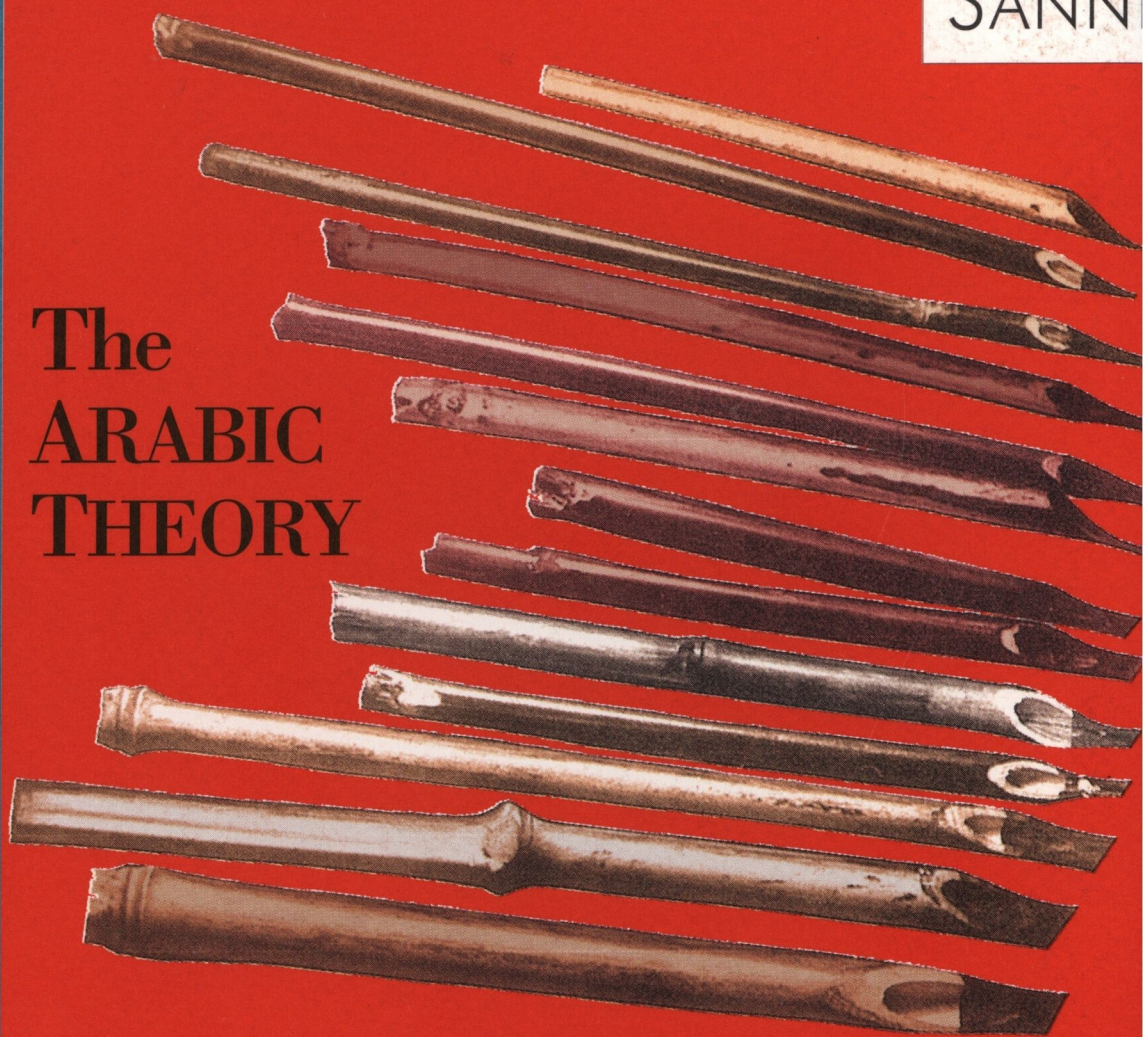


AMIDU  
SANNI

# The ARABIC THEORY



*of*  
PROSIFICATION  
and  
*VERSIFICATION*

IN KOMMISSION BEI FRANZ STEINER

BEIRUTER TEXTE UND STUDIEN • BAND 70









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For the first time, a comprehensive analysis is made in regard to the development of the Arabic theory of prosification and versification, that is, how poetical materials are utilized in prose compositions and vice versa. This study examines the trajectory of development from the stage of studied vagueness and intuitiveness to that of explicit categorization at the hands of Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637/1239) as reflected in his *al-Washy al-marqūm*, so far the oldest and extant exposé on the theory and practice of the device.

The systematic rendering of the Arabic poetical schemata and thematic stereotypes into prose with appropriate model essays by al-Nayramānī (403/1012) in his *Manthūr al-manzūm*, the earliest and probably the only surviving effort of the type, is duly analyzed in this monograph. Eager explorers in the field of intertextuality will find the present contribution a useful addition to their library.







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AMIDU SANNI

THE ARABIC THEORY OF  
PROSIFICATION AND VERSIFICATION

ON *ḤALL* AND *NAẒM* IN  
ARABIC THEORETICAL DISCOURSE





BEIRUTER TEXTE UND STUDIEN  
HERAUSGEGEBEN VON  
DER DIREKTORIN DES ORIENT-INSTITUTS  
DER DEUTSCHEN MORGENLÄNDISCHEN GESELLSCHAFT  
PROF. DR. ANGELIKA NEUWIRTH

BAND 70

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BEIRUT 1998  
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*To Àpèké and our children*





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## PREFACE

That this study is coming out as a book is a coincidence. It has its roots in an adventure that had an entirely different purpose and motivation. It was during my search for the poetical *dīwān* of al-Marzubānī (d. 384/994) at the Egyptian National Library, the *Dār al-kutub*, in the autumn of 1988 that I stumbled upon al-Thaʿalibī's (d. 429/1037) *Nathr al-naẓm* (Prosification of Poetry). I decided then to make this work the subject of an investigation that might serve as a follow-up to von Grunebaum's 1944 monumental article on plagiarism, a classic contribution which, inspite of its age, all future studies in literary borrowings will still have to reckon with. I was still toying with this idea when, in the summer of 1991, I obtained a copy of Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Waṣṣṣa al-marqūm* from the Iraqi Academy (*Al-Majmaʿ al-ʿilmī al-ʿirāqī*) through the efforts of Mr. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Sāmarrāʾī, then the Iraqi Ambassador to Nigeria, who unfortunately had to leave at the height of "Operation Desert Storm", the Gulf War. By the time I came to know of al-Nayramānī's (d. 403/1012) *Manthūr al-manẓūm* (The Prose of Poetry), the earliest and possibly the only extant prose version of the Arabic poetic stereotypes, I realized that I may have got enough materials that could help in the analysis of how an important aspect of the Arabic theory of literature developed both in theory and practice, and this is what I have attempted to do in this study.

I have many debts to acknowledge in regard to this effort. My greatest debt is to the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung (Germany) for granting me a fellowship to undertake this study as well as for supporting its publication financially. It is my pleasant duty to thank Prof. Ewald Wagner who facilitated my coming to Gießen and cheerfully offered me every practical and intellectual assistance, whenever this was needed. Prof. Angelika Hartmann hosted me at the Institute and put all the necessary facilities at my disposal. Her unstinting interest in my research and personal welfare made her a wonderful *Betreuerin* towards whom I feel grateful. I lack adequate words to thank Prof. Heinrichs, and Dr. Van Gelder, Rijks *Universiteit* Groningen-Netherlands, for reading most of



my draft and for their useful remarks and stimulating suggestions. I thank Mr. McWilliam, Director, SOAS London, for granting me residence at the School during the three very agreeable months I spent in the United Kingdom in the course of this study. The members of Staff of the Near and Middle East Department at SOAS, particularly my former teacher, Prof. Owen Wright, and Prof. Abū-Deeb, gave me the opportunity to present part of this study in a seminar. I am grateful to my employers, the Lagos State University in Nigeria, for allowing me to be away until this study was concluded. It is more than with a sense of tradition in an effort of this nature that I acknowledge the support and understanding of my wife and children who had to endure my long absence from home while this study lasted. If I were to name others who have assisted me in various ways, I should have a list that would rival that of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Conrad of Hirsau in *Dialogus*, and that hardly seems necessary. I thank Prof. Angelika Neuwirth and Dr. Schöning for accepting to include this work in the publication series of the Orient-Institut of the DMG.

Institut für Orientalistik Gießen  
October 17, 1995.

AMIDU SANNI

## FOREWORD

The poet and the scribe are the two implicit protagonists of the present monograph. The time is roughly one millennium before our age; the place is the heartlands of the Caliphate, and the language, Arabic. Poets had been around from the attested history of Arabic literature, although they underwent certain metamorphoses from the tribal poet of the pre-Islamic times to the urban and courtly poet of the Islamic empire. Scribes were a new set of people necessitated by the administrative demands of the Caliphate. However, they were new only in the Arabic context: the profession of the scribe had enjoyed a long and venerable tradition in various states and languages of the Near East and the Islamic scribe in particular was largely modeled on Persian antecedents, since Sasanian statecraft had a strong influence on the Caliphal chanceries, both through the living tradition of practitioners and by way of translations from the Middle Persian “advice” literature. But then there is the literary side of the scribe’s activity, the composition of ornate epistles. This was quite naturally based on the Arabic antecedents. Ancient Arabic literature, as far as we can gauge it from the text collections of later philologists and antiquarians, knew two main practitioners of literary art: the poet and the orator, the producer of rhymed and metered poems and the producer of rhetorical prose speeches. Although orators continued to exist in Islamic culture in the guise of preachers, it was the scribe who became the main representative of the ornate prose.

Interestingly, the 9<sup>th</sup> century “inventor” of the Arab Humanities, al-Jāhīz, points out that poetry and prose-writing (he is thinking of both speeches and epistles) require different talents and that only a few – whom he proceeds to enumerate – were sufficiently gifted to combine the two. But things were changing even at the time he was writing. Since court poets and scribes often had to address the same topics, such as congratulations, condolences and admonitions, the idea of an equivalency between poem and epistle, though not in their outward form, became prevalent. Some people felt capable of writing in both modes. This meant that authors now would often leave two *dīwāns* for posterity, a collection

of poems and one of letters. It also meant that a lively give-and-take between scribes and poets was now the order of the day. Soon theorists began to describe, evaluate and classify the various techniques that would be used to accommodate prose passages in poetry or *vice versa*. The technical terms for the two processes are *‘aqd*, lit. “solidification”, i.e. “versification”, and *ḥall*, lit. “dissolution”, i.e. “prosification”.

This is the focus of the present monograph. Though *‘aqd* is certainly not neglected, the emphasis is on *ḥall*, and this for a reason: since the scribes were wielders of political power, while the poets were normally not, and since, in addition, the theorists were usually members of the scribal class, the interest in making poetic materials usable for epistolography was much greater than that in the opposite procedure. A large part of the book is taken up by a close analysis of *Al-Waṣḥy al-marqūm fī ḥall al-manẓūm*, “The Striped Embroidery – on Turning Verse into Prose”, by ʿIyāʾ al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr (b. 558/1163, d. 637/1239). Almost the entire literary output of this author served the need of the scribes, and the *Waṣḥy* is no exception. Small wonder, since Ibn al-Athīr himself was a noted vizier with Saladin and some of his followers and was considered one of the greatest epistolographers and stylists of his age.

The phenomenon of *‘aqd* and *ḥall* and the literature devoted to it has not attracted much attention from Western scholarship. Apart from the 19th century rhetorical handbooks of Mehren and his ilk, where the terms are briefly mentioned and defined, the first to point out the importance of these techniques was probably G.E. von Grunebaum in a passage of his 1944 article on “The Concept of Plagiarism in Arabic Theory” (*Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 3, 234–253). The title of this article shows that, rather than viewing the two processes from the vantage point of improving and enriching an epistle by incorporating poetic materials (or *vice versa*), they could also be viewed from the point of view of plagiarism.

But it is Amidu Sanni’s present work which, for the first time, addresses the topic squarely and with all its ramifications. And some of these ramifications attract the reader’s attention. There is the interesting fact that Ibn al-Athīr, in addition to poetic materials, also discusses various cases of including Koranic and Prophetic passages and adapting them to their epistolary context; these are duly analyzed and classified here. There is also the remarkable advice of some of the theorists that the existing poetry was not a sufficient reservoir of ideas for the inspiration of a practising poet and that, for that reason, poets should turn to prose, especially aphoristic writings, and incorporate them into their poetry. Here is still a wide field for further research.



In general, Dr. Sanni has drawn up a blueprint that will assist future researchers in the analysis of specific texts and authors. His contribution is a courageous first step in this largely unknown terrain and will prove invaluable, especially for those who intend to study the interrelated phenomena of mannerism and intertextuality in classical Arabic literature. We will all be indebted to him.

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## EXORDIUM

The practice of borrowing from prose discourse into poetic compositions and *vice versa* seems to be as old as the history of literary practice itself. Evidence in support of this observation is to be found in the Western classical literary tradition. Homer's *Iliad* (c. 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) is undoubtedly the oldest surviving poetical work, and the author is reported to have borrowed into his poetry from the ballads then alive in oral tradition.<sup>1</sup> But the earliest, deliberate attempt at turning a prose discourse into poetry is probably that by Socrates (d. 399 B.C.) who, during his imprisonment, rendered some of Aesop's (fl. 570 B.C.) fables into poetry.<sup>2</sup> The Graeco-Roman rhetorical traditions are replete with accounts about orators and rhetoricians, for example, Cicero (d. 43 B.C.) and Horace (d. 8 B.C.), borrowing from ancient poetry into their speeches and works. The works of Vergil, Tyrtæus, Pindar, to name but a few, were favourite materials on which rhetoricians drew; and even St. Paul is shown to be an admirer of Menander (d. 89 B.C.), a Greek comedy poet, whom he not rarely quoted.<sup>3</sup> Statius (c. 40–96 C.E.) proudly claims that his father not only explained difficult poets but also turned Homer's poetry into prose without "falling a step behind".<sup>4</sup> Quintilian's (d. 95 C.E.) definition of grammar as "the science of speaking correctly and of interpreting the poets" can be taken as a strong evidence of interest in poetical compositions.<sup>5</sup> The justification for the study of poetry in the syllabus of the classical grammar was to illustrate rhetorical figures that students could use in prose orations. Moreover, turning poetry into prose was introduced into schools of rhetoric as an exercise about the first century of the Christian

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, SHAW, *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, s.v. "plagiarism".

<sup>2</sup> ALSTON HURD CHASE & HENRY PHILLIPS JR, *A New Introduction to Greek* (Cambridge Mass. etc., 1961), 153.

<sup>3</sup> PREMINGER, *Classical and Medieval Literary Criticism*, 292–93.

<sup>4</sup> CURTIUS, *European Literature*, 147–48.

<sup>5</sup> MURPHY, "Rhetoric- Western European", in STRAYER, ed., *Dictionary of Middle Ages*, 10/352.

era, and was in fact recommended by Quintilian.<sup>6</sup> In regard to borrowing from scriptural sources into literary or speech performances, its employment as an artistic technique was first expressed by St. Augustine (d. 430) in his *De Doctrina Christiana*, a work which is intended to demonstrate, among other things, that the rhetorical *colores* for which the pagan oratory tradition was known, are equally to be found in the Scriptures. Consequently, he recommended that Christian preachers, or rather, Christ's spokesmen, should borrow from the Scriptures into their compositions.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the Biblical books were turned into verse, as the Spaniard Juvencus (c. 330 C.E.) did with the Gospels; and there was no shortage of several versified materials turned into prose afresh in Roman antiquity. What can be deduced from the foregoing is the existence of a symbiotic relationship between poetry and prose, the two principal modes of literary expression, to the extent that they cast irresistible influence on the structure and contents of each other in their historical development.

In the Arabic literary practice of the classical period, the poet or the orator drew freely on the experiences and sources that were available to him. Poets who lived in environments where scriptural materials and ideas were available and accessible reflected these in their works. Even hortatory compositions, for example the one attributed to the pre-Islamic Quss b. Šā'ida, show a marked tendency towards colorization with ideas and expressions which could have derived only from scriptural sources.<sup>8</sup> The Islamic author of prose or poetry did not have to wait for a St. Augustine before drawing on the facilities afforded by the faith: the expressions, motifs and styles of the Qur'ān, already acknowledged as the ultimate in eloquence, inspired literary compositions and supplied materials for them. In regard to borrowing from poetry into prose essays and *vice versa*, the memoranda of instructions to prospective practitioners which started to emerge from as early as the first half of 2<sup>nd</sup> A.H./8<sup>th</sup> C.E. century were already recommending a good knowledge of all forms of literary discourse. However, a well-formalized theory on how this should be translated into practice started to emerge only at a much later period, specifically when the various aspects of the literary discourse were being analyzed through the instruments of formal criteria and technical characterizations. The term *iqtibās* thus came to be applied to borrowing from

<sup>6</sup> CURTIUS, *loc. cit.* See also PREMINGER, 10.

<sup>7</sup> See MURPHY, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, Chapter II, 43ff. See also CURTIUS, 40; MINNIS, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 35ff.

<sup>8</sup> For the text of Quss's oration, see AL-IŠBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/504.

the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*; *ḥall al-naẓm* to turning poetry into prose, and *naẓm al-ḥall* to the opposite procedure.

The problem then arises in regard to adequate and satisfactory English renderings for these terms, as it is important that equivalent terms should give precise significations, and far more important that such significations should not be distorted. For example, rendering the term *ḥall* as “decomposition” as was done by Grunebaum is less than accurate.<sup>9</sup> The theoretical discourse relating to the concept of *ḥall*, as this study intends to establish, demonstrates that the term was used to refer to any of, “derobing” a poem of metre and rhyme; of borrowing the thought content of a verse and then expressing the same in prose; of paraphrasing of poetical and scriptural expressions; as well as of quotations from, or allusions to, such materials. Besides, the term “decomposition” carries an inherent value of negative judgement. It is for the same reasons that Makdisi’s rendering of the term as “deconstruction”, which is anyway far less felicitous, is unsatisfactory.<sup>10</sup> The fact of the case is that a *kātib* or a poet who borrows from Qurʾānic materials and Prophetic *akhbār* into his compositions is not “deconstructing” such materials, but rather, “reconstructing” or “recomposing” them into new forms. Moreover, the term “prosification” as an equivalent for *ḥall* will be of questionable validity when applied to borrowings from the Qurʾān and the Prophetic *akhbār*; for the two source materials are already in prose form. Also, to render *naẓm/aqd* as “versification” is equally inadequate, for the fact that the variety of instances and sublevels cited above in the case of *ḥall* are equally demonstrable in regard to *naẓm*, its complementary opposite.<sup>11</sup> But *Daʿ dhā ’l-qawl ʿan ʿiddat ahl al-kaḥf*.<sup>12</sup> For analysis and convenience purposes however, I have used “prosification”, sometimes interchangeably with “recomposition”, as an equivalent for *ḥall*. But I have not failed to employ “decomposition” too where this seems to be more appropriate to the context. By the same token, “versification” is generally employed as an equivalent for *naẓm*.

The response of the native connoisseurs in Arabic literary practice to the *ḥall* and *naẓm* phenomenon ranged from toleration that bordered on approval, to dispraise that verged on disapproval. However, the view that

<sup>9</sup> See GRUNEBaum, “The Concept of Plagiarism in Arabic Poetry”, 234–53.

<sup>10</sup> MAKDISI, *The Rise of Humanism*, 362–64.

<sup>11</sup> Compare *ibid.*, 135.

<sup>12</sup> The allusion here is to the controversy over the number of the mysterious cave dwellers mentioned in Qurʾān 18:22.



finally emerged as the standard not only recommended both procedures as necessary tools for anyone contemplating on serious compositions, it also provided broad guidelines as to how they could be cultivated for optimum aesthetic effect. By the close of the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century, the debate over the subject had been furnished with an enduring logical framework both in theory and in practice, to the extent that later contributors could do no more than fine tuning. It must be stated, however, that it was the *ḥall* phenomenon that provoked the most extensive and sustained discussion. The reason for this is to be sought in the tradition that accorded the pride of place to the *kātib*, both in terms of training and social status. It should therefore not be surprising that the subtleties and varieties of *ḥall* as part of the essential instruments of the writing profession took a greater portion of the theoretical discourse over the subject of intertextual borrowing, as will be evident from the following.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **Qur'ānic and Poetic Idioms in Prose: the *ḥall* “prosification” Theory**

Al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) related how Ibrāhīm b. Ḥittān (d. 84/703), a popular poet orator, once delivered an impressive speech at the court of Ziyād (d. 53/673), but the fact that the speech contained no Qur'ānic idioms denied the author a favourable assessment. The use of Qur'ānic idioms in public speech became a tradition from the inception of Islam, and such speeches that were not decorated with them were characterized as *shawḥā'* “deformed”.<sup>1</sup> The earliest reference to the use of Qur'ānic materials as a stylistic phenomenon is probably in a letter written by 'Abd al-Ḥamid al-Kātib (d. 132/750) on behalf of caliph Marwān (d. 91/710) to the Crown Prince 'Abd Allāh. The latter was advised to read the Qur'ān regularly in order that he may ponder over its meaning and *embellish his speech with it*.<sup>2</sup> The aesthetic value of the Qur'ān was thus recognized, and its use as a means of enhancing the artistic quality of formal or normal speech performance was acknowledged. Wadād al-Qāḍī's study of the patterns and forms of Qur'ānic usages in the epistolography of 'Abd al-Ḥamid is an effort with which any investigation on the subject will have to reckon, the only problem one might have is that the author went too far; almost characterizing every expression for which some roots could be found in the Scripture as instances of borrowing or adaptation, even when such idioms may have been fully absorbed into the routine usage.<sup>3</sup> But it is quite clear from al-Qāḍī's analysis that 'Abd al-Ḥamid used the Qur'ān in his letters in a number of ways, by quoting the verses fully or partially; by paraphrasing or rephrasing them; by adopting their sense rather than their wording; or by alluding to specific motifs or reports. The use of the style or idioms of the Qur'ān became a standard among the early generation of stylists, almost constituting the distinctive character of their works. One early *kātib* in whose writings the tendency

<sup>1</sup> AL-JĀḤIẒ, *al-Bayān wa 'l-tabyīn*, 2/7. See also, IBN WAḤB, *al-Burhān*, 95.

<sup>2</sup> AL-QALQASHANDĪ, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 10/195–233 (p. 197).

<sup>3</sup> AL-QĀḌĪ, “The Impact of the Qur'ān”, 285–313.



is said to have been amply reflected was the Yemeni Bishr b. Abī Kubār, whose letters are said to date between 154/772 and 202/817.<sup>4</sup>

In his analysis of the tools of eloquence required in the writing profession, Ibrāhīm al-Shaybānī (d. 298/910) specifically recommends that the *kātib* should be efficient in lifting the verses of the Qurʾān for use in appropriate places in prose writings, and this is probably the earliest and clearest evidence to support the early recognition of the device as part of the basic instruments of the profession.<sup>5</sup> Occasional references to borrowings from Qurʾān into literary compositions are encountered in some of the remarks and comments made by later connoisseurs, although the issue developed fully into a literary phenomenon worthy of an independent inquiry only at the hands of al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1037) in his *al-Iqtibās min al-Qurʾān*. In this work, the author argues that borrowing from Qurʾānic idioms into all discourse types, viz., prose, poetry and oratory, is a requisite tool for excellent performance in respect of which he says:<sup>6</sup>

... وإِنَّمَا قُصَارَى الْمُتَحَلِّلِينَ بِالْبَلَاغَةِ وَالْحَاطِينَ فِي حَبْلِ الْبَرَاءَةِ أَنْ يَقْتَبِسُوا مِنْ أَلْفَاظِهِ {أَيِ الْقُرْآنِ} وَمَعَانِيهِ فِي أَنْوَاعٍ مَقَاصِدَهُمْ أَوْ يَسْتَشْهَدُوا وَيَتَمَثَّلُوا فِي فُنُونِ مَوَارِدِهِمْ وَمَصَادِرِهِمْ، فَيَكْتَسِي كَلَامُهُمْ بِذَلِكَ الْاِقْتِبَاسِ مَعْرُضًا، مَا لِحُسْنِهِ غَايَةً...

“... certainly, the ultimate objective of those who are endowed with eloquence, those who strive for efficiency, should be to borrow from its (i.e. Qurʾānic) expressions and meanings into their various topics; or to cite it; or to quote it in their various introductions and conclusions. Such borrowing will then confer on their speeches an attractive outlook that is of immeasurable beauty.”

As far as I know, al-Thaʿālibī’s work remains the only effort in the classical scholarship to give such a remarkable attention to the issue as to make it the subject matter of an independent analysis. Although his interest seems to be concentrated more on its employment in poetic practice than

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 285, where she refers to the study of his style in her (not seen) *Bishr Ibn Abi Kubār al-Balawī: namūdhaj min al-nathr al-fannī al-mubakkir fī ‘l-Yaman* (Beirut, 1985), 99–148.

<sup>5</sup> See below, fn. 17. A very recent study on the writing profession in Arabic tradition is ADRIAN GULLY, “Epistles for Grammarians: illustration from the *inshāʾ* literature”, *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 23 n° 2 (1996), 147–66. Yet another study is MUḤAMMAD KHAYR SHAYKH MŪSA, “Ḥarakat al-taʿlīf fī ‘l-kitāb wa ‘l-kuttāb...”, *MMLAD* 72 n° 3 (1997), 481–526.

<sup>6</sup> AL-THAʿĀLIBĪ, *al-Iqtibās*, 23–24.

in prose as will be shown elsewhere in this study, what is significant is that borrowing from Qur'ānic idioms as a device that promotes the aesthetic quality of compositions was given its definitive technical shape by him. But for the earliest and so far the most detailed proposition on how Qur'ānic *formulae* or ideas should actually be used in prose works, we are beholden to 'Ali b. Khalaf al-Kātib (fl. 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> c.) who says:<sup>7</sup>

ومنها أن يقتصر فيما يستعيره من آيات التنزيل العزيز في المكاتبات النافذة في الأمور الجليلة للترصيع والتحلية والاستشهاد للمعاني على ما يقع في موقعه ويليق بالمكان الذي توضع فيه ولا يستكثر منه حتى يكون هو الغالب على كلامه تنزيهاً لكلام الله تعالى عن الابتذال فإنه إنما يستعار على وجه التبرك والزينة لا ليجعل حشواً للمسهب من العبارة ومادة الألفن المفحم. وإذا استعار منه شيئاً فليحكه على هيئته ولا ينقله عن صيغته ليسلم من تحريفه عن مواضعه ومخالفة إختيار الله تعالى فيه. وكما لا يجوز الإكثار منه فكذلك لا يجوز أن يخلى كلامه من شيء منه يُحليه، فإنَّ خُلُوَ الكلام من القرآن يتخون محاسنه ويتقص بهجته، ولذلك كانوا يسمون الخطبة الخالية من القرآن بتراء. وحال الكتب الجليلة النافذة في معازم أمور الدين والسلطان مناسبة لحال الخطب في استحقاقها ما يستحقه من العيب إذا خلت من وقوع شيء من القرآن فيها. ومنها أن لا يؤخر ما يجب تقديمه ولا يقدم ما يجب تأخير، ولا يستعمل في الرسائل ما جاء به القرآن العظيم من الحذف ومخاطبة الخاص بالعام والعام بالخاص والجماعة بلفظ الواحد والواحد بلفظ الجماعة وما يجرى هذا المجرى لأنَّ القرآن نزل بلغة العرب وخُوطب به فصحاؤها ولا يجوز حمل الرسائل على طريقته.

“Another (rule) is that he should limit himself, while borrowing from the verses of the Noble Revelation (i.e. the Qur'ān) into letters concerning serious matters, to such that is appropriate and relevant, using it only for purposes of embellishment, adornment, and as authority for the ideas (that he is expressing). He should not indulge in too much of it to the extent that it becomes dominant in his speech. He should observe this (rule) as a protection for the Word of the Almighty Allah from becoming hackneyed, because borrowing (from it) should be for inducement of divine blessings and for adornment, not as fillers in verbose expressions or as an aid for the one short of words. When he borrows anything from it, he should cite it as it occurs; not chang-

7 IBN KHALAF AL-KĀTIB, *Mawādd al-bayān*, 88–89.



ing its form, so that he would not be guilty of altering it or going against the peculiar choice of the Almighty Allah in regard to it. Just as too much of it is not allowed, so too should his speech not be devoid of that which will be adorn it from it (i.e. the Qurʾān); because for a speech to be lacking in Qurʾānic materials detracts from its beauties and reduces its appeal; hence any speech bereft of Qurʾān is designated as *abtar* 'defective'.<sup>8</sup> This applies to important letters concerning the affairs of religion and the state as well as to speeches which would equally be considered defective should they be bereft of any Qurʾānic materials. Another (rule) is that he should not commit inversion: what should occur first should not come last and *vice versa*. He should also not employ in epistles such peculiar usages of the Holy Qurʾān as ellipsis; the use of common idioms in addressing the cream of the society and the employment of sublime idioms for the commoners; addressing the group with the expression that is meant for an individual; or addressing an individual with the expression that is meant for group; and similar peculiar cases. This is because the Qurʾān was revealed in the language of the Bedouins and was addressed to the eloquent ones amongst them; epistles should therefore not be made to follow its (peculiar) pattern."

By Ibn Khalaf's standards, Qurʾānic materials may be used in prose writings or public speeches only in the form of quotational borrowing; they may not be rephrased or alluded to. The overriding motivation for their use should be to elicit divine benediction rather than for purposes of stylistics. The various ways in which ʿAbd al-Ḥamid made use of Qurʾānic materials in his writings were highlighted above, and there is little doubt that Ibn Khalaf's stipulation is at odds with them and indeed with the reality of the technique as evidenced by the epistolary works provided in the tradition before Ibn Khalaf. In any case, the view that the original wordings of Qurʾānic usages must be retained when they are being borrowed into prose compositions was generally espoused in subsequent discussions and was in fact developed into a sort of formal rule.

Knowledge of the Qurʾān and Prophetic *akhbār*, as well as the employment of their *formulae* and ideas constitute two of the eight necessary instruments of eloquence required by the poet and the prose writer, according to Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637/1239).<sup>9</sup> He is, however, of the opinion

<sup>8</sup> This is a reference to the following *ḥadīth*: *Kull amr dhī bāl lā yuftaḥ bi-dhikr Allāh ʿazz wa-jall fa-huwa abtar*. See IBN ḤANBAL, *Musnad*, 2/359.

<sup>9</sup> IBN AL-ATHĪR, *al-Mathal al-sāʿir*, 1/44.



that the utilisation of materials from those two sources can be accomplished with greater ease in prose than in poetry, and this led him to designate it as one of the five essential pillars in any prose composition of value.<sup>10</sup> But Ibn al-Athīr's discussion of the subject is dogged by terminological deviation and analytical imprecision. The scholarly tradition before him characterized borrowing from the Qur'ān into routine discourse or poetry as *iqtibās/isti'āra*, an eloquent demonstration of the time hallowed concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* which rules out the possibility of any artistic duplication or amplification of Qur'ānic idiom – the *forté* of the *ḥall* device. Why Ibn al-Athīr decided to ignore either of these terms, choosing instead to characterize the phenomenon as *taḍmīn* of the approved type, is difficult to explain. To quote a Qur'ānic verse or a Prophetic tradition in full is designated by him as *al-taḍmīn al-kullī* (complete *taḍmīn*), and partial quotation of them or utilization of the idea contained in them is characterized as *al-taḍmīn al-juz'ī* (partial *taḍmīn*).<sup>11</sup> The latter, which he considers to be of greater aesthetic value than the former, corresponds to his interpretation of *ḥall* as it relates to Qur'ānic materials and Prophetic *akhbār*. Instances of imprecision are, however, to be found in his choice between *taḍmīn* and *ḥall* in regard to a number of texts and samples illustrated by him.<sup>12</sup> According to him, when Qur'ānic materials and Prophetic traditions are used in the form of partial *taḍmīn*, they must come either at the beginning or at the end of prose essays into which they are being borrowed, presumably as a form of *tarṣīf*. The difference between theory and practice in his application of this proposition will be illustrated in the appropriate place, but suffice it to say that it is only Ibn al-Athīr among the early theorists who discussed the use of Qur'ānic materials within the context of a well-formalized *ḥall* theory, the deficiencies or shortcomings in his model of discourse and illustrations notwithstanding. His endorsement of paraphrase or allusion in regard to the use of Qur'ānic materials in essays distinguishes him from Ibn Khalaf, and it is to his eternal credit that this progressive and dynamic view emerged as the standard in the scholarly discourse.

In regard to the use of poetical materials in prose writings, the earliest documentary reference to it as an instrument of style is to be found in 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's memorandum to the secretaries, namely, his *Risāla ilā*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 1/71 and 124–25; *idem*, *al-Jāmi' al-kabīr*, 19.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 2/200–5. For some detailed discussion on *taḍmīn*, see my article, "Again on *taḍmīn* in Arabic Theoretical Discourse", *BSOAS*, LXI Pt 1 (1998), 1–19.

<sup>12</sup> See the discussion on "partial prosification" in the next chapter.

'*l-kuttāb*. The importance of this epistle as the most important surviving remains of the author and, at the same time, the earliest surviving exemplar of the *adab al-kātib* literature has been adequately established by Schönig.<sup>13</sup> However, it is the aspect concerning the utilization of poetic materials in prose writings that I would like to relate here:<sup>14</sup>

فنافسوا يا معشر الكتّاب في صنوف العلم والأدب وتفقّهوا في الدين وابدأوا بعلم  
كتاب الله عز وجلّ، والفرائض، ثم العربية، فإنها ثقاف ألسنتكم وأجيدوا الخط،  
فإنه حلية كتبكم، وارووا الأشعار، واعرفوا غريبها ومعانيها وأيام العرب والعجم  
وأحاديثها وسيرها، فإن ذلك معين لكم على ما تسمون إليه بهممكم.

“And strive hard, O you the community of secretaries, in all types of religious and secular learning. Be well versed in religious sciences; start by studying the Book of Allah the Almighty; then the knowledge of the obligatory religious duties, then the (linguistic sciences of) Arabic, for these will set your tongues straight. Cultivate good handwriting, for this is the adornment of your works; *study poetry and know its rare usages and meanings*, as well as the history of the Arabs and the non-Arabs, for these will help you achieve your aims.”

This statement contains some instruction to the prospective *kātib* that he should make use of ideas and expressions obtainable from poetry. But ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was not just a preceptor, he was a serious exponent of the practice, as evidenced by the testimony of his son Ismā‘īl who attributed the secret of his father’s eloquence to adeptness at putting together the statements of theologians, the speeches of propagandists, the poetry of the ancients, and the sermons of preachers.<sup>15</sup> The use of poetical materials was thus cited as one of the reasons responsible for the efficient performance of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd as a secretary. Evidence of this device in his surviving works illustrates very vividly his strong conviction in the literary and stylistic value of poetic materials in epistolography. As rightly observed by Cachia, the convention of linguistic purity and verbal dex-

<sup>13</sup> SCHÖNIG, *Das Sendschreiben*, 116–17. Further evidence in support is that it formed part of the materials learned by heart by later *kātib*s. See GIBB, “The Social Significance”, 105–6.

<sup>14</sup> AL-JAHSIYĀRĪ, *al-Wuzarāʾ*, 73–79 (p. 75). Part of the text is also quoted in AL-ṬIBĪ, *Jāmiʿ maḥāsini kitābat al-kuttāb*, 79–80.

<sup>15</sup> AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Kitāb al-kuttāb*, 149. For similar testimonies, see IBN ‘ABD RABBIHĪ, *al-ʿIqd*, 4/165; AL-QALQASHANDĪ, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 1/282; MUḤAMMAD KURD ‘ALĪ, *Rasāʾil al-bulaghā*, 35; AL-JAHSIYĀRĪ, *al-Wuzarāʾ*, 28.

terity already established by poets equally became an accepted canon among the court secretaries.<sup>16</sup> Against this background, it is therefore not surprising that the study of poetry would be part of the *curriculum* recommended to the aspirant *kātib*. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's emphasis on the knowledge of the rare usages and thought contents of poetry cannot be interpreted in any way other than as an endorsement of the use in prose essays such ideas and expressions as are obtainable from poetry.

Contributors to the scholarly discourse after 'Abd al-Ḥamīd equally recommended the study of poetry to secretaries. But the first to offer an enlightening view of some sort on how it should actually be used in prose writings was al-Shaybānī in his letter to Ibn al-Mudabbir (d. 279/893). If 'Abd al-Ḥamīd recommends the study of poetry as part of the training of a *kātib*, al-Shaybānī goes further to argue explicitly in favour of conscious incorporation of, and borrowing from, poetical expressions into prose essays as an artistic technique that enhances the quality of a *kātib*'s work:<sup>17</sup>

واعلم أنّ الاكتساب بالتعلّم والتكلف، وطول الاختلاف إلى العلماء، ومدارسة كتب الحكماء، فإن أردت خوض بحار البلاغة، وطلبت أدوات الفصاحة فتصفّح من رسائل المتقدمين ما تعتمد عليه، ومن رسائل المتأخّرين ما ترجع إليه في تلقيح ذهنك واستنتاج بلاغتك، ومن نوادر كلام النّاس ما تستعين به، ومن الأشعار والأخبار والسير والأسمار ما يتّسع به منطقك ويعذب به لسانك ويطول به قلمك. وانظر في كتاب المقامات والخطب ومحاورات العرب... وتمهّر في نزع آي القرآن في مواضعها واجتلاب الأمثال في أماكنها واختراع الألفاظ الجزلة، وقرض الشعر الجيد وعلم العروض: فإنّ تضمين المثل السائر، والبيت الغابر مما يزين كتابتك ما لم تخاطب خليفة أو ملكاً جليل القدر، فإن اجتلاب الشعر في كتب الخلفاء والجلّة الرؤساء عيبٌ واستهجان للكتب إلا أن يكون الكاتب هو القارض للشعر والصّانع له وذلك مما يزيد في أبهته ويدلّ على براعته.

“Know that acquisition of proficiency is through learning and practice, and through prolonged contacts with scholars and the study of the works of sages. So, if you intend to enter into the oceans of *balāgha* and you require the instruments of eloquence, look into the epistles of the predecessors for such models as you can rely on, and in the writings

<sup>16</sup> See CACHIA, “Andalusī Belles Lettres”, 308.

<sup>17</sup> AL-SHAYBĀNĪ, *al-Risāla al-‘adhrā’*, 7–8. Knowledge of poetry is also listed by ‘ABD ALLĀH AL-BAGHDĀDĪ (d. after 256/869) as part of the requirements of a *kātib*. See his *Kitāb al-kuttāb*, 132.

of the (older) contemporaries for what could nourish your intellect and help you achieve eloquence. Take from the curious speeches by men, that which could assist you; and from poetry, anecdotes, biographies, and evening stories that which would broaden your power of expression, make your speech attractive, and your pen productive. Look into the books of public speeches, of sermons; and of the witty exchanges of the Arabs... learn to be efficient in borrowing the verses of the Qurʾān and proverbial citations at their appropriate places; in coining sublime expressions; in making good poetry; and in the knowledge of prosody, for incorporating a popular proverb and an ancient line of poetry into your writing adorns it, as long as it is not addressed to a caliph or an eminent king, because the use of poetry in letters to caliphs and notable leaders is a defect and an abuse of the value of letters, unless it be that the *kātib* is also the author of the poetry, in which case his prestige is enhanced and his efficiency established.”<sup>18</sup>

All legislators on the secretarial art thenceforth stressed the need for the *kātib* to be knowledgeable in poetry and to draw on it in prose compositions. That the practice of borrowing from poetry into prose writings was becoming popular and was fast emerging as an artistic device is confirmed by a number of anecdotes citing from which may not be out of place here. Qulayb al-Muʿtazilī (fl. 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century) sought to procure some favours from a certain king by consciously turning a passage of poetry into prose.<sup>19</sup> The prominent *kātib* Ibrāhīm al-Ṣūlī (d. 243/859) confirmed turning into prose a certain poem by Abū Tammām (d. 231/845), and another by Muslim b. al-Walīd (d. 208/823),<sup>20</sup> and he frequently, if not regularly, rendered his own poems into prose and *vice versa*.<sup>21</sup> Sulaymān b. Wahb al-Kātib (d. 272/885) related how a work of his was declared a “prose solution” of Abū Tammām’s poetry.<sup>22</sup> Kulthūm b. ʿAmr al-ʿAttābī (d. circa 220/835), who was generally acclaimed as a man of equal competence in prose and verse making, attributed his elo-

<sup>18</sup> The view that royal correspondences should contain no borrowed poetical illustrations was widely accepted among later law givers, for instance, IBN WAHB AL-KĀTIB (d. circa 340/952). See his *al-Burhān*, 95–96, and IBN KHALAF, *Mawādd*, 87–88.

<sup>19</sup> AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 216.

<sup>20</sup> MUḤAMMAD KURD ʿALĪ, *Umarāʾ*, 251; IBN KHALLIKĀN, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, 1/44; AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 204–5. See also AL-ṢŪLĪ, *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, 102–3; IBN WAHB, *al-Burhān*, 128; IBN ABĪ ʿL-IṢBAʿ, *Tahrīr*, 439.

<sup>21</sup> IBN ʿABBĀD, *al-Kashf*, 250 fn. 2.

<sup>22</sup> AL-ṢŪLĪ, *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, 104.

quence to his practice of turning poetry into prose expressions.<sup>23</sup> Al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078) related how Ibn al-ʿAmīd (d. 360/970) used to put marks on such verses that he admired whenever he studied the poetry of Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283/896), presumably for use later in his prose writings.<sup>24</sup> It is not even unlikely, as many anecdotes tend to suggest, that the practice of prosification, like versification, became very popular, developing indeed into an item of entertainment at various courts and seances from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, one of the challenges Badiʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008) threw to his audience required them to produce a line of poetry that would not lose its poetical character, even if it is turned into prose.<sup>26</sup> From these and other reports, it is possible to identify three important factors that promoted the *ḥall* device in the intellectual cosmos of the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

First, the rivalry between the poets and the secretarial class found a corresponding response in the scholarly exertions of the period, as attempts were being made to establish the relative merits of each group within the context of the demands and effects of its art. The earliest of such efforts is probably that by Sinān b. Thābit b. Qurra (d. 331/942), his *Risāla fi 'l-farq bayn al-mutarassil wa 'l-shāʿir*.<sup>27</sup> Interest in the topic continued up till the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century, and it is probably no coincidence that prose or prose writer is often mentioned before poetry and poets in many of these discussions. In his division of speech forms *manẓūm al-kalām*, for example, Ibn Farīghūn (fl. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century) arranged them in the following order of precedence, namely, *risāla*, *khuṭab*, and *shiʿr*, which same arrangement is found in Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (d. 396/1005).<sup>28</sup> Ibn Khalaf was the most illustrious, and probably the most fanatical, supporter of this sequence.<sup>29</sup> But the greatest exponent of the tendency

<sup>23</sup> AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 222. For a testimony to his literary versatility, see IBN AL-MUʿTAZZ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 262; IBN AL-ABBĀR, *Fṭāb al-kuttāb*, 92.

<sup>24</sup> AL-JURJĀNĪ, *Dalāʾil al-ʿijāz*, 362; SHIHĀB AL-DĪN, *Ṭirāz al-majālis*, 213.

<sup>25</sup> For example, see AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 211–16; AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *al-Risāla al-muḍīḥa*, 183–84; AL-JAHSHIYĀRĪ, *al-Wuzarāʾ*, 201.

<sup>26</sup> See AL-HAMADHĀNĪ, *Maqāmāt*, 224.

<sup>27</sup> GAS, 2/105.

<sup>28</sup> IBN FARĪGHŪN, *Jawāmiʿ al-ʿulūm*, 56; AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 161. But Ibn Farīghūn's inversion of this order in his discussion about poetry illustrates the inconsistency that is not rarely demonstrated by some of the early Arabic theorists. *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>29</sup> See his *Mawādd al-bayān*, 31 ff. See also AL-KALĀʿĪ, *Iḥkām*, 36–39: “*faṣl fi 'l-tarjīḥ bayn al-manẓūm wa 'l-manthūr*”, in which he spoke highly of prose at the expense of poetry.



was Ibn al-Athīr, as reflected in his *Al-Mathal al-sāʿir fī adab al-kātib wa ʿl-shāʿir*. To illustrate the relevance of this factor, we may cite the view of Ibn Khalaf to the effect that any sublime motif treated in prose is most likely to lose the whole or most of its quality whenever an expression of it in poetry is attempted, and this is one of his reasons for ranking prose higher than poetry.<sup>30</sup>

Second, the generation group of the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century court secretaries exhibited special fascination with the device of *ḥall* and promoted it to the level of an artistic *techné*, an acceptable touchstone by which to test the efficiency and status of the *kātib*. The following line of poetry by Ibn ʿAbbād (d. 385/995), one of the most important secretaries of the time confirms this.<sup>31</sup>

“*Alā inna ḥalla ʿl-shiʿri rutbatu kātibin,  
wa-lākinna minhum man yaḥullu fa-yaʿqidu*”.

Surely, prosification of poetry is a *kātib*’s proof of merit; but  
some of them (try to) prosify but versify.

Ibn al-ʿAmīd and Ibn ʿAbbād stand out among the secretaries of the period in whose writings the practice is abundantly demonstrated, especially with the poems of al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965) the verbal legerdemain of the period.<sup>32</sup> Apart from the two, the *kātib*-vizier Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḍabbī (d. 398/1008) and Abū Ishāq al-Ṣābī (d. 384/994) were among the notable *kātib*s who also cultivated the device extensively. It may be remarked, too, that it was also a familiar practice among the prose writers of the Islamic West.<sup>33</sup>

Third, the elaborate use of intertextual standards in the literary criticism of the period. Construing background sources to any striking expression, whether this was found in prose writings or in poetry, became a distinctive character of the scholarly discourse among the men of learning.

<sup>30</sup> *Mawādd*, 41–42.

<sup>31</sup> AL-THAʿĀLIBĪ, *Nathr al-naẓm*, 4; *idem*, *Yatīma*, 1/127, in the latter reference it is unattributed.

<sup>32</sup> AL-THAʿĀLIBĪ illustrates several instances in which al-Mutanabbī’s poetry was turned into prose by both. A section in his discussion about the poet is headed with the rubric: *Qifʿa min ḥall al-Ṣāhib wa-ghayrihī naẓm al-Mutanabbī wa ʿṣtiʿānatihiḥim bi-alfāẓihī wa-maʿānihi fī ʿl-tarassul*. See *Yatīma*, 1/122. Compare AL-BADĪʿĪ, *al-Ṣubḥ al-munabbīʿ*, 270ff.

<sup>33</sup> AL-TAHĀNAWĪ, *Kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, 2/102.

One significant piece of evidence in support of the argument that prosification of poetry acquired a considerable importance and provoked a remarkable scholarly interest is the emergence of works wholly dedicated to the discussion of it. In this connection may be mentioned the *Nathr al-manzūm* by al-Ḥasan b. Bishr al-Āmidī (d. 370/980), the earliest contribution to the subject;<sup>34</sup> the *Nathr al-naẓm wa-ḥall al-ʿaqd* by al-Thaʿālibī; and *al-Irshād ilā ḥall al-manzūm* by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-ʿAmidī (d. 443/1051).<sup>35</sup> Of all the three, only the one by al-Thaʿālibī has survived and it remains up till today the oldest contribution in this regard. One other work by him that is somewhat related to the subject is his *Siḥr al-balāgha*. The book consists of passages of concatenated phrases and expressions on a number of themes and motifs. These expressions and phrases, which may generously be passed as essays, are said by the author to have derived from, among other sources, the poems of some of the authors discussed in his *Yatīmat al-dahr*. In fact, the author lists some twenty-two poets on whose compositions the *Siḥr al-balāgha* drew.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, several cases of *iqtibās* as they relate to Qurʾānic materials can also be illustrated from the book.<sup>37</sup> Given all this, it is not surprising that the subject of prosification and versification became a familiar topic in works on criticism, rhetoric and epistolography from the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

Perhaps it may not be amiss to highlight a parallel development that was provoked by a similar motivation in the Western literary tradition. In the rhetorical training of the Christian preachers of the 4<sup>th</sup> century C.E., emphasis was placed on the study of classical poetry and on a thorough cultivation of the styles of the Scriptures which included the *Psalms*, and the *Song of Songs*.<sup>38</sup> But the art of letter-writing, *ars dictaminis/ars dictandi*, became part of the rhetorical training of Medieval culture in the Latin West from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Although discussion about the art is of earlier history, for example it occurs in the 4<sup>th</sup> century *Ars rhetorica* of Julius Victor, Alberic of Monte Cassino's (d. 1105) *Dictaminum radii* or *Flores rhetoricii*, which was completed around 1087, was the earliest

<sup>34</sup> AL-QIṬṬĪ, *Inbāh*, 1/288; YĀQŪT AL-ḤAMAWĪ, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 3/58; ḤĀJĪ KHALĪFA, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2/1928.

<sup>35</sup> GAS, 2/83.

<sup>36</sup> AL-THAʿĀLIBĪ, *Siḥr al-balāgha*, 3–7.

<sup>37</sup> For instance, *ibid.*, 52, in the essay entitled *Fī waṣf al-kutub al-balīgha*, where the following occurs: *Kitābun law qurīʿa ʿalā ʿl-ḥijāra la ʿnfajarat, aw ʿalā ʿl-kawākib la ʿntatharat*, and this derives from Qurʾān 82:2–3.

<sup>38</sup> See the introduction to this study.

treatise on the theory of letter-writing to formalize the use of poetical materials in the art. In this work, Alberici refers frequently, if not regularly, to ancient pagan authors, from whose works he draws his illustrations of “good style”. His ultimate aim was to provide models to be imitated by letter-writers. It is no coincidence that the majority of his illustrative examples are from poetry rather than model letters which were undoubtedly known to him. He argues that a writer’s composition must be brilliant with examples drawn from other sources as well as from the author’s own thought, but he specifically recommends to the *dictator*, the letter-writer, the study of works by poets as a means towards the cultivation of efficiency and good style.<sup>39</sup> One other common feature of the art in Arabic and Western traditions to which we may briefly refer is the evolution of formal rules in regard to the structural patterns of letters. The two rhetorical traditions legislate on the contents of salutations with which a letter begins and their appropriateness to the recipient, the subject matter and the intention of the writer. Alberici’s other work, his *Breviarum de dictamine*, provided the first articulated theoretical prescription on this in medieval Western cultural history. The stylistic parallels between the works of the *dictatores* of the Latin West and the Arabic *kuttāb*, especially in the use of ornate epistolary style with balanced assonantal phrases, have been noted by Kraemer.<sup>40</sup> It need be added, however, that the similarities between the use of *saʿf* in the Arabic art of *kitāba* and of *cursus* in the Western *ars dictaminis* is one of the many other convergences between the two cultural experiences at that point in time, and examining them promises to be a fruitful line of investigation in comparative studies.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> The text of Alberici’s epistle is contained in MILLER *et al.*, eds., *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric*, “Flowers of Rhetoric”, 131–61. See also MINNIS, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 62. For more on *ars dictaminis*, see “Dictamen”, in STRAYER, ed., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 4/173–77 and the sources quoted there; LOUIS JOHN PAETOW, *The Art Course at Medieval Universities with Special Reference to Grammar and Rhetoric*, Univ. of Pennsylvania Ph. D. Thesis (Illinois, 1910), Chapter 3, 67–91; CURTIUS, *European Literature*, 75–76, 148–54.

<sup>40</sup> KRAEMER, *Humanism*, 209. Makdisi also examines the relationship between the *Amālī* literature in Arabic and the *ars dictaminis*. In my view, both have little in common in terms of subject matter, although they are similar in terms of procedure of delivery. See MAKDISI, *The Rise of Humanism*, 318–31.

<sup>41</sup> On the historical development of *cursus*, see “Cursus”, “Rhetoric”, in STRAYER, ed., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*; CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic to 1400* (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1959), Chapter VIII, 206–27.

Coming back now to our discussion on *ḥall*, our earliest encounter with a theoretical analysis of it is in Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī. That he was building on the tradition is not in doubt, but the uniqueness of his contribution lies in its success at imposing some order on a body of general statements and casuistic remarks that had been given by his predecessors. According to him, turning poetry into prose and *vice versa* on the one hand, and making an original composition that does not draw on an existing prototype on the other, require different degrees of effort. For purposes of classification, he collapses the two concepts of versification and prosification into one and identifies, with illustrations, four ways through which *ḥall* could be carried out:

- a) By the insertion of one or two words in the verse, thus stripping it of its metrical form, becoming thereby a prose statement.
- b) By changing the word order of the poetic exemplar, often without complementing it with additional phrases.
- c) By slightly altering the phraseology of the verse in a way that it is complemented with such new idioms that would enhance the quality of the original idea which had been treated in the poetic piece.
- d) By using one's own peculiar words and expressions in the prose treatment of motifs that have their roots in poetry. This, in his view, is the highest demonstration of artistic competence.

Al-ʿAskarī goes further to caution against the temptation of subjecting every poetry to prosification through mere inversion of the word order or by just dispensing with the original wording altogether; some verses do not just lend themselves to the exercise, he argues.<sup>42</sup> Although he does not indicate explicitly which type of poetry lines may not be subjected to *ḥall*, it is evident from his illustrations that poetic pieces with proverbial imports, or those expressing specific motifs should retain their original wording. In either case however, the original expression as found in the verse treatment may be propped up with additional phrases, but this should not, as a rule, obscure the thought content of the original treatment. Why al-ʿAskarī decided to bring together the concepts of prosification and versification is quite obvious; many accomplished secretaries were equally impressive versifiers. Proficiency in the two arts is, according to him, one of the greatest proofs of perfection.<sup>43</sup> It would however be too generous an assessment, as Leder and Kilpatrick seem to propose,

<sup>42</sup> AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 216–19. Cf. AL-JĀḤIẒ, *al-Ḥayawān*, 1/75.

<sup>43</sup> *Ṣināʿatayn*, 138–39.

that combination between the two arts was commonplace.<sup>44</sup> In fact, prose writers themselves sometimes acknowledged that the grain of their creativity did not accommodate poetry, and the dominant, albeit not canonical, view among the literary coterie was that good poetry and prose hardly combined in one individual.<sup>45</sup> It must be admitted, however, that the *kuttāb* exhibited greater interest in poetry than any other scholarly group; and this goes further to confirm the ever growing tendency towards borrowing from it into their writings.<sup>46</sup> So, if poetry became a “field for word-hunters” among the philological scholars, to borrow from Krenkow’s expression, so too did it evolve into a mine for the professional *kātib* searching for sublime images and expressions.<sup>47</sup>

It is intriguing, if not disappointing, that al-ʿAskarī’s methodical treatment of the subject was not taken up or developed by later contributors. Al-Thaʿālībī’s discussion of it, to which he dedicates his *Naẓm al-nathr*, is essentially an illustration of verses of poetry as turned into prose by him in a manner that is not only lacking in analytical standards but also innocent of any explicit categorization. Except for his favourable comment about al-Jāḥiẓ’s prosification of a certain poem by Nuṣayb, the subject is all but ignored by ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī.<sup>48</sup> Ibn Khalaf’s examination of it is also somewhat superficial. In the chapter dealing with *ṭabʿ*, “literary ingenuity”, and the various forms of borrowings and artistic imitation is a section entitled *qawl fī naql maʿānī ʿl-naẓm ilā ʿl-nathr wa ʿl-nathr ilā ʿl-naẓm*, where he simply argues that the practice of transferring ideas and expressions from poetry into prose and *vice versa* was commonplace in the literary tradition. He goes on to give some illustrations without any indication or guidelines as to how the device could be employed.<sup>49</sup> The discussion about the *ḥall* phenomenon, however, assumed its final and authoritative form at the hands of Ibn al-Athīr, and this I intend to show later. For now, it may simply be noted that from the

44 LEDER & KILPATRICK, “Classical Arabic Prose Literature”, *JAL* 23 (1992), 8–9.

45 AL-JĀḤIẒ, *al-Bayān*, 1/243; IBN AL-MUʿTAZZ, *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, 262–63. See also AL-ṢĀBĪ, “Risāla fī ʿl-farq bayna ʿl-mutarassil wa ʿl-shāʿir”, 498; AL-MARZŪQĪ, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa*, 1/16. Compare the reason given by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 142/758) as to why he did not attempt too much of poetry, in AL-JĀḤIẒ, *al-Ḥayawān*, 3/132.

46 For example, see the statement of al-Jāḥiẓ in IBN ʿABBĀD, *al-Kashf*, 243–44; AL-ḤUSAYNĪ, *Naḍrat al-ighrīḍ*, 233–34. See also, SHAFĪQ JABRĪ, “Madhhab al-Jāḥiẓ”, *MMLAD* 12 (1932), 90.

47 See KRENKOW, “The Use of Writing”, 261.

48 See *Dalāʾil al-iʿjāz*, 331–32.

49 *Mawādd*, 315–18.

5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century onwards the issue of *ḥall* figured prominently both in works on *kitāba* and on poetics. For example, in a chapter entitled *Bāb dhikr ālat al-imtithāl*, “Listing the instruments of discourse illustration”, Muḥammad Ibn Futūḥ al-Ḥumaydī (d. 488/1095) argues that the masters, *ḥudhdhāq*, of the art of epistolography demonstrate their adeptness by turning prose into poetry and *vice versa* in such a skilful manner that it can hardly be detected, except by an acutely discerning mind. In most cases, he argues, they improve upon the quality of the original materials which inspired their own compositions.<sup>50</sup> Ibn Munqidh (d. 584/1188) suggests that the *kātib* should use word endings other than the rhyme words of the poetic exemplars that he is turning into prose. Besides, the prose writer should use *caesuras* or periods, *fawāṣil*, that are different from the metre that is identified with the poetic prototype. More importantly, the *kātib* should improve upon the treatment of the idea expressed in the verse model through an economical use of words. Striking expressions found in poetry, he argues, must be preserved for use in writings and conversations.<sup>51</sup> That this enlightening proposition is found in a work on poetics probably goes further to confirm the existence of interactive cross currents in the scholarly cosmos at a stage when canons for literary practice in general were being formalized. By and large, the *ḥall* device became an established technique recognized in the epistolary practice.<sup>52</sup>

An important effort that deserves some special attention in its own right is the one by Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Khalaf al-Nayramānī (d. 403/1012). The familiar understanding of the concept of *ḥall* either in the sense of borrowing poetical expressions and images, or in the sense of allusion, *talmīḥ*, to them in prose essays, was taken a step further by

50 AL-ḤUMAYDĪ, *Tas’hīl*, 15:

... يمثلون المنشور فيصرفونه منظوماً ويمثلون المنظوم فيعيدونه منشوراً ليعد ما بين مراتب تأليفهما ليخفى لهما عند العامة وأكثر الخاصة مكان ما أخذوا ورّبما أجادوا الأخذ وأحسنوا الامتثال بحكمة السبك وجودة الصوغ وإبداع التصوير وحسن الزيادة.

51 IBN MUNQIDH, *al-Badīʿ*, 296–98:

فإذا نثرت منظوماً فغَيّر قوافي شعره عن قوافي نثره، وإذا سرقَت معنى فغَيّر الوزن والقافية ليخفى ولا يظهر. وإذا أخذتَ شِعْراً فَرَدَدَ على معناه وانقَصَ من لفظه، واحترس مما طعنَ به عليه، فحينئذٍ تكون أحقَّ به... وأدخِر الألفاظ التي جاءت في الأشعار للمكاتبات والمخاطبات.

52 This is confirmed by the following statement of Ibn ‘Abd, probably 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century:

وليس يعاب الكاتب المترسل بما ينقله من منظوم إلى منشور بشرطة قول عبد الحميد الذي هو إمام الجماعة وأول من رَتَّب ألفاظ الكتابة، وكساها حلل البلاغة ولا يعيب الشاعر أن يأخذ من المنشور ما يجعله نظماً لأن ذلك يوجد كثيراً في أشعارهم ولا يتناكرونه من اختيارهم.

See AL-ZUʿBĪ, ed., “Risālat al-Ṭayyib”, 72.

al-Nayramānī in his attempt at a prose rendition of the entire Arabic poetic discourse. A prose equivalent of the themes treated in the poetical selections of *al-Ḥamāsa* of Abū Tammām is the object of al-Nayramānī's *Manthūr al-manẓūm li 'l-Bahā'i*.<sup>53</sup> He was quite conscious and proud of his pioneering effort, for which he draws a parallel with the legendary role of al-Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad (d. 170/786) in the canonization of Arabic prosody.<sup>54</sup> It is to be noted that al-Nayramānī's model of subject and material arrangement provoked no imitation among later scholars and the work remains up till today the first, and possibly, the only surviving effort of its kind. The attempt by 'Izz al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, otherwise called Ibn Abī 'l-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258), at turning into prose the poems composed by al-Mutanabbī in respect of Sayf al-Dawla, which poems came to be known as *Sayfiyyāt*, is probably the only exception, although we do not possess any evidence to prove that he was aware of al-Nayramānī's model.<sup>55</sup>

As indicated above, the ultimate contribution to the subject of *ḥall* is to be attributed to Ibn al-Athīr who has been deservedly described as "the seal of the classical literary legislators".<sup>56</sup> Besides, he was an accomplished secretary with enormous political influence and intellectual standing. The tenth section of his *al-Mathal al-sā'ir* is entitled *fī 'l-ṭarīq ilā ta'allum al-kitāba* (The way to training in secretarial art), and this is where the issue of *ḥall* is treated with copious illustrations from the author's own compositions.<sup>57</sup> But a more significant and extensive treatment of the subject is in his *al-Washy al-marqūm fī ḥall al-manẓūm*, the first, and possibly the only surviving work wholly dedicated to the theory and practice of *ḥall*.<sup>58</sup> The skill of Ibn al-Athīr in the prosification of poetry was widely recognized, even by his critics. Ibn Abī 'l-Ḥadīd, for example, considers him an outstanding exponent of the technique and argues that *al-Mathal al-sā'ir* may have been written as a demonstration

<sup>53</sup> See reference to it in *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa*, editor's introduction, 4; ḤAJJĪ KHALĪFA, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2/1859; GAL, SII/910; 'UMAR RIḌĀ KAḤḤĀLA, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin* (Damascus, 1959), 7/195. Notices of the author are to be found in AL-THA'ĀLIBĪ, *Yatima*, 3/409–10; AL-ZIRIKLĪ, *al-A'lām*, 5/145.

<sup>54</sup> AL-NAYRAMĀNĪ, *Manthūr al-manẓūm*, 10.

<sup>55</sup> IBN ABĪ 'L-ḤADĪD, *al-Falak al-dā'ir*, 97. The prose version of *Sayfiyyāt*, which was intended to be an independent book, was probably not completed.

<sup>56</sup> See 'ABD AL-KARĪM AL-ASHTAR, "Ākhir al-nuqqād al-'Arab al-quḍamā", 525–36.

<sup>57</sup> IBN AL-ATHĪR, *al-Mathal al-sā'ir*, 1/125–209.

<sup>58</sup> Edited by Jamīl Sa'īd (Baghdad, 1989).



of it.<sup>59</sup> Although this testimony may be taken as an exaggeration, if not an inaccurate assessment of the work, it nonetheless reveals the extent to which Ibn al-Athīr succeeded in developing the device into an important tool employed in the writing profession. If al-Thaʿalibī served the prospective secretary with what one could call “dishes of recomposed texts” in his *Nathr al-naẓm*, Ibn al-Athīr goes further to teach the aspirant how to prepare such dishes by himself. For analysis purposes, we shall bring together his discussion and analysis of the subject as found in *al-Mathal*, and *al-Washy*, although the latter still remains the main thesis in which his historical contribution to the discussion is reflected.

The primary instruments required by anyone contemplating to make a profession out of epistolography, he argues, consists in the study of the Qurʾān, the Prophetic traditions and lastly, poetry.<sup>60</sup> But as a rule, the aspirant must start by trying his hands at turning poetry into prose.<sup>61</sup>

من أحبَّ أن يكون كاتبًا أو عنده طبع مجيب، فعليه بحفظ الدواوين ذوات العدد، ولا يقنع بالقليل من ذلك؛ ثم يأخذ في نثر الشعر من محفوظاته، وطريقه أن يتدبَّر فيأخذ قصيدًا من القصائد، فينثره بيتًا بيتًا على التوالى. ولا يستنكف في الابتداء أن ينثر الشعر بألفاظه أو بأكثرها، فإنه لا يستطيع إلا ذلك. وإذا مرتَّ نفسه وتدرَّب خاطره، ارتفع عن هذه الدرجة، وصار يأخذ المعنى ويكسوه عبارة من عنده. ثم يرتفع عن ذلك، حتى يكسوه ضروريًا من العبارات المختلفة، وحينئذٍ يحصل لخاطره بمباشرة المعاني لقاح، فيستنتج منها معاني غير تلك المعاني... وهذه شىءٌ خبرته بالتجربة، ولا ينبئك مثل خبير.

“Whoever wishes to be a *kātib* or possesses a favourable talent for it should start by memorizing a large number of *diwāns* (of poetry), and should not be content with just a few of them. He should then start by turning into prose, part of those poems that he had memorized. The way to go about this is by taking a particular poem and turning

<sup>59</sup> IBN ABĪ 'L-ḤADĪD, *al-Falak al-dāʿir*, 96–97:

واعلم أنَّ هذا الباب وهو حلَّ المنظوم هو عين الكتاب وخلاصته ووجه جميعه، وطاراز حُلَّتِه، وكأنَّه لم يصنِّفه إلا لأجله، وليظهر صناعته فيه. على أنَّ كتابته كلها إذا تأملها العارف بهذا الفنَّ وجدها من هذا الباب لأنَّها إما محلولٌ منظوم، أو ترصيع آية أو خبر أو مثل أو واقعة، وهذه إحدى طرائق الكتاب عندي، وإليها أذهب ولها أستعمل.

<sup>60</sup> *al-Washy*, 49.

<sup>61</sup> *al-Mathal al-sāʿir*, 1/136–37. Compare *al-Washy*, 46f. See also AL-ḤALABĪ (d. 725/1325), in his *Ḥusn al-tawassul*, 325–29.

it into prose verse by verse. He should not feel dejected at the beginning that he could turn a poetry into prose only by using the same or most of the original wording, for this is what he would be able to do (at this stage). But as soon as he gets used to it and his aptitude is developed, he would be able to go beyond that stage to treat an idea and clothe it with his own expression. He would then transcend this stage to another where he would be able to clothe an idea with various forms of (his own) expressions; it is only then that his mind would be fertile for the treatment of conceits and would be able to produce ideas other than those (familiar) ideas... this is something I have learnt through experience; and it is only the experienced who can inform you adequately.”

Why the *kātib* should start with the study of classical poetry is, according to him, due to the fact that it is the depository of sublime ideas and hieratic idioms expressed by the Bedouin in addition to its being the principal source of their documentary discourse. In regard to the Holy Qurʾān and Prophetic *akhbār*, these are to be “recomposed” in a way that is somewhat different from poetry. Insofar as the Holy Book and the Prophet represent the zenith of eloquence, their idioms can hardly be substituted with better expressions or images and should therefore be retained as they occur whenever they are borrowed into prose writings. In his experience as a *kātib*, he confirmed that his greatest aid, and presumably the secret of his efficiency and success in the profession, had been the employment of the *ḥall* device in respect of Qurʾānic verses, *ḥadīth* reports, and poetry.<sup>62</sup> But he too, like al-ʿAskarī, cautions against any ingenuous or unrestricted use of it.<sup>63</sup>

ولست أريد بحلّ معاني القرآن والأخبار النبوية والأشعار أن يكون الكاتب مرتباً بها بحيث لا ينطق إلا عنها، ولا يأخذ إلا منها، لأنه لو فعل ذلك لما كان يفرغ من كتاب واحد إلا في زمان طويل؛ وإنما أردت أن تحصل له الملكة وتكثر لديه المعاني، ويطلع على الدقائق والدقائق، ويستنتج من خاطره أشياء يستعين عليها بهذه الأسباب الثلاثة. ومن حصلت له الملكة، وتمكن من خاطره جاءته المعاني من غير أن يتعب في طلبها كل التعب.

<sup>62</sup> *al-Mathal al-sāʿir*, 1/126–27.

<sup>63</sup> *al-Washy*, 53.

“But I do not mean by the recomposition of the meanings of the Qur’ān, the Prophetic reports, and poetry that a *kātib* should tie himself exclusively to it, such that his speech derives only from it, and he saying nothing except that which is based on it. Were he to do this, it would take him a long time to complete a single text. What I mean is that he should achieve competence, have ideas in abundance, and strive to understand their intricacies and subtleties, thus would his mind produce ideas in the generation of which he will be assisted by these three instruments. Whoever achieves competence and has his mind well-disposed will have ideas occurring to him without him striving for them strenuously.”

The synthesis of Ibn al-Athīr’s proposition is that the *kātib* should, using the hooks and eyes of memory, utilize the expressions and images that naturally come to his mind as a result of his extensive study of poetry, the Qur’ān, *ḥadīth*, and historical anecdotes, and must avoid straining after them or employing them in an obtrusive fashion. This is the golden rule offered by our author. The uniqueness of Ibn al-Athīr’s contribution lies in the fact that subsequent analyses of the subject adopted his model of discourse. Moreover, no new development on the *ḥall* phenomenon is discernible in the theoretical lore after him, and the best one could say about later contributions is that they succeeded in either fine-tuning his analytical *exposé* or repeating it. Even Ibn Abī ’l-Ḥadīd’s discussion and illustrations, which were intended to be a form of competition, *mu’āraḍa*, if not a rebuttal of Ibn al-Athīr’s thesis, turned out as a reinforcement for it.<sup>64</sup> In other words, with Ibn al-Athīr emerged what can rightly be called the final, authoritative, and analytical discussion of *ḥall* in the scholarly tradition, and this will be evident from our analysis of his systematic categorization of the various manifestations and levels of the device as illustrated in his *al-Washy*.

<sup>64</sup> See *al-Falak al-dā’ir*, 96–172.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Washy al-marqūm*: an Analytical Study

The work is made up of an introduction and three chapters, *fuṣūl*. Chapter one, which discusses prosification of poetry, is subdivided into three sections *aqsām*. The first section deals with the type of prosification in which the original wording of a poem is retained in the new prose composition, *ḥall al-shiʿr bi-lafẓihī*.<sup>1</sup> Section two illustrates such prose compositions in which only a part of the wording of a poem is utilized, *ḥall al-shiʿr bi-baʿḍ lafẓihī*.<sup>2</sup> The third section discusses prose compositions whose wordings are different from those of the poetry that inspired them, *ḥall al-shiʿr bi-ghayr lafẓihī*.<sup>3</sup> Chapter two is about recomposition of Qurʾānic verses, *ḥall āyāt al-Qurʾān*.<sup>4</sup> The final Chapter is concerned with the recomposition of Prophetic anecdotes, *ḥall al-akhbār al-nabawiyya*.<sup>5</sup>

In the following, I shall examine the various illustrations of the foregoing classification as given by Ibn al-Athīr. It must be stated from the outset that the prose examples given by our author to illustrate the various types of *ḥall* are exclusively his. Although illustrations from other poets are used, his choice of poetical exemplars is largely in favour of the trio of Abū Tammām, al-Mutanabbī, and al-Buḥturī. In his view, the first two excelled over all other poets, ancients and moderns alike, in terms of sublime motifs; while the third was an unrivalled proband of artistry in phraseology.<sup>6</sup>

1 IBN AL-ATHĪR, *al-Washy al-marqūm*, 57–101. Henceforth WM.

2 *Ibid.*, 102–51.

3 *Ibid.*, 152–73.

4 *Ibid.*, 174–95.

5 *Ibid.*, 196–215.

6 *Ibid.*, 56:

ولم يشتمل شعر أحد من الشعراء المفلكين قديمًا وحديثًا على المعاني التي اشتمل عليها شعر أبي تمام، وأبي الطيب المتنبي، فإنهما غَوَّصَا المعاني. وأما الألفاظ في سبكها ودياجتها، فلم أجد أحدًا يسامي بأعبادة البحرى فيها.



## I

*Fī ḥall al-shiʿr*  
(Prosification of Poetry)

**Section 1** *Ḥall al-shiʿr bi-lafẓihī*  
(Prosification with the original wording retained)

According to Ibn al-Athīr, to employ the exact wording of a poetical expression in a prose essay without the slightest form of modification is the lowest form of *ḥall*; though instances of such essays possessing some artistic value abound.<sup>7</sup> In his view, such practice of word for word prosification is like building a new house from the rubbles of an old one. Nevertheless, it is still allowed for the up and coming *kātib* until he is able to master the art very well. But the reason for the negative attitude towards this type lies in the fact that it is interpretable as crass plagiarism, especially if the poetical archetype is exceedingly familiar. In which case it becomes easy, even for an uncritical mind, to establish the obvious affinity between the poem and the new prose essay. It is however interesting that our author does not give an example of this type in *al-Washy*, and it is only in *al-Mathal* that we find it illustrated with the following:<sup>8</sup>

وَأَلَدَّ ذِي حَنْقٍ عَلَيَّ كَأَنَّمَا      تَغْلَى عِدَاوَةُ صَدْرِهِ فِي مَرَجَلٍ  
أَرْجِيئُهُ عَنِّي فَأَبْصُرْ قَصْدَهُ      وَكُوَيْتُهُ فَوْقَ النَّوَظِرِ مِنْ عَلٍ

“Many a deadly opponent resentful of me, as if the hatred in  
his bosom was boiling in a metal pot put on fire.  
I turned him away from me (with tact) till he realized his right  
path, and I pressed him hard over his gaze from the tops.”

An anonymous ʿIrāqī prosaist is reported to have turned this into a prose which, in the view of our author, is bereft of any artistic touch. The prose rendering reads:

فَكَمْ لَقِيَ أَلَدَّ ذَا حَنْقٍ كَأَنَّهُ يَنْظُرُ الْكَوَاكِبَ مِنْ عَلٍ، وَتَغْلَى عِدَاوَةُ صَدْرِهِ فِي مَرَجَلٍ  
فَكَوَاهُ فَوْقَ نَظَرِيهِ وَأَكْبَهُ لَقَمَهُ وَيَدِيهِ.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 57–58. See also *al-Mathal al-sāʿir*, 1/125; AL-QALQASHANDĪ, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 1/283.

<sup>8</sup> *al-Mathal al-sāʿir*, 1/129; AL-QALQASHANDĪ, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 1/285. The poetical illustration is to be attributed to Rabiʿa b. Maqrūm al-Ḍabbī. See AL-MARZŪQĪ, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa* 1/63–64. AL-ʿASKARĪ gives a similar example of word for word prosification. See *Ṣināʿatayn*, 216.



“Many a time he met a deadly and resentful opponent, who behaved as if he were watching the stars from the tops; the hatred in his bosom was boiling in a metal pot; but then he (i.e. his victim) pressed him hard over his gaze and humiliated him till his mouth and hands kissed the dust.”

There are, however, certain categories of poetic expressions which, according to our author, should be retained when being reused in prose. These are of ten categories:

#### Category A<sup>9</sup>

Lines containing proverbial citations such as the following:

Abū Tammām:

لقد آسف الأعداء مجدُ ابن يوسف      وذو النقص في الدنيا بذى الفضل مولع

“The magnificence of Ibn Yūsuf has distressed his enemies, the lowly in this world is often after the honourable.”

Al-Mutanabbī:

لعل قولك محمود عواقبه      وربّما صحّت الأجسام بالعلل

“Perchance your (critical) statement may yield pleasant results, sick bodies may get healed through infections.”

The verse by Abū Tammām is expressed in prose as follows:

الشرف الرفيع يُغري الأعداء بإطلاق الألسنة وجعل السيئة مكان الحسنة. ولم يزل ذوو النقص مولعين بذوى الفضل. ولربّ نابل يظنّ الإصابة، وهو المصاب بما يرسله من النبل.

“Outstanding nobility makes the enemies malicious and encourages requittal of good with evil. Lowly people are ever after the honourable. Many an archer presumes hitting the target, though in reality he is the one hit by the arrows that he shoots.”

Al-Mutanabbī's verse is contained in the following:

<sup>9</sup> *WM*, 58–67. For the illustrations from Abū Tammām and al-Mutanabbī, see in that order, *Dīwān Abī Tammām*, 2/325; *Dīwān Abī 'l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 3/86.



العتاب، وإن آلم فإنه يشفى من أمراض الوداد، وكثيرًا ما يصح بالعلل مرض الأجساد.

“Reproach, even if painful, cures diseases of (mutual) affection; many a time is the disease of the body healed through the (same) infections (that caused it).”

Proverbial citations expressed in verses should be so retained in prose because they are often popular. Besides, they are usually very few in the routine speech. In utilizing such verses, the prosaist should pair them only with expressions of comparable quality, otherwise, the sublimity of the poetical exemplar would be lost. Although a slight modification of the wording of proverbial citations is permissible, according to our author, such a modification can hardly generate the same effect that is identified with the original with which people are already familiar.

An important observation that may be made here is that although this category is meant to illustrate poetical examples containing proverbial citations, illustrations with Qur’ānic idioms, Prophetic sayings, as well as proverbial usages whose wordings should also be retained when being used in prose are also discussed. Digression is one of the few shortcomings of the author which will be examined later in some detail.

#### Category B<sup>10</sup>

Verses illustrating popular historical events, for which the following serves as an example.

Abū Tammām:

لحقنا بأخراهم وقد حوم الهوى	قلوبًا عهدنا طيرها وهي وُقِع
فُرِدَّت علينا الشمس والليل راغم	بشمس لهم من جانب الخدر تطلع
نضا ضوءها صبح الدجنة وانطوى	لبهجتها ثوب السماء المجزع
فوالله ما أدري أحلام نائم	ألمت بنا أم كان في الركب يوشع

<sup>10</sup> WM, 67–68. On the rule that proverbial citations must not be altered when being reused, see also IBN KHALAF, *Mawādd*, 187. The concluding verse in the poetical exemplar contains reference to the story of delayed sunset at Joshua’s request for which see AL-KISĀ’I, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, 240–41. For the poetical illustration, see *Dīwān Abi Tammām*, 2/319–20; AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *Shurūḥ al-talkhis*, 4/525; MEHREN, *Die Rhetorik*, 141, where it is given as an illustration of *talmiḥ*. The concluding verse of the poem is also cited by IBN ABĪ ’L-ĪṢBA’ as an example of *al-ighrāb fi ’l-badi’*, “unfamiliar rhetorical usage”, see his *Tahrir*, 508–9 and *Badi’ al-Qur’ān*, 222.

“We overtook their last contingent while passion made our hearts hover, although they (i.e. the hearts) used to be at ease like birds at rest.

So the sunshine was restored to us, though the night was already falling, through a sun of theirs rising from beside the tent.

Her rays wiped away the hue of darkness and, due to her brilliance, the variegated clothing of the sky folded away.

By Allah I knew not whether it was a dreamer's illusions that affected us, or whether Joshua was among the party of travellers.”

The poetical piece is utilized as follows:

كم في الأرض من شمس تخجل لها شمس السماء، وتتضاءل لها تضائل الإماء.  
وتعلم أن ليس من محاسنها إلا المشاركة في الأسماء. ولربما طلعت في الليل فقال  
الناس: استوى بياض النهار وسواد الظلماء. ولا عجب للعيون إذا رأتها أن تظن  
ذلك في أحلام النوم، أو يُخيل إليها أن يوشع قد كان في القوم.

“Many an earthly sun (i.e. a damsel) towards whom the heavenly sun feels bashful and brings itself to her feet like slave girls. It is aware that the sharing of the same name with her is the only quality it has. Perhaps she comes out at night and people say in admiration: ‘the brightness of the day has levelled up with the darkness of the night’. Small wonder, when eyes gaze at her, people imagine that they are in a dream or that Joshua was among them.”

#### Category C<sup>11</sup>

Lines of poetry containing scientific or technical terms associated with particular disciplines. Of the many examples he gives, we may illustrate with the one from al-Mutanabbī:

<sup>11</sup> WM, 69–72. For the poetical samples, see *Dīwān Abī 'l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 2/170–71; *Dīwān al-Buḥturī*, 2/749. For similar verses by al-Aʿshā and Abū Nuwās in which the same concept is expressed, see IBN QUTAYBA, *al-Shiʿr*, 1/19. For the first *ḥadīth* see *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1/382; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 4/3; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7/400. The second *ḥadīth* relates to an incident in which somebody complained that his brother was having some stomach disorder, for which the Prophet recommended honey. But when the complainant came back and reported that the situation had not improved, the Prophet uttered the statement. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7/397–98, 413.



ولقيت كلّ الفاضلين كأنّما ردّ الإله نفوسهم والأعصرا  
نُسِقُوا لنا نسق الحساب مُقدّما وأتى «فذلك» إذ أتيت مؤخّرا

“I met (by meeting him) all the past men of nobility, and it is as if the Lord has brought back to life their souls and times. They were arranged to come first like an arithmetical sum, then came ‘equals’, for you came last.”

The prose rendering of this is:

ولقد رأيته فرأيتُ العالم في واحدٍ، وعلمت أنّ الدهر للناس ناقد، وما أقول إلا أنّ الله ردّ به الأفاضل إلى معاد، ومثّلهم بأعداد الحساب، ثم وضعه موضع «فذلك» من جملة الأعداد.

“I saw him and I discovered that the world had been represented in a person. Then I knew that fate is selective. I would only say that Allah has used him to bring back to life the dead nobles, whom He had arranged like a mathematical equation. He then put him in the position of ‘equals’ in the sequence of arithmetical numbers.”

Another example of this category is the one that combines between a scientific conceit and a Prophetic statement. Such a blend is, according to him, one of the beauties of *ḥall*, for which he provides an illustration with a line by al-Buḥturī:

فتى دفعوا بُخل الزمان بجوده ولا طبّ حتى يُدفع الضدّ بالضدّ

“A youth he was with whose generosity they overcame the stinginess of the time, there can be no healing until the opposite is used against the opposite.”

This is turned into prose as follows:

الأحوال شبيهة بالأبدان في عوارض سقمها، وكل داء من أدوائها له علاج، إلا ما كان من سأمها وهرمها. وقد قيل إن الطبّ معالجة الأضداد، ولا يُطبّ سقم الأحوال إلا بجود الأجواد. ومولانا هو الذى يشفى بعطاياه أملاً، وإذا شكى إليه شاكٍ سقاه من جوده عسلاً.

“Conditions are like bodies in regard to sickness symptoms; for there is a cure for all (bodily) ailments except death and old age.



It is said that (the science of) medicine is all about treatment with opposites, hence unhealthy conditions can be treated only with the generosity of the generous. Our master is the one who fulfils hope with his gifts; should anyone complain about uneasiness to him, he gives him (the complainant) honey to drink out of his generosity.”

The two *ḥadīths* embedded in the prose are:

*mā khalaqa Allāhu dā'an illā khalaqa lahu dawā' illā 'l-sa'm wa 'l-haram.*

“Allah has not created a disease without creating alongside it its cure, except death and old age.”

*isqihī 'asalan... ṣadaqa Allāhu wa-kadhaba baṭnu akhika.*

“Give him honey to drink... Allah has said the truth but the belly of your brother has lied.”

#### Category D<sup>12</sup>

Lines containing tribe or clan names, such as the following, attributed to al-Farazdaq:

ولو أنى بُليتُ بهاشمى      خؤولته بنو عبد المدان  
لهان على ما ألقى ولكن      تعالوا فانظروا بمن ابتلانى

“Had I been tried by a Hāshimite whose maternal uncles are the children of ‘Abd al-Madān,  
What I suffer now would have been insignificant; but here I am now, come, and see by whom I am being tried.”

This is used in prose as follows:

ظلم السادات لا تعدّه النفوس من ظلمها. ولربما كلم السوار يداً فذهب فخر زيتتها  
بألم كلمها. ولهذا هانت جناية عبد المدان، وضرب بها المثل فى شرف المكان.  
والناس فى المنازل ضروبٌ وأطوار؛ فمنهم أنجاد ومنهم أغوار.

“Transgression by leaders is not considered as oppression by souls against them. Many a time is a wrist injured by the bracelet, but the

<sup>12</sup> WM, 72–73. The illustration is to be attributed to Di‘bil not to al-Farazdaq. For the illustration and its background, see *Dīwān Di‘bil*, 157, with a slight variation in the second line. See also AL-MUBARRAD, *al-Kāmil*, ed. Muḥammad Zakī A. Mubārak (Cairo, 1927), 2/799, where it is also attributed to Di‘bil. It is unattributed in AL-ḤAMAWĪ, *Khizāna*, 100.

pride in the adornment it offers removes the pain of the injury. This is why the offence by the children of ‘Abd al-Madān is insignificant, and it is used as a parable of highness in position. People are of different status and levels: some are [like] high mountains some are [like] lowlands.”

### Category E<sup>13</sup>

Verses expressing specific *similes* the value of which would be lost should the word combination be altered in a prose expression of them. An illustration is provided from Imru’ al Qays:

كَأَنَّ قُلُوبَ الطَّيْرِ رَطْبًا وَيَابَسًا      لَدَى وَكْرَهَا الْعُتَابُ وَالْحَشَفُ الْبَالِي

“It was as if the hearts of the birds – next to their nest – were  
jujube when fresh and shriveled date when dry.”

The rhetorical combinations expressing specific *similes* in the poem are *raṭḥan wa-yābisan* and *al-‘unnāb wa ‘l-ḥashaf al-bālī*; and in so far as they are special *similes* expressed in specific words they are to be retained when borrowed into prose as in the following:

وأشهب تفخر السوابق بأنّها له سميّة. وترتمى الطير في جو السماء وهي له رميّة. كأنّما يجلو القذى عن عقيقتين، ويظلّ من توحّشه وإيناسه بين خليقتين ومن أدنى صفاته أن يقال: هذا خلق من الرياح في صورة ذى منسر وجناح. لقد لُقب بالبازي، لكثرة وُثوبه، وما عدا لمطلب صيد ففاته شيء من مطلوبه. ولقد تكاثرت قلوب الطير لديه في كل حال حتّى شَبّه رطبها ويابسها بالعناب والحشف البالي.

“A grey falcon it is, against which racing horses pride themselves for sharing a name with. Birds fly high in the sky yet, they remain its target. It is as if (by its speed) it removes mote from the eyes. It oscillates, by virtue of its wildness and domesticity, between two characters. The least that can be said of its qualities is: ‘here is a creature from the winds, but in the shape of a possessor of beak and wings (i.e. bird)’. It is nicknamed ‘the falcon’, due to its enormous leaps. It never misses any prey it sets out to catch. Hearts of birds

<sup>13</sup> WM, 73–76. For the poetical illustration, see *Diwān Imru’ al-Qays*, 145; Aghānī, Dār al-kutub ed., 3/142, 196; AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *Hilya*, 1/170; IBN ABĪ ‘AWN, *Kitāb al-Tashbihāt*, 152; IBN WAKĪ‘, *al-Munṣif*, 1/50; IBN RASHĪQ, *Qurāḍat al-dhahab*, 24–25. It may be noted that the prose composition contains paraphrases of a few other lines from the same poem containing the poetical illustration that is utilized.



converge by it under every condition so much that the fresh and the dry ones are likened to jujube and shriveled date.”

#### Category F<sup>14</sup>

Lines exhibiting the highest degree of eloquence which would be destroyed if any of the component words is substituted when used in prose. The reason for this is that such substitution can hardly match the quality of the original wording. Moreover, a verse of this nature rarely occurs, but when it does, the point of eloquence is often contained within, at most, a half line. An example is provided from al-Mutanabbī:

أُطَاعَ خَيْلاً مِنْ فُؤَارِسِهَا الدَّهْرُ وَجَيْدًا وَمَا قَوْلِي كَذَا وَمَعِيَ الصَّبْرُ

“I fight alone an army whose horsemen include fate; but I do not mean to say I am lonely, after all I enjoy the company of perseverance.”

According to our author, the first half of this verse is extremely sublime. His inability to provide a corresponding prose expression of it is probably an evidence of its sublimity. It is only with the following, similar line from Muslim Ibn al-Walīd that an example could be provided:

دَاوَى فَلَسْطِينَ مِنْ أَدْوَانِهَا بَطْلٌ فِي صُورَةِ الْمَوْتِ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ رَجُلٌ  
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَظُمَتْ فِي الدِّينِ شَوْكُتُهَا وَاسْتَذَابَتْ شَاتِيهَا وَاسْتَأْسَدَ الْوَعْلُ

“He cured Palestine of its ailments; a hero in the shape of death, though in reality he was a man.  
After its strength in religion had become great; with its sheep behaving like a wolf and its ibex like a lion.”

The sublime rhetorical idiom here is the phrase *istadh'abat shātuhā*, which our author has tried to incorporate in the following:

وَرَدَ الْبِلَادَ وَقَدْ اسْتَذَابَتْ نَقَادُهَا، وَاسْتَجَبَلَتْ وَهَادَهَا، وَوَرَدَتْ وَعُولُهَا بِحَيْثُ تَرَدَّ  
آسَادَهَا. فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ ذَلِكَ جَهْلٌ لَا يَزِغُ مِنْهُ عَنَفُ الْمَلَامَةِ وَدَاءٌ لَا يَكْفِي فِي تَقْلِيلِ دَمِهِ

<sup>14</sup> WM, 76–79. The attribution of the highest degree of eloquence to any given verse is, to say the least, subjective, and remains at best a value judgement. For the poetical illustrations, see in that order, *Diwān Abī 'l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 2/148; MUSLIM B. AL-WALĪD, *Sharḥ Diwān Ṣarī' al-ghawānī*, 252.

الفصد والحجامة. بل لا بد من وضع السيف فيه موضع العصا. ومن عَمَا الضلالة ما لا يُصَرُّ إلا بسفك الدم، ومنه ما يبصر بتسييح الحصا.

“He entered into the country while its sheep were already behaving like wolves, its lowlands appearing like mountains, and its ibexes entering into such places as lions used to. He then realized that this was a folly from which the severity of (any) reproach would turn no one away; and a disease which blood letting and cupping would not relieve. So, sword had to be used instead of stick. Some errors cannot be corrected except by the shedding of blood, some others by the granting of exception through clemency.”

According to our author, this particular type is the most sublime of all the ten categories, hence it is the most difficult to accomplish. This is because the prose writer is attempting to match the established excellence in an idiom, and this can only be achieved by an adept prosaist who is good at using the instrument of *mu'ākhāt*, “parallelism”.

#### Category G<sup>15</sup>

Lines containing *tajnīs* (*paronomasia*), illustrated with the following lines from Abū Tammām:

ما زال للصارخ المُعلَى عقيرته      غوثاً من الغوث تحت الحادث الجلل  
بكلّ أبيض يجلو منه سائله      خدّاً أسيلاً به خدٌّ من الأسل

“He remained a helper to the one crying aloud for assistance from the Ghawth tribe over serious calamities. With every white sword he reveals a bright countenance, leaving traces of strikes on all cheeks that it hits.”

The wording of the rhetorical usage as retained is given in the following prose sample:

من كل بطل يزحم غرب الأهوال بغاربه، ويلقى وجوها الكريهة لقاء حبابه. ولطالما كافحها حتى نفضت وقائعها غباراً على ذوائبه. فهو يُقدم فيه إقدام من ليس له أجل، ولا يرى للخدّ الأسيل حسناً إلا بخدّ من الأسل.

<sup>15</sup> WM, 79–81. For the poetical illustration see *Diwān Abī Tammām*, 3/97, with *min kulli* in place of *bi-kulli*.





“(The army) is made up of many a hero who takes on terrifying situations; who often proceeds to meet their awesome looks as if he was meeting his friends. Many a time he fights against them until the encounters soak his hair lock with dust. He proceeds bravely into battles like someone with an endless life span; he values no smooth cheek that has no trace of sword strikes.”

#### Category H<sup>16</sup>

Verses containing antithetical combinations, for example, white/black, laughter/cry, for which the following by al-Ghazzī (d. 524/1130) is given as an illustration:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا طَاحَ عَنْهَا الْبِرُّطُ مِنْ دَهْشٍ      وَانْحَلَّ بِالضَّمِّ سَلْكُ الْعَقْدِ بِالظُّلَمِ  
تَبَسَّمَتْ فَأَضَاءَ اللَّيْلُ فَالْتَقَطَتْ      حَبَّاتٍ مُنْتَثِرٍ فِي ضَوْءٍ مُنْتَظِمٍ

“Until the robe fell away from her out of bewilderment;  
and in the dark the string of the necklace broke in the  
embrace.

She smiled and the dark night became bright; she thus picked  
up in the brightness of a well-arranged [set of teeth] the  
beads of that which had been loose.”

The antithetical words here are *muntathir* (loose) and *muntazim* (well-arranged), which are retained in the following:

تمائلت عقودُ فرائدها وثغرها، فلا يُدرى أنظمت حلية نحرها في مبسمها أم حلية  
مبسمها في نحرها. فلو انتشرت تلك الفرائد في الليل البهيم لالتقطت حبات العقد  
النثر في ضوء العقد النظيم.

“The gems of her necklace and her set of teeth look alike so much  
that it is not known whether the glamour of her necklace was made  
from her teeth, or whether the attraction of her teeth derived from her  
necklace. Were those gems to get loose in the intense darkness, she  
would have picked the beads of the loose necklace in the brightness  
of the well-arranged [set of teeth].”

<sup>16</sup> WM, 81–83. The illustration occurs in IBN KHALLIKĀN, *Wafayāt*, 1/59; AL-ṬIBĪ, *al-Tibyān*, 443; IBN ISMĀ‘ĪL, *Jawhar al-kanz*, 500. I am grateful to Dr. van Gelder for drawing my attention to the sources mentioned here.

Category I<sup>17</sup>

Lines expressing specific concepts or circumscribed ideas. An illustration is provided with the following from al-Mutanabbī:

فَتَبَّأَ لِدِينِ عِبِيدِ النُّجُومِ      وَمَنْ يَدَّعِي أَنَّهَا تَعْقِلُ  
وَقَدْ عَرَفْتُكَ فَمَا بِهَا      تَرَاكَ تَرَاهَا وَلَا تَنْزِلُ  
وَلَوْ بَتَّمَا عِنْدَ قَدْرِكَمَا      لَبِتَّ وَأَعْلَاكَمَا الْأَسْفَلُ

“Woe unto star worship, and unto him who claims that they [the stars] are endowed with reason.

(Had they been truly sensible) what then is the matter with them, in spite of recognizing you, that they see you see them and don’t come down?

Should each of you stay where he rightly belongs, you would have stayed high up, and that which stays high above would be below.”

The expression *‘abid al-nujūm*, argues our author, cannot be substituted with its synonym, as for one to say *‘abid al-kawākib*, for the former is the conventional phrase for the concept being expressed. So too are the words *al-a‘lā* and *al-asfal* and the phrase *annahā ta‘qilu*; all must be retained in any prose utilization of them as in the following:

إذا نظر الخادم إلى حسبه المقتنى من خدمة الديوان العزيز لم يحتج إلى أولية  
مجد قديم، ولا إلى فضيلة سعى كريم، والحظوظ المقتسمة في تلك الأبواب بلثم  
التراب. ولو عقلت النجوم، كما يزعم قوم، لنزلت إليها خاضعة الرقاب، وقامت  
لتعظيم حرمتها مقام العبيد لخدمة الأرباب. وقالت لها: أنت أولى بمكان السماء  
الذى منه مطلع الأنوار ونشء السحاب.

“If the servant considers the honour he acquired by serving in the noble *dīwān*, he would require neither an ancestral honour nor a glory of any virtuous deed; for fortunes are bestowed upon men at the gates just by kissing the dust. If stars had been endowed with reason, as some claim, they would have come down there in submission and would have exhibited respect for their sanctity as servants do for

<sup>17</sup> WM, 83–84. For the illustration see *Dīwān Abi 'l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 3/73; IBN QĀRIḤ, *Risālat Ibn al-Qāriḥ* q.v. in MUḤAMMAD KURD ‘ALĪ, *Rasā'il al-bulaghā*, 259, first line only.

(their) masters. They would have said: 'You are more entitled to be in the sky, from where lights emanate and where clouds are formed.'

### Category J<sup>18</sup>

Verses containing phrases or words that are unique in the context in which they occur such that when they are substituted with any other phrase the original image or meaning is destroyed. An example is provided with the following by Imru' al-Qays:

وقد أغتدى والطير في وُكُنَاتِهَا      بمنجريدٍ قَيَدِ الأوابدِ هَيْكَلِ

"At times I set out at dawn while birds are still in their nests,  
on a stoutly built fast horse that outruns wild beasts."

The words *munjarid*, *wukunāt*, *awābid*, and *haykal* are unique in the context in which they occur, hence any use of this verse in a prose essay must retain those words. In addition to the verse from Imru' al-Qays, the following by 'Abd al-ʿAzīz b. 'Umar otherwise called Ibn Nubāta al-Saʿdī (d. 405/1015), is also utilized:

فكأنما لطم الصباح جبينه      فاقتصّ منه فخاض في أحشائه

"It is as if the daybreak struck its forehead; it retaliated and  
went deep into its bowels."

The prose essay illustrating the use of the two lines runs as follows:

وطالما امتطيت صهوة مُطَهَّم نهد، فغنيت عن نشوة الكمية من ذات نَهْدٍ يسابق  
الريح فيغبرّ في وجهها، دون شقّ غباره. وإذا ظهرت عليها رجعت حسرى في  
مضماره. نُسب إلى الأعوج وهو مستقيم في الكرّ والفرّ، وقد حنقت عليه الشمس؛  
إذ لا يمكنها أن ترسم ظله على الأرض إذا مرّ. ليلي الإهاب، لطم جبينه الصباح  
ببهائه، فعدا عليه وعاد يقتصّ منه في أحشائه. وقد أغتدى عليه والطير في وكناتها،  
فلا يفوتني الأجدل، وإذا أطلقته لصيد الوحش، رأيتني على كيد الأوابد هيكَل.

<sup>18</sup> WM, 84–85. For the illustration from Imru' al-Qays, see *Diwān Imru' al-Qays*, 143; AL-İŞBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/812. The one from Ibn Nubāta occurs in AL-THAʿĀLIBĪ, *Yatima*, 2/391; AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Şināʿatayn*, 252. The Aʿwaj family mentioned in the prose refers to an ancient Bedouin family of reputable horse breeders. About this and other notable horse breeds, see AL-MAʿARRĪ, *Risālat al-Şāhil wa 'l-shāḥij*, ed. ʿĀʾisha ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Cairo, 1984), 161.



“For long I rode on the back of a well built horse, thus I came to be in need of no intoxication by wine served by a full-breasted lady. It (i.e. the horse) competes with the wind and blows dust on its face, and yet, it (i.e. the wind) cannot overtake it. Whenever it (i.e. the wind) tries to outrun it, it turns back dejected from its course. It (i.e. the horse) is attributed to the Aʿwaj (lit. crooked) family of horses, but it is stable while running back and forth. It causes outrage to the sun, as it is too fast for her to reflect its shadow on the ground. It is dark in colour like the nightfall, but the daylight stamped its forehead with its radiant brightness which penetrates deep into it, almost bursting its bowels. At times I set out at dawn on its back while birds are still in their nests; the falcon never overtaking me. Whenever I release it to catch preys, you will see me riding a stoutly built horse that outruns wild beasts.”

The illustration of the ten categories is concluded by further examples, nineteen in all, in which the wordings of the poetical exemplars are retained in the prose models that made use of them. However, these are not classified under any of the ten formal categories delineated above. Elaborating further on the problem associated with the type of *ḥall* in which the original wording of the poetical exemplars must be retained, Ibn al-Athīr argues that the essayist’s choice of words and phrases is limited because of the inherent uniqueness of the exemplars. In respect of the other two types however, namely, *ḥall al-shiʿr bi-baʿḍ lafẓihī* and *ḥall al-shiʿr bi-ghayr lafẓihī*, there is always an ample room for manoeuvre, as the rules are more flexible in regard to them.<sup>19</sup>

## Section 2 *ḥall al-shiʿr bi-baʿḍ lafẓihī* (Partial prosification)

This is considered to be of a higher artistic degree than the previous type, although it is still lower in rank to the third type. Nevertheless, our author considers it more difficult to cultivate than the latter. He argues that the charm of a good verse of poetry the words of which had been carefully selected in the expression of a splendid motif can be sustained in a prose rendering only if such expressions as are paired with the bit borrowed from the poetical exemplar are of similar quality.<sup>20</sup> Further explaining on

<sup>19</sup> *WM*, 91–92.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

this type of *ḥall* in *al-Mathal*, he says that it can be defined in the sense of conscious matching of types, *mushābaha/mumāthala*, where any disparity in quality is interpretable as stringing of pearls and pebbles together in a single chain.<sup>21</sup>

In his treatment of this type of *ḥall*, the specific words borrowed from the poetical exemplar are designated as *al-alfāz al-muntakhala*, “the sifted words”, while those that are added to them by the prose writer to make a new composition are called *al-alfāz al-murtajala*, “the improvised words”.<sup>22</sup> In this section, forty-six prose passages that derive from partial prosification of verses are provided. The passages are not classified as in the previous section, but two of them are characterized as *ḍarb min al-kīmiyāʾ*, “a form of chemical process”, on the ground that they demonstrate a complete transformation of the motif expressed in the poetical exemplars which inspired them. His definition of alchemy in relation to the *ḥall* concept involves changing or transferring the *ṣūra*, “form/structure”, of a conceit into another, and this is likened to the chemical process of transforming elements, for example, of stone into emerald, or brass into copper or gold.<sup>23</sup> It may be noted in parentheses that Ibn al-Athīr’s understanding of the term *ṣūra* is not in the same sense as that of ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī. In the latter, the concept of *ṣūra* relates to sentence structure as can be effected through the instrument of *naẓm/tartīb*, “arrangement”. Nevertheless, it may be assumed that Ibn al-Athīr is extending the sense of the word, since his use of the term *mushābaha/mumāthala*, “imitation/copying” for this type of *ḥall* bears a strong affinity with al-Jurjānī’s concept of *muʿāraḍa*, “conscious competition”.<sup>24</sup> Further examination of this relationship will undoubtedly take us out of the discussion here which is essentially the illustration of prose samples that derive from partial utilization of poetical exemplars. A remarkable change is however noticeable in the order of materials in this section. In the previous section, the poetical prototypes are given first and are followed by the model prose passages that derived from them. It is the other way round in this section; and this is not without a purpose: the author intends to demonstrate the extent to which his model compositions had bettered the poetical antecedents which, but for the reality of chronology

<sup>21</sup> *al-Mathal al-sāʾir*, 1/130–31.

<sup>22</sup> *WM*, 124.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 109. See also *al-Mathal al-sāʾir*, 1/161. Heinrichs also refers to al-Jurjānī’s use of the term “verbal alchemy” to characterize the blending between the real and the imaginary in poetic expressions. See HEINRICHS, “*Istīʿārah* and *Badīʿ*”, 209.

<sup>24</sup> For example, see his *Dalāʾil al-iʿjāz*, 199–200.

and logic, would have been proffered as having been generated by his sample essays. Insofar as his prose samples betray no evidence of any methodical arrangement however subtle, selecting only a few for analysis purposes will be in order. In this regard, five examples, including the two he gives as examples of *al-kimiyā*<sup>25</sup> are illustrated.

### في وصف سخى

i (Description of a Generous Person)<sup>25</sup>

ولقد جاراني في سبق مطالبي بالعطاء، حتى حكم إسرعه على إسرعي بالابطاء.  
وخليفة الكرم أن تأتي عجلي، ولا تكون اليد العليا شريفة إلا إذا سبقت اليد  
السفلى. ولهذا قيل: إنَّ قليل الابتداء خيرٌ من كثير الاحتذاء. ورداء العطايا ليس  
بكاسٍ إذا حسر ما على الوجه من الرداء.

“He competed with me by making his gifts precede my asking for them, so much that his quickness (at giving) rendered my quickness (at asking) tardy. The virtue of generosity lies in its coming with speed; for the upper hand will not be considered noble unless it supersedes the lower hand. This is why it is said: ‘Little originality is better than plenty of imitation’. The garment of generosity can provide no raiment to a face whose covering had already been removed.”

The lines of poetry utilized here are from al-Mutanabbî:

وجاودني بأن يُعطي وأخوى فأغرق نيْلُه أخذى سريعا

“He puts me to the race by giving while I receive; but his generosity drowned my quickness at taking.”

Abū Tammām:

ما ماء كفك إن جادت بنائلها من ماء وجهي إذا أفنيته عوضُ

“The water from your palm when it gives, cannot be a replacement for the lustre (lit. water) of my face if I had to exhaust this.”

<sup>25</sup> WM, 108–9. For the illustrations, see *Dīwān Abī 'l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 2/257; *Dīwān Abī Tammām*, 4/465; AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/615; SHIHĀB AL-DĪN, *Ṭirāz al-majālis*, 140. The last two sources for the illustration from Abū Tammām only.

ii                      **في إباق غلام**  
(About a Run-away Slave)<sup>26</sup>

وأما فلان فإنه أبق من يد كريم، لو كان للدنيا سعة صدره لم تضق بطالب، ولا ضاقت على هارب. فيا ويله! ينتجع والروض في منزله ويستمطر والغيث في منزهه! وما هو إلا كمن باع الصحة بالسقم والثروة بالعدم. وسترده الأيام إلى بابه بعد أن تأخذ في تهذيبه، وتذم إليه عُقبى تجربيه، وتعلمه أن خيرته في ملازمته ذلك الباب الذي ما فارقه أحد إلا شوى وجهه حرّ الهجير، ولا استظلّ بظله إلا وجد على كبده بردّ العذب النмир.

"In regard to so-and-so, he has run away from a noble hand, whose good nature, were it to be possessed by the world, could accommodate every person of want and will never be uncomfortable for any refugee. Damn him (the run-away slave)! he goes out in search of pasture, although he has meadows at his home; he longs for rainfall, though abundant rains are at his base. Experience will return him home after it might have taught him some lessons and reprimanded him for his misadventure. It will make him realize that his fortunes lie in remaining at that gate which no one abandons without getting his face grilled by the intense heat, and in the shade of which no one seeks protection without feeling the freshness of pure water in his heart."

The poetical exemplars from which the above derive are from al-Mutanabbī:

تضيق عن جيشه الدنيا ولورُحِبْتُ      كصدره لم تَبْنِ فيها عساكره

"The world cannot contain his army; even if it were as spacious as his good nature, his soldiers would still not be visible in it."

Muslim b. al-Walid:

وُترجعني إليك إذا نَبْتُ بِي      ديارى عنك تجربة الرجال

"There would return me to you – whenever I journey far away from you – my experience of men."

<sup>26</sup> WM, 115–6. For the illustrations, see *Diwān Abī 'l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 2/120; MUSLIM B. AL-WALID, *Sharḥ Diwān Ṣarīf al-ghawānī*, 336.





### في وصف قلم

iii

(Description of a Pen)<sup>27</sup>

وقلمه هو اليراع الذي نفثت الفصاحة في رُوعه وكننت الشجاعة بين ضلوعه. فإذا قال أراك كيف نُسق الفريد في الأجياد، وإذا صال أراك كيف اختلاف الرماح بين الآساد. وله خصائص أخرى يبدعها إبداعًا، وإذا لم يأت بها غيره تصنعًا أتى هو به صنعًا. فطورًا يرى نحلة تجنى عسلًا، وطورًا يرى شفة تملئ قبلاً وطورًا يرى إمامًا يُلقى درسًا، وطورًا يرى ماشطة تجلو عرسًا، وطورًا يرى ورقاء تصدح بين الأوراق، وطورًا يرى جوادًا مُخلَقًا بخلق السباق وطورًا يرى أفعوانًا مُطَرِّقًا. والعجب أنه لا يزهى إلا عند الإطراق. ولطالما نفث سحرًا وجلب عطرًا، وأدار في القرطاس خمرا، وتصرف في وجوه العناء، وكان في الفتح عُمَر وفي الهدى عَمَارًا وفي الكيد عَمَرًا. فلا تحظى به دولة إلا فخرت به على الدول، وغنيت به عن الخيل والخول، وقالت: أعلى الممالك ما يُبنى على الأقلام لا على الأسل.

ولربما لقي هذا القول قومًا يعظم النكير وقالوا: من أين للقصبة الضعيفة هذا الخطر الكبير. وللبهائم عُذر ألا تعرف من ملاذ الأطعمة غير الشعير. ولو أنصف هؤلاء لعلموا أن القلم مزارع المعاني، كما أن أخاه في النسب مزارع الأغاني؛ فهذا يأتي بغرائب الحكم كما يأتي ذلك بغرائب النعم. وكلاهما شيء واحد في الإطراب، غير أن أحدهما يلعب بالأسماع والآخر يلعب بالألباب.

“His pen is the reed into whose heart eloquence has breathed and in whose ribs bravery is concealed. When it speaks, it shows you how gems are strung in necklaces; and when it strikes, it demonstrates how spears pursue different courses among lions. It has other qualities which it exhibits marvelously. When others could only demonstrate these (qualities) with affectation, it demonstrates them with skill. Sometimes it looks like a bee which produces honey; at other times

<sup>27</sup> WM, 102–4. The first of the two illustrations attributed to al-Buḥturī appears to have originated from the following two verses that are collapsed into one:

لتجاوزت بالبلاغة ما أعز  
نظرتُ باحثٌ ونظمٌ كنظمِ الدُّ  
يَا عَلَى كُلِّ سَيْدٍ وَمَسْودٍ  
رَ قَضَلْتُ بَيْنَهُ بِفَرِيدٍ

See *Dīwān al-Buḥturī*, 2/812. For the second illustration, see *ibid.*, 2/890; IBN ABĪ ‘AWN, *Kitāb al-Tashbihāt*, 227; IBN JINNĪ, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ*, 1/15; AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *Ḥilya*, 1/425; AL-KHAFĀJĪ, *Sirr al-faṣāḥa*, 157, with *‘itābin* in place of *ṭi‘ānin*. The illustrations from Abū Tammām and al-Mutanabbī occur respectively in *Dīwān Abī Tammām*, 4/309; *Dīwān Abī ‘l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 3/34.

it looks like a lip that doles out kisses. At times it is seen like an *imām* giving lessons; sometimes it looks like a beautician making up brides. At another stretch it is seen like a dove coring among the foliage; and sometimes it looks like a horse that is endowed with the steadfastness of a racing horse, and at yet another time it is seen like a viper that bows its head in silence. But what is surprising is that it does not perform wonders except in the bowing position. Many a time it spits out magical words, procures perfume, serves wine (i.e. ink) on paper, and stands up to different challenges: he is ‘Umar in victory, ‘Ammār in guidance, and ‘Amr in tact.<sup>28</sup> No dynasty controls it without boasting against other dynasties, and with it does away with horses and war supplies; proclaiming in effect that ‘the greatest of empires is that which is established with the strength of pens not of spears’.

Perchance some people might protest vehemently against this statement and ask: ‘How could a weak reed be of such a high value?’ Well, livestock should be excused for savouring nothing but barley. If such people had been fair, they would have realized that pen is the wind-pipe for ideas just as its twin sister, (the musical reed) is the wind-pipe for songs. The former expresses unfamiliar saws just as the latter produces pleasant tunes. Both are the same in providing pleasure, except that one plays to the ears while the other plays to the intellects.”

The following are given as having been partially recomposed in the essay.

Al-Buḥturī:

فِي نِظَامٍ مِنَ الْبَلَاغَةِ مَا شَكَ  
لَكَ أَمْرٌ أَنَّهُ نِظَامٌ فَرِيدٌ

“(It is a poem) in a kind of eloquence of which no one doubts that it is of unique arrangement.”

طَعَانٌ بِأَطْرَافِ الْقَوَافِي كَأَنَّهُ  
طَعَانٌ بِأَطْرَافِ الْقَنَا الْمَتَكَسِّرِ

“Strikes they are with rhyme edges, (penetrating deep) as if they are strikes with the edges of a broken lance.”

<sup>28</sup> The references here are to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the second caliph in Islam; ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, one of the early converts to Islam; and ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, the first governor of Egypt in Islam.

Abū Tammām:

عَبَقَاتٍ بِالسَّمْعِ تُبْدَى وَجُوهًا كَوُجُوهِ الْكَوَاعِبِ الْأَتْرَابِ

“(They are poems) with which ears are ever infatuated; they reveal appearances like those of full breasted damsels.”

Al-Mutanabbī:

أَعْلَى الْمَمَالِكِ مَا يُبْنَى عَلَى الْأَسْلِ وَالطَّعْنِ عِنْدَ مُحِبِّينَ كَالْقُبْلِ

“The greatest of the empires is the one founded on the strength of the spears; spear strikes are, to those in love with them, like kisses.”

### فِي ذَمِّ كَاتِبٍ

iv

(Upbraiding a *kātib*)<sup>29</sup>

لا يمشى قلمه في قرطاس إلا ضلّ عن النهج، ولا يصوغ لفظاً إلا قيل: رُبَّ حَدَثٍ  
من الفم كحدث من الفرج. فله عي الفهاة، ولغيره بسطة الفصاحة. والذي يقوله  
من أقوال الناس، فهو لا ينفك عن الأقوال المستمحة.  
وقد يجيء بخلط فالنحاس له وللأوائل ما فيه من الذهب  
سبحان الله! أفكلّ من تناول قلماً كتب، أم كلّ من رقى منبراً خطب؟! والدعوى  
في هذا المقام كبيرة، لكن ليس القنا كغيرها من القصب.

“Whenever his pen sets out to write on a paper, it misses the way; and he would not form a sentence without it being said (in contempt of him): ‘Many an impurity from mouth is (as awful) as the impurity from the private part.’ To him is the inability to self-expression, and to others the joy of clarity of expression. Whatever he says is (stolen) from the speeches of men, for he can not do without borrowed expressions.

‘At times he produces a mixture; to him belong the copper thereof, and to the forerunners the gold contained in it.’

Glory be to Allah! Does everyone who takes hold of a pen actually write, or everyone who mounts the pulpit deliver (good) sermons?

<sup>29</sup> WM, 106–7. The line of poetry quoted in the text is from Ibn Rūmī’s satire against al-Buḥturī. See *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī*, 412. The line from al-Mutanabbī is in *Dīwān Abī ’l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 1/94.

False claim in this regard is enormous. But the lance (of a spear) is unlike other reeds.”

The passage draws on the following line of al-Mutanabbī:

حللتهم من ملوك الناس كلهم محلّ سُمر القنا من سائر القصب

“Your position among the kings is like that of a bamboo lance among other reeds.”

### من أدعية الكتب

(Prayers from Books)<sup>30</sup>

v

وهبه الله عُمرًا طويلاً، وبنى له مجداً أثيلاً، وصوّر وجه أيامه جميلاً، ونصب سعيه للشمس والقمر رسيلاً، وحوى بَعْدْلِهِ رعيّة وبأسه رعيلاً، وأقام جُوده عن أخويه: البحر والسحاب بديلاً. ومثّل معنى شيمه دقيقاً، ومحلّ عليائه جليلاً وأنطق السيوف بشكره صليلاً، والجياد بمدحه صهيلاً، وجعل هام العدى لرماحه مقيلاً، ووحش الفلا لجيوشه نزيلاً.

“May Allah grant him a long life and establish for him a deep-rooted nobility. May He make his days bright and his deed to be reflected afar by the sun and the moon. May He protect the citizenry by his fairness, and the army by his valour. May He make his generosity a substitute for its twin brothers: the sea and the clouds. May He make the value of his character to be accurate and ennoble his high office. May He make swords clatter with gratitude to him, and horses neigh in praise of him. May He make the skulls of the enemies the resting place for his spears, and wild beasts easy preys for his armies.”

The verses of poetry utilized here are from Muslim b. al-Walīd:

قوم إذا احمرّ الهجير من الوغى جعلوا الجماجم للرماح مقيلا

“A people they are, when the midday heat turns red from the war, they make [their enemies’] skulls the resting places for their spears.”

<sup>30</sup> WM, 148–49. For the poetical illustrations see MUSLIM B. AL-WALĪD, *Sharḥ Dīwān Ṣarīf al-ghawānī*, 60 and AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/603; *Dīwān Abī ’l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 3/245.



al-Mutanabbī:

نطقت بسؤددك الحمام تغنياً وبما تُجشّمها الجيادُ صهيلًا

“The doves professed in song your leadership, and the horses acknowledge with neighing, the onerous duties you undertake.”

The first two prose illustrations related in our discussion here are the ones adduced as examples of *al-kīmiyāʾ* which, by his definition, involves the transformation of the basic thought content of the motif treated in a given verse. Whether his own treatments exhibit this particular trait is open to question. For example, the poetical exemplars utilized in *Illustration I* contain *madḥ* elements which are also reflected in the prose derivative in a way that is suggestive of no change to the *ṣūra* of the original treatment, although our author would wish us to believe otherwise.<sup>31</sup> It is equally relevant to observe that although this section is intended to illustrate partial prosification of poetical exemplars, there is no shortage of borrowings from, or allusions to, Qurʾānic idioms, Prophetic anecdotes, and historical reports. What is however remarkable is that he regards the use of the sense of a Qurʾānic or a Prophetic idiom in such examples as a sort of incorporation, *ḍimn* [or *taḍmīn*], and not as illustrations of *ḥall*. Evidence of confusion, or at least imprecision, in regard to the borderline between quotational borrowing of Qurʾānic verses (*iqtibās*, or *taḍmīn* by Ibn al-Athīr’s characterization) and the utilization of them as a form of *ḥall* is an important analytical deviation discernible in this particular section.

Another use of Qurʾānic materials exhibited in this section is in the form of *tarṣīʿ*, “decorative envoi”, which is used to conclude some of the model passages. The skill of Ibn al-Athīr in this regard is recognized, even by his critics.<sup>32</sup> Proverbial and non proverbial lines of poetry are also to be found cited in full in some of the prose samples in this section, and as in the previous section, the concluding samples here consist of prose prayers which, in this case however, illustrate verses of poetry

<sup>31</sup> WM, 109, where he argues:

فانظر إلى هذا الفصل من الكلام المشثور، وإلى هذين البيتين من الشعر، واعطِ ذلك حقَّ النظر حتى تعلم ما في الكلام المشثور من الزيادة معنًى ولفظاً.

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter One, note 59. For the discussion about *tarṣīʿ* as a rhetorical term in the sense of precise assonantal rhymed periods, see AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 375–79; *al-Mathal al-sāʿir*, 3/361–65.

whose wordings are partially retained. Such prayers that can be used in *sulṭāniyyāt*, “official letters”, or *ikhwāniyyāt*, “correspondence with acquaintances”, are the subject matter of another work of his which he says contains some one hundred of such samples. One distinctive characteristic of that work, according to him, is that each prayer sample contains the *maʿnā* of a Qurʾānic verse, or of a Prophetic anecdote, or of a proverbial poetic citation, or of all the three.<sup>33</sup>

### Section 3 *ḥall al-shiʿr bi-ghayr lafẓihī*

(Prosification in words different from those of the poem)

This is the highest form of the *ḥall* device according to our author, as it makes the prose writer's source of inspiration hardly perceptible; and even when the poetical exemplar which generated the prose rendering can be identified, the fact that the expressions in the latter are different from the former makes the exercise an object of praise rather than reproach.<sup>34</sup> In this particular section, 23 samples are provided, and it is here that his concept of *al-kīmiyāʾ* seems to have found a full expression. Three different levels can be identified in relation to this third category of *ḥall*, as afforded by his model essays. Admittedly, the three levels are recognized by him, but they are not illustrated in any systematic fashion, and the order in which they are given here is imposed for analysis purposes.

- A That which involves the transfer into prose a conceit that had been expressed in poetry. Whereas a different wording is employed, the thematic character remains unchanged (*taghyīr al-lafẓ wa-naql al-sūra*).

For this we may cite the following examples.

#### في وصف الكرم

i (About Generosity)<sup>35</sup>

قطعت مواهبه إلى مدى البلاد ولم أقطع إليها مدى. ومدت يدها نحوي، ولم أمدد نحوها يدًا؛ فهي المسافرة إلى كل مقيم وطاردة الإعدام عن كل عديم، والكريمة

<sup>33</sup> WM, 151.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 152. See also, *al-Mathal al-sāʿir*, 1/132; AL-QALQASHANDĪ, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 1/288.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 154. For the illustration, see *Dīwān Abī ʿl-Tayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 2/7. The verse by Zuhayr: *ʿalā mukthirihim ḥaqqu man yaʿtarihimū/wa-ʿinda ʿl-muqillina al-samāḥatu wa ʿl-badhlu* is an equally possible inspirer here. See *Dīwān Zuhayr*, 62;

إذا غدا صوب الغمام وهو ليثم. فشكرى لها شكران: شكر على العطاء، وشكر  
على التبرّع. ومن أحسن أوصافها أنها تأتي للصنع لا للتصنيع.

“His gifts travelled the length and breadth of the lands to reach me, though I did not travel to receive them. They presented themselves to me, even though I did not stretch out my arms (begging) for them. They are the ones that proceed to meet anyone at his place; they drive away poverty from every poor person. They are the generous, when the early morning downpour decides to be stingy. My gratitudes are twofold: for the [quality of the] gifts, and for the donation of them. Of their best features is that they come as a reward for good deeds and not as (undue) inducement.”

The following line by al-Mutanabbī is proffered as the original expression on which the passage is modeled:

وأنفسهم مبدولة لفودهم وأموالهم في دار من لم يفد وفد

“Their souls are given away to those who visit them; their wealth is a guest at the home of the one who does not come to them.”

### في العفو والصفح

ii (About Pardon and Forgiveness)<sup>36</sup>

تدافعهُ الأعداء عن نفوسها بجهد قراءها، فإذا أسرت حاطها حلمه بما لم تُحطه قوّة  
دفاعها. فلها من تغمّده عند الإذعان أنصار. والكريم يلقى عداته في الحرب بالإقدام  
وعند السلم بالفرار.

“The enemies defend themselves against him by fighting fiercely; but when they are captured, his clemency protects them more than their defensive efforts could have. When they submit to him in defeat, he provides them with helpers out of compassion. The generous one confronts his enemies in war with boundless bravery, but in peace by turning away.”

AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/594; IBN KHALAF, *Mawādd*, 150; IBN ABĪ 'L-IṢBA', *Tahrīr*, 507.

<sup>36</sup> WM, 159. For the poetical exemplar see MUSLIM B. AL-WALĪD, *Sharḥ Diwān Ṣarī' al-ghawānī*, 331.

The corresponding line of poetry here is attributed to Muslim Ibn al-Walid:

يغدو عدوك خائفاً فإذا رأى أن قد قدرت على العقاب رجاً

“Your enemy is ever afraid; but whenever he sees that you are in position to retribute, he hopes for your clemency.”

In the first sample, eulogy is the common theme between the line of poetry and the prose passage; and in the second, indulgence is the shared conceit. The difference in phraseology between the prose samples and the respective lines of poetry that inspired them are too obvious to warrant further elaboration.

B That which involves the generation of other conceits (*tawlid al-maʿānī*) from poetic pieces.<sup>37</sup>

This type, according to our author, is the most sublime of the *ḥall* device, as the poetical source can hardly be detected, due to the fact that the new expression has been skilfully composed to generate, as it were, a different motif which can easily pass as a new creation that draws on no antecedent.<sup>38</sup> The following serve as illustrations.

### في فضل المال والرزاد

i (On Excess Wealth and Provision)<sup>39</sup>

الإنسان في هيج أخلط ماله كهو في أخلط جسده، وكلاهما شيء واحد في تقويم أوده؛ فهذا يُطبَّبُ بتنقيص شيء من دمه، وهذا يُطبَّبُ بتنقيص شيء من درهمه. وقد قيل إن الغنى داء عند بعض الناس، ولا يُسكن من سورته إلا استعمال مسهلات الأكياس: وهذا فلان قد طغى حيث استغنى، وامتلأ عيناً ويداً وبطناً، فينبغي أن يُعالج بهذا العلاج الذي فيه إصلاح للمزاج.

“Man, when his wealth surges [violently], is like when his four senses of humour do; both require the same treatment to put aright. The latter

<sup>37</sup> On *tawlid* as a rhetorical concept, see IBN ABĪ 'L-IṢBAʿ, *Tahrir*, 494–98.

<sup>38</sup> *WM*, 166:

وهذا هو أشرف الدرجات في حل المنظوم. ولا يكاد يُفطن لمكان الأخذ منه، بل يُظن أن النثر هو المتفرد بصوغ تلك المعاني. غير أن الطريق إلى ذلك كثير الإشكال، دقيق المسلك، لا يستطيعه إلا من أقدره الله على سلوك مضايقه، وثبت قدمه في مزلقه.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 169. The illustration could not be found in the *Diwān*.



is treated through reduction of his blood; the former by reduction of his wealth. It is said that, to some people, wealth constitutes a disease whose severity can be mitigated only by the use of purgatives of the purses. Here is a man who transgressed as he became excessively rich, who overburdened his eyes, hands, and belly. He should be treated with the kind of treatment that brings normality to the body mixture.”

The poem on which this prose draws is attributed to Abū Tammām:

أرى فضل مال المرء داءً لعرضه      كما أن فضل الزاد داءٌ لجسمه  
فليس لداء العرض شيء كبذله      وليس لداء الجسم شيء كحسمه

“I consider a man’s excess wealth a disease to his honour, just as excess nutrition is a disease to his body.

Nothing cures the disease of honour like spending, nothing relieves a body’s disease like controlling it.”

The prose model, as can be seen, amplifies with additional ideas, the original motif that is treated in the verse.

### شكر بعض المنعمين

ii (Gratitude to a Certain Benefactor)<sup>40</sup>

إذا تقابلت مدائحي وسجاياه رأيت مرآة صقيلة تقابل صورة جميلة؛ فلولا هذه ورونق صقالها لما تمثّلت تلك على هيئة جمالها. وأنا أول من طبع مرآة من الكلام، وصوّر الأخلاق بصور الأجسام. فإذا علم ذلك مني فلا يجعل لسانى مُعمّداً، ولا قلّمي مقعداً. فإن له من أحدهما صارماً بتاراً ومن الآخر فارساً كزاراً؛ ولا يُعتمد هذا ويُتعد هذا إلا أن يضعنى فى غير موضعى ويُلحق بى من لم يُؤمّل لحاقى، ولم يجر فى ميدان معى. والغيرة حيرة والغينة ضغينة.

“Whenever my encomiums and his character traits encounter each other, you see a shiny mirror facing a beautiful image. But for the former and the lustre of its radiance, the true beauty of the latter would not have shown. I am the first to make a mirror out of speech and [the first to] portray character traits in terms of corporeal images. If he would identify this with me, let him not sheathe my tongue nor make my pen idle; for in one he finds a sharp sword, and in the other,

<sup>40</sup> WM, 167–68. For the poetical illustration, see *Diwān Abi Tammām*, 1/106–7.



a tireless horseman. So, let him not sheathe the former nor render the latter idle, unless he intends to place me where I do not belong and to hold me down to be overtaken by someone who had never hoped for this nor had ever competed with me in a course. For sense of honour generates perplexity and prejudice produces malice.”

This prose is said to have been generated by the following lines of Abū Tammām:

أولى المديح بأن يكون مُهَذَّباً      ما كان منه في أغرّ مهذَّب  
عُربتْ خلائقه وأغرب واصفٌ      فيه فأحسن مُعربٌ في مغرب

“The best of eulogy, especially the refined one, is that which is said in praise of the generous, the refined.

His character traits are unfamiliar, hence the praise singer praised him marvelously, thus a marvel – creating eulogist excelled in praising a marvelous character.”

In explaining how the prose treatment illustrates the principle of *tawlid al-maʿānī*, Ibn al-Athīr argues that the simple meaning of the poetical exemplar is that a good *madiḥ* need be said only in respect of a good person. In his own treatment, however, the conceit of a mirror reflecting a good image is introduced to prepare the ground for the claim that the nobility of the patron who is being praised can only be manifested through the eulogist’s praises for him. This is not all, other conceits are also treated, and in conclusion, an expression of a friendly censure is introduced. Such an adept way of going round a prototype is, according to our author, the normative way which he would recommend, rather than any form of laboured pedantry that readily reveals strain.

C The one in which the antithesis of an idea that was treated in verse is treated in prose (*ʿaks al-maʿnā ʿalā ḍiddih*).

This he says, occurs very rarely because it is very tasking. It can be illustrated with the following:

في الشكر  
(About Gratitude)<sup>41</sup>

i

الشكر أخفّ من الإحسان وزناً وصاحبه يستبدل الذي هو خير بالذي هو أدنى. ولقد ربحت صفقته إذ باع أقوالاً وحاز أموالاً، وأعطى كلمات خفافاً وأخذ عروصاً ثقالاً. ومن زعم أن شكر الشاكر أفضل من موهبة الواهب فقد جهل في هذا وكذب، فهو لا ينفك من عذر الجاهل أو ريبة الكاذب. ولقد أغلى القول فيما ليس بغال وأتى ويده السفلى من مكان عال. وأتى فضل لمن يكون غايته مجازياً لا موازياً، ومعاملاً لا معادلاً. وإذا أنصف علم أنه جاء أخيراً، ولا فرق بينه وبين من أُعطي أجره فصار أجيراً. وما أرى الشكر إلا حديثاً يذهب في الرياح لو لم يقبده مكارم السماح. فلا حاجة إذاً مع لسانها إلى شكر الشاكر. وإذا نطقت الحقائق أغنت بنطقها عن مديح الشاعر.

“Expression of gratitude is lighter in weight than benevolence; the one who expresses gratitude is simply substituting the better with the lower. His trade has indeed prospered, for he exchanged words for wealth; he gave some scanty words and got weighty riches [in return]. Whoever claims that expression of gratitude is more valuable than the gift by the benevolent, is either ignorant or insincere; he is suffering either from the fluff of the ignorant or from the misgiving of the doubter. He has certainly overvalued something of little value and has made his lowly hand droop from the top. What merit is there for one whose goal is just to offer a recompense rather than a match; who intereracts without a matching return. Had he been fair, he would have admitted his lateness in appearance; and there is no difference between him and someone who was given his wages [for a job done],

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 170–71. The poetical exemplar could not be located in the *Diwān*. The opening statement is doubtless a paraphrase of Qurʾān 2:61, while the concluding statement is borrowed from the following verse of Nuṣayb:

فعاوجوا فأتوا بالذي أت أهله      ولو سكتوا أثنت عليك الحقائق

See *Shiʿr Nuṣayb b. Rabāh*, 59; AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *Ḥilya*, 1/258; AL-JAHSIYĀRĪ, *al-Wuzarāʾ*, 206; AL-MAʿARRĪ, *R. al-Sāhil*, 348; AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Šināʿatayn*, 214. The prose also contains a paraphrase of the *ḥadīth*: *Al-yad al-ʿulyā khayrun min al-yad al-suflā* “The giving (lit. the upper) hand is better than the receiving (lit. the lower) hand”. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 2/292. Compare the sample entitled *Fī waṣf sakhī* above. But our author does not illustrate any of the materials given here as sources to his prose passage. – For more examples illustrating *ʿaks al-maʿnā ʿalā dīdihī*, see *al-Mathal al-sāʿir*, 1/144.

thus becoming a hireling. I do not consider expression of gratitude more than a mere speech that goes with the wind if not preserved by acts of benevolence. By (speaking through) their own tongues, they (the acts) do not need any expression of gratitude by the grateful. When bags speak [by giving out presents], their speech put them in no need of a poet's encomiums."

This prose composition is said to have derived from the inversion of the meaning expressed in following verse by Abū Tammām:

الشكر بالمأمول أبهى من يدٍ غراء يودعها رجاء الآمل

"Gratitude for that which is longed for is more attractive than a bright hand brought out by the hope of the hopeful."

Whereas the line of poetry values gratitude at the expense of generosity, the opposite view is the one expressed in the prose.

### شكوى الزمان

ii (Complaints about Time)<sup>42</sup>

من كان يشكو الأقوام فإنَّ الخادم لا يشكو إلا الأيام، فإنَّ المعدي على قدر العدوى والمشكو إليه على قدر الشكوى. ومما يشكوه منها أنها تبادله ولا تواجهه، وتساوره ولا تجاهره. ولو كان لها شخصٌ للقيه بعزم مولانا فقارعه وأرهبه باسمه فوادعه. على أنها عبيده تجنى وهو المطلوب بجنايتها، وإذا رأت بأحدٍ من جاهه قرنته بعنايتها. والخادم يطالب مولانا بأرش جراحها، ويسأله عناية تكفَّ من غرب جماحها.

"Who is that complaining about peoples? The obedient servant complains only about the vicissitudes of time. An infected person's suffering is as strong as the infection itself, and a person to whom a complaint is made is to be gauged by the degree of the complaint. Among his complaints is that they (i.e. the vicissitudes) come upon him without premonitions and never confront him face to face; they attack him, but not openly. Were they to possess a real body, he would have challenged this to a duel with the resolve characteristic of our Lord; he would have fought it, terrified it with his name, and would have caused it to flee. However, they (i.e. the vicissitudes) are [like] servants who commit

<sup>42</sup> WM, 171–72. The poetical illustration occurs in *Diwān Dik al-Jinn*, 75.

crimes, though it is he (our Master) who is being held responsible. Whenever they see anyone enjoying his grace, they too make such a person their target. The servant hereby demands that our Lord compensate him for the injuries suffered through them and provide him with the security that would put their relentless assaults in check.”

Part of this essay is said to be an inversion of the sense contained in the following by Dīk al-Jinn (d. 235/850):

ودافعتُ في صدر الزمان ونحره وَأَيَّ يَدٍ لِي وَالزَّمانَ مُحارِبُ

“I stood up against the chest and the throat of time; but who is there to lend me a hand as the time fights?”

Evidence of inversion in the prose sample is quite obvious. Whereas it is the time that is portrayed as waging a war against his human victim in the poetic prototype, this role is inverted in the prose version, thus illustrating the sense of *‘aks al-maʿnā ‘alā ḍiddihī*.

One significant feature of the discussion in this section is the author’s technical characterization of the nature of relationship between the poetic pieces and the corresponding prose essays that derived from them. Thus we encounter such phrases as “*wa-hādhā maʿkhūdh min...*”; “*wa-hādhā ‘l-maʿnā mustall min...*”; “*wa-baʿḍ hādhā ‘l-maʿnā yataṣawwar ‘alā...*”; “*wa-hādhā ‘l-maʿnā mukhtalas min...*”; “*wa-dhayl hādhā yansaḥib ‘alā...*”; “*wa-baʿḍ hādhā ‘l-maʿnā yanẓur ilā...*”; “*wa-baʿḍ hādhā ‘l-maʿnā mustamadd min...*”; “*wa-hādhā tusāriq al-naẓar ilā...*”; “*wa-hādhā ‘l-maʿnā yastariq al-samʿ min...*”; “*wa-hādhā ‘l-maʿnā yughāmiz al-naẓar ilā...*”; “*hādhā mustanbaṭ min...*”; “*hādhā mabnāhu ‘alā...*”.

The difference between these phrases as it relates to the poetic exemplars and their prose derivatives is more of degree than kind: the employment of expressions other than those of the corresponding lines of poetry remains the underlying principle for all of them.

But an important issue adumbrated by Ibn al-Athīr in this section is the distinction between interlingual transfer of motifs – that is, where an idea expressed in one language is consciously expressed in another language –, and the use of a different phraseology in a prose composition that derives from poetry. The former, he argues, is a straightforward process of substitution of equivalents between the donor and target languages; although an adequate knowledge of the languages involved in terms of their structures, nuances, dictions, and choice of words is still essential. This is illustrated with the story of the Persian poet, al-ʿUnṣurī, who is reported to have expressed in Persian, an idea originally expressed

in Arabic, using a precisely similar wording.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, this is not pursued any further, as our author fails to give any details or instructions as to how such could be adapted to prose essays, his main focus. Reference will be made elsewhere in this study to the effort of Ibn al-Muqaffa<sup>c</sup> in turning the Persian Bidpai fables into Arabic and to the successful attempt of al-Firdawsī (d. c. 411/1021) in rendering the Qurʾānic love story involving Yūsuf and Zulaykhā into Persian. That Greek wisdom sayings may have perceptibly crept into the Arabic popular discourse is equally noteworthy.<sup>44</sup> However, a coherent *modus operandi* as to how “exotic” materials can be integrated into prose essays or indeed how they relate to the *ḥall* theory was never formalized, and discussion about it is generally lacking in the theoretical discourse. The *lacuna* is not filled, as one would expect, by our author in his reference to interlingual borrowings in literary compositions.

For now, it may simply be remarked that although the prose passages provided by our author as illustrations of how *ḥall al-shiʿr* works in practice may not be full or complete essays, thus making a more comprehensive evaluation of them somewhat difficult, nonetheless, the prose samples demonstrate in an explicit and methodical fashion the various possibilities and levels of the *ḥall* device in the context of prose compositions. Furthermore, the overlapping of the source materials in his model prose samples on *ḥall al-shiʿr* by which materials from the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, and popular anecdotes are also utilized in addition to poetic pieces, is by no means an evidence of analytical imprecision. What it reveals is that the various forms of the source materials that are available to an author are intertwined and should be so regarded and employed by the *kātib*. Moreover, it illustrates Ibn al-Athīr's understanding and interpretation of *ḥall* as a technique in which all forms of non prose discourse types should be adapted into prose compositions in a pragmatic way.

## II

### *Fī ḥall āyāt al-Qurʾān* (Recomposition of Qurʾānic Verses)

The uniqueness of the style and idiom of the Holy Qurʾān is adduced as the justification for the recommendation of a different pattern of approach in the application of the *ḥall* device to the Scripture. Constant recitation

<sup>43</sup> *WM*, 152–53.

<sup>44</sup> See ROSENTHAL, “Sayings of the Ancients”, 29–54 and 150–83.

of the Book and meditation over its meanings are recommended to any serious practitioner of the art, as new ideas and images emerge as often as the Book is read. A thorough understanding of its meanings and peculiar usages, which naturally results from a constant study of them, would equip the *kātib* with such sublime ideas and eloquent expressions that have their roots in the Book.

As already highlighted, the use of Qurʾānic idioms in poetry and prose compositions had long been recognized as an essential tool in the literary enterprise, but Ibn al-Athīr was the first to offer a detailed and systematic analysis of how Qurʾānic idioms are to be made objects of *ḥall* in prose compositions. In his argument for a distinctive approach to the *ḥall* of Qurʾānic materials, he says:<sup>45</sup>

واعلم أنَّ كتاب الله هو أفصح الكلام ولا ينبغي أن يُسلَّك به مسلك الأشعار في حلِّها، بل ينبغي أن يُحافظ على ألفاظه لعدم القدرة على مماثلتها ومشابهتها.

“Know that the Book of Allah is the most eloquent of speech, and should therefore not be made to follow the same course as poetry in prosification, rather, its peculiar wording must be retained, as it is impossible for it to be imitated or paralleled.”

The issue of the uniqueness of the Holy Qurʾān has been extensively examined in the intellectual lore, both classical and contemporary, and the argument that Qurʾānic idioms must be retained when used in prose compositions is a further endorsement of the established view about the Scripture’s unapproachable quality.<sup>46</sup> Ibn al-Athīr’s prescription on how the Qurʾān may be subjected to *ḥall* is also highlighted in *al-Mathal* where he argues that only a part rather than the whole of any given Qurʾānic material may be utilized in a prose composition. With this, a clear distinction is made between quotational borrowing of Qurʾānic idioms, (i.e. *taḍmīn/iqtibās*), and the use of its wording or ideas in new compositions. The former is simply the incorporation of a whole verse in the text of a prose essay, but the latter involves a process of integration in a way that the Qurʾānic expressions or motifs blend with the essay and

<sup>45</sup> WM, 174.

<sup>46</sup> On the doctrine of *iʿjāz* and the scholarly discussions of it, see AL-ḤIMṢĪ, “Tārikh fikrat iʿjāz al-Qurʾān”; EI, s.v. “iʿdjāz”, and “al-Ḳurʾān”; POONAWALA, “Al-Sulṭān al-Khaṭṭāb’s Treatise on the *iʿgāz al-Qurʾān*”.

flow naturally into it without effort or prior indication.<sup>47</sup> I highlighted in Chapter One and elsewhere in this chapter some of the deviant elements in Ibn al-Athīr's discussion about the use of Qur'ānic materials, and the issue need not detain us again. What should interest here is his success at formulating a scientific framework within which the *ḥall* technique is applicable to Qur'ānic materials. According to him, there are two ways in which a Qur'ānic verse can be utilized in prose compositions:<sup>48</sup>

- i By opening or concluding a prose essay with a part of it. This can equally be characterized as *tarṣīʿ*, although he does not designate it as such.
- ii By the adoption of its sense or thought content and then expressing this in prose accordingly.

Whereas the first type involves the use of the exact wording of the Qur'ānic piece so selected, the second does not; it being a paraphrase or an allusion of some sort whose relationship to, or descent from, the scriptural text can be established either through inductive or deductive methods. In all, our author gives 27 model passages illustrating how the two levels function in practice. However, a finer classification of the samples provided is still possible, if we employ other criteria afforded by the patterns of usage discernible in the model passages. Five different patterns can be identified. For purposes of analysis, the samples in which the exact wordings of the Qur'ānic expressions are retained are grouped under QA; those in which the Qur'ānic verses or anecdotes are paraphrased come under QB<sub>1</sub>; those illustrating allusions come under QB<sub>2</sub>; samples combining between the last two features come under QB<sub>1</sub> + QB<sub>2</sub>; and the samples illustrating a blend of quotation and paraphrase/allusion are classified under QA + QB. It is relevant to remark that whereas some samples contain materials from a single Qur'ānic verse, some others derive from more than one. Although instances of overlapping are not wholly lacking in some of the samples as classified, the most dominant characteristic demonstrated by each sample decides the group to which it is allotted. In the following, each of the five groupings is illustrated.

<sup>47</sup> *al-Mathal*, 1/190.

<sup>48</sup> *WM*, 174–75. See also *al-Mathal*, 1/170.



Table 1\*

Table of model passages illustrating the *ḥall* of Qur'ānic materials in prose

QA Quotation	QB <sub>1</sub> Paraphrase	QB <sub>2</sub> Allusion	QB <sub>1</sub> + QB <sub>2</sub> Paraphrase + Allusion	QA + QB Quotation + Paraphrase/Allusion
<i>fī waṣf karīm</i> (175)	<i>al-iqtīṣād fī ṭalab</i>	<i>dhamm al-bakhīl</i>	<i>fī 'l-ighṭirāb</i> (179)	<i>kitāb ilā 'l-Malik al-ʿAzīz</i> (184)
<i>fī waṣf karīm</i> (175–6)	<i>al-rizq</i> (176)	(175)	<i>ilā baʿḍ al-ṭughāt</i> (185)	<i>fī waṣf ḥiṣār</i> (188)
<i>balāgha baʿḍ al-fuḍalāʾ</i> (187–8)	<i>khuṭba mawadda</i> (177)	<i>waṣf al-karīm</i> (176)		
<i>fī dhamm rajul</i> (191)	<i>kitāb ilā 'l-Dīwān</i> <i>al-ʿazīz</i> (178)	<i>jawāb ʿan kitāb</i> (180)		
	<i>fī waṣf qalam</i> (179–80)	<i>fī waṣf al-shukr</i> (182)		
	<i>fī waṣf al-makr</i> <i>wa 'l-khidāʿ</i> (183)	<i>fī taʿziya</i> (182)		
	<i>kitāb ilā 'l-Malik</i> (186)	<i>fī waṣf kitāb</i> (191)		
	<i>fī waṣf maʿraka</i> (187)			
	<i>fī waṣf al-manjanīq</i> (189)			
	<i>fī maʿnā 'l-tawakkul</i> (190)			
	<i>duʿāʾ fī ṣadr kitāb</i> (192)			
	<i>duʿāʾ ākhar</i> (192–3)			
	<i>duʿāʾ ākhar</i> (193–4)			
	<i>duʿāʾ ākhar</i> (192)			

\* The number within the brackets refers to the pages on which the passages occur in *WM*.

QA

## QUOTATION TYPE

## في وصف كريم

i

(About a Noble Man)<sup>49</sup>

لا يضرب بين ماله حجابًا وبين الناس، وإذا عُذِل على الجود أجاب بقوله تعالى: «واعرض عن الجاهلين». وقد علم أنّ البخل والمعذرة أخوان، فلا فرق عنده بين المعتذرين وبين الباخلين. وفي شريعة هذا الخلق الكريم تكثر أسباب الامتياح ولو عده سائل لناداه: «حيّ على السماح» كما ينادى «حيّ على الفلاح».

“He puts no curtain between his wealth and people; and whenever he is blamed for excessive generosity he replies with the statement of (Allah) the Exalted: ‘Turn away from the ignorant’. He believes that giving of excuses and avarice are brothers: the stingy and those who give excuses are not different in his estimation. In the bow of this noble man are strings of favour. Should any beggar bypass him, he calls him back and says: ‘Come to munificence’ as one calls [to prayer] ‘Come to salvation’.”

The Qur’ānic verse quoted in part is:

خذ العفو وأمر بالعرف واعرض عن الجاهلين.

“Cultivate the virtue of forgiveness, commend what is good, and turn away from the the ignorant”. (Qur’ān 7:199).

## في وصف بلاغة بعض الفضلاء

ii

(Description of a Noble Man’s Eloquence)<sup>50</sup>

وقد سُخِّرَتْ له حِكم البيان يأتي بأعاجيبها. فإذا لم يظفر غيره إلا بوحشها، ظفر هو بريبيها. فهو يسحر بألفاظه، ولا لفظ إلا لمن سحر. ويصوّر أرواح المعاني، والمعاني غير الصور. فما أبرز فيها معنى إلا قيل: «ما هذا بشرٌ إن هذا إلا ملك». ولا جلا محاسنه على بنت فكر من الأفكار إلا قالت: «هيت لك».

<sup>49</sup> WM, 175–76. We may also draw attention to the fact that the expression: *ḥayya ‘alā ‘l-falāḥ* is borrowed from the text of the formal call to the Muslim prayer.

<sup>50</sup> WM, 187–88.



“The standards of eloquence have been made subservient to him; he produces the most wonderful of them. When others could only achieve their stray ones, he achieves the cream of them. He charms with his expressions, and expression belongs only to the one who charms. He puts the souls of ideas in [brilliant] images; and they (certainly) excel over ideas. He will not reveal an idea through them (i.e. the images) without it being said: ‘This is no human being, he is nothing but an angel’. He will not bring out his beauties on any daughter of (his) imagination without her saying: ‘Come on, you dear one’.”

The Qurʾānic verses utilized here are:

وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ.

“And they said in amazement: ‘This is no human being; it is certainly nothing but a noble angel’.” (Qurʾān 12:31).

وَعَلَقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْت لَكَ.

“And she locked the door firmly and said: ‘Now come on, you dear one’.” (Qurʾān 12: 23).

QB<sub>1</sub>

#### THE PARAPHRASE TYPE

من كتاب إلى الملك أبي بكر بن أيوب

i (From a Letter to King Abū Bakr Ibn Ayyūb)<sup>51</sup>

... والله قدفهم بالبأساء من موضع النعماء، وأمطرهم بالحجارة بدلًا من الماء وتلك  
سُنَّة لا تُحَوَّلُ، وآياته التي لا تُؤَوَّلُ، وفعله الآخر الذي يبنني على فعله الأول. وقد  
أرسل أبابيل الطير على قاصدي بيته الحرام، وجعل ذلك آية في الجاهلية وذكرى في

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 186. The prose essay equally contains a reference to the report relating to the founding of the Aqṣā Mosque, some forty years after the Kaʿba. See SHIHĀB AL-DĪN, *Ṭirāz al-majālis*, 230–231. Our author fails to indicate that the prose sample equally reflects the contents of the following verse by Abū Khirāsh al-Hudhālī:

حمدتُ إلهي بعد عروة إذ نجا خراشٌ وبعض الشر أهون من بعض

See *Sharḥ Diwān al-Ḥamāsa*, 2/782; *Sharḥ ashʿār al-Hudhaliyyīn*, 3/1230; AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/550; AL-TANŪKHĪ, *Kitāb al-Qawāfi*, 61.

الإسلام. وكذلك أجرى مثلها على قاصدى بيته الذى سمّاه مقدّساً. وجعله بعد تأسيس البيت الحرام مؤسساً. ولو نجا هؤلاء من العذاب للقوا من سيف مولانا عذاباً، ومسحهم الله بذبابه ذباباً حتى لقد كانوا يعدّون نقمة الحجارة نعمة ويرون أنها هى الصغرى بالنسبة إلى تلك العظمى. فإن فى الشرّ خياراً، والمستأصل بالسيف، يودّ لو ألقت عليه أحجاراً.

“... Allah threw misfortunes at them in place of fortunes, and rained on them rocks in place of water. That is a tradition that never changes; His signs that are not interpretable; a recent act of His that follows in the pattern of His earlier act. He had sent flights of birds on those who had set out to destroy His Holy House, and he made this a sign in the pre-Islamic times and an event to be remembered in Islam. He did the same to those who attempted His House [in Jerusalem] which he named a sanctuary, and made it an institution after the Holy House [in Mecca].

Even if these (mischievous makers) had escaped Divine chastisement, they would still have suffered a heavy punishment through the sword of our Lord (the king) who would have defaced them with the edge of his sword, so much that they would have regarded punishment with stones a blessing. They would have considered it the lesser evil in relation to the greater one. Certainly there are choices in calamities: someone who is destroyed completely by the sword would have preferred that the heaven threw stones on him.”

The Qurʾānic expression paraphrased here is:

وأرسل عليهم طيراً أبابيل. ترميهم بحجارة من سجيل.

“And He sent on them flights of birds, striking them with stones of baked clay.” (Qurʾān 105:3–4).

### فى وصف المنجنيق

ii

(Description of a Catapult)<sup>52</sup>

ونُصبت المجانيق فأنشأت سُحباً يُخشى محلّها ولا يُرجى وبؤها. فما سيقّت إلى بلد حتى إلا أماته، ولم تأته إلا أنه أمر الله إذ أتته. فهى تنبت لأهله كلّ أمر مريح لا كلّ

<sup>52</sup> WM, 189–90.



زوج بهيج. فلم تزل تقذف السور بصوبها المدرار، وتترل عليه جبلاً من برد، غير أنها من أحجار.

“Catapults were set up and they generated clouds, the emptiness of which is dreaded and the downpour from which is never longed for. They will not be launched against a living city without they destroying it, and they will not come upon it without making Allah’s decree take effect. They plant among its residents all sorts of confusion, not lovely crops. They continued bombarding the city walls with their copious shower; raining on them mountains of hail which, however, consisted only of stones.”

The following Qur’ānic passages are said to have been utilized in this essay:

والله الذي أرسل الرياح فتثير سحاباً. فسقناه إلى بلد ميّت فأحيينا به الأرض بعد موتها كذلك النشور.

“It is Allah who sends winds so that they raise up the cloud. And We drive this to a dead land and revive the earth therewith after its death. Thus will be the resurrection.” (Qur’ān 35:9).

أتى أمر الله فلا تستعجلوه... الآية.

“The decree of Allah has come by, never seek to hasten it.” (Qur’ān 16:1).

... أتاهَا أمرنا ليلاً أو نهاراً فجعلناها حصيداً كأن لم تغن بالأمس.

“... then came upon it our decree by night or by day. And We made it like a harvest clean-mown, as if it had not flourished of late.” (Qur’ān 10:24).

بل كذبوا بالحق لما جاءهم، فهم في أمر مريج... والأرض مددناها وألقينا فيها رواسي وأنبتنا فيها من كل زوج بهيج.

“But they denied the truth when it came to them, they are indeed in a confused state... And the earth We have spread it out and threw upon it mountains standing firm, and produced therein every kind of lovely pairs.” (Qur’ān 50:5–7).

وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَمَّنْ يَشَاءُ.

“And He sends down from the sky mountain masses of clouds containing hail. He causes them to strike whom He pleases and turns them away from whom He pleases.” (Qur’ān 24:43).

### دعاء

iii

(A Supplication)<sup>53</sup>

جعل الله في اقتناء المعالي من المكثرين، وخلّد ذكره تخليد المُنْظَرِينَ وأحضره السعادة، ولا جعله في الآخرة من المحضرين. ورفع مكانه فوق الناس حتى لا يكون فيه أحد من الممترين، وقرن النصر بمساعيه، فإذا نزل بساحة قوم، فساء صباح المنذرين.

“May Allah place him among those who acquire glories in abundance; immortalize his name like those given respite (from hell); grant him happiness; and let him not be among those to be brought forth for questioning at Resurrection. May He make him tower above others so that no one would doubt his superiority, and crown his efforts with success. Should he land at the forecourt of a people (for a fight), how evil would be the morn of those who had been admonished.”

The four Qur’ānic verses paraphrased here are as follows:

قال ربّ فأَنْظِرْني إلى يوم يبعثون. قال فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ إلى يوم الوقت المعلوم.

“It (the Satan) said: ‘O my Lord, grant me then respite till the day they are raised’. Allah said: ‘Certainly you are among those to be granted respite till the day of the appointed time.’” (Qur’ān 38:79–81).

ولولا نعمة ربّي لكنت من المحضرين.

“But for the mercy of my Lord, I would have surely been among those to be brought here.” (Qur’ān 37:57).

<sup>53</sup> WM, 192–93. It may be remarked that the Qur’ānic idioms paraphrased here occur at the end of each period. This is a good example of the paraphrase type that also combines the device of *tarṣīf*.

فإن كنت في شك مما أنزلنا إليك، فاسأل الذين يقرأون الكتاب من قبلك. لقد جاءك الحق من ربك فلا تكونن من الممترين.

“If you are in doubt concerning that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Book before you. Surely has truth come to you from your Lord, and be not among the doubters.” (Qurʾān 10:94).

أفبعذابنا يستعجلون. فإذا نزل بساحتهم فساء صباح المنذرين.

“Is it our punishment that they earnestly wished it come quickly? When it descends at their forecourt, how evil would be the morn of those who had been warned.” (Qurʾān 37:176–7).

QB<sub>2</sub>

#### THE ALLUSION TYPE

##### في وصف الكريم

i

(Description of the Noble)<sup>54</sup>

شيمة كرمه مسيحية في طبها، كليمة في تسهيل شربها. فإذا أعلت الآمال تلقتها بشفاء عليها، وإذا ذبدت عن الورود تلقتها بشفاء غليلها. فلها الفضل الذي ليس بمطروق، والخلق الذي لم يكن قبلها لمخلوق. ولا جناح على من سبح لها متعجبا، وسجد لها متعبدا، وصلى بالثناء عليها موحدا ومتوجدا.

“The feature of his generosity is Messiah-like in healing, Moses-like in facilitating the watering (of animals). When hopes wane (lit. fall sick), his nobility overtakes them with a cure; and when they are prevented [like thirsty herds] from entering into watering places, it rescues them by quenching their thirst. To it belong the honour which is not well worn, and good manners that no one had ever possessed. Not to be blamed is one who glorifies it out of admiration and prostrates for it in reverence then showers praises on it out of conviction in Allah’s oneness and out of passion.”

The Qurʾānic materials alluded to here are:

وتُبرئ الأكمه والأبرص بإذنى ... الآية.

<sup>54</sup> WM, 176–77.



“... and you used to cure the blind and the lepers by my leave.”  
(Qurʾān 5:113).

ولما ورد ماء مدين وجد عليه أمة من الناس يسقون ووجد من دونهم امرئتين تذودان. قال ما خطبكما قالتا لا نسقى حتى يصدر الرعاء وأبونا شيخ كبير. فسقا لهما ثم تولى إلى الظل... الآية.

“And when he arrived at the watering place in Madyan, he found there a group of men watering their flocks, and beside them were two women who were keeping back (their flocks). He asked them: ‘What is the matter with you?’, and they replied: ‘We cannot water our flocks until the other shepherds take back their flocks, and our father is a very old man.’ So he watered their flocks for them and then turned to take a refuge under the shade.” (Qurʾān 28:23–24).

### جواب عن كتاب

ii

(Reply to a Letter)<sup>55</sup>

كُتِبُ سَيِّدَنَا رِياضٌ وَإِنْ جَلَّتْ عَنِ التَّمثِيلِ وَأَبَتْ أَنْ تَكُونَ كَلِمَهَا الَّتِي تَبْقَى عَلَى الْأَيَّامِ كَزَهْرَةٍ نَبَتْ يَذْهَبُ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ. وَلَوْلَا أَنْ يَرْخُصَ فِي حَمْلِ الْمَعْنَى عَلَى الْمَعْنَى، وَتَشْبِيهِ الْأَعْلَى مِنْهَا بِالْأَدْنَى لَمَا ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَبِيِّهِ مَثَلًا بِسَرَّاجٍ، وَلَا لَنُورِهِ مَثَلًا بِمَصْبَاحٍ فِي زَجَاجٍ. فَلَا يَنْكَرُ سَيِّدُنَا إِذَا مَا مَثَلَتْ بِهِ صَفْحَةً كِتَابِهِ وَلِيَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ ضُرُوبِ التَّوَسُّعَاتِ الْمَجَازِيَةِ لَا مِنْ أَضْرَابِهِ. وَكَمَا أَنَّهُ يَجَلُّ عَنِ ضَرْبِ الْأَمْثَالِ، فَكَذَلِكَ الشُّوقُ إِلَى مَرْسَلِهِ يَجَلُّ عَنِ إِحَاطَةِ الْأَقْوَالِ. وَكِلَاهُمَا قَدْ حَارَ الْخَادِمُ فِي مَلَابَسَةِ أَمْرِهِ، فَهُوَ مُمْتَعٌ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا بِرُونِقِ حَسَنِهِ وَمَرُوعٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِ بِتَوَقُّدِ جَمْرِهِ. وَقَدْ حَصَلَ مِنْهُمَا فِي فَصْلَيْنِ مِنْ فُصُولِ عَامِهِ؛ فَطَرَفُهُ فِي رَيِّعٍ مِنَ النَّظَرِ وَاجْتِلَاثِهِ، وَقَلْبُهُ فِي مَصِيفٍ مِنَ الشُّوقِ وَغَرَامِهِ.

“Our master’s letters are meadows, although they are above comparison; their words, which are everlasting, refuse to wither like a flower that passes away after a while. Had it not been that figurative usage is allowed and comparing the inferior with the superior permissible, Allah would not have likened His Prophet to a lamp, nor His light to a lamp that is enclosed in a glass. So, let not our master feel offended

<sup>55</sup> WM, 180–81. For the poem of Abū Tammām in question see *Diwān Abī Tammām*, 2/250, lines 24 and 25; IBN ABĪ ’L-IṢBAʿ, *Taḥrīr*, 507.



that I compared his letter [with something]. He should regard this as one of the figurative usages and not as a typical idiom. As much as it (i.e. the letter) is above comparisons, so too is the yearning for the addressee hard of description; both have confused the [obedient] servant in the running of his affairs. He is granted pleasure from the lustre of one, but is terrified by the burning charcoal of the other. He has experienced from both, two of the annual seasons: his gaze is in the spring of the pleasant sight and its outlook; his heart in the summer of passion and its suffering.”

The Qurʾānic verses to which allusion is made here are:

الله نور السموات والأرض مثل نوره كمشكاة فيها مصباح المصباح في زجاجة...

“Allah is the light of the Heaven and the Earth; the similitude of His light is like a niche containing a lamp, and the lamp enclosed in a glass...”. (Qurʾān 24:35).

يا أيها النبي إنا أرسلناك شاهداً ومبشراً ونذيراً وداعياً إلى الله بإذنه وسراجاً منيراً.

“O Prophet, We have indeed sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; and as one who calls to Allah by His leave, and as an illuminating lamp.” (Qurʾān 33:45–46).

Some explanations are however necessary, especially in regard to the first sample illustrating the allusion type. The concept of Messiah-like medicine referred to in the prose sample does not contain any scriptural usage, and its relationship with the Qurʾānic verse referring to the Messiah as curing the sick and the unsound can be established only by reference to extratextual insights afforded by a good knowledge of the Qurʾān. This is precisely what the prose passage aims at exploiting through the use of the allusive elements of the corresponding verse. Similarly, the term *kalīmiyya*, which occurs in the prose sample is a *nisba* name for Moses, viz., *kalīm Allāh* (someone to whom Allah talked without an intermediary), and the reference to his assisting some helpless women in watering their flocks can be fully understood only by recourse to an implied knowledge of the scriptural lore, insofar as the verses given as the source material do not mention him by name. In regard to the second sample in which the Divine is likened to a light-bearing niche enclosed in a lamp, Ibn al-Athīr was quite aware that he was not the first to make an allusive use of this imagery in a literary expression; he was anticipated by Abū Tammām. But as it is

customary with him, he goes a great length to argue that his treatment of the idea is superior to that of Abū Tammām.

$QB_1 + QB_2$

PARAPHRASE AND ALLUSION TYPE

### في الاغتراب

i

(On Separation from Homeland)<sup>56</sup>

ولطالما أورت الاغتراب عزًا واستثار كنزًا، حتّى إن الله جعله سُنةً في أنبيائه ورسله، ونهج لهم سبيل العزّ بسلوك سبله. ويكفى في ذلك ما سنّته الغربةُ اليثريّةُ من القوّة بعد الفرار والكثرة بعد الإثنين إذ هما في الغار. والتقلقل سبب السكون والسهاد داعية لهدوء العيون. ولو لزم السيف غمده لم يبن أثرٌ مضاربه، ولا خدمه لسان المدح في نظم شاعره ولا نثر خاطبه. ومن فوائد الاغتراب عذوبة ماء البحر بمرافقة السحاب.

“For long has separation from home bequeathed honour and unearthed treasure, so much that Allah made it a tradition among His prophets and messengers, and paved the way to honour for them by encouraging them to take its courses. A sufficient proof is that which the exile in Yathrib established; it gave power after the flight and abundance [of people], after there had been [only] two companions in the cave. Disquiet results in peace, and sleeplessness [eventually] leads to the calmness of the eyes. Were sword to remain in its sheath, traces of its strikes would not have shown; nor would it have been served by the tongue of praise through the poet’s composition or the orator’s speech. Among the advantages of separation is the freshness of the sea water only after it had been in the company of the clouds.”

This essay is said to have borrowed from the following Qur’ānic verse:

إلا تنصروه فقد نصره الله إذ أخرجه الذين كفروا ثاني اثنين إذ هما في الغار.

“It matters not whether you help him, for Allah has helped him when the disbelievers drove him out; he had no more than one companion, both of them were in the cave.” (Qur’ān 9:40).

<sup>56</sup> WM, 179.



Although this is the only Qurʾānic verse that is adduced by our author as the one from which he borrowed into the prose sample, the expression *al-ghurba al-Yathribiyya* (Exile in Yathrib) is an allusion to the historic migration from Mecca to Medina to which a number of Qurʾānic verses refer. (For example, Qurʾān 2:218; 33:50; 59:8–9).

### إلى بعض الطغاة

ii

(To a Certain Oppressor)<sup>57</sup>

تذكير الطاغى من سنة الله التى خلت فى عباده، وإن عسر نقله عما جُبلت عليه فطرة  
ميلاده. وقد أمر موسى بتذكير فرعون مع أنه لم يستفد ذكرى، بل زاد إلى طغيانه  
طغياناً وإلى كفره كفرًا.  
وهذا الكتاب صادر إلى من أخذته العزة بالإثم، وأضلّه الله على علم؛ الذى ظلم  
نفسه وقطع غرسه وأخذ أهل بيته بسالف حقوقه؛ وكان كالسامريّ فى عبادة عجله  
وعاقر الناقة فى ثموده.  
ولا لوم علىّ إن جهرتُ بسوء قولى لمن جاهرنى بحيفه، وكلمته بلسانى إذ كلمنى  
بسيّفه.

“To admonish the tyrant is part of Allah’s tradition which had long been established among His servants, even if it is difficult to turn him (i.e. the tyrant) away from that to which he has been disposed from birth. Moses was commanded to admonish Pharaoh, although admonition was to be of no use to him, as he became more tyrannical and more deeply sunk in disbelief.

This letter is being sent to one who is led to more sins by arrogance; one whom Allah, knowing him to be so inclined, allowed to go astray; one who acted unjustly against his own soul, who uprooted his own plant and brought misfortunes onto his household by his agelong malice. Thus becoming like al-Sāmīrī in the worship of the Golden Calf, and like the one who hamstrung the camel from among the Thamūd.

I am not to be blamed for saying unpleasant words aloud against someone who had openly oppressed me and for talking to him [harshly] with my tongue; for he had talked to me with his sword.”

The following are given as the sources to the prose passage:

<sup>57</sup> WM, 185.

وإذا قيل له اتق الله أخذته العزة بالإثم...

“And when he is told: ‘Fear Allah’, arrogance leads him to commit more sins.” (Qurʾān 2:206).

أفرايت من اتخذ إلهه هواه، وأضلّه الله على علم...

“Do you see such a person who takes as his god his own lowly desire; whom Allah, knowing him to be so, allowed to go astray”. (Qurʾān 45:23).

لا يحبّ الله الجهر بالسوء من القول إلا من ظلم...

“Allah does not like that evil speech be loudly pronounced in public, except by one who is oppressed”. (Qurʾān 4:148).

Qurʾānic materials other than those illustrated by our author are also discernible in the prose sample. For instance, its opening statement is a paraphrase of Qurʾān 40:85. Moreover, the sample also contains an allusion to the encounter between Moses and Pharaoh, which is abundantly illustrated in several places in the Qurʾān, particularly in Qurʾān 79: 15–26. Two more allusions are those relating to the worship of the Golden Calf as introduced by al-Sāmīrī to his kinsmen (Qurʾān 20:85–89), and the brutal slaughter of the mysterious camel by a member of the Thamūd tribe related in Qurʾān 91:11–15.

#### QA + QB QUOTATION AND PARAPHRASE/ALLUSION TYPE

##### كتاب إلى الملك العزيز عثمان

i (A Letter to His Highness al-Malik ʿUthmān)<sup>58</sup>

وأنا أسأله بالرحم التي أمر الله باتقائه واتقائها، وتكفل بالإسقاء يوم القيامة لمن تكفل بإسقائها. ولولا كرامتها عليه لما اشتق له اسمًا من اسمه وقسم لواصلها ببسط العمر والرزق للذين من أفضل قسمه. فلا يتركني أتأوه بقلب المتألم، وأجهر بلسان المتظلم. وعند ذلك أناضله بسهام الدعاء القاصدة وأحاكمه إلى صرعة البغي التي ليست عن الباغي براقدة، وأتمثل بقوله تعالى: «إنّ هذا أخى له تسعة وتسعون نعمة

<sup>58</sup> WM, 184–85.



ولى نعمة واحدة». ويعزّ عليّ أن ألقاه بهذا القول الذى أنا فيه مُكرّه لا مختار، وإن كان من المحظورات المنهية عنها، فالمحظور مباح لمرتكبه عند الإضطرار.

“I ask him in the name of kinship which Allah ordered that it be feared like Him. He has taken upon Himself in the Hereafter the welfare of whoever takes care of it (in this world). If it had not been dear to Him, He would not have coined a word for it from His name. He has allotted to whoever protects it the grace of long life and prosperity, both of which are of His best graces. Therefore, let him (i.e. the king) not leave me to moan with a heavy heart and to talk aloud with the tongue of the oppressed. When this happens, I would fight him with straight shooting arrows of prayers, draw him before justice over oppression which sleeplessly haunts its perpetrator, and cite the statement of the Almighty: ‘Certainly, this is my brother, he has ninety-nine ewes while I have just one.’ I find it hard to utter this statement against him, which statement I am, without choice, constrained to utter. Although this may be one of the forbidden acts, that which is forbidden is allowed to its perpetrator if he is constrained.”

The Qurʾānic verse quoted here is :

إن هذا أخى له تسع وتسعون نعجة ولى نعجة واحدة.

“Surely this is my brother, he has ninety-nine ewes, while I have just one.” (Qurʾān 38:23).

The paraphrased verse of the Qurʾān is:

... واتقوا الله الذى تساءلون به والأرحام...

“... and fear Allah by Whom you solicit assistance from each other, and [fear also] the ties of kinship...”. (Qurʾān: 4:1).

The prose essay also contains allusion to Qurʾān 4:148, which was cited in the preceding prose sample. In addition, some borrowings from the *ḥadīth* are also reflected here, and insofar as this section is not intended for discussing them, the author chose not to illustrate them.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> One of the *ḥadīths* is: *man arāda an yuzāda fī ʿumrihī wa-yubṣaṭ fī rizqihī, fa ʿl-yašila raḥimah* – “Whosoever wishes that his life be prolonged and his sustenance be improved, let him uphold the ties of his kinship.” See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 8/12; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 4/1982. The second *ḥadīth*, which may well be a juristic cliché, is *al-ḍarūrāt*

## في وصف حصار

(Description of a Siege)<sup>60</sup>

ii

وُنُصِبَتِ الْمَجَانِيْقُ فَأَلْقَتِ عَصِيَّهَا وَحِبَالَهَا، وَصَبَّتْ عَلَى أَقْطَارِ الْبِلَادِ نَكَالَهَا. فَسَجَدَتْ لَهَا الْأَسْوَارُ سَجُودَ السَّحَرَةِ لِفَعْلِ الْعَصَا، وَبَادَرَتْ بِالْإِيْمَانِ لَهَا مِبَادَرَةَ مَنْ أَطَاعَ وَمَا عَصَى؛ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ إِيْمَانُهَا إِلَّا بَعْدَ إِذْنِ الْأَحْجَارِ الَّتِي مَا أُذِنَتْ لِمَشِيدٍ إِلَّا أَخَذَ فِي الْبَوَارِ وَخَرَّ مِنَ الْأَقْطَارِ. وَأَصْبَحَ كَشَجَرَةٍ أُجْتُتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ.

“Catapults were set into place; so they threw their beams and ropes and overwhelmed all parts of the city with their chastisement. Thus did the city walls prostrate for them as did the magicians to the effect of (Moses’) staff; and they hurriedly proceeded to submit like someone who obeys and does not disobey. Except that their submission came only after the threat of the stones which would not threaten any structure without leading it to destruction and causing it to fall from all its sides; thus becoming like a tree that is turned up by the root from the surface of the earth; it has no stability.”

This sample contains, among others, a paraphrase and an allusion which derive from:

قَالَ بَلْ أَلْقُوا فَإِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعَصِيُّهُمْ يَخِيزُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعَى فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةَ مُوسَى. قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلَى. وَأَلْقَى مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوا، إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدٌ سَاحِرٌ وَلَا يَفْلَحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَى. فَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سُجُودًا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَى.

“He said: ‘You throw (first)’. And behold, their ropes and rods are made to appear to him, on account of magic, as if they were in lively motion. Moses then felt some fear in him. We said: ‘Fear not, you shall indeed have the upper hand. Throw that which is in your right hand; instantly will it swallow up that which they have conjured, for what they have conjured is but a magic’s trick; and the magician prospers not wherever he goes.’ So the magicians went down prostrate

*tubih al-mahzūrāt* – “Necessities make illegalities permissible.” Compare Qur’ān 2:173; 6:119.

<sup>60</sup> WM, 188.



and said: ‘We believe in the Lord of Moses and Aaron.’” (Qur’ān 20: 66–70).

The quoted passage of the Qur’ān in the sample is:

ومثل كلمة خبيثة كشجرة آجُتَّتْ من فوق الأرض ما لها من قرار.

“The similitude of an evil word is like an evil tree, uprooted from the earth, it has no stability.” (Qur’ān: 14:26).

Consistent adherence to the principle of maintaining the Qur’ānic idioms when utilized in prose essays is demonstrated by our author in all the essay types provided in this section. His sense of scientific orderliness is also reflected in his limiting himself to the illustration of only the Qur’ānic exemplars that inspired a prose sample, even when other sources, for example, poetry, juristic clichés, routine proverbs and *ḥadīth*, are also utilized. Allusions to the haggadic or halachic elements of the Scripture are equally introduced in such a way that the specific elements or aspects to which they refer can be established with a good knowledge of the historical tradition of the Qur’ān. There are, however, cases in which our author fails to illustrate all the Qur’ānic materials used in a passage, either because he takes knowledge of them for granted, or because such materials occur in different versions and forms and are presumed to be popular enough to make illustration of them unnecessary. The essays entitled *Fī ’l-shukr* and *Fī waṣf ḥiṣār* provide good examples of this. An important inference that may be drawn from the proportions of the samples to the categories under which they occur is that Ibn al-Athīr’s understanding of the concept of *ḥall* as it relates to Qur’ānic usages is essentially in the form of paraphrase. Almost half of the total number of the samples provided by him, as the table shows, falls under this category.

## III

*Fī ḥall al-akhbār al-Nabawiyya*

## (Recomposition of Prophetic Anecdotes)

In so far as Prophetic anecdotes and statements are of enormous quantity and are often related in differing versions, some modification in the approach to how they are used in prose essays is considered inevitable. Nevertheless, a Prophetic *khbar*, like a Qur'ānic verse, may be utilized in two ways:<sup>61</sup>

- i By selecting part of its phraseology and using this as an introduction in a prose writing.
- ii By adopting the sense of its thought content and then expressing this in various ways.

According to our author, the *kātib* need not limit himself only to the reports that are certified to be authentic; the genuine and the spurious would always have something to offer in compositions on various topics that come up for treatment. In his analysis of how Prophetic *akhbār* are to be used in prose, thirty-one model samples are provided. Although he argues that these samples fall under the two formal categories delineated above, it is possible, as in our analysis of the *ḥall* of Qur'ānic verses, to classify the samples into five categories. Hence I have grouped under HA the passages in which the original wordings of the Prophetic *akhbār* are largely retained. Those in which the Prophetic statements are paraphrased or their sense expressed in the author's own peculiar wording come under HB<sub>1</sub>; those containing allusion to specific events or statements attributable not only to the Prophet but also to those belonging in the general historical lore of Islam come under HB<sub>2</sub>; the ones in which quotation and paraphrase are reflected are classified under HA + HB; and those in which Qur'ānic idioms or verses are blended with Prophetic sententia come under H + Q. As it is the case with the categorization of prose samples illustrating the *ḥall* of Qur'ānic materials, instances of overlapping cannot be completely ruled out here either, but the dominant feature reflected in such samples has been applied in the determination of the category under which it occurs.

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<sup>61</sup> WM, 196.



Table 2\*

Table of model passages illustrating the *ḥall* of Prophetic *akhbār* in prose

HA Quotation	HB <sub>1</sub> Paraphrase/Adoption	HB <sub>2</sub> Allusion	HA + HB Quotation + Paraphrase	H + Q Ḥadīth + Qurʾān
<i>faṣl min kitāb</i> (199)	<i>fi ṣadr kitāb</i> (199–200)	<i>fi waṣf kalām</i> (200)	<i>ḥathth ʿalā ʿl-ṣadaqa</i> (197)	<i>ʿiyādat mariḍin</i> (202–203)
<i>dhamm al-zamān</i> (207)	<i>fi waṣf kalām</i> (202)	<i>waṣf qalam</i> (201–2)	<i>fi taqlīd bi-wilāya</i> (208)	<i>fi qitāl kuffār</i> (204)
<i>fi ʿl-mawaddāt</i> (207)	<i>waṣf al-ukhuwwa</i> (210)	<i>waṣf al-ḥazm</i> (204)	<i>duʿāʾ fi ṣadr kitāb</i> (212)	<i>fi tahdhīb al-naḥs</i> (205–6)
<i>min jumlat kitāb</i> (208)	<i>duʿāʾ li-qāḍin</i> (213)	<i>ilā baʿḍ al-ʿuṣāt</i> (206)		<i>kitāb ilā baʿḍ al-mulūk</i> (210)
<i>fi waṣf karīm</i> (210)	<i>duʿāʾ ākhar</i> (212)	<i>waṣf al-ḥilm</i> (209)		
<i>fi ṣadr kitāb</i> (211)	<i>duʿāʾ ākhar</i> (214)			
<i>duʿāʾ li-man ismuhū ʿAlī</i> (213–14)	<i>dhamm al-shayb</i> (196)			
<i>duʿāʾ fi kutub al-Dīwān</i> (213)	<i>ilā ʿl-Dīwān</i> (198)			
<i>duʿāʾ ākhar</i> (214–5)	<i>ʿināya bi-baʿḍ</i> <i>al-fuqarāʾ</i> (200)			
	<i>min futūḥ al-kuffār</i> (208)			

\* The number within the brackets refers to the pages on which the passages occur in *WM*.

HA

## QUOTATION TYPE

## فصل من كتاب

i

(A Section from a Letter)<sup>62</sup>

لو كنت جارًا لمولانا لما أقدمتُ على صروف الأيام، ولا نظرتُ إلى إلا بعين  
الاجلال والاعظام. ولكنني بُعدتُ عن داره، فأخذتُ مني بالناصية، وفرستني،  
وللذئب من الغنم القاصية.

“If I had been a neighbour of our master, the vicissitudes of time would not have dared to afflict me; they would have assessed me highly and with respect. But I was far away from him, so they held me by the forelock and tore me up like a prey; to the wolf belongs the stray sheep.”

The Prophetic *ḥadīth* quoted in the passage is from the following:

يد الله مع الجماعة. ومن شذَّ شذَّ إلى النار، وإنما للذئب من الغنم القاصية.

“Allah’s support is for the community. Whosoever deviates, deviates into the Hellfire; to the wolf belongs the stray sheep.”

## دعاء في كتب الديوان

ii

(A Supplication in Chancery Letters)<sup>63</sup>

أدام الله سلطان الديوان العزيز النبوي، وجعل إمداد البقاء لدولته موطنه ومقاليد  
الأيام بإعلاء كلمته مؤذنة، وبسط يده في الأعداء مكيته، وأسبغها على الأولياء  
ممكنة. وأخدم الجدود عبيده حتى لا يُدعن بطاعته لسان إلا كانت له مدعنة، ولا  
تُقرَّ بعبوديته رقة إلا قالت للدهر: أعتقها فإنها مؤمنة.

“May Allah make eternal, the authority of the Prophetic Noble *Dīwān*; may He make a prolonged tenure of office a stabilizer for his dynasty, and the key events of the time a harbinger of his supremacy. May He make his hand operate freely over the enemies, but make it overwhelm the friends with gifts. May He grant luck to his subjects so that no one would declare obedience to him without submitting [to

<sup>62</sup> WM, 199. For the *ḥadīth*, see *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, 4/466.

<sup>63</sup> WM, 213–14. The full text of the report is in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1/382.

him] completely; so that no one would acknowledge his right to service without him declaring: ‘Set her free, for she is a believer.’”

This prayer quotes from the following report involving the Prophet:

... وذاك أنَّ جارية لبعض الصحابة حضرت بين يديه صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال لها: «أين الله؟» فقالت: «في السماء». فقال لسيدها: «أعتقها فإنها مؤمنة».

“... a maid belonging to a certain companion of the Prophet came before him and was asked: ‘Where is Allah?’, and she replied: ‘He is in the heaven’. So he (the Prophet) told her master: ‘Set her free, for she is a believer.’”

### في المودات

iii

(About Affections)<sup>64</sup>

لولا تنقل القلوب من شأن إلى شأن، لما قيل: إنها بين إصبعين من أصابع الرحمن. فهي تنأى وتقرب، وتأبى وتصحب. ومن رام بقاءها على حالة واحدة، فقد كلفها غير خلقها، وسلك بها في غير طرقها.

“Were it not that hearts oscillate between one state and another, it would not have been said that: ‘they are between two of Allah’s fingers of authority’. They [the hearts] get close and fall apart; they could be friendly or unfriendly. Whoever wishes that they remain in one condition has certainly burdened them with a character other than theirs, and has taken them along a route that is not theirs.”

The *ḥadīth* quoted here is:

قلوب بني آدم بين اصْبَعَيْنِ من أصابع الرحمن، يصرفها حيث شاء كقلب رجل واحد.

“The hearts of the children of Adam are between two of Allah’s fingers of authority; he turns them where he likes, like the heart of a single person.”

<sup>64</sup> WM, 207–8. For the *ḥadīth*, see IBN ḤANBAL, *al-Musnad*, 2/168; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Cairo ed. “Bāb al-qadar”, 4/2045.



HB<sub>1</sub>

PARAPHRASE TYPE

في صدر كتاب

i

(At the Beginning of a Letter)<sup>65</sup>

الخادم يفتتح كتابه بالدعاء الذي لا يزال لقلبه زميلاً وللسان رسيلاً. وإذا دُفع، أدنته الملائكة قرّباً إذا تباعدت عن غيره ميلاً. ولا اعتداد بالدعاء إلا إذا صُدر عن أكرم مصدر، ووُجد له فوق السماء مظهرًا، وإن لم يكن هناك من مظهر، ووُصف باطنه بأنه الأبيض الناصع الذي هو خير ممن ظاهره أشعث أغبر. ولا يعامل الخادم أهل ودّه إلا بمثل هذه المعاملة، ومن خلّقه المجازفة في بذل المودة إذا أخذ الناس بسنة المكايلة.

“The (obedient) servant begins his letter with the prayer that continues to be a regular companion to his heart and a messenger of his tongue. If he is shoved back, the angels draw him close to themselves [in affection] when they keep others at a mile’s distance. A prayer will be considered to be of value only when it emanates from the noblest of sources and an exhibition place for it is found above the sky, although there might be no (concrete) place over there; when its interior can be described as immaculate white, and this is better than the one whose exterior is unkempt and dusty. The [obedient] servant behaves towards his beloved ones only in this manner. Among his character traits is boundless adventure in the giving of love when others adopt the tradition of returning like for like.”

The *ḥadīth* paraphrased here is:

إذا كذب ابنُ آدم تباعد عنه المَلَكُ ميلاً من ثَنِّ ريحه.

“When the child of Adam lies, the angels stay away from him a mile distance due to his bad odour.”

<sup>65</sup> WM, 199–200. For the *ḥadīth*, see *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, 4/348. The prose sample is also given in *al-Mathal*, 1/203–4, where it is said to contain, in addition, a sense of the following *ḥadīth*: *rubba ashʿath aghbar ghayr madfūʿ bi ʿl-abwāb, law aqsama ʿalā Allāh la-abarraḥ*. “Many a man with an unkempt hair, who is covered with dust, yet he is never sent back at the doors of (blessings); if he were to swear by Allah that a request should come to pass, He would make it so.” See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Cairo ed.) “Bāb al-birr”, 4/2024.

### عناية ببعض الفقراء

#### ii (Care for a Certain Needy Person)<sup>66</sup>

قد جعل الله النصر والرزق مُنَوِّطَيْن بِالْإِحْسَانِ إِلَى الضَّعِيفِ، فَمَنْ شَاءَ أَنْ يَحْظِيَ  
بِهَٰذَيْنِ الْأَمْرَيْنِ فَلْيَرْضَخْ وَلَوْ بِالْقَدْرِ الطَّفِيفِ. وَقَدْ عَلِمَ أَنَّ النَّارَ تُتَّقَى وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ.  
وَمَا سَدَّ رَمَقًا فَلَا يُطْلَقُ عَلَيْهِ اسْمُ قَلَّةٍ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ مُوصُوفًا بِكَثْرَةٍ.

“Allah has made [His granting of] victory and sustenance conditional upon kindness to the weak. So, let whosoever aspires to acquire both offer it, even if little. It is known that protection against the Hellfire may be sought just by the donation of half a date fruit. Whatever sustains a life should not be considered small, even if it cannot be described as big.”

The two *ḥadīths* paraphrased here are:

إِبْغُونِي ضَعْفَاءَكُمْ، فَإِنَّمَا تُنْصَرُونَ وَتُرْزَقُونَ بِضَعْفَائِكُمْ.

“Find me the weak ones from amongst you, for you shall be granted victory and sustenance for the (sake of the) weak ones amongst you.”

مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا سَيَكَلِّمُهُ رَبُّهُ كِفَاحًا، لَيْسَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهُ تَرْجُمَانٌ؛ فَيَنْظُرُ أَيْمَنَ مِنْهُ  
فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا مَا قَدَّمَ، وَيَنْظُرُ أَشْأَمَ مِنْهُ فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا مَا قَدَّمَ، وَيَنْظُرُ تَلْقَاءَ وَجْهِهِ فَلَا يَرَى  
إِلَّا النَّارَ. فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ.

“There will be none of you without Allah talking to him [on the Day of Resurrection] directly. He would look right, but would see nothing save that which he had put forward [in this life], and would look left, and would see only that which he had put forward; he would look in front of him and would see nothing save the Hellfire. So, fear the Hellfire, even if it be by [giving in charity] half a date fruit.”

<sup>66</sup> WM, 200. For the first *ḥadīth*, see IBN ḤANBAL, *al-Musnad*, 5/198. Compare *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 2/285. For the second *ḥadīth*, see IBN ḤANBAL, *al-Musnad*, 1/446; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, 4/611. Compare *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2/703–4.

## دعاء

iii

(A Prayer)<sup>67</sup>

خَلَّدَ اللَّهُ سُلْطَانَ الدِّيْوَانِ الْعَزِيزِ النَّبَوِيِّ وَجَدَّدَ لِيَالِي دَوْلَتِهِ وَأَيَّامَهَا، وَأَجَفَّ الْقَلَمَ بِأَنْ يَجْرَى فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقْلَامُهَا، وَنَظَّمَ لَهَا عَقُودَ سَعَادَةٍ لَا تَبْلُغُ عَقُودَ الْحَسَنَاءِ نِظَامَهَا. وَنَصَبَ حَرَمَهَا مَثَابَةً لِلْأَمَالِ، وَجَعَلَ إِلَيْهِ تَلْبِيَّتَهَا وَإِحْرَامَهَا، وَأَنْشَرَ بِفَضْلِهَا أَمْوَاتَ الْمَكَارِمِ الَّتِي لَيْسَ لغيرِهِ أَنْ يُنْشَرَ أَرْوَاحُهَا وَأَجْسَامُهَا، وَمَاثَلَ بَيْنَ أَسْمَاءِ عِزَائِمِهَا وَمُسَمِّيَّاتِهَا حَتَّى يَلْقَى الْأَعْدَاءُ حَرْبَهَا وَمَرَّتَهَا، وَالْمَسَاعِي حَارِثَهَا وَهَمَّامَهَا.

“May Allah immortalize the authority of the Prophetic Noble Chancery and make the days and the nights of its authority anew. May He cause the [Original] Pen to decree that his authority (lit. pens) be pervasive on earth, and string for it such pearls of fortunes the precision of which arrangement will not be matched by the necklaces of beautiful damsels. May He instal its sanctuary as a landing place for hopes, where *talbiya* and *ihrām* are performed; bring back to life, by the leave of its glory, the dead acts of nobility whose souls and bodies none but Him could resurrect; bring to proper correlation objects and the terms used for them until the enemies meet [the inauspicious] *Ḥarb* and *Murra* and virtuous deeds come in contact with *Ḥārith* and *Hammām*.”

This sample contains a paraphrase of the following *ḥadīth*:

أَحَبُّ الْأَسْمَاءِ إِلَى اللَّهِ: عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَعَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَأَصْدَقُهَا عِنْدَهُ: الْحَارِثُ وَهَمَّامٌ، وَأَبْغَضُهَا إِلَيْهِ: حَرْبٌ وَمُرَّةٌ.

<sup>67</sup> WM, 214. For the *ḥadīth*, see IBN ḤANBAL, *al-Musnad*, 4/178, 345. Compare *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 8/134, 144. *Talbiya* is the recitation of a specific supplication during the performance of the *hajj* ritual and *ihrām* refers to the abandonment of ordinary clothes for two pieces of seamless white sheets also during *hajj* exercise. The image of the original pen is to be understood from another *ḥadīth* which says that it was the first object created and then ordered to write all that would be from the beginning of the world to the end. See MUḤAMMAD B. JARĪR AL-ṬABARĪ, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, ed. Muḥammad Abū 'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1960ff.), 1/32–36; IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāya wa 'l-nihāya* (Beirut, n. d.), 1/8. The names *Ḥārith* and *Hammām* are proverbial names that are meant to encourage hardwork and self-reliance. See AL-ḤARĪRĪ, *al-Maḡāmāt*, author's introduction, p. 7 note 3. *Ḥarb* (war) and *Murra* (bitter), are frowned upon as names because they are ominous.

“The most beloved of names to Allah are: ‘Abd Allāh and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān; the most truthful of them are al-Ḥārith and Hammām, and the most hateful to Him are Ḥarb and Murra.”

HB<sub>2</sub>

ALLUSION TYPE

إلى بعض العصاة

i

(To a Certain Offender)<sup>68</sup>

ولقد حذرناك عُقبى الشقاق فلم يكن لك إلى ذلك إصغاء، وأتيت اليوم كالذى  
يأتى يوم القيامة وعلى رقبته جملٌ له رُغاءٌ، أو شاةٌ لها نغاء. وكما لم يغن رسول  
الله شيئاً عن صاحب الشاة والجمل، وكذلك لا يغنى الشفعاء عنك شيئاً فيما  
قدمته من الخطل والزلل. والتوبة إن جئت ما قبلها فإنها معتبرة فيمن ندم على ما  
فات، وأخلص فيما هو آت. وأما من يُظهر أمراً ويُبطن خلافاً، فإنه لا يلج بابها  
ولا يرجو ثوابها.

“We had warned you about the consequence of disobedience but you heeded not. Here you are now like someone who would come on the Day of Resurrection either with a braying camel tied round his neck or with a bleating sheep. Just as the Messenger of Allah would be of no assistance to the man with the camel and sheep, so too would intercessors be of no help to you in respect of the sins and blunders that you have committed. Repentance, even if it wipes away that which preceded it (of sins), is only taken into consideration for someone who regrets his past and shows sincerity about the future. As for someone who exhibits one character but conceals its opposite, such a person would neither pass through the gate of repentance nor hope for its reward.”

The quoted portion of the *ḥadīth* is from the following sermon delivered by the Prophet in which he warns against cheating:

لا ألفين أحدكم يجيء يوم القيامة وعلي رقبته جملٌ له رُغاء فيقول: يا رسول الله  
أغثنى، فأقول: لا أملك لك شيئاً، قد بلغت. لا ألفين أحدًا منكم يجيء يوم القيامة  
وعلى رقبته شاة لها نغاء فيقول: يا رسول الله أغثنى، فأقول: لا أملك لك شيئاً،  
قد بلغت.

<sup>68</sup> WM, 206. For the *ḥadīth*, see *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 2/276; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 3/1461–62; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 3/135.

“Let me not see any of you coming on the Day of Resurrection with a braying camel tied round his neck while he cries out for help saying: ‘O Messenger of Allah, please rescue me.’ For I would reply: ‘I cannot; I delivered (my message) to you in full.’ Let me not see any of you coming on the Day of Resurrection with a bleating sheep tied round his neck while he cries out for help saying: ‘O Messenger of Allah, please rescue me.’ For I would say: ‘I cannot; I delivered (my message) to you in full.’”

### وصف الحزم

#### ii (Description of Resoluteness)<sup>69</sup>

الحزم عروة بها يستمسك، فهي كالفرصة التي إن ضُيِّعت فلا تستدرك. وقد قامت التجارب فيه بالإندار، وعُرفت مواقع الحذار. فإن شئت أن تُدعى حازماً، فلا تأخذ بالعزائم الضعيفة، ولا تُهمل الأمور في أولها حتى تأتي وهي رديفة. واعلم أن الحسين لم يُقتل يوم كربلاء وإنما قتل يوم السقيفة.

“Resolve is a rope to be held tight, it is like opportunity which is never regained once wasted. Experiences have provided sufficient warning concerning it, and points of caution in regard to it have been identified. If you want to be described as resolute, do not embrace weak decisions; do not leave matters (unattended to) when they are in the foreground until they fall into the background. Know that al-Ḥusayn was not murdered on the Day of Karbalā’, rather, he was killed on the Day of Saqifa.”

<sup>69</sup> WM, 204. The *Yawm al-Saqifa* refers to the day on which Abū Bakr was proclaimed the caliph after the demise of the Prophet, and this represents, as the prose sample suggests, the starting point of the series of events that eventually culminated in the murder of al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā’. See a report to this effect in ‘ABD AL-RAḤMĀN B. ‘ISĀ AL-HAMADHĀNĪ, *al-Ālfāz al-Kitābiyya* (Beirut, 1885), 143. About *Yawm al-Saqifa*, see IBN ABĪ ‘L-ĪṢBA‘, *Badī‘ al-Qur’ān*, 277; *Ṭirāz al-majālīs*, 274. The alleged correspondence between Abū Bakr and ‘Alī is also the subject of an epistle by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī. See AL-TAWḤĪDĪ, *Risālat al-Saqifa*, in *Rasā’il*, 5–26.



### في وصف الحلم

iii

(About Forbearance)<sup>70</sup>

تركته حتى سلك ما سلك، وقال فما ترك، ولم أنتصر خوفًا من قعود الشيطان وقيام الملك.

“I ignored him until he behaved the way he did and he talked without leaving anything unsaid. I did not seek help over him, for fear of the devil taking a seat and of the angel taking a leave.”

The sample contains an allusion to an incident in which the Prophet reprimanded Abū Bakr for disputing in his presence with an opponent. The part of the *ḥadīth* which is alluded to is:

... كان كلما قال لك شيئًا كذبه الملك بما يقول؛ فلما انتصرت، قام الملك وقعد الشيطان، وما كنت لأقعد حيث قعد الشيطان.

“... whenever he said anything against you, the angel declared him a liar [as long as you kept quiet], but when you sought help over him, the angel left and the devil took the seat; and it is not right of me to sit where the devil does.”

HA + HB

QUOTATION + PARAPHRASE TYPE

### في الصدقة

(About Charity)<sup>71</sup>

ليست الصدقة لمن مردت على المسألة نفسه حتى صار فيها لحومًا، وكلمت المطالب وجهه حتى أصبحت فيه كدوحًا. إنما الصدقة لمن قمّصه الفقر لباسًا فستره ذلك اللباس، وكان لا يقطن به فيتصدق عليه، ولا يقوم فيسأل الناس.

“Charity is not for someone who accustoms himself to begging until he becomes a nuisance; whose face is injured by requests until they become scratching whips on it. Charity is certainly for the one that is clothed by poverty with such a dress that conceals his need; hence he

<sup>70</sup> WM, 209. For the full text of the *ḥadīth* report, see IBN ḤANBAL, *al-Musnad*, 2/436. For a similar sample, see IBN AL-ATHĪR, *al-Mathal*, 1/194–95.

<sup>71</sup> WM, 197–98. For the first *ḥadīth*, see IBN ḤANBAL, *al-Musnad*, 2/93–4. For the second *ḥadīth*, see also *ibid.*, 1/384; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 2/324–25.



cannot be identified as to be given charity, nor does he stand up to beg people (for alms)."

The *ḥadith* paraphrased here is:

المسائل كدوخ يكدح بها المرء وجهه إلا أن يسأل السلطان أو في أمر لا يجد منه بداً.

"Acts of begging are a scratching whip by which man renders his face unseemly; unless it be that he requests from the sovereign or [only] in respect of an affair that is unavoidable."

The one that is quoted is:

ليس المسكين من تَرُدُّه اللقمة واللقمتان، والتمرة والتمرتان، إنما المسكين من لا يجد غنى يُغنيه ولا يُقطن له فيُتصدق عليه، ولا يقوم فيسأل الناس.

"The needy is not the one who receives a morsel or two, or one or two date fruits; rather, the needy is someone who has not got enough to satisfy his needs, but he is not easily noticed as to be given charity, nor does he stand up to beg people (for alms)."

### في تقليد بولاية

#### ii (On Appointment to an Office)<sup>72</sup>

الفراسة تُعرب عيونها وتُصدق ظنونها. والإنسان سرّ مكنون يظهره الاختيار وقد عوّلتنا في ولاية فلانة على فلان. وما أهّلناه لها حتى تؤسّمنا منه ما يتوسّم من الصالحين، وعَضَدْنَا رأينا فيه برأى مَنْ عندنا من الناصحين. ونحن نسأل الله أن نكون ممن حظى بالأجرين في اجتهاده، وارتاد للرعايا ما راقب جانب التقوى في ارتياده.

"Meticulous prognosis reveals facts and confirms suppositions. Man is a mystery which is revealed through trial. We have decided to give the administration of such-and such to so-and-so. We did not entrust it to him until we saw in him what is seen in the people of virtue, and we backed up our view of him with the opinion of our advisers. We pray to Allah that we be like someone who secures twofold recom-

<sup>72</sup> WM, 208–9. I could not find the first *ḥadith* in any of the sources consulted, but the second one occurs in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 3/1342; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, 3/615.

pense for his effort; one who looks after the citizenry, who keeps the fear of Allah in view in his stewardship.”

The quoted *ḥadīth* is:

إِبْنُ آدَمَ سَرٌّ مَكْنُونٌ تَظْهَرُ الْقُدْرَةُ وَيُخْفِيهِ الْعَجْزُ.

“The son of Adam is a well concealed mystery; he is revealed through competence but is hidden by weakness.”

That which is paraphrased is:

مَنْ اجْتَهِدَ فَأَصَابَ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ، وَمَنْ اجْتَهِدَ فَأَخْطَأَ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ.

“He who strives and succeeds obtains twofold rewards; he who strives but fails gets his reward for that (striving).”

#### H + Q      PROPHETIC TRADITION AND QUR’ĀNIC MATERIALS

##### فِي عِبَادَةِ مَرِيضٍ

##### i      ( A Visit to a Sick Person)<sup>73</sup>

ولما بلغ الخادمَ خبرَ شكاته، هيض منه ما ليس بمهيض، وأصبح، وهو الصحيح، أشدَّ شكوى منه وهو المريض. وقد ودَّ لو وقاه، وتلك أقصى درجات الوداد. ولم يبقَ إلا نفسه بنفسه، وقد تجتمع النفسان في جسد من الأجساد. ولولا أنَّه يُؤمَلُ بشرى العافية، لم يكن بفوادح الهمِّ بمطبق، ولا من غمراته بمفريق، وكان كالذي خرَّ من السماء فتخطفه الطير أو تهوى به الريح في مكان سحيق. وقد ناجاه أمله أنَّ هذه الشكاية لا تلبث إلا لبث الزائر عند المزور، وإنها لم تأت إلا لتطهر ما عند الناس من مودّات الصدور. فكم من أيدٍ بالدعاء ممدودة، ونذور عند الله مُعدّة وليست معدودة. وكم من آخذ بالخبر النبويّ في جعل الصدقة طيباً، ومن متفائل بأحاديث منامه، ثم لا يحدث بها إلا لبيّاً أو حبيّاً. وللخادم من ذلك مزية يشهد بها لسان الضمير الذي هو أصدق لسان وهي خُزمية النسب لا يحتاج معها إلى شاهد ثان.

<sup>73</sup> WM, 202–4. The first of the paraphrased *ḥadīth* can be found in MUḤAMMAD B. ABĪ BAKR IBN ‘UṢFŪR, *al-Mawā‘iz al-‘Uṣfuriyya* (Cairo, 1342), 11, but the second one is in IBN ḤANBAL, *al-Musnad*, 4/10; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 4/1773; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, 4/536.



“When the news of his suffering got to the servant, what ought not break got broken in him, and he became, though healthy, more distressed than the sick. He had wished he could protect him; and that is the highest degree of affection. But he could only protect his own soul by himself. Sometimes two souls find a meeting point in a single body. Had it not been that a healthy recovery was hoped for, he would not have been able to bear the tragedies of distress nor regain consciousness from its mortal throes. He would have been like one who, falling from the heaven, was snatched by the bird or was thrown far afield by the wind. But his hope had confided in him that the suffering would not last longer than a visitor would stay with his host; that it had only come to purify the love in the bosoms of men. Many a hand is stretched out in prayer and many a pledge is made to Allah, neither of which is countable. Many a person has adopted the Prophetic tradition in making charity a doctor, and many a man is optimistic with the statements inspired in him in his dreams, which statements he relates only to the intelligent or the beloved. The servant has this trait of character to which his soul testifies, and this is the most truthful [of witnesses]. It (i.e. the trait) is of the Khuzaym tribe, hence it requires no second witness.”

In this sample, two *ḥadīths* are paraphrased; an allusion is made to a Prophetic anecdote, and a verse of the Qurʾān is also utilized. The paraphrased *ḥadīths* are:

داؤوا مرضاكم بالصدقة.

“Cure your sick ones through charity.”

رؤيا المؤمن جزء من أربعين جزءاً من النبوة، وهي على رجل طائر ما لم يُحدّث بها؛ فإذا حدّث بها سقطت، ولا يحدّث بها إلا لبيباً أو حبيباً.

“The dream by a believer is one out of the forty parts of prophethood; it remains tied to the leg of a bird as long as he does not relate it. But once he relates it, it drops; so let him relate it only to an intelligent [person] or to a loved one.”

The anecdote to which allusion is made relates to a sale transaction that involved the Prophet and a bedouin. The latter, having sold a horse to the Prophet, tried to abrogate the sale unless the Prophet could produce a witness who would testify that the sale agreement had actually been

concluded. One Khuzaym b. Thābit provided this testimony, hence the reference to the Khuzaym tribe in the sample. The Qurʾānic verse quoted is:

ومن يشرك بالله فكأنما خرّ من السماء فتخطفه الطير أو تهوى به الريح في مكان سحيق.

“Whoever ascribes a partner to Allah is as if he fell from heaven, then was snatched away by the bird, or thrown away by the wind far afield.” (Qurʾān 22:31).

### صفة المسلمين في قتال الكفار

#### ii (Description of the Muslims in a Fight against the Unbelievers)<sup>74</sup>

وما منهم إلا من مشى إلى الحُمَامِ مَشَى عُمَيْرُ بْنُ الْحُمَامِ. ورأى حياة يومه طويلة فقصرها بمبادرة الإقدام. ولا يغلو ذلك لمن وجد سلعة الله سُوقًا، وأحبّ أن يكون بعد موته حيًّا مرزوقًا. وهؤلاء هم سيوف الله التي إذا جُرِّدت زالت الهام عن مناكبها، واستوى في القتل أنفُسُ مضروبها وضاربها. فلا عليها إذا جاهدت صابرة محتسبة ما كان من موارد هلكها. ولا أَلَمَ عندها للكلوم إذا جاءت يوم القيامة ولونها لون دمها وريحها ريح مسكها.

“There was none of them who did not but match towards the decreed death as did ‘Umayr b. al-Ḥumām; who considered his present life too long and shortened it by taking to intrepidity. This is not considered too much by someone who considers Allah’s offer an article of trade; who wishes that he be alive and be provided with sustenance after death. Such people are the swords of Allah which, when pulled out, cause heads to drop from their anchors; when souls of the killed and the killer become equal in war. No blame for them (i.e. the souls) if they fight perseveringly in hope of reward against that which could lead to their destruction. They feel no pains from injuries which, on the Day of Resurrection, though still bear the colour of blood, generate the odour of musk.”

<sup>74</sup> WM, 204–5. For the first paraphrased *ḥadīth*, see *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, 4/633; and for the second, see IBN ḤANBAL, *al-Musnad*, 2/391, 537; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 4/46, 95.



As in the previous sample, two *ḥadīths* are paraphrased here; allusion is made to an anecdote; and a Qurʾānic idiom is also utilized. The two *ḥadīths* paraphrased are:

أَلَا إِنَّ سَلْعَةَ اللَّهِ غَالِيَةً، أَلَا إِنَّ سَلْعَةَ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْجَنَّةُ.

“Behold, Allah’s article of trade is certainly expensive, verily, Allah’s article of trade is the paradise.”

and:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ، مَا مِنْ كَلِمٍ يُكَلِّمُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَا جَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَوْنُهُ لَوْنُ دَمٍ وَرِيحُهُ رِيحُ مِسْكِ.

“I swear by Allah in whose hand is the soul of Muḥammad, no wound is sustained in the cause of Allah without it appearing on the day of Resurrection with its colour like that of blood and its odour that of musk.”

Allusion is made to the spectacular act of bravery demonstrated by ‘Umayr b. al-Ḥumām at the Battle of Badr, when the Prophet encouraged his followers to fight in anticipation of reward with paradise. ‘Umayr took a mouthful of dates but later concluded that his life span would have been too long if he were to finish eating those dates before going into the fray. He then got into the fight and was martyred in the duel.

The Qurʾānic idiom employed in the sample is contained in:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا، بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ.

“Think not of those killed in the cause of Allah as dead, nay they are alive, enjoying sustenance provided by their Lord.” (Qurʾān 3:169).

#### APPRAISAL

With the illustration of how *ḥadīth* is used in prose essays our author concludes his discussion of the theory and practice of *ḥall*. Some of the shortcomings in his pattern of illustration or characterization have been highlighted in the specific places in which they occur, but an overview of the general pattern of his presentation and the way he utilized his materials will probably be in order. That no prose samples by other authors are adduced to illustrate any of the various types of *ḥall* discussed by him is probably the greatest testimony to his high view of his own

compositions to the disregard, and sometimes dispraise, of the efforts by others.<sup>75</sup> Neither the *maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122) nor the sermons of Ibn Nubāta (d. 374/984), the proficiency of whose authors he acknowledges anyway, seems to have been inspiring enough for him as materials worthy of study, talk less of selecting from them in his illustration of the various ramifications of the *ḥall* device.<sup>76</sup>

The stipulation that Prophetic *akhbār* should come at the beginning of prose essays when they are being cited is adhered to only in two instances, namely, the essays entitled *Tahdhīb al-naḥs* and *Fī 'l-mawaddāt*, otherwise, such quotations come either at the end or in the main body of the essays. Another observation that should be made relates to his view of some of his compositions vis-a-vis the Prophetic reports on which they are supposed to have drawn. We have already referred to his frequent and persistent estimation of his model passages in relation to some of the poetic exemplars that inspired them; an estimation that sometimes verged on intolerable arrogance. Although there is no lack of similar self-assessment in his treatment of Qur'ānic and indeed Prophetic reports, his *forté* here is to establish how effective he had been in the use of those materials, as he avoids, understandably, any statement that could suggest a conscious comparison between his usage or style and the High Idioms of the Qur'ān or *ḥadīth*.

Cases of digression are familiar in his overall analysis. For example, a fairly long discussion about the *ḥall* of Prophetic *akhbār* is found in the section that is meant for the analysis of lines of poems the wording of which is supposed to be retained when being used in prose.<sup>77</sup> More interestingly, he feels no constraints in changing the wording of this type of poetry whenever he thinks that the substitute being offered by him offers a better treatment.<sup>78</sup>

One isolated but important defect is imprecision in the matching of a sample with the figure of speech that it is supposed to illustrate. According to him, the original wording of any line containing *tajnīs* should be retained when being reused in a prose treatment, but one of the two examples given as an illustration of this category actually contains no *tajnīs*.<sup>79</sup> A common feature of all the three chapters under which the

<sup>75</sup> Compare VAN GELDER, *Beyond the Line*, 10.

<sup>76</sup> *WM*, 50–51.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 59–66.

<sup>78</sup> See for example *ibid.*, 76–77.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 79–80.

various manifestations and sublevels of *ḥall* are discussed is that each of them is concluded with prayer type samples. Thus the chapter on *ḥall* of poetry is concluded with prayer samples deriving from prosification of poetry;<sup>80</sup> the one on the *ḥall* of Qurʾānic materials with prayer samples containing “decomposed” Qurʾānic expressions;<sup>81</sup> and the concluding chapter, that of *ḥall* of Prophetic reports, is concluded with examples containing these elements.<sup>82</sup>

In regard to the general style of our author and the thematic spectrum covered by his illustrative passages, a few words need be said to place both in the context of the writing tradition of his period. The fact that none of his illustrative essays is a complete essay has been highlighted above, and the constraint such a situation imposes in regard to a thorough assessment of the author's style is by no means negligible. Nevertheless, we can still identify certain specific features which mark it off from the excessively ornamental writing tradition of the previous generations, especially that of the ʿAbbāsid era. The passionate style of the previous period as replaced by a more natural, conversational, and relaxed style is what we see in the samples contained in *al-Washy*. One may be tempted to think that this style is deliberately cultivated in the book as a way of simplifying the details of the *ḥall* technique to which the book is dedicated. However, an assessment of his other works, especially, *al-Mathal al-sāʿir* and his complete epistolary compositions as found in a collection of these,<sup>83</sup> illustrate a stylistically brilliant model of writing for which the Mamlūk chancery was known. The sentences are in measured proportions, and where rhymes occur at the periods, they do not exhibit any evidence of strain. In other words, the idea being expressed determines the occurrence or absence of rhyme, in contrast to the style of the ʿAbbāsid period, as we shall see from al-Nayramānī's samples, where predilection for rhyme not rarely generated ambiguous or inappropriate expressions. Ibn al-Athīr generally employs familiar idioms, and the few cases of rare expressions can be explained in terms of legitimate archaisms. Ambiguous allusions occur in a number of instances. For example, in the essay entitled *Wasf al-ḥazm* (HB<sub>2</sub> illus. ii), where the murder of al-Ḥusayn is said to have taken place on the Day of al-Saqifa rather than

<sup>80</sup> *WM*, 99–101, 148–50.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 192–95.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 212–15.

<sup>83</sup> See *Rasāʾil Ibn al-Athīr*, ed. Anīs al-Maqdisi (Beirut, 1959).



at Karbalā'.<sup>84</sup> So also is the allusion to the fictitious names Ḥarb and Murra, Ḥārith and Hammām in the passage entitled *Du'ā'* (HB<sub>1</sub> illus. iii) somewhat ambiguous.

Familiarity with scientific subjects is demonstrated by his expression of technical terms, as can be seen in the essays illustrating the third category of verses the wording of which must be retained when being used in prose; and in the essay entitled *Fī faḍl al-māl wa 'l-zād*, which is given as an example of *tawlīd al-ma'ānī*. The greatest testimony to his scientific bent is the designation of a type of *ḥall* as *al-kīmiyā'*, for which he provides illustrations. The common rhetorical devices, such as simile, metaphor, metonymy, and allusion are moderately used, and the essay entitled *Fī waṣf al-qalam*, which is cited in the discussion of partial prosification of poetry, contains a good illustration of these tropes. His liberal use of the term *ḍimn/taḍmīn* deserves to be noted too. Non-Qur'ānic materials that are used in prose passages which illustrate *ḥall* of the Qur'ān are characterized as a form of *ḍimn/taḍmīn* in the same way as are Qur'ānic/*ḥadīth* materials used in passages essentially meant to illustrate prosification of poetry.<sup>85</sup> The variety of the subjects covered by his model samples indicate the stock of themes that was treated by the secretarial class. A more elaborate examination of our author's style will undoubtedly take us too far from the basic intention here which is to illustrate the various levels and categories of *ḥall* as delineated by him and the extent to which his model samples adhere to his theoretical blueprint. His concept of *ḥall* is essentially one of hybridization between paraphrase, allusion, rephrase, and generation of ideas and expressions obtained from poetry, the Qur'ān and the Prophetic *akhbār*. By widening the scope of *ḥall* to include other than poetry, its original domain, Ibn al-Athīr succeeded in furnishing the discussion with an enduring logical and theoretical framework which served as a point of departure for subsequent contributions to the discussion. In spite of the various shortcomings highlighted and the hiatus between theory and practice as exhibited in some of its illustrative passages, it is fair to say that *al-Waṣṣṣ al-marqūm* is a classical model in motif analysis.

<sup>84</sup> See note 69 above.

<sup>85</sup> See *WM*, 113, 187.



### CHAPTER THREE

## Al-Nayramānī's *Manthūr al-manzūm*: an Analytical Study

The arrangement of literary materials according to themes found expression in the *diwān al-maʿānī*, “motif florilegia”, literature, a scholarly exertion that has the same history with the compilation of poetical materials. The pioneering efforts in both are to be attributed to al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī (d. 170/786), namely, his *Kitāb Maʿānī al-shiʿr* and *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*.<sup>1</sup> With *al-Ḥamāsa* of Abū Tammām emerged the first systematic arrangement of the Arabic poetical corpus according to themes.<sup>2</sup> The remarkable success of this work in the orderly illustration of poetical themes was a major inspiration to al-Nayramānī in his attempt at providing a prose version of it, and this was crystallized in his *Manthūr al-manzūm*, the analysis of which is the subject matter of this chapter.

That the prosification of poetry as a literary exercise was a common practice among the secretarial class contemporaneous with al-Nayramānī was confirmed by him but not without some criticism. The tendency towards modeling prose essays strictly on the wording and structural patterns of the poetic exemplars that inspired them is one critical observation made by our author against the majority of those who attempted the practice, although he does not provide a single illustration of this.<sup>3</sup> The plurality of the *qaṣida* themes, which has been aptly characterized by Lyons as “polymerism”,<sup>4</sup> is portrayed in a less than positive light by al-Nayramānī in his argument against the alleged prosification of poetry on the structural and thematic patterns of the *qaṣida*. It should be said that the uniqueness of the *qaṣida* actually derives from its polythematic nature, and that of prose from the specificity of its subject, that is, its atomicity, if such it can be described. It is this fundamental difference that would have precluded any prose essay which follows in a strictly

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<sup>1</sup> GAS, 2/53, 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 2/66–72.

<sup>3</sup> AL-NAYRAMĀNĪ, *Manthūr al-manzūm*, 11–14. Henceforth *MM*.

<sup>4</sup> LYONS, “Notes on Abū Tammām’s Concept of Poetry”, 63.

systematic fashion the word order and the thematic arrangement of *qaṣīda*, if such essay ever occurred at all, from being characterized as a serious composition or as an illustration of the *ḥall* device for that matter. The tradition of finding faults with existing exertions, especially when a new one is being introduced is not uncommon, and al-Nayramānī's strictures against earlier or contemporaneous efforts in the employment of the *ḥall* device should be viewed in this sense, especially if we consider his eagerness at showing the pioneering nature of his effort.

Apart from the use of poetry as the preserver of the customs and traditions, which reason motivated the professional transmitters and the *kuttāb* to be engaged in the study and utilization of it, poetry, according to our author, contains "precious pearls" of a far greater aesthetic utility than hitherto realized by the connoisseurs:<sup>5</sup>

... ولم يتصوروا أنه إذا قُطفَ زهره وشبك جواهره ثم غُيِّرَ تأليفه، وجُدِّدَ ترصيفه وعرض في معرض الخطابة وعدل به إلى مذهب الكتابة تولد منه فرع يزيد على الأصل ونوع يُنِيف على الجنس كما يزيد الربيع على البذر ويعلو الغيث على البحر. وقنعوا لترسلهم بالألفاظ الحاضرة والمعاني الخاطِرة، وتواضع بعضهم بالكلام السوقي ليقال مطبوعٌ، وتفاصح بعضهم بالغريب الخوشى ليقال مصنوع.

"... they (i.e. the *kuttāb*) failed to realize that when its flower is plucked and its jewel cast; when its component is changed and its arrangement renewed and then exhibited on the terrain of oratory and taken to the mode of [prose] writing, a branch that is better than the root is produced, and a type that is superior to the [original] sort is generated, in the same way as the yield gives more than the seed sown, and as the clouds overshadow the sea. They are content in their writing only with the use of urban expressions and ideas from their imagination; some of them condescend to the use of common idioms so that it can be said (that they are) natural; others feign eloquence by using the unfamiliar, the uncouth, in order that it may be said (that they are) artificial."

It is the unexploited potentials of the poem that our author intends to utilize through a systematic and comprehensive rendering of *al-Ḥamāsa* into prose. The new effort is to be dedicated to Bahā' al-Dawla (d. 403/1012), the author's patron whose remarkable appreciation and encourage-

<sup>5</sup> MM, 6–7.



ment of unfamiliar scholarly efforts are cited as a motivation too.<sup>6</sup> The primary objective of the work, according to its author, is to provide an easy model for the would-be *kātib* who would necessarily require to borrow from poetical expressions into his prose writings. In the choice of the poetic materials to be used in the model essays, al-Nayramānī argues that only those exhibiting high aesthetic standards would be selected. This, he says, is in contrast to his model, Abū Tammām, whom he criticizes for mixing contrasting themes and expressions. As an example, he cites the first selection in *al-Ḥamāsa*, the last three verses of which he says are more of a vilification of trepidation than of appreciation of chivalry, the subject matter of the poem. In his view, only the second, the third, and the fourth verses of the seven line poem actually treat the intended motif of chivalry.<sup>7</sup> Although no evaluation of al-Nayramānī's arguments and views is intended for now, it may be briefly stated that his criticism of Abū Tammām, whose role is essentially that of a selector or a compiler rather than an author, is by no means justifiable. Besides, his view of the specific verses which he isolated for criticism involves a question of interpretation rather than thematic correctness, as the same verses are favourably interpreted by al-Marzūqī (d. 421/1030), his contemporary. To this and other points I intend to return later. On the pattern of material utilization, he says:<sup>8</sup>

ووقعت تحت كل كلمة مأخوذة من الشعر باسم قائله ثم أثبتت بالآيات المجتمعة في كل فصل بعد تكامله ليكون كل غريب إلى قائله منسوباً وبه معروفاً... ونسبت كل بديعة إلى شاعرها ليُعلم أنه صاحبها وأني صاحب ساثرها، وأنه نظمها فرائد فترتها توائم. ولم أراع في ذلك الشعراء وطبقاتهم ولا ترتيبهم على تواريخ أوقاتهم، بل راعيت المنظوم لا الناظم، والمقول لا القائل، وأجريت شعر المحدثين في ذلك مجرى أشعار الأوائل... وعلى هذا الأصل فستزداد عناية هذا العصر بالإبداع في النظم والنثر إذا علموا أن محاسنهم تُعدّ كما تعدّ محاسن الأولين.

"I register under every word that is taken from a poem the name of its renderer; I then bring together all the verses [used] in every passage after it had been completed, so that every rare usage can be

<sup>6</sup> *MM*, 38–39.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–18. (For the selection in question, see *al-Ḥamāsa*, 1/23–30).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 24–25. The copyist(s) may have dispensed with this feature of every borrowed word from poetical illustrations carrying the name of the renderer, as this is not reflected in the published edition of the work.



attributed to its author and be identified with him... I also attribute every fascinating verse to the poet that said it, so that it may be known that it belongs to him and that I am the one who makes it popular; that he had composed it (in verse) as single gems while I have arranged them in prose as twins. I have not taken into account in this (effort) the status of the poets, their classes, nor their chronology; rather, I have concerned myself with the poem not with the poet; with what was said and not with the one who said it. I have treated the poetry of the moderns in the same way as that of the ancients... On this basis, the interest of the moderns in composing good poetry and prose will increase if they realize that their good works are taken into account as are those by the ancients.”

Equality between the Classical and the post-Classical works is thus a major feature to look for in our author's selection of materials to be utilized in his essays, and the extent to which he has adhered to this principle will be evident from our illustrations from them. But one important piece of evidence that may establish his strong conviction in this principle is his other effort, a *Ḥamāsa* work which he describes as containing poetical selections from both the ancients and the moderns in equal proportions.<sup>9</sup> This work probably did not survive.

It has already been said that al-Nayramānī took Abū Tammām's work as his model, but this is not without some modification; his own classification of the themes treated shows this very clearly. The realities of the court life and the peculiarities of his own environment seem to have played a significant role in this. In support may be cited his observation that reports about conquests and acts of benevolence are the dominant subject matter of many of the letters and official formulas emanating from the court of his patron. He interprets this as an evidence that the attributes of *ḥamāsa*, “chivalry”, and *samāḥa*, “benevolence”, are both represented in his patron in equal proportion.<sup>10</sup> This assumption led him to collapse the two themes into one for treatment under the first chapter, the chapter on *ḥamāsa*, although the prose essays that are given as model illustrations on the two themes are not in any specific proportion or order. The rhetorical feature of playing on words reflected in the words *ḥamāsa* and *samāḥa* may well have encouraged him to fuse the two into one, not least

<sup>9</sup> *MM*, 26–27.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

because of his fascination with verbal acrobatics, as our selections from him will show.

The chapter on *nasīb* follows that of *ḥamāsa*, and this is done on purpose: love and passion motivate the cowardly and encourage the niggardly to be generous.<sup>11</sup> The psychological relationship between themes is hereby employed in the arrangement of the two principal themes treated by the author, although this is ignored in his arrangement of the other themes. The extent to which our author has adhered to *al-Ḥamāsa* in terms of thematic classification as well as the relative importance of those themes within the overall context of the illustrations that treat them will be clear from the table.

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<sup>11</sup> *MM*, 44.

Table 3\*

<b>Diwān al-Ḥamāsa</b>			<b>Manthūr al-manẓūm</b>		
Theme	No of poetic pieces	%	Theme	No of essays	%
<i>Ḥamāsa</i>	261	29.63	<i>Ḥamāsa/Samāḥa</i>	67	28.27
<i>Marāthī</i>	137	15.55	<i>Nasīb</i>	26	10.97
<i>Adab</i>	55	6.24	<i>ʿItāb</i>	19	8.02
<i>Nasīb</i>	140	15.89	<i>Hijāʾ</i>	26	10.97
<i>Hijāʾ</i>	80	9.08	<i>Adab</i>	24	10.13
<i>ʿAḍyāf</i>	110	12.49	<i>Awṣāf</i>	19	8.02
<i>Madḥ</i>	32	3.63	<i>Taʿāzī</i>	25	10.55
<i>Ṣifāt</i>	3	0.34	<i>Mulaḥ</i>	31	13.08
<i>al-Sayr wa 'l-nuʿās</i>	9	1.02			
<i>Mulaḥ</i>	35	3.97			
<i>Madhammat al-nisāʾ</i>	19	2.16			
Total	<u>881</u>		Total	<u>237</u>	

\* Themes and the quantity of corresponding illustrations of them in the *Diwān al-Ḥamāsa* and *Manthūr al-manẓūm*. The percentage given in respect of each selection category represents its proportion to the entire number of selections or illustrative essays in the respective works.



From the table, some difference in nomenclature, scope, and other details can be observed. For instance, the *taʿāzī* chapter in the *Manthūr* corresponds to the *rithāʾ* chapter in *al-Ḥamāsa*. The *ʿitāb*, which looms large in the epistolary genre as it can be established from the treatment of it as an independent theme by al-Nayramānī, is often of secondary status in poetry, occurring in most cases as a subsumed or peripheral subject matter. This may well explain why it is not treated as an independent theme in *al-Ḥamāsa*. Furthermore, a cursory look at the illustrative essays in the *Manthūr* shows that the three themes of *ḥamāsa*, *adyāf* and *madḥ*, which are treated under independent chapters in *al-Ḥamāsa*, are collapsed into one in the *Manthūr* under the chapter of *ḥamāsa*, and even then, the illustrations for each of these three themes are not distinctly marked. Moreover, *al-sayr wa 'l-nuʿās* and *madhammat al-nisāʾ*, which are independent themes in *al-Ḥamāsa*, are conspicuously absent in the *Manthūr*, presumably because both do not strictly belong in the domain of epistolography.

Having examined the areas of convergence and divergence between the two, a more general assessment of the pattern of material presentation in the *Manthūr* is necessary as a prelude to the analysis of the samples that will be selected from it. The essays, each of which is designated as *faṣl*, are of varying length; they range from single sentences and quotational citations to short and long essays. The longest occurs in the chapter on *nasīb*; it is some forty-eight lines at an average of six to seven words per line.<sup>12</sup> The length of an essay is not necessarily proportional to the number of poetic pieces on which it draws nor to the number of poets that is quoted in it. A short essay, for instance, may draw on various poetical pieces and poets, while a long essay may draw on just a poem and a poet.<sup>13</sup> The largest number of poets whose verses are used in any given essay is nine, and this is in the second essay in the chapter on *ḥamāsa*.<sup>14</sup> Also, the poetical materials utilized also range from half lines to long pieces. The length of an essay is equally not necessarily proportional to that of the poem on which it draws. For instance, a seventeen line piece of poetry by a certain Hilāl b. al-Asʿar is one of the two poetical exemplars given as the sources to a seven line prose essay,<sup>15</sup> while a half line by Abū Tammām is given as one of the two sources used in a *hijāʾ*

<sup>12</sup> *MM*, 120–26.

<sup>13</sup> See in that order *MM*, 102–3; 92–93, essays on *ḥamāsa*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–52.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 169–72.



essay of average length.<sup>16</sup> It should be said, however, that even when a long poem is given as a source, what is borrowed from it into the corresponding essay is usually a few words or phrases rather than an entire line, and this is the strong point which our author intends to establish in his practical interpretation of the *ḥall* device. Furthermore, an essay may also draw from more than a poem of a given poet, and Abū Tammām is incidentally the most prominent illustration of this particular feature; he is quoted more often than any other poet. As indicated by the author in his prefatory note that was related above, the poetic pieces utilized in each essay are illustrated at its end. In most cases, their renderers are introduced with the phrase *wa-qāla*..., although there are several instances in which this does not occur; where an essay simply runs into the corresponding poetical illustration. Although our author was also a poet of some sort with pure and fine diction whenever the opportunity knocked,<sup>17</sup> it is to be noted that he did not quote any of his own poems as an exemplar for any of the essays.

Of the 237 essays contained in the work, if we generously pass the short epigrammatic statements as essays too, only four actually carry titles indicating their subject matter: two in the chapter on *awsāf* containing descriptions of a horse – both essays come one after the other –<sup>18</sup> and the other two, which also occur in succession, in the chapter on *mulaḥ*. The first of these two is a condolence message over a woman who died during intercourse, *taʿziya bi-imraʿatin mātat bi-jamʿ*, and the other is a lamentation over the passage of youth, *marāthī al-shabāb*.<sup>19</sup> It is curious, if not ironical, that these two essays should occur in the chapter on funny stories rather than in the chapter on condolences. The issue of thematic incorrectness, for which al-Nayramānī was critical of Abū Tammām as highlighted above, is remarkably more pronounced in our author, and further evidence of this will be given later. For now I shall illustrate the eight theme-chapters, each with three samples from the author's model essays. The titles given to the selected essays in the following, excepting the one on the description of a horse, are improvised.

<sup>16</sup> *MM*, 182–84.

<sup>17</sup> For instance, see his lengthy nostalgic pieces over Baghdad, *ibid.*, 30–36. See also his praise poem for Bahāʾ al-Dawla, and his poetical tirades against some of his own kinsmen given in AL-THAʿĀLIBĪ, *Tatimma*, 1/126–30.

<sup>18</sup> *MM*, 243–48.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 323–28.



I Bāb al-Ḥamāsa (The Chapter on Chivalry)

i الإقدام  
(Intrepidity)<sup>20</sup>

فأما بنو فلان فقد سادوا القبائل وحازوا الفضائل، فما تُرفع راية ولا تُذكر غاية إلا سَبَقُوا إليها وعلّوا عليها، مُرْخِصِينَ لأنفسهم إذا حائُوا ومستامين بها إذا ساءُوا. يرون القتل سُنَّةً إذا رآه غيرهم سُبَّةً، ويستعجلون آجالهم بالإقدام إذا استأجلها غيرهم بالإحجام. فما يُعتمد لهم سيف سليلٌ حتى يستباح به قبيل، ولا يُطلّ منهم في البلاد قتيلٌ، ولا يموت منهم على الفراش إلا قليل. ولا عيب فيهم إلا شحوب بوجوههم من وصال الهواجر، وفلول بسيوفهم من قراع الكتائب، ونُحول برماحهم من طعان المقاب. قد تعودوا كَرَّ الجياد واستحلوا مَرَّ الطراد، فلو بُذِل لأحدهم السِّلْمُ عَفْوًا واستسلم له الخصم طوعًا حتى يكفى خُطّة الحرب ويكفّ بالطاعة له عن الطعن والضرب، لتكَلَّف أن يكون للأسنة مِسْنًا وللجناة مِجْنًا. قِلَقُ الصفيحة، ثابت القدم، جذع البصيرة، قارح التقدم.

بشامة بن حزن:

إِنْ تُبْتَدِرْ غَايَةً يَوْمًا لِمَكْرُمَةٍ      تَلَقَّ السَّوَابِقَ مِنَّا وَالْمُصَلِّينَا  
إِنَّا لَنُرْخِصَ يَوْمَ الرُّوعِ أَنْفُسَنَا      وَلَوْ نُسَامَ بِهَا فِي الْأَمْنِ أَغْلِينَا

السموئل بن عاديا:

وَأَنَا لَقَوْمٌ مَا نَرَى الْقَتْلَ سُبَّةً      إِذَا مَا رَأَتْهُ عَامِرٌ وَسَلُولُ  
يُقَرِّبُ حَبَّ الْمَوْتِ آجَالَنَا لَنَا      وَتَكْرِهُهُ آجَالَهُمْ فَتَطُولُ  
وَمَا مَاتَ مِنَّا سَيِّدٌ حَتَفَ أَنْفَهُ      وَلَا طُلَّ مِنَّا حَيْثُ كَانَ قَتِيلُ  
وَأَيَّامُنَا مَشْهُورَةٌ فِي عِلُونَا      لَهَا غُرُرٌ مَعْلُومَةٌ وَحُجُولُ  
وَأَسْيَافُنَا فِي كُلِّ غَرْبٍ وَمَشْرِقٍ      بِهَا مِنْ قِرَاعِ الدَّارِعِينَ فُلُولُ  
مُعَوَّدَةٌ أَلَا تُسَلِّ نَصَالِهَا      فَتُعْمَدُ حَتَّى يَسْتَبَاحَ قَبِيلُ

سوار السعدي:

وإني لا أزال أخا حُرُوبٍ      إِذَا لَمْ أَجْنِ كُنْتُ مِجَنِّ جَانٍ

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 52–55. For the poetical illustrations: Bashshāma = Ḥamāsa, 1/100–10, selection 14, lines 4 & 6 (pp. 103–4), where his father's name is given as Jaz', the illustration also occurs in IBN QUTAYBA, *al-Shi'r*, 2/533; al-Samaw'al = Ḥamāsa, 1/110–24, selection 15; Sawwār = Ḥamāsa, 1/130–33, selection 18, line 4 (p. 132); Qatari = Ḥamāsa, 1/136–39, selection 20, line 4 (p. 138). Henceforth, 'S' stands for selection and 'L' for the line.

قَطَرِي بن الفُجاءة:  
ثُمَّ انصرفتُ وقد أُصِبتُ ولم أُصِبْ      جذعَ البصيرة قارحَ الإقدام

“As for the children of so-and-so, they have led the tribes and acquired honours. No banner is raised and no goal is set without them getting there first and controlling it. They accord but a little value to their lives when they have a cause to defend, but offer them at a high price when they bargain with them. They see fighting as a tradition when others see it as a dishonour. They hasten the coming of their appointed time through intrepidity when others postpone it through abstention. No drawn sword of theirs is sheathed until a tribe is subdued through it, and no blood of any of their fallen heroes is desecrated in the lands. Only but a few of them die naturally. No defects in them except, the paleness of their faces [which arose] from persistent midday heat, the dent in their swords from continuous hitting at armoured regiments, and the thinness of their lances from strikes at troops of horsemen. They are used to mobilizing fast horses, and they savour the bitter rigours of pursuing enemies. If any of them were offered peace without effort, or an enemy were to surrender to him willingly so that he stops planning for war and refrains – by virtue of [the opponents’] submission to him –, from hitting and striking, he will still take it upon himself to be a whetstone for spearheads and a shield for violators. He is of disturbed face but of firm feet; he is youthlike in perception but advanced in approach.

Bashshāma b. Ḥazn:

Whenever a goal of honour is earnestly pursued, you’ll see  
the foremost and the next to the foremost to be from  
amongst us.

We offer our souls cheap on the day of fright; but should  
they be bargained for in peace, they are offered at high  
prices.

al-Samaw’al b. ‘Ādiyā’:

We are a people who do not see fighting as a dishonour,  
when it is seen as such by ‘Āmir and Salūl.

Our love for death hastens the coming of our appointed  
time; but their appointed time hates it, hence their life  
span is prolonged.

None of our leaders dies naturally, and none of our slain  
ones is ever desecrated.



Our encounters are well-known among our enemies; they  
leave behind them known traces and distinctive marks.  
Our swords are all over the East and the West; they bear  
dents from their hitting at armour-clad soldiers.  
They are used to the tradition that their blades would not be  
drawn out and then sheathed until a tribe had been  
subdued.

Sawwār al-Saʿdi:

Certainly, I would for ever be a war monger; when I am not  
violating [others' sanctity], I serve as a shield for the  
violateur.

Qaṭarī b. al-Fujā'a:

Then I left after I had struck, but I was not struck; [I'm]  
youthlike in perception, advanced in approach."

ii

نصيب في المجد  
(A Share of Glory)<sup>21</sup>

قد جعل الله لك من كلّ فخر نصيباً وفي كلّ مجد نصيباً، وقسمك على المعالي،  
فلا تزال تُنشئ كتاباً أو تُرجى كتيباً. قد بلغت الذروة التي تزل عنها قدم المثبت،  
ولا يرقى إليها أمل المتأمل.  
البحرئ:

وأعطاك من كلّ فضل يُعدّ حظاً ومن كلّ مجد نصيباً  
وقال مرداس بن أبي عامر:  
إنني أرى الملك الكندي أوسطهم يُرجى كتيباً ورجلاً غير أنزار  
وقال أبو تمام:  
بني لتنوخ الله عزاً مؤبداً تزل عليه وطأة المثبت

"Allah has allotted you a portion of every honour and a share of every  
glory. He made you represent all acts of eminence; you remain, either  
causing a document to be written or a squadron of soldiers to be

<sup>21</sup> MM, 87–88. For the poetical illustrations: BUḤTURI, *Diwān*, 1/151 where "wa-aʿtāhu" is read in place of "wa-aʿtāka"; no source could be found for Mirdās' verse; for Abū Tammām's verse, see *Diwān*, 1/307.

dispatched. You have reached the summit where the feet of the careful would slip; where the hope of an optimist cannot reach.

al-Buḥturī:

He endowed you with a share of every noteworthy glory  
and a portion of every honour.

Mirdās b. Abi ʿĀmir:

I saw the Kindite king as the most modest of them; he  
dispatches a squadron of soldiers and horses that are  
not few.

Abū Tammām:

Allah established for Tanūkh an everlasting glory, on its  
plane would the feet of even the careful slip.

iii

### للقرب والبعد

(For the Kith and the Kin)<sup>22</sup>

وَدَّ فلان للقرب مبدولٌ ورفدُهُ إلى البعيد محمولٌ، على أنه يعمُّهما بالحُسنيين ويعنِّي  
بهما في المعنَّين. ولكنَّه يَخْصُّ القرب بزيادة الأُنس كما يقتضيه الرَّجْمُ، والغريبَ  
بزيادة البرِّ كما يُوجبه الكَرَمُ. فهو كالبحر يُؤنِّسُ بالجواهر جاره ويبعثُ إلى الأقطار  
قطاره.

أبو تمام:

الوَدُّ للقُربى ولكن عُرِفَه      للأُبعد الأوطان دون الأقرب

المتنبى:

كالبحر يقذف للقرب جواهرها      جوداً ويبعثُ للبعيد سحائبها

“The love which the so-and-so possesses is freely given to the kith, and his generosity is extended to the kin, except that he still embraces both of them with the two virtues and puts them into consideration in the exercise of the two attributes. But he favours the kith with close intimacy, as demanded by blood ties, and (favours) the kin with additional generosity, as required by nobility. He is like the sea: it delights its neighbour with jewels and sends its dribbles to the regions.

<sup>22</sup> MM, 115–16. For the illustrations: ABŪ TAMMĀM, *Dīwān*, 1/103; AL-MUTANABBĪ, *Dīwān*, 1/130.



Abū Tammām:

(His) love is for the kith, but his generosity is for those at far away lands; not for close relatives.

al-Mutanabbī:

He is like the sea that throws jewels to the one nearby out of generosity; but sends clouds to the one far away.”

## II Bāb al-Nasīb (The Chapter on Genealogy/Love)

i

### الوصال (On Union)<sup>23</sup>

لئن منعني يا سيدي الرقيب من الوصال، فلقد أمتعني الحبيب بالخيال، ولئن صدف  
ضيف الهوى عن طريقه، فلقد أذن لطيف الكرى في طروقه. فها أنا أعلل نفسي  
بالتقاء أنفاسنا في الجوّ وارتقاء أبصارنا في الضوء. ويبد الذي شغف بكم كبدي،  
ومد إليكم بالمسألة يدى تفريج ما ألقى من الهمّ وتسهيل ما أهوى من الوصل، وإياه  
أسأل أن ينسخ عنا آية الهجر وينشر علينا راية الأنس، ويجمع بيننا في رياض أريضة  
النعم، ورياح مريضة النسيم، لترتع منها في رفيف الخزامى، وننعم فيها بحفيف  
النعمى.

قال الشاعر:

فإن تمنعوا ليلي وحسن حديثها      فلن تمنعوا مني البكا والقوايا  
فهلاً منعتم إذ منعتم حديثها      خيلاً يوافيني على النأى هاديا

وقال آخر:

إن كان لا يسعدني نأسها      وكان لا يغفل حراسها  
ففى هبوب الريح ما تلتقى      فى الجوّ أنفاسى وأنفاسها  
وقال الهذليّ [أبو صخر]:

يبد الذي شغف الفؤاد بكم      تفريج ما ألقى من الهمّ

<sup>23</sup> MM, 126–28. The first poetical illustration here occurs in *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1312, S. 515, without attribution, too. The renderer of the second illustration could not be identified. For that by al-Hudhalī, see *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1232–35, S. 462, L. 1; *Hudhaliyyin*, 2/972–75, S. 17, L. 31 (p. 975). The last poetical illustration in the prose essay is to be attributed to Ibn Muṭayr and not Ibn Ḍaḥḥāk, see *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1228–30, S. 460, L. 6 (p. 1230).

وقال الحُسين بن الضحَّاك:  
يُؤمِّنِينَا حَتَّى تَرْفَ قُلُوبُنَا      رَفِيفَ الْخُزَامِيِّ بَاتَ طَلٌّ يَجُودُهَا

“Although the guard, O my Master, may have prevented me from reunion, the beloved had certainly entertained me with phantasy. Although the guest of passion may have diverted me from his path, the pleasant slumber [I had] had allowed me through his paths. Here I am, cherishing the hope that our breaths will meet in the air and that our gazes will ascend into the light. In the hand of the one who overspread my heart with the love of you and caused my hands to stretch out begging, lies the relief from the agony that I suffer and the facilitation of the reunion for which I long. It is Him I beseech to take away from us the sign of separation; spread the banner of friendship over us; and bring us together at gardens with extensive comforts and at open spaces with still winds, so that we can enjoy from them the glitter of the lavender and amuse ourselves with the rustling of the ostriches.

A certain poet:

If you prevent Laylā and her sweet talk [from reaching me], you cannot prevent my cry and poems.  
Why not also prevent – since you prevented her speech –, a rightly guided phantasy from reaching me inspite of the long distance?

Another poet:

If her people would not make me happy and her guards would not be inattentive,  
With the blowing of the wind my breaths and hers meet in the air.

al-Hudhalī [Abū Ṣakhr]:

In the hand of the One who overspread the heart with love of you lies the relief from the distress that I suffer.

al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk:

They continued raising hope in us until our hearts glittered like the lavender on which dew fell generously.”

ii

الغُرَّة

(The Beautiful Spot)<sup>24</sup>

ومِمَّا أُبْتُكَ يَا سَيِّدِي أَنَّنِي صَفَحْتُ فِي بَعْضِ الدُّوَرِ بَنْظَرَةً فَظْفِرْتُ مِنْ خِلَالِ الْخُدُورِ  
بُغْرَةً كَأَنَّ بِهَا مَطْلَعًا مِنْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدَرِ أَوْ عَلَيْهَا بُرْقَعًا مِنْ سُنَّةِ الْبَدْرِ. فَمَا زِلْتُ أُمْلِي طَرْفِي  
مِنْهَا مَلِيًّا، وَأَجْنِي بِلَحْظِي مِنْ خَدِّهَا وَرَدًّا جَنِيًّا وَهِيَ غَافِلَةٌ لَا تَشْعُرُ، وَسَاهِيَةٌ لَا  
تَفْطِنُ، إِلَى أَنْ ثَبَتَ مِثَالُهَا فِي نَازِلِي، وَتَمَكَّنَ مَكَانُهَا مِنْ خَاطِرِي. فَالْتَفَتْتُ إِلَى  
التَّفَاتَةِ الْمَغْتَرَّةِ ثُمَّ انْتَنَتْ عَنِّي كَالنَّفْسِ الْمُرْتَدَّةِ، وَقَامَتْ تَمْشِي الْهُوَيْنَا كَمْشَى التَّرِيفِ  
يَصْرَعُهُ الْبُهِرُ بِالْكُثِيبِ.

وَقَدْ سَحَبَتْ فَرْعًا لَهَا مِنْ قِيَامٍ، وَلَبَسَتْ بِهِ دَرْعًا مِنْ ظِلَامٍ، فَكَأَنَّهَا فِيهِ سَنَا صُبْحٍ،  
وَكَأَنَّهُ عَلَيْهَا دُجَا جُنْحٍ. فَمَا كَادَتْ لِفَرْطِ التَّرِيفِ تَأْتِي بَيْتَ جَارَتِهَا إِلَّا بِالتَّكَالِيفِ.  
وَرَجَعْتُ عَنْهَا بِفَوَادٍ مُخْتَطِفٍ وَرُقَادٍ مُخْتَلِسٍ. وَمَا لِي مَوْثِلَ غَيْرِ تَلَطُّفِكَ فِي ارْتِيَادِهَا  
وَتَوَصُّلِكَ إِلَى اقْتِيَادِهَا. وَأَنْتِ - أَيُّدُكَ اللَّهُ - تَجْرِي فِي ذَلِكَ عَلَى عَادَتِكَ الْمَشْكُورَةِ  
وَسَجِيَّتِكَ الْمَأْثُورَةِ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ.

قال الشاعر:

تَأَمَّلْتُهَا مَغْتَرَّةً فَكَأَنَّمَا رَأَيْتُ بِهَا مِنْ سُنَّةِ الْبَدْرِ مَطْلَعًا  
بِشَارِ بْنِ بَرْدٍ:

ضَنْتُ بِخَدِّ وَجَلْتُ عَنْ خَدِّ ثُمَّ انْتَنَتْ كَالنَّفْسِ الْمُرْتَدَّةِ  
إِمْرُؤُ الْقَيْسِ:

وَإِذَا هِيَ تَمْشِي كَمْشَى التَّرِيفِ فَ يَصْرَعُهُ بِالْكُثِيبِ الْبُهِرُ  
آخر:

وَبِالتَّكَالِيفِ تَأْتِي بَيْتَ جَارَتِهَا تَمْشِي الْهُوَيْنَا وَمَا يَبْدُو لَهَا قَدَمٌ  
وَقَالَ آخَرُ:

وَإِذَا عَبَّتْ عَلَى بَتٍّ كَأَنَّنِي بِاللَّيْلِ مُخْتَلِسُ الرُّقَادِ سَلِيمٌ

<sup>24</sup> MM, 138–41. The first illustration occurs unattributed in *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1286, S. 496, L. 1. For the illustration from BASHSHĀR, see his *Diwān*, 2/222; IBN ‘ABD RABBIH, *al-Iqd al-farīd*, 5/339. For that by IMRU’ AL-QAYS, see his *Diwān*, 110. For the fourth poetical illustration, see *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1389–1404, S. 577, L. 24 (p. 1397), where it is attributed to Ziyād b. Ḥamal. The last illustration is to be attributed to Ibn al-Dumayna. See *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1384, S. 572, L1. The “Night of Majesty” in the prose text refers to the historic night on which the Qur’ān started to be revealed to the Prophet. See Qur’ān, *sūra* 97.



“Of things I want to inform you about, O my Master, is that I peeped into a house and captured behind the curtains the sight of a beautiful damsel. It was as if the ‘Night of Majesty’ had appeared by her, or that a veil cut out of the full moon is on her. I continued looking at her for a while with pleasure and plucking ripe roses from her cheek by my glance; she was inattentive, oblivious; she was unmindful and absent-minded until her image became stable before my eyes and her position got control of my heart. Then she (suddenly) turned towards me like someone who had been dazzled, she then turned away like a returned stroke of breath. She then started walking leisurely like a drunkard that is afflicted by breathing difficulties while climbing a sandhill. But she had already pulled out her body while standing and covered it with a coat of mail from darkness. It is as if she is, while in it, the brightness of the dawn, and it [i.e. the coat of mail] the darkness of a night. She hardly visits her neighbour, due to excessive exhaustion, except when there are obligations to be fulfilled. So I went away from her with a kidnapped heart and a forcibly taken sleep. I have no safe place to turn except your bringing her through your grace, and your leading her back. Your Lordship – May Allah assist you – will be acting according to your praiseworthy tradition and the character that is known of you [if you undertake this], God willing.

A certain poet:

I looked at her intensely while she was inattentive; it was  
as if I saw with her the surface of the rising full moon.

Bashshār b. Burd:

She held back a cheek and revealed the other, then she  
turned away like a stroke of breath returned.

Imru’ al-Qays:

While she was walking like a drunk man hit by breathing  
difficulties at a sandhill.

Another poet:

She visits her neighbour only to fulfil obligations, she  
walks leisurely; her feet hardly show.

A certain poet:

Whenever you scold me I pass the night like the one  
whose sleep has been forcibly taken; a victim of  
snake-bite.”

iii

الشباب  
(Youth)<sup>25</sup>

وقد كان الشباب والصِّبا رفيقِي إذا سريتُ، ورسيلِي إذا جريتُ، فقد فارقاني  
وتركانِي وحدِي، وخلياني خاليًا بوجدِي.  
قال كُثَيِّر بن عبد الرحمن:

وكان الصِّبا يحدن الشباب ففارقا      وقد تركاني في مغانيهما وحدي  
ولم أقصر من نعت الكواعب لذتي      وشدّي بالباب المسومة الجرد  
عشيّة لا أعدى بدائي صاحبي      ولم أر داءً مثل دائي لا يعدي

“Youth and sensual passion had been my companions whenever I walked and my messengers whenever I ran. But both have now left and abandoned me, leaving me alone to my emotion.

Kuthayyir b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān:

Passion was an intimate companion of youth, but both left,  
after they had abandoned me (to stay) alone in their  
homes.

I am yet to exhaust my lust for the description of full-  
breasted ladies, nor my passion for embracing the  
decorated (lady) with hairless cheeks at the door.

At an evening in which I do not infect my companion with  
my ailment; I have never seen an ailment like mine that  
does not infect.”

III

Bāb al-‘Itāb (The Chapter on Reproach)

i

في الشدة والرخاء  
(Through Thick and Thin)<sup>26</sup>

أفي الحقّ يا سيدي والاخاء أن أذكر في الشدة وأنسى في الرّخاء، فما أزال أدنّي إذا  
احمرّ المأزل وأقصى إذا اخضرّ المنزل. وأدعى إذا عنت الكريهة وأنأى إذا غنت

<sup>25</sup> MM, 149–51. For the poem, see *Diwān Kuthayyir ‘Azza*, 445, the first line only.

<sup>26</sup> MM, 153–55. I could not locate the second of the two illustrations in any source. The first is to be attributed to Hānī b. Aḥmar. See AL-ĀMIDĪ, *al-Mu’talif wa ‘l-mukhtalif*, ed. ‘A.S. Aḥmad Farrāj (Cairo, 1961), 45. Lines 4 & 5 of this illustration

الكريمة. فعدّ بي عن هذه السجّية ولا تتعدّ عليّ في هذه القضية فُطارِد بي إذا  
الحربُ نابت وتطرَدني إذا السِّلْمُ ثابت. فلا تقص منّي ظلاً يليك، ولا تنفض عني  
درعاً يقيك. فإنّ الرماح قصيرة عن الدّارع، والصفّاح بصيرة بالحاسر.

رجلٌ من بني عبد مناة بن كنانة:

يا ضمّر أخبرني ولست بكاذب	وأخوك ناصحك الذي لا يكذب
هل في القضية أنّ إذا أخصبتُم	وأمنتُم فأنا البعيد الأجنب
فإذا الشدائد بالشدائد مرّة	أشجّتكم فأنا الحبيب الأقرب
وإذا تكون كريمة أدعى لها	وإذا يُجاش الجيش يُدعى جُندب
هذا وجدّكم الصغار بعينه	لا أمّ لي إن دام ذاك ولا أب
ولمالك أنف البلاد ورعيها	ولي الثماد ورعيهنّ المُجدب
عجبا لتلك قضية وإقامتي	فيكم على تلك القضية أعجب

يزيد بن الصقع الكلابيّ:

أبني عبّيد قد أتى أشياعكم	قولُ المقامة عنكم والسامر
أبني عبّيد إنّ ظلم صديقكم	والبغى يترككم كأمر الغابر
فإذا أتتكم هذه فتلبّبوا	إنّ الرماح بصيرة بالحاسر

“Is it part of fairness and brotherhood, O my Master, that I should be remembered during distress but forgotten during prosperity. I am always brought closer when the warfront gets red but I am kept at bay when the pasture gets green. I am summoned whenever calamity emerges, but I am kept at a distance whenever fortune sings. Please discontinue with this behaviour in regard to me and do not persist in this affair in dealing with me, as to be throwing me to the battlefield whenever war breaks out but discarding me whenever peace returns. Do not put away from me a protective shadow that is close to you, nor remove from me a coat of mail that protects you; for spears reach not the one clad in a coat of mail, but flat swords are experienced (in dealing) with the unprotected.

A certain man from Banū ‘Abd Manāt b. Kināna:

O Ḍamr, tell me, for you are not a liar, your [true] brother  
is one who advises you and does not lie.

are also quoted in AL-TANŪKHĪ, *Kitāb al-Qawāfi*, 85. See also HIBAT ALLAH B. ‘ALĪ IBN AL-SHAJARĪ, *K. al-Ḥamāsa* (Hyderabad, 1345/1926), 67, where this illustration is attributed to Hammām b. Murra al-Shaybānī.

Is it to be taken that whenever you are self-sufficient and in  
peace I should be the distant stranger.  
But once calamities upon calamities befall you I become  
the closest friend?  
When there is a misfortune, I am called to it; when the  
army is being mobilized, Jundub is summoned.  
This, I swear, is the real contempt, may I be bereaved of  
my father and mother if that should continue.  
To Mālik belong the fresh herbage of the lands and their  
green pastures; but its wastes and barren fields are  
meant for me.  
What a surprise! That is a serious affair; but my staying  
with you, inspite of that, is even more surprising.

Yazīd b. al-Ṣaʿīq al-Kilābī:

O children of ʿUbayd, the report about staying with you  
and about your night entertainer has reached your folks.  
O children of ʿUbayd, your transgression and injustice  
against your friend will make you a dead past.  
When this (advice) reaches you, prepare for war, for spears  
are experienced (in dealing) with the unprotected.”

ii

### الشكاية

(Complaint)<sup>27</sup>

وأنا أشكو إليك – أيدك الله – ما أقاسيه من تجهّم نقبائك وتهجم رقبائك وما ألاقيه  
من قلة إيجابك وكثرة حجابك. فقد أرداني ردّهم وأصداني صدّهم، فما أصل  
إليك إلا في كلّ فينة، ولا أمثلُ لديك إلا في كلّ فترة. فإذا حضرتُ كنتُ في حكم  
الغائب وعدتُ بغيظ العاتب لكثرة من أراه حولك من رقيب عتيد وألقاه عندك من  
عنيفٍ عنيدٍ، وأقفُ لديك ما وقفتُ كما يقف المُجتاز أو يختطف الباز. ثم أنصرف  
إذا انصرفتُ بفؤادٍ خافق ورجاءٍ مُخفق ولما أقرّ منك إلا بالنظر الشّر بعد غيبة  
الشهر.

شاعر:

ولما رأيتُ الكاشحين تتبّعوا هوانا وأبدوا دوننا نظراً شزراً  
جعلتُ وما بي من صدودٍ ولا قلى أزورك يومًا وأهجركم شهراً

<sup>27</sup> MM, 162–63. The poetical illustration is also unattributed in *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1244, S. 468, L. 1 & 2.

“I hereby complain to you –May Allah assist you– about what I suffer from the barbarity of your assistants and the uncouth behaviour of your guards; about what I experience of your poor attention to my requests and the large number of your chamberlains. Their turning me back has devastated me and their standing in my way has distressed me. I could only get to you once in a while, and I could stand before you only occasionally. Whenever I came, I was treated as if I were not there, and I often went back furious like a censurer, due to the large number of the watchful guards that surround you, and due to the rude and stubborn people I see with you. I often stood before you, whenever I could, for a time long enough for a passer-by, or for a falcon to catch [its prey]. Whenever I left, it was with a heart that throbs (abnormally) and a hope that is dashed. I could not secure from you save the snappy, unfriendly look; (often) after a month long period.

A certain poet:

When I saw that the secret enemies monitored our love  
very closely and cast unfriendly looks at us,  
I began – although not out of hatred nor aversion – to visit  
you for a day and to keep away from you for a month.”

iii

### الايثار

(Preferential Treatment)<sup>28</sup>

وقد علمت – أيدك الله – أن الصديق يحتمل أخاه على كل زلة ويمشي معه على كل  
مزلة، ما لم يحطه ذلك عن رتبة ويُفَضَّى به إلى ذلة. وكان أَمَس من تقديمك على  
لفلان في الترتيب والترحيب وإيثاره بفضل التقريب والترحيب ما لا يُرَضَّى بفعله ولا  
يُغَضَّى على مثله. فلا جرم أني قد انقبضت عن تلك الدار وسلوت عن كثير من تلك  
الأوطار، واعتقدت إذا عرضت لي حاجةً ببابك أن أدلوها ببعض أصحابك،  
وذكرت ذلك لتعرف عُذري فيما سَنَح من هذا الاعتقاد، وأن الأنفة من تلك المنزل  
ألزمتني منزلي.

<sup>28</sup> MM, 173–75. For the first poetical illustration see *Hamāsa*, 3/1120–23, S. 402, L. 2–4, where ...*ḥājati nazalat* is read in the last line. The illustration is also to be found in AL-JĀḤIẒ, *Bayān*, 2/316, 3/302, 4/85; SHIHĀB AL-DĪN, *Ṭirāz al-majālis*, 97, first line only. I could not locate the half line illustration attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in any source.

قال عصام بن عبيد [الله] الزماني:  
 أدخلت قبلي قوما لم يكن لهم  
 في الحق أن يلجوا الأبواب فقامي  
 لو عدّ قبر كنت أكرمهم  
 ميتا وأبعدهم من منزل الدّام  
 فقد جعلت إذا ما حاجة عرضت  
 باب دارك أدلوها بأقوام  
 أبو عبد الله بن الحجاج:  
 منزلة تضطرنى إلى لزوم منزلى

“You have known – may Allah assist you – that a true friend tolerates every fault of his brother and walks with him on every slippery track, as long as this does not lower his position nor lead him to dishonour. Your recent act of conceding priority to so-and-so in regard to rank and reception, and your according him closeness and warm reception in spite of me, is an act with which no one can be pleased, nor can it be overlooked. Little wonder, I have held back from that house (of yours) and I have stopped thinking about many of those needs (of mine). I have resolved, whenever a need that would bring me to your door arises, to pass it through one of your companions. I have mentioned this so that you may be aware of my excuse as dictated by my conviction. My sense of honour against that state of affairs has forced me to stay at home.

‘Iṣām b. ‘Ubayd [Allāh] al-Zimānī said:

You gave priority in admission to a people that should not,  
 as of right, have it.

Were ancestors to be taken into consideration, I would be  
 the one with the most respectable ancestors and the  
 farthest from the abode of dishonour.

I have resolved, should a need that would bring me to your  
 door arises, to pass it through people.

Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥajjāj:

A state of affairs that forces me to stay at home.”

IV **Bāb al-Hijāʾ** (The Chapter on *hijāʾ*)<sup>29</sup>i **المُعْتَرِّ بِالْآبَاءِ**  
(The One who Vaunts with Ancestors)<sup>30</sup>

وأما فلان فلم ينل العزَّ بآبائه ولكن بآبائه، ولا المجد بإسعافه ولكن بأسلافه، ولا  
يفخرُ إلا بأعمامٍ كَرُمَتْ وجُودُ، ولا يُعَوِّلُ إلا على أحاطٍ قُسِّمَتْ وجُود. وهل  
ينفعُ من كان زيرًا أن يكون أبوه وزيرًا، أو يُغْنِي عنه عِظْمُ جسمه وكبر اسمه إذا لم  
يأو من نفسه إلى جاه ولا وجاهة، ولم يَحْظَ من سعيه نبيا ولا نباهة.  
شاعر:

وليس الغنى والفقر من حيلة الفتى      ولكن أحاطٍ قُسِّمَتْ وجودُ  
آخر:

ولا خير في حُسن الجُسوم وطولها      إذا لم يزن حُسن الجُسوم عقولُ

“As for so-and-so, he did not achieve honour through self-respect but through his ancestors; nor glory by his personal efforts but through his forebears. He prides himself only with noble uncles and grandparents, and relies only on lucks and allotted lots. Is it of use to someone who is a water jar that his father be a vizier? Or is the heftiness of his body and the grandeur of his name of any avail to him if he does not by himself strive for glory or nobility nor achieve renown or fame through his own effort?

A certain poet:

Prosperity and poverty are not a man's own making, rather,  
they are allotted portions and lots.

Another poet:

<sup>29</sup> On the difficulty of finding an adequate English equivalent for the term see G.J.H. VAN GELDER's *The Bad and the Ugly: Attitudes Towards Invective Poetry – hijāʾ – in Classical Arabic Literature* (Leiden, 1988).

<sup>30</sup> *MM*, 187–88. For the first illustration, see *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1148–49, S. 415, L. 2 (p. 1148), where it is attributed to Maʿlūt al-Saʿdī al-Qarī. But it is attributed to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥassān b. Thābit by al-Ḥuṣrī on the authority of al-Jāḥiẓ. See *AL-ḤUṢRĪ, Zahr al-ādāb*, 1/496. But compare *AL-JĀḤIẒ, Bayān*, 2/364, *Ḥayawān*, 3/51, where it is attributed to Ḥassān's grandson. It also cited without attribution in *AL-TANŪKHĪ, K. al-Qawāfi*, 59. The second illustration is to be attributed to a certain Fazzārī man. See *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1181–82, S. 439, L. 2 (p. 1181) with *nubliḥā* in place of *ṭūliḥā*.

There is no value in beauty and size of bodies when the beauty of the bodies is not adorned by intelligence.”

ii

### العدو الضغين

(The Malicious Enemy)<sup>31</sup>

الحزم أحمداً ما فعل، والنصح أولى ما قبل، والاعتبار غرر والاختبار خطر. وأراك قد وثقت بفلان ثقة المستوثق، وأنست إليه أنسة المسترسل، وهو الذى قد عرفته نكراً ونكرته خبراً؛ فخذ من مكايده حذر، وخف من غوائله جهدك، فإنه وإن لم يكن العدو الضغين فهو الصديق الظنين، والعز يكمن ثم ينتشر، والجمر يحمى ثم يستعر. ولا يخدعك يمينه الغموس ولا حديثه المأنوس، فما يبر إذا حلف حتى يحالف بطن الراحة الشعر، ولا يصدق إذا نطق حتى يصم الصدى أو ينطق الحجر.

قال الأخطل:

بنى أمية إننى ناصح لكم	فلا يبيتن فيكم أمنا زفر
واتخذوه عدواً إن شاهده	وما تغيب من أخلاقه دعر
إن الضغينة تلقاها وإن قذمت	كالعر يكمن حيناً ثم ينتشر
لا يسمع الصوت مستكاً مسامعه	وليس ينطق حتى ينطق الحجر
قد أقسم المجد حقاً لا يحالفهم	حتى يحالف بطن الراحة الشعر

وقال آخر:

بعيد الرضى لا يتغى ود مدبر ولا يتصدى للضغين المغاضب

“Firmness is the most praiseworthy act, and advice is the worthiest of what can be accepted. Contemplation is precious, taking of risk is dangerous. I see you confiding in so-and-so as you will to a confidant, and demonstrating such friendliness towards him as you will to a familiar pen pal. He is the one I had known to be an undefined [subject], so I rendered his predicate indefinite. Beware of his intrigues, and try your utmost to be safe from his machinations. Although he may not be a malicious enemy, he is certainly an unreliable friend. Scabies conceals itself but breaks out thereafter; live charcoal (tends to) die out but then it burns. Let not his false oath nor his tantalizing friendly speech deceive you. He would never make good

<sup>31</sup> MM, 194–95. For the first illustration, see *Diwān al-Akhṭal*, 173; AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/691, the first line only. The second poetical illustration is to be attributed to Abū 'l-Ḥajjā. See *Ḥamāsa*, 3/922–25, S. 312, L. 5 (p. 924).



his pledge until hair keeps the company of the palms, and would never say the truth whenever he talks until echo becomes deaf or the stone talks.

al-Akḥṭal:

O children of Umayya, I am advising you, let not Zufar spend the night peacefully in your midst.

Take him for an enemy; for that which is apparent and that which is concealed of his characters are dreadful.

You'll find malice, even if it is suppressed for a long time, to be like scabies which conceals itself for a while but breaks out later.

He hears no sound [of reason], his ears are blocked; he would not speak until stone talks.

Glory has rightly vowed not to be their companion until hair keeps the company of the palms.

Another poet:

He is fastidious, he seeks not the love of whoever turns away, nor does he bother about the malicious opponent."

iii

### الخزى والخزاية

(Disgrace and Dishonour)<sup>32</sup>

فأما الذى بعثت به إلى من الهبة فقد أبيت له لما فيه على من الأية صيانة لقدرى عن  
صلتك وصفدك، وذهاباً بنفسى عن فضتك وذهبك. لأن البذل دون الابتذال كما  
أن الماء فوق المال، والإياء أحق من الحياء والعلاء أعلى من العطاء. وفي العطاء ما  
يزينه نسبه أو يشينه قدر الذى يهبه. فأما الذى أتيت فى باب فلان فعاره بادٍ على  
صفحات الأيام، وعزه باقٍ على ذهاب الأعوام قد عممك بالخزى والخزاية،  
وطوقك من اللؤم والملامة بمثل طوق الحمامة.

ضمرة بن الضمرة النهشلى:

أأصرها وبني عمى ساغب فكفك من أبي على وعاب

<sup>32</sup> MM, 206–8. Al-Nahshali's verse could not be located in any source, and the one attributed to Abū Nuwās either. For the illustration from Abū Tammām, see *Dīwān*, 4/465 and AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/615; for that from al-Mutanabbī, see *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī*, 4/76. The one attributed to 'Ubayd Allāh does not occur in any of the editions of the *Dīwān* consulted.



أبو تمام:  
 ذُلَّ السؤال شجًا في الحلق معترضٌ      من فوقه غصصٌ من تحته جرضٌ  
 ما بال كفك إن جادت وإن بخلت      من ماء وجهي إن أفنيته عوض  
 أبو نواس:  
 وله مواهب كلما نُسبت      يومًا إليه زانها النسب  
 ومن المواهب ما يُكدره      ويشينه قدر الذي يهب  
 عبيد الله بن قيس الرقيات:  
 إن فيها طوق الحمامة يدعو      ساق حُرٍّ على غصون هدالة  
 المتنبي:  
 أقامت في الرقاب له أيادٍ      هي الأطواقُ والناس الحمامُ

“In regard to the gift that you sent me, I had rejected it out of self-esteem and as a protection for my honour against your gift and trap; and in order that I may keep myself away from your gold and silver. This is because generosity is higher than degradation, in the same way as dignity [lit. water] is above wealth. Self-respect is greater than presents, and self-esteem is superior to gifts. Some gifts appreciate by its descent or depreciate by the status of their giver. In regard to that which you did at the door of so-and-so, the disgrace (arising) from it will show on the pages of the days and the honour [for condemning it] will remain on the silver plates of the years ahead; both have overwhelmed you with dishonour and disgrace and have put lowliness and blame round your neck like the dove’s ring.

Ḍamra b. Ḍamra al-Nahshali:

Would I creak against it loudly while my cousins are  
 starving? Enough from the one who is defiant towards  
 me, who finds fault in me.

Abū Tammām:

The dishonour in begging is a bone that lies across the  
 throat; on top of it is a painful lump, under it is a  
 choking spittle.

The state of your palm, be it generous or miserly, cannot be  
 a replacement for the lustre [lit. water] of my face if I  
 exhaust it [through begging].

Abū Nuwās:

He possesses certain gifts, whenever these are attributed to him, the attribution adorns them.

Among the gifts are such that are made dingy and dreary by the status of their giver.

‘Ubayd Allāh b. Qays al-Ruqayyāt:

In it is the ring of the dove which invites every dove to the free branches.

al-Mutanabbī:

His favours stick onto the necks, they (the favours) are the rings and the people are the doves.”

## V

### Bāb al-Adab (The Chapter on Manners/Ethics)

#### i

#### الحلم

(Forbearance)<sup>33</sup>

لئن أجمع يا سيدي أهل العقل والعزم على أن سنجية الحلم من قضية العلم وأجروا ذلك مُطَرِّدًا في سائر الأمور على عموم الجمهور، فلقد استثنوا منه بصفات وأثنوا على تركه في أوقات فقالوا: إن من الحلم ذلًا أنت عارفه. والعفو مكرمة وتفضل، فإن أغرى به متغافل قيل هو مُغْفَل، ولا سيما إذا صادف ذلك تشمسًا من الظلم أو تغمضًا عن الضيم، فإن الحلم ذلٌ وعجزٌ والجهل عزٌّ وعزٌّ. والذي أجرى عليه فلان من الإساءة وتجبراً عليه من المساءة يقتضى صدّه وصدفه وهجره وزجره. فإن أبيت أن تمسه بالعقاب ولا أقل من أن تقرضه بالعتاب، ففيه منهاة للأشرار عن الأحرار، وحياة للود بين الإخوان الأبرار.

شاعر:

وَلِلْحَلْمِ خَيْرٌ فَاعْلَمَنَّ مَغْبَةً      من الجهل إلا أن تَشْمَسَ من ظُلمِ  
الشريف الرضّى ذو الحَسَنِينِ:  
والحلم مكرمة فإن أغرى به      متغافل قال الرجال: مُغْفَلٌ

<sup>33</sup> MM, 211–13. The first illustration is to be attributed to al-Marrār b. Saʿid. See *Ḥamāsa*, 3/1119–20, S. 401, L. 2 (p. 1119). For the illustration from AL-SHARĪF AL-RADĪ, see his *Dīwān*, 2/158 with *al-ʿafw* in place of *al-ḥilm*. The final poetical illustration in the essay is the opening line of the poem attributed to al-Zimānī as given in fn. 28 above.



شاعر:  
أبلغ أبا مُسمعٍ عني مُغلغلةً وفي العتاب حياةً بين أقوام

“If people of understanding and resolve agree, O my Master, that the character of forbearance belongs in the realm of knowledge and they apply this generally to all matters among the populace, they nonetheless grant some exceptions and commend its abandonment at certain times to which effect they say: ‘Some acts of forbearance are recognizable disgrace.’ Indulgence is an act of nobility and grace; but should a light-hearted man be induced to practise it, it is said (of him): ‘a simpleton’, especially if such coincides with protection against oppression or prevention of injustice. Exercising forbearance is an act of baseness and weakness, and folly (a proof of) resolve and honour. The evil which so-and-so did and the offence which he daringly committed demand that he be alienated, rejected, forsaken, and reprimanded. But if you refuse to punish him, the least you should do is to reproach him strongly, for this will deter the vicious from injuring the virtuous, and will give a lifeline to love among the righteous brethren.”

A certain poet:

Forbearance is certainly of better end result than folly;  
unless you need to protect yourself from oppression.

al-Sharīf al-Raḍī Dhū ’l-Ḥasabayn:

Forbearance is an act of nobility, but should a light-hearted  
(person) be induced to it, people say (of him):  
‘a simpleton’.

A certain poet:

Convey my strong message to Abū Musma<sup>c</sup>; for in reproach  
is life among peoples.”

ii

مذموم الأحاديث  
(Derogatory Talks)<sup>34</sup>

من خاف بعده مذمومَ الأحاديث بذل رفده قبل المواريث.  
شاعر:

أخافُ مذمّات الأحاديث من بعدى

<sup>34</sup> MM, 220. The renderer of the half line illustration could not be identified.

“Whoever is afraid of derogatory talks behind him would expend all his wealth before it could be inherited.

A certain poet:

I am afraid of derogatory talks behind me.”

iii

### الاعتدال

(Moderation)<sup>35</sup>

القصْدُ في الإسْعافِ أشْبهُ بِخِلَافِ الأَشْرَافِ، والاعتدالُ في الجودِ أحسنُ من الاعتداءِ  
على الموجودِ. فلا تَكُ بِمالِكَ كلَّ السَّمُوحِ ولا تَجِرْ في نوالِكَ جَرى الجَمُوحِ. واعلم  
بأنَّ من المنعِ حَزْمًا ومن المنحِ ذَمًّا، فاحفظْ نَسَبَكَ كما تحفظُ نَسَبَكَ، فإنهما  
يتعاونانِ على الفخرِ تعاوُنُ السَّاعِدِينَ، ويتعاضدانِ على العزِّ تعاوُدُ المُسَاعِدِينَ. ومتى  
ضُمَّتِ الغِنَى إلى الغِنَا، والنسبُ إلى الثَّنَا كنتَ سماءً إلى المجدِ خطاءً إلى الفخرِ،  
ولا يَلْتَفِتُ طرفُكَ إلَّا إلى الصديقِ، ولا يُفْتَلِتُ مالُكَ إلَّا في الحقوقِ.

كثير بن عبد الرحمن:

إذا المالُ لم يُوجِبْ عليك عطاؤه  
صنِعة تقوى أو خليلاً تُخالقه  
منعتَ وبعض المنعِ حزمٌ وقوة  
فلم يفتلتك المالُ إلَّا حقائقه

نُصَيْب:

وأنت امرؤُ إذ ذاك رأيتُ وهمّة  
وحلمٌ وجدّ يفزعُ الناسَ صاعد  
سعى طالباً سعى ابن مروان قبله  
ومروان والقومُ السعاة الأماجد

“Modesty in giving assistance is more of the character trait of the nobles, and moderation in generosity is better than squandering of that which is available. Do not be extremely generous with your wealth and do not behave like an unwilling horse in giving your favours. Know that some (acts of) holding back are resoluteness, and some (acts of) giving are blameworthy. Protect your wealth as you will protect your blood ties; both collaborate with each other like the two hands in preserving your honour, and both act in alliance like friendly companions in strengthening your glory. Whenever you combine between wealth and contentment, between kinship and glory, then you become an aspirant to glory, a striver towards honour. Let

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 222–24. For the illustration from Kuthayyir, see his *Dīwān*, 308–9, where *tuwāmiqūhū* is read in place of *tukhālīqūhū*. The one attributed to Nuṣayb could not be found in his *Dīwān*.

not your eye look back except towards the friend, and let not your wealth be expended except on the right causes.

Kuthayyir b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān:

If giving from your wealth does not lead to an act of piety  
or goodness towards a close friend

Hold back; for some holding back is resoluteness and  
strength, and let only the rightful causes make you  
expend your wealth.

Nuṣayb:

You are a man, for that is a wise decision, a high ambition,  
prudence, and an awe-inspiring, rising fortune.

Someone had tried to act like Marwān; but it is only  
Marwān and the people who strive hard that are the  
noble ones.”

## VI Bāb al-Awṣāf (The Chapter on Descriptions)

### i في وصف فرس (Description of a Horse)<sup>36</sup>

نَضَّاحُ الأعْطَافِ، خَفَّاقُ الأطرافِ، كالسَّيِّدِ المَبْلُولِ، والسَّيْلِ المَغْسُولِ. إِذَا هَاجَاً  
لِلْخَضِرِ هَوًى هَوًى الصَّقَرِ للوَكْرِ.

الأخطل:

وَنَضَّاحُ الأعْطَافِ مُلْهِمَةُ الْخَضِرِ	وَنَجَّى ابْنَ بَكْرِ رَكْضَهُ مِنْ رَمَاحِنَا
فَدَى لَكَ أُمِّي إِنْ دَأْبَتْ إِلَى الْعَصْرِ	يُسِرُّ إِلَيْهَا وَالرِّمَاحُ تَنْوِشُهُ
عُقَابٌ دَعَاها جُنْحٌ لَيْلٍ إِلَى وَكْرِ	فُظِّلَ يُفْدِيهَا وَظَلَّتْ كَأَنَّهَا

الطفيل الغنوي:

مِخْرَاقُ حَرْبٍ كَنْصَلِ السَّيْفِ بُهْلُولِ	وِغَارَةُ كَجَرَادِ الرِّيحِ زَعَزَعَهَا
سُوقَطَنَ ذُو قَتَبٍ مِنْهَا وَمَرْجُولِ	شَهِدَتْهَا ثُمَّ لَمْ أَحَرَ النَّهَابِ إِذَا
يُصَانُ وَهُوَ لِيَوْمِ الرُّوعِ مَبْدُولِ	بِسَاهِمِ الْوَجْهِ لَمْ تُقَطَّعْ أَبَاجِلُهُ
سَيْدٌ تَمَطَّرَ جَنْحُ اللَّيْلِ مَبْلُولِ	كَأَنَّمَا بَعْدَ مَا صَدَّرْنَ مِنْ عَرَقِ

<sup>36</sup> MM, 243–44. For the illustration from AL-AKHTAL, see his *Dīwān*, 152; for that from AL-ṬUFAYL, see *The Poems of al-Ṭufail*, Qaṣida 5, pp. 29–34, occurring as lines 20, 22, 23, 24, 9, and 10, with slight *variae lectione* in lines 9 and 22.

ولا يُفارقني ما عشتُ سلَهِيةً      مَثَلُ النعامِ في أوصالِها طُولُ  
تَقريبِها المَرطَى والجَوزُ معتَدِلُ      كَأَنَّهُ سَبُلٌ بالماءِ مَغسُولُ

“She is of profusely sweating joints, of active limbs like a rain-soaked wolf and a rain-beaten bird; whenever it responds to a cry that it should run, it swoops (forth) as a falcon swoops onto the nest.

Al-Akḥṭal:

Ibn Bakr's running saved him from our spears; so too  
did the profusely sweating horse which ran like a  
lightning.

He was whispering into its ears as the spears continued  
hitting him in succession: ‘May my mother be your  
ransom if you could run to safety by the evening’.

He continued driving it hard until it appeared like an  
eagle that is forced by nightfall to fly to the nest.

Al-Ṭufayl al-Ghanawī:

Many a raid like locusts in the air; they were dispatched  
by a light-hearted warrior who was as active as the  
sword blade.

I took part in them but did not take from the spoils as they  
started rolling in, both in small and large quantities.

With a horse that had little flesh on its face; its leg veins  
had never been treated, it is well-catered for, but it is  
freely sacrificed at war time.

It appeared, after its breasts had been sweat-soaked, like a  
wolf soaked by the rain during the night.

A stoutly built horse will for ever be my companion as long  
as I live; a horse that is as strong as an ostrich with  
long limbs.

Its galloping is pleasantly fast, yet it does not lose its  
balance; it is like a bird that is beaten by the rain.”

الرياح  
(The Winds)<sup>37</sup>

لست أدري كيف أشكرُ الرياحَ فإنَّها ما تزال تُهدى إلى السرور والارتياح مساعدةً  
على أسباب الهوى ومُخَفِّفةً لأتراح الجوى. تُسرِّني إذا سرت وتُجيرني من كلِّ همٍّ  
إذا جرت. فتارة تُهدى السلام من الحبيب سرًّا إلى عن الرقيب وطورًا ترفعُ عنه  
السَّجَافَ لألمح عُرتَه من قريب. وإذا رأت الوُشاة والحساد قد نصبوا على العيون  
والأرصَاد سَفَتَ في وجوههم عامدةً، وأطبقتْ من جفونهم ساترةً لأسلم من  
روعاتهم وآمن من شرِّ مراعاتهم. وإذا وصلتُ إلى الحبيب وقد تلثَّم بردائه توقيا  
لأعدائه وأشفقتُ أن يردَّني بثامه عن رشفه والثامه هبَّت عليه شديدة من كلِّ جانب  
حتَّى تحلَّ غرى العصائب بيد الشمال والجنائب فأفوز بمقابلة وجهٍ قد بَرَّ منه  
غطاؤه، وتقيل خدَّ قد رُدَّ عنه رداؤه. وإذا تباها الحسان بدُرر أصدافها وتداعت  
برجاجة أكفاله، أبانت شواهدُها عن المغيب ونمت خواطرها بالسرِّ، فافتضح  
الأرشحُ واتضح منها الأرجحُ.

يزيد بن الطثريَّة:

إذا لم يكن بيني وبينك مرسلٌ فريح الصبا مَنى إليك رسول  
آخر:

إذا هبَّت الرِّيحُ الشمال فسلمى فآية تسليمى عليك هُوبها  
شاعر:

ألا يا جارنا يا باغِ إنا وجدنا الرِّيحَ خيرًا منك جارا  
تُغذيُّنا إذا هبَّت علينا وتملأ عين ناظركم غبارا  
الفرزدق:

وركب كأنَّ الرِّيحَ تطلبُ عندهم لها ترَّةً من جذبها بالعصائب  
الصُّولي:

الريح يحسدني عليك ولم أخلها في العدى  
لما همتُّ بقبلة ألقَتْ على الوجه الردا

<sup>37</sup> MM, 252–55. The first two illustrations here could not be found in any sources. Shamʿala b. al-Akhḍar was probably the author of the third illustration. Compare Ḥamāsa, 2/565–67, S. 183. For AL-FARAZDAQ's verse, see his *Dīwān*, 1/29; ABŪ 'L-FARAJ AL-IṢBAHANĪ, *Aghānī*, 1/336; AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *Ḥilya*, 2/32. For that from JAMĪL, see his *Dīwān*, 45. The illustration from AL-ṢŪLĪ could not be located in al-Nayramanī's edition of his *Dīwān*, but see AL-JURJĀNĪ, *Asrār*, 257; for al-ṢŪlī's verses see *ibid*.



جميل بن معمر العُدريّ:  
 ترى الزلّ يلعنُ الرياح إذا جرتْ      وُبُئْتُ إن هبّت لها الرياح تفرح  
 إذا الزلّ حاذرن الرياح رأيتها      من العُجب - لولا خشية الله - تمرّح

"I do not know how to thank the winds; they continue offering me satisfaction and amusement, helping over the rigours of passion, and reducing the agonies of love. They please me whenever they move and protect me from sorrow when they blow. Sometimes, they deliver secretly the greetings from the beloved while the guard was inattentive, at times they remove the veil from him so that I can see his beautiful spot from a close range. Whenever they [i.e. the winds] notice that the spies and the mischievous have turned their attention towards me and started watching me, they blow dust over their faces and draw veils over their eyes so that I can be saved from the inconveniences of their disturbance and be secure from the evil consequences of their watch. But whenever I get to the beloved who had already wrapped himself up in his gown as a protection against his enemies, and while I entertain the fear that his mufflers would prevent me from kissing him, a strong wind blows on him from all directions until the loops of his turban are loosened by the hands of the Northwinds and the Southwinds. Only then do I succeed in seeing a face the veil of which had been shredded, and in kissing a cheek the raiment of which had been withdrawn. When beautiful damsels show off with the pearls from their oysters and proclaim their preeminence over their equals, their exterior features reveal their interior and their dispositions indicate their secrets, thus would the affected trait be shamed and the reality exposed.

Yazīd b. al-Ṭathriyya:

When there is none to serve as a messenger between  
 you and me, the Southwind will be my messenger  
 to you.

A certain poet:

When the Northwind blows, respond to it; for its blowing  
 is the sign of my greetings to you.

Another poet:

O you our neighbour, the transgressor, we found the  
 wind to be a better neighbour than you.  
 It nourishes us when it blows but fills your eyeballs  
 with dust.

al-Farazdaq:

A party of travellers they are, it is as if the wind was seeking a revenge from them by pulling their turbans.

al-Ṣūlī:

The wind is envious of me because of you; although I had never considered it as an opponent.  
When I tried to give a kiss, it pulled a dress over the face.

Jamīl b. Maʿmar:

You see slim-built women cursing the winds when these blow; but Buthna is always happy whenever the wind blows on her.

When slim-built women avoid the winds, you see her out of pride – but for fear of Allah – rejoicing extravagantly.”

iii

### غُتَّةُ الْغَزَالِ

(The Twangs of the Gazelle)<sup>38</sup>

قد أَجْمَلَ الْحُسْنَ فِيهَا تَفْصِيلَهُ، وَصَوَّرَ الظَّرْفَ فِيهَا تَمْثِيلَهُ، فَلَهَا غُتَّةُ الْغَزَالِ وَسُتَّةُ الْغَزَالَةِ وَدِقَّةُ الْهَلَالِ وَرَفَّةُ الْغِلَالَةِ. مَا الْعَنَمُ الْوَرْدَ بِالْطَّفِّ لَوْنًا مِنْ ثِيَابِهَا، وَلَا الْبَرْدُ الْمَرْدُ بِأَعَذَبَ مِنْ رُضَابِهَا، وَلَا الْعُنْفُودَ الْمَتَعَتِكِلَ بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْ فَرْعِهَا الْمُسْبِلِ. قَدْ جَرَى فِي مَقْلَتَيْهَا السَّحَرُ وَجَمَدٌ فِي وَجْنَتَيْهَا الْخَمْرُ.

الحُسَيْنُ بْنُ مُطِيرٍ:

وَمَا عَنَمٌ وَرْدٌ تَطْلَعُ يَانَعًا	بِأَحْسَنَ لَوْنًا مِنْ بَنَانٍ لَهَا طِفْلٌ
وَلَا بَرْدٌ مِنْ مُزْنَةٍ مَتَحَدَّرٌ	بِأَطْيَبَ مِنْ ثَغْرِ لَهَا زَانَهُ الصَّقْلُ
وَلَا كَرْمَةٌ فِيهَا عَنَاقِيدُ مُسْبِلِ	بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْ فَرْعٍ لَهَا وَارْدٌ جَثْلُ

أَمُّ الضَّحَّاكِ الْمَحَارِبِيَّةُ:

أَقُولُ إِذَا لَمْ تَحْظِ عَيْنِي بِمَنْظَرِ	سَقَى اللَّهُ عَيْنًا جَحْشِيٍّ وَرَعَاهَا
سَقَى اللَّهُ عَيْنِيهِ اللَّتَيْنِ كَانَمَا	جَرَى السَّحَرُ مِنْ حَيْثُ التَّقَى مَا قِيَاهَا

“Beauty has brilliantly established its details in her and elegance has drawn its image on her. She has the twang of the gazelle, the character of the sun, the tenderness of the crescent, and the comfort of dress. The roselike ‘*anam* flower is not more pleasant in colour than her

<sup>38</sup> MM, 259–61. The poetical illustrations could not be found in any source.

dress; the immaculate hale is not sweeter than her saliva; nor is the clustered bunch (of dates) more attractive than her head with drooping locks of hairs. Charm has run through her eyeballs and a wine-like beauty has frozen on her cheeks.

al-Ḥusayn b. Muṭayr:

A <sup>ʿ</sup>*anam* tree with rose-like flowers that blossom fully  
is not better in colour than her tender fingers.  
Nor is the hale that flows down from a heavy rain nicer  
than her teeth which is adorned with brilliance.  
Not even is a date tree that bears drooping clusters  
more attractive than her head which bears plenty  
of hairs.

Umm al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Muḥāribiyya:

I pray, whenever my eye could not catch his sight: may  
Allah calm the two eyes of Jaḥwash and protect them.  
May Allah calm (lit. irrigate) his two eyes; they are as  
if charm ran through the point at which the two  
eyelids meet.”

## VII

### Bāb al-Ta<sup>ʿ</sup>āzī (The Chapter on Condolences)

i

أَفْلَ طَالَعٌ

(A rising Star is set)<sup>39</sup>

الحمد والحُكْمُ لله ربّ العالمين، والشُّكر والأمرُ لله أعدل الحاكمين. شكرًا على  
بقاء من وهب وصبرًا على لقاء من ذهب. فلتن ثلم من المجد جانبٌ فلقَد سَلِمَ منه  
جانبٌ؛ أو أفلَ طالعٌ فقد طلعَ غاربٌ. ولئن قَلَقَتْ سلوةٌ فقد سَكَنَ جأشٌ، أو أودى  
عُرْوَةٌ فقد نجا خراشٌ. ولا خفاء بما بين تصاريف الزمان من الصَّرف، ولا يتفاوتُ  
الممزوج منها والصَّرفُ. فخذشُ الحوادث أهون من عضُّها وبعضُ النوائب أدون من  
بعضها. فإذا اختلطت العادية بالعائدة، والفاذية بالفائدة، ثم وفق الله فيهما للقيام  
بُحْسِنِ العزاء وحقِّ الثناء، عاد من المفقود أعواضه وزاد في الموجود أضعافه.  
أبو خراش الهذلي:

حَمِدْتُ إلهي بعد عُرْوَةٍ إذ نجا خراشٌ وبعض الشرِّ أهون من بعض

<sup>39</sup> MM, 261–62. See the illustration in *Ḥamāsa*, 2/782–89, S. 262, L. 1; *Hudhaliyyīn*, 3/1230; AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/550; AL-TANŪKHĪ, *al-Qawāfi*, 61.



“All praise and decision belong to Allah the Lord of the Worlds; all thanks and affair are due to Allah the fairest of judges. Thanks for the survival of whom He spared, and fortitude (is necessary) until we meet the deceased. Although one side of glory may have cracked, the other side is certainly safe; a rising star may have set, that which had set has now risen. Although a consolation may have caused an upset, a heart is [now] at ease; ‘Urwa may have died but Khirāsh has survived. There is no secrecy concerning the changing events of time; the adulterated is not better than the pure. Scratches by calamities are more bearable than their bites, and some misfortunes are less serious than others. When misfortune is mixed with fortune and calamity with benefit, but with Allah’s guidance, one is able to bear the loss and offer praises (to Him), that which is lost is replaced in abundance and that which is spared will increase in folds.

Abū Khirāsh al-Hudhalī:

I offer praise to my Lord after ‘Urwa, as Khirāsh survived; some evils are lesser than others.”

ii

التجلّد

(Fortitude)<sup>40</sup>

ولا بدّ للحَيِّ أن يبيدَ ولو عاشَ كما عاشَ لبيدُ. فعَدَّ عن ذى قبرٍ ولا تتعرَّ من صبرٍ،  
ولا تتعرَّ عن أجرٍ. فإنَّ التجلّدَ أجدرُ بالحرِّ والتجلُّلُ أشبه بالبرِّ. ولو كان التشبُّثُ  
بالأسى والحُزنُ، والتشبيهُ فى البكاء بالمُزنِ ينفعان صاحبًا أو يُرجعان ذاهبًا لتجاوزنا  
فى الكمد غاية الأمد. ولكنّه الدهرُ الأصمُّ عن العتاب، الأشمُّ عن الأعتاب. وما  
للفتى عن مورد الموت مَعْدِل، ولا لِامْرِئٍ عَمَّا قَضَى اللهُ مَرَحْلُ.

إبراهيم بن حكيم النبهاني:

وليس على رب الزمان مَعْوَل	تعرَّ فإنَّ الصبرَ بالحرِّ أجملُ
لحادثة أو كان يُعْنَى التذلُّلُ	فلو كان يُعْنَى أن يُرى المرءُ جازعًا
وإن عَظُمَتْ منها أجلُّ وأفضلُ	لكان التعزَّى عند كلّ مصيبة
وما لِامْرِئٍ عَمَّا قَضَى اللهُ مَرَحْلُ	فكيف وكلّ ليس يعلو حِمَامُهُ

<sup>40</sup> MM, 272–73. The author of the poetical illustration is given as Ibrāhīm b. Kunayf in *Ḥamāsa*, 1/258–61, S. 70, where the second hemistich of the third line according to al-Tibrizī’s recension reads: *wa-nā’ibatin bi ‘l-ḥurri awlā wa-ajmalū*.



“Every living being is bound to die, even if it lives as long as Labīd. Stop worrying about the one in the grave and do not be lacking in endurance nor discountenance reward. Surely, fortitude is more befitting for the noble, and restraint is more of a virtue. Had excessive show of grief and sorrow as well as copious shedding of tears like rainfall been of use to a (dead) companion or able to bring back one who has passed away, we would have exceeded the bounds in mourning for ever. But that is fate; it is deaf to reproof and it is never inclined to granting reprieve. There is no escape for man from entering into the watering place of death, nor is there for a man a place of refuge from that which is decreed by Allah.

Ibrāhīm b. Ḥakīm al-Nabhānī:

Be consoled, for endurance is better for the noble, there  
is no security against the calamity of time.

Had it been of use that man be seen disturbed by a  
calamity or that resignation be of avail,

Consolation at every calamity, even if it's greater than it  
(the calamity), would have been loftier and better.

But what is the matter? No one will miss his decreed  
death, and there is not for a man a place of refuge  
from that which is decreed by Allah.”

iii

لَسْتُ أَنْسَاهُ

(I would not forget him)<sup>41</sup>

فَلَسْتُ أَنْسَاهُ مَا لِأَلَّاءِ الْغَفْرِ وَتَلَاءِ الْفَجْرِ.

الْأَبِيرُ الْيَرْبُوعِيُّ:

أَحَقًّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ أَنْ لَسْتُ لَاقِيًا بُرَيْدًا طَوَالَ الدَّهْرِ مَا لِأَلَّاءِ الْغَفْرِ

“I would not forget him as long as the he-goat desires the female, and the dawn breaks.

al-Ubayrid al-Yarbū‘ī:

Is it true, O ye servants of Allah, that I would never  
meet Burayd again as long as the he-goat desires  
the female?”

<sup>41</sup> MM, 283.

VIII Bāb al-Mulāḥ (The Chapter on Entertaining Stories)

i

بدائع الدعاوى  
(Strange Claims)<sup>42</sup>

ومن بدائع دعاويك وغرائب فتاويك أنك تزعم أن قلبي سالي عنك وصدري خالي منك، فتنسب خلتي إلي الخلل، وملتي إلي الملل. هذا وأنا محمدي وأنت إسرائيلي متهود. ديني التوحيد لله الواحد، ودينك دين من لا يصبر على طعام واحد. تنتمي في الوفاء إلي ابن عاديء، وما ورثت منه إلا الظلم والاعتداء. وإذا أخبرتك أنني مشغوف بقربك، مشغول بحبك، رددت قولي وزعمي وأبطلت بالظن علمي، وادّعت أنني في هواك دعئي، وأنت في ظنك بي المعنى، وزعمت أنك أعلم به مني. فأعجب عن راوٍ يخبرني عنّي. ثم أسلم طاعة لك وأعترف، وأتقلد الذنب عنك فأعتذر.

العباس بن الأحنف:

فيا من ليس يُقنعه حبيبٌ ولا ألفى حبيب كل عام  
أظنك من بقيّة قوم موسى فهم لا يصبرون على طعام

شاعر:

أخبره أنني سقيم مُتيمّم فيُطل من قولي التيقن بالظن  
ويُخبرني أنني خلقي من الهوى فواعجبي ممن يُخبرني عنّي

“Among your strange claims and unfamiliar views is your assertion that my heart had forgotten you and that my bosom has no place for you. You find fault in my ardent love and disgust in my creed. This is inspite of the fact that I am a follower of the Muḥammadan path, who keeps vigil at night, whereas you are an Israelite, a Jew. My religion is the declaration of unity for Allah, the only One, but your religion is that of the one who is never content with just one type of food. You associate yourself with Ibn ‘Ādiyā in regard to loyalty, but you inherited nothing from him except dishonesty and oppression. If I inform you that I am overwhelmed by my intimacy with you and preoccupied by my love for you, you reject my statement and claim

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 321–23. The illustration attributed to Ibn al-Aḥnaf could not be found in any of the editions of his *Dīwān* consulted. In fact it is most likely to belong to Abū Nuwās. See *Dīwān Abī Nuwās* (Beirut, Dār Ṣādir edition, 1962), 585. It is also given as an example of the trope *iqtibās* in AL-ZANJĀNĪ, K. *Mī‘yār al-nuẓẓār*, 2/109.

and you falsify my knowledge by (mere) conjecture. You assert that I am a pretender in my claim of affection for you and that you are a wizard in your opinion of me, and you claim to know more about it than myself. I am surprised about a reporter telling me about myself. You wish that I surrender to your will and confess that I admit my offence against you and apologize.

al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf:

O you who no friend pleases; not even two thousand  
friends every year.

I think you are one of the surviving followers of Moses,  
who were never content with just one type  
of food.

Another poet:

I inform him that I am sick from (passion), enslaved by  
love; but he falsifies the certainty in my statement  
with conjecture.

He tells me that I am bereft of any affection; what a  
surprise about someone telling me about myself.”

ii

الطُّفَيْلِيُّ

(The Cadger)<sup>43</sup>

وأما فلان فإنه يتطفل في الولائم والمآدب، ويتوغل على المطاعم والمشارب، ولا  
يزال الصدى يستتيه إلى كل صوت، والطوى يستتيه في كل بيت فإذا قرأ لم يقرأ  
إلا سورة المائدة، وإذا قرأ لم يقرأ إلا من سورة المائدة.

شاعر:

ومُستتجِج بات الصدى يستتيه . إلى كل صوت فهو في الرحل جانح

ابن بسام:

قد حفظوا القرآن واستوعبوا ما فيه إلا سورة المائدة

“As for so-and-so, he comes to parties and banquets uninvited and intrudes upon dinners and feasts. The echo leads him without guidance to every sound, and hunger makes him seek accommodation at every house. Whenever he reads [from the Qurʾān], he reads only the

<sup>43</sup> *MM*, 329–30. The first illustration is to be attributed to ʿUtba b. Bujayr al-Ḥārithī. See *Ḥamāsa*, 4/1557–62, S. 674, L. 1; *AL-ḤATIMĪ, Ḥilya*, 2/207.

*Sūra* of the Banquet, and whenever he flees, it is only from the inconveniences at dinners.

A certain poet:

Many an inciter of dog to barking, who is led aimlessly  
by the echo towards the direction of every sound,  
yet he remains unstable on his camel.

Ibn Bassām:

They memorized the Qurʾān and understood all its  
content, except the *Sūra* of the Banquet.”

iii

بطيء القراءة

(A Slow Reader)<sup>44</sup>

فأما فلان فإنه يتطير من البلة فيتيمم ولو سار في دجلة، ولا يستطهر ولو كان بالأبلة،  
ويتفأل بالقراءة للقرى، فلا يزال يتلو سورة الشمس إلى طلوع الشمس، ويقرأ سورة  
الليل إلى دخول الليل، ولا يفطر في أيام الأعياد خوفاً من الإطعام المعتاد، ولا  
يسافر إلا في شهر الصيام شرفاً إلى الطعام.

الحسن بن الليثي:

كأنما خلقت كفاه من حجر فليس بين يديه والندی عمل  
يرى التيمم في برّ وفي بحر مخافة أن يرى في كفّه بلل

وقال أيضاً:

لا بارك الله في كعب ومجلسهم ماذا تحلل من لؤم ومن ضرع  
لا يدرسون كتاب الله بينهم ولا يصومون من حرص على الشبع

“As for so-and-so, he draws evil omen from wetness, hence he performs the dry ablution, even if he travels on the Tigris. He would not purify himself, even if he were in a muddy place; and he nurses hope for entertainment through recitation. He does not finish from reciting the *Sūra* of the Sun until the sunrise, and recites the *Sūra* of the Night till nightfall. He does not break his fast on festival days for fear of providing the customary feasting, and would travel only in the month of fasting out of lust for sumptuous food.

<sup>44</sup> MM, 331–32. The first poetical illustration here is attributed to ‘Amr al-Ḥazīn al-Kinānī in SHIHĀB AL-DĪN, *Ṭirāz al-majālis*, 147.





al-Ḥasan b. al-Laythī:

It is as if his palms are created from stone; no act of generosity is (ever) done by his hands.

He prefers to perform the dry ablution, be he on land or at sea, for fear that his palms might be seen wet.

He also said:

May Allah bless not the Kaʿb and their assembly, what a great dishonour and humiliation they bear.

They do not study Allah's Book among themselves, and do not fast out of lust for full belly."

#### APPRAISAL

Al-Nayramānī's model compositions as illustrated above are complete essays. This contrasts very sharply with what obtains in Ibn al-Athīr, the majority of whose samples as given in *al-Washy* are fragments containing the specific source materials that are intended for illustration. A comprehensive analysis of al-Nayramānī's model essays through the standards of thematic, rhetorical and linguistic structures and their inter-relationship is impracticable in a study of this nature: the focal point here is the examination of the degree of harmony between the theory and the practice of *ḥall* in the author's perception. Nevertheless, some investigation into his style and technique within the context of the writing tradition of his time would be in order.

Al-Nayramānī was writing at a time when the flowery style of the epistolary genre was the style *par excellence*. Indeed it became the standard model for all forms of writings, viz., literary, historiographical, and speculative.<sup>45</sup> It is therefore not surprising, judging by the success of our author as an efficient *kātib*, that his *Manthūr al-manẓūm* can reasonably be regarded as a noteworthy representative of the writing style of the period. The prefatory note gives a clear indication of our author's preferred style: a blend between the simplicity of the familiar idiom and the sophistication of the uncommon usage. In his view, exclusive use of routine idioms detracts from sublimity as much as intolerable archaism and unfamiliar usage breed riddle and lead to barbarism.<sup>46</sup> His essays reveal a consistent

<sup>45</sup> See ROWSON, "The Philosopher as Littérateur", 87; BOSWORTH, "'Abū 'Abdallāh al-Khwārizmī", 118.

<sup>46</sup> See note 5 above. Compare DORSCH, *Classical Literary Criticism*, 63; AL-JĀḤIẒ, *al-Bayān*, 1/144.

pattern of material utilization: an expression borrowed from a poetic exemplar is paired with a similar phrase of his, a case of *izdiwāj*, “parallelism”. The parallelistic style, which had its roots in the Umayyad hortatory tradition, was combined with a telling use of the facilities of rhyming and rhythm in the Abbāsīd writing tradition, and this is eloquently demonstrated by our author.<sup>47</sup> He exploited to the fullest all the features of parallelism be they of sound, expression, or structures. A detailed analysis of the subtleties and varieties of this is obviously not feasible, but one good illustration will explain the point better, and this is from our second selection under *Bāb al-hijāʿ*, namely, the essay entitled *al-ʿAduww al-ḡaghīn*, where the following occurs: *al-ḡazm aḥmad mā fuʿila/wa ʿl-nuṣṣ awlā mā qubila....* The essay goes on, and with one of the expressions from the poetic exemplars utilized we read: *wa ʿl-gharr yakmunu thumma yantashiru/wa ʿl-jamr yakhmudu thumma yastaʿirru....* The same essay also illustrates a modest use of grammatical and rhetorical terms as metaphors.<sup>48</sup> The full range of the rhetorical devices, viz., paronomasia, double entendre, simile, metaphor, assonance, antithetical isocola, anaphoras, to mention but the most important, is employed, and some of these are brilliantly utilized in, for example, the essay entitled *afala ṭālīʿ*, the first of our selections under the chapter on condolences. The precision arising from a well-selected recurrence of accents, balanced *stichoi* and metrical rhythms are too obvious to warrant specific elaboration. The variety of the subject matter does not affect the general style, although some elements of sarcasm are discernible, especially in his essays on *mulaḥ*.

An important feature that may be observed, especially in his essays on *nasīb*, is that they are not essentially about love relationship with women, the basic domain of the genre. The majority of the essays here are focused on men, for example, expression of gratitude to patrons, complaints about unreciprocated entreaties, requests for reunion, lamentation over the passage of youth, and other social topics. Even the *nasīb* poetic pieces which have women as their central figures are used in prose essays where men are made the central characters. One tempting but misleading conclusion is to interpret this as an evidence of versatility.

<sup>47</sup> On parallelism and the writing style of the Abbasid era, see LATHAM, “Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and Early Abbasid Prose”; BEESTON, “The Role of Parallelism in Arabic Prose”; HORST, “Die Entstehung”; *idem*, “Besondere Formen”.

<sup>48</sup> The practice was also common in the Medieval Western literary culture, and this is yet another fertile area in comparative studies awaiting investigation. See CURTIUS, *European Literature*, Excursus III, “Grammatical and Rhetorical Terms as Metaphors”, 414–16.

But the fact is that the majority of his *nasīb* essays deal less with motifs concerning women, and this raises once more the question of thematic correctness which is far more important than any argument that might be adduced in favour of stylistic efficiency. What makes this all the more significant is that the author has also unwittingly mixed unrelated themes, a fault for which he criticized Abū Tammām, his model, although unjustifiably. Specific cases of thematic imprecision in respect of some of the essays cannot be undertaken here, but suffice it to say that certain essays would have been more appropriate under themes other than the ones in which they occur, even if we allow for necessary overlapping. However, a greater conformity with the conventional thought contents of *ʿitāb* is maintained in the essays on the theme, although there is no shortage of materials, especially epigrammatic and proverbial short essays that would strictly not pass as *ʿitāb*. The chapter on *adab* contains, as normal, essays that treat social manners, ethics, and moral values, but it is here that our author's infatuation with precise rhymed periods and other rhetorical artifices is exhibited, sometimes to the verge of the grotesque. The chapter on *mulah*, which is supposed to contain only amusing and entertaining compositions, is an interesting collage of materials ranging from praise to satire, from extolment to dispraise, and even simple expressions of sentiments that are lacking in any amusing elements. The imprint of personal touch discernible in some of the essays will argue in favour of the supposition that they are not after all mere imaginary essays intended to teach the prospective *kātib* how to cultivate the device of *ḥall*. In other words, some of them are likely to be expressions of the author's real life experience, especially at the courts.

A clear image of al-Nayramānī's understanding of *ḥall* as an artistic device is revealed in his essays which are, in the first place, intended to be a conscious and deliberate rendering into prose of the thematic stereotypes contained in his model, the *Ḥamāsa* of Abū Tammām. The way in which the poetic exemplars are utilized in his essays clearly demonstrates his view of how the *ḥall* device should work both in theory and in practice: the wording of the poetical expression on which an essay draws should be retained so much that the relationship between the two can be established without effort. This represents a major difference between him and Ibn al-Athīr whose strong view was that the more imperceptible the relationship, the better. However, instances in which the original wording of the poetical models is slightly modified by al-Nayramānī are not altogether lacking, but such modification hardly obscures the affinity between the new expression and the original idiom that inspired it.

Although only borrowings from poetry are illustrated, cases of borrowings from proverbial citations, anecdotes and popular statements are also reflected in some of the essays.<sup>49</sup> More remarkable are borrowings from, or allusions to, Qurʾānic usages or anecdotes, reference to which is nowhere made by our author.<sup>50</sup> No poetic piece is utilized more than once in all the essays except in two instances. In the first, a poetic piece that was used in an essay is reused in another belonging to the same theme. That the piece in question is fascinatingly unfamiliar in terms of its wording, *gharībat al-lafz*, is the reason given by our author for using it more than once.<sup>51</sup> The second instance is where a poem by Umm al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Muḥāribiyya which is used in the concluding essay in the Chapter on *awṣāf* is once again utilized in the concluding essay in the Chapter on *mulaḥ*, the final chapter of the book. What is even more remarkable here is evidence of self-plagiarism; similar expressions occur in both essays.<sup>52</sup> With the exception of Abū Tammām from whom more illustrations are drawn, equal attention seems to have been accorded both the ancients and the moderns in the selection of poems.<sup>53</sup> But the fact that only twelve out of a total of some 447 poetic pieces are attributable to women may once again provoke the question of fairness to feminine poets in the literary tradition. The intention here is not to discuss this.

By and large, al-Nayramānī's work is a historic effort in literary adventure. Except for a few convoluted expressions and idioms, which are anyway dictated by the demand of rhythm, assonance or stylistic constraints associated with the *sajʿ* style, the work generally offers a good reading and illustrates with remarkable clarity the author's interpretation of the concept of *ḥall* both in theory and in practice.

<sup>49</sup> For instance, see *MM*, 196–97, 202–5. Reference to al-Samawʿal's legendary demonstration of trustworthiness in the essay entitled *al-Shikāya* may also be noted.

<sup>50</sup> Like the use of Qurʾān 50:18, also in the essay *al-Shikāya* (supra note 27); of Qurʾān 36:80 in the essay on fire, see *MM*, 255–56; and of Qurʾān 18:17 in an essay on passion, see *MM*, 284. The only case of allusion to a Qurʾānic story, which also entails the use of a Qurʾānic phraseology, is in the essay entitled *Badāʾiʿ al-daʿāwa* above, where reference is made to an event involving Moses and the Jews (see Qurʾān 2:61). The other two essay samples illustrated in this chapter under *Bāb al-Mulaḥ* should also be noted for their passing references to Qurʾānic or religious concepts.

<sup>51</sup> See *MM*, 294–95. The poem occurs first in an essay on pp. 282–83.

<sup>52</sup> See the essay entitled *ghunnat al-ghazāl* and the last essay in the book occurring on pp. 334–35.

<sup>53</sup> I was able to count 44 pieces taken from Abū Tammām.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Qur'ānic and Prose Conceits in Poetry: the *naẓm* “versification” Theory

According to al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 216/831), verses treating religious and eschatological themes in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poet Zuhayr are attributable to the poet's contact with the Jews.<sup>1</sup> Although we possess no concrete proof to support any conjecture that the poet may have been literate, the fact that he lived in a religious milieu in which written scriptures were easily available underpins the probability of his drawing on these sources in his poetry. Further evidence in support is the remarkable correspondence between the scriptural world view of those themes and Zuhayr's expressions of them, which correspondence can hardly be explained in terms of sheer coincidence. But one early poet, the distinctive character of whose poetry largely derives from an extensive borrowing and versification of scriptural conceits, was Umayya b. Abī 'l-Ṣalt (d. circa 2/623). He is said to have read the scriptures and “looked” into them.<sup>2</sup> Kaʿb al-Aḥbār (d. 32/652) also argued that a certain line of poetry by al-Ḥuṭayʿa (d. 30/650) is found in exactly the same wording in the Torah.<sup>3</sup> Against this background, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that the practice of drawing on religious books in the Arabic literary tradition has some roots in the chronologically unspecified period before

<sup>1</sup> AL-AṢMAʿĪ, *Fuḥūlat al-shuʿarāʿ*, 34.

<sup>2</sup> So reported al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (d. 256/870) on the authority of his uncle: *kāna Umayya fī 'l-Jāhiliyya naẓara 'l-kutub wa-qara'ahā*. See AL-ʿASQALĀNĪ, *al-Iṣāba*, 1/134. See evidence of this observation in Umayya, *Diwān Umayya Ibn Abī 'l-Ṣalt*, *passim*. The most recent study on the poet is probably that by TILMAN SEIDENSTICKER, “The Authenticity of the Poems ascribed to Umayya Ibn Abī 'l-Ṣalt”, Paper presented at the 1994 Exeter Conference on Arabic Poetry. I am grateful to the author for making a copy of the paper available to me. The paper is to be published soon.

<sup>3</sup> IBN ʿABD RABBIHĪ, *al-ʿIqd*, 5/276–77; IBN MUNQIDH, *Lubāb al-adab*, 424–25. The verse in question is:

من يفعل الخير لا يعدم جوازيه      لا يذهب العرف بين الباب والناس

See *Shiʿr al-Ḥuṭayʿa*, ed. ʿIsā Sābā (Beirut, 1951), 77; AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *Ḥilya*, 2/86. Compare IBN HAMDŪN, *Tadhkirat Ibn Hamdūn* (Cairo, 1927), 21.



Islam. But it is quite intriguing that the knowledge of the scriptures, and indeed literacy, were not to be to the advantage of the poet belonging in this period in the estimation of the literary evaluators. For instance, one of the reasons adduced by Abū 'Amr Ibn al-'Alā' (d. 154/771) for excluding 'Adi b. Zayd (c. 35 B.H. /590) from the rank of authoritative poets was the poet's knowledge of the scriptures, and presumably, his use of expressions and motifs borrowed from them in his poetry.<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to judge with any definitive precision whether this negative attitude was dictated by the time hallowed preference for the Jāhiliyya literary corpora, or was simply a reaction against the apologetic and moralizing motifs of the post-Islamic literary compositions to which scriptural materials and ideas contributed in no small measure.

The Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, the principal scriptures of Islam, facilitated the emergence of new themes and provided idioms and motifs on which poets could draw in literary practice. The most classic representative of this trend was Ḥassān Ibn Thābit (d. 54/674), as evidenced by his many vivid and passionate illustrations of the *kléa* and exploits of the Prophet of Islam. But the negative assessment by al-Aṣma'ī of the quality of the poetry authored by the poet under Islam further illustrates the attitude of the literary law givers to the practice of borrowing from the scriptures.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, poets of the Islamic period found a listening, and indeed an enthusiastic audience, for verses, motifs, and expressions that derive from the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. For instance, al-Nābigha al-Ja'dī (d. 65/684), al-Namir b. Tawlab (c. 14/635), and Ḥumayd b. Thawr (c. 30/650) are reported to have consciously expressed in verse certain expressions by the Prophet.<sup>6</sup> Besides, imaginary descriptions in verse of celestial concepts deriving from earlier scriptures were tolerated, if not applauded.<sup>7</sup>

In the literary practice of the pre-Islamic and the early Islamic periods, borrowing from the conventional idiom or documentary sources was never an issue among the connoisseurs and their audiences. It was only in the post-Classical period, in the generation of the so called *muḥdathūn* poets, that we observe a curious exhibition of interest in the poet's source of expression and in the original ideas that inspired his treatment of

4 IBN QUTAYBA, *al-Shi'r wa 'l-shu'arā'*, 1/230.

5 AL-AṢMA'Ī, *Fuḥūlat al-shu'arā'*, 42, 53.

6 For example, see AL-THA'ĀLIBĪ, *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*, 21. Compare AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *Ḥilya*, 1/247; AL-KHĀLIDIYYĀN, *al-Ashbāh wa 'l-naẓā'ir*, 1/38. See also *Dīwān Ḥumayd*, Introduction, 9.

7 Compare the reaction of the Prophet to Umayya's description of the angelic bearers of the Divine Throne, *al-'Arsh*, given in IBN 'ABD RABBIHĪ, *al-'Iqd*, 5/277.

specific motifs. An incident involving Bashshār Ibn Burd (d. 167/783), the putative father of this class of poets, illustrates this better. A certain poem by him, which was read at a gathering, was taunted by a member of the audience as a derivative of a prose statement made by the legendary greedy man, Ash'ab al-Ṭāmi' (d. 154/771). The observation was robustly rejected by the poet who went further to accuse his critic of narrow-mindedness.<sup>8</sup> In regard to the employment of Qur'ānic expressions and idioms in poetry, the most illustrious exponent of this convention among the *muḥdathūn* was Abū Nuwās (d. 199/814). So fascinated with the poet's use of the device was Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. 360/970) who brought together under a specific chapter in his recension of the poet's *Diwān* such lines as containing deliberate and systematic employment of Qur'ānic expressions and ideas. What is more intriguing is that the majority of these Qur'ānic materials are used in frivolous or wine themes.<sup>9</sup> Two basic patterns are discernible in the poet's use of Qur'ānic materials, namely, as direct quotations, and in the form of adaptations. Most, if not all, of the examples adduced by al-Iṣfahānī belong to the former category, but an example of the latter can be established from the following anecdote.<sup>10</sup> Al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk related how he and Abū Nuwās once passed by as a small boy in a local school in Kūfa was reading a certain portion of the Qur'ān. Abū Nuwās was instantly moved to think about a wine poem that could be made out of the Qur'ānic verse that was being recited, and by the following day he had composed the following.

وسَيَّارَةٌ ضَلَّتْ عَنِ الْقَصْدِ بَعْدَمَا      تَرَادَفَهُمْ جَنَحٌ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مَظْلَمٌ  
فَأَصْغَوْا إِلَى صَوْتِ وَنَحْنِ عَصَابَةٌ      وَفِينَا فَتًى مِنْ سَكْرِهِ يَتَرَنَّمُ

<sup>8</sup> Aghānī, 3/223. The poem in question is:

"yurawwī'uhū al-sirāru bi-kulli arḍin,  
makḥāfata an yakūna bihī 'l-sirāru.  
Secret talks instil fear in him anywhere,  
for fear of secret agents being there."

See the illustration in *Diwān Bashshār*, 3/247; AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 1/138.

<sup>9</sup> See the Appendix.

<sup>10</sup> IBN MANZŪR, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, 79; HADDĀRA, *Mushkilat al-sariqāt*, 55. See the illustration in *Der Diwān des Abū Nuwās* 3/301. The Qur'ānic verse in question is ... *kullamā aqā' lahum mashaw fīhi wa-idhā aḡlama 'alayhim qāmū* ... Qur'ān 2:20. For a similar instance of the use of Qur'ān in a wine theme see illustration 2 in the Appendix and the story connected with it given in ABŪ HIFFĀN, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, 68; IBN AL-MU'TAZZ, *Ṭabaqāt al-shu'arā'*, 206–7.



فلاحت لهم منّا على البعد قهوة      كأنّ سناها ضوء نار تَضَرَّم  
إذا ما حسوناها أناخوا مطيهم      وإن مُرّجت حثوا الركاب ويمموا

“[It was] a convoy of travellers that missed its way after it had been covered by the wing of an intense darkness.

They listened to a tune coming from our group; and in our midst was a young lad singing out of intoxication.

So appeared to them, in spite of the distance, a wine from us, it was as if its brightness was the light of a burning fire.

When we sip it [unmixed], they stay with us; but whenever it is mixed they prepare their camels and journey away.”

It is remarkable that Abū Nuwās’s fascination with the use of Qur’ānic expressions and ideas seems to have elicited a popular admiration among his literary audience, which fact may have encouraged him to utilize them, even when passing casual remarks. For example, once the drunk al-Amīn (d. 198/813) was being carried to a wine session by his court maids, Abū Nuwās was quick at illustrating this with a Qur’ānic verse which contains names similar to those of the caliph’s ancestors.<sup>11</sup>

In the works of other poets of the period, for example, Abū ‘l-‘Atāhiya (d. 211/826) and Abū Tammām (d. 231/845) are also illustrations of borrowing from the Qur’ān, although their use of it appears not to have provoked the same favourable response generated by that of Abū Nuwās.<sup>12</sup> The experience of Abū Tammām at the court of the vizier ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ṭāhir (d. 230/844) provides an eloquent testimony to this observation. The poet had waited for a few days in order to have an audience with the vizier, and when his patience appeared to be running out, he sent the following piece to him:<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> ABŪ HIFFĀN, *Akhbār*, 124. The Qur’ānic verse employed here is: *inna āyata mulkihi an ya’tiyakum al-tābūt fīhi sakinatun mimmā taraka ālu Mūsā wa-ālu Hārūna ...* See Qur’ān 2:248.

<sup>12</sup> One example from Abū al-‘Atāhiya is to be found in his poem about al-Mahdī. See AL-THA‘ĀLIBĪ, *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*, 87; *Dīwān Abī ‘l-‘Atāhiya*, 375; AL-ZANJĀNĪ, *Mi‘yār*, 2/109.

<sup>13</sup> AL-ṢŪLĪ, *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, 211. The poetical illustration is also given in AL-THA‘ĀLIBĪ, *Nathr al-naẓm*, 22, without attribution; AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Cairo, 1931), 12/421, where one gets the impression that the piece was the product of a joint effort. For the Qur’ānic passage on which the poem draws, see Qur’ān 12:78–88.

أيها العزيز قد مَسَّنَا الضُّرُّ      نُرُّ جَمِيعًا وَأَهْلُنَا أَشْتَات  
ولنا في الرِّحال شيخ كبير      ولدينا بضاعة مزجاة  
قلَّ طُلَّابُهَا فَأُضْحَتْ خَسَارًا      فَتَجَارَاتُنَا بِهَا تُرْهَات  
فاحتسب أجرتنا وأوف لنا الكي      ل وتصدَّق فإننا أموات

“O noble one! we have all been afflicted by distress and  
our families have been dispersed.

In our convoy is an old man, and our articles of trade are  
limited.

Few customers are really interested in them hence they lost  
their value; our trade is indeed in ruins.

Consider a reward for us and give us full measures, be  
generous to us for we are dying.”

Although the vizier was amused by this poem, which obviously drew heavily on the story of Joseph and his brothers as contained in the twelfth *Sūra* of the Qurʾān, he sent a warning to Abū Tammām asking him to desist from further attempt at borrowing from Qurʾānic idioms. This negative attitude towards the use of Qurʾānic expressions in poetry enjoyed some proponents, especially among the literati of the time, who had by then started to analyze certain aspects of poetic diction and structure. In support may be cited what is probably the earliest work on literary borrowing, Muḥammad Ibn Kunāsa’s (d. 207/822) *Sariqāt al-Kumayt min al-Qurʾān* (the thievings of al-Kumayt from Koran).<sup>14</sup> Although the work has not survived, it is evident from its title that it was an illustration of such poems by al-Kumayt as are presumed to have derived from the Qurʾān, and are accordingly characterized as a form of plagiarism. But the turning of routine prose statements into poetry was never frowned upon, and was in fact regarded as a demonstration of artistic talent. In fact, it may well have evolved into an item of entertainment at various courts where poets tried to exhibit their talents by deliberately turning the statements of their patrons into verse. The earliest evidence of this is probably at the court of the awe-inspiring governor of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf (d. 95/714), where a comment by him was turned into poetry by ‘Abd Allāh b. Ayyūb al-Tamīmī.<sup>15</sup> Also, al-Ma’mūn (d. 218/833) was delighted, if not ecstatic, by the success of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-

<sup>14</sup> GAS, 2/533.

<sup>15</sup> IBN RASHĪQ, *Qurāḍat al-dhahab*, 99.



Yazīdī (c. 230/844) in rendering into poetry a certain remark which the caliph had passed in praise of the poet's ancestors.<sup>16</sup>

It may be mentioned in parenthesis that the practice of turning prose into poetry as a convention was cultivated for reasons other than literary or stylistics. Abān al-Lāḥiqī (d. 200/815) is reported to have turned the popular *Bidpai* fables, the *Kalila wa-Dimna*, into a poetry of some 14000 lines at the request of the vizier Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā (d. 187/803).<sup>17</sup> This was not limited to Arabic literary tradition, and we may mention in passing a similar event in Persian. The *Shāhnāmāh* (the Book of Kings) was rendered into a poetry of some 60000 lines by al-Firdawsī who also turned the Qurʾānic story of Yūsuf and Zulaykhā into verse.<sup>18</sup> Philological and scientific works were equally made objects of versification. For example, Ibn Abī ʿl-Ḥadīd attempted rendering Thaʿlab's (d. 291/904) *Faṣīḥ* into poetry,<sup>19</sup> as did Ibn al-Mawṣilī (d. 774/1372) with Thaʿalibī's *Fiqh al-lughā*.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, many versifications of al-Masʿūdī's (d. 346/957) history are reported to have been made.<sup>21</sup> Although these exertions, specifically in the Arabic tradition, were inspired not by literary but mnemotechnic or didactic impulses, they none the less illustrate very profoundly the belief in the enduring and attractive nature of poetry as a pedagogical instrument, a means of imparting or preserving information.<sup>22</sup> In support may be cited the reported efforts of the Muʿtazilite Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir (d. 210/845) at spreading his ideas and instructions through popular poetry,<sup>23</sup> and this was probably the earliest of such attempts at using poetry for pedagogical purposes in subject matters that

16 ABŪ ʿL-FARAJ AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *Aghānī* (Beirut, 1960), 20/232. For a similar anecdote involving the vizier Yaḥyā al-Barmakī (d. 190/805) and a certain poet see AL-JAHSHIYĀRĪ, *al-Wuzarāʾ*, 201.

17 *Ibid.*, 211. See also IBN AL-ABBĀR, *Fṭāb al-kuttāb*, 82.

18 IBN AL-ATHĪR, *al-Mathal al-sāʿir*, 4/12. Al-Firdawsī was anticipated in the versification of the *Shāhnāmāh* by one Masūdī Marvazī. See JULIE S. MEISAMI, (review of) Oldga Davidson's *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*, in: *Journal of Islamic Studies* [Oxford] 7 (1996), 87.

19 IBN ABĪ ʿL-ḤADĪD, *al-Falak al-dāʿir*, 17.

20 AL-ZIRIKLĪ, *al-Aʿlām*, 7/269.

21 VAN GELDER, *Beyond the Line*, 146f., n. 4.

22 For example, see ḤUSAYNĪ, *Naḍrat al-ighrīd*, 359. But compare AL-JĀHIZ, *al-Bayān wa ʿl-tabyīn*, 1/75. The most recent study on didactic poetry is probably that by VAN GELDER. See his "Arabic Didactic Verse", in: JAN WILLEM DRIJVERS & A.A. MACDONALDS, eds., *Centres of Learning – Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East* (Leiden, 1995).

23 GIBB, "The Social Significance of the Shuʿūbiya", 112.

do not belong in the traditional domain of the art. It must be conceded, however, that all such renditions of romances, theological ideas, or parables into verse do not actually qualify as poetry in the real sense of the word.<sup>24</sup> But the fact that they are clothed in metre and rhyme gives them some distinction which their prose forms might not have had.

According to Bonebakker, versification of prose anecdote or transferring a concept from one genre to another was one of the issues that provoked the interest of critics in Arabic literary tradition.<sup>25</sup> Reference has already been made to Ibn Kunāsa who regarded the practice of borrowing from the Qur'ān as a form of literary felony. A similar line of thought is discernible in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's (d. 296/908) characterization of a poem by Abū Tammām as an example of *sariqa*, as long as its roots could be traced to a specific *ḥadīth*.<sup>26</sup> But there was no lack of borrowings from the Qur'ān in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poems either.<sup>27</sup> In any case, borrowing from the Qur'ān or *ḥadīth* in poetic practice was generally characterized in the classical discourse as a form of plagiarism.

We must, however, grant an honourable exception with Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī (d. 297/909) among the classical authorities. The ninety-third chapter of his *Zahra* is entitled *Dhikr mā 'sta'arat'hu al-shu'arā' min al-Qur'ān wa-mā naqalat'hu ilā ash'ārihā min sā'ir al-ma'ānī*, (A discussion of what poets borrowed from the Qur'ān and what they lifted into their poetry from popular ideas). It is, however, in the third section of this chapter that the author actually illustrates with two examples each from al-Khansā' and al-Kumayt, and one other example from Jarīr, lines of poetry containing Qur'ānic usages. But of particular significance is the rubric under which these illustrations are provided, namely, *mā 'sta'ānat bihi al-shu'arā' min kalām Allāh ta'ālā*, "What is employed as an aid by poets from the word of Allah the Almighty".<sup>28</sup> Al-Iṣbahānī's characterization of borrowings from Qur'ān as *isti'āna*, "facility/aid seeking,"

<sup>24</sup> The fact that the *Kalila wa-Dimna* was essentially a fictional story rather than a real or likely event precludes it from being considered a poetry, even when put into verse, so argued Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1036). See STROUMSA, "Avicenna's Philosophical Stories", 201. Compare VAN GELDER, *Beyond the Line*, 60.

<sup>25</sup> BONEBAKKER, "Poets and Critics", 108.

<sup>26</sup> IBN AL-MU'TAZZ, *Kitāb al-Badr*, 26. For the verse in question, see *Dīwān Abi Tammām*, 3/26.

<sup>27</sup> See an example from him as given in the Appendix under illustration 11.

<sup>28</sup> AL-IṢBAHĀNĪ, *al-Zahra*, 2/815–20. The example from Jarīr given by the author is equally adduced by Ibn Khalaf. See below, note 35. On later development of *isti'āna* as a rhetorical trope, see, for example, IBN ABĪ 'L-IṢBA', *Taḥrīr*, 140–42.

rather than *sariqa*, “plagiarism/thieving”, clearly demonstrates his favourable view of the convention in poetic practice. But the credit for employing the term that would thenceforth project the convention as an artistic device belongs to al-Tha‘alibī, namely, his use of the term *iqtibās*. Furthermore, he dedicates a whole work to the subject, his *al-Iqtibās min al-Qur’ān*, the twentieth chapter of which is entitled *fī dhikr al-shi‘r wa ‘l-shu‘arā’ wa ‘qtibāsātihim min alfāz al-Qur’ān wa-ma‘ānīh* – About poetry and poets and their borrowings from the words and meanings of the Qur’ān”.<sup>29</sup> According to him, borrowing from the Qur’ān enhances literary productions and promotes eloquence in discourse.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, such illustrations of borrowings from the Qur’ān which other theorists might cite in less than favourable contexts are portrayed differently and are in fact cited by him as examples of *iqtibās*.<sup>31</sup> The *Kitāb Intizā‘āt [min] al-Qur’ān* attributed to al-‘Amīdī (d. 433/1042), which unfortunately has not survived, is in most probability an examination of the issue of borrowings from Qur’ān, and this may well be taken as the third part of his trilogy on the whole subject of intertextual borrowings.<sup>32</sup>

That poets used to borrow from the Qur’ān, the *ḥadīth* and conventional usages is also noted by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jurjānī (d. 392/1001), although he failed to discuss this in the context of any theoretical framework.<sup>33</sup> In his analysis of the nature and types of literary borrowings and

<sup>29</sup> AL-THA‘ALIBĪ, *al-Iqtibās*, 27. The second part of this work, which is expected to contain the discussion of this topic is not available to me, hence it was not possible to examine the author’s discussion in this regard. It may be safely assumed, however, that it would be an illustration of good and bad cases of borrowings from Qur’ānic idioms into poetry. It is not even clear whether the editor had access to the complete work, as the published fragment contains eleven of the 25 chapters listed by the author.

<sup>30</sup> See Chapter One, note 6.

<sup>31</sup> For instance, the following verse by al-Mutanabbī:

وجرم جرّه سفهاء قوم وحلّ بغير جارمه العذاب

“A crime committed by the fools from among a people, but the punishment descended on the one who did not commit it.”

is suggested by him to be a case of *iqtibās* deriving from Qur’ān 7:155. See AL-THA‘ALIBĪ, *Yatīma*, 1/31; AL-ḤAMAWĪ, *Khizāna*, 113. But compare AL-‘AMĪDĪ, *al-Ibāna*, 70. See the illustration in *Diwān al-Mutanabbī*, 1/81. For another example of *iqtibās* given by AL-THA‘ALIBĪ see his *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*, 21.

<sup>32</sup> See YĀQŪT, *Irshād*, 6/328; AL-‘AMĪDĪ, *al-Ibāna*, editor’s introduction, p. 15. If we take into consideration his two other works, namely, *al-Irshād ilā ḥall al-manẓūm* and *al-Hidāya ilā naẓm al-manthūr*, it will be reasonable to consider him the first to attempt a comprehensive investigation of the subject as a whole. Compare GAS, 2/83.

<sup>33</sup> For example, see *al-Wasāṭa*, 347, 364, 387.

imitation 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī divides motifs treated in literary discourse into *‘aqlī*, “mental,” and *takhyīlī*, “imaginative”, and argues that the former, being essentially statements of fact, are often derived from Prophetic *ḥadīths* and the saws of sages. He goes further to illustrate from Ibn al-Rūmī and al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965) among other poets, with such verses as are presumed to have derived from the Qur’ān and *ḥadīths*, otherwise no concrete or analytical discussion of *iqtibās* can be attributed to al-Jurjānī.<sup>34</sup> ‘Alī b. Khalaf’s discussion of it comes in the context of his argument in favour of the superiority of prose to poetry. He portrays the alleged borrowings of Jarīr and a certain other poet from the Qur’ān, as well as ‘Antara’s presumed versification of a *ḥadīth* as inferior to the original prose materials that are presumed to have inspired them.<sup>35</sup> However, an instance in which a poet makes an allusive use of the twentieth verse of the *Sūra* of the Cave, the eighteenth *Sūra* of the Qur’ān, is viewed favourably and is in fact cited by him as a good illustration of *kināya*, “i.e. indirect usage”.<sup>36</sup>

From the 17<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the *iqtibās* phenomenon became a common topos in rhetorical works, sometimes under a different nomenclature. For instance, Ibn Abī ’l-Iṣḡa’ (d. 654/1256) considers it a subtype of *ḥusn al-taḍmīn*, “good incorporation/quotation”.<sup>37</sup> The extensive and exaggerated use of the device by verse makers and prose writers of the Ayyūbid period, almost to the point of it becoming a tasteless mannerism, found a corresponding response in the scholarly discourse of the time, as its details and limitations were now being worked out. Among the poets, Ibn an-Nabīh (d. 619/1222) and Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Nubāta (d. 768/1366) are mentioned as its fanatical exponents, while ‘Abd al-Mu’min b. Hibat Allāh al-Iṣfahānī (d. circa 600/1203) is considered its most outstanding cultivator, as evidenced by his homiletic work, the *Aṭbāq al-dhahab*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>34</sup> AL-JURJĀNĪ, *Asrār al-balāgha*, 241–45. For more on *takhyil*, see HEINRICHS, “Takhyīl”, in *EL*.

<sup>35</sup> IBN KHALAF, *Mawādd al-bayān*, 38–40.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>37</sup> *Tahrīr*, 140. But compare his *Baḍī‘ al-Qur’ān*, 277, where the utilization of Qur’ānic materials is not included in his definition of the term. His agreement with Ibn al-Athīr in the characterization of borrowings from the Qur’ān is noteworthy. See Chapter One, notes 11 & 12.

<sup>38</sup> AL-ḤAMAWĪ, *Khizāna*, 539–54. About *Aṭbāq al-dhahab*, see GAL, 1/292. For more on *iqtibās*, see AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *Shurūḥ al-talkhīṣ*, 4/509–13; AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *Itmām al-dirāya*, 295.

In regard to borrowing from prose in general, two opposing views emerged almost as soon as the issue became the subject of some discussion in the scholarly tradition. One was in favour of it, regarding it as a proof of artistry; the other considered it, like borrowing from scriptural sources, a form of plagiarism. Representative of the first perspective was Ibn al-Jarrāḥ (d. 296/908); the adeptness of ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak in making poetry from *akhbār* (prose reports) was the major criterion he applied in ascribing merits to the poet.<sup>39</sup> When Ibrāhīm al-Ṣūlī expressed his amazement at how the *umarā’ al-kalām*, “the masters of discourse” that is, the literary practitioners, were enthralled by the poetry of Abū Tammām, the latter attributed it to his practice of borrowing from prose into his poems in imitation of al-Ṣūlī’s example of borrowing from poetry into his own prose essays.<sup>40</sup> The other point of view which portrayed the practice in negative terms found a noteworthy exponent in al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898). He was very critical of Abū l-‘Atāhiya’s borrowings from prose sources in respect of which he said:<sup>41</sup>

“Ismā‘īl Ibn al-Qāsim hardly leaves out of his poetry such ideas as are obtainable from reports (*akhbār*) and anecdotes (*āthār*); he turns popular sayings into verse, adapting them with ease, and appropriating them in a subtle way.”

Except for al-Jāḥiẓ’s passing remark on Abū l-‘Atāhiya’s “lifting” of the sense of an elegiac statement, al-Mubarrad’s discussion, its lack of analytical and theoretical insights notwithstanding, remains the oldest contribution to the issue of borrowing from prose into poetry.<sup>42</sup> But the fact that many of the prose materials posited as sources by al-Mubarrad in regard to Abū al-‘Atāhiya’s verses are far-fetched and hardly convincing, illustrates once more how laboured pedantry and intuitiveness characterized the early efforts in the Arabic literary criticism.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> IBN AL-JARRĀḤ, *al-Waraqā*, 14. One Aḥmad b. ‘Ubayd Allāh (fl. 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century) also commends the remarkable cease at which Abū l-‘Atāhiya turns prose into poetry in his work. See AL-MARZUBĀNĪ, *al-Muwashshah*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Cairo, 1995?), 327. Cf. fn. 41 below.

<sup>40</sup> AL-ṢŪLĪ, *Akhbār Abi Tammām*, 104. Compare Chapter One, notes 20 & 21.

<sup>41</sup> AL-MUBARRAD, *al-Kāmil*, 2/11: *wa-kāna Ismā‘īl Ibn al-Qāsim lā yakād yukhlī shi‘rahū mim mā taqaddama min al-akhbār wa l-āthār fa-yanzimu dhālika l-kalāma al-mashhūra, wa-yatanāwaluhū aqrab mutanāwal wa-yasriqihū akhfā sariqa.*

<sup>42</sup> Compare AL-JĀḤIẒ, *al-Bayān wa l-tabyīn*, 1/407–8.

<sup>43</sup> AL-MUBARRAD, *al-Kāmil*, 2/11–14. A further illustration of this deficiency is the suggestion that a certain poem by the pre-Islamic Uḥayya b. al-Julāḥ (d. circa 130

It is to Ibn Ṭabāṭabā (d. 322/934) we must turn for the first analytical examination of the subject. That he was an esteemed poet who also experimented with the device puts him in a better position to examine the issue from both the theoretical and practical perspectives. Anyone embarking on poetry making, he argues, should first ferment the ideas he is willing to express and establish them in his mind in prose form and then proceed to clothing them with the appropriate metre and rhyme.<sup>44</sup> There is a significant inference to be drawn from this statement, and this is the natural order of precedence between prose and poetry, which was also a subject of some debate among the literati.<sup>45</sup> Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's discussion of versification is set within the framework of his analysis of *al-ma'ānī 'l-mushtaraka*, "common motifs", that are treated in poetic practice. He argues that a good poet should be able to manipulate with skill when borrowing from verbal and conceptual antecedents into a new composition. He suggests that a usage found in a praise motif, for instance, could be borrowed and reused in a satire. Interthematic transfer of idioms and images is thus recognized as a good literary device. According to him however, the best form of borrowing and hence of literary competence, is for a poet to express in verse such sublime ideas as are obtained from speeches, sermons, and epistles. By so doing, the poet becomes comparable to either an adept goldsmith who turns cast models of gold and silver into different but better models or an outstanding dyer who treats an old garment with a new colour so perfectly that the original colour is hardly identifiable.<sup>46</sup> The significance of Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's argument reveals itself at two fundamental levels, namely, the conceptual and the terminological. The dominant view before him was that versification of prose ideas was a form of plagiarism. This was successfully challenged and in fact suppressed by his promoting the practice into a form of convention that should be cultivated by anyone trying his hands at verse making. On the theoretical level, his characterization of the practice as a form of *akhdh*, "borrowing/lifting", rather than *sariqa* is of particular importance. Through this, he was able to introduce a new vista on the scholarly discussion about versification. That his model of discourse was a remarkable success is evident from the fact that later theorists took it as their

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B. H./497) has its roots in a Qur'ānic verse. See AL-KHĀLIDIYYĀN, *al-Ashbāh wa 'l-naẓā'ir*, 1/16–17.

44 IBN ṬABĀṬABĀ, *ʿIyār al-shiʿr*, 5.

45 A brilliant account of the subject is AL-ZUʿBĪ, *Das Verhältnis*.

46 IBN ṬABĀṬABĀ, *ʿIyār al-shiʿr*, 77–78.



point of departure, and indeed espoused his line of thought. Further evidence in support of the favourable view of versification as an artistic device is discernible in Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s (d. 328/940) discussion of it. That he chose to discuss it under the literal meaning of *isti‘āra* “borrowing”, underpins the suggestion that the practice had ceased to be portrayed in negative lights. We have no reason to believe that the term *isti‘āra* in its tropical sense of metaphor was unknown to him, for the theoretical lore had assigned it that sense right from the time of Abū ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Alā’ (d. 154/771).<sup>47</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi argues that borrowing prose ideas and expressing them in poetical compositions or using poetical motifs in prose writing is a form of discourse transformation for which the poet or the prose writer should be commended.<sup>48</sup> It must be remembered that he too was a poet, and his acknowledgement of borrowing, even from non-Arabic prose materials in his compositions, illustrates further the extent to which the practice may have been cultivated from that time on.<sup>49</sup>

Among the heirs to Ibn Ṭabāṭabā’s proposition was al-Ḥātimī (d. 388/998). He considers borrowing from prose a form of subtle stealing to which poets frequently resorted. He says that some of the *maṭbū‘ūn*, “gifted/natural”, poets often sought to conceal or make imperceptible the sources of their expressions or ideas by borrowing from prose rather than poetry, presumably because drawing on the latter easily reveals their sources. He cites Abū ‘l-‘Atāhiya and Maḥmūd al-Warrāq (d. circa 225/840) as the most illustrious exponents of the practice among the post-classical poets. He also mentions al-Akḥṭal (d. 90/709) as one of the older cultivators of the device, illustrating with one of his poems that is believed to be a conscious versification of a Greek wisdom statement.<sup>50</sup> But

<sup>47</sup> See the comment of Abū ‘Amr on a verse by Dhū ‘l-Rumma (d. 117/735) in AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *Ḥilya*, 1/136. See also, GRUNEBaum, *A Tenth Century Document*, 7. For an early use of the term with the connotation of borrowing, see also AL-ṢŪLĪ, *Akḥbār Abi Tammām*, 211.

<sup>48</sup> IBN ‘ABD RABBIHĪ, *al-‘Iqd*, 5/338: “*wa-aḥsanu mā takūnu an yusta‘āra al-manthūr ilā ‘l-manẓūm, wa ‘l-manẓūm ilā ‘l-manthūr, wa-hādhih al-isti‘āra khafiyya lā yu‘bah bihi li-annaka qad naqalta al-kalām min ḥāl ilā ḥāl*”.

<sup>49</sup> For example, his borrowing from a certain *Kitāb al-Hind* in his verse treatment of a motif. See *‘Iqd*, 3/18.

<sup>50</sup> AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *Ḥilya*, 2/92. On the issue of naturalness versus artificiality in poetry, see GREGOR SCHOELER, *Einige Grundprobleme der autochthonen und der aristotelischen arabischen Literaturtheorie* (Wiesbaden, 1975); MANSOUR AJAMI, *The Neckveins of Winter* (Leiden, 1984); STEFAN SPERL, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry* (Cambridge etc. 1989).



the general tone of al-Ḥātīmī's analysis clearly suggests a growing tendency towards the full integration of the technique into the stock of artistic facilities allowed to the verse maker. A clear evidence in support of this is discernible in his illustration of *abda' amthāl al-a'jāz* (the most fascinating citational half lines). The majority of the 114 half lines of poetry instanced as examples of this phenomenon are verse renditions of prose statements.<sup>51</sup> One other significant insight offered by al-Ḥātīmī is his illustration of some 97 verses by al-Mutanabbī, the roots of which he traces, although not entirely convincingly, to certain concepts in logic and philosophy. It may be noted, however, that al-Ḥātīmī demonstrated with equal conviction both positive and negative reactions to the alleged borrowings of al-Mutanabbī from Greek philosophical ideas.<sup>52</sup> Whatever the deficiencies in al-Ḥātīmī's analytical exposé, the insights it offers into the level of training among poets and critics of the period compensate for those shortcomings. It illustrates very vividly that the literary practice had cast its net wide enough to take from sources that are essentially foreign to the aesthetic culture. The new sciences, both speculative and concrete, that were making an inroad into the intellectual culture started to be reflected in the literary tradition of the time too.<sup>53</sup> Through this, the poet belonging in this generation sought to establish both artistry and versatility. Similarly, the critic of the period having realized the inadequacy of the traditional religious and philological sciences from which his criteria for judging poetry derived, also engaged in learning the new sciences, a reflection of which is seen in al-Ḥātīmī's attempt at identifying the presumed foreign sources of al-Mutanabbī's poems.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Ḥilya*, 1/255–68.

<sup>52</sup> See his *al-Risāla al-Ḥātīmīyya*, in *al-Tuhfa al-bahīyya*, 144–59, where he is full of praise for the poet as he says:

ووجدنا أبا الطيب أحمد بن الحسين المتنبي قد أتى في شعره بأغراض فلسفية ومعان منطقية...  
فقد زاد على الفلاسفة بالإيجاز والبلاغة والألفاظ العربية وهو على الحالين على غاية من الفضل  
وسبيل نهاية من النبل.

Against this laudatory remarks may be compared his characterization as *sariqa*, another poem by al-Mutanabbī which he says had its roots in a certain statement of Aristotle. See his *al-Risāla al-Ḥātīmīyya*, in *al-Ibāna*, 260. A later illustration of parallels between al-Mutanabbī's poetry and Aristotle's statements is to be found in IBN MUNQIDH's *al-Badrī fī naqd al-shi'r*, 264–83, which subsection is headed with the title *al-Munāqala bayna Aristūṭālīs al-Ḥakīm wa-Abī 'l-Ṭayyib*.

<sup>53</sup> See AL-ZU'BI, *Das Verhältnis*, 84.

<sup>54</sup> Compare GRUNEBaum, "Arabic Literary Criticism", 57.

Another exponent of Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's pattern of argument was Ibn Waki<sup>c</sup> (d. 393/1002). His discussion of the issue of borrowing from prose into poetry comes within the framework of his analysis of the alleged plagiarisms by al-Mutanabbī, the subject to which his *al-Munṣif* is essentially dedicated. But his justification of versification as a literary device was underlied by his concession of superiority to poetry at the expense of prose, which assumption makes him liken elegant motifs occurring in prose to stray jewels that can be preserved only when turned into poetry as he says:<sup>55</sup>

... إنَّ مرور الأيام قد أنفذ الكلام فلم يبقَ لمتقدم على متأخر فضلاً إلا سبق إليه واستولى عليه. فأحذق شعرائنا من تخطى المنظوم إلى المتنثر لأنَّ المعاني المستجادة والحكم المستفادة إذا وردت متنثرة كانت كالنواذر الشاردة وليس لها شهرة المنظوم السائر على ألسنة الراوين المحفوظ على قائله كالتدوين. فالعارف بأخذ المتنثر قليل والجاهل به كثير. وقد أبقى قائل الحكم المتنثرة لسارقها من فضيلة النظم ما يزيد في رونق مائها... حليها في نظامها، فإذا حلّاها النظم نُسبت إلى السارق واستحقت على السابق.

"... surely, the passing of the days had exhausted speech so much that nothing of merit had been spared by the forerunner for the successor; the former had anticipated the latter in all this and had taken control of it. The most skillful of our [present day] poets is the one who sets aside [the old] poetry and turns his attention to prose. This is because when excellent motifs and useful wisdom sayings occur in prose they are like stray rarities; they do not possess the fame attributable to poetry which is widely transmitted by rhapsodists and preserved on behalf of the renderer as when it is consigned to writing. Only few are skilled in lifting from prose [into poetry], many are ignorant of it.

An author of prose wisdom sayings has given room for improvement in composition to the one who might steal them and arrange them in verse which then increases the lustre of their elegance... for their beauty lies in their being strung in verse form; so when arrangement into verse adorns them, they get attributed to the borrower who is now more entitled to lay claim to them than the (original) prose author."

<sup>55</sup> IBN WAKI<sup>c</sup>, *al-Munṣif*, 1/7.

Ibn Wakī<sup>c</sup>'s reference to a later borrower with the term *al-sāriq*, "thief", need not be taken in its pejorative sense, for the context and indeed the concession of merit to the "thief", especially when he could express better in verse an idea that had already been treated in prose, indicates that his use of the term is simply in the sense of chronology and descent of ideas. One fundamental subject highlighted in his proposition is that the forerunners in the poetical tradition had exhausted the pool of sublime ideas and left no room for their successors to add anything new to the tradition. This was vehemently contested by the post-classical poets, and Abū Tammām was probably the most outstanding defender of their position in a number of his poems.<sup>56</sup> But it was this assumption, as espoused by Ibn Wakī<sup>c</sup>, that underlied his recommendation that the contemporary poet should turn to prose sources rather than to ancient poetry for ideas. One other point is his concession of copyright to a verse treatment of a motif which had earlier been expressed in prose, as long as he considered brilliant ideas treated in prose a sort of stray jewels whose security is assured only when put into verse.

The contribution of Ibn Farīḡhūn is admittedly little but significant. Information about him is almost non-existent. He was said to be a disciple of the philosopher and belles lettrist, Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934) who inherited the tradition of injecting the Islamic intellectual tradition with philosophical orientations.<sup>57</sup> Ibn Farīḡhūn divides *ʿilm*, "knowledge/science", into *alfāz*, "words", and *maʿānī*, "ideas". The former could be *mufrad*, "independent/singular", or *mushtarak*, "common/shared". But it is his idea of the *mushtarak* that is of interest to us here. It is defined as "the knowledge of words and ideas as a unit, as in the building of poems from prose."<sup>58</sup> His classification undoubtedly offers a significant insight into the philosophical understanding of the dichotomy between *lafz* and *maʿnā*, a phenomenon which engaged almost exclusively the attention of the scholars in the late classical tradition. Insofar as this is not relevant to the present study, it should not be allowed to detain us here. The view

<sup>56</sup> See especially *Dīwān Abī Tammām*, 1/214, 2/161. See also AL-ŠULĪ, *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, 54; AL-KHĀLIDĪYYĀN, *al-Ashbāh wa 'l-naẓā'ir*, 1/2; AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *al-Risāla al-Ḥātimiyya*, in *al-Ibāna*, 287.

<sup>57</sup> GERHARD ENDRESS, "The Defense of Reason", *ZGAIW* 6 (1990), 1–50 (p. 24). Apart from Heinrich's notice of the work in his "The Classification of the Sciences and the Consolidation of Philology in Classical Islam", pp. 129–39 in Jan Willem Drijvers & A.A. Macdonalds, as given in note 22 above, BIESTERFELDT's, "Ibn Farīḡhūn's Chapter on Arabic Grammar" is probably the latest detailed study on the work.

<sup>58</sup> IBN FARĠGHŪN, *Jawāmiʿ al-ʿulūm*, 134: *maʿrifat al-alfāz wa 'l-maʿānī maʿan, ka-tarkīb al-kalām al-manẓūm min al-manthūr*.

that the making of poetry from prose is an example of combined word formation is not explained further by him, but it may be conjectured from his analysis that the word as a linguistic unit without regard to its referent or meaning is the idea to which the term *mufrad* applied, but when such word can be assigned a meaning which may derive from its occurrence in a prose text and then in poetry, it can then be characterized as *mush-tarak*. This is probably the only plausible interpretation of an elliptical thesis which is the earliest, and possibly the only philosophical proposition on the issue of borrowing from prose into poetry.

Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī was the one scholar at whose hands the discussion assumed a more systematic character. He considers versification of prose ideas and the turning of poetry into prose as complementary components of the same device, hence he collapsed both into a unified conceptual unit for analysis purposes and says:<sup>59</sup>

وأحد أسباب إخفاء السرقة أن يأخذ معنى من نظم فيورده في نثر، أو من نثر فيورده في نظم، أو ينقل المعنى المستعمل في صفة خمر فيجعله في مديح، أو في مديح فينقله في وصف؛ إلا أنه لا يكمل لهذا إلا المبرز، والكامل المقدم.

“One of the ways by which [literary] theft is concealed is for him (the author) to take an idea from poetry and inject it into prose, or (an idea) from prose and inject it into poetry; or to lift into a *madiḥ* an idea that was used in the description of wine, or to lift into a *wasf* that which is found in a praise motif. However, it is only the competent, the outstanding, who could achieve this.”

The similarity between al-ʿAskarī’s model of discourse and that of Ibn Ṭabāṭabā is quite obvious, his failure to acknowledge the latter as his source notwithstanding. Nevertheless, his individuality as an analytical mind within the context of the materials provided by the tradition is revealed through his discussion and illustrations. He argues that prosification and versification on the one hand, and original composition on the other, do not require the same amount of effort. In the former case, he argues, the new author has the advantage of having a material to work on: the mental product of someone else, hence his task would be less than demanding; but the one who is faced with the task of creating a new idea from the scratch would need to exert himself a little bit more.<sup>60</sup> This

<sup>59</sup> AL-ʿASKARĪ, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 198.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

proposition may look attractive and convincing at the theoretical level, but the reality may in fact prove otherwise. This is because a serious verse composer does not just cloth a prose prototype with metre and rhyme, which exercise will simply be interpreted as an abuse of literary culture, a crass plagiarism; rather, he would need to make hardly perceptible the indebtedness of his verse composition to the prose original that inspired it, and this is by no means an easy task. As already highlighted, al-ʿAskarī fused versification and prosification into one, and this has been illustrated in Chapter One. Succinctly put, his view of utilizing prose expressions in poetry is positive, as long as it is considered a subtle, hence admissible, form of appropriation. As a poet, he too often attempted the practice, either through direct borrowing or by simply imposing metre on a prose prototype that caught his admiration.<sup>61</sup> Among the classical authorities on the subject of literary borrowing in general, al-ʿAskarī's contribution remains the most detailed and exhaustive, a fact to which he himself did not fail to draw attention.<sup>62</sup> Although reference to the phenomenon is to be found in other important works belonging to the period, a sustained analytical approach to the subject was only achieved at his hands and his contribution continues to be of high analytical value in the theoretical lore. Except for his illustration of certain verses whose sources are traced to some prose statements under the rubric *dhirw mimmā nuqila min al-manthūr ilā 'l-manzūm*, "the zenith of that which is lifted from prose into poetry", no systematic discussion of the concept of versification can be ascribed to Ibn Khalaf.<sup>63</sup> Perhaps to expect this from him would have been a misplaced optimism; his model of discourse demonstrates that he was discussing from an entrenched position that accords superiority to prose treatments of motifs at the expense of their poetical equivalents.<sup>64</sup>

Ibn Rashīq (d. 457/1064) may be tipped as the final contributor to the debate in the classical tradition. He was also a great admirer of Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, whom he regularly quotes anyway. He too regards versification of prose motifs as a commendable artistic device, and indeed a tolerable form of theft, *al-sariqa al-mughtafara*.<sup>65</sup> But one important feature which is eminently illustrated in his treatment of the subject is the tendency towards characterizing the phenomenon in terms of rhetorical filiation.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 221. For more examples of his borrowing from prose into poetry, see 243–44, and his *Diwān al-Maʿānī*, 2/92.

<sup>62</sup> *Ṣināʿatayn*, 237–38.

<sup>63</sup> *Mawādd*, 316–18.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 38–42.

<sup>65</sup> IBN RASHĪQ, *Qurāḍat al-dhahab*, 95. Compare his *ʿUmda*, 2/293–94.

Thus a simile, a metaphor or a paronomasia found in a particular verse would be traced to the place of its first occurrence, for example, in a prose expression.<sup>66</sup> Although instances of this are not altogether lacking in previous contributions especially in Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's model, it was at his hands that the tendency found a prominent illustration. Two reasons may be proffered for this. The distinction between *balāgha*, "rhetoric", and *naqd*, "literary criticism", seemed to have paled into insignificance so much that a work on either would equally qualify to be regarded as a contribution to the other. Secondly, the issue of *sariqa* has already developed into a very prominent topic in the theoretical discourse, and it is therefore to be expected that any work which makes the subject its central theme would examine any issue, however remotely related. In any case, interest in the issue of versification of prose continued from the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, so strong it was that it became the subject of an independent inquiry in the scholarly discourse as reflected in al-ʿAmīdī's *al-Hidāya ilā naẓm al-manthūr*.<sup>67</sup> Although the work has not survived, it may be conjectured from its title that it was intended to be a practical guide to borrowing from prose into poetry. By and large, versification, *ʿaqd/naẓm*, and prosification, *ḥall*, became standard topics in works on rhetoric or poetics from that time on; both had been admitted into the fund of conventions available to the literary practitioners.<sup>68</sup>

Although the general understanding of the concept of *ʿaqd* was in the sense of quotational borrowing or adoption of the sense of a prose motif into poetry, the one interpretation that bordered on dissent was offered by Ibn Abī ʿl-Iṣḥāq. By his definition, only the borrowing of all or most of the expressions of any given prose is to be considered *ʿaqd*; adopting the sense without the wording is, in his view, a form of plagiarism.<sup>69</sup> As far as I know, his is the only queer interpretation of the term in the classical and medieval contributions to the subject, as the majority and indeed the standard view considers the convention an artistic device, especially when it involves borrowing the sense rather than the wording

<sup>66</sup> *Qurāḍat al-dhahab*, *passim*.

<sup>67</sup> *GAS*, 2/83.

<sup>68</sup> For example see IBN MUNQIDH, *al-Badīʿ*, 259–63; QAZWĪNĪ, *Shurūh*, 4/509–28; AL-ḤAMAWĪ, *Khizānat al-adab*, 560–61; AL-ʿABBĀSĪ, *Maʾāhid al-tanṣīṣ*, 4/182–94; AL-QALQASHANDĪ, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 1/273–95; AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *Itmām al-dirāya*, 294–95.

<sup>69</sup> IBN ABĪ ʿL-IṢḤĀQ, *Taḥrīr al-taḥbīr*, 441:

... أن يؤخذ المشور بجملة لفظه أو بمعظمه ... ومتى أخذ معنى المشور دون لفظه كان ذلك نوعاً من أنواع السرقات ... ولا يسمى عقداً إلا إذا أخذ المشور برُمَّته.

of a prose material. It may be mentioned *en passant* that a similarly favourable view of the device as an artistic device is found in the Western literary tradition. For example, the 15<sup>th</sup> century rhetorician, Lydgate, was highly commended for “versifying the depured [i.e. purified] rhetoric in English language”.<sup>70</sup>

The interdependency between prose and poetry has been noted in the Arabic scholarly discourse to the point that both are described as mutual derivatives: *fa 'l-shi'r rasā'il ma'qūda wa 'l-rasā'il shi'r maḥlūl*".<sup>71</sup> The view is admittedly too simplistic. Nevertheless, it establishes the recognition of the inevitable symbiosis between prose and poetry as the principal forms of the literary discourse and indeed of human speech performance. What emerged as the dominant view in Arabic literary discourse in regard to versification of prose materials provides a strong evidence in support of the suggestion that both are mutually interdependent.

<sup>70</sup> GEORGE SAINTSBURY, *A History of English Criticism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Edinburgh & London, 1962), 30.

<sup>71</sup> According to IBN ṬABĀṬABĀ. See *ʿIyār*, 78.





## PERORATION

In the preceding chapters, I have tried to chart the theoretical landscape relating to intertextual borrowings in Arabic literary practice. I have also attempted to give a practical illustration of the theory through specific selections. The reader may have found some of the prose models that are illustrated from al-Nayramānī and Ibn al-Athīr rather drab and sometimes not too intelligible. If either of the two authors were to be around to defend himself against the charge of saying that which is not understood, he would probably have replied in the same way as Abū Tammām did by asking why the reader should not understand what is being said.<sup>1</sup> We should bear it in mind that the model essays are efforts in theoretical analysis: the main aim of the authors is to demonstrate how the *ḥall* theory, as individually perceived by them, works in practice. The authors make no pretence at giving entertainment essays nor another *One Thousand and One Nights*. But how do the propositions of the theorists concerning the various ramifications of *ḥall* and *naẓm* relate to the various literary genres, namely, the *khutab*, the *maqāmāt*, the *rasā'il*, and poetry? This is what I intend to highlight here.

In his discussion of quotational borrowing from Qur'ān into literary compositions, Ibn al-Athīr illustrated with examples from the sermons of 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn Nubāta and described the author as an outstanding exponent of the practice.<sup>2</sup> This necessarily provokes a fundamental question of how the device of *iqtibās* was actually utilized by Ibn Nubāta, probably the most noteworthy *khaṭīb*, in his hortatory compositions.<sup>3</sup> One should hasten to say from the outset that Qur'ānic and *ḥadīth* materials are found more in *khutab*, epideictic, and paraenetic epistles than in

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<sup>1</sup> See AL-MARZUBĀNĪ, *al-Muwashshah* (Cairo, 1343/1925), 325.

<sup>2</sup> *al-Mathal al-sā'ir*, 2/204–5; *al-Jāmi' al-kabir*, 19.

<sup>3</sup> See IBN NUBĀTA AL-KHAṬĪB, *Diwān Khutab Ibn Nubāta*. The number given within the brackets in the text refers to the page(s) of the respective titles discussed in this section.

poetry, and this is quite understandable: the scriptural materials have an overwhelming moral and utilitarian content.

Ibn Nubāta's style is admittedly lacking in variety, his *khuṭab* are generally made up of measured rhythmical couplets which reflect a strong influence of the Qur'ānic style, especially that of the early Meccan passages. Furthermore, the author made full use of the effects of epigrammatic and antithetical phrases. This shows that both the style and the content of the Scripture inspired his sermons. Qur'ānic expressions and phrases blend with his own statements, often without indication, and in a number of cases, complete Qur'ānic verses are quoted in the body of the *khuṭba*. It is quite remarkable that at the end of each sermon, a Qur'ānic passage relevant to the subject matter treated is quoted in full, and where this is not done, the author indicates the extent to which the passage should be read. This is a good illustration of *tarṣīf*. Qur'ānic expressions are sometimes modified as when he says (p. 15) *wa-qāma 'l-nās li-rabb al-ʿālamīn*, which is a variation of *yawma yaqūm al-nās li-rabb al-ʿālamīn* (Qur'ān 83:6). A Qur'ānic verse selected for use may even be modified in more than one form and then used in two or more *khuṭbas*. This can be illustrated with (p. 15) *wa-qālat jahannam hal min mazīd* which also reads (p. 34) *yawma yaqūl Allāh li-jahannam hali 'mtala't? wa-taqūl hal min mazīd*, both of which are a rephrase of *yawma naqūl li-jahannam hali 'mtala't? wa-taqūl hal min mazīd*. (Qur'ān 50:30). In some cases, only a part of the verse utilized is quoted, for example (p. 27), *wa-ʿanat al-wujūhu li 'l-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm* (Qur'ān 20:111). Furthermore, Ibn Nubāta sometimes pairs his own statements with such Qur'ānic expressions that have similar rhythmical periods, as in (pp. 38–39) *qad shamalathum al-ḥira fa-mā taʿrifu nafsun nafsan/ wa-khashaʿat al-aṣwāt li 'l-Raḥmān fa-lā tasmaʿu illā hamsan* (see Qur'ān 20:108); and (p. 113) *wa-lā takūnū min al-ladhīna arjaʿū 'l-ʿamal bi-sawfa wa-ḥatta/ba'suhum baynahum shadīd, taḥsabuhum jamīʿān wa-qulūbuhum shattā* (see Qur'ān 59:14). He also makes use of allusion to Qur'ānic stories, for instance, the expulsion of Adam from paradise (p. 30). A limited use is made of *ḥadīth* materials, which are not even quoted in full when they occur (p. 114). But the *khuṭab* in respect of the two great festivals in Islam, namely, the termination of *Ramaḍān* fasting and the *ʿId al-aḍḥā*, are lavishly laden with Qur'ānic verses and expressions (pp. 400–18). So much is obvious about the comprehensive manner in which Ibn Nubāta employed the instrument of *iqtibās* to enhance the quality of his sermons. But it is almost certain that he deliberately avoided citing lines of poetry or borrowing from its idioms.

In regard to the *maqāma* genre, Badi<sup>c</sup> al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī did not employ the device of *iqtibās* in any appreciable fashion. In *al-Maqāma al-Dināriyya*, for example, are just a few adaptations of Qurʾānic expressions, as in the exclamatory phrases *Yā bādiyat al-zaqqūm* and *Yā mānī<sup>c</sup> al-mā<sup>c</sup>ūn*. In other words, he cannot be credited with any remarkable use of Qurʾānic or *ḥadīth* materials.<sup>4</sup> He is, however, seen challenging his audience in *al-Maqāma al-shi<sup>c</sup>riyya* to produce a line of poetry that would still retain its metrical character when turned into prose.<sup>5</sup> This clearly indicates that he was more interested in the *ḥall* device. It may be said in parenthesis that even when he is quoting lines of poetry, he gives no indication of this, and one is left with the misleading impression that the lines being quoted are his. One good example is in *al-Maqāma al-Jurjāniyya* where a two line quotation from Zuhayr is not so indicated. If, for argument purposes, Ibn Shuhayd's (d. 426/1034) *Risālat al-Tawābi<sup>c</sup>* is considered as belonging to the *maqāma* genre, it may reasonably be argued that the author was the first to employ *iqtibās* in this genre in a more systematic manner.<sup>6</sup> The strong point our author was set to prove is that he could write prose and poetry with equal ease and skill, and in the two arts, the device is employed. The Qurʾānic expression *ka-lamḥ bi 'l-baṣar* (Qurʾān 16:77) which later rhetoricians are fond of attributing to al-Ḥarīrī as a standard example,<sup>7</sup> was first used by Ibn Shuhayd (p. 91). In addition to his use of Qurʾānic expressions, for example, *al-Qāri<sup>c</sup>a mā 'l-Qāri<sup>c</sup>a* (Qurʾān 101:1–2), and *ḥadīth*, he also makes use of allusion in regard to some Qurʾānic stories, for instance, (pp. 120–21) the experience of Mary during childbirth (Qurʾān 19:21–25), and the saga of the Magicians with Moses and Pharaoh (Qurʾān 20:60–71). Moreover, he quotes in full (p. 125) the first four verses of Qurʾān 55. Also to be found in his improvised *rithā'* which was read to the imaginary spirit of Abū Tammām (pp. 99–100) are a number of Qurʾānic idioms, expressions and ideas. This shows very clearly that the various ramifications of the *iqtibās*

<sup>4</sup> AL-KHAṬĪB AL-QAZWĪNĪ could only cite one example of al-Hamadhānī's use of a Qurʾānic verse in the sense of *iqtibās* from an epistle. See his *al-Īdāḥ* on the margin of *Shurūḥ al-Talkhīṣ*, 4/510.

<sup>5</sup> See his *Maqāmāt*, 224; SANNI, "Filiation: the Arabic Theorist's Prescription for Excellence", 3–14.

<sup>6</sup> See his *Risālat al-Tawābi<sup>c</sup> wa 'l-Zawābi<sup>c</sup>*.

<sup>7</sup> See *Shurūḥ al-Talkhīṣ*, 4/510–11; MEHREN, *Die Rhetorik*, 136. It was also used by al-Maʿarrī in one of his poems. See *Shurūḥ saḡṭ al-zand*, Pt II (Cairo, 1946), 649; AL-ZANJĀNĪ, *Mi<sup>c</sup>yār*, 1/2.

device are reflected in Ibn Shuhayd's use of it, both in his prose and poetry compositions.

It is to al-Ḥarīrī we must turn for a more artistic and articulate use of it, as he was able to integrate it into the demands of rhymed prose from which the *maqāma* genre derives its peculiarity in the first place.<sup>8</sup> I referred above to the Qur'ānic expression *ka-lamḥ bi 'l-baṣar* which theoreticians were to later cite from al-Ḥarīrī as a standard example of *iqtibās*. The expression is to be found in *al-Maqāma al-Ḥulwāniyya* (pp. 17–25).<sup>9</sup> One important point about his citation from the Qur'ān in general is that he only quotes, often without indication, up to the point that fits into his predetermined rhymed periods and measured terminations, although there are instances in which short verses are cited in full and in close succession, as in *al-Maqāma al-Rāziyya* (pp. 198–209). Al-Ḥarīrī's use of Qur'ānic and *ḥadīth* materials is too extensive to be illustrated in detail, but we may cite two *maqāmas* the distinction of which derives largely from a systematic and copious employment of *iqtibās*; and these are *al-Maqāma al-Furātiyya* (pp. 209–20) and *al-Maqāma al-ʿUmmāniyya* (pp. 425–38). From the former we may cite *wa-yurshī, illā 'l-ladhina āmanū wa-ʿamilū 'l-ṣāliḥāt wa-qalilun mā hum*, which is taken from Qur'ān 38:24. The expression *fa-tabassama dāḥikan min qawli* that is used in the same *maqāma* is also adapted from Qur'ān 27:19. This shows how al-Ḥarīrī integrates or twists scriptural materials into his own expression. The second *maqāma* equally contains a number of expressions and ideas taken from the Qur'ān and the Prophetic *akhbār*. These are used in form of paraphrases, indirect quotations, or allusions. But there is one unique example that I would like to cite here, and this is a poetic *envoi* in which a *ḥadīth* is used in one line and an expression from the Qur'ān is used in the other (p. 433):

أَيْهَذَا الْجَنِينِ إِنِّي نَصِيحٌ      لَكَ وَالنَّصِيحُ مِنْ شُرُوطِ الدِّينِ  
 أَنْتَ مُسْتَعَصِمٌ بِكُنٍّ كَنِينٍ      وَقَرَارٌ مِنَ السَّكُونِ مَكِينٍ  
 “O you this foetus I am advising you,  
 for giving of advice is one of the rules in religion.  
 You are taking refuge in a concealed shelter;  
 a comfortable abode of tranquility.”

<sup>8</sup> See BEESTON, “Al-Hamadḥānī, al-Ḥarīrī and the Maqāmāt Genre”, in: *CHAL* (ABL), 125–35.

<sup>9</sup> AL-ḤARIRĪ, *al-Maqāmāt al-adabiyya*.

The first line derives from the *ḥadīth* which says: *al-Dīn al-naṣiḥa* (Religion is advice) and the second from Qurʾān 23:13. The foregoing illustrates that *iqtibās* was a popular device in the literary culture of the Arabs. In fact it assumed a more complex character in terms of scope and use from the last quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Many poetical compositions lavishly coruscate, *ad nauseam*, with Qurʾānic idioms. A classic and typical example is found in an eulogy by Ibn Nabīh for his patron al-Fāḍil (d. 596/1200).<sup>10</sup> This should not be surprising; the entire stock of the rhetorical schemata which had hitherto served as mere beautifiers and enhancers developed into themes intended for themselves. There are, however, two important developments to which attention must be drawn. First, the expansion of the scope of the term *iqtibās*. Borrowing from juristic, philological, and philosophical expressions or concepts came to be characterized as *iqtibās* also, although the dominant view still preferred to limit the term to borrowings from the Qurʾān and the Prophetic *akhbār*.<sup>11</sup> Second, a distinction was made in the characterization of these materials, depending on whether they are used in prose or poetry. When used in poetry, they are designated as instances of *ʿaqd* or *taḍmīn*, and the term *iqtibās* came to be exclusively applied to the utilization of them in epistles or *khuṭab*.<sup>12</sup> The difference is essentially one of kind rather than degree, for the use of these materials in the forms and patterns already illustrated is adequately reflected in prose and poetical compositions alike.

In regard to *ḥall* and *naẓm*, this study has tried to establish, perhaps successfully, that it was the former that attracted a greater attention of the scholarly coterie; it being considered a fundamental tool of the professional *kātib*. The efforts of al-Nayramānī and Ibn al-Athīr bear a strong testimony to this. Nevertheless, it is still important for us to see how the *ḥall* device is generally employed in the compositions and writings of scholars other than the two, and indeed in the medieval literary writing tradition as a whole. The pioneering role of al-Thaʿālibī in providing the oldest, surviving, comprehensive model, the *Nathr al-naẓm*, has already been noted, but more need to be said about this work, its lack of theoretical insights notwithstanding. It illustrates quite clearly how the device was employed during the time of the author and indeed up to the emergence of Ibn al-Athīr. In this work, al-Thaʿālibī treats a variety of topics

<sup>10</sup> AL-ḤAMAWĪ, *Khizānat al-adab*, 540.

<sup>11</sup> For example, see AL-ḤILLĪ, *Sharḥ al-Kāfiya*, 326–30.

<sup>12</sup> See AL-ḤAMAWĪ, *Khizānat al-adab*, 541–54.

in prose passages that derive from conscious utilization of poetical illustrations. A common trend is however discernible in his utilization of poetical materials: their wording is generally retained. This equally applies to his employment of Qurʾānic materials and Prophetic *akhbār*.<sup>13</sup> Whether our author is opening (for example, p. 30) or concluding an illustrative passage (for instance, pp. 31, 61, 71) with a Qurʾānic verse or expression; or is using either within the texts as citations or paraphrases (for instance, pp. 8, 13, 22, 70, 79), the original wording as found in the Qurʾān is maintained, although nowhere did he indicate that he was equally subjecting materials from the Qurʾān or *ḥadīth* to the *ḥall* process. Moreover, not all the poetical pieces utilized in the essays are illustrated, as can be seen from his first prose passage (p. 65) under *Bāb al-shakwā*, where the popular line by Imruʾ al-Qays, namely *raḍītu minā 'l-ghanīmati bi 'l-iyābi* is used but not so indicated.<sup>14</sup> The same can be said in respect of his first prose illustration (pp. 82–83) under *Bāb al-rizq*, where Imruʾ al-Qays's *wa-laylin ka-mawji 'l-baḥri arkḥā sudūlahū* is utilized also without reference being made to it. The conclusion one may draw from this is that he did not feel it necessary to indicate it when drawing on popular verses. One remarkable experimentation with the *ḥall* device undertaken by him is his turning into prose proverbs a forty-four line *qaṣīda* by Abū 'l-Faṭḥ al-Bustī in which proverbial motifs (pp. 127–32) are treated. A similar one made up of twenty-nine lines (pp. 132–35) by Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḍarīr al-Ibyawardī was equally turned into prose epigrams line by line. If we relate this to al-Nayramānī's wholesale prosification of *al-Ḥamāsa*, it will not be unreasonable to conclude that the application of the *ḥall* device to the thematic stereotypes of the Arabic verse was exclusive to the generation group of the authors who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century, for we do not encounter similar attempts among the later generations of the connoisseurs.

But if we are looking for a representative and prominent illustration of how the *ḥall* and *naẓm* devices were combined and employed at the height of their popularity, especially by authors who were versatile in both prose writing and verse making, we would find one in Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī (d. 383/993). The prose and poetic compositions of this author as illustrated by al-Thaʿālibī provide an eloquent evidence.<sup>15</sup> Al-Khwārazmī was an accomplished verse maker and an epistolographer of

<sup>13</sup> *Nathr al-naẓm wa-ḥall al-ʿaqd*. Numbers within the brackets are page references.

<sup>14</sup> See the full reading of the verse in AL-ḤĀTIMĪ, *Ḥilya*, 2/46.

<sup>15</sup> See AL-THAʿĀLIBĪ, *Yatīma*, 4/194–241.

note with two *dīwāns* to his credit: one of prose the other of poems. His prose essays draw on poetry, the Qurʾān and Prophetic *akhbār* in the same way as his poems reflect borrowings from the scriptural materials as well as from popular discourse. In the two literary types, his use of these materials conforms largely with the tradition and techniques that are discernible in the literary practice of the period extending up to the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century. That the literary practitioners belonging in this time frame generally understood and cultivated *ḥall* in the sense of “loyalty” and “allegiance” to source texts is quite obvious, but it should be regarded as an important phase upon which later authorities built, as can be seen from Ibn al-Athīr’s efforts.

The theoretical discourse concerning *iqtibās*, *ḥall* and *naẓm* is doubtless characterized by a variety of orientations and attitudes as one may have observed, but it certainly reveals an important feature: that the Arabic literary practice is a remorselessly inter and intra-textual continuum, and this fact was recognized by the practitioners and their assessors alike. The aesthetic corpora of the Arabic-Islamic intellectual cosmos show that the literary tradition can boast of letters and correspondences that were written in verse in the same way as there were poetical compositions that had been turned into prose.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, that there was no shortage of authors who left two *dīwāns*: one of poetry and the other of prose writings, attenuates the Jāḥiẓian theory that the two arts hardly combine in an individual. In fact, efficiency in both became a condition for admission into the literary salon, for instance, by al-ʿAskarī’s standards: the perfect poet is the one who is also an efficient orator and an epistolographer, and the best *kātib* is the one who is equally good in oration and in verse-making.<sup>17</sup> Some literary craftsmen equally recognized the dignity and honour associated with competence in the two modes of literary expression and wanted to be accepted as exponents of both. For instance, Maḥmūd b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 360/970), a poet-laureate to Sayf al-Dawla, adopted the sobriquet Kushājīm by which he came to be generally known. The *kāf* in his bye name derived from *kātib* (writer); *shīn* from *shāʿir* (poet); the long vowel *ā* from *adīb* (litterateur); *jīm* from *jawwād* (generous); and *mīm* from *munajjim*/*mughann* (astrologer/

<sup>16</sup> For samples of correspondence in poetry between Ibn al-ʿAmīd and Ibn Khallād (d. 360/970) see AL-ṬHAʿĀLIBĪ, *Yatīma*, 3/166–71. A work entitled *Mukātabāt al-ikhwān bi ʿl-shiʿr* is listed among the works of Ibn al-Muʿtazz. See IBN KHALLIKĀN, *Wafayāt*, 3/77.

<sup>17</sup> *Ṣināʿatayn*, 138–39.



singer).<sup>18</sup> The theoretical discourse and the reality of the literary practice clearly establish the fact that the men of the reeds, the *kuttāb*, had always been fascinated with the mental products of “The Singers of Tales”, as Albert Lord would like to call poets. Against this background, the view by Mehren that the *ḥall* device was of negligible aesthetic value could not have been acceptable to the secretarial class in whose estimation the convention had developed into an acceptable parameter for determining professional efficiency.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the poets demonstrated pleasure, if not ecstasy, in drawing on prose materials, and sought to exhibit their literary efficiency through conscious versification of prose materials. The insights afforded by the variety of responses and propositions by the native theorists to the various ramifications of *ḥall* and *naẓm* may well be utilized as an essential input into a conscientious study of the development of a universal theory on intertextuality.

What I have tried to do in this investigation is to illustrate the theoretical landscape of intertextual borrowings in Arabic literary practice. There are admittedly some lines of thought and interpretations that are adumbrated but which should have been pursued further or articulated more adequately; some translations may not be wholly felicitous. But if ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Abi Ishāq (d. 117/735), a patron saint of Arabic philology, could be complaining about the difficulty, if not the frustration, involved in interpreting literary ideas, specifically the poetical,<sup>20</sup> the modern student of the literary culture can only hope for indulgence, especially if he does not have the luxury of conducting his investigation within an unbound time limit.

<sup>18</sup> See HANĀʾ DUWAYDARĪ, “Riḥlat al-ṭard wa ’l-ṣayd bayna ’l-Mashriq wa ’l-Andalus”, *MMLAD* 70, Pt 4 (1995), 702–24 (p. 723 fn. 25). A slightly different source words from which the sobriquet derived are given by MUḤAMMAD KHAYR SHAYKH MŪSA in his article quoted in Chapter One, fn. 5. See p. 510, fn. 4 of the article.

<sup>19</sup> MEHREN, *Die Rhetorik*, 141.

<sup>20</sup> See AL-QIFĪ, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 2/106–7.

## APPENDIX\*

Verses by Abū Nuwās containing Qurʾānic phrases.\*\*

الفنّ الثالث عشر من الباب الثاني عشر من مجون أبي نواس...

فللنوع الأول

من ذلك في ذكر ما خلطه بشعره من موزون ألفاظ القرآن في تضاعيف الأبيات:

- ١ -

جئت أشكو إليك فاسمع قليلاً	لست ألقى عليك قولاً ثقيلاً
يا طويل الصلاة قصّر قليلاً	سترى في النهار سباً طويلاً
إنّ نفسي غدت تُفارق جسمي	فمن اليوم خذ عليها كفيلاً
رُحْتُ عبداً ورُحْتُ مولى جليلاً	إن تُنلني أهُجرك هجراً جميلاً

- ٢ -

وقال [من السريع]:

وفتية في مجلس وجوههم	ريحانهم قد عدّموا الثقيلا
دانية عليهم ظلالها	وذُلّت قطوفها تذليلا

- ٣ -

وقال من أبيات [من الخفيف]:

وقرأ مُعلّناً ليصدع قلبي	والهوى يصدع الفؤاد السقيما
أرأيت الذي يُكذّب بالديـ	ن فذاك الذي يدعّ اليتيما

## - ٤ -

وقال من أبيات له في اللهمي لما حجّ [من المنسرح]:  
 لولا هوائيك ما اغتربتُ ولا حطّ ركابي بأرض مغترب  
 ولا تخطّيتُ في الصلاة إلى قراءة: تبت يدا أبي لهب

## - ٥ -

وقال من أبيات [من الخفيف]:  
 خُذ فؤادي مباركاً لك فيه فأذنه كما يُذاب الرصاص  
 هاك فاققص من أخيك فإنّ الـ نفس بالنفس والجروح قصاصُ

## - ٦ -

وقال من أبيات [من الخفيف]:  
 وجد الحاسدون فينا مقالاً فوقوا أسهماً بنا ونبالا  
 فاعذلوا فيه كيف شئتم ولوموا قد كفى الله المؤمنين القتالا

## - ٧ -

وقال من أبيات [من السريع]:  
 فلو تراهم شرّعا حولها حسبتهم طيراً أبابيل

## - ٨ -

وقال من أبيات [من الوافر]:  
 ويخزهم وينصركم عليهم ويشف صدور قوم مؤمنينا

وقال أيضًا من أبيات [من الوافر]:  
 كأهل النار إن نَضِجتْ جُلُودُ      أُعِيدَتْ للشقاء لَهُم جُلُودُ

— ٩ —

وقال من أبيات [من البسيط]:  
 نُهْدَى إِلَيْكُمْ عَلَى شَوْقِ تَحِيَّتِنَا      حَيَّوْا بِأَحْسَنِ مِنْهَا أَوْ فَرَّدُوها  
 وقال من أبيات قد مرّت [من السريع]:  
 قُولِي إِذَا صَرْتُ عَلَى ظَهْر      كَقَوْلِ قَوْمٍ رَحَلُوا ظَاعِنِينَ  
 سَبْحَانَ مَنْ سَخَّرَ هَذَا لَنَا      مِنْهُ مَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقَرَّنِينَ

— ١٠ —

وقال أيضًا من أبيات [من المجتث]:  
 إِذَا مُغْنَوُكَ غُنُّوا      فَاضْرِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ سِتَارَا  
 لَوْ أَطْلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِم      وَلَّيْتُ مِنْهُمْ فَرَارَا

— ١١ —

ومثله [من الرمل]:  
 وَمُغْنٌ يُورِثُ النَّد      مَا نَ بَرْدًا وَصُدَامَا  
 لَوْ تَدَهَّدَى فِي حَرِيق      صَارَ بَرْدًا وَسَلَامَا  
 وزاد ابن الرومي على أبي نؤاس في انتزاع لفظ القرآن بقوله [من السريع]:  
 قُولَا لِسَمَانَةٍ لَا قُدْسَتْ      سَبْحَانَ مَنْ وَسَّعَ أَحْشَاكَ  
 كَأَنَّمَا أَوْحَى إِلَى رَحْمَهَا      وَقِيلَ: يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاكَ

ولابن الرومي أيضًا [من المتقارب]:  
 ومن يتق الله يصنع له  
 وللبناسمي [من الرمل]:  
 يا بني وهب تحروا رشدًا  
 واحذروا هذا الإمام الأسدًا  
 فلئن كرر فيكم طرّفه  
 لتصيرن شتاتًا قددا  
 ولابن المعتز [من الرمل]:  
 يا نديمي سقني الرا  
 ح جهازًا واكتتامًا  
 وإذا خاطبك الجا  
 هل فيها قل سلامًا

## - ١٢ -

وقال أبو نّوّاس [من المنسرح]:  
 ومستمد من الدواة وقد  
 أخرجله الناس بالذي فاهوا  
 يكتب لي: لا فإن هم فهموا  
 زاد عليهم: إله إلا هو  
 وزاد:

حولًا وقوة وكذي الأحباب  
 لو أنصفوا لما تاهوا  
 أغر كالبدرد شادن لبق  
 لو فقد البدر قيل: هذا هو  
 وحكى ابن أبي طاهر عن علي بن خيار أن أبا نّوّاس دخل ديوان نجاح بن سلمة  
 فرأى فيه أمرد يكتب بخط حسن فقال له: أتجبن؟ فكتب في قرطاسه: لا. ففطن  
 به صبي آخر فزاد عليه: إله إلا هو فقال أبو نّوّاس من ساعته هذه الأبيات. وأبصر  
 في الديوان مملوكًا لصاحب الديوان فرج إليه رُقعة: هل فيك خير؟ فكتب إليه:  
 نعم. والتفت مولاه إليه فألحق به: القادر الله.

## - ١٣ -

فقال أبو نّوّاس [من المنسرح]:  
 وكاتب بالمداد في يده  
 مخافة أن يراه مولاه:  
 نعم، فلما رأى تأمله  
 ألحق فيه: القادر الله

Further examples from Abū Nuwās that are not contained in Wagner's exemplar.

— ١٤ —

ولم أنسَ ما أبصرته من جماله	وقد زُرت في بعض الليالي مصلاه
ويقرأ في المحراب والناس خلفه	ولا تقتلوا النفس التي حَرَّمَ الله
فقلت: تأمل ما تقول فإنها	فعالك يا من تقتل الناسَ عيناه

— ١٥ —

سُبْحان من خلق الخلد	تق من ضعيف مهين
فساقه من قرار	إلى قرار مكين
يحُول خلقاً فخلقاً	في الحُب دون العيون

\* I am obliged to the kindness of Prof. Ewald Wagner for making this text available to me. It is expected to be part of his forthcoming fifth volume of *Der Dīwān des Abū Nuwās*.

\*\* The corresponding Qur'ānic materials utilized in the poetical extracts are given as follows:

Illustration 1 – Qur'ān 73:5–10. Illustration 2 – which is also cited in AL-ŠULĪ, *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, 211; IBN AL-MU'TAZZ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 207; AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ, *Fjāz al-Qur'ān*, 77; ABŪ HIFFĀN, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, 68, draws on Qur'ān 18:13 and 76:14. Illustration 3 – Qur'ān 107:1–2. Illustration 4 – Qur'ān 111:1–2. Illustration 5 – Qur'ān 5:45.

Illustration 6 – Qur'ān 33:25. Illustration 7 – Qur'ān 105:3. The first of the two samples given under illustration 8 is to be attributed to Dī'bil. (See IBN MANZŪR, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, 53; IBN AL-MU'TAZZ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 207). The two samples here utilize Qur'ān 9:14 and 4:56 respectively. Illustration 9 – Qur'ān 4:86 and 43:13. Illustration 10 – Qur'ān 18:18.

Illustration 11 – Qur'ān 21:69. The two illustrations from Ibn al-Rūmī draw on Qur'ān 11:44 and 65:3. The one from al-Bassāmī (d. 302/914), the popular satirist and stylist, utilizes Qur'ān 72:11 & 14; and the one attributed to IBN AL-MU'TAZZ (see his *Dīwān* 2 pt 1, p. 239) draws on Qur'ān 25:63. Illustration 12 – Qur'ān 92:166 and many other places in the Qur'ān. Illustration 13 only contains a common Islamic declaration. Illustration 14 (see also IBN MANZŪR, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, 52–53, AL-'ABBĀSĪ, *Ma'āhid al-tanṣīṣ*, 4/184) draws on Qur'ān 6:151. Illustration 15 (see IBN AL-MU'TAZZ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 207–8; AL-THA'ĀLIBĪ, *Nathr al-naẓm*, 167) makes use of Qur'ān 23:12–14.



## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BEO</i>	<i>Bulletin des Etudes Orientales</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>CHAL</i> (UP)	<i>The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature to the end of the Umayyad Period</i> , eds. A. F. L. Beeston <i>et al.</i> , Cambridge etc., 1983.
<i>CHAL</i> (ABL)	<i>The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature. Abbasid Belles Lettres</i> , eds. J. Ashtiany <i>et al.</i> , Cambridge etc., 1990.
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , N. E., Leiden 1954-.
<i>GAL</i>	<i>Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur</i> , Leiden, 1943f. Arabic translation = <i>Tārīkh al-adab al-‘arabī</i> , by ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Najjār, Cairo, 1962.
<i>GAP</i>	<i>Grundriss der arabischen Philologie</i> , Band II: Literaturwissenschaft, hrsg. von Helmut Gätje, Wiesbaden, 1987.
<i>GAS</i>	Fuat Sezgin, <i>Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums</i> , Leiden, 1967ff. Arabic translation = <i>Tārīkh al-turāth al-‘arabī</i> , by ‘Arafa Muṣṭafā, 2/pt 1 only, Riyadh, 1983.
<i>JAL</i>	<i>Journal of Arabic Literature</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>MAY</i>	<i>Majallat abḥāth al-Yarmūk – Silsilat al-ādāb wa’l-lughawīyyāt</i>
<i>MMII</i>	<i>Majallat majma‘ al-‘ilmī al-‘irāqī</i>
<i>MMLAD</i>	<i>Majallat majma‘ al-lugha al-‘arabiyya bi-Dimashq</i>
<i>ZGAIW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften</i>





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## SUMMARY

Arabic literary theory is characterized by a peculiar pattern of development: it oscillates between intuitiveness and tortuous analytical discourse. The classical Arab poet required no formal training in the elaborate sense of the concept, as it was the case in later times when scriptural and documentary prose materials, as well as poetical anthologies became available as objects of study and models for new generation authors of verse and prose.

The professional *kātib* was a product of administrative necessity following on the establishment of the Islamic state. The training of the poet and the *kātib*, and the formalization of the techniques, rules, and styles for the two exponents of the literary culture became of paramount importance. But it was the *kātib*, who, for obvious reasons, attracted the greater attention. Among other things, he was required to be knowledgeable in all imaginable subjects, *ākhidh min kulli fann bi-ṭarf*, including poetry. Of the techniques recommended for efficient literary practice was the use of poetical materials in prose composition, *ḥall al-manẓūm*, that is, prosification; and the utilization of prose materials in verse making, *naẓm al-maḥlūl*, that is, versification.

ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib (d. 132/750) was the first to highlight the aesthetic dimensions of borrowing from Qurʾān and poetry into prose essays and speeches; and the various manuals on the secretarial art, which started to emerge from the second/eighth century, illustrated the technicalities and dimensions associated with the procedure. However, the ultimate credit for injecting the discussion on *ḥall* with a sound and enduring logical framework belongs to Ibn al-Athīr. His *al-Waṣṣṣa al-marqūm*, the main focus of this study, illustrates in a scientific fashion the various forms and techniques of borrowing from the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, and poetry into prose compositions for optimum artistic effect. This was analyzed in Chapter Two.

Al-Nayramānī's (d. 403/1012) *Manthūr al-manẓūm* is an adventurous attempt at giving a new interpretation to the concept of *ḥall*. The thematic spectrum of the Arabic poetical tradition as reflected in the *Ḥamāsa* of

Abū Tammām is what al-Nayramānī treated in a prose version, using the thought contents and wordings of the poetical exemplars in his model. He composed model essays which vividly illustrate the intertextuality of the literary discourse. This was the focus of Chapter Three.

Borrowing from prose into poetry was widely practised in some literary traditions, for example, Greek and Roman antiquities. In fact, it was regarded as a proof of literary efficiency. But in Arabic literary practice, the initial reaction to the procedure was one of disapproval, and this should not be surprising; the literary culture is known to be repellent to innovations. For instance, one of the reasons why Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Alā’ (d. 154/771), the patron saint of Arabic scholarship, excluded ‘Adī b. Zayd from the list of authoritative poets should be ultimately related to ‘Adī’s utilization of scriptural ideas, expressions, and *conceitos* in his poetry. Similarly, Abū ‘l-‘Atāhiya (d. 211/826) and Abū Tammām (d. 231/845) were variously criticized for either borrowing from prose materials into poetry, or for adapting Qur’ānic motifs and usages to poetical expressions; the practice was considered a reprehensible form of plagiarism. It was not long, however, before a contrary, and ultimately, the dominant view prevailed, developing indeed into a canon. This development was the subject matter of Chapter Four.

The most remarkable evidence of an early eirenic attitude towards the technique is found in Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī (d. 297/909). He was probably the first to characterize borrowing from Qur’ān into poetry as a form of facility, a practical aid which verssmiths may take advantage of in order to enhance the quality of their works. His line of thought was followed by al-Tha‘alibī (d. 429/1037) at whose hands the technique assumed the status of a formal convention which was designated as *iqtibās*. A coherent and analytical model of discourse in regard to borrowing from prose materials into poetry was, however, introduced by Ibn Ṭabāṭabā (d. 322/934) who went as far as highlighting its modalities. And from the analyses of later authorities, for example, al-Ḥatīmī (d. 388/998), Ibn Wakī‘ (d. 393/1002), Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī (d. 396/1005), and Ibn Rashīq (d. 457/1064), it is obvious that the procedure eventually assumed the seal of legitimacy, constituting indeed a key artistic technique.

By and large, the significance of *ḥall* and *naẓm* as essential tools or techniques in literary productions can be gauged from the artistic employment of both in the various literary genres, viz., the *maqāma*, aphoristic epistles, gnomic verses, homilies, and popular poetry.

## ملخص

إنَّ جاذبية الأدب العربي تكمن في هذا التنوع المذهل من الآراء التي وضعها رجال الفكر الأدبي منذ أرسوا اللبنة الأولى لتأسيس نظرية منسقة في إطار إنتاج الشعراء والأدباء والكتاب.

ونظرية الأدب العربي عبر العصور تتسم بأسلوب تطوّر معيّن، ألا وهو التراوح بين البدهاة والتحليل المتمقّق. كان الشاعر الجاهلي لا يحتاج إلى تدريب منظم، سوى أن يخدم شاعرًا آخر غيره كراوٍ ملازم له، وبالتالي تظهر ملكته الشعرية ومهارته الفنية. ولكن بظهور النصوص المدوّنة والمحفوظة كالقرآن الكريم والأحاديث الشريفة، وبعد ذلك دواوين الشعراء والمنتخبات ومجموعات الرسائل، أضحت في متناول الشعراء والأدباء مصادر جديدة يستقون منها آراءهم وشواهدهم ومثلاً يحتذونها وينسجون على منوالها. فبتأسيس الدولة الإسلامية أصبحت الحاجة ماسّة إلى الكتاب وأصحاب الدواوين الذين يقومون بالمهام الإدارية من كتابة الرسائل وتدوين الوثائق، وظهرت العناية البالغة بتدريب الكتاب وإعطاء شكل معيّن لأساليب الكتابة، وإبراز طرق فنيّة معيّنة يلتزم بها الكاتب في عمله، إذ قد أصبح شبه قانون أن يكون من يزاول الكتابة آخذًا من كل فن بطرف. ومن ضمن هذه الطرق الفنية المرسومة استعمال المواد الشعرية في الكتابة الثرية. وقد استُحسن للشاعر استعمال المواد الثرية بألفاظها ومعانيها في المنظومات الشعرية، وهكذا انبثق مفهوم حلّ المنظوم ونظم المحلول في نظرية الأدب العربي.

كان عبد الحميد الكاتب (ت ١٣٢هـ / ٧٥٠م) أول من تنبّه إلى ما تضيفه المواد القرآنية والشعرية على الكتابة الثرية والخطابة من مظاهر الجمال الفني، الأمر الذي دفعه إلى حثّ رجال الكتابة الديوانية على تزيين أعمالهم بهما. وتبعه في هذه الفكرة الذين جاءوا بعده من الكتاب البارزين على امتداد القرن الثاني الهجري، وقد أطالوا الكلام في مؤلفاتهم على أهمية هذه الظواهر الأسلوبية. ويرجع الفضل الأكبر في موضوع النظرية والتطبيق لمفهوم حلّ المنظوم إلى ضياء الدين بن الأثير (ت ٦٣٧هـ / ١٢٣٩م) في كتابه «الوشى المرقوم في حلّ المنظوم». ولقد حلّ هذا الكاتب، كما حاولت إظهاره في الباب الثاني من هذه الدراسة، مختلف الأساليب التي تستعمل فيها المواد القرآنية

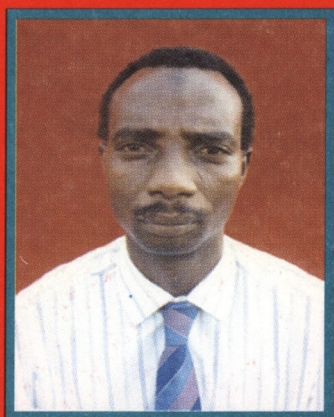


والأحاديث النبوية وأبيات الشعر في الرسائل والإنشاء. كانت محاولة النيرماني (ت ٤٠٣هـ / ١٠١٢م) في نقل حماسة أبي تمام - تلك المجموعة الوحيدة من عيون الشعر العربي الكلاسيكي - إلى النثر حيث الأغراض والمعاني والعبارات، عبارة عن مفهوم جديد لنظرية حلّ المنظوم، إذ يؤكد مؤلفنا بهذه المغامرة إمكانية تجاوب الآراء والمعاني الأدبية شعراً كانت أم نثراً.

وقد أثبتت الأدلة التاريخية أن استعارة المواد النثرية في الشعر عادة مألوفة في كثير من الحضارات ومظاهرها الأدبية العريقة، وخاصة عند الاغريق والرومان. وهم يعتبرون ذلك دليلاً على جودة الشعر وعلو كعب الشاعر ومهارته. لكن ردة الفعل المبكرة من رجال الأدب العربي حيال هذه العادة تميّزت بنوع من الاستنكار والاستنكاف. ولقد أثارت محاولات كل من أبي العتاهية وأبي تمام في تزيين أشعارهما بالألفاظ القرآنية ومعانيها أو الأمثال النثرية، أثارت استهجاناً حاداً. ولكن لم يلبث أن تفوق الموج المؤيد للعادة على التيار المعارض لها، وصار نظم النثر معترفاً به كوسيلة فعالة لتحسين فنية الشعر وجماله.

ويمكن أن نذكر من رواد هذا الاتجاه الإيجابي ابن داود الأصبهاني (ت ٢٩٧هـ / ٩٠٩م) وبعده الثعالبي (ت ٤٢٩هـ / ١٠٣٧م). ويمكن الاستنباط من تحليلات النقّاد البارزين من أمثال ابن طباطبا (ت ٣٢٢هـ / ٩٣٤م) والحاتمي (ت ٣٩٦هـ / ٩٩٨م) وابن وكيع (ت ٣٩٣هـ / ١٠٠٤م) وأبي هلال العسكري (ت ٣٩٦هـ / ١٠٠٥م)، وابن رشيق القيرواني (ت ٤٥٧هـ / ١٠٦٤م) أن استعارة المواد النثرية في الأشعار قد تحوّلت إلى مادة أساسية في النظم، بل وسيلة هامة في التجميل الفني للشعر.

وتتجلى واضحة أهمية ظاهرة حلّ المنظوم ونظم المحلول في كثرة استخدامها في المقامات والرسائل الإخوانية والخطب، والشعر والأدب التعليمي، وإن دلّ هذا على شيء فإنما يدلّ على قبولها لدى أهل الأدب والعلم.



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