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TRIBAL POETICS IN EARLY ARABIC CULTURE:

THE CASE OF *ASH'ĀR AL-HUDHALIYYĪN*

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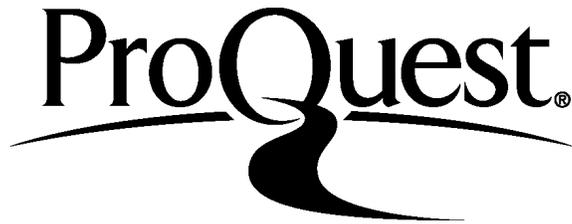
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To my grandmother,
Rebecca Willing Ashton Goss
and the memory of my grandfather Harry Lee Goss,
who both always supported me and my studies
with their love and attention,
I affectionately dedicate this work.

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Abbreviations

<i>Aṣm.</i>	<i>Al-Aṣma‘iyyāt</i> , ed. Shākir and Hārūn, Cairo, 1964
<i>Ash‘ār</i>	<i>Ash‘ār al-Hudhaliyyīn</i> , ed. Farrāj, Cairo, 1963–65
<i>BASIC</i>	Irfan Shahîd. <i>Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century</i> . Washington, D.C., 1995
<i>EI²</i> ,	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 2 nd edition, Leiden, 1960–
<i>EI³</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 3 rd edition, Leiden, 2007–
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>Lane</i>	Edward Lane, <i>Arabic-English Lexicon</i>
<i>Lisān</i>	Ibn Manẓūr, <i>Lisān al-‘Arab</i>
<i>Muf.</i>	<i>Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt</i> , ed. Shākir and Hārūn, Cairo, 1964
<i>REAL</i>	<i>Routledge Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature</i> , ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey, Oxford, 1998
<i>Six Divans</i>	Wilhelm Ahlwardt, <i>The Divans of the Six Ancient Arabian Poets</i> , London, 1870, revised as <i>al-‘Iqd thamīn fī dawāwīn al-shu‘arā’ al-sittah al-Jāhiliyyīn</i> , ed. Albert Arazi, Jerusalem, 1999
<i>Tāj</i>	Murtaḍá al-Zabīdī, <i>Tāj al-‘Arūs</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

N.B. For abbreviations used for specific Hudhalī poets, with the format of e.g. 1(ADhQ).1.1, see Appendix.

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Introduction

(*al-khafīf*)

Sayyidī, mā qabīlatun fī zamanin
marra fī-hā fī l-‘urbi kam ḥayyi shā‘ir
alqi min-hā ḥarfin wa da‘ mubtadāhā
thāniyan, talqa mithlahā fī l-‘ashā‘ir
wa-idhā mā ṣaḥḥafta ḥarfayni min-hā
kullu shaṭrin muḍa‘afan ismu ṭā‘ir

My lord! what is the tribe among whom,
in the course of time, many a poet of the Arabs lived?
If you remove a letter from it, and put the first letter
second, you’ll make another tribe’s name,
and if you mis-wrote two letters from it,
each half, doubled, is the name of a bird.¹

—‘Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235)

¹ ‘Umar ibn Abī l-Ḥasan Ibn al-Fāriḍ, *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2008), 195. The riddle involves a series of orthographic puns; the answer to the second line is that if you remove the *yā’* from “Hudhayl,” and put the *hā’* after the *dhāl*, it will spell Dhuhl, another tribe’s name. In the third line, if you remove one dot from the *dhāl* of “Hudhayl,” (making it *dāl*) and another from the *yā’* (making it *bā’*), and double the first two letters, you obtain *hudhud*, the name of a bird (the hoopoe), and if you double the second two letters, *bulbul*, a nightingale.

1. Najd and the Ḥijāz: Moving from Pre-Islamic Poetry to Early Arabic Regional Social Practice

For the Arabic term *Jāhiliyyah*, variously rendered as the period of “ignorance,” “barbarism,” or “paganism” preceding Islam’s emergence in 622 CE, the apparently more neutral adjective “pre-Islamic” is now often substituted. The divide between pre-Islamic and Islamic may be a less value-laden term, but it still imposes a potentially deceptive binary opposition upon us. In denoting a swath of history as “pre-Islamic,” we will always be tempted to use Islam as the referent for our analyses, by, among other things, focusing on religion to the exclusion of other forms of cultural expression. Pre-Islamic Arabs, however, did not think of themselves as pre-Islamic, and pre-Islamic poetry is famously very limited in its range of spiritual or religious expression.

Within this implicit chronological dichotomy of pre-Islamic/Islamic, pre-Islamic poetry thus inaccurately appears *in toto*, its disparate manifestations subsumed together. Above all else, one unitary poetic form is assumed to predominate, that of the tripartite, poly-thematic ode (*qaṣīdah*), while the social practice of poetry is assumed to be fairly uniform across the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula (allowing for certain outliers, such as female or brigand poets). If such assumptions are made, however, we overlook the significant variations in pre-Islamic poetry, such as the preponderance of certain meters among certain schools of poets, or divergent means of deploying conventional motifs, or even fundamentally opposed ethical or moral attitudes. The possibility that there could be several modes of producing poetry as a cultural practice, or that there could be competing models of the *qaṣīdah*, will continue to escape us.

There are several very good reasons, of course, why contemporary literary scholars should continue as heirs to an early medieval religious bias. Perhaps reflecting an original

superiority in development or quantity, early Arabic philologists explicitly prized poetry from the region of Najd, the central plateau, above all other regions of Arabia. Poetry from other areas was collected, but the centuries-long medieval process of anthologizing and theorizing literary criticism left us with a codification of key poems, citations and aesthetic principles polished to gem-like perfection. There are several features of ideal pre-Islamic poetry that stand out in this tradition: the tripartite *qaṣīdah*, praise poetry, and the singularly equestrian martial image assumed by the speaker of so many poems. To simplify, a normative pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah* should first begin with the speaker lamenting lost love, before he then turns to a desert journey on his camel mare, where he finally either praises some superior patron, or boasts about himself or his tribe. In both praise and boast, horsemanship usually figures heavily, either in military or hunting exploits. Faced with this compelling structure, most modern scholars fail to notice, amid the perplexing and often obscure networks of tribal affiliation, that almost all of the poets illustrating the *qaṣīdah*'s well-wrought aesthetic and social ideals were originally Najdī.

If pre-Islamic Arabs did not understand themselves as pre-Islamic, re-examining how they *did* understand themselves necessarily involves re-historicizing this Najdī poetic tradition that was later canonized as an atemporal aesthetic ideal. Two methodological lenses can help with this. Quranic studies and early Islamic history have been keen for some time to situate the emergence of Islam and its sacred text in the world of Late Antiquity, amid the polyphony of competing cultures in a Mediterranean and Near East dominated by the late Roman Empire and Sasanian Iran. Early Arabic culture has to a large extent been reconstructed from a massive quantity of later literary texts, but only a paucity of epigraphic or other material evidence supports our narratives. The better-documented world of Late Antiquity

supplements our impressions and illuminates Arabia more clearly, if indirectly. Arabs, however, understood themselves tribally above all else, so a historical description of varied poetic practice also requires a more careful anthropological consideration of early Arabic tribal society and culture.

It is with these methodological reconsiderations in mind that I wish to draw our attention to an unexploited resource in the form of the poetry of the Hudhayl tribe. This is the only surviving medieval *dīwān* (collected poems) of a single tribe to come down to us, and about a third of the poetry is pre- or early-Islamic. Unique also is the social, regional and geographical insight the anthology offers, for Hudhayl was a tribe of the southern Ḥijāz, an area for which we have virtually no other significant pre-Islamic poetic texts. The three characteristic features of Najdī poetry highlighted above—praise poetry, tripartite *qaṣīdahs*, and equestrian boasts—are all either absent or almost entirely absent from their anthology.

We must accordingly rethink what we mean by “pre-Islamic.” Rather than an undifferentiated pre-Islamic Arab culture, we are confronted with a dichotomy or even a plurality of different regional pre-Islamic Arabian tribal cultures. For Hudhayl’s early poets, there are no camel mares on desert journeys, no horse descriptions (at least, not of *their* horses), and no panegyric, all the supposed hallmarks of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. Even stranger, the most cursory intertextual analysis shows us that Hudhayl’s poets are obviously aware of the motifs, stylistic conventions, and vocabulary that Najdī poets use for camel mares, desert journeys, and horse descriptions, but must be self-consciously avoiding using them in the same manner as Najdī poets. Instead they intentionally repurpose Najdī motifs within their own tribal framework. The poetics of Najd and the Ḥijāz evidently subsisted in some kind of relationship of cultural rivalry, antagonism or competition.

In explaining the divergent social conditions of Najdī and Ḥijāzī poetic culture, we must look beyond literature. Firstly, the ecology of the southern Ḥijāz varies from Najd, and variations in seasonal rains are reflected in different patterns of migration among Ḥijāzī and Najdī tribes. Secondly, a richer ethnographic consideration of Najdī tribal culture's interactions with the Byzantines and Sasanians, complemented by a more sensitive reading of Najdī poetic texts, reveals a region more densely permeated than the Ḥijāz by the flows of material culture from these sedentary empires, which sponsored (semi-) nomadic tribesmen as military auxiliaries. Such interactions in turn encouraged a more stratified and hierarchical tribalism. The southern Ḥijāz in general, while certainly not isolated from such developments, had no reason to mirror them.

Understanding Hudhayl's anthology thus requires situating it within the cultural regionalism of the Ḥijāz. Within the corpus of Hudhayl's pre- and early-Islamic poetry, although it is not itself either unitary or undifferentiated, several features of their poetics relate directly to this Ḥijāzī regionalism. Rather than tripartite praise *qaṣīdahs* in which a patron or king is eulogized, the speakers in Hudhayl's texts often boastfully describe a companion, allowing for more egalitarian praise to take place within a less hierarchically stratified tribal context. Although the central section of the Najdī tripartite *qaṣīdah*, in which the speaker's camel mare is elaborately compared to swift desert animals such as onagers and oryx, is entirely absent from Hudhayl's early poets, they do ironically repurpose such animal descriptions in their unique elegies. These elegies essentially constitute their own genre, the contours of which remain essentially unexplored in secondary scholarship. In this genre of elegy, rather than praise the dead individual, the deceased remains entirely or nearly unmentioned, while fate's omnipotence is illustrated by describing the deaths of swift, strong

animals. Finally, the status of mounted warriors is negligible in Hudhayl's poetics. Rather than the expensive equipage of such figures, Hudhayl's poets more often than not boast of their speed in running, their ability to withstand hunger, and their simple weapons—in fact, many of the features characteristic of the anomalous “brigand” (*ṣu'lūk*) poets turns out to be widespread in Hudhayl's texts, indicating that the *ṣu'lūk* genre has also been poorly defined, because of the colorful folklore surrounding it, as an extra-tribal ethos, when it was in fact quite compatible with the tribal ethos of the southern Ḥijāz, if not of Najd.

2. Who Are Hudhayl?

Hudhayl's role in early Islamic history is not well-known, and the tribe is more readily recognized from their famous anthology of poetry, *Ash'ār al-Hudhaliyyīn*,² in its redaction by the eminent Baghdādī philologist Abū Sa'īd al-Sukkarī (d. 275 or 90/888 or 903). During the pre-Islamic period, Hudhayl lived in the Sarāh mountains around Mecca and the nearby city of al-Ṭā'if; we can place their location most accurately based on the place-names mentioned in their poetry. Most prominent among these are Wādī Na'mān south of Mecca, Marr Ḍahrān, now known as Wādī Fāṭimah, a valley running from the north of Mecca southwest towards Jiddah, and the two branches of Nakhlah—a tributary of Marr Ḍahrān to the northeast of Mecca—Nakhlah al-Sha'āmiyyah and Nakhlah al-Yamāniyyah.³ In the classical genealogical works, the ancestor of the tribe, Hudhayl ibn Mudrikah ibn Ilyās ibn Muḍar ibn Nizār ibn Ma'add ibn 'Adnān, was said to be an uncle of Kinānah, and the parent tribe of Quraysh, the

² Referred to henceforth as the *Ash'ār*. Note that the correct *nisbah* (adjective denoting descent or attribution) of Hudhayl is Hudhalī, not Hudhaylī. This morphological shift is identical to Quraysh/Qurashī, Sulaym/Sulamī, and Juhaynah/Juhanī. Members of Arabic tribes are referred to by this *nisbah*, a suffixed *-ī*, so a member of Tamīm is a Tamīmī (fem. Tamīmīyyah), Asad an Asadī (fem. Asadiyyah), Bakr a Bakrī (fem. Bakriyyah), etc. The approximate locations of these tribes can be found on Map 1.

³ G. Rentz, “Hudhayl,” *EP*²; 'Abd Allāh ibn Sa'āf Al-Liḥyānī, *Banū Hudhayl* (Dār Kunūz al-Ma'rifah al-'Ilmiyyah li-l-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī, 2010), 75–92.

Prophet Muḥammad's tribe.⁴ The Prophet himself was said to be related to Hudhayl via a couple of distant maternal great grandmothers.⁵ Hudhayl were not, however, part of the Ḥums, the Amphictyonic League-like confederation of tribes, including Quraysh, associated with Mecca's sacred rituals.⁶

References to Hudhayl's pre-Islamic religious practices are found scattered throughout several texts.⁷ Most famously, the genealogist and polymath Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204/819) asserted that they worshipped an idol named Suwā' at Ruhāṭ.⁸ The idol and its shrine was said to have been destroyed by the early Muslim general 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ with the advent of Islam.⁹ Authorities differ on which clan of Hudhayl served as the shrine's custodians (*sadanatuhu*), with Ibn Ḥabīb reporting that it was under Banū Ṣāhilah, and Ibn al-Kalbī giving the Banū Liḥyān.¹⁰ The *Ash'ār*, however, does not contain any substantial evidence to confirm such idolatrous practices. The Hudhalī poet Abū Khirāsh, for example, was said to have dedicated poems to one Dubayyah ibn Ḥaramī of Sulaym ibn Maṣṣūr, the last custodian of the shrine of

⁴ Werner Caskel, *Ġamharat an-nasab: Das genealogische Werk des Hiṣām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), Table no. 4.

⁵ Muḥammad Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānājī, 2001), 1:42.

⁶ M. J. Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm (Aspects of Their Relations)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8, no. 2 (November 1, 1965): 141, 143.

⁷ Aside from the citations listed below, see for example Abū Khirāsh's *talbiyyah*, mentioned in *Lisān*, s.v. "l-m-m," and discussed by M. J. Kister, "'Labbayka, Allāhumma, Labbayka...': On a Monotheistic Aspect of a Jāhiliyya Practice," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980): 41–42. A Hudhalī *istisqā'* is given in *Tāj*, s.v. "q-s-m."

⁸ Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-aṣnām: 'an Abī l-Mundhir Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1995), 9–10. See also Muḥammad Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, ed. Ilse Lichtenstadter (Hayderabad: Maṭba'at Jam'iyyat Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyyah, 1942), 316. According to Ibn Ḥabīb the idol was located in al-Na'mān. Ibn al-Kalbī adduces a pair of lines of poetry in which Hudhayl's worship of Suwā' is mentioned (*al-Aṣnām*, 57). Interestingly, the lines are a comparison of Ḥimyarites (?) attending to their leader (*qayl*) the way that Hudhayl devotes itself to Suwā'; the resemblance of this line to Imru' al-Qays's line about gazelles like virgins around an idol (*al-Mu'allaqah*, l. 58, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 149). Such an attestation, indirect as it is an similar to other apparently authentic lines of pre-Islamic poetry, seems more likely to be authentic. Ibn Ḥabīb locates the idol in Na'mān while Ibn al-Kalbī puts it in Ruhāṭ in the Nakhlah valley.

⁹ Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1857), 1:83.

¹⁰ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Al-Muḥabbar*, 316; Ibn al-Kalbī, *Aṣnām*, 10.

‘Uzzá.¹¹ The poetic texts attributed to Abū Khirāsh in the *Ash‘ār*, however, make no mention of historical events, and the commentary even says that they were custodians of the Ka‘bah, not ‘Uzzá’s shrine.¹² Of note, however, is the oath *wa-shamsi* ((sic) “by the sun” or “by Shams”) used by the Hudhalī poet Salmá ibn al-Muq‘ad,¹³ evidently polytheistic but also similar to the first *āyah* of Quran 91.

A disparity between prose reports and poetics texts is also evident in accounts relating to Hudhayl’s involvement in the expeditions of the fifth-century south Arabian monarch Tubba‘ As‘ad Abū Karib,¹⁴ and the sixth-century Ethiopian Abrahah,¹⁵ against Mecca. In the first case, Hudhayl was said to have lured Tubba‘ to attack the Ka‘bah, knowing that he would be killed. The South Arabian leader got wind of their plans and had the offending Hudhalīs hands and feet cut off. When Abrahah came, around the year 552 CE, it was supposedly due to a Hudhalī’s murder of a Sulamī tribesman allied to Abrahah. The Hudhalī chief, Khuwaylid ibn Wāthilah, was involved in negotiations with Abrahah. Even if there is an historical basis for these events, as the presence of the names of As‘ad Abū Karib and Abrahah in the Sabaic inscriptions Ry 506 and 509 would seem to attest,¹⁶ Wellhausen, who did not have access to

¹¹ Ibn al-Kalbī, *Aṣṅām*, 22–26; Julius Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen heidentums*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1897), 34–45.

¹² 65(AKhQ).7 and 65(AKhQ).12, *Ash‘ār*, 1212–15, 1227–28.

¹³ 33(SMQ).7.3, *ibid.*, 797.

¹⁴ Perhaps the fifth-century CE expedition of Abū Karib As‘ad recorded in Ry 509. For the text, translation and a commentary of this inscription, see Christian Robin, “Le Royaume ḥujride, Dit « Royaume de Kinda », Entre Ḥimyar et Byzance,” *Comptes Rendus Des Séances de l’Académie Des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 140, no. 2 (1996): 675–85. Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq and ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Hishām, *Kitāb Sīrat Rasūl Allāh/ Das Leben Mohammed’s*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1858), 12–16; Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-Ṭabarī: Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, *Dhakhā’ir al-‘Arab* (Miṣr: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1968), 2:107; Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 1:84–85. Al-Azraqī and al-Ṭabarī’s accounts’ source is Ibn Ishāq for both the Tubba‘ and Abrahah.

¹⁵ Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, 31–33; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:131–34; Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 1:92–95.

¹⁶ For the latter in particular see M. J. Kister, “The Campaign of Ḥulubān: A New Light on the Expedition of Abrahah,” *Museum (UNESCO)* 78 (1965): 425–36; ‘Abdel Monem A. H. Sayed, “Emendations to the Bir Murayghan

the epigraphic data, is correct to note that some cross-pollination has taken place with regard to Hudhayl's presence.¹⁷ The two events were confused, and Hudhayl's role was tendentious. Al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898 or 89) records a boast-contest (*mufākharah*) from the Islamic period between an Asadī and a Hudhalī, where the former accuses Hudhayl of having provided "the guide to the Ethiopians (*al-Ḥabashah*) to the Ka'abah."¹⁸ In Ibn Ishāq's version, the Tubba' is the king of Yemen, not Ethiopia, and Hudhayl have the excuse of attempting to kill him. The *Ash'ār* also contain an additional tendentiously pro-Hudhalī account of Khuwaylid ibn Wāthilah's negotiations, where he helps ransom a number of members of the unappreciative neighboring Kinānah tribe.¹⁹ As elsewhere, there is little relationship between the prose account and the poetic text.

Much more universally agreed upon in the sources is Hudhayl's opposition to Islam, right up until the conquest of Mecca in 8/630. One of the Prophet's abusive neighbors in Mecca, along with the more infamous Abū Lahab, was one Ibn al-Aṣḍā' al-Hudhalī.²⁰ According to the genealogist and historian al-Balādhurī (279/892), Ma'qil ibn Khuwaylid, the chief and son of Khuwaylid ibn Wāthilah who negotiated with Abrahah, was a *ḥalīf* (confederate) of the Prophet's enemy, Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb.²¹ There is no particularly unequivocal evidence that Hudhayl participated in either of the early battles between the Muslims and the Meccans, Badr (2/624) or Uḥud (3/625). The Meccans probably recruited at least the Liḥyān clan of Hudhayl

Inscription Ry 506 and a New Minor Inscription from There," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 18 (1988): 131–43.

¹⁷ Julius Wellhausen, "Medina vor dem Islam," in *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, vol. 4 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1889), 8–9. He was probably not correct, though, that the two stories are merely Median and Meccan versions of the same event.

¹⁸ Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Al-Mubarrad, *Al-Kāmil fī l-lughah wa-l-adab*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1997), 2:77.

¹⁹ 7(MKhS).11, *Ash'ār*, 389.

²⁰ Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, 276.

²¹ Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Jumal min ansāb al-ashrāf*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār and Riyāḍ Ziriklī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1997), 11:246.

and hostilities began when, word coming to the Prophet that Sufyān ibn Khālid ibn Nubayḥ of Liḥyān of Hudhayl was gathering forces to attack the Muslims, he sent ‘Abd Allāh ibn Unays to kill him, which he successfully did.²² Liḥyān responded by capturing six Muslim spies (or missionaries, according to Ibn Ishāq) at al-Rajī near Mecca in 4 AH, and selling two of them on to Quraysh in Mecca who killed them (one by crucifixion).²³ In 6/627, Muḥammad himself personally led an unsuccessful retaliatory raid against Liḥyān, who took refuge in the mountains.²⁴ Some Hudhalīs seems to have been present at the occupation of Mecca in 8/630, on Quraysh’s side, according to a brief reference in Ibn Sa’d and an account from the *Ash‘ār*.²⁵

A number of conflicting traditions tell us that a Hudhalī was killed by a Khuzāī in the last vengeance killing in Mecca, a day after its occupation.²⁶ The Prophet paid the bloodwite for the murdered Hudhalī, and prohibited any such further retaliatory killings. The tribe presumably submitted to Islam along with Quraysh. Hudhayl were not necessarily a united political entity, and Liḥyān rather than Hudhayl seems to be the group figuring most in accounts of opposition to Islam. The *Ash‘ār* contain an elegy attributed to the poet Abū Khirāsh purportedly lamenting a Hudhalī killed by a Jumāhī (Qurashī) at the battle of Ḥunayn. This battle between the Muslims and the Hawāzin tribe took place after the occupation of Mecca

²² Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-Maghāzī li-l-Wāqidī*, ed. Marsden Jones ([London]: Oxford University Press, 1966), 354, 531; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:156; Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, 981–83. Only al-Wāqidī explicitly accounts for al-Rajī by the assassination of Sufyān ibn Khālid, which he also, however, inconsistently dates to the forty-fifth month after the *hijrah*, while he gives a date of month thirty-six for al-Rajī. Al-Ṭabarī includes the assassination story in miscellaneous accounts from year 10 AH, but his account seems not to belong in this year, but to be an aside referring to an earlier event, “between Badr and Uḥud” (2 and 3 AH). Alternately, Bi’r Ma’ūnah in 4/625 may have been the precipitating event, as the Prophet cursed Hudhayl afterwards along with ‘Amir: al-Wāqidī, *Al-Maghāzī*, 349–50. Hudhayl do seem to have participated in Bi’r Ma’ūnah: Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 2:53.

²³ al-Wāqidī, *Al-Maghāzī*, 354–63; Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, 638–48; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:538–41.

²⁴ Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, 718–19; al-Wāqidī, *Al-Maghāzī*, 535–7; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:594.

²⁵ Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:136; 32(ARŞ).1., *Ash‘ār*, 787–88. However, the poem by Abū l-Ra‘ās al-Hudhalī is attributed elsewhere to others; in Ibn Ishāq it is attributed to Ḥimāš ibn Qays al-Bakrī: Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, 818.

²⁶ Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 1:352–53; al-Wāqidī, *Al-Maghāzī*, 843; Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, 822–24. In another version, a Hudhalī was the killer: al-Wāqidī, *Al-Maghāzī*, 1103.

later in the year 8 AH;²⁷ if the story is true, then, some Hudhalīs kept fighting against the Muslims until the end. Some Hudhalīs were also with the Muslims from the beginning, the most famous being the Quran expert and close companion of the Prophet Ibn Mas‘ūd (d. 32/652 or 53).²⁸

Hudhayl were not politically important during the conquests (ca. 11/632–41/661) or the Umayyad period (41/661–132/750), with the exception of some descendants of Ibn Mas‘ūd such as ‘Awn ibn ‘Abd Allāh, a famous ascetic associated with the pious caliph ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 99/717–101/720), and who participated in Ibn al-Ash‘āth’s revolt.²⁹ As far as their military role is concerned, the tribe seems have been most clearly involved in the Muslim conquest of Egypt. The early Egyptian historian Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871) informs us that they had a quarter of their own in Fuṣṭāṭ, the first Muslim garrison-town in Egypt, in present-day Cairo, and that for at least some time in Egypt they continued their nomadic practices, pasturing their animals in Banā and Buṣīr.³⁰ Their role in the Egyptian army would explain why they were present at that assassination of ‘Uthmān in 22/634, which they had a hand in.³¹ It is also regarding the historical relationship with Egypt that Hudhayl’s poets finally speak clearly. Abū l-‘Iyāl states that Hudhayl has “come west,”³² and Al-Burayq ibn ‘Iyāḍ complains of being left behind at al-Rajīr while his people have gone on to Egypt (*Miṣr*).³³ Later, Umayyah ibn Abī

²⁷ 65(AKhQ).9, *Ash‘ār*, 1221–23. Accounts vary and the poetic text is unhelpful; the killing took place during the occupation of Mecca according to Al-Mubarrad, *Al-Kāmil*, 2:39–40.

²⁸ J.-C. Vadet, “Ibn Mas‘ūd,” *EP*².

²⁹ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 11:229–30.

³⁰ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā*, ed. Charles Cutler Torrey (Leiden: Brill, 1920), 117, 120, 141.

³¹ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 11:259–60.

³² 8(A‘IKh).8.4, *Ash‘ār*, 411.

³³ 28(B‘IKh).4.5, *ibid.*, 758.

‘Ā’idh composed praise for ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān (d. 85/704), the Umayyad governor of Egypt.³⁴

Several poets were also clearly present in Syria. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abī Tha‘lab laments Hudhalīs who died of plague in Egypt and Syria.³⁵ Abū l-‘Iyāl composed an elegy for a cousin killed at Constantinople during the reign of the caliph Mu‘āwiyah (d. 41/661).³⁶ He also wrote a poem addressed to that caliph, requesting assistance in the release of companions taken captive by the Byzantines.³⁷ Abū Dhu‘ayb, the most famous Hudhalī poet, was said to have praised ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (d. 73 or 74/692) and to have participated in the conquests of Egypt,³⁸ but the texts dealing with these subjects do not reflect any such details, which, as I will argue below in chapter 4, are probably spurious. A widely-cited literary anecdote has the Hudhalī poet Abū Ṣakhr eloquently denouncing Ibn al-Zubayr, then (anti-)caliph, as a cheapskate, while praising the Umayyads.³⁹ He also has a poem in the *Ash‘ār* praising ‘Abd al-Malik (d. 86/705) for liberating the Ḥijāz from Ibn al-Zubayr.⁴⁰

Given their geographical distribution in the Ḥijāz, Egypt and Syria, in addition to the extant texts, it appears as if Hudhayl—at least, in so far as their poetic culture was concerned—fell pretty solidly into the Umayyad camp. With the advent of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate in 132/750, the tribe became even less prominent. This was probably due in part to its association with the fallen regime, in addition to the decreased role of the tribe as an organizational unit

³⁴ 10(UA‘A).4, *ibid.*, 515–520.

³⁵ 56(‘AAATHQ).1, *ibid.*, 885–90.

³⁶ 8(A‘IKh).9, *ibid.*, 423–433.

³⁷ 8(A‘IKh).10, *ibid.*, 433–35.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3, 196.

³⁹ Abū al-Faraj Al-Isbahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās, 3rd ed. (Dār Ṣādir, 2008), 24:62–63.

⁴⁰ 61(AṢ).10, *Ash‘ār*, 953–56.

under the ‘Abbāsids, and because Arab tribes anyway adapted to changing circumstances by splitting, merging and migrating.

3. Literature Review

The text of Hudhayl’s poetry on which I have relied is the edition of ‘Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, produced under the supervision of Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir. They consulted all of the previous editions, detailed below, and reproduce all of what is still extant of al-Sukkarī’s commentary, also detailed below. In the printed edition, the *Ash‘ār* runs to approximately 4,600 lines from 134 poets, not all of them Hudhalī (in particular, interlocutors from other tribes are often cited) and most of them extremely obscure. In terms of raw quantity, five poets stand out, representing 2,187 lines or about 48% of the total:

Abū Dhu‘ayb	600 lines
Abū Ṣakhr	532 lines
Mulayḥ ibn al-Ḥakam	511 lines
Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah	273 lines
Umayyah ibn Abī ‘Ā’idh	271 lines

The two poets from the generation known as the *mukhaḍrams*, those whose lifetimes spanned the pre-Islamic period and the advent of Islam, Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah and his student Abū Dhu‘ayb, form a distinctive school. The remaining poets mentioned are Umayyad-era. All told, there are about 39 pre-Islamic poets (with *floruit* dates between 550 and 625), 43 *mukhaḍrams*, a mere five poets from the period of the early caliphate and conquest era and eight Umayyyad

poets.⁴¹ Also prominent in the collection is a group of *ayyām* (battle-days) texts, poems attached to prose accounts of conflicts and other events, often involving other tribes.⁴²

Abū Dhu'ayb was and remains the most well-known Hudhalī by far. The first poem of the *Ash'ār*, Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy for his sons, is the last poem of al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī's (d. after 163/780) famous anthology of early Arabic poems, the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*. He was placed in the third rank of pre-Islamic poets by Ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī (d. 232/846 or 7), who records a statement attributed to Ḥassān b. Thābit, who considered Hudhayl "the most poetic tribe" (*ash'ar al-nās ḥayyan*) and Abū Dhu'ayb the most poetic among them.⁴³ The grammarian Ibn Jinnī (d. 392/1002) devoted a commentary, still extant, to the *Ash'ār*.⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥajar tells us that al-Shāfi'ī was quite enamored of their poetry, and memorized over 10,000 lines of it, even transmitting it to al-Aṣmā'ī.⁴⁵ There are not 10,000 lines in the *Ash'ār*, and al-Shāfi'ī is never mentioned by al-Asmā'ī himself, but such statements tell us in what esteem Hudhayl was held, like the epigraph to this introduction by Ibn al-Fāriḍ. Ibn Qutaybah gives notices on ten Hudhalī poets in *al-Shi'r wa-l-shu'arā'*, but the only two are of any length.⁴⁶ Abū Dhu'ayb is one and Abū Kabīr is the other, on account of the latter's association with the colorful brigand poet

⁴¹ Joseph Hell, "Der Islam und die Hudailitendichtungen," in *Festschrift Georg Jacob zum siebzigsten Geburtstag* (Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1932), 81–82. It is difficult to date the remainder, particularly those cited in *ayyām* texts.

⁴² Primarily found in *Ash'ār*, 761–890, but also interspersed among other poets works.

⁴³ Muḥammad ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu'arā'*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Madanī, 1974), 131.

⁴⁴ Abū l-Faṭḥ 'Uthmān Ibn Jinnī, *Al-Tamām fī tafsīr ash'ār Hudhayl*, ed. Aḥmad Najī l-Qaysī Muṣṭafā Jawwād, et. al. Baghdād: Maṭba'at al-'Ānī, 1962. (Baghdad: Maṭba'at al-'Ānī, 1962).

⁴⁵ Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū l-Faḍl Aḥmad Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tawālī l-ta'sīs li-ma'ānī Muḥammad ibn Idrīs*, ed. Abū l-Fidā' 'Abd Allāh al-Qāḍī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1986), 53.

⁴⁶ 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Shi'r wa-l-shu'arā'*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1966), 653–74.

Ta'abbata Sharran,⁴⁷ discussed in chapter 2. In general, the citation of Hudhayl's poetry by later anthologists and lexicographers is extremely extensive.⁴⁸

The poems come down to us in the commentary of al-Sukkarī. His method in the poems was to synthesize the transmissions of previous philologists, frequently attributing to them variants and glosses of difficult words. Among the most prominent he mentions are al-Aṣma'ī (d. c. 213/828), Abū 'Ubayda (d. 209/824 or 5), Ibn al-A'rābī (d. c. 231/846), al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. 210-221/825-835), and Abū 'Amr al-Shaybānī (d. 210/825) and his son.⁴⁹ Almost all of the prose accounts related to *ayyām* poems were transmitted by one 'Abd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jumaḥī, an otherwise unknown figure. His reports are of a different caliber than the commentary, and in many cases, the relationship between poetic texts transmitted by the philologists and his prose accounts is obscure or contradictory.

The oldest and most complete manuscript for the text is a 204-folio codex at Leiden with al-Sukkarī's commentary, dated to 576/1145; a later undated fragment containing the same material as the second half of the Leiden manuscript is also found at Paris.⁵⁰ Johann Kosegarten, with *The Poems of the Huzailis*, was the first to edit part of the Leiden manuscript in 1854.⁵¹ He died before completing the edition and translation. Rudolf Abicht translated the

⁴⁷ See also Charles Lyall, "Four Poems by Ta'abbata Sharra, the Brigand-Poet," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1918, 220–21.

⁴⁸ Farrāj has assembled a very complete *takhrīj* (list of citations): *Ash'ār*, 1353–1520.

⁴⁹ For a complete list, see *Ash'ār*, 10, 11 (*muqaddimah*). For a further consideration of the redaction history of the text as it relates to the question of the authenticity of early Arabic poetry, see Nāṣir al-Dīn Asad, *Maṣādir al-shi'r al-jāhili wa-qīmatuhā l-tārīkhiyyah*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1962), 561–70.

⁵⁰ Leiden Or. 549 and Paris Suppl. Ar. 1427 (=3286 in William McGuckin de Slane, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1883), 2:577); the former is described by M. J. De Goeje and M. Th. Houtsma in *Catalogus Codicum Arabicorum*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1888-1907), 1:354-360 and by Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur: Erster Supplementband* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937), 42–43.

⁵¹ John Godfrey Lewis Kosegarten, ed., *The Poems of the Huzailis* (London: Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1854).

texts of Kosegarten's edition into German in 1879.⁵² This translation in particular is not satisfactory, and the book itself is not easily available. Julius Wellhausen edited and translated into German the remaining Leiden manuscripts as well as the Paris supplement, publishing them in 1884.⁵³ The texts related to the Islamic conquests held historical interest for him.⁵⁴

Abū Dhu'ayb's *dīwān* (collection) and the *dīwāns* of four additional Hudhalī poets exist in nineteenth-century manuscript copies, made by the renowned Mauritanian scholar Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Shinqīṭī, of Medinan originals dated to 882/1477. Al-Shinqīṭī's manuscripts are now in the Egyptian national library, the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo.⁵⁵ The texts of the remaining Hudhalī poets in these manuscripts, besides those of Abū Dhu'ayb, exist in an uncertain recension other than that of al-Sukkarī. From these, the *dīwān* of Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī was edited from a portion of the Cairo manuscripts, published and translated by Fehim Bajraktarević, a Bosnian student of Rudolf Geyer.⁵⁶ Joseph Hell edited the remainder of the Cairo manuscripts, publishing from them the *dīwāns* of Abū Dhu'ayb, Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah, Abū Khirāsh, al-Mutanakhkhil and Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith as the two-volume *Die Neue Hudailiten-Diwane* between 1926-33. He also translated the poems into German.⁵⁷ The complete Cairo

⁵² Rudolf Abicht, *Aṣ'āru-l-Hudalijjīna: Die Lieder der Dichter vom Stamme Hudail* (Namslau: O. Opitz, 1879).

⁵³ Julius Wellhausen, "Lieder der Hudhailiten, Arabisch und Deutsch," in *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1884). Some emendations of his translations can be found in J. Barth, review of *Letzter Theil der Lieder der Hudhailiten*, by Julius Wellhausen, *ZDMG* 39 (1885), 151-64. Wellhausen himself published improvements to the translation: Julius Wellhausen, "Zu den Hudailitenliedern," *ZDMG* 39 (1885): 104-7.

⁵⁴ Julius Wellhausen, "Carmina Hudsailitarum Ed Kosegarten Nr. 56 Und 75," *Zeitschrift Für Assyriologie Und Verwandte Gebiete* 26 (1912): 287-94. He did not translate the poetry of Mulaḥ ibn al-Ḥakam, which can be found in Bräu, Hans Hermann, "Die Gedichte des Hudailiten Mulaḥ b. al-Ḥakam," *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 5 (1927): 69-94; 262-287. Bräu's translations are sometimes inaccurate.

⁵⁵ Nos. 6 *Adab-shīn* and 19 *Adab-shīn* Dār al-Kutub; referred to as "Cairo" hereafter. Cf. Brockelmann, *Geschichte*, 42-43. Hell describes the manuscripts carefully in Joseph Hell, *Neue Hudailiten-Diwane* (Hannover: H. Lafaire, 1926), 2:xix-xxvi.

⁵⁶ Fehim Bajraktarević, "La Lāmiyya d' Abū Kabīr al-Hudalī," *Journal Asiatique* 103 (1923): 59-115; Fehim Bajraktarević, "Le Dīwān d'Abū Kabīr al-Hudalī," *Journal Asiatique* 211 (1927): 5-100.

⁵⁷ For some suggested emendations of his translation, see Werner Caskel, "Der Abschluss der Carmina Hudsailitarum," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 39 (January 1, 1936): 129-31; G. Jacob, "Du'aib, Abū: Der Diwan,

manuscripts, including other already-published Hudhalī texts, where published in the late 1940s in an edition by Aḥmad al-Zayn.⁵⁸

Hell also contributed an important essay on the relationship of the Hudhayl tribe to the emergence of Islam.⁵⁹ He summarizes the poetry within the corpus, most of which has been alluded to above, that relates to the historical circumstances of Islam's advent. In general, like Wellhausen, he is not suspicious enough of the correspondence between prose anecdotes purporting to explain historical circumstances and the poetic texts themselves. However, in addition to his invaluable chronology, he makes two related observations. Firstly, there is no perceptible influence of Islamic beliefs on Hudhayl's poets until a full generation had passed after the new religion's birth, that is, beginning around 650–75 CE.⁶⁰ Secondly, he surveys all usages of God's name in the *Ash'ār* (including, for example, oaths, near-synonyms such as al-Raḥmān, and the like), and comes to the conclusion that pre-Islamic poets make more frequent reference to monotheistic/Islamic terms for the deity than *mukhaḍram* poets.⁶¹ He speculates that this generation, hostile as it was to Islam, began avoiding the use of terms previously acceptable in henotheistic Arabia but now given positively and exclusively monotheistic meanings.

The first and in many ways still the most significant contribution to the discussion of the Hudhalīs poetic texts' interrelationship is Erich Bräunlich's 1937 study "Versuch einer

übers. u. hrsg. von J. Hell (Book Review)," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 30 (January 1, 1927): 282–84; Erich Bräunlich, "Abū Du'ayb-Studien," *Der Islam* 18 (1929): 1–23.

⁵⁸ Aḥmad Al-Zayn, ed., *Dīwān al-Hudhaliyyīn* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1945).

⁵⁹ Hell, "Der Islam und die Hudhailitendichtungen."

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 88–93.

literargeschichtlichen Betrachtungsweise altarabischer Poesien.”⁶² This essay addresses numerous vital points. Bräunlich finds that Hudhalī vocabulary is apparently not very distinctive from other Ḥijāzī or even eastern tribes;⁶³ he cautions against simply mining poetic texts for descriptions of material culture, since generic and literary conventions need to be evaluated;⁶⁴ building on Hell, he offers a nuanced reading of shifts in structure and tone with the advent of Islam;⁶⁵ he offers a similarly nuanced reading of the question of the authenticity of Arabic poetry;⁶⁶ he argues for the short, monothematic *qit‘ah* as a unit of analysis, rejecting the notion of a normative *qaṣīdah*,⁶⁷ and finally, he elaborates a distinction between the poetics produced within the sphere of courtly patronage, and those produced within the system of tribal allegiance.⁶⁸ The main focus of the article, however, is on the relationship of the poet and his transmitter (*rāwin/al-rawī*), specifically that of Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah to his *rāwī*, Abū Dhu‘ayb. Bräunlich conclusively demonstrates the dependence of Abū Dhu‘ayb's handling of imagery, his ethical voice, poetical structure and vocabulary on Sā‘idah, and illustrates as well the metrical divergence of the Hudhalīs from the rest of the Arabic poetic canon.

Another very important, if somewhat indirect, contribution to the study of Hudhayl’s poetry as a tribal corpus comes in the form of Thomas Bauer’s discussion of their depiction of the hunted onager in his 1992 book on that subject, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*.⁶⁹ The central contention of his book is that early Arabic poetry was a conscious aesthetic project, and he

⁶² Erich Bräunlich, “Versuch einer literargeschichtlichen Betrachtungsweise altarabischer Poesien,” *Der Islam* 24 (1937): 201–69.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 203–4.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 211. This subject is also addressed in his important essay, Erich Bräunlich, “Zur Frage der Echtheit der altarabischen Poesie,” *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 29 (1926): 825–33.

⁶⁷ Bräunlich, “Versuch,” 214.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁶⁹ Thomas Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst: Eine Untersuchung ihrer Struktur und Entwicklung am Beispiel der Onagerepisode.*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992).

feels from this standpoint that the Hudhalī poets were somewhat lacking, citing with approval Georg Jacob’s statement that with “some exceptions aside, they don’t stand ‘at the height of poetic art (Dichtkunst).’”⁷⁰ He consequently treats Hudhayl’s poetics rather negatively, as exceptions to the norm of classical Arabic poetry, yet despite the exclusive focus of his study on the onager section, he provides extensive examples of Hudhayl’s unique stylistics: they are the only poets who exclusively describe the hunter successfully killing onagers;⁷¹ they are the only poets who do not introduce onagers in order to exemplify the speed of their camels;⁷² their onager episodes are metrically distinctive;⁷³ they describe spring pastures differently,⁷⁴ they describe hunters differently,⁷⁵ and so on.

Another comprehensive study of a specific motif not directly related to Hudhayl, but dealing with the tribe, is Ali Ahmad Hussein’s 2009 survey of lightning scenes in early Arabic poetry contains some observations on Hudhayl, arguing that lightning often serves to express a speaker’s longing for a distant beloved.⁷⁶ This is not a very difficult point to prove, and although he notes that many of the texts in which this is clearly the case are Hudhalī, other than speculating that the climate is different in the Ḥijāz, a point already made by Bräunlich, he offers little explanatory framework for understanding Hudhayl’s distinctiveness.⁷⁷ Hussein’s study nevertheless is very useful for systematically collecting examples of one motif found throughout early Arabic poetry.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1:230.

⁷¹ Ibid., 1:41

⁷² Ibid., 1:68, 74.

⁷³ Ibid., 1:66.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1:99.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1:137.

⁷⁶ Ali Ahmad Hussein, *The Lightning-Scene in Ancient Arabic Poetry: Function, Narration and Idiosyncrasy in Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Poetry* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009).

⁷⁷ Ibid., 37–39, 179–80.

A handful of contributions have been made dealing with individual Hudhalī poets. The most important is Renate Jacobi's 1984 article, "Die Anfänge der arabischen Ġazalpoesie," which deals with Abū Dhu'ayb in particular.⁷⁸ Her prime concern is chronological or literary-historical, and she reads Abū Dhu'ayb as indicative of a stylistic shift taking place during the generation of the *mukhaḍrams*.⁷⁹ As Gustave von Grunebaum and Joseph Hell had already noted,⁸⁰ elements Abū Dhu'ayb's lengthy *nasībs* anticipate 'Umar ibn Abī Rabī'ah's (d. 93/712) *ghazal*, that is, poetry specifically devoted to amorous concerns. As far as the ideological worldview of the *mukhaḍrams* is concerned, she is correct that an orientation towards the future characteristic of elegy (in phrases utilizing *mā al-ẓarfiyyah* in particular, "so long as ...") as well as the speakers expressions of self-doubt about leaving the beloved indicate unprecedented attitudes.⁸¹ However, two of the trends that she sees as characteristic of *mukhaḍram* poetry, the increasing use of narrative and the shift from simile (Vergleich) to metaphors expressive of emotional states (Gleichnis) are only true for Hudhalī poetry in a fairly general way.⁸² In general, she fails to consider the possibility that the worldview expressed in the poems, which is certainly distinctive, reflects a regional rather than a chronological sensibility. Much the same can be said of Kirill Dmitriev 2008 in his study of the Umayyad Hudhalī poet Abū Ṣakhr, which tracks the contribution of that poet to the development of *ghazal* in the Umayyad period.⁸³

⁷⁸ Renate Jacobi, "Die Anfänge der arabischen Ġazalpoesie: Abū Du'aib al-Huḍalī," *Der Islam* 61 (1984): 218–50.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 218–19.

⁸⁰ Grunebaum, "Abū Dhu'ayb," *EP*²; Hell, *Neue Huḍailiten-Diwane*, 1:3.

⁸¹ Jacobi, "Anfänge," 225, 240.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 220.

⁸³ Kirill Dmitriev, *Das poetische Werk des Abū Ṣakhr al-Huḍalī: eine literaturanthropologische Studie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008).

Giovanni Canova and Akiki Motoyoshi Sumi have written on one of the distinctive features of Hudhayl's poetry, their description of honey collection.⁸⁴ Sumi's essay is in particular is of limited value as it fails to make use of almost any use of the antecedent German scholarship on Hudhayl. Bernhard Lewin has also assembled a helpful lexicon of Hudhayl's vocabulary, although it duplicates to a certain extent the indexes in Farrāj's edition of the *Ash'ār*.⁸⁵

With regards to Arabic secondary literature, quite a few studies have been carried out either on the *Ash'ār* as a whole, or on individual poets within it. Most suffer from a certain formulaic organization and impressionistic methodology. They also fail almost universally to cite almost any Western sources, or even to refer to previous Arabic-language studies except cursorily. Some valuable syntheses of relevant information have been made, however. Any consideration of the medieval afterlife of the *Ash'ār* should begin with Ismā'īl al-Natshah,⁸⁶ who has assembled views expressed on the Hudhalīs by literary critics ranging from al-Aṣma'ī to al-Ma'arrī. 'Abd Allāh ibn Sa'āf al-Liḥyānī, whom I have drawn on above, has synthesized the *ayyām* information for the tribe, collected the disparate *akhbār* (lore) scattered throughout literary anthologies, chronicles, *ḥadīth*-texts and the like, particularly pertaining to the Umayyad period, and collated the place-names of their *diyār* (territory) with those mentioned in medieval Muslim geographical sources. A comprehensive and enlightening study of another obscure (poetically speaking) tribe, the Kalb, by Muḥammad Bayṭār, should certainly be

⁸⁴ Giovanni Canova, "Cacciatori die Miele': dalla poesia Hudaylita alle pratiche tradizionali nel Dhofar (Oman)," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 20–21 (2003 2002): 185–206; Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi, "Remedy and Resolution: Bees and Honey-Collecting in Two Hudhalī Odes," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, no. 2 (July 1, 2003): 131–57. I cannot read Italian, so I have no comment on Canova's article.

⁸⁵ Bernhard Lewin, *A Vocabulary of the Hudaylian Poems* (Göteborg: Kungl. vetenskaps- och vitterhets-samhället, 1978).

⁸⁶ Ismā'īl Al-Natshah, *Ash'ār Hudhayl: wa-atharuhā fī muḥīṭ al-adab al-'Arabī* (Amman/ Beirut: Dār al-Bashīr/ Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 2001), 2:281–350.

considered in any further analyses of pre-Islamic tribal Arabian culture.⁸⁷ In the same vein, al-Muʿīnī's study of Tamīm has a helpful introduction,⁸⁸ as does Salah Kazzarah's dissertation on the same tribe.⁸⁹ This is not an exclusive list, as recently, several Arab scholars have undertaken the compilation and analysis of poetry from individual early Arabic tribes, drawing on extant but scattered citations in medieval literary anthologies, geographical dictionaries, lexicons, and so forth.⁹⁰

4. Assessment

As is evident from the above literature review, any consideration of Hudhayl is largely absent from Anglo-American studies. For example, neither of the two most important recent studies on pre-Islamic poetry (they are neither many nor frequent), James Montgomery's *The Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah*,⁹¹ nor Suzanne Stetkevych's *The Mute Immortals Speak*,⁹² give any close attention to Hudhalī poets, and this despite the fact that at 4,600 lines, the *Ash'ār* offers a corpus of comparable size to any other early Arabic poetic anthologies or *dīwāns*. This is partially due to the fact that most of the best scholarship on Hudhayl is in German, research in which language American researchers in particular perversely and almost systematically ignore. Ewald Wagner's survey on early Arabic literature, *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen*

⁸⁷ Muḥammad Shafīq Bayṭār, *Dīwān shu'arā' Banī Kalb ibn Wabrah: akhbāruhum wa-ash'āruhum fī l-Jāhiliyah wa-al-Islām*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2002).

⁸⁸ 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Muʿīnī, ed., *Shi'r Banī Tamīm fī l-'Aṣr al-Jāhili* ([Al-Qaṣīm, Saudi Arabia]: Manshūrāt al-Nādī al-Qaṣīm al-Adabī, 1982).

⁸⁹ Salah Kazzarah, "Die Dichtung der Tamīm in vorislamischer Zeit: ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der altarabischen Poesie" (Dissertation, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1982).

⁹⁰ Bayṭār provides a good place to start on such studies, with his list in Muḥammad Shafīq Bayṭār, *Dīwān shu'arā' Banī Kalb ibn Wabrah: al-Dirāsah* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2002), 5 ff.

⁹¹ James E. Montgomery, *The Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah: The Tradition and Practice of Early Arabic Poetry* ([Cambridge]: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1997).

⁹² Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Dichtung,⁹³ which offers by far the best introduction available to the subject, and on which I have drawn extensively in this study, is replete with citations of Hudhayl's *Ash'ār*.

The insurmountable difficulty of the German language is not at all the whole story, however. Modern studies of Arabic literature are still heirs to a medieval prejudice. The medieval philologists who transmitted to us almost all that we have of early Arabic poetry admittedly preferred the poetry of Najd, the central plateau of the Arabian peninsula, to that of the Ḥijāz, the mountainous west coast where Hudhayl lived and where, ironically, Islam emerged. The obvious explanation for this is that there were different poetic cultures in these two regions, one of which (the Najdī) was more prestigious than the other. This resulted not only in well-known anthologies like the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* containing far more poetry from Najdī tribes than Ḥijāzī, but also in the disappearance of whole swathes of Ḥijāzī tribal poetry. Of the 26 tribal anthologies initially assembled by al-Sukkarī, nine were Ḥijāzī,⁹⁴ and none now survive except Hudhayl's, through some kind of good fortune. The perseverance of this medieval prejudice is most evident in a study like Renate Jacobi's invaluable 1971 work, *Studien zur Poetik der altarabischen Qaṣīde*,⁹⁵ certainly the most important work on the prestige genre of classical Arabic poetry, the *qaṣīdah* (poly-thematic ode). She takes as her corpus Wilhelm Ahlwardt's *Six Divans*,⁹⁶ a nineteenth-century edition of the Spanish philologist Yūsuf ibn Sulaymān al-A'lam al-Shantamarī's (d. 476/1083) collection of six pre-Islamic poets. Aside from

⁹³ Ewald Wagner, *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung: Die altarabische Dichtung*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987).

⁹⁴ Abū l-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Ishāq Ibn Nadīm, *Kitāb Al-Fihrist*, ed. Riḍā Tajaddud, vol. 2 (Tehran: Maktabat al-Asadī wa-Maktabat al-Ja'farī al-Tabrīzī, 1971), 180. See also Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums: Poesie. Bis ca. 430 H.*, vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 180.

⁹⁵ Renate Jacobi, *Studien zur Poetik der altarabischen Qaṣīde*, Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1971).

⁹⁶ Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *The Divans of the Six Ancient Arabic Poets Ennābiga*, 'Antara, Tharafa, Zuhair, 'Alqama and Imruulqais. (London: Trübner, 1870).

the question of how exactly al-A‘lam, in eleventh-century Spain, chose, redacted, edited and glossed the six poets he did, which merits a dissertation on its own, all six poet are Najdī.

However, the medieval prejudice in favor of Najdī poets also leads to a number of problematic generalizations even on the part of modern scholars who define their own corpuses. Many of the generalizations also result from a well-meaning intention to refute some purported Orientalist prejudices about pre-Islamic poetry being too conventional,⁹⁷ or barbaric and nomadic,⁹⁸ or atomistic.⁹⁹ I have already mentioned the strange way in which, in Bauer’s study, the aesthetically inferior Hudhayl becomes an exception to every other (Najdī) poet’s method of onager description. James Montgomery has gone so far as to deny that early Arabic poetry is in any sense oral or nomadic, calling it rather “pseudo-oral,” composed not by Bedouin but by an “intellectual (bedouinising) elite connected with centers of political power and cultural influence in the Arabian Peninsula.”¹⁰⁰ This may be true of some of the Najdī poets closely connected to the sub-Sasanian Iranian polities of the Tigris-Euphrates valley in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, but it is insufficient for explaining any quantity of Hudhayl’s immense corpus, much of it concerned with (to us, perhaps, petty) arguments over bloodwite, pasture disputes, and descriptions of desert flora and fauna, i.e., exactly what we would expect from nomadic poets. There is nothing disparaging in acknowledging that these were their concerns, and an analysis based on regional cultural variation, without polemic, accounts much better for the texts before us.

⁹⁷ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:246 ff.

⁹⁸ Montgomery, *The Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah*, 1–9. See also James Montgomery, “The Empty Ḥijāz,” in *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy: From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, ed. Richard M. Frank and James E. Montgomery (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006).

⁹⁹ Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak*, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Montgomery, *The Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah*, 258.

Suzanne Stetkevych, via anthropological theories of ritual, has found a means to read early Arabic poems as aesthetic unities. There are a number of points that could be made about this enterprise, but with regard to the present study, the most relevant is that she relies heavily on a medieval Arabic tripartite model of the *qaṣīdah*, wherein the poet begins with an amatory prelude (the *nasīb*), often consisting of a display of emotion over the beloved's former campsite, before tearing himself away (the *raḥīl*, or "journey"), and describing his camel-mare, before arriving at some goal (*gharaḍ*), boasting about his tribe, or praising a patron, or insulting an enemy. Stetkevych reads this structure as a rite of passage, whereby the speaker begins in a state of individuated emasculation (in the *nasīb*), before traversing a liminal state (the *raḥīl*), and becoming re-aggregated into the social polity in the *gharaḍ*.¹⁰¹ In many ways, this is a compelling argument for interpreting the tripartite *qaṣīdah*. The problem, however, is that only a small minority of pre-Islamic poems are tripartite,¹⁰² and there is a strong case to be made that this *qaṣīdah* genre only became normative during the Umayyad period and subsequently influenced the transmission and redaction of pre-Islamic texts.¹⁰³

In all of the secondary literature surveyed here, it is possible to dramatically expand the corpus on which analysis is based by including Hudhayl. This in turn allows for a more comprehensive view of how pre-Islamic Arabian poetic culture was produced within networks of competing, regional tribalisms.

¹⁰¹ Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak*, 3–54. For an argument against taking Labīd's *Mu'allaqah* as normative, see Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 2:86–96.

¹⁰² Statistics can be found in Jacobi, *Studien*, 12–13.

¹⁰³ Renate Jacobi, "The Camel-Section of the Panegyric Ode," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 13 (January 1, 1982): 1–22.

5. Framework of the Dissertation

The first chapter consists of two parts, a broad overview of tribalism in Late Antiquity based on non-Arabic sources, and a consideration of the medieval Arabic interpretation of this tribal heritage. The non-Arabic inscriptional and textual sources related to tribalism in Arabia between the fourth and sixth centuries CE are comprehensively explored. The chapter then narrates the emergence of poetry in the Arabian peninsula, which took place in Najd and in northeast Arabia in particular in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, as a result of interaction between Sasanian Iranian client tribes and other Arab tribes of the interior. Arab tribes played a role in the increasingly violent conflicts between Byzantium and Sasanian Iran over the course of the sixth century, thus creating the conditions for the warrior elite that we know through pre-Islamic Najdī poetry. Finally, however, classical Arabic poetry spread to the Ḥijāz in western Arabia in the late sixth and early seventh century, adapting to different cultural conditions there. This cultural bifurcation is reflected in medieval philologists and anthologists privileging of Najdī poetry.

The second chapter continues the exploration of Najdī and Ḥijāzī cultures by using poetry to develop anthropological models of the semi-nomadic warrior elites that dominated the Arabian peninsula and produced pre-Islamic poetry. Rather than stark dichotomies of state/nomadism or sedentary/pastoral, I attempt to locate poetic production on a spectrum of practices. The Najdī elite, with its material connections to Byzantine Rome and Sasanian Iran, enjoyed an elevated status that it cultivated through its poetic representations of equestrianism: horsemanship, hunting, armor and weaponry. This material culture encouraged depictions of hierarchical differentiation in Najdī poetics. Lacking such resources,

the Ḥijāzī tribes, and Hudhayl in particular, developed an egalitarian poetics of anti-equestrianism. They boasted of their running abilities, described hunting without horses, and even constructed a distinctive corporeal ideology of emaciated male bodies, lean from their martial and self-consciously (and apparently, really) nomadic lifestyle.

The third chapter deals with tribal geography. It draws extensively on modern ethnographies in order to construct a phenomenological model of tribal geography. According to this model, the social and ecological practices of a tribe such as Hudhayl actively create their spatial sense of the world in which they live. Their poetry reveals a tribe with almost no interest in Najd, or any region beyond, such as Persia, except occasionally as an area in which hostile tribes dwelt. On the other hand, their Ḥijāzī economic world stretches from Syria to Yemen, an area in which the exchange of wine, weapons, slaves and other commodities is described. This economic spine is reinforced by a climatic regime, and Hudhayl depict thunderstorms and tribal migration within the Ḥijāz's strip of mountains and coastal plains in a manner quite distinct from their Najdī poetic competitors.

The fourth and final chapter offers what Roland Barthe's calls a "starred text," rather than a close reading, of Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy for his sons, the first and most important poem of the *Ash'ār* on a number of counts. By exploring the dense network of intertextual citations, allusions and formulae through which Abū Dhu'ayb constructs his poem, we see that rather than a unified aesthetic project or an expression of ritual experience, his text reveals a stylistics rooted in tribal traditions, regionalism and the Ḥijāzī ideology of anti-equestrianism. He also draws on (or appropriates, or dialogues with?) the work of a female poet, Su'dá bint al-Shamardal of Juhaynah, a tribe that neighbored Hudhayl, indicating the priority of tribal and

regional affiliation over even gender boundaries, and calling into question the assumption of gendered spheres of poetic production assumed by many critics.

6. A Note on Authenticity

Any discussion of early Arabic poetry necessarily must confront the question of its authenticity. If we take Hudhayl's transmission as an example, it is perfectly obvious that not much transmission goes back earlier than al-Aṣma'ī, who died in ca. 213/828. Even if we presume that where he mentions his sources, they are older, we are looking at oral poetry that was in circulation at the end of the Umayyad period, at least a hundred years after its composition. What if it is all made up? Despite their reputation, even this belief was not held by David Samuel Margoliouth and his protégé Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, who nevertheless exemplified the skeptical case against pre-Islamic poetry in his seminal *Fī l-shi'r al-jāhīlī* (On pre-Islamic poetry).¹⁰⁴

A more generous attitude towards authenticity is taken by Bräunlich in his *much* less oft-cited response to Ḥusayn and Margoliouth.¹⁰⁵ I refer the interested reader to Ewald Wagner's comprehensive summary and evaluation their positions and of the subsequent pendulum swings.¹⁰⁶ A similar and equally illuminating summary of the parallel issue in the study of the Quran can be found Angelika Neuwirth and Nicolai Sinai's introduction to her

¹⁰⁴ D. S. Margoliouth, "The Origins of Arabic Poetry," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1925. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, *Fī l-shi'r al-jāhīlī* (al-Qāhirah: Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1926). This was revised and republished as Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, *Fī l-adab al-jāhīlī*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Maṭba'at Fārūq Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad, 1933).

¹⁰⁵ Erich Bräunlich, "Zur Frage der Echtheit der altarabischen Poesie," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 29 (1926): 825–33.

¹⁰⁶ Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1987, 1:12–29.

recent edited volume, *The Qur'ān in Context*.¹⁰⁷ I am very much in sympathy with their project of situating early Arabic culture within the culture of Late Antiquity.

Two larger theoretical points need to be borne in mind regarding any discussion of early Arabic poetry's authenticity. Firstly, our notion that written texts are more authoritative than oral texts was not held by early Arabs, who systematically prized memorization and oral transmission.¹⁰⁸ Secondly, much of the case against early Arabic poetry comes from the mouths of early Arab philologists, who often held fairly antagonistic views of each other. Their evaluations of each other's accuracy, then, is not always accurate and may even be slanderous.¹⁰⁹ This is setting aside the obvious fact that since these early scholars also themselves distinguished between authentic and forged poetry, often without reference to each other, we would do well to bear their critical judgments in mind.¹¹⁰

These methodological considerations—that early Arabic culture was self-consciously oral, that it was preserved by urban Iraqi philologists, and that attention to inscriptional and non-Arabic evidence from the neighboring cultures of Late Antiquity illuminates the Arabic Islamic-era sources—all inform this study. It goes without saying that any given poem's authenticity must be adjudged based on manuscript evidence and whatever is recorded of its recension, but neither of these are likely to leave us feeling very certain. On this point, it is worth noting that the Cairo manuscripts of the *Ash'ār* contain by far the most poetry related to the emergence of Islam, and are also in the worst state of all the manuscripts; they are late and

¹⁰⁷ Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx, eds., *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic Milieu* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1–21.

¹⁰⁸ Two recent works by Gregor Schoeler elucidate this point: Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam* (London: Routledge, 2006); Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, rev. ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

¹⁰⁹ Rina Drory, "The Abbasid Construction of the Jahiliyya: Cultural Authority in the Making," *Studia Islamica*, no. 83 (1996): 33–49. Some of her points repeat those made earlier by Bräunlich.

¹¹⁰ See Ibn Sallām's discussion of pre-Islamic Meccan poetry, for example, discussed in chapter 1.

the pedigree of the commentary and recension is extremely unclear. One reading this suggests is that poetry authentically hostile to Islam was intentionally not transmitted.

In general I do not deal in particular with questions of manuscript transmission or recension in so far as they relate to authenticity. In a larger sense, however, this entire dissertation, as a portrait of Hudhayl's social, cultural and ecological world, is an argument for the vast majority of the *Ash'ār's* authenticity (as authentic, orally transmitted poetry first recorded at a later date). At least, it depicts a world—visible with no small amount of reconstruction—rather like what we might expect to find nomadic tribespeople experiencing in the period 550–650. Nomadic life is not idealized, as in 'Udhrī love poetry, the origins of which are so difficult to ascertain, nor does the poetry relate very directly to narratives of Islamic origins, or to controversial personalities in Islamic history. Much of the poetry's obscurity, in fact, borders on incoherence. The vocabulary is difficult, and the generic conventions differ from more famous and canonical sets of poems. It is exactly not what we want to find in our sources, and for that very reason, I find it compelling. Hopefully this study confirms this impression for the reader.

7. A Note on Romanization/Transliteration

I have used the New York University *Library of Arabic Literature* (LAL) system for transliteration (or, more accurately, Romanization). LAL is a modification of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* system and the specifications are available online.¹¹¹ I chose it purely for the practical advantages it offers in transliterating classical Arabic literary language. The main features are: LAL uses the “h” to transliterate the *tā' marbūṭah* in the non-construct

¹¹¹ <http://www.libraryofarabicliterature.org/assets/HANDBOOK-10.15.15.pdf>

state, while “t” is used in the construct state. Apostrophes are not used to represent *alif al-waṣl*. “Bint” and “ibn” are spelled out. “Al-” is used even with sun letters. Fuller vocalization is sometimes given for poetry, where necessary. I have retained one feature of the American Library Association-Library of Congress system, the use of an acute accent (á) on an “a” for the *alif maqṣūrah*. It may be obvious to an Arabist that ‘*alā*’ is written with an *alif maqṣūrah*, but there is no way to know that a place name such as *Sharā* is thus written without using something other than a macron for the long “a” sound, (i.e., *Shará*) even if the pronunciation of the *alif* and the *alif maqṣūrah* is identical.

Bracketed numbers before a poetic text indicate that the Arabic is given under the corresponding number in Appendix B.

Chapter 1: Tribalism and the Development of Arabic Poetry in Late Antiquity

1.1. Introduction: Tribalism and Arabic Literary History

In 1942, Gustave von Grunebaum lamented “the backwardness of the study of Arabic poetry, when compared with the achievements of research in other fields of literature.”¹ He seems to have been discouraged by the lack of a source-critical attitude in dealing with the texts used to create a narrative of pre-Islamic Arabic literary history. Several scholars have followed in his footsteps in attempting to construct a consistent narrative of pre- and early-Islamic literature including Renate Jacobi on the development of the tripartite *qaṣīdah*,² Thomas Bauer on the function of one *qaṣīdah* motif, the onager scene,³ and Gregor Schoeler (in his earlier work) on the representation of nature.⁴ Although diachronic, all of their work has tended to be highly textual rather than historical or social. They find patterns of structural and artistic development, from simpler to more complex, and trace out networks of borrowings, allusions and citations between pre-Islamic poets.

At the same time, several scholars have brought the indisputably oral quality of early Arabic literature to the fore, and Gregor Schoeler has recently done much to shift the question of authenticity with the critical observation that early Islamic culture valued oral transmission as *more* reliable than written transmission, leading early scholars to obfuscate their increasing use of writing over time.⁵ Walter Ong’s theoretical work has also been influential in more

¹ Gustave von Grunebaum, “Pre-Islamic Poetry,” *Moslem World*. 32 (April 1942): 147.

² Jacobi, *Studien*; Jacobi, “Anfänge”; Jacobi, “The Camel-Section of the Panegyric Ode.”

³ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*.

⁴ Gregor Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung: die Zahrīyāt, Rabī’yāt und Raudīyāt von ihren Anfängen bis aṣ-Ṣanaubarī: eine gattungs-, motiv- und stilgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Beirut: in Kommission bei Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1974).

⁵ Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*; Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam*.

clearly describing the features of oral artistic production.⁶ In her ongoing work on the genre of *khutba* (oration), Tahera Qutbuddin has demonstrated not only that early Islamic oration is characterized by the features Ong discusses, but shown how oral texts embody the “lived world,” an oral world, of early Islamic culture.⁷

Other scholars have endorsed Michael Zwettler’s theory of oral formulaic composition modelled on Milman Parry and Albert Lord’s work.⁸ According to Zwettler, texts preserved from Arabic poetry were the result of formulaic improvisation, a notion heavily critiqued by Schoeler.⁹ Suzanne Stetkevych has stated that, following theories of orality, traditional questions of authenticity are “obsolete,” emphasizing instead that a “mythic, folkloric, and archetypal” logic underpins texts attributed to poets.¹⁰ Meanwhile, James Montgomery has reminded us how difficult it is to pin down what exactly is attributed to any given poet in his analyses of several pre-Islamic texts in which he carefully analyzes the multitude of versions and recensions, with their variants, in which most canonical Arabic poems and other literary works have come down to us.¹¹

The influence of all these approaches will be evident throughout this study. Beyond synthesizing previous insights, this chapter seeks to narrate a cogent pre-Islamic literary history, despite the numerous lacunae in our sources. The goal is to situate the early poetry of the Hudhayl tribe in the Ḥijāz, western Arabia, in the period between roughly 550 and 650 CE.

⁶ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, New Accents (London: Routledge, 1991).

⁷ Cf. for example, “The Sermons of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib: At the Confluence of the Core Islamic Teachings of the Qur’an and the Oral, Nature-Based Cultural Ethos of Seventh Century Arabia,” *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 42, no. 1 (2012): 201-228.

⁸ Michael Zwettler, *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: Its Character and Implications* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978).

⁹ Gregor Schoeler, “Die Anwendung der oral Poetry-Theorie auf die arabische Literatur,” *Der Islam* 58, no. 2 (1981): 205-36.

¹⁰ Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak*, 122, 124.

¹¹ Montgomery, *The Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah*.

Most optimistically, their poetry was transmitted orally until sometime in the eight century CE/second century AH, when we know the authorities cited in the *Ash'ār's* commentary lived, and we will not be able to say much more about its production or authenticity than that. However, I firmly believe that a horizon of pre-Islamic social history can be much more firmly drawn than it usually is, and that any reading of any individual Arabic poem will be thoroughly enriched thereby. Laying out a tribal and chronological map by which pre-Islamic poetry spread will have, at the very least, a heuristic value. By thematizing tribal political affiliations with imperial powers, imagery of tribal rule, and the lived geographies of particular tribes, we will be able to make more informed assumptions about poetry's audience, social function, and perhaps ritual function, if any.

Since the most essential task, as I see it, is a compelling chronology pre-Islamic poetry's development within a tribal matrix, I first offer a comprehensive examination of what non-Arabic sources can tell us about tribalism in the three centuries or so preceding Islam. This may seem gratuitous, but everything I have included relates to an aspect of the narrative of poetry's development in tribal Arabia, either later in this chapter or later in the study. The field of Arabic literature has not seen a consistent approach towards tribalism. Most recently, Suzanne Stetkevych has made extensive use of anthropological theory at a highly abstract level,¹² while the illuminating earlier work of Werner Caskel roots his notions of tribalism in inscriptional evidence and genealogical texts.¹³ A further methodological problem lies at the

¹² In particular, her use of the tripartite model of the *qaṣīda* is a-historical for scholars who see this as a later development, such as Ewald Wager: Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1987, 1:159.

¹³ Caskel's work, which is central for understanding pre-Islamic tribalism, does not deal closely with poetry. "Aijām al-'Arab: Studien zur altarabischen Epik," *Islamica* 3 (1931) deals with prosimetric tribal lore (*ayyām*) accounts and his invaluable introduction to his edition Ibn al-Kalbī's *Jamharat al-Nasab* is vital for understanding genealogical texts (*nasab*): Caskel, *Ġamharat an-nasab*. Cf. also Wener Caskel, "Der arabische Stamm vor dem Islam

border of literary studies and early Islamic History. While no historian of Islam or pre-Islamic Arabia has entirely ignored the phenomenon of tribalism, nor has any scholar of pre- and early-Islamic literary history, but research dealing with tribalism has tended to move in two relatively independent tracks.

In terms of literary history, scholars have tended to follow the narrative laid down by von Grunebaum in a series of essays from the 1940s onwards.¹⁴ His analysis does not explicitly thematize tribalism, but his conclusions tell us much about the subject. In a crucial break from earlier orientalists, von Grunebaum bases his narrative on internal stylistic patterns, not on the unreliable anecdotes transmitted in such medieval Arabic literary anthologies as the tenth century CE *Kitāb al-Aghānī*.¹⁵ In his account, the earliest stratum of pre-Islamic poetry emerges in the Qays ibn Tha‘labah clan of Bakr ibn Wā‘il in the late fifth or early sixth centuries CE.¹⁶ Among these could be counted al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar, and ‘Amr ibn Qamī’a.¹⁷ Bakr dwelt, for the most part, in the north-eastern region of the peninsula, interacting extensively with the Arab vassals of the Sasanian Persians, the Naṣrids (a.k.a. the Lakhmids) of Ḥīrah.¹⁸ In the early sixth century, von Grunebaum identifies three other stylistic groups, all of whom, like Qays ibn Tha‘labah, stood at the intersection of nomadic tribal politics

und seine gesellschaftliche und juristische Origination,” *Convegno internazionale sul tema ‘Dalla tribu allo stato,’ Accademia dei Lincei* 359 (1962): 139–151.

¹⁴ The most important is “Zur Chronologie der früh-arabischen Dichtung,” *Orientalia* 8 (1939), which is recapitulated with significantly less detail in “Pre-Islamic Poetry.” His general historical observations, drawing on literary sources, are in “The Nature of Arab Unity before Islam,” *Arabica* 10, no. 1 (January 1963).

¹⁵ “Chronologie,” 338, 339. Erich Bräunlich’s earlier essay, “Versuch einer literargeschichtlichen Betrachtungsweise altarabischer Poesien,” anticipates von Grunebaum in analyzing the relationship between Sā‘idāh ibn Ju‘ayyah al-Hudhalī and his *rāwiyah* (transmitter), Abū Dhu‘ayb al-Hudhalī.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 342.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 343.

¹⁸ Al-Ḥīrah is increasingly the subject of a large degree of scholarly attention. The most recent, by Isabel Toral-Niehoff, is *Al-Ḥīrah: Eine arabische Kulturmetropole im spätantiken Kontext*, (Leiden: Brill, 2014), which has relatively little to add regarding poetry. Kirill Dmitriev, however, is currently working on the poetic Arabic culture of al-Ḥīrah, attempting, like Toral-Niehoff, to situate this culture within late antiquity.

on the one hand and sedentary imperial politics on the other. The first and second schools, those of ‘Abīd ibn al-Abrāṣ al-Asadī and ‘Alqamah of Tamīm, were connected to the third, Imru’ al-Qays of Kindah in both their biographical material, but also on stylistic grounds.¹⁹ The tribe of Kindah, as a vassal of the Yemen-based kingdom of Ḥimyar, was the foremost power of south-central Arabia during the first half of the sixth century,²⁰ and the Arabic literary tradition considers Imru’ al-Qays as the innovator of a number of generic conventions within Arabic poetry.²¹

The school of Qays ibn Tha‘labah continued almost into the time of Islam in the guise of the famous al-A‘shá,²² while the influence of Imru’ al-Qays pervaded the peninsula wherever Arabic poetry was produced.²³ Aside from two other poets that von Grunebaum regard as idiosyncratic talents exerting little stylistic influence on posterity, al-Mutalammis and Ṭufayl al-Ghanawī, the only other significant Arabic poetic school is that beginning with Aws ibn Ḥajar of Tamīm, and continuing through Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmá, associated with Ghaṭafān, and continuing with his son Ka‘b ibn Zuhayr, who converted to Islam and wrote a famous *qaṣīdah* for the Prophet Muhammad. This circle then, would have been active in the central plateau of Najd, home of Tamīm, and in the north-western region of the peninsula.

Absent from this account is any attention to tribes of the Ḥijāz, the mountainous western strip of the Arabian peninsula, although von Grunebaum perhaps considered his work

¹⁹ For a summary of Imru’ al-Qays’s “obscure and semi-legendary” biography, with a bibliography of Arabic sources, see S. Boustany, “Imru’ al-Qays b. Ḥudjir,” *EI*².

²⁰ C.f. Irfan Shahīd, “Kinda,” *EI*². Shahīd has been criticized for exaggerating the role of pre-Islamic Arabs in the political world of the late antiquity, for which see Whittow, “Rome and the Jafnids: Writing the History of a Sixth-Century Tribal Dynasty” in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East*. See also his introductory chapter Mark Whittow, “Rethinking the Jafnids: New Approaches to Rome’s Arab Allies,” in *Les Jafnides: des rois arabes au service de Byzance*, ed. Denis Genequand and Christian Julien Robin (Paris: Éditions De Boccard, 2015).

²¹ Abū ‘Uthmān ‘Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiz, *al-Bayān wa-al-tabyīn*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1968), 4:87; Al-Jumāḥī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu‘arā’*, 55.

²² “Chronologie,” 342.

²³ *Ibid.*, 344.

to be a supplement to that of Erich Bräunlich, whose 1937 essay “Versuch einer literargeschichtlichen Betrachtungsweise altarabischer Poesien” largely deals with the transmission of stylistic techniques in the Ḥijāzī Hudhayl’s corpus, and which von Grunebaum cites in the first paragraph of his 1939 essay on the chronology of early Arabic poetry. Bräunlich and von Grunebaum’s work continues most clearly in that of Renate Jacobi, whose 1971 work, *Studien zur Poetik der altarabischen Qaṣīde*, takes as its corpus Wilhelm Ahlwardt’s *Divans of the Six Ancient Arabic Poets*, or, in its Arabic title, *Al-‘Iqd al-thamīn* (The precious necklace), consisting of the diwans of Imru’ al-Qays of Kindah, al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, ‘Antarah al-‘Absī, Ṭarafah ibn al-‘Abd of Qays ibn Tha‘labah, Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā of Dhubyān and ‘Alqamah al-Tamīmī.²⁴ These are mostly poets of Najd, representing the same approximate chronological stratum and geographical range as those poets examined by von Grunebaum. Two late sixth century poets from Ahlwardt’s group did influence Ḥijāzī poetry, al-Nābighah and Zuhayr, both of Dhubyān, whose territories in Shammar and Wādī l-Rummaḥ in the north-west of the peninsula directly abut the northern Ḥijāz to the west and Najd to the south and east.²⁵

The tribes of the Ḥijāz have held more interest for historians of early Islam, who have given us a second line of inquiry into pre-Islamic tribalism. With the exception of Tamīm, whose relations with Mecca (at least insofar as the sources present them) are carefully documented by M. J. Kister,²⁶ few of the poetically prominent tribes mentioned by von Grunebaum figure much in the emergence of Islam, led of course, by a prophet of the Quraysh

²⁴ Her essay, “Die Anfänge der Arabischen Ġazalpoesie: Abū Du‘aib Al-Ḥudālī,” *Der Islam* 61 (1984), indeed deals with the most important Hudhalī poet, but as a specimen of *mukhaḍram* poetry, a chronological rather than cultural or geographical category.

²⁵ J. Fück, “Ghaṭafān,” *EI*².

²⁶ Kister, “Mecca and Tamīm”; M. J. Kister, “Mecca and the Tribes of Arabia: Some Notes on Their Relations,” in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization in Honour of Professor David Ayalon* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 33–57.

tribe, of the Ḥijāzī city of Mecca. We might also add Shaybān of Bakr ibn Wā'il, cousins of the Qays ibn Tha'labah mentioned above, who are discussed extensively by Fred Donner in the context of their role in the invasion and conquest of Iraq.²⁷ The role of the Medinan tribes of Aws and Khazraj, and to a lesser extent, the tribe of Thaḳīf of the city of al-Ṭā'if, are central to any discussion of early Islamic history.²⁸ It is noteworthy that these tribes' power bases were mostly urban, in marked contradistinction to all of the nomadic tribes discussed by von Grunebaum.

Several individual tribes have been studied, in particular by scholars associated with Kister. Michael Lecker has devoted a monograph²⁹ to Sulaym, a nomadic tribe dwelling between Mecca and Medina, as well a collection of articles, including several expanded *Encyclopedia of Islam* articles, in *People, Tribes and Society in Arabia Around the Time of Muhammad*. He has also examined Kindah, particularly during the Riddah wars,³⁰ while E. Landau-Tasseron has studied the Asad tribe.³¹ According to Kister, Quraysh's relations with powerful tribes were rooted in their mercantile arrangements, as they organized caravans between Ḥīrah and Mecca and between Mecca and Syria.³² To the north, Ghaṭafān and the Syrian tribe of Kalb secured the routes with Byzantium,³³ and to the north-east, Tamīm secured the routes with

²⁷ Fred McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 171 ff.; Fred McGraw Donner, "The Bakr B. Wa'il Tribes and Politics in Northeastern Arabia on the Eve of Islam," *Studia Islamica*, no. 51 (1980): 5.

²⁸ The bibliography on Aws is available in an updated form in *EI³* (Yaara Perlman, "Aws"), and Thaḳīf (Michael Lecker, s.v. "Ṭhaḳīf" in *EI²*), while Montgomery Watt's essays (s.v. "al-Khazraj," and "Ḳuraysh") in *EI²* are now somewhat dated.

²⁹ *The Banū Sulaym: A Contribution to the Study of Early Islam* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1989).

³⁰ "Kindah on the Eve of Islam and during the 'Ridda'," *JRAS* 4, no. 3 (1994) and "Judaism among Kindah and the 'Ridda' of Kinda," *JAOS* 115, no. 4 (1995).

³¹ "Asad from Jāhiliyya to Islām," *JSAI* 6 (1985).

³² Kister, "Mecca and the Tribes of Arabia," 57; Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm," 120.

³³ Kister, "Mecca and the Tribes of Arabia," 37, 42, 44 ff.

Persia.³⁴ Lecker broadly follows Kister's views on Tamīm in *People, Tribes and Society*.³⁵ He likewise finds that Sulaym cooperated extensively, and as a coherent unit, with pre-Islamic Quraysh of Mecca.³⁶

The methodology of Kister and his school of investigation of tribal Arabia has fallen in for some severe criticism. According to Patricia Crone, Kister, like Montgomery Watt, often presupposes rather than demonstrates his claims. His work has the virtue, however, that his "impeccable footnotes undermine our basic assumptions" concerning Mecca.³⁷ Both of these positive and negative sides are certainly evident in his well-documented work on Mecca's relationships with Arabian tribes; his evidence rarely unequivocally supports his theses, although it is varied and fascinating. Just as the tribes of the Ḥijāz are utterly ignored in von Grunebaum's narrative of Arabic poetry, for Kister, it often seems as if the entire peninsula's tribes are connected via some trade agreement, kin tie or ritual alliance with Mecca.

If Kister's evidence doesn't match the point he is making, Lecker has been accused of simply having no point; of his work on Sulaym, Fred Donner writes that "there is no organizing interpretation and no statement explaining why the data reported was included."³⁸ This is perhaps a bit unfair, since, as will be seen, the two points Lecker makes about Sulaym, that they functioned as a coherent military unit and cooperated with Quraysh, are also difficult to assess with regard to Hudhayl, Sulaym's neighbors. Wringing the generalizations he makes from the material is an accomplishment in itself. Donner is correct, however, to point out that

³⁴ Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm," 130 ff.

³⁵ Lecker, *People, Tribes and Society* XI:68-70.

³⁶ Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*, 202.

³⁷ Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1987), 3, 4.

³⁸ Donner, Fred, review of *Banū Sulaym: A Contribution to the Study of Early Islam*, by Michael Lecker, *JAOS* 111, no. 3 (1991): 600-601. *Banū Sulaym* was also reviewed negatively by G. R. Hawting, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 54.2 (1991): 359-62.

Lecker fails to explore basic tribal notions like bloodwite,³⁹ and poetry, which Lecker makes only very passing use of, abounds in wrangling over bloodwite. Similarly, the poets of Hudhayl refer with some frequency to the apparently Meccan-controlled markets of Dhū l-Majāz and ʿUkāz, so it is of more than passing interest that they fail to refer to the Qurashī trade alliance discussed by Kister, let alone mentioning far-off tribes like Tamīm.

With literary critics intent on the most ancient pre-Islamic tribes of Najd, and historians largely fascinated with tribal Arabia only insofar as it intersected with the history of Quraysh and the emergence of Islam, a very important feature of pre-Islamic culture falls through the cracks: the historical emergence of poetry in the Ḥijāz, especially the area south of present-day Medina. By taking the Ḥijāz as a rubric of analysis, this study not only avoids a disciplinary myopia, but hopefully, makes the utmost possible use of the source material, since many pre-Islamic Arabs, despite living near Mecca, did not seem to know that Islam was coming; they are subsequently ignored by historians. By clearly setting Hudhayl in the Ḥijāz, we can thus allow their poetry to tell us about a pre-Islamic world that did not realize it was “pre-Islamic.”

Sixth and early seventh century Arabian tribes would have understood themselves regionally based firstly on the areas in which they migrated, but secondly, on their relationships with Byzantium, Sasanian Persia, and Yemen. In each of these areas, significant inscriptional and non-Arabic literary evidence helps corroborate the narrative of Arabic poetry’s development laid down by Grunebaum. However, as the sixth century progressed cultural developments took place in the interior of the peninsula and in the southern Ḥijāz for which Arabic literary texts dating to hundreds of years later become indispensable. Yet

³⁹ Ibid., 601.

synthesizing these two areas of inquiry is not methodologically impossible. In many ways, the more verifiable political events of the earlier sixth century lead to and explain the literary efflorescence of the late sixth and early seventh century Ḥijāz, despite the pall of inauthenticity that is so often cast over the literary sources, especially poetry. As the control over Arab tribes by Yemen, followed by Rome and Persia, ebbed in the second half of the sixth century, this allowed space not just for the apparent growth of Quraysh's power, as has often been speculated,⁴⁰ but for new expressions of tribal identities. Ḥijāzī poets like those of Hudhayl made use of older models of poetry developed in Najd, but adapted them to the social and geographical conditions in the Ḥijāz.

1.2. Non-Arabic and Epigraphic Reference Points

1.2.1. Nomadic Arabia and the Near Eastern Empires Before the Sixth Century

Rome, Persia and Yemen interacted in various ways with nomadic Arabs, and the sixth century is marked by the increasing prominence of “super-chief” dynasties,⁴¹ the Naṣrids of Ḥīrah and the Jafnids of Palestine and Syria.⁴² Their emergence, however, must be seen as part of several political, religious and social processes ongoing since the third century.⁴³ Since that

⁴⁰ Much information in support of this notion can be found in M. J. Kister, “Some Reports Concerning Mecca from Jāhiliyya to Islam,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 15, no. 1/2 (June 1, 1972): 61–93. Arguments for economic activity on the eve of Islam have, after having been the subject of much criticism, recently revived. Cf. Patricia Crone, “Quraysh and the Roman Army: Making Sense of the Meccan Leather Trade,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 70, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 63–88; Michael Lecker, “Lost Towns: Zuhra and Yathrib,” in *L'Arabie à la veille de l'islam: bilan clinique*, ed. Jérémie Schiettecatte and Christian Robin, vol. 3, Orient & Méditerranée (Paris: De Boccard, 2009).

⁴¹ The expression is Hoyland's, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 81.

⁴² The most valuable overview of the sources for the Jafnids, especially non-Arabic sources is Denis Genequand and Christian Julien Robin, eds., *Les Jafnides: des rois arabes au service de Byzance: VIe siècle de l'ère chrétienne: actes du colloque de Paris, 24-25 novembre 2008*, vol. 17, Orient & Méditerranée (Paris: Éditions De Boccard, 2015).

⁴³ “The tribal map of Muhammad's time has to be understood in terms of the interaction between Rome/Iran and this region from the third century onwards,” Robert G. Hoyland, “Arab Kings, Arab Tribes and the Beginnings of Arab Historical Memory in Late Roman Epigraphy,” in *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East*, ed. Hannah Cotton et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 390.

time, the center of Roman life had shifted decisively to the east, partially because of increased agricultural productivity in Syria and Anatolia,⁴⁴ to say nothing of the importance of the Egyptian grain supply, and partially to confront the rising challenge of the Persians, who had humiliatingly defeated the emperor Valerian (r. 239–270) in 260 CE at the hands of Shāpūr I,⁴⁵ the second emperor of the dynamic new Sasanian dynasty which was to last until 650, when it was subsumed by the Muslims. The Roman confrontation with the Sasanians is manifest in the emperor Constantine I's (d. 337) decision to rebuild the small town of Byzantium as the imperial capital Constantinople in 324, a move itself evocative of Near Eastern and Sasanian practice: Ardashīr I (d. 242), the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, built several new cities named after himself, like Būdh-Ardashīr near present-day Mosul.⁴⁶ At the same time, the Roman empire's ideological basis shifted, or was shifted, from the polytheistic imperial cult to an ecumenical, Christian empire centered on the person of the ruler.⁴⁷

Somewhat earlier, for the Sasanians, “the third century was a transition period between the Hellenistic tradition of expressing political allegiance through the cults of deified rulers and the emergence of confessional religions with mass memberships that became identified with states.”⁴⁸ Under high priest (*Ohrmazd-mowbed*) Kirdīr (fl. Late third century),⁴⁹ the Sasanian empire, largely in response to Christianity, but also to Manichaeism, set about

⁴⁴ Bryan Ward-Perkins, “Land, Labour and Settlement,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ed. Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins, and Michael Whitby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 315–45; Geoffrey Greatrex, “Les Jafnides et la défense de l’empire au VI^e siècle,” in *Les Jafnides: des rois arabes au service de Byzance*, ed. Denis Genequand and Christian Julien Robin (Paris: Éditions De Boccard, 2015), 135n47.

⁴⁵ For a narrative overview of the Sasanian period, see R.N. Frye, “The Political History of Iran Under the Sasanians,” *CHI*, vol. 3, pt. 1.

⁴⁶ Abu ’l-Ṭayyib Ṭāhir b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, trans. Theodor Nöldeke (Leyden: Brill, 1879), 20n4; Arthur Christensen, *L’Iran sous les Sassanides* (Osnabrück: O. Zeller, 1971), 96.

⁴⁷ Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 37–60, 80–99.

⁴⁸ M. Morony, “Sāsānids,” *EP*².

⁴⁹ Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Kartir,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*.

establishing Zoroastrianism as an established church.⁵⁰ This institution was never so far-reaching in Persian society as the Christian church(es) were in the Roman empire, as, in addition to the challenge of Mani's faith, and later in the sixth century that of the hyper-egalitarian Mazdak, the Sasanian empire was home to large populations of Buddhists, Jews, many of whom had been expelled from eastern Roman territory, and of course, Christians, particularly the "heretical" Nestorians, who lived a precarious existence as potential fifth columnists within Sasanian territory. Indeed, reliance on the necessarily biased Kirdīr's inscriptions as a source has led to what Richard Payne calls, the "myth of Zoroastrian intolerance."⁵¹

Relations in subsequent centuries were far from uniform. The clash of civilizations played out on a religious level, which ineluctably embroiled nomadic Arab tribesmen, but a striking degree of political and cultural interaction, and even of mutual respect, is also visible in the sources. Following a prolonged period of continuous warfare between the Sasanians and Romans, with the death of the emperor Julian ("the Apostate") in a 363 CE battle against the Sasanians, Julian's general Jovian surrendered significant territories, especially around the flash-points of Armenia and northern Mesopotamia, to the Sasanians in the so-called Jovian Peace. Open hostilities were rare over the course of the next century and a half, and in 402, for example, we see Yazdgerd I acting as guardian to the young Roman emperor Theodosius II,⁵² in 408/9 attempts to regulate commercial traffic at the borders,⁵³ and in the 470s, a treaty of

⁵⁰ A. Shapur Shahbazi, "Sasanian Dynasty," *Encyclopædia Iranica*.

⁵¹ Richard Payne, *A State of Mixture: Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2015), 23 ff.

⁵² Samuel N. C. Lieu and Geoffrey Greatrex, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars: Part II AD 363-630*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2002), 32.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 2:33.

mutual assistance whereby the two sides promised troops to each other in times of duress.⁵⁴ Real war would not erupt again until 502 CE, although the intervening peace of the fifth century was also due in no small part due to the constant threats the Persians faced from Hunnic invaders, while the western Roman empire was, by 476, overrun by various Germanic tribes.

Yemen's society was tribal, if mostly sedentary (not nomadic), and its languages Semitic; the area thus holds a special place in any consideration of pre-Islamic regionalism in Arabia. Moreover, Yemen is often seen, following traditional accounts, especially those of two geographers, the Córdoba al-Bakrī (d. 487/ 1094) and the widely-travelled Baghdadi, al-Mas'ūdī (d. ca. 345/956), as the Ur-homeland of the Bedouin tribes of the sixth century.⁵⁵ In this narrative, the collapse of the Mārib dam led to a mass emigration from Yemen.⁵⁶ However, inscriptions testify that the dam was still functioning up until the early seventh century, so there was no environmental cataclysm.⁵⁷ There is thus no one identifiable date for a cataclysm at Mārib to which tribal migrations could be attributed.

The strongest case for a migration out of Yemen can be made for Ghassān, whose name appears in Sabaic inscriptions in Yemen in the third century CE, such as in 'Inān 75 where the kings of Ghassān, al-Asd, Nizār and Madhḥij are mentioned.⁵⁸ Since Ghassān reappears (but not in Byzantine sources) in the sixth and seventh centuries in the Levant, scholars such as Irfan

⁵⁴ Ibid., 2:58, 59.

⁵⁵ Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2001), 233. He discusses the same issue of tribal migration in Hoyland, "Arab Kings, Arab Tribes," 384–393.

⁵⁶ Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 232, citing al-Mas'ūdī.

⁵⁷ Müller, "Mārib," *EI*².

⁵⁸ M. Bāfaqīh and Christian Robin, "Min nuqūsh Maḥram Bilqīs/ Quelques inscriptions du Maḥram Bilqīs," *Raydān* no. 1, (1978): 51.

Shahîd have assumed that they migrated to Syria, in line with the Bakrî-Mas'ûdî narrative.⁵⁹ Tribes in between, such as the Aws and Khazraj of Medina, are certainly associated with Ghassân in the Arabic sources.⁶⁰ Robert Hoyland has argued for a softer version of this narrative, based on epigraphic evidence. Rather than a “large-scale migration of peoples,” we are dealing with “more frequent movements of smaller groups within the arid areas of the Syro-Arabian landmass for a variety of purposes, such as pasture, water, trade, booty, employment, etc.”⁶¹ Christian Robin has gone much further, asserting that “les ‘migrations’ de la tribu Ghassân ... ont autant de fondement historique que celles des Hébreux dans le Sinâï sous la conduite de Moïse.”⁶² The fundamental problem is that the Ghassân of Sabaic inscriptions need not be the same entity to which Arabic sources refer, an issue to which we shall return.

Another large problem with the Out of Yemen thesis is the Arabic sources are not consistent about. In al-Bakrî, the contradictory migration narratives all have the air of a folk topos; in each, a group of tribes shares a common area, and then for some reason is dispersed. In one, the Najdî group of Rabî'ah, the Ḥīran tribe of Iyād, Quraysh's ancestral group Muḍar, and the Anmār of Ghaṭafān were all said to have originated in Mecca before their dispersal.⁶³ Each of these then has its own dispersal narrative, often with several versions.⁶⁴ The role of Yemen in all these narratives is thus very inconsistent. Caskel argues convincingly that most or all of these stories were created retroactively to explain how certain groups tribes with

⁵⁹ Shahîd, *BASIC*, vol. 2, pt. 1, 2–4.

⁶⁰ Michael Lecker, “Were the Ghassânids and Byzantines behind Muḥammad's Hijra?,” in *Les Jafnides: des rois arabes au service de Byzance*, ed. Denis Genequand and Christian Julien Robin (Paris: Éditions De Boccard, 2015), 284–287.

⁶¹ Hoyland, “Arab Kings, Arab Tribes,” 387.

⁶² Christian Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar, des « Romains » et des Perses (IIIe-VIe siècles de l'ère chrétienne),” *Semítica et Classica* 1 (2008): 191n180.

⁶³ Al-Bakrî, *Mu'jam mā ista'jam*, 5, 52–53, 79–80.

⁶⁴ Such as Iyād, *ibid.*, 67–69.

disparate pre-Islamic lineages, realigned by Umayyad politics and the Islamic conquests, explained to themselves a common descent from one distant ancestor.⁶⁵ In most versions, a common origin in Tihāmah reflects an Islamic bias, as if all Arab tribes had originated near Mecca. But pro-Yemeni factions in early Islam developed an antagonistic regional bias alluding to the cultural weight of their pre-Islamic monarchy, although rooted in Umayyad-era political exigencies.⁶⁶

Around the turn of the first century BCE,⁶⁷ the non-Arabic tribal group known as Ḥimyar⁶⁸ (known to Greek authors as Homeritae) began to take over Yemen, establishing their capital in Ṣafār, 120 km south of Sanaa, which latter begins to appear in inscriptions from the third century CE,⁶⁹ by which time they had consolidated their control over the other major Yemeni kingdoms, Saba' (Biblical Sheba) and Ḥaḍramawt. Our knowledge of Ḥimyarite is based solely on inscriptions, and it was long assumed that the Ḥimyarites spoke a different (“non-Ṣayhadic”) language from that of their inscriptions,⁷⁰ which are in (“Ṣayhadic”) Late Sabaic, a development of the inscripational language of Saba'. Some sort of Himyarite language may be attested in a first century CE 27-line cave inscription from Qāniya, a poem devoted to the sun-

⁶⁵ Caskel, *Ḡamharat an-nasab*, 1:40–44.

⁶⁶ Crone offers one of the most succinct and clear descriptions of the tribal rivalry of “northern” and “southern” Arabs of the Umayyad period: Patricia Crone, “Were the Qays and Yemen of the Umayyad Period Political Parties,” *Der Islam* 71, no. 1 (1994): 1–57.

⁶⁷ Beaucamp, et. al. have recently offered further argumentation for Beeston’s date of 110 BCE: Joëlle Beaucamp, Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, and Christian Julien Robin, “La Persécution Des Chrétiens de Nagrān et La Chronologie ḥimyarite,” *ARAM Periodical* 11, no. 1 (January 1, 1999): 68.

⁶⁸ Not necessarily to be confused with the Arab tribe recorded from Islamic times of the same name, and which claimed descent from Ḥimyar.

⁶⁹ As in Ry 535. Cf. G. R. Smith, “Ṣan'ā',” *EI*².

⁷⁰ Thus for example, Macdonald in his very helpful general overview of the linguistic situation in pre-Islamic Arabic: M.C.A. Macdonald, “Reflections on the Linguistic Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia,” *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 11, no. 1 (May 2000): 30. Complete definitions of terms used here are found in that article.

goddess Shamash (*S²ms¹*),⁷¹ although Peter Stein, in the most recent examination of the nature of a Ḥimyaritic language, argues that the poem is written in an artificial literary register, and as such cannot be taken as evidence of a spoken Ḥimyaritic.⁷² (The poem is fascinating, however, for sharing some features, such as mono-rhyme—a single end rhyme maintained throughout the text—with classical Arabic poetry.) Whatever the nature of Ḥimyaritic, however, it was not later perceived as Arabic by medieval Arabs, as testified by Ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī around the year 800 CE, and in the fourth/tenth century by the (Yemeni) Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-Hamdānī.⁷³ In the sixth/twelfth century, Nashwān ibn Saʿīd al-Ḥimyarī composed a dictionary of Ḥimyaritic, *Shams al-ʿulūm wa-dawāʾ kalām al-ʿArab min al-kulūm* (The sun of wisdom and the remedy for the Arabic language’s wounds).

The Ḥimyarite inscriptions follow the titular traditions of the Sabaeen kings, which included, after their conquest of Sabaʾ itself, calling themselves “kings of Sabaʾ.” ʿAbdkarib Asʿad, however, near the end of the fourth century, began to call himself “the king of the Arabs of the highlands and lowlands,”⁷⁴ following military operations which left some imprint in later Arabic literary sources.⁷⁵ During this period, the kings of Ḥimyar, if their inscriptions are to be believed, were capable of raising 20,000 corvée laborers to repair damage to the Mārib

⁷¹ Described by Christian Robin, *L’Arabie antique de Karibʿil à Mahomet: nouvelles données sur l’histoire des Arabes grâce aux inscriptions*, *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 61 (Ed. Edisud, 1992), 122–125.

⁷² Peter Stein, “The ‘Ḥimyaritic’ Language in Pre-Islamic Yemen. A Critical Re-Evaluation,” *Semitica et Classica* 1 (January 1, 2008): 203–12.

⁷³ Al-Jumaḥī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shuʿarāʾ*, 11. Ibn Sallām cites Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ: “the language of Ḥimyar and the most distant reaches of Yemen is not like our language, nor is their Arabic our Arabic” [*mā lisān Ḥimyar wa-aqāṣī l-Yaman al-yawma bi-lisāninā, wa-lā ʿarabiyyatuhum bi-ʿarabiyyatinā*]. For further specimens of medieval Arabic texts testifying the existence of a distinct Ḥimyaritic spoken language, see the citations in Christian Julien Robin, “Les inscriptions de l’Arabie antique et les études arabes,” *Arabica* 48, no. 4 (January 1, 2001): 522–525; Christian Robin, “Les langues de la péninsule Arabique,” *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 61, no. 1 (1991): 107–108.

⁷⁴ Jacques Ryckmans, *L’institution monarchique en Arabie méridionale avant l’islam: (Maʿin et Saba)* (Louvain: Publications universitaires, 1951), 215, 216, 317–319.

⁷⁵ Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. Alfred Guillaume (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 6–12. ʿAbdkarib Asʿad’s inscription Ry 445 will be discussed below.

dam following heavy rains.⁷⁶ The implication of a high level of centralization thus required is mitigated according to Jacques Ryckmans by the mere fact that the dam ruptured in the first place, indicating poor maintenance.⁷⁷ Decentralization is also perhaps implied by the absence of administrative or legal inscriptions.⁷⁸ Weakening of the king's power would have given the tribes of the area allied to the monarchy a higher degree of autonomy than heretofore.⁷⁹ The tribes of south-western Arabia by the sixth century had thus had significant experience of Yemeni monarchical ideology of rule, although the actual power of the king had decreased and would continue to do so over the sixth century in the face of repeated foreign invasion from Ethiopia and Persia.

The monarchy of Ḥimyar was also buttressed by some kind of monotheistic ideology, following a regional trend of the period. As we have already seen, in the late third and early fourth centuries, both the Sasanian and Roman empires underwent significant religious change as rulers not only adopted, but formalized and centralized certain doctrines, imposing them on their populations with some degree of coercion. Garth Fowden has argued that these formal changes need to be seen against the backdrop of an increasing tendency in the third century Roman world towards henotheism, a pagan universalism wherein one deity is primarily worshipped, although lesser gods remain recognized.⁸⁰ The move towards more formal, universalist expressions of religion continued with the conversion of Ezana (d. 360), the ruler of the kingdom of Aksum in present-day Ethiopia, to Christianity. As Fowler notes, however, the Aksumite associations with the Monophysite church of Alexandria led to an

⁷⁶ Ryckmans, *L'institution monarchique en Arabie*, 229.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁸⁰ Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, 37–60.

ambiguous and tense relationship with Constantinople, perhaps retarding the progress of Christianity in Aksum.⁸¹ Even more ambiguous then is the appearance of the so-called Ḥimyarite monotheism between 360 and 383, after which period polytheistic inscriptions and temple artifacts come to an end.⁸² It is difficult, before coming to the sixth century, to discern the exact nature of the monotheism which emerges, as both Christian and Jewish elements are evident. One god, under the names “Lord of heaven,” Ilān, or Raḥmanān (the merciful),⁸³ was worshiped, however. It is also impossible to say, as in Ethiopia and in the broader Arabian peninsula, how pervasive monotheistic practice in Yemen was, but according to Iwona Gajda in a recent consideration, much of the population participated to some degree.⁸⁴ Some scholars have seen Ḥimyaritic monotheism as “neutral,” unaffiliated with Judaism or Christianity.⁸⁵ Gajda concedes that based on the inscriptional evidence, and lacking testimony from other Jewish communities, any monotheism in Yemen must have been only partially or unofficially Jewish, describing it as “monothéisme judaïsant.”⁸⁶

The nature of Arab nomadism in the third to sixth centuries between these three polities of Byzantium, Sasanian Persia, and Ḥimyar is difficult to qualify. Certainly, in part as a result of the level of warfare between the eastern Romans and the Sasanians, the settled Arab polities at the edge of the fertile crescent were abandoned or destroyed, such as Hatra/ al-

⁸¹ Ibid., 111, 112.

⁸² For a summary of the outlines of Ḥimyarite monotheism see Norbert Nebes, “The Martyrs of Najrān and the End of Ḥimyar: On the Political History of South Arabia in the Early Sixth Century,” in *The Qur’ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur’ānic Milieu* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 35–40.

⁸³ B’l s’myⁿ, mar’ s’myⁿ, Rḥmnⁿ. Iwona Gajda, “Quel monothéisme en Arabie du Sud ancienne?,” in *Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie aux Ve et VIe siècles: regards croisés sur les sources: [actes du colloque de novembre 2008]*, vol. 32, Monographies (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d’histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2010), 108.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 117. Gajda has also recently devoted an entire monograph to the subject: Iwona Gajda, *Le royaume de Ḥimyar à l’époque monothéiste: l’histoire de l’Arabie du sud ancienne de la fin du IVe siècle de l’ère chrétienne jusqu’à l’avènement de l’Islam*, vol. [nouv. sér.] 40, Mémoires de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2009).

⁸⁵ Gajda, “Quel monothéisme en Arabie du Sud ancienne?,” 115n72.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 117.

Ḥaḍr in the mid-third century or Palmyra/Tadmur in 273 CE.⁸⁷ Werner Caskel has famously described a “bedouinization” of Arabia taking place during this dark age, when monarchies based on mercantile city-states at the deserts’ edges gave way to a social landscape of nomadic tribalism.⁸⁸ How exactly this happened he leaves somewhat unclear, especially as many of the cities in question were Hellenized to one degree or another. It is also uncertain to what extent their inhabitants spoke a predecessor of classical Arabic.⁸⁹ There is certainly evidence of increasing use of probably nomadic Arabs in military units. During the fifth century, numerous Greek and Syriac sources testify to Rome and Persia subsidizing Arab tribal nomads along the frontier,⁹⁰ probably for no other reason than because both empires’ financial resources were mostly diverted elsewhere and these nomads would otherwise raid sedentary areas.⁹¹ “Saracen” military units did, however, serve in other campaigns, and the ca. fourth century Roman administrative document *Notitia Dignitatum* mentions that they served in Egypt, Palestine and Phoenecia.⁹² After the battle of Adrianople in 378, Arab forces are reported to have played a role in repelling the Goths from Constantinople.⁹³ Following the peace of 363, the maintenance of frontier forces was neglected,⁹⁴ and it was not until the sixth century that Arab tribesmen would serve in the proxy wars between the Sasanians and Romans closer to home.

⁸⁷ C.E. Bosworth, “Tadmur,” *EI*².

⁸⁸ W. Caskel, “Zur Beduinisierung Arabiens,” *ZDMG* 103 (1953): *28*-*36* (asterisks in original). An English version of this appears in Gustave von Grunebaum, ed. *Studies in Islamic Cultural History* (Menasha, WI: American Anthropological Association, 1954), 36-46.

⁸⁹ For a summary of the state of Old Arabic inscriptions from throughout the Arabian peninsula, see Macdonald, “Linguistic Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia,” 48–60. Macdonald argues that the Nabataeans spoke Aramaic, not Arabic.

⁹⁰ Lieu and Greatrex, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, 2:45.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹² Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 239.

⁹³ Ammianus, *Res Gestae*, XXXI.16.5–6. Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Roman History of Ammianus Marcellinus, during the Reign of the Emperors Constantius, Julian, Jovianus, Valentinian, and Valens*, trans. Charles Duke Yonge (London: G. Bell, 1902), 622.

⁹⁴ Lieu and Greatrex, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, 2:42, 74–77, 185.

Caskel's thesis of 'bedouinization' has been widely cited⁹⁵ and tinkered with,⁹⁶ and recently, attacked by Michael Macdonald,⁹⁷ who rightly notes that most versions of the bedouinization argument give undue attention to technological developments, particularly that of the *shadād* saddle, which according to Walter Dostal and to a lesser extent Richard Bulliet gave nomadic fighters an advantage in battle. Drawing on a range of evidence, including pre-Islamic poetry, Macdonald rightly concludes that Arabs of the period fought either on horseback or on foot, using camels primarily for long-range desert mobility. Nevertheless, it remains the case that two of Caskel's observations ought to be retained: firstly, the strength of sedentary, monarchical Arab polities in or on the border of Arabia's deserts deteriorated significantly between the second and fifth centuries CE.⁹⁸ This need not mean any inverse quantitative increase in nomadic Bedouin activity, but it does mean that by the sixth century, we find typically find Arab-speaking nomads dealing with non-Arab sedentary populations, which carries import for the nomadic sense of self-conscious identity. Secondly, and equally as important, the caravan trade that sustained the trade entrepôts of Petra, Palmyra, Gerrha disappeared at this time, reducing the contact between different parts of the peninsula. This means that while camel nomads by their nature are highly mobile, their

⁹⁵ Jan Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 582–586; Montgomery, "The Empty Hijāz," in *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy: From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, ed. Richard M. Frank and James E. Montgomery, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 152 (Leuven; Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006), 56 ff.

⁹⁶ Dostal, "The Evolution of Bedouin Life," in *L'antica società beduina*, ed. F. Gabrieli (Rome: Centro di Studi Semitici, Università di Roma), 11–34; Richard W. Bulliet, *The Camel and the Wheel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 99. Bulliet is lumped a little unfairly in with Dostal, as he emphasizes that the military advantage of the *shadād* saddle would only have obtained against other desert-dwelling archers, not against horse cavalry. Zwettler also makes this point about MacDonald's arguments: Michael Zwettler, "'Ma'add' in Late-Ancient Arabian Epigraphy and Other Pre-Islamic Sources," *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 90 (2000): 280.

⁹⁷ Michael Macdonald, "Was There a 'Bedouinization of Arabia'?", *Der Islam* 92, no. 1 (2015). Khazanov, in passing, had already found grounds to disagree with Caskel some time ago: Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. Julia Crookenden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 101.

⁹⁸ W. Caskel, "Zur Beduinisierung Arabiens," *31*, *32*.

culture in the sixth century was also probably characterized by a marked regionalism. No serious international trade connected Mecca with Iraq, for example, according to Caskel,⁹⁹ and the only sources indicating such trade are later anecdotal Arabic literary sources.¹⁰⁰

Regardless of whether city-dwelling Arabs literally took to the desert, most scholars concur that during the period from the third to sixth centuries, new sorts of tribal formations coalesced in order to do business with the newly expansive imperial powers.¹⁰¹ The wars between Persia and Rome involved the Arabs of Mesopotamia, but Ardashīr I also conquered the eastern coast of Arabia (greater Bahrayn) in the early third century,¹⁰² and the Ḥimyarites, unlike their predecessors, the kings of Saba', ranged well into Najd and the Ḥijāz.¹⁰³ A late-Nabatean rock graffiti from the northern Ḥijāz, probably datable to the third or fourth century CE, refers to a "king of Ghassān" (*mlk 'sn*),¹⁰⁴ the tribe from which the later Jafnid clan, who would go on to serve as Rome's most important Arab vassals, claimed descent. The name of the tribe Ghassān is also found in third century south Arabian inscriptions.¹⁰⁵ An early Sasanian,

⁹⁹ Ibid., *32*.

¹⁰⁰ Trade and Arabs are, however, mentioned together by Menander Protector in a peace agreement he details between the Sasanians and Byzantines in 560/61. The text prohibits Saracen merchants from smuggling (frg.6.1.333–340, Blockley, *History*, 72, 73). Around the year 500, Theophanes tells us that "Scenite Arabs" seized the island of Iotabe, a trade entrepôt, in the Red Sea, although the Byzantines quickly took control back. This indicates some knowledge of Red Sea trade, which would probably have been with India, but it is difficult to know who exactly the "Scenite Arabs" are (*Chronicle*, AM 5990, Theophanes and Anastasius, *Chronographia*, ed. Carl de Boor (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883), 141; Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, A.D. 284-813*, trans. Cyril A. Mango, Roger Scott, and Geoffrey Greatrex (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 217.

¹⁰¹ Benjamin Isaac, "The Eastern Frontier," in *Cambridge Ancient History: The Late Empire, AD 337-425*, ed. Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 444.

¹⁰² Franz Altheim and Ruth Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1964), 1.37–39; 5, part 1, 166–7.

¹⁰³ Robin, "Les Arabes de Ḥimyar," 170. The toponyms in inscription 'Abadān 1 are the basis for the conclusion.

¹⁰⁴ Dhuyayb, *Nuqūsh Jabal Umm Jadhāyidh al-Nabaṭiyyah* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah, 2005), 144, no. 65. This is discussed by Cristian Robin, "Ghassān en Arabie," in *Les Jafnides: des rois arabes au service de Byzance*, ed. Denis Genequand and Christian Julien Robin (Paris: Éditions De Boccard, 2015), 96, 97. Cf. also the undated reference to an "Adī, son of Tha'labah [*T'lbh*] the king": Uzi Avner, Laïla Nehmé, and Christian Robin, "A Rock Inscription Mentioning Tha'labā, an Arab King from Ghassān," *Arabian Archaeology & Epigraphy* 24, no. 2 (November 2013): 237–56.

¹⁰⁵ For example, BR-MNMB 9 = 'Inān 9 described by M. Bāfaqīh and Christian Robin, "Min nuqūsh Maḥram Bilqīs/ Quelques inscriptions du Maḥram Bilqīs," *Raydān* 1, 1978, 11–56 in Arabic section, 51–54 in French. This inscription describes an envoy sent to "Ghassān, al-Asd, Nizār and Madhḥij."

bilingual inscription from Paykūlī (in present-day Sulaymaniyah, in Kurdish Iraq) mentions, among other vassals of the Persian shah, one ‘Amr, king of Lahmāy (Pahlavi: ‘m[*rw*] *Lhm’dyn ML(KA)*, Parthian: ‘*mrw Lhmyšn MLKA*),¹⁰⁶ seemingly a reference to the Lakhmid tribe from which the later Naṣrid dynasty of Ḥīrah claimed descent.

Despite these early inscriptions, there is no firm evidence of Ghassān’s relationship with Rome until the late fifth century, and little to shed light on Lakhm until around the same time. In fact, the title of “king” (*mlk*) turns out to be remarkably common amongst pre-Islamic Arabs: Christian Robin gives examples of kings of Tanūkh, Khaṣaṣatān, Kindah, Madhḥij, Qaḥṭān, Ghassān, Asd [=Azd] and Nizār, mostly based on Sabaic inscriptions from the Maḥram Bilqīs site in Yemen, all dating to a period before ca. 315 CE.¹⁰⁷ These tribes are almost all known from Arabic literary sources, which also provide numerous examples of tribesman claiming kingship from the fifth–sixth centuries,¹⁰⁸ but based on inscriptions few of these enjoyed any significant recognition from the imperial powers,¹⁰⁹ although the evidence from Sasanian Persia is very scanty. But certainly an idea of south Arabian “kingship,” even if fallen into a state of desuetude so far as outside observers were concerned, continued to play a significant if highly ambivalent role among Arabic tribal nomads (the exact role as seen in poetic texts is explored further in chapter 2).

Indeed, even based solely on the inscriptional corpus, the early “kingship” cannot be taken at too much face value. Louvre 205, the famous Namārah inscription (Namārah is

¹⁰⁶ Helmut Humbach, Prods O. Skjærvø, and Ernst Herzfeld, *The Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1978), part 3.1, p. 71; part 3.2, p. 126.

¹⁰⁷ Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar,” 181, 184. For the Tanūkh inscription, see Howard Crosby Butler, Enno Littmann, and William Kelly Prentice, *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria, in 1904-1905 and 1909*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1914), 4A.37–40.

¹⁰⁸ Lecker provides a range of significant examples in “Pre-Islamic Arabia,” *New Cambridge History of Islam*, 164, 165, 168, 169.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

modern Nimreh in southern present-day Syria), the first inscription written in Arabic, albeit with the Nabataean alphabet, is dated 328 CE and consists of the boast of one Imru' al-Qays to be “king over all the Arabs,” (*mlk 'l'rb klh*), including Asd (*'l'sdyn*, a variant of Azd) and Nizār (*nzrw*). During a campaign in southern Arabia, near Najrān, he made war against the tribe of Madhḥij (*whrb mhgw*) and conquered Ma'add (*wmlk m'dw*).¹¹⁰ Franz Altheim and Ruth Stiel, however, have argued that this same Imru' al-Qays is referred to in the contemporary ancient south Arabian inscription Ry 535,¹¹¹ where Imru' al-Qays was said to have been captured and held for ransom.¹¹² Imru' al-Qays, in this reading, was merely a regional leader in greater Syria, who perhaps undertook some daring expeditions into the south of the peninsula, with mixed results. We need to read his epigraphic claim to kingship as just that, part of his construction of an image of rule. Later Arabs would rely on oral poetry to perform the same task.

Arabic leaders drawing apparently on tribal power bases could not only ally with imperial powers, but also cause significant problems for the empires in the region. When, around 376 CE, the Arab queen Mavia revolted, the fifth century Greek church historian Sozomen tells us she “laid waste the cities of Phoenicia and Palestine, as far even as Egypt.”¹¹³ Mavia was the queen of an unknown tribe, perhaps Tanūkh, who took power on her husband's death.¹¹⁴ She successfully revolted over her demand for a Monophysite bishop for her tribe.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Y. Calvet, Christian Robin, *Arabie heureuse, Arabie desert. Les antiquités arabiques du Musée du Louvre*, Notes et documents des Musées des France 31 (Paris: Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1997), 265-269.

¹¹¹ Described, transcribed, transliterated and translated by Gonzague Ryckmans, “Inscriptions Sud-Arabes: Treizième serie,” *Le Muséon* 69 (1956): 139-163. Imru' al-Qays is mentioned in ll. 2 and 3.

¹¹² Altheim and Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, 2.322.

¹¹³ Sozomen, *HE* VI.38.1-5 = Sozomen, *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Joseph Bidez and Günther Christian Hansen, *Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), 297-298.

¹¹⁴ Lieu and Greatrex, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, 2:14, 15.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Sozomen goes on to assert that around the same time¹¹⁶ a childless Arab named Zocomus converted, along with his (unfortunately also unnamed) tribe, to Christianity, after a monk promised him that if he would believe in Christ, he would have a son. Evidently this worked. In both Mavia and Zocomus's cases, it is striking how the unit of the tribe serves as the vehicle for Christianity, and, presumably, other aspects of eastern Roman culture. As little information as we have about Mavia's and Zocomus's tribes, we know less about the 'Abd al-Qays tribe that revolted and were repressed by a ca. 360 CE Ḥimyarite expedition. They were perhaps located in greater Baḥrayn, if they were found in the same area as just before Islam, or perhaps near the Sijā springs 380 north-east of Mecca where the inscription is located.¹¹⁷

It is thus not surprising to find the empires of the region making use of Arab vassals early on, although it is not always evident that tribal units are in play. In 363, when the Roman emperor Julian launched his ill-fated invasion of Persia, he was aided by “the princes of the Saracen nations,” while the Persians had an Arab ally named “Malechus Podosaces, phylarch [a term used for tribal leaders] of the Assanitic Saracens.”¹¹⁸ It is not until the fifth century that the southern Arab tribe Kindah's role as Ḥimyar's primary nomadic enforcer emerges. This is most evident in Ry 509,¹¹⁹ the Sabaic inscription dated to 445 CE found in Najd at Ma'sal al-Jumḥ, 215 kilometers east of present-day al-Riyāḍ, in which the Ḥimyarite king Abikarib As'ad and his son commemorate a campaign against the group known as “Ma'add,” with the aid of

¹¹⁶ The last quarter of the fourth century, according to Isaac, “The Eastern Frontier,” 449, following Maurice Sartre, *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine* (Bruxelles: Revue d'études latines, 1982), 143–46.

¹¹⁷ Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar,” 191; Christian Robin and Iwona Gajda, “L'inscription du wādī 'Abadān,” *Rayān* 6 (1994).

¹¹⁸ Ammianus, *Res Gestae*, XXIV.2.4; Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Roman History of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 350.

¹¹⁹ Gonzague Ryckmans, “Inscriptions Sud-Arabes: Neuvième série,” *Le Muséon* 64 (1951): 93–126 and pl. IV; Christian Robin, “Le Royaume Ḥujride, dit ‘royaume de Kinda,’ entre Ḥimyar et Byzance,” *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1996*, 665–714. Cf. also Michael Zwettler's partial translation in Zwettler, “Ma'add,” 243.

“their Arabs” (*w-b-ʿrb-h-*), listing, among other tribes (perhaps, the reading here is confused),¹²⁰ Kindah (*kdt*).

Although almost all of the tribes mentioned heretofore are well-known to the Islamic tradition, one cannot be certain at all that the tribes known in Arabic sources are identical or related to the tribal entities named in inscriptions and in non-Arabic texts. This uncertainty is most acute with Maʿadd and Muḍar, two groups referred to not infrequently in inscriptions. In classic Arabic genealogical texts, though, they are considered the individual ancestors of two large groups of tribes, but almost no prose record survives of their doings as actual political tribal entities, which is what they evidently were.¹²¹ Christian Robin has recently postulated, in an important and insightful essay, that Muḍar and Maʿadd represent regional tribal confederations of the Ḥijāz and Najd, respectively (denoted in inscriptions by the expressions *Thmt* (“Tihāmah”, the lowlands) and *Ṭwd* (Classical Arabic, *al-ṭawd*, “the highlands”) dominated by Ḥimyar.¹²² Each of these groups, in turn, was dominated by a particular leadership clan; the tribe Kindah and probably within it the Ḥujrid family known from the Arabic literary tradition dominated Maʿadd, as is evident from Ry 509, and, more uncertainly, a clan called Banū

¹²⁰ Zwettler, “Maʿadd,” 244n42.

¹²¹ Typically, Maʿadd in poetry refers simply to the community of Arabs or of nomadic Arabs, usually in the sense that so-and-so or such-and-such has renown among Maʿadd. A memory of Maʿadd as a political unit over which, supposedly, Kulayb ibn Rabīah of Taghlib ruled, is preserved in the lore of the war of Basūs, which is basically undatable legendary material according to Caskel, *Ḡamharat an-nasab*, 35–39. Cf., for example, Muhalhil’s allusion to Yawm Khazārā (Abū Zayd al-Qurashī, *Jamharat Ashʿār al-ʿArab fī l-Jāhiliyyah wa-l-Islām*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Cairo: Nahḍat Miṣr, 1967), 460.):

Whosoever knows of Yawm Khazārā, his [Kulayb’s]

[was] Upper Maʿadd [*ʿulyá Maʿadd*] at the rending of the seams

[sc., in the violence, reading the variant *jadhb al-rutūq* for *jabdh al-wuthūq*].

Al-Musayyib ibn al-Rifall, likewise, boasts of how his ancestor, Zuhayr ibn Jabāb al-Kalbī, was invested by Abraha with “power over the two tribes of Maʿadd” (Kister, citing *Kitāb al-Muʿammarīn*, in “Mecca and the Tribes of Arabia,” 46–47. Cf. also Labīd no. 36, l. 12, 13, Labīd, *Sharḥ dīwān Labīd ibn Rabīah al-ʿĀmirī*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Kuwait: Wizārat al-Irshād wa-l-Anbāʾ, 1962), 257. This text is discussed below.

¹²² Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar,” 170–73.

Tha'labah dominated Muḍar in the Ḥijāz.¹²³ Although we have little information on Ma'add and Muḍar, the notion that just before Islam's emergence tribes were ranged into two regional confederations, one Najdī and on Ḥijāzī, is invaluable, as Arabic poetry developed in the former before arising in the latter.

1.2.2. Nomadic Arabia and the Near Eastern Empires in the Sixth Century and Beyond

At the beginning of the sixth century, groups of personality-driven, highly mobile, elite dynasties, operating partially above the fray of local tribes, come more clearly into focus. It is difficult to say to what extent this represents a change from the fifth century, as the attention given nomads, particularly by authors of the eastern Roman empire, was drawn to a number of violent shifts in power that occurred at this time involving Arab tribesmen. War between Rome and Persia erupted on a large scale again in the Anastasian War (502–506), followed by a series of conflicts and broken peace agreements under Justinian. In the years leading up to the first of his wars, from 530–32, extensive proxy warfare took place between the Roman and Sasanian Arab vassals. A treaty, called the “Eternal Peace” was declared in 532, but it failed to live up to its name. Justinian was at this time also engaged in reconquering North Africa from the Vandals and Italy from the Ostrogoths after those two groups had settled by force within the western empire's boundaries in the previous century. He could not allocate sufficient resources, like his famous general Belisarius, to so many fronts simultaneously, and war broke out again from 540–45, and conflict simmered on until another peace agreements in 561/2. In 565, Justinian's impetuous nephew Justin took over, and the peace agreement unraveled. Justin, however, sustained severe defeats at the hands of the Persians, including the loss of the

¹²³ Ibid., 176–78.

important fortress of Dara in northern Mesopotamia. Suffering from insanity, power was transferred to a general, Tiberius, who ruled until 582. Another general, Maurice, then took over. The two handled the inconclusive conflict better than Justin had, but it was not until the accession of the Persian emperor Khusro II (r. 590–628) that some semblance of peace returned. However, Maurice had aided Khusro to the throne during a Persian civil war, and when Maurice was overthrown in 602 by the usurper Phocas (r. 602–610), an officer in the Balkan army, Khusro seized the opportunity to “avenge” his overthrown friend. In an astonishing military rampage, his armies swept across a frontier that had remained largely unchanged since 363, capturing Jerusalem in 614, carrying the True Cross back to Ctesiphon, reaching Chalcedon in the same year, and conquering Egypt in 618. There seemed to be little left of the eastern Empire when a new emperor, Heraclius (r. 610–641) emerged and orchestrated, after much preparation, a striking come-back, launching a massive invasion of Persia in 627. Several severe defeats of Persian forces led to Khusro’s overthrow and execution at the hands of his own men; his son Kavād II Shiroe sued immediately for peace. On March 1, 630, Heraclius triumphantly restored the True Cross to Jerusalem. The first clash between Roman forces and Muslims had probably already taken place at Muṭ‘ah, just to the east of the Dead Sea, in September 629¹²⁴ and nearby Aeropolis/Ma’āb was the first Roman city to surrender in late 633 or early 634.¹²⁵

Part of this massive confrontation played out in the somewhat minor theater of Yemen in the early sixth century.¹²⁶ Under the Ḥimyarite king, Ma’dikarib Ya’fur, the Ḥimyarites

¹²⁴ Walter Emil Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 1st paperback edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 71–74.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 83–87.

¹²⁶ The most useful overview of these events, with translations of the relevant inscriptions and Greek sources, is still Sidney Smith, “Events in Arabia in the sixth Century A. D.,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*,

apparently followed a pro-Roman policy in the early fifth century,¹²⁷ even carrying out an incursion, probably with the assistance of the pro-Roman Muḍar confederation, against Mundhir III, the Sasanian vassal at Ḥīrah, recorded in the inscription Ry 510 from 521 CE at Ma'sal al-Jumḥ.¹²⁸ This Christian influence in turn prompted a backlash by the Ḥimyarite nobility, who, as we have seen, culturally identified as Jewish.¹²⁹ From 523 to 525, Yūsuf Dhū Nuwās, a Jewish Ḥimyarite, took power and began a persecution of local Christians, including massacres at Najrān. In response, the Aksumite emperor Ella Aṣbeḥa invaded Yemen from Ethiopia with some Roman support in the form of shipping. The invasion was a success, and Yūsuf was killed. However, one of the Aksumite generals, Abrahah, seized power around 533 CE, and installed himself as the leader of Ḥimyar. In Ry 506, a famous inscription from 552 CE (or 547 CE if the Ḥimyaritic calendar begins in 115 BCE) found in al-Murayghān, 180 km NNW of Najrān,¹³⁰ Abrahah celebrates his victory over Ma'add, with the help of Kindah, occasioned by the revolt of the tribe of 'Āmir, usually taken to refer to 'Āmir ibn Ṣa'sa'ah, known from the Islamic Arabic tradition. The Greek historian Procopius (fl. sixth century), who served under Belisarius in the Roman army, also mentions what appears to be the same campaign, leading some scholars to suppose it was undertaken at Byzantine behest.¹³¹

University of London 16, no. 3 (January 1, 1954): 425–68. For a more recent summary, see Nebes, “The Martyrs of Najrān and the End of Ḥimyar.”

¹²⁷ Ma'dikarib Ya'fur (r. c. 519-521) was placed on the throne, according to Christian records of the Najrān persecutions, by the Romans: Robin, “Le Royaume Ḥujride,” 701; Nebes, “The Martyrs of Najrān and the End of Ḥimyar,” 40, 41.

¹²⁸ Robin, “Le Royaume Ḥujride,” 686.

¹²⁹ Nebes, “The Martyrs of Najrān and the End of Ḥimyar,” 43–45.

¹³⁰ Gonzague Ryckmans, “Inscriptions sud-arabes: Dixième série.” *Le Muséon* 66 (1953): 267-317 and 6 pls. and Sayed, “Emendations to the Bir Murayghan Inscription Ry 506 and a New Minor Inscription from There.”

¹³¹ Procopius, *History of the Wars*, trans. Henry Bronson Dewing, The Loeb Classical Library 48 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 1:30.13. I.30.13.

The last Ḥimyarite inscription dates to ca. 559 CE (or 554).¹³² From this date, the Ḥimyarite kingdom falls into decline, and we must rely on later Arabic sources. According to the account of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), around the year 575, a few years after Abrahah's death, Ḥimyarite locals sought the support of the Persian emperor, who launched an invasion, led by Wahriz (perhaps a title).¹³³ This was reportedly done on the cheap: the Persian army consisted of about 800 prisoners the emperor was seeking to clean out of his jails. There is little to indicate that Persian-occupied Yemen played much role in wider events, and the descendants of the occupying force, known as the Abnā' ("the sons [of the free]," an epithet for the Persian race), evidently assimilated rather rapidly to Arabic culture.¹³⁴ A Persian governor was, though, nominally still in charge of Yemen at the time of Muhammad.¹³⁵

The pro-Roman and Sasanian Arab factions were led by two dynasties, the Jafnids and the Naṣrids, whose roles, at least as depicted in the Greek, Latin and Syriac sources, was highly personal. We first hear of the Jafnid Jabalah as Gabalas in the Chronicle of the Byzantine monk Theophanes the Confessor (d. 818 CE), where Jabalah overruns Palestine around the year 499 before being defeated by the military commander of Palestine, Romanus.¹³⁶ If the main Byzantine Jafnid vassal of the sixth century, Ḥārith ibn Jabalah (d. 569) is, as seems likely, the son of Gabalas,¹³⁷ then the family must have been coopted by the Byzantines as a result of their danger to the frontier. This had taken place by 529, when the emperor Justinian put Ḥārith ibn

¹³² Robin, "Ḥimyar," 171. He unfortunately does not identify the relevant inscription and I have been unable to determine it.

¹³³ Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 220-225.

¹³⁴ On the on the problematic love of one of Wahriz's grandsons for Arabic culture and poetry see al-Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 351.

¹³⁵ Ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 698, 699.

¹³⁶ Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 141=AM 5925.

¹³⁷ Theodor Nöldeke, *Die Ghassänischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's* (Berlin: Verlag der kgl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1887), 10. Robin, "Le Royaume Ḥujride," 698.

Jabalalah in charge of “as many clans as possible,” and bestowed upon him “the dignity of king (*basileus*), a thing which among the Romans had never been done before.”¹³⁸ In a rock graffiti at Mt. Usays, about a hundred kilometer east of Damascus, one Ruqaym son of Mu‘arrif of Aws records his military service to “al-Ḥārith the king.”¹³⁹

The Byzantine promotion of Ḥārith, Procopius explicitly tells us, was carried out in response to the Sasanian sponsorship of Mundhir III (r. ca. 503–554), whom the Greek writers had also termed *basileus*, for he “ruled over all the Saracens in Persia.”¹⁴⁰ Mundhir had appeared on the scene in 503, raiding deep into Palestine, “laying everything waste, enslaving countless thousands of Romans.”¹⁴¹ Indeed, he was throughout his life a scourge to the Byzantines, and as Procopius later wrote, he was “a man who for a space of fifty years forced the Roman state to bend the knee.”¹⁴² His influence, for example, is seen in the international conference he held at Ramlah, south-east of his base of Ḥīrah, in February 524. There, the Romans successfully attempted to obtain the release of two important prisoners recently taken in a raid, while Dhū l-Nuwās sent envoys (unsuccessfully) to obtain assistance in his persecution of Christians.¹⁴³ Mundhir later defeated and killed a Roman-supported phylarch named Ḥārith (not ibn al-Jabalalah) in 528,¹⁴⁴ played an important role in the significant defeat of the Romans at Callinicum in 531,¹⁴⁵ and his (staged, according to Procopius)¹⁴⁶ dispute with Ḥārith ibn Jabalah over grazing rights around the Strata Diocletiana, a desert road running

¹³⁸ Procopius, *History of the Wars*, 1:17.47.

¹³⁹ M.C.A. Macdonald, “The Old Arabic Graffito at Jabal Usays: A New Reading of Line 1,” *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 40 (January 1, 2010): 141–43; Christian Robin and Maria Gorea, “Un Réexamen de L’inscription Arabe Préislamique Du Ġabal Usays (528-529 è. Chr.),” *Arabica* 49, no. 4 (October 1, 2002): 503–10.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:17.45.

¹⁴¹ Lieu and Greatrex, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, 2:71.71.

¹⁴² Procopius, *History of the Wars*, 1:17.40,41.

¹⁴³ Lieu and Greatrex, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, 2:79.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 92-4.

¹⁴⁶ Procopius, *History of the Wars*, 1:1.1–11.

from Damascus to Callincium on the Euphrates, helped lead to Justinian's second war with Persia (540–45). He participated in this war, and hostilities between him and Ḥārith continued after a Byzantine-Persian truce in 545.¹⁴⁷ However, at a battle probably near Chalcis,¹⁴⁸ southwest of Aleppo, at a spot known to the Arabic tradition as 'Ayn Ubāgh, the feud ended when Ḥārith killed Mundhir in June, 554. Ḥārith himself died in 569.¹⁴⁹

The Jafnid dynasty came more or less to a conclusion not long after. Troubles mounted between Ḥārith's son Mundhir and the Byzantine emperors until, around the year 582, the emperor Maurice sent Mundhir into exile in Sicily.¹⁵⁰ For the Naṣrids we must rely on Arabic sources. The Naṣrid Nu'mān III (r. 580–602) of Ḥīrah was apparently quite powerful, and a great deal of pre-Islamic poetry and lore relates to him. It may have been his independence that led to his death at the hands of Khusro II in 602, purportedly trampled by elephants.¹⁵¹ As far as non-Arabic sources are concerned, Arabs played no prominent role under the period of peace under Khusro II after 590 CE, nor in the massive war of 602–30, although several unnamed figures and tribes were said to have participated.¹⁵² The massive war, in particular, oddly finds little echo in the Arabic sources, although the Quran famously alludes to the Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614.¹⁵³ Ḥassān ibn Thābit, a poet associated with Muhammad, refers in passing in one text to a Persian official (*biṭrīq Fāris*) in control of an area of the Golan, a formerly

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:28.12–14.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 170n1 and Shahid, *BASIC*, 243 for commentary on the location of the battle.

¹⁴⁹ Nöldeke, *Die Ghassänischen Fürsten*, 23.

¹⁵⁰ Shahīd, *BASIC*, 532–540; Greg Fisher, *Between Empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 174–184. Arabic sources continue to refer to powerful Ghassānids after 582: Nöldeke, *Die Ghassänischen Fürsten*, 33–52.

¹⁵¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 331n4, 332n1; Gustav Rothstein, *Die dynastie der Lahmidien in al-Hīra: Ein versuch zur arabisch-persischen geschichte zur zeit der Sasaniden* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1899), 114–119; Fisher, *Between Empires*, 185. Fisher further cites Howard-Johnston and Bosworth confirming this reading of Ṭabarī.

¹⁵² For example, the Saracen horsemen who campaigned with the Persians against Heraclius in 622: Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 436=AM 6113.

¹⁵³ Quran 30:2–5 and al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tafsīr*, s.v.

Byzantine area conquered by the Persians during the 602–630 war, and in another text mourns a man of the Ghassān tribe killed by Khusro, perhaps during the war.¹⁵⁴ Al-Aʿshá Maymūn ibn Qays refers elegiacally to Heraclius’s valor in the battle of Sātīdama in 627.¹⁵⁵

There is very little evidence from non-Arabic sources that the Jafnid and Naṣrid leaderships relied on tribal power bases.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, as we have seen, the most frequently mentioned tribes in sixth century inscriptions are Maʿadd and Muḍar, which do not represent recognizable groupings in the Arabic sources. Christian Robin has hypothesized that Muḍar, a tribal confederation dominating the Ḥijāz, was led by a group called Banū Thaʿlabah.¹⁵⁷ This is based primarily on three pieces of evidence from the early sixth century. The sixth century Syriac-speaking Eddessan monk Joshua the Stylite refers to “the Arabs of the Greek territory” as “of the house of Thaʿlabah” (*d-byt Tʿlbʿ*).¹⁵⁸ By “Greek territory” he evidently means greater Syria, the purported region of the Jafnids/Ghassānids. These Arabs fought against the Persians for the Byzantines. Secondly, Robin understands the Arethas (=Ḥārith) mentioned by Theophanes as captured in 499 by the military commander Romanus in Palestine as a leader of the Muḍar group.¹⁵⁹ Now, this same group appears as *bny Tʿlbt* in Ry 510 where they are supporting the Ḥimyarite Maʿdīkarib Yaʿfur in June 521 CE against the Naṣrid Mundhir III,

¹⁵⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 299n4; Ḥassān ibn Thābit, *Dīwān Ḥassān ibn Thābit*, ed. Walīd ʿArafāt (London: Luzac, 1971), 194, 195. Ḥassān refers to the beloved of the *nasīb* granted [the usage, for her tribe] of a lowland [*ghāʿit*] around Golan, by the *biṭriq Fāris*; 224: “Don’t be like a man drowsing off, dreaming of being in Khusro’s city, or Caesar’s”; 316: a poem, according to the heading of a copyist, mourning “a man from Ghassān killed by Khusro.”

¹⁵⁵ Aʿshá no. 36, ll. 10–15 Maymūn ibn Qays al-Aʿshá, *Dīwān Aʿshá al-Kabīr Maymūn ibn Qays*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Ḥusayn, 2nd ed. (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Sharqī li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1969), 239. The passage is discussed in Shahīd, *BASIC*, vol. 2, pt. 1, 275.

¹⁵⁶ Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar,” 193.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁵⁸ Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle*, LVII; Joshua, *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite: Composed in Syriac A.D. 507*, trans. William Wright (Cambridge: University Pr., 1882), 45, 46.

¹⁵⁹ For citations of the extensive discussion of the identity of this Arethas, see Lieu and Greatrex, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, 2:260n91.

along with the Arabic tribes of Kindah, Madhḥij and Muḍar. Finally, Robin understands the expression *bny T'lb*, similar to the “son of Thalabane” found in Theophanes and the *d-byt T'lb'* of Joshua as a lineage rather than a tribe, since the formula “*bny so-and-so*,” meaning “the sons of” somebody, is typically used in Sabaic inscriptions to describe a dynastic group rather than an entire tribe.¹⁶⁰ It should be noted that there is no evidence of a relationship between this Tha'labah, which is after all a very common name in pre-Islamic lineages, to the Tha'labah ibn Qays of Bakr mentioned by von Grunebaum's narrative above on the emergence of Arabic poetry.¹⁶¹ Robin, on better evidence, supposes that Tha'labah is a grandfather of the Jafnids.¹⁶²

Several implications of interest to a consideration of pre-Islamic tribalism can be drawn. Firstly, if Robin is correct that the Jafnids represent the sons of Tha'labah, the leaders of Muḍar or other tribal confederations, not of Ghassān, then the ruling class of a tribe, like the British monarchs since 1066, may normatively have consisted of an exogenous elite. Arabic lore is replete with such situations. Moreover, the Tha'labah group is identified differently in

¹⁶⁰ Robin, “Le royaume Hujride,” 689, 90. It is interesting to speculate whether this did not influence Arabic tribal self-identification. A difficult problem for Arabic genealogy is why some tribes such as Quraysh have a name, and are never called “the sons of Quraysh,” while others are referred to as “the sons of so-and-so,” as in “Banū Tamīm,” although many of these tribes are also known simply by their name, as “Tamīm,” for example. Cf. Nöldeke, review of *Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia*, by W. Robertson Smith, *ZDMG* 40 (1886): 170 and Caskel, *Ġamharat an-nasab*, 62, 63.

¹⁶¹ This almost certainly incorrect association is still made, as in as in Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor*, 217n4. The story of where this error emerged requires some detective work. It seems in English to have begun with Wright's 1882 translation of the *Chronicle*, 45n. There, he cites Charles LeBeau's (d. 1778) *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, 7:250, which, supplying the Greek text of Theophanes, confuses the Tha'labah with Taghlib. However, Wright's immediate source was apparently Caussin de Perceval's 1847-8 work, *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes*, 2:69, which does correct the confusion between Tha'labah and Taghlib but supposes that Tha'labah is from Bakr, apparently based on purely on the name appearing in Bakr's genealogical tables. Often cited is Gunnar Olinder's 1927 *The Kings of Kinda*, 48, who draws on *Aghānī* 8:65 (Būlāq ed.) to establish the connection with Bakr. Olinder could be correct only if we accept first, his identification (49 and 51 ff.) of Theophanes' Arethas of 499 with the Hujrid Hārith ibn 'Amr, which is questionable even without Robin's critique according to which this Arethas is a leader of Muḍar, and then go on to accept the genealogy of Hārith's mother given in *al-Aghānī*. *Al-Aghānī* is, however, a literary and not an historical or genealogical text to begin with, and Hārith's mother's Bakrī lineage is only mentioned in passing, in the lore associated with Imru' al-Qays, one of the most legendary figures of Arabic poetry.

¹⁶² Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar,” 177n72. Robin in turn is basing himself on Nöldeke, *Die Ghassānischen Fürsten*, 6 and his genealogical table, 62.

different sources; in Syriac and Greek texts, they are the sons of Tha‘labah, but in Arabic texts, they are from the Ghassān tribe. If the same group is in fact being referred to, the most logical explanation lies in Ghassān’s antiquity. As we have seen, inscriptions testify to “kings” of Ghassān dating at least to the fourth century in both southern Arabia (in Sabaic) and in the northern Ḥijāz (in Nabataean). As “Ghassān” is the most common identification in Arabic sources, this must have been the more prestigious identification for a nomadic Arabic audience, and the Jafnids/ Banū Tha‘labah must have derived their authority from this purported or real lineage.

Based on inscriptional evidence, Robin has come to just this conclusion,¹⁶³ and the use of names in praise poetry for the Naṣrids and Ghassānids bears this out. In support of this, we see that “the son” or “sons of Jafnah,” occurs very infrequently in pre-Islamic poetry (twice in Ahlwardt, once in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*) and in two of three instances, the attribution to Jafnah appears in al-Muraqqish al-Akbar and ‘Alqamah, poets said to be more closely associated with the Jafnids’ enemy, the pro-Sasanian Naṣrid court. ‘Alqamah, boasting of freeing his brother, refers to “Ibn Jafnah” as his brother’s captor¹⁶⁴ and al-Muraqqish al-Akbar’s poem is a complaint to “a king of the clan of Jafnah” (*malik min āl Jafnah*) for an attack on the speaker’s tribe, although Lyall reads “Kindah” for “Jafnah” on internal evidence.¹⁶⁵ In contrast, al-Nābighah alone, a propagandist as he was for the Jafnid court as he was, uses “Ghassān” five times.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Robin, “Ghassān en Arabie,” 108, 109; Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar,” 184.

¹⁶⁴ Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 108.

¹⁶⁵ *Muf.* no. 54, l. 18 Al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr and ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 10th ed., Dhakhā’ir al-‘Arab 81 (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 2010), 182; Charles James Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt: An Anthology of Ancient Arabian Odes*, vol. 2 (Oxford: The Clarendon press, 1918), 184n18.

¹⁶⁶ Al-Nābighah no. 1, ll. 8, 39; no. 18, l.2; no. 21, l. 30; no. 29, 19=Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 2, 3, 20, 24, 31.

Other tribes and clans also took their names from defunct ancient monarchies of Arabia. The clearest instance of this is the tribe of Ḥimyar, which took the name of the Yemeni ruling ethnic group, but such names appear at a local level as well, as in the Hudhalī clan of Liḥyān, whose name is identical to a group of ancient kings whose inscriptions remain south of Ḥijr/ Madā'in Šāliḥ in the northern Ḥijāz. The last inscriptions by individuals claiming to be kings of Liḥyān date from somewhere between the second century BCE and the first century CE.¹⁶⁷

Secondly, this elite would have been highly mobile. If, again, the Banū Tha'labah are one entity, then they were capable of carrying out engagements in both Syria and central Arabia within decades of each other. They also interacted meaningfully enough with both Ḥimyaritic and Byzantine powers, to the point where records in Sabaic, Greek and Syriac sources reflect their identity in a virtually identical fashion. Several other forces, such as Ḥīrah and Kindah appear in similarly geographically and linguistically varied records, so there is no reason to suppose Banū Tha'labah are not one entity, or perhaps a ruling house with different branches. At this level of authority, indeed, chiefs would defect from one major power to another. If Altheim and Stiel are correct, this is the reason why the "Lakhmid" Imru' al-Qays was buried near Namārah in Syria, because he had defected to the Byzantines.¹⁶⁸ The Greek monk Cyril of Scythopolis (d. 559) tells us of one Sasanian vassal, Aspebetos (a corruption of the Persian title *spāhbadh*, a kind of military official), who came over to the Romans in 420.¹⁶⁹ Likewise, Joshua the Stylite tells us of one 'Adīd the Arab who surrendered to the Romans

¹⁶⁷ A.J. Drewes, "Liḥyān," *Et*².

¹⁶⁸ Altheim and Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, 2.318 ff.

¹⁶⁹ Sartre, *Trois études*, 149-53.

during the 502–506 war, bringing his troops with him.¹⁷⁰ He then seems to have been put in charge of other Arabs in Roman territory.¹⁷¹ If such elites possessed a certain royal pedigree revered among nomadic Arabs (as well as a reputation for bravery and victory), this would explain their acceptance over new troops in such situations.¹⁷² Alternatively, or in conjunction with this prestige, the subsidies that came with Byzantine support may have done the trick.¹⁷³ This then, is the model for the tribal aristocracy, the development of which underpins the development of classical pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, as described by Ewald Wagner,¹⁷⁴ and which dominated the Arabian peninsula politically before the advent of Islam, as described by Fred Donner.¹⁷⁵ This relationship of this model of a peninsula-wide warrior aristocracy to the emergent tribes of the southern Ḥijāz, as reflected in Hudhayl’s poetry, will be discussed in chapter 2.

This mobile, dynastic elite, sponsored financially and technologically, with weaponry, represented a vector for the regional empires’ cultural and political currents. This is most evident religiously; we have already seen how Sozomen records the late fourth century conversion of Zocomus along with his tribe. The agent of conversion is the tribal leader, while

¹⁷⁰ Joshua, *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, 61=LXXV.

¹⁷¹ “Il (Anatolius, the *magister militum per Orientem*, the military commander over the eastern provinces) les fit entrer dans l’alliance des Romains et confia à Aspébet la phylarquie des Sarrasins alliés, en Arabie, de Rome.” Qtd. in Sartre, *Trois études*, 149. If the Arethas (Ḥārith) mentioned by Theophanes (Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 217, 223.) in the years 499 and 502/3 is the same as the Arethas mentioned by John Malalas (*Chronicle*, 434–5, 252 John Malalas, *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys et al. (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986), 251=434 Bonn.) in 527/8, arguing with the *dux* of Palestine before fleeing and being killed by Mundhir, as Fisher supposes (*Between Empires*, 88), then this would represent another example of elite mobility.

¹⁷² As Robin phrases it, “[l]e prince ne peut exercer utilement son rôle que s’il jouit d’une double légitimité. Il doit être reconnu et investi par son suzerain. Mais il doit également appartenir à une famille dirigeante”: Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar,” 184.

¹⁷³ Fisher, *Between Empires*, 98n108 for citations on subsidies.

¹⁷⁴ Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1987, 1:30–37.

¹⁷⁵ Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, 28–49.

the relevant unit is the “tribe,” (φυλή) whatever that entails.¹⁷⁶ The dogmatic and linguistic affiliations of Christian communities throughout the Arabian peninsula reflected their contacts with the regional powers. No complete pre-Islamic buildings exist in Yemen, but capitals of the Great Mosque of Ṣan‘ā’ were reused from previous Christian churches, and show Byzantine and Aksumite architectural influence.¹⁷⁷ The churches of the eastern coast of the Arabian peninsula, however, were established by Nestorian monks from Syriac-speaking Sasanian Iraq, and later administered from the Sasanian capital of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, where the catholicos or patriarch of the Church of the East had his seat.¹⁷⁸ Nomadic Arabs would have participated in this regional affiliation. Under Islam in the mid-seventh century, local bishops in charge of the islands of Bahrain and the nearby “desert dwellers” attempted to assert their regional independence against the catholicos.¹⁷⁹ Nomads were even able to make regional demands, indirectly or directly, on sedentary powers. The Byzantine shrine of St. Sergius in Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis after 518) in Syria in the upper Euphrates valley was frequented by Arab tribesmen.¹⁸⁰ Ahudemmeḥ (d. 575), a Monophysite, Syriac bishop converted Arab tribes of the area around the northern Tigris, and built a rival shrine (the archaeological remains of which have recently been discovered) there at Qaṣr Sirjīs, northwest of Jabal Sinjār, since Sergiopolis was across the Persian-Byzantine frontier.¹⁸¹ Michael the Syrian, a twelfth century CE

¹⁷⁶ A similar event is conversion of the Persian-sponsored Saracen Aspebetos to Christianity record by Cyril Scythopolis, qtd. in Lieu and Greatrex, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, 2:37=Vit. *Euthym.* 10 (18.15–19.9).

¹⁷⁷ Barbara Finster, “Arabia in Late Antiquity: An Outline of the Cultural Situation in the Peninsula at the Time of Muhammad,” in *The Qur’ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur’ānic Milieu* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 80, 81.

¹⁷⁸ Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 30.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁸⁰ Elizabeth Key Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain: Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 60–100. A list of Arab writers who refer to Taghlib’s devotion to Sergius is given in J. Spencer Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1990), 236n60.

¹⁸¹ Lieu and Greatrex, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, 2:78; Key Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, 121–8.

Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, records a dispute between a Chalcedonian and the Monophysite Jafnid Ḥārith ibn Jabala.¹⁸²

Other modes of cultural transmission were at play as well. As we have seen, some Arab vassals of the Sasanians, like Aspebetos in the early fifth century, made use of Persian or Persianate titles. The fourth century Latin historian Ammianus Marcellinus mentions that one Arab vassal named Malechus Podosacis had earlier fought with the Sasanians against Julian during his fatal campaign of 363; “Podosacis” is almost certainly an Iranian name, while Malechus would probably be the proper name Mālik.¹⁸³ Sasanian notions of authority and leadership thus found an early inlet into Arabian tribal culture. Later, an Arab ruler of Ḥīrah, Qābūs ibn Mundhir (r. ca. 570–574), had a Persian first name.¹⁸⁴ Pre-Islamic Arabic sources provide us with figures with Persian names such as Bisṭām (ibn Qays) of Shaybān, closely associated in Arabic sources with Sasanian patronage,¹⁸⁵ or Dakhtanūs (bint Laqīṭ), the daughter of the illustrious chief of the Tamīm tribe, Laqīṭ, purportedly named after Dukhtar-i Nūsh, the daughter of a Sasanian emperor.¹⁸⁶ Some members of these elites would likely have been brought up as hostages in imperial courts, as the Byzantine diplomat Nonnosus demanded be done with the son of Qays, chief of Kindah and Ma‘add, on a mission around 527–32.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² Michael the Syrian and Jean Baptiste Chabot, *Chronique de Michel Le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899), 310–11 (Syriac)=2:246 (French).

¹⁸³ Altheim and Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, 2:326.

¹⁸⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 172n1.

¹⁸⁵ J. M. Kister, “Bisṭām b. Qays,” *IEJ*. For a further discussion of ties between the Shaybānī leadership and the Sasanians, see Donner, “Bakr B. Wa’il,” 27–29.

¹⁸⁶ This explanation of her name is given in *Tāj*, s.v. “Dakhtanūs.” Her poetry has been collected by al-Mu‘īnī, *Shi‘r Banī Tamīm*, 333–42.

¹⁸⁷ Photius, *Bibliothèque*, trans. René Henry (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1959), 3.

It was certainly the case that Byzantine modes of authority were highly esteemed, as the Syriac bishop and historian John of Ephesus (d. 586/8) carefully describes the titles, honors and gifts, including a crown or diadem, bestowed upon the Jafnid Mundhir ibn Ḥārith at Constantinople by the emperor Tiberius in 580, surrounded by Alexandrian clergy.¹⁸⁸ Much Jafnid expression of rule was accordingly Hellenic and Christian. Architecturally, a Greek inscription found near Damascus records a tower built by Mundhir,¹⁸⁹ and his name is recorded in a Greek mosaic inscription at a church near ʿAmmān,¹⁹⁰ perhaps indicating his sponsorship. In Syriac historical and ecclesiastical sources Ḥārith and Mundhir are depicted as a supporter of the Monophysite faction in the Roman empire.¹⁹¹ Several other bilingual inscriptions in Arabic and Greek from greater Syria testify to the interaction of Arabic and Byzantine culture.¹⁹² In general, in the Negev desert, Jordan river valley and greater Syria, the number of Arabic names in inscriptions, as in tombs, increases from the fourth to sixth centuries.¹⁹³

Thus, although the exact links are difficult to discern and shifting, the tribes of the interior of the Arabian peninsula would have found themselves affected culturally in varying degrees by their elite dynasties leading them. Affiliations with the Christian Jafnids, the pro-Sasanian Naṣrids, and the Ḥimyarites would in turn have affected the sense of regional identity among tribes and groups of tribes. Diverse as such tribes would have been, to non-Arab eyes the nomads of the interior of the peninsula would have fallen largely under the rubrics of

¹⁸⁸ John of Ephesus, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, trans. R. Payne Smith (Oxford: University Press, 1860), 298–306=3.4.39–42.

¹⁸⁹ Fisher, *Between Empires*, 102.

¹⁹⁰ George Bevan, Greg Fisher, and Denis Genequand, “The Late Antique Church at Tall Al-ʿUmayrī East: New Evidence for the Jafnid Family and the Cult of St. Sergius in Northern Jordan,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 373 (May 1, 2015): 49–68.

¹⁹¹ Fisher, *Between Empires*, 57–60.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 144–153.

¹⁹³ Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 237.

Muḍar in the west and Ma‘add in the center and east of the peninsula, respectively. Although the Jafnids were known as Banū Tha‘labah in Christian and south Arabian inscriptional sources, they were known as Ghassān in medieval Arabic texts, and the nomadic population would certainly have seen certain tribal elites in a different light than non-Arabs. Other families probably also legitimized themselves by appealing to indigenous royal lineages as did Kindah and Ghassān, known from inscriptions to date back hundreds of years before Islam. Other tribes and clans from the late pre-Islamic period, such as Ḥimyar and Liḥyān, were also known for ancient Arabian monarchies and their self-identification with royal lineages can be seen in light of Jafnid practice.

1.3. The Historical Development of Arabic Poetry in Light of Non-Arabic Sources

Non-Arabic sources cannot inform us much further about the regional affiliations possible in the sixth century among Arab tribes, but the Arabic sources give us a complementary picture. With regard to religion, it is evident from Arabic sources that some tribes were clearly Jewish, such as the Naḍīr and Qurayzah of Medina, early opponents of the Muslims. Likewise, the Cordoban polymath Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) gives us a comprehensive list of tribal religious affiliation: “all of Iyād and Rabī‘ah and Bakr and Taghlib and Namar and ‘Abd al-Qays are Christian, so too is Ghassān, and Banū Ḥārith ibn Ka‘b in Najrān, and al-Ṭayyi’, Tanūkh, many of Kalb, and all those from Tamīm and Lakhm residing in Ḥīrah. Ḥimyar were Jewish, as were many from Kindah. Khath‘am had no religion at all (*lā tadīn bi-shay’ aṣlan*). Zoroastrianism (*al-majūsiyyah*) appeared among Tamīm, and it is said that Laqīṭ ibn Zurārah had

converted to Zoroastrianism (*qad tamajassa*). The rest of the Arabs worshipped idols.”¹⁹⁴ A somewhat earlier summary of tribal religion by the Persian geographer Ibn Rustah (d. after 290/903) is very similar, although listing Banū Ḥārith ibn Kaʿb as Jewish, and with a shorter list of Christian tribes.¹⁹⁵

Although a lengthier and more critical examination of the extensive Arabic texts would be required to say with full certainty, in general, the tribes’ religious affiliation depicted by Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn Rustah clearly corresponds to a regional configuration conforming to that evident in Byzantine and inscriptional sources. ‘Abd al-Qays were said to live in greater Bahrain, where the Sasanian-based Nestorian church is known to have been active, and Ṭayyi’ and Tanūkh¹⁹⁶ were known to Christian authors, as well as Ghassān if their leadership is equated with the Banū Thaʿlabah. All of the other northern tribes dwelt in the fertile crescent near either Byzantine or Sasanian territory and Ḥimyar is known from inscriptions to have adopted some sort of Judaizing monotheism, and Kindah were their vassals.

There is nevertheless a discrepancy between what some sources tell us about tribes’ adoption of religion and what is reflected in the extant poetry. This is probably due to the bulk of well-transmitted Arabic poetry originating among the nomadic Arab tribes; for them Christian monks or Jews mostly appear as distant figures whose lamps, to which lighting is compared, burn through the night.¹⁹⁷ Poets were also aware of monks’ vows of celibacy, since

¹⁹⁴ ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-‘Arab*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1962), 491. For a discussion of Tamīm’s relationship with the Sasanians as depicted in Arabic sources, see Michael Lecker, *People, Tribes, and Society in Arabia around the Time of Muḥammad*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), XI, 68–76.

¹⁹⁵ Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar ibn Rustah and Aḥmad ibn Abī Ya‘qūb Ya‘qūbī, *Kitāb al-a‘lak an-naḥḥa vii, auctore Abū Alī Ahmed ibn Omar Ibn Rusteh; et Kitāb al-boldān*, ed. M. J. De Goeji, second ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1892), 217.

¹⁹⁶ For for Ṭayyi’ and Tanūkh see Ahūdemmeh, *Histoires d’Ahoudemmeh et de Marouta, métropolitains jacobites de Tagrit et de l’Orient (VIe et VIIe siècles): suivies du traité d’Ahoudemmeh sur l’homme*, trans. François Nau, vol. 1, Recueil de monographies; (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1909), 28.

¹⁹⁷ Imru’ al-Qays in Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 148, l. 8, 149, l. 18 of a monk’s lamp; Abū Dhu‘ayb of a Jew’s: 1(AdhH).11.9.

they would often describe a woman's seductive power as capable of overwhelming holy men.¹⁹⁸ But otherwise, clearly authentic references to monotheistic religion are few and far between, and Theodor Nöldeke, having examined the evidence available to him at the time found almost no influence of Jewish thought on pre-Islamic poetry attributed to Jews.¹⁹⁹ Having carefully collected and studied the extant poetry of the Kalb tribe surviving as citations in medieval anthologies, Muḥammad Shafīq Bayṭār concludes in a recent study that "Christianity did not prevail among the Banū Kalb ... it was adopted among some individuals and families among them, while the majority remained pagan until the advent of Islam."²⁰⁰ This fits nicely with the model of a dynastic, supra-tribal warrior elite sketched above. Contemporary western scholars for their part are more skeptical still, and have tended to see much of the purported pre-Islamic Christian and Jewish poetry as Muslim retrojection.²⁰¹ Clear allusions to pagan religion, it should be noted, are also mostly lacking, although oaths in the name of God (*Allāh*), and the pagan deities such as Wadd (or Wudd)²⁰² appear from time to time. The Meccan pilgrimage, discussed below, although allusions to it are sparse, is the most frequently and clearly recurring religious reference in pre-Islamic poetry.

In Arabic sources, then, the perceived adherence of certain tribes or configurations of tribes to religions of the regional imperial powers offers an index of these powers' cultural influence. The historical development of sophisticated Arabic poetry in the poly-thematic

¹⁹⁸ Al-Nābighah in Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 11, l. 1.

¹⁹⁹ Theodor Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Poesie der alten Araber* (Hannover: C. Rümpler, 1864), 52–86, esp. p. 56.

²⁰⁰ Bayṭār, *Shu'arā' Banī Kalb*, 1:196.

²⁰¹ Ewald Wagner, *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung: Die arabische Dichtung in islamsicher Zeit*, vol. 2 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987), 7. He examines in more detail (7–9) the noteworthy examples of 'Adī ibn Zayd, a Christian of al-Ḥīrah, and Umayyah ibn Abī l-Ṣalt of al-Ṭā'if.

²⁰² Muraqqish al-Akbar of Qays ibn Tha'labah, *Muf.* no. 50, l. 11 in Al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 232; al-Nābighah in Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 23, l. 6; and see also C.A. Nallino, "Il Verso d'an-Nābighah sul dio Wadd," *Atti della Accademia naz. Dei Lincei: Rendiconti della classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, series 5, v. 29 (1920): 283–290.

form of the *qaṣīdah* also parallels the emergence of the most powerful Arab dynasties, especially the Naṣrids of Ḥīrah, allied with non-Arab powers. Curiously here, none of the tribes associated most closely with foreign powers (i.e. Banū Lakhm and Banū Ghassān, representatives of whom do appear from time to time) in Arabic sources produced much poetry, with the exception of the legendary Imru' al-Qays of Kindah, whose problematic corpus is even more replete with corrupt and spurious texts than most. Rather, tribes and dynasties almost unknown to non-Arabs such as Qays ibn Tha'labah, Dhubyān, Tamīm and 'Āmir produced the bulk of classical pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. These were mostly nomadic tribes, and the genre of *qaṣīdah* poetry is thus in one sense the nomadic response to elite-controlled confederations sponsored by sedentary imperial powers. Setting Imru' al-Qays to one side as a one-off, it is important to note that the Naṣrid role was much more seminal than the Jafnid/Ghassānid one.

In several instances, this poetic development can be linked to non-Arabic sources. The earliest powerful Naṣrid documented in Byzantine and south Arabian sources is Mundhir III ibn Nu'mān. As in the case of the Jafnids/ Ghassānids, Mundhir is identified differently in Arabic and non-Arabic sources. In non-Arabic sources, he is consistently referred to, apparently by his mother's name,²⁰³ as the son of Sakkikē or Zakikē. Two references are from sixth century near-contemporaries. Procopius refers to him as Ἄλαμούνδαρος ὁ Σακκίκης²⁰⁴ and Cyril of Scythopolis as Ἄλαμούνδαρος ὁ Σακίκης.²⁰⁵ Now, within this dynasty and in

²⁰³ A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, eds., *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 2:s.v. "Alamundarus." Check citation.

²⁰⁴ Procopius, *History of the Wars*, 145=1:17.1.

²⁰⁵ Eduard Schwartz, ed., *Kyryllos von Skythopolis* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1939), 211, l. 15.

have been well documented.²¹¹ Thus, if Qays ibn Tha'labah was, as von Grunebaum has argued, the foundational clan for the development of classical *qaṣīdah*-poetry, then it is equally inescapable that their relationship with the Naṣrid dynasty of Ḥīrah formed a part of this new creative impetus. That prose Arabic sources and poetic texts attributed to later poets exchange Ibn Shaqīqah for the more sonorous Mā' al-Samā' or Mā' al-Muzn indicates, as is possible with "Ghassān" for the Jafnids, that poetry played a legitimizing function for the foreign-sponsored elites.

Another well-known reference point for pre-Islamic poetry is the death of Mundhir III in June, 554. This is referred to by, among others, Michael the Syrian (d. 1199), the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, drawing on the sixth century John of Ephesus: "In the year 27 of Justinian, Mundhir [the son] of Shaqiqa went up into the territory of the Romans and devastated many regions. Harith [the son] of Jabalah encountered him, fought against him, defeated and killed him ... in the region of Chalcis [Arabic "Qinnasrīn," south-west of Aleppo]."²¹² Mundhir's death found some echo among poets. Opinion varies widely as to who exactly killed him. According to Ibn Ḥazm, it was 'Amr ibn 'Abd Allāh of Suḥaym, hence the line by Aws ibn Ḥajar of Tamīm:

I was informed that Banū Suḥyam

brought the blood of Mundhir into their tents with them.²¹³

Similarly unclear is the reference by 'Alqamah, also of Tamīm, to one Ḥārith of Ghassān, usually taken by commentators to refer to Ḥārith ibn Jabalah, in his famous petition for his brother's Sha's's release following the battle in 554:

²¹¹ Ibid., 4, 5; von Grunebaum, "Chronologie," 342n4.

²¹² Michael the Syrian and Chabot, *Chronique de Michel Le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)*, 323–24a (Syriac)/ 269 (French)=IX.33.

²¹³ Aws no. 22, l.2 in Aws ibn Ḥajar, *Dīwān Aws ibn Ḥajar*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1979), 47.

To Ḥārith the munificent have I worked my she-camel,
her breast and ribs heaving ...

The Banū Ka'b ibn 'Awf brought home their confederate [sc. Ḥārith]:
another confederate [sc. Mundhir] was left abandoned among some of his
soldiers ...

Those entrusted with the defense of Ghassān fought on her behalf.²¹⁴

The evidence from the text for any historical date is clearly spotty, and as James Montgomery has noted after a thorough review of the lore (*akhbār*) associated with the poem, the text could refer to more than one event with the same cast of characters, such that rather than a firm peg to the year 554, he offers a range from 554–578.²¹⁵

If 'Alqamah's poem does not date from the death of Mundhir in 554, the Tamīmī poet nevertheless represents an increase in poetic activity around the Jafnids/Ghassānids. There is very little poetry associated with Ḥārith ibn Jabalah, who died in 569, or with his successors known in non-Arabic sources, Mundhir ibn Ḥārith (r. 569–82) and his son, Nu'mān ibn Mundhir (r. 582–83). Rather, the poet most renowned for his innovative praise *qaṣīdahs* of both Jafnid and Naṣrid rulers is the late sixth century al-Nābighah al-Dhubayānī, who can be dated from his compositions to the last Naṣrid at Ḥīrah, al-Nu'mān III b. Mundhir IV (c. 580–602), who confusingly has the same first name as al-Nu'mān ibn Ḥārith al-Aṣghar, a Jafnid figure unknown in non-Arabic sources, but presumably dating from the same period as al-Nu'mān III's reign,²¹⁶ to whom al-Nābighah devoted six poems.²¹⁷ By this point, however, the Jafnids/

²¹⁴ James Montgomery's translation (*Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah*, 26–29) and corresponds to 'Alqamah no. 2, ll. 15, 24, 29=Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 106, 107.

²¹⁵ Montgomery, *Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah*, 25.

²¹⁶ Nöldeke, *Die Ghassānischen Fürsten*, 53.

Ghassānids were a shadow of their former selves. Al-Nābighah undoubtedly offers an inflated image of them in exchange for their patronage when praising them, but their actual weakness is evident elsewhere as when, for example, he threatens them with defeat if they were to attack his Asad-Dhubyān nomadic confederation:

I told Nu'mān the day that I met him,

when he wished [to attack] Banū Ḥunn [of 'Udhrah] at Burqat Ṣādir:

Avoid Banū Ḥunn, for clashing with them

is abominable, even if you encounter only one steadfast man [of them].²¹⁸

Poets would not dare speak that way to Mundhir III ibn Nu'mān. Chronologically, then, between 554 and 582, the style of *qaṣīdah* poetry initially cultivated by nomadic tribes in the north-east of the peninsula near Ḥīrah, and especially by Qays ibn Tha'labah, was transmitted to remnants of the Jafnid dynasty in Syria and the northern Ḥijāz. In some cases, poets associated with the Naṣrids defected to the Jafnids. This was reportedly the case of al-Mutalammis al-Ḍubā'ī,²¹⁹ who, along with his kinsman Ṭarafah, is the subject of a probably legendary story involving the Naṣrid Mundhir's son, known as 'Amr ibn Hind (r. 554–70) after his mother, Hind. According to Ibn Qutaybah's (d. 276/ 889) version of this story, he and his cousin Ṭarafah were boon companions of 'Amr ibn Hind, but having written invective against him, he decided to kill them. Telling them they were to be rewarded, he gave them sealed letters to take to the governor (*āmil*) of Baḥrayn, which in reality contained their death

²¹⁷ Nos. 4, 9, 14, 19, 22 and 32 in Al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, *Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1977).

²¹⁸ Al-Nābighah no. 14, ll. 1,2 in *ibid.*, 98.

²¹⁹ According to Ḥasan Kāmil al-Ṣayrafī, this is Ḍubay'ah ibn Rabī'ah, not Ḍubay'ah of Qays ibn Tha'labah: al-Mutalammis, *Dīwān Shī'r al-Mutalammis al-Ḍubā'ī: Riwāyat al-Athram wa-Abī 'Ubaydah 'an al-Aṣma'ī*, ed. Ḥasan Kāmil al-Ṣayrafī (Cairo: Jāmi'at al-Duwal al-'Arabiyyah Ma'had al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-'Arabiyya, 1970), 14, 15 (al-muqaddima). Cf also Caskel, *Ḡamharat an-nasab*, vol. 1, table 173.

warrants. Al-Mutalammis opened his letter and then escaped to Syria, but Ṭarafah refused to countenance reality and continued to his untimely demise, and “Mutalammis’s message” (*ṣaḥīfat al-Mutalammis*) became a proverb equivalent to hoisting oneself by one’s own petard.²²⁰

There are a few interesting points about the story. It is probably a trope (as the resemblance to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s fate attests), but a number of elements suggest an early date. It strongly resembles a story told by John of Ephesus regarding the Byzantine emperor Justin II (r. 565–78)’s attempt to kill the Jafnid heir to Ḥārith, Mundhir, in 572. Justin wrote one letter to a patrician named Marcian explaining his plans, and another to Mundhir inviting him to meet with Marcian. The letters were switched, and Mundhir learned of Justin’s scheming and revolted.²²¹ Muka’bar, the governor to whom Mutallamis and Ṭarafah were sent, was said elsewhere by al-Ṭabarī to have been in charge of Baḥrayn under under Khusro I (r. 531–79).²²² Although most of his poetic texts have “the illustration of a saga rather than the work of a single historical figure,” according to Charles Pellat, Mutalammis’s poem on his journey to Iraq has more claim to authenticity than other texts attributed to him: it “presents variants and inspires such divergent interpretations that one has the impression that the transmitters and commentators did not understand it.”²²³ Irfan Shahīd likewise dates the poem to 554–69.²²⁴ Although often over-confident in his dating of Arabic sources, he may have a point here. Mutalammis, in recording his journey to Syria, mentions the rulers of Ḥīrah, apostrophizing his camel mare, enjoining it to eschew paths leading back to al-Ḥīra:

I am heading towards Syria, for we have no Iraq –

²²⁰ Abū l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Al-Maydānī, *Majma’ al-Amthāl*, ed. Jān ‘Abd Allāh Tūmā (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2005), 2:267–70, s.v. “Ṣaḥīfat al-Mutalammis.”

²²¹ John of Ephesus, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, 370=6.3–4.

²²² al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:166–72; 6:154; al-Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 257–63.

²²³ Charles Pellat, *EI*², s.v. “al-Mutalammis.”

²²⁴ Shahīd, *BASIC*, v. 2 pt. 1, 266.

for a people we love, since our people look askance at us.

Do not tread the Najdī paths of Bawbāh,

so long as ‘Amr lives, as long as Qābūs has life left in him.²²⁵

‘Amr and Qābūs, two sons of Mundhir III, are known to non-Arabic sources, unlike, for example, the Ghassānid addressees of al-Nābighah al-Dhubayānī’s poems. Menander Protector, a sixth century Constantinopolitan bureaucrat and diplomat, reporting on negotiations between the Persians and Romans in 561/2, includes extensive discussions on Persian demands for Roman payments to ‘Amr.²²⁶ Theophanes Confessor mentions discussions held in 563 between Ḥārith and the emperor Justinian regarding raids by ‘Amr in Palestine²²⁷ and John of Ephesus mentions Qābūs raiding Palestine shortly after Ḥārith ibn Jabalah’s death in 569.²²⁸ If the story of al-Mutalammis is elaborated via a trope, an historical core quite likely dates to the period after Mundhir III’s death in 554. Furthermore, the transmission of the trope itself, from a story about a Byzantine-Arab encounter into a story about an encounter between an Arab and the pro-Sasanian Naṣrids, indicates growing cultural ties among these disparate Arab tribes.

At any rate, ‘Amr ibn Hind is depicted very negatively in the Arabic literary sources, and was said to have been assassinated by another poet, ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm al-Taghlibī.²²⁹ Given what we have seen of tribal elites defecting throughout the fifth and sixth century from the pro-Persian to pro-Roman camps, the loss of Mundhir III and his replacement by an impetuous

²²⁵ Al-Mutalammis no. 11, ll. 11, 12 in *Dīwān al-Mutalammis* 92, 93. Ibn Qutaybah also mentions ‘Amr and Qābūs together in two lines of Ṭarafah discussed in the context of this story: Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā’*, 189.

²²⁶ Menander, *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. and trans. R. C. Blockley (Liverpool, Great Britain: F. Cairns, 1985), 69, 71, 83 (fragment 6.1).

²²⁷ “Ambros, son of Alamoundaros”: Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 352=AM 6056/ Bonn 240.

²²⁸ John of Ephesus, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, 370=VI.3.

²²⁹ Cf. Régis Blachère, *EP*², s.v. “‘Amr b. Kulthūm.”

son would logically have driven poets previously associated with Ḥīrah to the Jafnids. By the 580s, al-Nābighah was composing poetry for both the (post)-Jafnids and Naṣrids.

Aside from Mundhir III's death in 554, a new political force associated with a slew of innovative poetic texts arises after 552, the tribe or confederation of 'Āmir (ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah).²³⁰ They represent another vector by which the poetic tradition associated with Ḥīrah was transmitted to the Ḥijāz. As we have seen, the power of Ḥimyar waned with the Aksumite occupation, and one of the last Sabaic inscriptions, Ry 506 from Murayghān, records Abrahah's successful suppression of a revolt by a tribe called 'Āmir in 552 (or 547):

[1] By the power of the Merciful One and His Messiah, the King Abrahah Zybmn, King of Saba' and Dhū Raydān and Ḥadramawt and [2] Yamnt and their Arabs of the highlands and coastal plains [3] wrote this inscription when he had raided Ma'add in the fourth razzia in the month of April [and] when all of Banū 'Āmir had revolted. ... [5] Against Banū 'Āmir were Kindah and 'Alī in the valley of Dhū Markh, and Murād and Sa'd in a valley on the TRBN route, and they slew and made captive [the enemy] and took booty in great quantity. ... [7] After all this, 'Amr son of Mundhir negotiated [with Abrahah] and agreed to give hostages to Abrahah from Mundhir.²³¹

The tribes mentioned here would, like the Naṣrids and Jafnids fighting after their Sasanian and Byzantine overlords had quit in 545, continue to fight long after non-Arab sources lose

²³⁰ I draw on Iḥsān 'Abbās's introduction to Labīd, *Sharḥ dīwān Labīd*, 8–15.

²³¹ Sayed, "Emendations to the Bir Murayghan Inscription Ry 506 and a New Minor Inscription from There," 131–132.

interest. If Abū ‘Ubaydah is to be believed, Murād would meet ‘Āmir again, the latter under the lead of ‘Āmir ibn Ṭufayl, a contemporary of the Prophet, at Fayf al-Rīḥ²³² around the year 614.²³³

The ‘Āmir of Ry 506 has contacts with both Yemen and ‘Amr ibn Mundhir at Ḥīrah, evidently receiving support from him for such confrontations. This lends credibility to the texts attributed to Labīd addressing al-Nu‘mān III ibn Mundhir IV, such as his improvised *urujūzah* mocking the king's companion Rabī, or his elegy for that king:²³⁴

Let the wine-drinkers and slave girls weep for Nu‘mān,

and the widows like wraiths that come knocking and begging.

Sovereignty is his over near-dwelling Ma‘add (*fī ḍāḥī Ma‘add*),

and the ‘Ibād²³⁵ submit to him (*aslamat*); he cannot be deceived (*mā yuḥāwalū*).²³⁶

The use of the term Ma‘add, so frequent in south Arabian inscriptions, is striking. While frequently connected to Ḥīrah, ‘Āmir is also said to have interacted with Quraysh and other Ḥijāzī tribes; by some accounts they were part of the “Ḥums,” a sort of amorphous Delphic league based somehow on ritual and political affinities with Quraysh.²³⁷ Yet they also fought against the Meccans in the so-called “sacrilegious” Fijār war, which took place during the Prophet’s youth.²³⁸ They bordered, cooperated and also fought with Sulaym, a Ḥijāzī tribe located between Mecca and Medina (and frequently mentioned in *Ash‘ār*),²³⁹ and according to the Cordoban geographer Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī (d. 487/ 1094), ‘Āmir entered into an agreement

²³² *Naqā’id*, ed. Bevan, 469–72; A.A. Bevan, ed., *The Naqā’id of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1905), 469–72; Egbert Meyer, *Der historische Gehalt der Aiyām al-‘Arab*. (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1970), 13.

²³³ W. Caskel, *EI*², s.v. “‘Āmir b. al-Ṭufayl.”

²³⁴ Nos. 36, 59 in ‘Abbās, ed., *Sharḥ Dīwān Labīd*, 254–66, 340–343.

²³⁵ The tribe of Christian Arabs resident at al-Ḥīrah.

²³⁶ Labīd no. 36, ll. 12, 13, Labīd, *Sharḥ dīwān Labīd*, 257.

²³⁷ Kister, “Mecca and Tamīm,” 132.

²³⁸ J.W. Fück, *EI*², s.v. “Fidjār.”

²³⁹ Lecker, *People, Tribes, and Society in Arabia around the Time of Muḥammad*, 26–34.

with the Ḥijāzī Thaḳīf tribe to spend the dry Arabian summers near the rich agricultural land around al-Ṭāʾif, moving into the Najd uplands with the winter rainfall.²⁴⁰ They thus had connections both in Ḥīrah and in the heart of the Ḥijāz, and evidently brought poetic traditions with them.

In all likelihood, ʿAmir’s ascendancy only happened after around 575 CE. The *ayyām*-lore is bereft of any very antique battles in which ʿĀmir participated; the bulk of them involve either ʿĀmir ibn Ṭufayl or Labīd, both contemporaries of the Prophet, or Labīd’s father Rabīʿah.²⁴¹ Egbert Meyer supposes that the oldest date for any battle involving ʿĀmir would be Raḥraḥān (between 565 and 580)²⁴² or Naḥrawāt (pre-570),²⁴³ where Kilāb killed the “tyrant” Zuhayr ibn Jadhīmah of Hawāzin, thus becoming the leading clan within ʿĀmir. Not by coincidence, Kilāb produced the most famous poet of ʿĀmir, Labīd ibn Rabīʿah.²⁴⁴ It is at the exact same time that ʿĀmir’s poetry develops, around 575, according to Caskel.²⁴⁵ At the same time, ʿĀmir was attracting poets from elsewhere in the peninsula who praised them.²⁴⁶

A final means of the transmission of poetry to the Ḥijāz from the tribes connected to Ḥīrah lies in the intertribal profession of the *ruwāḥ*, specialist poetry transmitters. As we have seen, Aws ibn Ḥajar was connected to or knowledgeable of the demise of the Naṣrid Mundhir III in 554. He marks the beginning of a chain of transmitters, the next line of which is Zuhayr,

²⁴⁰ Al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam mā istaʿjam*, 77.

²⁴¹ Cf. Meyer, *Der historische Gehalt der Aiyām al-ʿArab*. At Dhū ʿAlaq (Meyer 13), the tribe of Asad killed Rabīʿah; at Fayf al-Rīḥ (Meyer 13), ʿĀmir under ʿĀmir ibn Ṭufayl was defeated by Madḥḥij and Murād, and ʿĀmir ibn Ṭufayl lost an eye; Labīd is associated with the Dāḥis war (Meyer 50–65), dated by Meyer to c. 575–95; the battles of Raḡam and Nutāʿah were fought between ʿĀmir under ʿĀmir ibn Ṭufayl and ʿAbs (Meyer 9, 10, 17).

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 47–50.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 33–38.

²⁴⁴ Labīd, *Sharḥ dīwān Labīd*, 7.

²⁴⁵ Caskel, *EI*², s.v. “ʿĀmir b. Ṣaʿṣaʿa.”

²⁴⁶ Al-Musayyab ibn ʿAlas of Qays ibn Thaʿlabah in Abū Zayd al-Qurashī, *Jamharat Ashʿār al-ʿArab fī l-Jāhiliyyah wa-l-Islām*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Cairo: Naḥḍat Miṣr, 1967), no. 15, pp. 557–560 and Bishr ibn ʿAmr of Bakr, *Muf. no. 71, al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, ed. Shākir et. al, 275–277, discussed in chapter 2.

who was involved in the end of the Dāḥis war, which involved both ʿĀmir and Mecca. A number of scholars have found stylistic grounds authenticating this line of transmission.²⁴⁷ Zuhayr, whose father was from the Muzaynah tribe of the Ḥijāz, then transmitted poetry to his son Kaʿb ibn Zuhayr, who was a famous opponent of the Prophet, before converting to Islam and composing the famous poem, “Suʿād has departed” as an apology, very much in the style of al-Nābighah’s poetic apologies to al-Nuʿmān.

Arabic *qaṣīdah*-poetry, from its origins in the social interaction of Qays ibn Thaʿlabah with the Naṣrid kings of Ḥīrah, subsequently developed among the nomadic tribes of Najd and was then transmitted to the northern Ḥijāz by defecting poets from the Ḥīran court, as well as into the southern Ḥijāz by nomadic tribes with ties to Ḥīrah, especially ʿĀmir. Simultaneously, we can speculate that the diminishing first of Ḥimyarite and Kindan power after the 550s, and then of Jafnid power after 582, left a space for the development of Ḥijāzī tribes and cities, including Quraysh at Mecca but also al-Thaqīf at al-Ṭāʿif, and Aws and Khazraj at Yathrib (later Medina). In a milieu of increasing local power, the poetic stylistics developed among the Naṣrids for navigating the complex hierarchies that imperial policies generated among the sedentary and nomadic Arab tribes was adapted to a heretofore subordinated and peripheral region. By the end of the sixth century, however, Arabic *qaṣīdah* poetry had become a more peninsula-wide affair. Poetic diction, in particular, was increasingly normalized,²⁴⁸ but regional, tribal and personal affiliations still definitively shaped stylistic and structural choices of poets, as Erich Bräunlich has demonstrated in examining the influence in the early seventh

²⁴⁷ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:159–60; Ḥusayn, *Fī l-Adab al-Jāhīlī*, 284–298; Aus ibn Hajar, *Gedichte und Fragmente des Aus ibn Hajar*, ed. and trans. Rudolf Eugen Geyer (Vienna: In Commission bei F. Tempsky, 1892), 8, 9.

²⁴⁸ Von Grunebaum, “Chronologie,” 340.

century of Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah of Hudhayl on his contemporary, Abū Dhu'ayb, reportedly the *rāwī* (transmitter) of the former.²⁴⁹

The narrative thus outlined, bringing poetry from the northeast to the southwest of the peninsula, is very similar to that described by Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī in his *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu'arā'* (Rankings of the stallions among the poets). He describes the evolution in terms of lineage rather than geography, as a division between the tribes of Rabī'ah on one hand, which included Bakr ibn Wā'il (to which Qays ibn Tha'labah belonged) and Taghlib, both located in the northeast near Iraq, and Qays 'Aylān on the other, which included north-western groups like Ghaṭafān and some central and south-western Najdī groups like Tamīm and 'Āmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'a respectively. According to Ibn Sallām, "the first pre-Islamic poets of Rabī'ah were al-Muhalhil, the two Muraqqishes, Sa'd ibn Mālik,²⁵⁰ Ṭarafah ibn al-'Abd, 'Amr ibn Qamī'ah, Ḥārith ibn Ḥillizah, al-Mutalammis, al-A'shā, and al-Musayyab ibn 'Alas."²⁵¹ All of these poets, with the exception of Ḥārith ibn Ḥillizah, are from (or connected to, in the case of al-Musayyab) the Qays ibn Tha'labah tribe. Ibn Sallām continues, "then [poetry] moved to Qays (*thumma tahawwala fī Qays*), and among them were al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, and they count among them Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā from [the tribe of] 'Abd Allāh of Ghaṭafān, and his son Ka'b, and Labīd ... then it shifted to Tamīm, where it remains to this day."²⁵²

Missing from this narrative, however, is any reference to poets of the Ḥijāz, particularly the southern Ḥijāz: Aws, Khazraj, Sulaym ibn Manṣūr, Qurasyh, Thaḳīf, Kinānah, Khuzā'ah, or of course Hudhayl. Nor does it refer to Yemeni tribes, some of whom, such as Azd and Fahm, interacted significantly with the tribes of the southern Ḥijāz. Ibn Sallām, as a literary critic

²⁴⁹ Bräunlich, "Versuch."

²⁵⁰ =Jarīr ibn 'Abd al-Masīḥ.

²⁵¹ Al-Jumahī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu'arā'*, 40.

²⁵² Ibid.

concerned to create an anthology based on hierarchical rankings of poets, has ignored this region of “inferior” poetic productivity. This is a missing link in Ibn Sallām’s narrative. His remark on Tamīm, unclear in itself, perhaps refers to the dominance of Tamīmī poets such as Dhū l-Rummah (d. 117/735), Jarīr (d. 111/729) and al-Farazdaq (d. 110/728) during the Umayyad period, although this is an odd comment by Ibn Sallām, living nearly a hundred years after these poets. The passage was perhaps copied from one of his teachers. Nevertheless, what of the “Ḥijāzī” love poetry of the Umayyad period, such as the Qurashī Don Juan, ‘Umar ibn Abī Rabī‘ah (d. 93 or 103/712 or 721)? This development is systematically ignored by Abbasid philologists and literary critics.

1.4. The Emergence of Poetry among the Tribes of the Ḥijāz

1.4.1. The Ḥijāz and Najd

The nascent southern Ḥijāzī culture was characterized by several features leading to its neglect in narratives of poetic production: it had less claim to Arab antiquity than Najdī culture; it was more closely associated with early Islamic culture than “pagan” poetic traditions; its culture was dominated by urban centers, unlike the purportedly purer deserts of Najd; and unlike tribes associated with al-Ḥīrah, Ḥimyar, or the Jafnids/Ghassānids, the tribes of the southern Ḥijāz were not sponsored by a major sedentary power, but fell within the sphere of Ḥimyarite and Ethiopian influence. Quraysh and a constellation of both nomadic and urban tribal powers began to expand with the blows to Ḥimyar from Axum and Iran in ca. 525 and 570.

In particular, cultural development in the southern Ḥijāz in the second half of the sixth century is ineluctably related to the rise of Quraysh, a process shrouded in myth and legend.

J.M. Kister has, however, argued persuasively for identifying the “expedition of the Elephant” mentioned in surah 105 of the Quran with the expedition of Abrahah described in Ry 506, dated to 552.²⁵³ Drawing on a range of Arabic sources, he dates the rise of the seminal Qurashī leader Quṣayy to the first half of the sixth century.²⁵⁴ Expansion in urban building and reform of sacred rites are attributed to Quṣayy, and Kister supposes that the “defeat” of Abrahah “enhanced the growth of the power of Mecca and strengthened the prestige of Quraysh.”²⁵⁵

This Ḥijāz, an emergent cultural region, is, in contrast to the philological tradition, accordingly privileged by early Islamic texts. Geographical exigency determined which tribes played significant roles in early Islamic history, thus embedding elements of a Ḥijāzī worldview in sacred scripture. For example, in several Prophetic *ḥadīths* (statements), Muḥammad demands that Christians and Jews, or polytheists (*al-muskhrikūn*) be expelled from the region known as *Jazīrat al-‘Arab*.²⁵⁶ In contemporary and most medieval usage, *Jazīrat al-‘Arab* simply means the Arabian peninsula, but the Medinan legal school of Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/796) offers a different definition of this region, in which it only refers to the western half of the peninsula. According to Mālik himself, “*Jazīrat al-‘Arab*” means “Medina, Mecca, al-Yamāmah [southern Najd] and Yemen.”²⁵⁷ His student, the Egyptian ‘Abd Allāh ibn Wahb (d. 197/813), narrows “the land of the Arabs” (*arḍ al-‘Arab*) down to “Mecca, Medina, and Yemen.”²⁵⁸ Likewise, in a statement attributed to the Qurashī general ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ (d. ca. 42/663), the new Islamic world is described as being like “a bird,” the “head” (*al-ra’s*) of which

²⁵³ Kister, “The Campaign of Ḥulubān,” *Le Muséon* 78, (1965): 428.

²⁵⁴ Kister, “Mecca and the Tribes of Arabia,” 51.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ For example, al-Bukhārī 3053, where the Mālikī al-Mughīrah ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān is cited to define the term *Jazīrat al-‘Arab*. His definition is identical to Mālik’s discussed below.

²⁵⁷ Bakrī, *Mu‘jam mā ista‘jam*, 5.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

is “Mecca, Medina, and Yemen.”²⁵⁹ Likewise, early Quran exegetes understood the winter and summer journeys of Quraysh mentioned in Sūra 106 of the Quran as taking place between Yemen and Syria.²⁶⁰ These markers of early Islamic geographical sensibility essentially represent a Qurashī tribal regionalism centered on the Ḥijāz, and other tribes of the region, such as Hudhayl (as explored in detail in chapter 4), shared nearly the same outlook. An early geographer of the Ḥijāzī tribe of Sulaym, ‘Arrām ibn Aṣṣbagh al-Sulamī, defines the Ḥijāz as lying between Medina and Mecca,²⁶¹ while the adjacent coastal strip Tihāmah extends from Mt. Raḍwā north of Medina to al-Ṭā’if near Mecca.²⁶² It is this “southern Ḥijāzī” definition that I understand by the term “Ḥijāz” throughout this study. Although there is little agreement on borders, distinguishing between the Ḥijāz and Najd was very important for ‘Arrām and other geographers, who go so far as to note which sites are on the border of both regions—Medina, for example, is “half Ḥijāzī and half Najdī.”²⁶³

Early philologists, grammarians and commentators refer very frequently to the division between “Ḥijāz” and “Najd,” or “Ḥijāz” and “Tamīm” (a powerful Najdī tribe), not merely in points of grammatical detail but in points of culture as well. This division probably reflects the sensibility of their nomadic informants. Ibn Qutaybah for example, tells us that the two poets of Dhubyān, Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā and al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, were particularly favored by

²⁵⁹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā*, 1.

²⁶⁰ Among the extensive discussions of this chapter of the Quran, see Rubin, “Quraysh and their Winter and Summer Journey: On the Interpretation of Sūra 106”; Shahid, “Two Qur’anic Suras: Al-Fil and Quraysh”; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 204–14.

²⁶¹ ‘Arrām ibn al-Aṣṣbagh al-Sulamī, *Kitāb asmā’ jibāl Tihāmah wa-sukkānihā: wa-mā fihā min al-quran wa-mā yanbutu ‘alayhā min al-ashjār wa-mā fihā min al-miyāh*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maṭba‘at Amīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, 1954), 52–3, 79 ff.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 5, 46 ff.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 52.

the “people of the Ḥijāz.”²⁶⁴ Likewise, according to Ibn Qutaybah, citing Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’ (d. 144 or 147/ 771 or 774), the “Arabs” (*al-‘Arab*) do not transmit the poetry of the pre-Islamic Ḥīran poet ‘Adī ibn Zayd al-‘Ibādī because his language is “not Najdī” (*li-anna alfāzahū laysat bi-Najdiyyah*).²⁶⁵ An almost identical statement is attributed to al-Aṣma‘ī (d. ca. 213/828) concerning another pre-Islamic Ḥīran poet, Abū Du‘ād al-Iyādī.²⁶⁶ It is important to note that despite these observations by eighth and ninth century scholars, few modern researchers have been able to detect much dialectic variation in the pre-Islamic poetry that has come down to us. Von Grunebaum, for example, collected Abū Du‘ād’s fragments specifically in order to study non-normative vocabulary, but did not find extensive evidence for the phenomenon.²⁶⁷ Likewise, Chaim Rabin’s attempt to describe traces of a west Arabian dialect in classical texts rely on later grammatical works rather than poetic texts themselves.²⁶⁸ Hudhayl’s poetry has some dialectical oddities, but not many.²⁶⁹

Nevertheless, even the earliest grammatical works like Sībawayhi’s (d. ca. 177/793) *al-Kitāb* posit a distinction between Ḥijāzī and Tamīmī dialects. For example, Sībawayhi describes the famous difference between *mā al-Ḥijāziyyah* and *mā al-Najdiyyah*, a distinction to be found in grammatical references down to the present day. The Ḥijāzī *mā*, a particle of negation, functions similarly to the word *laysa* and takes its object in the accusative, whereas Tamīmī

²⁶⁴ Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Shi‘r wa-l-Shu‘arā’*, 157: “ahl al-Ḥijāz yufaḍḍilūna l-Nābighah wa Zuhayran.”

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 230.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 238: *kānat al-‘Arab lā tarwī shi‘r Abī Duwād li-anna alfāzahū laysat bi-Najdiyyah*. Umayya ibn Abī l-Ṣalt was also not authoritative (*ibid.*, 461).

²⁶⁷ Gustave E. Von Grunebaum, “Abū Du‘ād Al-Iyādī: Collection of Fragments,” *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 51 (1948): 83.

²⁶⁸ Chaim Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*. (London: Taylor’s Foreign Press, 1951). Alexander Magidow reviews criticisms of Rabin in “Towards a Sociohistorical Reconstruction of Pre-Islamic Arabian Dialect Diversity” (PhD diss., University of Texas, 2013), 3, 127-133, <http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/21378>.

²⁶⁹ ‘*Udd* for *wudd*, *sīd* meaning lion rather than wolf, ‘*adī* mean “fighting footmen” rather than “cavalry.” *Ash‘ār*, 946, 1026 for “*udd*”, 531 for *sīd*; Lewin, *Vocabulary*, 279, s.v. “*adī*”;

speakers would leave the object in the nominative.²⁷⁰ Likewise, Ḥijāzī speakers of Arabic, according to Sībawayhi, “lighten” the *hamzah*, or glottalstop, so that a word like *qara’a* is pronounced *qarā*.²⁷¹ Sībawayhi notes dozens of such distinctions between Ḥijāzī and Tamīmī usages, but most of his observations deal with phonetic differences or accent rather than what would be considered true grammatical dialectical variation. Such variations as existed in speech could easily be altered or “corrected” in transmission of poetry as they would not alter the meter of a verse. The Ḥijāzī cursive script of seventh century Quran manuscripts is distinctive from other scripts such as the more monumental Kufan, probably reflecting a regional pre-Islamic scribal practice.²⁷²

The distinction between Ḥijāz and Tamīm or Najd extends to other cultural phenomena as well. For example, much confusion prevails over the nature of augury, particularly the meaning of the words *al-sāniḥ* or *al-sanīḥ* (pl. *sawāniḥ*) and *al-bāriḥ*, animals approaching from either the right or left hand side. Al-Aṣmaʿī’s student, Abū Naṣr Aḥmad ibn Ḥātim al-Bāhilī (d. 231/855), in his commentary on the poetry of Dhū l-Rummah, glosses a reference to *bāriḥ* as meaning “inauspicious,” of an oryx approaching the speaker from the left hand side.²⁷³ In so doing, he explains that Ḥijāzīs consider the opposite, *sāniḥ*, to be inauspicious, citing Abū Dhuʿayb of Hudhayl. On another note, architecturally, the Ḥijāz was characterized by stone architecture, particularly the well-known *uṭum*, or stone towers recorded in a swath stretching from the northern Ḥijāzī oasis settlements of Taymāʾ and Fadak, through Yathrib and al-Ṭāʾif,

²⁷⁰ ‘Amr ibn ‘Uthmān Sībawayhi, *Al-Kitāb*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānagī, 1988), 1:57. The example given is *Mā ‘Abdullāhu akhākha* versus *Mā ‘Abdullāhu akhūka*.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 3:541-559.

²⁷² François Déroche, “Manuscripts of the Qur’ān” in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*.

²⁷³ Dhū al-Rummah, *Dīwān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qaddūs Abū Ṣāliḥ (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Iymān, 1982), 862–863.

down to Najrān and Ṣan‘ā’ in Yemen.²⁷⁴ Najdī buildings on the other hand, were mostly constructed of mudbrick.²⁷⁵ Underlying cultural differences, for nomads, would be the fact that migration patterns would vary for Ḥijāzī and Najdī tribes. Rains in the southern Ḥijāz would begin in late summer in a period known as the *kharīf*, but this season of rain was unknown in Najd, where the period was called the *ḥamīm*, a period of light or ineffective rains.²⁷⁶

The Ḥijāz then, was a region with some sense of identity differentiating it from Najd, especially as represented by Tamīm. Ḥijāzīs’ pronunciation of Arabic was conspicuously different from Najdīs’, and they probably practiced similar, but distinguishable customs. Sedentary Ḥijāzīs shared a certain architectural heritage with Yemen, and Ḥijāzī and Najdī nomads would have operated on slightly different calendars due to variations in rainfall between the two regions. Najdī poetry was, by and large, considered to be superior to poetry from other areas of the peninsula, and we find major tribes of Syria, such as Kalb, Iraq, such as Taghlib, and the east coast along the Persian Gulf, such as ‘Abd al-Qays, represented only infrequently in the early medieval anthologies, or not at all. *Qaṣīdah* poetry from ‘Umān and Yemen is nearly non-existent, and the second largest group is certainly the Ḥijāzī.

Although gaps in transmission certainly cannot be discounted, this state of affairs probably reflects a certain uneven level of cultural development across the peninsula. Insofar

²⁷⁴ Imru’ al-Qays refers to an *uṭum* of the northern Ḥijāzī oasis settlement of Taymā’ in his *mu‘allaqah*: Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 150 and Imru’ al-Qays, *Dīwān*, 25. For the same style of building in Yathrib, with reference to Khaybar, Fadak, Najrān and Ṣan‘ā’, see Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm, *Der Dīwān des Kais ibn al-Ḥaṭīm*, ed. Tadeusz Kowalski (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1914), xv–xx. For al-Ṭā’if, see Michael Lecker, “Al-Ṭā’if” in *El²*. Finster mentions the apparent dependence of the *uṭums* on Yemeni architecture: Finster, “Arabia in Late Antiquity: An Outline of the Cultural Situation in the Peninsula at the Time of Muhammad,” 103. W. W. Müller summarizes the stone castle architecture [*al-quṣūr*] of the western peninsula as described by al-Hamdānī: “Ancient Castles Mentioned in the eighth volume of al-Hamdānī’s *Iklīl*, and Evidence of them in Pre-Islamic Inscriptions,” in *Al-Hamdānī: A Great Yemeni Scholar: Studies on the Occasion of His Millennial Anniversary*, ed. Y. M. Abdallah (Ṣan‘ā’: Ṣan‘ā’ University, 1986). The Quran (33:26) also refers to distinctive Medinan architecture with the word *ṣayāṣī* (fortifications).

²⁷⁵ Andrew Petersen, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996), 252–54.

²⁷⁶ Varisco, “Rain Periods,” 256–258; Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. “*kharīf*”; see also my “A Summer Song: The Dry Season and Autumn Rains among Pre-Islamic Najdī and Ḥijāzī Tribes,” *Arabica* (forthcoming).

as it can be reconstructed, nearly all Ḥijāzī poetry dates from after 575, following the development earlier in the sixth century of Najdī poetry as charted by von Grunebaum. Reconstruction of pre-Islamic poetry is a sketchy business, and often poets appear in several different generations, leading to a class of legendarily long-lived figures known as *mu‘ammarūn*, many of whom were collected by Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 255/869) in his *Kitāb al-Mu‘ammarīn* (The book of the long-lived men). Since a critical and comprehensive study of pre-Islamic poetry’s chronology is beyond the realm of this dissertation, a corpus based on the prominent anthologies mentioned above has been consulted: those of al-Aṣma‘ī, al-Mufaḍḍal, al-A‘lām, Abū Zayd al-Qurashī, with reference to the most prominent Ḥijāzīs mentioned by Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī (d. 232/846 or 7) in *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu‘arā’* and Ibn Qutaybah in *al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā’* (Poetry and poets) as well as the *Ash‘ār al-Hudhaliyīn*.

Medieval compilers of pre- and early-Islamic poetry demonstrated a clear bias towards Najdī poets. As we have seen above, the influential anthology edited by Ahlwardt as *Six Divans/al-‘Iqd al-thamīn*, based on a collection and commentary by the Andalusian philologist Yūsuf ibn Sulaymān al-A‘lam Shantamarī (d. 476/1083), does not contain poetry by any Ḥijāzī poets, although two of the latest poets chronologically, Zuhayr and al-Nābighah, were from Dhubyān, a tribe with some Ḥijāzī connections. More or less the same poets were included as the *Mu‘allaqāt*, the highly influential selection made by the philologist Abū Zayd al-Qurashī (fl. late third or fourth/ninth or tenth century) as part of his *Jamharat ash‘ār al-‘Arab* (Compendium of the poems of the Arabs).²⁷⁷ Of the 126 poems collected by al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Muḥammad al-

²⁷⁷ The inclusion of various poets in the list of *Mu‘allaqāt* varies somewhat. See Thomas Bauer, “Mu‘allaqāt,” *REAL*.

Ḍabbī (d. ca. 163/780), only eleven are from Ḥijāzī tribes.²⁷⁸ These eleven are from nine different tribes, some quite obscure, while from Najd, twenty-three pieces are by poets from the powerful Tamīm alone.²⁷⁹ The *Aṣma‘iyyāt* contain more texts from tribes of the Ḥijāz, with fourteen out of ninety-two poems originating there. It also contains nine texts by poets of Yemeni tribes, while the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* only has one.

The extant poetry, however, clearly demonstrates the interrelated features discussed above resulting from the regional dichotomy of Najd and the Ḥijāz: the transmitted poets are by and large connected somehow to Islamic lore; they date from a generation or two before Islam; a different *qaṣīdah* tradition predominates; and significant amounts of poetry have been preserved from urban poets. Of the eight Ḥijāzī poets mentioned by Ibn Qutaybah in *Al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā’* (out of 247 biographies, of which 47 are Jāhili, 41 *mukhaḍram* and 159 Islamic), excluding the Hudhalīs, six are explicitly connected to narratives of early Islām: al-‘Abbās ibn Mirdās, a prominent leader of Sulaym, was a convert to Islam, and Ibn Qutaybah reports on his negotiations with the Prophet for a larger donation;²⁸⁰ Khufāf ibn Nadbah (or Nudbah), also of Sulaym, participated in the conquest of Mecca;²⁸¹ Ḥassān ibn Thābit was the Prophet’s poet;²⁸² al-Khansā’ lived into Islām, and supposedly knew the Prophet’s wife ‘Ā’ishah;²⁸³ Umayyah ibn Abī l-Ṣalt’s poetry was purportedly known to the Prophet, and he supposedly supported Quraysh at Badr (discussed further below),²⁸⁴ and Abū Miḥjan al-Thaqafī participated in the

²⁷⁸ An additional eighteen poems are from the Ghaṭafān group of tribes, some of whose territory lay in the northern Ḥijāz.

²⁷⁹ For a breakdown of the tribes from which al-Mufaḍḍal and al-Aṣma‘ī drew his poets, as well as the tribal anthologies collected by al-Sukkarī and listed in Ibn Nadīm’s *Fihrist*, see the appendix.

²⁸⁰ Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā’*, 300; for further reports on ‘Abbās, see the bibliography in von Grunebaum, “al-‘Abbās b. Mirdās,” *EI*² and Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*, index, s.v. “al-‘Abbās b. Mirdās.”

²⁸¹ Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā’*, 342.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 305–08.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 345–46.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 459.

conquering Islamic armies (having been imprisoned by Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ for drunkenness, he asked one of Sa'd's concubines (*umm walad*) to be released in order to fight at al-Qādisiyyah—she did release him, he fought valiantly, and then voluntarily returned to captivity).²⁸⁵ The remaining two poets are Ta'abbaṭa Sharran al-Fahmī and the obscure Jāhilī Dhū l-Iṣba' al-'Adwānī.²⁸⁶ Most of the poets of the region not mentioned by Ibn Qutaybah are Medinan, and are discussed further below. They were all converts to Islam.

Our sample size is very small, but the approximate chronological distribution of the poets more or less matches that of Hudhayl. Hell counts 78 Hudhalī poets belonging to the generation immediately preceding Islam (ca. 575–625) or the *mukhaḍram* generation (ca. 600–650).²⁸⁷ He counts at most 14 mostly minor pre-Islamic poets dating to before 575, five poets from the conquest generation (ca. 625–675) and eight (including several prolific poets) from the Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd periods (almost all Umayyad). If the tapering off with the advent of the 'Abbāsīd probably reflects a philological interest in earlier and more primordial, the lack of pre-Islamic poetry must either be explained by a lack of pre-Islamic poetry or a failure amongst Ḥijāzī tribes to transmit any to later generations, which in turn may have been due to a lack of prestigious poets among the tribe.

In all likelihood there was simply little *qaṣīdah* poetry to transmit, if, like Renate Jacobi, we define the *qaṣīdah* as any multi-thematic poetic text beginning with a *nasīb*.²⁸⁸ By the time of Islam the two-part *qaṣīdah* had made some inroads into the southern Ḥijāz, and poets such as Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī and Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm al-Awsī of Medina favored extremely long and amorous *nasīb*s. However, in the *Aṣma'iyyāt* (14 poems, four *qaṣīdah*s), *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (11 poems,

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 423.

²⁸⁶ He is mentioned in the *Sīrah* in connection to pre-Islamic *hajj* ritual: Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīrah*, ed. Wüstenfeld, 77.

²⁸⁷ Hell, "Der Islam und die Hudailitendichtungen," 81–82.

²⁸⁸ Jacobi, *Studien*, 6.

three *qaṣīdahs*) and above all the *Ash‘ār al-Hudhaliyyīn* (34 *qaṣīdahs* dating from the *mukhadram* or pre-Islamic poets) there is perhaps one tripartite *qaṣīdah* out of the 41.²⁸⁹ If we added the 13 total *qaṣīdahs* from the *dīwān* of Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm to the corpus, there are three tripartite *qaṣīdahs* out of 54 total.²⁹⁰ Thaddäus Kowalski supposes that in Qay’s poetry the lack of a *raḥīl* featuring a camel mare, or hunting scenes or depictions of desert fauna such as onagers and oryx, reflects the semi-urban environment of Medina, although such a structure seems to be part of a regional trend.²⁹¹ In contrast to this Ḥijāzī poetics, the *Six Divans* collection contains 51 *qaṣīdahs*,²⁹² of which 15 are tripartite. The handful of Ḥijāzī *raḥīls* are also substantially shorter than those of Najdī poets. They contain only a total of nine lines of desert-crossing or *nāqah* description (the mean and median length is three lines).²⁹³ In contrast, the *Six Divan’s* fifteen *raḥīl* sections contain 169 lines for a mean length of about 11 lines per section and a median of seven lines. These statistics show, if only in a very rough way, not only an evident regional variation, but also that the tripartite *qaṣīdah* was never normative anywhere in pre-Islamic Arabia.

The precise definition of a tripartite *qaṣīdah* requires some elucidation. Jacobi only counts those which thematize the central *raḥīl* section with a transitional motif at the beginning or ending of the section. The most common is the initial Trostmotiv, where the poet enjoins himself to take consolation from the beloved’s absence in a camel mare with which he undertakes the *raḥīl*.²⁹⁴ A *raḥīl* can also, however, begin with the particle *wāw rubbah*, usually

²⁸⁹ *Aṣm.* no. 3.

²⁹⁰ Including Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm, nos. 16 and 21.

²⁹¹ Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm, *Der Dīwān des Kais ibn al-Ḥaṭīm*, xxxi.

²⁹² Or 61 (*Studien*, 6): Jacobi disregards 10 texts as unclassifiable as obviously incomplete or irretrievably confused in their line ordering (*Studien*, 12n3).

²⁹³ *Aṣm.* no. 3 has 4 lines, and Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm nos. 16 and 21 have 2 and 3, respectively.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

meaning “many a ...” followed by a genitive noun. In this case, however, nothing distinguishes the desert journey from general *mufākharah* (boasting), which is usually taking constituting a possible terminal third part of the tripartite *qaṣīdah*. Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid (or his father, Khuwaylid) of Hudhayl, for example, boasts of his assistance to another tribe. In the poem he boasts both of crossing treacherous deserts in the winter (l. 3: *fa-yā rubba ḥayrā jumādiyyatin*) and then his defeat of black, apparently Ethiopian enemies (l. 6: *wa-sūdin ji‘ādin ghilāzu l-riqābi*). This poem not only has no clear *nasīb*, but seems to be structured via an aggregation of boasts introduced with *wāw rubbah* rather than by a tripartite progression of sections.²⁹⁵

Jacobi considers this to be an chronologically earlier development in her corpus, one in which either the *nasīb* and the *mufakharah* were conceived as a single unit (the poet boasts to a female interlocutor of his exploits, thus rendering a transition unnecessary, or in which no sensibility of the sequential tripartite *qaṣīdah* as a genre had yet emerged.²⁹⁶ If we included such texts, in the *Six Divans* corpus we have 21 tripartite out of 51 *qaṣīdahs*, and five out of 54 for the Ḥijāzī corpus.²⁹⁷ Given that in elegies and other poems the poets of Hudhayl depicted onager and oryx episodes similar to those used by Najdī poets in their *raḥīl*, it would seem not that they were entirely unaware of such texts, but that they chose not to emulate them, or to make use of the same material in order to construct tripartite *qaṣīdahs*. There are no *nāqah* descriptions or desert-crossing sections in any tripartite Hudhalī poem introduced by a transitional motif. This is likely the result of different social circumstances than those dictating the development of the tripartite *qaṣīdah* among Najdī tribes. The tripartite *qaṣīdah* can play a crucial social role in negotiating highly hierarchical social situations, such as were

²⁹⁵ 7(MKHS).11.3, 6, *Ash‘ār*, 389–90.

²⁹⁶ Jacobi, *Studien*, 50.

²⁹⁷ Including Ma‘qil’s poem cited above, and Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm, no. 25.

found between nomadic Arabs and the Jafnid/Ghassānid or Naṣrid/Lakhmid “kings,” but this situation did not obtain in the pre-Islamic Ḥijāz. Well after the advent of Islam, some Hudhalī poets such as Mulayḥ ibn al-Ḥakam or Abū Ṣakhr produced recognizable tripartite *qaṣīdahs*,²⁹⁸ but poets’ willingness to experiment reveal that the tripartite *qaṣīdah* did not become in any way normative. Mulayḥ ibn al-Ḥakam, for example, has a lengthy and original text where he begins by describing how, having returned to his tribe in distant lands (perhaps Syria), he recollects Laylā’s departure, then his subsequent race to catch her up, and then their solemn vows to each other to remain true. He finally returns to the present, where he is racing through the desert with his men, seeking Laylā out again. There is no third section (*gharad*).²⁹⁹

1.4.2. Urban Ḥijāzī Poets

Unlike any other area of the Arabian peninsula save al-Ḥīrah, we have significant sources for urban pre-Islamic Arabic poetry of the Ḥijāz. This led Ibn Sallām to devote a special section of his *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu‘arā’* specifically to poets of the cities of Mecca, Medina and al-Ṭā’if. Likewise, Abū Zayd devotes a section of “golden odes,” the *mudhhabāt* (or *mudhahhabāt*), to the poets of Medina. As has been noted, the Ḥijāzī tribes of Aws, Khazraj, Quraysh and al-Thaqīf are associated almost entirely with their cities of Yathrib, Mecca, and al-Ṭā’if. Ibn Sallām in fact records five prominent Yathribī poets, nine from Mecca, and five from al-Ṭā’if. In Medina, Ḥassān ibn Thābit, Ka‘b ibn Mālīk and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Rawāḥah, all of Khazraj, were all early supporters of the Prophet, the Anṣār.³⁰⁰ The two other, Medinan poets, Qays ibn al-

²⁹⁸ 62(MḤQ).9; 61(AṢ).7 and no. 14 were composed for an Umayyad *amīr*.

²⁹⁹ 62(MḤQ).7, *Ash‘ār*, 1042–1049.

³⁰⁰ Ibn Sallām al-Jumahlī, *Fuḥūl*, 215-226. Ḥassān’s poetry is the most copiously preserved, but unfortunately its authenticity is extremely suspect. For a summary of the problems of attribution and the manuscript tradition, Ḥassān ibn Thābit, *Dīwān Ḥassān ibn Thābit*, 1:3–31.

Khaṭīm and Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat were both of the tribe of Aws, Khazraj's tribal rival in Medina.³⁰¹ Qays's extant poetry is more extensive than that of Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat, but both poets deal with the feud between the Aws and Khazraj which, after the battle of Bu'āth in 617 CE, led to their request for the Prophet's arbitration and his eventual migration with his followers to Yathrib in 622 CE.³⁰² Aws were not early supporters of the Muslims, but Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm is said to have eventually converted, while Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat deferred converting for political reasons and died before he was able.³⁰³ There is no significant record of poetry in Medina before these figures.

In al-Ṭā'if, of the five poets mentioned by Ibn Sallām, the only two from whom anything of note was transmitted were Abū l-Ṣalt and his son, Umayyah. The former praises the Persians for their conquest of Yemen around the year 570 CE. This poem, cited in part by Ibn Sallām, is also cited by al-Azraqī and al-Ṭabarī.³⁰⁴ Theodor Nöldeke holds the poem for authentic, noting Abū l-Ṣalt uses epithets such as *banū l-ahrār*, the “sons of the free men,” meaning “noble.” This Arabic apparently renders the Aramaic *b'nai ḥêrê* as an epithet for the Persians, reflecting sixth century Mesopotamian usage.³⁰⁵ A poem in praise of the generous Qurashī noble, 'Abd Allāh ibn Jud'ān al-Taymī is attributed to Umayyah.³⁰⁶ If Abū l-Ṣalt's poem for the Persians is authentic, it provides a tentative *terminus a quo* for the emergence of poetry in al-Ṭā'if. More importantly, however, poetry in a panegyric mode emerges from the same matrix that existed in the north-

³⁰¹ Qays's poetry suffers from the same problems as Ḥāssan's, and the history of its transmission is even spottier. Cf. Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Asad's introduction to his edition of the *Dīwān: Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm, Dīwān Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm: 'an ibn al-Sikkīt wa-ghayrih*, ed. Nāṣir al-Dīn Asad (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-'Urūbah, 1962), 17–26.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 228; Guillaume, *Life*, 197 ff. More details on Abū Qays ibn Aslat are given in Lyall, *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 2:224–25, commenting on *Muf.* no. 75 by Abū Qays.

³⁰³ Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, *Fuḥūl*, 227, 230, 231.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 260. Cf. 260n1 for a complete list of other attestations of the poem. A translation of Ibn Hishām's recension is given in Guillaume, *Life*, 32, and Ṭabarī's in Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 234–236.

³⁰⁵ Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, 234n1, 235n2.

³⁰⁶ Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, *Fuḥūl*, 264, 5.

east of the peninsula: the relationship of tribal Arabs to more powerful non-Arabic sedentary rulers. In this context, any praise poetry for Quraysh could be taken as a shift in regional power, but Qurashī figures were also those most likely to later attract spurious poetry during Islamic disputes over political leadership in the first two centuries of Islam.

Umayyah is most well-known for his poetry on Biblical subjects, the authenticity of which is much disputed,³⁰⁷ and he reputedly enjoyed close relations with Jews and Christians (*ahl al-kitāb*).³⁰⁸ Like the Medinan poets, Umayyah was said to be hostile, despite his apparent knowledge of monotheistic traditions, to the Prophet's new religion, and composed an elegy on those who died fighting against the Muslims at the battle of Badr in the year 2/624.³⁰⁹ Our primary source for this, however, is Ibn Hishām's *Sīrah*, and Ibn Sallām himself cautions against accepting anything related solely on the authority of Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Hishām's teacher.³¹⁰ Guillaume, Ibn Hishām's translator, inclined to think the poem contains proto-ʿAlid sympathies belying a later composition,³¹¹ and ʿAbd al-Ḥafīz al-Saṭlī, considering the sources for Umayyah's life, thinks there is little that can be concluded about his stance towards the battle of Badr.³¹²

The Meccan poets are very minor figures, and all of those Ibn Sallām cites lived around the time of the Hijrah and were hostile to the Muslims, fighting against them at either Bakr or Uḥud. Some conclusions about the possible role of poetry in Mecca before Islam can be inferred. Poetry fulfilled a minor ideological role, since Ibn al-Zibā'rá praises Quraysh for their

³⁰⁷ ʿAbd al-Ḥafīz al-Saṭlī deals extensively with this subject in his introduction to the *Dīwān*, 121-240. See also, more recently, Tilman Seidensticker, "The Authenticity of the Poems Ascribed to Umayya Ibn Abī Al-Ṣalt," in *Tradition and Modernity in Modern Arabic Language and Literature*, ed. J. R. Smart (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1996), 87-101.

³⁰⁸ Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, *Fuḥūl*, 262.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 263; Umayyah ibn Abī l-Ṣalt, *Dīwān*, ed. al-Saṭlī, 345-352; Guillaume, *Life*, 353-355.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7, 8, 247.

³¹¹ Guillaume, *Life*, xxvii, 354n2.

³¹² Umayyah ibn Abī l-Ṣalt, *Dīwān*, ed. al-Saṭlī, 53 ff.

performance in the Fijār war.³¹³ The invasion of Abrahah also held ideological significance, as Zubayr ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib refers to Quraysh’s victory over the Ethiopians (*al-Ḥubsh* (sic)).³¹⁴ Quraysh’s poetry reflects a military strength that was local or at best, regional—Ḍirār ibn al-Khaṭṭāb al-Fihri fought with the tribe of Daws, whose territory lay to the south of Mecca and some of whose members were apparently among Ḍirār’s clients.³¹⁵ Finally, poetry perhaps had spiritual significance. Abū ‘Azzah was leprous (*abraṣ*) and, reviled by his tribe, went up to Ḥirā’ (the same cave where Muḥammad was wont to retire and where he received his first revelation) to try to kill himself, but merely made an incision in his skin, letting out a yellow liquid, after which he was cured and composed some verses in praise of God.³¹⁶ If we date Abrahah’s invasion to 547 or 552, and the Fijār war to the time of Muḥammad, then the poets of Quraysh would seem to have no cultural memory extending into the first half of the sixth century. Ibn Sallām notices the dearth of poetic activity in Mecca and explains it rather curiously, as the result of a *lack* of internal strife within Mecca which could lead to the invective and tribal boasting we find among Medinan poets.³¹⁷ He is also aware that polarizing figures like Abū Sufyān had had poetry forged in their names, and has even seen reports about additions being made to a famous poem by Abū Sufyān in praise of the Prophet.³¹⁸

Al-Aṣma‘ī and al-Mufaḍḍal also take little interest in Quraysh. Al-Mufaḍḍal relates two poems from Maqqās al-‘Ā’idhī, of Quraysh, but he dwelt among Banū Dhuhāl of Shaybān, and

³¹³ Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, *Fuḥūl*, 240.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 245, 6.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 241, 2.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 256, 7. There is no way to know whether such verses are authentic, but it is equally difficult to ascertain what would have prompted such a text to emerge later.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 259.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 247.

both of his poems are in praise of that tribe.³¹⁹ Al-Aṣmaī includes the same poem in his collection.³²⁰ Mu‘āwiyah ibn Mālik, associated with al-Nu‘mān III (580-602), the last ruler of al-Ḥīrah, boasts of bearing bloodwites for his tribe’s sake like “the burdens of a Qurashī (*ḥamaltu ḥamālata l-qurashiyyi ‘anhum*).”³²¹ His tribe, ‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘a, dwelt in the Ḥijāz and southwestern Najd, and took part in the Fijār war against Quraysh in the late sixth century.

Other poets, however refer to Quraysh and to the rites of pilgrimage, the *ḥajj*, in Mecca. They also date to the later sixth and early seventh century and mostly originate from the Ḥijāz, indicating a regional rather than peninsula-wide reach of the Quraysh-controlled sacred precinct. Ḥārith ibn Zālim of Dhubyān, dated by Lyall to the 570s CE, praises Quraysh in an attempt, according to the anecdotes in the commentary, to elicit their support in his struggle against the ruler of al-Ḥīrah.³²² In his *mu‘allaqah*, Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmá, whose father was of the Ḥijāzī tribe of Muzaynah but who dwelt with Dhubyān, swears by the Ka‘bah [1]:

And I swore by the house around which
men circumambulate, built by Quraysh and by Jurhum ...³²³

And by the locales and rituals of the pilgrimage [2]:

And I swore forcefully by the stations of encampment (*al-manāzil*) at Miná,
and by that which there is shaved—heads³²⁴ and lice [i.e., hair] ...³²⁵

³¹⁹ *Muf.* no. 84, 85; Lyall, *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 1:608.

³²⁰ *Aṣm.* no. 13, *Aṣma‘īyyāt*, 57.

³²¹ *Muf.* no. 105, l.14; Lyall, *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 2:293.

³²² *Muf.* nos. 88, 89; Lyall, *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 1:615-622, 2:250-255.

³²³ Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 94, l. 19.

³²⁴ *Al-maqādim*, sc. *maqādim al-ra’s*.

³²⁵ Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 89, l. 14.

‘Awf ibn al-Aḥwaṣ of ‘Āmir, who flourished around 570 CE,³²⁶ describes a battle between his tribe and Quraysh in *Mufaḍḍaliyyah* no. 108,³²⁷ and also swears by the Ka‘bah, but even more elaborately [3]:

I swear by Him to whose sacred precincts Quraysh make pilgrimage (*ḥajja Qurayshun maḥārimahū*),

and that which Mt. Ḥirā’ gathers together,

and by the holy month of the sons of Umayyah, and the sacrificial animals (*al-hadāyā*)

when they are bound [for sacrifice] with the blood

soaking into the ground on which they stand ...³²⁸

Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah of Hudhayl also swears by pilgrimage rituals.³²⁹ Occasionally, poets with little connection to the Ḥijāz refer to rituals similar to the Meccan *ḥajj*.³³⁰

³²⁶ Lyall, *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:124.

³²⁷ Translated in Lyall, *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:304, 305. The poem is also attributed to Khidāsh ibn Zuhayr of ‘Āmir: Shākir and Hārūn, *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 364-366.

³²⁸ *Muf.* no. 35, ll. 4-5. Shākir and Hārūn, *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 174. Translation adapted from Lyall, *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* 125. The reference to Umayyah may seem suspect, but as Lyall notes, commenting on this verse, the cave of Ḥirā’ plays no part in the Islamic pilgrimage; this line suggests that in pre-Islamic times it did have such a role, perhaps, he conjectures, as a gathering place for sacrificial animals. The text also oddly refers to Quraysh making the pilgrimage, implying that the *ḥajj* was something they, rather than other tribes performed. A further oath on the Ka‘bah, [*wa-bayti llāhi*] is found in Khidāsh ibn Zuhayr’s *Mujamharah*, l. 12, al-Qurashī, *Jamharat Ash‘ār al-‘Arab*, 415.

³²⁹ 64(SJK).9.1.

³³⁰ One significant example is ‘Amr ibn Qamī‘ah of Qays ibn Tha‘labah who, as we saw flourished in the first half of the sixth century (*The poems of ‘Amr son of Qamī‘ah*, ed. Lyall, 15, 20; *Dīwān*, ed. al-Ṣayrafi, 21, 22):

And that I see that my religion agrees with theirs when they worship [*nasakū*],
both as to the offerings of firstlings and the manner of sacrifice;

And many another observance of the pilgrimage [*wa-manzilatīn bi-l-ḥajj*] do I follow [with them],
that brings its blessing (*nufah*), departure from which is not permitted.

Interestingly, the poet is affirming that the rituals of sacrifice bind him with his fellow tribesmen, clearly contradicting Ibn Ḥazm’s statement that Bakr (with which Qays ibn Tha‘labah were purportedly affiliated) were entirely Christian. The passage is unlikely a retrojection, as firstlings make no part of the Islamic pilgrimage, and the strange word *nufah* also fails to figure in the Islamic ritual vocabulary. However, no place-names such as al-Ḥirā’ or Miná, as seen elsewhere, explicitly link the rituals here described with Mecca, and many other such sites were reported, such as Banū Murrah’s sanctuary [*ḥaram*] at Buss (Kister, “Mecca and the Tribes of Arabia,” 43). Kister also has a discussion of a conflict over pilgrimage protocol between the Ḥijāzī tribe of Fazārah and Quraysh, in the reports on which poetry is extensively quoted: Kister, “Mecca and the Tribes of Arabia,” 34–37.

Poets also refer occasionally to Meccans, apparently pejoratively, as *ḥirmī* (an inhabitant of Mecca's sacred area, the *ḥaram*; fem. *ḥirmiyyah*); thus al-Nābighah al-Dhubayānī,³³¹ describing a Meccan woman trying to buy (or sell) leather, and Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī,³³² who describes the sound of boiling cauldrons as being like the jealous wives of a Meccan (*ḥirmī*) screaming at each other.³³³ These references—to Qurashī standing, to the pilgrimage, and to *ḥirmīs*—are representative, if not perhaps entirely exhaustive given the scope of this study. But in contrast, non-Ḥijāzī poets of our corpus singularly fail to refer to Quraysh, the Ka'bah or the pilgrimage in any way. This strongly indicates not only that Quraysh and its rites did not enjoy any peninsula-wide prestige, at least among nomadic poetry producers, and apparently not until quite late in the sixth century, but that our sources display clear regional attitudes. These tribal regionalisms provide evidence of a broad authenticity of the poetic texts, at least to the degree that poetry attributed to certain tribes probably did in fact emerge from those very groups.

If references to Mecca and its rites are found primarily in Ḥijāzī poets only from the late sixth century, it is also the case that the tribes of the Ḥijāz share a common experience of Abrahah's invasion.³³⁴ We have already seen that Zubayr ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib refers to this event. The Madīnan poet of Aws, Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm, boasts of being respected throughout the peninsula [4]:

When we come to Abrahah the Yemeni, and to Nu'mān,
 who honors us, and to 'Amr,

³³¹ Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, no. 23, l.15, p. 26; Al-Nābighah al-Dhubayānī, *Dīwān*, ed. Ibrāhīm, 64.

³³² 1(ADhQ).5.24.

³³³ Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 26, l.1.

³³⁴ For a collection of more dubiously transmitted poems, cf. Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīrah*, ed. Wüstenfeld, 38–41.

and if we alight with the noble Kurz,³³⁵

we find no mean draught prepared for us.³³⁶

Thaddäus Kowalski supposes that Qays is referring to representatives of the major powers of the peninsula—al-Nu‘mān III b. al-Mundhir at al-Ḥīrah, ‘Amr, probably a Ghassānid/Jafnid, and, anachronistically, Abrahah of Yemen.³³⁷ Qay’s *dīwān*, transmitted by the Baghdadi lexicographer and philologist Ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 243/ 867),³³⁸ represents a tradition apparently independent of the Medinan tradition of lore and poetry transmitted by Ibn Hishām in the prophetic biography, or other such *ḥadīth*-minded enterprises. The *Ash‘ār* of Hudhayl in turn, represents a third tradition, although it was also transmitted in Baghdadi philological circles. Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid of Hudhayl depicts a more direct, and racialized nomadic interpretation of the Ethiopian presence in southern Arabia [5]:

and from many black [Ethiopians (*sūd*)], kinky-haired, thick-necked,

whose ilk the frightened one fears (*yarhab al-rāhibū*),

whose marching turns heads white,

for all of them are war-like (*nāshib*) spear-hurlers,

did I bring your sons,

and I had no obligation to any of you ...³³⁹

According to the prose account attached to this poem, these lines refer to how the speaker obtained the freedom of various tribesmen taken prisoner by Abrahah.³⁴⁰ Nöldeke and

³³⁵ A clan of the Qaḥṭānī tribe of Bajīlah, living south of Mecca in the early sixth century. Cf. Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm, *Dīwān*, ed. Kowalski, 67, 68 (German section) and Watt, *EI*², s.v. “Bajīla.”

³³⁶ Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm, *Dīwān*, ed. Kowalski, no. 14, ll. 15, 16, p. 33, 34 (Arabic section), p. 185 in *Dīwān*, ed. Asad.

³³⁷ *Dīwān*, ed. Kowalski, 67 (German section).

³³⁸ *Dīwān*, ed. Asad, 17–21 deals with the transmission history of Qays’s poetry.

³³⁹ 7(MKhS)11.6–8, pp. 390–391.

³⁴⁰ *Ash‘ār*, 390.

Wellhausen both took this text as an independently transmitted confirmation of the Medinan tradition of Ibn Hishām³⁴¹ regarding Abrahah’s invasion of the Ḥijāz. However, the transmitter of and commentator on Hudhayl’s poetry, al-Sukkarī, in whose version our text survives, transmits the *khbar* on the above lines from ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jumāḥī, the source for most of Hudhayl’s *akhbār*. Al-Jumāḥī includes so much Quranic language in his account, and, as we will see in chapter 4, al-Sukkarī follows such a mix-and-match approach in connecting poems with prose lore accounts anyway, that it would make more sense to regard the verses as merely a reference to an ill-understood Ethiopian force. Ma‘qil is said elsewhere to have been a contemporary of the Prophet, and al-Aṣma‘ī, noticing the discrepancy, supposed the poem in question to be by Ma‘qil’s father.³⁴² The black warriors depicted could be any group of Ethiopians, perhaps descended from Abrahah’s. In this reading, the urban poet Qays has more accurate, if out-of-date information of the names of regional leaders, while the nomadic poet Ma‘qil, living far to the south of Medina, closer to Yemen, has actual experience with Ethiopian warriors (or some group that he perceives as racially distinct) but no understanding of their leadership organization at an elite level. His poem was then later interpreted in light of the Quranic exegetical tradition and Prophetic biography, giving us al-Jumāḥī’s account. Both poets, Qays and Ma‘qil, did however share an awareness, unique to the Ḥijāz, of a living Aksumite presence in the Arabian peninsula.

³⁴¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 204n2, 208n1; Wellhausen, “Medina vor dem Islam,” 1889, 8n2.

³⁴² *Ash‘ār*, 389.

1.4.3. Nomadic Ḥijāzī Poets

In general, however, like the urban poets, the poets of the nomadic tribes of the Ḥijāz such as al-Khansāʾ of Sulaym or ʿĀmir ibn al-Ṭufayl of ʿĀmir are mostly connected in some way or another to the body of early Islamic lore such as the Prophetic biography. If Hudhayl's *Ash'ār* with its philological pedigree is anything to go by, there was probably once a much larger quantity of poetry transmitted independently of the religious material. The most important nomadic tribes of the Ḥijāz were, in the north, ʿUdhrah,³⁴³ Juhaynah and Balī³⁴⁴ around Medina and Sulaym ibn Manṣūr³⁴⁵ between Medina and Mecca. Only Sulaym could boast of any significant poetic output. Hudhayl lived around Mecca, as did Kinānah,³⁴⁶ reportedly the parent tribe of Quraysh, and Khuzāʿah,³⁴⁷ the guardians of the Kaʿbah before Quraysh took over, while the poor Muzaynah³⁴⁸ and Fahm dwelt well to the south of the city. Further south still dwelt Bajīlah,³⁴⁹ ʿAdwān and Azd, known as Azd Sarāh (Azd of the Sarāh mountains) to distinguish them from identically named tribes elsewhere.³⁵⁰ In terms of poetry, by far the most important tribe in the region, beside Hudhayl, was ʿĀmir ibn Ṣaʿṣaʿah, who lived in Najd to the east of al-Ṭāʾif, and interacted significantly with Ḥijāzī tribes. As part of Hawāzin,³⁵¹ they were supposedly related to Thaqīf, the tribe that controlled al-Ṭāʾif, to Saʿd ibn Bakr, whose main claim to fame was to have provided Muhammad's Bedouin wet-nurse,

³⁴³ Lecker, *People, Tribes and Society*, XI, 91–96.

³⁴⁴ Kister, *IE*², s.v. “Ḳudāʿa.”

³⁴⁵ Lecker, *People, Tribes and Society*, XI, 30–33.

³⁴⁶ Watt, *IE*², s.v. “Kināna.”

³⁴⁷ Kister, *IE*², s.v. “Khuzāʿa.”

³⁴⁸ Donner, *IE*², s.v. “Muzayna.”

³⁴⁹ Watt, *IE*², s.v. “Bajīla.”

³⁵⁰ Strenziok, *IE*², s.v. “Azd.”

³⁵¹ See Qays' lineage, table 92 in Caskel, *Ġamharat an-nasab*.

Ḥālīmāh³⁵² and to Jusham. However, ‘Āmir itself consisted of a rather capacious and probably relatively dispersed collection of clans and can thus be considered either eastern Ḥijāzī or western Najdī. In addition to Hudhayl, several of these Ḥijāzī tribes once had their own collections and al-Sukkarī compiled anthologies, now no longer extant, of the poetry of the tribes of Kinānah, Fahm and Muzaynah, in addition to the southern tribes of Bajlāh and al-Azd whose territories marched on the southern Ḥijāz.³⁵³

Certain broad features distinguish the nomadic poets of the Ḥijāz. Like the urban poets, very little dates to before ca. 575 CE and nothing recognizable to before 550. Like the poets of Medina, but unlike the few poets of Mecca, they wrote poly-thematic *qaṣīdahs*, although as we have seen almost no prominence is given to the central “journey” section, in which usually the camel mare is described as well as a desert journey. This has much to do with the social circumstances of composition, as the tripartite *qaṣīdah*, such as we find composed for Naṣrid or Jafnid monarchs by the likes of ‘Alqamah of Tamīm or al-Nābighah of Dhubyān, is used almost exclusively to praise a patron superior in some degree socially to the speaker in the poem. There is much tribal boasting in Ḥijāzī poetry, a theme common to all Arabic poetry, but almost no praise (*madīḥ*, *madḥ*) as such, and no professional praise at all.

Instead, we find the figure of the warrior-poet is quite common in Ḥijāzī poetry. Such a figure is independent, and in no need of praise from lackeys. Among Sulaym, ‘Abbās ibn Mirdās and Khufāf ibn Nudbah stand out in this regard. Khufāf’s few preserved poems fall into the category described by Renate Jacobi as an *Errinerungsqaṣīde*, where the poet’s introductory address to a beloved shifts to boastful remembrance of generosity, valor in battle, and other

³⁵² Guillaume, *Life*, 69–73.

³⁵³ Abū l-Faraj Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 2 vols., ed. Riḍā Tajaddud (Tehran: Yuṭlab min Maktabat al-Asadī wa-Maktabat al-Ja’farī al-Tabrīzī, 1971), 180.

virile exploits.³⁵⁴ ‘Abbās ibn Mirdās’s poetry appears frequently in Ibn Hishām’s *Sīrah*, and a poem of his is included in the *Aṣma‘iyyāt* where he describes a twenty-nine-night journey to raid Murād in Yemen.³⁵⁵ Nomadic poets could thus orally broadcast their exploits, their poetry serving as oral surrogates to inscriptions like Namārah, detailing Imru’ al-Qays’s long-distance raid undertaken against Yemenis from Syria, or Abrahah’s inscription (Ry 506) describing a raid from Yemen against ‘Āmir (and Muhammad’s similarly long night journey to Jerusalem mentioned in surah 17 of the Quran can be regarded as a spiritualized version of the pattern). ‘Abbās gives us the impression that local Ḥijāzī warlords of hitherto obscure tribes like Sulaym had filled the power vacuum left by the decline of Yemenite power, and were now capable of raids against Abrahah’s former vassals—Murād, along with Kindah, were among Abrahah’s military subordinates mentioned in Ry 506. Lacking the resources for inscriptional monuments, Ḥijāzī poets opted for oral monuments to themselves, while during the same generation, Najdī poets were consecrating praise poetry to Nu‘mān ibn Mundhir at al-Ḥīrah. Other famous warrior poets of the Ḥijāz and environs include ‘Āmir ibn Ṭufayl of ‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah, Durayd ibn al-Ṣimmah of the Jusham clan of ‘Āmir, and the minor figure Khuwaylid ibn Ma‘qil of Hudhayl.

A final dominant feature of the Ḥijāz is elegy. Elegy (*rithā’*, *marthiyah*) is universal and ancient, but as a social expression it can expand and develop. Professional mourners for higher-status individuals are a perennial feature of Near Eastern burial ritual, although we possess no relevant information for this practice in pre-Islamic Arabia. In an analogous context however, among late antique German tribes, an increase in burial wealth after around

³⁵⁴ Jacobi, *Studien*, 101–103.

³⁵⁵ *Aṣm.* no. 70, l. 9, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 205.

the year 300 has been taken to indicate increased social competition among European barbarians.³⁵⁶ In this case, material culture has been preserved while the presumably oral burial culture has not. The situation is reversed for pre-Islamic Arabian culture, as we have extensive elegiac poetry, but virtually no archaeological data on burials. During this period, however, as in the German case, interaction with Roman civilization was increasing.

Pre-Islamic mourning poetry seems to have originated in the rhymed chants of female kin of the deceased expressing grief and praise for the dead. These rhymed but unmetrical chants may then have evolved into poetry in the *rajaz* meter, the simplest of Arabic poetic meters, and thence into other meters.³⁵⁷ Over the course of the pre-Islamic period, the genre became “professionalized,” and we find, especially in the *mukhaḍram* generation just before Islam, an expanding quantity of sophisticated elegiac *qaṣīdahs* by male as well as female poets. These coexisted with the more rudimentary forms of mourning expression. Shawqī Ḍayf accordingly distinguishes between *al-nadb* (dirge, lament or mourning at the time of death) and *al-ta’bīn*, which is more akin to eulogy, and enumerates the virtues of the deceased.³⁵⁸ The former is more closely associated with grieving for kin, especially by women, in any situation, while the latter was associated with the political situation of death during intertribal warfare.³⁵⁹ In eulogy or *al-ta’bīn* then, the same features lauded in praise poetry (*al-madīh*) for powerful rulers are enumerated, except that the bravery, support, and generosity of the deceased are described as lost, and past.³⁶⁰ There are several features common to most elegiac

³⁵⁶ P. J. Heather, *The Goths* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 65–70.

³⁵⁷ I. Goldziher, “Bemerkungen Zur Arabischen Trauerpoesie,” *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 16 (January 1, 1902): 307–39.

³⁵⁸ Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-Rithā’*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1968), 12 ff.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12, 54, 55.

³⁶⁰ This distinction between *al-madīh* and *al-rithā’* is axiomatic in medieval rhetorical handbooks. Qudāmah ibn Ja’far, *Naqd al-shi’r*, ed. Kamāl Muṣṭafá, 2nd ed. (Egypt: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1963), 100–107; Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan Ibn

poetry: descriptions of weeping, including an apostrophe to one's tearful eyes; vows of vengeance (among men) or exhortations to vengeance if the deceased was killed; taking consolation in that the vicissitudes of fate conquer all.

One of the earliest examples of *al-ta'bīn*, and representative of the movement of poetry from Najd to the Ḥijāz, was the poet Aws ibn Ḥajar, characterized by James Montgomery as an “itinerant ... panegyrist” and “professional threnodist.”³⁶¹ He was a seminal figure in the development of poetic norms, and had connections to the court at al-Ḥīrah, as evinced by his poem mentioning the death of Mundhir III,³⁶² and knowledge of sedentary luxury items associated with Persian court culture.³⁶³ Aws's traditional status as the first link in a chain of prominent transmitter-poets has already been mentioned, and his role in diffusing Najdī poetic norms to the Ḥijāz was crucial. However, as a member of Tamīm, Aws was considered by classical philologists as “the leading poet of Muḍar,”³⁶⁴ Tamīm's purported ancestor, as opposed to Rabī'ah, from whom the earlier Qays ibn Tha'labah poets descended. This registers as a genealogical shift what was also at least in part a geographical transmission occurring over time. As we have noted, Christian Robin associates Muḍar, based on inscriptional evidence, with the western Arabian peninsula. According to Ibn Qutaybah, who gives ample citations in proof of his judgment, Aws was superseded as the leading poet of Muḍar by Zuhayr ibn Abū Sulmā of Muzaynah and Dhubyān, both tribes of the north-western Arabian peninsula,

Rashīq, *Al-'Umdah fī maḥāsin al-shi'r wa-ādābihi wa-naqdih*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1981), 2:147.

³⁶¹ Geyer, *Gedichte und Fragmente des Aws ibn Hajar*, 3. Najm no. 39 reproaches a chief of 'Abs for failing to give a reward. This text, incidentally, serves as a nice indication of how tribal leadership imitated the court culture of al-Ḥīrah by employing professional poets.

³⁶² Aws, *Dīwān*, ed. Najm, 22.

³⁶³ Montgomery, *Vagaries*, 139.

³⁶⁴ Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Shi'r wa-l-Shu'arā'*, 99; Ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī, *Fuḥūl*, 97.

and by al-Nābighah of Dhubyān, who both developed aspects of his work.³⁶⁵ In addition to his connection with al-Ḥīrah in the north-east, a verse of Aws's testifies to a battle between his clan and a Sulaym-ʿĀmir alliance in the Ḥijāz, evincing his peninsula-wide connections and influence.³⁶⁶ And as we will see, the Sulamī poetess al-Khansā' developed Aws's work in her own poetic traditions, particularly in the realm of elegy.

Although a Tamīmī, Aws was an intertribal poet, and he also composed four elegies, fragmentarily preserved, for Faḍālah ibn Kadalāh of Asad, again a north-western tribe.³⁶⁷ The elegies were thus not composed for a kinsman, but for some political or professional reason, as Montgomery notes.³⁶⁸ These four fragments, however, are distinguished not merely by fine depictions of a sense of emotional loss, but by a keen interest in praising certain ethical values emblematic of a particular elevated social status. Two of the four fragments have, somewhere near their introduction, a line emphasizing the status of Faḍālah:

How oft did he wait, between the chamberlain and the enclosed court,
awaiting the decrees of kings (*al-mulūk*).³⁶⁹

The poet boasts that while the deceased was no king himself, he enjoyed ready access to kings. In the tribal hierarchy of the Arabian peninsula he holds a position of mediator between the tribesmen, the intended audience for such a poem, and some regional imperial power.

... I have searched among all the people around me
for any man besides a king (*ʿalā mraʿin sūqatin*),
more generous and perfect than him, ah, how perfect!³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Shʿr wa-l-Shuʿarāʿ*, 202, 205.

³⁶⁶ Aws no. 28, l. 5, *Dīwān*, ed. Najm, 57.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4, 26, 40, 41. Cf. also *Naqd al-Shiʿr*, 104–108.

³⁶⁸ Montgomery, "Aws ibn Ḥajar," in *REAL*.

³⁶⁹ Aws, no. 4, l. 6, *Dīwān*, ed. Najm, 11.

Here again, the deceased is positioned below kings—he is among the *sūqah*—but within this sphere he enjoys the utmost possible elevation. The speaker does not merely reflect, but actually constructs the social status of the deceased within a fluid but carefully articulated tribal hierarchy. Later in the same poem, the deceased is compared to a Sasanian border military official (*marzubān*).³⁷¹ In a less clear, evidently hyperbolic verse, Faḍālāh is said to lead kings into battle:

Many men with their heads adorned (*wa-mu'aṣṣabīna*), on swift steeds,

did you lead (*sudtahum*) ...³⁷²

According to the philologist al-Mubarrad, who preserved this poem in his *Al-Ta'āzī wa-l-marāthī* (Condolences and mourning, written between 282/896 and 284/897), the word *mu'aṣṣabīn* means “crowned,” although it more commonly means “be-turbaned.”³⁷³ If the latter were the case, then he is leading chiefs into battle, and again, we have a precise image, at the beginning of the fragment and probably of the original poem, of a leader at the peak of the tribal pyramid, but without pretension to any higher level. Regardless, the elegy is not merely cathartic, but carefully defines (or perhaps, actively constructs) Faḍālāh's elevated standing in his social circle.

The most famous elegist of classical Arabic poetry is al-Khansā' of Sulaym ibn Manṣūr, who is considered a *mukhaḍramah*, having composed both before Islam's arrival and after her conversion. She is particularly well known for a series of laments for her brothers, Mu'āwiyah and Ṣakhr, who died in combat before Islam. Much poetry by pre-Islamic women poets is

³⁷⁰ No. 40, ll. 3–4, *ibid.*, 102.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, l. 19.

³⁷² *Ibid.* 107, no. 41, l. 3.

³⁷³ Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Mubarrad, *Kitāb al-ta'āzī wa-al-marāthī*, ed. Muḥammad Dībājī (Damascus: Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah bi-Dimashq, 1976), 39.

extant, but al-Khansā's is unique for its quantity and sophistication. Most scholars have focused on the poetess's gender. For Theodor Nöldeke, the genre of *marthiyah* (elegy for the dead) was mostly left to women, who accordingly composed, for the most part, simple products.³⁷⁴ Suzanne Stetkevych, more recently, although she finds al-Khansā's poetry more sophisticated, still sees women's elegy as "a discretely defined body of verse ... prescribed by gender role," which is "ritually determined."³⁷⁵

Yet al-Khansā's elegies are often indistinguishable from those of Aws, an apparently well-trained, intertribal, male panegyrist. Indeed, al-Khansā' was probably influenced either by Aws's work or that of his successors. There are aspects of her work analyzed by Stetkevych that do indeed draw on what was evidently a ritualized, feminine cultural domain, but al-Khansā' is also appropriating stylistic devices from the professional male poets of Najd in order to suit the needs of her Ḥijāzī tribe, Sulaym. There are a number of other important elegists, men and women, from Ḥijāzī tribes whose work is preserved. Interpreting this emergent cultural phenomenon is difficult, but it may be that these Ḥijāzī tribes, liberated gradually over the course of the second half of the sixth century from the cultural hegemony of various powers based in Yemen, had entered into a period of dynastic formation, where the kin of leaders with only one or two generations of elite status behind them emphasize their virtues in order to consolidate a new lineage as prestigious.

Poetic devices either of Aws's devising, or representative of the conventions of Najdī poetry which he represents, are certainly everywhere in evidence in the work of al-Khansā'. For example, the genre of elegy which the two poets share typically opens with a description

³⁷⁴ Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Poesie der alten Araber*, 152.

³⁷⁵ Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals*, 161.

of copious weeping. Not only is this structural feature usually the same, but certain images reappear in both poets. Aws gives us:

When I recollected Abū Dulayjah [teknonym or *kunyah* of Faḍālah], my eyes
flowed, until their downpour drenched my shirt (*fa-balla wakīfuhā sirbālī*).³⁷⁶

Al-Khansā' begins an elegy on her brother Mu'āwiyah:

Alas, what ails my eye, what ails it?
For tears have wetted her shirt (*fa-qad akhḍala l-dam'u sirbālahā*).³⁷⁷

Aws, in the citation above, refers to Faḍālah leading turbaned or crowned men into battle. He uses the structure, *wāw al-rubbah*+indefinite noun+relative clause (*sudtahum*): "Many are the turbaned men that you led." Al-Khansā' uses the same formula to describe Mu'āwiyah:

Many is the gathered battalion you drove forth (*wa-mujmi'atin suqtahā*) ...³⁷⁸

Like Aws, she uses the terms of *malik* and *sūqah* to establish the deceased's position in the peninsular hierarchy, except that instead of gaining access to kings, as Faḍālah did, Mu'āwiyah makes war against them. The gathered battalions he leads,

To a king, not one below him, (*ilā malikin, lā ilā sūqatin*) ...³⁷⁹

If, like Aws, she cannot praise her brothers as kings, she can at least use her rhetorical leverage as an elegist to position them in relation to kings as favorably as possible. For the most part, she envisions her brothers as among the most important leaders of Sulaym,³⁸⁰ and given the amount of internal dissension in any tribe, that may have been an aspiration of

³⁷⁶ Aws, no. 41, l. 2, *Dīwān*, ed. Najm, 107.

³⁷⁷ Al-Khansā' no. 4, l.1, in Tumāḍīr bint 'Amr al-Khansā', *Dīwān al-Khansā' sharaḥahu Tha'lab Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sayyār al-Shaybānī l-Naḥawī*, ed. Anwar Abū Suwaylim (Amman: Dār 'Ammār, 1988), 78.

³⁷⁸ No. 4, l. 20, *ibid.*, 95.

³⁷⁹ L. 22, *ibid.*, 100. For further examples of the *malik/sūqah* pairing in praise, see al-Nābighah and Zuhayr, in index of Ahlwardt, *Divan*, and in Labīd, *Dīwān*, ed. 'Abbās, 3.

³⁸⁰ Mu'āwiyah is the best of Sulaym (*khayr Banī Sulaym*) (No. 2, l. 3), and the chiefs (*ru'asā'*) of the tribe come to him for arbitration (no. 2, l. 7).

considerable ambition (here it is worth returning to Michael Lecker’s point that Sulaym was able to function as a military unit, which was not, for example, the case with Hudhayl, whose elegy differs markedly from al-Khansā’s). In drawing on the rhetorical devices of Aws and his successors who proliferated Najdī poetic techniques developed in the courts of Syria and al-Ḥīrah for patrons more widely recognized as kings, al-Khansā’ may have praised the local leaders of her Ḥijāzī audience for the first time—we simply lack evidence of such elegies in the Ḥijāz before her time—in language evocative of praise for distant leaders of greater and older confederations, or even for kings in palaces. The cachet associated with such a poetic form must have been significant, and aside from her grief, al-Khansā’ must have had a pressing reason to compose such lengthy and complex texts, and her tribesmen to transmit it; the vast bulk of her poetry is elegy for her two brothers, Ṣakhr and Mu’āwiyah. In promoting their memory, al-Khansā’ is composing poetry with a social function very similar to *madīḥ* (praise poetry).

Indeed, almost the entirety of the most famous elegiac pieces from pre-Islamic Arabic derive from the area of western Najd and Ḥijāz, mostly from the *mukhaḍram* generation flourishing from 600 CE forward. Among the western Najdī poets, the most important are Durayd ibn al-Ṣimmah al-Jushamī’s elegy on his brother ‘Abd Allāh,³⁸¹ al-A‘shā al-Bāhilah’s elegy for his brother al-Muntashir,³⁸² and Labīd’s elegies for his brother, Arbad.³⁸³ Among the tribes of the Ḥijāz proper, in addition to al-Khansā’, Su‘dá bint al-Shamardal of Juhaynah has a famous elegy for her brother Asa‘d, killed in battle by Sulaym. A number of poets from Hudhayl

³⁸¹ *Aṣm.*, no. 28.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, no. 24.

³⁸³ Labīd, *Dīwān*, ed. ‘Abbās, 153–209.

were renowned for their elegies. Abū Dhu'ayb is chiefly famous for his elegy for his sons,³⁸⁴ but also composed a series of elegies for his kinsman (probably his uncle) Nushaybah.³⁸⁵ Ṣakhr al-Ghayy composed an elegy for his brother, Abū 'Āmr, killed by snakebite,³⁸⁶ as well as his son Talīd.³⁸⁷ Qays ibn al-'Ayzārah mourns his brother Ḥārith, who died of dropsy (*al-ḥaban*).³⁸⁸ Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah composed an elegy for his cousin Jundab, killed in battle with a neighboring tribe,³⁸⁹ and for his son, Abū Sufyān.³⁹⁰

Two interesting features link the elegies of the Hudhalī poets with those of nearby tribes. As classical rhetoricians like Ibn Rashīq (d. 456/ 1063) noticed, it was unusual for pre-Islamic poets to begin an elegy with the *nasīb* (amatory prelude).³⁹¹ Ibn Rashīq does not know of any other elegy beginning with a *nasīb* besides that of Ibn Durayd for his brother, and argues that one *should not* begin an elegy thus, since one should be concerned with the calamity at hand rather than love. Ibn Durayd, he argues somewhat naively, must have written his poem after he had attained his vengeance, which is why he would have leisure for amorous dalliance.³⁹² Ibn Durayd was not alone, however. Renate Jacobi has observed that four of Abū Dhu'ayb's elegies begin with a *nasīb*,³⁹³ a tendency influenced by his fellow tribesman, Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah.³⁹⁴ The poetry of Hudhayl is also famous for its depictions of animals, especially onagers and oryx, that are killed by hunters as representatives of the ineluctability of fate. We

³⁸⁴ *Ash'ār*, 4–41 and *Muf.* no. 126.

³⁸⁵ *Ash'ār*, Abū Dhu'ayb, nos. 5, 7, 11, 13, 14, 19.

³⁸⁶ *Ash'ār*, Ṣakhr al-Ghayy, no. 1.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 15.

³⁸⁸ *Ash'ār*, 600. Interestingly, he, like al-Khansā', speaks of a "great lord" or "king" (*al-malik*) who decrees the fate of death for all: al-Khansā', *Dīwān al-Khansā'*, 72.

³⁸⁹ *Ash'ār*, 1152, Sā'idah no. 6.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1165, 1181, no. 8, no. 11,

³⁹¹ Ibn Rashīq, *Al-'Umdah*, 2:151.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 152.

³⁹³ Jacobi, "Anfänge," 226–230.

³⁹⁴ *Ash'ār*, 1097–1121, Sā'idah no. 1.

find both this motif and the *nasīb* introducing an elegy in the difficult and perhaps fragmentary *Mufaḍḍaliyyah* no. 54 of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar of Qays ibn Tha‘labah. Hudhalī poets elaborated his example, illustrating the movement of structural principles of the *qaṣīdah* from east to west over time, another iteration of the geographical narrative I have been sketching throughout this chapter. Such movement of poetic structures suggests that a comparative diachronic analysis of the themes in question is necessary, rather than merely considering Abū Dhu‘ayb, for example, in isolation, as a representative of a distinctive new *mukhaḍram* sensibility. As in any artistic novelty, he had precedents. Such a diachronic analysis will be a goal of chapter 5.

The second interesting feature of Hudhalī elegy, also to be dealt with in more detail in chapter 5, relates to the diction, rhyme and meter of several of the elegies of the Ḥijāz and the nearby area. Su‘dá of Juhaynah in her *Aṣma‘iyyah* bewails her brother As‘ad, who was said to be a Hudhalī, as he would have been called if his mother had been of Juhaynah but his father of Hudhayl.³⁹⁵ Her poem uses the same meter (*kāmil*), rhyme (*‘ayn*) and much of the vocabulary as Abū Dhu‘ayb’s famous elegy for his sons. Abū Dhu‘ayb’s use of the same elegiac techniques as a female elegist from a neighboring tribe, combined with his sophisticated scenes of animals being hunted, suggest that he is amalgamating an “indigenous” Ḥijāzī or Hudhalī tradition of elegy, or at least, a local aesthetic, with trans-peninsular poetic traditions in an experimental new fashion. The relationship between his and Su‘dá’s texts moreover provides a fairly compelling case of male and female poets responding to each other. In addition to the texts by Aws and al-Khansā’ adduced above, this further indicates that transmission of poetic technique in this genre moved across gender boundaries. That the elegy by ‘Alqamah al-Ḥimyarī, in the

³⁹⁵ Al-Aṣma‘ī, *Al-Aṣma‘iyyāt*, 101.

marthiyah section of Abū Zayd's *Jamharat Ash'ār al-'Arab* is also rhymed in 'ayn suggests that perhaps an even wider regional aesthetic conversation was taking place.

1.5. Conclusions

The region of the Ḥijāz was thus the scene, in the late sixth century, for a cultural efflorescence that built upon at the same time as it diverged in several ways from predecessors in other areas of the peninsula. Although there were certainly other urban centers in Arabia, it is apparently only in Ḥijāzī cities that, due to political contestation, significant numbers of indigenous poets composed in Arabic. Most of the poets of al-Ḥīrah were nomads of Najd. In contrast to al-Ḥīrah, the urban centers of Medina, Mecca and al-Ṭā'if did not serve as centers for patronage. Mecca had a sacred role, however, and nomadic poets were aware of the rites practiced there, but if these bedouin texts are anything to go by, the Meccan cult was of a distinctively middling regional significance, of little interest to other inhabitants of the peninsula. The paucity of references in poetic texts to the market of 'Ukāz, to Quraysh, to Mecca or to the *hajj* rites in any but late poets from the Ḥijāz or its environs contrasts strongly, for example, with the prose tradition of a cycle of peninsular markets, the *ḥadīth al-aswāq*, in which all tribes participated.³⁹⁶

In addition to the moderate importance of Mecca, both the urban and nomadic tribes of the Ḥijāz had some sense of the importance of Abrahah's (from their point of view, unsuccessful) invasion in 525 or 527. This was obviously of central importance for Quraysh, but the fact that they were not making something up is confirmed by traditions from Medina and

³⁹⁶ For a recent summary of this literature, cf. Michael Bonner, "Commerce and Migration in Arabia before Islam: A Brief History of a Long Literary Tradition," in *Iranian Language and Culture*, ed. by B. Aghaei and M. R. Ghanoonparvar (Malibu and Costa Mesa: Mazda, 2012), 1-27.

from nomadic tribesmen dealing with the same event. Nomadic tribes do not have much impression that Yemen was under the control of Persia after about 570, and texts like ‘Abbās ibn Mirdās’s poem about his raid against the Yemeni Murād indicate that the decline of Yemeni power was felt more as the absence of a strong southern neighbor than as the arrival of a new imperial power.

Since neither a foreign imperial power nor a prestigious Arabic urban center patronized praise poetry, the verse of the region is accordingly almost devoid of the kinds of *madiḥ* associated with the courts of al-Ḥīrah or Syria. It is also mostly devoid of the clear-cut, three-part *qaṣīdahs* most characteristic of classical Arabic poetry, with the amatory *nasīb* prelude, a desert journey or description of the camel mare, concluding with some clearly defined *gharaḍ* (goal): praise, boasting or invective. Two-part *qaṣīdahs* predominate.

The ideology of Ḥijāzī poets as a social class was somewhat more militarized and less professional than in other areas of the Arabian peninsula. Most of the warrior-poets of the region vaunt their own successes and achievements in battle or as generous patrons, rather than praising others. This less hierarchical ideology sometimes extends to extreme degrees, to the point where self-abnegation, an emaciated body and combat on foot are considered suitable subjects for boasting. Likewise, the poets of the Ḥijāz, although they vaunt their lineage, also often boast of the superiority of deeds to ancestry. The elegiac mode of Arabic poetry then allowed their successors to adapt more prestigious poetic techniques from Najdī traditions in order to retroactively construct the prestige that, among Najdī tribes, *madiḥ* would have accorded in life.

Chapter 2: The Warrior Aristocracy: A Flexible Hierarchy

*a-Zuhayra, hal ‘an shaybatin min ma‘kimī?
am lā khulūda li-bādhilin mutakarrimī.*

O, Zuhayrah, on the path to gray hair is there any turning back?

No man, however noble, however much he spends, is eternal.¹

—Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī

2.1. Introduction: Poetry’s Role in the Flexible Tribal Hierarchy²

In chapter 1, we surveyed the cultural vectors of Near Eastern imperial powers which would have disposed Arabian tribes to certain regional paradigms. This interaction was certainly not a one-way street, however, and in the example of the use of the name “Ghassān” to describe the Jafnid dynasty of Roman clients, we have seen what appears to be a foreign-sponsored leadership drawing on an indigenous notion of Arabian kingship, as evinced by numerous inscriptions testifying to Ghassān’s kings, and by the frequency of the use of the term in Arabic poetry. Such an indigenous ideology was, moreover, regional—the inscriptions as well as later Jafnid activity are all localized within the western Arabian Peninsula, in a strip running from Syria through the Ḥijāz to Yemen. There is far less evidence for other leadership groups or tribes in the Arabian Peninsula at the time, but it stands to reason that in other areas other combinations of Arabian ideologies with foreign cultural interaction—Robin’s “double

¹ 63(AKJ).4.1, *Ash‘ār*, 1090.

² A version of the first portion of this chapter will be published in the forthcoming second volume of *The Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East*, ed. Saana Svārd (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2016).

legitimacy”³—would have obtained. However, the glimmer of ideological insight that inscriptions mentioning Ghassān give us are not available for the vast majority of Arabian tribes.

Pre-Islamic Arabian tribal society has often been characterized as egalitarian. According to Werner Caskel, for example, in tribal organization there is “no office of leadership, let alone a hierarchy.”⁴ Any true leadership role would derive invariably from a foreign power conferring it.⁵ Anatoly Khazanov offers a more nuanced view of nomadic/sedentary relations based on twentieth-century ethnography. He describes early Arabian tribal chiefs—usually of a chiefly lineage in ethnographic description, somewhat akin to the Jafnids and Naşrids perhaps in pre-Islamic times—as “more equal than others.”⁶ Although Arabian tribes, like almost all nomadic peoples, are characterized by segmentary lineage in which all members of the tribe are united by links to a common ancestor and in which varying degrees of proximity envelop one another like a Russian doll, starting with the nuclear family and going back to the common ancestor, Khazanov accordingly denotes the Arabian system as based on “differentiated segmentary lineage.”⁷ Such a system is not as stratified as sedentary cultures, or even for example, the Mongols after Genghis Khan, but under the right circumstances such as the influx of resources from an outside power, chiefly families can become the vectors for further stratification.

Khazanov’s model is amenable to that of other scholars of Islamic history and Arabic literature who have drawn on ethnography to depict a more hierarchical pre-Islamic Arabian

³ Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar,” 184.

⁴ Caskel, *Bedeutung*, 9. Cf. also Caskel, “Zur Beduinisierung Arabiens,” *29* and Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 117–120.

⁵ Caskel, “Zur Beduinisierung Arabiens,” *29*.

⁶ Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, 146.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 146, 180–82.

tribal society. Fred Donner describes *sharīf* (honorable, noble) tribes of warrior aristocrats holding together tenuous confederations of other tribes.⁸ This created a hierarchy, for the most part between tribes (although ruling lineages also emerge within warrior aristocrat tribes), where stronger tribes extorted taxes (*khuwwah*) from weaker tribes. The leadership of these tribes was hereditary, but also rooted in wealth, certain forms of expensive weaponry such as horses, and overall fighting prowess.

Literary scholars have evoked a similar leadership cadre. Renate Jacobi has argued that pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is inherently conservative, perpetuating the ethical and legal norms of what she calls a tribal aristocracy (Stammesaristokratie).⁹ Wagner corroborates and elaborates this view, noting that the beloved in classical Arabic poetry is always described within a setting of luxurious commodity goods such as perfumes and fine fabrics, while the military values praised center on the expensive equipment of horses and imported weapons.¹⁰ Finally, Thomas Bauer, drawing on both Jacobi and Wagner, has argued that the generic qualities of early Arabic poetry's seemingly rigid linguistic formulae reflect a social conservatism invested in establishing consensus.¹¹

The only problem with this line of thought is that in pre-modern societies, essentially all emergent ideological notions express themselves highly conservatively,¹² so if a poet has something radical to say, no meta-statement would call attention to his or her radicalness. In the realm of genealogy as we have seen, the Arabian tribe of Ḥimyar ibn Saba' trace their

⁸ Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, 30–34.

⁹ Jacobi, "Die Anfänge der arabischen Ġazalpoesie," 246.

¹⁰ Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1987, 1:34; I. Lichtendstädter, "Das Nasīb der altarabischen Qaṣīde," *Islamica* 5 (1932): 34–35, 38, 49–52.

¹¹ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:204–10.

¹² For the notion of emergent ideologies, see Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 121–28.

lineage to a person named Ḥimyar, son of Saba', when in fact Ḥimyar was the dominant ethnic group in Yemen until the sixth century CE, not an individual. Saba' was the monarchy preceding them, not Ḥimyar's father. Whatever the Arabian Ḥimyar tribe represents, although certainly ideologically emergent, it is expressed as a genealogical link to antiquity. The same is true of the identification of the Jafnids with Ghassān.

If it is widely understood that pre-Islamic Arabian nomadic society was in fact significantly hierarchical, the nature of this hierarchy is still open to question. As I have argued in chapter 1, it was likely regionally inflected both as a result of tribes' relationships with non-Arab powers and as a result of indigenous notions of regional rule.¹³ In a consideration of the question of complex, large-scale nomadic polities such as confederations, William Honeychurch reminds us that although “‘hierarchy’ is usually taken as a structural characteristic ... in social terms [it] emerges from a consistent pattern of deference that permits a sorting of individuals into groups of either ‘deferred to’ or ‘deferring to.’”¹⁴ Hierarchy is then imagined as a “vertical” structure, in a spatial metaphor. Although the practices of deference vary between, say, sedentary states and nomadic confederations, in both cases the negotiations perpetuating inequality must be instantiated and reenacted in quotidian practices. Honeychurch lists “violence, theatrics, protest, material symbols and ideology, and the bestowal of titles, ranks and wealth to incur loyalty, as well as factional alliances of opposition” as examples of such negotiation.¹⁵ Hierarchy, in other words, is always

¹³ Khazanov cites as a modern example of stratification within nomadic tribes on a regional level, in response to larger-scale political developments, the Rwala, who were responding simultaneously to the Sha'lān sheikhs' control over pilgrimage routes, in alliance with the Ottomans and to the Rashīdids in al-Ḥā'il: *Nomads and the Outside World*, 180.

¹⁴ William Honeychurch, “Alternative Complexities: The Archaeology of Pastoral Nomadic States,” *Journal of Archaeological Research* 22, no. 4 (April 2, 2014): 285.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 284.

flexible to some degree, noticeably more so in nomadic polities. It requires upkeep, however, and in the context of pre-Islamic Arabia, perhaps the dominant social practice for instantiating lived hierarchy is poetry, and the extant poetry is certainly the best source to which we have access for understanding the negotiation of this flexible hierarchy.

It has long been observed that pre-Islamic poetry is an essentially agonistic practice. Ignaz Goldziher describes the fundamental code of pre-Islamic Arabian ethos rooted in *muruwah* (roughly, “virility”). According to this value system, freedom, honor and the necessity of blood-vengeance underpin the tribe as a social unit.¹⁶ Goldziher, however, was primarily interested in distinguishing between pre-Islamic Arabian culture and the value-system of Muhammad’s new religion. James Montgomery has expanded on this oft-cited notion of *muruwah*, arguing that *muruwah* is a system of “competitive virtue.”¹⁷ According to Montgomery, all of the major motifs of pre-Islamic poetry serve as “poetical manifestations” of the *muruwah* worldview.¹⁸ This is most obvious in *fakhr* (boasting), but all forms of description (of the beloved, of one’s camel) serve, in their depiction of superlative objects, as a medium for displaying poetic virtuosity and often of his bravery, independence, etc.¹⁹ This analysis, however, ultimately cancels through; if all poetry expresses *muruwah*, why boast about different subjects at all? We immediately require a fuller analysis of poetry’s social function.

That poetry serves a centrally *social* function is Montgomery’s pivotal insight. Poetry is not produced simply for aesthetic enjoyment, and to the extent that it is ritualistic, the tripartite model often invoked of the *qaṣīdah* is insufficient for the texts at hand (as already noted in chapter 1, above, Ahlwardt’s *Six Divans* contains only 61 poly-thematic *qaṣīdahs* out of

¹⁶ Ignác Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, vol. 1 (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1888), 13–39.

¹⁷ James E. Montgomery, “Dichotomy in Jāhilī Poetry,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 17 (1986): 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2–6.

174 poems, only 15 of which are tripartite).²⁰ Much pre-Islamic poetry was neither aesthetically complex nor tripartite, but all of it has social meaning. More comprehensively and basically then, poetry is the matrix within which all other forms of hierarchical social disposition are mediated. It does not merely reflect pre-existing hierarchies, but actively *constructs* actionable images of tribal unity. The “tribe,” a famously slippery concept, is unstable in the pre-Islamic Arabian context precisely because of its ability to undergo constant reconstruction. Indeed, it must do so and this ability is almost its definition. Hierarchy in pre-Islamic Arabian society could be based on a number of competing and contradictory claims, but two pairs are selected in this chapter: lineage (*al-nasab*) versus alliance (*al-ḥilf*, *al-walāʾ*, *al-jiwār*), and those of royal lineage (*al-mulūk*) versus those without (*al-sūqah*). Close readings of selected texts reveal that one of the central functions of the poet and poetry was to resolve these contradictions in a manner satisfactory both to the tribal group the poet represented as well as his addressee.

The nature of a tribe, its internal and external hierarchical relationships, the function of the poet, and accordingly finally the image of rule and leadership constructed in poetry all varied regionally. In Najd and the north-east of the Arabian peninsula, where Arabian tribes interacted with and were subsidized by the Sasanian and Ḥīran courts, the tripartite praise *qaṣīdah* developed as a means for the poet to reconfigure a subordinate status as one of equality and parity. Poets made use of an earlier boasting theme, the perilous desert crossing, to develop the *raḥīl*, a teleological movement towards the patron.²¹ Another form of *raḥīl* compares the speaker’s mount to swift desert fauna, a display of professional virtuosity as

²⁰ Jacobi, *Studien*, 6, 12, 13. For a cogent analysis of the historical development of the tripartite *qaṣīdah* and the early aesthetic theory of it, see Jacobi, “The Camel-Section of the Panegyric Ode.”

²¹ Jacobi, *Studien*, 50, 61.

Thomas Bauer has argued.²² Recalling Montgomery's point that this in itself is a performance of *muruwah*, an important function of the *raḥīl* is to elevate the speaker's position in relationship to the praised patron. Such poetic developments allowed the ideological reconciliation of emergent hierarchies with more conservative notions of tribal egalitarianism.

Renate Jacobi has pointed out that there are, in essence, two modes of praise in Arabic poetry, one tribal and one used for sedentary leaders.²³ These modes are, very roughly, regionally inflected. In Jacobi's analysis, the two poets associated with princely praise are al-Nābighah and 'Alqamah, both Najdī tribes and both associated with either the Jafnids, the Naṣrids or both. Zuhayr on the other hand, associated with the Ḥijāzī tribe of Muzaynah, and with neither the Byzantine nor the Sasanian client courts, produced praise exclusively for tribal leaders. Tribal praise is characterized by a position of equality assumed between the speaker and the praised individual, and by the lack of reference to remuneration in exchange for the praise.²⁴ The stylistic methods associated with individual praise were propagated exclusively by Najdī poets associated for the most part with the Naṣrid court: by Aws ibn Ḥajar al-Tamīmī in his praise of Faḍālah ibn Kadalāh of Asad, al-Musayyab ibn 'Alas (associated with Qays ibn Tha'labah as he was reportedly the maternal uncle of al-A'shā) in his praise of al-Qa'qā' ibn Ma'bad ibn Zurārah of Tamīm, and Bishr ibn 'Amr of Qays ibn Tha'labah in his praise of the 'Uqayl clan of 'Āmir ibn Ṣa'sa'ah (all discussed below).

The leadership ideology and imagery of rule of this Najdī cluster of Arabian tribes is more hierarchical than that associated with Ḥijāzī tribes, or other tribes distant from Byzantine and Sasanian influence. The Najdī model also draws on elements of courtly culture,

²² Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:6–9.

²³ Jacobi, *Studien*, 91.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

an inherently hierarchical model, not in evidence elsewhere. Al-Nābighah, for example, in addition to taking a markedly more subservient tone at most times (his *i'tidhār* genre of asking for forgiveness does not exist in tribal praise), emphasizes the leader's bravery, his troops' strength, and the magnificence of his gifts (such as slaves and horses).²⁵ This contrasts with tribal praise which, for example, often emphasizes generosity in a nomadic context (feeding guests and the needy, especially in winter) and conflict resolution (especially assuming bloodwite payments). The material culture associated with the Najdī leadership accordingly differs from areas of the Arabian Peninsula less in contact with sedentary court life. Leaders with sedentary ties were able to cultivate a more capital-intensive patronage network (as al-Nābighah's references to gifts of slaves and horses indicates), were able to present a more sophisticated equestrian and more powerful military persona, and were even keen at times to emphasize mastery of certain courtly rituals such as wine parties in which hierarchical patterns of deference were enacted.

In the south-west of the Arabian Peninsula, these elements are never without regional inflection. Depictions of weaponry reflect a uniquely Ḥijāzī geography (explored further in chapter 4), equestrian imagery is less sophisticated, and attitudes towards urban centers such as Mecca are dismissively negligent. Poets, to the extent that their role is actually visible in the texts themselves, seem to always also be tribal leaders rather than professional panegyrists or threnodists. This lack of a professional poetic class would explain the absence of tripartite *madīḥ qaṣīdahs*. Hudhayl's corpus lacks the three-part *qaṣīdahs* of the Najdī poets. If we view the *raḥīl* used in Najdī praise poetry as a development of a species of boast whose structural purpose is to elevate the speaker as he negotiates intertribal hierarchy, Hudhayl's limited

²⁵ Ibid., 95.

number of bi-partite praise poems reflects a more egalitarian tribal milieu. This in turn is consonant with their derisive attitude towards urban culture. Finally, it explains one of the most striking features of Hudhayl's poetry: the careful description of armed warriors only as illustrations of men's inability to resist the fate of death. These depictions take place in elegies, but also in *nasībs* where the speaker's pain at the loss of the beloved is compared to that of the mother of a warrior fallen in battle. In both cases, the profoundly ironic attitude towards a certain ideal warrior leadership indicates its alien quality to the Ḥijāzī regional sensibility.

An alternate development in the genre of the praise *qaṣīdah* appears to have taken place in Hudhalī poetry. There, the common device of describing a strong companion as part of a boast is lengthened and developed, always in the third person. In a handful of poems, this companion is described to such an extent that the descriptions effectively amount to a praise *qaṣīdah*. The ideal of virile leadership in these texts is different from that found in the praise poetry of Zuhayr or al-Nābighah. The companions described are always lean, able to withstand hunger, with an air of poverty to them. This ideal in fact resembles that of the so-called *ṣu'lūk* poets, who are associated in several ways with Hudhayl. In fact, all of the elements by which a *ṣu'lūk* can be identified are presented as ideals in one way or another in Hudhayl's poetry, to the point where the *akhbār* related to the *ṣu'lūks* should be understood as a rationalization for why Hudhayl's imagery of leadership should vary so much from that found in the remainder of Arabic poetry.

2.2. The Role of Poetry in Negotiating Intertribal Hierarchy

2.2.1. Flexible Absolutes: Lineage and Alliance

A pre-Islamic Arabian tribe, like any tribe, was by no means a static entity. Ostensibly linked via a shared lineage claim, there are several tribes or tribal groupings not named for an ancestor, such as Quraysh (genealogists disagreed as to whether Quraysh was the nickname of the ancestral al-Naḍr ibn Kinānah, or an epithet denoting their trading prowess, among other explanations),²⁶ or the Ribāb confederacy, known simply as “the confederates” (*rubbah*, pl. *ribāb*).²⁷ Many shared lineages were patently fictive, a subject that was of more concern during the Umayyad period when tribal affiliation became so important for military payments and caliphal patronage, but which pre-Islamic poets still addressed.²⁸ Since tribal ideology would tend to describe any tribal reconfiguration as based on kinship, other reconfigurations are obscured. Walter Caskel, however, has amply documented the evidence, mostly from Ibn al-Kalbī’s genealogical work, for the ways in which sections of tribes amalgamated via matrilineal connections,²⁹ moved from one tribe to another,³⁰ or were dispersed among other tribes, subsequently assuming the lineage of their new tribe.³¹ All this is in keeping with Anatoly Khazanov’s observation that one of the main features of nomadic community is the fluctuation of its membership, owing to the limited availability of pasture, vertical organization along

²⁶ For the derivation of Quraysh from *taqarrasha* as related to trade, cf. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 9:80. For some other explanations see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:263–65; and Guillaume, *Life*, 41.

²⁷ Lane, s.v.; Walter Caskel, *EI*², “Ḍabba.”

²⁸ See for example al-Mu’aṭṭal’s attack against a tribesman for laying claim to an ancestry his drunken, cowardly behavior belied: *Ash’ār*, 636.

²⁹ Caskel, *Ġamharat an-nasab*, 57–59.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 59–62.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 62–64.

kinship lines, and variable herd sizes based on a large number of ecological and other conditions.³²

In addition to the genealogical evidence, numerous reports tell of one tribe or tribal section joining another. The Ḥishnah section of the northern Ḥijāzī Balī tribe were said, following a defeat in their original territory, to have fled to Taymā' where they converted to Judaism and joined the Jews living there.³³ The caliph 'Umar was said to have given permission to the Banū Murrāh of Dhubyān, if they wished it, to be reincorporated into Quraysh, because of a shared ancestor.³⁴ The Arabian logic of discerning a shared ancestry with groups with which one finds oneself in political communication seems to underpin the famous *al-waṣiyyah bi-l-Aqbāṭ* (exhortation regarding the Copts) *ḥadīth*, commanding Muslims *istawṣū bi-l-Qibṭ khayran fa-inna la-hum dhimmatan wa raḥīman* (treat the Copts well, under the obligation both of covenant and blood relation), referring to the Egyptian Hagar, Abraham's servant girl who gave birth to Ismā'īl, progenitor of the Arabs.³⁵ A report of at least the possibility of non-Arabs joining an Arab tribe is also found in al-Ṭabarī, who tells us that the men of a Persian garrison in eastern Arabia, neglected by the emperor, asked to join the local tribe of 'Abd al-Qays, a proposition that was seriously debated before being rejected.³⁶

When the reconfiguration of tribal groupings took place, as must have continuously been the case, poetry often gave expression to the logic of a new alliance, separation or other alteration. The ideological work done by a Prophetic *ḥadīth* in articulating a lineage relationship between Egyptian Christians and the early generations of Arab Muslims resident

³² Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, 133–34.

³³ Al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam mā ista'jam*, 29; cf. also Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Poesie der alten Araber*, 55.

³⁴ Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍalīyāt: An Anthology of Ancient Arabian Odes*, 2:255n7; Kister, "Mecca and the Tribes of Arabia," 42.

³⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā*, 2. Ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 4.

³⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:170.

in Egypt following the conquests would, prior to Islam, have had to be done largely through poetry. In the example of the *ḥadīth*, the Muslims must bear responsibility for Copts both because of covenant and lineage. In pre-Islamic Arabian society, these two categories were often seen as mutually incompatible. Under the heading of covenant come terms like *jiwār*, *ḥilf* or *walā'*. The parties to these were known respectively as *jār*, *ḥalīf* and *mawlan*. The first two blend into each other somewhat, although a *jār* is literally a neighbor, thus implying a relationship based on common pasture territory. A *mawlan* is a confusing term because it can refer to either kin ties or a species of covenant. An interesting ritual in this sense is mentioned in the *Ash'ār al-Hudhaliyyīn*: one Burayq of Hudhayl refers to making a man of Sulaym his *jār* by covering him in his cloak (*alḥaftuhu jardī*).³⁷

When conflicts arose in which a contradiction between these forms of association emerged, poetry could, not just symbolically, but apparently truly resolve them. This can be illustrated in an obscure dispute that took place between Banū 'Āmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah and Banū Dhubyān, mentioned in the *dīwān* of al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī. Banū 'Āmir proposed that 'Uyaynah ibn Ḥiṣn (or perhaps it was his father, Ḥiṣn), a Dhubyānī leader, break off his alliance (*ḥilf*) with Asad by claiming that Asad was more closely related to its brother tribe, Kinānah (*alḥiqūhum bi-Kinānah*) than to Dhubyān.³⁸ 'Āmir, on the other hand, were half-brothers to Dhubyān (*naḥnu banū abīkum*),³⁹ presumably meaning that they were both members of the Qays 'Aylān lineage, which is true according to the classical genealogies. Dhubyān countered that if 'Āmir ejected their confederates (*ḥulafā'*), then Dhubyān would accordingly eject theirs, but 'Āmir refused this. Presumably the proposed shifting of alliances was in 'Āmir's favor, but since

³⁷ 28(B'IKh).6.2, *Ash'ār*, 754. See also *Ash'ār*, 1230.

³⁸ Al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, *Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī*, 82.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

it was couched in terms of shared lineage, Dhubyān had to find grounds on which to reject it. Al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī accordingly composed a threatening 13-line poem addressed to ʿĀmir. Since the *ḥilf* is a rather more abstract linkage than a shared lineage, he charges the issue emotionally, reframing it as a matter of loyalty to Dhubyān’s confederates. This introduction lasts for four lines, and he follows it with a nine-line depiction of Dhubyān’s military force, a symbolic threat. The effect of the depiction is not so much a real threat of military action, but a magnification of the emotional statement that Dhubyān’s honor as loyal confederates had been offended [6].

Banū ʿĀmir said to renounce Banū Asad,
 alas for such ignorance (*li-l-jahl*), hurtful to tribes (*ḍarrāran li-aqwāmī*)!
They have been found tried and true, we’d exchange them for no other,
 and we have no desire to dissolve anything after it’s been firmly resolved.
So come to terms with us, all of us, if it seems [right] to you,
 and do not, O ʿĀmir, speak of such things again.
I fear for you lest, because of your hateful behavior (*baghdā’ikum*)
 a day like the days [of battle] befall you:
its stars appear though the sun has arisen,
 its light is not light, nor its darkness darkness—
or that you face an unequalled, glowering [army],
 like the night, coming in serried ranks.⁴⁰

Here we have a typical tribal situation in which two terms, the *ḥilf* and shared lineage, are used to make claims for action that undoubtedly impinge on the power relationships

⁴⁰ Ibid., 82, 83.

between the parties involved. However, the alliance and lineage are both, as it were, flexible absolutes. Depending on the situation, a party can emphasize one or the other absolute requirement. The vehicle through which such emphasis and magnification takes place is poetry. Without a poetic articulation of Dhubyān's loyalty to their confederates, their offended honor, and their symbolic willingness to go to war over this relationship, the claim has no public, intertribal visibility. A juncture opened up by 'Āmir for a realignment of the power relations requires redressing, and professional poetic discourse allows Dhubyān to respond, save face, and maintain the status quo.

Al-Nābighah's poem allowed the maintenance of an alliance between Dhubyān and Asad in opposition to 'Āmir. Poetry could also be used to justify the severing of such a relationship. In his poem addressed to one Banū Sa'd, perhaps of Ḍabbah, Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim announces the dissolution of their alliance with Asad, the poet's tribe. Sa'd can no longer pasture with Asad [7]:

Carry a message to Sa'd and to their cousin (*mawlāhum*)—

the last drops in the udder have been drawn out.

We offer you the way of uprightness,

and we are a people whose affection if one quits, he will have no praise in war.

Then, since your vessels of love are empty, and there is not in them

any tie between us of mutual affection and aid,

the wadi-slopes of 'Uraynāt and the gravelly plain of 'Ayham

are forbidden to you.

We will close them against you, though they be lands wherein

the flanks and humps of camels grow fat and swell.⁴¹

Bishr goes on to assert that his tribe pastures wherever they like because of their strength, and then, like al-Nābighah, threateningly depicts the military strength of the tribe. This has the effect of lending finality to the expulsion of Sa'd, but it is not a mere demonstration of brute force. Both Asad's military power and hence their ability to break off relations from another tribe are rooted in an explicit hierarchy [8]:

We had been in defense of them a strong fortress (*ḥiṣn ḥaṣīn*):
ours was the supreme leadership (*al-ra's al-muqaddam*)
and the loftiest place (*wa-l-sanām*).⁴²

Tellingly, the poet combines two images to make this point here, one sedentary, and one nomadic, an issue to which we'll return shortly. The *ḥiṣn* is an image of sedentary and even urban strength, while the leadership role of Asad is described as the "head jutting forth" and the "hump" of the camel, rendered in the translation idiomatically as "supreme leadership" and "foremost place." Sa'd in this schema are presumably the camel's rump. This construction of a hierarchical relationship is crucial to the speaker's justification for voiding the alliance. In this depiction, the severing of the alliance is not treacherous or disloyal, but the natural result of a rhetorical logic articulated by the poem. In the text's image of Asad, it is their prerogative as a strong, leading tribe to take such action.

In the two examples cited, tribesmen make use of the social practice of poetry in order to construct images legitimizing the adherence to or severing of intertribal relationships. These relationships are not viewed as kin-ties, but poets could also enter a diplomatic fray in

⁴¹ *Muf.* no. 97, ll. 15–19, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 335; translation here and following adapted from Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:274 ff.

⁴² *Ibid.*, l. 35.

an attempt to police the sacrosanct nature of lineage within a tribe. When a war broke out between Sahn and Şirmah of Murrah, a branch of Dhubyān, tribes from outside Dhubyān became involved. At one point in the conflict, Şirmah defeated Sahn with the help both of allies from within Dhubyān, Tha‘labah ibn Sa‘d, as well as the unrelated outside tribe of Muḥārib. Ḥuşayn ibn al-Ḥumām of Sahn expresses his outrage [9]:

No wonder! But when Muḥārib came upon us

with a thousand horsemen, eagerly pressing on in a host together—

they, the clients of our clients, to take captive our women!

O, Tha‘labah, you have truly done here a hateful thing, Tha‘labah!

I said to them, “O house of Dhubyān, what has come to you—

may you perish—that this year you walk not in the right path?”

Their chiefs invited one another to the worst of deeds, and Mawḏū‘

has thereby become a place to which that [shame] will cleave forever.⁴³

The description of Muḥārib as *mawālī mawālīnā* (the clients of our clients), not only evokes the lack of a kin relationship, but swiftly subordinates al-Muḥārib to an abject rung in the intertribal hierarchy. This has the effect not only of insulting Muḥārib and emphasizing Dhubyān’s degradation, but of diminishing the client-status of *walā’*, a competing allegiance that the speaker attempts to dismiss by invoking the ties of the larger, tribal kin-group.

2.2.2. Flexible Absolutes: Egalitarianism and Hierarchy

The various categories of alliance and lineage by which pre-Islamic tribes understood their relationships with each other were implicitly hierarchical. Somewhat related to lineage is

⁴³ *Muf.* no. 90, ll. 9–12, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 317–18; translation adapted from Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:257.

the issue of royalty, by which Arabs were divided into kings (*mulūk*) and commoners (*sūqah*). The exact meaning of these references is never extremely clear—in some cases, the kings in question have to do with well-known sedentary powers such as Rome or Iran, but in many other cases the nature of the claim is uncertain,⁴⁴ except that it involves an assertion to some kind of hierarchical superiority. Bloodwite was one arena in which such a hierarchy was quite definite. Rabī'ah al-Aḥwaṣ demanded a king's ransom (*diyat al-malik*), said to be one thousand camels, after the battle of Raḥraḥān (perhaps around 570), in exchange for the Tamīmī leader Ma'bad ibn Zurārah. Ma'bad's brother Laqīṭ refused to offer more than two hundred camels for his brother, who ended up dying in captivity.⁴⁵

The prevailing attitude towards kingship as such was profoundly ambivalent. Most famously, Kulayb ibn Rabī'ah of Taghlib supposedly had himself named “king,”⁴⁶ and was murdered for his overweening behavior; Imru' al-Qays's father Ḥujr of Kinda was assassinated by Asad for overreaching himself as “king,” and poets as diverse as 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Tha'lab of Hudhayl and Jābir ibn Ḥunayy of Taghlib boasted of killing, capturing or otherwise defeating kings (*mulūk*).⁴⁷ Yet at the same time poets such as al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥillizah of Yashkur of Bakr ibn Wā'il praised another Bakrī tribesman, Qays ibn Sharāḥīl as a king (*malik*), “intractable, with an exalted disposition (*shahm al-maqāda, mājid al-nafs*).”⁴⁸ Al-Musayyab of Qays ibn Tha'labah praises the Tamīmī chief al-Qā'qā' ibn Ma'bad ibn al-Zurārah for mingling with kings, saying “when the chiefs at the courts of kings throng together, you excel beyond

⁴⁴ Cf., for example, Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah, no. 2, l. 38, *Ash'ār*, 1135, where high-ranking enemies in battle are all *mulūk*.

⁴⁵ Bevan, *The Naḳā'id of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq*, 227.

⁴⁶ Or to have demanded to be called *a'azz Wā'il*, according to *Naḳā'id*, 908.

⁴⁷ *Ash'ār*, 980; *Muf.* no. 42, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 211.

⁴⁸ *Muf.* no. 25, l. 9, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 133.

their reach a full cubit's length."⁴⁹ There is a pattern to the ambivalence. Tribes such as Qays ibn Tha'labah and Tamīm who resided closer to al-Ḥīrah, the Mesopotamian court of the Sasanian client kingdom of the Naṣrid dynasty (known as Lakhmids from Arabic sources), were more likely to view kings positively than those of the interior of the peninsula such as Asad or Hudhayl, although there is much room for variation.

Poets, in treating intertribal political situations, invoke the hierarchy of *mulūk* and *sūqah* both with sedentary kings, with tribal leaders that they treat as kings, and amongst themselves, when no one making a claim to monarchical status is even involved. Although the nature of the hierarchy varied regionally, a poetic speaker's invariable imperative as a point of honor is to present himself and those he speaks for as equals (or even superiors) to his interlocutor. Just as in the case of relationships of covenant and lineage, poetry's role is to resolve a contradiction. Here, the task is, through rhetorical magic, to present a public declaration that depicts the speaker and his tribe as equals to a man he simultaneously praises as superior, or to whom he makes some significant political concession.

Al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, in a poem addressed to an unknown king who had attacked his tribe, illustrates the twin imperatives of displaying subordination while asserting equality. His tactic, a tried and true strategy of those of a middling social rank throughout history, is to invoke and depict tribes lower down on the hierarchy than his. First, though, he describes the king's attack against his tribe, praising the king's power and lineage [10]:

What is our crime, that a king (*malik*) of the clan of Jafnah,

prudent, the humbler of his foes, led an attack?

Noble of lineage on both sides, sprung from the 'Awātik and the Ghullaf,

⁴⁹ *Muf.* no. 11, l. 17, *ibid.*, 62.

no weakling, not born a twin!⁵⁰

According to the commentary, ‘Awātik refers to several women named ‘Ātikah from the southern tribe of Azd, while Ghullaf refers to men named Ghafḷā’ from the tribe of Kindah, on the basis of which Lyall reads “Kindah” for “Jafnah.”⁵¹ The issue cannot probably be resolved. Also according to the commentary, a twin, having to share his mother’s milk, would be weak. The meaning could also be “unrivalled,” “unmatched.” Clearly, though, the addressee is of superior status. Evidently one of the speaker’s kinsmen had been killed by the king, which requires vengeance. Instead, the poet asserts equality of lineage, claiming that his own tribe are related in the maternal line to the king, and that as such are deserving of respect [11]:

But we are of your mother’s kin, by my life!

And to the mother’s brother are due respect and defense for his honor!⁵²

Regardless of the veracity of this assertion, and regardless of how close a maternal link would have been considered, by emphasizing equality of lineage rather than status, the poet deflects somewhat the need to demand vengeance. Within a lineage group, reconciliation by payment of a bloodwite would be sufficient and even preferable.

His lineage is not sufficient to save face completely, however, and Al-Muraqqish goes on to contrast the dignity of his own tribe with a hypothetical, lower-grade entity [12]:

We are not like some folk whose daily food is earned by foul speech

and the rending of reputations;

if they are in a state of plenty, they know not how to use their abundance well,

and if they are famine-stricken, then they are viler still.⁵³

⁵⁰ *Muf.* no. 54, ll. 18–19, *ibid.*, 239; translation adapted from Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:182.

⁵¹ Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 1:489; 2:184n.

⁵² *Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, ed. Shākir and Hārūn, 240, l. 24.

The speaker goes on for four more lines describing the inhospitable behavior and parsimony of this tribe, before contrasting them with his own [13]:

But we are a folk whom self-respect and nobleness
rouses [to act] in the midst of our tribe;
as for our possessions, we guard ourselves, by [spending from] them,
against anything that blame draws near to.
May God not keep us from girding [ourselves with our weapons],
from raiding when the raiders cry out that there are herd animals—
and from the bustle [of servants] between guests as they sit,
when the evening has fallen and all come together, calling each other.⁵⁴

The effect of sandwiching the hypothetical vile tribe between the assertion of kinship to the king and praise for his own people is to evoke a sense of intertribal hierarchy. The imaginative depiction of another tribe lower down on the scale, inflates the speaker's assertion of kinship with nobility that may otherwise have rung hollow.

The rhetoric of a hierarchy capped by monarch-status (there hardly ever seems to be the sense that *one* king only is legitimate) could be evoked as well in intra-tribal conflicts where no actual kings were involved. Such a situation arose within the ʿĀmir tribe, between the Abū Bakr ibn Kilāb clan and Banū Jaʿfar, as the result of rather confused situation. According to Abū ʿUbaydah in his commentary on the *Naqāʿid*,⁵⁵ the tribe of Asad killed a man from Abū Bakr, and needing to kill an Asadī, Abū Bakr murdered an Asadī *jār* (protégé) of Banū Jaʿfar. Their need for vengeance having been fulfilled, Abū Bakr now owed Banū Jaʿfar the

⁵³ Ibid., l. 25–26.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 240–41, l. 31–34.

⁵⁵ Bevan, *The Naqāʿid of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq*, 532–33.

bloodwite of a *jār* (less than that of a full tribesman), so in the meantime as a sign of their good intentions, a man from Abū Bakr, Mālik ibn Quḥāfah, gave his son to Banū Ja‘far as a hostage. Upon the payment of this bloodwite (and then Banū Ja‘far’s consequent payment to Asad for the death of their *Asadī jār*), the situation would have ended. In the meantime, however, hotheads from Banū Ja‘far captured a man from Abū Bakr called Rabī‘at al-Sharr, binding and humiliating him (he had just finished breakfasting on milk, and they dragged him through the dirt until he defecated on himself). Mālik ibn Quḥāfah then demanded his son back, which he was given, but Banū Ja‘far now needed to make restitution to al-Hiṣṣān, the brother of Rabī‘at al-Sharr, still in captivity. Banū Ja‘far allowed al-Hiṣṣān to adjudge the amount owed the family for the unusual humiliation his brother had suffered, and he decided forty camels was adequate, slightly less than half of the one hundred due for a death.

During these negotiations, ‘Awf ibn al-Aḥwaṣ of Banū Ja‘far composed a poem intended, evidently, to pacify al-Hiṣṣān. In the course of the poem, ‘Awf offers his son to his addressee. Two explanations for this are given. In one, ‘Awf tells them they can humiliate his son Da‘b as Rabī‘at al-Sharr had been humiliated. In another, Abū Bakr wanted to exact their vengeance against ‘Awf, who offered his son instead.⁵⁶ A more likely explanation is offered by Aḥmad Shākir and ‘Abd al-Sallām Hārūn, that Da‘b would serve as a hostage until bloodwite was payed.⁵⁷ Whatever the actual events, which as ever in such lore are of little historical value, the same cultural logic made the same inexorable and contradictory demand on the poet: that he submit to another leader’s decision while simultaneously depicting his equality or superiority to the interlocutor, just as al-Muraqqish al-Akbar had to do with the king [14]:

⁵⁶ Ibid., 533.

⁵⁷ *Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 174.

I will never blame you so long as tears roll down my eyes,
if I do, may God destroy me!

I acknowledge your authority (*uqirru bi-ḥukmika*) so long as life lasts,
and I accept it, though it bring the loss of all my goods.⁵⁸

The speaker then warns his interlocutor against any deviation from the true in his *ḥukm*, his ruling or judgment (*ḥukm*), and then the unclear line about the speaker's son appears [15a]:

Take Da'b in exchange for the wrong that I've done you (*bi-mā athaytu fī-kum*),
you have no superiority (*'alā'*) over Da'b:

for among those not of royal race (*li-sūqatin*) none has superiority (*faḍl*) over us,
and among your kinsmen (*ashyā'ikum*, sc. among us) you can find
equality in bloodwite (*bawā'*).

Do you have some relationship (*walā'*) to the race of Ḥujr, son of 'Amr,
that you know about and of which I am ignorant?

...

I don't think that you're from the race of the kings of Naṣr;
and kings are expensive [to ransom—(*la-hum ghalā'ū*)].⁵⁹

The family of Ḥujr were the kings of Kinda. In the next two lines, he refers to the families of the Jafnids and the Naṣrids of Syria and al-Ḥīrah. Whatever the nature of the speaker's concession involving his son, it is swiftly followed by a reminder of the equality of the two parties. However, to invoke merely the bald fact that they are both clans within 'Āmir fails to balance the concession that the speaker has made. There can be leadership, precedence, and

⁵⁸ *Muf.* no. 35, ll. 6, 7, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 174. Translation here and following cited lines adapted from Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt: An Anthology of Ancient Arabian Odes*, 2:125 ff.

⁵⁹ Thus Lyall's reading of *ghalā'*. It could also mean *irtifā'* (elevation (in status), for which see Lane, s.v.), which reading Shākir and Hārūn prefer.

subordination between brother clans after all. So a depiction of the wider hierarchy of the Arabian Peninsula is invoked—the kings of the north-west, north-east, and south-central Arabia, a veritable panorama of the region. What began as a concession has turned into an attack against the addressee for inflating his status. This attack in turn sets the stage for the speaker to contrast inflated claims with a boast of his own lineage [15b]:

I have gained glory from the side of the father and the mother,
and my high place reaches up to both of them. ...
And [war] is pierced, when I gain mastery over her,
even as a piece of broiling meat is pierced on the skewer,
by a spear with the sharpened head of which I thrust into her
a long iron point, the knots in which are athirst for blood.⁶⁰

Lyall is correct to point out that this is probably a veiled threat.⁶¹ The rhetorical logic of ‘Awf’s text is the same here as in al-Nābighah and Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim above. In both of those cases, assertions regarding the nature of alliance (retaining it in the first case and dissolving it in another) are followed by martial language, a symbolic expression of the speaker’s tribe’s investment in its claims. It is not necessarily belligerence, or even a very real threat, since even here, in what is apparently an attempt to reconcile two tribes, potential violence is involved. It seems rather to be the case that a tribesman who would not back up his statement with potential use of force does not really mean what he’s saying and could not be expected to be taken seriously.

⁶⁰ Ll. 16, 19–20. The knots [*maqālim*] are the segments of some kind of reed from which the spear’s shaft is manufactured. It seems as if, since such reed or cane plants grow in wet areas, they are thirsty, here, figuratively. See Schwarzlose, *Waffen*, 221–22.

⁶¹ Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍaliyāt*, 2:127.

2.3. *The Northeast Arabian/Najdī Model of the Warrior Aristocracy: Between Court and Tribe*

Most of the poets cited thus far (such as Tamīm) hail either from the central plateau of Najd or are, in addition, from the clan of Qays ibn Tha'labah located near Iraq. Qays ibn Tha'labah was perhaps the seminal school for the development of the tripartite *qaṣīdah* and many of the other conventions of Arabic poetry. Poets from these regions enjoyed a privileged and interactive relationship with the material culture of Byzantine and Iranian (or perhaps, sub-Byzantine and sub-Iranian) court practice. They accordingly represent elements of these cultures in their poetry in order to depict themselves as high-status speakers, i.e., to boast. In doing so, their goal was not necessarily to identify with foreign culture, but to skillfully mediate between Arabian nomadic values and foreign sedentary customs.

This mediation is most evident boasting poetry, or *mufākhharah*, particularly when it deals with material culture. Renate Jacobi has divided the kinds of boasting (*mufākhharah*) in early Arabic poetry into tribal and personal.⁶² Most of the following examples are necessarily from the type of personal *mufākhharah*, which is more conducive to depictions of individual leadership. The distinction between the two lies in the tribal *mufākhharah* typically coming in the format of a message, where the speaker begins or inserts a formulaic meta-statement asking an addressee to bear the poem to the final interlocutor. These kinds of boasts, some of which we have seen above, often deal with intertribal politics and include threats or propositions regarding alliance. The personal boast is only found as the final section of a tripartite *qaṣīdah*.

The virtues extolled in the tribal *mufākhharah* revolve around what, in anthropological terms, would be termed reciprocity. As Khazanov has argued, “the less social differentiation

⁶² Jacobi, *Studien*, 65–78.

there is in a given society, the greater is the importance of balanced and non-balanced reciprocity,”⁶³ that is to say, socially valorized acts of generosity, either requited later or not. It is accordingly acts of reciprocity that are praised in this kind of boast, “social virtues” according to Jacobi,⁶⁴ such as generosity in times of famine and providing for the poor. When wine or camel-slaughter are mentioned, it tends to be in terms of such acts of generosity. This kind of tribal boast can emphasize status and hierarchy, particularly between tribes when a political situation is dealt with (as in militant equestrian boasts, below), but in general it is in such praise that the tribal leader appears as the *primus inter pares* figure that Caskel and others refer to. The emphasis falls on the egalitarian solidarity of the tribe. Moreover, in this kind of boasting, poets from different times and regions tend to articulate similar “nomadic” values.

For personal boasting, Jacobi identifies six subjects: the dangerous desert journey, hunting, battle, speaking in tribal councils, drinking, and the company of women.⁶⁵ Four of these (excluding the desert journey and tribal councils) deal with material culture, and accordingly, emphasize the status of the speaker in a hierarchical social context much more explicitly. Most of the components of material culture in question are of foreign origin and are used in poetic texts to denote the speaker’s elevated status, frequently with explicit reference to foreign systems of hierarchy such as the Sasanian kingship. However, weapons, wine and horses are not merely uninflected status markers, and different poets felt in varying degrees the necessity of mitigating or modifying their representations. For the most part, those poets from tribes most distant from sedentary centers seem to have felt the anxiety to do so most acutely.

⁶³ Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, 154.

⁶⁴ Jacob, *Studien*, 74.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

2.3.1. Equestrianism in Combat and Hunting

Domesticated, saddled horses used for riding may have been a relatively late addition to Arabian culture, the result of interaction between Arabian nomads and the Persian military. Horse-mounted cavalry had first appeared in the Near East in the early first millennium BCE with the settlement of horse-breeding Iranian peoples in Persia.⁶⁶ It was accordingly in the north-east of the peninsula, sometime after about 500 BCE, that domesticated horses and horse breeding appear in Arabia.⁶⁷ Strabo (d. 24 CE) emphasizes in his *Geography* that Arabs made do in his time with camels to the exclusion of horses,⁶⁸ and Paul Yule and Christian Robin accordingly see little evidence in South Arabia for horse-riding before the first century CE.⁶⁹ Bulliet argues that the horse and the new North Arabian camel saddle would have entered Arabian culture as part of a constellation of commodities, including metal weapons, particularly swords and spears to replace a previous reliance on bows, and grain to feed the horses.⁷⁰ In his view, “the development of horse breeding in the desert makes it clear that the camel nomad was becoming increasingly able to control his economic life as it impinged upon settled society.”⁷¹ The financing of such investments in equestrian culture was made possible, although sources do not allow us to specify how, exactly, by the caravan trade, particularly in incense, through the Near East at this time, which later decreased in the third century CE.

⁶⁶ Roman Ghirshman, *Iran from the Earliest Times to the Islamic Conquest* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1954), 89.

⁶⁷ M. C. A. Macdonald, “Hunting, Fighting and Raiding: The Horse in Pre-Islamic Arabia,” in *Furusiyya: The Horse in the Art of the Near East*, ed. David Alexander (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: King Abdulaziz Public Library, 1996), 74.

⁶⁸ Strabo, *Geography*, 7:368–69, 16.4.26.

⁶⁹ Paul Yule and Christian Robin, “Himyarite Knights, Infantrymen and Hunters,” *Arabia* 3 (2005 2006): 261.

⁷⁰ Bulliet, *The Camel and the Wheel*, 100.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Horses continued to play an important role in depictions of elite status among regional powers around and within Arabia. This is most obvious in Sasanian Persia, where the model of a heavily armored horse and horseman, the cataphract, had developed during the Parthian period (247 BCE–224 CE).⁷² Traditionally, the landed aristocracy had provided the Persian military with its cavalry, but Ardashīr I, the first Sasanian emperor, attempted to create a standing professional army loyal to him rather than local leaders.⁷³ The Sasanian model of heavy cavalry was influential throughout the Near East, and the Roman army formed similar units of *clibanarii* in order to counter Sasanian strength.⁷⁴

More than merely an effective military force, however, the Sasanian model of mounted warriors traditionally drawn from landed nobility presented an image of equestrian status and prestige. Nowhere, perhaps, is this more visible than in the famous third- and fourth-century Sasanian rock reliefs of Fars in southwestern present-day Iran—Sar-i Pul, Naqsh-i Rostam, Bīshāpūr, Fīrūzābād, among others—featuring equestrian representations of Sasanian emperors such as the investiture scene at Naqsh-i Rostam of a mounted Ardashīr (?–242CE) being granted sovereignty, in the form of a ring, from the deity Ohrmazd,⁷⁵ or his mounted and splendidly accoutered son Shāpūr I (r. ca. 239–270) accepting the submission of the Roman emperor Valerian, defeated after the battle of Edessa.⁷⁶

⁷² Alireza Shapour Shahbazi, “Army, i. Pre-Islamic Iran,” *EIr*. For the development of cavalry in the Sasanian period, and parallel Roman developments, see Michalak Mirosław, “The Origins and Development of Sassanian Heavy Cavalry,” *Folia Orientalia* 24 (1987): 73–86.

⁷³ Shahbazi, “Army, i. Pre-Islamic Iran,” *EIr*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Heinz Luschey, “Ardašīr I, ii. Rock Reliefs,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*; Dorothy Shepherd, “Sasanian Art,” *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3, pt. 2, 1083, pl. 90a. Early sovereigns of Ḥaḍramawt and perhaps Saba’ celebrated a ritual mounted hunt at their accession: A. G. Loundine, “Le banquet rituel dans l’état de Saba’,” *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 20 (1990): 98.

⁷⁶ Dorothy Shepherd, “Sasanian Art,” *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3, pt. 2, 1083.

Such imagery of power projection would have travelled. The style in which horse-mounted warriors at Naqsh-i Rostam are depicted perhaps influenced similar stone reliefs in Yemen. Paul Yule and Christian Robin, in an analysis of an undated Ḥimyarite relief of an armored and mounted “knight,” detail the similarities between the Sasanian and Ḥimyarite depictions, thus proposing a date post-third century for the Ḥimyarite relief,⁷⁷ arguing that the images probably reflect awareness of external developments.⁷⁸ Such “depictions of a mounted knight would serve to underscore the status of the owner. Representations of hunters and riders make clear the stratification of highland Ḥimyarite society. They are the high-status bearers as opposed to the silent and invisible majority.”⁷⁹ In general, several South Arabian inscriptions attest to the central role of hunting in royal and elite self-depiction in the centuries preceding Islam. For example, an inscription discovered in 2006 records the fourth-century CE governor of Saba’s dedication to the deity Almaqah for healing his horse, who is named (‘Alīyum, the Sabaic cognate of the Arabic proper name ‘Alī).⁸⁰ The hunt is also described.

Other aspects of Sasanian rule, particularly coinage and decorated vessels, were certainly imitated outside of the Sasanian realm proper. The Kidarite “Huns,” who made incursions into the eastern part of the Sasanian empire in the late fourth century, minted coins with a crown resembling that later used by the Sasanian emperor Yazdegerd II (r. 439–57

⁷⁷ Yule and Robin, “Ḥimyarite Knights, Infantrymen and Hunters,” 264.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 267.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Mohammed Maraqtan, “Hunting in Pre-Islamic Arabia in Light of the Epigraphic Evidence,” *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 26, no. 2 (November 1, 2015): 220. This article provides an excellent, up-to-date and much needed synthesis of the epigraphic and pictographic data related to hunting from pre-Islamic Arabia, including rock art and relief panels.

CE).⁸¹ Sasanian emperors were also depicted on silver dishes, most of which depict royal hunts. These make use of the same crown imagery found on Sasanian coins as well as representations of horses similar to the rock reliefs of Naqsh-i Rostam and elsewhere. The hunt as a motif on silver dishes probably emerged in the fourth century CE, and developed aesthetically thereafter.⁸² Some of these dishes were likely the products of a royal workshop, but other less well executed dishes have been interpreted as imitations produced by “peripheral” eastern Hunnic or Turkic polities, although actual provenance is highly uncertain.⁸³

Cruder depictions of hunting have been found in pre-Islamic Arabia. Among the Safaitic inscriptions, datable only approximately to a period between the first century BCE and the fourth century CE, several graffiti drawings on rocks of horse activities have been found, mostly from northeastern Jordan. These depict horse-mounted riders raiding camels, hunting oryx and engaging in combat.⁸⁴ At Qaryat al-Fāw, in southern Najd, painted murals representing horse-back hunting or raiding have been found, dated by A. R. al-Ansary to roughly 200 BCE–500 CE.⁸⁵ There was certainly interaction between Qaryat al-Fāw and nearby Saba’, then later Ḥimyar.⁸⁶

We can speculate that Sasanian cavalry developments, which in turn led to hunting and battle scenes used as imagery of rule, affected not only the Roman army but filtered into other peripheral areas such as Yemen, where, in turn, the Ḥimyarite imagery was adapted by both sedentary (at Qaryat al-Fāw) and nomadic Arabs of the interior of the Arabian Peninsula. Or, if

⁸¹ Prudence Oliver Harper, *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1981), 44–45.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 136.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 8, 40–42, 47, 135–137, 142.

⁸⁴ Macdonald, “Hunting, Fighting and Raiding: The Horse in Pre-Islamic Arabia,” 77.

⁸⁵ A. R. Ansary, *Qaryat Al-Fau, a Portrait of Pre-Islamic Civilization in Saudi Arabia* ([Riyadh]: University of Riyadh, 1982), 29, 130–133.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 15, 16.

we reject such speculation, a minimalist reading would indicate that the interior of the Arabian Peninsula was engaged in a progressive social valorization of equestrian values associated with horse-mounted combat and hunting, and that in this, it participated in developments which, having begun on the Eurasian steppe, were then taking place in Sasanian Iran and the eastern Roman empire. At the very least, nomadic Arabic culture was coming to generally valorize equestrian combat and hunting, and with it certain levels of hierarchical stratification.

Arabic poetry served a similar purpose within Arabian society as Sasanian and Ḥimyaritic equestrian reliefs, and perhaps the Safaitic rock graffiti and murals of Qaryat al-Fāw, namely, to emphasize the status of the person represented. Horse description was not, in other words, a socially neutral aesthetic exercise, but a means of defining the speaker's role as a legitimate leader within his tribe, or his tribe's role within an inter-tribal hierarchy. In the poem already cited above, where Bishr ibn Abī Khāzīm al-Asadī dissolves the alliance with Sa'd, the speaker describes his tribe's power by mentioning that [16],

[Asad's] men have no need to run afoot (*tas'á*);

they have spare horses in plenty standing ready bridled ...⁸⁷

This is then followed by a seven-line description of the tribe's horses. Just as al-Muraqqish—in his petition cited above to a Jafnid king with whom the poem's speaker asserts maternal kinships—evokes a miserly and servile tribe as a foil to his own, here Bishr evokes a horseless tribe, carefully situating the social status of horse ownership and equestrian skills before moving on to the description itself.

⁸⁷ Muf. no. 97, l. 25, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 336. Translation adapted from Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 274.

As we shall see, not all tribes could make this boast, and chose to vaunt their running abilities instead. Bishr, in fact, a celebrated describer of horses, always situates his horse description in intertribal political contexts. In a long *qaṣīdah* glorifying Asad’s victories over Ṭayyi’, Sulaym the Ribāb as well as sections of Dhubyān, Tamīm, ‘Āmir and Ghaṭafān—in other words, all of the tribes of north-central and north-western Arabia, constituting most of Najd and some of the northern Ḥijāz—the speaker concludes with an address to Kinānah, “our tribe” (*qawmanā*). Lyall reads this as a “greeting” to a “brother tribe,”⁸⁸ since the father of both Asad and Kinānah was Khuzaymah [17]:

Bring a message (*rasūlan*), if you should speak of us (*in ‘araḍta bi-nā*),

to Kinānah, our tribe, wherever they may be:

We take the place of those who have gone away,⁸⁹

and we occupy at will the “earth’s fat camel-hump” (*sanām al-arḍ*)⁹⁰

with led mares, all pressing on, lively and nimble,

though worn down by reconnoiters and distant raids—

yanking against the reins, as if a yellow [full-grown] locust

[flying] in the windy dust-cloud possessed them,

thrusting back the girth with their elbows,

the spaces between their udders clogged with dust.

You can see their dark coats flecked pale-gray, from dried [foamy] sweat,

plentiful in some places and thin in others,

⁸⁸ Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 2:278.

⁸⁹ *Kafaynā man taghayyaba* means, according to the commentary, “we defeated its people” [*ghalabnā ‘alayhi ahlahu*]: Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 1:672.

⁹⁰ Two authorities cited by al-Anbārī say that this means the highest part of Najd (ibid.). As Lyall points out, (2:282), the most direct point the speaker is trying to make is that his tribe is powerful enough to occupy good grazing areas in the highlands when there is drought.

in every place of soft soil, wherever they wheeled about,

is a well-like footprint of the hoof with the sides crumbling in.⁹¹

Thus the mares; a further six lines describing the stallions follow. To understand both of Bishr's horse descriptions, we must elaborate on simplistic explanations of poetic imagery as expressive of *muruwah*, or aristocratic conservatism. Bishr's horse descriptions play a specific role in the intertribal politics of his day, even if the situation is unclear and he is exaggerating Asad's role. In both of the texts cited, Asad's equestrian power is connected to its ability to control and hold territory, particularly grazing areas. We saw this territorial power emphasized in the address to the Sa'd tribe, when Asad dissolves their relationship with that group, and it is clear here as well, because in the winter the tribe is able to control the best pasture. When Sa'd was addressed such imagery was aggressive and threatening, whereas if Kinānah is being addressed as a related kin-group, then the suggestion seems rather to be one of powerful alliance, patronage, or solidarity. In any case, equestrian power plays a specific role in situating the speaker and his tribe in a variable and flexible regional tribal hierarchy.

Arabic poetry depicts hunting, broadly speaking, via three generic conventions. In describing the speed and endurance of his camel, the speaker in a tripartite *qaṣīdah* often constructs what amounts to an epic simile between the camel and some hunted animal, always either an oryx or onager.⁹² In the case of the onager, the hunter is always depicted as impoverished, unmounted, using a bow and arrow and lying in wait for his prey in a simple blind.⁹³ The oryx hunter uses dogs, although there is less emphasis on his social standing

⁹¹ *Muf.* no. 98, ll. 41–48, *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 343–44. Translation adapted from Lyall 1918, II, 280.

⁹² This is Jacobi's *selbständige Vergleich*. For her discussion, including a comparison with the Homeric epic simile, see Jacobi, *Studien*, 157–167.

⁹³ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 42–59.

generally.⁹⁴ The poets of Hudhayl describe animals being hunted in the context of elegies, but not camel comparisons. Finally, in boasts, poets describe mounted hunting, where, as Ewald Wagner points out, the central purpose is not to describe the hunt so much as the speaker's horse.⁹⁵ The hunt has been characterized as "sport hunting" (Sportjagd) by Tilman Seidensticker,⁹⁶ and according to Thomas Bauer, celebrates the participation of the hunter in the aristocracy.⁹⁷ Here the hunter typically uses a spear rather than a bow and arrow, and is accompanied by servants. Like the equestrian combat scenes mentioned above, scenes of hunting are often implicit vaunts of territorial power, as the hunter dares to hunt in whatever pasture he cares to.⁹⁸

It is this last type of hunting which resembles the depictions of Ancient South Arabian (ASA) hunts. Paul Yule and Christian Robin write of these that "[m]ilitary operations and hunting are ... related and share the same kind of weapons. Moreover, in OSA hunts often took place in conjunction with military ventures. The hunt serves as a platform where the ruler can represent himself in a positive and active light. Thus, an entourage accompanies the royal hunter to support this social activity."⁹⁹ It is probably no coincidence that the most well-crafted and famous hunting depictions in pre-Islamic poetry are those of the Kindan Imru' al-Qays, whose tribe is closely associated both in Arabic literary lore and epigraphically with Ḥimyar. In his poetry as well, hunting reveals itself to be a highly hierarchical social activity [18]:

⁹⁴ For a general discussion of oryx episodes in the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah*, see Montgomery, *The Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah*, 110–65.

⁹⁵ Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1987, 1:109–10.

⁹⁶ Shamardal ibn Šarīk, *Die Gedichte des Šamardal ibn Šarīk: Neuedition, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, ed. and trans. Tilman Seidensticker (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983), 15.

⁹⁷ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:39–42.

⁹⁸ Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 2:13; Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, 29–31.

⁹⁹ Yule and Robin, "Ḥimyarite Knights, Infantrymen and Hunters," 265.

My slave (*ghulām*) kept thrusting the spear about him,
at all of the gazelles and white-flanked, long-legged [onagers],
and [the horse] reared up (*qāma tuwāla l-shakhṣi*) when [the game] dyed him
[with blood] like a sash-girdled Persian noble (*qiyāma l-'azīzi l-fārisiyyi*).
Then we said, “that was a hunt worthy of the hunter,
spread above us now a pavilion’s shade (*thawbin murawwaqī*).”¹⁰⁰

Here the slave appears to be doing all of the work of hunting, while the speaker merely commands him, just as he commands the tent to be spread for a feast after the hunt. The horse, with a laudably lengthy back, is depicted as a status symbol by means of a comparison with a Persian noble, evoking Sasanian court mores in our Arabian hunting scene. The blood is smeared across the horse’s torso just as a colorful sash binds the nobleman.

The *ghulām* figure’s servile status is emphasized in another passage by Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmá. Here, the slave comes back to the hunting party having sighted game, and asks what course of action they should take, whether to charge openly or try to sneak up on the animals [19]:

He says: “My lord (*amīri*), that which you think, so do we (*mā tará ra’ya mā nará*),
shall we surprise him with subterfuge or storm in upon him?”¹⁰¹

Such language indicates hierarchical stratification within the tribe, but it seems possible that the hierarchy present in this exchange is peculiar to the practice of the hunt. Dialogue between individuals, including those of different social standing, is not infrequent in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, and such deferential modes of speech are not common.

¹⁰⁰ Imru’ al-Qays no. 40, ll. 30–32, Ahlwardt, *Dix Divans*, 142.

¹⁰¹ Zuhayr no. 15, l. 17, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 92.

In Zuhayr's scene, the *ghulām* does not do all the hunting, nor does the hunter in other scenes attributed to Imru' al-Qays, but the *ghulām* is invoked in other contexts as well. In the *mu'allaqah* of Imru' al-Qays, in a description of the speed of the speaker's horse, we hear that [20],

he makes the light slave (*al-ghulām al-khiff*) slide from his back,
and sets aflutter the robes of the unskilled,
hard-clenching rider (*al-'anīf al-muthaqqal*).¹⁰²

The horse, in other words, is so powerful that it takes a special combination of heft and skillful grace to masterfully ride it. Again, just as al-Muraqqish and Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim evoke more lowly tribes in order to throw their kinship with kings or their equestrianism into a more positive light, the speaker in this poem evokes the *ghulām* to throw his own embodiment of aristocratic poise into relief.

Another feature of the aristocratic or sport hunt in Najdī poetics is the emphasis on large numbers of animals of different species (typically oryx and onagers) being killed.¹⁰³ In contrast, onager and oryx episodes when they appear in camel comparisons (or in elegies, in the Hudhalī corpus), feature a single animal being hunted. Likewise, within the extant silver dishes of the Sasanian royal hunt, some feature solitary animals while others depict hunters killing a large number of animals from different species. This seems to have been a chronological development, although its exact contours are unclear, that took place between the emergence of these hunting depictions in the fourth century and the early sixth century.¹⁰⁴

The Metropolitan Museum's "Peroz-Kavad I plate," for example, shows Peroz or Kavad I

¹⁰² Imru' al-Qays no. 38, l. 52, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 149. For this meaning of *'anīf*, c.f. Lane, s.v.

¹⁰³ Cf. *Muf.* no. 26, l. 58, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 142, by 'Abdah ibn Ṭabīb, mentioning ostrich and oryx together, in addition to the Imru' al-Qays citation above.

¹⁰⁴ Harper, *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period*, 136.

representations of hunts between Byzantine and Sasanian cultural realms.¹⁰⁸ Local customs may also have played a role in encouraging such scenes as Imru' al-Qays's. Michael Zwettler has suggested that this is a South Arabian royal hunt, a ritual ensuring the fertility of the king's lands, since Imru' al-Qays's text ends with a long and famous rain description.¹⁰⁹ At any rate, the Arabian cultural world was quite evidently participating in the same ideological and material cultural developments as the wider Near East. The poet's role mediating between foreign cultural elements is not as apparent here as elsewhere, but we can see that poetry played an important role in developing an indigenous hunt as an image of rule in parallel evolution to other regional powers. In weaponry, the role of poetry in mediating anxieties over foreign cultural norms is more pronounced.

2.3.2. Weaponry and Wealth

In both poetry and the prose *akhbār* (lore "reports") of the pre-Islamic period, it is evident that the economic value of war equipment as well as the prestige and power accruing to its possessors led both to the imbrication of the nomadic warrior aristocracy with sedentary powers, as well as conflict between all groups involved. Most famously, the battle of Dhū Qār took place around 610 CE in north-eastern Arabia at the Shaybān tribe's summer watering places where Nu'mān ibn Mundhir, the last Naṣrid king of al-Ḥīrah, had deposited

¹⁰⁸ Harper, *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period*, 77, 137n44, 139n58; Jacques Aymard, *Essai sur les chasses romaines, des origines à la fin du siècle des Antonins* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1951), 530 ff., pls. 35, 38, 39; Irving Lavin, "The Hunting Mosaics of Antioch and Their Sources: A Study of Compositional Principles in the Development of Early Mediaeval Style," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 201–203. Lavin emphasizes the differences between Sasanian and late Roman hunting depictions.

¹⁰⁹ Zwettler, "Ma'add," 243n40. Descriptions of the South Arabian hunt can be found in Jacques Ryckmans, "La chasse rituelle dans l'Arabie du sud ancienne," in *al-Bāḥith= al-Bahit: Festschrift Joseph Henninger zum 70. Geburtstag am 12. Mai 1976* (St. Augustin bei Bonn: Verlag des Anthropos-Instituts, 1976), esp. 260–263, 266; Loundine, "Le banquet rituel dans l'état de Saba"; R. B. Serjeant, *South Arabian Hunt* (London: Luzac, 1976), 35–36, 61, 76–77, 84.

hundreds of suits of Persian armor.¹¹⁰ Rāshid ibn Shihāb of the Yashkur, a relative within Bakr of Shaybān, composed poems over an apparently similar but different dispute over armor.¹¹¹ Following the defeat of the Jewish tribes of Banū l-Naḍīr and Banū Qurayzah, the Muslims seized hundreds of coats of mail, in addition to other weaponry.¹¹² Al-Ḥuṣayn ibn al-Ḥumām of Murrah of Dhubyān boasts of the men of his tribe “as warriors whom Muḥarriq has equipped,”¹¹³ referring a Naṣrid/Lakhmid king, probably ‘Amr ibn Hind (r. 554–69).

The exact cost of items evidently driving such contention is not easy to pin down, but it was very high. Numbers are easier to come by from the early Islamic period. Hugh Kennedy has calculated that in the early Abbasid period in the mid-eighth century, it would cost at least ten months’ wages for the average soldier to buy a fine 50-*dīnār* Yemeni sword.¹¹⁴ Closer to our period, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muljam al-Murādī, the murderer of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/660) was said to have paid 1000 *dirhams* (=100 *dīnars* at 10 *dirhams/dīnār*) for his sword.¹¹⁵ Somewhat later a coat of mail was said in the year 87/706 to cost about 700 *dirhams* (=58.33 *dīnārs* at 12 *dirhams/dīnār*).¹¹⁶ Horses were expensive to maintain, and they were kept in or near tents and given camel’s milk to drink, even in times of drought.¹¹⁷ However, possession of a complete

¹¹⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 310 ff.

¹¹¹ *Muf.* nos. 81 and 82. Cf. Lyall, 2:246–247.

¹¹² More specifically, following the defeat of al-Naḍīr, fifty coats of mail, fifty helmets, and three hundred and forty swords. Following the defeat of Qurayzah, three hundred coats of mail, one thousand five hundred swords, a thousand spears, and one thousand five hundred shields: al-Wāqidī, *Al-Maghāzī*, 377, 510. For the argument that these numbers in fact reflect Hījāzī metalware production, cf. Gene W. Heck, “‘Arabia without Spices’: An Alternate Hypothesis,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, no. 3 (2003): 567, 568. For a response see Crone, “Quraysh and the Roman Army.”

¹¹³ *Muf.* no. 12, l. 14, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 66; Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:36, 38n14.

¹¹⁴ Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (London: Routledge, 2001), 175.

¹¹⁵ Friedrich Wilhelm Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen der alten Araber aus ihren Dichtern dargestellt: Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Alterthumskunde, Synonymik und Lexicographie, nebst Registern* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1886), 37. The silver *dirhams* depreciated with time against the 4.25-gram gold *dīnār*. Cf. Eliyahu Ashtor, *Histoire des prix et des salaires dans l’Orient médiéval* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1969), 40–41.

¹¹⁶ Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, 169.

¹¹⁷ Lyall, 2:11n3, 82n31, 236.

panoply of horse and weapons was indispensable for maintaining one's status, which in turn, could reinforce a warrior's income: after a battle in Muḥammad's lifetime, horsemen were given thrice the share of those who fought on foot, justified by the expense of maintaining a horse.¹¹⁸ The *mukhadram* poet al-Muzarrad of Dhubyān says that whoever's hands are empty of weapons has no reputation (*makānuhū khāmīl*).¹¹⁹

Tha'labah ibn 'Amr demonstrates equestrian status clearly by comparing himself to a camel-mounted fighter [22]:

And many the [mare], wide of mouth and nostrils, whose forelegs have never been fired,¹²⁰

nor has she ever been put to mean work, or spent the summer with a slave,
being galloped on his errands—

...

have I had in hand, when the sore-beset cries for help—while another

was borne about in the tribe by an ash-gray worn-out old camel,
ambling along—

clad in a bright [mail-coat], [glimmering] like the surface stirred by the wind of a pool

swelled by heavy showers of the late spring (*al-ṣā'if*) that pare down the hills,

with a [spear] smooth and regular in its length, true when you test it,

that pierces through its target, not bending back ...¹²¹

In accordance with poetic convention, several objects are not named directly but are referred to via epithets. Here the now familiar tactic is used of comparing the speaker's self-

¹¹⁸ Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, ed. Wüstenfeld, 692–93; Guillaume, *Life*, 466.

¹¹⁹ *Muf.* no. 17, l. 12, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 95.

¹²⁰ Because of disease.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 281–22, no. 74, ll. 5, 7–9. Translation adapted from Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:223–24.

presentation with another, lower-status foil. The social classes of the two figures are based entirely on their choice of mount and their combat equipment. The speaker represents the true warrior aristocrat, with his horse, armor and weaponry, while of the other it is sufficient to say that he only has a camel. It is not simply the animal that conveys status; the horse-mounted warrior is almost always described, as here, as properly armed and armored. The camel as a battle-mount is almost synecdochical; it stands in for a bevy of low-status attributes, moral as well as material, including the lack of ownership of proper weaponry. These material attributes are in turn inseparable from moral qualities. In order to illustrate his ability to defend those less powerful, whom he is obliged to defend because of kin or covenantal ties, the speaker must conjure up the material items that allow him to effectively project power.

Weaponry's Arabic nomenclature often reveals either foreign sources or origins. The most famous swords were said to be "Indian" (*Hindī*) or "of Indian make" (*muhannad*), although if contemporary Byzantine usage—where "India" could refer also refer to Ethiopia or even Yemen—is anything to go by, this designation must be treated with extreme circumspection.¹²² Syria, Yemen, and Persia are all mentioned in poetry as well as locales for the manufacture of fine swords.¹²³ The Arabic words for several items are of apparently foreign origin: *zarad* (chain mail) seems to be derived from a Persian word,¹²⁴ as does *sirwāl* (trousers),¹²⁵ a term that could be applied to chain leggings or a whole coat of mail.¹²⁶ A common word for the peak of a helmet, and the helmet itself, *qawnas*, pl. *qawānis*, derives from the Greek κῶνος, the late-

¹²² Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen der alten Araber*, 127–28. For a discussion of the confused Byzantine usage of Ἰνδία and Ἰνδοί see Philip Mayerson, "A Confusion of Indias: Asian India and African India in the Byzantine Sources," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113, no. 2 (1993): 169–74.

¹²³ Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen der alten Araber*, 128–33.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 340.

¹²⁵ Cf. Lane, s.v.

¹²⁶ Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen der alten Araber*, 323.

Roman ridge helmet.¹²⁷ Similar helmets of Byzantine manufacture were also status symbols amongst Germanic tribesmen, such as a mid-sixth century Spangenhelm type now in the Metropolitan Museum,¹²⁸ or a gilded version found at Krefeld-Gellep.¹²⁹ As prestige objects, some of these helmets were buried with their Germanic owners with other valuable status objects such as weapons, gold buckles for sword harnesses, and bejeweled sheathes.¹³⁰ They were perhaps also, like some particularly fine weapons, handed down from generation to generation, thus ensuring a firmer social stratification based on lineage.¹³¹

As extraordinarily expensive prestige objects connected to foreign cultures, weapons and horses caused some degree of social disruption and anxiety within Arabia. Concern for wasteful spending was often put into the mouths of a stock character, the *‘ādhilah* or “blamer,” to whom the poet could then expatiate on his glory-earning lifestyle of valorous generosity.¹³² The *‘ādhilah* has the air of a rhetorical prop, but sometimes more lively exchanges are recorded, as when Ḥājib ibn Ḥabīb of Asad describes an argument with his wife over selling his beloved horse, Thādiq.¹³³ The poet then uses the argument as a rhetorical pretext to demonstrate Thādiq’s superlative equine features.

In a brief praise poem of, apparently, the Khafājah clan of the Najdī ‘Āmir ibn Ṣaṣa’ah tribe, Bishr ibn ‘Amr of Qays ibn Tha’labah presents a means of resolving the tension between a hierarchical regime characterized by expensive weapons as status markers on the one hand,

¹²⁷ Lane, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:180.

¹²⁸ Katharine Reynolds Brown, Dafydd Kidd, and Charles T. Little, eds., *From Attila to Charlemagne: Arts of the Early Medieval Period in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), 124.

¹²⁹ For images of a gilded Spangenhelm and other grave goods, see *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas. Vor 1500 Jahren, König Chlodwig und seine Erben (Exhibition Catalog)* (Mannheim: Städtisches Reissmuseum Mannheim, 1996), figs. 192–196.

¹³⁰ Brown, Kidd, and Little, *From Attila to Charlemagne*, 126–27.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 126; Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen der alten Araber*, 36–37.

¹³² Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1987, 1:110–11.

¹³³ *Muf.* no. 110, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 368–69.

and a nomadic society that valued egalitarian acts of generous reciprocity on the other. He paints a scene that at once depicts luxurious consumption, but attempts to defuse any disruptively conspicuous display of status-markers by synthesizing a wine-party with an act of tribal redistribution. This is a large-scale, social contradiction, but before performing his praise, he first resolves the small-scale, interpersonal contradiction of hierarchy and egalitarianism outstanding between himself and the praised family by establishing parity between himself and his addressee as an equal participant in their practices [24]:

I did not humble myself among them out of fear,

and when they drank, I was invited to drink with them.

And when they played at their appointed times for play,

I did not withdraw to spend the night apart, but played with them.

All night long a skilled songstress sang antiphonally

with another like her, young and fair, brought up in luxury (*muna‘amatan*),

and struck the resounding oud (*mu‘tibā*),

among brethren who join together generous heart and hand,

who break up their possessions [to give them away],

when winter’s famine rages.

Their finest clothes are worn through with holes,

and their Mashrafī swords are clothed with gilding.

‘Amr, the son of Marthad, is honorable (*karīm*) in all he does, and his sons—

he was noble, and he begat noble progeny (*kāna huwa l-najību fa-anjabā*).¹³⁴

¹³⁴ *Muf.* no. 71, ll. 5–10, *ibid.*, 276–77. Translation adapted from Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt*, 2:218–219.

The Khafājah are marked by other material cultural markers of stratification: they possess wine, have hired or purchased two well-trained singing girls, perhaps foreign, to facilitate what is certainly a quasi-Persian wine-drinking practice (see below). The poet himself, who is not from the same tribe, may expect remuneration from his interlocutors, although this is not made explicit.

Yet the most striking contrast is the conscious rhetorical opposition between the ragged state of Khafājah's clothing and their expensive, probably foreign swords. The fact that these are gilded, *mudhhabah*, recalls Germanic prestige weapons of Byzantine origin or design, such as the gilded sixth-century Spangenhelm-type helm found at Krefeld-Gellep or a group of seven Sasanian swords of which the most impressive is Metropolitan Museum's magnificent ca. fifth-sixth-century Sasanian sword with a gold-covered hilt and a gold-covered and garnet-embedded scabbard.¹³⁵ (The Metropolitan sword, and other similar finds, in fact resemble depictions of Hunnic or Avar nomads,¹³⁶ offering a potential example for the transmissions of such objects between nomadic and sedentary cultures similar to that which we're considering).

It is the contrast between such objects and the ragged clothes that allows the poet, in the end, to depict his addressee as generous (*karīm*) and noble (*najīb*) from generation to generation. The social stratification that Khafājah's practices utilize—wine, singing girls, fine weaponry—are converted within the world of poetry into emblems of generosity. None of these expenditures are on themselves, or for the sake of enhancing their prestige, status or power, which will continue into the following generation. Rather, these expenditures are

¹³⁵ Accession no. 65.28. For a discussion and images, see Helmut Nickel, "About the Sword of the Huns and the 'Urepos' of the Steppes," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 7 (1973): 131–42.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*; R. Ghirshman, "Notes Irlandaises XIII. Trois épées Sassanides," *Artibus Asiae* 26, no. 3/4 (1963): 293–311.

naturalized (that is, they carry an ideological meaning which is made to seem “natural”) as emblems of tribal reciprocity or redistribution.

It is in such texts that we see the potentially emergent, rather than conservative, qualities of the image of warrior aristocrat rule. ‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah only emerged as a serious power around 570 CE,¹³⁷ while the poet hails from the Qays ibn Tha‘labah clan, whose associations with the sub-Sasanian court of al-Ḥīrah date back at least two generations previously. The material practices depicted here, in essence, seem to mix more nomadic tribal practice of the interior of the Arabian Peninsula with sedentary practices of the north-east, where Arab and Persian culture intersected in lower Mesopotamia. The rhetorical strategy employed by Bishr, of praising a man’s hunger, leanness or poverty as an expression and incorporation of his generosity, is not uncommon in the southwestern tribe of Hudhayl.¹³⁸ Absent among Hudhayl, though, are most of the luxury practices emphasized by Bishr, who effectively grafts these depictions of, if not foreign, at least potentially disruptively stratifying practices onto a highly egalitarian, tribal rhetoric of redistributive leadership. We can speculate that such rhetoric provided effective propaganda for ‘Āmir as its power grew.

2.3.3. Wine

Drinking culture for the Najdī warrior aristocracy thus involved more than just wine, but a constellation of customs often associated with Sasanian Iran. The area where the wine drinking took place was decorated with flowers; wine was brought, filtered and served by young male servants; and servant girls played music. In representing such scenes in poetry,

¹³⁷ Werner Caskel, “‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘a,” *EP*².

¹³⁸ E.g. *Ash‘ār*, 1277.

Arabic poets often made extensive use of Persian vocabulary. Al-A‘shá is often cited to illustrate this phenomenon, as in a passage quoted by Ibn Qutaybah, who writes that “because of his frequenting the kings (sic.—*mulūk*) of Persia, Persian is frequently found in his poetry” [24]:

I drink eight, and then eight more,
then eighteen, and two and four—
of fine wine aged to clarity in Persia (*Fāris*),
that makes a man into a king, tottering and prostrate,
amid flowers (*bi-l-jullisān*),¹³⁹ while one with perfumed sleeves
strikes the strings of the *wann*, his fingers fluttering,
and the *narm*-flute (*al-nāy narmi*)¹⁴⁰ and the hoarse lute (*barbat*)
and the stringed *ṣanj* moans to be struck.¹⁴¹

This passage is not actually found in al-A‘shá’s *dīwān*, but similar and even more elaborate passages are. All of the customs mentioned are evidently Sasanian, and the names of the flowers in such passages as well as all the musical instruments are Persian. The wine itself is said explicitly to come from Persia. Elsewhere, al-A‘shá describes the accoutrements of such a drinking party, the decanter (*ibrīq*) and silvery goblets (*miṣḥāh*).¹⁴² The highly hierarchical social setting is, in essence, non-tribal. The interaction is merely between the speaker and servants (reminiscent of Imru’ al-Qays’s hunting parties) whose presence is purely at his

¹³⁹ Probably Arabized from Persian *gulistān* or *gulsitān*, a flower garden. *Lisān* (s.v. *j-l-s*) gives one meaning along these lines: “the scattering of flowers where people are assembled sitting (*nithār al-ward fī l-majlis*)” although another meaning given is “white flowers.”

¹⁴⁰ *Narm* can refer to the bass tones in music (cf. Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v.), so perhaps this is a flute which sounds in a lower register.

¹⁴¹ Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā*, 258. The *ṣanj* can also mean “cymbals.”

¹⁴² E.g., no. 55, ll. 5–11, *Dīwān*, 293.

pleasure. The typical characters of such a scene are *nidmān* (boon companions) or *fityah* (young men).

Just as Bishr ibn ‘Amr attempts to reconcile the wealth and status displays of Khafājah with tribal values, other poets sought to do the same with the Iranian model of wine party. There is some resemblance between the scene described by al-A‘shá and that of a more or less straight-forward boast of Tha‘labah ibn Šu‘ayr of Tamīm, for whom the purchasing of expensive wine reinforces tribal solidarity, albeit evidently here among a leading cohort, rather than among, say, some extended kinship-group in general [25]:

O Sumayyah, how can I tell you (*mā yudrīki*) how many young warriors (*fityatin*)
shining of countenance, famed for generosity and noble deeds,
fair in their jesting, whose hospitality none blames,
liberal-handed [in peace], setting the fires of battle blazing in wartime,
have I awoken before in the early morning by buying (*sibā’*) a small, dark
skin of wine (*dhāri’*), before the dawn, before the birds began their babble.
Then did I shorten the day for them with the scream of a tall camel-mare
[as I slaughtered it], and the tune of a songstress (*mudjin*),
and gifts for the slaughterer.¹⁴³

Yet significant differences obtain between this wine party and that of al-A‘shá. As opposed to al-A‘shá’s comical binge drinking (forty cups, if we do the arithmetic), the wine here, whose purchase in such tribal scenes is almost always denoted by the word *sibā’*, is expensive and only available in small quantities. The speaker buys a *dhāri’*, a wine-skin made from the fore-leg (*dhirā’*) of a slaughtered animal. No reference is made to the fine silverware used by the

¹⁴³ *Muf.* no. 24, ll. 15–18, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 130; translation adapted from Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:87.

speaker in al-A'shā's texts. Rather than servants, the *fityah* here, the young warriors or tribesmen, are given traits to indicate their elevated status: generosity (*nadan*) and noble deeds (*ma'āthir*). Tribal reciprocity is possible in this circle. The wine is not, generally, part of a sedentary cultural ritual or an orgy of consumption, but one component of a larger feast display of the speaker's generosity. He also slaughters a fine camel mare. The one true point of resemblance with al-A'shā's description is the singing girl, although the word *mudjin* is most frequently used in tribal boasts. Tha'labah's type of "fore-leg wine-skin" feast can be thought of as, perhaps, a slightly more "provincial" version of al-A'shā's cosmopolitan wine party, somewhat akin to Bishr ibn 'Amr's praise of Khafājah. In both cases, the poets which produced the texts more thickly layered with reference to sedentary material culture hailed from Qays ibn Tha'labah, dwelling, geographically, closer to Sasanian Mesopotamia.

Easy familiarity with the culture and comportment of proper wine drinking could be employed, in poetry, to assert a superior status. This is quite clearly the case in a text by 'Abd al-Masīḥ (a Christian, his name means "the slave of the Messiah") ibn 'Asalah of Shaybān of Bakr ibn Wā'il, the same group to which Qays ibn Tha'labah belonged. Here he mocks one Ka'b of Namir, who evidently, having drunk too much, affronted the singing girl [26]:

O Ka'b, would that you could restrain yourself to good wine-fellowship (*ḥusn al-nidām*)
and stop giving offence to the company,
and be content to listening to the singing girl (*mudjinah*)
until we return home, lulled to sleep as foreign kings are
(*na'ūbu tanāwuma l-'ujmī*)!

You'd be sober in that case. But the man from Namir thinks [the singing girl]
is [as lofty] as Spica Virginis's uncle, or the Pleiades' aunt.

Hold off, Ka'b, now that she's given him a backhand to the forehead
with a plump wrist!

On his brow are streaks of blood, caked and dry, as the fingers
of him that gathers grapes are dyed purple.

No, the wine isn't your bother: sometimes it betrays
him that trusts his self-command too much
and tempts him to foolish council, when the
vapor of intoxication rises [to the brain].

I am a man (*imra'un*) from the clan of Murrah—
if I wound you [with satire] you won't stanch the wound.¹⁴⁴

Given that the premise of the text revolves around a drunken tribesman being humiliatingly slapped by a woman, the tone of the poem is actually quite remarkable. Ka'b's virility is not in fact the primary target of the invective. 'Amr ibn Qamī'ah also describes a man being hit by a woman, a hunter who returns unsuccessfully from hunting to a hungry and dominating wife [27]:

and if she's slapped with a five-fingered blow,
he'll get given two just as good by her.¹⁴⁵

Such a description is, according to Thomas Bauer, self-evidently part of a derisive portrait of an impoverished and status-less man, and such a domination of the hunter by a stereotypically shrewish or empty-headed wife is typical of such scenes in Arabic poetry.¹⁴⁶ And yet, in this piece of satire, 'Abd al-Masīḥ targets not Ka'b's virility but his inability to follow the protocol of

¹⁴⁴ *Muf.* no. 72, ll. 1–8, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 279, Translation adapted from Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:220. For a similar story, see Kister, "Mecca and the Tribes," 39–40.

¹⁴⁵ 'Amr ibn Qamī'ah, *The Poems of 'Amr Son of Qamī'ah*, 51.

¹⁴⁶ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:47.

ḥusn al-nidām. That is, the role of the wine drinker in this situation is self-consciously foreign; one should be acting like a *nadīm*, like the *‘ujm* or non-Arabs (or “barbarians”). There is some confusion in the commentary about the reading of *tanāwuma l-‘ujmī*, but if *‘ujm* is understood as Persians, the reading Lyall prefers, the commentator al-Anbārī informs us that this means their kings (*mulūk*).¹⁴⁷ This would echo al-A‘shá’s description cited above of Persian wine that “makes a man a king.” In the context of his poem, it evidently means intoxicated to the point that he feels a king, but it now seems as if the associations of wine-drinking protocol were also quite consciously associated with Sasanian or sub-Sasanian court settings. The speaker in ‘Abd al-Masīḥ’s text takes advantage of this failure of Ka‘b to comport himself in order to throw his own behavior into more aristocratic relief. Yet here too, we see that the ultimate goal of the poem is a reconciliation of nomadic values with the hierarchical values of a sedentary culture. Having established his ability drink like a Persian, he concludes with a brief tribal boast reminding us of his lineage and his rhetorical abilities, but these tribal and poetic points were scored by his ability to depict Ka‘b’s behavior as utterly unsuitable to the cultural context of proper wine consumption.

2.4. The Hudhālī/ Southwest Arabian Model of the Warrior Aristocracy

The southern Ḥijāz was not subject to the same level of political influence from sedentary powers as northeast Arabia, or northern Arabia more generally. The furthest south that direct Roman influence appears with any certainty is the oasis Madā’in Ṣāliḥ/ Ḥijr in the

¹⁴⁷ Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 1:556; 2:221.

northern Ḥijāz, as testified by a graffito.¹⁴⁸ It is possible to speculate that Medina was also involved in Byzantine politics during the Byzantine-Sassanian war of 602–630.¹⁴⁹ In terms of poetic culture, the Medinan poet Ḥassān ibn Thābit was said to have travelled to greater Syria to praise the Ghassānids,¹⁵⁰ but no poets from further south did so. Poets demonstrate an awareness of south Arabian politics. The Ḥimyarite ruling title *qayl* appears in poetry in connection to the Ḥijāz, suggesting that an acquaintance with Ḥimyarite notions of hierarchy obtained in the region’s culture. *Qayl* is attested in Sabaic inscriptions referring to a leader of a tribe (*sh‘b*), although not necessarily of that tribe’s descent, and subordinate directly to a king (*mlk*).¹⁵¹ Zabbān ibn Sayyār, of Fazārah of Dhubyān, describes the powerful Murrah branch of Dhubyān as occupying the Ḥijāz, “as if they were *qayls* (*quyūl*),”¹⁵² and Mālik ibn Khālid of Hudhayl mocks a man from Hawāzin, boasting of how Hudhayl has been occupying a stony upland (*ḥijāz*), “before you ever saw the kings of Banū ‘Ād, or the *aqwāl* [pl. of *qayl*] of Ḥimyar.”¹⁵³ Al-Nābighah refers to the *qayl* of Ḥimyar as a the sort of powerful figure that fate destroys,¹⁵⁴ and Imru’ al-Qays mentions the “*aqwāl*” of Ḥimyar as well.¹⁵⁵ Evidently the *qayls* were more well-known to the poets of western Arabia (and Kindah, of course, Ḥimyar’s client

¹⁴⁸ Timothy P. Harrison, “Ḥijr,” *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*. Of course the Axumite invasion of Yemen in the early sixth century, as well as other Christian deputations to southern Arabia, demonstrate significant indirect influence.

¹⁴⁹ Lecker, “Were the Ghassānids and Byzantines behind Muḥammad’s Hijra?” I do not find his arguments very convincing.

¹⁵⁰ Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, *Fuḥūl*, 218..

¹⁵¹ A.F.L. Beeston, “Ḳayl,” *Et*²; Gonzague Ryckmans, “Le Qayl En Arabie Méridionale Préislamique,” in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies: Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday, 20 August 1962*, ed. D. Winton Thomas and W. D. McHardy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 147, 153–55.

¹⁵² *Muf.* no. 102, l. 3, 4, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 352. This may not refer to the region, exactly, but perhaps contrasts *ḥijāz* (upland) with *faḍā’*, the open *bādiyah*. Fazārah did, however, have a presence in the northern Ḥijāz.

¹⁵³ 9(MKhKh).4.6, *Ash‘ār*, 454.

¹⁵⁴ Ahlwardt, *Six Diwans*, 166.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

tribe, if the Imru' al-Qays line is authentic) as powerful figures of the past, not sources of patronage.

Hudhayl, at any rate, held disparaging views of any possible regional political figures, including Ḥimyarite or Axumite leaders, kings in general, and sedentary leaders like the Meccans. The Islamic poet, 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Tha'lab, boasting of Hudhayl's pre-Islamic past, vaunts their defeat of kings (*mulūk*) and imprisoning of *qayūl*.¹⁵⁶ Other Ḥijāzī poets also tended to see *mulūk* as enemies.¹⁵⁷ Some examples of Hudhayl's attitudes towards Meccans have been cited in chapter 1. These attitudes were ambivalent,¹⁵⁸ and mostly associated with trade. Mecca is the location of *mawāsim* (trade fairs),¹⁵⁹ and slaves obtained in raids can be sold there.¹⁶⁰ There are noble men (*kirām*) in Mecca,¹⁶¹ but a pot boiling is compared to a shrieking Meccan's (*ḥirmi*) wives,¹⁶² and the speaker in a text by al-Nābighah is irritated with a Meccan woman (*ḥirmiyyah*) trying to buy leather from nomads.¹⁶³ Qays ibn al-'Ayzārah, mourning his brother who died at Mecca, describes his brother as "worthy" (*jadīr*) of the Meccan notables,¹⁶⁴ indicating no sense of inferiority to the urban tribe, while Abū Khirāsh, with the coming of Islam, laments his inability to retaliate for a dead kinsman *qatīl bi-qatīl* (one slain man for another) against Quraysh.¹⁶⁵ As we also saw in chapter 1, Ḥijāzī poets in general reflect some awareness of the Axumite presence in Yemen, but attitudes towards "black" warriors were antagonistic. There is no praise poetry composed for regional figures, and little of the sense of

¹⁵⁶ 56('AAATHQ).1.55–56, *Ash'ār*, 890.

¹⁵⁷ Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah of Hudhayl (no. 2, l. 38, *Ash'ār*, 1135) and al-Khansā' (*Dīwān*, ed. Abū Suwaylim, 100, l. 22) of Sulaym both describe heroes in their poetry as killing kings.

¹⁵⁸ Mecca's role as a trade entrepôt in Hudhayl's geography is explored further in chapter 4.

¹⁵⁹ 13(Q'AS).4.3, *Ash'ār*, 597.

¹⁶⁰ 7(MKHS).14.5, *ibid.*, 395.

¹⁶¹ 13(Q'AS).4.5, *ibid.*, 598.

¹⁶² 1(ADhQ).5.24, *ibid.*, 79.

¹⁶³ Al-Nābighah al-Dhubayānī, *Dīwān*, 64.

¹⁶⁴ 13(Q'AS).4.3, *Ash'ār*, 597.

¹⁶⁵ 65(AKhQ).13.2, *ibid.*, 1229.

hierarchical relationships that obtain with Najdī tribes' (especially Qays ibn Tha'labah's poets') relations with sedentary powers such as al-Ḥīrah. Kings are not held in reverence, and the *lex talionis*, unlike in the poem cited above by al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, is held to apply to all with the power to enforce it.

In keeping with the generally antagonistic attitude towards sedentary peoples and figures such as *qayls* and *maliks*, the material objects associated with status among Najdī tribes are often treated dismissively by Ḥijāzī and particularly Hudhalī poets. Among Najdī tribes, poets could potentially boast of associations with sedentary figures as sources of wealth and power. As seen above, al-Ḥuṣayn ibn al-Ḥumām of Dhubyān boasted of how his tribe's warriors were armed by a king, one Muḥarriq, probably the Naṣrid/Lakhmid 'Amr ibn Hind. We have also seen how one of the more clearly foreign pieces of armor was the *qawnas* or helm. While most weapons and types of armor appear indiscriminately in poetry of various tribes and regions, the *qawnas* seems to have a regional inflection. Al-Muraqqish al-Akbar of Qays ibn Tha'labah boasts of his own tribes' warriors wearing *qawnases*,¹⁶⁶ but the Awsī Anṣārī poet Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat,¹⁶⁷ Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim of Asad,¹⁶⁸ and the Hudhalī Rabī'a ibn Jaḥdar al-Liḥyānī¹⁶⁹ describe their enemies as wearing the *qawānis*. Aws and Hudhayl of course, are both Ḥijāzī tribes and Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim, despite hailing from the Najdī tribe of Asad, is associated with the Fijār War around Mecca between Quraysh and 'Āmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah.¹⁷⁰ Just as enemies are consistently depicted as "kings," perhaps some associated weaponry of strong tribes, associated with foreign powers, were also incorporated into stereotyped images of

¹⁶⁶ *Muf.* no. 52, l. 4, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 235.

¹⁶⁷ *Muf.* no. 75, l. 18, *ibid.*, 286.

¹⁶⁸ *Muf.* no. 99, l. 11, *ibid.* 347.

¹⁶⁹ 17(RJ).1.7, *Ash'ār*, 642.

¹⁷⁰ Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:268–69.

enemy tribes. This is the case, as will be seen, with some other luxury items, and in a series of unique depictions in Hudhayl's poetry of heavily armed warriors dying.

As a tribe prizing egalitarian values in a region lacking large-scale hierarchical structures imposed on nomadic tribes by sedentary polities, the role of poetry accordingly differs for Hudhayl. All Arabian poets would praise leaders of their own tribes, but depictions of one tribe's poet for another reveal the level of professionalization among poets as well as the leadership ideals of the tribe being praised. As we have seen above, Bishr ibn 'Amr of Qays ibn Tha'labah of Bakr praised the Khafājah of 'Āmir ibn Ṣaṣā'ah for their fine imported weaponry and quasi-Persianate drinking parties, as well as their nomadic values of redistributive hospitality and generosity. Aws ibn Ḥajar of Tamīm reproaches a chief of 'Abs for failing to give a reward.¹⁷¹ The tripartite structure also suited such poems, as in the case of al-Musayyab of Ḍubay'ah's praise of the Tamīmī chief Qa'qā' ibn Ma'bad ibn Zurārah,¹⁷² cited above, where the poet praises the patron for mingling with other leaders at the courts of kings.

A rare, and if I'm not mistaken, the only intertribal praise poem in Hudhayl's *dīwān* is said to have been composed by a Fahmī for Hudhayl. Fahm, an inveterate enemy of Hudhayl, requested permission to pasture in Hudhayl's territory during a drought in their lands. Having been given permission by Quraym, a branch of Hudhayl, a Fahmī named Kānif (or Kātif or Kāthif) composed [28]:

Quraym and their people have opened grazing pastures

to us, after blocking our way and reviling us.

A young man (*ghulām*), spirited and [slender/hard] like the point of a Samharī spear,

¹⁷¹ Aws ibn Ḥajar, *Dīwān Aws ibn Ḥajar*, 39.

¹⁷² *Muf.* no. 11, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 60–63.

demands of them all that he wants—
 Iyās, and if you mention Iyās, he is gracious
 in the noblest possible way with you.
 And what a great man Khuwaylid is, they day we encountered him,
 a man of war, in tempestuous times uncringing.
 The noble veins of Nubayshah lift you up,
 and the veins of Zubayd, so that his dignity rears its head up
 the morning that we cast lots over [which] path [to take],
 herd-animals like an ocean cloud, dark and light, overwhelming us.¹⁷³

In the *khavar* (anecdote) connected to the text, Kānif is referred to as the delegation's poet (*shā'iruhum*). If this were accurate, poetry comes across as a specialization of Ḥijāzī poets, but not as a lucrative professional role as was evidently the case for poets visiting al-Ḥīrah or the Jafnids/Ghassānids. The poem is accordingly of a different nature than Najdī praise poems: it is not tripartite and the men are praised only for nomadic social virtues: they are lean, hard, warlike, generous, and of good birth. Absent are the conspicuous displays of wealth, hierarchical status or sedentary connections seen in Najdī texts.

The text represents a decentralized leadership structure amongst Hudhayl: it is not one figure who is praised but a cohort of four men. Fahm's leadership is represented the same way in the *khavar*: a delegation of “three or four hundred noble leaders (*ashrāf*).” This impression is confirmed in other Hudhalī texts. Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah describes tribal leaders so numerous that, in their councils (*majālis*), the spears they have planted in the ground around

¹⁷³ F48, ll. 1–6, *Ash'ār*, 857–58. Two more lines follow depicting Fahm's herd animals.

them are like a reed-bed (*ghābah*).¹⁷⁴ In a communal elegy for several Hudhalīs who died from a plague in Egypt and Syria, presumably during the early conquest period, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abī Tha‘lab refers to the numerous “leaders” (*sādāt*) and “warriors” (*fityān*) and “noble chiefs,” (*al-sarāt al-kirām*).¹⁷⁵

The *Ash‘ār* also contains numerous examples of what may be called warrior-poets. This is not necessarily a regional phenomenon, as other well-known warrior poets such as ‘Antarah or Bisṭām ibn Qays make clear, but the presence of the warrior-poet perhaps testifies to less specialization in cultural and political roles within Ḥijāzī tribes. A text such as al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī’s address to ‘Āmir, composed in order to sustain Dhubyān’s relationship of *walā’* over Asad, may be described as intertribal diplomacy, while in that of ‘Awf ibn al-Aḥwaṣ of Ja‘far of ‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah, the speaker has a clear military, political or economic stake in the proceedings. His role is not simply, as a professional poet, to aesthetically represent his tribe’s position, but to represent the tribe in both a political and aesthetic sense.

Hudhayl’s poets resemble this latter type of poet. Abū Dhu‘ayb, the most well-known poet of Hudhayl and the composer of sophisticated *qaṣīdahs*, including one poem included in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, was said to have fought under ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr in the conquests of North Africa in 26-7/647 after his conversion to Islam,¹⁷⁶ testifying to a military or political stature. More importantly, in a dispute with his cousin, Khālīd ibn al-Zuhayr, Abū Dhu‘ayb is referred to as a leader of his tribe (*imam li-l-‘ashīrah*).¹⁷⁷ Abū Dhu‘ayb also plays a role in a poetic dispute between Khālīd and one Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid, telling Ma‘qil, “all know you are a noble

¹⁷⁴ 64(SJK).1.41, *ibid.*, 1114.

¹⁷⁵ 56(AAATHQ).1.4, *ibid.*, 885.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 3, 196.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 212.

leader (*‘alima l-aqwāmu annaka sayyidun*).¹⁷⁸ Part of the implication of the poem is that disputes between well-known men, in poetry, were unseemly given their leadership positions. Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah, Abū Dhu‘ayb’s teacher, boasts of his role in mediating tribal affairs: “Both the alien [sc. in the tribe—(*al-dakhīl*)] and the noble man (*al-muḥassab*) entrust me with their most important affairs.”¹⁷⁹

2.4.1. The Social Role of Poetry in Negotiating Lineage and Alliance among Hudhayl

Poets of Hudhayl, then, are accordingly also found negotiating the meaning of lineage and alliance for their tribe. Their role, however, is considerably more comprehensive than that of Najdī poets and the very definition of Hudhayl as a tribe is revealed as decentered and unstable. The integrity of the tribe itself requires constant performance, and poetry is one of the central social practices by which such integrity would have been performed. The institutions of *walā’* and *jiwār* play a centrifugal role in this regard, militating against the institution of tribal integrity. Some poets, such as Abū Jundab, make use of poetry to justify the precedence they give to alliance over lineage. In contrast, other poets, such as Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid, dedicated themselves to preserving Hudhayl’s unity, founded on tropes of common lineage and ancestry. Abū l-Ḍabb was even said to have taken it upon himself to retaliate for any one killed from Hudhayl, regardless of their relationship to him.¹⁸⁰ In many cases, poets yoke their evocations of either alliance or lineage to landscape imagery, and Abū Jundab in particular often justifies his actions by invoking the sacred topography of Mecca and its environs, the *ḥaram*, or rituals associated with the Ka‘bah.

¹⁷⁸ 1(ADhQ).30c.4, *ibid.*, 223.

¹⁷⁹ 64(SJK).4.4, *ibid.*, 1143.

¹⁸⁰ F24(ADL), *ibid.*, 703 ff.

The lore associated with Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid is that of a leader and warrior. He engaged in uncompromising combat with Sulaym¹⁸¹ and Khuzā‘ah.¹⁸² One text reports to pertain to Abrahah’s dealings with Hudhayl when he invaded the Hījāz, but al-Aṣma‘ī, al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Ishāq all report that it was his father Khuwaylid,¹⁸³ who is said by al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Ishāq to have been the chief of Hudhayl (*sayyid Hudhayl*).¹⁸⁴ The poetry in the *Ash‘ār* gives body to what this word *sayyid* meant in practice. In one text, the associated *khobar* tells us that Ma‘qil was attempting to resolve a feud between two branches of Hudhayl, Khunā‘ah and Liḥyān. Purportedly, Ma‘qil had secured a truce and the release of two Liḥyānī prisoners, but he then heard that Liḥyān was about to betray the truce and attack him and Khunā‘ah. As is often the case, there is little evidence for this in the text, but it is clearly addressed to Duhmān, a branch of Liḥyān [29]:

Send messages from me to both ‘Amr and his father,
and to all of Banū Duhmān:

You are driving away a tribe that is furious with you,
you doing horrible things to them, terrible.

I called Banū Sahn, and they didn’t hesitate,
the foremost among them (*sarātuhum*),
to turn towards you (*tulqī ‘alayka l-kalākilā*).

All the tribes (*afnā’*) of Khindif have known
that we, when ill things transpire, are refuges.

[Those in need of refuge are] our cousins, on any frightful day,

¹⁸¹ 7(MKhS).2, *ibid.*, 375.

¹⁸² 7(MKhS).4, *ibid.*, 377.

¹⁸³ Al-Aṣma‘ī’s view is found in *Ash‘ār*, 389; Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīrah*, 34; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:134.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

if the lineages bring together ‘Amr and Kāhil.¹⁸⁵

In the text, Ma‘qil addresses himself to two unidentified figures, evidently from Duhmān of Liḥyān, one of the two main branches of Hudhayl. Ma‘qil himself was the Sahn clan, from the other branch, Sa‘d. He reproaches his addressees, and then invokes his own tribe. He is able to persuade his own tribe to countenance Duhmān, and this is represented as a camel heaving down its chest (*kalākil*) in order to sit. Khindif, in classical genealogy is also known as al-Yās and is a son of Muḍar, one of the two main progenitors of the Arab race. Khindif here represents some larger grouping of tribes that witness Sahn’s importance, as do Sahn’s cousins, ‘Amr and Kāhil, who join with them in duress.

Ma‘qil’s text gives us, in sum, a fairly straightforward image of what a tribe should be, as a lineage-based social unit. As the chief, evidently in a first-among-equals sense, of one branch, he calls for mediation with another branch, rhetorically invoking an ancestor. Strangely though, Khindif is not invoked as a unifying figure, but as an emblem of a group of tribes that can testify to Sahn’s prestige. This is typical of much of the evocation of ancestral figures in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. Hudhayl, as an individual, is never evoked as an ancestor based on common descent from whom conflicting clans ought to resolve differences.

In another text, in opposition to an enemy tribe, Sulaym, Ma‘qil evokes familial imagery to justify his violation of an agreement (*muwāda‘ah*) with Sulaym. Sulaym apparently wanted to invoke this agreement in order to ally with Ma‘qil in an attack on Liḥyān, but he comes to their defense [30]:

Sulaym says, “Make peace with us and war on Hudhayl,”

and their desire was for nothing [remotely possible].

¹⁸⁵ 7(MKHS).1.1-5, *Ash‘ār*, 373.

Know that Banū Liḥyān are our cousins,
and whoever attacks them, attacks us with them.
Our cousins came and alit (*ḥallū*) by us,
so whoever is offended by that, let him be!
My [only] betrayal of them is that I'm only aiding them
with an even thousand (*bi-alfin ... aqra'ā*), when they need reinforcements.
[Liḥyān] is our brother, and whoever leaves his brother when [the latter] is fighting,
leaves him to his fate in a harsh sandy place.¹⁸⁶

Here, like Khindif above, Hudhayl is not evoked as a common ancestor, but as the social group to which Liḥyān and the speaker's tribe both belong. Rhetorically, "Liḥyān," with whom Sulaym truly had a dispute, has been replaced in the text by the broader category of "Hudhayl." This sets up the evident absurdity decried in the second hemistich of the first line. The speaker thereby uses "Hudhayl" as a self-evident locus of genealogical loyalty, but this is somewhat disingenuous: there is also a question of territorial integrity at play, for Liḥyān are pasturing with the speaker's tribe (*ḥallū janābanā*). Liḥyān may be "cousins," but the proximity of mutual pasturing and the protective host-guest relationship thus assumed trump any previous agreement with Sulaym. This cannot be betrayed.

Territorial integrity as a tribal bond is also praised in another text by Ma'qil. According to the *khobar*, one Ḥabīb of Sahm, Ma'qil's tribe, was pasturing with Khuzā'ah. When hostilities were about to break out between Khuzā'ah and Sahm, Ma'qil urged Ḥabīb to return to his tribe, but he did not want to lose his camels. Evidently, Khuzā'ah's pasture land was superior to

¹⁸⁶ 7(MKhs).2, *ibid.*, 375.

Sahm's. Ḥabīb chose instead to enter into an agreement of *walā'* with Khuzā'ah (*uwālīhim 'alaynā*), which Ma'qil decries [31]:

By the life of Abū Umaymah, I won't make deals with
Khuzā'ah the way that Ḥabīb has done!
I will keep my animals amidst the abodes of Tamīm [of Hudhayl],
and no barren pasture (*al-kala' al-jadīb*) will drive me off.
And I won't be thrown away when the old camels groan;
I will choose whatever scrubby waste I traverse [over Khuzā'ah's land].
Other tribes won't try to take my share from me,
and my share will be left to me.¹⁸⁷

Here, the speaker overtly places lineage ties over any other interests. He would prefer any kind of barren or poorly watered landscape over an affiliation with the enemy tribe. This rhetorical maneuver allows him to reformulate Ḥabīb's preference for a relationship of *walā'* as a basely motivated and crass preference for material interests over loftier, more ideal loyalties.

Texts such as this could serve as instruments to publically shame tribesmen who degrade tribal unity. Likewise, in another conflict with Sa'd ibn Bakr, Ma'qil praises the Hudhalī clan of Khunā'ah for capturing Sa'd's leader (*sayyid*) and selling him into slavery.¹⁸⁸ Abū Shihāb likewise reproaches another Hudhalī clan, to whose assistance the speaker's clan had come, for making excuses (*ma'ādhir*), disregarding duty (*law annahum lam yunkirū l-ḥaqq*), and ingratitude (*al-kufr*).¹⁸⁹ Through such public declarations, poet-leaders could construct

¹⁸⁷ 7(MKhs).19.1–4, *ibid.*, 399.

¹⁸⁸ 7(MKhs).14., *ibid.*, 394.

¹⁸⁹ 23(ASHM).1b.17, 18, 21, *ibid.* 697–98. See also 28(B'IKh).3, *Ash'ār*, 746, reproves Liḥyān, reportedly for their behavior in their dispute with Ma'qil, and 28(B'IKh).6, *Ash'ār*, 754 reproves a Sulamī for not requiting a Hudhalī for protecting the Sulamī during a dispute.

images of tribal unity articulated across the various branches of Hudhayl. Of course, in doing so, poets also construct their own role of leadership within such a unity. Abū Shihāb takes the poor behavior of his “cousins” (*banī ‘amminā*) as an excuse to expostulate on the central role his clan plays in the tribe [32]:

If they hadn’t disregarded duty (*al-ḥaqq*), they would still
have in us a refuge, mighty and victory-giving!
Men of wars who stir up [battle fires], a ring
of tents that the skirmishers (*al-ḥadā’ir*) don’t dare attack.¹⁹⁰

If Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid represents a warrior-poet who instrumentalizes public poetic texts in an attempt to consolidate tribal coherence, Abū Jundab represents the centrifugal tendency against which the likes of Ma‘qil rage, as he lashed out against Ḥabīb for his allegiance to Khuzā‘ah. Many of the anecdotes connected to Abū Jundab relate to his campaign of vengeance against Liḥyān (the same tribe that Ma‘qil claimed so often to have assisted). According to these reports, two of his protégés (*jārs*) of Khuzā‘ah (the same tribe with which Ma‘qil so often came into conflict) were killed by Liḥyān, who raided some of his herd animals as well. When he heard the news, he went to the Ka‘bah at Mecca, exposed his buttocks (*ist*), and then circumambulated (*tāfa*) the Ka‘bah, reciting in the *rajaz* meter [33]:

I am a man, verily, weeping over my two neighbors (*jārayyah*)!
I weep over the Ka‘bī and the Ka‘biyyah:¹⁹¹
If I were killed, they would weep for me—

¹⁹⁰ 23(ASHM).1b.18–19, *ibid.* 697.

¹⁹¹ Ka‘b ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Āmir ibn Luḥayy ibn Qama‘ah ibn al-Yās. Either ‘Amr is said to be the progenitor of Khuzā‘ah: ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-‘Arab*, 1:235. For further discussion and citations, see J. M. Kister, “Khuzā‘a,” *EI*². The same clan interacting with Hudhayl comes up again in the poetry of ‘Amr ibn Humayl (37(‘AHL).3 and 4.1, *Ash‘ār*, 818–20).

They were as close to me as the robe to the waist-girdle.¹⁹²

According to Wellhausen, this does not represent a pre-Islamic ritual, but depicts the level of distress Abū Jundab felt.¹⁹³ He bases this on the text of the *khobar*: “those who saw him knew he had brought forth something ill (*atā bi-sharr*).”¹⁹⁴ This statement could, however, simply represent the opinion of the transmitter, as the tenor of the story indicates that a public, ritual proclamation of vengeance is intended. Elsewhere, Abū Jundab is said on making this statement to have completed the rites of the pilgrimage (*qaḍā nuskahu*).¹⁹⁵

Abū Jundab consistently shows himself willing, in association with *ḥajj* ritual or invoking the sacred space around Mecca, to ally himself with tribes outside of Hudhayl and to make war on those within the tribe. Following the death of his two protégés, he gathers together the outcasts of other tribes (*al-khula‘ā’ min Bakr wa-Khuzā‘ah*) and attacks Liḥyān.¹⁹⁶ When he has taken his vengeance, he uses language not dissimilar to that of the Quran [34]:

Banū Liḥyān have through me become

utterly abased (*fī khizyin mubīn*), God be praised (*bi-ḥamdi llāhi*)!¹⁹⁷

Although the exact words *khizy* (abasement) and *ḥamd* (praise) are very common in the Quran (and relatively uncommon in Arabic poetry), the exact locutions *khizy mubīn* or *bi-ḥamdi llāh* do not appear at all. This increases the probability that the text reflects a genuine pre-Islamic sentiment rather than a post-Islamic interpolation. Abū Jundab’s ritualistic terminology follows logically from the narrative’s depiction of his sacred vows of vengeance at the Ka‘bah.

¹⁹² 6(AJQ).2.1–4, *ibid.*, 349.

¹⁹³ Wellhausen, “Medina vor dem Islam,” 1884, 144–45.

¹⁹⁴ *Ash‘ār*, 349.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 351.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ 6(AJQ).6.1, *ibid.* 354.

Abū Jundab also evokes the sacred space around Mecca in another text announcing his accomplishing of vengeance for his *jār*. Rather as Ma‘qil evokes the ancestor Khindif as a witness to his tribe’s status, Abū Jundab also evokes Hudhayl, not as a unity to be respected, since he has been exacting merciless blood vengeance from another Hudhalī clan, but also as a witness to his integrity which, significantly, is compared to a mountain near Mecca [35]:

Hudhayl has learned that my protégé (*jār*)

is [as secure as] atop Ghaynā of Mt. Thabīr (*ladá aṭrāf ghaynā min Thabīr*).

I hold back from protecting, but whomever I protect (*man ujirhū*),

he is not one thrown into deception.

You have your protégés, and I have defended mine,

fairly (*sawā’an*), and it is no unjust division (*al-qasm al-athīr*).¹⁹⁸

His resolute loyalty to his *jārs*, evidently, if the reports about him are to be believed, to the exclusion of blood ties, flies in the face of the tribal unity promoted by ‘Awf ibn al-Aḥwaṣ of ‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah above, or of Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid, who consistently reproves fellow Hudhalīs for siding with members of other tribes over Hudhayl. Since we know that both ‘Awf and Ma‘qil were from ruling lineages, it would seem as if it fell to such figures to attempt as best they could to enforce tribal unity. Abū Jundab represents the sort of tribesmen concerned for their own interests, power base, and reputation with which tribal leaders had to contend. Their usage of the name of the tribe “Hudhayl,” could not be more opposed: for Ma‘qil, Hudhayl is a unity rallied to oppose enemy tribes, while for Abū Jundab, Hudhayl is merely the social horizon for a man’s reputation, a reputation staked on individual, not tribal loyalties.

¹⁹⁸ 6(AJQ).7.1–3, *ibid.* 355–56.

As in his other texts, the language that Abū Jundab uses in his proclamation evokes the sacral space Mecca's *ḥaram*, and anticipates the ritualistic language of the Quran. The meaning of *ghaynā min Thabīr* is uncertain. *Ghaynā* is said by al-Bāhilī in the commentary to be the name of the peak of Thabīr (*qullat Thabīr allatī fī a'lāhu tusammá Ghaynā*), and Thabīr itself is, according to Abū 'Amr al-Shaybānī, located within Mecca's *ḥaram*.¹⁹⁹ According to the geographer Yāqūt, citing al-Aṣma'ī, Thabīr Ghaynā is none other than Ḥirā',²⁰⁰ the mountain outside Mecca to which Muḥammad was wont to retreat in meditation, where the revelation of the Quran began. The notion that Thabīr's safety is the result of its sacral status is reinforced by the ritualistic language of line 3. "You have your protégés, and I have defended mine (*la-kum jirānukum wa-mana'tu jārī sawā'an*)," evokes Sūrat al-Kāfirūn of the Quran, "you have your religion and I have mine (*la-kum dīnukum wa-liya dīni*),"²⁰¹ or Sūrat Āl 'Imrān, "come to an equitable word amongst ourselves (*ta'ālaw ilā kalimatin sawā'in baynanā wa-baynakum*)." Abū Jundab's language is evocative of statements in the Quran where agreements or accords between two parties are recorded (between Muḥammad and the Meccans in the first instance, and between Muslims and other monotheists (*ahl al-kitāb*) in the second), and as above, there is a general correspondence of diction, not an exact quotation. Abū Jundab is drawing on the same traditions of sacred topography and ritual Arabic on which the early Quranic texts also draw.

Other poets also testify to the importance of rites related to Mecca for constituting identity, although like Abū Jundab's poetry, the references are also somewhat obscure. Just as Abū Jundab invokes the sacred topography of the *ḥaram* and makes use of ritualistic Arabic to

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 355.

²⁰⁰ *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 614, s.v. "Thabīr."

²⁰¹ Q109:6.

justify intertribal relationships, we see in anecdotes associated with poets that different tribes would pasture together within the *ḥaram*, secure within its bounds.²⁰² Sacred topography could also be invoked to justify the superiority of a certain lineage, as ‘Amr ibn Humayl insults a Khuzā‘ī [36]:

And we take precedence over you, with our might,
when the tents are erected at Makhlafah.
Khuzaymah is our uncle, and Hudhayl my father,
all of [those tribes attained] to might, and I am heir [to it].²⁰³

Makhlafah refers, al-Sukkarī tells us, to Minan, the site outside Mecca where pilgrims encamp for most of the Islamic *ḥajj*. This social precedence is paired with a rare assertion of Hudhayl’s genealogical significance.

However, the reference to Minan is specific to the speaker’s addressing Khuzā‘ah. As we have seen, Abū Jundab often uses imagery of Mecca’s sacred environs in his defense of Khuzā‘ī *jārs*. Al-Mu‘aṭṭal insults another Hudhalī’s lineage by asserting that his family are Khuzā‘ī, and thus are not among those who do not participate in the sacred rites Mt. ‘Arafāt [37]:

You’ve claimed that, “without a doubt, you’re one of their sons (*fatāhum*).”
You’re a preening arrogant boaster enough, yourself.
I think that you’re from some Qama‘ī family
that, when they perform the sacrifice,
doesn’t remain at ‘Arafah (*idhā nasakū lā yashhadū l-mu‘arrafā*).²⁰⁴

²⁰² 31(AML).1, 2, *Ash‘ār*, 777–79.

²⁰³ 37(‘AHL).4.12–13, *ibid.*, 822.

²⁰⁴ 16(MR).3.5–6, *ibid.*, 638.

According to the commentary, a descendent of Qama‘ah ibn Khindif would be a Khuzā‘ī, a member of the Ḥums who does not observe the *waqfah* rite at ‘Arafah. This is clearly intended as an insult, depicting a worldview quite opposed to that of Quraysh’s, which became normative under Islam.

Taken as a whole, then, Hudhalī poets in their negotiation of systems of affiliation, be they based on agreement or lineage, display certain features. The speakers can be characterized as warrior-poets or leader-poets. Grammatically, they prefer the first person to the third person: they are not only speaking as representatives of their tribes, but the implied distance between the poetic speaker and the political agent the speaker represents are much narrower. Hudhayl as a tribe, if their poetry is any indication, was far less stratified and accordingly less politically coherent than the Najdī tribes depicted in their poets’ texts. This is only to speak on the level of representation, of course, but actual tribal unity seems to have been quite lacking in the pre-Islamic period.

Two general tendencies associated with poets can be discerned: a centripetal and centrifugal. Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid, apparently of a chiefly lineage, is emblematic of the first tendency, and makes social use of poetry in public acts of praise and denunciation in order to encourage a lineage-based notion of the tribal unity, as well as to reinforce his own leadership role. Abū Jundab, a highly autonomous actor, is emblematic of the centrifugal tendency, holding adherence to *jiwār* and *walā’* agreements more highly than loyalty to a lineage group. In justifying his actions, he draws on ritual language associated with Mecca’s ritual and sacred geography. Other poets such as ‘Amr ibn Humayl and al-Mu‘aṭṭal draw on this same sacred imagery as well, and here it appears that Hudhayl’s relationship with Khuzā‘ah was particularly vexed, and that relationships of *jiwār* and *walā’* between Hudhayl and Khuzā‘ah

were charged along ritual lines in some way. We could thus consider ‘Amr ibn Humayl and al-Mu‘aṭṭal as part of Ma‘qil’s bloc of poets promoting a notion of Hudhayl as a lineage group to whom loyalty is owed, by either asserting that lineage’s status within the ritual framework of Mecca’s rites, or deriding Khuzā‘ī association with those rites.

2.4.2. Anti-Equestrianism: The *ṣu‘lūk* as a Regional Phenomenon

More independent than the warrior poet is the quasi-mythical *ṣu‘lūk*, the “brigand poet,” ostensibly a social outcast, although the poetic texts attributed to these figures contain little evidence of pariah or extra-tribal status. Two of the most famous brigand poets were Ta‘abbaṭa Sharran of Fahm, who is mentioned in some of Hudhayl’s poetry and lore, and his companion al-Shanfará, originally of the southern tribe of Azd but purportedly adoptively of Fahm. In secondary literature critics often speak of “*ṣu‘lūk* poems” or “poetry,” although in fact, only three exemplars are ever given: ‘Urwah ibn al-Ward in addition to Ta‘abbaṭa Sharran and al-Shanfará.²⁰⁵ ‘Urwah was from ‘Abs and never separated his tribe, so we are really discussing two poets, the authenticity of whose poetry is questionable and much of the lore on which is only transmitted in the unreliable *akhbār* of *Kitāb al-Aghānī*. In terms of actual verse, the evidence for al-Shanfará’s alienation from his tribe primarily rests on the first line of his famous *Lāmiyyah*.²⁰⁶ In addition to a sense of independence or alienation from their own tribe, two of the most distinctive characteristics of the *ṣu‘lūks* are said to be a propensity for fighting

²⁰⁵ Cf. Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1:135–144; S. Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals*, 87–160; Jones, *Early Arabic Poetry*, 1:35–37, 143–266; G. Borg, *EAL*, s.v. “*ṣa‘ālīk*.”

²⁰⁶ The line is, “Make the breasts of your mounts arise, sons of my mother,/ for I incline to another tribe than you.” For a similar point on the probably invention of *akhbār* about Shanfará based on isolated lines, see Montgomery, *Vagaries*, 58n102.

on foot and an ability to endure extreme poverty.²⁰⁷ Other characteristics often find their way into the mix, like bravery, generosity and self-restraint, but as Ewald Wagner points out, these are common nomadic virtues that *ṣu'lūk*s merely give special emphasis to.²⁰⁸

The three most typical *ṣu'lūk* characteristics—of praise or self-praise for emaciation, endurance of hunger and poverty, and boasting about an ability to run on foot—are also found many poets of Hudhayl. Abū Khirāsh, in a text discussed further below, complains that his wife prefers a fat man to him, boasting of his ability to control his hunger [38]:

I hang around with Hunger until he gets tired of me,
and leaves without spoiling (*lam yudnis*) my clothes or my body [...]
She sees [in me] a man, worn away by hunger,
and goes circling around a flab-ball with flapping flanks [...] ²⁰⁹

As Roland Barthes mentions in his autobiography, a scholar's stereotypical emaciation carries semiotic weight insofar as it indicates excessive, wearying lucubration.²¹⁰ Likewise, overt signs of bodily deprivation are lauded in pre-Islamic poetry insofar as they indicate generosity to guests and kin. Al-Mutanakhkhil of Hudhayl praises his father [39]:

He is light and supple,
like the top of a spear [near its head], [but] strong at the base (*'ardun nasāh*) ...
Abū Mālik limited his poverty to himself,
while he let his wealth be known to all.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ G. Borg, *EAL*, s.v. “*ṣa'ālik*,” Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 142, 143; Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals*, 109 ff.

²⁰⁸ Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 135n1.

²⁰⁹ 65(AKhQ).3.7, 11, *Ash'ār*, 1199–1201.

²¹⁰ Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard, Pbk. ed. (New York: Hill & Wang, 2010), 30.

²¹¹ 66(ML)4.3,6, *Ash'ār*, 1277.

While poverty associated with an ignoble character was strongly condemned,²¹² nomadic Arabic poets valued leanness as a visible manifestation of generous nobility. It is perhaps not surprising to find such poverty praised more highly among the truly impoverished, that is, among poor tribes. Ta'abbata Sharran only exaggerates what is already a wide-spread regional phenomenon when he describes his “shank fleshless, arm sinewy,”²¹³ which Stetkevych, for example, takes as “the physiognomy (sic) of the *ṣu'lūk*” by which he expresses his “perpetually marginal state.”²¹⁴ But it is merely a variation on boasts like Abū Dhu'ayb's, whom no one would accuse of being a *ṣu'lūk*, that Hudhayl's warriors are “as gaunt as gaming arrows.”²¹⁵

Another feature of Shanfarā that is he fights, or rather, flees, on foot [40]:

I scape as once from Bajīlah I escaped, the night I ran

on al-Raḥṭ's smooth ground with all my might ...

None is swifter than I—not the forelocked horse,

or the eagle soaring by the mountain peak, beating broad wings.²¹⁶

According to Gert Borg, the *ṣu'lūk*'s “swift foot when circumstances forced him to flee” is “remarkable ... because a pre-Islamic hero would never run away from danger.”²¹⁷ Stetkevych also finds, commenting on this verse, that “the insane and mindless running of the *ṣu'lūk* is diametrically opposed to the purposeful and teleological *riḥlah* of the tribal hero.”²¹⁸ Wagner notes, however, that such depictions of flight are found elsewhere in pre-Islamic

²¹² Cf. Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 141, 142, citing 'Urwah ibn Ward.

²¹³ Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals*, 106.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

²¹⁵ *Ash'ār*, 694. Other poets implicitly praise leanness by mocking fat men; Ḥabīb al-A'lam mocks “the fat man taking cover in his tent and camel-stockade, angered by our raiding,” (4(H'AKh).4.1, *ibid.*, 328).

²¹⁶ Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals*, 105, translating *Muf.* no. 1, ll. 4, 7. Cf. also al-Shanfarā, *Muf.* no. 20, l. 17, 18.

²¹⁷ Borg, *REAL*, s.v. “*ṣa'ālīk*.”

²¹⁸ Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals*, 114.

Arabic poetry: al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsah* features three chapters devoted to such pieces.²¹⁹ Passages about fleeing *on foot* exist in fact primarily in poets who are not necessarily brigands, but who happen to dwell in the Sarāh mountains south of Mecca. Being a good runner and a fine horseman may not be mutually exclusive. Wa'lah ibn al-Ḥārith (as Lyall suggests, or, alternately, al-Ḥārith ibn Wa'lah) of Jarm, a tribe of the Sarāh mountains, loses his horse, and then boasts of how he flees with an eagle comparison reminiscent of al-Shanfarā's [41]:

I saved myself by a flight such as none have seen before,
as though I were an eagle swooping in Tayman down on his prey—
a black eagle brownish of hue, whose feathers a steady rain
has matted, some day of cold and storm [in the mountain air].
It seemed, when at last I put Ḥudhunnah between me and them,
we were ostriches all in a string before a horseman's pursuit.²²⁰

Mālik ibn Khālid of Hudhayl offers an even more extensive comparison of himself to an ostrich [42]:

When I saw the branches of the *ṭalh* and
ṭarfā' and *salam* trees snatching the clothes
from the running fighters (*'adiyya l-qawm*) of the tribe,
I gathered my clothes up [to run], turning to no one.

²¹⁹ Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 143, al-Walīd ibn 'Ubayd Buḥturī, *Le Kitāb al-hamāsah* (Beirut: [Imprimerie Catholique], 1910), 40–43. Their tribal distribution is interesting. Chapter 17: two Qurashīs, one Sulamī, one 'Āmirī, one Bāhili and two Tamīmīs (i.e., three Ḥijāzīs, three Najdīs, and 'Āmir, who interacted with both); chapter 18: one Zubaydī (of Yemen), a Qurashī, 'Āmir ibn Ṭufayl of 'Āmir, describing an encounter with Fazārah, a Ḥijāzī tribe, and Aws ibn Ḥajar of Tamīm (i.e., one Ḥijāzī, one 'Āmirī, one southerner, one Najdī); chapter 19: two Medinans, one Zubaydī, one southerner (Sa'd al-'Ashīrah). Total: five Ḥijāzīs, four Najdīs, two 'Āmirīs, three southerners). This distribution is an inverse of the normal geographical distribution as seen in the collections of al-Aṣma'ī and al-Mufaḍḍal. The poets who describe fleeing tend to originate the most mountainous areas of the peninsula in its south-western corner.

²²⁰ *Muf.* no. 32, ll. 2–4, Lyall's translation.

I despised the man muzzled up like a young camel [unable to run],
and I said that the wife of whoever gets caught will weep,
and whoever is taken prisoner will hunger while [his captors] eat.
By God, the bare-headed female ostrich, when
the giant dark-backed male, rippling with muscle, comes for her—
she had been in level valleys, and then gushing clouds of
spring, with constant mist-drippers between them, had rained on them—
so that she is plumping up, her underbelly has fattened,
not grown lanky, but her flesh is filling in—
[no such ostrich] is faster than me, on a day with no flagging or weakening,
when I recognized them, and locks of hair danced around [as we ran].²²¹

In the same poem cited above in which he defends his ability to control his hunger to his wife, Abū Khirāsh boasts of his ability to race swiftly on foot through the desert in the darkness and rain [43]:

And how many an overcast night of mid-winter have I traversed,
when it had begun to rain, and it was silent, dark, wet; [...]
when the feet were wet, and roots (*ghuthā'*) twisted
and turned underfoot like the barrels of black camels roped together;
and how many a sandal, [torn] like a picked-apart quail carcass,
have I tossed to one side at the end of the night, after all the dew or drizzle?²²²

²²¹ 9(MKhKh)6.1–7, *Ash'ār*, 460–61.

²²² 65(AKhQ).3.17, 19–20, *ibid.*, 1202–03. See similar scenes at 54(JZS)1.9, *ibid.*, 872; 65(AKhQ).8.8–10, *ibid.*, 1219.

It may be that fighting on foot was a tactic in which Hudhayl excelled. Wagner has noted that Ta'abaṭṭa Sharran, like some Hudhalī poets, has descriptions of mountain terrain not found elsewhere in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.²²³ Even if poverty were not to prevent the purchase and maintenance of horses, it stands to reason that in mountainous or any uneven territory horses would offer little advantage in a raid. The lexicon *Tāj al-'arūs*, gives the word 'adī as a Hudhalī dialect word meaning a group of fighting men who run (*ya'dūna 'alā aqdāmihim*),²²⁴ citing none other than the first line of the poem by Mālik ibn Khālid just quoted. The *Tāj* is probably citing al-Sukkarī's commentary, which glosses 'adī *l-qawm* as *ḥāmilatuhum alladhīna ya'dūna 'alā arjulihim* (their attackers who run on their legs).²²⁵ Such dialectical usages, like the *ṣu'lūks*' running boasts, reflect the tribe's adaptations to regional topography. The type of ideal warrior depicted by Wa'lah ibn al-Ḥārith and Mālik ibn Khālid existed on a spectrum with the "*ṣu'lūk*" Ta'abbaṭa Sharran, and that we are facing is a *regional* sensibility, in which poetic techniques were developed accordingly (such as the ostrich comparison, used elsewhere to describe camels).²²⁶ Such tribes, located mostly in the Ḥijāz and southwest Arabia, represent the "tribes that go afoot" mocked by Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim al-Asadī, cited above.

Michael Zwettler has made some germane arguments about the Ma'add tribal grouping, contending that the entity referred to in fifth- and sixth-century inscriptions represents a group of "progressive' Northern Arabs" making use of horses in raiding, the techniques and materials for which spread from Persia.²²⁷ Ḥijāzīs, he supposes, were not from this group of Ma'addī Arabs, and thus they are referred to as the 'Arab *musta'rabah* (Arabized

²²³ Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 142–43.

²²⁴ *Tāj*, s.v. "'adī."

²²⁵ *Ash'ār*, 460. Cf. also 379, 380 and 673.

²²⁶ For citations of four major poets ('Antarah, Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, Imru' al-Qays and 'Alqamah) who compare camel mare to an ostrich, see Jacobi, *Studien*, 57n63.

²²⁷ Zwettler, "Ma'add in Late Ancient Arabian Epigraphy," 276–286.

Arabs) according to the lexicographical tradition.²²⁸ Nor were inhabitants of the southern part of the Arabian peninsula, as evinced by their more primitive camel saddle technology, still observable today.²²⁹ Be this as it may, horsemanship was not unknown to the Ḥijāz, and Sulaym’s poets, in particular Khufāf ibn Nudbah,²³⁰ were well-known for horse description, but perhaps this was unique to Sulaym: their horsemen’s crucial role in the Muslim conquest of Mecca was noted by Islamic historians.²³¹

Some of Hudhayl’s poets do boast in passing of horsemanship, but none adopt the hunting-boast horse description seen in Muzarrid or Imru’ al-Qays, among others. According to al-Aṣma’ī, Hudhayl “were owners of camels and raided on foot (*kānū yughīrūna rajjālatan*), and they had no horses (*lam takun la-hum al-khayl*).”²³² This is probably too blanket of a statement: in all likelihood, horses were ubiquitous in the Arabian peninsula, but rather, possession and mastery of horsemanship was not part of the ideology of rule promulgated by poets. Abū Dhu’ayb, for example, either lacked the skill or desire to describe horses properly. Al-Aṣma’ī accordingly strongly criticizes Abū Dhu’ayb’s brief horse description in his famous elegy included in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*. When a warrior’s horse is described as sweating profusely (*yatabaḍḍa’u*), al-Aṣma’ī tells us, “horses (*al-khayl*) are not thus described, and he does it poorly (*wa-qad asā’a*).”²³³ When the horse is described as having fat so thick that one could insert a finger into it (*tathūkhu fī-hā l-iṣba’ū*), al-Asmā’ī tells us, “this is one of the worst ways to

²²⁸ *ibid.*, 286n99.

²²⁹ *ibid.*, 280.

²³⁰ *Aṣm.* no. 2, ll. 16–23, no. 3, ll. 10–15 contain detailed and well-constructed horse descriptions.

²³¹ Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*, 217.

²³² *Ash’ār*, 35. Al-Aṣma’ī was an authority on the subject, and we also owe an early lexicographical work on vocabulary of horses, *Kitāb al-Khayl*.

²³³ *ibid.*

describe a horse (*hādhā min akhbath mā tun‘at bi-hi l-khayl*),” and “such a horse would be too fat to run for an hour (*law ‘adat hādhihi sā‘atan la-qāmat min kathrat shaḥmihā*).”²³⁴

Depictions of hunting in Hudhayl’s poetry almost always take place within onager scenes, as has been carefully documented by Thomas Bauer. As we have seen, according to Bauer, the social status of the horseless, impoverished, emaciated hunter in such scenes is debased. The poet was “mouthpiece of an aristocratic society,” and the hunter was “a wretched figure, whom one could mock with no fear of reprisal.”²³⁵ This obtains merely within the onager scene as a thematic unit; within the poem as a whole, other hunting scenes exist such as we have discussed above, in which poets demonstrate their elevated status through description of hunting as an equestrian, hierarchical practice. For Bauer, some poets quite consciously use the low-status hunter as a foil for their own honorable status: ‘Amr ibn Qamī‘ah opposes his generosity with meat to the hunger of the starving hunter, while Muzarrid contrasts himself as a well-equipped rider against an impoverished hunter.²³⁶ The poet, in this model, never identifies with the hunter.

One of the most unique poems in the *Ash‘ār* is accordingly a text of al-Dākhil ibn Ḥarām in which the speaker of the poem is a hunter on foot. The poem is worth quoting in full, as it is evident that—in contrast to poems cited above focusing on horse description—the speaker’s goal is to display his technical expertise in describing his weaponry, a bow and arrow [44]:

He recalled Umm ‘Abd Allāh when

she went away from him, and departure from him was her wont.

There is no black-eyed doe with soft bones

²³⁴ Ibid., 34.

²³⁵ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:50–51.

²³⁶ Ibid., 51.

whose trembling-voiced mother dotes over him (*tarudduhu*)
 with a more beautiful lips (*maḏḥak*) and neck than her,
 in the morning, in her apartment of the tent, her smile gleaming.
 [Many] an oryx—out ahead of its herd, apprehensive of every unseen [scent],
 when she snuffs the air (*idhā sāmat la-hā nafasun nasīj*),
 listening to the empty lands, where echoes resound,
 tilting her head like a man with a blow to his skull— 5
 have I taken unawares while it pastured (*fī maṣāmin*),
 with its back as white as Yemeni cotton cloth—
 fate decreed for her a dust-covered (*ughaybir*) hunter in rags (*dhū ḥashīf*),
 unseen in his hunting blind (*fī najāshatīhi*), deft [in his movements]—
 the two beaters come at her, surrounding her,
 getting her to a place where she can neither turn nor escape,
 and he'd kill himself if he misses her [now],
 he ought to get an arrow into the breast or belly—
 so he makes his way towards her, and when she turns her left flank to him,
 exposing herself and running, 10
 I reach for an arrow then for her,
 sharp, not impaired by its split shaft (*lam takhawwanhu l-shurūjū*),
 the arrowhead's face is balanced, [so it flies true],
 well-molded (*lam yadḥaḍ 'alayhi l-ghirār*),
 it shaft brisk (*za'il*) and wind-swift (*darūjū*),
 the longer outer-feather (*zuhrān*), with interlocked barbs (*dumūj*),

from the firm, supple central-wing feathers (*abāhir*),
 finely fletches the shaft (*yazinna l-qadh*),
 [straight] as a wolf's back, not spinning top-over-bottom,
 neither coming up short when the bow string's pulled back,
 nor too thick or bent.
 A resounding [bow—(*hatūf*)] brings her [the oryx] closer to the one she'll feed,
 [its center] fills the palm (*al-kaff*), its handle firm, 15
 its [string's] twang is like the shriek of a woman bereaved,
 burning grief (*wajd*) within her ribs,
 and bright, long slender [arrowheads—(*murhafāt*)],
 as if its edges were a fire's hottest embers, uncovered [from the ashes],
 and golden (*ṣafrā'*) carved, a [whole] bough of *nab'* wood
 reached by [long, winding] paths and roads
 (*taḍammanahā l-sharā'i'u wa-l-nuhūjū*).
 She swerved, but I sought out her innards with [the arrow],
 and it darted like a trembling, slender branch.
 The feathers and the notch, up to the arrowhead,
 were mixed with the muck of blood and guts. 20
 So I and my companions (*aṣḥāb*) had fresh meat,
 the raw and the cooked.²³⁷

The poet, as the commentary makes clear,²³⁸ refers to himself at times in the poem in the third person, alternating between persons according to an unusual convention found in some pre-

²³⁷ 14(DḤS).1.1–21, *Ash'ār*, 611–622.

Islamic poems. The prey here is evidently an onager, as the commentary tells us in defining *ḥadiyah* in line 4, although the animal's white back in line 6 seems to indicate an oryx. The hunter is described as poor, dust-covered (*ughaybir*), and dressed in rags (*ḥashīf*). Although the dust-covered or dust-colored hunter is more typically describes as *aghbar*, rather than the diminutive *ughaybir*, and the word *ṭimr* is often used to denote his clothing, the character is obviously the same hunter found in other onager hunting scenes as described by Bauer, in which the hunter is intentionally depicted as low-status.²³⁹ The hunter's technique here is, like that of other hunters, to lie in wait in a hunting blind (*najāshah*), probably a weave of branches and foliage, for animals coming to drink. The word *qutrah* or *quturāt* is more commonly used, but the technique and style of description is obviously the same as in other, both Hudhalī and non-Hudhalī, texts.²⁴⁰

Likewise, again with partial overlap in vocabulary, the speaker in this poem pays careful attention to the feathering and heads of the arrows, and the construction of the bow. This is a frequent feature of the hunter in onager episodes as well. The resemblance in language, for example, with Ka'b ibn Zuhayr's description of a hunter drawing his arrow and fitting it to his bow is clear [45]:

The hunter observes them ...
 from off to one side, with a yellow bow of *nab'* wood,
 combining strength and flexibility, in hand (*al-kaff*),
 readying a sharpened [arrow—(*murhaf*)] on the grip,

²³⁸ Ibid, 614.

²³⁹ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtunst*, 1:46.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 55–58.

broad-edged, with well-trimmed feathers ...²⁴¹

Like al-Dākhil's bow, Ka'b's is yellow or golden in color (*ṣafrā'*), made of *nab'*-wood, and the sharp arrows are described as *murhaf*. The handle of the bow and ability of the hunter to grip it are described, and the fletching is detailed in technical terms. The sound of the bow is also described as resounding, with al-Dākhil using the word *hatūf*, while in another onager description, al-A'shā uses the word *mutarannim*, both meaning "resounding," more or less.²⁴²

While the basis of the text is clearly rooted in other depictions of impoverished hunters, predominantly in onager episodes, al-Dākhil appropriates the generic conventions for himself, and then boastfully expands on them. The *nab'* wood is from an inaccessible tree; he revels in the detail of the parts of the feather used to fletch the arrow (*zūhrān*, *abāhir*); the arrowhead is perfectly shaped and balanced. The most striking detail, however, is that in onager episodes, the impoverished hunter (except in Hudhayl's elegies) never strikes his prey. This hunter does, and successfully brings meat to his comrades (not his family, as in onager scenes). Here we see the social function of the hunt, which results in the sharing (redistribution or reciprocity) of food among members of the tribe. The poem as a text, however, a display of social status, dwells not on equestrian trappings but on simple, hand-crafted, locally produced weapons, and on his own prowess as a hunter. As an artefact of regional Hijāzī culture, it demonstrates the appropriation and inversion of a character from Najdī poetics, the impoverished, horseless hunter, and valorizes him as a skilled provider of meat for his comrades.

²⁴¹ *Dīwān*, ed. Kowalski, 57–61; Bauer, *ibid.*, 2:133–136.

²⁴² *Dīwān*, ed. Geyer, 92 ff.; Bauer, *ibid.*, 2:73–74.

The poets of Hudhayl, then, consistently depict themselves using a set of anti-equestrian values. On almost all of these points, they are echoing or responding to more prestigious and older poets. Their values—of leanness, ability to withstand hunger, and running or traveling on foot (as opposed to on horseback), even to hunt on foot and, to a certain extent, a fondness for describing local weapons such as bows rather than imported swords and armor—do not make them *ṣu'lūks*. Rather, this set of anti-equestrian values is found throughout Hudhayl as tribal values, not anti- or extra-tribal values, and they are moreover evident in other tribes of the region such as Fahm and Jarm, inhabitants like Hudhayl of the Sarāh mountains to the south of Mecca. The regional values cultivated by these tribes reflect their relative poverty, their distance from major thriving urban polities such as the Sasanians or Byzantines, and the topography of the area.

2.4.3. Egalitarian Praise

Hudhayl's poetic milieu was thus characterized by an egalitarianism even more marked than elsewhere in the Arabian peninsula. Pre-Islamic tribal culture was not strongly hierarchical anywhere, but as we have seen, Najdī poetics wrestled with several strongly hierarchical themes while simultaneously attempting to resolve hierarchical assertions with egalitarian tribal values. This is the case, for example, when Bishr ibn 'Amr praises the Khafājah clan both for their fine weapons and their ragged clothes. Hudhayl, however, lacks any tripartite praise *qaṣīdahs*, and as we saw in the example above of Fahm's praise for Hudhayl, a cohort of leaders rather than one chief is praised. This decentralized cohort is indicative of a less hierarchical tribal culture, and such praise poems as we find reflect Hudhālī poetry's adaptation to a different ideological situation.

Individuals could be praised, but with an unusual style. Abū Kabīr in particular is associated by commentators such as al-Tabrīzī with Ta'abbaṭā Sharran, of whom he was supposedly a companion. As Fehim Bajrakterević, the first editor of Abū Kabīr, has pointed out, this is yet another *ex post facto* explanation of some verses in the poet's corpus, and the narratives are extremely inconsistent.²⁴³ It is not surprising that the medieval critics should want to describe Abū Kabīr as a companion of Ta'abbaṭā Sharran, as the former poet's description of his unnamed companion consist of praise of a lean, impoverished and generally very *ṣu'lūk*-like figure. Bajrakterević also points out the lack of camels in Abū Kabīr's corpus, another feature in common with the pedestrian *ṣu'lūks*, and a deeper shade of the broader anti-equestrian tribal ideology.

All of Abū Kabīr's poems follow the same structure: he addresses his daughter, Zuhayrah, and laments growing old and infirm. He then reminisces on his youthful accomplishments in combat, love and desert life. Most of these are introduced by the *wāw al-rubbah* particle, meaning "and many a ..." followed by a genitive noun, or by *wa-la-qad* followed by a past tense verb, either emphasizing the quantity of the verb (*al-takthīr*, i.e., "how oft did I...") or that it was in fact accomplished (*al-taḥqīq*, "indeed, did I ..."). In his longest, piece, lines 14–30 of the 48-line *qaṣīdah* are dedicated to describing a companion in travel and war. Although commentaries identify him as Ta'abbaṭā Sharran, he is not identified at all in the verse itself. The description is, I would like to suggest, the praise piece of a poet lacks the structure of the tripartite *qaṣīdah*; he thus embeds the praise within a boast, beginning with the structure, *wa-la-qad saraytu* [46]:

²⁴³ Fehim Bajrakterević, "Abū Kabīr al-Hudhālī," *EI*². The poem also, in some points, resembles an elegy on Ta'abbaṭā Sharran by his maternal nephew, Hajjāl (vocalization uncertain) ibn Imri' al-Qays: 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām and Wahb ibn Munabbih, *Kitāb al-Tījān fī mulūk Ḥimyar* (Ṣan'ā': Markaz al-Dirāsāt wa-al-Abḥāth al-Yamaniyyah, 1979), 256–57.

I've gone traveling through the night, with a ruthless man,
 one of the unrelenting young fighters, with no chub on him (*ghayr muhabbal*).
 He was a boy [whose mother] conceived while her robes' girdles were tied,
 so he grew [in her] without being a burden (*shabba ghayra muthaqqalī*); 15
 she conceived him of a night, frightened (*maz'ūdatan*),
 against her will (*karhan*), her cincture not even loosened.²⁴⁴
 She brought him forth untameable (*hūsha l-janāni*), lean-bellied, a man
 who keeps watch through the night while a slow-witted oaf (*al-hawdajī*) sleeps,
 unsullied by any remnants of menstrual blood (*ghubbari ḥayḍa*),
 or by any corruption of a wet-nurse, or pregnancy milking taint (*dā'i l-mughīl*).
 If you tossed a pebble at him [while he slept],
 you'd see him leap up at the sound of it, like the *akhyal*-bird leaping into flight.
 Nothing of him touches the earth [when he sleeps]
 save his shoulder, and the edge of his leg, like a sword bandolier's fold. 20
 If you send him up through the mountain passes,
 you see him traversing the peaks like a hawk as it dives.
 And when you looked into his face's features,
 they blaze like lightning in a broad, stormy cloud.
 When he gets up from sleep, he [is as firm]
 as the heel of the leg fixed in place, no weakling.
 [He is] tough in the face of battle (*ṣa'bu l-karīha*),
 none coming near him (*lā yurāmu janābuhū*),

²⁴⁴ According to the commentary, a woman forced into sex would give birth to a stronger child.

incisive his determination, like a polished sword blade.
 He defends his companions in fierce [fighting],
 and when they alight, he is a refuge to the needy. 25
 Often have I seen a tribe, after their night's sleep,
 with their skulls cleaved by [well]-pomelled swords;
 when you see them, it is as if a cloud's rain
 had poured over them, no north wind [having dispersed it].
 We set the swords to their limbs,
 and straighten what was crooked with them (*māyla mā lam yu'dalī*),
 [leaving them] piled atop each other, [face down] on their crotches,
 [blood from] sword blows [flowing] over them
 as from a water-skin's gaping tear.
 Then we depart in the morning, leaving those who will dwell
 on the field of battle behind, binding those not slain in cords. 30²⁴⁵

The *qaṣīdah* is of a highly unusual format. In general, it corresponds to the “Errinerungsqaṣīde” described by Jacobi.²⁴⁶ The typical structure of such a poem is the *nasīb*, followed optionally by a camel description and then *mufākharah*; that is, the poem can be tripartite. In Jacobi's corpus, within which ‘Alqamah and Imru’ al-Qays are the chief practitioners of the Errinerungsqaṣīde, the usual subjects of boasting are hunting, amorous liaisons, and drinking. Abū Kabīr's poem thus varies on several fronts: none of his four poems, three of which fit the Errinerungsqaṣīde

²⁴⁵ 63(AKJ)1.14–30, *Ash‘ār*, 1072–1076.

²⁴⁶ Jacobi, *Studien*, 101–03.

pattern, are tripartite. He does boast once of amorous liaisons,²⁴⁷ but not about wine or hunting. His boast subjects are: climbing mountains to scout for enemies,²⁴⁸ his ability to withstand the heat and thirst of the desert;²⁴⁹ his combat abilities and his weapons, a sword, a bow and arrows.²⁵⁰ The longest of these boasts is 11 lines.

The description of his brave companion quoted above then, at 17 lines, is longer than any boast in Abū Kabīr's brief corpus. The length of the passage encourages us to read the passage as praise, rather than boasting. Hudhayl lacked a structure for tripartite praise *qaṣīdahs* connected to court culture, such as al-Musayyab's praise poem for Qā' qā' ibn Ma'bad,²⁵¹ among others. This led their poets to insert praise as a description of the brave companion, an inherently egalitarian structural feature of the boast. Abū Kabīr's praise in fact depicts a number of other features already identified as central to the anti-equestrian ideology of the tribe: he is lean (*ghayra muhabbal*) (ll. 14, 17); used to hardship, sleeping directly on the ground (l. 20), where again, he is so emaciated that his mark in the sand is like the fold of a bandolier—none of his lank torso touches the ground; he moves across the mountain passes on foot (l. 21), and is compared to a hawk for swiftness. Above all, he is a ruthless fighter and raider (ll. 25–30). All of these images are connected to a worldview of misogynistic biology: the praised man's mother conceived him in non-consensual sex, an act which, according to the commentary, led in popular belief to stronger offspring (ll. 16–17). The biological beliefs of l. 18 are not explicated by the commentary, but the general tenor is clear: none of the contaminants possible via an embryo's or infant's contact with maternal blood or a nurse's

²⁴⁷ 63(AKJ)1.45–47, *Ash'ār*, 1079.

²⁴⁸ 63(AKJ)1.31–37, *ibid.*, 1076–77;

²⁴⁹ 63(AKJ)39–41, *ibid.* 1078; 63(AKJ)3.4–14, *ibid.*, 1085–87.

²⁵⁰ 63(AKJ)2.10–19, *ibid.*, 1082–84; 63(AKJ)1.42–44, *ibid.*, 1078–79; 63(AKJ)3.15–21, *ibid.*, 1087–89.

²⁵¹ *Muf.* no. 11, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 60–63.

breast milk have affected the pure and moisture-less virility of the praised man. We'll return to the question of gender depictions in the next section, 3.4.5.

The structure of Abū Kabīr's egalitarian companion-praise could be considered an anomaly, but it is part of a recurring pattern in Hudhayl's corpus. A shorter example concludes a 19-line Erringerungsqaṣīde by one Rabī'ah ibn Kawdan, which is preceded by boasts about amorous liaisons, his bow, and desert travel [47]:

And many a white [path] has led me along (*yahdīnī*),
thought I hadn't asked ((?) *lam unādīhi*),
[as clear as] the part of a bride's [hair], its length doesn't perturb me,
the paths branching out from it are [as thin as]
the fissures of the unseparated skull-plates—
I make my way quickly along it with a rag-clothed [comrade (*dhā ḥashīf*)],
trimmed of flesh (*bāra laḥma 'anhu khayru bārin*),
as if sharpened with an arrow-parer,
a noble of the young warriors, like Khuwaylid,
reliable, brave, honest.
You watch out lest you be struck, by accident,
by his forearm like the edge of a hammer,
he aids you when you're oppressed,
or assists you in oppressive vengeance (*yu'dīka zāliman*),
and defends you with a light, sharp, joint-piercing [sword].²⁵²

²⁵² 19(RKM)1.14–19, *Ash'ār*, 657–59.

The ideological valorization of virile impoverishment and hunger here is the same as in Abū Kabīr’s praise, and is also evocative of al-Dākhil ibn Ḥarām’s description of himself as a rag-clad hunter above. Rabī’ah uses the same term to describe his comrade: *dhū ḥashīf*. Like Abū Kabīr’s praised companion, Rabī’ah’s is lean, like a trimmed arrow shaft, and a fierce fighter.

The exact same set of characteristics is evident in a text by Abū Khirāsh describing a companion of his in a 9-line *qaṣīdah*. In the text by Abū Kabīr, the lengthiest boast was dedicated to describing his companion, and in Rabī’ah, the description of the praised companion concluded the *qaṣīdah*. Although Abū Khirāsh’s text is not a *qaṣīdah* in the sense that it is not poly-thematic, the focus as in Rabī’ah’s text lies entirely in describing and praising a companion. A preliminary boast merely introduces the subject [48]:

I’m no [son of] Murrah if I don’t take to a look-out,
 over [both] the tillage and clover-grass pastures,²⁵³
 on [a mount] with jutting peaks, like axe-edges, lofty,
 the path to it followed by people, well-trodden—
 only the [peak’s] shelter’s supports remain,
 two branches, one fallen over, one still standing—
 with a companion never taken unawares—
 while the moronic son of a slave wanders too far afield with his herds—
 [a companion] whom I sent watching out for me in the dead of the night,
 when weaklings prefer sleep and warmth. 5
 [He is] like Ibn Wāthilah the “Spear” (*al-ṭarrādi*),
 or a man from the Murrah clan, long-bodied and lanky (*surḥūb*) like a wolf.

²⁵³ I.e., on a very high peak, such that the view encompasses both agricultural and desert grazing areas.

He remains on [the peak's] top like a *maysir*-arrow shaft,
 well-bitten and wrapped in sinew,
 a generous man of the tribe (*al-qawm*), nude the tendons on the back of his hand,
 fleshless (*khaffa*) those on his inner forearm, his shins.
 He has, in some ways, the strength of Khālid,
 and some things that people attribute to others are lies.²⁵⁴

By now we can see that this method of a poet describing a companion is has a well-defined corpus of formulae. The companion is lank, and in his leanness he is compared stereotypically to an arrow-shaft (l. 7) or a wolf (l. 6), with exposed tendons, as we saw with Shanfará above, in his lean forearms (l. 8). These markers of virility are here explicitly juxtaposed, as so often Arabic poetry, with the praised man's generosity—he is so emaciated because he supports his tribe, chiefly through combat, evidently. Another feature evident here, as in Rabī'ah's poem, is the comparison to Khālid or Khuwaylid (l. 9). The companion is also compared to one Ibn Wāthilah. The most likely explanation is that all of these refer to Khālid ibn Wāthilah, the semi-legendary Hudhalī tribal leader who negotiated with Abrahah when the Abyssinians invaded the Ḥijāz, and father of Ma'qil ibn Khuwaylid, cited above. Rather than referring to well-known Arabian or Biblical heroes as other poets do—al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī compares his patrons to Solomon, for example—the poets of Hudhayl compare those they praise to Hudhalī leaders well-known to their local tribal audience.

Abū Dhu'ayb also has a praise poem of the sort described, which according to the report included in the commentary was composed for 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr,²⁵⁵ the son of the

²⁵⁴ 65(AKhQ).15.1–9, *Ash'ār*, 1232–1234.

²⁵⁵ Al-Sukkarī, *Ash'ār*, 196.

Companion al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām. According to the commentary, the young ‘Abd Allāh was his companion or perhaps commander (*ṣāhib*) on the campaign into Ifrīqiyah (sic), presumably that of 26–27/647.²⁵⁶ One other report, that of Abū Dhu‘ayb’s elegy for his sons, connects the poet to the conquests,²⁵⁷ so the general chronology is not unlikely. There is, however, no explicit reference to Ibn al-Zubayr in the text itself. Here, the companion spoken of is mentioned in the context of the address of the beloved. The poem opens with a *khayāl* description, followed by a description of a thunderstorm falling over his kin-people’s encampments. He then addresses the beloved again [49]:

I called for that rain (*saqaytu bihi*) to fall upon her distant abodes,
and the clouds (*al-khāl*) fulfilled to us the groaning lightning’s promise.²⁵⁸

If the time has indeed come for you to set off,
and to exchange one companion, one sincere friend, for another, 15
and if the time has come for you to break things off,
to head for distant places, far away,
then some lowlife (*ibn turná*) when he comes to you,
will say vile things about me—

[choose] a companion worthy of you, one like a wolf that conceals himself
in a thicket on a plain, one who slays victoriously in battle,
quick to do his part [in war (*washīk al-fuḍūl*)], not returning
until the battle had been decided one way or another—

the [other] warriors return home, but he—his torso lean

²⁵⁶ See H. A. R. Gibb, “‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr,” *EI*².

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁵⁸ Reading *al-khālu* for *al-khāla*. For this meaning I depart from the commentary and Hell’s translation, but see Lewin, *Vocabulary*, s.v.

20

and he weary—he doesn't return—
 like a Murādī sword, not faint-hearted
 and cowardly, not squat and ugly,
 the raiding and fighting having left his body for you
 with arms with sinews like a wolf, his face bright—
 I shared his desire so I set off—
 driving off the birds flying from left to right (*al-sanīḥ*)²⁵⁹ out of love for battle—
 on paths as broad as camels' chests,
 with way-markers like palaces,
 with hutches of desert-thatch, built by men,
 where scouts toss away the straps
 (*al-sarīḥ*—of their sandals, because of how far they have walked.)²⁶⁰ 25

The praised companion is introduced unusually here, as a possible companion for the beloved of the *nasīb*. However, by the end, the speaker reveals that the man described is his companion, and fellow-warrior, in the same vein as the previous texts examined above. That the companion is a fellow-warrior is the only element of the text that conforms to the claim that the poem praises Ibn al-Zubayr. As is evident from the passages by Abū Kabīr, Rabī'ah ibn Kawdan and Abū Khirāsh, however, the companion is always praised as a reliable warrior. All of the other elements conform to the generic conventions of this form of tribal praise: the companion is lean, as evidenced by his sinewy arms, he is compared to a weapon—here a

²⁵⁹ He disregards any ill omens.

²⁶⁰ 1(ADhQ).25.14–25, *Ash'ār*, 201–203.

sword, rather than an arrow—and a wolf, and he is fierce in battle and a steadfast and rugged desert traveler.

What we are confronted with, in short, is not a depiction of a specific individual, Ibn al-Zubayr or anyone else, but a genre of praise specific to the Hudhayl tribe. This Hudhalī praise exemplifies a particular tribal ideal of leadership and masculinity. Unlike praise poetry for other tribesmen in Najdī poetics, the individuals praised in Hudhayl’s texts here possess no social superiority to the speaker. Structurally speaking, the praise is incorporated within personal boasts, almost always introduced with the *wāw al-rubbah* or the particle *qad*, the standard structuring devices of personal praise. No markers of lineage or alliance indicate social superiority, nor any depictions of material cultural possessions such as imported weapons or armor. In addition, the masculine idea depicted corresponds largely to the anti-equestrian ideological stance also evident not only in Hudhayl, but in other tribes of the region.

2.4.4. Wealth and Women in Hudhayl’s Poetry: Luxury, Gender and Ambivalence

Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry in general is characterized by a marked ambivalence towards women, on the one hand as a carefully described object of affection, and on the other, as repulsive objects of misogynistic invective. Modern, western readers will perhaps tend to think of the Freudian Madonna-whore complex, but in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, the beloved is not virginal and is often explicitly sexualized. More often than not sexual liaisons with the speaker take place behind the back of a cuckolded husband.²⁶¹ There is a striking dichotomy in depictions of women, however, and even a quick reading of any Arabic invective, whether

²⁶¹ See, for example, 1(ADhQ).6.31, *Ash’ār*, 97. 1(ADhQ)2.1–6 offers a chaster *nasīb*.

directed against men or women, with its brutal and corporeal depictions of the physiology of maternity, often invoking decaying flesh and rotting food, suggest that such texts could usefully be read with Kristeva's notion of the abject in mind.

Without excluding such directions, it is crucial to examine the fundamental role that women play for male poets in articulating status and an image of rule, and I would suggest that in Hudhayl's case, much of the ambivalence towards women has to do with their ambiguous status, potentially destabilizing tribal ideology based on a certain image of egalitarian virility. Women as characters in Arabic poetry can both uniquely consume certain luxury goods (perfume, clothing and other textiles) and reprove male characters for excessive spending, giving them a regulatory role in the economy of status which, as we have seen, poets were socially invested in controlling, mediating, and generally finessing. Poetry was vital to establishing certain public norms on how status was determined via the display of martial artifacts, the generous gifting and distribution of wealth, and the control of violence through bloodwite exchanges. Within Hudhalī poetics, in particular, women represent a vector for the display and evaluation of status markers that male poets, with their valorization of a quasi-asceticism, treat with profound discomfort.

With regard to the conventional depictions of women in the *nasīb* and in invective, Hudhayl's poets do not differ markedly from other poets of the Arabian Peninsula. Ambivalence towards women in these passages depends almost entirely on the social class of the woman depicted. The women in *nasībs* are described as ensconced in luxury, while invective is chiefly composed against lower-status women. In the *nasībs* of Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah and Abū Dhu'ayb, however, the beloved is not so much directly described as that her features are taken as jumping-off points for comparisons resembling epic similes. Most frequently, the

woman's lips are compared to honey and wine, providing the jumping-off point for a long description of a ragged, impoverished, mountain-climbing honey collector. Sā'idah describes his beloved, named Ghaḍūb, thusly [50]:

She came to Aṣḥam with charcoal [hair],
neither marred by thinness in the roots, nor shortness, [nor was it] gray—
like the filaments of moist papyrus (*al-ḥana'*) plants,
inundated with floodwater, with duckweed (*al-tuḥlubū*) floating around it,
and straight [teeth] like chamomile blossoms, girded
with white luster, with polished side-teeth, cool,
like the first press of the crushed grape, mixed
with aloeswood, brown musk and camphor,
[her mouth is] chill and refreshing, its moisture when I taste it
in the still of the night, when Venus (*al-kawkab*) has risen, 25
is nectar collected [from a hive] on the peak of a lofty summit,
where vultures perch like men lounging with their robes over their knees;
[ll. 27-35 contain description of honey collector]
Then he cuts [the honey] with generously poured, clear [water]
from a mountain valley where the *ta'lab* trees grow,
and it's mixed with a golden wine by a pierced-[eared], earring-adorned,
kinky-haired [wine merchant], deaf [to Arabic], who breaks open its seal:
and when it's been strained, it's like her mouth,
or her mouth is sweeter to me, by God!

If now, she does not come in the evening,

there will be no visiting us [at all], and in the morning, no longing for her!²⁶²

As in most such descriptions, the “beschreibende Stil” of Jacobi,²⁶³ the beloved is not herself directly described and is indeed, a stereotype rather than any living individual. An impression of luxury is cultivated, however, by the comparison of aspects of her person to various beautiful objects and commodities: her hair is like lush vegetation (l. 22), a particularly attractive image in the desert lifeworld, evocative of rich pasture and thus of material prosperity; her teeth are likewise compared to white flowers, and to fine scents of camphor, musk and aloeswood (l. 23); and from 26 ff., her mouth is elaborately compared to wine imported by foreigners and rare honey, the latter evidently a local specialization. The woman depicted is idealized, not as immaterial—the poet drinks her in, sexually—but as a dense entity composed of signifiers of affluence and opulence. She is highly corporeal, but her body is also visually removed as an object of the speaker’s and audience’s gaze through an apotheosis of sensual comparative language.

In contrast, when the woman being described is lower-status, her body is directly described, always negatively. In an invective against a woman of another tribe, Dīl (a.k.a. Du’īl) ibn Bakr (of Kinānah), Sā’idah composed [51]:

What a wonder is the women, sinewy (*watariyya*),

ostrich-like, like a bow of *ta’lab*-wood.

She has kids, black-faced,

like iron arrowheads the smith sold, not yet [polished] and fitted.

When she sits in the tent,

²⁶² 64(SJK)1.21–26, 36–39, *ibid.*, 1106–10, 1112–14.

²⁶³ Jacobi, *Studien*, 172–79.

she rests on her haunches like a jackal sliding down a hill.
 She drinks up the broth [of others] in the summer;
 if no one else is doing the milking, she goes and does it.
 A Nufathī²⁶⁴ woman, whenever her kin want to see
 her clit between her legs, it's always around. 5
 As she sits around the tent,
 she scratches her cunt with a mangy, scabby ankle.
 If given a dowry (*mahr*) of a meatless bone,
 she says, "that'll do nicely, come here."
 Her brow is a heavy ridge, her upper lip hairy,
 with fur like the coat of a fox.²⁶⁵

The woman has debased moral features: she is servile (l. 4), immodest (l. 5) and sexually available for a pittance (l. 7). The bulk of the poem focuses on her bodily features, however, often in more visual comparisons than used above with Ghaḍūb. The adjectives and comparison are essentially those we have seen male poets use to describe themselves. The Nufathī woman's body is literally sinewy, but also oddly shaped, like an ostrich, or hard and thin like a bow (l. 1). Traits that for a man constitute high praise—the swiftness of the ostrich and the lank hardness of a bow's wood—are here inverted as signifiers of repulsion. Her feminine reproductive abilities and organs are also singled out for scorn—her children are dark-skinned and emaciated (l. 2), and her limbs and private parts are compared to those of a jackal (l. 3) or indirectly, to a mangy dog (l. 6). Her face is also visually described, again with

²⁶⁴ Nufāthah ibn 'Adī ibn Du'il. See Caskeel, *Ġamharat an-nasab*, table 43.

²⁶⁵ 64(SJK)5.1–8, *Ash'ār*, 1150–51.

masculine traits—a heavy brow, a hairy lip, again visualized in animalistic terms. The masculine anti-equestrian ideology, described above as embodied in a constellation of corporeal features, here finds its antithesis. Sā'idah's invective portrait testifies inversely to the potency of the physical and animalistic signifiers of true masculinity in Hudhayl's imagination; the grotesque unnaturalness of these masculine traits as projected onto a female figure testifies to and naturalizes their inherence in men.

The status of women in the two texts above, however, is also directly marked by images of commercial exchange. In order to describe the sensuous intoxication experienced in kissing Ghadūb, the poet evokes the purchase of wine, which is certainly high-cost as the seller is foreign, as well as the long and difficult, and thus expensive, procurement of honey from an inaccessible mountain. The Nufathī woman on the other hand is willing to accept a meatless bone as a dowry (*mahr*), apparently as a prelude to sexual intercourse. The social status of the women is indicated and stamped by the value of the economic exchanges used to describe them. Such a depiction for men, however, would be profoundly discomfiting; Hudhayl's poets attempt to disengage themselves from markers of economic exchange and social status. As we have seen above, Najdī tribal poets often engage in the mediation of egalitarian tribal values with more hierarchical power relations denoted by high-value markers of status. For the most part, Hudhayl bypasses this project of mediation but the same tension and anxiety, regarding the possibility that material culture is capable of re-ordering social status, is acted out in depictions of relationships with women. Hudhayl's men, lean, tough and independently egalitarian, in the world of their poetry subsist as inherent value without reference to material status markers such as horses, imported weapons, or fine fabrics. Femininity, in contrast, is defined by its saturation with such markers.

One upshot of this saturation of the feminine with pure exchange value is that, by representing a male speaker's seduction of high-status women as a kind of mastery, the male poet exercises virtual mastership over the discomfiting world in which economic products alone correspond to hierarchy and social value. Inversely, excessive dalliance with low-status women is emasculating. Abū Dhu'ayb gives us examples of both tendencies. Eulogizing his deceased kinsman Nushaybah, he composes [52]:

If he fights with [Nushaybah] for an hour, his enemy (*qirn*),
 when the lovers of slave girls (*akhdānu l-imā'*) wither in battle, perishes.
 And many a flock (*wa-sirbin*) of women smeared with scented oil,
 as the breast of slaughtered gazelles is smeared with blood,
 did you address freely, you always knew
 just what to say, with sweet and winning words—
 they let him get away with whatever he wants (*fa-amkannahū mimmā arāda*),
 while everyone else is scorned, finding no way to their charms—
 he would talk with them and get them talking,
 until their hearts inclined to him wary at first and then relaxing.²⁶⁶

Nushaybah is clearly being praised as a smooth-talker; if there were any doubt, however, within the poem, this citation is wedged between descriptions of his combat abilities and his desert-crossing skills. The passage is introduced with the standard grammatical marker of boasting and Hudhalī egalitarian praise, the *wāw al-rubbah*. We can tell that these are high-status women because they are described tropically as gazelles (*sirb*), a *nasīb* convention, and because they are “smeared with scented oil,” an expensive product. With his skillful and

²⁶⁶ 1(ADhQ).13.12–16, *ibid.*, 151–53.

convincing speech, always an attribute of an accomplished tribesmen in the Arabian life-world, he gains mastery of these women, marked by their luxury goods. In battle, he defeats those who associate with lower-class women, slave girls (*imā'*). It is his inherent qualities, such as speech and strength, that determine his value, not material possessions. His mastery of the disturbing system of hierarchy mediated by exchange value is indicated by his verbal mastery of wealthy women, while cowardly men are themselves mastered by slave girls, tokens of exchange themselves.

Other poets condemn womanizing as well when it relates to low-status women. Iyās ibn Jundab leaves no doubt as to the status of the female consorts of his enemy, Ibn Najdah, whom he addresses here [53]:

You sing to women around the *ghuḍār* trees,
as if you were something they coo over,
they crack open *khazam*-tree dates, for they're black-skinned [apes (*fa-hunna sūdun*)],
split-lipped hags that sit around him.²⁶⁷

Like Sā'idah's invective above, this deals with intertribal insults; his enemy, Ibn Najdah, is from Fahm. It is the status of the women, however, and not their tribe that causes hostility. Ghaḍūb also seems to be from an enemy tribe,²⁶⁸ as is often the case in *nasībs* dealing with wealthy women.

Part of the anxiety surrounding women's status, and their role as bearers of high-status luxury products, is simply a result of their social role in pre-Islamic society. Any prisoner could be enslaved, but women were apparently more valuable as commodities in this sense, a value

²⁶⁷ 40(IJ).2.4–5, *ibid.*, 836.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1097.

that depended, moreover, on their social status. Poets dwell on details that signify status in these circumstances. ‘Abd al-Manāf ibn Rij’, eager for vengeance, exclaims that he will not accept any bloodwite: “I hurried my people forward, and payed no attention to a bloodwite of slave girls, or [camel mares] heavy [with young], swaying as they walk.”²⁶⁹ Here, slave women are more or less interchangeable with camels, the standard commodity for the discharge of bloodwite. In addition to this equation, poets emphasize the shift in status that takes place when women are taken prisoner, as when ‘Amr ibn Humayl composes [54]:

slain in exchange for slain, and we drove the women as our prisoners,
and we brought back the fat-humped, well-bred camels;
[the women] have become the submissive companions of slaves,
walking along separately in shackles.²⁷⁰

His enemy, a Khuzāī poet, in response to this, describes among other things his own tribes’ taking prisoner of Hudhalī women. They “would go about before stepping on the tails of fine dresses, in luxury; now they walk amidst the abodes in sandal-length robes.”²⁷¹

Just as, in seducing high-status women, male poetic speakers can assert their control over women as uncomfortable signifiers of economic or social hierarchy, so to in war they can imprison them and demonstrate their control over the social hierarchy their luxury purports to signify. While it is true that men are sometimes treated in the same way—only high-status prisoners counted for vengeance—such men were more often merely killed in battle, after which the speaker can no longer hurt them any further. The prestige of an enemy’s tribe or clan can however be further degraded by the degradation of the status of their women, or by

²⁶⁹ 22(‘AMRJ).2.2, *ibid.*, 677. See also 28(B’IKh).1.14, *ibid.*, 743.

²⁷⁰ 37(‘AHL).1.2–3, *ibid.*, 815.

²⁷¹ 37(S’AKhz).2.4, *ibid.*, 817.

considering them a “surplus” to the bloodwite equation. In ‘Amr ibn Humayl’s boast, there is a logic of accretion to the vengeance: the men are slain in retaliation, and then, superadded to this, women and camels are both taken as excess vengeance, and the status of the women is further downgraded to slavery. As such, the economy of raiding and vengeance forces women, unlike men, to bear an over-signifying social status within the tribal hierarchy. Poetry seizes on this over-signification.

We saw above that Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid, part of the hereditary tribal leadership, was particularly committed to a cohesive ideological vision of the tribe, rooted in lineage. An exchange between him and one Umm ‘Amr of Khuzā‘ah, a captive from an enemy tribe, further illustrates his commitment as well to using poetry to promote the tribal or regional ideology of martial virility. The circumstances of these texts are obscure. The *khavar* associated with the two poems only states that “when Sahn [of Hudhayl, Ma‘qil’s clan] raided Khuzā‘ah, they took Umm ‘Amr, the wife of Khidhām, as prisoner, naked, among the other women of the tribe.”²⁷² Umm ‘Amr’s verse indicates that she clearly understands the nature of the raiding economy and women’s fungible status within it [55]:

Hudhayl has driven me along shamefully and vilely,
and forced an excessive march, its captivity vile.
Perhaps riders of ours shall drive a lady of theirs along
while her vulva (*bādin shawāruhā*) is bare to the world—
[but] if the highlanders (*‘ulyā*) of Hudhayl avenged her
before Khuzā‘ah does [me], what excuse will they make for themselves?²⁷³

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 396.

²⁷³ 7(U‘AKhz).15.1–3, *ibid.*

Although she is addressing Ma‘qil, her captor, the fault lies with Khuzā‘ah’s men for failing to protect her. Hudhayl’s behavior is vile, but Khuzā‘ah’s would be worse if they cannot rescue or avenge her more swiftly than Hudhayl would rescue one of their women. Rather than represent her situation vis-à-vis Hudhayl, she posits a Hudhalī woman in a similar situation, in order to conjure another individual of similar value to herself, relationally, within the raiding economy. She is, in effect, taunting her absent tribe for their failure to retain face in this hierarchical economy of raiding, in which women function as surplus signifiers of status. Just as the female genitalia of the Nufathī woman, exposed through Sā‘idah’s invective, serves as a marker of her abject social status, so too here Umm ‘Amr evokes her own exposed body as a mark of disgrace not ultimately upon Ma‘qil, but upon Khuzā‘ah.

Ma‘qil’s response, in the same rhyme and meter as Umm ‘Amr’s poem, pitiless follows the same logic as her text. He does begin by addressing her own complaint about her present situation, but like her, he swiftly moves to the role they both are playing in the politics of intertribal status [56]:

I see Umm ‘Amr is angered by how she’s being driven along;

demeaning her and forcing her forward are nothing to us.

How many women before have I driven forward, against their will,

noble, wealthy women (*muna‘amatin*),

where the mountains’ tumbled rocks are “bare to the world” (*bādin ḥirāruhā*).²⁷⁴

If your riders come for us, O Umm ‘Amr,

they’ll find with us a brightly blazing war,

and strong men, glorious fighters from Hudhayl,

²⁷⁴ His expression, *bādin ḥirāruhā* is a riposte semi-quotation of Umm ‘Amr’s *bādin shawāruhā*.

pokers of [the fires of] war; no one worries they'll flee.²⁷⁵

The ultimate point of Ma'qil's text is not to address Umm 'Amr's situation, but to set up a dichotomy between Hudhayl and Khuzā'ah. Ma'qil does not emphasize his indifference to Umm 'Amr's plight as merely an expression of cruelty, but as an assertion of intertribal status. Umm 'Amr can only claim significance as a high-status individual, and by disregarding the significance of her rank, Ma'qil, in his own textual logic, affirms his own status, as the leader of a powerful tribe that routinely captures and enslaves women used to luxury (*muna'amah*). He is not (or, not merely) bullying a woman, but asserting the superiority of the men of Hudhayl to the men of Khuzā'ah, a rhetorical vector opened by her own poem. Ma'qil misses no opportunity to vaunt Hudhayl's tribal coherence, and Umm 'Amr's attack on Hudhayl by name gives him the opportunity to attribute the greater glory of his actions goes not only to himself as the tribal leader, or to his own kin family or clan, but to the tribe of Hudhayl as a whole over which he claims (and, he feels, demonstrates) leadership.

Having largely rejected the social role poetry plays among Najdī tribes mediating between various markers of hierarchical status, (in large part by failing to write tripartite praise poetry), Hudhayl falls back on a more egalitarian ideal of martial virility. This image, however, requires policing, and not only against the occasional Nufathī woman. To a large extent, it has always been the role of the *nasīb* in Arabic poetry to emphasize the speaker's virility by staging a steadfast departure from the beloved in the transition to the camel-description. Without the camel-description section, however, Hudhayl finds other settings for this dialogue of the genders. While Ma'qil's exchange with Umm 'Amr consists of texts from both a male and female poet, such actual exchanges between male and female speakers are

²⁷⁵ 7(MKHS).16.1-4, *ibid.*

much less frequent in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry than representations of dialogue between two personas in texts by male poets.

Several Hudhalī poets seem to have a hostile relationship with the women they address in the *nasīb*s of their poems, often, as we saw above, anticipating that the woman's next romantic liaison will be some weakling with whom the speaker compares favorably.²⁷⁶ Abū Dhū'ayb's elegy begins with him being reproached by a woman for his grief,²⁷⁷ and 'Amr Dhū l-Kalb's interlocutor is indifferent whether he lives or dies [57]:

Ghaziyyah made the announcement before departing,
and the cords of union became tattered and torn.
She went far off, her place distant,
beyond white-bearded, hateful [enemies (*ghurr al-sibāl*)].²⁷⁸
Ghaziyyah said to me when she saw me,
“Didn't you get killed in Banū Hilāl's territory?”
Wouldn't you like that (*a-sarraki dhālika*), if I got killed in Fahm's lands?
But are you going to inherit something from me, Ghaziyyah, if I get killed?²⁷⁹

A long boast follows, mostly dwelling on the speaker's combat skills. In pre-Islamic poetry, a somewhat antagonistic relationship with the beloved in the *nasīb* is not uncommon, often combined with keywords such as an implied or stated *lawm* (blame) or *'adh*l (reproach). This allows the speaker to boast of his virile virtues. Labīd in his *mu'allaqah* does not in its *nasīb* address the beloved, Nuwār, but after describing his camel mare, he does declare that [58]:

I fulfil all incumbent upon me, leaving off nothing, out of fear

²⁷⁶ 1(AdhQ).25.17, *ibid.*, 201. See also 12('ADhKL).1.14, *ibid.*, 578 and 12('ADhKL).2.7, *ibid.*, 574.

²⁷⁷ 1(AdhQ).1.1-3, *ibid.*, 4-5.

²⁷⁸ According to the commentary, enemies are said to have light-colored beards.

²⁷⁹ 12('ADhKL).1.1-4, *ibid.*, 565-66.

lest some blamer lay blame upon me for some affair or another.

Don't you know, Nawār, that I am he

who binds all ties together, or severs them?²⁸⁰

This declaration segues into the final section of the poem, a long boast on Labīd's prowess in arms, generosity with wine, and his fine horse. With Hudhayl, an excessively hostile or antagonistic relationship with a female speaker helps to introduce a more defensive boast. In other words, having few possessions and status-markers to boast of, the speaker sets a more strident tone from the outset by addressing some female interlocutor more harshly. Labīd boasts of his generosity with wine and his horse, while 'Amr Dhū l-Kalb has nothing but his weapons, and the entire boast turns on his combat abilities, specifically against Fahm, Ta'abbāṭa Sharran's tribe [59]:

ask for me, [and you're asking for] a white Mashrafi [blade],

that I keep at my side, perfectly polished, the strap round my chest,

and wide [arrow-heads], like spear-heads, their shafts wrapped tightly,

garbed [sc. fletched] with molted inner feathers,

and a red-brown, curved [shield] of bull-leather,

solid and notched from blades' [blows]—

and a gold-colored [bow], carved of *nab'* wood,

from the curved marrow of it, like a tortoise-shell bracelet.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ Labīd, *Dīwān*, 313, ll. 54–55.

²⁸¹ 12('ADhKL).1.15–18, *Ash'ār*, 568–69.

The reference to the *nab'*-wood bow in particular evokes the speaker in al-Dākhil ibn Ḥarām's text above who describes himself using the language of the impoverished hunter character from Najdī onager-hunt scenes.

Labīd is not specific about who might blame him, but whenever the gender of a blamer is specified by other poets, it is usually women who do the blaming, and the boast almost always relates to excessive spending. I have already mentioned above how Ḥājib ibn Ḥabīb describes a dispute with his wife over the expense of maintaining his horse. Other poets developed conventional defenses of excessive spending for wine. Ṭarafah, in his *mu'allaqah*, declares that there are three status-marking pursuits that make a noble man's life worth living: whiling away the hours with beautiful singing girls (not a practice to be disparaged, *contra* Abū Dhu'ayb above); fighting for a protected individual in need of succor; but the first thing he mentions is defying anyone by spending money on wine.

Among the [three] things are my disregard for reproachful women,

going to get a red wine that bubbles when mixed with water

(*wa-min-hunna sabqi l-'ādhilāti bi-sharbatin*

kumaytin matá mā tu'lá bi-l-mā'i tuzbidī)²⁸²

Al-Mutammim uses virtually the same expression, evidently alluding to the earlier Ṭarafah, stating that, "I went straight for the thirst-quenching wine, despite the reproaching women (*wa-la-qad sabaqtu l-'ādhilāti bi-sharbatin rayyā*)."²⁸³ Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmá paints an image of (reportedly) Ḥafṣ ibn Ḥudhayfah ibn Badr, in a praise *qaṣīdah*, as a generous man surrounding by women harassing him for his expenditure [60]:

²⁸² Ṭarafah no. 4, l. 57, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 57.

²⁸³ *Muf.* no. 9., l. 28, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 52.

and how rarely have I come across a noble-countenanced man (*wa-abyaḍa*),
his generosity overflowing, his two hands a pouring cloud
for those who come to him in need, his gifts unceasing
in the early morning, and saw him sitting at dawn,
with women all around him reproaching him (*ladayhi bi-l-ṣarīmi 'awādhiluh*).
Sometimes they vow themselves his ransom,²⁸⁴
and other times they lay blame upon him,
but he wearies [them], and they know not how to deceive him.
So leave off from the noble man, unstinting (*murazza'*),
determined to persevere in his actions.²⁸⁵

This passage, which lacks any significant verisimilitude, demonstrates the extent to which female reproachers were conventional in depictions of generosity. No matter what obsequiousness or duplicity they employ, these women cannot hold the praised individual back from his spending. This should not be understood as realistic depiction of social life, of course, but it does have both social and, as in *Ṭarafah* and *al-Mutammin*'s passages, structural meaning. Structurally, as a rhetorical device, female reproachers allow the speaker to boast of his nonchalant expenditure of wealth. More importantly, socially, passages as this indicate that the notion of virility was not only defined in relationship to certain attitudes and postures towards wealth, but that these attitudes and postures depend for their significance on gender relations. Conventional though they are, the idealized norms of poetry would have given meaning to everyday social life. In particular, such idealized gender relationships would have

²⁸⁴ *Yufaddīnahū*. That is, they praise him saying, "may I be your ransom!"

²⁸⁵ Zuhayr no. 15, ll. 30–33, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 93.

allowed the tribal elite to reconfigure excess spending, exceeding the bounds of egalitarian redistribution or reciprocity, as an aspect of masculine identity, reabsorbing an emergent tendency towards hierarchy into the egalitarian male ethos of tribal culture. In other words, if there were an increasing stratification in social mores based on increasing spending, by configuring elevated levels of spending as the generosity of a real man, poets facilitated the tribal leader's expenditures and thus increasing social hierarchy and stratification.

While we lack sufficient empirical data from the period to declare that such stratification was really taking place, the reading of the social function of poetry adumbrated here is likely not purely speculative, because regional variations do strongly obtain. Hudhayl's poets in particular put their fictional dialogues with women to the service of constructing a significantly different image of masculinity, one devoid of the conspicuous spending valorized by Najdī poets. Most representative of Hudhayl's tribal ideology in this regard is a poem by Abū Khirāsh already cited once above, a boast directed to a female interlocutor. Some elements of the poem's conceptual world are similar to that found throughout the peninsula: there is a confident expression of a *carpe diem* attitude in the face of remorseless fate, and a valorization of generosity and martial prowess. However, the emphasis on spending on such luxury products as horses, wine, singing girls, and the like—as is the case in Labīd, Ṭarafah, al-Mutammim and Zuhayr's poetry—is absent. On the contrary, with this Hudhalī poet, the female speaker enjoins luxury spending and desires status, while the male speaker renounces these [61]:

Umm al-Udaybir has known me to say,

“Give it to me [now], don't put away the meat!”

And if we don't find any provision tomorrow,

I'll bring you spoils of war, or else I'll make you fast (*nu'addiki bi-l-azmī*).

When she longs (*ḥannnat*) for vain things (*al-hawā*), her stomach (*ḥannat*) groans
like the inside of a camel [yearning for its home];
her heart knows no steadfastness.

No, by your good and decent father, you won't find [another man]
generous with wealth, nor patient with little [like myself],
nor valiant when the armored warriors are adorned,
at death's gates (*ghamarāt al-mawt*), in darkly-dyed red. 5

After I've proven myself (*ba'da balā'ī*)—may she go blind and not find her way home!
does she still want me to depart? Or will she be permitted to cuss me out?

I hang around with Hunger until he gets tired of me,
and leaves without spoiling (*lam yudnis*) my clothes or my body.

I take water as my evening soup, and then stop there,
while food looks so tasty to the spoiled little man (*al-muzallaj*).

I control the snake of my stomach—you know him—
and I give preference to your kin with my food,
out of fear of living demeaned and debased;
death is better than living like that. 10

She sees [in me] a man, worn away by hunger,
and goes circling around a flab-ball with flapping flanks,
fed with fresh milk, [as soft] as a tanned leather churning-skin,
whose bones you can't feel beneath his fat!

She says, if it weren't for you, I'd be married to a chief (*sayyid*)!

I'd have had a fine wedding (*uzaffu*), or born about on a stallion (*qarm*)!
 By my life, you were free to choose (*mullikti*) once, for a long while;
 shouldn't you be strutting about in embroidered finery by now?
 She came [as humble] as a donkey-castrater, unadorned
 with even a bauble or tortoise-shell bracelet over her tattooed [hands]. 15
 O, Fāṭimah, I outrace death as I advance
 and leave my opponent bleeding on the field of battle.
 And how many a race that puts [my opponent] to shame have I fought hard,
 either to settle a score of vengeance or to take some prize (*ghunm*).²⁸⁶
 And how many an overcast night of mid-winter have I traversed,
 when it had begun to rain, and it was silent, dark, wet;
 when the feet were wet, and roots twisted
 and turned underfoot like the torsos of black camels roped together;
 and how many a sandal, [torn] like a picked-apart quail carcass,
 have I tossed to one side at the end of the night, after all the dew or drizzle? 20
 when the quarrelsome have ceased to bicker with the thoughtful and clement,
 and the mountains seem like hills in the night—
 you'd think they were small, the eye wearing before them,
 even though they be lofty ranges where herds of wild goats dwell—
 but I guide my people through the gloomy night,
 and I fire [my bow] when someone asks who will.
 And many a charge of mounted riders have I repelled,

²⁸⁶ This is line 18 in the text, and the following line is line 17 which, however, seems to precede 19.

as if [they were] locust legs trying to climb to the top of a cliff.²⁸⁷

Although the speaker's avowal in the first two lines that all depends on martial valor and fate is not unusual, his threat to make his wife fast is uncommon. She should not, the speaker asserts, expect constant provision of food; that is *hawá*, a term with moralistic overtones, as it is one of the Quranic keywords used to define the thoughtless self-absorption of polytheists neglecting God for minor deities. In lines 4 through 6, however, he shifts to a focus on himself. Lack of food serves as a pretext for expanding on his skills in combat and his generosity. The terms that he uses to describe his ability to combat hunger, like the word *hawá*, are moralistic. Hunger leaves no *danas* (filth, defilement) on his clothes or body (l. 7). The term *danas* can refer to any kind of filth that might soil a garment, perhaps invoking the image of food as converted into excrement, but it also denotes the sully of honor. Likewise, obsession with hunger can lead you to *raghm* (abasement) and *dhillah* (abjectness, humiliation); it is better to be dead (l. 10).

In contrast to him, the speaker's wife desires a fat man (ll. 11–12). Fat here is associated, in the wife's eyes, with a number of images denoting social status: a fine wedding, a horse, expensive clothes, and titles like *sayyid* (ll. 13–14). Abū Khirāsh is in effect the mirror image of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, cited above comparing his own powerful tribe to a weak one afflicted by hunger, or to Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim, who despises "other tribes" who have no horses. The speaker concludes the poem by contrasting the fat, high-status man with his own masculine anti-equestrian valor: he fights on foot, races on foot,²⁸⁸ and crosses the desert on foot, despite the treacherous ground, and even without sandals (ll. 16–20). Yet with all this, he still defeats

²⁸⁷ 65(AKhQ).3.1–24, *ibid.*, 1198–1204.

²⁸⁸ The term for this is *shawṭ*, which can refer to running afoot or on horseback. Hell also translates it as "Wettrennen": Hell, *Neue Hudāiliten-Diwane*, 2:28.

mounted warriors in combat (l. 24). The structure of the poem, in short, is identical to any other Erinnerungsqāṣide (*nasīb* + boastful remembrance), but the attitude towards the female addressee is far more antagonistic than in other poets of other tribes, and the martial ideology is significantly different. The speaker disdains markers of status, hierarchy, and conspicuous expenditure, and constructs his own image of masculinity on a sort of ascetic stoicism, despising corporal concerns in favor of the ultimate values of honor, bravery and generosity.

That this construction takes place by means of a gendered dialogue is consistent with the other poets of Hudhayl cited, for all of whom ambivalence towards women is connected to ambivalence towards the material status markers women uniquely consume, make use of, and display. Dominance of women, either indirectly through seductive speech or directly through capturing women who represent an enemy tribe's "surplus" value of honor and status, is connected throughout Hudhayl's poetry with an ideology of virility that, unlike Najdī poets (where the men boast to women of *their* expenditures) eschews conspicuous male displays of material status markers. Abū Khirāsh literally embodies this form of dominant masculinity, exercising verbal control over his wife as he exercises control over his hunger, leaving his lean figure a mute symbol, to which he gives voice, of his generosity and his power in combat.

2.4.5. The Death of the Warrior Aristocrat

Najdī poetry not only comprehends certain subjects—wine, weaponry, and horses for example—that receive much less attention in Hudhayl's poetry, but the two cultural regions of Najd and Ḥijāz promoted the development of different poetics based on local socio-cultural conditions. One of the central social functions of poetry in Najd was to negotiate between egalitarian tribal values on the one hand and on the other, more hierarchical configurations

(such as powerful tribal leaders) rooted in the display and deployment of status-marking objects imported from Rome and Persia. The relationships of Najdī tribes with the great sedentary empires of Byzantium and Sasanian Iran allowed these developments, so that, for example, more emphasis is given to the individual tribal leader by the tripartite *qaṣīdah*. Tribes of the Ḥijāz certainly had significant sedentary connections, but neither Mecca nor the collapsed state of Ḥimyar in Yemen could offer the same patronage as Rome. Hudhayl's poetics accordingly revolve around a more egalitarian, decentralized form of tribalism. Praise poetry is either written for cohorts rather than individual leaders, or for companions, not superiors, and poets make use of early Najdī poetic devices, originally used to describe hunting and riding animals, in order to articulate an anti-equestrian form of virile militarism. Rather than using fictional female speakers as foils to their own conspicuous consumption (depicted as generosity), Hudhalī poets use dialogues with women as a jumping off point for magnifying their anti-equestrian self-image of ascetic masculinity.

To speak somewhat reductively, if the default speaker in Najdī poetics is a “warrior aristocrat,” with an equipage of horse, armor, weaponry and a set of behavioral norms based on patterns of deference, Hudhayl's default speaker has been characterized as a “warrior poet,” lending himself to folk stereotyping as the quasi-mythical *ṣu'lūk* figure. In one regard, the warrior aristocrat does make an appearance in Hudhalī elegies. Some of Hudhayl's elegies, the most famous of which is Abū Dhu'ayb's *Mufaḍḍaliyyah* no. 126, possess a unique structure. After an introduction, usually a sort of *nasīb*, formulae regarding fate's omnipotence are used to introduce episodes featuring animals that are killed. As elsewhere, Hudhayl makes use of a generic convention from Najdī poetics—the “self-standing simile” in which a camel mare is compared at length to an ostrich, onager or oryx, usually fleeing a hunter—for their own

purposes, here elegiac. This particular form of elegy will be considered more carefully in chapter 4. More remarkable even than the use of onager and oryx hunting scenes, is the implicit or direct juxtaposition of such animals slain by fate with heavily-armored, mounted warriors.

Abū Kabīr had already used this technique to describe an onager, in an elegy describing fate's overwhelming power.²⁸⁹ The technique was adapted and expanded later by Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah and Abū Dhu'ayb, who introduce the death of horse-mounted, armored warriors as an episode possibility. As we have seen above, in this connection al-Aṣma'ī criticized Abū Dhu'ayb's horse describing ability. Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah comes in for the same criticism in the following passage, evidently the first such passage, chronologically, in the Hudhalī corpus [62]:

Fate's blows do not stay for

a massive tribe, spread over a vast area, strong-chested,

40

noble-faced (*bīḍu l-wujūh*) sitting in council, a grove of reeds

surrounding them, shuddering like taught well-ropes,

of close lineage, mighty all of them;

to injure the likes of them—a thing spurned, and feared!

If any pasture is avoided (*tuḥūmiya*), they [daringly] pasture there,

and if anyone comes to warn them, they fret not.

Their great resolve is steadfast in combat;

each one avoided like a mangy, pitch-covered [camel].

Strong and bold, each helps whoever needs protection

and a fighter's fierceness blazes in the fray, and he rages.

45

²⁸⁹ 63(AKJ)4.4–15, *ibid.*, 1090–93.

Thus they were (*baynā humū yawman kadhālika*), when one day an iron-clad
 host, gathered from all corners, alarmed them;
 it was protected by a well-armed, helmeted [vanguard (*dhātu qawānisin*)],
 a turbulent mass whom no one would dare [attempt] despoiling;
 from every mountain pass comes
 a charging high-headed steed, or a quick-pacing, thick-legged stallion—
 well-muscled, with thick, curved ribs
 and a long back (*matnun ... salhabū*), [thin] as a saddle strap,
 his hooves striking the stony ground
 as though his pasterns were set with solid rock—
 [his neck] shudders with the reins as if he
 were the trimmed trunk of a palm, when [its pruner] ascends the palm.
 Thus the enemy force came forward, and their fears came true;
 from every pass, raiders, undeniably,
 their numbers uncountable, indescribable,
 companies with whole tribes in them swelling their ranks.
 Suddenly (*wa-idhā*) someone comes with [news] that silences them,
 and says (*fā-yaqūlu*), “I’ve seen a raging [horde]: mount!”
 They fly to all of their swift, milk-fed,
 short-haired [horses], led by a long-bodied chestnut charger,
 and they’re bestrewn with dust that rises in clouds,
 some thick in the air, some narrow and long.
 Then the two sides clash, and spears are drawn

50

55

on which no smith fell short working, and mounting [the heads firmly],
 [spears] dark brown and trembling, not marred
 by any shortness,
 neither weak in the base nor needing [extra] sinew [in the head],
 fine Khaṭṭī lances, with tapered, sharpened edges,
 blazing like a comet when you raise them,
 made firm with the straightening-tool (*al-thiqāf*),
 adorned with a pointed “floppy ear” [spear-head (*akhdhá*)]
 like the inner-feather of an eagle, 60
 wobbling soft in the hand, its spine joggling
 like a fox does speeding down its path—
 then [the raiders] wiped them all out when it came to swords,
 and disgraced (*abrazū*) all the saffron-dyed ladies,
 who got dragged and taken as spoils,
 and they chased the last of them down, while they drove off
 the massive camel herds as the south wind shoves a rain cloud along.²⁹⁰

The passage is all but unique in Arabic poetry.²⁹¹ There is no direct evidence in the poem indicating the purpose of this description, but there are two likely possible readings. In one, the people raided are being elegized, and are thus presumably members of Hudhayl, the poet’s tribe. Two points argue in favor of this: Abū Dhu’ayb’s elegy for his sons contains a similar scene, while an additional scene in another of Sā’idah’s poems names the place (May’at) where

²⁹⁰ 64(SJK).1.40–63, *ibid.*, 1114–1121.

²⁹¹ An antecedent is probably ‘Amr ibn Qamī’ah no. 6, l. 11: ‘Amr ibn Qamī’ah, *The Poems of ‘Amr Son of Qamī’ah*, 32 = *Dīwān*, ed. al-Ṣayrafī, 66, discussed below.

the slaughter took place, and specifically points out that the men killed were neither mean nor base (*lā wakhshin wa-lā qazamī*).²⁹² Is this the language of mourning? A second way of reading the text would be that it is merely a lament on the nature of fate generally. In favor of this reading, no clear names are given of the deceased, while in other elegies by both Sā'idah and Abū Dhu'ayb, the deceased are named, addressed and clearly lamented. It is also strange to memorialize the deceased by recounting their military defeat in such detail.

As mentioned above with reference to Kānif al-Fahmī's praise for Hudhayl, the tribal leaders form an apparently homogenous cohort (ll. 40–42), rather than a single leader with a group of elite warriors for example. Their credentials are established by their ability to pasture anywhere, fight well in battle, and come to the succor of the weak (ll. 43–45). These are the traditional characteristics of the warrior aristocracy, as we have seen articulated by Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim, for example. Likewise, they possess horses, and milk-fed ones as well (l. 55).²⁹³ The bulk of the passage is given over to establishing, or attempting to establish, narrative tension. All of these characteristics are mentioned in anticipation of the coming clash with a seemingly incontestable force. The coming warriors, however, are not really meant to be illustrative of another identifiable social group, a particular tribe, say; rather, the text is attempting to present the ultimate human power in the face of fate. In doing so, it draws on the language of traditional poetic boasts as seen above. Yet whereas the invocation of fate and the ultimate impossibility of defying death are often invoked as a foil to the poet's boast about his fearlessness in combat and recklessness with his wealth, as in Ṭarafah's case,²⁹⁴ here the

²⁹² 64(SJK).2.28, *ibid.*, 1131.

²⁹³ For milk-fed horses, see *Muf.* nos. 79, l. 3 and 124, l. 11, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 297, 413.

²⁹⁴ He speaks of *al-dahr* (l. 66), like al-Sā'idah, and *al-maniyyah* l. 56, more or less an equivalent term (cf. Abū Dhu'ayb no. 1, l. 8).

metaphysical argument is inverted: no matter what weaponry and horseflesh they can boast of, no warrior is immune from fate.

Sā'idah attempts to dramatize the predicament of these mounted warrior aristocrats with two narrative devices. In the first, what had been a static image from ll. 40–45 suddenly becomes a temporal flow in l. 45. Here he uses two adverbial expressions, *baynā* (“meanwhile”) and *yawman* (“one day”). This narrative structure echoes that of the onager episode, where a static description of spring gives way to a narrative of the onagers’ migration to a watering hole and subsequent encounter with a hunter. As Thomas Bauer has demonstrated, poets struggled to find a way to articulate this transition.²⁹⁵ So too with al-Sā'idah. The horses of the enemy are described from ll. 45 to 53, to the point where l. 52 mentions the fear evoked in the first group by the enemy raid. Yet in l. 54, new adverbial markers (*idhā*) and conjunctions (*fa-*) are used to bring on scene a warner announcing the arrival of the enemy. It is as if the enemy arrive twice. The narrative continues apace, and in ll. 55 and 56, the warrior aristocrats mount, and prepare for battle, clashing with the enemy in l. 57. The narrative abates for a description of (ll. 59–61) of the spears used for the horse-mounted portion of the battle, before concluding (ll. 62–63) with the foot-combat in which swords were used, and the annihilation of the tribe and their utter debasement, their women imprisoned and camels captured. The weapon descriptions mirror the descriptions of a hunter’s weapon in onager scenes,²⁹⁶ and the obliteration of the tribe’s warriors the slaughter of multiple onagers in Hudhay’s onager episodes.

²⁹⁵ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:118.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:131–45.

If the narrative structure and moral of the passage mirrors onager episodes, the vocabulary of horse description mirrors that used in other poets in boasts of hunting, combat and wealth. We have already seen that the topic of milk-fed horses echoes well-known Najdī poets such as the Tamīmī ‘Alqamah and others,²⁹⁷ while the image of equestrian warriors pasturing wherever they will is found in the likes of Bishr ibn Abū Khāzim of Asad. We can add as well, that the enemy come wearing *qawānis* (l. 47), which as we have seen is part of the stock apparel for al-Muraqqish al-Akbar of Qays ibn Tha‘labah in his boasts, and in combat scenes of other poets. Yet the physical description of the horses themselves is of uncertain quality. Arabic grammar allows the horses of the enemy to be described in the singular, allowing ll. 48–51 to stand out as a kind of set piece, inventory-like horse description such as is usually found in boasts, as in Imru’ al-Qays’s *mu‘allaqah* for example.²⁹⁸

The first term Sā‘idah uses, *‘abl al-juzārah* (thick-legged), is said by Abū ‘Ubaydah in his lexicographical work on horses to be an image that nomadic Arabs approved of, providing citations of similar expressions by al-A‘shá and Imru’ al-Qays.²⁹⁹ Line 49 presents problems, however. The horse is said to be well-muscled (*khāzī l-baḍī*), but also to have a long back (*matnun salhabū*) and thick, curved ribs (*zawāfiru ‘ablatun ‘ūjun*). The poet uses the word *‘ablah* a second time, this time in the feminine. Horses are generally said, when the word *matn* is used of their backs, to have hard backs. Imru’ al-Qays compares his horse’s back to the stone of a pestle (*madāka ‘arūsin aw ṣalāyata ḥanḏalī*),³⁰⁰ and ‘Alqamah his to a smooth hill (*al-haḍbati l-*

²⁹⁷ *Muf.* no. 120, l. 55, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 404.

²⁹⁸ Especially ll. 59–61.

²⁹⁹ Ma‘mar ibn al-Muthanná Abū ‘Ubaydah, *Kitāb al-Khayl*, ed. Fritz Kremkow (Hyderabad: Maṭba‘at Dā‘irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmāniyyah, 1939), 75, 80, 90; the expression is quoted approvingly in discussion of a different term at 131.

³⁰⁰ *Mu‘allaqah*, l. 56, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 149.

khalqā).³⁰¹ Sā'idah's appears to be soft, although the worn leather strap is perhaps to be taken as an indication of smoothness. Moreover, according to the commentary, experts considered a long back (*salhab*) to be a fault.³⁰² Abū 'Ubaydah also approvingly quotes a description of a horse with a moderately-length back (*quṣayru l-zahr*).³⁰³ If overall horse length was prized, this would seem to be its length as it extended its legs in running,³⁰⁴ not its absolute length. Nevertheless, the commentary could be wrong that *salhab* is an adjective to the *matn*; it could be a predicate of the horse itself. The neck description, in which the neck is compared to a palm tree trunk stripped of its branches, mirrors that of several other poets.³⁰⁵

If it is difficult to judge whether we and the commentary are accurately grasping the aesthetic merit of Sā'idah's horse description, what is clear is that he has appropriated the inventory-style description, its vocabulary and structure, from other poets' boasts, and inserted it into his narrative of warriors unable to stave off death, which is structured similarly in its narrative to an onager episode. It is a piece of incredibly daring innovation, to judge by the extant poetry. His audience would almost certainly have recognized all of this; the stereotyped ideal horse seen in descriptions of the warrior aristocrat are here transformed into pawns tossed about by fate like so many hunted animals.

2.5. Conclusions

As we will see in chapter 4, this metaphysical Copernican revolution, in which the equestrian warrior aristocrat no longer boasts in the face of fate but carries out its dictates, in

³⁰¹ *Kitāb al-Khayl*, 85.

³⁰² *Ash'ār*, 1116.

³⁰³ *Kitāb al-Khayl*, 84.

³⁰⁴ See Lane, s.v. "*salhab*."

³⁰⁵ *Kitāb al-Khayl*, 69.

some ways anticipates the spiritual revolution of Islam. A number of other elements of Hudhayl's self-image changed with the rise of Islam, although these are difficult to map out very completely because of the paucity of poetry from the generation following the *mukhaḍramūm* (generation IV, approximately years 625–75, in Hell's schema, expanded upon the appendix). Interestingly, as already mentioned above, the conquest-era 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Tha'lab refers to the same rather diffuse leadership seen in other poets discussed in this chapter. It is perhaps, though, not very surprising to find little evidence of a strong leadership cadre among Hudhayl, given the subordination of tribal leaders to early Islamic institutions such as the *dīwān*, or military pay register, and given the apparent dispersion of the tribe into several newly conquered areas. Indeed, "Hudhayl" as such is almost never referred to in the later poets with the same frequency that we saw among Ma'qil ibn Khālid and Abū Jundab. A rare example is Abū l-'Iyāl, in a *mu'arāḍah* with another tribesman, composed in Egypt [63]:

[We are] two brothers from two branches of Hudhayl that have come west,
like a lofty mountain whose roots stretched far below the ground.]³⁰⁶

As Joseph Hell has observed, the poets from the generation in which Islam emerged, the *mukhaḍramūn*, virtually ignored Islam,³⁰⁷ and several branches of Hudhayl, but especially Liḥyān, were strongly connected to opposition to Islam until after the conquest of Mecca.³⁰⁸ Later poets, such as Mulayḥ ibn al-Ḥakam (*fl.* post-650, according to Hell), revised their tribal allegiance, connecting themselves to more distant ancestors, such as Khindif. This allows him to vaunt, in the first person plural, his people's contributions to Islam [64]:

It was we who struck with our swords

³⁰⁶ 8(A'IKh).2.4, *al-Ash'ār*, 411.

³⁰⁷ Hell, "Der Islam und die Hudāilitendichtungen," 89–92.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 83–84

during the struggle for the true faith (*yawma yultamasu l-hudá*)
 with the Prophet blessedly ordained [by God (*al-nabiyyi l-muwaffaqī*)];
 we struck with them the heads of all those outraging (*jā'ir*)
 the religion, the misguided and arrogant,
 with a blow that bought the brain from the skull,
 like a rabbit [coming out of its hole] when it appeared in its socket,
 with the blow whose force took the head clean off,
 wielding fine-edged swords with [glittering] damask.
 All of the tribes (*al-qabā'il*) knew of this,
 as well as all of the prisoners we released and freed.
 If I vaunt, I reach the utmost reach of all glory,
 but even speaking with brevity, I reach a lofty rank, my words still truthful.
 If I ever vaunt Khindif, I find no stake in them
 on the day the wager's placed;³⁰⁹
 they are the ears, eyes, the whole head
 by which I keep the infidels (*al-kuffār*) from speaking.³¹⁰

Here we see the speaker glorying in association with the Prophet, and employing the full terminology of Islamic discourse, with terms like “right guidance” (*al-hudá*) and “infidels” (*al-kuffār*).

³⁰⁹ *Wa-in aftakhir yawman bi-Khindifa lā ajid * la-hā khaṭaran yawma l-rihāni l-musabbaqī*. I am at a loss regarding this line; I suspect it is corrupt because of the repetition of *wa-in aftakhir*. If this were replaced by a verb connoting something negative, we would have, “if ever I once [do anything negative] with regard to Khindif, may I find no wager, etc.” If we read the *lā*, somewhat improbably, as superfluous (*zā'idah*), the meaning would make somewhat more sense as well.

³¹⁰ 62(MḤQ).1.55–62, *Ash'ār*, 1005. See also the same poet, 62(MḤQ).9.87–88, and Hell, “Der Islam und die Hudāilitendichtungen,” 88, 92–93, on sudden use of Islamic language in the corpus.

Also with the emergence of Islam, we find Umayyad-era Hudhalī poets making use of the tripartite *qaṣīdah* for praise poems for political leaders under the new dispensation. This is the case, for example, with Abū Ṣakhr, who composed several poems in praise of an obscure member of the Umayyad family, Abū Khālid ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abd Allāh. One is tripartite. In keeping with Hudhayl’s tendency to compose longer *nasīb*s, Abū Ṣakhr’s tripartite *qaṣīdah* features a 26-line *nasīb*, with a brief three-line *raḥīl*, which allows a transition to the 22-line praise section [65]:

Away from Umm ‘Amr, and from Ḥammād, however dear she be,
both wishes and riding animals are sending us into the distance,
when their reins have been held tight for a month,
passing the peaks of mountain sides, and cliffs,
they and the men driving them along at a quick pace,
now together, now apart, now in pairs or one-by-one, to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz,
betaking themselves to the generosity of the ‘Īṣī, drawing near
like qaṭā birds come to the remnants of water, after the camels and men.³¹¹

Such developments indicate that during the Umayyad period, dominated as it was by tripartite praise *qaṣīdah*s, the unique stylistic features of Hudhayl were absorbed into the broader literary developments of the age. The egalitarian praise poem distinctive of Hudhayl, beginning with a boast introduced by the *wāw al-rubbah* or *wa-la-qad* inventorying-formula, is no longer in evidence in Umayyad-period texts—nor are the constellation of features of their *ṣu’lūk*-like tribal ideology of martial virility (unless some of the extant texts were composed during this period and then attributed to earlier poets). Renate Jacobi has noticed that even

³¹¹ 61(AṢ).7.27–30, *ibid.*, 942.

the *mukhaḍram* Abū Dhu'ayb, when the beloved chastises him as he lies sprawled out drunk, uses stylistics associated with boasting but “in no way appears as the ‘bedouin hero.’”³¹²

Indeed, with stylistic shifts in the Umayyad period largely defined by the absence of previous concerns and motifs and an increasing uniformity among Arabic poets, attitudes towards women by male poets offer something of an index to changes in the social function of poetry. As seen in the *nasīb* cited above of Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah, the beloved although described physically is not necessarily described mimetically. During the Umayyad period, an emphasis on a more mimetic physicality as well as a complementary emphasis on moral attributes emerged. Mulayḥ ibn al-Ḥakam again provides an excellent example in an *urjūzah*, a piece written in *rajaz* (also a stylistic choice more commonly found amongst Umayyad poets) [66]:

[Recall] when you were in resplendent youth's first bloom,
in the days with Laylá; [she was] the most beautiful of noble women,
wearing a thin veil whose folds cascaded
over long hair, its plaits perpetually intertwining,
sleeping long through the summer on fine cushions (*namāriq*),
[her posterior as full] shuddering, two-toned sand-dune (*al-abāriq*),³¹³
[with the scent] of lavender dew, [and the sound] of a tall 'Ishriq tree,
heavy-thighed (*hirkawlah*), she's not one of the scrappy girls,
nor ungracious (*kubbunnāt*) or empty headed,
a woman everyone knows (*al-'arīfāt*), no inveterate flirt (*al-ma'āniqī*).³¹⁴

³¹² Jacobi, “Die Anfänge der arabischen Ġazalpoesie,” 225.

³¹³ *Abraq* normally refers either to a rope of two colors, or a place with both sand, rock and small stones. It seems here that the meaning is the former, in the sense that a sand dune's ridge is usually two different tones, one lighter where the sun strikes it and the other shaded.

³¹⁴ 62(MḤQ).18–27, *Ash'ār*, 1054.

In addition to citing texts such as al-A‘shá’s *mu‘allaqah* with words like *hirkawlah* and the ‘*ishriq* tree,³¹⁵ the poet uses unusual (perhaps nonsense) words to fit the novel meter, such as *kubunnāt*, a feature also found in other Umayyad *rajaz*-poets like al-‘Ajjāj (d. 90/715).³¹⁶ In recollecting Laylá, the speaker evokes reclining on fine cushions (*namāriq*), a term found in Quran 88:15. In short, the Islamic period brought not only shifts in the ways that women were depicted, but shifts in the modes of intertextuality used in those depictions. The “Hudhalī” features, such as extensive comparison of the beloved’s mouth to mixed honey and wine, have been abbreviated. Just as Hudhalī poets had once played with other tribe’ images of rule with a detachment and even irony rooted in their distinctive regional identity, they now adopted stylistic devices deployed across the landscape of the new Islamic culture, but this time participating in the cultivation of a trans-tribal, Islamic identity.

³¹⁵ Al-A‘shá no. 6, ll. 4, 12, *Dīwān A‘shá al-Kabīr Maymūn ibn Qays*, ed. Ḥusayn, 55. See also *Zwei Gedichte von al-‘Aššá*, ed. and trans. Rudolf Eugen Geyer, vol. 2, *Waddi‘ Huraiata* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1919), 57 ff. for generous intertextual citations related to al-A‘shá’s lines.

³¹⁶ For al-‘Ajjāj, see Manfred Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Rağazpoesie: Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966), 29–37.

Chapter 3: Representations of Tribal Geography: Seasonal Rains, Migration and Trade Patterns

3.1. Introduction

Although largely nomadic, the tribes of the Arabian peninsula just before the rise of Islam were by no means culturally uniform or purely egalitarian.¹ Tribal identity was based as much on political exigency as genealogy, and we have accordingly seen (in chapters 1 and 2) that among tribes definite hierarchical relationships obtained. This is manifest not only in payments or taxes, signs of subordination only occasionally referred to, but also in the image of rule that the tribal warrior aristocrats projected in poetic texts. Following Christian Robin's division on inscriptional grounds of the peninsula into two pre-Islamic nomadic cultural groups, tribal Arabia can be divided into Ma'add in the center and north-west of the peninsula and Muḍar in the west (the southern Yemeni and Omani cultures were largely sedentary and agricultural).² Ma'add corresponds roughly to the "Najdī" tribes of the central peninsula, more closely associated with the sub-Sasanian court of the Arab Naṣrid dynasty at al-Ḥīrah, and Muḍar to the Ḥijāzī tribes such as Hudhayl, more closely associated, broadly speaking, with Byzantium and Yemen. Certain images of rule (wine ritual, equestrian values, and elevated material culture), and a good deal of pre-Islamic poetics, were developed among the network of Najdī tribes in the late 5th and early 6th centuries CE, only later adopted in the latter half of

¹ This is often said in secondary literature to be the case, but such was the view of non-Arabs. Hoyland, for example, quotes Assyrian, Greek and Latin sources in support of the generalization that nomadic Arab society lacked stratification or much division of labor. See Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 117 ff. The poetry offers a more nuanced picture, and if we had fuller access to archaeological data from Saudi Arabia, we would no doubt find material evidence for what also occurred amongst tribal Germanic populations in Europe between the 1st and 5th centuries as they interacted with the Roman empire: an increase in material wealth, social stratification, and political sophistication. See Peter Heather, P. J. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire a New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 46–100.

² Robin, "Les Arabes de Ḥimyar."

the sixth century by Ḥijāzī tribes, with the decline of the Yemeni kingdom of Ḥimyar and its associated tribal confederation of Kinda which had heretofore dominated the Ḥijāz.

The image of rule amongst Hudhayl's tribal elite was seen to reflect a subordinate position viz-a-viz other tribes, and to reflect its distance from major centers of urban power in Palestine, Yemen or Iraq. Likewise, Hudhayl's sense of geography reflects a particular Ḥijāzī regionalism which stands in sharp contrast to Najdī tribes. In addition to the projection of cultural authority from Byzantium or Persia, the ecology of the Arabian peninsula also played a role in shaping nomadic regional sensibility. Rainfall patterns and topography need to be taken into account in attempting to understand Hudhayl's geographical imagination, as these were the basis for their migrational life, through which their Ḥijāzī regionalism was constructed. In addition to political differences, then, the differing ecological bases of nomadic life in Najd actually produced different poetics.

Ḥijāzī regionalism naturally evolved over time, but it is noteworthy that it does in many ways parallel geographical attitudes expressed by early Muslims, Ḥijāzīs themselves, despite the apparent lack of interaction between the Prophet's tribe of Quraysh and Hudhayl. With the early Islamic conquests, in which Hudhayl fully participated, their poetry accordingly registers a dramatic shift in geographical sensibility.

3.2. On Tribal Geography

An Arabic tribe would, in all likelihood, not have conceived of their place in the world visually, cartographically, or in terms of written description. Rather, pre- and early-Islamic Arabic poetry testifies to a certain phenomenological ecology with temporal, spatial and social aspects. Temporally, the tribe's migration would have been based on annual cycles established

by seasonal rains. These rains would have corresponded to celestial phenomena, the *anwā'* (rain-stars), as well as to the appearance of certain plants in their seasons, and to the migrations of desert fauna such as onagers, oryx, ibex, and ostrich. Spatially, migration was the chief activity by which the landscape became visible and was understood, a landscape described firstly in terms of elevation, as certain times of year were spent at higher altitudes, and secondly in relation to rain, as fine sand, gravel, or a non-porous rock bed meant different watering possibilities for the herd animals in different seasons. Socially, a tribe would have competed for territory with neighboring tribes. They would have dealt more peacefully with neighboring tribes during seasonal markets and during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, or perhaps other local shrines.

The phenomenological aspect of this vernacular geography bears emphasizing. By phenomenological I mean, along with Yi-Fu Tuan, that “geography mirrors man.” Phenomenological geography “suspends . . . the presuppositions and method of official science in order to describe the world of intentionality and meaning.”³ As he points out, the concerns of the phenomenological tradition, seemingly more concerned with “the nature of experience and with the meaning of being human,”⁴ may seem to have little to offer a geographer. A consideration of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s observations on the “spatiality of one’s own body”⁵ should illuminate the basic insight phenomenology possesses for geography, however.

Merleau-Ponty distinguishes between “bodily space” and “external space,” for which he uses several other pairs of expressions, such as “oriented space” and “objective space.” We

³ Yi-Fu Tuan, “Geography, Phenomenology, and the Study of Human Nature,” *Canadian Geographer* 15, no. 3 (September 1971): 181.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge, 2002), 112–170.

do not express our sense of the relation of our hand to our mouth, for example, in centimeters, but through the task or intention by which we move our hand:

If I stand holding my pipe in my closed hand, the position of my hand is not determined discursively by the angle which it makes with my forearm, and my forearm with my upper arm, and my upper arm with my trunk. I know indubitably where my pipe is, and thereby I know where my hand and my body are, as primitive man in the desert is always able to take his bearings immediately without having to cast his mind back, and add up distances covered and deviations made since setting off.⁶

His choice of “primitive man,” intended, like Picasso’s masks and Levi-Strauss’s “cold societies,” to ennoble the primitive man by the comparison rather than demean, is felicitous for our purposes, although the comparison of pipe smoking to desert travel may be overly dramatic.

All apparently objective, or external orientation is thus, for Merleau-Ponty, oriented primordially through our bodies. The planet earth, which we cannot represent to ourselves directly anyway, does not have a top and a bottom. It has an axis of rotation of course, but it is through our bodies that we understand ourselves as visually and physically oriented towards it, perhaps celestially, or cartographically if we are accustomed by maps to think of north as “up” and south as “down.” We feel “disoriented” under different stars (if we ever oriented ourselves towards them in the first place), or if we see a map with north on the bottom. Whatever the case may be, our sense of direction receives its primary orientation from our bodies. The world has a top and a bottom, and symmetry, because we do, but “[s]tripped of this

⁶ Ibid., 115.

anthropological association, the word *on* is indistinguishable from the word ‘under’ or the word ‘beside’ . . . homogeneous space can convey the meaning of oriented space only because it is from the latter that it has received its meaning.”⁷

To return then, to the “primitive man” of the desert; to speak of the temporal, spacial and social categories by which Arab tribes understood their geography is useful for analysis, but these are intersecting, overlapping and interpenetrating categories. Cardinal directions were not abstract categories in pre-Islamic tribal geography. *Al-shamāl* means “north” in contemporary Arabic, but the north wind (*al-shamāl*), is almost invariably mentioned in early poetry in conjunction with winter, which in turn is either associated with cold rains bringing abundant pasture, or more often with poor rains⁸ requiring a tribal leader’s generosity.⁹ Hudhayl uses the terms, “Syrian” (*Shāmī*) and “Yemeni” (*Yamanī*), socio-geographical entities distinct from them, to denote “north” and “south.” A prominent wadi in Hudhalī territory, Marr Ḥahrān, had two branches, a northern, or “Syrian,” branch (*al-Nakhlah al-Shāmiyyah*)¹⁰ and a southern, or “Yemeni,” branch (*al-Nakhlah al-Yamāniyyah*).¹¹ Likewise, the southernmost portion of Hudhayl was known as “*al-Yamānūn*,” that is, as “the Yemenis,”¹² although they were only so in relation to Hudhayl itself. Likewise, time was not a matter of days and minutes. In addition to the migrational seasons, time would also have been divided socially into sacred and profane months, during which latter combat was permitted; one would

⁷ *Ibid.*, 116–117.

⁸ 1(ADhQ).4.11, 1(ADhQ).9.16, *Ash‘ār*, 68, 116.

⁹ 65(AKhQ).9.5, *ibid.*, 1222.

¹⁰ 3(ṢGhKh).9.2, *ibid.*, 280.

¹¹ 26(ABṢ).1.1, *ibid.*, 725; *EI*², s.v. “Ḥijḏāz”; al-Liḥyānī, *Banū Hudhayl*, 83. The northern and southern walls of the Kaaba are also called *Shāmī* and *Yamanī* respectively. Cf. Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Azraqī, *Akḥbār Makkah wa-mā jā’a fī-hi min al-āthār*, ed. ‘Abd al-Malik ibn ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Duḥayshah (Mecca: Maktabat al-Asadī, 2003), 1:469 ff.; 2:911 ff. Likewise, Dhū al-Khalāṣah, the idol seven days march south of Mecca, was known as *al-Ka’bah al-Yamāniyyah*, in contrast to the *Ka’bah al-Shāmiyyah* in Mecca. Cf. T. Fahd, “Dhū al-Khalāṣa” in *EI*², citing Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*.

¹² 30(AḤQ/YS).1, *Ash‘ār*, 769.

expect that these divisions would correspond in some way to the seasonal migrations. When a Hudhalī poet speaks of a time of year or a cardinal direction, the context of the poetic statement must be, as carefully as possible, elucidated. This is not always easy.¹³

Tuan articulates several intuitive structures governing what could be called “oriented” or “pre-objective” geography. Three are probably relevant for discussing tribal geography: symmetry, ethnocentrism, and the dichotomy of home/journeying. Tuan illustrates a desire for symmetry in such preconceived geographies as Captain Cook’s expectation of finding a southern continent, *Terra Australis*, that would balance the northern landmass of Asia, or in the hope for a Northwest passage after Magellan sailed around the southern strait that now bears his name. Our example of the Syria/Yemen dichotomy already mentioned will turn out to be axial for Hudhayl. Ethnocentrism is a well-documented and universal phenomena, but it is perhaps more familiar in maps. It can occur textually as well, however. The pre-Islamic poet al-Akhnas ibn Shihāb al-Taghlibī gives an unusual survey of the territories of the Arab tribes [67]:

All men of Ma‘add, all tribes that wander Arab soil,

¹³ As preserved textually, the vernacular geography of Hudhayl was not always completely intelligible to the Abbasid philologists who compiled Hudhayl’s poetry in the second and third Hijrī centuries/ eighth and ninth centuries CE, much less so to contemporary, non-nomadic readers. To take just one example out of perhaps hundreds in the *Ash‘ār* alone, Umayyah ibn Abī ‘Ā’idh describes an onager as migrating when,

Gemini’s [*al-furū*] heat drove [the animals] forward,

from the shimmering blaze towards the remaining cool water (10(UA‘A).3.31, *Ash‘ār*, 500).

Onagers, wild equids living in the Arabian peninsula until relatively recently, were hunted by Arabs and were commonly described by poets from the pre-Islamic period on. They are almost always described as leaving a spring pasture as it dries up in the summer, before heading to another water source where a hunter lies in wait for them. The star mentioned here, however, is given as al-Furūgh in the manuscript, with the orthographically similar al-Furū‘ given as a variant. Thomas Bauer (Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 2:284, 285, 324–327) reads al-Furūgh as referring to the star Pegasus, whose helical rising is in March. He understands this as an error on the part of the poet, rejecting the reading of al-Furū‘, an abbreviation of Furū‘ al-Jawzā’, a portion of the constellation Gemini, whose heliacal rising would take place in mid-June or mid-July, thus corresponding to convention. In this case, the intended meaning of the word for this star, if ever there was one, is not strictly decidable, and depends on weighing the force of a poetic convention, with which the reader must be acquainted, against the poet’s stylistic competence.

have somewhere a place of strength, a refuge in time of need:
 Lukayz hold the sea-coast and the shores of the twin-sea Cape (*al-Baḥrān*),¹⁴
 but if there should come danger from India's threatening mien,
 They fly on the rumps of beasts untamed to the highlands,
 as though they were cloud-wisps hurrying home after heavy rain.
 And Bakr — all 'Irāq's broad plain is theirs: but if they so will,
 a shield comes to guard their homes from lofty Yamāmah's dales.
 Tamīm, too — a place lies far between the tossed dunes of sand
 and uplands of rugged rock where safety for them is found.
 And Kalb hold the Khabt and the sands of 'Ālij, and their defense
 is steeps of black basalt rock where footmen alone can go.
 And Ghassān — their strength, all know, is other than in their kin
 — for them fight the legions and the squadrons [of mighty Rome].
 And Bahrā' — we know their place [in warfare and time of peace]:
 to them lie the ways unbarred that lead to Ruṣāfah.
 Iyād has gone down to dwell in the mid-river plain, and there
 are squadrons of Persians seeking to fall on their enemy.
 And Lakhm are kings of men, who pay them the tribute due:
 when one of them speaks his will, all others must obey.
 But we are a folk who have no shelter in all our land (*lā hijāza bi-arḍinā*):
 we spread ourselves were rain falls, and so fares the might man!¹⁵

¹⁴ This is the only instance in Arabic where the place-name Baḥrayn, which means “two seas,” is found in the nominative. The term at this time denoted the coast of the Arabian peninsula along the Persian gulf, not the merely the area of the current nation of Bahrain.

Al-Akhnas describes how every tribe has an upland area that it takes refuge in in times of trouble, enumerating the territories of Lukayz, along the Persian Gulf Coast, Bakr in Iraq, then Tamīm in the center of the peninsula, then Kalb and Ghassān in Syria and Bahrā' in upper Mesopotamia in Ruṣāfa, and Lakhm and Iyād of Mesopotamia. These are essentially tribes of the Fertile Crescent, in orbit as it were, around the Taghlib, the speaker's tribe, and this Iraqi poet of course fails to mention any Ḥijāzī tribes such as Aws, Khazraj, Sulaym, Hudhayl, Quraysh, Khuzā'ah or Kinānah, let alone Yemeni or Omani tribes. This is noteworthy, because his purpose in the poem is to boast of Taghlib's superiority to other tribes, so listing more would have served his rhetorical purpose. He evidently did not conceive of a peninsular Arabic geography, or a complete confraternity of the Arabic language.

The dichotomy of home/journeying mentioned by Tuan is perhaps not so relevant to nomadic peoples, but Arabs certainly had a notion of their home, articulated perhaps most forcefully as nostalgia for certain regions (Najd, Ḥijāz, Tihāmah, Yemen) after they were spread far and wide during the Islamic conquests. Based on ethnographic description, it would seem as if a tribe might associate its home with certain pasture lands, or summer watering places. This sense is not much in evidence in Hudhayl's poetry, but after the journey of the conquests, it becomes quite clear to them that "home" was the Ḥijāz, and I will argue, always had been.

In reconstructing an Arab tribe's pre- and early-Islamic geography, in addition to relevant classical texts, such as Ibn Qutaybah's (d. 276/889) book on the rain stars, *Kitāb al-*

¹⁵ *Muf.* no. 41, ll. 8–16, al-Mufaḍḍal, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 203–206. The translation is adapted from Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:150.

Anwā' (On rain stars),¹⁶ which provides extensive details on nomadic migration, we can supplement our textual account with two forms of material description: ethnographic descriptions of Arabian nomadic groups, most of which descriptions date from the late-19th and early 20th centuries, and archaeological description of nomadic campsites from late antiquity or early Islam. The most fundamental pattern for understanding Hudhayl's tribal geography is the annual migrational cycle of Arabian bedouin. Of course, nomadic migration is not immutable or mechanically determined by invariable climactic determinants, but ethnographic and archaeological description can provide a horizon of expectations with which to interpret the sparse, often indeterminate passages on rain-stars and migration in the *Ash'ār*.

3.3. The Northern Arabic Nomadic Year

3.3.1. The Northern Arabian Nomadic Year: Ethnographic Considerations

Aside from the fact that they describe modern conditions, modern ethnographies suffer from several shortcomings. For political and religious reasons, European researchers have often focused on nomadism in the Levant, Iraq, and northern Arabia, areas of more strategic concern and a closer affiliation to the lands of Biblical antiquity than the southern Ḥijāz or elsewhere in the peninsula. Charles Doughty spent most of his time in 1876-78 with the Fuqarā' and Mawāhib of the northern Ḥijāz, closer to the inscriptions of Madā'in Ṣāliḥ, which he was one of the first to study. The Rwala bedouin, the subject of Alois Musil's famous study based on research conducted between the 1890s and 1920s, inhabit the Syrian desert, and H. R. P. Dickson's work, based on experiences between 1929 and 1936, mostly deals with nomads in the

¹⁶ 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutaybah, *Kitāb al-Anwā' fī mawāsim al-'Arab*, 1st ed. (Hyderabad: Maṭba'at Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyyah, 1956).

area between Kuwait and northern Saudi Arabia. In addition to the regional bias, the rise of modern anthropology has coincided with political, social and lifestyle changes, notably the (usually forced) settlement of nomads in the Arabian peninsula, thus limiting the possibility for substantial further research, or directing research towards the process of social change itself.

Nevertheless, a general outline of a modern north Arabian nomadic year will be an exceptionally useful starting point for considering the problems associated with reconstructing a pre- and early-Islamic nomadic year. The Rwala tribe divides their year into five seasons: the first part of the rainy season, *aṣ-ṣferi* (classical Arabic *al-ṣafarī*, which in its medieval usage as defined by Lane¹⁷ is more or less identical to the Rwala usage) consists of October, November and December; *aš-šta'* (classical *al-shitā'*, “winter”) lasts until about March 4; *as-smâk* (classical *al-samāk*, the star Arcturus) lasts about 50 nights, until the middle of April; and *aṣ-ṣeyf* (classical *al-ṣayf*, used of several periods between March and September)¹⁸ lasts until the beginning of June. There are rains associated with all these periods from October until early June. The remaining four months from June through September are *al-kâz* (classical *al-qayz*, meaning either May-July or June-September).¹⁹ Doughty gives a nearly identical scheme for the Fuqarā', but the *as-smâk* and *aṣ-ṣeyf* were consolidated into one “spring” season, *er-rabîa* (*al-rabī'*).²⁰ Dickson gives the same four-season paradigm, but with the autumn season known as *kharīf*.²¹ It should be noted that *kharīf* is mostly applicable to the northern half of the

¹⁷ Lane, s.v. “Ṣafarī.” Interestingly, Ṣafarī is defined in the classical lexicons as beginning with the rising of Canopus (Suhayl), by which both the Rwala and Muṭayr also marked the beginning of *aṣ-ṣferi*.

¹⁸ Lane, s.v. “zaman.”

¹⁹ Ibid., s.v. “zaman.”

²⁰ The range of meanings for *al-rabī'* is especially vast. Cf. Daniel Martin Varisco, “The Rain Periods in Pre-Islamic Arabia,” *Arabica* 34, no. 2 (July 1987): 257–58.

²¹ H. R. P. (Harold Richard Patrick) Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert: A Glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Sau'di*

peninsula; Yemen, subject to the south-west monsoons, receives heavy rain in the summer months which can at times reach as far as Mecca, and *kharīf* there can refer to these summer rains.²² Doughty observed such summer rains occurring, seemingly rarely, as far north as Mecca, where he found the Hudhayl tribe still living.²³

The nomadic year effectively begins with the rains of October or November, which last intermittently through the spring months.²⁴ During the summer months (June through mid-October), there is little rain, and tribes do not migrate, but remain by constant sources of water, usually in a lowland area. The Muṭayr (“Mutair”) tribes of the north-east of Arabia described by Dickson would remain at wells south of Kuwait, since there was no pasture elsewhere. This is a time of “long, weary, soul-killing heat . . . scorching, suffocating duststorms, the need to stay close-camped near water, and the ever-present dread that your enemy knows where you are and by a sudden dash may carry off . . . all you possess in one swift raid.”²⁵ Moreover, government tax-collectors could easily find the tribes, which would

Arabia, 2d. ed. (George Allen & Unwin, 1951), 257–58.

²² Hugh Scott, Kenneth Mason, and Mary Marshall, *Western Arabia and the Red Sea*, Geographical Handbook Series (Oxford: Naval Intelligence Division, Printed under the authority of H.M.S.O. at the University Press), 1946), 178–80; H. Stewart Edgell, *Arabian Deserts: Nature, Origin and Evolution* (Springer, 2006), 49–50; Varisco, “Rain Periods,” 257.

²³ Charles Montagu Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, New and definitive ed. (Random House, 1936), 2:545.

²⁴ The following description is based primarily on Alois Musil, *Arabia Petraea*, vol. 3 (Vienna: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1907), 3:8–13; Alois Musil, *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins*, Oriental Explorations and Studies; (American Geographical Society, 1928), 1–19; Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1:259–61; Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 50–65, 247–57. It also draws heavily in places on Miller, “Rain-Stars, Seasonal Migration and Ritual in the Mu‘allaqa of Imru‘ al-Qays,” 6–22. For *anwā*, a some helpful information can be found in Georg Jacob, *Altarabisches Beduinenleben: Nach Den Quellen Geschildert*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1897), 3–5. With regard to pre-Islamic months, I rely on Lane, s.v. “z-m-n,” and Wellhausen, *Reste*, 94–101. Wellhausen asserts that the ‘Arafāt ḥajj took place in the autumn, while the Meccan pilgrimage consisted of the late spring or early summer ‘Umra. The recognition that the Kaaba is oriented towards Canopus, a star widely seen in pre-Islamic inscriptions, classical poetry and ethnographic observations as the marker of the autumnal nomadic year, would seem to mitigate the conclusion regarding the ‘Umra somewhat. Cf. Gerald S. Hawkins and David A. King, “On the Orientation of the Ka’ba,” *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 13, no. 2 (June 1, 1982).

²⁵ Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 34. Al-Ḥārith ibn Zālim’s (in *Muf.* no. 89, ll. 21–23) description of summer as a time of flies, hunger and brackish water is very similar to Dickson’s: Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Muḥammad al-Ḍabbī, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyat*, 316. Caskel thinks that the primary time for raids would have been the *rabī*, the autumn in the north of the peninsula, but my analysis of Hudhayl’s poetry below finds little evidence of this: Ibn al-Kalbī, Caskel,

probably have been true in any century.²⁶ Doughty spent a summer with the Mawāhīb (“Moahîb”) sub-tribe of the tribe of Balī in Wadi Thirba near Madā’in Šāliḥ in the northern Ḥijāz, about equidistant between Petra and Medina. He describes the summer as a time of “indigence” and near-starvation, spent “fasting” and “lying on the elbow,” interrupted about once a week by feasts given when someone of property would expiate a vow made during sickness, or give thanks for a new son, by sacrificing an animal and feasting his neighbors and kin.²⁷ His stay was peaceful, but he witnessed other tribes’ raids taking place at this time.²⁸

The Rwala would spend the summers on “the borders of settled and cultivated districts” and Doughty also observes some sporadic agriculture taking place in Wadi Thirba, and some members of the tribe would normally inhabit the valley year-round, although when he was there they had removed to a nearby locale that year due to raids.²⁹ Their mobility illustrates both the typical division of most Arabian tribes into both settled and nomadic groups as well as the gray area in between, with the ready possibility for settled tribesmen to up and move, and presumably vice versa. Nevertheless, attitudes of contempt towards settled Arabs by nomads would be frequently expressed, apparently mostly across tribal lines, as Doughty hears of the supposedly treacherous thieves of Banū Šakhr for example, although he later finds “good beduish hospitality” with some members of the tribe that he encounters.³⁰

Musil notes the same contempt that nomads raising camels would have towards settled Arabs

and Strenziok, *Ġamharat an-nasab*, 24. Moreover, we might add that the battle of Dhū Qār (c. 611) took place when the Persians staged an attack against Bakr at their summer watering holes: al-Ṭabarī, *Perser und Araber*, 334. Similarly, in an elegy on the Jafnid al-Nu‘mān ibn al-Ḥārith (d. sometime after 583 CE), al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī also states that tribes were attacked by the Jafnids at their watering holes [*manāhil*], although the word *rib‘iyya*, used in l. 14, perhaps refers to spring raids: Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 23; al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, *Dīwān*, 117, l.11.

²⁶ Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 50.

²⁷ Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1:489–491.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:537.

²⁹ Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 8; Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1:487.

³⁰ Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1:54, 55.

or those practicing other forms of husbandry, particularly of sheep. He also observes that settled Arabs perhaps use the word “bedouin” (*badū*) in a condescending fashion.³¹

After spending the summer in one location, the tribe would begin migrating with the autumn rains in October or November. The Muṭayr would leave, based on star risings, before any actual rain, to camp in an area where rain was expected. From this migration until the spring, they would follow seasonal rainfall, camping every ten to twelve miles, usually for not more than ten days at a time.³² The territory of this migration would vary greatly from tribe to tribe. Dickson estimates Muṭayr’s territory at 120 miles by 180 miles.³³ With a roughly ellipsoid shape, this would easily exceed 15,000 square miles. The Ḥijāzī Fuqarā’s territory in contrast, amounts to 3,000 to 4,000 square miles in Doughty’s estimation.³⁴ Orographic precipitation, in which mountainous relief intensifies precipitation, plays a significant role in Arabia’s climate,³⁵ and the autumnal migration often entails a move to higher elevations. The Rwala mention this in their songs³⁶ and after his summer with the Mawāhīb, Doughty went into the mountains east

³¹ The nomadic portion of a tribe would be referred to as “our *A’rāb*” and the bedouin themselves were rarely heard by Musil to describe themselves using the word *badū*. The antagonism between camel-raising nomadism and other forms of husbandry should not be overemphasized either; the donkey- and sheep-raising Shi’ite Arab Muntafiq noted by Dickson seem to have been relatively strong and well-regarded. Musil, *Arabia Petraea*, 3:22–28; Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 44–50; Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 108–113, 545–549.

³² Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 51, 82.

³³ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁴ There is also massive room for variation. The Fuqarā, for political reasons, pastured for months in a neighboring tribe’s territory, and contemplated going as far as Hawran in present-day northern Jordan and southern Syria: Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1:285, 314, 345 ff. Cf. also Steven Rosen, who writes that, “[a]lthough ethnographies will often describe general patterns of seasonal variability, the variation in these seasonal patterns may be as great or greater than the range of the identified norm: Steven A. Rosen, “The Case for Seasonal Movement of Pastoral Nomads in the Late Byzantine/ Early Arabic Period in the South Central Negev,” in *Pastoralism in the Levant: Archaeological Materials in Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Ofer Bar-yosef and Anatoly Khazanov, vol. 10, Monographs in World Archaeology (Madison, WI: Prehistory Press, 1992), 153. Hudhayl’s territory, if we conservatively allowed that it stretched from about 100 km south of Mecca to 100 km north, along a 50 km-wide band, would amount to 10,000 sq. km, or about 4,000 square miles.

³⁵ Scott, Mason, and Marshall, *Western Arabia and the Red Sea*, 178; Edgell, *Arabian Deserts*, 49–50. This is the so-called “vertical” nomadism, based on migrations between different elevations, as opposed to “horizontal” migrations along areas of similar elevation. For a discussion and further citations, c.f. Rosen, “Seasonal Movement,” 159.

³⁶ Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 164, 205.

of Tayma with the Bishr tribe.³⁷

Dickson describes the arrival of the first rains at Wafra, thirty miles inland from the Persian Gulf in the then-Saudi-Kuwaiti neutral zone, on November 2, after the long hot summer of 1933, at some length. His depiction, although the language is somewhat quaint, is worth quoting at some length, as the extent of rain-fall in Arabia is perhaps not well-known, and rain description plays a large role in Hudhayl's, and all classical Arabic poetry.

As the camp sleeps, a great thundercloud appears and gradually creeps up from the far north-west. Nearer and nearer it comes until at 3 a.m. it is exactly overhead. There is a death-like stillness, and even the camp dogs cease their braying and the sleepers turn uneasily in their sleep. The air is oppressive, even hot. Suddenly, a cold chill wind begins to blow . . . there is a soul-raising thunderclap followed by a simultaneous blaze of forked lightning, which lights up the whole landscape a vivid bluey-white. Clap after clap follows Shouts and cries rise from the camp. The men rush to the camels and sheep, the women to the tent ropes, and then with a dull roar growing every instant deeper and closer, the rain comes at last. At first great heavy drops . . . then in a few seconds the downpour . . . there is no wind but just a deep booming roar, as the water pours down in sheets. For ten minutes everyone holds on to what he can grip, expecting the squall which usually follows such rain. But none comes. Then cries of joy as the open spaces round the camp site begin to fill with water. The tents perched up on higher ground than the surrounding country are safe from flood, but by 3.30 a.m. the countryside is a vast shallow lake. By 3.45 the rain thins off.

³⁷ Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1:617 ff.

Regardless of everything, men, women and children rush forth to collect the delicious rain-water into every kind of utensil they can lay hands on: water-skins, basins, tins and cooking pots of every description are made to serve. When these are filled women and children sit in the water and literally wallow in it for sheer joy. The men rouse the camels and make them drink knee deep in the fresh brown sea. Everyone is delirious, for they have been drinking brackish and even salt water for the last nine months.³⁸ . . . What a scene daylight brings! Each tent, like a little Noah's ark, is perched safely on its small Ararat, and a sea of fresh water for a couple of miles all around gives the appearance of the Flood of Bible story. Away to the right are low hills, and to the left one can see the water tumbling down their sides as the various nullahs *sail* (the Arab word for running in spate). You can hear the dull roar of these distant-water courses running full. The Badawin world comes to life and is happy once more.³⁹

During the autumn dates are harvested, which as much as the autumn rains alleviate the hunger of the summer. Doughty describes tribes' visits to the markets of Tayma at the end of the summer.⁴⁰ There are then rains throughout the winter, which is chiefly distinguished by its cold. January usually brings about ten frosts according to Dickson, noting that many poor bedouin possess little if any clothing beyond their summer garments.⁴¹ The nights are "often so cold as to make the life of both human beings and animals miserable; the noses of the

³⁸ For the torments of thirst and brackish water in the summer, cf. also al-Ḥārith ibn al-Zālim in *Muf.* no. 89, ll. 21–22, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* 316, and Lyall's notes in Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:254, 255.

³⁹ Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 64, 65.

⁴⁰ Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1:589 ff.

⁴¹ Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 256.

camels even bleed from the effects of the cold.”⁴²

If the rains have been good, the vegetation is at its fullest beginning in late February or early March. This time is known the *rabīʿ* for the Muṭayr and Fuqarāʾ (the Rwala use the term *rabīʿ* to mean any pasture at all.)⁴³ During *rabīʿ*,

the whole steppe and even the desert are transformed into a delightful meadow.

Every valley and piece of low ground or gentle slope . . . are at once covered with an infinite variety of annuals and perennials. The camels nibble at the greatest dainties only and grow so fat⁴⁴ they can hardly move. The milk often flows or drips from the udders of the she-camels, which are full to overflowing. . . . they have the hope for a sure profit in selling the superfluous old or sterile she-camels.⁴⁵

It seems to be a more social time of the year, and the settled members of the Muṭayr tribe would go into the desert *rabīʿ* pastures to spend a festive time with their bedouin kin in this season.⁴⁶ Since camels calve in the spring,⁴⁷ and as Musil points out, all animals are now also at their healthiest, spring is often also a propitious time to sell off the surplus of the herds. Thus, the spring and autumn seem to be two common times for going to market, first with animals to sell and in the second to purchase dates. For the tribes of the northern Ḥijāz that Doughty

⁴² Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 17.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁴ As Doughty puts it, the camels “lay up . . . grease in their humps” (Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1:260) which humps then diminish, even growing floppy, over the summer and autumn. Abū Dhuʿayb mentions this phenomenon, describing a clan diminished by battle: “their tribe is like a camel whose spring [*rabīʿ*] has been slow to come, its hump worn down to nothing;” 1(ADhQ).31.4, *Ashʿār*, 225, and ʿAlqamah, *Muf.* no. 120, l. 9, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 398: “for a full season unsaddled,/ until her hump hardened, firm as the rounded side of a smith’s bellows” (trans. Sells, *Desert Tracings*, 14).

⁴⁵ Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 14.

⁴⁶ Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 257.

⁴⁷ Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 1:369.

spent time with, both seasons usually entailed visits to Tayma.⁴⁸ With the end of the *rabi'* season, as pastures withered in the heat, the tribes would head back to their summer watering places before beginning the annual season again.

3.3.2. The Northern Arabian Nomadic Year: *Anwā'*

Such are the typical annual migrations of modern, northern Arabian nomads. Ibn Qutaybah describes a not dissimilar pattern in *Kitāb al-Anwā'*, drawing on rhymed proverbs (*asjā'*) dealing with star risings and settings and the accompanying seasonal rains, and on classical poetry, particularly that of Dhū l-Rummah, (d. c. 117/735), the last great bedouin poet of classical Arabic, renowned for his detailed and beautiful desert description. The modern ethnographers also frequently cite *asjā'* among the bedouin they study.⁴⁹ Both theirs and Ibn Qutaybah's *asjā'* were used to transmit star-lore among the tribes,⁵⁰ that is, information about the *anwā'* (rain-stars), the subject of his text.

The *anwā'* require a special note as their interpretation is somewhat technical and difficult. A typical star (or Messier object in this case) should illustrate the difficulties faced in interpreting such astronomical poetic images. The Pleiades (Thurayyā) are exemplary, since they are probably the most commonly cited stars in early Arabic poetry. The dates given are Ibn Qutaybah's, for the 8th century CE in the Ḥijāz, and around Mecca more specifically.⁵¹ The

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1:314 ff, 1:66 ff.

⁴⁹ For example, the middle days of the lunar month provide enough visibility to prevent raiding. Musil records the statement, *laylat themān, nim b-amān, w-laylet 'ashar lā tarodd an-nashar* (transliteration modified). *Themān* and *b-amān* rhyme, as does *'ashar* and *nashar*. It means, "from the eighth night, sleep securely, and on the tenth, the camels do not need to be driven together." Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 3. As will be seen, these are extremely similar to the *asjā'* quoted by Ibn Qutaybah.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 7; Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 261.

⁵¹ To the best of my limited ability I have confirmed these dates, and all of those cited, with astrolabe software. They are only approximate, and Dickson gives a two-week range for Suhayl's first appearance in September during his time in Kuwait (Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 248). As Ibn Qutaybah points out with regard to Suhayl

Pleiades arise in the eastern sky, at *fajr* (dawn, just before sunrise) on May 14th. This represents the heliacal rising (*ṭulū'*) of the stars. Since they arise at *fajr*, just ahead of the sun, they disappear with the sunrise. As the spring and summer progress, the Pleiades will rise earlier and earlier in the night in the east, disappearing higher and higher in the sky with the dawn. Around mid-October, the Pleiades will now be seen to rise in the east at sunset (their acronychal rising). They would now travel westwards through the night, fading into the dawn sky before reaching the western horizon. With their *naw'*, they will be seen to have set in the west at dawn; this occurs for the Pleiades on approximately the 13th of November, six months after the *ṭulū'*. Now they are seen to set in the west every night, earlier and earlier, until early May, just after the acronychal setting, they will drop out of the night sky entirely for a couple of weeks when rising with the sun at dawn. Ibn Qutaybah designates this setting in the west as *'ufūl*. With the next heliacal rising (*ṭulū'*) in mid-May, the Pleiades begin rising ahead of the sun again. Their position can thus mark several different seasons; the hot season is said to begin with the heliacal rising and the cold season with the *naw'*. The coldest part of the year is when the Pleiades are in mid-sky at sunset, while the hottest part would occur when they are at mid-sky at sunrise.⁵² The mention of a star's name in a poem can thus carry significant ambiguity.

To return then to Ibn Qutaybah's version of the nomadic year, in order to contrast it with the ethnographic version; nomads are either at their settlements (*maḥāḍir*) and wells, or in the inner desert (*al-bādiya*). They depart for the latter at the heliacal rising of Canopus (Suhayl) around August 14th in the Ḥijāz.⁵³ The rituals of the Kaaba were probably in some way

(Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Anwā'*, 153.), stars rise about ten days later in Iraq than in the Ḥijāz. The explanation itself is adapted from Miller, "Rain-Stars, Seasonal Migration and Ritual in the Mu'allaqa of Imru' Al-Qays," 7,8.

⁵² Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Anwā'*, 6–13, 26, 27.

⁵³ Both Dickson and Musil (Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 8; Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 51, 247–250) say that the Muṭayr and Rwala left their summer waters at the rise of Suhayl, which both Dickson and Musil take to refer to

related to this migration, since it is oriented towards the degree on the horizon where Suhayl rises.⁵⁴ They provision themselves with dates (as Doughty observed with the Furaqā' and Mawāhīb), and the first rains, called *wasmī*, come in late September.⁵⁵ The Pleiades begin their acronychal (sunset) rising in mid-October, marking the beginning of cold weather, and with their *naw'* in mid-November, the best of the *wasmī* rains comes.⁵⁶ The Arabs return to their summer settlement sometime between mid-April, with Sharaṭān's heliacal rising, and mid-May, with the Pleiades' heliacal rising.⁵⁷ The absolute latest they return to their waters is with the beginning of Gemini's rising on June 9th, exemplified by one of the rhymed proverbs (*saj'*) with which his text is peppered, and which are so similar to those of the *Rwala* quoted by Musil: *idhā ṭala'at al-Haq'ah, taqawwad al-nās li-l-qul'ah wa raja'ū 'an al-nuj'ah* ("When al-Haq'ah [a star in Gemini] rises, people go their own separate ways, coming back from pasturing").⁵⁸ This summary of the annual migration is quite succinct, yet Ibn Qutaybah's text in its modern print edition runs to a nearly two-hundred page catalog of stars.

Daniel Varisco has observed this discrepancy and concluded that using Ibn Qutaybah as a source presents several problems. Firstly, his and other medieval compilers' concerns (like this dissertation's) were primarily lexicographical.⁵⁹ This is certainly true; most of Ibn Qutaybah's other major works such as *al-Shi'r wa-l-shu'arā'* (Of poetry and poets) and *al-Ma'ānī l-kabīr* (The greater *Interpretations*) concern the interpretation of poetic texts. Reading *Kitāb al-*

Canopus. Dickson quotes none other than Aḥmad al-Jābir al-Ṣabāh, the father of the current emir of Kuwait (Ṣabāh al-Aḥmad al-Jābir al-Ṣabāh), as saying that Suhayl rises on September first, but is obscured by dust and mist until later. This must be why Musil says it appears in early October.

⁵⁴ Hawkins and King, "On the Orientation of the Ka'ba."

⁵⁵ Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Anwā'*, 97. The *Rwala* and Muṭayr call these rains *wasm*, and they begin in October.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 26, 31, 98. The *Rwala* mark their autumn season by three stars, Canopus, the Pleiades, and Gemini. Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 8.

⁵⁷ Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Anwā'*, 98.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵⁹ Varisco, "Rain Periods," 264.

anwā', it is easy to see that it is more of a treatment of a particularly abstruse topic found frequently in Arabic poetry than a real astronomical or anthropological work. Varisco's second relevant conclusion is that we are presented with a surplus of information, as Ibn Qutaybah attempts to provide material on a comprehensive, systematic set of twenty eight *anwā'*, whose number is equal to the lunar stations in the night sky over the course of the month.⁶⁰ Varisco's point certainly holds true for Hudhayl's use of asterisms. Of the approximately 100 stars detailed by Ibn Qutaybah, only nine are found in Hudhayl's poetry, which would confirm Varisco's statement that "the ethnographic data . . . show that people tend to recognize only those seasons and rain periods of importance to them. . . . Invariably one finds partial calendars. . . ." ⁶¹ This is also the case, it should seem, if Ibn Qutaybah's text is contrasted with ethnographic data. Musil only mentions five stars in his discussion of the Rwala's migrational calendar, and a sixth in a passage of poetry that he reproduces.⁶²

More importantly, the use to which actual individual nomadic tribes put their observations of the stars departs from Ibn Qutaybah's model. Classical texts tend to emphasize the *naw'*, the heliacal setting, but even on this score there is dispute. Ibn Qutaybah, who seems to have helped establish the classical definition, reports that Abū 'Ubaydah (d. 209/ 825), an expert on tribal lore, believed the *naw'* marked the (heliacal) rising of the star, arguing that the verbal root *nā'* means *nahaḍa*, "to rise."⁶³ Also, as Varisco notes, most of the examples Ibn Qutaybah gives, as we saw with the example of Suhayl, involve the rising of a star.⁶⁴ As for so many of his conclusions, Ibn Qutaybah relies on Umayyad poets, particularly al-Rā'ī and his

⁶⁰ Ibid., 266.

⁶¹ Ibid., 265,266.

⁶² Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 8, 295, 298.

⁶³ Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Anwā'*, 7.

⁶⁴ Varisco, "Rain Periods," 252.

disciple Dhū l-Rummah, for his own definition of the *naw'*.⁶⁵ The term, however, is ambiguous even in Umayyad poetry, and much more so in pre-Islamic poetry.

In terms of the ethnographic data, the *Rwala* are more concerned for when the star is “reigning.” For their three winter stars, Canopus, the Pleiades, and Gemini, this would apply most obviously to the latter two (Suhayl’s heliacal rising is anomalous), which in the late autumn would have their acronychal rising and then, about a month later, their heliacal setting, the phase identified by Ibn Qutaybah as the *naw'*. During this one month period, these stars “reign” in the sky; they are visible throughout the entire night. The heliacal setting, supposedly so important classically, is a mere bookend. The word *naw'* itself is used by modern *bedouin* simply to mean rainfall.⁶⁶ This is also the case in at least two instances in Hudhayl’s corpus, and there are no unequivocal instances demonstrating that their poets specifically associate the word *naw'* with either the heliacal setting or rising.⁶⁷

A particular problem with interpreting astronomical imagery in Hudhayl’s poetry emerges because not infrequently, a poet will merely say that something happens when a particular star was low in the sky, or descending, or rising, none of which fully convey the time of year unless the poet also specifies the time of night. Usually the correct reading is evident from context, but not always. For example, the speaker in Abū Kabīr’s famous *Lāmiyyah* (poem rhyming in the letter “l,” *lām*) tells of waiting up through the night to steal into a woman’s tent for an amorous encounter and betaking himself in the direction of *al-Samāk al-Aʿzal* (*Spica*, *Alpha Virginis*), which is presumably low in the night sky, in the wee hours.⁶⁸ The star would

⁶⁵ Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Anwāʾ*, 8.

⁶⁶ Varisco, “Rain Periods,” 252.

⁶⁷ Usāma ibn al-Ḥārith unambiguously uses *naw'* to mean “rain” (67(UḤ).4.26, *Ashʿār*, 1301) as does al-Burayq ibn ʿIyād (28(BʾIKh).1.6, *Ashʿār*, 742) and Abū Khirāsh’s usages are ambiguous (65(AkhQ).16.3, 7, *Ashʿār*, 1234–35).

⁶⁸ 63(AKJ).1.45–47, *ibid.*, 1079.

be thus visible either in early October, at its heliacal rising, or its heliacal setting (*naw'*) in early April.⁶⁹ The problem is that the star is mentioned in poetry to refer to both periods. Ibn Qutaybah describes the autumn rains associated with Spica,⁷⁰ while elsewhere in Hudhayl's poetry it appears unequivocally associated with spring.⁷¹ It seems thus more probable to read Abū Kabīr's speaker as having met his lover in the spring, but the star is mentioned very frequently in pre- and early-Islamic poetry, so a full determination would require more careful consideration of many additional texts.⁷²

The data available from modern ethnography would thus seem to confirm the broad outlines of Ibn Qutaybah's migrational schema, and the most important stars used as *anwā'* by the bedouin for their seasonal migrations are found by the same name in both the ethnographies and the classical Arabic lexicographical tradition. We have already seen, however, that extreme caution needs to be used, as even the fundamental terms used by the lexicographical tradition, such as the word *naw'* itself, seem not to be used by Hudhayl in the prescriptive manner of an urban philologist like Ibn Qutaybah. Hudhayl at first glance also seems to confirm Varisco's supposition, also evident in Musil's observations on the Rwala, that only a handful of stars would be relevant to any given tribe, who would, furthermore, interpret them idiosyncratically. Given all these caveats then, it would be best to proceed carefully in applying ethnographic description from modern, northern Arabian tribes to the southern Ḥijāzī tribe of Hudhayl, especially regarding social norms, or (perhaps less obviously) to too

⁶⁹ Cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Anwā'*, 64. It could conceivably also be during its achronycal rising or setting as well, which would be near in time to the heliacal setting and achronycal rising respectively.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 63–65.

⁷¹ 62(MḤQ).5.16–18, *Ash'ār*, 1032.

⁷² Bajraktarević gives a list of citations of lines mentioning Spica. For example, Labīd ibn Rabī'a of the 'Āmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'a tribe also uses Spica to represent spring. Cf. Bajraktarević, "Lāmiyya," 107; Labīd ibn Rabī'a, *Sharḥ dīwān Labīd*, 235.

quickly interpret Hudhalī poetics in light of material culled from other tribes in the classical tradition without attending to chronology and tribal affiliation.

3.3.3. *The Northern Arabian Nomadic Year: Evidence from Archeology and Non-Arabic Sources*

The scant archaeological record does, however, confirm what we have seen thus far with regard to migration. The Safaitic inscriptions are rock graffiti found in more or less the area of the Rwala, in the south of present-day Syria, extending into north-eastern Jordan and northern Saudi Arabia, dating from the 1st century BC and the 4th century AD.⁷³ The inscriptions' language belongs to Ancient North Arabian, rather than Arabic, but they display some clear parallels with pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, including a vocabulary of seasonal migration. M.C.A. Macdonald has compared this seasonal terminology with that given by Musil for the Rwala, and found three, *s²t'*, *ṣyf*, and *qyṣ* (the Safaitic inscriptions lack both short and long vowels) that he suggests correspond more or less to the winter *shitā'*, early summer *ṣayf* and mid- and late-summer *qayṣ* of the Rwala.⁷⁴ Most of the inscriptions bearing the word *qyṣ* are found near semi-permanent watering places.⁷⁵ He suggests that the word *dt'* found in the inscriptions signifies late, pre-summer rains, as no cognate of the Rwala/ classical *al-samāk* is to be found.⁷⁶

A term for autumn rains, where the Rwala/ classical *wasm* or *ṣafarī* is used, is also lacking, but he does note that the verb *'s²rq* is used in the context of “going to the *mabr* ‘open

⁷³ M. A. C. Macdonald in “Safaitic,” *EP*.

⁷⁴ Macdonald, “Seasons and Transhumance,” 2. Cf. also Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 206.

⁷⁵ Macdonald, “Seasons and Transhumance,” 8,9.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 2,3. He attempts to relate the word found in the inscription to classical Arabic *dafa'i*, and seems to ignore the closer cognate of *dathth*, “weak rains,” (Lane, s.v.).

desert.”⁷⁷ This is suggestive. The classical Arabic cognate, *sharraqa*, often means “to move towards the east,” as would be etymologically expected, since *sharq* means “east.” However, Macdonald draws on the Rwala usage of *sharraqa*, which seems to mean “any migration into the inner desert . . . regardless of the direction taken.”⁷⁸ This interestingly parallels a passage by Mulaḥ ibn al-Ḥakam of Hudhayl who, in a *nasīb* (amatory prelude) describing the “morning of departure” speaks of his beloved “in the first of the eastward (?) traveling company” (*fī l-raʿīl al-musharriqī*).⁷⁹ It seems quite likely that what is intended here is not necessarily “eastwards,” although this is not excluded, but the annual migration into the open desert. If this is the case, in addition to the endurance of the use of certain stars and constellations, it would demonstrate the remarkable persistence of certain concepts associated with the nomadic life world for perhaps over 2,000 years.

The seasonal pattern of migration allowed economic relationships with sedentary peoples, both those of the same tribe and others. The Safaitic inscriptions seem to show nomads summering closer to settled areas in the basalt desert around Hawran, near the important late-antique Syrian town of Bosra.⁸⁰ As we have seen in the modern ethnographies, the nomadic migratory itinerary passed through areas inhabited by sedentary branches of the tribes during summer, and by market-towns at other times, particularly during the autumn date harvests. Such conditions probably obtained for Hudhayl, but even this is perhaps too tidy a demarcation of the sedentary and nomadic. Steven A. Rosen and Gideon Avni have conducted

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁸ Varisco, “Rain Periods,” 4; Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 45.

⁷⁹ 62(MḤQ).1.1, *Ashʿār*, 999.

⁸⁰ Macdonald, “Seasons and Transhumance,” 8,9. Bosra [Buṣṣrā], Roman Bostra, the capital of the province of Arabia, is also mentioned repeatedly by Hudhayl, mainly as a source for fine swords: c.f 6(AJQ).3.6, *Ashʿār*, 350, and 64(SJK).2.37, *Ashʿār*, 1134, or as part of the trade route for the importation of wine (1(ADhQ).6.21, *Ashʿār*, 94). See Maurice Sartre, *Bostra: des origines à l’Islam* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1985). Crone discusses the significance of a Roman legion being stationed there: Crone, “Quraysh and the Roman Army,” 70, 78–80.

an archaeological survey of the late-Byzantine and early-Islamic era nomadic campsites (still visible today!) in the central Negev. This area, like that of the Safaitic inscriptions, would have lain along the edge of Roman-controlled settlement. They note that “tent sites are located all over the Negev,” even in areas with sufficient rainfall to support sedentary wheat and barley agriculture.⁸¹ In general, he notes the “general dependence of the nomadic tribes on the permanent settlements.” Of the metalware, ceramics, glass and “even millstones and grinding stones,” he says “[v]irtually the entire preserved material culture repertoire of these pastoralists derives from the settled zone.”⁸² Furthermore, “the aggregation and dispersion of nomadic groups may be partially related to agricultural schedules of the sedentary farmers.”⁸³ This interdependence, he argues, was so thorough that we see the disappearance of any archaeological record of nomadic activity in the area after a century or so of Islamic rule, as economic activity shifted elsewhere and the settled areas ceased to thrive.⁸⁴ The nomads living in the area, in other words, chose the area not merely to pasture their herds, but so that they could be near markets where they could sell the animals they raised.

Aside from small-scale trade in ceramics, metal utensils, glassware and the like, at least

⁸¹ Steven A. Rosen and Gideon Avni, “The Edge of the Empire: The Archaeology of Pastoral Nomads in the Southern Negev Highlands in Late Antiquity,” *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 1993, 192. Mayerson notes that, in the late 6th century CE, there were reported to be 12,600 Saracens living in the Sinai, within the Roman frontier zone, the *limes*: Philip Mayerson, “Saracens and Romans: Micro-Macro Relationships,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 274 (May 1, 1989): 72. Of course, sedentary areas and those within the *limes* were not synonymous, but this is a telling figure for the interaction between the sedentary Roman culture and largely nomadic Arabic culture.

⁸² Rosen and Avni, “The Edge of the Empire,” 197.

⁸³ Rosen, “Seasonal Movement,” 160.

⁸⁴ Rosen and Avni, “The Edge of the Empire,” 198. For Mayerson, this picture of the interdependence of the settled and nomadic represents too “peaceful” a picture based on a “micro” archaeological view. Based on literary sources, which he asserts offer a “macro” view, Mayerson paints a picture with “both conflict and symbiosis.” Mayerson, “Saracens and Romans,” 71, 74. Hudhayl’s poetry, in contrast, seems to give us a picture consisting almost entirely of violence and conflict between tribes (see Chapter 2), with nearly no mention of settled folk or indication of symbiosis with them; this does not mean it was not part of their world. It almost certainly would have been and they almost certainly chose to ignore it. The issue of the slave trade, discussed below, illustrates nicely how economic interdependence must have gone hand in hand with conflict and violence.

three ways can be documented by which nomads of the pre- and early-Islamic period would have been integrated into sedentary economies, all with a potential seasonal aspect. At the most obvious, nomadic herders could have sold their animals at market, as we have seen the ethnographic data. Ibn Qutaybah says that January was the best date for healthy camels to be born,⁸⁵ and Rosen assumes a late-spring date for Negev nomads.⁸⁶ The Rwala camels would give birth in spring, but the exact time of birth depends on the time of mating, which occurs most frequently when pasture is good, which for the Rwala was in December or January, resulting in calving around March or April the next year.⁸⁷ The camel markets were in July or August, but representatives of the chief buyers would travel into the desert in spring to arrange for purchase.⁸⁸ The 6th and 7th c. papyri found at Nizzana (or Nessana) in the central Negev, some of which detail agricultural activities, lack mention of any livestock, including goats and sheep as well as camels. Rosen concludes that this portion of the economy may have been almost completely provided by nomadic herders, which, in a pre-modern economy based primarily entirely of food production, is a substantial role.⁸⁹ Hudhayl's poems are entirely silent on this point, but the range of spring dates, varying also from year to year, must have obtained for them for the birth of livestock, and perhaps also related markets.

Secondly, as an aside to the question of herd animals, the magnitude of Mecca's pre-Islamic leather trade has recently been studied by Patricia Crone, complete with some hefty estimates on the leather requirements of the Roman army in Syria.⁹⁰ According to Crone, if Muhammad's tribe, Quraysh, did in fact play any significant role in regional trade (as she had

⁸⁵ Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Anwā'*, 94–96.

⁸⁶ Rosen, "Seasonal Movement," 160.

⁸⁷ Musil, *Manners and Customs*, 600.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 170, 180.

⁸⁹ Rosen, "Seasonal Movement," 160.

⁹⁰ Crone, "Quraysh and the Roman Army," 65–66; 68–69.

previously argued in her 1987 volume, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, was not the case), demand for nothing so much as leather must have come from none other than the Roman army, especially during its war of 602-628 with the Sassanian Persians. A suggestive line of poetry not cited by Crone comes in the form of a peculiar observation by al-Nābighah al-Dhubaynī on a Meccan woman (*ḥirmiyyah*) at the autumn market of Dhū l-Majāz. She gets in the way of his camel, asking him, “are any of you who pack a light camel buying hides?”⁹¹ He dismissively tells her to watch out that his camel not step on her, then says the market is almost finished (*al-bay‘a qad zarimā*).⁹² Abū Dhu‘ayb in passing does mention Dhū l-Majāz in connection with wine imported from Syria, a sexier subject for a poem, after all, than tanned goods.⁹³

Worthy of note is one curious poem in which Abū Khirāsh thanks none other than Dubayyah ibn Ḥaramī l-Sulamī, the last custodian of the pagan idol of ‘Uzzá before it was destroyed by Muhammad’s military commander Khālid ibn al-Walīd,⁹⁴ for a lovely pair of sandals [68]:

After my sandals were torn apart, Dubayyah
had some made for me — what a wonderful friend! —
from the upper thighs of an old bull,
well-stitched together (*‘aqduhumā jamīlū*).

We can go in the evening, with something like these, to enjoy ourselves,

⁹¹ *Hal fī mukhaffifikum man yashtarī l-adamā*: Al-Nābighah no. 23, l. 15, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 26. Jacobi renders *mukhaffif*, wrongly I think, as “leicht bewaffneten Reitern,” (Jacobi, *Studien*, 55.) I follow al-A‘lam al-Shantamarī’s gloss: Al-Nābighah al-Dhubaynī, *Dīwān*, 64.

⁹² Al-Nābighah al-Dhubaynī, *Dīwān*, 64.

⁹³ 1(ADhQ).6.23, *Ash‘ār*, 95.

⁹⁴ For this anecdote see Wellhausen, *Reste*, 34–45; Al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, 21:150; Ibn al-Kalbī, *Aṣnām*, 22–23.

and a hard-walking man can carry out his tasks!⁹⁵

Many Arabic poets, however, display the same acquaintance with leatherwork from time to time, although more often with regard to water skins. Hudhayl's silence regarding any leather trade is otherwise complete. It is perhaps a silence of contempt corroborating the idea that a sedentary, and not a nomadic tribe trucked in such commerce.⁹⁶ In their only overt mention of Quraysh, Abū Khirāsh, like al-Nābighah, shows a scornful attitude towards them, seemingly seeing in Islam's rise nothing other than Quraysh's ascendancy, and lamenting that he has seen a day when they could slay a Hudhalī without retaliation.⁹⁷

Mecca is actually mostly mentioned by Hudhayl in the context of the third facet of sedentary/nomadic economic interaction, as a place to sell slaves. The slave trade was certainly a very real part of life in the region where sedentary and nomadic peoples mingled. Literary sources document nomadic incursions against monastic settlements in the Sinai, as well as major attacks by tribal leaders like the Lakhmid (Naṣrid) al-Mundhir III b. Nu'mān (r. 503 - 554), allied to the Sassanian Persians.⁹⁸ In the possibly apocryphal account of the capture of Theodolus, son of Nilus, an ascetic, dating perhaps to the late 4th or early 5th century, Theodolus reports being taken to Soubaita in the central Negev, "a market town for the disposal of booty," according to Mayerson.⁹⁹ There his captors "announced to the inhabitants

⁹⁵ 65(AKhQ).7.1-3, *Ash'ār*, 1212.

⁹⁶ Abū Dhu'ayb, for example, compares the commotion of a boiling cauldron to the sound of a Meccan [*hirmī*] with multiple wives [*ḍarā'ir*] arguing with each other: 1(ADhQ).5.24, *ibid.*, 79. For contrasting poems by a Qurashī and a Bedouin on the different lifestyles of the townsman and violent nomad, cf. Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm," 140, 141, drawing on Balādhurī. For a general account of Mecca's relationship with Arabian tribes, see Kister, "Mecca and the Tribes of Arabia: Some Notes on Their Relations." *Muf.* no. 89 also contrasts the misery of a nomadic summer with life for wealthy Qurashīs.

⁹⁷ 65(AKhQ).13.2, *Ash'ār*, 1229.

⁹⁸ Numerous literary documentations of raids and slave-taking are given in Mayerson, "Saracens and Romans," 73-77. Cf. also al-Ṭabarī, *Perser und Araber*, 170, 180.

⁹⁹ Philip Mayerson, "The Desert of Southern Palestine According to Byzantine Sources," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107, no. 2 (April 15, 1963): 166.

that I was for sale,” but after no one offered more than two gold pieces, he was taken outside the city gates, apparently because of a taboo on shedding blood within the town, a practice evocative of Mecca’s *ḥaram* or sacred precinct, where the Saracens “placed a bare sword on my neck and announced to all that they would behead me if someone did not make a [suitable] offer.”¹⁰⁰ Mecca’s economic function for Hudhayl in this regard is evident, for example, in a poem by Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid mocking an opponent who had been captured: “you have been sold, and made a slave, at Mecca, where bones rot.”¹⁰¹

Theodolus had been captured in a surprise raid typical of those copiously described in Hudhayl’s “battle days” (*ayyām*) accounts, and these raids too probably also had a seasonal component. As we have seen in the modern ethnographies, summering by fixed water sources would have lent itself to raids, although sedentary folk were always vulnerably stationary. The sixth century pilgrim to the Christian holy sites, Antoninus of Placentia, notes while traveling through Sinai that the Saracens observed a certain festival which prohibited combat.¹⁰² Around Mecca, the summer would probably have been bracketed by the sacred months of Rajab (May/June) and Dhū l-Qa‘dah, Dhū l-Ḥijjah, and al-Muḥarram (September - December), during which most of the Meccan markets (‘Ukāz, Dhū l-Majāz, Majannah, ‘Arafāt)¹⁰³ mentioned by

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ 7(MKHS).14.5, *Ash‘ār*, 395

¹⁰² Philip Mayerson, “The Pilgrim Routes to Mount Sinai and the Armenians,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 32, no. 1 (January 1, 1982): 46–47.

¹⁰³ A.J. Wensinck and C.E. Bosworth, “Mawsim,” *EI*²; Kister, “Mecca and Tamīm,” 118; Bonner, “Commerce and Migration in Arabia before Islam.” Between 527–32, Byzantine diplomats Julian and Nonnosus concluded agreement with Qays b. Salama b. al-Ḥārith of Kinda, part of a larger diplomatic strategy of cementing alliances between Byzantium’s territories in Egypt and Yemen, a sphere of influence opposed to the Sassanians, according to Irfan Shahid (“Byzantium and Kinda”). The abstract of Nonnosus’s description of his mission, preserved in Photius’s (10th c.) *Bibliotheca*, mentions that Nonnosus observed that the “Saracens” in “Phoenikon” and “beyond the Taurenian mountains” “have a sacred-meeting place consecrated to one of the gods, where they assemble twice a year,” once for a month in the middle of the spring and then for two months after the summer solstice, during which they observe a peace. This seems to correspond roughly to the *ḥarām* months, Rajab in the spring and then two of the three autumnal months of Dhū al-Qa‘dah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah and al-Muḥarram (I. Kavar,

Hudhayl,¹⁰⁴ as well as the pilgrimage, were reported to have taken place.

All told then, drawing on reconstructions based on ethnographic, archaeological evidence and non-Arabic literary sources, we would expect a spring calving season, summer raids, and autumn date harvests to represent the most significant economic seasons for Arabian bedouin. As it stands Hudhayl, whose relationship with sedentary folk seems to have revolved around relations with Mecca and nearby al-Ṭā'if, only mention summer raiding and autumn markets in the most general terms.

3.4. Hudhayl's Poetic Geography

Hudhayl's poetry cannot, except occasionally, really be taken seriously as a material description for 7th and 8th century nomadic life, but that is not the purpose of this study. Given the nature of early Arabic poetry's generic conventions, the above description of nomadic seasonal existence probably cannot greatly be improved upon. Aside from the difficulties of transmission and authenticity, matching statements from a poetic text to some ethnographic or archaeological datum, although suggestive, will always be probabilistic. Poets, nomads and especially nomadic poets have entirely different standards of phenomenological "orientedness" than is required for the objective reporting modern historians would like. Hudhayl's poetry is, however, invaluable precisely for describing their phenomenological horizon, that cultural matrix in which the ecological, economic and social facets of reality presented themselves as a unified mode of existence. In each of these aspects, the utmost horizon of Hudhayl's identity up until the generation of Islam was a Ḥijāzī identity, as a result

"Byzantium and Kinda," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 53, no. 2 (1960): 57–73.).

¹⁰⁴ See al-Sukkarī, *Ash'ār*, index. and below.

of the climatic regime they relied upon, and in terms of their sense of relations of trade, alliance and conflict with neighboring regions.

Ecologically, the Hudhalī world, like that of the rest of nomadic Arabia, revolved around spring and autumn rains, as is evident from the limited range of *anwā'* used to describe rainfall. Their rain description is vital for forming their sense of tribal geography located between the Red Sea, which is often invoked, and the central plateau of the Arabian peninsula, Najd. The winds most often evoked to describe rain-storms come from the south, from Yemen and Hadramawt on the Indian Ocean. These would, in all likelihood, correspond to the autumn Suhaili wind as observed today.¹⁰⁵ The rainfall as weather systems moved inland would be produced as a result of orographic precipitation, in Hudhalī territory in the mountainous areas east of Mecca before Najd, rising up from the Tihāmah coastal plain. Hudhayl describes rains in conventional terms found throughout pre-Islamic poetry, comparing thunder to camels' groans and rain to streaming camel udders or bursting leather water skins. However, the geography of moving rain clouds is unique to Hudhayl, forming the ecological basis for their conception of themselves as a Ḥijāzī tribe.

Hudhayl conceived of themselves as nomadic, in opposition to sedentary Arabs. Their migratory patterns also seem to resemble, in the most general terms, those already sketched out for the northern Arabian peninsula in general. Everywhere a dichotomy of highland/lowland is presumed, but rarely thematized as a subject. Fixed summer watering places seem to be presupposed as well as spring and autumn pastures. Summers are consistently referring to as a time of conflict and raiding. The primary season for interacting with other tribes was the market fair of 'Ukāz in the autumn month of Dhū l-Qa'dah and the

¹⁰⁵ Edgell, *Arabian Deserts*, 54, 57.

pilgrimage in the following month of Dhū l-Ḥijjah (September through late October), before or around the time the autumn rains. Hudhalī poets mention romantic trysts occurring at this time. Spring pastures were probably significant social occasions as well, but there are no unequivocal descriptions of amorous liaisons during times of tribal amalgamation in the spring, an apparent shift of emphasis from tribes of the eastern peninsula. Central for Hudhayl's sense of itself as Ḥijāzī, however, the beloveds are more often than not from other tribes, which migrate to Tihāmah and Najd.

Poetic descriptions of the beloved also contain references to Hudhayl's economic sense of themselves in the world, located very clearly on an axis ranging from Syria to Yemen, with virtually no references to Iraq, the sub-Sassanian Lakhmid (Naṣrid) capitol of Ḥīrah on the Euphrates, or any region more eastern than Najd, the central plateau. Encounters with the beloved frequently take place during the pilgrimage, and her lips are often compared to wine, the importation of which is then described in careful detail. Like migratory patterns, then, markets and trade routes are indirectly alluded to, but never directly described. The source of certain well-crafted products, usually weapons, is also often identified, and here as well, a Syria-Yemen axis is much in evidence.

3.4.1. Hudhayl's Poetic Geography: *Anwā'*, Rain Storms, the Red Sea

In discussing Hudhayl's use of *anwā'*, a distinction needs to be made between expressions of geography and time on the one hand (which I will call ecological), and more or less rhetorical expressions on the other. Abū Dhu'ayb exemplifies the former [69]:

[The onagers] arrived at the water [they were making for] when Capella was sitting
over Gemini (*al-najm*), not preceding it (*lā yatatalla'ū*),

like a *maysir*-arrow dealer above his gamblers,
and they plunged into the sweet, brisk water,
pebbly bottomed, swirling around the knees —¹⁰⁶

The speaker is stating that the onagers moved from one watering place to another in mid-May, as summer began. In contrast, when Abū Ṣakhr praises a patron using astronomical imagery, referring to the “two calves,” two stars that revolve around Polaris [70]:

You combine the generosity of beardless youths, but without [their] levity,
to the determination [of an older man], when a desperate calamity occurs,
along with a dignity that takes the Pole Star’s two calves (*al-farqadayn*)
by their forelock,
not like those beguiled by money (*zakhrafa l-amwāl*), with flagging brains.¹⁰⁷

While references like those of Abū Dhu’ayb are of course also intertextual and profoundly literary, Abū Ṣakhr’s reference to the “two calves” is more so. The speaker is alluding to the famous ‘Alqamah ibn ‘Abadah’s praise of the 6th century Byzantine vassal, the Jafnid/Ghassānid al-Ḥārith ibn Jabalah (“towards thee the Polestars led” (*hadānī ilayka l-farqadānī*)).¹⁰⁸ The basis of comparison for these poets is elevation, a physical elevation in the stars’ case, and a moral one in the patrons’. However, the stars’ name, the two *farqads*, signifies two camel or oryx calves more than two months old. Via personification, Abū Ṣakhr plays with this meaning as well as that of elevation exploited by ‘Alqamah: the “dignity” of the patron exercises the utmost control (leading young calves) over something extremely elevated (as stars). This verbal dexterity has less concern for the lived world usage of these stars’ names.

¹⁰⁶ 1(AdhQ).1.27–28, *Ash’ār*, 20.

¹⁰⁷ 61(AṢ).8.34, *ibid.*, 948.

¹⁰⁸ *Muf.* no. 119, l. 21; the translation is Lyall’s: Al-Mufaḍḍal, *Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyat*, 393; Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:330.

Not only is Abū Dhu'ayb concerned with depicting something physical (early summer heat), while Abū Ṣakhr is dealing in a moral trait, but the self-conscious allusiveness of Abū Ṣakhr and play on the dual meanings of *farqad* indicate a deeper concern for the textual surface of the poetry than his predecessors. Another later poet, Umayyah ibn Abī 'Ā'idh, even invents constellations, in the context of a contest over two women's superiority: the "Wide-eyed Goat" sets in the night sky when the other, the "White Gazelle," representing his favorite, rises.¹⁰⁹

Between the poets of generations I-III (of Hell's schema)¹¹⁰ and the poets of generation V, there is a clear increase both in *anwā'* imagery as well as an increase in the rhetorical, as opposed to ecological use of the *anwā'*. Of the 17 uses in the *Ash'ār* of *anwā'* imagery, nine are ecological and eight are figurative.¹¹¹ Of the rhetorical usages, only one instance is from a generation II poet, while four of the ecological usages are from generation I or III poets. There is thus a marked tendency towards stylization of the *anwā'* over time, but it also follows, interestingly, that regardless of ecological or rhetorical usage, the usage of any and all *anwā'* imagery also increases with time; five out of the eighteen instances of *anwā'* imagery are from generation III or before, while thirteen are from generation V. There are six instances of ecological usage of the imagery from the generation V poets as against four instances from generations I through III.¹¹² The poets thus seem to use even ecological *anwā'* with more

¹⁰⁹ 10(UA'A).7.1, *Ash'ār*, 526.

¹¹⁰ See Appendix A.

¹¹¹ 1(ADhQ).1.27, *Ash'ār*, 20; 1(ADhQ).18.9, 172; 28(B'IKh).1.6, 742; 61(AṢ).4.9, 932; 61(AṢ).6.2-3, 936; 61(AṢ).15.20, 970; 62(MḤQ).5.16-18, 1032; 63(AKJ).1.46, 1079; and 60('AAMKh), *Ash'ār*, 1743, are ecological, while 61(AṢ).8.34-35, *Ash'ār*, 948; 10(UA'A).5.6, 521; 10(UA'A).6.11, 523; 10(UA'A).10.11, 533; 66(ML).6.13, 1283; 61(AṢ).10.25, 955; 61(AṢ).14.30, 967 and 61(AṢ).9.8, 951 are rhetorical.

¹¹² The quantity of poetry from the two groups (generations I-III and generation V) are roughly comparable, or perhaps there is more earlier poetry in the *Ash'ār*, so it is not an issue of preservation. My impression, based on extant Tamīmī poetry, is that their use of *anwā'* also increases, particularly with Dhū al-Rummah's poetry and it is also the case that Ibn Qutaybah draws overwhelmingly from Umayyad poets for his citations of *anwā'* imagery. This seems to be a feature of the conventionalization of poetry during the Umayyad period, before the "modernist" *muḥdath* poetry of the early 2nd century Hijrī.

frequency as a way to stylistically denote a nomadic ethos, so that an increase in stylization initially corresponds to, rather than opposes, an increasingly self-conscious bedouin tenor to the poetry.

The stars used unequivocally to denote a vernal season are al-Simāk,¹¹³ which is highly conventional, al-‘Ayyūq,¹¹⁴ a part of the Pleiades, which is only slightly less so, and perhaps al-Jawzā’ (Gemini).¹¹⁵ For the autumnal seasons, al-‘Ayyūq and (probably) al-Jawzā’ are also used, as is al-Dalw, al-Simāk al-A‘zal (Spica) and (probably) Thurayyā (Pleiades).¹¹⁶ Several of these are subject to interpretation, but none are especially unconventional. Overall, the stars used to denote rain are the conventional Gemini, al-Dalw, and probably the Pleiades. There are no really clear instances of spring rain being described, and the impression of the poems is that the autumn season was more symbolically important for Hudhayl in terms of amorous encounters and meetings with other tribes, as well as in terms of anticipated rains after a hot summer.

Hudhayl’s poems, like those of all tribes, feature lengthy descriptions of rain, although never, as in the *Mu‘allaqah* of Imru’ al-Qays, as a direct, independent object of description (i.e. *al-gharaḍ*). When rain is described at length, it is almost always in the context of the *nasīb* (amatory prelude). Of the fifteen instances of rain descriptions of two lines or more, all but five take place in the *nasīb*. The exceptions are two additional two-line instances of rain description, one in a praise section where the patron’s generosity is compared to rain, and

¹¹³ 62(MḤQ).5.16-18, *Ash‘ār*, 1032.

¹¹⁴ 1(ADhQ).1.27, *ibid.*, 20. Note that if the star is rising or setting, or if the time of night is specified, the same star can denote different seasons.

¹¹⁵ 61(AṢ).6.2-3, *ibid.*, 936, and 10(UA‘A).3.31, 500.

¹¹⁶ 1(ADhQ).18.9, *ibid.*, 172; 28(B‘IKh).1.6, 742; 61(AṢ).4.9, 932; 63(AKJ).1.46, 1079; and 61(AṢ).15.20, 970.

another in an onager section where the animals seek out pasture.¹¹⁷ A third short instance describes the freshness of water mixed with wine to which the beloved's lips are compared.¹¹⁸ In two elegies, the poet invokes rain to fall upon the deceased's tomb.¹¹⁹ All but one of these outlying instances are found in poems from generation V. But as for the *nasīb*, in eight cases, the speaker either describes rain falling on the distant beloved, once actually invoking that rain, and in seven of those, by far the most common motif, the speaker asks rhetorically if he has seen lightning in the distance from rain falling on the beloved.¹²⁰ There are two instances in which, independent of the beloved, rain is described as falling over the abandoned encampments as the passage of time is described.¹²¹

Thus, the earlier motif, and that most characteristic of Hudhayl, is the depiction of rain in the *nasīb* (amatory prelude) passages where the speaker weeps over the beloved's *aṭlāl* and then describes rain coming from the beloved's current direction somewhere far off. Of the ten *nasīb* rain-descriptions, all but two originate in generation II or III poems. The two generation V poems with lengthy rain-descriptions in the *nasīb* are both of the type that describe the rain falling on *aṭlāl* themselves to illustrate the passage of time, rather than in any connection with the beloved. All of the motifs and images associated with rain and the *nasīb* are highly conventional, but it is noteworthy perhaps that the particular method of describing time's passage over the *aṭlāl*, illustrated so beautifully and effectively by Labīd (d. c. 41/ 661), a

¹¹⁷ 61(AṢ).8.35-36, *ibid.*, 948, and 64(SJK).9.7, 1173.

¹¹⁸ 61(AṢ).10.14, *ibid.*, 954. This is a slightly elaborated version of an image found in passing in earlier poems, such as 1(ADhQ).9.13.

¹¹⁹ Burayq 28.1.6-9, *ibid.*, 742-43, and 61(AṢ).1.36-58, 919-22. Burayq is dated to generation III.

¹²⁰ 1(ADhQ).16.10-14, *ibid.*, 164-76; 1(ADhQ).20.2-3, 178; 1(ADhQ).25.5-15, 197-201; 3(ṢGhKh).17.2-14, 294-98; 64(SJK).1.14-20, 1103-05; 64(SJK).10.8-13, 1176-77, and 66(ML).1.11-21, 1254-58. The one case that lacks a rhetorical question or sighting of the lightning is 1(ADhQ).11.6-17, 128-133.

¹²¹ 10(UA'A).10.4-18, *ibid.*, 515-16, and 61(AṢ).17.5-12, 972-73. As opposed to the rains falling on the *aṭlāl* after the beloved's departure, which emphasizes the pastness of her departure, a somewhat unusual example may be added to those enumerated, where Mulayḥ (generation V) describes, in two lines, rains that had fallen on the beloved's pastures while her tribe dwelt there, but in the time frame of the poem, they are departing.

mukhaḍram poet of the ‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah, in his *Mu‘allaqah*, is markedly absent from Hudhayl’s poetry until generation V, that is, two generations after his text’s composition. This would seem to indicate that Hudhayl were somewhat isolated from their Najdī neighbors in poetic development, only adopting other regional techniques in the Umayyad period, after they had become part of a common “Arabic” repertoire. A comparison of the “Hudhalī”-type of rain description, which is by no means absent from other tribes, is worth contrasting with Labīd’s. Al-Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah composes [71]:

Did the beloved’s caravan leaving at dawn stir your heart?

They rode hard through the night, their leader not turning aside.

They set out from Dhāt al-Sulaym

like ships of the sea with the west wind at their back.

They went into the distance in every direction,

on long-lasting treks,

heading towards Najd al-Sharā, making their way straight,

for it was their accustomed route.

[...] ¹²²

From your direction in the night’s early hours, my heart beat faster at the sight

of lightning dispersing [the clouds of] dark-gray camels, some hobbled,

flying and bobbing.

I watched sleeplessly, until the broad clouds massed together

were stirred by lightning that made them fly apart.

[The clouds] hang low over the Ḍāḥ wadi and the watery sands (*nabṭā*) ¹²³ of Usāla,

¹²² A fragmentary description of the beloved’s beauty is omitted.

then Marr, its heights and the areas around it,
then Raḥb, then the Furūṭ mountains, then Kāfir,
then Nakhlah, with its fallen acacias and lote-trees.
A slow cloud rises up in the south, abutting the highlands
at al-Sarāh, rumbling and dark —
it came down to drape al-Mulimm and its hill,
setting the lofty *arāk* trees to rustling.¹²⁴

The speaker narrates the departure of the beloved, as found so often in pre- and early Islamic poetry, and apparently, the entire sequence is recollected, as indicated by the initial rhetorical question. Within the recollected sequence, the beloved was first present with the speaker. After departing, he follows her departing caravan with his eyes, until they reach what they were seeking, rain and pasture, and the opportunity arises for the poet to describe the clouds' trajectory, their lightning, the sound of their thunder, and the subsequent effect of the rainy torrents on plants and trees. The transition from, apparently, dry to rainy, would seem to indicate that the season is late summer, turning into autumn, a point that will be returned to.

Labīd's text is more complex. He begins in the present: he describes the effaced traces of the beloved's former spring encampment, abandoned years ago, but part of this description consists of an imagined scene of further years' spring rains falling over the encampments *after her departure from them*. The rains described are gentler than those often found in pre-Islamic poetry, and the effect of describing the cycles of nature is to embody a ghostly sense of lost time for which this poem is so justly famous. Only after describing the time which has passed

¹²³ That is, where water can be reached easily by digging, a well not being necessary. Cf. Bräunlich, *Well*, 18/65.

¹²⁴ 64(SJK)10.1-4, 8-13, *Ash'ār*, 1175-77.

over the abodes does he return to the immediacy of the present, at which point he returns back to the original point of her departure. She disappears into the mirage (*al-sarāb*), indicating that we are dealing with a transition from spring to summer, utterly different from the summer-to-autumn transition presupposed by Sā'idah's passage. Labīd's text deserves to be quoted at some length, both for its beauty, and as it contrasts with Hudhalī poetics on a number of other points besides its rain description [72].

The tent marks in Minan are worn away, where she encamped
and where she alighted, Ghawl and Rijām left to the wild.
And the torrent beds of Rayyān naked tracings,
worn thin, like inscriptions carved in flattened stones,
Dung-stained ground that tells the years passed
since human presence, months of peace and months gone by,
and months of war,
Replenished by the rain stars of spring, and struck
by thunderclap downpour, or steady, fine-dropped, silken rains,
From every kind of cloud passing at night,
darkening the morning, or rumbling in peals across the evening sky.
The white pondcress has shot upward, and on the wadi slopes,
gazelles among their newborn, and ostriches,
And the wide-of-eyes, silent above monthling fawns.
On the open terrain, yearlings cluster.
The rills and the runlets uncovered marks like the script
of faded scrolls restored with pens of reed,

Or tracings of a tattoo woman: beneath the indigo powder,
 sifted in spirals, the form begins to reappear.
 I stopped to question them. How is one to question
 deaf, immutable, inarticulate stones?
 Stripped bare now, what once held all that tribe —
 they left in the early morning leaving a trench and some thatch,
 They stirred longing in you as they packed their howdahs,
 disappearing in the lairs of cotton, frames creaking [...]

They faded into the distance appearing in the shimmering haze (*al-sarāb*)
 like tamarisks and boulders on the slopes of Bīshah.
 But why recall Nawār? She's gone.
 Her ties and bonds to you are broken.
 The Murrite lady has lodged in Fayd,
 then joined up with the Ḥijāzī clans ...¹²⁵

Deviations from what might be called more canonical poets like Labīd would seem to indicate that Hudhayl, with respect to rain description, was isolated to a certain extent from poetic trends found in nearby tribes. The shift between generations II/III and V also indicates that description of rain, like the imagery of the *anwā'*, both associated with bedouin life as they are, actually increase with time rather than vice versa. Thus, as with the *anwā'*, elements of the nomadic life world become denser in the texts as a result of stylistic development, not of closer contact with a nomadic lifestyle, as the period after the conquests must have been characterized by some increase in urbanization of the tribes in the military cantonments of

¹²⁵ Adapted from Sells, *Desert Tracings*, 35, 36.

the campaigns (*amṣār*). The increase in rain and *anwā'* imagery is especially striking as the rain descriptions of later generations, like those descriptions of *anwā'*, often employ a rich and abstruse diction quite at odds with the simplification of *ghazal*'s vocabulary taking place in the same period, and indeed often in the same poems.¹²⁶

The longer depictions of rain imagery convey the tribe's sense of its place in the world. To a disappointingly limited extent, we can also learn a small amount about the timing of rains. Abū Dhu'ayb for example, refers to the *armiyyah* rain of Yemen, a late summer or early fall rain, after which wild pomegranates grow from which bees gather honey that ultimately ends up being traded in the Mecca area, around the time of the pilgrimage which perhaps took place in late October.¹²⁷ Abū Dhu'ayb and Abū Ṣakhr also both refer in passing to vernal Rajab rains.¹²⁸ The Hudhalī *nasīb*, however, seems to take place in autumn; in Abū Dhu'ayb's poems, his speakers are said to meet their beloveds while on the *ḥajj* pilgrimage or at 'Ukāz market, held in Dhū l-Qa'dah, probably in September or October.¹²⁹ As the rain passages mostly follow the *nasīb*,¹³⁰ as seen in the passage of al-Sā'ida cited above, they apparently represent the autumn rains. Labīd (see above, p. 35) is not the only Najdī poet to describe his beloved

¹²⁶ An example of this would be Mulayḥ 62(MḤQ).2.25-42, *Ash'ār*, 1010-12. In ll. 1-6 in a description of the departure of the beloved, the speaker carefully depicts the details of rutting camels and rain-clouds' movement, elements certainly associated with everyday nomadic life but found less often, for example, in the 'Udhrī love poetry of Majnūn Laylā or Jamīl Buthaynah. In contrast, from ll. 25, the speaker seems to begin again, and here we find a sequence of images endemic to 'Udhrī poetry: imagery of death in l. 34, ominous crows portending departure in l. 28 and the beloved's glance figured as an arrow in l. 31. This combination of styles is very common in generation V Hudhalī poets, and probably the result of a rapidly-evolving stylistics, not merely of accretions occurring as a result of poor transmission.

¹²⁷ 1(ADhQ).6.28, *ibid.*, 96.

¹²⁸ 1(ADhQ).12.17, *ibid.*, 145, and 61(AṢ).10.14, 954.

¹²⁹ 1(ADhQ).23.1-2, *ibid.*, 183. In 1(ADhQ).9.6, 113, the beloved refers to having met with the speaker during the pilgrimage, while at at Ḥujūn and al-Sarar, both near Mecca. The use of the star 'Ayyūq (Capella) to indicate a November tryst with the beloved has already been cited above (1(ADhQ).18.9, 172), as has the use of al-Simāk al-A'zal for an October rendez-vous (63(AKJ).1.46, 1079).

¹³⁰ This is most evident in the rain passage of Sā'idah, 64(SJK).1-13, *ibid.*, 1097-1109, discussed further below.

disappearing into the summer mirage,¹³¹ and the preference for describing an autumnal departure of the beloved would certainly set Hudhayl apart from the bulk of preserved pre-Islamic poets. The ecological variations between the Ḥijāzī and Najdī regions would seem to at least partially explain this dichotomy.

Some Hudhalī passages however, do describe the beloved's spring encampment, as when the speaker in a text by Abū Dhu'ayb comes across the abodes of Umm al-Rāhin, now abandoned, and reminisces on how she dwelt there "through Jumādá's two months and the two months of Şafar," that is, from November to January (Şafar) and then from March through May (Jumādá).¹³² This, however, is in the context of the speaker recognizing and reminiscing over the abodes, not of the "morning of departure." The temporal point at which he is speaking could either be summer, which is patently the case elsewhere,¹³³ or the autumn or the spring rainy seasons. In another poem, he describes how hostile raiders have come between him and Laylá.¹³⁴ If these are summer raids, they must have bid adieu in the spring. Too rigid a seasonal paradigm certainly can not be inferred from the available texts, but as they bear the more intense significance in the ethnographic descriptions, it seems as if the autumnal rains' were more important for defining Hudhayl's seasonal sense of time, perhaps to the point of ritual.

Regardless of their timing, extended rain storm descriptions of the Hudhalīs do depict a very specific regional imagination. In three poems, from poets dated to generations II, III and V, the rain storm is said specifically to have originated "off the coast (*ayqah*)," over "the Bāḍī

¹³¹ For citations, c.f. Jacobi, *Studien*, 27–35.

¹³² 1(ADhQ).9.1-4, *Ash'ār*, 112–13. The inverted naming here of first the spring months and then the autumn ones here might lead us to suppose he is using the dating found in al-Wāqidī (cf. Wellhausen, *Reste*, 96), or it may reflect metrical necessity.

¹³³ 9(MKhKh).2.2, *Ash'ār*, 444.

¹³⁴ 1(ADhQ).4.1-2, *ibid.*, 65.

islands,” or “over the sea (*al-baḥr*).”¹³⁵ This is evidently a description of storms arising off of the Red Sea, although very little acquaintance with the sea is otherwise in any evidence. In four passages, the winds or clouds for these storms are said to come from the south, from Yemen, or from Hadramawt.¹³⁶ The first rainfall is often said to fall on Tihāmah or some other area near the Red Sea coast.¹³⁷ The cloud then moves inland, presumably to the mountainous territory occupied by the Hudhalīs, where rain could be produced by orographic precipitation. Sā’idah ibn Ju’ayyah mentions the Sarāh mountains, Najd, and a Mount Shamaṣīr near Mecca.¹³⁸ These basic elements of the Hudhalī rain description, namely, the origin over the water, the southern and eastern winds, and the precipitation over elevation, seem to be generally consistent across the different generations.¹³⁹ The entire sequence bears a fairly striking resemblance to Psalm 29, where the voice of the Lord is “upon the waters,” before moving over Levantine topography, apparently in an example of orographic precipitation, and laying low “the cedars of Lebanon.”

Al-Sā’idah ibn Ju’ayyah illustrates this track of the storms very vividly. His speaker, as above (p. 33), again begins the rain description after following the beloved with his eyes, and catching sight of lightning [73]:

Did lightning come from your direction, its flash

¹³⁵ 66(ML).1.11-21, *ibid.*, 1254–58; 64(SJK).1.14-20, 1103–05; 61(AṢ).1.36-58, 919–22. Abū Khirāsh, in an onager episode, seems to refer to the sun setting over the Baḍī islands (65(AKhQ).1.11, 1191).

¹³⁶ 64(SJK).1.15, *ibid.*, 1103; 1(ADhQ).25.11, 199; 61(AṢ).8.35-36, 948; 61(AṢ).17.7, 972, and 61(AṢ).1.38, 919. Ibn Qutaybah, discussing which region produces rain, cites Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī as describing rain coming from the south, while the Najdī poet Ṭarafah attributes rain to the *ṣabā* breeze blowing from the east: *Kitāb al-Anwā’*, 164.

¹³⁷ 1(ADhQ).20.2, *Ash’ār*, 178 (the place name mentioned here, al-Ghimād, is said in *Mu’jam al-Buldān* (s.v.) to like near the coast from Mecca); 61(AṢ).1.36-42, 918–19.

¹³⁸ 64(SJK).1.20, 1005; 64(SJK).9.7, 1173; 64(SJK).10.12, 1177.

¹³⁹ Other rains are of course mentioned. Umayyah ibn Abī ‘Ā’idh, a generation V poet, describes an improbably rhetorical-sounding slew of rains coming simultaneously from the Ḥijāz, Tihāmah, Najd, Yemen and Syria (10(UA’A).10.4-18, *ibid.*, 515–16). The most striking exception to the pattern described here is Abū Dhu’ayb’s description of a rain storm that “drank from the sea,” and yet features “east winds” and “winds from the highlands [*najdiyyah*]” (1(ADhQ).11.6-12, 128–30).

like a forest through a conflagration has just been set raging?
 A wandering cloud, lingering over the Baḍīr islands for eight nights
 twisting along the coast, driven by the south wind;
 when it came (*ra'á*) to 'Amq, its flanks echo
 with thunder like a strong, recalcitrant young camel,
 and when it came to Na'mān, it let down stacks of cloud,
 turbid and heavy, the way that [weary] travelers throw themselves
 to the ground,
 and the lote-trees are uprooted, and the *ath'ab* plants
 sent sliding downhill between 'Ayn and Nabāh,
 and the tamarisks (*athl*) of Sa'yā and Ḥalya —
 the torrents of 'Ulyab wadi and black stone gullies sweep down palms along.
 Then I could see no further, and a peak of [the clouds] in the distance
 rose (*aṣbaḥa jālisan*) over Najd.¹⁴⁰

The relationship of the Hudhalīs to the Red Sea is worth noting briefly, as Mecca is less than fifty miles inland from the coast, an easy two-day journey on camel. Like most pre- and early-Islamic classical Arabic poets, Hudhalī poets make often elaborate comparisons of objects or people from their nomadic surroundings to ships and pearls, but without describing either directly. Ṣakhr al-Ghayy compares advancing rain clouds to the “ships of foreigners (*a'jam*),” and Sā'idah, conventionally, compares the beloved's departing lofty camel litters to ships sailing.¹⁴¹ These are both generation III poets, the earliest generation in which any such

¹⁴⁰ 64(SJK).1.14-20, *ibid.*, 1103-05.

¹⁴¹ 3(ṢGhKh).17.3, *ibid.*, 295; 64(SJK).10.2, 1175.

references are found, and Ṣakhr's phrasing in particular seems to indicate a knowledge of maritime commerce, but not an intimate or direct knowledge. As has often been noted, Ṭarafah ibn 'Abd of the Qays ibn Tha'labah clan of Bakr, a Najdī tribe with connections to Ḥīrah, quite carefully describes (also apparently non-Arab) ships seen perhaps in the Persian Gulf.¹⁴² It is possible, as Ṭarafah was said to have lived in the 6th century, that Ṣakhr is imitating eastern poets, rather than speaking from experience. Jacobi has noted that Abū Dhu'ayb of Hudhayl seems to draw on the 6th century poet al-Musayyib ibn 'Alas, also associated with the Qays ibn Tha'labah clan, in his comparison of the beloved to a pearl, which is then extended into a description of the pearl diver.¹⁴³

Ibn Burrāq seems to reflect conditions at the time of the conquest when he complains [74]:

O, is there no respite from cares?

And shall I escape from riding upon the sea?

Is a curve-[keeled boat] every evening to throw

us down into the dark and dusky surging flow?

Its prow (*kalkal*) insistently splits the water,

despite the crashing of briny waves,

as if the crests that its swelling wake throes off

are young animals in the pastures together.¹⁴⁴

His nomadic sensibility, already evident in the first line as he expresses his distaste for travel by sea, also appears when he compares the cresting waters of the ship's wake to young

¹⁴² Cf. his *Mu'allaqah*, l. 3-5, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 54-55 and George Fadlo Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Expanded ed., Princeton Paperbacks (Princeton University Press, 1995), 3, 42.

¹⁴³ Jacobi, "Die Anfänge der arabischen Ġazalpoesie," 220; 1(ADhQ).11.18-22, *Ash'ār*, 133-34.

¹⁴⁴ 55(IB).2, *Ash'ār*, 878

animals bounding in a pasture. The ship's prow is called a *kalklal*, literally the sternum of a camel. The text offers a vivid example of the way in which social and historical change underlie new poetics.

The ship motif becomes much more frequent in the work of Mulayḥ ibn al-Ḥakam, a generation V poet, who mentions ships in his *nasīb*s no fewer than four times.¹⁴⁵ Although the quantity of references would seem to indicate that the image has become highly repeatable and thus stereotyped, the speaker also refers to ships of “Murays,” identified by Hans Hermann Bräu as islands off the coast of Nubia.¹⁴⁶ Such specificity could reflect actual historical conditions at the time of composition. Thus, with regard to both ship and pearl imagery, it is difficult to generalize accurately regarding whether listeners would have associated these images, if anything, with the neighboring Red Sea, or with poetic motifs from the eastern Arabian peninsula, but it seems as if an eastern style has been adapted to the Ḥijāzī milieu.

3.4.2. Hudhayl's Poetic Geography: Seasonal Migration

Hudhayl's tribal conception of their place in the world is rooted in a dichotomy between lowlands and highlands. Abū Dhu'ayb, mocking the Naṣr ibn Mu'āwiyah tribe of Hawāzin after a defeat, mentions how a now-widowed woman of the tribe had taken “refuge in the high places in the hills.”¹⁴⁷ This is evocative of the poem by al-Akhnas ibn Shihāb al-Taghlibī cited above (p. 6), where he describes the upland areas to which all tribes take

¹⁴⁵ 62(MḤQ).2.22, *ibid.*, 1010; 62(MḤQ).3.7, 11, *ibid.*, 1014; 62(MḤQ).5.13, 30, 37, *ibid.*, 1032, 1034–35; 62(MḤQ).10.37, 1060. Umayyah ibn Abī 'Ā'idh, also generation V, mentions ships once (10(UA'A).4.14, 516).

¹⁴⁶ Bräu, “Mulayḥ b. al-Ḥakam,” 285. The island is called Marīsa in *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, s.v.

¹⁴⁷ 1(ADhQ).15b.3, *Ash'ār*, 160. Similarly, Abū Buthayna mocks the Kinānī Sāriyah ibn Zunaym, saying “shouldn't you take refuge on high ground [from me]?” 26(ABŞ).5.3, 731.

refuge.¹⁴⁸ Tribes defending themselves are often said to retreat into interior uplands. We find that Quraysh was said by Ṭabarī to seek refuge against Abrahah in the mountains around Mecca, which in turn reminds one of the Prophet Muḥammad, in the period leading up to the first revelation of the Quran, seeking solitude in the cave of Ḥirā'.¹⁴⁹ Joshua the Stylite reports that “Tha‘labite” Arab tribes, allied with the Romans, attacked al-Ḥīrah, whose inhabitants “withdrew into the inner desert.”¹⁵⁰ Al-Akhnas, in his poem on Arabian tribes’ territories cited above, uses the word *ḥijāz* to mean “a barrier” or “refuge,” precisely to boast that Taghlib, a tribe of lower Mesopotamia, requires no such mountainous haven. To a large extent this meaning is distinguished from the region, *al-Ḥijāz*, by the use of the definite article *al-*. Hudhayl certainly speaks of *al-ḥijāz* as a region, but this sense blends at times with al-Akhnas’s sense, as when Mālik ibn Khālid, in an invective against the neighboring Naṣr tribe of the Hawāzin, boasts, “cut out the threats . . . haven’t you seen that we’re a people of a land of hard black rock, taking refuge (*dhī ḥijāz*) in stony highlands and slopes?”¹⁵¹ Both meanings are also perhaps discernible when Umayyah ibn Abī ‘Ā’idh boasts that “Hudhayl pastures safely (*ḥamaw*) in the heart of the Ḥijāz (*al-Ḥijāz*).”¹⁵² Certain elevated territories were more especially the prerogative of certain tribes; they would seek security there and boast over their control over them.

Mountainous areas were also associated with winter pasturing, and lowlands with

¹⁴⁸ *Muf. no. 41*, ll. 8-16, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 203–206.

¹⁴⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Ṭabarī*, 2:134; al-Ṭabarī, *Perser und Araber*, 212. When the Prophet Muḥammad sought to attack Banū Liḥyān of Hudhayl, they also took refuge in mountainous territory, so that he was unable to reach them: Guillaume, *Life of Muḥammad*, 485, 6 and for further citations on this incident, see al-Liḥyānī, *Banū Hudhayl*, 181. This sense of geography is also reflected frequently in the bible, as in the prophecy that the people of Judea should flee into the mountains when attacked (Matthew 24:16).

¹⁵⁰ Joshua, *Chronicle*, LVII=Wright, *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, 46.

¹⁵¹ 9(MKhKh).4.4–5, *Ash’ār*, 453–54.

¹⁵² 10(UA’A).10.4–18, *ibid.*, 515–16.

summer. Ṣakhr al-Ghayy, in an exchange of invective, mocks his interlocutor of the Hudhalī Khunā‘ah clan for wintering at the supposedly particularly cold al-Ḥalā‘ah, said to be a mountain near Medina.¹⁵³ Ṣakhr also refers to hearing of some inter-clan tribal matters “on descending from Mt. Numār,” where, if he was descending in summer, the time of raids, he had perhaps been wintering.¹⁵⁴ The speaker’s beloved in a poem by Umayyah ibn Abī ‘Ā’idh is said to spend her summer in the coastal strip of Tihāmah,¹⁵⁵ and al-Burayq, contrasting Hudhayl’s presence in the Ḥijāz before and after the Islamic conquests, describes their winters, when “we would cross through the dark-green highlands (*al-tilā‘*),” and then how “we used, every summer, to have [our] lowlands (*al-ghawr*) and valley-sides out past the towns (*al-a‘rāḍ*).”¹⁵⁶ Thus the migrational patterns of the tribe are more or less vertically structured, as is mostly the case in modern ethnographic descriptions, and characterized by a dichotomy between the dry summer and rainy winter season from autumn through spring. The summer and early autumn in particular seem to have been marked by closer contact with sedentary peoples, in Mecca, al-Ṭā‘if and the ‘Ukāz market.

We would expect from the ethnographic data to see, in connection with sedentary peoples, some expression of contempt or kinship, but nothing of the sort is seen until later generations. The (generation V) Umayyad poet, Umayyah ibn Abī ‘Ā’idh, describes an antagonism between settled and nomadic Arabs that is not evident in earlier poems. In a verbal joust with another Hudhalī poet, similar to the Umayyad “flyting” exchanges between the more famous Jarīr and al-Farazdaq in the *Naqā‘id*, Umayyah champions a young woman named Umm Nāfi‘ against Laylá [75]:

¹⁵³ 3(ṢGhKh).5.4, *ibid.*, 266, and *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, s.v. “al-Ḥalā‘ah.”

¹⁵⁴ 3(ṢGhKh).3.4, *Ash‘ār*, 262.

¹⁵⁵ 10(UA‘A).7.3, *ibid.*, 524.

¹⁵⁶ 28(B‘IKh).4.9, 10, *ibid.*, 750.

I wish that Laylā could walk side by side with Umm Nāfi‘
at some late spring (*al-ṣayf*) gathering in Tihāmah’s vale,
for both of them are from families that once
possessed the finest herds to be driven to pasture.
On that day, you won’t see Umm Nāfi‘
upon some big headed ass from Sa‘da’s brood,
nor walking as a servant by the head of a cow [to lead it],
[a cow] that has a gut that, when it swells up in her, rumbles —
the beast (*ḥamūlatu*) of another girl¹⁵⁷ whose folk, between Mahwar
and Maskan, are people of grain and the vine,
but on a fine stallion, well-bred,
fully equipped, or with double-stitched [blankets], long-necked.¹⁵⁸

Umayyah seems to have lived after the conquests, probably in the urban environment of Fustāṭ in Egypt, and the depiction of nomadic life here is somewhat stereotyped. The “late spring gathering” denotes a congregation of clans come together to pasture in an area that has received good rains. Although both women are of nomadic extraction, “possessed of ... herds,” Umm Nāfi‘ is superior: she would ride a “fine stallion,” the animal of the the tribal warrior aristocracy *par excellence*, not an “ass.” It is unimaginable that she would dwell among sedentary agriculturalists, those who grow grain or grapes, leading domestic animals about. The imagery here may actually reflect life in the Nile valley more than anywhere in Arabia, especially as the word for “cow,” *khazūmah*, supposedly a Hudhalī dialect word, is of uncertain

¹⁵⁷ That is, you will not see Umm Nāfi‘ serving leading this cow that belongs to another woman, whom Umm Nāfi‘ serves.

¹⁵⁸ 10(UA‘A).7.3-8, *ibid.*, 524–25.

meaning.

In another text by Umayyah, the speaker asks, “did you, or,” tellingly, “any forefather of yours before you rear up the young of the ten-month pregnant [camels], or wean them?”¹⁵⁹ Umayyah’s mention of “forefathers” opens the possibility that he himself, an Islamic poet, perhaps did not have the most impeccable nomadic credentials, but could boast that his father and ancestors had. As with the increase in poets’ usage of *anwā’* imagery, and their increasingly detailed and extensive rain description, these expressions of heightened “bedouin” identity seem to indicate that the self-conscious representation of a nomadic poetics actually increased with time.

The hottest and driest months are frequently referred to in the context of warfare. When raids are mentioned in the *Ash‘ār*, and a season is referred to, they are invariably said to take place during the summer. ‘Abd ibn Ḥabīb, boasting of his swift retreat on foot after a successful raid, says that, “I would have spent the summer like those who get raided among the Ḥarra’s black rock,” had he not run fast enough.¹⁶⁰ Al-Burayq sets women “wailing when the [star] al-Mirzam rises,”¹⁶¹ that is, he kills their husbands in raids at the time of the Dog Star Sirius’s heliacal rising in mid-July. Similarly, Abū Buthaynah seems to be referring to the summer when he threatens an enemy, saying “We’ll kill you at Ruṣuf and Ḍarr when the heat sears your faces.”¹⁶² Thus, given that migration to the lowlands seems to be associated with summer, Ghāsil ibn Ghuzayyah, speaking to the *khayāl*, the specter of his beloved that has come in the night, tells her that “the tribe has come to the lowlands (*al-ghawr*) to raid; the raid

¹⁵⁹ 10(UA‘A).11.7, *ibid.*, 537.

¹⁶⁰ 30(‘AḤQ/YS).1.8, *ibid.*, 772.

¹⁶¹ 28(B‘IKh).5.1, *ibid.*, 751.

¹⁶² 26(ABS).3.5, *ibid.*, 729.

[is about] to blaze forth and bare itself.”¹⁶³ In several of these cases, the “heat” could also be the conventional flames of combat, or there could be a play on the summer heat and the fire of the fight.

The end of the summer, before the autumn rains, was as has been seen the most likely time for encounters with the beloved for Hudhayl.¹⁶⁴ Romantic encounters never take place in the summer; whenever the beloved is mentioned during the summer, the speaker is invariably describing how she is elsewhere: in Tihāmah,¹⁶⁵ or her summer encampments,¹⁶⁶ or some place name is given merely informing the listener that she is distant from the speaker.¹⁶⁷ The Najd is the easternmost area conceived of by the early poets, and if that is where the beloved has gone, that is “far for the Ḥijāzī man.”¹⁶⁸ Thus, differentially, the speaker’s identity is centered on the Ḥijāz. In contrast, we will note that in the text by Labīd cited above (p. 35), “the Murrīte lady has lodged in Fayd, then joined up with the Ḥijāzī clans.” His text mirrors Hudhayl’s texts. Just as his poem depicted the beloved’s departure at the end of spring, before the summer heat, in contrast to the Hudhalī autumn departures, so too for the Najdī Labīd, his Ḥijāzī beloved is an other, in contrast to the Hudhalī Ḥijāzī identity. These senses of tribal identity are not merely based on genealogy, but are rooted in a regionalism which in turn is structured by a dance of interweaving migrations adapted to the peninsula’s varying ecology.

Another feature of the morning-of-departure scenes that distinguishes Najdī from Ḥijāzī poets, as described by Jacobi,¹⁶⁹ is the string of place-names. We see this in Labīd’s

¹⁶³ 34(YN).1.3, *ibid.*, 806.

¹⁶⁴ Particularly Abū Dhu’ayb’s reference to the autumn market of ‘Ukāz (1(ADhQ).23.1-2, *ibid.*, 183).

¹⁶⁵ 10(UA’A).7.3, *ibid.*, 524.

¹⁶⁶ 9(MKhKh).2.2, *ibid.*, 444.

¹⁶⁷ 10(UA’A).2.2-3, *ibid.*, 493.

¹⁶⁸ 9(MKhKh).2.7, *ibid.*, 445.

¹⁶⁹ Jacobi, *Studien*, 27–35.

Mu‘allaqa (p. 35 above) as well: after setting off for the Ḥijāz, the “Murrīte lady” passes through “the eastern slopes of Twin Mountains of Muhajjar, Lonebutte ... Marblehead ... then Tinderlands if she heads towards Yemen¹⁷⁰ — I imagine her there — or at Thrall Mountain, or in the valley of Tilkhām.”¹⁷¹ This stylistic feature is found only infrequently in Hudhayl’s poetry. More typically, the speaker names the beloved’s locale as she departs, contrasting it with his own. Abū Dhu‘ayb describes “Laylá’s people proceeding by caravan by al-Ḍajū‘,” while the speaker is “at Na‘f al-Liwá, or al-Ṣufayyah.”¹⁷² Such scenes, as we possess too little firm information about the locales mentioned, are rarely very informative.

It should be noted that the autumn setting for these migrations must be inferred from the texts, although the heaviness of autumn (*kharīf*) rains was proverbial: ‘Umayr ibn a‘d compares flying arrows in pitched battle to *kharīf* rain.¹⁷³ The scene of Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah quoted above (p. 33), where the season is left unspecified, typifies the more usual situation; he describes the beloved’s tribe setting out from Dhāt al-Sulaym, which may be in the ‘Aqīq valley near Medina,¹⁷⁴ thus in a lowland, near a sedentary area.¹⁷⁵ They head into the east, apparently, since they are compared to “ships of the sea with the west wind at their back.” An eastward direction seems indicated also by the beloved’s tribe’s destination, a toponym called “Najd al-Shará,” about which we know nothing. As a toponym built on the word *najd*, meaning “high, or elevated, land, or country,” and *shará* meaning “a mountain,”¹⁷⁶ they are evidently heading to

¹⁷⁰ This probably means “to head south.”

¹⁷¹ Sells, *Desert Tracings*, 36, 37.

¹⁷² 1(ADhQ).4.1, *Ash‘ār*, 65.

¹⁷³ 9.4(‘UJKhz).9.5, *ibid.*, 464.

¹⁷⁴ *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, s.v. “Sulaym.”

¹⁷⁵ 64(SJK).10.2-4, *Ash‘ār*, 1175.

¹⁷⁶ Lane, s.v. *Shará* is almost certainly the same root for “mountain” found in the etymology of the Nabataean mountain god Dushara: M. C. A. Macdonald, “Reflections on the Linguistic Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia,” *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 11, no. 1 (May 1, 2000): 48.

an elevated locale. An extensive rain description follows. All of these features, the movement from a lowland to a highland, apparently eastwards into the open desert away from sedentary areas, followed by rain, seem to denote an autumn migration of the sort described in ethnographic descriptions of modern Muṭayr and Rwala nomads. A similar description is found in Ṣakhr al-Ghayy, who, after leaving his beloved Shammā', sees lightning coming from her direction, then describes a massive rain storm.¹⁷⁷ This emphasis in poetry on autumn migration is consonant with the Kaaba's orientation towards the place where the star Suhayl rises in autumn; both the poetry and the Kaaba reflect a distinctively Ḥijāzī ecological orientation. The poetry of the Najdī tribes almost entirely lacks such descriptions of autumn rain, and the beloved is frequently said to depart at the end of spring for her summer encampments.

The topographical contrast between the coastal lowlands of Tihāmah and the inland plateau of Najd found in rainfall descriptions thus underlies the east-west axis of lowlands and highlands as found in the details of migration mentioned in this “morning of departure” scene. Indeed, the cardinal directions east and west had no significance for the tribe outside of these dichotomies. For Abū Dhu'ayb, the eastern winds during a rainstorm are “Najdiyyah,” in contrast to the floods produced in the wadis of the lowlands, in “Tihāmah.”¹⁷⁸ The speaker in a poem by Badr ibn 'Āmir, addressing his beloved Fuṭaymah (the diminutive of Fāṭimah), complains to her of the deserts he has wandered through in the winter, “when the frigid north wind (*rīḥu l-shamāli*) sweeps over” them, and “the lowlands, the highlands (*ghawriyyuhū, najdiyyuhu*), their east and their west (*sharqiyyuhū, gharbiyyuhū*), all look accursedly alike.”¹⁷⁹ In this depiction of desert travel, which in fact is not so easy as smoking a pipe, the speaker

¹⁷⁷ 3(ṢGhKh).17.1-14, *Ash'ār*, 294–98.

¹⁷⁸ 1(ADhQ).11.12, 15, *ibid.*, 131–32.

¹⁷⁹ 8(A'IKh).1.5-6, *ibid.*, 408.

orients himself on an east-west cardinal axis through a lived dichotomy of lowlands and highlands.

It thus speaks for the authenticity of a text by Usayd of the ‘Adī ibn Dīl clan of the tribe of Kināna, which neighbored Hudhayl, that he addresses the Prophet Muḥammad in a poem asking for forgiveness for an offense given before Muslim ascendancy over the region by telling “the Messenger of God,” that he has “power over every tribe, those of Tihāmah and those of Najd.”¹⁸⁰ This is an instance of merism, the common rhetorical device in Arabic whereby two contrasted terms are meant to indicate a totality. But instead of saying, as the Quran does when it describes God’s power over all creation, that “God’s are the east and the west,”¹⁸¹ this nomadic tribal speaker makes use of the only relevant east and west of his entire world, the lowlands of Tihāmah and the uplands of Najd, the contrasting terms within which all rain, pasturing and migration take place, and thus, all tribal power. Moreover, the address seems to derive from a title of the Sabaean and Ḥimyarite kings, particularly from the mid-5th to mid-6th centuries CE, when the standard royal titlature included the phrase “king ... of the Arabs (bedouin) in Ṭwd (“Highland”, synonymous with Najd) and Tihāma,”¹⁸² which is also worth noting when considering the significance of Usyad’s description of Muḥammad’s geographical authority.

¹⁸⁰ 15(UAIK).2.1, 627.

¹⁸¹ Quran 2 :115, 2 :142, et. al.

¹⁸² The citation is from Ryckmans 509. For a comprehensive survey of royal Ḥimyarite titlature from the period, see Jacques Ryckmans, *L’institution monarchique en Arabie méridionale avant l’islam: (Ma’in et Saba)* (Louvain: Publications universitaires, 1951), 215–228. Ry 510, dating from 521, contains the same epithet and Ry 506 was found at Murayghān, mid-way between Mecca and Yemen, very near the territory of Hudhayl. Cf. A.F.L. Beeston, “Tubba’,” *El²* and Robin, “Les Arabes de Ḥimyar,” 171–173. Zwettler, “Ma’add,” 238–257 has a very useful discussion.

3.4.3. Hudhayl's Poetic Geography: Trade, Commodities, Markets

The east-west axis of Hudhayl's topographical world is bisected by the rains and winds coming from "Yemen" or "Hadramawt," and winds from "Syria," on a north-south axis. Although they never describe engaging directly in trade, the axis of their economic world is very nearly identical to this north-south line from Syria to Yemen. This in turn is foundational to Hudhayl's tribal geography generally. In three lines with more claim to authenticity than the story accompanying them, Abū Khirāsh, having been bitten by a viper and dying, sardonically eulogizes himself by stating that the snake had not left "any enemy between Buṣṣā and Ṣan'ā' who could take vengeance against him."¹⁸³ That is to say, by killing him, the viper had taken the pleasure of revenge from Abū Khirāsh's numerous enemies. The merism of Buṣṣā in Syria and Ṣan'ā' in Yemen, like that of Tihāmah and Najd in the address of Usayd al-Kinānī to the Prophet, is intended to encompass the entirety of the world relevant to the speaker. For the *mukhaḍram* poet Abū Khirāsh, either writing before the conquests or from the point of view of a tribesman hostile to the advent of Islam, the entire relevant world ranges from Buṣṣā to Ṣan'ā', two trade hubs mentioned in other texts by Hudhayl.¹⁸⁴

Hudhalī poets refer obliquely to trade in a wide variety of contexts. The most useful for our purposes are extended descriptions of a wine merchant in "self-standing comparisons" resembling epic similes occasioned conventionally by the taste of the beloved's lips. The poets elsewhere also allude indirectly to marketplaces, most often in describing meetings with beloveds, but in other cases as well. They also describe their weapons as coming from such-

¹⁸³ Al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, 21:163; al-Sukkarī, *Ash'ār*, 1244.

¹⁸⁴ In contrast, the entire peninsula is referred to by the Tamīmī poet al-Aswad ibn Ya'fur, as everything between "Iraq" and the tribe of Murād [*bayna l-'irāqi wa bayna arḍi murādī*], located near Najran in the south-west of the peninsula. The similar expression, *bayna l-'irāqi wa-Najrānī* is used by Imru' al-Qays. See *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyat*, 216 and Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 161.

and-such a region or tribe. The epithets thus used (*khattī* spears are one of the vaguest and most common in Arabic poetry in general) are often, like the toponyms in the “morning of departure” scene, unidentifiable, but when identifiable, they provide a valuable glimpse into how regional trade patterns constructed the everyday material world of the speaker. Finally, clouds or camel litters are sometimes compared to merchants or their caravans.

The Hudhalī poets associate Syria with wine, swords, and merchandise in general. Abū Dhu’ayb in particular renders the journey of the wine caravan from Syria in the vivid detail, in the context of a boast of his generosity, giving away an expensive vintage. It is unclear whether the text dates from before or after Islam, but the depiction of an extensive Syria-to-Mecca wine trade centered around the pilgrimage to Mecca and/or Mt. ‘Arafāt is extremely striking [76]:

I drank, without my companion in drinking paying a cent,
and Asmā’ tried to get her people to act like me!
There is no fine wine from Adhri‘āt brought by
a hardy camel mare, tough as a male,
sturdy as a smooth flat stone in a shallow stream bed —
wine virgin-pressed, kept in leather skins,
sealed with tar, behind the saddle on the back [of the camel],
brought in from Buṣrā and Ghazza
on a sturdy camel mare, with proud high haunches and croup —
she brought it to ‘Uṣfān, and then to Majanna,¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ This is mentioned in two verses given in the commentary by Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ al-Ḥabashī; it is a few miles from Mecca.

pure and serene in its clay jars —
 she took it by evening from Dhū l-Majāz
 to ‘Arafāt’s sandy ridge (*al-ḥabl*),
 to get there before those performing the [pilgrimage] rites [to sell it]¹⁸⁶ —
 and she came among [the other camels of the caravan],
 [her rider] wiping the sweat from her neck while she bellows like a stallion¹⁸⁷ —
 so he brought that wine as part of his pilgrimage,
 the drinking companion of noble men, not a sponger or a rogue —
 he stayed then the night where the stones are gathered [at al-Muzdalifa]
 then headed to Miná, looking in the morning to pay good coin to mix
 [his wine with honey],
 and he found [honey] for mixing, the like which none had seen before,
 it was astonishing, although it was the work of [mere] bees¹⁸⁸ —
 Yemeni [honey], for which the clouds of the dark *armīyah* rain cloud
 gave life to the wild pomegranates around Ma’bad and Āl Qarās¹⁸⁹ —
 [this honey and wine] in a goblet made in Bāriq,
 new, adze-carved and polished,

¹⁸⁶ Dhū al-Majāz was a seasonal autumn market a parasang from ‘Arafat, where oaths perhaps were solemnized (*Lisān*). *Ḥabl* here refers to a long sand formation, and the commentary says this refers to ‘Arafat, cf. also *Lisān*, s.v. “a-l-l.”

¹⁸⁷ Or he wipes her on the back of the neck to calm her.

¹⁸⁸ There is uncertainty over the meaning of *al-ḍaḥk*, with al-Aṣma‘ī claiming it means “the whiteness of teeth.” ‘*ajab* and *ḥayḍ* are two other meanings given.

¹⁸⁹ In addition to *armīya*, *asqīya* is also narrated — these are said to be rains of *al-kharīf* and *al-ḥamīm*, both of which could refer to summer rains or early Sept. rains according to Varisco, in Yemen, with *al-kharīf* referring to autumnal rains in other parts of the peninsula. According to Ibn Qutaybah, summer rains did not produce growth except in Yemen where, unlike in the rest of the peninsula, the spring rains are the most substantial. This honey then could be expected to arrive in Mecca in the fall or winter — according to Lane (*z-m-n*), Dhū al-Ḥijjah took place in October/November.

are not as sweet as her mouth when you come to her at night,
when nothing is yet shining on the horizon,
while a good-for-nothing cheapskate [her husband] sleeps off the wine he can afford
by keeping his long-eared herd animals of goats and sheep to himself,
depriving his kin.¹⁹⁰

Similar passages occur several times in the corpus of Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah and his disciple, Abū Dhu'ayb. Wine is consistently said to come from Syria¹⁹¹ and is sold either in the environs of Mecca around the time of the pilgrimage,¹⁹² or to the Thaqīf tribe at the 'Ukāz market.¹⁹³ Most often, the wine is said specifically to come from the Byzantine town of Adhri'āt (modern-day Dar'ā, Syria),¹⁹⁴ and it also passes through Buṣrā (late antique Bostra, a Byzantine provincial capital in Palestine) and Gaza.¹⁹⁵ The merchants are non-Arab, kinky-haired, with earrings.¹⁹⁶ They are said once to be Persian, although their wine is described in the same passage as Syrian.¹⁹⁷ Only in the generation V poet Mulayḥ ibn al-Ḥakam is "Babylonian wine" mentioned.¹⁹⁸ Syria is not present merely in Abū Dhu'ayb's wine descriptions, however. Caravans were so intimately associated with Syria that al-Burayq ibn 'Iyād can describe a "thundering cloud, as if on its peaks were Syrian camels bearing their loads of merchandise (*al-buhār*)."¹⁹⁹ Syria was also strongly associated with swords, an expensive commodity.²⁰⁰ And the

¹⁹⁰ 1(ADhQ).6.18-31, *Ash'ār*, 93-97.

¹⁹¹ 1(ADhQ).2.8, *ibid.*, 44; 1(ADhQ).5.13, 74; 1(ADhQ).6.19, 93; 1(ADhQ).9.11, 115.

¹⁹² 1(ADhQ).6.23, *ibid.*, 95.

¹⁹³ 1(ADhQ).2.11, *ibid.*, 47.

¹⁹⁴ 1(ADhQ).5.13, *ibid.*, 74; 1(ADhQ).6.19, 93; 1(ADhQ).9.11, 115.

¹⁹⁵ 1(ADhQ).6.21, *ibid.*, 94.

¹⁹⁶ 64(SJK).1.37, *ibid.*, 1113.

¹⁹⁷ 1(ADhQ).2.7, *ibid.*, 24.

¹⁹⁸ 62(MḤQ).1.12, *ibid.*, 1000.

¹⁹⁹ 28(B'IKh).1.7, *ibid.*, 742.

²⁰⁰ Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 44, 50.

poets carefully note swords that come from Jericho²⁰¹ or Buṣrā.²⁰² A romantic anecdote attached to an obviously unrelated poem tells of a Hudhalī sold into slavery in Syria.²⁰³

Yemen as well as the regions of the al-Sarāh mountains extending south from Mecca towards Yemen, are invariably named as a source not only of fabric, a ubiquitous convention throughout pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, but of bows, arrows and armor. In order to illustrate the shifting state of a wealthy woman captured in battle who is now a slave, Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah (generation III), contrasts how she once wore *khāl* fabric of Yemen, but now wears rags.²⁰⁴ Such references are probably much less frequent than in pre-Islamic poets of other tribes, but fabrics of apparently Persian origin, such as *sundus* and *istabraq* mentioned in the Quran are not mentioned at all.²⁰⁵ As with Persian wine, Persian fabrics do make an appearance in Hudhalī poetry, but only later. The embroidery *dībāj*, often elsewhere mentioned in conventional descriptions of camel litters or a well-born beloved's tent, is mentioned only by the late poet Mulayḥ, who identifies its Persian origin (*dībāj al-'Irāq*).²⁰⁶ The provincial Hudhalīs seem to have been living in less luxury than some earlier poets of Najdī tribes like Imru' al-Qays and Ṭarafah.

Weapons from Yemen are mentioned far more frequently. Like swords, well-made bows and arrows were both expensive and prized. Al-Mutanakhkhil even boasts of his weapons (in place of the customary desert-crossing camel-mare), primarily his bow, as consolation for the departure of his beloved [77]:

²⁰¹ 3(ṢGhKh).2.11, *Ash'ār.*, 257.

²⁰² 6(AJQ).3.6, *ibid.*, 350; 64(SJK).2.37, 1134.

²⁰³ 53(H'A), *ibid.*, 869–70.

²⁰⁴ 64(SJK).2.44, *ibid.*, 1137.

²⁰⁵ Quran 18:13, 44:53, 76:21. Cf. also Chapter 1, where I discuss the diffusion of Syriac and Persian words according to tribal affiliation in the pre-Islamic period.

²⁰⁶ 62(MḤQ).2.24, *Ash'ār*, 1010; 62(MḤQ).4.13, 1022; 62(MḤQ).5.21, 1033. Umayyah ibn Abī 'Ā'idh, also generation V, mentions Coptic cloth [*qubṭiyyat al-ṣawn*], the first (and only) Hudhalī to do so: 10(UA'A).3.23, 498.

Forget about love, with a [bow], pliable at its two ends (*maḍlūʿah*),
 planed carefully by its maker (*al-bārī*), unhurriedly,
 [as smooth as] fine bracelets or anklets of tortoise shell, no notches in them,
 its string resounding like the queen bee buzzing,
 made from the heart of *nabʿ*-wood. . . ²⁰⁷

According to the early-sixth century poet Aws ibn Ḥajar (of the Tamīm tribe), who describes the two-year (or two-month, according to a textual variant) process of curing *nabʿ*-wood, a well-crafted bow would fetch three fine robes, plus a traveling satchel and a vessel of honey at market.²⁰⁸ Abū Dhuʿayb mentions such bows being sold at the market in Mecca.²⁰⁹ Thus, in addition to swords and armor, fine bows seem to also have been an important commodity, and Hudhayl traded with the peoples to the south for all three. The tribes of Azd, dwelling in the mountainous region between Mecca and Yemen, particularly the Zārah clan, were renowned for their bows.²¹⁰ A man from Azd was responsible for the excellent “Māsikhī” bows,²¹¹ and Azd also produced the fine “Thābirī” arrows.²¹² Further south, Yemen was the source of fine arrows as well,²¹³ in addition to “Murādī” swords.²¹⁴ The Yemeni people of Ḥimyar, in particular a king, Tubbaʿ, are referred to as semi-legendary makers of armor and, perhaps, “Yazanī” spears.²¹⁵

The Yemeni and Syrian economic poles converged for Hudhayl around various markets near Mecca and presumably al-Ṭāʾif, most of which have already been mentioned: slaves from

²⁰⁷ 66(ML).1.23-25, *ibid.*, 1259 Cf. also Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1987, 1:100.

²⁰⁸ Aws ibn Ḥajar, *Dīwān Aws ibn Ḥajar*, 96–98; Jacob, *Altarabisches Beduinenleben*, 131, 132.

²⁰⁹ Al-Sukkarī, *Ashʿār*, 1310. This line is not in al-Sukkarī’s recension but is attributed to Abū Dhuʿayb in several medieval lexicons.

²¹⁰ 3(ŞGhKh).2.13, *ibid.*, 258.

²¹¹ 10(UAʿA).12.10, *ibid.*, 541.

²¹² Recorded by al-Sukkarī as a variant to 1(ADhQ).21.3, *ibid.*, 179n.

²¹³ 1(ADhQ).1.34, *ibid.*, 24.

²¹⁴ 1(ADhQ).25.21, *ibid.*, 202.

²¹⁵ 1(ADhQ).1.61, *ibid.*, 39; 3(ŞGhKh).15.22, 291.

raiding were sold in Mecca, fine bows could be found there, and lovers could hope to meet their beloved at ‘Ukāz.²¹⁶ Al-Sukkarī also notes, commenting on the *khazam* tree that grew on Mt. Kabab, overlooking ‘Arafāt, that there was a rope-makers’ market in Medina called al-Khazzāmūn.²¹⁷ The itinerary of the wine merchants from Syria brings them through Dhū l-Majāz, and Hudhalīs and Yemenis there also exchanged improvised insults in the simple *rajaz* meter.²¹⁸ Invective was also exchanged with the local Ḥijāzī tribe of Khuzā‘ah at the market of Miná, “when the tents are erected at Makhlafah.”²¹⁹

These markets all took place in or in the vicinity of Mecca, and the poets also display a noteworthy knowledge of that area’s sacral toponyms. When the speakers in Hudhalī poems swear their everlasting devotion to their beloveds, they often construct oaths using elements of the pre-Islamic Meccan *ḥajj* pilgrimage ritual. Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah in particular swears [78],

... by [the camel mares’] forelegs and by each and every sacrificial animal
over whose neck bones [blood] gushes and pours,
and by their station when they’re penned
in a narrow, crowded trail, apart from al-Akhshab’s slopes . . .²²⁰

Khayf is an area near Miná in the hills east of Mecca, the site of the ritual stoning (*jamrah*) of the Islamic *ḥajj*. Al-Akhshab is another name for Miná and according to the commentary, the “narrow crowded trail” is in the valley path between Miná and Mt. ‘Arafāt. Since he is swearing by created objects, human hands and animal limbs, al-Sukkarī condemns Sā‘idah for “swearing by that which it is ill for him to swear by (*yaḥlif bi-mā yasū’uhu*), by something other than

²¹⁶ 7(MKhS).14.5, *ibid.*, 395; *ibid.*, 1310; 1(ADhQ).23.1-3, *ibid.*, 183.

²¹⁷ 64(SJK).2.29, *ibid.*, 1131.

²¹⁸ 1(ADhQ).6.23, *ibid.*, 95; 15(ADhM), 621–28.

²¹⁹ 37(‘AHL).3, *ibid.*, 818; 37(‘AHL).4.12, *ibid.*, 822.

²²⁰ 64(SJK).9.1, *ibid.*, 1172.

God.”²²¹ The evident offensiveness of the passages seems to testify to their authenticity.

For Hudhayl, then, although there are occasional references to al-Ṭāʾif in the anecdotes pertaining to the poems, transmitted by al-Sukkarī, Mecca was obviously the center of sedentary existence, of axial importance for both economic and ritual life (although Quraysh are almost never mentioned — or perhaps early redactors removed hostile references to them). There are no even vague references (in the poetry itself) to any other ritual or religious practice unrelated to Mecca. With regard to the larger economic sphere of which the poets are aware, a very clear north-south axis is articulated ranging from “Buṣṣā to Ṣanʿā,” hinging ethnocentrically on the Hudhayl’s tribe’s own territories and on Mecca. Against this axis, there is some awareness of other areas of the peninsula. Many of the stylistic conventions of the generation III Hudhalī poets, and perhaps even what we know as the *qaṣīda* form itself, show the clear and apparently recent influence of earlier developments originating in the eastern peninsula. Aside from these features, however, “Persian” traders have already been mentioned.²²² In one place, Aʿīqqah, apparently a toponym within Tamīm’s territory, is mentioned by Abū Khirāsh,²²³ and Ṣakhr al-Ghayy mentions “camels of al-Ḥīrah” in passing.²²⁴ Otherwise, the central plateau of Najd is conceived of as a region of hostile tribes, delimiting the Hudhalī world. The Red Sea bounds their world to the east, a source of rain beyond which neither Ethiopia nor Egypt are mentioned.

3.5. Conclusions: Ḥijāzī Regionalism Before and After the Conquests

The world of Hudhayl can best be described as “Ḥijāzī.” It belonged neither to the

²²¹ *Ashʿār*, 1101.

²²² 1(ADhQ).2.7-14, *ibid.*, 44-48.

²²³ 65(AKhQ).17.3, *ibid.*, 1237.

²²⁴ 3(ṢGhKh).13.2, *ibid.*, 283. There is also a suspect poem by Abū Dhuʿayb that mentions Tamīm: 1(ADhQ).34.3, 233.

coastal plain of Tihāmah, nor the central plateau of Najd, but dwelt securely between the two. On this front, the word *ḥijāz* itself, as shown in the poems cited earlier by al-Akhnas and Mālik ibn Khālid, can refer both to a tribal stronghold and to the elevated region of the western Arabian peninsula running parallel to the Red Sea. These two overlapping meanings lie at the center of Hudhayl’s sense of regionalism. Their poetry, like that of all pre-Islamic Arabs, is rife with a bewildering array of highly specific toponyms, but the larger ecological and economic structures of their poetry clearly reveal a nomadic Ḥijāzī regionalism centered, apparently with some degree of antagonistic negligence, on sedentary Mecca. When reaching for more general toponyms, the poets of Hudhayl tend to situate themselves between poles, those of Syria and Yemen on one hand, and those of Tihāmah and Najd on the other, differentiating themselves topographically and economically.

When forced to define themselves, it is most often as Ḥijāzī. In an elegy for a clansmen, Abū Dhu’ayb boasts that the deceased “left the men of the Ḥijāz, [both] the ruling and the ruled, quavering [below].”²²⁵ When wandering through the waterless desert, al-A‘lam says, “I raised my eyes to the Ḥijāz, to people in the mountain passes; I remembered my folk in the plantless desert.”²²⁶ Defining himself against the beloved somewhere in Najd, the love-lorn speaker in a poem by Mālik ibn Khālid says she is far away “for a Ḥijāzī” like him.²²⁷ A poet of the Khuazāī clan of Hudhayl, attacking Liḥyān, another Hudhalī clan, complains that they are the most graceless people in the Ḥijāz.²²⁸ All of these are generation II or III poets. As we saw in the generation V poet Umayyah ibn Abī ‘Ā’idh’s boast that “Hudhayl pastures safely (*ḥamaw*) in

²²⁵ 1(ADhQ).24.2, *ibid.*, 189.

²²⁶ 4(Ḥ’AKh).1.17, *ibid.*, 315.

²²⁷ 9(MKhKh).2.7, *ibid.*, 445.

²²⁸ 37(‘AHL).3.3, *ibid.*, 819.

the heart of the Ḥijāz,²²⁹ this sensibility did not diminish with time. This invocation of the tribal homeland or “*ḥimá*” is perhaps somewhat nostalgic, as it does not appear elsewhere in the *Ash‘ār*.

This Ḥijāzī regionalism, shared as we have seen in Chapter 1 with Quraysh and Sulaym, had parallels in other tribes, as in the “Fertile Crescent” regionalism seen in the passage by al-Akhnas ibn Shihāb al-Taghlibī, cited and discussed above. The strong impression of these regionalisms throughout early texts strongly qualifies the overwhelming tendency throughout the secondary literature to suppose that nomadic Arabic culture was essentially homogenous throughout the peninsula on the eve of Islam, that “[d]ie arabische Nation ist nicht erst durch den Islam geschaffen wurden,” as Caskel puts it,²³⁰ or that they had a “Kulturation” in the phrasing of G.E. Von Gruenebaum,²³¹ a view recently endorsed by James Montgomery, who also cites Crone’s “nativist” explanation for the rise of Islam, that Islam is an expression and unification of Arab identity.²³² Hudhayl’s sense of tribal affiliation does not include reference to a fear of “what the Arabs will say (*al-maqālah fī l-‘Arab*)” noted by Caskel;²³³ the term never occurs in either the poetry or related prose accounts preserved by al-Sukkarī, even though he relates some reports about Hudhayl from Abū ‘Ubaydah Ma‘mar ibn al-Muthanná (d. 209/824 or 5), the primary source for the battle days (*ayyām al-‘Arab*) on which Caskel’s study draws. No

²²⁹ 10(UA‘A).10.4-18, *ibid.*, 533-34.

²³⁰ “The Arabic nation was not first created via Islam.” Thus Caskel, “Aijām Al-‘Arab,” 54. He later altered this position, considering the varied meanings that the terms ‘Arab and A‘rāb carried in early 7th century texts: “seit wann gibt es ein arabisches Volk? Der Koran kennt zwar eine arabische Sprache, aber keine Araber, während die Bedeutung von ‘Arab und A‘rāb bei den zeitgenössischen Dichtern zwischen “Beduinen”, so A‘rāb im Koran, und “Araber” schwankt. Das arabische Volk war also im Anfang des 7. Jahrhunderts noch im Werden begriffen.” He makes the honest admission in his introduction that he began to see things differently on studying genealogy more carefully, having been trained in literature and philology. Ibn al-Kalbī, Caskel, and Strenziok, *Ġamharat an-nasab*, xii, 19.

²³¹ G.E. Von Gruenebaum, “The Nature of Arab Unity before Islam,” *Arabica* 10, no. Fasc. 1 (January 1963): 5.

²³² Montgomery, “The Empty Ḥijāz,” 56, 57; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 247-250.

²³³ Caskel, “Aijām Al-‘Arab,” 54-57.

variant of *‘Arab* is used in any of the poetry at all until its sole instance in a poem by generation V Abū Ṣakhr, where we see the familiar Islamic merism of *al-‘Arab wa-l-‘Ujm*, “the Arabs and non-Arabs,” i.e., all of creation.²³⁴

It should be noted that the phenomenological regionalism reconstructed here, rooted in ecological and economic lived realities, is not identical to the nostalgia for “the Ḥijāz” or “Najd” that emerges somehow²³⁵ during the Umayyad period among the so-called ‘Udhri love-poets with their pseudo-bedouin landscapes, endless weeping and unending love. Moreover, although the pre-Islamic regionalism was by no means displaced entirely, there is of course a massive shift in the regional sensibility between poets before and after the Islamic conquests, although most generation III poets avoid political subjects.²³⁶

Egypt is mentioned most often by poets who lived through or after the conquests. Abū Ṣakhr laments the departure of one Muḥarriq family in the conquests: “they have left Tihāmah, our land, and for Mecca have exchanged Babylon (Bāb al-Yūn),”²³⁷ that is Egypt, referring to the Byzantine settlement Babylon which preceded the Arabic Fuṣṭāṭ in the site of present-day Cairo. No Hudhalī had conceived of Tihāmah as Hudhalī territory before, nor referred to Egypt, and the sacral Mecca has replaced the Ḥijāz as the navel of the universe. Al-Burayq ibn ‘Iyād describes being left behind “like a kid tied to a stake” at Rajī‘, a toponym frequently mentioned by the early Hudhalī poets, while the tribe has gone on to Egypt.²³⁸ Mulayḥ seems to have lived in Egypt, and a speaker in one poem of his bemoans how far

²³⁴ 61(AṢ).17.14, *Ash‘ār*, 973.

²³⁵ Wagner carefully summarizes some of the competing theories for the emergence of the school, including dealing with the question of whether the poetry is Umayyad at all: Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1987, 2:68–77.

²³⁶ For the effect of Islam on Hudhayl, see Hell, “Der Islam und die Hudhaylitendichtungen,” discussed in the Introduction.

²³⁷ 61(AṢ).16.4, *Ash‘ār*, 971.

²³⁸ 28(B‘IKh).4.5, *ibid.*, 748.

distant the beloved Umm ʿĀbid is from the Muqaṭṭam hills lining the Nile valley to the east, “beyond Babylon.”²³⁹ Umayyah ibn Abī ʿĀʿidh, also apparently in Egypt, describes a journey from Egypt to Mecca.²⁴⁰ The prominence of Egypt in the poetry seems to reflect the actual participation of Hudhayl in the Egyptian and north African conquests as described by Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbd Allāh’s (d. 257/ 871) *Fuṭūḥ Miṣr wa akhbāruhā* (reports on the conquests of Egypt).²⁴¹

Syria is also mentioned frequently in post-conquest poets. Abū Khirāsh and Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith both lament how their sons, lacking any filial piety, went to Syria (al-Shaʿm) to fight in the Islamic conquests.²⁴² Another post-conquest Hudhalī, evidently having moved to the Levant, mentions more specific Syrian place-names never mentioned by previous poets: Qaysarūn, Balqaʿ (Moab) and Aylah (Eilat).²⁴³ Abū l-ʿIyāl composes an elegy on the death of his cousin, who was with those who attacked “the city of Constantine’s people,” before retreating.²⁴⁴ Abū Ṣakhr also refers to Mecca, Syria and Egypt in the context, apparently, of the civil war between the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Marwān (d. 60/680) and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Zubayr (d. 73/692), who controlled the Ḥijāz and Mecca for a time.²⁴⁵

When Mulayḥ ibn al-Ḥakam boasts that the “Arabs,” an identity with almost no valence before the conquest poets and to whom he refers eponymously by the famous ancestral names Khindif and Muḍar, fill the horizons, from ʿAdan (in Yemen) to Ghāfiq (evidently in Spain),²⁴⁶

²³⁹ 62(MḤQ).10.7, 8, *ibid.*, 1057.

²⁴⁰ 10(UAʿA).5, *ibid.*, 521.

²⁴¹ Cf. chapter 1 above.

²⁴² 65(AKhQ).21.5, *Ashʿār*, 1242; 67(UḤ).4.4, 1296.

²⁴³ 53(ḤʿA), *ibid.*, 869–70.

²⁴⁴ 8(AʿIKh).9.14, *ibid.*, 426.

²⁴⁵ 61(AṢ).10.18, 20, 31, *ibid.*, 955–56.

²⁴⁶ *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, s.v.

and from Dābiq (near Aleppo) to Jadas (perhaps in present-day Pakistan),²⁴⁷ it is quite clear that Hudhayl's world had completely changed, and had evidently, for those tribesmen who did not remain behind in the Ḥijāz, disappeared entirely.

²⁴⁷ 62(MḤQ).9.56-60, *Ash'ār*, 1055.

Chapter 4: Hudhayl's Regional Stylistics and Intertribal Intertextuality

wa-mā yughnī mra'an waladun ajammat

maniyyatuhū wa-lā mālun athīlū

No son will avail a man whose death has come due,
nor any wealth he's inherited.¹

—Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah al-Hudhalī

lan tughniya 'anhum amwāluhum wa-lā awlāduhum min Allāhi shay'an

ulā'ika aṣḥābu l-nāri, hum fī-hā khālidūn

Neither their wealth nor their sons will avail them in the least with God;
they are the possessors of fire, they dwell within it.

—Qur'ān, 58:17

4.1. Introduction

Almost all of this study has depended on the observation that pre- and early-Islamic poetry is best studied intertextually. Roland Barthes's assertion that "any text is a new tissue of past citations" is as, if not more true of pre-modern Arabic literature than any modern European tradition.² Stylistic devices for describing onager hunts, battle and ostriches migrated around the pre-Islamic Arabian peninsula and were adapted in different ways by poets in different regions with varying tribal affiliations. Each individual poem, while

¹ 64(SJK).4.9, *Ash'ār*, 1145.

² Roland Barthes, "Theory of the Text," in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 39.

generating meaning on its own terms, is a web of citations to other texts that must be born in mind when we read, as they certainly would have been by contemporary audiences. This chapter accordingly offers a set of interpretations of individual poems that builds on previous aspects of this study to offer a model of intertextual readings, arguing that each *qaṣīdah*, rather than reflecting some paradigmatic norm, should most fruitfully be understood as a sequence of intertextual allusion, citation and parody. This sequence is in turn generated by and generative of regional, tribal and other forms of cultural, ideological and gendered affiliation.

A central critical problem is that the relationship of Hudhalī poets, let alone the relationship between Hudhalī poets and poets of other tribes, has yet to be extensively explored. Erich Bräunlich was the first to observe that two *mukhaḍram* Hudhalī poets, Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah and Abū Dhu'ayb, formed part of a school, sharing commonalities in the depictions of rain storms, honey-collectors, vocabulary and stylistic devices like repetition.³ He made two critical observations for our purposes: firstly, that two of the most valid factors for literary history of the period are chronology and tribal affiliation,⁴ although he goes on to specify that some "schools" are intertribal; secondly, that we should base our aesthetic evaluation of Arabic poetry from this period on their contemporary audiences,⁵ as nearly as their horizon of expectations can be reconstructed. As we have seen in chapter 1, Gustave von Grunebaum's attempt at a chronology of pre-Islamic poetry still has much to recommend it.

However, recent research in early Arabic poetry, particularly the Hudhalī poets, has not embraced Barthe's notion of the "death of the author." Barthes argues that "a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-

³ Bräunlich, "Versuch," 221 ff.

⁴ Ibid., 218.

⁵ Ibid., 264.

dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centers of culture.”⁶ Given that most of the lore and biographical information about early Arabic poets is in all likelihood *ex post facto* fiction, it is certainly worth asking why the author should be taken as the basis for any study, or individual poems as the subject of any essay. Yet recent examinations of Hudhalī poets tend to base their analyses on an authorial axis, although they often add additional illuminating dimensions. Renate Jacobi’s examination of Abū Dhu’ayb as an innovator in *ghazal* poetics, for example, chiefly examines him as an example of what she calls a *mukhaḍram* sensibility, an increasing attention to interior psychologizing also evident in other poets from the same generation.⁷ In a similar vein Kirill Dmitriev’s study of Abū Ṣakhr, an Umayyad-era poet, contributes to our understanding of the development of *ghazal* in the literary-historical context of the late seventh century.⁸ Both, however, by limiting themselves to explorations of individual authors, fail to explore the sort of intertextual avenues broached by Bräunlich.

Examinations of motifs and themes found in Hudhalī and other traditions of early Arabic poetry have also made uneven headway. Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi’s article, “Remedy and Resolution: Bees and Honey-collecting in Two Hudhalī Odes,” refers in passing to Bräunlich’s article, but seems to be unaware of the contents.⁹ Similarly, Ali Ahmad Hussein’s study on lightning scenes in early Arabic poetry brings together a useful body of material, and he

⁶ Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge and Nigel Wood, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 2000), 149.

⁷ Jacobi, “Anfänge.”

⁸ Dmitriev, *Das poetische Werk des Abū Ṣakhr al-Hudhalī*.

⁹ Sumi, “Remedy and Resolution.” Aside from the fact that Bräunlich’s article deals with essentially the same material, she makes specific errors; she inaccurately describes Abū Dhu’ayb and Sā’idah’s relationship as one of *mu’āraḍah* (“Remedy,” 132)—*mu’āraḍah*, however, involves matching a poem in rhyme and meter, in an explicit competition, not simply using the same motifs. There is no evidence that Abū Dhu’ayb was attempting to “outdo” Sā’idah. Furthermore, Sumi claims that descriptions of bees and honey were limited to Hudhalī poets (*ibid.*), while Bräunlich gives examples of other poets at least broaching the subject (“Versuch,” 222 ff.).

notices, like Bräunlich, that there is a family resemblance in Hudhayl's thunderstorm descriptions, but is unable to advance any argument for the commonality,¹⁰ such, as we have seen in chapter 3, as the variation in climate regimes between the Ḥijāz and Najd and their effect on nomadic migration. Most useful are the networks of stylistic affiliation observed by Thomas Bauer in his description of the onager hunt.¹¹ Bauer's understanding of intertextuality as *Kunstdichtung*, however, while chronological, is not particularly historically situated, as his primary concern is negative, to rebut a pejorative understanding of the "conventionality" of Arabic poetry as unoriginal or offensive.¹² According to his model, conventionality is merely the background against which aesthetically enjoyable deviation takes place (*Deviationshintergrund*).¹³ As a result of this textual-based model, he insists that any "depth" to early Arabic poetry is a result of aesthetic play, and emphatically *not* due to any interaction between text and the social or cultural world.¹⁴ As a result of his argument that pre-Islamic intertextuality is determined entirely by aesthetic considerations, he neglects to acknowledge that cultural or social conditions could have played any significant role, although he contradicts himself to a certain extent on this point as he concedes that the migrations of the onagers would have held an inherent interest for a nomadic audience.¹⁵

¹⁰ Hussein, *The Lightning-Scene in Ancient Arabic Poetry*, 179–80.

¹¹ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, esp. 228–30.

¹² *Ibid.*, 246–250.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 250.

¹⁴ Let alone allowing that the text is an object within a social or cultural material world. "Jede Abweichung von der Konvention bildet wiederum einen Teil einer neuen, jetzt leicht verändert Konvention und kann entweder in mehr oder weniger identischer Form aufgegriffen und damit bestätigt, oder aber ihrerseits wieder abgeändert and dadurch erneut weitergebildet werden. Das aber ist genau die „Tiefe“ der altarabischen Dichtung: *Keine „tiefere“ Erkenntnis der Welt und des Menschen soll zunächst vermittelt werden*" (my italics), *ibid.*, 251.

¹⁵ He asserts that "erst in einem Milieu, in dem Dichtung um ihrer selbst willen betrieben wird, ist es denkbar, daß man diesen Vergleich zu einer Episode ausgestaltet, die schildert, wie ein Tier, das zwar interessant anzuschauen ist, das dem Dichter und seinem Publikum aber völlig gleichgültig sein könnte, Dinge tut, die niemanden, der mit Dichtung zu tun hat, irgendwie betreffen. *Der Grund, dies doch zu tun, kann nur die Freude an Dichtung selbst gewesen sein,*" (my italics). Here he evidently has the "aristocratic" speaker in mind, but as we have seen, Hudhalī poetic

This study has attempted to take a more material view of intertextuality, and earlier chapters have tended to focus on the content of Hudhayl's poetry rather than its stylistic qualities, in order to explore the social function of poetry in a regional tribal context. This regionalism as we have access to it consists largely in the adaptation of earlier Najdī poets' themes and stylistic devices. Although I have typically characterized Hudhayl's deviations from Najdī poetics as "adaptations" or some other kind of allusive, citational or parodic response or inversion, there is no apodictic way to demonstrate the validity of the chronology adumbrated in chapter 1. Mine is a heuristic reading which I hope demonstrates its own validity. But I do think that the conclusions of this chapter are, of course, historically valid.

This chapter will expand on earlier comparisons of Najdī and Ḥijāzī/Hudhalī poetics with further examples, focusing on stylistic devices. This will offer yet further evidence that the adaptations, citations and inversions by Hudhayl's poets of previous poets from elsewhere in the peninsula took place neither on a disinterested aesthetic level, as per Bauer, nor did they follow, for example, the ritual structures identified by Suzanne Stetkevych and others, which are based only on the most canonical Najdī poets and texts, but rather, they elaborated previous stylistic devices according to their own regional, material and social interests. Specifically, I will examine several elements of Hudhayl's *nasīb*: descriptions of wine, where it is compared to the beloved's lips; comparisons of the *aṭlāl* (beloved's campsite ruins) to writing; the incorporation of rain descriptions from boast-scenes in Najdī poets into the *nasīb*s

speakers *could* imagine themselves in the role of the impoverished hunter. Compare this with with "zum anderen aber ist auch das Bestreben zu nennen, jene Aspekte aus dem Leben der Tiere auszuwählen, die mit dem Leben der Hörer in irgendeiner Beziehung stehen. Den Aufbruch zu den Tränken des Hochsommers aber vollziehen die Onager zur selben Zeit, zu der die Beduinen sich zu den Sommerquartieren aufmachen. So *erlaubt die Onagerepisoden, Probleme und Mühsale zu schildern, die den Menschen nicht fremd sind*" (my italics); Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:212, 265.

of Hudhayl's poets; and the narrative of honey collection, usually in conjunction with the wine description, in describing the beloved's lips.

The chapter will secondly analyze the larger *qaṣīdah* pattern in which a lament over fate's power or an elegy is structured around animal episodes. The Hudhalī elegy is both the most famous of their innovations, and the best example of Najdī *qaṣīdah*-level structures being reworked. The earliest example of the animal fate *qaṣīdah* seems, as in so many cases, to be found in the Qays ibn Tha'labah school, specifically in al-Muraqqish al-Akbar's description of an ibex in his *Mufaḍḍaliyyah* no. 54. This was broadly adapted by Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī for the same purpose, to describe fate's power. Abū Dhu'ayb's *Mufaḍḍaliyyah* no. 126 is the most famous of Hudhayl's poems, and the previous chapters and the previous analyses of motif- and *qaṣīdah*-level intertextuality lay the groundwork in this chapter for an extensive reading of this piece (hopefully closer to Barthe's "starred text" of centerless citations than to an author-centric "close reading"). In particular, I will argue that it is most likely not merely an elegy, but an anti-Islamic lament for sons who have left Arabia to fight in the Islamic conquests. In each episode of his elegy, Abū Dhu'ayb dislocates a narrative model from the dominant *qaṣīdah* models of Najdī poets, and repurposes within an historical context. Finally, however, with the advent of the new faith, Labīd ibn Rabī'ah makes use of the same elegaic structure to describe God's power. With his text, we move beyond Hudhalī poetry, although larger intertextual discourse in which Hudhayl's poetry participated cannot be left behind.

4.2. The Hudhalī Nasīb as Paradigm for Intertribal Intertextuality

We have already examined Abū Dhu'ayb's sixth poem (chapter 3), in which the beloved's lips are compared extensively to honey and wine imported from Syria. Two features

of Hudhalī *nasīb*s demonstrate the intertextual vectors linking poets of Hudhayl with other poets. In the first case, they modified and developed an extended simile of the beloved's lips to honey and wine. In the second, they re-purposed whole episodes for *qaṣīdah* structures particular to Hudhayl. In both cases, they adapted techniques developed elsewhere in the Arabian peninsula, expanded them, and suited them to their own cultural milieu.

In the *nasīb* featuring extended similes, a favorite with Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah and Abū Dhu'ayb, the elaborate comparison of some aspect of the beloved's kiss to something else follows the pattern, *wa-mā X ... bi-* + relative of Y (e.g., such-and-such a wine ... is not sweeter than her lips), where almost any number of lines can fall between the first and second half of the formula. This is the *Ec* formula noted by von Grunebaum, who finds that it originates with al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar, but is not found in Imru' al-Qays, 'Alqamah or 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ.¹⁶ It is thus apparently not amidst the oldest stratum of pre-Islamic poetry, belonging perhaps to the mid-sixth century, although it emerges in the same Qays ibn Tha'labah group within which so much innovation related to the *qaṣīdah* took place. The technique was employed subsequently by Aws ibn Ḥajar, and developed by al-Musayyab, and al-A'shā,¹⁷ whose style has some affinity with Sā'idah and Abū Dhu'ayb, perhaps younger contemporaries of his.

Exemplifying the earlier, Najdī appearance of the technique, we can cite the same text cited by von Grunebaum, al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar's *Mufaḍḍaliyyah* no. 55 [79]:

She turned and departed, leaving behind her a gnawing pain,

and sore was my torment when her eyes seemed to gush with tears.

Not (*wa-mā ...*) wine of the white grape, fragrant as musk,

¹⁶ Von Grünebaum, "Chronologie," 332–33.

¹⁷ Ibid., 333.

and set in a strainer to clear, and ladled from cup to cup—
 a captive it dwelt in the jar for twenty revolving years,
 above it a seal of clay, exposed to the wind and sun,
 imprisoned by Jews who brought it from Jīlān in lands afar,
 and offered for sale by a vintner who knew well to follow gain—
 is sweeter than (*bi-aṭyaba min*) her mouth when night brings me near to her—
 no indeed, her lips are sweeter than the wine, and of pure delight fuller.¹⁸

This illustrates the structuring formula, *wa-mā X ... bi- + elative of Y*. As is evident, almost any number of verses can be inserted between the two end points as more and more description of the wine is inserted. It appears as if, in accordance with his connections with al-Ḥīrah on the Euphrates, al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar describes a Persian wine, imported from Jīlān, south of the Caspian Sea. Other poets expressed their tribal geographies in their *nasībs*. ‘Awf ibn ‘Aṭīyyah of Taym al-Ribāb likewise (although not with Grunebaum’s *Ec* grammatical formula) describes feeling so stunned as he looks upon the *aṭlāl*, the ruins of the beloved’s encampment, that it is as if he has drunk “Median” wine (*ka-annī ṣṭbaḥtu ... mādhīyyatan*).¹⁹ ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm mentions in the *nasīb* of his *Mu‘allaqah* a wine from Andarūn, a Syrian town.²⁰ Coming from Taghlib, a tribe of the middle Euphrates to the west of Qays ibn Tha‘labah and Taym al-Ribāb, the poet modifies the *nasīb* to specify wine from Syria, the closest sedentary cultural region to his tribe’s territory. We have likewise seen how Abū Dhu‘ayb of Hudhayl specifies that the wine to which he compares his beloved’s lips, using the *Ec* formula, is also from Syria (*rāḥ al-shām*),²¹

¹⁸ *Muf.* no. 55, ll. 7–11, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 242. Translation adapted from Lyall, *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:187.

¹⁹ *Muf.* no. 12, ll. 5–6, *ibid.* 413. This interpretation of *mādhīyyah* is Lyall’s, who notes other Persian words in the text: Lyall, *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:350–51.

²⁰ L. 1, ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm, *Dīwān ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm*, ed. Imīl Ya‘qūb (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 2006), 64.

²¹ 1(ADhQ).2.8,26, *Ash‘ār*, 44.

specifically from Adhri‘āt (modern Daraa, Syria),²² detailing the journey that it takes through the Ḥijāz, arriving with the pilgrimage.²³

In all of Abū Dhu‘ayb’s references to Syrian wine, he is not merely expressing his tribe’s phenomenological geography, as discussed in chapter 3, but in accordance with tribal identity, he is adopting and modifying a grammatical and stylistic structure with its origins in the earlier poets of Qays ibn Tha‘labah. In the list of poets cited by Grunebaum, we can clearly see that the stylistic feature he calls the *Ec* comparison moves from the northeast to the southwest of the peninsula over the course of the sixth century, as outlined in chapter 1. However, early adopter poets did not simply emulate or begin to utilize the new method of comparison mindlessly, but took the opportunity to fill out the details with their own quotidian content. The intertextual interaction that took place between poets had a material and social aspect. If purely aesthetic considerations were at play, there would be no reason to adapt stylistic conventions to local circumstances, but the audience must somehow have enjoyed hearing an older and likely more prestigious style adapted to the phenomenological world they inhabited, rather like American adaptations of European television shows like *The Office* or *The Bridge* (a Danish/Swedish crime series, *Broen*, converted into a story about the Texas-Mexican border). Likewise, ritual readings of the *qaṣīdah* tend to be synchronic, and fail to account for diachronic stylistic changes.

Hudhayl’s *aṭlāl*-scenes in their *nasīb*s display the same adaptation to local circumstances. When comparing the *aṭlāl* (remains of the beloved’s former encampment) to writing, a stock comparison, poets favored comparisons with the most nearby sedentary

²² 1(ADhQ).5.13, *ibid.*, 74.

²³ 1(ADhQ).6.18-31, *ibid.*, 93-97.

civilizations. For example, al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥillizah al-Yashkurī compares the marks (*āyāt*) on the ground to pages of Persian writing (*ka-mahāriqi l-Fursī*).²⁴ As a Najdī tribe—Yashkur was perhaps based around present-day Riyāḍ—the speaker draws on local social relations to describe the *aṭlāl*. Likewise, in describing the incomprehensible sounds of animals, Ṭarafah compares the call of the sandgrouse to Persians (*tarāṭun al-Fursi*),²⁵ while ‘Alqamah uses the same expression, but changes it to Greeks, in order to describe an ostrich (*ka-mā tarāṭanu fī afdānihā l-Rūmū*).²⁶ When Abū Dhu’ayb describes the *aṭlāl*, he describes how [80],

I recognize the abodes, like the marks a Ḥimyarite writer (*al-kātib al-Ḥimyarī*)
inscribes from his inkwell.²⁷

Likewise, al-Mulyaḥ ibn Ḥakam describes the abodes as [81],

like the tattoo that a Yemeni woman from Ḥadramawt
spreads, an admixture of black soot.²⁸

Both of these poets, rather than referring to Persian or Greek writing or culture, refer instead to south Arabian culture, drawing on the lived world of the tribe while adapting poetic conventions used by poets from Najd and elsewhere.

In addition to the *Ec* formula, or modifying already existing motifs like the *aṭlāl* with “local color,” Hudhayl would repurpose whole episodes developed for completely different purposes for their own *qaṣīdahs*. The two best examples of this are rain and honey collection (the latter occurring within the *Ec* formula). In chapter 3, I compared a rain passage from a *nasīb* by Sā’idah ibn Ju’ayyah to that in Labīd’s *Mu’allaqah*, primarily for the purpose of noting

²⁴ *Muf.* no. 25, l.1, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 132.

²⁵ Cited in *Lisān*, s.v. “r-ṭ-n.”

²⁶ No. 13, l. 26, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 112.

²⁷ 1(ADhQ).7.1, *Ash’ār*, 98.

²⁸ 62(MḤQ).11.6, *ibid.*, 1062.

that Labīd's *ẓa'n* (departure of the beloved's caravan) scene takes place at the onset of summer; his rain describes the passage of time over the abandoned abodes since that departure. Sā'idah's text, in contrast, depicts a beloved departing in the autumn, with her caravan heading off into a rain storm that he describes. Those two *nasīb* rain storms, however, are analogous in the evolutionary biological sense that they do not share a common genetic ancestor. No stylistic device such as the *Ec* comparison links them. Both poets made the decision to place rain descriptions in their *nasīb*, but drawing on different previous stylistic models. The stylistic ancestor of Sā'idah's rain storm is not to be found in a *nasīb*, but in the set-piece rain descriptions of early poets. There are, however, examples of Hudhalī poets who make use of Najdī-style rain scenes, although before we examine one such example, it is useful to survey the chief means of introducing such a scene in pre-Islamic poetry.

With regard to rain-storms featuring lightning, Ali Ahmad Hussein has identified three structuring devices as the most basic and original.²⁹ Few of the instances that he cites take place in the *nasīb* or are connected to the beloved. Two methods used by Imru' al-Qays involve the speaker calling on his companion or (often in the dual) companions to help him locate lightning, or to ask if they see it.³⁰ Such phrases might include *hal tará barqan* (do you see any lightning?)—Hussein's type 3—or *a'innī 'alá barqin* (assist me [to see] some lightning)—Hussein's type 2. While there is no one definitive explanation for such pieces, they are most easily explained in relation to boasting,³¹ as the text presumes a treacherous ascent of a mountain at

²⁹ Hussein, *The Lightning-Scene in Ancient Arabic Poetry*, 1–3. I have drawn on Hussein's corpus, but my schematization differs somewhat from his. The best recent study of rain in general is Anwar 'Alyān Abū Suwaylam, *al-Maṭar fī l-shi'r al-Jāhili* (Amman: Dār 'Ammār, 1987).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2, 42–51.

³¹ Montgomery, "Dichotomy in Jāhili Poetry," 4.

night, in all likelihood acting as the *rā'id* of his tribe,³² to scout for rain and fresh herbage. Another method, Hussein's type 1, is not found very often in early poets, where the speaker describes being kept awake with expressions like *arraqanī l-layla barqun*, used by al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar.³³

Although none of the examples given by Hussein are set clearly in the *nasīb*, there are two possible ways in which the lightning or rain-scene can be connected to the beloved. The citation just given for al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar introduces a one-line *ṭayf al-khayāl* (the image of the beloved that comes to the speaker in the night), although this is not common in early *ṭayf al-khayāl* scenes.³⁴ The structuring of al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar's text is facilitated by the fact that the verb *arraqa* can also be used of the image (*ṭayf*) herself, as in the *nasīb* of a poem by Ṭarafah.³⁵ A passage by 'Abīd featuring lightning, though not cited by Hussein, is introduced by the verb *saqá* ("it rained upon," or "may it rain upon").³⁶ In 'Abīd's case, he invokes rain upon the beloved, Rabāb: "May the cloud pour down (*saqá*) upon Rabāb its rain, with the thunder rumbling amid its flashes."³⁷ Unfortunately, 'Abīd's text is an isolated set-piece, so it is impossible to determine whether it is a fragment that once belonged in a *nasīb* or if it simply stands on its own. Nevertheless, it certainly lends itself to use within a *nasīb*.

Hussein's type 4 of formulaic phrases marks a significant departure from the first three, because here, "the protagonist asserts that he is watching the lightning gleaming over some

³² Tahera Qutbuddin suggested this reading to me (personal communication).

³³ Hussein, *Lightning Scene*, 1; *Muf.* no. 57, l. 11, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 248.

³⁴ See Jacobi, *Studien*, 35–37.

³⁵ Ṭarafah no. 5, l. 4, *Six Divans*, 60: *arraqa l-'ayna khayālun*.

³⁶ 'Abīd no. 6, l. 1, 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ and 'Āmir ibn al-Ṭufayl, *The Dīwāns of 'Abīd Ibn Al-Abraṣ, of Asad, and 'Āmir Ibn Aṭ-Ṭufayl, of 'Āmir Ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah*, ed. and trans. Charles James Lyall (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1913), 36 (Arabic section). This is similar to Labīd's *ruziqat*, more or less synonymous with *saqá* in the context of his usage.

³⁷ Lyall's translation, *ibid.*, 27.

9 It is as if its first showers, when they came up against Mount Shaṭīb,
 were the white flanks of a black-backed horse,
 charging down mounted enemies—
 10 surging above and churning below,
 tearing at the seams, the water's weight spilling out,
 11 as if, between its heights and lower reaches,
 there were a white garment flapping out, or the glare of a lamp,
 12 as if within, massive, ten-month pregnant, disheveled
 camel-mares [bellowed], their utters bursting,
 their nearly-weaned calves following,
 13 their throats rasping, their lips dangling,
 driving their young forth into the sun-bleached plain.
 14 A south wind arose before it, while from behind
 rain-heavy clouds propelled it forward pouring water.
 8 There is no difference between rising slopes and wadi bottoms,
 and he who crouches in his tent may as well walk over the floodplain.
 15 The pastures and plains grow green in the morning
 amidst hollows of still water and rivulets running.⁴²

This description displays most of the typical features of Najdī rain storm boasts introduced with Hussein's types 2 or 3 introductory formulae. The edges of the dark rain cloud, where lines of heavy rain are visible, are compared to the fringe mesh of thread (*haydab*) from a

⁴² 'Abīd no. 28, ll. 6–15 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ and 'Āmir ibn al-Ṭufayl, *Dīwān*, 75–77 (Arabic), 60 (English). The translation is mine but I follow Lyall's resequencing of the lines and his Arabic text. The poem is also attributed to Aws ibn Ḥajar, and Najm's edition possesses a good apparatus of variants: Aws ibn Ḥajar, *Dīwān Aws ibn Ḥajar*, 15–17.

hand-woven cloth (l. 7). It is described as abutting a mountain, almost always named (l. 9). The heavy rain (l. 10) is compared to a bursting water skin and the sound of the thunder to herds of camels, particularly pregnant ones or camels with young (l. 12) that make as much of a racket as possible. The south wind (*janūb*) is often mentioned (l. 14) and the rain is described as so strong, that whether one is on low or high ground (where tents were pitched to avoid this problem), one gets inundated (l. 8). The distinctive features unique to ‘Abīd’s piece here are his beautiful evocation of piebald horse, white and black, compared with the dark clouds illuminated beneath by bright lightning (l. 9). His comparison of the expanse of the lightning’s flash (l. 11) to a white sheet is also striking. One significant feature of most rain scenes absent from this one, found in Imru’ al-Qays and perhaps representing his contribution to the tradition, has the rain cloud moving from one area to another. In the case of his *Mu‘allaqah* for example, it begins at Mt. Qaṭan, then falls on Mts. al-Sitār and Yadhbul, Kutayfah, and Mt. Qanān, ending at Taymā’.⁴³ Most later poets, including Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah, certainly make use of the same technique as Imru’ al-Qays of giving a series of place-names to indicate the storm’s movement.

The Hudhalī rain scene used in a *nasīb* is not introduced in the context of a boast. The poet begins with a description the *aṭlāl* (ruins of the beloved’s camp, ll. 1–2) followed by a description of his weeping (ll. 3–5), which in some ways anticipates the rain storm as he compares his tears to water leaking from a burst water skin, and to rain. He then recollects the *za‘n*, the departure of his beloved’s caravan, clearly situating the scene in the Ḥijāz by noting

⁴³ Ll. 74–77. The place-names mentioned are hundreds of miles distant from each other, and the geography of the path of the storm is incoherent, as demonstrated by Ulrich Thilo, *Die Ortsnamen in der altarabischen Poesie; ein Beitrag zur vor- und frühislamischen Dichtung und zur historischen Topographie Nordarabiens.*, vol. Heft 3, Schriften der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung, (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1958), 12–13. Given the incompleteness of our knowledge of pre-Islamic geography, this does not demonstrate conclusively that the text is corrupt or forged, as Thilo believes, but Hussein’s reconstruction (*Lightning Scene*, 46–50) is extremely unconvincing.

that she is a woman from the tribe of Kinānah (l. 7), before describing her body and her teeth when she smiles (ll. 10–11). The brilliance of her smile offers a segue into the description of the lightning. Thus, by comparing his tears to rain and describing the beloved's smile, al-Mutanakhhil tightly integrates the rain scene into the *nasīb*. This in itself would have been understood by the audience as a novel, particularly Hudhalī tribal appropriation of the coming rain scene, and by alluding to the tribal identity of the beloved, he more clearly establishes that he is depicting a distinctively Ḥijāzī lightning scene [83]:

Did lightning's faint flash tonight⁴⁴ over Asmā's [abodes],
coming from a white cloud, promising rain, rouse your heart?
It arose off the coast, driven forward by [other]
big-bellied clouds, heavy with rain,
its sharp showers and thunder veiled by lightning,
up to the gravely sands around al-Ajwal,
shrouded, dark, the seams of its handles torn,
the soft sandy lands and the rocky refuges are the same to it.
It settled tumultuously in place, and the wind slit its rainy surface open,
while its flank poured forth, before the north wind drove it [apart],
shedding its water its forefront jostled,
throwing down the lofty *samur* trees.
It ascended Najd, heaping up there
until the end of the night, foaling [rains and thunder].
The shimmering, white doves of all the desert places it reaches

15

⁴⁴ Reading *al-layla* with Hell for *al-laylu* in *Ash'ār*.

cry out in alarm as they flit [over the waves] like colocynth seeds,
 and the large-eyed [oryx] stand on hillocks,
 lest they sink into the muck [and be carried away],
 white as fine robes, their color polished
 by the pouring rain of dark, big-bellied clouds. 20
 May the rain fall first of all on Salmá;
 and don't weary yourself over the word given by a faithless,
 inconstant [woman].
 Leave aside the lowly and treacherous;
 when they turn away and seek another, then you too seek another!⁴⁵

The resemblances to Aws's scene are numerous, and our commentary quotes in particular l. 8 of Aws's text, contrasting the high- and lowlands, as a source for l. 14, in addition to a similar line from Imru' al-Qays.⁴⁶ Al-Mutanakhkhil's debt to Aws or similar poets is also evident in his more implicit comparison of the rain clouds to herds of pregnant camels (l. 12), his naming of the mountains on which the clouds rain (l. 13), and the comparison of the rains with burst water skins (l. 14). His descriptions of animals are evocative of Imru' al-Qays's *Mu'allaqah*.⁴⁷

The differences are, in their way, much more striking. Having anticipated the rain scene so completely in his introduction, the poet first does away with the conventional addresses to a companion. The emotional content of the introductory line is noteworthy: the speaker simply asks himself, "did lightning's faint flash ... rouse your heart?" (*hal hājaka kalīlun*, l. 11). As described in chapter 2, Hudhayl's rain clouds follow a different path than

⁴⁵ 66(ML).1.11–22, *Ash'ār*, 1254–58. See also Hell's translation and Arabic text in Hell, *Neue Hudāiliten-Diwane*, 2:41–42 (German), 83–85 (Arabic).

⁴⁶ Al-Sukkarī, *Ash'ār*, 1255–56.

⁴⁷ Ll. 76, 81, 81.

those of poets from tribes of the interior of the peninsula, beginning on the coast (l. 12) before moving into the uplands (l. 17). While the place name Ajwal (l. 13) is not known outside of his poem, such naming probably allowed poets to specify local toponyms understood by their regional audiences. Finally, in ll. 21 and 22, the rain is coming from his beloved, and he asks it to fall upon her, although the question of multiple names (Salmá in this case) used for beloveds in Arabic poems is perplexing, as it occurs not infrequently. It could be that it was common to address a person by more than one name, as the commentators state, or that there is an error in transmission, or that Salmá here refers to a toponym. To conclude the scene, he uses the transitional formula called the Trostmotiv by Jacobi,⁴⁸ an extremely common means to segue from the *nasīb* to camel description in tripartite *qaṣīdahs*. Specifically, he uses the *da‘‘an-ka dhā* formula, but repurposes it, abandoning the tripartite structure.⁴⁹ In accordance with tribal traditions, al-Mutanakhkhil carefully takes his consolation not in the desert journey, but in a fine bow and sword that he carefully describes (ll. 23–29).

The figure of the Hudhalī honey collectors gives us a second and final example of the use of whole episode narratives from older Najdī poets. Above, we saw that the influence of Aws ibn Ḥajar on the Hudhalī poet al-Mutanakhkhil is clearly discernible in the latter’s rain depiction. Not only this, but al-Mutanakhkhil in the same text draws on and modifies Aws’s famed bow descriptions.⁵⁰ Al-Mutanakhkhil does not rework his source material quite so completely with the bow descriptions, however.⁵¹ Abū Dhu‘ayb, though, draws on Aws’s characterization of a mountain-dwelling bow-maker to depict his honey collectors, who

⁴⁸ Jacobi, *Studien*, 51.

⁴⁹ For the formula, see *ibid.*

⁵⁰ See also 66(ML).3.33–36 (*Ash‘ār*, 1266–76); Aws ibn Ḥajar no. 35, ll. 17–36, discussed below, and no. 37, ll. 18–24, *Dīwān*, 85–89, 96–98.

⁵¹ In both sections they function essentially as boasts, but his no. 37 is a evidently a panegyric where a weapon description takes the place of the central camel mare description.

harvest the honey during dangerous excursions into the mountains. Abū Dhu'ayb deploys these episodes as part of his extended *Ec*-type similes in *nasīb*s, where he compares the beloved's lips to wine and honey.⁵²

The comparison of the beloved's lips to honey and wine are ubiquitous in pre-Islamic poetry. Rudolf Geyer gives numerous examples,⁵³ to which Erich Bräunlich adds several others.⁵⁴ Most are one line. It is worth noting that, although as Bräunlich states, there is no particular reason to think that the descriptions of honey collection in Hudhayl's corpus means they were particularly avid honey-harvesters (most Hudhalī poets make no reference to honey), there are numerous discussions of actual honey collecting in Arabic literature, and our authors often refer to native informants telling them of honey collecting in southwest Arabia. An extensive text dealing with honey, published since Bräunlich's article appeared, is Abū Ḥanīfa Aḥmad ibn Dāwūd al-Dīnawarī's (d. before 290/902 or 3) chapter on bees and honey (*bāb al-ʿasal wa-l-naḥl*) in his *Kitāb al-Nabāt* (book of plants).⁵⁵ Al-Dīnawarī's discussion is not simply philological, although he does quote famous poets and philologists. It also takes in empirical questions on queen bees, bees' wax, stings, and the like, and he seems to have had an ethnographic bent. We read phrases like *sa'altu ʿanhu ba'd al-a'rāb* (I asked a nomad about it) or *akhbaranī ba'd al-Azd* (someone from the tribe of Azd told me).⁵⁶ In these ethnographic moments, he only discusses the southwest Arabian areas like al-Ṭā'if and the Sarāh mountains

⁵² His honey descriptions can be found in 1(ADhQ).2.15–25, 1(ADhQ).6.26–28 (contains no description of the collector), 1(ADhQ).12.10–16 and 1(ADhQ).22.1–6, *Ash'ār*, 48–53, 95–96, 143–44, 180–81. Sā'idah's are 64(SJK).1.26–35, 64(SJK).3.1–6, *Ash'ār*, 1108–12, 1138–40.

⁵³ Rudolf Eugen Geyer, ed., *Zwei Gedichte von al-'A'šā*, trans. Rudolf Eugen Geyer, vol. 1, *Mâ bukâ'u* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1905), 57, 62, 62n7, 69, 71n3, 90, 290.

⁵⁴ Bräunlich, "Versuch einer literargeschichtlichen Betrachtungsweise altarabischer Posien," 222–24.

⁵⁵ Not to be confused, as has occurred occasionally, with Abū Aḥmad ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnawarī. Abū Ḥanīfah Aḥmad ibn Dāwūd Dīnawarī, *The Book of Plants/Kitāb al-Nabāt*, ed. Bernhard Levin, Wiesbaden (F. Steiner, 1974), 257–294.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 264, 266.

where fine honey was produced, and the tribes who collect it.⁵⁷ The commentary in the *Ash'ār* also contains similar ethnographic comments, such as that of Abū Sa'īd (the *kunyah* (paedonymic), confusingly, of both al-Aṣma'ī and al-Sukkarī), who heard “a man from Quraysh at al-Ṭā'if” discussing honey.⁵⁸ Giovanni Canova sees a relationship between modern honey collection in Oman and Hudhalī poetry.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, even if there was more material honey collection taking place in the area familiar to Hudhayl in Arabia, their poets still needed to textually represent it. The evidence is that they did this by taking over conventional motifs from previous poets and adapting them to new uses, such as describing honey collectors in the *nasīb*. Bräunlich, in his search for antecedents to Hudhayl's depictions of honey collection, only examines texts directly related to that subject. As Bauer has noted, however, in many regards the impoverished, low-status, calloused and lanky honey collector is a version of the hunter character from the onager episode.⁶⁰ Abū Dhu'ayb even describes the honey collector, at one point, as a hunter as well.⁶¹ Yet the honey-collector also differs from the hunter on numerous points; in particular, he uses ropes and skill to ascent treacherous mountains, characteristics never found in onager episodes.

Such characteristics, are, however, evident in Aws's distinctive and unique description of a bow-maker, who finds prized trees for wood in the mountains [84]:

[I arm myself with] a [bow] cut, a hacked tranche, from the base of a tree-bough,

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Al-Sukkarī, *Ash'ār*, 1139. The man offers folk philology: the kind of honey known as *ḍarab* is related to the expression *istadrab al-'asal*, when the “bees have eaten hailstones (*al-barad*).”

⁵⁹ Canova, “‘Cacciatori die Miele’: dalla poesia Hudaylita alle pratiche tradizionali nel Dhofar (Oman).”

⁶⁰ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:42.

⁶¹ He carries arrows, in addition to his honey collecting instruments, as his sole possessions. Ibid., 1:44; 1(ADhQ).22.8, *Ash'ār*, 181.

growing atop a peak crowned with cloud,
upon a stone face, as if its surface
were smeared, again and again, with oil, so that any who treads upon it slides—
someone eyeing it up circled it, taking the difficult task upon himself
to weary his gaze as he looks up and watches it,
until he met a man from Mayda‘ān whose soul despaired over it,
though then he hurried forward, 20
saying, “do you know of anyone who’ll
tell you how to gain a prize, without any hard work,
the most valuable thing upon which ever eyes have been laid,
for someone seeking to sell it, or merely to have?”
[It was] above a mountain with a soaring peak, unreachable
unless you wore yourself out and labored,
and he saw chasms around the mountain before him
with crevices between each peak,
so he prepared for death, resolved,
and cast off his ropes, and laid the matter before God (*tawakkalā*), 25
and oft were his nails bitten into by the rock,
yet whenever a lengthy ascent wearied him, he went on to another.
He continued on until he reached it, clinging desperately
in place, for if he fell, he’d be cut apart,
and he continued on, not desiring that which he’d climbed for,
his desire was only to hope for deliverance

(*wa-lā nasfsahū illá rajā'an mu'ammalā*).⁶²

Aws does not use the same grammatical function of the *Ec* extended simile, but the effect is the same; a detail from the main rhetorical track of the *qaṣīdah* is exploded like part of an engine in a schematic drawing. Aws creates or depicts a certain character, discursively, as an extension of his bow description. Abū Dhu'ayb does not use the character for the same purpose, but utilizes many of character's same features in his discursive extension of the honey simile within the *nasīb*, by depicting the honey's gatherer [85]:

[a wine mixed] with honey of those [bees] that work in hidden places,
returning there when the sun's crust yellows [sc. it sets], 15
with honey that the lord-bees [i.e., the queen] make,
their peaks in a lofty place below the sky,
their pollen-harvesters [sc. the bees (*jawāris*)] settle constantly upon the heights'
[blossoms],
then head down into the [cool] crags, with their rivulets of summer rains.
When they fly up there, [the height] wears upon those speeding along
like arrow heads fired far, their paths compact together—
the pollen-harvesters remain over the hill of al-Thamrā' [or: over fruitful trees]
young [bees], yellow-tufted [lit. "feathered"], with fluffy necks,
and when the tribesman of Khālid saw them, they were like
the pebbles thrown up by hooves' clipping, falling and rising in turns. 20
He made a firm resolution about them, and knew certainly that
he would get to [the bees], or [die trying and] fall to the powdery earth;

⁶² Aws no. 35, ll. 17–28, Aws ibn Ḥajar, *Dīwān Aws ibn Ḥajar*, 85–88.

for people said to him: “avoid it, Ḥarām”—and he was astonished
 by its conspicuous heights, its breadth and the way it rose straight up—
 so he affixed the fateful cords, and was pleased
 with his skill, if he could go, unbetrayed by a frayed rope—
 he dangles over [the honey] between cord and peg,
 [hanging] from a smooth, massive glossy face of rock, from which crows slide—
 and when he smokes [the bees] out of their hive they scatter,
 thoroughly dejected and disgraced— 25
 so how sweet is the pure wine of Syria and this [honey],
 [wine] aged bright red, and this [honey] mixed with it!
 And the two of them together, in a [wooden] Bāriqī cup,
 freshly carved from a newly-lopped bough, are not
 sweeter than her mouth, when I come to her in the night
 and she wraps me in her garments.⁶³

The overall narrative of Abū Dhu’ayb is similar to Aws: the protagonist confronts a challenge in the form of an apparently insurmountable mountain, and overcomes it. In innumerable details, both he and Sā’idah seem to be drawing either on Aws or on poets who produced similar texts. For Aws, the slope that the wood-collector confronts is “smeared, again and again, with oil, so that any who treads upon it slides,” (l. 18). For Abū Dhu’ayb, “crows slide off of it,” (l. 24). Both poets describes the protagonist’s response to the lofty peaks of the mountain they are confronting (Aws, l. 23, Abū Dhu’ayb, l. 16), and the fear that they experience, Abū Dhu’ayb with the expression, “he made a firm resolution (*ajadda fī-hā amran*, l. 21)” and Aws

⁶³ 1(ADhQ).2.15–26, *Ash’ār*, 48–54.

with the structurally parallel, “so he prepared for death, resolved (*fa-ashraṭa fī-hā nafsaḥū wa-hwa mu‘ṣimun*, l. 25).” Both describe the ropes that the protagonist uses in his venture, connecting the character’s use of the rope with his fatalistic attitude. Aws says, “and he cast off his ropes, and laid the matter before God (*wa-alqá bi-asbābin la-hū wa-tawakkalā*, l. 25),” while Abū Dhu’ayb has “he affixed the fateful cords (*fa-a’laqa asbāba l-maniyyati*, l. 23).” In both, the character engages in some dialog regarding their task; Aws’s wood-collector, inexplicably, asks a man from the tribe of Mayda‘ān (l. 20), allowing him to externalize his resolution on the matter through the dialog (ll. 21-22), while Abū Dhu’ayb’s honey-collector is dissuaded by unnamed others who warn him of the danger (l. 22), again, allowing for narrative movement revolving around a psychological event (to climb, or not to climb). One of the most distinctive details found in verses of both Aws and Hudhalī poets is the callous and rough nails of the protagonist. Aws’s character’s nails are “bitten into by the rock (*wa-qad akalat azfārahū l-ṣakhr*, l. 26). Abū Dhu’ayb does not mention this detail, but Sā‘idah does, describing the honey collector as “a callous-fingered man, his nails worn down to the nubs (*shatnu l-banān, mukazzam*).”⁶⁴

Just as I have argued that images of rule were profoundly affected by a tribe’s proximity to and interaction with regional sedentary imperial powers, and that moreover the social function itself of poetry varied accordingly as well, here we see that the adaptation and adoption of stylistic devices in pre-Islamic poetry did not take place in an intertextual void. These tribal stylistics have been alluded to for comparative purposes throughout this study, but the more careful examination of one section of the Hudhalī *qaṣīdah*, the *nasīb*, shows a consistent strategy of relocating and utterly repurposing preexisting motifs, to modify

⁶⁴ 64(SJK).3.2., *Ash‘ār*, 1139.

narrative and grammatical structures, and to consistently modify the details of certain conventions to suit their audience's expectations, by including references to Ḥimyarite instead of Persian writing for example. We should also be wary of associating any particular motif, ritual significance or any ultimate meaning with a particular section of a *qaṣīdah*. Although the details of depictions of rain-storms the characterization of Aws's wood-collector tended to be "sticky," moving around in clumps from one poet to another, poets from different tribes and regions were also quite quick to repurpose those "clumps" in entirely new ways in their own *qaṣīdahs*. Al-Mutanakhkhil and Abū Dhu'ayb use rain-storms and the poor mountaineer entirely differently in their *nasīb*s than Aws had in his boasts.

4.3. *The Hudhalī Fate Elegy: Najdī Inception, Adoption in Hudhayl and Early Development*

What I call here the Hudhalī fate elegy is a structure unique in the pre- and early-Islamic period to Hudhayl's poets, but which draws on some elements of Najdī texts. While they allude predominantly to each other and in some cases to poets from outside the tribe, we can speculate that in some regards their stylistic choices were ideological, if they depict fate in a distinctive way, for example, but in other regards they represent stylistic development the motive for which is now difficult or impossible to determine. Eleven poems dating to pre-Islamic or *mukhaḍram* Hudhalī poets can be identified as belonging to this generic tradition.⁶⁵ In general, these are characterized by some kind of introduction such as a *nasīb*, followed by a

⁶⁵ 1(ADhQ).1, *ibid.*, 4–41; 1(ADhQ).3, pp. 56–64; 3(ṢGhKh).1, pp. 245–253; 3(ṢGhKh).15, pp. 287–292; 63(AKJ).4, pp. 1090–93; 64(SJK).1, pp. 1097–1121; 64(SJK).2, pp. 1122–1138; 64(SJK).8, pp. 1157–1165; 65(AKhQ).1, pp. 1189–1195; 67(UḤ).2, pp. 1291–1293; 67(UḤ).4, pp. 1295–1301. 67(UḤ).2 is not exactly a fate elegy in the sense that it does not make use of the formulae or episodes as described below. Its onager episode, uniquely in the *Ash'ār*, is used to describe camels—not the camel mare of the poet, but rather, the camels of the swiftly departing beloved. This may be unique in early Arabic poetry. As an experimental elegiac text with some kind of animal episode, however, the text certainly deserves to be included with other texts of the fate elegy genre.

formulaic and gnomic statement on fate, and one or more episodes on the death of an animal, seven of which are hunted onagers (I will refer to these as animal episodes for convenience; three texts feature human warriors run down by fate).⁶⁶ Like most pre-Islamic poems, there is little structurally or stylistically to indicate conclusions.

Not all of the texts can be explicitly identified based on the text as elegies; two begin with *nasīb*s, one with a complaint on old age, and one has no introduction. This latter is Abū Dhu'ayb no. 3, which has no introduction and consists only of an onager episode initiated by a fatalistic formula. It is either a fragment or a set-piece.⁶⁷ Sā'idah nos. 1 and 2 have been discussed in somewhat more detail above in chapter 2; no. 1 has a lengthy, complex and amorous *nasīb* while no. 2 is somewhat equivocal, opening with a complaint about old age. No. 2 is included in the first table below. Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith no. 2 also begins with a short departure of the *ẓa'n*-type *nasīb*. The remaining eight are evidently elegies, referring clearly to the death of a kinsman (or apparently, in Abū Kabīr's text, a kinswoman, his wife). However, none of them contain the explicit praise for the dead so common in well-known elegies such as those of al-Khansā'.⁶⁸ Such "praise elegies" do appear in the Hudhalī corpus and even by authors who composed fate elegies, but they seem to have constituted two entirely separate genres.

The introductory section varies in the nine explicit elegies (i.e., excluding Sā'idah no. 1 and Usāmah no. 2, which also have fairly unusually introductions), but some features recur among different poets. Table 1 illustrates the possible combinations of motifs in the six poets'

⁶⁶ 1(ADhQ).1.11–24, *ibid.*, 11–25; and 1(ADhQ).3.1–8, pp. 56–59; 3(ṢGhKh).15.11–22, pp. 289–91; 63(AKJ).4.4–15, pp. 1090–93; 64(SJK).8.18–23, p. 1170; 65(AKhQ).1.7–18, pp. 1190–93; 67(UḤ).2.5–11, pp. 1292–93; 67(UḤ).4.8–42, 1296–1301. Discussed in detail in Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 2:282–318, although he neglects Abū Kabīr and Sā'idah's onager sections. Sā'idah's onager section is not extremely clear, though.

⁶⁷ Jacobi, "Anfänge," 224, convincingly argues that pieces such as these are not fragments.

⁶⁸ 65(AKhQ).16.2–3, *Ash'ār*, 1234, is an exception. The speaker briefly praises the deceased's valor and generosity.

introductions to their poems, with the poets arranged, as near as can be ascertained, in ascending chronological order.

Table 1: Motifs Employed in the Introduction to Hudhalī Fate Elegies

Motif	Dialogue with Umaymah	Sleepless -ness	Deceased kin named/ specified	Lament over old age	Kin departed and died elsewhere?	Endurance
Abū Kabīr			No. 4	No. 4		
Şakhr		No. 15	Nos. 1, 15			
Abū Khirāsh	No. 1		Nos. 1, 16			No. 1
Sā'idah		No. 8	No. 8	No. 2		
Abū Dhu'ayb	No. 1	No. 1	No. 1		No. 1	No. 1
Usāmah		No. 4			No. 4	

In several points, poets appear to draw on previous poets. Abū Dhu'ayb's famous *marthiyah* (elegy) for his sons resembles, in some points, that of Abū Khirāsh. Both feature an antagonistic conversation with a woman named Umaymah. Likewise, Sā'idah's introduction to his second poem strongly resembles that of the old-age complaint in Abū Kabīr's almost certainly older text. Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith no. 4, was explicitly composed for sons who had emigrated to Syria, apparently to fight in the Islamic conquests; this also bears many similarities with Abū Dhu'ayb's text. All of these parallels will be discussed and elucidated in more detail below.

Following the introduction, when there is one, the most distinguishing formal feature of the Hudhalī fate elegy is the formulaic phrase used to introduce the animal episodes.⁶⁹ Most of the poets use the term *ḥadathānu l-dahr* (time/ fate's vicissitudes), which seems to be

⁶⁹ Since poets refer to animals by circumlocutory epithets and distinctive habits rather than by explicit identification, it has not always been clear which animal is being described, denoted in the table below by a question mark.

distinctive to Hudhayl; occasionally the refer to *al-ayyām*. In every case, the verbal formula falls in the first hemistich of the line, with as grammatical subject the animal or humans named described in the second hemistich. In two cases, fate itself is the grammatical subject, and in two cases, the poet introduces the formula with an oath referring to Allāh.

The earliest instance, and a very representative one, is Abū Kabīr's, who introduces his onager section with the phrase *wa-l-dahru lā yabqá 'alá ḥadathānihī* (No [onager] escapes the vicissitudes of time/fate),⁷⁰ followed in the second hemistich by the subject of the verb. This is identical to the phrase used in Abū Dhu'ayb no. 1 (=Mufaḍḍaliyyah no. 126),⁷¹ and Sā'idah uses the same formula to introduce one episode on the death of mounted warriors,⁷² while in his other episode about fighting men, he asks *hal iqtaná ḥadathānu l-dahrī min anas?* (Are there people the vicissitudes of time/fate spare?).⁷³ Time or fate is the grammatical subject in that sentence. Abū Khirāsh uses the similar *ará l-dahra lā yabqá 'alá ḥadathānihī*, (I see that [an onager] does not endure time/fate's vicissitudes),⁷⁴ a phrase identical to one used by Sā'idah,⁷⁵ also for an onager. Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith begins the phrase with an oath, *fa-wa-llāhi lā yabqá 'alá ḥadathānihī*, (By God, no [onager] escapes the vicissitudes of fate/time).⁷⁶ Ṣakhr al-Ghayy introduces an ibex scene by referred to the ibex as *fādir* ("isolated in its mountain," or "aged and full-grown") in the similar phrase, *a-'aynayya lā yabqá 'alá l-dahri fādirun*,⁷⁷ (O my eyes, the full-grown [ibex] does not endure against time/fate). In his no. 15, he states that "the passage

⁷⁰ 63(AKJ).4.4, *Ash'ār*, 1090.

⁷¹ 1(AdhQ).1.15, 36, 49, *ibid.*, 11, 26, 33.

⁷² 64(SJK).1.40, *ibid.*, 1114.

⁷³ 64(SJK).2.28, *ibid.*, 1131.

⁷⁴ 65(AKhQ).1.7, *ibid.*, 1190.

⁷⁵ 64(SJK).8.18, *ibid.*, 1170.

⁷⁶ 67(UḤ).4.8, *ibid.*, 1296; 65(AKhQ).16.5, *ibid.*, 1235 is identical, but without the oath.

⁷⁷ 3(ṢGhKh).1.4, *ibid.*, 246. The second section of this text depicts an eagle's death, but does not begin with a formula. This is the case with a few other episodes in other poets' texts as well.

of time lets no noble man remain behind, nor the wild, white-footed [ibex], or the ostrich,” (*arā l-ayyāma lā tubqī karīman wa-lā l-‘uṣma l-awābida wa-l-na‘āmā*).⁷⁸ He refers here to “the [passing] days,” rather than *al-dahr* (time/fate), but uses the verb *yubqī*, form IV of *baqiya* used elsewhere. He also makes time the subject of the sentence. Abū Dhu’ayb also refers to *al-ayyām* (the days) in his no. 3, an isolated onager episode,⁷⁹ and Sā’idah introduces an ibex-episode with the oath, *ta-llāhi yabqá ‘alá l-ayyāmi dhū ḥiyadin* (By God, the curve-horned [ibex] does not endure against the days’ passing).⁸⁰

The poets then depict between one and three animal episodes, in virtually all of which the protagonist(s) die, explicitly or implicitly, as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Animal Episodes Employed in Hudhalī Fate Elegies

Motif Poet	Ibex	Onager	Oryx	Warrior(s)	Hawk/Eagle
Abū Kabīr		No. 4a(?)			
Ṣakhr	Nos. 1a, 15a	No. 15b			No. 1b
Abū Khirāsh		Nos. 1a, 16a			No. 1b
Sā’idah		No. 8a(?)	No. 2a(?)	Nos. 1a, 2b	
Abū Dhu’ayb		Nos. 1a, 3a	Nos. 1b, 3b	No. 1c	
Usāmah		No. 4a			

Other than the fact that all poets deploy at least one onager episode, there is little consistency in the range of animals or the number of episodes used by different poets. Ṣakhr al-Ghayy, relatively early on introduced the ibex as a possible protagonist for the fate elegy, but no other poet follows him in this. He and Abū Khirāsh both depict birds of prey who, like the ibex, may

⁷⁸ 3(ṢGhKh).15.5, *ibid.*, 287.

⁷⁹ 1(AdhQ).3.1, *ibid.*, 56.

⁸⁰ 64(SJK).2.8, *ibid.*, 1124. Because of the oath, the negation of the verb is implicit.

seem especially unattainable by fate and time by virtue of their height above the human world. Sā'idah and Abū Dhu'ayb offer a relatively coherent group, as they do in most regards. Abū Dhu'ayb no. 1, here as in his use of formulae, offers the most comprehensive, coherent and representative specimen of this small genre.

In addition to drawing on each other, Hudhayl's poets' intertextual antecedents include at least two very old Najdī poets, al-Muraqqish al-Akbar and, 'Amr ibn Qamī'ah, both connected to the tribe of Qays ibn Tha'labah. 'Amr was reportedly the nephew of al-Muraqqish. Lyall tentatively dates al-Muraqqish to the early sixth century,⁸¹ and 'Amr probably belongs to about the same period.⁸² The two poets are the earliest to introduce the motif of animals' inability to survive fate, although in both cases the primary animal of concern are the "white-footed" ibex, (*al-a'ṣam*, pl. *al-'uṣm*).⁸³ While the structure of the fate elegy is evident in al-Muraqqish's text, 'Amr—without elaborating or narrating the episodes at all—seems to be the only non-Hudhālī poet to refer to the nearly full spectrum of possible protagonists for their elegies. In his poem, he addresses the beloved, describes how time or fate (*al-dahr*) has aged him, and how none escape [86]:

There is nothing astonishing in what you see;

astonishing is how the fates (*al-ājāl*) overtake [us] on all sides.

⁸¹ Lyall, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:168. Régis Blachère also held the poems attributed to the two Muraqqishes collected by the al-Mufaḍḍal to be relatively early, especially as they are alluded to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, although a depiction of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar as a melancholic courtly later emerged: Régis Blachère, "Remarques sur deux élégiaques arabes du VI^e siècle J.-C.," *Arabica* 7, no. 1 (1960): 37. He dates al-Muraqqish al-Akbar's death to the mid-seventh century: Régis Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe des origines à la fin du XVe siècle de J.-C.* (Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1952), 2:252.

⁸² See Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe*, 2:252–3.

⁸³ For other instances of the same motif see the *mukhaḍram* poet al-Mukhabbal al-Sa'dī, who tells a woman reproaching him (*ādhilatī*) that saving wealth will not save him from his fate, even if he had a lofty fortress inaccessible even to ibex (*al-'uṣm*): Muf. no. 21, ll. 35–38, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 118; the line is also attributed to Ṭarafah: Ahldwardt, *Six Divans*, 188 and a similar image appears in al-A'shā (from the same tribe, Qays ibn Tha'labah, as 'Amr), no. 13, l. 3, *Dīwān*, 101.

They reach the mottled crocodile (*al-timsah* (sic)) beneath the waves,
and the white-legged ibex (*al-‘uṣm*) on their mountain peaks,
and the solitary oryx bull (*al-farīd al-musaffa‘ al-wajh*), his face streaked,
with a brown band on his sides, that chooses safe sands for his dwelling,
and they seek to cast down the terrifying battle-champion (*al-baṭal al-arwa‘*),
[piercing] between his camel-leather jerkin and his chain mail (*sirbāl*).⁸⁴

Neither ‘Amr nor al-Muraqqish mention onagers, but ‘Amr does mention several of the other protagonists who will later appear in Hudhayl’s fate elegies. Unfortunately, no crocodile episodes survive in Arabic poetry, but narratives about the ibex, oryx and human warriors all frequently appear in more elaborated narratives, as we have seen, in Hudhayl’s corpus. ‘Amr also speaks about fate in different terms than the Hudhalī poets; although he introduces the subject of animals’ inescapable demise in terms clearly evocative of Hudhayl’s formulae, his is distinctive. His invocation of fate takes up an entire line, and demonstrates a well-balanced parallelism, rather than the front-loaded phrases of Hudhayl allowing for the animals to appear as grammatical subjects in the second hemistich of the formula line, before an entire episode is articulated. ‘Amr also uses the term *ājāl* (fated ends), rather than *ayyām* (passing days) or *ḥadathān al-dahr* (vicissitudes of fate/time) utilized by Hudhayl.

Al-Muraqqish’s role in expanding the narrative possibility of such pithy statements as ‘Amr’s is not very often appreciated. It is generally assumed that Hudhayl was the first to adopt the theme of animals slain by fate to the service of elegy,⁸⁵ but in his *Mufaḍḍaliyyah* no. 54, al-

⁸⁴ ‘Amr ibn Qamī‘ah no. 6, l. 10–13: ‘Amr ibn Qamī‘ah, *The Poems of ‘Amr Son of Qamī‘ah*, 32–33 = *Dīwān*, ed. al-Ṣayrafī, 66. Translation adapted from Lyall. A similar line is found in the pre-Islamic al-Mutanakhkhil (fl. ca. 575–625) of Hudhayl, who mentions in two lines that neither the ostrich (*na‘ām*), gazelle (*zaby*), onager (*himār*) nor the ibex (*wa‘il*) escape death: 66(ML).6.14–15, *Ash‘ār*, 1283–84. See also Sā‘idah, 64(SJK).4.19–23, *Ash‘ār*, 1148–50.

⁸⁵ Wagner, *Grünzüge*, 1:127.

Muraqqish introduces the crucial narrative arc of animal episodes developed further later by Hudhayl. I have already cited his text in chapter 2; it is apparently a composite of two separate poems.⁸⁶ The second part (ll. 18–35), cited in chapter 2, is his complaint to an apparently Jafnid king, while the first section (ll. 1–17) consists of an unusual elegy, preceded by a six-line *nasīb* describing the abodes of the beloved Asmā’ and the departure of her caravan (ḡa’n).⁸⁷ The poet then laments the loss of a kinsman, his cousin Tha’lab [87]:

No misfortune bereaved my heart

like [the death] of my companion, left lying in Taghlam,

Tha’lab, ever striking helms’ crests with his sword,

and leading the tribe when darkness fell.

Go then, and may your uncle’s son [sc. the speaker] be your ransom;

nothing endures save the mountains Shābah and Adam.

If any living thing were to escape its fated day, it would be (*la-najā min yawmihi*)

the light-limbed ibex (*al-muzallam*), its forelegs streaked with white (*al-a’ṣam*), 10

[dwelling] among the lofty peaks of ‘Amāyah,

or just below heaven, where Mount Khiyam lifts him up,

the eggs of white vulture beneath him,⁸⁸

and above him a mountain summit, tall-shouldered.

He ascends wherever he wants, all around;

and if fate (*maniyyah*) would give him any respite, he could grow old and weak.

⁸⁶ See Lyall, *Al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 2:181 and Régis Blachère, “Remarques sur deux élégiaques arabes,” 32–33.

⁸⁷ On the issue of the relationship between *nasīb*s and elegies, rarely combined in early Arabic poetry except by Hudhalī poets, see Wagner, *Grünzuge*, 1:129 and Jacobi, “Anfänge.”

⁸⁸ This bird, the *anūq*, was said to nest at extremely high elevations. The commentary states that it is the *rakhamah*, or Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), but it may also be an eagle (c.f. Lane, s.v. “*anūq*”).

But ever-changing fortune (*raybu l-ḥawādith*) overcame him;
sliding from the cliffs, he was dashed.

No one regrets a long life lost;

he knows what [old age and weakness] would have lain before him.

15

The father dies, and the son remains behind;

everyone born of a father is one day orphaned.

Mothers benefit from their pains;

later then, according to fate (*al-miqdār*), they are [as if] barren.⁸⁹

The inevitable demise of Tha‘lab is illustrated by the death of the ibex, identified, as is virtually always the case in pre-Islamic poetry, by epithets. In this instance, the ibex is described as *muzallam*, light-limbed, and *a‘ṣam*, with white markings on its forelegs (l. 10). Like ‘Amr, al-Muraqqish does not use recognizably formulaic language to introduce the subject of fate. Although in l. 13 he uses the term *maniyyah* and in l. 14, *rayb al-ḥawādith*, all terms or expressions akin to later poets and to those of Hudhayl, his expression that the ibex would be “saved from his fated day” (*la-najā min yawmihi*), with its unrealis conditional *law* has little grammatically or lexically in common with later markers of the fate elegy.

The poet does, however, attempt to narrate the fate of the ibex, as opposed to ‘Amr’s static axiom. For the most part, though, this consists of a rather immobile description of the animal’s environment: place names known to his audience, evocative of great height, are employed (l. 11); the height of his habitat is contrasted with that of an eagle’s nest (l. 12); in sum, the area offers him perfect security (l. 13). That the ibex was unattainably secure was proverbial, not simply because of texts like ‘Amr’s, but because of others, such as the

⁸⁹ Muf. no. 54, ll. 7–17, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 238–39; translation adapted from Lyall, *Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:181–82.

Mu‘allaqah of Imru’ al-Qays, who illustrates the power of a storm by describing how its downpours drive the ibex (*al-‘uṣm*) from their mountain fastnesses.⁹⁰ The death of the ibex is curious, and somewhat problematic, since no agent representative of fate has overpowered the security of his elevated, mountainous position. He simply slips one day and anticlimactically falls to his death.

At this point, there is a gap of some fifty years or more before these same themes are picked up again by Hudhayl. As a stylistic device, the narrative of fate crushing an animal life clearly had elegiac potential, but al-Muraqqish’s innovation was limited and susceptible to further development. Perhaps other poets whose work does not survive continued his trajectory, but it does not appear again until the poetry of the Hudhalī Ṣakhr al-Ghayy, who must have lived closer to the year 600 CE. Ṣakhr has developed the narrative to a very large degree, but the overall arc is clearly more akin to Hudhayl’s onager episodes, for which we have earlier examples, and to which we’ll now turn before considering the adoption of the ibex narrative.

Abū Kabīr is one of Hudhayl’s earliest poets, with Hell placing him in the earliest generation of the tribe’s poets, with a *floruit* date of 550–600.⁹¹ We have already considered his first poem in chapter 2, where he describes an ideal companion in an “egalitarian praise” poem. His fourth poem’s introduction, like all of his four extant poems including the first, opens with an identical address to one Zuhayrah, referred as his daughter his first poem,⁹² followed by a complain on old age. In his poem no. 4, he quickly switches to addressing one

⁹⁰ *Al-Mu‘allaqah*, l. 70, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 150.

⁹¹ Hell, “Der Islam und die Hudailitendichtungen,” 81. Blachère agrees: Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe*, 2:280.

⁹² 63(AKJ).1.8, *Ash‘ār*, 1070.

Khilāwah, apparently his son, consoling him on the death of his mother (evidently the speaker's wife) with a discourse on fate, illustrated with an unusual onager episode [88]:

O, Zuhayrah, on the path to gray hair is there any turning back?

No man, however noble, however much he spends, is eternal.

Khilāwah weeps about departing from his mother (*an yufāriqa ummahū*),

but he will see her again when he nods off with sleep.

O, Khilāwa (sic), time (*al-dahr*) indeed destroys all whom you see:

fathers, mothers, and sons (*min ibnamī*).⁹³

And time's vicissitudes spare not (*wa-l-dahru lā yabqá 'alā ḥadathānihī*)

lank-bodied [onagers] going to drink at the black stone gullies

where the *ghaḍāh* is beginning to flourish;

they go to drink at Sāhira, the first flush of whose plants,

covering everything, are like night's dark curtains,

5

a pasture for wild, tawny-flanked and white-bellied animals,

where thin clouds hover and mist, and heavier ones settle down,

their sides split open when their lightning flies out

in the evening, in rumbling under-clouds draped low [over the earth]—

[a pasture where] the sound of mosquitoes near the wadi-bed

is like the chant in the open desert of riders

who've made a quick profit, whose summer caravan

carries the remains of [wine] jars' contents.

Then [the onagers] saw the head of a rider (*fāris*)

⁹³ For the unusual *ibnam* for *ibn* see Bajraktarević, "Le Dīwān d'Abū Kabīr al-Huḍalī," 65–66.

10

atop a full-girthed, rippling-haunched [stallion],

with the energy of a storm-cloud (*dhū ghayyith*), rearing his head

when wrestling with the bit as he struggles and tugs against the reins.

It is as if the dripping streams of blood on their torsos [when they're speared]

were spilled water from a bountiful well,

vast buckets, sloshing full,

being hauled out of a gurgling well, its casing collapsing.

Terror seized them and the colts (*jihāsh*), the weaned

and the unweaned, flew off

in fright, the spear-heads coming towards them,

as some were run through and some hit true.⁹⁴

15

Thomas Bauer did not include this text in his study of the onager episode, to which we alluded in chapter 2 with reference to the impoverished pedestrian hunter of most onager episodes. Here we have a spear-carrying, horse-mounted hunter, a feature which also appears once elsewhere in Hudhayl's corpus, when Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith, in a non-elegiac poem, describes an onager being hunted by a man on horseback.⁹⁵ Moreover, the overall narrative arc here seems to be quite different than that of almost all of the texts of Bauer's extremely comprehensive corpus. In most early Arabic texts, since the onager is being compared to the camel mare, its speed as it runs through the desert heading through water is a central part of the episode.⁹⁶ The description of the spring pastures wilting as the summer dry season comes

⁹⁴ 63(AKJ).4.1–15, *Ash'ār*, 1090–1093.

⁹⁵ 67(UḤ).2.9, *ibid.*, 1292. Oddly, Bauer does not comment on this fact in his commentary on this poem (*Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 2:306–308.) Another of Usāmah's poems (67(UḤ).4.11, *Ash'ār.*, 1297) also features an encounter with horseback riders (*khayl*), which Bauer does note (*Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 2:316).

⁹⁶ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:123–127.

usually precipitates the onagers' dust-raising desert journey.⁹⁷ It is at their arrival at some watering place, the second location in the episode, that the onagers encounter a lurking hunter who fires at them.⁹⁸

Abū Kabīr's onager episode here thus differs not only in the nature of the hunter, but in the entire narrative structure, and seems not to derive from the standard early Arabic onager episode as found both among Najdī poets as well as later Hudhalī poets. These more common scenes, at least in Najdī poets, usually serve to illustrate the swiftness of the camel mare (a section absent, as we have seen, from pre-Islamic and *mukhaḍram* Hudhalī poets). Abū Kabīr's episode can perhaps be said to represent an independent development, or to follow from the structure of al-Muraqqish's text. While most onager episodes are narrative and have multiple stages, both al-Muraqqish's ibex episode and Abū Kabīr's onager episode have a dipartite structure; the poets contrast an animal's ideal life with an irruption of fatalistic disaster. In the ibex episode, the ibex's inaccessibility is first described (ll. 11–13), and then rather inaptly, fate in the form of a slip on the rocks sends him hurtling to his demise. Abū Kabīr has improved on this somewhat by introducing a powerful, mounted hunter to carry out fate's decrees and kill the animal. However the tension of the scene still derives from the contrast between the long description (ll. 4–9) of the onagers' verdant pastures and the appearance of the hunter.

Abū Kabīr introduces a more suitable antagonist, representative of fate, but he still struggles with narrative coherence. Unless some part of the poem has gone missing, the poet has neglected to include a depiction of the actual death of the onagers at the hands of the hunter. The hunter is described in two lines (ll. 10–11), but in the next line the onagers are

⁹⁷ Ibid., 1:105–117.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 127 ff.

bleeding profusely. Aside from missing lines, two other explanations are possible. One is that such oral poetry, while it developed, functioned like Levi-Strauss's bricolage.⁹⁹ The speaker made use of such models of poetic description as he had available: verdant pastures, equestrian heroes, onagers, and the dichotomous structure found in al-Muraqqish al-Akbar. The actual depiction of the action of the hunter drawing, firing, and striking the onagers was not, perhaps, part of the poet's repertoire. Except in Hudhayl's poems, the onagers never die,¹⁰⁰ so the depiction had yet to be developed in Abū Kabīr's aesthetic world.

A more cogent reason for the elided narrative segment lies in the remarkably focused symmetry of the poem. Abū Kabīr addresses his son, Khilāwah (ll. 2–3) to console him over the death of his mother, appositely reminding him that fate cares not for kin relationships. "Fathers, mothers, and sons," (l. 3), none are spared. In most onager episodes, the male onager is accompanied by a group of female mates,¹⁰¹ whereas in Abū Kabīr's text, they are accompanied by colts (*jihāsh*). Khilāwah's bereavement is echoed in the death of the onagers, which leave their young behind them attempting unsuccessfully to escape, just as the speaker consoles Khilāwah with the stoic comfort that, no matter what the kin relationship, all mortal beings will wither before fate's blows.

Şakhr al-Ghayy's poem deserves mention since he alone continues to use an ibex episode for the fate elegy. If his texts date to a later period than al-Muraqqish, the latter's influence seems probable. Şakhr essentially synthesizes the narrative arc of Abū Kabīr's onager episode with the ibex episode [89]:

By the life of Abū 'Amr, fates (*al-manā* (sic)) have driven him

⁹⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1–34.

¹⁰⁰ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:140–141.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 92–98.

to a grave built for him among flat-topped hills,
 because of a viper in a deserted area, residing in its den,
 brought forth by time's (*al-manā*) appointed twists and turns—
 My brother, after whom I have no brother, his allotted time came
 for him, and no amulets or spells (*al-ruqā wa-l-ṭabāṭib*) could keep it off.
 O my eyes—fate (*al-dahr*) does not wait forever for an aged ibex (*fādir*),
 in a sandy depression, [watered] beneath sparse turban-like clouds.
 He dwelt contentedly there throughout his life,
 his horns jutting up loftily like knuckles— 5
 when night falls he retreats to his covert to sleep,
 like an old man (*mabīt al-kabīr*), fighting [with his kin], wrapped in his robe,
 passing the night like an old man (*mabīt al-kabīr*) whose children don't ask for his favor,
 complaining of the pain of his sons' refractoriness—
 the *bashām*-tree and the sweet-scented branches of the copse
 dangled over him, their twigs and leaves lank—
 he was young there, and his sixth year came, and he teethed,
 and grew old, as all such ibex do—
 he takes fright whenever he hears a crow (*ghurāb*) caw,
 and heads to passages in the rock, for he is most quick to flee. 10
 So one day, when much of his life had passed, fate (*utīḥa la-hu yawman*) sent
 one, hunchbacked and hungry, out to find food for his aged parent—
 he protects [his parent] in the winter when it grows cold,
 and in the summer he assiduously gathers fruit (*al-janā*) for him—

when he saw [the goat's size] he said, “Good God, who has seen
such a beast (*min al-‘uṣmi shātan*) as him in recent times?”
if my revered [parent (*karīmi*)] should have this to eat, it will keep him going
until [the time when] one of the rain-stars (*al-kawākib*) bestows its rain on
people.”

He circled him (*aḥāṭa bi-hi*) and then shot, when he had drawn near,
a well-aimed, dark broad arrow-head. 15

He called out to his brother (*fa-nādá akhāhu*), then flew forward with his blade
to slaughter the light-footed, fleet [animal].¹⁰²

The remainder of the poem describes an eagle struck down by fate; it clips its wings against a rock ledge, falls to its death, and leaves its chicks starving. From al-Muraqqish, or from similar poems, Ṣakhr draws the entire elegiac structure of this ibex episode; it is bipartite, illustrating the full life the ibex had lived (ll. 5–9), and contrasting that with fate’s eventual and inevitable destruction of the animal (l. 10 ff.).

Ṣakhr has made several amendments to the model of al-Muraqqish. His introductory formula the same as most other Hudhalī formulae introducing such scenes, allowing the animal (*fādir*, a full-grown ibex) as the subject of the verb *yabqá* (to endure) in l. 4 to be introduced with more economy, and foregrounding the agency of fate in the line. The inaccessibility of the animal on his mountain heights is not emphasized, but as in Abū Kabīr’s onager description, the animal is described as living a full life in an idyllic pastoral setting. The vegetation is plentiful (l. 8) and the rocks offer him shelter (l. 9). As if in a riposte of one-upmanship to al-Muraqqish, who had said that “if fate would give him any respite, he could

¹⁰² 3(ṢGhKh).1.1–16, *Ash‘ār*, 245–250.

grow old and weak,” Şakhr here repeatedly emphasizes the full growth, and indeed the anthropomorphic advanced age of the ibex. The emphasis on the longevity of the animal builds something like narrative tension in the otherwise static description, before sending fate crashing down on the ibex. Also like Abū Kabīr, he replaces the slip on the rocks with a hunter (ll. 11–16), although the eagle later in the poem suffers a similar self-inflicted fate to al-Muraqqish’s ibex. This hunter is the familiar, rag-bedecked and impoverished individual familiar to us from the vast majority of similar episodes in early Arabic poetry.

Şakhr’s contribution here, similar in the abstract to Abū Kabīr’s, is to establish a certain parallelism between episodes by inserting human concerns with kin relationships into the animal world being depicted. This is elaborated less between the subject of the elegy, the speaker’s brother, than between the ibex, the hunter, and the eagle. In all three cases, the protagonists illustrate the protective and providing relationship of young to their elders, or vice versa. The ibex is depicted as an old man, estranged from his children over some dispute (l. 7). The immediate purpose of this is to depict the loneliness and isolation of the mountain-dwelling creature. Yet the same image appears again with the introduction of the hunter, who is desperate to procure food for his aged parent (ll. 11, 12, 14). The eagle, likewise, leaves behind [89b]

two chicks that grew restless when dawn came,
and whenever they heard the sound of the wind, or a cawing crow (*nā’ib*)—
they didn’t see her after she left in the evening,
and they kept twittering back and forth to each other.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Ibid., 252, ll. 23–24.

The sound of the cawing crow (*nā'ib*) that the chicks hear may represent feared predators, but it also evokes the crow (*ghurāb*) that unsettles the ibex. The crow's caw in pre-Islamic society was inauspicious, and the animals in Ṣakhr's text are rent with anxiety, attentive to every possible omen portending their impending destruction at the hands of fate.

In pre-Islamic society, the only solution to this state of anxious weakness, if there was one, was strength from a strong protector. Expressions of lament for the loss of a powerful kinsman are found not only in female poets, such as al-Khansā', but in male poets as well. For example, in an elegy Abū Dhu'ayb states that [90],

When I thought of the man of al-'Umqā (*akhā l-'umqā*), my cares would return to me,

[how] the strong and valiant warrior left me to fend for myself (*afrada zahri*) ...¹⁰⁴

and [91]

It is as though I had a leader of a thousand men (*al-ṣārikh al-alf*), and have been left

alone in a hard land strewn with fine sand,

with no helper roused to fight with me.¹⁰⁵

Pre-Islamic elegies are not, in their emotional content, simply outpourings of personal grief for a lost companion, but an expression of profound social and existential vulnerability following the disappearance of an important source of security and stability. It is this situation of sudden exposure to any chance vicissitude of life—a rainless winter, an enemy raid, an illness or injury—that is captured by Ṣakhr's poem. The most anthropomorphic thing about the ibex, and of animals generally in pre-Islamic poetry, is his self-consciousness of his impending doom

¹⁰⁴ 1(ADhQ).10.2, *ibid.*, 120.

¹⁰⁵ 1(ADhQ).4.10, *ibid.*, 67.

without a protector. In contrast, the human protagonist, the representative of fate in the poem, is fulfilling the role of protector and provider of his parent by hunting.

All of these poems display, if not a sequential development, a family resemblance of increasingly complex intertextual concerns. All of the poems explores “fate,” *al-dahr*, as an emotional state, and as a set of relationships between living beings. Fate is not merely as an abstractly held belief, with no bearing on the present, that at some point life will end at an appointed time, when the Moirai cut any given individual’s thread of existence. The notion of fate that emerges in the intertextual play of al-Muraqqish’s, Abū Kabīr’s, and Ṣakhr al-Ghayy’s poems is of an invisible force perforating and lurking throughout existence. Humans and animals are both aware of it, and are on the lookout for it in the sounds, scents, and winds of the desert world. Their social worlds are constructed of webs of protective relationships erected in the face of this force. It is the subtle manner of the fates’ unmaking of these relationships that the Hudhalī fate elegy explores.

To some extent, the intertextual autonomy that the fate elegy takes on is regional and tribal. Calls for vengeance are entirely absent from these poems, perhaps because the deceased died of natural causes, but perhaps also due to a recognition of the fragility of the relationships of social protection in the face of the forces of time and disorder. As we have seen in chapter 2, fate in the Hudhalī world is one to which no equestrian ideology or boastful tribesman can stand up. While as a general statement, this would be recognized as true by all of their Arabian contemporaries, Hudhayl gave themselves up to the exploration of that truth with far dedication than any other poets. In part, their recognition of fate’s power emerges from the social experience of a weak tribe in a peripheral region. Two further texts suggest that poetic culture in the Ḥijāz at this time was concerned a social problem, perhaps with the lack of a

model for a powerful regional leader such as Ḥimyar or the foreign-sponsored Arab polities of north Arabia. Abū Dhu'ayb's fate elegy concludes with a powerful warrior's death, and demonstrates the extent to which, to a remarkable extent, following the early origins in the tribe explored here, sophisticated poetic enterprises could rely on an a Ḥijāzī regional and Hudhalī tribal intertextual world. Around the same time, the adoption by Labīd of the structure suggests that this particular species of fatalistic worldview was not only amenable to the emergence of Islam, but the ground—a sense of social, political and metaphysical powerlessness—from which Islamic monotheism emerged.

4.4. The Hudhalī Fate Elegy: Abū Dhu'ayb's Intertextual Grief

4.4.1. Abū Dhu'ayb's Elegy: Historical Background

Al-Sukkārī appended a prose account of some of the circumstances of Abū Dhu'ayb's life to his elegy. The account is related on the authority of several prominent philologists. Al-Aṣma'ī's source was one 'Umārah ibn Abī Ṭarafah. Ibn al-A'rābī and Abū 'Amr al-Shaybānī transmitted from 'Abd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jumaḥī, the source for most of Hudhayl's *ayyām* texts.¹⁰⁶ These lines of transmission are given, but only one (synthesized?) account, according to which “five of [Abū Dhu'ayb]'s sons died in one year; they were struck down by the plague [*al-ṭā'ūn*]. They had emigrated [*hājarū*] to Egypt. Abū Dhu'ayb died in the time of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān on the way to Egypt with Ibn al-Zubayr, and Ibn al-Zubayr buried him.”¹⁰⁷ Other authorities report that he died on the way to Ifrīqiya.¹⁰⁸ Ibn Hishām, meanwhile, gives a lengthy anecdote about how Abū Dhu'ayb's sons were killed not in the Islamic conquests, but

¹⁰⁶ Al-Sukkārī, *Ash'ār*, 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

in a dispute with the tribe of Asad.¹⁰⁹ His account has a number of improbable elements to it—it is connected with the accounts of the semi-legendary Ta'abbaṭa Sharran—but it does demonstrate that there were competing narratives to that of Abū Dhu'ayb and his sons' emigration.

There are several other reasons for supposing that al-Sukkarī's accounts are unreliable. Firstly, there is no agreement as to the place of Abū Dhu'ayb's death, and secondly, as we have seen in chapter 2, nothing in Abū Dhu'ayb's poetic corpus indicates a relationship with 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (or even conversion to Islam or participation in the conquests). Ibn Sallām, who does not mention these stories, even includes him among the poets of the Jāhiliyyah.¹¹⁰ More problematic, the praise poem ostensibly written for Ibn al-Zubayr does not actually mention him, a glaring enough omission from a praise poem, and moreover, the text bears a strong resemblance to other Hudhalī egalitarian praise poems that also, I have argued, are mistakenly said to describe famous figures (as in Abū Kabīr's purported description of Ta'abbaṭa Sharran). Ibn al-Zubayr, moreover, was young (about 23) and played a minor role in the conquest of North Africa in 26-7/647, while he played a much more significant role later in the civil war of 60/680–72/692.¹¹¹ If Abū Dhu'ayb had participated in the conquest of Ifrīqiyyā, there were more important generals for him to have been associated with and praised. Such a polarizing figure as Ibn al-Zubayr, on the other hand, the son of a famous Companion, would have been more likely to have had associations foisted upon him, such as his purported relationship with the Hudhalī poet.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Hishām and Wahb ibn Munabbih, *Al-Tījān fī mulūk Ḥimyar*, 258–63.

¹¹⁰ Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, *Fuḥūl*, 131–32.

¹¹¹ Gibb, “Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr,” *EP*.

There are two further reasons for supposing that the relationship with Ibn al-Zubayr was constructed later. Al-Jumahlī himself, the source for al-Aṣmaʿī's version of the story, gives prose accounts throughout al-Sukkarī's commentary which are incongruous or incompatible with the poetry being transmitted. For example, he gives two accounts on the dramatic defeat of Banū Liḥyān in the account of Yawm al-Aḥathth leading to their loss of status and emigration from their previous territories. The stories bear no relationship to the poem, which contains a conventional *ẓaʿn* scene in no need of explication as an a mass emigration precipitated by a battle.¹¹² Numerous similar examples of such mismatched poetic texts and prose accounts could be cited.

Secondly, Abū Dhuʿayb in particular attracted fabulous stories tying him to narratives of Islamic origins. For example, in Ibn al-Athīr's (d. 630/1233) *Usd al-ghābah*, a dictionary of the Prophet's Companions, Ibn al-Athīr relates a story supposedly narrated from Ibn Ishāq, wherein on hearing of the Prophet's final illness, Abū Dhuʿayb dreams that a strange voice tells him of the Prophet's death.¹¹³ On his way to Medina, he encounters a series of portentous animals, such as a snake wrapping itself around a porcupine which is eating the snake. Abū Dhuʿayb interprets the snake winding (*taltawī*) as people's deviation from the truth (*iltiwāʾ al-nās ʿan al-ḥaqq*) after the death of the Prophet, while the porcupine represents the Prophet's successor taking control of the situation again. When Abū Dhuʿayb arrives in Medina, he finds everyone at Saqīfat Banī Sāʿidah engaged in negotiations over the Prophet's successor. The anecdote, in short, has all the characteristics of a tendentious, evidently pro-Sunnī fabrication.

¹¹² Al-Sukkarī, *Ashʿār*, 709–713.

¹¹³ ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah fī maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah* (Cairo: Jamʿiyyat al-Maʿārif, 1869), 5: 188–89. The story is repeatedly almost identically in Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī l-Rūmī, *Muʿjam al-Udabāʾ: irshād al-arīb ilá maʿrifat al-adīb*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1993), 3:1275–77.

Ibn al-Athīr's text is considerably later than the late third/ninth-century al-Sukkarī's, but a comparison of the biographical accounts in al-Iṣbahānī (d. 363/ 972), Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/ 1176), Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (626/1229) and Ibn al-Athīr shows a steadily increasing accretion of fabricated material, much of it related to Islamic origin narratives.¹¹⁴ The story of Abū Dhu'ayb's trip to Medina appears in almost all sources, for example, but is most elaborate in Ibn al-Athīr and Yāqūt, the latest works. Ibn al-Athīr does also quote the earlier reports used by al-Sukkarī, mostly verbatim, but adds still more possibilities: that Abū Dhu'ayb died in Anatolia fighting the Byzantines, where he was buried not by Ibn al-Zubayr but by his son, Abū 'Ubayd.¹¹⁵ It is remarkable that this line of biographical transmission seems not to derive ultimately from *ḥadīth*-transmitters usually cited in *isnāds*, but from 'Umārah ibn Abī Ṭarafah and 'Abd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jumaḥī, obscure informants of Baghdad philologists, in combination with accretions found in literary anthology anecdotes. But in consideration of Ibn Hishām's anecdote, that the sons did not even die in the conquests, the most that can be said of the biographical material on Abū Dhu'ayb is that it offers rich material for source-critical analysis in which a poet showing no signs of piety or evidence of conversion was transformed with time into a Companion of the Prophet.

In truth, if anything, Abū Dhu'ayb seems to have been hostile to Islam. As Hell has pointed out, Abū Dhu'ayb does not even use the word God (*Allāh*), with the exception of a couple of oaths.¹¹⁶ This is in keeping with the tendency of Hudhalī poets among the generation

¹¹⁴ Al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, 6: 187–196; Abū l-Qāsim 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, ed. 'Amr ibn Ghurāmah Al-'Amrawī (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), 17:53–54. There is no reliable edition of *Ta'rikh Dimashq*; this is one among many unreliable and uncritical editions.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5:190.

¹¹⁶ Hell, "Der Islam und die Hudhalitendichtungen," 89–90.

that lived through Islam not to refer directly to the new religion.¹¹⁷ He gives a detailed depiction of wine being imported into Mecca during the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*),¹¹⁸ and the speaker of a poem, in a dialogue with a female character, is reprimanded for his lack of interest in the pilgrimage: “you have acted piously in performing the pilgrimage with us (*tabarrarta fī ḥajjinā*),” she says, “and you were not until recently known for such devotion.”¹¹⁹ The implication is that he is insincere.

Thus as we turn to Abū Dhu’ayb’s *marthiyah* it is better to leave what we think we know from anecdotes passed down by the philologists to one side. A careful comparison of the poetic text itself with others, I will argue, reveals Abū Dhu’ayb drawing on a range of regional and tribal generic and stylistic conventions, first among them that of the fate elegy tradition identified above.

4.4.2. Abū Dhu’ayb’s Elegy: Translation

[92] “Are you pained by death, how it strikes at random (*al-manūn wa-raybihā*)?

Fate (*al-dahr*) bears no good will to those in anguish.”

Umaymah said, “what is wrong with your body, wasting away (*mā li-jismika shāḥiban*),

since affliction struck? Wealth such as yours will suffice you.

And what is wrong with you that, as soon as you lie on your side on any bed,

it becomes a bed of stones for you?”

I responded to her that what is wrong with my body is

my sons have perished from this land (*awdá baniyya min al-bilād*),

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ 1(ADhQ).6.19–26, *Ash‘ār*, 93–95.

¹¹⁹ 1(ADhQ).9.7, *ibid.*, 114.

and bid adieu (*wadda'ū*).

My sons have perished, and left me behind with choking grief

instead of sleep, and with unceasingly tears.

5

[Though I find weeping to be foolishness,

he who has been bereaved will break forth in tears.]¹²⁰

They chose their desire before mine (*sabaqū hawayya*),

and did whatever they wanted (*wa-a'naqū li-hawāhumū*);

thus they were annihilated one by one; thus everyone falls.

I remained after them with a wearisome life;

I picture myself following behind, going to meet them.

I wish that I could have defended them,

but when Fate (*al-maniyyah*) comes around, there is no defense;

when death (*al-maniyyah*) sinks in its claws,

you find that no amulet avails.

10

The eye after them, it's like its pupil has been pierced

with thorns, so that it's maimed and flowing

until it's as if, because of time's tribulations, I'm [nothing but] tiny pebbles

ground down daily across the broad slab of stone before a plastered [cistern].

My endurance will spite those who gloat (*al-shāmitīn*). I'll show them

that I am not perturbed by the throes of Fate (*rayb al-dahr*).

The soul is desirous [of more] if you let it be;

but if it is only given little, it will find contentment.¹²¹

¹²⁰ This line is not in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*.

The dark-spined [onager] with his four milk-dry [mares]

does not survive time's ill fortune,

15

the deep-gulleted brayer bellowing along

as if he were a slave of the Abī Rabī'ah family keeping off wolves.¹²²

He ate the thriving herbage, and the spear-like, long-backed [mare]

yielded to him, and the verdure fed his spirit

amid stony plains' rocky pools, fed by bursting rainclouds,

so he abode for a while, not departing.

Thus they dwelled there, knocking about together in his pasture;

he would tear at them in earnest for a while, then playfully

until the pools' gathered waters dried up,

and what a fateful time (*bi-ayyi ḥīni mulāwatin*) did they dry up in!

20

He remembered coming to those waters; an inauspicious star (*shu'm*)

had struck his affairs, and his doom was (*ḥaynuhu*) creeping in upon him.

He drove the [mares] from the fields of black rock, the water [now] paltry (*bathr*),¹²³

and a wide path confronted him.

They were, at the turn of the valley between Nubāyī'

¹²¹ Here the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 422, has the following lines:

And if Time and its vicissitudes has bereaved [me] of them,
I am indeed bereaved of the people of my affection.

How many of those whose fortune and powers were gathered and bound together
lived before us, and were broken apart?

¹²² There are three possible identities for this Abū Rabī'ah given, but Ibn Ḥabīb identifies him as Abū Rabī'ah of the 'Umar ibn Makhzūm, the grandfather of 'Umar ibn Abī Rabī'ah, the poet (d. 93 or 103/712 or 721). Other candidates are that he is from Duhl ibn Shaybān or Kinānah (*Ash'ār*, 12).

¹²³ The commentary gives several authorities asserting that this is a place-name, but see *Lisān*, s.v., for this meaning.

and Hyena Hole, like a rustled flock being driven along together
 as if [the long-backed mares] were the arrows in a game of *maysir*,
 and [the onager] were the *maysir*-dealer, pushing and spreading the shafts—
 and he is like the [firm] stone on which a sword is burnished,
 flipping in the palm of the hand, except that he is stouter and firmer. 25
 They arrived at the water [they were making for] when Capella was sitting
 over Gemini (*al-najm*), which was yet unrisen (*lā yatatalla‘ū*),¹²⁴
 like a *maysir*-dealer above his players
 and they plunged into the sweet, brisk water,
 pebbly bottomed, swirling around the knees—
 they drank, [but] then heard a sound from behind
 a hillock of broken black rock, and the twang (*rayb*) of a bowstring plucked,
 and the sound that slipped from a hunter with a quiver in his belt,
 with a hoarse-voiced bow of wood and pointed shafts in his hand.
 The [mares] were uncertain where he was, and started, in his direction,
 a lank-torsoed mare, foremost among them, and a broad-bodied stallion. 30
 [The hunter] fired an arrow, and pierced a plump, empty-wombed mare;
 it fell to the ground, its feathers gunky with gore.

¹²⁴ Here I have had to use the variant, given by al-Sukkarī, of al-Mufaḍḍal’s recension, *al-‘Ayyūq ... fawq al-Nazm*, (Capella (for which see Lane, s.v., “*Aqqūq*”) is above the Pleiades: *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 424) rather than *al-‘Ayyūq fawqa l-Najm* (Capella is above Gemini). Assuming that the onagers arrive at or just before dawn (Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 76–77; 131) and that the stars are rising (as discussed in the meaning of the word *naw’* in chapter 3), Capella would rise before Gemini in mid-July, the usual time for onagers to arrive at the watering place in these episodes. If Gemini had not yet risen (taking *lā yatatalla‘ū* as *ḥāl*), the time would be early July. In contrast, Capella is never “above” the Pleiades, which arise slightly before it; these stars would arise together at dawn in late May. Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Anwā’*, 35–36, has *khalfa l-Najm* (Capella is behind the Pleiades), which is conceivable, but would again give us the unusually early date of late May.

This [male's] flank was exposed to him as it turned away quickly,
so [the hunter] reached into his quiver, grasping,
and shot a far-flying, Ṣā'idī arrow into the [narrow, vital]
spot between his rib-cage and hip, and his ribs closed around [the shaft].¹²⁵
He apportioned out to each one their dooms (*hutūf*):
the one fleeing with its last gasp of life,
the one sinking onto its chest, quivering—
They stumble with the arrow-heads in them as if their legs
were draped with the striped [red] cloaks of Banī Yazīd.¹²⁶

35

A terrified oryx bull that dogs drive before them
does not survive time's ill fortune.
The trained hunting hounds drove him from his senses,
and he felt fear as he saw the morning glowing.
He takes refuge in the *arṭá* thicket
when the [rain]drops wear upon him, and the cold shuddering wind.
He searches with his eyes about the hidden depressions in the ground,
[then] lowers his lids, seeing if his hearing is truthful.
The sun falls on his back
as the first [dogs] come, gathering.
Then he turns away in fear, his way blocked (*sadda furūjahū*)¹²⁷ by

40

¹²⁵ Ṣa'dah, to which these arrows are attributed, is a village in Yemen according to the commentary (*Ash'ār*, 24).

¹²⁶ A clan of merchants in Mecca descended from the Quḍā'ah (ibid., 25).

gray hounds, ears marked with slashes, or flapping,
then tilts towards them with his two sharpened [horns (*mudhallaqayn*)],
as if [from goring the hounds] they were splattered with dragon's blood-dye,¹²⁸
as they snap at him and he pushes them back—the thick-limbed,
bull, a brown band along his belly (*muwalla'*),¹²⁹ protecting himself—
until they retreated as he pierced several of them,
the rest flying, writhing and baying.

[The two horns] were like [bloody] skewers (*saffūdayn*),

taken out quickly from cooking meat for [hungry], hurrying drinkers. 45

Then the master of the hounds drew near, in his hand

slender-headed arrows, lightly-fletched (*al-muqazza'*).¹³⁰

He shot an arrow to save the remaining [dogs]

and the shaft split [the bull's] striped side.

He came crashing down like a firm-muscled camel stallion does

when it slumps to rest in a stony depression.

A helmeted [warrior] with chain mail over his torso

does not survive time's ill fortune.

The armor becomes hot upon him

¹²⁷ Following Lyall, “the way is blocked” (*al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 2:358, 361n40). The word *furūj* meaning “gaps,” the commentary asserts, that this indicates the gaps between the limbs of the oryx and *sadda furūjahu* means “he filled his limbs with running.” Lyall, in contrast, takes it as the gaps in the foliage by which he could escape.

¹²⁸ *Dam al-akhawayn*; or perhaps saffron.

¹²⁹ Montgomery asserts that *muwalla'* means “variegated” or “parti-colored” referring to “the colouring of the oryx’s legs, underbelly and facial markings,” (*Vagaries*, 112, 141). The commentary (*Ash'ār*, 29) gives both definitions as possible.

¹³⁰ For more information on this term, see Dīnawarī, *The Book of Plants/ Kitāb al-Nabāt*, 353, 363.

until his face is black in the day of battle.

50

A hollow-eyed [mare] bears him along, tearing

with her gallop the links of the saddle, for she is swift and fleet.

He had fed her with each morning's fresh camel-milk

until she fattened, and a finger would disappear into her [flesh].

She scorns to pour forth (*ta'ba bi-dirratihā*), when goaded and forced (*istukrihat*),

anything but a summer rain (*hamīm*) that gushes down (*yatabadda'ū*).

The [heavy] muscle around her sciatic nerve reveals a dark-skinned udder,

[as small as] an earring, withered, its milk never drunk.

While [the warrior]'s clashing with and dodging armored fighters,

one day fate deals out to him (*yawmwan utīha la-hū*)

a bold and broad-chested one

55

on a light-limbed charger like a slender-bellied gazelle,

with no limp in its gait.

They each dismount and halt their two horses;

they are both tried and seasoned in battle.

They'll seize honor from each other, each is certain of his own

valor, and the day today is a loathsome day.

And both of them are girt with a sword with glinting swirls in its steel,

severing, cutting whatever it falls upon, however hard.

And each has, in his hand, a Yazanī spear,

with a polished head [that blazes] like a lamp.

60

Upon them both is [fine] armor (*mādhiyyatāni*), linked together by

David, or by the skilled craftsman of loose chain mail, Tubba‘.

They jab and dart with their spears, with slicing blows,
 like the death blow to an unblemished slaughter camel that won't rise again.

Both of them have lived the life of a valorous man,
 and both of them have attained to the height [of valor],
 if such a thing matters (*law anna sha'ayn yanfa'ū*).¹³¹

4.4.3. *Abū Dhu'ayb's Elegy: Introduction*

The poem is structured extremely clearly, with a 13-line introduction, followed by three episodes illustrating fate's action in the world. The onager episode (ll. 14–35) is the longest at 21 lines, followed by a shorter 12-line oryx bull episode (ll. 36–48) and a 14-line warrior episode. Each of the last three episodes is introduced by the distinctive identical formula, *wa-l-dahru lā yabqá 'alá ḥadathānihi* discussed above. The meter is *kāmil* and the rhyme is *'ayn*. The introduction engages intertextually with two separate traditions. One is the Hudhalī tribal tradition of texts condemning emigration (*hijrah*) to fight in the Islamic conquests, while the other is an elegiac tradition including not only on Hudhayl's poets, but other regional poets of the Ḥijāz and western Arabia.

The poems dealing with disobedient sons leaving to fight in the conquests were composed by al-Burayq ibn 'Iyāḍ, Abū Khirāsh and Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith.¹³² Burayq describes being left behind with the women and children [93]

¹³¹ 1(ADhQ), *Ash'ār*, 1–41; *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 419–29. For previous translations, see for ll. 15–35 Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 2:295–295; Lyall, *Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:355–362; Hell, *Neue Hudailiten-Diwane*, 1:11–14.

¹³² 28(B'IKh).4; 65(AKhQ).21; 67(UḤ).3, 4, *Ash'ār*, 748–50, 1242–43, 1293–1301. For an overview of other poetry from this time period dealing with the Islamic conquests, in addition to Hell, Joseph Hell, “Der Islam und die

If I have become an old man, with the children, at al-Rajī,
and my people's (*qawmī*) abodes are beyond Egypt (*Miṣr*),
I asked about from every rider [that comes through],
residing at Amlāj, like a kid tied to a stake as lion-bait.
I would never have feared to be living after they [had gone]
(*fa-mā kuntu akhshá an a'īsha khilāfahum*),
over six houses [of women and children] like 'itr plants.¹³³

This last line is similar to Abū Dhu'ayb's complaint (l. 7) that "I remained after them with a wearisome life, (*ghabartu ba'dahumū bi-'ayshin nāṣibin*)." While in his text, his children have clearly died, unlike in al-Burayq's text, the situation seems similar. It is not only that his sons have died, but they have emigrated and died elsewhere (l. 4): "my sons have perished from this land (*awdá baniyya min al-bilād*), and bid adieu (*wadda'ū*)." This does not appear to be figurative language; the nature of the complaint is that the sons have literally left the tribal territories, and literally bade their farewells.

The introduction of Abū Dhu'ayb's text also resembles that of two poems by Abū Khirāsh. In the first instance, Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy, like one by Abū Khirāsh, opens with a conversation with a woman named Umaymah, followed by an assertion of endurance despite nights of sleepless anxiety.¹³⁴ It would not be surprising then, if other elements of Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy resembled those found in Abū Khirāsh's. And indeed, Abū Khirāsh elsewhere speaks of his son, Khirāsh, albeit in a much more condemnatory tone [94]:

Know then, O Khirāsh, that little good comes to the emigrant

Hudāilitendichtungen," see Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-'Aṣr al-Islāmī*, Ta'rīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī 2 (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1963), 42–67; Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 1987, 2:1–30.

¹³³ 28(B'IKh).4.5–7, *Ash'ār*, 748–49.

¹³⁴ 65(AKhQ).1.1–6, *ibid.*, 1189–90.

after his immigration (*hijrah*).

To seek for piety (*birr*), after [leaving] me,

you're like [a dog] with blood on his chest, though he hasn't been hunting.¹³⁵

This hostility towards a son who has left to fight gives us a cue for understand Abū Dhu'ayb's tone in the introduction to his elegy. If Abū Dhu'ayb were expressing both grief and condemnation of his sons for emigrating, this would explain several unusual usages that commentators are at pains to explain. Glossing his statement that “they chose their desire before mine (*sabaqū hawayya*),” (l. 7), al-Sukkarī quotes al-Aṣma'ī asserting this means that “they died before me, and I would have liked to die before them.”¹³⁶ He offers no citations in support of such a tortured reading. In explaining the expression “and they did whatever they wanted (*wa-a'naqū li-hawāhumū*),” literally, “they embraced their desire,” al-Aṣma'ī is forced to consider this metaphorical: “[the poet] represents them (*ja'alahum ka'annahum*) ‘loving’ (*yahwū*) departure (*al-dhahāb*), and expresses [their death] figuratively (*ḍarabahu mathalan*).”¹³⁷ Yet, if several other poets of the tribe speak of their children literally leaving them, it seems perverse to consistently construe Abū Dhu'ayb's statements about his sons departing the land, bidding farewell, leaving him behind, and here, following their own desire as figurative. Tellingly, the Umayyad poet Mālik ibn al-Rayb, in his famous elegy for himself reportedly composed during his participation in the Islamic conquests, refers to his portentous decision to participate in the wars and leave his kin using the word *hawá*: *da'ānī l-hawá min ahl Ūd* (desire called me away from the people of Ūd).¹³⁸ His parents were also anxious about his decision.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ 65(AKhQ).21.6–7, *ibid.*, 1243.

¹³⁶ Lyall, *Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt*, 1:854.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Al-Qurashī, *Jamharat Ash'ār al-'Arab*, 608.

This reading is all but confirmed by a final intertextual linkage, with an elegy by Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith. Unlike the texts by al-Burayq and Abū Khirāsh, Usāmah's text is, like Abū Dhu'ayb's, another fate elegy featuring a long (20-line) onager episode introduced by a formula (*fa-wa-llāhi lā yabqá 'alá ḥadathānī*) very similar to that used by Abū Dhu'ayb. Usāmah's text covers much of the same ground as Abū Dhu'ayb's introduction to his *marthiyah* [95]:

O, ward of ours (*jāratanā*), can the night of the care-worn be restful?

No (*aw*), sleep drives that which I seek away from me.

O, my girl, they come to visit a sick man, on the verge of death,

for less serious ailments than what I conceal through the night.

I recollected my brethren, and I spent the night tossing and turning,

[longing] like a mother camel, her young gone,

when she looks to a *baww* in the night.¹⁴⁰

By my life, I tried to dissuade Khālid gently from Syria (*al-Sha'm*);

but Khālid had to go and disobey me.

And I did the same with his brethren,

but it was like trying to make yourself heard among free-running ostrich.¹⁴¹

Then I told him, "a man cannot control what happens to him;

[when he departs,] he cannot return to the kin (*jidhm*) of his tribe (*al-'ashīrah*)."

I have grieved for the kin of the tribe; strips and edges

are being cut from it here and there as from a piece of leather.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 609: *wa-darru kabīrayya lladhayni kilāhimā 'alayya shafīqun nāṣihun mā alā biyā* (To God be attributed the goodness of my two elderly parents, each anxious for me, giving me sincere advice, not holding back).

¹⁴⁰ The *baww* was the stuffed skin of a camel calf given to milch-camels after their young had been taken, so that they would continue giving milk. The affection that the mother showed towards the *baww* was proverbial.

¹⁴¹ Ostrich are known by epithets denoting clipped or missing ears (e.g., *maṣlūm*); because of the imperceptible size of their ears, they were said, proverbially, to be deaf.

By God (*fa-wa-llāhi*)! Fate does not spare her blows for

a solitary [onager (*fārid*)] of al-‘Alāyah, driven from land to land ...¹⁴²

As Abū Dhu‘ayb’s elegy begins with a dialogue between the speaker and Umaymah, Usāmah’s text begins with an address to a female tribal protégée (*jārah*), explaining the anguish of sleepless grief that the speaker is feeling (ll. 1–3). In Abū Dhu‘ayb’s text, this exchange is followed (ll. 6–7) by the statement that his sons have “chosen their desire before mine,” and “done whatever they wanted.” Here, like Abū Khirāsh, Usāmah speaks of filial disobedience, but he is more specific. Where Abū Dhu‘ayb has “my sons have perished from this land (*awdá baniyya min al-bilād*),” (l. 4), Usāmah’s speaker names his son, Khālid, and his brethren, and he names his destination: Syria. Like Abū Khirāsh, Usāmah voices moral disapproval; his sons are rending the fabric of tribal society by leaving (ll. 6–7). Where Abū Khirāsh compares Khirāsh to a dog, Usāmah compares his sons’ disobedience to the deafness of ostrich (l. 5). Abū Dhu‘ayb’s speaker contrasts grief with fortitude and gnomic statements about fate, thus segueing more effectively into his first onager episode. Usāmah’s transition is more abrupt in comparison.

It is difficult not to read all of these texts as mutually citing each other, situated in the historical moment of the early Islamic conquests. There is no evidence from his texts that Abū Dhu‘ayb knew any early Islamic leaders or participated in the conquests, but there is a family resemblance between his elegy’s introduction and a veritable genre of texts composed on the premise that young men’s participation in the early Islamic conquests constituted filial disobedience. In fact, the structure of his introduction, followed by an onager episode, is almost exactly parallel to that of Usāmah’s elegy, only more polished and streamlined.

¹⁴² 67(UH).4.1–8, *Ash‘ār.*, 1295–6.

In addition to stylistic overlap, the introduction to Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy draws on (or cites, or is in dialogue) with several other texts on a more technical stylistic level, that of diction, meter and rhyme. We have already seen that Abū Dhu'ayb and his poetic kinsmen share certain stylistic features, such as the use of a dialogue with Umaymah in both his text and Abū Khirāsh no. 1. It is not uncommon in pre-Islamic poetry to find entire lines repeated by different poets; this is a function of oral transmission. For example, the third and second lines of the two *Mu'allaqahs* of Imru' al-Qays and Ṭarafah, respectively, are identical: *wuqūfan bi-hā ṣaḥbī 'alayya maṭiyyahum * yaqūlūna lā tahlik asan wa-tajammalī/ tajalladī* (stopping their mounts there at my bidding, my companions say, “do not perish with grief; remain steadfast!”).¹⁴³ The two poems are in the same meter, *ṭawīl*, and all that is required for the confusion is to replace the final word *tajammalī* (or vice versa) with a synonym ending in the letter *dāl*.

Abū Dhu'ayb's text interacts stylistically with two much more obscure poets from the *Aṣma'iyyāt*,¹⁴⁴ Ka'b ibn Sa'd al-Ghanawī in his *Aṣma'iyyah* no. 26 and, Su'dā bint al-Shamardal al-Juhaniyyah, in her coincidentally (?) *Aṣma'iyyah* no. 27.¹⁴⁵ Both poets are from the same region as Hudhayl. Ka'b is from Ghanī ibn A'ṣur, a western Najdī tribe but with some grazing grounds

¹⁴³ Imru' al-Qays no. 48, l. 3; Ṭarafah no. 4, l. 2 in Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 146, 54.

¹⁴⁴ These similarities were noticed at least as early as Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir and 'Abd al-Sallām Muḥammad Hārūn, editors of both the *Aṣma'iyyāt* as well as the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, who point these commonalities out: *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 419; *Al-Aṣma'ī, Aṣma'iyyāt*, 101.

¹⁴⁵ *Aṣma'iyyāt*, 98–104. The *Aṣma'iyyāt* are an anthology, so there is no reason why similar poets would be grouped together. However, Lyall has noted (*Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 2:309n3) that unusual words or usages appear consecutively in one poem after another, leading him to suppose that perhaps al-Mufaḍḍal intended to illustrate these usages pedagogically in the sequence he chose. The same could be true of the *Aṣma'iyyāt*. I have accepted Shākir and Hārūn's argument (*al-Aṣma'iyyāt*, 93) attributing *Aṣm.* no. 26 to the author of no. 25, Ka'b ibn Sa'd al-Ghanawī: the poems are in the same meter, rhyme, and deal with the same subject, and are found elsewhere as a single text as in al-Qurashī, *Jamharat Ash'ār al-'Arab*, no. 30, 701–710. For a discussion of Su'dā's poem, see also Marlé Hammond, “Qasida, Marthiya, and Différance,” in *Transforming Loss into Beauty: Essays on Arabic Literature and Culture in Honor of Magda Al-Nowaihi*, ed. Marlé Hammond and Dana Sajdi (Cairo: American University In Cairo Press, 2008), 143–84.

in Bīshah in the ‘Asīr mountains, adjacent to Hudhayl’s territory in the Sarāh.¹⁴⁶ Ghanī were also associated with ‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah, whose chief poet, Labīd, also composed a fate elegy, which will be examined below. Su‘dá’s tribe, Juhaynah, was a Ḥijāzī tribe, and her brother As‘ad for whom she composed *Aṣma‘iyyah* no. 27 was, moreover, said to be a Hudhalī.¹⁴⁷ In these poets, whole lines and phrases are not repeated as in the line shared by Ṭarafah and Imru’ al-Qays. Ka‘b repeats certain phrases, but adapts them to a text with a different rhyme (*bā’*) and meter (*al-ṭawīl*) than Abū Dhu‘ayb’s. Su‘dá’s elegy on the other hand is in the exact same meter and rhyme as Abū Dhu‘ayb’s elegy. The parallels between her text and Abū Dhu‘ayb’s are exceptionally complex, and certainly not the result of a confused transmission.

Ka‘b’s elegy is for his brother, Abū l-Mighrār, and begins with a dialogue with a female interlocutor, and meditates on the nature of fate [96]:

Sulaymá says, “what is wrong with your body, wasting away (*mā li-jismika shāḥiban*)
as if a physician were keeping you from drink?”

So I said, without stumbling and without diffidence,

“Fate has its share of the silent, unhearing rocks
(*li-l-dahri fī ṣummi l-silāmi naṣībū*).¹⁴⁸

One blow of blind chance after another,

they have annihilated (*takharramna*) my brothers,
and they’ve whitened my hair; difficult events whiten the hair.

One disaster on the footsteps of another has removed all sweetness

¹⁴⁶ Fück, “Ghanī b. A‘sur,” *EI*²; Mulligan, “Bīshah,” *EI*².

¹⁴⁷ Al-Aṣma‘ī, *Aṣma‘iyyāt*, 101.

¹⁴⁸ This is a literal translation of the line, but as it stands, I am not certain of its meaning. *Naṣīb* itself is similar to words denoting rocks, as in the *naṣība*, a rock supporting a cistern, or *naṣb*, any rock erected as a marker or an altar for sacrifice. Perhaps a translation such as, “Among the silent rocks, *al-dahr* has its own altar-stone,” alluding to a polytheistic practice, is possible.

from my life, until it has become bitter.
 By my life, any catastrophe that could, befell
 my brother; and death has many paths that lead to men.
 My brother was all that I needed, he assisted me
 against the blows of fate (*nā'ibat al-dahr*) when they struck.”¹⁴⁹

The most striking resemblance in Ka'b's poem is the expression in l. 1, *mā l-jismika shāḥiban*, which is identical to l. 2's first hemistich in Abū Dhu'ayb's poem. By simply modifying the tense of the verb from *qālat* (she said) to *taqūlu* and converting the two short syllables in *Umaymatu* to one long in *Sulaymá*, the hemistich can serve for both a *kāmil* or a *ṭawīl* poem. This is a strikingly adept technical trick, whoever modified the other's line. This modification could still seem somewhat accidental, were the diction of Ka'b's passage not so similar to Abū Dhu'ayb's. Aside from the language of fate (*al-dahr*, *al-maniyyah*, *al-manāyā*), both poets use the verb *takharrama* to describe the death of their kin. The verb is a *hapax legomenon* in both the *Aṣma'iyyāt* and the *Hudhalī Ash'ār*; the only place where it appears in the two texts (constituting approximately 8,700 lines of poetry together) is in these two elegies.

Su'dá's text displays even more similarities in her elegy for her brother As'ad, although, perhaps because as a female speaker such a convention is less suitable, she does not include a dialogue with a female or any other interlocutor. She in effect asks herself the same question that Umaymah puts to the speaker in Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy [97]:

Is it sudden death (*al-manūn*) and chance events (*al-ḥawādith*) that frighten me,
 as I spend the night restless and unsleeping?
 I pass the night, with no one near me, and weep for As'ad,

¹⁴⁹ *Aṣm.* no. 26, ll. 1–6, *al-Aṣma'iyyāt*, 98.

and eyes pour forth for the like of him.

Even the weariest eye, it is clear,

weeps when anxiety (*al-jaza'*) comes upon it.

Up until now, that has become apparent to me,

and I've learned as much, if any knowledge means anything

(*law anna 'ilman yanfa'ū*)—

that chance events (*al-ḥawādith*) and sudden death (*al-manūn*), none of them

bear any good will (*lā yu'tibāni*) to those in anguish (*man yajza'ū*).¹⁵⁰

The first line alone is exceptionally evocative of the first line of Abū Dhu'ayb's poem (or vice versa) and it is worth comparing complete transliterations of both lines. Abū Dhu'ayb has:

a-min al-manūni wa-raybihā tatawajja'ū?

wa-l-dahru laysa bi-mu'tibin man yajza'ū.

While Su'dā gives us:

a-min al-ḥawādithi wa-l-manūni urawwi'ū?

wa-abītu laylī kullahū lā ahja'ū.

The structure of the first hemistich, a question opening with the interrogative *alif*, is identical to that of Abū Dhu'ayb's; since the speaker is female, she can ask herself the question to avoid modifying the meter. The phrase is subtly altered, however, with *al-manūn wa-raybihā* altered to *al-ḥawādith wa-l-manūn*. This latter requires one more syllable, so rather than the form V verb *tatawajja'ū*, the speaker uses the form II verb, *urawwi'ū*. The second hemistich veers into a different direction, but as with the correspondence between Ka'ab and Abū Dhu'ayb, the near-parallelism here would require much more poetic craftsmanship to achieve than a mere word-

¹⁵⁰ *Aṣm.* no. 27, ll. 1–5, *al-Aṣma' iyyāt*, 101–2.

for-word citation. Despite the fact that Su'dá and Abū Dhu'ayb are using the exact same rhyme and meter, significant differences in syntax still obtain.

As it happens, the second hemistich of Abū Dhu'ayb's first line is echoed by Su'dá in the fifth line of her text. Again, the transformation is perfectly recognizable, but grammatically distinctive. Abū Dhu'ayb's hemistich *wa-l-dahru laysa bi-mu'tibin man yajza'ū* is expanded into a full line. The subject of Abū Dhu'ayb's maxim is fate (*al-dahr*), which appears as "chance events (*al-ḥawādith*) and sudden death (*al-manūn*)" in Su'dá's elegy. With these subjects, her verb appears in the dual, is shifted to the front of the second hemistich, and the parenthetical *wa-law baká* (even if he weeps), ending with the same expression as Abū Dhu'ayb, *man yjza'ū*. Something similar, the preservation of a phrase at the end of a line, is achieved with both poets' use of *lawa-nna 'ilman yanfa'ū* in l. 7 of Su'dá's text and as the last line (l. 63) of Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy (he has *lawa-nna shay'an yanfa'ū*). The use of the same phrase is even more striking as both poets use *hamzat al-waṣl*, contracting the *hamzat al-qaṭ'* (a glottal stop) so that *law 'anna* (long-long-short) is rendered as *law-anna* (short-long-short). This more idiomatic-sounding expression fits the *kāmil* meter.

Again, although it is impossible to trace out a path of influence among the texts, or even if influence is the correct way to speak of the relationship between the two poems, the relationship between the three texts of Abū Dhu'ayb, Ka'ba and Su'dá is clearly very thoroughgoing. The similarities in style are not tribal. They are intertribal, but not across a wide spatial range; all of the poets hail from more or less the same area, and it is quite conceivable to imagine all of them pasturing in the mountains around Mecca at some point, or for marriage ties to have linked certain clans from the different tribes.

The intertextual relationship of the elegies also illustrates transmission between the worlds of two genders. While many tend to see, largely because of al-Khansā's corpus, a clearly defined world of female elegiac composition,¹⁵¹ in the relationship between Abū Dhu'ayb's and Su'dá's texts, we actually have a remarkable instance of life imitating art, or vice versa. As discussed in chapter 2, Hudhayl's texts feature distinctive poetic dialogues between male and female personas. Evidently, real dialogues among male and female poets were taking place. Two social inferences can be made. On the one hand, contractions like *lawa-nna sha'an/ 'ilman yanfa'ū*, which are more common in Su'dá's text than in Abū Dhu'ayb's,¹⁵² might represent a more "professional" male poet drawing on local, more "popular" traditions. Maybe the striking repetition three times of the fate formula in Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy represents one such borrowing. On the other hand, especially given that Su'dá's text is quite sophisticated on its own, it may make more sense to view texts such as hers and al-Khansā's as more professional in their own right. A careful intertextual study of al-Khansā' and other female elegists would be useful in this regard.

Finally, however, rather than stark dichotomies between male and female spheres or professional and popular traditions, we could view the larger number of female elegists, and their networks of textual interaction semi-professionally with male poets, as a regional, Ḥijāzī phenomenon. The bits of stylistic DNA that appear in these poets' texts reveals a pool of shared regional diction and stylistic devices, a fact would not have been lost on these texts' audiences. Just as they would have recognized and comfortably responded to allusions to Ḥimyarite writing, Syrian wine, and Red Sea thunderstorms as cited above in the discussion of the

¹⁵¹ Cf. for example, Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals*, 161 ff.

¹⁵² Contractions occur in ll. 4, 7, 9.

Hudhalī *nasīb*, they would have recognized not just the elegies' intertextual play with older poems from further afield, in Najd or al-Ḥīrah, but to their dialogue with other regional poets' works. In this regional context, it is clear that much Ḥijāzī female elegy consists of praise similar to that of Najdī panegyrists, that is, it plays a very prominent role in status-construction; the remainder of Su'dā's elegy is primarily concerned with praising her brother. It is appropriate to ask what possible social function a fate elegy like Abū Dhu'ayb's serves.

4.4.3. *Abū Dhu'ayb's Elegy: Onager Episode*

After the introduction, the remainder of the poem consists of three episodes illustrating the power of fate over a group of onagers, an oryx bull, and a well-armed, mounted warrior. Most obviously, the death of the animals and the warrior parallel the death of Abū Dhu'ayb's sons. Within the onager episode, for example, as Bauer has pointed out, all five onagers are slain by the hunter, just as many or all of Abū Dhu'ayb's sons were killed.¹⁵³ The poem aesthetically commemorates them. However, the question then occurs as to *why* the death of onagers or an oryx bull, or both, should more fully express the role of fate in slaying the speaker's sons. The parallelism in such a complex text, although undeniable, ultimately lacks sufficient explanatory power; when we move on to the onager, it is not the animal's sons that are slain, but his female mates. In the oryx episode there is only one animal. Even the warrior episode features only one protagonist who is remarkably devoid of individual features, or any of the moral qualities such as generosity normally praised in an elegy. Nor is he mourned, but, like the animals, simply provides another detached illustration of the omnipotence of time and destiny. Even if we wanted to label a text with such difficult generic

¹⁵³ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 300–1.

qualities “allegorical,” for example, our interpretation is further hindered by the lack of contemporary aesthetic theories: we cannot confidently call the protagonists of these episodes symbolic, allegorical, or otherwise without first asking why, historically and theoretically, these terms would be applicable to this text.

If we frame the interpretive problem, partially, around the question of what constitutes an elegy in the first place, several other Hudhalī texts with unclear generic boundaries are relevant. As we mentioned above, not all of the fate episodes take place clearly in an elegy. Moreover, and even more distinctively, there are episodes resembling warrior fate episodes embedded in some *nasībs*.¹⁵⁴ Sā‘idah and Abū Dhu‘ayb also experimented with blending genres in other ways, for example, by composing elegies with amorous *nasībs* introducing them.¹⁵⁵ Stylistically and in terms of worldview, Renate Jacobi has argued, fairly persuasively in some cases, that this blending of themes anticipates several concerns of Umayyad *ghazal* (love poetry).¹⁵⁶ However, we will not understand the emotional nuance or pitch of a given motif or narrative structure without simultaneously examining how other poets employed, and how portable the poet in question felt it was within his or her own generic corpus.

So for the warriors appearing in *nasībs*, in two of these, Sā‘idah expands on a similar one-line comparison by ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm in which the speaker compares his grief at the beloved’s departure to a woman, all of whose nine sons have died.¹⁵⁷ This is introduced in the

¹⁵⁴ Bräunlich, “Versuch,” 227–229, discusses these scenes. As he points out, Ka‘b ibn Zuhayr (a Hijāzī poet) also extensively compares the quickly-moving legs of a camel the violent gesticulations of a grieving woman; in such cases, the comparison seems to be purely physical or visual, not based on any comparison of emotional registers. Jacobi argues against this of course, but my stance here is closer to Bräunlich’s: we cannot necessarily assume an emotional appeal, at least not a very consistent one, in these comparisons precisely because poets were willing to move these little scenes around from one place to the next in what seems to be an emotionally detached manner.

¹⁵⁵ Abū Dhu‘ayb nos. 5, 7, 9, 11 are discussed in Jacobi, “Anfänge,” 226 ff. and my “Introduction,” above.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Sā‘idah nos. 7 and 10; *al-Mu‘allaqah*, l. 25, ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm, *Dīwān*, 70. See Bräunlich, “Versuch,” 227.

case of both ‘Amr and Sā‘idah with the expression *mā wajadat wajdī* (she has not felt the same deep pain as me ...) to allow the transition from the *nasīb* to an extended narrative episode. In both of Sā‘idah’s poems, which contain a 24- and a 16-line narrative, an only son who goes off to war and apparently dies leads to a description of the mother’s grief. She discovers in the end that he has somehow survived.

Abū Dhu’ayb draws on this structure of Sā‘idah, introducing an episode with the similar *fa-mā in wajdu mu‘qilatin* (the deep pain of a wailing woman is not ...).¹⁵⁸ In his 15-line episode, his growth with the devoted care of his mother from a child into a strong warrior is described. One day, he and a companion see an eagle (*‘uqāb*), and he incorrectly interprets the omen as a sign of eventual victory. Later, during a battle, he confronts another tribal chief and is mortally wounded, but not before killing the chief. As he lies dying, a man who knew him finds him [98],

he said to him, “didn’t you fear—for the fates (*li-l-manāyā maṣāri‘*) bring death—
that swords would tear you apart?”

He replied, “I do so fear, and the eagles foretold it to me,
if only I had rightly augured the ill it had in store!”

Then he swore, as he lay among them (*qāla bi-‘ahdihī fī l-qawm*),
“I have avenged myself, at least, [by killing your chief],
if such a wretch [as me (*lahīf*)] can be avenged.”¹⁵⁹

The entire passage, although neither contained in an elegy or introduced by the formulae distinctive of what I am calling the fate elegy, bears a number of resemblances to it. One is a

¹⁵⁸ 1(ADhQ)23.5, *Ash‘ār*, 184.

¹⁵⁹ 1(ADhQ).23.18–20, *Ash‘ār*, 188.

concern with fate, sharing vocabulary such as *al-manāyā* (fated deaths) and *al-maṣāriʿ* (deaths, places where one is slain) with Abū Dhuʿayb’s elegy. This is evident, as well, in the augury that foretold the young man’s death. When he meets his companion, he is introduced with the expression *utīḥa la-hu*,¹⁶⁰ an expression seen in Ṣakhr al-Ghayy’s ibex episode above, as well as the warrior episode of Abū Dhuʿayb’s elegy. As in his elegy, although we are not told explicitly, it is presumed both men die. The emphasis on fate and the ultimate presumed death of the protagonist narrative represents a significant variation on al-Sāʿidah’s episodes.

In sum, the animals are not used purely or even primarily to “represent the sons,” and even the human warrior does not do this. Rather, our poets are again demonstrating their superiority as intertextual *bricoleurs*. Pre-Islamic poets did not attempt—either because they did not value it or because such a process makes little sense in the composition of oral poetry—to generate original narratives from scratch. Portable narrative structures were taken over, modified, and given new structural meaning. In illustrating the action of fate, as we have seen, Arabic poets in general and Hudhalī poets in general began with ibex, onagers, and eagles. To the extent that we have sufficient data, it appears as if Sāʿidah and Abū Dhuʿayb deliberately narrowed their choice of animal episodes to the onager and oryx, then adding their own warrior episode. The reasons for this are profoundly intertextual; in the earlier Jāhilī periods the possibilities for animal episodes were somewhat inchoate. By the generation of the *mukhaḍramūn* Sāʿidah and Abū Dhuʿayb, a more or less well-established canon of onager and oryx episodes had developed for the specific task of illustrating the camel mare’s speed. This is the central insight which an intertextual consideration of Abū Dhuʿayb’s elegy brings: for his audience, not only was the fate elegy an appropriate genre for virtuoso poetic performance,

¹⁶⁰ L. 8, *ibid.*, 185.

but it made sense and was even aesthetically valued to adapt the animals specifically depicted for camel-mare descriptions to the fate elegy, rather than for the tribal poets to describe a camel mare themselves.

The onager episode initially developed in the same quasi-courtly milieu that encouraged the development of the tripartite *qaṣīdah*, in which the camel-mare bears the poet to the patron. Here it is worth citing Bauer at length.

It is striking that all of the same poets of the Jāhiliyyah who left behind truly impressive onager episodes were in close contact with the Lakhmid court at al-Ḥīrah. Both ‘Amr ibn Qamīrah as well as Aws ibn Ḥajar spent long years of their life at court (for that matter, al-Muraqqish already was said to have learned writing from a Christian of al-Ḥīrah). Bishr [ibn Abī Khāzim] must also have passed through and finally, al-Nābighah, as is well-known, was a court poet there. Two of [his] three poems in our corpus were for the Lakhmid king, while another was for his Ghassānid peers.”¹⁶¹

Al-Nābighah’s role in the development of the episode is important to consider, because of al-Nābighah’s unparalleled influence, perhaps as a poet from a northwest-Arabian tribe, on Abū Dhu’ayb.¹⁶² Contemporary audiences would have recognized Abū Dhu’ayb’s appropriation of a type of episode often reserved for describing a camel mare’s swiftness as she made her way to a patron, and appreciated the modifications made to insert the episode into an elegy.

The most striking of these is the unique emphasis on fate’s role throughout the narrative. This is of course emphasized from the introductory formula, “The dark-spined

¹⁶¹ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:215. He also translates, comments on and discusses the texts by al-Nābighah he cites: 2:58–67.

¹⁶² Jacobi, “Anfänge,” 223.

[onager (*jawn al-sarāh*)] with his four milk-dry [mares] does not survive time's ill fortune" (l. 15). Such texts are usually introduced with a formula such as al-Nābighah's, "as if my saddle were bound to [an onager mare] that flings back stones as she runs, dark-spined (*min al-jawniyyi*), a leader, a sprinter ...".¹⁶³ The same or similar epithets are used, (as here, *jawn al-sarāh* versus *min al-jawnī*, thus evoking the earlier texts. The rest of Abū Dhu'ayb's episode is well-structured between a description of the spring meadows, the journey to a new watering place after the spring waters dry out in summer, and the arrival at the new watering place, and subsequent slaughter. As Bauer points out, the narrative tension is well-constructed, the idyllic spring setting contrasts with what is to come, which the poet foreshadows the animals' death with allusions to fate.¹⁶⁴

Following the introductory formula, the speaker describes the loud sound of the onager (according to Otto Antonius, midway between a whinny and a bray, but enunciated as quickly as a dog's bark, like "gyang-gyang")¹⁶⁵ as being like that of a slave of the Abū Rabī'ah family yelling to keep animals of prey away from the herds (l. 15). Among the possible glosses given for the name Abū Rabī'ah, one is that it was a prominent Meccan trading family. The reference would certainly have been to someone known by the audience, adding some "local color" to the description adapted from famous poets such as al-Nābighah, known throughout the peninsula. The next three lines (ll. 17–19) describe the idyllic spring pastures of the onagers. Bauer, not having included Abū Kabīr's elegy cited above, states that this is the only "spring pasture" description in the Hudhalī corpus.¹⁶⁶ As we have seen, however, the older Hudhalī Abū

¹⁶³ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 2:63–67; al-Nābighah, *Dīwān*, ed. Ibrāhīm, 220. See Bauer, *ibid.*, 1:82–92 for a full discussion on introductory formulae for the onager episode.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:298–302. My discussion below draws on his to some extent.

¹⁶⁵ Cited in Bauer, *ibid.*, 1:25. To my mind they sound very much like donkeys.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:299.

Kabīr, perhaps drawing on the earlier Najdī al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, also structures his onager episode via the dichotomy of peaceful life and the disaster of fate's blows. Abū Dhu'ayb undoubtedly drew on Abū Kabīr's text, since he uses the same introductory formula as the earlier poet, but has added a narrative tension, in effect setting the simple diptych of the earlier poets in motion.

Abū Dhu'ayb also seems to be drawing on Ṣakhr al-Ghayy in his use of foreshadowing. The ibex in Ṣakhr's text hears crows, *ghurāb*, the sonorous and animal form by which fate signifies itself in the phenomenal world. Abū Dhu'ayb had used this exact same detail, except with an eagle (*'uqāb*) to create foreshadowing in the *ghazal* episode of a young warrior who goes off to war where he dies. Here, it is not within the world of the episode, but through the poetic voice itself that the foreshadowing occurs, exclaiming, "and what a fateful time (*bi-ayyi ḥīni mulāwatin*) did they dry up in!" (l. 20). One explanation given for the word *malāyah* (or, *mulāyah*), meaning "a period of one's life," is that it is the time God has dictated (*amlā*) for a living being.¹⁶⁷ Through this sort of interjection into the text itself, Abū Dhu'ayb succeeds not only in structuring the narrative and establishing its pacing, but in framing the succession of time as inherently fatalistic to its core. The narrative devices, in other words, do not exist merely to relate events, but to construct a world. The narrator continues in this vein in l. 21; as the animals move towards their foreordained fate, they are guided by inauspicious stars (*shu'm*) to their appointed demise (*ḥayn*).

As described above, however, the fatalism under discussion here is not merely an abstract set of timed events to which the protagonists must adhere, but an impending felt sense that some chance destruction is preparing to erupt out of the world, animated by time

¹⁶⁷ *Lisān*, s.v. "m-l-w."

and fate's power. If this mood is established during the onager's journey through the desert (ll. 22–25), it is reaffirmed by the comparison of the onagers to *maysir*, a game of chance (l. 24).¹⁶⁸ It is further reaffirmed by the use of celestial imagery to depict the time (around July) at which the onagers arrive at their new watering hole (l. 26). Astrology as we know it from most medieval sources was not practiced by pre-Islamic nomadic Arabs, but the system of *anwā'* (rain-stars) discussed in chapter 3 was, in its way, portentous. The arrival of a certain star in the sky meant migration, and the attendant rains' arrival were a matter of life and death. Whether or not pre-Islamic Arabs literally worshipped stars or thought them deities,¹⁶⁹ *anwā'* were, like the sound of the crow or the flight of an eagle, signifiers of potential disaster, the irruption of fate, in the lived world of the desert. The association, again, of stars with *maysir* only emphasizes the mood of hazard and unforeseen danger.

In what Bauer identifies as an “unparalleled” narrative technique,¹⁷⁰ the onagers do not see the hunter, but hear him and are unable to locate him (ll. 28–30). This same technique will be used again in the oryx episode which follows, and we can recall the role of sonic imagery in Ṣakhr al-Ghayy's ibex episode. Just as Ṣakhr's ibex, in hearing the sound of crow, or the warrior in Abū Dhu'ayb's *ghazal* episode on seeing the eagle, were confronted with their fate, the onagers, hearing the sound of the hunter, are being confronted with theirs: Abū Dhu'ayb uses the word *rayb*, here, a sound that arouses doubt or fear (l. 28). The same word was used in the first line of the poem, when Umaymah asks Abū Dhu'ayb whether he finds himself in pain from

¹⁶⁸ In itself, such comparisons are conventional, based on physical appearance. Bauer has compiled a list of all the objects to which onagers' bodies are compared: *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 1:193–197. However, as Jacobi has pointed out, one of the signal features of Abū Dhu'ayb's poetry is the transition from comparison based primarily on physical appearance to that which carries emotional, moral or psychological meaning (“Anfänge,” 220).

¹⁶⁹ Toufic Fahd, *Le Panthéon de l'Arabie centrale à la veille de l'Hégire*, 88 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1968), 18–24.

¹⁷⁰ Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst*, 2:300.

the *rayb* of death, and fate. The problem for the onagers is the inevitable, life-and-death one of interpretation.

More than merely stylistic conventions, then, Abū Dhu'ayb draws on earlier Hudhalī poets to express a fatalistic ethos. The narrative techniques, foreshadowing, comparisons and sonic imagery serve to create a sense of time subordinated to fate and a phenomenal world expressive of fate through omens. The protagonists of the Hudhalī fate elegy are ceaselessly confronted with ambiguous sounds, sights and signs of possible impending doom. It is remarkably apt then, that the hunter here appears as one of these difficult-to-interpret signs, rather than simply springing out of hiding and killing the animals. Instead he appears first as a cipher, like so many others, but a cipher that does turn out to represent the destructive force of the universe.

4.4.4. *Abū Dhu'ayb's Elegy: Oryx Episode*

The onager episode, although it emerged in the more hierarchical social milieu of Najdī poets interacting with the Naṣrid/Lakhmid court, has been “re-purposed” by Abū Dhu'ayb, not just by inserting a fatalistic formula at the beginning and letting the hunter succeed at the end, as many readers have noticed, but by saturating a well-paced narrative with foreshadowing, sensory imagery, and polyvalent diction such as the word *rayb* or the insistent *maysir*-comparisons. The onagers are thereby removed from their heroic world, the world of a confident Najdī tribal culture, and placed in a new and different world, the Ḥijāzī world of an uncertain and ironic fatalism. He is taking a well-known piece of music in a major key, and transposing it into a minor one.

[The hunter] set them upon it, but [its legs] kept it going,
 slender-jointed, supple, free from malformation:
 Dumrān,¹⁷² where he urged him to, [snapped at it as] the combatant
 thrusts at the doughty [warrior] who has been routed.
 It jabbed and rent the shoulder-muscle with its horn,
 jabbing like the farrier, when treating a limb for inflammation, 15
 [and] as it emerged from the other side, it resembled a spit (*saffūd*)
 that a group of revelers had forgotten by the fire—
 impaled on the pitch-black, true, unbending [horn],
 it gnawed repeatedly at its tip.
 When Wāthiq saw the instantaneous slaughter of his companion,
 and the impossibility of bloodwite or vengeance,
 he said to himself, “I feel no [more] desire,
 for my kinsman has not reached safety and not caught his prey.”¹⁷³

If by adapting a Najdī narrative structure to Hudhayl’s traditional motifs, Abū Dhu’ayb in effect transposed a major piece of music into a minor key, the oryx episode is more like Haydn’s *Surprise Symphony*. By steadfastly repeating his fatalistic refrain, *wa-l-dahru lā yabqá ‘alá ḥadathānihī*, Abū Dhu’ayb is not only providing structure to the poem, a certain choral lyricism, and a semantic build-up that comes of repetition and variation. He is also confounding audience expectations. Hudhalī poets had at least composed onager episodes in fate elegies before, although as we have seen, they varied significantly in their narrative structure from

¹⁷² The name of a hound.

¹⁷³ Al-Nābighah no. 5, ll. 9–19, Ahlwardt, *Six Divans*, 6; Montgomery, *Vagaries*, 148.

other tribes' episodes. The oryx episode was a novel adaptation, as far as we know, by Sā'idah and Abū Dhu'ayb. It would typically begin, like the onager episode, with a line such as al-Nābighah's:

As if my saddle, when day quitted us at al-Jalīl,

was [bound] upon a solitary [bull oryx], on the look-out, alert ...

It is thus a display of unexpected skill to continue to use the fate-formula to introduce the oryx episode with,

A terrified oryx bull that dogs drive before them

does not survive time's ill fortune.

However, Abū Dhu'ayb soon settles into a fairly accustomed narrative in this episode, as opposed to the mood-setting allusions to fate in his onager section. He begins *in medias res*, directly describing the emotional state of the oryx as it is hunted without describing its appearance and physical state, as al-Nābighah does in ll. 10–11. In l. 36 the oryx is described not by his physical characteristics, but as “terrified,” (*murawwa'*), and in l. 37, it is said that the dogs “drove him from his senses” (*sha'afa ... fu'ādahu*),” leaving him anxiously (*yafza'u*) awaiting the dawn. There is thus no opportunity for the sort of foreshadowing used in the onager episode; the oryx's fate is upon him already.

It is difficult to say regarding ll. 36–40 if the narrative is unwieldy, if the transmission of the poem is somewhat jumbled, or if the poet intends a sort of flash-back, but in ll. 38–39, the oryx takes refuge in the *arṭá*-thicket, which normally precedes the arrival of the dogs at dawn. The dawn seems to arrive with the dogs at both l. 37 and l. 40. Before returning to the arrival of the dogs, in l. 39, the oryx, like the onagers before him, is described carefully looking and listening for the hunter. The components of the narrative, are, however, conventional. So too

is the description of the battle with dogs, the epithets used to describe the onager, and the overall diction. A quick survey of the central features of the vocabulary in this section reveals the influence of previous poets, with some modification based on Abū Dhu'ayb's own style and that of other Hudhalī poets. Some images are modified or stylized. The Arabian oryx has a white back and two dark flank stripes above the belly. The animal is thus frequently described as *dhū judad* or *dhu juddatayn* (possessing stripes), a term found in Zuhayr and al-A'shā,¹⁷⁴ while Abū Dhu'ayb never uses this term and prefers the synonym *bi-l-turratayn* (ll. 43, 47). This term reflects a tribal preference. It is not found, for example, in the *dīwāns* of 'Antarah, Imru' al-Qays, 'Antarah or Zuhayr, but it is also used by the Hudhalīs al-Mutanakhkhil,¹⁷⁵ and Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith,¹⁷⁶ and Abū Dhu'ayb himself uses the term twice elsewhere.¹⁷⁷ Likewise, it is conventional to speak of the oryx's horn, as it gores the hounds, as being dyed; Aws ibn Ḥajar speaks of how it is dyed (*ikhtaḍab*),¹⁷⁸ while Abū Dhu'ayb adds the detail, dyed with *ayda'* (l. 42), a skillful twist on convention by adding an unusual word to fit his 'ayn-rhymed poem.

However, much of the description is boilerplate. In describing the oryx as “the thick-limbed bull (*'abl al-shawá*), a brown band along his belly (*muwalla'*),” (l. 43) he uses several common epithets, albeit perhaps somewhat unusually. *'Abl al-shawá* or similar phrases, as discussed with regard to Sā'idah ibn Ju'ayyah in chapter 2, is borrowed from horse descriptions such as those of 'Antarah,¹⁷⁹ Imru' al-Qays, and al-A'shā. *Muwalla'* was used by 'Alqamah and Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmá specifically of oryx.¹⁸⁰ Abū Dhu'ayb uses in l. 42 the term *mudhallaq*

¹⁷⁴ See *ibid.*, 141 for these and further citations.

¹⁷⁵ 66(ML).1,8, *Ash'ār*, 1252.

¹⁷⁶ 67(UḤ).2.5, *ibid.*, 1292.

¹⁷⁷ 1(ADhQ).5.7, 1(ADhQ).11.26, *ibid.*, 71, 136.

¹⁷⁸ Aws no. 1, l. 18, *Dīwān*, 3.

¹⁷⁹ *Mu'allaqah*, l. 21.

¹⁸⁰ For citations and discussion see Montgomery, *Vagaries*, 112, 141.

(sharpened) of the oryx's horns, similar to the synonym *dhalīq* used by Aws ibn Ḥajar,¹⁸¹ for example. The most striking citation of a previous poet, however, is in l. 45, where the oryx runs the hounds through, and his horn is compared to a skewer (*saffūdayn*). This is the same term and the same comparison used by al-Nābighah (l. 16), and Abū Dhu'ayb playfully modifies it. While al-Nābighah compares the horn as it emerges from the other side of the run-through dog to "a spit which a group of revelers (*sharb*) had forgotten by the fire," (l. 16), Abū Dhu'ayb describes the blood on the horns as it is withdrawn from the dog as being like a skewer "taken out quickly from cooking meat for [hungry], hurrying drinkers (*sharb*)," (l. 45), that is, the meat is still raw and the skewer comes out red. This level of intertextuality certainly exemplifies the "competitive virtue" of Montgomery of the "Kunstdichtung" of Bauer.

But then comes the surprise; Abū Dhu'ayb, in making this clear allusion to al-Nābighah, also invokes the narrative structure of al-Nābighah's episode. Abū Dhu'ayb has brought the episode to the exact same figurative note that al-Nābighah and other poets use for their conclusion. For al-Nābighah, the skewering of the dog signals the final victory of the oryx just as for Aws, the image of a horn dyed with blood likewise signals the oryx's impending escape. This is crucial for the larger meaning of the oryx episode within al-Nābighah's panegyric; Abū Dhu'ayb and Sā'idah are engaged in the aesthetic experiment of adapting Najdī oryx and onager episodes to the Hudhalī fate elegy structure. In particular, the use of the oryx for this purpose was very novel. His audience would certainly have been anticipating, or at least recalling from other poems, the death of the oryx, wondering how the poet would bring it about, and admiring his reframing of an episode used in panegyric and boasting for a genre, the fate elegy, from their own tribal traditions.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 113, 128 ff.; Aws ibn Ḥajar no. 21, l. 25, *Dīwān*, 43.

Abū Dhu'ayb's solution is a sort of *deus ex machina*. In two lines, the hunter simply walks up and with a startling abruptness, shoots the oryx dead. This resolution occurs at precisely the place where, in al-Nābighah's text, the final two lines are given over to a personification of the dogs (ll. 18–19), who, realizing that no vengeance can be taken, lost their desire for the fight. The personification of the dogs is crucial to constructing the oryx as an emblematic animal, representative of the patron in the text. Someone from whom no bloodwite can be exacted or against whom no vengeance can be taken is either a king, or a very powerful individual. With this personification, the poet returns the audience to the world of status and hierarchy that he navigates in seeking forgiveness from Nu'mān, and in the poem, direct address of the patron follows the oryx episode. By remorselessly slaughtering the oryx, Abū Dhu'ayb is not so much representing the demise of his sons, as the demise of an intertextual ideal animal whose primary function is to convey elevated social status. The oryx episode's fringes are woven at two ends into the tapestry of a *qaṣīdah*: at one end, it symbolizes the strength and speed of the camel mare, and hence the speaker's status and determination, and at the other, it asserts the superiority either of the speaker or a praised patron over other men, just as the animal asserts its superiority over the hunters. The poet's audience would have felt the death of the animal intertextually, as a disruption related in some way to status hierarchies in the human world.

In its own way, however, his elegy does function like al-Nābighah's; al-Nābighah makes the transition to the human world, in the form of the patron, while Abū Dhu'ayb makes the transition with a further fate episode, but this one featuring the human warrior. He is not merely re-purposing individual episodes, but creating a sort of alternate narrative to that of the panegyric *qaṣīdah*. In taking over structures, techniques and narrative details from

previous poets, Abū Dhu'ayb leaves the reader in little doubt of his consciousness of his inherited tradition. The question then presents itself as to why, in comparison with Ṣakhr al-Ghayy for example, he has chosen an onager and an oryx, but not an ibex. It seems hard to escape the fact that these very animals had become the standard poetic vehicles for vaunting one's own individual and tribal merits. In fact, whether he was aware of it or not, Abū Dhu'ayb's poem exactly follows the structure of Labīd's *Mu'allaqah*, a boast. Labīd begins with a *nasīb* about Nuwār, his beloved, before describing his separation on his camel mare, which he compares to an onager and then an oryx, before boasting of himself as, among other things, a warrior. We have the exact same structure in this elegy: a dialogue with a woman, followed by an onager, oryx and warrior episode, except that in the elegy, each of these protagonists is struck down in turn.

4.4.4. Abū Dhu'ayb's Elegy: Warrior Episode

Abū Dhu'ayb's use of animal episodes thus revolves around the same questions of status as any panegyric or tribal boast. It is not only unable to escape its own intertextuality, but it exploits it to invert the Najdī *qaṣīdah*. I argued in chapter 2 that Hudhayl's techniques of praise and boasting both reflect and construct anti-equestrian tribal identity rooted in Hudhayl's peripheral status, distance from significant urban centers, and relatively egalitarian leadership in comparison to the hierarchal status-claims of Najdī warrior aristocrats articulated in their *qaṣīdah* poetry. Given that Hudhalī poets never boast of their horsemanship, it is difficult to read Abū Dhu'ayb's warrior episode here as anything other than ironic, at best, and perhaps even satirical or sarcastic. This is not a glorious and powerful warrior, but a frail, mere human

seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. If fate strikes down the onager and oryx, it strikes down the warrior who uses those animals in his poetry to elevate his status just as equally.

Indeed, the egalitarian sensibility of Hudhayl expresses itself not only in the poem's remorseless metaphysics, but in its stylistics. Rather than a teleological narrative leading to a boast, patron, or deceased individual, each section of the poem is relentlessly flattened by the repetitive formula that introduces each episode. The warrior is not just juxtaposed with animals, but he essentially is one. Instead of throwing his status into relief, the previous animal episodes have levelled it irreducibly.

In depicting the two warriors, Abū Dhu'ayb draws on a number of phrases and expressions normally used for boasting. Although much of the diction is also highly conventional, it is worth considering the circumstances under which it is conventionally employed by non-Hudhalī poets. Many of the horse's traits can be found in a boast by 'Alqamah about his leadership role as a mounted warrior [100]:

Many times have I mounted the saddle frame, face seared (*yasfa'unī*)
by a day of the Gemini, and pestilent, blistering winds. ...
I might well lead before the tribe a tall mare (*salhabatun*),
as if her lineage, known to all, were leading her,
with a flawless splint bone, and a flawless pastern,
with hoof walls trimmed and intact.¹⁸²

Abū Dhu'ayb's horse description in the warrior episode in many ways echoes such heroic passages in Najdī poets. The face of the warrior (l. 50) has also been blackened (*asfa'*) by the heat under his armor, and Abū Dhu'ayb gives attention to the same details of the warriors'

¹⁸² 'Alqamah no. 13, ll. 45–47, Ahlwardt, 113. Translation from Sells, *Desert Tracings*, 19.

horses as ‘Alqamah. The enemy’s horse’s gait is free of defects (56), just as ‘Alqamah’s leg-bones are flawless. Abū Dhu’ayb does not use the exact term *salhabah*, but this was used by Sā’idah in his warrior description discussed in chapter 2.¹⁸³ Other aspects of Najdī diction are evoked as well in the equipage of the warriors. They are both wearing armor described (l.) as “Median,” or Persian (*mādhiyyatāni*, in the dual), a term we saw in ‘Awf ibn ‘Aṭīyah above, describing wine.

Yet there are reportedly flaws in the depiction. Al-Aṣma’ī criticized two aspects of the horse description in particular, blaming, as we have seen, Hudhayl’s lack of experience with horses. The warrior feeds the horse from the camels’ morning milking (*al-ṣabūḥ*, l. 52), a familiar enough topos, but as a result, it has become so fat (*sharraja laḥmuhā bi-l-nayy*) that “a finger would disappear into her.” Al-Aṣma’ī singles this line out for particular disapprobation, stating that this is one of the worst ways to describe a horse (*hādhā min akhbath mā tun‘at bi-hi l-khayl*).¹⁸⁴ Such a horse would be too fat to run for an hour, he complains.¹⁸⁵ I have already argued that his explanation for this, that Hudhayl possessed no horses, is unconvincing. Describing horses was a textual, not a mimetic exercise, and it only takes anyway a very passing acquaintance with horses to realize one should not be able to insert one’s finger into its fat. A second problem with the horse, though, comes in l. 53, where the horse is said to “pour forth a summer rain (*ḥamīm*) that gushes down.” The commentators disagreed on the meaning of this line, in particular as to the meaning of what the horse “pours forth,”

¹⁸³ 64(SJK)1.49, *Ash‘ār*, 1116.

¹⁸⁴ Al-Sukkarī, *Ash‘ār*, 34.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

(*dirratihā*). According again to al-Aṣmaī, this means profuse sweat, and again condemns Abū Dhu'ayb's inept description.¹⁸⁶

The question of what horses truly look like is rather irrelevant; at issue is that philologists were unable to follow Abū Dhu'ayb when he departed from the conventions of horse description laid down by previous poets. That he does depart from the conventions is not surprising, however, as his purpose is not, as in 'Alqamah's text, to boast of his own horsemanship and to depict a magnificent horse, but to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of these two equestrian warriors in the face of fate. Although they are certain of their experience in battle (*wāthiq bi-balā'ihī*), the narrative knows better and as in the onager episode, speaks for fate: today is inauspicious (*ashna'*, l. 58), and powers beyond comprehension have chosen for this enemy to meet this warrior (*utīḥa la-hū*, l. 54).

The speaker is in effect modulating between two different keys. For the most part, the episode is told in the heroic style familiar to us and no doubt to its contemporary audience from the massive quantity of Najdī boasting and panegyric *qaṣīdahs*. However, the episode is also indebted to Sā'idah's text in the same style, and listener's expectations would have been shaped by other similar texts, such as Abū Dhu'ayb's description, discussed above, of a young warrior fated to die in battle, but not before slaying his enemy.¹⁸⁷ Ominous tones characteristic of the Hudhalī fate elegy's animal episodes punctuate the episode. The final line of the poem (l. 63, on the glory that the warriors achieve, "if such a thing matters (*law anna shay'an yanfa'ū*)," also strikes a regional or Hudhalī note, by invoking the idiomatic phrase of Su'dá, *law anna 'ilman yanfa'ū*. The clear implication is that it does not. The particle *law* is used primarily for

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁸⁷ 1(ADhQ).23.18–20, *Ash'ār*, 188.

irrealis conditions, but moreover, as we have seen, it is used in Su'dá's poem to describe her knowledge of fate's omnipotence. Although Abū Dhu'ayb depicts the warrior aristocrat using intertribal vocabulary, throughout his elegy he makes use of such regional or intra-tribal intertextual citations to structure his poem. His introduction is clearly interwoven either with Su'dá's or similar texts, and the fatalist formula he uses (*wa-l-dahr la yabqá 'alá ḥadathānihī*) also invokes earlier Hudhalī fate elegies. These echo like a folk motif interspersing the classical and heroic diction of the onager, oryx and warrior episodes, and by choosing to end on this note, the audience ends profoundly distanced from the ideological world of the warrior aristocrat.

As in chapter 2, where dialogue with women, rather than serving as a jumping off point to boast of excessive consumption in defiance of fate and death, leads instead to quasi-ascetic assertions of virility, the invocation of fate in Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy is profoundly more pessimistic than that found in other elegies. Elsewhere, avenues of recourse against fate are articulated, such as vengeance for the slain, or at least the commemoration of the social support received from the deceased. Any recourse against fate is, in Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy, singularly futile, and the sequence from animal to human, although found in Najdī poetic structures, leads not to a boast but only serves to reinforce humanity's limitless impotence in the face of fate. If it seems there is something apocalyptic about this, this intuition is borne out by the use of the fate elegy structure by Labīd (or one of his followers or imitators) to depict the omnipotence of God, rather than fate.

4.5. Conclusion: Labīd's Islamic Fate Elegy

Several authors have noted that, as a poet widely said to have converted to Islam and to have written religious poetry, even Labīd's pre-Islamic poetry contains a spiritual element to

it. For Stetkevych, “there is much in the fakhr section of Labīd’s *Mu‘allaqah* that sounds distinctly Islamic in tone and diction. It could thus be considered ‘proto-Islamic’ ...”.¹⁸⁸ Thomas Bauer actually agrees, stating that as “his poetry displays a deep religious sensitivity, there is no reason to doubt reports according to which he became a pious Muslim.”¹⁸⁹ While Stetkevych, however, seems to give credence to the accounts that Labīd stopped writing poetry on his conversion, saying that the Quran was all he needed, they seem apocryphal.¹⁹⁰ He has much religious poetry, but no Western scholars have taken up the subject. An analysis of one of his texts reveals the use of pre-Islamic, particularly Hudhalī stylistic devices and thought-structures to articulate a uniquely Arabic monotheistic vision of the world.

The recension of the text is not particularly coherent, and there is no extant commentary on it by a major philologist. It is found in Labīd’s *Dīwān*,¹⁹¹ and from scattered glosses was apparently known to and perhaps transmitted by al-Aṣma‘ī, but if so, his version no longer exists and I have mostly followed the text as found in apparently its earliest version the compendium of Yemeni lore by Ibn Hishām, *Kitāb al-Tījān fī mulūk Ḥimyar*.¹⁹² Early versions are also found in al-Buḥturī’s *Ḥamāsah* and *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* of al-Jāḥiẓ.¹⁹³ The poem is also cited frequently in geographical dictionaries and lexicons. Given the state of the text, and what I consider to be its inherent interest, I have translated it in full and included rather more philological apparatus than elsewhere. Like Labīd’s *Mu‘allaqah*, and Abū Dhu‘ayb’s elegy for his sons (and Su‘dá bint al-Shamardal’s elegy for her brother), it is in the *kāmil* meter.

¹⁸⁸ Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals*, 45.

¹⁸⁹ Bauer, “Labīd,” *REAL*.

¹⁹⁰ Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals*, 50–51; Bauer, *ibid*.

¹⁹¹ Labīd, *Dīwān*, ed. ‘Abbās, 271–276. ‘Abbās is unclear what his primary text is, or its source and recension.

¹⁹² Ibn Hishām and Wahb ibn Munabbih, *Al-Tījān fī mulūk Ḥimyar*, 85–86.

¹⁹³ Buḥturī, *Le Kitāb al-hamāsah*, 84–85; ‘Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, ed. ‘Abd Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Muṣṭafá al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1966), 6:326–27.

4.5.1. *Labīd: Li-llāhi nāfilatu l-ajalli*

[101] God's in abundance is all that is most glorious, most superb,¹⁹⁴

His are the heights, and unto him in the utmost every ancient thing.

No mortal can efface His scripture,

how, when no decree can be exchanged for His?

He proportioned (*sawwā*), beneath the spectacle (*ghurrah*)¹⁹⁵

of his throne, seven levels (*ṭibāq*) [of heaven], above the lofty peaks,
and the earth below them, a restful and reliable bed (*mihād*),¹⁹⁶

its ranges of mountains made secure to massive, mute rock.¹⁹⁷

All that you strive for is vanity, unless it be fear of God (*al-taqwā*),

for whenever anything passes away, it is as if it had never been.

5

If ever anything could endure forever (*kāna ... khālidan*),

the white-ankled [ibex] would be saved, dwelling upon Mt. Ma'sal—

it has the sweet-scented *bashām*-leaves [clinging] to its hooves,¹⁹⁸

with an arduous [mountain (*ṣa'b*)] beneath them,

from whose back [even] the lank [eagle] slips—

or the many-[tufted lion (*dhū zawā'id*)],¹⁹⁹ whose land none goes near,

¹⁹⁴ Compare *li-llāhi nāfilatu l-ajalli l-afḍalī* with Abū Dhu'ayb no. 6, l. 3 (*Ash'ār*, 88), *la-qad u'ṭiti nāfilata l-faḍlī*. Labīd's line is cited by al-Sukkarī glossing the line by Abū Dhu'ayb.

¹⁹⁵ Var. *'izzah* (power, might).

¹⁹⁶ Allusion to Quran 78:6.

¹⁹⁷ Following this, the *Dīwān* has the following line, but it is not found in the *Tījān*:

The waters and the fires are among His signs (*ayāt*);
in them is meaningful exhortation (*maw'izah*)
to those who do not go ignorantly astray (*lam yajhalī*).

¹⁹⁸ Ṣakhr al-Ghayy's ibex likewise dwells among *bashām* in the passage cited above, l. 8 (*Ash'ār*, 248).

who falls upon any who come yelling (*al-muhajhij*)²⁰⁰
 as [swiftly and uncontrollably as] a heavy bucket plunging down a well,
 with crooked fangs coming out of his jaw,
 the upper [teeth] locking in behind the lower ones;
 the chance blows of time (*rayb al-zamān*) struck him down,
 and his fangs became like dulled iron spear-butts, detached from their shafts. 10
 Şubḥ saw into the depth of his pierced [liver, (*sawāda khalīlīhī*)]²⁰¹
 between the hilt of his sword and its sheathe (*miḥmal*).²⁰²
 [The fates] came for Şubḥ in the morning (*şabbahna Şubḥan*),²⁰³
 though he was truly on guard,
 a discerning tracker (*qā'if*),²⁰⁴ who ignores nothing, struck down Şubḥ.²⁰⁵
 Lubad ran his course,²⁰⁶ and the chance blows of fate (*rayb al-zamān*)

¹⁹⁹ An obscure expression; it either refers to the lion's many claws and teeth, to excessive hairs around his feet, or his excessive roaring (Lane, s.v. "zā'idah").

²⁰⁰ According to the *Lisān* (s.v. "h-j") citing this line, and al-Aşma'ī's comments on it, this word (a participle related to or derived from *hājḥajjah*, an onomatopoeic noun representing the sound of screaming at a lion) means someone yelling at a lion. This must refer to a beater in hunting; I cannot imagine why else one would approach and yell at a lion.

²⁰¹ Reading *khalīl* as *makhlūl* (transpierced, perforated, see Lane, s.v. "khalīl" and *Lisān*, s.v. "kh-l-l," citing this line). Ibn Manẓūr in the *Lisān* (s.v. "kh-dh" and "kh-l-l"), glossing the line, states that Şubḥ looked into a deep wound after either having been stabbed by an assassin who killed him sleeping or by a lion. The latter seems like a misreading based on the previous line. Şubḥ was either an Ethiopian king (*min mulūk al-Ḥabashah*, *Lisān*, s.v. "kh-l-l") or "one of the pre-patriarchal giants (*al-amāliq*)" according to Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, s.v. "Şubḥ", who had an area of land in Yamāmāh named after him.

²⁰² This seems to indicate where he was stabbed, if the hilt of the sword can be assumed to rise above hip against the side of his torso.

²⁰³ Iḥsān 'Abbās suggests that the subject of *şabbahna* is fates. I follow him, while other sources say it refers to horses; a morning raid thus offers a third explanation for his wound in the previous line (Labīd, *Dīwān*, 274).

²⁰⁴ I.e., fate. For *qiyāfah*, the semi-supernatural ability attributed to nomadic Arabs of tracking, recognizing kin relationships, and the like, see Werner Caschel, "Aijām Al-'Arab: Studien Zur Altarabischen Epik," *Islamica* 3, fasc. 5: Supplementum voluminis (1931): 31 ff. It is analogous to *firāsah*, for which see Fahd, "Firāsa," *El*².

²⁰⁵ Here the *Dīwān* has the obscure line:

Their side (*şafqhumā*) twisted with Şubḥ beneath it,
 between the dirt and the rippling chest (*ḥinwi l-kalkalī*).

The image is of a man being crushed beneath the body of an animal; the referent of the dual pronoun is unclear. For the first hemistich, al-Jāḥiẓ has the clearer, "he [sc. Şubḥ] twisted about, broken, and his star set": al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, 6:326.

caught up with him, though he was light and unburdened.

When Lubad saw that [all the rest of] the eagles had flown off,

he lifted the fore-feathers [of his wings] like a broken-spined, limp-tailed
[horse],

with Luqmān beneath him, fearful of his ascent (*yarjū nahḍahū*),

but Luqmān saw that [Lubad] certainly didn't falter.

15

The [passing] nights eventually conquered the descendants of Muḥarriq's clan,

just as they did to Tubba' and Heraclius (*Hirqal*).

They conquered Abrahah, whom they found

inhabiting Ghurfat Mawkal,²⁰⁷

and al-Ḥārith al-Ḥarrāb left 'Āqil desolate behind him,²⁰⁸

and abode there, never departing [sc. died and was buried].

The poets, speaking so articulately, I see

that they have all taken the path of al-Muraqqish and al-Muhalhil.

A few notes on the transmission are in order. As always, very little can be absolutely ascertained. The first five lines of the poem are found in the *Tījān*, but not in al-Buḥturī or al-

²⁰⁶ Luqmān was a legendary pre-Islamic sage who was given the life equal to the consecutive spans of seven individual eagles or vultures, the last of which was named Lubad. See N. A. Stillman, "Luqmān," *EI*².

²⁰⁷ Here the *Dīwān* has two lines:

His stores, to whoever calls upon Him, flow
like the Euphrates (*al-furāt*) into the mouth of a stream.
Until his kin and all those who abode with him departed
and their lord (*ṣayyid*) dwelt there without departing [sc. died and was buried].

The first seems like a pious interjection that interrupts the sequence of named, departed figures being depicted elegiacally, and the second recapitulates the statement about al-Ḥārith al-Ḥarrāb.

²⁰⁸ According to al-Aṣma'ī, this is al-Ḥārith ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥujr al-Kindī. He is also mentioned in a similarly elegiac context in Labīd no. 8, l. 31, *Dīwān*, 55. 'Āqil is accordingly said (*Mu'jam mā ista'jam*, s.v.) to have been a mountain where Ḥujr, the father of Imru' al-Qays lived. It is mentioned repeatedly in Labīd (in addition to instances already cited, *Dīwān*, 118, 213, 236, 265, 276, 279).

Jāḥiẓ. This in itself means very little, since these are anthologies whose composers explicitly make selections of larger texts based on the theme they are treating. However, the possibility that they represent a pious accretion remains. The references to pre-Islamic mythology in ll. 11–19 are mostly South Arabian, and show a detail of knowledge regarding figures and places that obviously baffled commentators. Both Ibn Hishām and al-Jāḥiẓ cite the poem in discussions of the eagle Lubad, so the remaining material on Subḥ, Tubbaʿ, Heraclius, al-Ḥārith al-Ḥarrāb would seem to have been part of the *textus receptus* by their time. The reference to Heraclius is interesting, as it seems post-Islamic: he was the Byzantine emperor defeated by the Muslims.²⁰⁹ In light of my discussions on the historical development of Arabic poetry in chapter 1, the reference to the early poets of Qays ibn Thaʿlabah, al-Muraqqish and al-Muhalhil is also of importance: it suggests, if the poem is authentic, that these poet were known, considered authoritative, and historically and culturally distant by the early seventh century poet.

The section from ll. 6–10 is what most concerns us, however, as it follows the fate elegy structure, and contains several allusions to Hudhayl’s texts. As we saw above, al-Muraqqish al-Akbar introduces his ibex episode, the earliest known, with the *law ... la-* (*irrealis* if ... then) particles (*law kāna ḥayyun nājiyan la-nājā*). Labīd uses the same structure in l. 6: “If ever anything could endure forever (*law kāna shay’un khālidan la-tawā’alat*) ...” This structure is not used in Hudhayl’s fate elegies, and shows the influence of al-Muraqqish, especially given that Labīd himself alludes to this poet personally in l. 19.

Several other traits betray the influence of Hudhayl, however. Labīd has attempted to construct two animal episodes, one after the other, an ibex and a lion. Al-Muraqqish’s text only

²⁰⁹ Al-Aʿshá, a contemporary of Labīd, also mentions Heraclius: no. 36, l. 10, *Dīwān*, ed. Ḥusayn, 239.

contains the one ibex episode. The first line of the poem contain a strange locution, “God’s in abundance is all that is most glorious (*li-llāh nāfilatu l-ajalli l-afḍalī*).” Al-Sukkarī had glossed a similar usage in Abū Dhu’ayb by citing this very line by Labīd: “to you would be given in the utmost abundance (*la-qad u’ṭiti nāfilata l-faḍlī*).”²¹⁰ Although not a structuring device, Labīd repeats the expression *rayb al-zamān* (the chance blows of fate/time) in ll. 10 and 13, which in itself evokes several favored Hudhalī expressions, such as Abū Dhu’ayb’s synonymous *rayb al-dahr* in l. 13 of his elegy for his sons. A variant of *rayb al-manūn* is given for Labīd’s *rayb al-zamān*,²¹¹ which is even more evocative of the first line of Abū Dhu’ayb’s elegy. Finally, at least one other detail evokes a Hudhalī poem, the *bashām*-plant that the ibex encounters on its mountain top (l. 7) recalls l. 8 of Ṣakhr al-Ghayy’s ibex episode cited above.

Labīd’s poem then, if we take it at face value, seems to reflect exactly the cultural milieu that we would expect from a Muslim convert. By drawing on and referencing al-Muraqqiṣh al-Akbar, he is rooting himself in a tradition of Najdī poetics that reflects his role as a leading poet and spokesman for his prominent Najdī tribe, ‘Āmir ibn Ṣa’ṣa’ah. ‘Āmir, however, also interacted extensively with the Meccans and other Ḥijāzī tribes, experiences leaving the textual traces of Hudhayl’s poetics. Above all, however, he has synthesized not just a divergent traditions of stylistics on an aesthetic level, but subsumed them under a new Islamic credo.

If it were not clear already, then, the developments of the fate elegy within Hudhayl took place within an ideological context. Without necessarily serving as its *telos*, the stylistic developments of Hudhayl’s elegy also somehow lead logically to Labīd’s monotheism. For, having exceeded mere commemoration, or assertion of the status of the deceased, the Hudhalī

²¹⁰ 1(ADhQ).6.3, *Ash’ār*, 88.

²¹¹ Ibn Hishām, *Tījān*, 380.

fate elegy in Abū Dhu'ayb's hands had become something different, an expression of a tribal tradition that was competitively opposed not only to Najdī poetics, which it inverts through its pseudo-tripartite structure, and through citation, but at the same time to the nascent Islam which had superseded not only all regional Ḥijāzī power structures, but all Arabic tribal ideology itself, if not, for the time being, all tribal power *per se*.

Although any undue overconfidence could only serve as the basis of polemic, some tentative points regarding southern Ḥijāzī tribal culture evidently underlie the development of the fate elegy. Firstly, Najdī poetics were more older and prestigious than any other regional form; although we can discern “indigenous” influences like Su'dá bint al-Shamardal's elegiac idioms or Ṣakhr al-Ghayy's unconventional onager narratives, these chiefly appear in poems already taking Najdī poetics as their models. Secondly, however, the audiences of Ḥijāzī and Hudhalī poets in particular did feel distinctive enough from the social world in which Najdī poetics had developed to modify them, consistently adapting stylistic devices to their own cultural world. They did possess their own poetic traditions, expectations, and values. Thirdly, the attitude towards Najdī poetics was competitive enough that the sophisticated cultivation of rival forms of say, the animal episodes was deemed culturally appropriate. If this development was in any way accurately reflected in the extant texts, it took place primarily between the years 600 and 630, reflecting a major growth in cultural confidence during the decades on the eve of Islam.

I have suggested in chapter 1 that all of these developments make sense, given the southern Ḥijāz's relatively peripheral location as a result of its distance from major sedentary powers, especially after the decline of Ḥimyar around ca. 570 CE. Ideological norms or rule were accordingly in flux, and Ḥijāzī culture would have been characterized by a sense of both

distinctiveness and a competitive attitude towards other sedentary models of rule. Thus, rather than tripartite panegyric, elegy that took a much more ironic or detached attitude towards the values of a relatively hierarchical Najdī tribal leadership would allow the cultivation both of new social values, through the promulgation of new prestige texts associated with Najdī models, while simultaneously emphasizing regional particularity.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but as there was effectively no model of rule in Late Antiquity that was not also religious, all of these points on Ḥijāzī culture would seem conducive to the emergence of a new system of religion. As the epigraphs from the beginning of this chapter from Sā'idah and the Quranshow, the Prophet and Hudhayl were clearly breathing the same air. My point, however, goes beyond similarities of vocabulary or even the modification by Islam of pre-existing Arabian ideas, many of which have been noted repeatedly long ago.²¹² Early Islam was directed towards almost entirely different sources of social value than Hudhayl's poets, namely, Jerusalem, or its Christian and Jewish representatives in the Arabian Peninsula. But the new religion also had at one and the same time a sense of reverence for and a confidently competitive attitude towards antecedent spiritualities. It modeled itself on them in its practices, its fixation with scriptural revelation, the very language of Arabic revelation, saturated with Syriac loan-words, but it also irreverently changed the aspects of older traditions that no longer made sense. This peripheral yet ascendant cultural region was the perfect matrix for new modes of political rule, spirituality, and poetics. But prophets are not without honor, except in their own home town,

²¹² Goldziher, *Muhammedanische studien*, 1:1–100, 219–66; Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān*, Rev. ed. (Montreal: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University Press, 1966). Much more nuance is now possible regarding these sorts of arguments, given recent resources, especially in engaging with poetry. See, to begin with, Nawāl Karīm Zarzūr, *Mu'jam alfāz al-qiyam al-akhlāqiyah wa-taṭawwuruhā l-dalālī bayna lughat al-shi'r al-jāhili wa-lughat al-Qur'ān al-karīm* (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, 2001).

where they are known as carpenters or as the same men who eat and walk about in the markets. Hudhayl was perfectly aware of how conducive Ḥijāzī society at the time was to new forms of culture, it was developing some itself, and as such, could not fail to be unimpressed by Islam.

But just as it was Ḥijāzī love poetry, not the rambunctious escapades of Najdī warrior aristocrats that became the basis for all Islamic mystical and devotional notions of love, so Hudhayl's elegy was extremely influential, and not merely with Labīd. While Hudhayl exercised some influence on Umayyad-era *ghazal*, they did not exercise any immediate effect on elegy, dominated by the panegyric mode as it was at this time. During the early 'Abbāsīd period, however, the fate elegy enjoyed a new lease on life at the hands of Abū Nuwās (d. 198/813), who composed elegies using animal motifs. Some were composed for specific individuals, such as his elegy for his teacher Khalaf al-Aḥmar,²¹³ while others may have been artistic exercises, with no dedicatee.²¹⁴ While utilizing some of the diction and fatalistic formulae of the Hudhalīs,²¹⁵ he also incorporated new *muḥdath* ("modernist") stylistic tendencies and expanded the animals described, including not only ibex, eagles, onagers and lions but also gazelle calves (*farqad*). He influenced the later 'Abbāsīd poets Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283/896) and al-Mu'tazz 296/908, who imitated his experiments.²¹⁶ Thus the pre-Islamic fate elegy became part of the stock of classical medieval Arabic poetry.

²¹³ al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī' al-Ḥakamī Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān Abī Nuwās al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī' al-Ḥakamī*, ed. Ewald Wagner, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1958), 310–17.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:327–35.

²¹⁵ Such as *arā l-dahra la yabqā 'alā ḥadathānihī*: *Ibid.*, 1:328.

²¹⁶ Ewald Wagner, *Abū Nuwās: eine Studie zur arabischen Literatur der frühen 'Abbāsidenzeit* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1965), 350, 354–8.

Conclusion

1. Late Antiquity: New Contexts for Arabic Poetry

This study has argued, if for nothing else, for two simple premises: firstly, that early Arabic pre-Islamic poetry should be understood as a social practice reflecting a nomadic (in places semi-nomadic) culture that varied regionally and chronologically over the Arabian Peninsula during the period from 500–650. This is not a particularly novel observation, as my reliance on the works of Erich Bräunlich, Gustave von Grunebaum and Régis Blachère make clear. But this dissertation should have confirmed our fundamental need for an historical narrative understanding of the development of Arabic poetry, if it needs confirming, alongside such recent works as Thomas Bauer's *Altarabische Dichtkunst*.

The second and more difficult premise is that we need to then interpret early Arabic poetics based on these narratives. Fortunately, much work has been done in recent years and decades that allows such historically engaged readings, situated somewhat more firmly in Late Antique material culture. Such engagement is particularly possible in three areas: with the Jafnids/Ghassānids of Syria, with South Arabian inscriptions, and with the emergence of the Quran. Some archaeological work in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states is also promising, as is the continuing trickle of data related to the Safaitic inscriptions, and research on Sasanian history and archaeology. In none of these fields are there the mouth-watering quantities of data produced from excavations in Germany, Eastern Europe, or even Anatolia related to Late Antique Rome, but they are sufficient to further situate pre-Islamic and early Arabic culture more precisely.

This very approach—situating Arabic culture within Late Antiquity—has been explored by James Montgomery,¹ who makes a very detailed complaint about the “dispiriting development” in discussions of early Islamic history of the “complete disregard of pre-Islamic poetry,” calling this attitude a “remarkable decline in the fortunes of the poetry of the *Jāhiliya* from the days of Nöldeke, Golziher and Lyall, for whom it was the very bedrock of their responses to the Qur’ān and the desert ‘Arab (as it was for the ‘Abbāsids and as it is for many modern Muslims scholars).”² I could not agree more. However, scholars of Arabic literature are equally as culpable for failing to take any heed of ongoing epigraphic, archaeological and historical research (or even, sometimes, for being very acquainted with Nöldeke or Goldziher).

In arguing that recent research on developments in Late Antiquity can be applied to early Arabic poetry, Montgomery takes as his test-case the *wishāḥ*, or ornamental belt mentioned so often in pre-Islamic poetry. He connects this to the “body chain” found on depictions of women, particularly goddesses, in Late Antique Europe and the Near East. This is yet another instance in which Hudhayl stands out: they do not mention the *wishāḥ* until the Umayyad period, so if we want to argue that Arabic poetic culture was not really nomadic and was in fact, very closely connected to other sedentary Near Eastern cultures, as Montgomery does, it also seems clear that this Arabic culture was regional, uneven, and variable.

Nevertheless, the integration of research related to Late Antiquity with research into early Arabic poetry offers the only real route forward. When discussing a social practice or mode of culture, we would do well to ask whether it is really representative of “pre-Islamic Arabs,” as a whole, or rather of a particular tribe, region, or other network of affiliation

¹ Montgomery, “The Empty Hijāz,” 2006.

² *Ibid.*, 76–77.

(cultural, political, religious, or some combination of them). This study has argued wholeheartedly in chapter 1 that tribalism is the best rubric within which to begin this discussion.

Tribalism is not without its problems: defining a tribe is difficult, if not futile; “tribes” are associated in older research with condescending or reductive attitudes about primitive societies; in the case of pre-Islamic tribalism, our sources are spotty—we have for the most part, a great deal of self-representation (poetry), but very little ethnography and no quantitative data of any accuracy. Nevertheless, “tribalism” remains a very good way to describe early Arabic culture. Chapter 2 argued that the term does represent how Arabs of the period 500–650 understood themselves. They were utterly invested in constructing meaningful notions of tribalism, despite but also because of the fact that the content of the term “tribe,” and even the Arabic vocabulary with which it would be understood, varied with time, regionally, and was even context-specific.

So we are not dealing with one monolithic form of tribalism, but multiple and in some cases competing versions. The definitions are sometimes tacit, but early Arabic poetry elucidates quite clearly the processes by which cultural self-definition took place in a tribal context. One ineluctable result of this insight, and I feel the most valuable contribution that this dissertation has made and that a careful consideration of Hudhayl’s poetry has to offer, is to recognize that poetic structure was not uniform across the Arabian Peninsula during our period.

2. Poetry as Social Practice: New Structures and Generic Categories

As there are multiple tribalisms that early Arabs engaged in constructing through the social practice of poetry, we should start to talk about multiple *qaṣīdahs*, and indeed, to begin

to more creatively address the mass of poetic structures used by early Arabs. By a *qaṣīdah*, I mean Jacobi's definition of a poly-thematic text beginning with a *nasīb*, although in some cases even this last qualification is not necessary. One resource which is utterly ignored in contemporary scholarship is battle-days (*ayyām*) texts; I have drawn on these in a limited fashion in chapter 2 to argue that even within the Hudhayl tribe, multiple but distinct notions existed of what the tribe was, and that poetic practice—often composing in non-*qaṣīdah* forms—helped these tribespeople represent themselves and their notion of the tribe. Much more could be done on this massive body of poetic texts, to which, to my knowledge, a grand total of now three secondary texts in Western languages have been dedicated, in addition to three dissertations, including this one, only one of which deals directly with the subject from a literary standpoint.³

Even outside of *ayyām*-texts, and outside of Hudhayl, there are numerous texts the structures of which require much more attention. I will summarize here three as yet unidentified generic structural conventions that I have found in Hudhayl's corpus; this by no means exhausts their corpus, as there is much more to be analyzed. Firstly, in chapter 3, I have distinguished between two types of *ḡa'n* (departure of the beloved) texts; those that take place at the onset of summer (Najdī *ḡa'n* texts), and those that take place at the onset of the autumn or winter rainy season (Hijāzī texts). Secondly, in chapter 2, I distinguished between

³ Caskel, "Aijām Al-'Arab"; Ilse Lichtenstadter, *Women in the Aiyām Al-'Arab; a Study of Female Life during Warfare in Preislamic Arabia*, Prize Publication Fund, Vol. XIV (London: Royal Asiatic society, 1935); Meyer, *Der historische Gehalt der Aiyām al-'Arab.*; I. El-Sakkout, "The Arab Tribes from Jahilya to Islam: Sources and Historical Trends" (Ph.D., University of St. Andrews (United Kingdom), 1998), 40–67, <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/pqdtglobal/docview/900267318/13BF19B81BD6425EPQ/1>; Walter James Oller, "The Poet as Antitribal Protagonist in the 'Ayyam Al-'Arab'" (Ph.D., New York University, 2002), <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/pqdtglobal/docview/305559662/abstract/35F85A2B15F84E4EPQ/1>.

hierarchical (tripartite) praise *qaṣīdahs*, and egalitarian (usually bi-partite) praise *qaṣīdahs* where the description of a companion takes the form of a boast. Thirdly, in chapter 4, I have conducted an extensive analysis of the fate elegy, where the deceased is *not* described or praised, and animals' deaths are depicted as emblems of fate's omnipotence.

All three of these represent major contributions to the usual descriptions of early poetry found in secondary literature, and they have two things in common. Firstly, discussions in secondary literature tend to take one poet or set of poems, usually Najdī, as normative. This is the case with the tripartite *qaṣīdah* (where Stetkevych takes Labīd as normative) and the *ẓa'n* (where Jacobi, for example, takes the six poets of al-A'lām/Ahlwardt as normative). The exception is elegy, where al-Khansā' is usually taken as representative, and Hudhayl's unusual fate elegy is sometimes noted. Al-Khansā' is Ḥijāzī, but taking her as representative obscures the fact that there is very little elegy that is *not* Ḥijāzī.

Secondly, all three distinctions are rooted in a more attentive reading of the poetic texts as examples of social practice within a differentiated historical context. The distinction of different *ẓa'n* types is rooted in attention to the role of ecology and climate in regional nomadic migration. The distinction between modes of praise draws on a more careful consideration of hierarchy/heterarchy in pre-Islamic tribal society, and the recognition of the fate elegy comes simply by taking Hudhayl's anthology as a tribal corpus, rather than a category that we as interpreters have constructed to suit our own scholarly practice (like the "author," who most often needs to be reconstructed from a variety of source texts before s/he can be studied). An extension of these simple methodological principles to other early Arabic poetic texts would no doubt advance and nuance our understanding substantially.

As it stands, Hudhayl's massive corpus of tribal poetic texts remains the best evidence we have for reading early Arabic poetry not simply as "pre-Islamic," but as a social practice that varied regionally. Their poetry in many ways constructs an anti-equestrian regional tribal ideology, an ideology with which elements of the *ṣu'lūk* poets' (mistakenly viewed as "anti-tribal") worldview has often been confused. The adoption or rejection of militant equestrianism has been seen as part of a larger Near Eastern Late Antique discourse. The Ḥijāzī phenomenological geography that Hudhayl lived is also given expression in the economic and ecological imagery of their poetry. At the same time, there were competing ideals within the tribe itself, as some poets asserted a more centralized, lineage-based model of Hudhayl, while others used poetry to promote a de-centered version favoring alliances with pastoral neighbors; yet even this competition was regional, as the ritual status of Mecca and its pilgrimage helped shape the poetic arguments for any notion of Hudhalī identity. Finally, the fate elegy tradition shows us a uniquely tribal genre, one that drew in elements of Najdī poetics but was in even closer dialogue with the poets of neighboring tribes.

A skeptical attitude towards our sources is common among historians of early Islam, but to a large extent this comes of ignoring the available texts in the quest to find out what was "pre-Islamic" or "Jāhili" about early Arabs. It seems quite certain that if we could travel back in time and ask a Hudhalī tribesperson who they were, they would tell us that although their language was Arabic, their people were some clan within the tribe of Hudhayl, they summered in such-and-such a valley and wintered in such-and-such a mountain near Mecca, and that moreover, they inhabited the Ḥijāz.

Afterword: The Afterlife of Hudhayl's Poetry

The question of Hudhayl's poetry's fate requires a lengthier discussion than is possible here, but some contours of the *Ash'ār's* afterlife are discernible. Hudhayl's poetry obviously enjoyed some currency in Abbasid society. This is attested by scattered reports about caliphs asking for it to be recited,¹ as well as by the philologists' own attention to it. This scholarly attention is indistinguishable from Abbasid poetic culture at large, as attested by someone like Abū Nuwās, who both studied with semi-scholarly figures like Khalaf al-Aḥmar, and produced poetry clearly influenced in some points by Hudhayl's. Their poetry was also known to and influenced other Abbasid poets such as al-Buḥturī, who included some of it in his anthology the *Ḥamāsah*.²

Yet the extant manuscripts of Hudhayl's poetry are very few, and the dozens of tribal anthologies that once existed have disappeared. According to Goldziher, who surveyed the question of the tribal *dīwāns*, with “the disappearance of the immediate interest in the tribal life of the desert, regard for [tribal] *dīwāns* more and more vanished into the background.”³ This is somewhat belied by his observation that as late as ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn ‘Umar al-Baghdādī (d. 1093/1682) other tribal *dīwāns* than Hudhayl's were extant.⁴ He is correct to note, however, that writers after the tenth century CE were increasingly content to cite lines of Hudhayl's poetry, occasionally reproducing extracts of the finest pieces. Already in al-Buḥturī's time, tribal anthologies were being re-anthologized.

¹ Al-Natshah, *Ash'ār Hudhayl: wa-atharuhā fī muḥīṭ al-adab al-'Arabī*, 281–86.

² *Ibid.*, 312–321.

³ Ignaz Goldziher, “Some Notes on the *Dīwāns* of the Arabic Tribes,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, April 1897, 332.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 330.

From an early period, Quranic exegetes and lexicographers also took an interest in Hudhayl, not as a tribe but as a mine of citations. In fact there is little evidence, except occasional anecdotes, that tribal *dīwāns* other than Hudhayl's were ever of much importance. Despite the supposed existence, as attested by the *Fihrist*, of dozens of tribal anthologies, al-Ṭabarī (d.314/923), for example, in his *tafsīr*, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, apparently refers to none besides Hudhayl. A search of an electronic text of his *tafsīr* shows that no poets identified as al-Tamīmī, al-ʿĀmirī, al-Sulamī (one poet is thus identified), al-Qurashī, al-Asadī, al-Thaqafī or al-Dhubyānī (other than al-Nābighah) are cited. If *dīwāns* from these tribes were of any significance in al-Ṭabarī's time, it is difficult to imagine why he would prefer Hudhayl and exclude all else.

In contrast, poets identified as “al-Hudhalī,” often introduced with no other proper name (especially with the formula *qāla l-Hudhalī*, (the Hudhalī said)), are cited 20 times by al-Ṭabarī. Seven of these are Abū Dhu'ayb, and he had something of a life of his own; al-Ṭabarī cites him 12 times without appending the epithet al-Hudhalī. Taken as a tribe, Hudhayl's figures are comparable with other leading individual poets; Labīd is cited 42 times, Imru' al-Qays 37, and al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī 23 times. Not all of al-Ṭabarī's successors included as much poetry citation as he did and later exegetes such as al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) or al-Bayḍāwī (d. before 716/1316) cite poets known by the “Hudhalī” epithet far less frequently. Al-Qurṭubī (671/1272) refers to them dozens of times though, more often than even al-Ṭabarī.

Lexicographers made avid use of Hudhayl, and nearly every line of Abū Dhu'ayb's elegy in *ʿayn* (discussed in chapter 4) is cited in Ibn Manẓūr's (d. 711/1311) *Lisān al-ʿArab*. Ibn Manẓūr cites poets identified as “al-Hudhalī” over 700 times. No other tribal *nisbah* is used more than a hundred times (except al-Ja'dī, almost always referring only to al-Nābighah al-Ja'dī). As in al-Ṭabarī, “al-Hudhalī” is used about as often as the names of the most important pre-Islamic

poets (e.g., Imru' al-Qays: 794 times; Labīd: 683; Dhū l-Rummah beats everyone at 913 instances).

These are only preliminary observations, and any definitive conclusions about the afterlife of Hudhayl's poetry would require further study. As a *ḥadīth*-specialist and an historian interested in the meticulous reconstruction of the social world in which Islam emerged, it makes a certain kind of sense that al-Ṭabarī should use Hudhayl's poetry relatively frequently. Later exegetes could mostly simply refer to al-Ṭabarī. Likewise, philology always preferred pre- and early-Islamic poetry for its citations, explaining Hudhayl's interest to lexicology. Some of the citations in both cases were no doubt spurious, and not all of them occur in al-Sukkarī's recension of the *Ash'ār*. Later literary critics put more emphasis on symmetry and polish than on the copious use of strange vocabulary. With the aesthetically superior pieces culled out and placed in collections like the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* or al-Buḥturī or Abū Tamām's *Ḥamāsahs*, the unusual vocabulary sorted out in lexicons, and vocabulary shared with *ḥadīth* or Quranic texts culled out by the likes of al-Ṭabarī, the medieval Islamic traditional had less and less use to continue to copy manuscripts of Hudhayl's anthology, always the most singular and important of the tribal anthologies, and still an invaluable testament today to the vivid poetic culture of the Ḥijāz at the time of Islam's emergence.

Appendix A: Approximate Dates of Hudhalī Poets

Generation	I	550-600 CE
	II	575-625
	III	600-650 (<i>mukhaḍramūn</i>)
	IV	625-675
	V	650-700 or later

The column “Farrāj” denotes the section in his edition dedicated to the poet or poets named, along the abbreviation of the poet's name used in footnotes. The clan within the larger Hudhayl tribe is noted in parentheses beside the poet's name. “Page number” also refers to this edition. If the poet is not Hudhalī this is noted with asterisk*. The column “Generation” is based on Joseph Hell's “Der Islam Und Die Hudāilitendichtungen,” and *Banū Hudhayl* (pp. 356-365) by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sa‘āf al-Liḥyānī, in addition to my own suppositions. References in the footnotes give the poem and line number in Farrāj’s edition, so 1(AdhQ).1.1 would be the first line of his first poem.

Farrāj number	Poet	Generation	Page
1(ADhQ)	Abū Dhu‘ayb (Qird)	III	1
2(MḤḤ)	Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith (al-Ḥārith)	III	235
3(ṢGhKh)	Ṣakhr al-Ghayy (Khuthaym)	II or III	243
4(Ḥ‘AKh)	Ḥabīb ibn al-A‘lam, brother of Ṣakhr al-Ghayy	II or III	309
5(S‘AKh)	Sā‘idah ibn ‘Ajlān (Khuthaym)	III	331
6(AJQ)	Abū Jundab (Banū Murrah of Qird)	early III	343
7(MKhs)	Ma‘qil ibn Khuwaylid (Sahm)	late II	371
	7(U‘AKhz).15 Umm ‘Amr (Khuzā‘ah*)	late II	
8(A‘IKh)	Abū l-‘Iyāl (Khunā‘ah) and Badr ibn ‘Āmir (Ḍubā‘a or Khunā‘ah)	IV	405
9(MKhKh)	Mālik ibn Khālid (Khunā‘ah)	III	437
	9.4(‘UJKhz) ‘Umayr ibn al-Ja‘d (Khuzā‘ah*)		
10(UA‘A)	Umayyah ibn Abī ‘Ā‘idh (clan?)	V	485

11(HA'A)	Ḥudhayfah ibn Anas ('Amr ibn al-Ḥārith)	III	545
12('ADhKL)	'Amr Dhū l-Kalb (Kāhil of Thaḳīf (Hudhalī <i>jār</i>) or Liḥyān)	II	563
13(Q'AS)	Qays ibn al-'Ayzārah (Ṣāhilah)	II	587
14(DḤS)	Al-Dākhil ibn Ḥarām (Sahm)	nd	609
15.1(ADhM)	Abū Dharrāh al-Milāṣī (Ṣāhilah)	III (?)	621
15(UAIK).2	Usayd ibn Abī Iyās (Kinānah*)	IV	
16(MR)	Al-Mu'atṭal (Rahm ibn Sa'd)	II or III	629
17(RJ)	Rabī'ah ibn al-Jaḥdar (Liḥyān)	II or III	639
18(H)	Hudhalī man	nd	649
19(RKM)	Rabī'ah ibn al-Kawdan (Mu'āwiyah ibn Tamīm)	III (?)	653
20(UMQ)	'Urwah ibn al-Murrah (Banū Murrah of Qird)	early III	661
21(AMQ)	Al-Abahḥ ibn al-Murrah (Banū Murrah of Qird)	early III	665
22('AMRJ)	'Abd al-Manāf ibn Rib' (Jurayb)	late II	669
23(AShM)	Abū Shihāb al-Māzinī (Qird)	II or III	691
24(ADL)	Abū l-Ḍabb (Liḥyān)	II	701
25(AQT)	Abū Qilābah al-Ṭābikhī (Liḥyān)	I	707
26(ABṢ)	Abū Buthaynah (Ṣāhilah)	III	723
27(AAS)	Abū Arākah (Ṣāhilah)	II	735
28(B'IKh)	Al-Burayq ibn 'Iyāḍ (Khunā'ah)	III	739
29(YZH)	Yawm Ḍahr al-Ḥarra	nd	761
30('AḤQ/YS)	'Abd ibn Ḥabīb (Quraym)/ Yawm Sumy	nd	767
31(AML)	Abū l-Muwarriq (Liḥyān)	II or III (pre-622 ?)	775
32(ARṢ)	Abū l-Ra'ās (Ṣāhilah)	III	785
33(SMQ)	Salmā ibn Muq'ad (Quraym)	II	789
34(YN)	Yawm Niyāt	nd	803
35(LA)	Laylat Alamlam	II	808
36(S'AKhz)	Suwayd ibn 'Āmir (al-Khuzā'ah*)	III	810
37('AHL)	'Amr ibn Humayl (Liḥyān)	III	813
37(S'AKhz).2	Suwayd ibn 'Āmir (al-Khuzā'ah*)	III	
38('ASKh)	'Amir ibn Sadūs (Khunā'ah) ¹	III	825
39(M'AAL)	Murrah ibn 'Abd Allāh (Liḥyān)	nd	833
40(NF/IJ)	Najdah (Fahm*) and Iyās ibn Jundab ('Amr ibn al-Ḥārith)	nd	835
41(KhZṢ)	Khālid ibn Zuhayr (Ṣāhilah)	nd	838
42(YN)	Yawm Numār (with Ta'abbaṭa Sharran)	II	841

¹ Both of his two poems are also attributed to al-Burayq.

43(YŞ)	Yawm Şūra	nd	
44(YTh‘A)	Yawm Thaniyyat al-‘Aqīq	nd	
45(YH)	Yawm al-Ḥiqāb or Yawm Na‘mān	nd	
46(YGh)	Yawm al-Ghār	nd	
47(YŞ)	Yawm Şīra (death of ‘Amr Dhū l-Kalb)	II	
48(Y)	Yawm	nd	
49(Y)	Yawm	nd	
50(Y)	Yawm	III	
51(Y)	Yawm (the death of Ibn ‘Aşiyah of Bahz of Sulaym*)	nd	
52(YGhDhK)	Yawm Ghamr Dhī Kinda/ al-Masadd	nd	
53(H‘A)	Ḥabīb (‘Amr ibn al-Ḥārith)	III	
54(YN)	Yawm Nabṭ/ Dhāt al-Badhām		
54(JZS).1	Al-Jamūḥ of Zafar (Sulaym*)	late II	
54(MZ).2	Al-Muḥarrith ibn Zubayd (Şāhilah)	I (?)	
54(GhRH).3	Ghālīb ibn Razīn (Hudhayl)	I (?)	
54(WK).4	Walī‘ah (Kinānah*)	I (?)	
55.1 (A‘UQ)	Abū ‘Umārah (Quraym),	V	875
55(IB).2	Ibn Barrāq (clan?)	III	
55(‘AZ).5	‘Aqīl ibn Ziyād (clan ?)	V	
56(‘AAATHQ)	‘Abd Allāh ibn Abī Tha‘lab (Qird)	III	883
57(H)	A man from Hudhayl	III and IV	891
58(AḤS)	Abū l-Ḥannān (Sahm)	V	895
59(Q‘A)	Qays ibn ‘Ajwa (clan?)	III	901
60(‘AAMKh)	‘Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Jundab (Khuzaymah ibn Şāhilāh)	V	908
61(AŞ)	Abū Şakhr (Sahm)	V	913
62(MḤQ)	Mulayḥ ibn al-Ḥakam (Qird)	V	997
63(AKJ)	Abū Kabīr (Jurayb)	I	1069
64(SJK)	Sā‘idah ibn Ju‘ayyah (Kāhil ibn al-Ḥārith)	III	1094
65(AKḤQ)	Abū Khirāsh, Khuwaylid ibn Murrah (Banū Murrah of Qird)	early III	1187
66(ML)	Al-Mutanakhhil al-Lihyānī	II	1247
67(UḤ)	Usāmah ibn al-Ḥārith (Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith)	III	1287

Appendix B: Arabic Texts

Chapter 1

[1] زُهَيْرِ بْنِ أَبِي سُلَيْمٍ (من الطويل):

فَأُقْسِمْتُ بِالْبَيْتِ الَّذِي طَافَ حَوْلَهُ رِجَالٌ بَنُوهُ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ وَجُرْهُمِ

[2] (من الطويل):

فَأُقْسِمْتُ جَهْدًا بِالْمِنَازِلِ مِنْ مَنِي وَمَا سَحِقْتُ فِيهِ الْمَقَادِمُ وَالْقَمَلُ

[3] عَوْفِ بْنِ الْأَخْوَصِ (من البسيط):

وَإِنِّي وَالَّذِي حَجَّتُ قُرَيْشُ مَحَارِمُهُ وَمَا جَمَعَتْ حِرَاءُ
وَشَهْرٍ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ وَالْهَدَايَا إِذَا حُسِبَتْ مُضَرِّجَهَا الدِّمَاءُ

[4] قَيْسِ بْنِ الْخَطِيمِ (من الوافر):

فَإِنْ نَلْحَقْ بِأَبْرَهَةَ الْيَمَانِي وَنُعْمَانَ يَوْجِئُنَا وَعَمْرُو

[5] مَعْقِلِ بْنِ حُوَيْلِدٍ (من المتقارب):

وَسُوْدٍ جِعَادٍ غِلَاطُ الرِّقَابِ وَمِثْلُهُمْ يَزْهَبُ الرَّاهِبُ
أَشَابَ الرُّؤُوسَ تَقْدِيهِمْ فَكُلُّهُمْ رَامِحٌ نَاشِبُ
أَتَيْتُ بِأَبْنَائِكُمْ مِنْهُمْ وَلَيْسَ مَعِي مِنْكُمْ صَاحِبُ

Chapter 2

[6] النابغة الذبياني (من البسيط):

قالت بنو عامرٍ خالوا بني أسدٍ
يا بُؤسَ للجهلِ ضراراً لأقوامٍ
يأبى البلاءُ فلا تَبغى بهم بدلاً
زلا تُريدُ خِلاءً بعدَ إحكامٍ
فصالحونا جميعاً إن بدا لكم
ولا تقولوا لنا أمثالها عامٍ
إني لأخشى عليكم أن يكون لكم
من أجل بعضائهم يوم كأيامٍ
تَبْدُو كواكبُه والشمسُ طالعةٌ
لا النورُ نورٌ ولا الإظلامُ إظلامُ
أو تزجروا مكفَهراً لا كِفَاءَ له
كالليلِ يخلطُ أصراماً بأصرامٍ
مُستحقِّي حليِّ الماذي يقدّمهم
شُمُ العرائنِ صرّابون للهام

[7] بشر بن أبي خازم (من الوافر):

ألا أبلغ بني سعدٍ رسولاً
ومولاهم فقد حلبت صرامٍ
نسومكم الرّشادَ ونحن قومٌ
لِتبارك وُدنا في الحربِ دَامٍ
فإذا صفرت عيابُ الودِّ منكم
ولم ياكُ بيّنا فيها ذمامٍ
فإنّ الجرعَ جزعَ عُريّثاتٍ
ويزفةَ عيّهم منكم حرامٍ
سَمَتَعُها وإن كانت بلاداً
بها تزيو الخواصِرُ والسَنامُ

[8]

أَمْوَالُنَا نَقِي النَّفُوسَ بِهَا مِنْ كُلِّ مَا يُدْنِي إِلَيْهِ الدَّمَ
لَا يُبْعِدُ اللَّهُ التُّبُّبَ وَالْإِذَا قَالَ الْحَمِيمُ نَعَمْ غَارَاتِ إِذْ قَالَ الْحَمِيمُ نَعَمْ
وَالْعُدُوَّ بَيْنَ الْمَجْلِسَيْنِ إِذَا وَلَى الْعَثِيَّ وَقَدْ تَنَادَى الْعَمَّ

[14] عوف بن الأحوص (من الوافر):

أَدُّمُكَ مَا تَرْتَرِقُ مَاءَ عَيْنِي عَلَيَّ إِذَا مِنْ اللَّهِ الْغَفَاءُ
أَفِرُّ بِحُكْمِكُمْ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا وَالزَّمُّهُ وَإِنْ بَلَغَ الْفَنَاءُ

: [15a]

خَذُوا دَابًّا بِمَا أَتَيْتُ فِيكُمْ فَلَيْسَ لَكُمْ عَلَى دَابِّ عِلَاءُ
وَلَيْسَ لِسَوْفَةٍ فَضْلٌ عَلَيْنَا وَفِي أَشْيَاعِكُمْ لَكُمْ بَوَاءُ
فَهَلْ لَكَ فِي بَيْتِ حُجْرٍ بِنِ عَمْرٍو فَتَعَلَّمَهُ وَأَجْهَلَهُ ، وَلَاؤُ
أَوْ الْعَنْقَاءُ نَعْلَبَةُ بِنِ عَمْرٍو دِمَاءُ الْقَوْمِ لِلْكَأْبِيِّ شِفَاءُ
وَمَا إِنْ حَلَّتْكُمْ مِنْ آلِ نَضْرٍ مُلُوكًا ، وَالْمُلُوكُ لَهُمْ عِلَاءُ

: [15b]

وَلَكِنْ نَلْتُ مَجْدَ أَبِي وَخَالَ وَكَانَ إِلَيْهِمَا يُنْمِي الْعِلَاءُ
وَقَدْ شَجِيتُ إِنْ أَسْتَمَكْنْتُ مِنْهَا كَمَا يَشْجَى بِمِسْعَرِهِ الشَّوَاءُ
فَنَاءُ مُدْرَبٍ أَكْرَهْتُ فِيهَا شُرَاعِيًّا مَقَالِمَهُ ظِمَاءُ

[16] بشر بن أبي خازم (من الوافر):

وما تَسْعَى رِجَالُهُمْ وَلَكِنْ فُضُولُ الْحَيْلِ مُلْجَمَةٌ صَبَاؤُ

[17] بشر بن أبي خازم (من الوافر):

فَأَبْلُغْ إِنْ عَرَضَتْ بِنَا رَسُولًا كِبَانَةٌ قَوْمَنَا فِي حَيْثُ صَارُوا

كَفِينَا مَنْ تَعَيَّبَ وَأَسْتَبَحْنَا سَنَامَ الْأَرْضِ إِذْ فَحِطَ الْقَطَاؤُ

بِكُلِّ قِيَادٍ مُسْتَنْقَةٍ عُنُودٍ أَصَرَ بِهَا الْمَسَالِيحُ وَالغَوَاؤُ

مُهَارِشَةَ الْعِيَانِ كَأَنَّ فِيهَا جِرَادَةَ هَبْوَةٍ فِيهَا أَصْفَرَاؤُ

كَأَنِّي بَيْنَ خَافِيَتِي عُقَابٍ تُثْقَلِينِي إِذَا أَبْتَلَّ الْعِدَاؤُ

تَسُوفٍ لِلحِزَامِ بِمِرْقَعِيهَا يَسُدُّ حَوَاءَ طُبَيْبِيهَا الْعُبَاؤُ

تَرَاهَا مِنْ بَيْبِسِ الْمَاءِ شُهْبًا مُخَالِطًا دِرَّةً مِنْهَا غِرَاؤُ

بِكُلِّ قَرَارَةٍ مِنْ حَيْثُ جَالَتْ رَكْبَتِي سُنْبُكَ فِيهَا أَهْبَاؤُ

[18] امرؤ القيس (من الطويل):

فَطَلَّ غَلَامِي يُضْجِعُ الرُّفْحَ حَوْلَهُ لِكُلِّ مَهَاةٍ أَوْ لِأَخْفَبِ سَهْوَقِ

وَقَامَ طَوَالَ الشَّخْصِ إِذْ يَخْضِبُونَهُ قِيَامَ الْعَزِيزِ الْفَارِسِيِّ الْمَنْطَقِ

فَقُلْنَا أَلَا قَدْ كَانَ صَبْدًا لِقَائِصِ فَتَخَبُّوا عَلَيْنَا ظِلَّ ثَوْبٍ مُرَوِّقِ

[19] زهير بن أبي سلمى (من الطويل):

فَقَالَ أَمِيرِي مَا تَرَى مَا تَرَى أَلْحَتِلُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ أَمْ تُصَاوِلُهُ؟

[20] امرؤ القيس (من الطويل):

يُرِلُّ الْغُلَامَ الْخِفَّ عَنْ صَهَوَاتِهِ وَيَلْوِي بِأَثْوَابِ الْعَيْنِيفِ الْمَتَقِّلِ

[21]

فَعَنَّ لَنَا سِرْبٌ كَانَ نِعَاجُهُ عَدَارَى دَوَارٍ فِي مُلَاةٍ مُدَّتِلِ

فَادْبَرْنَ كَالْمَجْرِعِ الْمُفْصَلِ بَيْنَهُ يَجِيدُ مَعَمَّ فِي الْعَشِيرَةِ مُحْوَلِ

فَأَلْحَقْنَا بِالْهَادِيَاتِ وَدُونَهُ جَوَاحِرُهَا فِي صَرَّةٍ أَمْ تَرْتَلِ

فَعَادِي عِدَاءٍ بَيْنَ ثَوْرٍ وَنَعَجَةٍ دِرَاكًا وَلَمْ يَنْصَحْ بِمَا فُيْعَسَلِ

[22] ثعلبة بن عمرو (من الطويل):

وَشَوْهَاءَ لَمْ تَوْشَمْ يَدَاهَا وَلَمْ تُدَلِّ فِقَاظَتْ وَفِيهَا بِالْوَلِيدِ تَقَادُفُ

بَلَلْتُ بِهَا يَوْمَ الصَّرَاحِ، وَنَعَضُهُمْ يَحْتَبُ بِهِ فِي الْحَيِّ أَوْزُقُ شَارِفُ

بِبُضَاءٍ مِثْلِ النَّهْيِ رِيحٌ وَمَدَّةُ شَابِيبِ عَمَيْثٍ يَخْفِشُ الْأَكْمَ صَائِفُ

وَمُطَرِّدٍ يُرْضِيكَ عِنْدَ دَوَاقِهِ وَمَيَّضِي وَلَا يَنَادُ فِيمَا يُصَادِفُ

[23] بشر بن عمرو (من الكامل):

وَإِذَا هُمْ شَرِبُوا دُعِيَتْ لِأَشْرَابِهَا	لَا أَسْتَكِينُ مِنَ الْمَخَافَةِ فِيهِمْ
لَمْ أَنْصَرِفْ لِأَبِيَّتِ حَتَّى أَلْعَبَا	وَإِذَا هُمْ لَعَبُوا عَلَى أَحْيَانِهِمْ
خَوْدًا مُنْعَمَةً وَتَضْرِبُ مُعِينَا	وَتَبِيْتُ دَاجِنَةً مُجَاوِبُ مِثْلَهَا
هُضُمِ إِذَا أَرَمَ الشِّتَاءُ تَرَعْبَا	فِي إِخْوَةٍ جَمَعُوا نَدَى وَسَمَاحَةً
وَالْمَشْرِفِيَّةَ قَدْ كَسَوْهَا الْمُدْهَبَا	وَتَرَى جِيَادَ نِيَابِهِمْ مَخْلُولَةً
وَبِنُوهُ، كَانَ هُوَ النَّجِيبُ فَأُنْجَبَا	عَمْرُو بْنُ مَرْزَدِ الْكَرِيمِ فَعَالُهُ

[24] الأعرشى (من الكامل):

وَتَمَانَ عَشْرَةَ وَأَنْتَنِينِ وَأَرْبَعَا	فَلَأَشْرَبِينَ ثَمَانِيًا وَثَمَانِيًا
تَدْعُ الْفَتَى مَلِكًا يَمِيلُ مُصْرَعَا	مِنْ قَهْوَةٍ بَاتَتْ بِفَارِسَ صَفْوَةً
بِالْوَوِّ يَضْرِبُ لِي يَكُرُّ الإِصْبَعَا	بِالْجُلْسَانِ وَطَيِّبِ أَرْدَانُهُ
وَالصَّنْعُ يَبْكِي شَجْوَهُ أَنْ يُوضَعَا	وَالنَّايِ نَرَمُ وَيَرْطِطُ ذِي بُحَّةٍ

[25] ثعلبة بن صعير (من الكامل):

بِيضِ الْوُجُوهِ دَوِي نَدَى وَمَائِرِ	أَسْمِي مَا يُدْرِيكَ أَنَّ رُبَّ فُتَيْتَةٍ
سَبَطِي الْأَكْفَبِ فِي الْحُرُوبِ مَسَاعِرِ	حَسَنِي الْفُكَاهَةِ لَا تَدْنُمُ لِحَامُهُمْ
قَبْلَ الصَّبَاحِ وَقَبْلَ لَعْوِ الطَّائِرِ	بَاكَرْتُهُمْ بِسِبَاءِ حُؤُنِ ذَارِعِ
وَسَمَاعِ مُدْجِنَةٍ وَجَدَوِي جَازِرِ	فَقَصَّرْتُ يَوْمَهُمْ بِرَنَّةِ شَارِفِ

[26] عبد المسيح بن عسبه (من الكامل):

يا كَعْبُ إِنَّكَ لو قَصَرْتَ عَلَيَّ
حُسْنِ التَّدَامِ وَقِلَّةِ الجُزْمِ
وسَمَاعِ مُدْجِنَةٍ تُعَلِّلُنَا
حَتَّى نُؤُوبَ تَنَاوُمِ العُجْمِ
أَصْحَوْتُ وَالتَّمَرِيُّ يَحْسِبُهَا
عَمَّ السِّمَاكِ وَخَالَةَ النَّجْمِ
هَلْهَلْ لِكَعْبٍ بَعْدَ مَا وَقَعَتْ
فَوْقَ الجَبِينِ بِمِعْصَمِ فَعْمِ
جَسَدُهُ بِهِ نَضْعُ الدِّمَاءِ كَمَا
فَنَأْتُ أَنَامِلِ قَاطِفِ الكَرْمِ
والخمرُ لَيْسَتْ مِنْ أُخْيَاكِ وَلَا
كَيْنُ قَدْ تُثْوِنُ بَآئِنِ الحِلْمِ
وَتُبَيِّنُ الرِّأْيَ السَّفِيهَ إِذَا
جَعَلْتَ رِيَاحَ شَمُولِهَا تُنْمِي
وَأَنَا امْرُؤٌ مِنْ آلِ مُرَّةٍ إِنْ
أَخْلَفْتُمْ لَّا تُرْفَعُوا كَلْمِي

[27] عمرو بن قميئة (من الوافر):

فَلَوْ أُطِمْتُ هُنَاكَ بِذَاتِ حَمْسٍ
لَأُوتِيَّ عِنْدَهَا حِثَّتَيْنِ سِيَا

[28] كانف الفهمي (من ال طويل):

لَقَدْ فَسَحَتْ رِنْعًا فُرَيْمٌ وَقَوْمُهُمْ
لَنَا بَعْدَمَا سَدُّوا الطَّرِيقَ وَشَجَّعُوا
يُرِيغُهُمْ عَنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ أَرَادَهُ
عُلَامٌ كَنَصْلِ السَّمْهَرِيَّةِ أَرْوَعُ
إِيَّاسٌ وَإِنْ تَدَكَّرَ إِيَّاسًا فَإِنَّهُ
يُوَاتِيكَ فِي الأَمْرِ هُوَ أَرْفَعُ

وَنَعْمَ الْفَتَى يَوْمَ أَتَقَيْنَا خُوَيْلِدًا
أَخُوا لِحِزْبٍ فِي الصَّرَاءِ لَا يَتَضَعُضَعُ
نَمَى بِكَ عِرْقٌ فِي النَّبِيْشَاتِ مَا جِدُّ
وَعِرْقٌ زُبَيْدٍ فَهَوَ فِي الْمَجْدِ مُتْلَعٌ
عَدَاةَ نَسَاهَمْنَا الطَّرِيقَ فَنَزَرْنَا
سَوَامَ كَفَلْسِ الْبَحْرِ جَوْزٌ وَأَنْفَعُ

[29] معقل بن خويلد (من الطويل):

أُبْلِعُ أبا عَمْرٍو وَعَمْرَأَ كِلَيْهِمَا
وَحُلَّ بَنَى ذُهْمَانَ عَتِي الْمَرَّاسِيلاً
تَدَافِعُ قَوْمًا مُعْضِبِينَ عَلَيْكُمْ
فَعَلْتُمْ بِهَا حُبْلَاءَ مِنَ الشَّرِّ خَابِلًا
دَعَوْتُ بَنِي سَهْمٍ فَلَمْ يَتَلَكَّبُوا
سَرَائِهِمْ تُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ الْكَالَاكِيلَا
وَقَدْ عَلِمْتُ أَفْنَاءَ خُنْدِيفِ أَتْنَا
إِذَا بُلِغَ الْمَكْرُوهُ كُنْنَا مَعَاقِلَا
بَنُو عَمْتَنَا فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ كَرِيهَةٍ
إِذَا قَرَّبَ الْأَنْسَابُ عَمْرَأَ وَكَاهِلَا

[30] معقل بن خويلد (من الطويل)

تَقُولُ سُلَيْمٍ سَالِمُونَآ وَحَارِبُوا
هُدَيْلًا وَلَمْ تَطْمَعْ بِذَلِكَ مَطْمَعَا
فَأَمَّا بَنُو لِحْيَانَ فَاغْلَمَ بِأَنَّهُمْ
بَنُو عَمْتَنَا جَاءُوا فَحَلُّوا جَنَابَنَا
وَأَنَّ خُدُولِيمَ عَلَى أَنْ أُمِدَّهُمْ
فَمَنْ سَاءَ فَسِيءٌ أَنْ نَتَجَمَّعَا
بِأَلْفٍ إِذَا مَا حَاوَلُوا النَّصْرَ أَفْرَعَا
يُدْرَهُ لِمَرِّ الْحَادِثَاتِ بِأُخْرَعَا
بَنُو عَمْتَنَا جَاءُوا فَحَلُّوا جَنَابَنَا

[31] معقل بن خويلد (من الوافر):

لَعْمُرُ أَبِي أُمَيْمَةَ لَا أُولِي
حُرَاعَةَ مِثْلُ مَا وَآلِي حَبِيبُ
سَأُحْسِسُ وَسَطَ دَارِ نَبِيِّ نَمِيمِ
وَلَا تُلْقَى إِذَا مَا النَّيْبُ حَنَّتْ
وَلَا يَسْتَسْقِطُ الْأَقْوَامُ مِثِّي
أُخَيْرُ أَيِّ مَهْلَكَةٍ أَجُوبُ
نَصِيبُهُمْ وَيُتْرَكُ لِي نَصِيبُ

[32] أبو شهاب (من الطويل):

فَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَنْكِرُوا الْحَقَّ لَمْ يَزَلْ
هُمَّ مَعْقِلًا مِنَّا عَزِيزٌ وَنَاصِرُ
رِجَالُ حُرُوبٍ يَسْعَرُونَ وَحَلَقَةٌ
مِنَ الدَّارِ لَا تَمْضِي عَلَيْهَا الْحِضَائِرُ

[33] أبو جندب (من الرجز):

إِنِّي أَمَرْتُ أَبُوكِي عَلَى جَارِيَةٍ
أَبُوكِي عَلَى الكَعْبِيِّ والكَعْبِيَّةِ
وَلَوْ هَلَكْتُ بِكَيْبَا عَلِيَّةِ
كَانَا مَكَانَ النَّوْبِ مِنْ حَقْوِيَّةِ

[34] أبو جندب (من الوافر):

لَقَدْ أَمَسَتْ بُنُو لِحْيَانِ مِثِّي
بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ فِي خِزْيِ مُبِينِ

[35] أبو جندب (من الوافر):

لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ هُدَيْلًا أَنْ جَارِي
لَدَى أَطْرَافِ عَيْنِنَا مِنْ تَبِيرِ
أَخْصُ فَلَا أُجِيرُ وَمَنْ أُجِرُهُ
فَلَيْسَ كَمَنْ يُدَلِّي بِالْعُرُورِ
لَكُمْ جِيرَانُكُمْ وَمَنْعَتْ جَارِي
سَوَاءَ لَيْسَ بِالْقَسَمِ الْأَثِيرِ

[36] عمرو بن هميل (من الوافر):

وَأِنَّا نَحْنُ أَقْدَمُ مِنْكَ عَرًّا
إِذَا بُنِيَتْ بِمَخْلَفَةِ الْبَيْوُثِ
حَزِيمَةُ عَمْنَا وَأَبِي هُدَيْلٍ
وَكُلُّهُمْ إِلَى عَزِّ وَلِيَتْ

[37] المعطل (من الطويل):

وَأَنْتَ فَتَاهُمْ غَيْرَ شَكِّ زَعَمْتُهُ
فَكَفَى بِكَ ذَا بَأُوٍ بِنَفْسِكَ مِرْحَقَا
إِحَالِكُمْ مِنْ أُسْرَةٍ قَمَعِيَّةِ
إِذَا نَسَكُوا لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الْمُعْرِفَا

[38] أبو خراش (من الطويل):

وَأَبِي لَأَتُوي الْجُوعَ حَتَّى يَمَلِّي
فَيَذْهَبُ لَمْ يُدْنِسْ ثِيَابِي وَلَا جِرْمِي
رَأَتْ رَجُلًا قَدْ لَوَّحَتْهُ مَخَامِصُ
وَطَافَتْ بِرِنَانِ الْمَعْدِينِ ذِي شَحْمِ

[39] المتنخل (المتقارب):

ولكنه هين لئن كعالية الرمح عرذ نساه

أبو مالك قاصر فقره على نفسه ومشيع غناه

[40] شنفرى (من البسيط):

نجوت منها نجائي من بجيلة إذ ألقيت ليلة خبت الرهط أرواقي

لا شيء أسرع مني ليس ذا عذرٍ وذا جناح يجنب الرئد حفاق

[41] وعله بن الحارث (من الطويل):

نجوت نجاء لم ير الناس مثله كأني عقاب عند تيمن كاسر

حذارية سعاء لبذ ريشها من الطير يوم ذو أهاضيب ماطر

كانا وقد حالت خذنة دوننا نعام تلاه فارس متواتر

[42] مالك بن خالد (من البسيط):

لما رأيت عدي القوم يسألهم طلع الشواجن والطرفاء والسلام

كفئت ثوبي لا ألوي على أحدٍ إني شئت الفئ كالبكر يتخطم

وقلت من يفتوه تباك حننه أو يأسروه يجع فيهم وإن طعموا

نالله ما هفلة خصاء عن لها جؤن السراة هجفت لحمه زيم

كَانَتْ بِأُودِيَةِ مَخْلٍ فَجَادَ لَهَا مِنْ الرَّيِّعِ نَجَاءً بَيْنَهَا دِيمٌ

فَهِيَ شَتُونٌ قَدْ أَتَبَلَّتْ مَسَارِيهَا غَيْرُ السَّخُوفِ وَلَكِنْ لَحْمُهَا زَهْمٌ

بِأَسْرَعِ الشَّدِّ مَعِيَ يَوْمَ لَا نِيَّةً لَمَّا عَرَفْتُهُمْ وَأَهْتَرَّتِ اللَّيْمُ

[43] أبو خراش (من الطويل):

وَلَيْلَةَ دَجْنٍ مِنْ جُمَادَى سَرَيْتُهَا إِذَا مَا اسْتَهَلَّتْ وَهِيَ سَاجِيَةٌ تَهْمِي

إِذَا أَتَبَلَّتِ الْأَقْدَامُ وَالْتَفَّتْ تَحْتَهَا عَنَاءٌ كَأَجْوَارِ الْمُفَرَّغَةِ الدُّهْمِ

وَنَعْلٍ كَأَشْلَاءِ السَّمَاءِ نَبَذْتُهَا خِلَافَ نَدَى مِنْ آخِرِ اللَّيْلِ أَوْ رَهْمِ

[44] الداخِل بن حرام (من الوافر):

تَذَكَّرُ أُمَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ لَمَّا نَأْتَهُ وَالنَّوَى مِنْهَا لَجُوجٌ

وَمَا إِنْ أَحْوَزَ الْعَيْنَيْنِ رَحْصُ الْعِظَامِ تَرُدُّهُ أُمَّ هُدُوجٌ

بِأَحْسَنِ مَضْحَكًا مِنْهَا وَجِيداً عَدَاةَ الْحِجْرِ مَضْحَكُهَا بَلِيحٌ

وَهَادِيَةٍ تَوَجَّسَ كُلَّ غَيْبٍ إِذَا سَامَتْ لَهَا نَفْسٌ نَشِيحٌ

تُصْبِحُ إِلَى دَوِيِّ الْأَرْضِ تُهْوِي بِمَسْمَعِهَا كَمَا أَصْعَى الشَّجِيحُ

عَزُزْنَاهَا وَكَانَتْ فِي مَصَامٍ كَأَنَّ سَرَاةَ سَحْلٍ نَسِيحٌ

أُتِيحَ لَهَا أُعْيِدِرُ ذُو حَشِييفٍ عَيْيٌ فِي نَجَاشِيَتِهِ زُلُوجٌ

أَحَاطَ النَّاجِشَانِ بِهَا فِعَاءَتْ مَكَاناً لَا تَرُوعُ وَلَا تَعُوجُ

وَيُهْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ إِنْ لَمْ يَنْلُهَا فَحَقٌّ لَهُ سَجِيرٌ أَوْ بَعِيحٌ
 وَمَمَّهَا فَلَمَّا وَرَكَتُهُ بِشِمَالًا وَهِيَ مُعْرِضَةٌ تَهِيحُ
 دَلَقْتُهَا أَوْ أَيْنِذٍ بِسَهْمٍ خَلِيفٍ لَمْ تَخَوَّنَهُ الشُّرُوحُ
 شَدِيدِ الْعَيْرِ لَمْ يَدْخُضْ عَلَيْهِ السُّرُوحُ غَرَارٌ فَقَدَحُهُ زَعَالٌ دَرُوحُ
 عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَبَاهِرٍ لَيْتَاتٍ يَزِينُ الْقَدَحَ طُهْرَانٌ دُمُوحُ
 كَمَثْنِ الدَّبَابِ لَا نِكْسٌ قَصِيرُ فَأُعْرِفُهُ وَلَا جُلُوسٌ عَمُوحُ
 يُعْرِيهَا لِمَطْعَمِهَا هَتُوفُ طِلَاعُ الكَفِّ مَعْقَلُهَا وَثِيحُ
 كَأَنَّ عِدَادَهَا إِزْنَانُ تُكَلِّي خِلَالَ ضُلُوعِهَا وَجُدُّ وَهِيحُ
 وَبَيْضٌ كَالسَّلَاجِمِ مُرَهَفَاتُ كَأَنَّ طُبَاتِهَا عُقْرٌ بَعِيحُ
 وَصَفْرَاءُ الْبُرَايَةِ فَرَعٌ نَبَعُ تَضَمَّنَتْهَا الشَّرَائِعُ وَالنُّهُوحُ
 فَرَاعَتْ فَأَلْتَمَسَتْ بِهِ حَشَاهَا فَحَرَ كَأَنَّهُ حُوطٌ مَرِيحُ
 كَأَنَّ الرِّيشَ وَالْفُوقَيْنِ مِنْهُ خِلَافَ النَّصْلِ سَبِيطٌ بِهِ مَبِيحُ
 فَطَلْتُ وَظَلَّ أَصْحَابِي لَدَيْهِمْ عَرِيضُ اللَّحْمِ بِيءٌ أَوْ نَضِيحُ

[45] كعب بن زهير (من المتقارب):

فَأَمْسَكَ يَنْظُرُ حَتَّى إِذَا دَنَوْنَا مِنَ الرِّيِّ أَوْ قَدْ رَوِينَا
 تَنَحَّى بِصَفْرَاءٍ مِنْ نَبْعَةٍ عَلَى الكَفِّ تَجْمَعُ أَرْزَاءُ وَلِينَا
 مُعِدَّةً عَلَى عَجْسِهَا مُرَهَفًا فَيَبِيقُ الْغِرَارَيْنِ حَشْرًا سَبِينَا

[46] أبو كبير (من الكامل):

وَلَقَدْ سَرَيْتُ عَلَى الظَّلَامِ بِمَغْشِمِ جَلِدٍ مِنَ الفِتْيَانِ غَيْرِ مَهْبَلِ
بِمَنْ حَمَلَنُ بِهِ وَهْنٌ عَوَاقِدُ حُبُكَ التِّيَابِ، فَشَبَّ غَيْرَ مَثْقَلِ
حَمَلْتُ بِهِ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مَزُودَةً كَرَاهًا، وَعَقْدُ نِطَاقِهَا لَمْ يُجَلَّلِ
فَأَنْتَ بِهِ حَوْشَ الجِنَانِ مَبْطَنًا سُهْدًا إِذَا مَا نَامَ لَيْلُ الهَوَجَلِ
وَمُبَرَّأً مِنْ كُلِّ غُبْرٍ حَيْضَةً وَفَسَادَ مُرْضِعَةٍ وَدَاءٍ مُغِيلِ
وَإِذَا طَرَحْتَ بِهِ الحِصَاةَ رَأَيْتَهُ يَنْزُو لَوْفَعَتِهَا طُمُورِ الأَخِيلِ
مَا إِنْ يَمَسُّ الأَرْضَ إِلاَّ مَنَكِبَتْ مِنْهُ، وَحَزَفُ السَّاقِ طَيِّ المِحْمَلِ
وَإِذَا رَمَيْتَ بِهِ الفِجَاجَ رَأَيْتَهُ يَنْضُو مَخَارِمَهَا هَوِيَّ الأَجْدَلِ
فَإِذَا نَظَرْتَ إِلَى أَسْرَةٍ وَجْهِهِ بَرَقَتْ كَبْرَقِ العَارِضِ المَتَهَلِّلِ
وَإِذَا يَهْبُ مِنْ المَنَامِ رَأَيْتَهُ كَرُتُوبِ كَعْبِ السَّاقِ لَيْسَ بِرُؤْمَلِ
صَعْبُ الكَرِيهَةِ لَا يُرَامُ جَنَابُهُ مَاضِي العَزِيمَةِ كَالْحَسَامِ المِفْصَلِ
يُحْمِي الصِّحَابِ إِذَا تُكُونُ عَظِيمَةً وَإِذَا هَمَّ نَزُلُوا فَمَأْوَى العَيْلِ
وَلَقَدْ شَهِدْتُ الحَيَّ بَعْدَ رُقَادِهِمْ تُفْلَى جَمَاجِمِهِمْ بِكَلِّ مُقَلِّلِ
حَتَّى رَأَيْتُهُمْ كَأَنَّ سَحَابَةً صَابَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَدَفُّهَا لَمْ يُشْمَلِ
نَضَعُ السُّيُوفَ عَلَى طَوَائِفِ مِنْهُمْ فَتَقِيمُ مِنْهُمْ مَيْلَ مَا لَمْ يُعْدَلِ
مُتَكَوِّرِينَ عَلَى المَعَارِي بَيْنَهُمْ ضَرْبُ كَتْعَطَاطِ المَزَادِ الأُنْجَلِ

نَعْدُو فَنَنْتَرُكَ فِي الْمَزَاحِفِ مَنْ تَوَى وَكُرَّ فِي الْعِرْقَاتِ مَنْ لَمْ يُقْتَلْ

[47] ربيعة بن كودن (من الطويل):

وَأَبْيَضَ يَهْدِينِي وَإِنْ لَمْ أَنْادِيهِ كَفَرَقِ الْعُرُوسِ طَوْلُهُ غَيْرُ مُحْرِقِ

تَوَائِمُهُ فِي جَانِبَيْهِ كَأَتَمَّا شُؤُونُ بِرَاسِ عَظْمُهُ لَمْ يُفْلَقِ

أُنَاسِلُ فِيهِ ذَا حَشِيصٍ كَأَتَمَّا بَرَى اللَّحْمَ عَنْهُ خَيْرُ بَارٍ بِمِعْرِقِ

كَرِيحاً مِنَ الْفَتِيَانِ مِثْلَ حُوَيْلِدِ أَحَا ثِقَّةٍ وَذَا بِلَاءٍ وَمَصْنَدِ

تَظَلُّ تَوَقَّى أَنْ يُصِيبَكَ مُخْطِئاً بِسَاعِدِهِ كَأَنَّهُ حَزَفُ مِطْرَقِ

يُعِينُكَ مَطْلُوماً وَيُؤَدِيكَ ظَالِماً وَيَحْمِيكَ بِاللَّيْلِ الْحَسَامِ الْمَطْبَقِ

[48] أبو خراش (من البسيط):

لَسْتُ لِمَرَّةٍ إِنْ لَمْ أُوفِ مَرْقَبَةً يَبْدُو لِي الْحَزْتُ مِنْهَا وَالْمَقَاصِبِ

فِي ذَاتِ رَيْدٍ كَذَلِقِ الْفَأْسِ مُشْرِفَةٍ طَرِيفُهَا سَرِبٌ بِالنَّاسِ دُعُوبُ

لَمْ يَبْقَ مِنْ عَزْشِهَا إِلَّا دِعَامَتِهَا جِدْلَانِ مُنْهَدِمٌ مِنْهَا وَمَنْصُوبُ

بِصَاحِبٍ لَا تُنَالُ الدَّهْرَ غِرْتُهُ إِذَا أَفْتَلَى الْهَدَفَ الْقَيْنَ الْمَعَارِبِ

بَعَثْتَهُ بِسَوَادِ اللَّيْلِ يَرْقُبِي إِذْ آتَرَ النَّوْمَ وَالذَّفَاءَ الْمَنَاجِبِ

مِثْلُ آبْنِ وَائِلَةَ الطَّرَادِ أَوْ رَجُلٍ مِنْ آلِ مَرَّةٍ كَالْبِيرْحَانِ سُرْحُوبِ

يَظَلُّ فِي رَأْسِهَا كَأَنَّهُ رُؤْمٌ مِنْ الْقِدَاحِ بِهِ ضَرْسٌ وَتَعْقِيبِ

سَمَّخَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ عُرْيَانًا أَشَاجِعُهُ خَفَّتِ النَّوَاشِرُ مِنْهُ وَالطَّنَائِبُ

كَأَنَّهُ خَالِدٌ فِي بَعْضِ مِرَّتِهِ وَيَعْضُ مَا يَنْحَلُّ الْقَوْمُ الْأَكَاذِبُ

[49] أبو ذؤيب (من المتقارب):

سَقَيْتُ بِهِ دَارَهَا إِذْ نَأَتْ وَصَدَّقَتِ الْخَالَ فِينَا الْأَنْوَحَا

فَإِنَّمَا يَجِينَنَّ أَنْ تَهْجُرِي وَتَسْتَبْدِلِي خَلْفًا أَوْ نَصِيحَا

وَإِنَّمَا يَجِينَنَّ أَنْ تَصْرَمِي وَتَنَأَى نَوَاكٍ وَكَانَتْ طُرُوحَا

فَإِنَّ أَبْنَ ثُرَيْقٍ إِذَا جَنَّتَكُمْ أَرَاهُ يُدَافِعُ قَوْلًا بَرِيحَا

فَصَاحِبِ صِدْقٍ كَسِيدِ الصَّرَا (م) ءِ يُنْهَضُ فِي الْعَزْوِ تَهْضَا نَجِيحَا

وَشَيْكَ الْقُضُولِ بَعِيدِ الْقُفُو (م) لِ إِلَّا مُشَاحًا بِهِ أَوْ مُشِيحَا

يَرِيغُ الْعُرَاةُ وَمَا إِنَّ يَرَا (م) لُ مُضْطَمِرًا طُرَاتَه طَلِيحَا

كَسَنِبِ الْمُرَادِيِّ لَا نَاكِالًا جَبَانًا وَلَا جَبْدَرِيًّا قَبِيحَا

قَدْ أَبْقَى لَكَ الْعَزْوُ مِنْ جِسْمِهِ نَوَاشِرَ سَيْدٍ وَوَجْهًا صَبِيحَا

أَرَيْتُ لِإِرْبِيهِ فَاَنْطَلَقْتُ أُرْجِي لِحِبِّ اللَّقَاءِ السَّبِيحَا

عَلَى طُرُقِ كَنْحُورِ الرِّكَا (م) بِ تَحْسِبُ آرَامَهُنَّ الصُّرُوحَا

يَهِنٌ نَعَامٌ بِنَاهَا الرِّجَا (م) لُ تُلْقِي النَّفَائِضُ فِيهَا السَّرِيحَا

[50] ساعدة بن جؤية (من الكامل):

وَأَفْتِ بِأَسْحَمِ فَاحِمٍ لَا ضَرَّةَ قَصْرٌ وَلَا حَرِيقُ الْمَفَارِقِ أَشْيَبُ

كَذَوَائِبِ الْحَفَا الرَّطِيبِ عَطَا بِهِ عَيْلٌ وَمَدٌّ بِجَانِبَيْهِ الطُّحْلُبُ

وَمُنْصَبِّ كَالْأَفْحَوَانِ مُنْطَقٌ بِالظَّلْمِ مَصْلُوثُ الْعَوَارِضِ أَشْنَبُ

كَسَلَاةِ الْعِنَبِ الْعَصِيرِ مِرَاجُهُ عُودٌ وَكَافُورٌ وَمِسْكٌ أَصْهَبُ

حَصْرٌ كَأَنَّ رُضَابَهُ إِذْ دُفِنَهُ بَعْدَ الْهُدُودِ وَقَدْ تَعَالَى الْكُؤُكُبُ

أُزْيِ الْجَوَارِسِ فِي دُؤَابَةِ مُشْرِفٍ فِيهِ النُّسُورُ كَمَا تَحْتَجِي الْمَوْكِبُ

[...]

فَأَزَالَ نَاصِحَهَا بِأَبْيَضٍ مُفْرِطٍ مِنْ مَاءِ أَهَابٍ عَلَيْهِ التَّلَابُ

وَمِرَاجُهَا صَهْبَاءُ فَتَّ جِتَامَهَا قَرَطٌ مِنَ الْخُرْسِ الْقِطَاطِ مُتَّقِبُ

فَكَأَنَّ فَاهَا حِينَ صُفِّيَ طَعْمُهُ وَاللَّهُ أَوْ أَشْهَى إِلَيَّ وَأَطْيَبُ

فَالْيَوْمَ إِذَا تَمَسَّ فَاتَ مِرَازُهَا مَنَا وَنُصْبِحَ لَيْسَ فِيهَا مِرَازُ

[51] ساعدة (من الطويل):

فِيمَ نِسَاءِ النَّاسِ مِنْ وَرَثَةٍ سَفَنَجَةٍ كَأَنَّهَا قَوْسٌ تَأَلَّبُ

لَهَا إِلدَةٌ سَفْعُ الْوُجُوهِ كَأَنَّهم نِصَالٌ شَرَاهَا الْقَيْنُ لَمَّا تَرَكَّبُ

إِذَا جَلَسَتْ فِي الدَّارِ يَوْمًا تَأْبُضُ تَأْبُضُ ذَنْبِ التَّلْعَةِ الْمُتَصَوِّبُ

شَرْوَبٌ لِمَاءِ اللَّحْمِ فِي كُلِّ صَيْفَةٍ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدْ مَنْ يَنْزِلُ الدَّرَّ تَحْلُبُ

نُفَائِيَّةٌ أَيَّانَ مَا شَاءَ أَهْلُهَا رَأَوْا فَوْقَهَا فِي الْحِصِّ لَمْ يَتَعَيَّبُ

إذا جلس في الدار حكّت عجائها بعُرْفُوبِها من ناخِسٍ مُتَقَوِّبِ

إذا مُهرت صُلباً قليلاً عِرافُهُ تقولُ ألا أُرْضِيَتَنِي فَتَقَرَّبِ

مُصَنَّتَعُ أَعْلَى الحَاجِبَيْنِ مُسَبَّلٌ لَهُ وَبَرٌّ كَأَنَّهُ صُوفٌ تُعَلَّبِ

[52] أبو ذؤيب (من الطويل):

فلو مارَسُوهُ سَاعَةً إِنَّ فِرْنَهُ إذا حَامَ أَحْدَانُ الإِمَاءِ يَطِيحُ

وسرِبٍ تَطَلَّى بِالْعَبِيرِ كَأَنَّهُ دِمَاءُ طِبَاءٍ بِالنُّحُورِ ذَبِيحُ

بَدَلْتُ هُنَّ الْقَوْلَ إِنْكَ وَاجِدٌ لِمَا شِئْتَ مِنْ حُلُومِ الكَلَامِ مَلِيحُ

فَأَمَكْنَهُ بِمَا أَرَادَ وَبَعْضُهُمْ شَقِيٌّ لَدَى خَيْرَاتِهِمْ نَطِيحُ

نازَعَهُنَّ الْقَوْلَ حَتَّى أَرَعَوْتُ لَهُ فُلُوبٌ تَفَادَى تَارَةً وَتُزِيحُ

[53] إياس بن جندب (من الواقب):

تُعَيِّي نِسْوَةٌ كَنَفِي غُضَارٍ كَأَنَّكَ بِالنَّشِيدِ هُنَّ رَامُ

يُتَّعِظُنَّ العَرَابُ فَهِنَّ سَوْدٌ إِذَا جالَسَنَّهُ فُلُحٌ قِدَامُ

[54] عمرو بن هميل (من الطويل):

فَقَتَّلًا بِقَتْلِنَا وَسُقْنَا بِسَبِينَا نِسَاءً وَجِئْنَا بِالْمُهْجَانِ المَرَعَلِ

فَأَصْبَحُنَّ أَحْلامَ العِبَادِ عَوَانِيًا يَرِسْفُنَّ شَيْءٌ فِي الحَدِيدِ المُسَلْسَلِ

[55] أم عمرو (من الطويل):

أساءتْ هُذَيْلٌ فِي السَّبِياقِ وَأَفْحَشَتْ وَأَقْرَطَ فِي السَّوْقِ القَيْبِحِ إِسَاها
لَعَلَّ فِتْنَةً مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يَسَوْفُها
فَإِنْ سَبَقَتْ عَلِيًّا هُذَيْلٌ بِدَخْلِها
فَوَارِسُ مَنْأَ وَهِيَ بَادِ شَوَاها
حُرَاعَةٌ أَوْ فَاتَتْ فَكَيْفَ أَعْتَدَاها

[56] معقل بن خويلد (من الطويل):

أرى أُمَّ عَمْرٍو فِي السَّبِياقِ تَعَصَّبَتْ وَهانِ عَلَيْنَا رَعْمُها وَصَعَاها
وَكَمْ مِنْ فِتْنَةٍ قَبَلْها سُمْتُ عَنوَةٌ
فَإِنْ يَأْتِنَا يا أُمَّ عَمْرٍو حُبُولُكُمْ
مَنْعَمَةٌ وَالرُّزْقُ بَادِ حِرَاها
وَفَتِيانَ صِدْقِي مِنْ هُذَيْلٍ أَعَزَّةٍ
تُلاقِ لَنَا حَرْبًا شَدِيدًا سَعَاها
مَساعِيرِ حَرْبٍ لَيْسَ يُخَشَى فِرَاها

[57] عمرو ذو الكلب (من الوافر):

غَزِيَّةٌ أَذَنْتْ قَبْلَ الرِّيالِ وَأَمْسَى حَبْلُها رَثَّ الوِصالِ
وَأَمْسَتْ عِنْدَكَ نائِيَةً نَوَاها بِشَقَّةِ شُنَّ عُرِّ السَّبِبالِ
أَلَا قالَتْ غَزِيَّةٌ إِذْ رَأَيْني أَلَمْ تُقْتَلِ بِأَرْضِ بَنِي هِلالِ
وَهَلْ لَكَ لو قُتِلْتُ بِأَرْضِ فَهْمِ

[58] لبيد بر ربيعة (من الكامل):

أَقْضِي البُنَانَةَ وَلَا أَقْطِرْ رِبِيَّةً أَوْ أَنْ يَلُومَ بِحَاجَةٍ لَوَامِهَا
أَوْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَدْرِي نَوَازٍ بِأَيِّ وَصَلَّ عَقْدِ حَبَائِلٍ جَدَّامِهَا

[59] عمرو ذو الكلب (من الوافر):

تَمَنَّانِي وَأَبْيَضَ مَشْرِيفِيَا وَشَاحَ الصَّدْرِ أَخْلِصَ بِالصَّقَالِ
وَتُجْرَأَ كَالرِّمَاحِ مُسْتَبْرَاتِ كُوسِينَ ذَوَاخِلِ الرِّيشِ النَّسَالِ
وَأَسْمَرَ مُجَنِّئًا مِنْ جِلْدِ ثُورٍ أَصَمَّ مُقَلَّلًا طَبَةَ النَّصَالِ
وَصَفْرَاءَ الْبُرَابِيَةِ عُوذَ نَبْعِ كَوْثِفِ الْعَاجِ فِي وَزْكِ حُدَالِ

[60] زهير بن أبي سلمى (من الطويل):

وَأَبْيَضَ قَبَاضٍ يَدَاهُ عَمَامَةٌ عَلَى مُعْتَقِيهِ مَا تُغِبُّ فَوَاضِلُهُ
بَكَرَتْ عَلَيْهِ عُذْوَةٌ فَرَأَيْتُهُ فُعُودًا لَدَيْهِ بِالصَّرِيمِ عَوَازِلُهُ
يُعَدِّبُنُهُ طَوْرًا وَطَوْرًا يَلْمَنُهُ وَأَعْيَى فَمَا يَدْرِيْنَ أَيْنَ مَخَاتِلُهُ
فَأَقْصَرَ مِنْهُ عَنِ كَرِيمِ مَرَرَةٍ عَزُومٍ عَلَى الْأَمْرِ الَّذِي هُوَ فَاعِلُهُ

[61] أبو خراش (من الطويل):

لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُ أَنَّمُ الْأَدْبِيرِ أَنِّي أَقُولُ لَهَا هَدَى وَلَا تَدْخِرِي حَيْمِي

فَإِنَّ غَدَاً إِنَّ لَا تَجِدُ بَعْضَ زَادِنَا	نُفِي لَكَ زَاداً أَوْ نُعَدِّكَ بِالْأَزْمِ
إِذَا هِيَ حَنَّتْ لِلْهَوَى حَنَّ جَوْفُهَا	كَجَوْفِ البَعِيرِ قَلْبُهَا عَيْرُ ذِي عَزْمِ
فَلَا وَأَبْيَكِ الخَيْرِ لَا تَجِدِينَهُ	جَمِيلَ العَنَى وَلَا صَبوراً عَلَى العَدَمِ
وَلَا بَطْلاً إِذَا الكُمَاةُ تَزَيَّنُوا	لَدَى عَمَرَاتِ المَوْتِ بِالخَالِكِ القُدَمِ
أُبْعَدُ بِلَاثِي صَلَّتِ البَيْتِ مِنْ عَمَى	تَحِبُّ فِرَاقِي أَوْ يَجِلُّ لَهَا شَتْمِي
وَإِنِّي لِأَتَوِي الجُوعَ حَتَّى يَمَلَّنِي	فَيَذْهَبَ لَمْ يُدْنِسْ نِيَابِي وَلَا جِزْمِي
وَأَعْتَبِقُ المَاءَ القَرَّاحَ فَأَنْتَهِي	إِذَا الرَّادُّ أَمْسَى لِلْمَرْزُوحِ ذَا طَعْمِ
أَرُدُّ شُجَاعَ البَطْنِ قَدْ تَعَلَّمِينَهُ	وَأَوْتِرُ عَيْرِي مِنْ عِبَالِكِ بِالطُّعْمِ
مَخَافَةَ أَنْ أَحْيَا بِرِعْمٍ وَذَلَّةً	وَلِلْمَوْتِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ حَيَاةٍ عَلَى رَعْمِ
رَأَتْ رَجُلًا قَدْ لَوَّحَتْهُ مَخَابِصُ	وَطَافَتْ بِرِنَانِ المَعَدَّيْنِ ذِي شَحْمِ
عَدِيٍّ لِقَاحٍ لَا يَزَالُ كَأَنَّهُ	حَمِيْتُ بِدَبْعِ عَظْمُهُ عَيْرُ ذِي حَجْمِ
تَقُولُ قَلْوُ لَا أَنْتَ أَنْكِحْتُ سَيِّدًا	أُزِفْتُ إِلَيْهِ أَوْ حُمِلْتُ عَلَى قَرَمِ
لِعَمْرِي لَقَدْ مُلِّكْتَ أَمْرَكَ جِحْبَةً	زَمَانًا فَهَلَّا مَسَّتْ فِي العَقْمِ وَالرَّقْمِ
فَجَاءَتْ كَخَاصِي العَيْرِ لَمْ تُحَلْ جَاجَةً	وَلَا عَاجَةً مِنْهَا تَلُوخٌ عَلَى وَشْمِ
أَفَاطَمَ إِلَيَّ أَسْبِقُ الحَنْفَ مُقْبِلًا	وَأُتْرِكُ قَرْنِي فِي المَرَاحِفِ يَسْتَنْدِمِي
وَلَيْلَةَ دَجْنٍ مِنْ جُمَادَى سَرَّيْتُهَا	إِذَا مَا اسْتَهَلَّتْ وَهِيَ سَاجِيَةٌ تَهْدِي
وَشَوْطُ فِضَاحٍ قَدْ شَهِدْتُ مُشَاجِحًا	لِأُدْرِكَ ذَخَالًا أَوْ أُشَيْفَ عَلَى عُنْمِ
إِذَا أَبْتَلَّتِ الأَقْدَامُ وَأَلْتَفَّتْ تَحْتَهَا	عَنَاءٌ كَأَجْوَارِ المُقَرَّنَةِ الدُّهْمِ

وَنَعْلٍ كَأَشْلَاءِ السَّمَانِي نَبْدُهَا خِلَافَ نَدَى مِنْ آخِرِ اللَّيْلِ أَوْ رَهْمٍ
 إِذَا لَمْ يُنَازِعْ جَاهِلُ الْقَوْمِ ذَا النُّهْيِ وَبَلَدَتِ الْأَعْلَامُ بِاللَّيْلِ كَالْأُحْمِ
 تَرَاهَا صِغَارًا يَخْسِرُ الطَّرْفُ دُوَهَا وَلَوْ كَانَ طُودًا فَوَقَّهَ فِرْقُ الْعُصْمِ
 وَإِنِّي لِأَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ فِي لَيْلَةِ الدُّجَى وَأَرْمِي إِذَا مَا قِيلَ هَلْ مِنْ فَتَى يَزْمِي
 وَعَادِيَةٌ تَلْقَى التِّيَابَ وَرَعْنُهَا كَرَجَلِ الْجِرَادِ يَنْتَجِي شَرَفَ الْحَزْمِ

[62] ساعدة بن جؤية (من الكامل):

فَالدَّهْرُ لَا يَبْقَى عَلَى حَدَثَانِهِ أَنَسٌ لَفِيفٌ ذُو طَوَائِفَ حَوْشِبُ
 فِي مَجْلِسٍ بِيضِ الْوُجُوهِ يَكُنُّهُمْ غَابَ كَأَشْطَانِ الْقَلِيبِ مَنْصَبُ
 مِتْقَارِبٌ أَنَسَاهُمْ وَأَعَزَّةٌ يُؤْوِي بِمِثْلِهِمُ الظَّلَامُ وَيُرْعَبُ
 فَإِذَا تُخَوِّمِي جَانِبَ يَرْعُونَهُ وَإِذَا تَجِيءُ نَدِيرَةً لَمْ يَهْرَبُوا
 بُدْخَاءُ كُلُّهُمْ إِذَا مَا نُوكِرُوا يُتَّقَى كَمَا يُتَّقَى الطَّالِي الْأَجْرُبُ
 ذُو سَوْرَةٍ يَخْجِي الْمُضَافَ وَيَخْتَمِي مَصْعٌ يَكَادُ إِذَا يَسَاوُرُ يَكْلَبُ
 بَيْنَا هُمْ يَوْمًا كَذَلِكَ رَاعَهُمُ ضَبْرٌ لِيَأْسُهُمُ الْحَدِيدُ مُؤَلَّبُ
 تُخَوِّمُهُمْ شُهْبَاءُ ذَاتِ قَوَانِسٍ رِمَازَةٌ تَأْتِي لَهُمْ أَنْ يُخْرَبُوا
 مِنْ كُلِّ فَيْحٍ يَسْتَقِيمُ طَيْرَةٌ شَوْهَاءُ أَوْ عَيْلُ الْجَزَارَةِ مِنْهَبُ
 خَاطِطِي الْبَضْعِ لَهُ زَوَافِرُ عَيْلَةٍ عُجٌّ وَمَثْنٌ كَالْجَدِيدَةِ سَلْهَبُ
 وَحَوَافِرُ تَقَعُ الْبِرَاحَ كَأَمَّا أَلِفَ الزَّمَاعِ بِهَا سِلَاطِمُ صَلْبُ

يَهْتَرُ فِي طَرْفِ الْعِنَانِ كَأَتَمَا جَدُّعٌ إِذَا فَرَعَ النَّخِيلَ مُشْدَبٌ
فَحَبَّتْ كَتَيْبَتُهُمْ وَصَدَّقَ رَوْعُهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ فَيْحٍ غَارَةٌ لَا تُكْذِبُ
لَا يُكْتَبُونَ وَلَا يُكْتَعَدِيهِمْ حَقَلَتْ بِجَيْشِهِمْ كَنَائِبُ أَوْعُبُوا
وَإِذَا يَجِيءُ مُصَمِّتٌ مِنْ غَارَةٍ فَيَقُولُ قَدْ آنَسْتُ هَيْجًا فَأَرْكَبُوا
طَارُوا بِكُلِّ طِمْرَةٍ مَلْبُوثَةٍ جَزْدَاءَ يَقْدُمُهَا كُمَيْتٌ شَرَجِبُ
فَرُمُوا بِنَفْعٍ يَسْتَقِيلُ عَصَائِبًا فِي الْجَوِّ مِنْهُ سَاطِعٌ وَمَكْتَبٌ
فَتَعَاوَزُوا ضَرْبًا وَأُشْرِعَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَسْلَاتُ مَا صَاعَ الْقَيْوُونَ وَرَكَّبُوا
مِنْ كُلِّ أَطْمَى عَاتِرٍ لَا شَانَهُ قِصْرٌ وَلَا رَأْسَ الْكُغُوبِ مُعْلَبٌ
خِرْقٍ مِنَ الْخَطِيئِ أَعْمِضَ حُدَّهُ مِثْلَ الشَّهَابِ وَفَعَعَنَهُ يَتَلَهَّبُ
مِمَّا يُتْرَضُ فِي التَّقَافِ بِيَرِينَهُ أَخَذَى كَخَافِيَةِ الْعُقَابِ مَحْرَبٌ
لُدَّ بَهْرَ الْكَفِّ يَعْسِلُ مَنَّهَ فِيهِ كَمَا عَسَلَ الطَّرِيقَ التَّلْعَبُ
فَأَبَارَ جَمْعَهُمُ السُّيُوفُ وَأَثْرُوا عَنْ كُلِّ رَاقِنَةٍ تُجْرُ وَتُسَلَبُ
وَأَسْتَدْبِرُوهُمْ يَكْفَتُونَ عُرُوجَهُمْ مَوْرَ الْجَهَامِ إِذَا زَفَنَهُ الْأَزْيَبُ

[63] أبو العيال (من الكامل):

أَخَوَيْنِ مِنْ فَرَعِي هُدَيْلٍ عَرَبَا كَالطَّوْدِ سَاحٍ بِأَصْلِهِ الْمَدْفُونِ

[64] مليح بن حكم (من الطويل):

وَتَحْنُ صَرَبْنَا يَوْمَ يَلْتَمَسُ الْهَدَى
 بِأَسْيَافِنَا عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ الْمُؤَفَّقِ
 صَرَبْنَا بِهِنَّ الْهَامَ عَنْ كُلِّ جَائِرٍ
 عَنِ الدِّينِ أَوْ مِنْ تَائِهٍ مُتَبَطِّرٍ
 بَصْرَبٍ تَرَى أُمَّ الدِّمَاغِ كَأَنَّهَا
 إِذَا نَدَرَتْ مِنْ جَوْهَا أُمَّ خَزِينِ
 بِصْرَبٍ يَزِيلُ الْهَامَ شِدَّةً وَقَعِهِ
 بِكَلِّ حُسَامٍ ذِي صَيِّ وَرَوْتِ
 وَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ ذَاكَ الْقَبَائِلِ كُلُّهَا
 وَمَنْ قَدْ فَكَّكْنَا مِنْ أَسِيرٍ وَمُطَلِّقِ
 وَإِنْ أَفْتَحِرْ أَبْلُغْ مَدَى الْمَجْدِ كُلَّهُ
 وَإِنْ أَقْتَصِرْ أَبْلُغْ سِنَاءً وَأَصْدُقِ
 وَإِنْ أَفْتَحِرْ يَوْمًا بِجِنْدِ لَا أَحَدُ
 لَهَا حَظْرًا يَوْمَ الرَّهَانِ الْمَسْبُوقِ
 هَمَّ السَّمْعِ وَالْعَيْنَانِ وَالرَّأْسِ كُلُّهُ
 أَلْزُ بِهَا الْكُفَّارَ عَنْ كُلِّ مَنْطِقِ

[65] أبو صخر (من البسيط):

إِنَّ الْمُنَى وَمَطَايَا لَشَاسِيعَةً
 عَنْ أُمَّ عَمْرٍو وَلَوْ حَبَّتْ وَحَمَادِ
 بِنَا إِذَا أَطْرَدَتْ شَهْرًا أَرْمَتْهَا
 وَوَارَنْتْ مِنْ دُرَى فَوْدٍ بِأَزْيَادِ
 وَالْمُرْسُومُونَ إِلَى عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ بِهَا
 مَعَا وَشَيْئًا وَمِنْ شَفْعٍ [وَفُرَادِ
 عَوَامِدًا لِنَدَى الْعَيْصِيِّ قَارِبَةً
 وَرَدَ الْقَطَا فَضَلَاتٍ بَعْدَ رُوَادِ

[66] مليح بن حكيم (من الرجز):

إِذْ أَنْتَ فِي غَضِّ الشَّبَابِ الْآتِقِ

أَيَّامَ أَلْبَلَى أَجْمَلِ الْعَوَاتِقِ

نَوَامَةُ الصَّيْفِ عَلَى النَّمَارِقِ

مِثْلُ الْكُثَيْبِ الرَّاجِفِ الْأَبَارِقِ

طَلُّ الْخُرَامِيِّ مَانِعِ الْعَشَارِقِ

هَرَكَوْلَةٌ لَيْسَتْ مِنَ الْعَسَالِقِ

وَلَا الْكُتُبَاتِ وَلَا النَّوَارِقِ

وَلَا الْعَرِيفَاتِ وَلَا الْمَعَانِقِ

Chapter 3

[67] قال الأحنس بن شهاب التعلبي (من الطويل):

لِكَلِّ أَنْاسٍ مِنْ مَعَدِّ عِمَارَةٍ عَزُوضٌ إِلَيْهَا يَلْجُؤُونَ وَجَانِبُ

لُكَيْزٍ لَهَا الْبَحْرَانِ وَالْبَيْيْفُ كُلُّهُ وَإِنْ يَأْتِيهَا بَأْسٌ مِنَ الْهِنْدِ كَارِبُ

تَطَايُرٌ عَنْ أَعْجَازِ حُوشٍ كَأَنَّهَا جَهَامٌ أَرَاقَ مَاءُهُ فَهُوَ أَثْبُ

وَبَكَرٌ لَهَا ظَهْرُ الْعِرَاقِ وَإِنْ تَشَأْ يَحُلُّ دُونَهَا مِنَ الْبِمَامَةِ حَاجِبُ

وَصَارَتْ تَيْمٌ بَيْنَ فُفٍّ وَرَمْلَةٍ لَهَا مِنْ جِبَالِ مُنْتَأَى وَمَدَاهِبُ

وَكَلْبٌ لَهَا حَبْتٌ فَرَمَلَةٌ عَالِجٍ إِلَى الْحَرَّةِ الرَّجَالَاءِ حَيْثُ تُحَارِبُ

وَعَسَانُ حَيٍّ عَزُهُمْ فِي سِوَاهُمْ يُجَالِدُ عَنْهُمْ مِقْتَبٌ وَكِتَابِ

وَبَهْرَاءُ حَيٍّ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَكَانَهُمْ لَهُمْ شَرَكٌ حَوْلَ الرُّصَافَةِ لِأَجْبُ

وغارت إِيَّادٌ فِي السَّوَادِ وَدُوَهَا بَرَارِيْقُ عَجْمٍ تَبْنَعِي مَنْ تُصَارِبُ
وَحَمَّ مُلُوكُ النَّاسِ يُجْبِي إِلَيْهِمْ إِذَا قَالَ مِنْهُمْ قَائِلٌ فَهَوَ وَاجِبُ
وَنَحْنُ أَنْاسٌ لَا حِجَارَ بَأَرْضِنَا مَعَ الْعَيْثِ مَا نُلْقَى وَمَنْ هُوَ غَالِبُ

[68] قال أبو خِرَاشٍ (من الوافر):

حِذَانِي ، بَعْدَمَا خَدِمْتُ نِعَالِي دُبَيْبَةُ إِنَّهُ نَعَمَ الْخَلِيلُ
بِمَوْرَكَّتَيْنِ مِنْ صَلَوِيٍّ مِشَبِّ مِنْ التَّيْرَانِ عَقْدُهُمَا جَمِيلُ
يَمْتَلِهَمَا نَرُوحٌ نُرِيدُ هُوًّا وَيَقْضِي حَاجَةَ الرَّجُلِ الرَّجِيلُ

[69] قال أبو ذؤيبٍ (من الكامل):

فَوَرْدَنَ وَالْعَيْوُثُ مَفْعَدَ رَابِيءِ الْعِـــــــ ضُرْبَاءِ فَوْقَ النَّظْمِ لَا يَتَنَلَعُ
فَشَرَعْنَ فِي حَجَرَاتِ عَدْبٍ بَارِدٍ حَصْبِ الْبِطَاحِ تَغِيْبُ فِيهِ الْأَكْرَعُ

[70] قال أبو صخرٍ (من الطويل):

جَمَعَتْ سَمَاحَ الْمُرْدِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَقَّةٍ وَعَزَمًا إِذَا مَا جَلَّ أَفْقَمُ كَارِبُ
وَعَجْدًا يُبَاصِي الْفَرَقْدَيْنِ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ كَمَنْ رَحْرَفَ الْأَمْوَالَ وَالْمُحُّ لَاغِبُ

[71] قال ساعدة (من الكامل):

أَهَاجِكَ مِنْ عَيْرِ الْحَبِيبِ بُكُورُهَا أَجَدَّتْ بِلَيْلٍ لَمْ يُعْرِخْ أَمِيرُهَا
تُحْمَلُنْ مِنْ ذَاتِ السُّلَيْمِ كَأَنَّهَا سَفَائِرُ يَمِّ تَنْتَحِيهَا دُبُورُهَا
وَكَانَتْ قَدُوفاً بِالنَّوَى كُلِّ جَانِبٍ عَلَى كُلِّ مَرٍّ يَسْتَمِرُّ مُرُورُهَا
مُيَمِّمَةً نَجَدَ الشَّرَى لَا تَرِيْمُهُ وَكَانَ طَرِيقاً لَا تَزَالُ تَسِيرُهَا
وَمَا مُغْرِلٌ تُقَرُّو أَسْرَةَ أَيْكَةِ مُنْطَقَةٍ بِالْمَرَدِ ضَافٍ بَرِيرُهَا
وَمَنْكَ هُدُو اللَّيْلِ تَزِقُ فَهَاجِنِي يُصَدِّعُ زُنْكَأً مُسْتَطِيرًا عَقِيرُهَا
أُرِفْتُ لَهُ حَتَّى إِذَا مَا عَرُوضُهُ تَحَادَتْ وَهَاجَتْهَا بُرُوقُ نُطِيرُهَا
أَضَرَ بِهِ ضَاحٍ فَنَبْطَأُ أَسَالَةَ فَمَرٌّ فَأَعْلَى حَوَزِهَا فَخُصُورُهَا
فَرَحَّبَ فَاعْلَامُ الْفُرُوطِ فَكَافِرٍ فَتَنَحَّلُهُ تَلَى طَلْحِهَا وَسُدُورُهَا
وَمَنْهُ بِمَآنٍ مُسْتَنْطِلٌ وَجَالِسٌ بِعَرَضِ السَّرَاةِ مُكْفَهَرٌ صَبِيرُهَا
فَحَطَّ مِنَ السُّوْلِ الْمُلِيمِ وَتَلَّهُ يَحِفُّ بِأَرْيَاضِ الْأَرَكَ صَرِيرُهَا

[72] قال لبيد (من الكامل):

عَفَّتِ الدِّيَارُ مَحَلُّهَا فَمُقَامُهَا بِمِئٍّ تَأْتِدُ عَوْلُهَا فَرِجَامُهَا
فَمَدَافِعِ الرِّيَّانِ عُرِي رَسْمُهَا حَلَقًا كَمَا ضَمِنَ الْوُحْيِ سِلَامُهَا
دِمْنٌ بَجَرَمٍ بَعْدَ عَهْدِ أَيْسِيهَا حَجَجَ حَلُونَ حَلَالُهَا وَحَرَامُهَا
زُرْقَتْ مَرَابِعِ النُّجُومِ وَصَابِهَا وَدُقُّ الرِّوَاعِدِ جَوْدُهَا فَرَاهُمَا
مِنْ كُلِّ سَارِيَةٍ وَعَادٍ مُدْجِنٍ وَعَشِيَّةٍ مُتَجَاوِبٍ إِزْرَامُهَا

فَعَلَا فُرُوعَ الْأَيْهَمَانِ وَأَطْفَلَتْ بِالْجُلْهَتَيْنِ ظَبَاؤَهَا وَنَعَامَهَا
وَالعَيْنُ سَاكِنَةٌ عَلَى أَطْلَانِهَا عُوْدًا تَأَجَّلُ بِالْفَضَاءِ بِهَامِهَا
وَجَلَا السُّيُوفُ عَنِ الطُّلُولِ كَأَنَّهَا زُبُرٌ تُجَدُّ مُثُونَهَا أَقْلَامُهَا
أَوْ رَجَعُ وَاشْتَمَّةٌ أُسِفَّ نُوُورُهَا كِفَفًا تَعَرَّضَ فَوْقَهُنَّ وَشَامِهَا
فَوَقَفْتُ أَسْأَلُهَا وَكَيْفَ سَوَّلْنَا صَمًّا حَوَالِدَ مَا يَبِينُ كَلَامِهَا
عَرِيَتْ وَكَانَ بِهَا الْجَمِيعُ فَأَبْكُرُوا مِنْهَا وَعُوْدِرَ نُورِهَا وَنَمَامِهَا
شَاقَتَكَ طُعْنُ الحَيِّ حِينَ تَحْمَلُوا فَتَكَنَسُوا فُطْنًا نَصِرُ حَيَامِهَا
مِنْ كُلِّ مَخْشُوفٍ يُظْلِكُ عَصِيْبَهُ رَوْحٌ عَلَيْهِ كِلَّةٌ وَقِرَامِهَا
زُجْلًا كَأَنَّ نِعَاجَ تُوضِحُ فَوْقَهَا وَظَبَاءَ وَجَرَّةً عَطْفًا أَرَامِهَا
حُفِرَتْ وَرَايَلَهَا السَّرَابُ كَأَنَّهَا أَحْزَاءُ بَيْشَةَ أَثْلَهَا وَرِضَامِهَا
بَانَ مَا تَذَكَّرُ مِنْ نَوَارٍ وَقَدْ نَأَتْ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ أَسْبَابُهَا وَرِمَامِهَا
مُرِيَّةٌ حَلَّتْ بِعَيْدٍ وَجَاوَرَتْ أَهْلَ الحِجَازِ فَأَيْنَ مِنْكَ مَرَامِهَا

[73, 78] قال ساعدة (من الطويل):

إِنِّي وَأَيْدِيهَا وَكُلِّ هَدِيَّةٍ مِمَّا تُنْجِي لَهَا تَرَائِبَ تَنْعَبُ
وَمَقَامِيْنَ إِذَا حُبِسْنَ بِمَأْرَمِ ضَيْقِ أَلْفٍ وَصَدَّهِنَّ الْأَخْشَبُ
أَفْعَانِكَ لَا بَرَقَ كَأَنَّ وَمِيضُهُ غَابَ تَشَيَّمُهُ صِرَامٌ مُثَقَّبُ
سَادٍ بَجَرَمٍ فِي البَضِيْعِ تَمَانِيًّا يَلُوي بِعَيْتَقَاتِ البِحَارِ وَيُجَنَّبُ

لَمَّا رَأَى عَمَقاً وَرَجَعَ عَرَضُهُ زَعْدًا كَمَا هَدَرَ الْفَيْيُ الْمُصْعَبُ
لَمَّا رَأَى نَعْمَانَ حَلَّ بِكَزْفِي عَكَّرَ كَمَا بَجَّ النَّزُولُ الْأَرْكَبُ
فَالسِّدْرُ مُخْتَلِجٌ وَ أَنْزَلَ طَافِيَاً مَا بَيَّنَّ عَيْنَ إِلَى نَبَاةِ الْأُنْثَابِ
وَالْأَنْثَلُ مِنْ سَعِيَاً وَخَلِيَّةً مُنْزَلُ وَالِدُومُ جَاءَ بِهِ الشُّجُونُ فَعَلَيْبُ
ثُمَّ انْتَهَى بِصَرِي وَأَصْبَحَ جَالِسَاً مِنْهُ لِنَجْدٍ كَاتِقٍ مُتَعَرِّبُ

[74] قال ابن بُرَاق (من الكامل):

أَلَا هَلْ لِلْمُهْمومِ مِنْ انْفِرَاجٍ وَهَلْ أَنَا مِنْ رُكُوبِ الْبَحْرِ نَاجِي؟
أَكُلُّ عَيْنِيَّةٍ زُرُوءًا تَهْوِي بِنَا فِي مُظْلِمِ الْعَمَرَاتِ دَاجِي
يَشْقُ الْمَاءَ كُلَّكُلِّهَا مُلِحَاً عَلَى نَبِيحٍ مِنَ الْمِلْحِ الْأَجَاجِ
كَأَنَّ قَوَازِفَ التِّيَّارِ مِنْهُ نِعَاجٌ يَرْتَعِينِ إِلَى نِعَاجِ

[75] قال أمية بن أبي عائد (من الطويل):

تَمَدَّحَتْ لَيْلَى فَاثْمَدِيحُ أُمَّ نَافِعِ بِقَافِيَةٍ مِثْلِ الْخَبِيرِ الْمُسَلْسَلِ
فَلَوْ غَيْرَهَا مِنْ وُلْدِ كَعْبِ بْنِ كَاهِلِ مَدَّحَتْ بِقَوْلِ صَادِقِي لَمْ تُقْبَلِ
أَلَا لَيْتَ لَيْلَى سَايَرَتْ أُمَّ نَافِعِ بِوَادِ هَامٍ يَوْمَ صَبْفٍ وَتَحْفَلِ
وَكَلَّنَاهُمَا جَمًّا عَدَا قَبْلُ أَهْلَهَا عَلَى خَيْرِ مَا سَأَفُوا وَرَدُّوا لِمَزْحَلِ
فَدَلِيكَ يَوْمَ لَنْ تَرَى أُمَّ نَافِعِ عَلَى مُثَقَّرٍ مِنْ وُلْدِ صَعْدَةَ قُنْدَلِ

وَلَا تَبْعاً تَمْشِي بِرَأْسِ خَزُومَةٍ لَهَا قِبَةٌ إِنْ تَرَبُّ فِيهَا بُحْلُجِلْ
 حَمُولَةٌ أُخْرَى أَهْلُهَا بَيْنَ مَهْوَرٍ إِلَى مَسْكِنٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ كَرِيمٍ وَسُنْبِلْ
 وَلَكِنْ عَلَى قَرْمٍ هِجَانٍ مُوَكَّلٍ بِلُؤْمِيَّتِهِ أَوْ ذَاتِ نِيرَيْنِ عَيْطَلْ

[76] قال أبو ذئيب (من الطويل):

رَوَيْتُ وَلَمْ يَعْزَمْ نَدِيمِي وَخَاوَلْتُ بَنِي عَمَّهَا أَسْمَاءُ أَنْ يَفْعَلُوا فِعْلِي
 فَمَا فَضْلَةٌ مِنْ أَدْرِعَاتٍ هَوَتْ بِهَا مُذَكَّرَةٌ عَنَسُ كَهَادِيَةِ الصَّحْلِ
 سَلَاكُهُ رَاحٍ صُمِنَتْهَا إِدَاوَةٌ مُقَيَّرَةٌ رَدْفٌ لِمُؤَخَّرَةِ الرَّحْلِ
 تَرَوُدَهَا مِنْ أَهْلِ بُصْرَى وَعَزَّةٍ عَلَى جَسْرَةٍ مَرْفُوعَةِ الدَّيْلِ وَالْكِفْلِ
 فَوَائِي بِهَا عُسْفَانٌ ثُمَّ أَتَى بِهَا جَنَّةً تَصْفُو فِي الْقِلَالِ وَلَا تَعْلِي
 وَرَاحَ بِهَا مِنْ يِ الْمَجَارِ عَشِيَّةً يُبَادِرُ أَوْلَى السَّابِقَاتِ إِلَى الْحَبْلِ
 فَجَنَنْ وَجَاءَتْ بَيْنَهُنَّ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَمْسُخُ ذِفْرَاهَا تَزَعَّمُ كَالْفَحْلِ
 فَجَاءَ بِهَا كَيْمًا يُوَقِّي حَجَّهَ نَدِيمٌ كِرَامٍ غَيْرُ نِكْسٍ وَلَا وَعَلْ
 فَبَاتَ يَجْمَعُ ثُمَّ تَمَّ إِلَى مِئِي فَأَصْبَحَ زَادًا يَبْتَعِي الْمَرْحَ بِالسَّحْلِ
 فَجَاءَ يَمْزِحُ لَمْ يَرِ النَّاسُ مِثْلَهُ هُوَ الصَّحْحُ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ عَمَلُ النَّحْلِ
 بِمَائِيَّةٍ أَحْيَا لَهَا مَطَّ مَأْبِدٍ وَآلِ قَرَّاسٍ صَوَّبُ أَرْمِيَّةٍ كُحْلِ
 فَمَا إِنْ هُمَا فِي صَحْفَةٍ بَارِقِيَّةٍ جَدِيدٍ أَرَقَّتْ بِالْقُدُومِ وَالصُّغْلِ
 بِأَطْيَبِ مِنْ فِيهَا إِذَا جَنَّتْ طَارِقاً وَوَلَمْ يَتَّبِعَنَّ سَاطِعِ الْأَفْقِ الْمُجْلِي

إِذَا الْهَدَفُ الْمِعْرَابُ صَوَّبَ رَأْسَهُ وَأَمَكَّنَهُ صَفْوٌ مِنَ الثَّلَّةِ الْخَطِيئِ

[77] قال المتنخل (من السريع):

دَعَّ عَنْكَ ذَا الْأَلْسِ دَمِيمًا أَعْرَضَ وَاسْتَبَدَلَ فَاسْتَبَدَّلَ

وَاسْلُ عَنْ الْحَبِّ بِمَضْلُوعَةٍ تَابَعَهَا الْبَارِي وَلَمْ يَعْجَلِ

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[79] المرقش الأصغر (من الطويل):

فَوَلَّتْ وَقَدْ بَنَّتْ تَبَارِيحَ مَا تَرَى وَوَجَدِي بِهَا إِذْ تَحْدُرُ الدَّمْعُ أَبْرُحُ

وَمَا فَهْوَةٌ صَهْبَاءُ كَالْمِسْنِكِ رِيحُهَا تُعَلِّي عَلِي النَّاجُودِ طَوْرًا وَتُفْدَحُ

تَوَتْ فِي سِبَاءِ الدَّنِّ عِشْرِينَ حِجَّةً يُطَانُ عَلَيْهَا قَرَمَدٌ وَتُرْوَحُ

سَبَاهَا رِجَالٌ مِنْ يَهُودَ تَبَاعَدُوا لِحْيَلَانَ يُدْنِيهَا مِنَ السُّوقِ مُرْبِحُ

بِأَطْيَبِ مِنْ فِيهَا إِذَا جُمْتُ طَارِقًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ بَلَّ فُوهَا أَلْدُ وَأَنْصَحُ

[80] أبو ذؤيب (من المتقارب):

عَرَفْتُ الدِّيَارَ كَرَفَمِ الدَّوَا (م) وَتَذِيرُهَا الْكَاتِبُ الْحَمِيرِيُّ

[81] المليح بن حكم (من البسيط):

أو كالوشوم أسفنتها يمانية
من خضرموت نؤوراً وهو ممزوج

[82] عبيد بن الأبرص (من البسيط):

يا من ليزق أبيض الليل أرقبه
من عارض كتيباض الصبح لَمَاح

دانٍ مسيفٍ فوق الأرض هيدبه
يكاذ يدفعه من قام بالراح

فمن بنجوتيه كمن بحفله
والمستكركن كمن بمشي يترواح

كان ريقه لَمَا علا شطياً
أقرب أبلق ينفي الخيل رَمَاح

فالتج أعلاه ثم ارتج أسفله
وضاق ذرعاً بحمل الماء منصاح

كأنما بين أعلاه وأسفله
رئط منشرة أو ضوء مصباح

كان فيه عشاراً جلّة شرفاً
شعناً لهاميم قد همت بإرشاح

بحاً حناجرها هدلاً مشافرها
تسييم أولادها في قرق ضاح

هبت جنوباً بأولاه ومال به
أعجاز مزن يسح الماء دلاح

فأصبح الروض والقيعان ممرعة
من بين مرتفق فيه ومنطاح

[83] المتنخل (من السريع):

هل هاجك الليل كليل على
أسماء من ذي صبر محيل

أنشأ في العيقة يرمي له
جوف زباب وره مثقل

فُوَيْقَ جُبَيْلِ شَامِيخِ الرَّاسِ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَتَبْلُغَهُ حَتَّى تَكِلَ وَتَعْمَلَا
فَأُبْصَرَ أَلْهَابًا مِنَ الطَّوْدِ دُوَهَا تَرَى بَيْنَ رَأْسَيْ كُلِّ نَيْقَيْنِ مَهْبِلَا
فَأَشْرَطَ فِيهَا نَفْسَهُ وَهُوَ مُعْصِمٌ وَالْقَى بِأَسْبَابٍ لَهُ وَتَوَكَّلَا
وَقَدْ أَكَلَتْ أَطْفَارُهُ الصَّخْرَ كُلَّمَا تَعَايَا عَلَيْهِ طُولُ مَرْقَى تَوَصَّلَا
فَمَا زَالَ حَتَّى نَالَهَا وَهُوَ مُعْصِمٌ عَلَى مَوْطِنٍ لَوْ زَلَّ عَنْهُ تَفَصَّلَا
فَأُقْبِلْ لَا يَرْجُوَ الَّتِي صَعَدَتْ بِهِ وَلَا نَفْسَهُ إِلَّا رَجَاءً مُؤَمَّلَا

[85] أبو ذؤيب (من الطويل):

بَارِي الَّتِي تَأْرِي الِيعَاسِيْبَ أَصْبَحَتْ إِلَى شَاهِقٍ دُونَ السَّمَاءِ دُوَاهُهَا
جَوَارِسُهَا تَأْرِي الشُّعُوفَ دَوَائِبًا وَتَنْصَبُ أَلْهَابًا مَصِيْفًا كِرَاهُهَا
إِذَا نَهَضَتْ فِيهِ تَصَعَّدَ نَفْرُهَا كَفَيْتِ الْغِلَاءَ مُسْتَدِرًّا صِيَاهُهَا
يَظَلُّ عَلَى التَّمْرَاءِ مِنْهَا جَوَارِسُ مَرَاضِيْعُ صُهْبِ الرِّيشِ رُغْبٌ رِقَاهُهَا
فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا الْخَالِدِيُّ كَأَنَّهَا حَصَى الْخَذْفِ تَهْوِي مُسْتَقْبَلًا إِيَّاهُهَا
أَجَدَّ بِهَا أَمْرًا وَأَيْقَنَ أَنَّهُ هَا أَوْ لِأُخْرَى كَالطَّحِينِ ثَرَاهُهَا
فَقِيلَ تَجَنَّبَهَا حَرَامٌ وَرَاقَهُ دُرَاهَا مُبِينًا عُرْضُهَا وَأَنْصَاهُهَا
فَأَعْلَقَ أَسْبَابَ الْمَيْبَةِ وَأَرْتَضَى تُفُوقَتَهُ إِنْ لَمْ يُحْنَهُ أَنْقِضَاهُهَا
تَدَلَّى عَلَيْهَا بِنَى سِبِّ وَخَيْطَةٍ يَجْرِدَاءَ مِثْلَ الْوَكْفِ يَكْبُو غُرَاهُهَا
فَلَمَّا أَجْتَلَاهَا بِالْإِيَامِ تَحَيَّرَتْ ثُبَاتٍ عَلَيْهَا دُهَاً وَكَيْبَاهُهَا

فَأَطِيبَ بِرَاحِ الشَّمَامِ صِرْفًا وَهَذِهِ مُعْتَقَةً صَهْبَاءَ وَهِيَ شِيَابُهَا
فَمَا إِنَّ هُمَا فِي صَحْفَةٍ بَارِقِيَّةٍ جَدِيدٍ حَدِيثٍ نَحْتَهَا وَأَقْتِضَايُهَا
بِأَطِيبٍ مِنْ فِيهَا إِذَا جِئْتُ طَارِقًا مِنْ اللَّيْلِ وَالْتَفَتَ عَلَيَّ ثِيَابُهَا

[86] عمر بن قميئة (من الخفيف):

لَا عَجِيبَ فِي مَا رَأَيْتَ، وَلَكِنْ عَجَبٌ مِنْ تَقْرُطِ الْأَجَالِ
تُذْرِكُ التَّمَسَّحَ الْمَوْعَى فِي اللَّجِّ، وَالْعَصَمَ فِي رُؤُوسِ الْجِبَالِ
وَالْقَرِيدَ الْمَسْفَعَ الْوَجْهَ ذَا الْجُدِّ (م) وَتَحْنَأُ أَمِنَاتِ الرِّمَالِ
وَتَصَدَّى لِتَصْرَعِ الْبَطَلِ الْأَزِّ (م) وَعَ بَيْنَ الْعَلْهَاءِ وَالسِّرْبَالِ

[87] المرقش الأكبر (من السريع):

لَمْ يُشْجِ قَلْبِي مِلْحَوَادِثُ إِلَّا صَاحِبِي الْمَثْرُوكِ فِي تَعَلَّمَ
تُعَلَّبُ ضَرَابُ الْقَوَانِسِ بِالسَّنَنِ وَهَادِي الْقَوْمِ إِذْ أَظَلَمَ
فَأَذْهَبَ فِدَى لَكَ ابْنُ عَمِّكَ لَا يَحْلُدُ إِلَّا شَابَةً وَأَدَمَ
لَوْ كَانَ حَيًّا نَاجِيًا لَنَجَا مِنْ يَوْمِهِ الْمَرْمُ الْأَعْصَمَ
فِي بَادِحَاتٍ مِنْ عَمَايَةِ أَوْ يَرْفَعُهُ دُونَ السَّمَاءِ حَيْمَ
مِنْ دُونِهِ بَيْضُ الْأَثُوقِ وَفَقُو (م) فَهُ طَوِيلُ الْمُنْكَبِينَ أَشَمَّ
بِرْفَاهُ حَيْثُ شَاءَ مِنْهُ وَ (م) مَا تُنْسِبُهُ مَبِيَّةٌ بِيَهُرَمَ

مُنْبَهَرَاتٍ بِالسِّجَالِ مِلَاءُهَا يَخْرُجْنَ مِنْ لِحْفٍ لَهَا مُتَقَلِّمٌ

فَأَهْتَجْنَ مِنْ فَرْعٍ وَطَارَ جِحَاشُهَا مِنْ بَيْنِ قَارِمِهَا وَمَا لَمْ يَقْرَمِ

وَهَلَا وَقَدْ شَرَعَ الْأَسِنَّةَ نَحْوَهَا مِنْ بَيْنِ مُحْتَقِقٍ بِهَا مُشْرَمِ

[89] صخر الغي (من الطويل):

لَعَمْرُ أَبِي عَمْرٍو لَقَدْ سَأَفَهُ الْمَنَا إِلَى جَدَثٍ يُوزَى لَهُ بِالْأَهَاضِبِ

لِحْيَتِهِ قَفْرٌ فِي وَجَارٍ مُقِيمَةٍ تَنْمَى بِهَا سَوْقُ الْمَنَا وَالْجَوَالِبِ

أَحْيٍ لَا أَحَا لِي بَعْدَهُ سَبَقَتْ بِهِ مَنِئِيئُهُ جَمْعَ الرَّقَى وَالطَّبَائِبِ

أَعْيِيَّ لَا يَبْقَى عَلَى الدَّهْرِ فَادِرٌ بِتَبْهُورَةٍ تَحْتَ الطِّحَافِ الْعِصَابِ

تَمَلَّى بِهَا طُولَ الْحَيَاةِ فَقَرَنُهَا لَهُ حَيْدٌ أَشْرَافُهَا كَالرَّوَابِحِ

بِيِثٍ إِذَا مَا آتَسَ اللَّيْلُ كَانِسًا مَبِيتَ الْكَبِيرِ ذِي الْكِسَاءِ الْمُحَارِبِ

مَبِيتَ الْكَبِيرِ يَسْتَكِي غَيْرَ مُعْتَبٍ شَفِيفَ عُقُوقٍ مِنْ بَيْنِهِ الْأَقَارِبِ

تَدَلَّى عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَشَامٍ وَأَيْكَةٍ نَشَاةٍ فُرُوعٍ مُرْتَعِرٍ الدَّوَائِبِ

بِهَا كَانَ طِفْلًا تُمُّ أَسْدَسَ وَأَسْتَوَى فَأُصْبَحَ لَهُمْ فِي هُومٍ قَرَاهِبِ

يُرْوَعُ مِنْ صَوْتِ الْغُرَابِ فَيَنْتَحِي مَسَامَ الصُّخُورِ فَهَوَ أَهْرَبُ هَارِبِ

أُبَيْحَ لَهُ يَوْمًا وَقَدْ طَالَ عُمُرُهُ جَرِيمَةُ شَيْخٍ قَدْ تَحَنَّبَ سَاغِبِ

مُجَامِي عَلَيْهِ فِي الشِّتَاءِ إِذَا شَتَا وَفِي الصَّيْفِ يَبْغِيهِ الْجَنَّا كَالْمُنَاجِبِ

فَلَمَّا رَأَهُ قَالَ اللَّهُ مَنْ رَأَى مِنْ الْعُصَمِ شَاءَ قَبْلَهُ فِي الْعَوَاقِبِ

لَوْ أَنَّ كَرِيمِي صِيدَ هَذَا أَعَاشَهُ إِلَى أَنْ يَغِيثَ النَّاسَ بَعْضُ الْكَوَاكِبِ
أَحَاطَ بِهِ حَتَّى رَمَاهُ وَقَدْ دَنَا بِأَسْمَرَ مَفْتُوقٍ مِنَ النَّبْلِ صَائِبِ
فَنَادَى أَخَاهُ ثُمَّ طَارَ بِشَفْرَةٍ إِلَيْهِ أَجْتِرَارَ الْفَعْمَعِيِّ الْمُنَاهِبِ

...

[89b]

فُرُخَانٍ يَنْضَاعَانِ فِي الْفَجْرِ كُلَّمَا أَحْسَنًا دَوِيَّ الرِّيحِ أَوْ صَوْتِ نَاعِبِ
فَلَمْ يَرَهَا الْفُرْحَانَ بَعْدَ مَسَائِهَا وَلَمْ يَهْدَأْ فِي عَشَّهَا مِنْ نَجَاوِبِ

[90] أبو ذؤيب (من البسيط):

لَمَّا ذَكَرْتُ أَخَا الْعُمَيْ تَأْوِي هَمِّي وَأَفْرَدَ ظَهْرِي الْأَعْلَبُ الشَّيْخِ

[91] أبو ذؤيب (من الطويل):

كَأَنِّي خِلَافِ الصَّارِحِ الْأَلْفِ وَاحِدٌ بِأَجْرَعٍ لَمْ يَعْضَبْ لَدَيْهِ نَصِيرُ

[92] أبو ذؤيب (من الكامل):

أَمِنَ الْمُتُونِ وَرَيْبِهَا تَتَوَجَّعُ وَالذَّهْرُ لَيْسَ بِمُعْتَبِرٍ مَنْ يَجْرَعُ
قَالَتْ أُمَيْمَةُ: مَا لِحِسْمِكَ شَاجِباً مُنْذُ ابْتَدَلْتَ وَمِثْلُ مَالِكَ يَنْفَعُ
أَمْ مَا لِحُنْبِكَ لَا يُلَايِمُ مَضْجَعاً إِلَّا أَقْضَى عَلَيْكَ ذَاكَ الْمَضْجَعُ

فَأَجَبْتُهَا: أَمَا لِحِسْمِي أَنَّهُ أَوْدَى بَيْيَّ مِنْ الْبِلَادِ فَوَدَّعُوا
أَوْدَى بَيْيَّ وَأَعْقَبُونِي حَسْرَةً بَعَدَ الرُّقَادِ وَعَبْرَةً لَا تُقْلَعُ
وَلَقَدْ أَرَى أَنَّ الْبُكَاءَ سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَسَوْفَ يُولَعُ بِالْبُكَى مَنْ يُفْجَعُ
سَبَقُوا هَوِيَّ وَأَعْنَفُوا لِهَوَاهُمْ فَتُخْرِمُوا، وَلِكُلِّ جَنْبٍ مَصْرَعُ
فَعَبَّرْتُ بَعْدَهُمْ بِعَيْشٍ نَاصِبٍ وَأَخَالَ أَيُّ لَاحِقٍ مُسْتَتَبِعُ
وَلَقَدْ حَرَصْتُ بِأَنْ أُدْفِعَ عَنْهُمْ فَإِذَا الْمَيْتَةُ أَقْبَلَتْ لَا تُدْفَعُ
وَإِذَا الْمَيْتَةُ أَنْشَبَتْ أَطْفَارَهَا أَلْفَيْتَ كُلَّ تَمِيمَةٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ
فَالعَيْزُ بَعْدَهُمْ كَأَنَّ حِدَاقَهَا سَلِمْتُ بِشَوْكٍ فَهِيَ عَوْرٌ تَدْمَعُ
حَتَّى كَأَيِّ لِلْحَوَادِثِ مَرُوءَةٍ بِصَفَا الْمَشْرِقِ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ تُفْرَعُ
وَيَحْلُدِي لِلشَّامِتِينَ أُرِيهِمْ أَيُّ لِرَيْبِ الدَّهْرِ لَا أَنْضَعُضَعُ
وَالنَّفْسُ رَاغِبَةٌ إِذَا رَعِبَتْهَا وَإِذَا تُرِدُّ إِلَى قَلِيلٍ تَفْعَعُ
وَلَيْزَنُ يِهِم فَجَعَ الزَّمَانُ وَرَيْبُهُ إِنِّي بِأَهْلِ مَوَدَّتِي لَمُفْجَعُ
كَمْ مِنْ جَمِيعِ الشَّمْلِ مُلْتَمِ الْفُؤَى كَانُوا بِعَيْشٍ قَبَلْنَا فَتَصَدَّعُوا
وَالدَّهْرُ لَا يَبْقَى عَلَى حَدَثَانِهِ جَوْنُ السَّرَاةِ لَهُ جَدَائِدُ أَرْبَعُ
صَحْبُ الشُّوَارِبِ لَا يَزَالُ كَأَنَّهُ عَبْدُ لَيْلٍ أَبِي رَيْبَعَةَ مُسْبَعُ
أَكَلَ الْجَمِيمِ وَطَاوَعْتُهُ سَمْحَجُ مِثْلُ الْقَنَاةِ وَأَزَعَلْتُهُ الْأَمْرُغُ
بِقَرَارِ قِيَعَانٍ سَقَاها وَأَبِلُ وَاهٍ، فَأَنْجَمَ بُرْهَةً لَا يُقْلَعُ
فَلَيْزَنَ جِيناً يَعْتَلِجَنَ بِرُؤُوسِهِ فَيَجِدُ جِيناً فِي الْعِلَاجِ وَيَسْمَعُ

حَتَّى إِذَا جَزَرَتْ مِيَاهُ رُزُونِهِ وَبِأَيِّ حِينٍ مَلَاوَةٌ تَنْقَطَعُ
 ذَكَرَ الْوُرُودَ بِهَا وَشَاقَى أَمْرَهُ شُومٌ¹ وَأَقْبَلَ حِينُهُ يَتَتَبَعُ
 فَاقْتَنَّتُهُنَّ مِنَ السَّوَاءِ وَمَاؤُهُ بَثْرًا، وَعَانَدَهُ طَرِيقُ مَهْبِغُ
 فَكَأَنَّهَا بِالْجِزَعِ بَيْنَ بُبَايِعِ وَأُولَاتِ ذِي الْعُرْجَاءِ نَهَبٌ مُجْمَعُ
 وَكَأَنَّهِنَّ رِيَابَةٌ وَكَأَنَّهُ يَسْتَرُّ يُفِيضُ عَلَى الْقِدَاحِ وَيَصْدَعُ
 وَكَأَنَّهَا هُوَ مِدْوَسٌ مُتَقَلِّبٌ فِي الْكَفِّ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْلَعُ
 فَوَزِدْنَ وَالْعَيُوفُ مَفْعَدٌ رَابِيءِ الـ ضُرْبَاءِ فَوْقَ النَّظْمِ لَا يَتَتَلَعُ
 فَسْتَرْعَنَ فِي حَجَرَاتِ عَذْبٍ بَارِدٍ حَصْبِ الْبِطَاحِ تَغِيْبُ فِيهِ الْأَكْرَعُ
 فَسْتَرْبِنَ ثُمَّ سَمِعْنَ حِسًّا دُونَهُ شَرَفُ الْحِجَابِ وَرَيْبُ قَرَعٍ يُفْرَعُ
 وَتَمِيمَةً مِنْ قَانِصٍ مُتَلَبِّبٍ فِي كَفِّهِ جَشْنٌ أَجَشُّ وَأَقْطَعُ
 فَتَكَرَّزَتْهُ وَتَفَرَّنَ وَامْتَرَسَتْ بِهِ سَطْعَاءُ هَادِيَةٌ وَهَادٍ جُرْشَعُ
 فَرَمَى فَأَنْقَدَ مِنْ نَحْوِصٍ عَائِطٍ سَهْمًا، فَحَرَّ وَرَيْشُهُ مُتَصَبِّعُ
 فَبَدَا لَهُ أَقْرَابُ هَذَا رَائِعًا عَجَلًا، فَعَيْتَ فِي الْكِنَانَةِ يُرْجَعُ
 فَرَمَى فَأَلْحَقَ صَاعِدِيًّا مَطْحَرًا بِالْكَشْحِ فَاشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ الْأَضْلَعُ
 فَأَبَدَّهِنَّ حُتُوفَهُنَّ فَهَارِبٌ بِدَمَائِهِ أَوْ بَارِكُ مُتَجَعِّعُ
 يَعْزُرَنَ فِي عَلَقِ النَّجِيعِ كَأَنَّمَا كُسِيَتْ بُرُودَ بَنِي تَزِيدَ الْأَذْرُعُ
 وَالذَّهْرُ لَا يَبْقَى عَلَى حَدَثَانِيهِ شَبَبٌ أَفْرَنْهُ الْكِلَابُ مُرَوَّعُ

¹ شوماً. Var.

شَعَفَ الكِلَابُ الضَّارِيَاتُ فُوَادَهُ فَإِذَا يَرَى الصُّبْحَ المُصَدِّقَ يُفْرَعُ
ويُعوذُ بالأرطَى إِذَا مَا شَفَّهُ فَطُرَّ وِرَاحَتُهُ بَلِيلٌ زَعَزَعُ
يَرْمِي بِعَيْنَيْهِ العُيُوبَ وَطَرَفُهُ مُعْضٍ يُصَدِّقُ طَرَفُهُ مَا يَسْمَعُ
فَعَدَا يُشْرِقُ مَتْنُهُ فَبَدَا لَهُ أُولَى سَوَابِقِهَا قَرِيباً تُورَعُ
فَأَنْصَاعَ مَنْ فَرَعَ وَسَدَّ فُرُوجَهُ عُبْرَ ضَوَارٍ وَافِيَانٍ وَأَجْدَعُ
فَنَحَا لَهَا بِمُدْلَقَيْنِ كَأَمَّا بِمَا مِنَ النَّضْحِ المِجْدَحِ أُيْدَعُ
يَنْهَسُنَّهُ وَيُدُوذُهُنَّ وَيَحْتَمِي عَبْلُ الشَّوَى بِالطَّرْتِينِ مُوَعُ
حَتَّى إِذَا ارْتَدَّتْ وَأَقْصَدَ عُصْبَةً مِنْهَا، وَقَامَ شَرِيدَهَا يَتَضَوَعُ
فَكَأَنَّ سَفُودَيْنِ لَمَّا يُفْتِرَا عَجِلاً لَهُ بِشِوَاءِ شَرِبٍ يُنْزَعُ
فَدَنَا لَهُ رَبُّ الكِلَابِ بِكَفِّهِ بِيضٌ رِهَابٌ رِيشُهُنَّ مُفْرَعُ
فَرَمَى لِيُنْقِدَ فَرَهَا فَهَوَى لَهُ سَهْمٌ، فَأَنْقَدَ طُرْتِيهِ المِنْزَعُ
فَكَبَا كَمَا يَكْبُو فَنِيْقُ تَارِزٌ بِالْحَبْتِ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ هُوَ أَبْرَعُ
وَالدَّهْرُ لَا يَبْقَى عَلَى حَدَثَانِيهِ مُسْتَشْعِرٌ حَلَقَ الحَدِيدِ مُفْنَعُ
حَمِيَتْ عَلَيْهِ الدَّرْعُ، حَتَّى وَجْهُهُ مِنْ حَرِّهَا يَوْمَ الكَرِيهَةِ أَسْفَعُ
تَعَدُّوْهُ بِهِ حَوْصَاءَ يُفْصِمُ جَرِيئِهَا حَلَقَ الرِّحَالَةَ فَهِيَ رَحُو تَمْرَعُ
قَصَرَ الصَّبُوحَ لَهَا فَشَرَّحَ لَحْمَهَا بِالنِّيِّ فَهِيَ تَنْوُحُ فِيهَا الإِصْبَعُ
تَأْتِي بِدِرَّتِهَا إِذَا مَا اسْتَكْرَهَتْ إِلَّا الحَمِيمَ فَإِنَّهُ يَنْبَضُّعُ
مُتَقَلِّقٌ أَنْسَأُوْهَا عَنْ قَانِيٍّ كَالْقُرْطِ صَاوٍ عُبْرُهُ لَا يُرْضَعُ

بَيْنَا تَعَانِيهِ الْكُفَمَاةَ وَرُؤُغِهِ يَوْمًا أُتِيخَ لَهُ جَرِيءٌ سَلْفَعُ
يَعْدُو بِهِ نَهْشُ الْمَشَاشِ كَأَنَّهُ صَدَعٌ سَلِيمٌ رَجَعُهُ لَا يَطْلَعُ
فَتَنَازِلًا وَتَوَاقَفَتْ خِيَالُهُمَا وَكِلَاهُمَا بَطَلُ الْبِقَاءِ مُحْدَعُ
يَتَنَاهَبَانِ الْمَجْدَ، كُلُّ وَائِقُ بِبِلَائِهِ، وَالْيَوْمُ يَوْمٌ أَشْنَعُ
وَكِلَاهُمَا مُتَوَشِّخٌ دَا رُونَقِي عَضْبًا إِذَا مَسَّ الْكَرْيَهَةَ يَمْقَطَعُ
وَكِلَاهُمَا فِي كَفِّهِ بَزِيئَةٌ فِيهَا سِنَانٌ كَالْمَنَارَةِ أَصْلَعُ
وَعَلَيْهِمَا مَاذِيَّتَانِ قَضَاهُمَا دَاوُودٌ أَوْ صَنَعُ السَّوَابِغِ نُبْعُ
فَتَحَالَسَا نَفْسَيْهِمَا بِتَوَافِدِ كَنَوَافِدِ الْغُبُطِ الَّتِي لَا تُرْقَعُ
وَكِلَاهُمَا قَدْ عَاشَ عَيْشَةً مَاجِدِ وَحَتَّى الْعَلَاءِ، لَوْ أَنَّ شَيْئًا يَنْفَعُ

[93] البريق بن عياض (من الطويل):

وَأَنْ أَمْسِي شَيْخًا بِالرَّجِيعِ وَوَلْدَةٌ وَيُصْبِحُ قَوْمِي دُونَ دَارِهِمْ مِصْرُ
أَسْأَلُ عَنْهُمْ كُلَّمَا جَاءَ رَاكِبٌ مُقِيمًا بِأَمْلَاحٍ كَمَا رُبَطَ الْبِعْرُ
فَمَا كُنْتُ أَحْسَى أَنْ أَعِيشَ خِلَافَهُمْ بِسِتَّةِ آيَاتٍ كَمَا نَبَتَ الْعِنْرُ

[94] أبو خراش (من الوافر):

أَلَا فَأَعْلَمُ خِرَاشُ بِأَنَّ خَيْرَ الْـمُـهَاجِرِ بَعْدَ هِجْرَتِهِ زَهِيدُ
فَأَنَّكَ وَأَتْبَعَاءُ الْبِرِّ بَعْدِي كَمَحْضُوبِ اللَّبَانِ وَلَا يَصِيدُ

[95] أسامة بن الحارث (من الطويل):

أَجَارَتْنَا هَلْ لَيْلُ ذِي الْهَمِّ رَاقِدٌ أُمُّ النَّوْمِ عَيْتِي مَانِعٌ مَا أَرَاوِدُ

أَجَارَتْنَا إِنَّ أَمْرَةً لَيَعُودُهُ مِنْ أَيْسَرَ مِمَّا بَتُّ أَخْفِي الْعَوَائِدُ

تَذَكَّرْتُ إِخْوَانِي فَبِتُّ مَسْهَدًا كَمَا ذَكَرْتُ بَوًّا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاقِدُ

لَعَمْرِي لَقَدْ أَمَّهَلْتُ فِي نَهْيِ خَالِدٍ عَنِ الشُّأْمِ إِذَا يَعْصِيَّتْكَ خَالِدُ

وَأَمَّهَلْتُ فِي إِخْوَانِي فَكَأَنَّهُ يُسَمِّعُ بِالنَّهْيِ النَّعَامَ السَّوَارِدُ

فَقُلْتُ لَهُ لَا الْمَرْءُ مَالِكٌ نَفْسِهِ وَلَا هُوَ جَذْمُ الْعَشِيرَةِ عَائِدُ

أَسَيْتُ عَلَى جَذْمِ الْعَشِيرَةِ أَصَبَحْتُ تُقَوِّرُ مِنْهَا حَافَةً وَطَرَائِدُ

فَوَاللَّهِ لَا يَبْتَعَى عَلَى حَدَثَانِيهِ طَرِيدٌ بِأَوْطَانِ الْعَالِيَةِ فَارِدُ

[96] كعب بن سعد الغنوي (من الطويل):

تَقُولُ سُلَيْمِي مَا لِحَسِمِكَ شَاجِبًا كَأَنَّكَ يَحْمِيكَ الشَّرَابَ طَبِيبُ

فَقُلْتُ وَمَ أَعْيَ الْجَوَابَ وَمَ أَلِخَ وَلِلدَّهْرِ فِي صَحِّ السَّلَامِ نَصِيبُ

تَتَأْبَعُ أَحْدَاثٍ تَحْرَمَنَّ إِخْوَتِي وَشَيْبَتِنِ رَأْسِي وَالْحُطُوبُ تُشِيبُ

أَتَى دُونَ خُلُوِّ الْعَيْشِ حَتَّى أَمْرَةٍ نُكُوبٌ عَلَى آثَارِهِنَّ نُكُوبُ

لَعَمْرِي لَوْ كَانَتْ أَصَابَتْ مُصِيبَةً أَخِي وَالْمِنَايَا لِلرِّجَالِ شَعُوبُ

أَخِي كَانَ يَكْفِيَنِي وَكَانَ يُعِينِي عَلَى نَائِبَاتِ الدَّهْرِ حِينَ تُتُوبُ

[97] سعدى بنت الشمردل (من الكامل):

أمنَ الحوادِثِ والمُنونِ أروغُ وأبيثُ ليلي كلُّهُ لا أهجغُ
وأبيثُ مُخْلِيةً أبكي أسعداً ولمثلِهِ تبكي العيونُ وتهمغُ
وتَبَيَّنُ العينُ الطَّليحةُ أنَّها تبكي من الجَزَعِ الدَّخيلِ وتدمغُ
ولقدَ بدا لي قبلُ فيمَا قدَ مَضَى وعلمتُ ذاكَ لو أنَّ علماً يَنفَعُ
أنَّ الحوادِثَ والمُنونَ كلَّيهِما لا يُعْتَبانِ ولو بكي من يجزغُ

[98] أبو ذؤيب (من الوافر):

فَقَالَ أَمَا حَسِيتِ وَلَمْنَايَا مَصَارِعُ أَنْ تُحْرِقَكَ السُّيُوفُ
وَقَالَ لَقَدْ حَسِيتِ وَأُنْبَأْتِي بِهِ الْعِثَابُ لَوْ أَنِّي أَعِيفُ
فَقَالَ يَعْهَدِي فِي الْقَوْمِ إِلَيَّ سَقَيْتِ النَّفْسَ لَوْ يُشْفَى اللَّهَيْفُ

[99] النابغة الذبياني (من البسيط):

كَأَنَّ رَحْلي وَقدَ زالَ النَّهَارُ بنا يومَ الجليلِ على مُستأنسٍ وِحدِ
مِنَ وَحْشٍ وَجَرَّةٍ مُؤَسِّبٍ أَكارِعُهُ طَاوِي المَصِيرِ كَسَيْفِ الصَّبَقِ الفَرْدِ
أَسْرَتْ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الجَوَازِ سَارِيَّةٌ تُزجِي الشَّمَالَ عليه جَامِدَ البَرْدِ
فَأرتاعَ مِن صَوْتِ كَلَابٍ فَبَاتَ لَهُ طَوَعِ الشَّمَامَتِ مِن خَوْفٍ وَمِنَ صَرْدِ

وكان ضمران منه حيث يوزعه
 طعن المعارك عند المحجر النجد
 شك الفريصة بالمذرى فأنفدتها
 طعن المبيطير إذ يشفي من العضد
 كأنه خارجاً من جنب صفحته
 سفود شرب نسوه عند مفتاد
 فطل يعجم أعلى الروق منقبضاً
 لنا رأى واشيق إقصاص صاحبه
 ولا سبيل إلى عقل ولا قود
 قالت له النفس: إني لا أرى طمعاً
 وإن مولاك لم يسلم ولم يصد

[100] علقمة (من البسيط):

وقد علوت فتود الرجل ينفعني
 يوم يجيء به الجوزاء مسموم
 حام كأن أواز النار شامله
 دون الثياب ورأس المرء مغموم
 وقد أفود أمام الحي سلهبة
 يهدي بها نسب في الحي معلوم

[101] لبيد (من الكامل):

لله نافلة الأجل الأفضل
 وله العلى وأثيث كل مؤئل
 لا يستطيع الناس نحو كتابه
 أتى وليس قضائه بمبدل
 سوى فأغلق دون عزة عرشه
 سعباً طباقاً فوق فرع المنقل
 والأرض تحتهم مهاداً راسياً
 ثبتت حوالقها بصم الجنادل
 [والماء والنيران من آياته
 فيهن موعظة لمن لم يجهل]

بل كُفَّ سَعْيِكَ بِاطِلٍ إِلَّا التَّقَى فَإِذَا أَنْقَضَى شَيْءٌ كَأَنَّ لَمْ يُفْعَلِ
 لَوْ كَانَ شَيْءٌ خَالِدًا لَتَوَاءَلَتْ عَصَمَاءُ مُؤَلَّفَةً ضَوَاحِي مَأْسَلِ
 يَظْلُوفُهَا وَرَقُّ البَشَامِ وَدَوَّهَا صَعَبٌ تَرُلُ سِرَاتُهُ بِالْأَجْدَلِ
 أَوْ ذُو زَوَائِدَ لَا يُطَافُ بِأَرْضِهِ يَعْشَى الْمُهْجَعِجَ كَالذَّنُوبِ الْمُرْسَلِ
 فِي نَابِهِ عَوْجٌ يُجَاوِزُ شِدْقَهُ وَيُخَالِفُ الأَعْلَى وَرَاءَ الأَسْفَلِ
 فَأَصَابَهُ رَبِيبُ الزَّمَانِ فَأَصْبَحَتْ أَنْيَابُهُ مِثْلَ الرَّجَاحِ النُّصَلِ
 وَلَقَدْ رَأَى صُبْحُ سَوَادَ خَلِيلِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ قَائِمِ سَيْفِهِ وَالمِحْمَلِ
 صَبَّحَنَ صُبْحًا حِينَ حُقَّ حِذَاؤُهُ فَأَصَابَ صُبْحًا قَائِمٌ لَمْ يَفْعَلِ
 [فَأَلْتَفَّ صَفْمُهُمَا وَصَبَّحَ تَحْتَهُ بَيْنَ التُّرَابِ وَبَيْنَ جَنُوبِ الكَلْكَلِ]
 وَلَقَدْ جَرَى لُبْدٌ فَأَدْرَكَ جَرِيَهُ رَبِيبُ الزَّمَانِ وَكَانَ غَيْرَ مُتَقَلِّ
 لَمَّا رَأَى لُبْدَ النُّسُورِ تَطَايَرَتْ رَفَعَ القَوَادِمِ كَالْفَقِيرِ الأَعَزَلِ
 مِنْ تَحْتِهِ لُقْمَانُ يَرْجُو نَهْضَهُ وَلَقَدْ رَأَى لُقْمَانَ أَنْ لَا يَأْتَلِي
 غَلَبَ اللَّيَالِي خَلْفَ آلِ مُحَرِّقٍ وَكَمَا فَعَلَنَ يُتْبِعِ وَيَهْرَقِلِ
 وَعَلَبَنَ أَبْرَهَةَ الَّذِي أَلْفَيْنُهُ قَدْ كَانَ حَلَدَ فَوْقَ عُرْفَةِ مَوْكَلِ
 وَالحَارِثُ الحَرَابُ حَلَى عَاقِلًا دَارًا أَقَامَ بِهَا وَلَمْ يَتَنَقَّلِ
 [تَجْرِي حَزَائِنُهُ عَلَى مَنْ نَابَهُ تَجْرِي الفُرَاتِ عَلَى فِرَاضِ الجَدُولِ]
 حَتَّى تَحْمَلَ أَهْلُهُ وَقَطِينُهُ وَأَقَامَ سَيِّدُهُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَحَمَّلِ
 وَالشَاعِرُونَ النَاطِقُونَ أَرَاهُمُ سَلَكُوا سَبِيلَ مُرْقِشٍ وَمُهْلِهِلِ

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