdhā’iyya lute-player, a
protégé of Shāriyya, 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. El2, s.v. “Ḥāmān.”
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. “Karad’a.”
868 Zunām was an expert flute player. He is mentioned here because he would have been emulated. al-Sharīsh, Sharh al-MaQamāt al-Ḥarīriyya (Cairo: Būlāq, 1300 (1882)), 1:282-3.
869 Ṭath’ath was a black drummer and singer belonging to Muḥammad b. Yahyā b. Muṣādh. al-Aḥrānī, 13:30-3.
870 al-Buldān, 1:96-7.
night), a plaything of purified silver, a white cloud, an egg hidden in a sand dune, a wild cow, a peacock, an effigy in a niche, a bright new (Sh. p. 191) dinãr, dawn stars, a diver's pearl, with long tresses, a cool, (refreshing) mouth, full breasts, swaying stature, 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 Rã'ibã' 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 puffy sleeves, weighed down by the largeness of her buttocks.

When she hoists herself up, her buttocks weigh her down
The way a weak one rises who is weighed down by cargo.

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 containers dabbed with musk.

O my killer, with (your) languid eyelids
And two perky (breasts) (floating) in a rain cloud.

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874 The manuscript adds wa qadd naḥûd. It appears that the copyist wrote a few words twice.
876 This word could not be conclusively identified.
878 `Amr b. Kulthãm, Mu'allaqat `Amr ibn Kulthãm bi-Shãrîf Abã al-Hasan ibn Kaysãn (Cairo: Dãr al-`îtîsãm, 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) backs

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, 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'lam al-Shantanari, Shahr Hamāsat Abī Tammam (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-
Mu'āṣir, 1992), 778. The verse is also found in: Ibn 'Abd al-Rabbih, Kitāb al-‘Iqd al-Farīd (Beirut: Dār al-
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

(Sh. has) front teeth like chamomile, lips like coral or red dye, and mustaches
like green basil

(Sh. 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 eyelids

Alas for me due to those collarbones and cheeks, and curling black braids. (Sh. p. 196) (M. p. 53)

"Umar 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-Rabāb

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

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881 Sick eyes, i.e. languorous eyes, were a sign of beauty.
882 ‘Umar Ibn Abī Rabī’ā, Sharh Dīwān ‘Umar Ibn Abī Rabī’ā al-Makhzūmī, 412. Thurayyā and al-Rabāb were
women friends of Ibn Abī Rabī’ā. 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 alluring\textsuperscript{883} pants (Sh. p. 198) and a green silk Salqiy\textsuperscript{884} waistband, made from diaphanous wings, slave girls' work; she is turbaned in a striped cloth (like) brocade with embellishments, of fine pattern and t\text{"i}r\text{"a}z, 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 Shi\text{"i}r coast\textsuperscript{885} and royal sandalwood, jointed into large grains worth a thousand din\text{"a}rs (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 b\text{"a}n\textsuperscript{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 grousse 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 lightening 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)

\textsuperscript{883} Literally, shaqqa al-mar\text{"a}ra (to split the gall bladder). The phrase is said to have originated with al-\text{"a}s\text{"a}nawbari. al-Sar\text{"a} al-Raff\text{"a}, al-Muh\text{\text{"a}}bb wa al-Mah\text{"a}b\text{"a}b wa al-Mashm\text{"a}m wa al-Mash\text{"a}b (Damascus: Majma\text{"a} al-Lugha al-\text{"a}rabiyya bi-Dimashq, 1986), 1:299.

\textsuperscript{884} Green, like the plant bugloss. DOZY, s.v. "Salq."

\textsuperscript{885} The coast of the Arabian Peninsula along the Indian Ocean between Yemen and Aden. The area is famous for perfume production. al-Bul\text{"a}d\text{"a}n, 3:363.

\textsuperscript{886} Salix aegypti\text{"a}, Egyptian willow. HAVA, s.v. "B\text{"a}n."
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 Ḥiḍāyat l’er/VIIe siècle: Sukayna, petite-fille de ʿAlī,” Arabica, v. 4, fasc., 3 (Sept. 1937), 276.
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 stringer

(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?

893 By al-Rāfī in Zahr, 1:15. The bayt is not found in al-Numayrī, Diwān al-Rāfī al-Numayrī, Reinhard
Weipert, ed., Beiruter Texte und Studien; Bd. 24 (Weisbaden: Franz Steiner, 1980). al-Rāfī 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-Rāfī."
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 Jāsim93

Sleepy, drowsiness pierces him; sleep
Blurs his eyes though he is not asleep94

Under two eyebrows like two plumes, are a hook or the stroke of an “n”

93 al-Buldān, 2:8.
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 ūd of aloe or teak wood, inscribed with ivory, in a brocade
drawstring pouch, (Sh. p. 203) and she sounds its strings with fingertips like ʾishil
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 ūd 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 jujube ʾishil. (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. “ʾishil.”
896 These two bayts are by Ṣukkāsha al-ʾAmmī. al-ʾAghāfī, 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 basât (meter),

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)
Allâh, 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.⁹⁸

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,⁹⁹ or a
heart that flies, palpitating.

I don't see these conditions in Isfahan. Rather, I see a female monkey, like a
cloth⁹⁰ pillow, or a ghoul arisen from the desert, with silver hair and gold teeth, with
disheveled hair like fluffy wool,⁹¹ 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

---

⁹⁸ The poem is really in the meter basīṭ.
⁹⁰ Lane, s.v. “‘Arḍl.”
⁹¹ Qurʾān 101 (al-Qār’a):5.
Another

The penises in her ass
Push the shit up to her throat

It is as if she were a bunch of narcissi."\textsuperscript{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,"\textsuperscript{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!"\textsuperscript{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)

\textsuperscript{902} al-Thaʿālibī, al-Kināya wa al-Taʿrīf (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Sīnā, 1992), 54.
\textsuperscript{903} al-Thaʿālibī, al-Kināya wa al-Taʿrīf (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Sīnā, 1992), 54.
\textsuperscript{904} Qurʾān 5:101 (al-Māʾīda).
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 belly*05

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.

---

*05 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 catchpole

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's  
And the other that of the youth ṢAmr b. Barrāq

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  
(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 Ismā'īl b. ṢAmmār. al-Aghānī, 10:139.
909 Buildings with cells arranged around a courtyard. They are frequently associated with Śūfī 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) \(^9^{10}\)

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 hair \(^9^{11}\)

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) \(^9^{12}\)(Sh. p. 211)

---

\(^9^{10}\) The grammar of this bayt is entirely unclear, so the translation is speculative.

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 Allâh 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

---

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\textsuperscript{913} for penis heads
And her clitoris is a minaret\textsuperscript{914}

Another

Shit is (like) perfumed incense when she smiles\textsuperscript{915}
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 grapes\textsuperscript{916}

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 butt\textsuperscript{917} with a spacious drill field

\textsuperscript{913} The direction of Mecca, or the specially marked wall in a mosque that marks the direction. EI2, s.v. “Kibla.”
\textsuperscript{914} Ibn al-Hajjāj, London 121a.
\textsuperscript{915} A play on bad breath.
\textsuperscript{916} Ibn al-Hajjāj, London 31b.
\textsuperscript{917} Emended from \textit{wajh} to \textit{ajz}.
In which the penis plays polo

With a pussy in whose soft flesh the arrowheads
Of javelins and arrows are pounded"18

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 instants"19

---

18 By ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Gotha, 4b 2d and 4th lines.
19
Another

A woman with a large clitoris walks in the street with her foot
Stumbling on the rope fiber of her ass hair\textsuperscript{920}

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 harša\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{919} Literally khardal, or mustard seed.
\textsuperscript{920} Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Tāliṣṭāf al-Mīzāj min Shīr ibn al-Ḥajjāj (Sūsā), 129.
\textsuperscript{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 four \(^{922}\)
We fart along in three four \(^{923}\) (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 milk \(^{924}\)

Another

---


\(^{924}\) By ibn al-Hajjāj. *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 away

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)

---

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 murrāf poured over it

Another

She walks with a labia (like) ink
And with pure silver pubic hair

As if she were a (white) shahmurg\footnote{A mythical bird who was the king of the birds. al-Damīrī, 1:533. A long-legged wading bird. al-Jaḥīz, Kitāb al-Hayawān (Cairo: M. al-Bābī al-Ḥalābī), 3:322.} 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

Another\footnote{By Ibn al-Hajjāj, London, 125a.}

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 darrā\footnote{Yedida Kalfon Stillman, Arab Dress from the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times (Boston: Brill, 2000), 47.} (Sh. p. 217)

Another
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 trap\textsuperscript{929} 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 firewood\textsuperscript{930} (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,\textsuperscript{931}
Because she, the one with a clitoris, is a demoness\textsuperscript{932}

Her name is Şafiyya, or “Ĥi`sha, or Khadija,”\textsuperscript{933} as if she were of the Prophet’s house, may God protect her.

If Bîlqîṣ\textsuperscript{934} 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,’\textsuperscript{935} that is, ‘You shouldn’t have done that.’

\textsuperscript{929} Emended from al-faja to faza’.
\textsuperscript{930} By Ibn al-Ĥajjāj. \textit{Ta`līf al-Mizāj min Shi`r ībn al-Ĥajjāj}. Collected by Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ībn Nubāṭa. Der Kongelige Bibliotek København, Codex Arabicus 260, 5a-6b. Lines 7 and 18 of a 50 line poem.
\textsuperscript{931} Emended from rāj to rāh.
\textsuperscript{933} All three of these women were Muḥammad’s wives. EI2, s.v. “Şafiyya bint Ḥuyayy,” “Ĥi`sha bint Abī Bakr” and “Khadija.”
\textsuperscript{934} The name for the Queen of Sheba in Arabic literature. “EI2, s.v. “Bîlqîṣ.”
\textsuperscript{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!  

Someone says, "O Abū al-Qāsim, what are the blights of the Market of Riding Animals?" (Sh. p. 218)

He says, "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 what 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 Babylonian 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

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936 Sūq al-Dawābb. LeStrange, Lands, 227.
937 Emended from yakānu to yaqūlu.
938 Emended from mimmâ to bi-mā.
939 Bewitching, enchanting. Dozy, s.v. "Bābilt."
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 nap\textsuperscript{460} 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 šād 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,\textsuperscript{441} brighter than fire, and better than the ground

\textsuperscript{460} Emended from za‘r to za‘bar.
\textsuperscript{441} al-Khayāl refers to the dream (tāf) 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 does
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 gem
And with a rump that occupies a surplus of waist-wraper
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

\footnote{The meaning of the second line is: He’s beautiful as the dawn in bed. Ibn al-Mu’tazz, Diwān (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1980), 234.}

\footnote{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.  

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 shyness (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. 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. 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 heretics  
Their claims are proven by his (existence)  

His creator formed him by making dung speak  
Not from a shaped lump of flesh  

He is ashen colored, his color is that of gray sheep  
It is as if (he spends his) nights blowing on charcoal  

544 All of these names are typical names for slaves.  
545 ibn al-Mu’tazz, 2:300. These three lines are lines two, three and seven of a seven line poem.  
546 This sentence appears in Zahr, 441.  
547 Reading zakhim instead of al-Shāfi’ī’s wakham or Mez’s rakham.  
548 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.”  
549 Qur’dān, 22 (al-Ḥajj): 5.
He has freckles that cover his face
It is as if flies had shit on it

His teeth are stained yellow; when he shows them it is
As if someone with diarrhea had shit on him

They have acquired from scum and plaque (at the roots)\textsuperscript{950} Streaks,\textsuperscript{951} as if they were the arch of a rainbow

He is more oppressive than Mount Abū al-Qubays\textsuperscript{952}
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 Ṭuways\textsuperscript{953} (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

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{951} Read as fardīqan.

\textsuperscript{952} A mountain to the east of Mecca. \textit{al-Buldān}, 1:101-2.

\textsuperscript{953} This proverb appears in more than one form: ‘Ash’am min Ṭuways and ‘akhmath 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 Muhammad died, weaned the day Abū Bakr died, circumcised the day the caliph Ṭūman was assassinated, married the day the caliph Ṭūman was murdered, and blessed with his first son the day Abī b. Abī Ṭālib died. \textit{Imīl Bādī’} Ya’qūb, \textit{Mawsū’at Amthāl al-‘Arab} (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1995), 2:221, 285.
From the bits of shit\textsuperscript{954} 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”\textsuperscript{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 tannery\textsuperscript{956}

Another

With gluey, armpit-smelling gums and
With foul meat and sour spit

\textsuperscript{954} Emended from ‘as to ‘abas. Steingass, Persian, s.v. “Abas.”
\textsuperscript{955} Sâlih al-marâra. A play on the phrase “shaqqa al-marâra” which means alluring and is said to have originated with al-Şanawbarî. al-Sarî al-Râfî, al-Muṣâhib wa al-Maḥrûb wa al-Mâṣhûm wa al-Maṣhrûb, 1:299.
\textsuperscript{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-Şanawbarî, Diwân al-Şanawbarî, 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-Ruwaydasṭī,\textsuperscript{957} or Ḥasan the Kurrajī.\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{957} Ruwaydast is a Persian term meaning wrestler.  
\textsuperscript{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.  
\textsuperscript{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 hardness\footnote{Emended from burnus to qawnas.} 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
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 Șarāh\textsuperscript{961} in Karkh
Or to the riverbank with its nearby palaces

Then days I went out to the ʿāmīr’s gates
And evenings to the houses of the singing girls

Another

O my nights, at Maṭīra\textsuperscript{962} and Karkh\textsuperscript{963}
And Darb al-Ṣūsī! 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 Qutrubbal\textsuperscript{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 muezzin\textsuperscript{965} 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

\textsuperscript{961} Yaʿqūb wrote that there was once a Big Șarāh and a Little Șarāh Canals, but that he knew the location only of one Șarāh, which flowed out of the ʿIsā Canal near Baghdad. \textit{al-Buldān}, 3:377-379.
\textsuperscript{962} A village near Sāmarrā. \textit{al-Buldān}, 4:598.
\textsuperscript{963} This context points to Karkh Sāmarrā. \textit{al-Buldān}, 4:256.
\textsuperscript{964} A village located between Baghdad and ʿUkbarā where people went to drink wine. \textit{al-Buldān}, 2:133-5.
\textsuperscript{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.”


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 Ṣarāḥ’s bank
My love for him has made life bitter for me

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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’s\textsuperscript{966} slave girl, Zād Mihr,\textsuperscript{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 ṢAlī 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

\textsuperscript{967} Zād Mihr is also mentioned in al-Shābushtī, al-Diyārī, ed. Kūrķīs ʿAwwād, 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 Ṣalī 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)  

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?  

One day a young man who pretended to be an aristocrat of Baghdad came to him, in the winter, wearing a ghilâla instead of a jubba. (Abū Ṣalī) 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!' 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,
‘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 me 975

She said to his messengerness, ‘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 dinārs in a purse and I’ll come to you and that will be that.’ (Sh. p. 233)

This Abū ṢAlī b. Jumḥūr was, in truth, one of the prominent merchants. 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 (tayf) 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.\textsuperscript{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 Wāṣīṭ, 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,\textsuperscript{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-thorn\textsuperscript{978}-(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

\textsuperscript{976} The grammar in this sentence is problematic.
\textsuperscript{977} The phrase “full moons” refers to beautiful young boys or girls.
\textsuperscript{978} \textit{Alhagi Maurorum}, a low very spiny bush. Sigigel, 51.
the Hizqal Asylum\textsuperscript{979} in which I am imprisoned like a madman! I have no income except (Sh. p. 235) a pittance in rent from your houses—35 \textit{dirhams} per month—it is as if (I were selling) a fragment of glass, or chicken feed.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{979} A large building located between Basra and ‘Askar, which functioned as an insane asylum. \textit{al-Buldān}, 2:706.

\textsuperscript{980} Literally chicken shit.

\textsuperscript{981} Beginning from “feathers,” this paragraph refers to removing hair from the private parts of the body, which was customary. EI2, s.v. “Sha‘r.” 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 Jumhûr, 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 Abû ʿAlî 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-Zayyāt\(^{982}\) or Ibrâhîm b. al-Mudabbir.\(^{983}\) (But) as for Zâd 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 Jumhûr! 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

\(^{982}\) Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Abān b. Abī Ḥamza al-Zayyāt was a poet in Baghdad. al-ʿAghānî, 20:46-60.

\(^{983}\) Abū Ishāq Abū Yusr Ibrâhîm, 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-madānî 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 bwā'ī/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 Wāṣīṭ, 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, 0 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 Hamdūn."
987 Bwā'ī/k and t/nmshi are unidentifiable.
988 Milhū-hu ʾalā rukbatī-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, Muṣjam 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’farān⁹⁹⁹ 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.’

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⁹⁹⁹ An area in Karkh, Baghdad, where traders and some poor people lived. al-Buldân, 2:562.
Another one said, 'I was standing at the Karkh Gate and lo, there was a
girl, 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.' (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 dinārs which are her dowry are measured by qafizes
(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

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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 wine[^953] 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

[^953]: 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-Ruṣāfī’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 hope. 994

Or if you could see ʿAlīf, Abū ʿĀʾidh al-Karkhī’s 995 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 you 996 (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

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994 These are the first and third lines of a four line poem found in al-Imāmī, 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-Imāmī, 2:176, but there is no further information on him.
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 rest.\(^997\)

(Sh. p. 246) Then you could see Abū ‘Abd 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 story\(^999\) as if he were ‘Abd al-Razzāq, the madman at Bāb al-Ṭāq. Or you could hear ‘Alam 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 \textit{al-Imtā’}, 2:177 except that “Even if it scraped the scab” appears as “\textit{wa ta‘alum anna-hā tanka}” (and know that she scrapes).
\(^999\) 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, \textit{A History of Arabian Music to the XIIth Century} (London: Luzac, 1967), 14, 74.
\(^1001\) The same story appears in \textit{al-Imtā’}, 2:167 except the names are given as Abū al-Wazīr al-Ṣūfī al-Qaṭṭīn in Dār al-Qūṭ and Qalam al-Qaḍībīyya.
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,\textsuperscript{1002} the judge, over the singing of Durra, Abū Bakr al-Jarrāḥī's\textsuperscript{1003} slave girl, at Darb al-Za'farānī, when she sings:

\begin{quote}
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 "ūd 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'\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{1006}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1002} He is mentioned in \textit{al-\textasciitilde{imtā}'}, 2:171, but there is no further information on him.
\textsuperscript{1004} This phrase is used in \textit{al-\textasciitilde{imtā}'}, 2:171-2.
\textsuperscript{1005} The seventh month of the Muslim lunar year. EI2, s.v. "Rajab."
\textsuperscript{1006} This anecdote appears in \textit{al-\textasciitilde{imtā}'}, 2:172.
Or the ecstasy of the Chief Judge Ibn Ma'rūf,\textsuperscript{1007} over the singing of Ṭūlayya, 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 teeth\textsuperscript{1008}

Or the ecstasy of Ābū Ḥishāq 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,\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{1008} This introductory line and poem appear in \textit{al-Imtā'a}, 2:172, although IM adds this phrase at the end of the introductory line: in the poetry of Ibn Abī Rabī'ā.
\textsuperscript{1009} \textit{al-Imtā'a}, 2:172, gives her name as Qinwa al-Baṣriyya.
A doctor, and when he could not find him, he (tried to) treat himself\footnote{1010}

Or the ecstasy of Ibn Nubāṭa\footnote{1011} 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)  
She\footnote{1012} 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 victims\footnote{1013}

And she sings in hazaj:\footnote{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?\footnote{1015}

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Azraq al-Kalwadhānī, over the singing of Sundus, the slave girl of Ibn Yūsuf,\footnote{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

\footnote{1010} “Or the ecstasy... treat himself” following it are found in al-Imtā’, 2:172 except that “and witticisms (between them) that have got out” is missing and “and spreading jokes” is added after “taunts.”
\footnote{1012} The wine.
\footnote{1013} The introductory line and the poem appear in al-Imtā’, 2:170 except that the “cup” appears as “the palm.”
\footnote{1015} The two lines of poetry appear in al-Imtā’, 2:171.
\footnote{1016} Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Yūsuf, a secretary in the caliph ʿAdud al-Dawla’s chancery and a poet. al-Thaʿallīf, Yaṭīma al-Dahr fi Maḥāsin Ahl al-ʿAsr, ed. 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 lovers\textsuperscript{1017}

Or the ecstasy of Abū Muḥammad al-Baradānī, over the singing of ṢAlwa, Ibn ṢAlluwayh’s slave girl, in Darb al-Silqi\textsuperscript{1018} in Karkh, when she raised her voice and sang the lines by al-Sabrawī\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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 tongue\textsuperscript{1021} (Sh. p. 252) (M. p. 81)

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Mutayyam al-Ṣūfī, over the singing of Nihāya, al-Sulami’s\textsuperscript{1022} slave girl, when she raised her (voice quavering with) emotion, and crooked her eyebrows in flirting, and made eyes (at him), and sang:

\textsuperscript{1017} The anecdote and lines of poetry appear in al-\textit{Imtā‘}, 2:173, except that al-Kalwadhānī is given as al-Jarjārāt.

\textsuperscript{1018} al-\textit{Buldān}, 2:563.


\textsuperscript{1020} Emended to \textit{thamaltī} from a blank, in accordance with al-\textit{Imtā‘}, 2:165-6 and \textit{Yatīma}, 4:58.

\textsuperscript{1021} The introductory line and poem appear al-\textit{Imtā‘}, 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 \textit{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 him.\(^{1021}\)

Or the ecstasy of Ibn Ghaylān al-Bazzāz,\(^{1024}\) over the warbling of Rayhāna, Ibn al-Barīḍī’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 passionately\(^{1025}\)

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 Throne\(^ {1026}\) 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.\(^ {1028}\)

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\(^{1022}\) The introductory line and poem are in al-Imām, 2:166 except the men’s names are given as Ibn al-Fahm al-Ṣūfī and Ibn al-Mughannī.
\(^{1024}\) In al-Imām, 2:166-7 except that Billawr appears instead of Rayḥāna and al-Yazīdī al-Muʿāllīf instead of Ibn al-Barīḍī.
\(^{1025}\) Qurʾān, 2 (al-Baqara): 255.
\(^{1026}\) Bashrāḥiyā marāḥiyā. 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.”
\(^{1027}\) “When he heard this ... in his ear” appears in al-Imām, 2:167.
Yes, O sir, or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Ṣūfī, when he heard the singing of Taraf al-Ṣabbāba, 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 Uqhwān, Ibn al-Aʿmāʾs 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-Warrāq 1033 the grammarian over the singing of Rawḥa, the slave girl of Ibn al-Raḍī 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-ʿImtāʾ, 2:170 except the names are given as Ibn al-ʿAwdhi and Taraf al-Ṣāhi. 1030 The poem is paralleled in al-ʿImtāʾ, 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-Muʿāllā b. Abī Naṣr 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-ʿImtāʾ, 2:176 except that Abū ʿAbd Allah al- Bsrfī is given instead of Ibn al-Bukhārī, Rawḥa instead of Uqhwān and Ibn al-Raḍī instead of Ibn al-Aʿmā. 1033 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī ʿAbbās b. al-Warrāq, d. 991 M./371 H. Imīl Yaqūb, al-Muʿjam al-mufassal fī al-lughawīn al-ʿArab (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1997), 327. 1034 This line has been emended from Ibn al-Ruṣāfa to Ibn al-Raḍī in Ruṣāfa on the basis of al-ʿImtāʾ, 2:176. It seems to be a copyist’s error. Ibn al-Raḍī 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
despised\textsuperscript{1035} (Sh. p. 255) (M. p. 82)

O our lord, because of these and similar (verses) by Ibn al-Âhnaf,\textsuperscript{1036} al-Wâsi'tî
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-Wâsi'tî, when he (once) came to an inn, and heard someone singing
the words of al-'Abbâs b. al-Âhnaf:

\begin{quote}
So increase and decrease your ill treatment (of me)
For all this is ascribed to fate\textsuperscript{1037}
\end{quote}

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-'Abbâs b. al-Âhnaf 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 Allâh 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

\textsuperscript{1035} The poem appears in al-Imtâq, 2:177. These are lines 10, 4 and 15 from the sixteen line poem "Lâ 'ara fî l-}l-}lubbî," al-'Abbâs b. al-Âhnaf, Diwân al-'Abbâs ibn al-Âhnaf, 141.
\textsuperscript{1036} al-'Abbâs b. al-Âhnaf, al-Baqa'îr, pt. 1, 36. al-'Abbâs b. al-Âhnaf, al-Aghâni, 8:15-27. He is famous for
love poetry, El2, s.v. "al-'Abbâs b. al-Âhnaf."
\textsuperscript{1037} al-'Abbâs b. al-Âhnaf, Diwân al-'Abbâs ibn al-Âhnaf (Beirut: Dâr Şâdir; Dâr Bayrût, 1965), 141.
more so) for the Creator! We are God's! May God curse love poetry, 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. 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 Mahdī, over the (singing) of Muntazim and ʿAlwa, 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 thwarted

Or the ecstasy of Ibn Ghassān al-Naṣrānī, the belletrist, when he heard Abū Tammām al-Zaynabī’s slave girl, Ḥabbāba, when she sang: (Sh. p. 257) (M. p. 83)

1038 Literally ghazāls.
1039 This passage appears in al-Imtāʿ, 2:178-9, except that “And if he had foreordained ... with licentiousness” is omitted. This is an example of ʿilm 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. El2, s.v. “ʿilm al-kalām.”
1040 The introductory line and poem are paralleled in al-Imtāʿ, 2:178, except that “over the (singing) of Muntazim and ʿAlwa” 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 qāḍī or judge. Yāqūt, The Irshād al-Arīb ilā Maʿrifat 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.”

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, 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)

The end of his business, poor man, was that he drowned himself in the Kalwādhhā whirlpool, for reasons that accumulated against him, from poverty and

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1062 The introductory line and poem are in al-Intā', 2:169 except that the names are given as Ibn Ghassān al-Brī and Ibn al-Rāfī'ī instead of Ḥubbāba, Abū Tammām al-Zaynabī's slave girl.
1063 Emended from Abū Naṣr al-Āmil to Abū Muḍar, the governor, on the basis of al-Intā', 2:169; and Yatīma, 3:428.
1064 The anecdote and lines 1-3 and 5 of the poem are paralleled in al-Intā', 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 mangle 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 the 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, errrs, 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 liberation

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, had come to Baghdad and he bought her for thirty thousand Ḥizzi 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

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1045 "The end of his business" through the line of poetry appears in al-Imtāṣ, 2:169-70, but with many variations.
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 Samūn the Șūfī,1049 over (the singing of) Ibn Bahlul, when he took the qaḍîb, 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 Abû Sa’d al-Bādirānī, over the singing of Ghulām al-Umarā’, 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-Imtā’ī, 2:181-2, with numerous variations.
1050 The anecdote and poem are in al-Imtā’ī, 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-Imtā’ī, 2:174, except that Abû Sa’d al-Bādirānī is replaced by Ibn Ḥayyawayh and the word “singing” is omitted.
Like a shaving that has been cut from a fingernail\textsuperscript{1052}

(Sh. p. 260) This Ghulām al-Umarā\textsuperscript{7} is the one about whom someone has said:

Abū al-\textsuperscript{5} Abbāsī 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.”\textsuperscript{1053}

Or the ecstasy of Abū Sulaymān al-Manṭiqī,\textsuperscript{1054} when he heard the singing of this
Mawṣili youth,\textsuperscript{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 bewitching\textsuperscript{1056} 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

\textsuperscript{1052} Lines seven and nine from a seventeen line poem called the Dayr \textsuperscript{5} Abdūn. Ibn al-Mu\textsuperscript{6} tazz, 2:250-1. The poem is discussed in: Renate Jacobi, “Ibn al-Mu\textsuperscript{6} tazz: Dair \textsuperscript{5} Abdūn, a Structural Analysis” in Journal of Arabic Literature, 6 (1975), 35-56.

\textsuperscript{1053} From “This Ghulām” through “inarticulateness.” al-\textsuperscript{5} Imtā\textsuperscript{a}; 2:174. “Ham” is Persian for also. Here it has been borrowed into Baghdādī Arabic vernacular. The wittiness is its insertion into a fushā Arabic verse.


\textsuperscript{1055} The \textsuperscript{5} Imtā\textsuperscript{a} names the youth: al-Ṣabī al-Mawṣili al-Nābigh, who is unidentified.

\textsuperscript{1056} Emended from ṣājīr to ṣāhīr on the basis of al-\textsuperscript{5} Imtā\textsuperscript{a}, 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 lustful\textsuperscript{1057} 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 tyrant\textsuperscript{1058}

Or the ecstasy of Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ībārī,\textsuperscript{1059} over the percussion playing of Ibn
al-Qaṣābānī,\textsuperscript{1060} when he would strike his ṣādīb 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 one\textsuperscript{1061}

Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Muqannaʾī Abū Ṭahīr al-Ṣādir,\textsuperscript{1062} over ʿAllūn, Ibn
ʿUrs’s\textsuperscript{1063} slave, for indeed when (the latter) arrived, he used to throw off his (outer)

\textsuperscript{1057} Read as al-shābiq.
\textsuperscript{1058} The anecdote and poem are in al-Imtāʾ, 2:174-5, but the second and third lines of the poem are reversed.
\textsuperscript{1059} An influential Muʿtazilī theologian and Ḥanafī judge. b. ca. 905-6, d. 19 June 980 in Baghdad. El2,
\textsuperscript{1060} ʿAṣābī appears in al-Imtāʾ, 2:175. I did not find either form elsewhere.
\textsuperscript{1061} The introductory line and poem are in al-Imtāʾ, 2:175.
\textsuperscript{1062} al-Imtāʾ, 2:178 has al-Muʿaddil instead of al-Ṣādir. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli b. Muḥammad b. al-
\textsuperscript{1063} Yāqūt, The Irshād al-ʿArīb ilā Maʿrifat al-ʿAdīb, or Dictionary of Learned Men of Yāqūt, ed. by D.S. Margoliouth
(Cairo, Matbaʿa Hindiyya, 1968), 5:164. He is mentioned writing letters for ʿĪzz 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 of need 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-Muqanna, 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) Dabiqī clothing, that Shattawi1064-style rīd1065 that Byzantine farajiyā,1066 that perfumed handkerchief, and the incense preserved in its container. And fetch in addition the dinār 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 bawāridār,1067 the condiments, and add to that a qirāt of grilled meat,1068 cheese and olives from Kīkī the grocer in Karkh, qaṭīf from Ḥabish, ḥalīdāj from ʿUmar, and fuqqaʾa1069 from Zurayq, and Khurāsānī hasḥ(?)1070 from Ibn Zunbūr. If we were drinking, we would order Ṣarīfīn1071 wine from Ibn Ṣarīyīn, 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, 3:388.
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, galangale, caraway, ground pistachios and sugar. Serve it over roasted chicken.
1068 A qirāt 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 dinār. LANE, s.v. “Qirāt.”
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. Marīn, Kanz, 146-50.
1070 Makhłat, 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 makhłat 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 Ṣadr
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 6Allūn 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-6Abbāsī, over the singing of Madhkhūr, 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 Sa’d 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)

1074 Emended from khulāsān to khudānān.
1075 “Or the ecstasy of Ibn al-Muganna‘ī ... so I do not die” is paralleled in al-Imtā’, 2:178-181, except that there are numerous small variations, especially in the first prose paragraph.
1076 The poem appears in al-Imtā’, 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 greet\(^{1078}\)

Or the ecstasy of Ghulām Bābā, over the slave girl of Ṭalḥa,\(^{1079}\) the professional

witness, in the ṢAṭash 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 place\(^{1081}\)

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-imtā', 2:181.

\(^{1078}\) This poem appears in al-imtā', 2:181.


\(^{1080}\) One of the largest neighborhoods in Baghdad. al-Buldān, 3:194.

\(^{1081}\) The introductory line and poem appear in al-imtā', 2:182.
songs and melodies. Indeed, I got to know all this, in the year 306 (918 or 919), 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, 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. 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

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1083 Shāljī 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-Imtā', 2:183 gives the numbers as 460 slave girls, 120 free girls and 95 youths.
1085 This paragraph is paralleled in al-Imtā', 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 Awānā\textsuperscript{106} (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'

\textsuperscript{106} al-Buldān, 1:395-6.
I recall a day when we were in ʿUmr (a monastery) in the area of Wāsiṭ,\textsuperscript{1087} and with us were Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, and Abū Muḥammad al-Yaʿqūbī,\textsuperscript{1088} and Abū al-Ḥasan b. Sukkara,\textsuperscript{1089} and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Jurjānī.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{1087} This is the same place as ʿUmr Kaskar. It is famous for a Christian monastery surrounded by gardens. Kaskar is near Wāsiṭ. \textit{al-Buldān}, 3:724-726.
\textsuperscript{1088} al-Yaʿqūbī is mentioned as a poet, but without further information in Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn al-Athīr, \textit{al-Lubāb fi tahdīth al-Ansāb} (Cairo: Maktabāt al-Qudst, 1936 or 7-), 3:311.
\textsuperscript{1090} Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jurjānī, a judge and poet. \textit{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,\textsuperscript{1091} and the ṭūd of Mawāhib,\textsuperscript{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) wonders\textsuperscript{1093}

And (then) we slept at the end of the day among the scented plants; the scents
of these gardens refreshed us. Abū ʿAbd Allāh\textsuperscript{1094} was drunk, sleepiness having clouded

\textsuperscript{1091} This could also be vowelled ʿAmī.
\textsuperscript{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. ʿAbd al-Sarraj, Maṣāfīʿ al-ʿUshshāq (Constantinople: Maṭbaʿat al-Jawāʿib, 1884), 273.
\textsuperscript{1094} Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.
his eyes, when all of a sudden there appeared a ship\textsuperscript{1095} traveling up to Baghdad. He observed it in this state, then recited:

\begin{quote}
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
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{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 Yahyā
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'qūb 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'qūb 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 Wāṣīt 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 for 1096

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-Ḥazn 1097 with one whose home is in al-Ṣūl 1098 (Sh. p. 274)

Allāh rolls up the carpet of the earth between the two
Until its grazing ground is seen to be populated.”

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.”

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 of stew
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

---

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 impose.\textsuperscript{102}

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\textsuperscript{103}

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 pudding\textsuperscript{104} has a special place in my heart
When if appears before\textsuperscript{105} 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.'"\textsuperscript{106}

Someone said to him, "Which fresh fruit do you like best?"

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\textsuperscript{102} Maqāmāt, 93-4 (al-Sāsāniyya). There are substantial variations.
\textsuperscript{103} Rice pudding, i.e. rice cooked in milk. Lisān, s.v. "Bahāṭṭu’n."
\textsuperscript{104} Aruzza.
\textsuperscript{105} Emended from qasādat to tāsādat.
\textsuperscript{106} The anecdote appears in al-Baṣā'ir, 5:164, anecdote 549. Paralleled 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 fāluḍhaj.'"

He says, "Abū Muḥammad ṢAbd Allāh b. Ja'far b. Durustawayh" recited to us:

'Abū al-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad, on the authority of al-'Uqayshir, recited to us (these verses):

O 'Amr, 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."

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1108 Abū al-'Abbās Muhammad b. Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Akbar al-Thamālī al-Azīdī al-Mubarrad, 826-899. was the Baṣrān philologist whose discussions with al-Thaṭār led to the founding of the Baṣrān and Kūfān schools of grammar. He collected extensive quantities of Arabic prose and poetry that illustrated interesting philological points and used them in his adab works. El2, s.v. "al-Mubarrad."

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 sīkbāj
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)\textsuperscript{1110}

\textsuperscript{1110} These are lines four through seven of an eleven line poem by Ibn Sukkara. \textit{Yatima}, 2:179-80.
Then he washes his hands and says, "Where is Abū al-Jalab?"--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 seeds and the pharmacists. Isn't this "Mr. Terror" going to become "Mr. Timidity?"

Then he says, "How does Abu Mushkāhal play?"

Someone says, "He is a good player."

He says, "The old mule is not scared by the sound of the bell." He approaches him and says:

O one who exposes to me his honor
You have united fire with "arfaj"

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

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1111 Literally, father of the imported goods or slaves; or clamor.
1112 Literally, father of the castanets player.
1114 Abū al-Hawl, literally Father of Fear.
1115 Abū al-Fazī, literally Father of Timidity.
1116 Since the word is undotted, it could be Mushkājal. Apparently a mocking name. For instance, see Dozy, s.v. "Miskhāl," meaning a wretch.
1118 A highly flammable thorny plant. Steingass, Persian, s.v. "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 Mushkāhal, bite by bite, so that you don't choke." Two squares at a time, so you don't end in the black. One bishop 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, and says, 'Back up a square to go around a piece' and back up and cut off his move, 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:

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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?
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’mā yakhrā fawq l-sāṭhi wa-yahṣibu al-nāsā 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 Dabiqī,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 '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 Dabiq!”1132

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1129 Emended from saff daqiqi to shaqq Dabiqī. As was mentioned above, “splitting Dabiqī” means farting.
1130 Cyclamen. Dozy, s.v. “Artanīth.”
1131 Siggel, 29.
1132 Dabiq was a small village extremely close to Aleppo. A fast-growing grass called halafa grows in its vicinity. However, the point is that in the last year of his life, the Umayyad caliph Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik, 96/715-99/717, moved to Dabiq, 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 Dabiq 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 Hikāya 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 hammer\textsuperscript{1133} 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."\textsuperscript{1134} So he puts it back\textsuperscript{1135} in its place, and (Abū al-Qāsim) says, "The grain goes round and round, then gets ground in the mill."\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{1138} What can I do?"

\textsuperscript{1133} Fāntalās. Lisān, s.v. "Fāntalāsā."
\textsuperscript{1134} al-Buldān, 4:445–7.
\textsuperscript{1135} Emended from fa-radda to fa-yarudda.
\textsuperscript{1136} al-Habba tadārū wa ilā al-rāhā tarjā’u. Freytag 1:419, Ch. 6, proverb 251.
\textsuperscript{1137} Tadradu means "you lose your teeth," but that does not make sense in English, so I have substituted "gnash your teeth."
\textsuperscript{1138} There appear to be a copyist’s error. The last words look like bi l-stlā lā wa l-hrq.
Then his opponent errs in (M. p. 96) play, and surrenders some pieces to him, and he says to him, “I outdid you, O meal\textsuperscript{1139} without bones,\textsuperscript{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-Sukkarī\textsuperscript{1141} 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.”

\textsuperscript{1139} Emended from bāwala to yā zulla.
\textsuperscript{1140} The phrase “meal without bones” may mean “spineless.”
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 bowl\textsuperscript{1142} (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.)

\textsuperscript{1142} \textit{Musarīj}. This form could not be verified. The closest form is LANE, s.v. "Sukarja," meaning sauce bowls, deriving from Persian \textit{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, 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”

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 ass

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:

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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 penis\textsuperscript{1146}
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)\textsuperscript{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 up\textsuperscript{1148} in surprise. He mouths nonsense, humming, and

\textsuperscript{1146} The beginning of the line looks like: f-r-d-d and is unintelligible.
\textsuperscript{1147} Words are missing in the manuscript. This is a guess by Şähî. 
\textsuperscript{1148}
saying, "O our lord, this is among the uncommon qualities of noble characters; this is of the innovation\(^\text{149}\) 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?"\(^\text{150}\) Then he recites, sneering at him:

And he said, 'Turn it around.' But I said, "Fuck that!"

If, O our master, it were turning!

\(^{148}\) Emended from yafghuru to yaqfuzu.

\(^{149}\) El2, s.v. "Badda?" 

\(^{150}\) 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),’”¹⁵¹ then it said, “If you knew what (hammering is on) my rear, you would forgive me.”

Then he banters 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:

¹⁵¹ 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 fatha\textsuperscript{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 riffraff!" 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."\textsuperscript{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;\textsuperscript{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."

\textsuperscript{1152} Ṣalḥ means reconciliation. Ṣalḥ means shit, i.e. it is shit in his beard.
\textsuperscript{1153} Qur\textsuperscript{ā}d, 17 (al-Isrā?): 81.
\textsuperscript{1154} Qur\textsuperscript{ā}d, 56 (al-Wāqi'a): 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.' (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) 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, or the cow of the Children of Israel, or

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1155 The manuscript looks like yalaffu. I prefer Shāljī's emendation to yakuffu.
1156 A word is missing here and this is a guess.
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 Qurʾān, 37 (al-Ṣāfāt): 139-147.
¹¹⁶⁰ Qurʾān, 7 (al-ʿArāf): 148.
¹¹⁶¹ Emended from majnūn to makhnūn.
¹¹⁶² Emended from batikīh to tabīkīh.
¹¹⁶³ Khosrow I Anūshirvān, Sassanian ruler, 531-578? His reign was extremely prosperous. If only Khosrow can afford this food, it must be impressive. Arthur Christensen, L’Iran sous les Sassanides (Copenhague: Levin & Munksgaard, 1936), 358-435.
tips are (like) the tips of cupping glasses, and its taste is the taste of the zaqqūm\textsuperscript{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 shūrba\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{1166} and peppered with beans, with (only) small\textsuperscript{1167} (amounts) of meat.’\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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.”
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{1166} Tharida daknā' meaning tharida with a large quantity of grain in it. LANE, s.v. “Adkan.”
\textsuperscript{1167} Emended from hīqāq to hīfāf.
\textsuperscript{1168} This anecdote is paralleled in al-Bazā’ir, 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 wolf's 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.'

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 or a hisrmiyya is brought out and he says, "Kushājīm used to say, 'Don't subject yourself to (eating) cooked baqrī, except during eggplant season, or to cooked hisrmiyya except during pumpkin season.'"

Then a ṭabāhaja 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

\[1169\] Ahmaqū min ar-rabā'. G.W. Freytagg, 1:405, Ch. 6, proverb 180. al-Maydānī, Muṣjam al-Amnthāl, 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...”

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 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, ṣalāṭiq, precious jīzrīyāt, and pistachio jūḥābah?”

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 Maʾn’s houses, an Ethiopian cook whose name is Nāranj. 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 casserole that (Sh. p. 300) he brings close, and is

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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 jūḏhāb 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. “Ṣaliqa.”
1177 The undotted word could be read as al-ḥarīrīyat.
1178 A tribe which ruled the Emirate of Shāf 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. “Maʾn.”
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 Nārānj, What do you need?', he would reply, 'Hungry people!'

Once he set some of his dishes before us: a zirdāj like brocade and a sukkāja 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't 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

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1180 The anecdote is paralleled in al-Baṣā'īr, 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 kaʻba 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-‘anāq to al-ta’nāq.
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 dross\textsuperscript{1183} 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,\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{1183} Emended from \textit{al-jubn} to \textit{al-khabath}.
\textsuperscript{1184} Emended from \textit{faqr} to \textit{qafr}. 
other is bitter salt; one is the stars of safūd\textsuperscript{1185} and the other is the stars (Sh. p. 304) of dhābiḥ;\textsuperscript{1186} one is cold water after thirst and the scent of roses (wafting) over dew (on them), (and)\textsuperscript{1187} one is a bitter tree\textsuperscript{1188} 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?

\textsuperscript{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. “Sa’d.”

\textsuperscript{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. “Sa’d.”

\textsuperscript{1187} Emended to add wa.

\textsuperscript{1188} A type of colocynth. Siggel, s.v. “şāb.”
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!).”

Then he says, “O boy, (some) beer.”

Give me the snbr drinking bowl  
To drink in its jšlfūn” (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-Mawṣili recited to me from his own poem:

When he complained of the pain of the hangover  
I poured for him the shaken buttermilk.

\footnote{Freytag 2:103, Ch. 18, proverb 69. al-Maydānī, Mu‘jam al-Amthāl, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl lIrāhīm, 2:348, proverb 2451.}
\footnote{šnBR and jšLFūN are unidentifiable.}
\footnote{This half line is corrupted: Min-hā makhīda labāni-hā al-mutarajjaraja  . Makhīda (buttermilk) is not dotted in the manuscript. There is no antecedent for hā. I am accepting al-Shālī’s emendation to al-mutarajjaraja, 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 Ṣāliḥ 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,” by God,” and he says, “The spring is for the eyes, and

\[193\] 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," and you all (will be) immortal in (those goblets), O lords of Isfahan. If you would count God's blessings, you cannot reckon them; they are neither out of reach, thank God, nor forbidden."

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 said.
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 nobility 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 neglected 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 price and of an excess of high cost
And they raise their voices, saying 'Yes indeed!'

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1194 Qur'ān, 43 (al-Zukhruf): 77.
1195 Qur'ān, 43 (al-Zukhruf): 71.
1197 Qur'ān, 56 (al-Wāqī‘a): 33.
1198 Emended from raqā‘ to dafa‘.
1199 Emended from Nīl to nubl.
1200 Emended from ‘adā‘ to ‘adū‘.
1201 Emended from shi‘r to sa‘r.
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\textsuperscript{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-Mu‘tazz'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 and\textsuperscript{1203} summer
Is steam and its water is black\textsuperscript{1204}

\textsuperscript{1202} The \textit{chadara tenax}, a tree with very hard wood which is used to make arrows. Hava, s.v., "Nāb;"
\textsuperscript{1203} Emended from bi to wa.
\textsuperscript{1204} ibn al-Mu‘tazz, 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 woman\(^{1205}\)

Woe to you, indeed do you not see how Abū al-Shīṣ\(^{1206}\) 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):

Qaṭīṭ 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.
\(^{1206}\) El2, 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 enough uninhabited space and food, i.e. garbage, for them to live on. LeStrange, Baghdad, 78: Jacob
suburbs\textsuperscript{1210}: Ba'qūbā,\textsuperscript{1211} and Shafaṭīthā,\textsuperscript{1212} and Bākusāyā,\textsuperscript{1213} and Ṭīznābādh,\textsuperscript{1214} and Nahr Būq,\textsuperscript{1215} and Dayr al-Šāqūl,\textsuperscript{1216} and Ṭassūj al-Bazbūn, and al-Saqāṭīyya,\textsuperscript{1217} and Dimimmā,\textsuperscript{1218} places (Sh. p. 312) of 'Nabateans,' and residences of rabble and low-lifes. What can one say about a city whose water cannot be drunk until it has been hung up (to cool), and whose nabīdūh (cannot be drunk) until it has been beaten, that is to say, (mixed with) dādhi?\textsuperscript{1219}

Someone says, "O Abū Qāsim, what is the point of dādhi?"

He says, "Dādhi--it is the thing (about) which the Baghdadī raves,--saying, (M. p. 107) 'It is to the nabīdūh like galingale is to the cooking pots," and saying, 'You should take some dādhi, (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

\textsuperscript{1210} Lassner, The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 72.
\textsuperscript{1211} Canal of Chickens. A region of Baghdad on the western side of Karkh where many poulterers lived and worked. al-Buldān, 4:838-9.
\textsuperscript{1212} 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.
\textsuperscript{1213} Emended from kūratu-ḥā to kūwaru-ḥā.
\textsuperscript{1214} A city around 10 miles north of Baghdad which was the capital of the Upper Nahrawān District. al-Buldān, 4:797.
\textsuperscript{1215} Emended from Shaqaṭāṭīnā to Shafaṭīthā based on Alī b. Yūsuf Qīfī, Ibn al-Qīfī's Tārikh al-Hukama (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.
\textsuperscript{1216} A place between Baghdad and Wāṣīt, near Nahrawān. al-Buldān, 1:477.
\textsuperscript{1217} Emended from Ṭīznā to Ṭīznābādh, which is between Kīfā and Qadisiyya. It was a stop on the pilgrimage route to Mecca and was also known for its entertainment. al-Buldān, 3:570.
\textsuperscript{1218} A tract in the Sawād of Baghdad, to the northeast of Baghdad, north of the Kalwādāh District. LeStrange, Baghdad, 50 and Map 3. al-Buldān, 4:836.
\textsuperscript{1219} A village a few miles along Tigris River from Baghdad, between Kīrā and Nu'māniyya, which was known for its markets. al-Buldān, 2:676-7.
\textsuperscript{1220} Emended from al-Saqāṭ to al-Saqāṭīyya. An area by Kaskar near Wāṣīt. al-Buldān, 3:100.
\textsuperscript{1221} A large village on the Euphrates near Baghdad where a bridge crossed the Euphrates. al-Buldān, 2:600.
\textsuperscript{1222} St. John's Wort. The reference is to date wine infused with St. John's Wort. Dozy, s.v. "Dādhi."
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 gharm,¹²²¹ the backstroke, the sidestroke, the shaqlabī, the ṭawūšī,¹²²² the ṣaqrabi,¹²²³ the muqarfas,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.”

¹²²¹ Based on the root of gharm, 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,\textsuperscript{1226} sufun,\textsuperscript{1227} sumayriyyāt,\textsuperscript{1228} (Sh. p. 314) marākīb al-ummāliyyāt,\textsuperscript{1229} zabāzib,\textsuperscript{1230} ṭayyārāt,\textsuperscript{1231} shadhāwāt,\textsuperscript{1232} burmāt,\textsuperscript{1233} ḥarrāqāt,\textsuperscript{1234} (Sh. p. 315) zallālāt,\textsuperscript{1235} (Sh. p. 316) mālāshat,\textsuperscript{1236} kumandārīyyāt,\textsuperscript{1237} bālūt, ṭabṭāb;\textsuperscript{1238} jáddī,\textsuperscript{1239} (Sh. p. 317) jāsūs,\textsuperscript{1241} warḥīyāt,\textsuperscript{1242} qawārīb,\textsuperscript{1243} khayṭīyyāt,\textsuperscript{1244} (Sh. p. 318) shalmālī,\textsuperscript{1245} and ja'fariyyāt.\textsuperscript{1246} One day, by God, I saw, while I was slandering him(?), Ibn Dabīs al-Ma'baranī\textsuperscript{1247} and with (him) were Makīn al-Hammānī, and Raqtā' al-Nu'mānī, and Salūqā b. al-Rummānī, with a ...\textsuperscript{1248} on his head,


\textsuperscript{1227} Singular: safīnā. Transport ships. Kindermann, 40-1. Transport ship; ocean-going ship or pontoon from Iraq, the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. Agius, 326.

\textsuperscript{1228} A row-boat, used in the region around Baṣra and Baghdad. Kindermann, 42-3.

\textsuperscript{1229} Working boats. Kindermann, 67-8.

\textsuperscript{1230} Singular: zabāzāb. 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.

\textsuperscript{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.


\textsuperscript{1234} A fireboat or a felucca. Kindermann, 22-3.

\textsuperscript{1235} This term is used for a boat or barque in the Tigris region. Kindermann, 35-6.

\textsuperscript{1236} A boat, in the Tigris region. Kindermann, 94.

\textsuperscript{1237} A small boat in the pattern of those from the Maldives. Kindermann, 90-1.

\textsuperscript{1238} A speedy boat with two large oars. Kindermann, 56.

\textsuperscript{1239} At this point, al-malāshat is repeated, probably a scribe's error.

\textsuperscript{1240} A boat with one deck. Kindermann, 16.

\textsuperscript{1241} A reconnaissance ship. Kindermann, 15. A reconnaissance ship. Agius, 324.

\textsuperscript{1242} Mentioned, but without a definition. Kindermann, 107.

\textsuperscript{1243} Singular: qārīb. 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.


\textsuperscript{1245} A small warship or a Byzantine ship. Kindermann, 51.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{1247} The manuscript does not make sense. It could be: ... 'ishṭara bi-hi min Dubays al-Ma'rānī wa-'inda Makīn... al-Shāljī emends it to: ... 'Ishtarba b. Dubays al-Mu'birānī and 'inda (hu) ...

\textsuperscript{1248} The manuscript looks like farāfaga. al-Shāljī emends it to muqāqa'a.
and wearing a zurmānaqa\textsuperscript{1249} of two colors without a neck binding and without sleeves. Beside him was a ship’s captain,\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{1251} and turbid oil,\textsuperscript{1252} and a tarred oar,\textsuperscript{1253} mahār, (Sh. p. 319) javelins, shikka, bitumen,\textsuperscript{1254} balādī, red lac, hawād, oars, sharārīf, and he was busy repairing the work, and inserting the rope\textsuperscript{1255} in it, and mounting the oars on it. Under him he had a worn-out di\textsuperscript{1256} and above him (Sh. p. 320) a gray mat, seeking its shade beside the qurqrū,\textsuperscript{1257} with his companions sitting opposite him in the mankūr. He had grown proud,\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{1259} and brought me safe into the Mediterranean,\textsuperscript{1260} and brought me to the strand/ caused me to raise the sail.\textsuperscript{1261} (I swear) by the right(s) of our venerable (masters).” Then he looks out over

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item A wool jubba, or robe. R. P. A. Dozy, Vêtements, “zurmānaqa.”
\item Līsān, s.v. “Ashtyām.” 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.
\item Kanūr.
\item This could be a pole rather than an oar. Muḥammad Yāsīn al-Hamawī, Tārīkh al-Uṣūl al-‘Arabī (Damascus: Matba‘at al-Turqī, 1945), 50.
\item James W. Redhouse, A Turkish and English Lexicon (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1978), s.v. “Qafr.”
\item al-Shall. Lisān, s.v. “Ashl.”
\item The word di is not identifiable.
\item A long boat. Kindermann, 79-81.
\item Steingass, Persian, s.v. “Qafr.”
\item Aḥmad b. Mājīd al-Sa‘dī, Arab navigation in the Indian Ocean before the coming of the Portuguese, being a translation of Kitāb al-Fawā‘id fi Ṭṣāl al-Bahr wa al-Qawā‘id., 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.
\item Zuqāq. The Bahr al-Zuqāq is the Mediterranean. Arab navigation, 209.
\item Read as sayyālān for “brought me to the strand,” as shiyālān for “caused me to raise the sail.” Arab navigation, 282, 530; 531.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the Hawr,\textsuperscript{1262} and looks at the shoals, and hears the singing of the shipbuilders, and calls to them, ‘O pilot,\textsuperscript{1263} forward, forward, get all those who are with you in the boats going, as long as you are at this shartā,\textsuperscript{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 ūṭā 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 tahrwaqta, 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.’\textsuperscript{1265} (Sh. p. 322)
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 dislocated\textsuperscript{1266}

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,\textsuperscript{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 game\textsuperscript{1268}

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

\textsuperscript{1266} Attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by Mez, London 154b, but not confirmed by the manuscripts and editions at my disposal.

\textsuperscript{1267} An negation of a verse from the Qurʾān, 9 (al-Tawba): 109.

\textsuperscript{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 Asfā min al-dam'a w-min al-mā' wa-min 'ayni al-ghurābī wa-min 'ayni al-dīkī wa-min lu'ābi al-jundabī. 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
small\textsuperscript{1270} 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 humors\textsuperscript{1271} there is a resemblance to it! Its moisture is
similar to the phlegm;\textsuperscript{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:

\begin{verbatim}
Iblîs 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)
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{1270} This word is unclear in the manuscript.
\textsuperscript{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,
\textsuperscript{1272} Emended from \textit{al-ruṭāba} to \textit{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 set.1273

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 Ja’far al-Ṣādiq

Another

Nature doesn't produce anyone like you, unless
Cucumber seeds emerge from carrots

(As for) every one who does not ... 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) 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 ‘Abd Allah Ja’far b. Muhammad, 699/700-702/993, called al-Ṣādiq, the Trustworthy. He was the sixth Shi‘ite imam. EI2, s.v. “DJa’far al-Ṣādik.”
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 hadith 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 religion\textsuperscript{1277}

Or, may I be associated with Yazid\textsuperscript{1278}
And Yazid 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!\textsuperscript{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 Khosrow despite his nobility,
Then they would adorn Khosrow b. Sasan”

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

\textsuperscript{1277} Qur\textsuperscript{d}n, 7 (al-A\textsuperscript{r}raf) 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.
\textsuperscript{1278} Yazid b. Mu‘awiya, the second Umayyad caliph and first caliph named Yazid. Although he was very
affable, he ordered Husayn and the ‘Alid partisans kept from Kufa, which resulted in their death at
Karbala. He also attacked Medina, which had declared him deposed, and invested Mecca in an attempt
to suppress Ibn al-Zubayr. EI2, s.v. “Yazid b. Mu‘awiya.”
\textsuperscript{1279} Qur\textsuperscript{d}n, 7 (al-A\textsuperscript{r}raf) 159-166.
A meal pleases them and loss of another
Annoys them in all circumstances

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. 113)

(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 smiles 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?)

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 Qurʾān 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-Najāshī.”
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, 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 proximity 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. (It is) speech, by God, that rusts the mind, even if it does not blind the sight; the ears stumble on its hard ground, and imaginations are confused with its roughness; it has no easy entry in the ears, nor reception in the dispositions.” (M. p. 114)

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1282 A similar passage appears in Zahr, 121.
1283 From “heavier” through “deafness” appears in Zahr, 629.
1284 Read as yuṣaddāl
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." (He is) a downpour to the intellectuals; and a blaze on the foreheads 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,

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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.\textsuperscript{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 apple\textsuperscript{1289} 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;\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{1288} This refers to Luqmān b. ʿĀd.
\textsuperscript{1289} Emended from bi-tāḥah to tuffāḥa. Zahr, 582.
\textsuperscript{1290} Emended from amthāl to iṣbāl.
\textsuperscript{1291} Qurʾān, 76 (al-Insān): 12.
comes from his stone,\textsuperscript{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 turn\textsuperscript{1293} ends, then he is transported (with delight) and turns to the țanbûr player, saying:

\begin{verbatim}
Every singer with every țanbûr
Falls short of you, until the last trumpet is blown
\end{verbatim}

Then he turns to the lute player, saying:

\begin{verbatim}
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 țanbûr players turn (to frowns)

(You are) a turtledove, while the female singers,\textsuperscript{1294} when
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{1292} Zahr, 582.
\textsuperscript{1293} Emended from tûr to dawr.
\textsuperscript{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 ʿūd 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 ʿūd 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 region\textsuperscript{1296} 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-Mahdí\textsuperscript{1297} used to say, ‘Whoever gets up in the morning

and has ṭabāḥija,\textsuperscript{1298} and a skimpy bottle, and an apple with a bite out of it, and doesn't

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{1296} Emended from wuldān to buldān.
\textsuperscript{1297} Ulayya bint al-Mahdí, 160/777-221/825, was the daughter of the caliph al-Mahdí 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 Mahdí.”
\textsuperscript{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'

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1299 Maṭāli', 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 closer

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 moon (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

\[1300\] Qur'ān, 50 (Qaf): 16.
\[1301\] ibn al-Mu'tazz, 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 vessel\(^{1302}\)
From which the harmful (substance) is not washed

Nor the snow which remains in Marj al-Qilā\(^{1303}\)
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

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\(^{1302}\) 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 Qušš\textsuperscript{1304} 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 Hāshim\textsuperscript{1305}
And of ’Abd Shams, and of Nawfal\textsuperscript{1306} (tribe)
And you possessed the heritage of the Banū Ṭāhir\textsuperscript{1307}
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

\textsuperscript{1304} The Arabic name for a Persian people, the Kufchis, 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. “Kufs.”

\textsuperscript{1305} Hāshim b. ’Abd Manāf. The great grandfather of the prophet Muhāmmad. EI2, s.v. “Hāshim b. ’Abd Manāf.”

\textsuperscript{1306} Nawfal was the father of a clan of the Quraysh tribe. ’Abd Shams was his brother. The clan, along with most of the Hāshim tribe, at first opposed Muhāmmad. 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 Muhāmmad was preaching, but helped end the boycott. EI2, s.v. “Nawfal, Banū.”

\textsuperscript{1307} A line of governors in Khurāsān and high ranking officers in Iraq, who flourished in the 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th} 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 ghoul's face
- O shame of white hair appearing on heads
- O grief of dismissal on the (official) dismissed

Another
O laxative\textsuperscript{1308} drink, O house rent
O disagreeable face of an enemy\textsuperscript{1309}

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 family\textsuperscript{1310} (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

\textsuperscript{1308} Hava, s.v. “‘Ayāraja.”
\textsuperscript{1309} Zahr, 442.
\textsuperscript{1310} A poem by Jahža al-Barmakī, but with numerous variations. Jahža, a famous musician and litterateur, was a descendant 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. Jahža was a grandson of Mūsā, the member who survived the executions. He was a companion of the caliph al-Muqaddar, 295/908-329/932. Jahža al-Barmakī, \textit{Diwān Jahžati al-Barmakī}, Jean Tuma, ed. (Beirut: Dār Şādir, 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;\textsuperscript{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 šaylasân of Ibn Harb;\textsuperscript{1312} O more inauspicious to his soul than Wahb’s fart;\textsuperscript{1313} O more detestable than a cup of thick laxative\textsuperscript{1314} 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 rottener than the odor from a butcher; O stupider than a guard\textsuperscript{1315} of the bath; and rottener than a cupper’s shop; O
dirtier than the mud of fish sellers’ [stalls]; O more brutal than a tyrant in the eyes of

\textsuperscript{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, picnicking and partying. C. Snouck Hurgronje, Mecca in the Latter Part of the 19th Century (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), 45-6.

\textsuperscript{1312} Zahr, 442 and 550. Yatîma, 3:3. Ibn Ḥarb’s šaylasân represents something worn out and torn. The occurrences of this phrase in literature are discussed in: Josef van Ess, Der šaylasân des Ibn Ḥarb: “Mantelgedichte” in arabischer Sprache, Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 1979 no. 4 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1979).

\textsuperscript{1313} Wahb b. Sulaymân b. Wahb b. Sa’td was the head of the city main. He farted in a crowded majlîs held by ‘Ubayd Allâh b. Yahyâ b. Khâkân, 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-Thâlibî, Thîmâr al-Qulûb fi al-Muṣâf wa-al-Mansûb, 1:340-4, no. 282.

\textsuperscript{1314} This phrase appears in a proverb: Abbaḥādu min qadāḥi al-lablâb wa-min al-shaybi lâl al-ghawānî wa min rîhi al-sadâbi iâ al-hayyâtî wa-min sajâdati al-zâniyati wa-min wujûhî al-tujjâri yawma al-kâsâdî. Freytag, 1:199, Ch. 2, proverb 165.

\textsuperscript{1315} Emended from kh-ṣ-ṣ to ḥaffîz.
the tyrannized; and more hated than the owl’s cry\textsuperscript{1316} 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, fondling\textsuperscript{1317} 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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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, Ḥaydūt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā,
s.v. “būm.”

\textsuperscript{1317} Emended from mujāshshīm to mujammish.

\textsuperscript{1318} This section parallels Abū Bakr Muhammad b. al-.SERVER-ABBAS al-KHUWĀRIZMĪ, Rasā’il (Qustantiniyya:
Māṭba’at al-Jawā’il, 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 'Urwa,\textsuperscript{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)\textsuperscript{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 ______\textsuperscript{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)\textsuperscript{1322}
When you were designated a person
Humanity was insulted
For if you are one of the people

\textsuperscript{1319} 'Urwa b. al-Ward. A pre-Islamic ṣu'rāk poet. Tradition has it he divorced his wife Salmā, or Laylā, while drunk and regretted it upon becoming sober. EI2, s.v. "'Urwa b. al-Ward."
\textsuperscript{1320} Khuld could be either the neighborhood of Baghdad where the caliph al-Mansūr 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."
\textsuperscript{1321} The manuscript looks like "azzama or possibly 'gharrama, which do not fit the context.
\textsuperscript{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 bag\textsuperscript{123} 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;\textsuperscript{124} 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;\textsuperscript{125} the flighty--may God make my ass a

\textsuperscript{123} Emended from kharāb al-nuwayra to jirāb al-nūra. The proverb means to make one wakeful and attentive. \textsuperscript{imil Badī’} Ya’qūb, Mawsū’at Amthāl al-’Arab, 4:290.

\textsuperscript{124} “But his... by him” is unclear in the manuscript.

\textsuperscript{125} 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 Khuld\textsuperscript{1326} 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 maṣūra!\textsuperscript{1327} By the life(-blood) of her salt and pepper anus,\textsuperscript{1328} and the hair of her Khafshalinjī vulva, and the center of her stork-like clitoris, and the black-and-white-maggie-like hair of her ass, then I will pluck your mustaches.\textsuperscript{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 Khidāsh\textsuperscript{1330}
And now Khidāsh doesn’t know what to hunt”\textsuperscript{1331}

\textsuperscript{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 ‘Adud 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.

\textsuperscript{1327} A box or stall reserved for the ruler, located near the miḥrāb in a mosque. Lane, s.v. “Maṣūra.”

\textsuperscript{1328} Literally: looking like a khulajj tree.

\textsuperscript{1329} The word khirqi appears at the end of the line but is omitted in the translation because it does not seem to fit grammatically or semantically.

\textsuperscript{1330} “Umāra b. Yazīd, a leader of the early Hashimiyya movement in Khurāsān. El2, 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

Even if you were Dubays\textsuperscript{1332} when he was in al-Ḥilla\textsuperscript{1333} (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 mīm\textsuperscript{1334}
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

\textsuperscript{1332} Nūr al-Dawlāl Abū al-A‘azz Dubays b. ʿAlī, founder of the city of Ḥilla, which was located halfway between Baghdad and Kūfah. El2, s.v. “Mazyad, Banū.”

\textsuperscript{1333} A town on the Tigris River between Baghdad and Kūfah. Although the lifespan of Nūr al-Dawlāl Abū al-A‘azz Dubays b. ʿAlī, 408/1017-474/1082, he is generally associated with its founding. al-Buldān, 2:322-3.

\textsuperscript{1334} Substituting mīm for ḥā changes the word “salām (greetings)” to “salīḥ (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 Ţād 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

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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 Shāhī. 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 Qurʾān, 4 (al-Nisāʾ): 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

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 Gabriel\footnote{Gabriel is called the angel of revelation because he passed on revelations from God to Muḥammad. Qurʾān, 2 (al-Baqara): 97.} 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 ʿAḍūd 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
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)

Ahl! (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 desire\textsuperscript{1341} 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 Raṣṣalla

Here is my penis, look at it
Bestow honor on the shaykh of the neighborhood!

It has, in fucking my lady,\textsuperscript{1342}
One campaign after another (Sh. p. 358)

And he says,

\textit{(She is) a houri who has drunk}
The water of the Kawthar River\textsuperscript{1343} by the ratl

\textit{(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:

\textit{Behave nicely to me,\textsuperscript{1344} for indeed in me there is the greatest}
Honor for the one who offers the likes of me sustenance

Another

\textit{Forget about that above which is my turban}
For indeed my beauty is behind my waistband\textsuperscript{1345}

\textsuperscript{1341} Emended from abki to abghi.
\textsuperscript{1342} The manuscript has an extra \textit{alif} here.
\textsuperscript{1343} The name of the River that runs through Heaven. El2, s.v. “Kawthwar.”
\textsuperscript{1344} Emended from ila to li.
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)\footnote{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 Ḥumṣī\footnote{1347}
And in me, when I fuck, is goatish"\footnote{1348}

\footnote{1346} By Ibn al-Hajjah, Copenhagen 57a.
\footnote{1347} Ibn al-Hajjah, Taltīf al-Mizāj min Shīr Ibn al-Hajjad, selected by Jamāl al-Rīn Muḥammad b. Nubāta; Najm ʿAbd Allah Muṣṭafā, ed., 317. Ḥumṣī is the adjective that refers to inhabitants of Hum.
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 ass\textsuperscript{1349} 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\textsuperscript{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?\textsuperscript{1351} (M. p. 128)

Then he turns back from her to his place and recites:

\textsuperscript{1349} Emended from ishtihā to istihā.
\textsuperscript{1350} al-Khaṭṭāṭī, Shīfā‘ al-Ghālib, 150.
\textsuperscript{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,” when\textsuperscript{1352} 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 girl\textsuperscript{1353}

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 daughter\textsuperscript{1354} before I (proposed such a thing)
And who am I (compared to) him and who are you?\textsuperscript{1355}

Then he says:

\textsuperscript{1352} Emended from ‘aw to ‘idh.
\textsuperscript{1353} Ibn al- Hajjāj, Tahlīf al-Mīzāj min Shīr Ibīn al-Hajjāj, 24a.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{1355} Ibn al- Hajjāj, Tahlīf al-Mīzāj min Shīr Ibīn al-Hajjāj, 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

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1356 The Guardian of Paradise. EI2, s.v. “Riḍwān.”
He says, “Taking refuge in God,

My killer is a gazelle fawn, marvelously coquetish
A Persian in passion, pure of speech

Another

(He is) aflake 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 mole

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 coquetishness 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-Mu’tazz, 2:280. These bayts are the last two lines in an eight line poem.
1358 Ibn al-Mu’tazz, 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?\footnote{Ibn al-Mu’tazz, 1:374. The first two lines of a five line poem.}

The Daylami (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
\textit{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-curls\footnote{Sidelocks formed into a ring. Lane, s.v. “Zarfin.”} of jet\footnote{Ibn al-Mu’tazz, 1:331.} (Sh. p. 364)

Another

They transformed his cheek (by putting)
Musk on smooth cheek(s)
(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 cheek.

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 blossoms.

Another

The dyer of shame continually and doggedly dyes his cheek
Sometimes with saffron, and sometimes with roses.

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


\footnote{\textsuperscript{1363} Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 2:257.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{1364} Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 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 sins^{1365}

^{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 hadd punishment, but the sins of drunkenness are deflected onto the back of the wine (itself), and the activity of drinking covers its offense.”

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)

(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 rats 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 khaḍīf 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:

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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-Mūstāqīl 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 time\textsuperscript{1368}

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 proligacy
And the day of my dancing and my playing\textsuperscript{1369} (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:

\textsuperscript{1368} Ibn al-Hajjāj, Tahlīf al-Mizāj min Shīr Ibn al-Hajjāj, Copenhagen 9a.
\textsuperscript{1369} Attributed to Ibn al-Hajjāj 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) distant\[^{1370}\] from
good; wide from (repeated pounding by) a prick; you destroyer\[^{1371}\] 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 shelves\[^{1372}\] 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 riffraff

O drain pipe that flows without cleansing
And O toilet filled without a (retaining) wall

\[^{1370}\] Emended from al-sa'da to al-shāsi'a.
\[^{1371}\] Emended from mahaqa 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-Hajjāj 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\textsuperscript{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 ***\textsuperscript{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 cease\textsuperscript{1376}

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

\textsuperscript{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. Muhammad b. Ahmad Abû Bakr al-Khwârazmî, Kitâb Maṣṭûh al-\(\text{U}\)lûm, 66.

\textsuperscript{1375} Something is missing here.

\textsuperscript{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-Rûmî. Ibn al-Rûmî, \textit{Dîwân Ibn al-Rûmî}, 5:230.
Mustaf'ilun fā'ilun faā'ilun
Mustaf'ilun fā'ilun faā'ilun

(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 electuary\textsuperscript{1377} 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!

\textsuperscript{1377} Astringent powder in a sweet base. Lane, s.v. "Atrifal."
Another

O son of the fucked woman, the penetrated
The farter, 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 jūḏhāba 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,\textsuperscript{1378} the mustard of Egypt, the lentils of Syria, the pebbles of
al-Jazīra,\textsuperscript{1379} the thorns of al-Qāṭūl,\textsuperscript{1380} wheat of (Sh. p. 375) al-Mawṣil, lotus fruit of al-
Ahwāz, and the olives of Palestine. Woe to you! My\textsuperscript{1381} friends are Ṭafīsa, Zaybaqī,
Šabāh al-Ṭaq, Sukhṭa b. Abī al-Baghł,\textsuperscript{1382} Mūsā (b.) Saḥa,\textsuperscript{1383} Juʿayfar b. al-Kalba,\textsuperscript{1384}
Kurdawayh,\textsuperscript{1385} Zurayq b. Wardān,\textsuperscript{1386} ʿĀqūl the Armenian, Ghułaybī the brother of
Hārba 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

\textsuperscript{1378} The district located between Isfahan, Zinjan and Qazwin. \textit{al-Buldān}, 2:15.
\textsuperscript{1379} The region between the upper Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers. \textit{al-Buldān}, 2:72.
\textsuperscript{1380} A canal dividing out of the Tigris River near Samarra. \textit{al-Buldān}, 4:16.
\textsuperscript{1381} From “my” through “dumb man,” this section closely parallels \textit{al-Baṣāʿir}, pt. 4, p. 157-160, anecdote 538.
\textsuperscript{1382} Literally, Discontent, the son of the Father of the Mule.
\textsuperscript{1383} Literally, Mūṣā, son of Shit.
\textsuperscript{1384} Literally, little Jaʿfar son of a Bitch.
\textsuperscript{1385} From “Mūṣā” through “Kurdawayh” is paralleled in \textit{al-Baṣāʿir}, pt. 4, p. 158, anecdote 538.
\textsuperscript{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 Pharaoh; I am Hāmān; 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; 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; I am Mirdās b. ʿAmr; I am al-Ashtar; I am al-Julandā b. Karkar; I am Abū ʿAlī al-ʿAwar; when he sees me, ʿibās 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

1388 A legendary tyrannical king who used a litter drawn by eagles to try to attack Abraham’s God up in Heaven. El2, s.v. “Namrād.”
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 Arab extraction. Abū Ishāq al-Fārisī al-ʿIṣṭakhkhrī, Vīae Regnorum, M.J. De Goeje, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, pars 1, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1927), 191.
1391 Abū Ishāq al-Fārisī al-ʿIṣṭakhkhrī, Vīae Regnorum, M.J. De Goeje, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, pars 1, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1927), 142. El2, s.v. “Mirdās b. ʿUdaya Abī Bilāl.” Mirdās b. ʿUdaya, d. 61/680-1, was a very moderate Khaṭir jite who left Basra in protest of his 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.
1393 An unidentified member of the Āl-Julandā, which were a seafaring people who sailed between Yemen and Fārs for the purposes of trade. Abū Ishāq al-Fārisī al-ʿIṣṭakhkhrī, Vīae 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);\textsuperscript{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;\textsuperscript{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 another 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-Shāš\textsuperscript{1396} and Farghāna.\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{1398} and to every place Dhū al-Qarnayn\textsuperscript{1399} did not reach and al-Khiḍr\textsuperscript{1400} did not know.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{1394} From "I was" through "vegetable" is paralleled in al-Baṣā'ir, pt. 4, p. 158, anecdote 538.
\textsuperscript{1395} These two phrases appear in al-Baṣā'ir, pt. 4, p. 158, anecdote 538.
\textsuperscript{1396} Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. El2, s.v. "Tashkent."
\textsuperscript{1397} The Ferghana Valley, now in southeast Uzbekistan. It was a frontier area, but nevertheless was well-developed under the Sāmānids. al-Buldān, 3:878-80.
\textsuperscript{1398} Two peoples who will waste the land at the end of the world. Alexander created a barrier which contained them. Qurʾān, 18 (al-Kahf): 93-97.
\textsuperscript{1399} Alexander the Great.
\textsuperscript{1400} al-Khiḍr, the green man, is considered to have been granted God's wisdom. El2, s.v. "al-Khaḍir."
\textsuperscript{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 rats 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 Isrā'īl would be destroyed.1602 Woe to you! I am Zuraiq1603 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,1604 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.1605 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,

1602 This sentence is found in al- ḅaṣīr, pt. 4, p. 158, anecdote 538.
1603 A crow or a jay. Hava, s.v. "Zuraiq."
1604 Voracious.
1605 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, 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 Nimrud 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

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1407 This word or phrase is not clear: wa-la-waḍḍa.
tail;\textsuperscript{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 patched\textsuperscript{1409} 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; you\textsuperscript{1410} 'old woman's cold,'\textsuperscript{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 "hattā" 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?);\textsuperscript{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;

\textsuperscript{1409} al-Mawsūl. Literally joined.
\textsuperscript{1410} From "you (yā bard)" through "less than a penny (fals)," this section is closely parallel to al-
Hamadhānī, Maqāmāt (al-Dīnāriyya), 217-222.
\textsuperscript{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 calls it "the old woman's cold." al-Tha'ālibī, Thīmār al-Qulūb fī al-Mudāf wa-al-Mansūb, 1:483-5, no. 473.
\textsuperscript{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); 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

\[1412\] “You monkey...black (man)” appears in the Maqāmāt (al-Dīnāriyya), 220
O tumor that has festered in the heart
From killing sorrow and from grief\textsuperscript{144}

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

\textsuperscript{144} 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.
The pricks to her shit in battalions

So you see the fornicators (descending) on her ass
Like ghāzīs on the frontiers

But the frontier of the sacred space of her ass is attacked, (not by holy warriors,
but)
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 opapanax-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 ʿĪd 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's 4117 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

4117 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 day\(^{1418}\)

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'an, 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 Bahram Gür\footnote{Bahrām V, a Sasanian king who ruled 430-438 A.D. EI2, s.v. "Bahrām."} 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:
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)"
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,
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 beneficient,
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 Ālī
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.

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1421 Qurʾān, 3 (Āl Āl Anī): 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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Monroe, James T. *The Art of Bāṭī al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī as picaresque narrative*. Papers of the Center for Arab and Middle East Studies, 2. Beirut: Center for Arab and Middle East Studies, American University of Beirut, 1983.


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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.


10/73-4/79 South Slavic and Russian Librarian, Slavic Section, University of Washington.

EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Dissertation topic: Translation and commentary on the Hikayat Abi al-Qasim al-Baghdadi, by al-Azdi, a satire from the early 11th century, written in Baghdad (working under Prof. Everett Rowson)
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.

PUBLICATIONS AND EDITING

Middle Eastern Literatures and Their Times / Joyce Moss, ed. Gale Group, 2003. (Western Literatures in their times) Assisted with editing.


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


Reviewed in: Booklist; Library Journal; New York Times Book Review; Publishers Weekly; SUP catalog


For the University of Washington’s Day of Reflection, Oct. 2001 (on911), compiled two web bibliographies:
Public Opinion: Middle East vs U.S.?


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.


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.
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.
Chairperson, ALUW Travel Fund Subcommittee, 1977-1978

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

20es Assises de la Traduction Litteraire en Arles “Mediterranées,” 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