Ghazal as World Literature I
Transformations of a Literary Genre

Thomas Bauer
Angelika Neuwirth



Orient-Institut Beirut

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The ghazal is one of the most successful genres of world literature. Starting as a new form of love poetry in the Arabian Peninsula at the end of the 7th century, it gradually spread as a literary form over the whole of the Islamic world and eventually was even introduced into German poetry during the 19th century. The 21 contributors to this volume trace the history of the ghazal through Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew and German literature. The impact of the ghazal tradition on contemporary literature of the Middle East is given ample space. Further emphasis is put on the social influence the ghazal has in different societies, as well as on the different conceptions of love and sexuality that are reflected in the thirteen centuries of ghazal tradition.

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Ghazal as World Literature I

Transformations of a Literary Genre

for Renate Jacobi

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Transformations of a Literary Genre

edited by

Thomas Bauer

and

Angelika Neuwirth

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INTRODUCTION

Ghazal as World Literature: Transformations of a Literary Genre

Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth
(Münster and Berlin)

Why the ghazal?

The ghazal is certainly one of the most successful genres in world literature. Due to extensive migrations it is spread over a vast geographical space of multiple literary languages: from Arabic it migrated via Persian into Turkic and the languages of India, in Spain into Hebrew via Arabic and, finally, transmitted via Persian models, it even emerged in the poetic canon of German literature. This widespread dissemination of the ghazal genre alone would have been reason enough to hold a symposium on the ghazal. But there were further challenges. In 1993, the qaṣīda conference[1] held in Oxford filled an important desideratum by focusing on another great traditional poetic genre from the Middle East, the polythematic qaṣīda. This initiative set an example worthy to emulate. Above all, however, it was the *power* of the ghazal itself that inspired us to turn to this uniquely universal genre and to discuss its complex aesthetic manifestations, the eloquence of its refined language and the musicality that radiates from its poetic form, and thus, the fascination that it entails for those who read, hear or study it. The enthusiasm displayed by the conference participants and their guests in Beirut emphatically proved that our perception of the ghazal as an "enchanting genre" was not mistaken.

But from where and how does the ghazal as poetry derive its power? Is it the sound pattern of this poetic form which offers a unique synthesis of monorhyme and refrain poetry through its peculiar rhyming praxis, especially in its Persian and Turkic forms? The most striking characteristic of the Persian-Turkic ghazal, and thus also of the German *Ghasel*, is certainly its peculiar underscoring of a key word or even whole phrase – the so-called

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1 Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle: *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*. I: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings II: Eulogy's Bounty, Meaning's Abundance. An Anthology. Leiden et al. 1996.

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radīf – that precedes the rhyming syllable, by repeating it throughout all the verses of the poem. Should this technique of completing each verse with an identical word or phrase not suggestively hint at a hidden deeper layer of meaning? Although the Arabic ghazal does not draw on this particular poetic device, it too stands out from other poetic forms. Is it the personal character of the address in the ghazal, inspiring an intimacy unimaginable in other poetic genres that particularly fascinates us? Is it the illusion of eavesdropping that arises while listening as the poet conducts a conversation with his own intimate "you," where the poet – to quote Northrup Frye – "has metaphorically turned his back on the listener"? This inverted speaker-listener situation is markedly distinct from those of other genres, in particular that of the qaṣīda, in which the poet keeps in view the audience that he directly addresses in his lengthy recitation (or at least pretends to address). Or is it the ambiguity of the ghazal text that generates such an impression: the fact that the gender of the person addressed in the familiar form in Turkic and Persian is inherently ambiguous and thus leaves open the exact nature of the gender relation at work? A vagueness that in later Arabic and, above all, in Persian, Turkic and Urdu poems, can even refer to the either natural or supernatural affiliation of the beloved, who, although mostly embodied in a human person, can also be divine. The ghazal not only transcends levels of language, but uses language itself to transcend the worldly and the sacred, areas that are otherwise mostly dealt with separately. The ghazal goes beyond the boundaries of profane speech, yet simultaneously hauls sacred speech back into the human context. Thus, precisely through its comprehensive perspective, it restores the connection between the divine and the human – that is so uniquely efficient in love – in the literary world of poetry.

The papers brought together in this volume present the outcome of a symposium convened by Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth at the Orient Institute of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* in Beirut between July 7th and 10th, 1999, with the support of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG). The volume designed for publication in the series *Beiruter Texte und Studien* (BTS) was kindly accepted by the subsequent Director of the Orient Institute, Prof. Manfred Kropp. The editors wish to express their thanks to him, as well as to Thorsten Gerald Schneiders, who took upon himself the trouble of formatting and proofreading the texts as well as preparing the index, and Ruth Hartmann, OIB, who took care of the publication process. This collection of papers read in Beirut[2] is accompanied

[2] Unfortunately, four papers on the classical and mystic ghazal read at the symposium

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by a parallel volume, titled *Ghazal as World Literature – The Ottoman Gazel in Context. From a Literary Genre to a Great Tradition*, which documents the contributions presented at a second symposium on ghazal convened by Angelika Neuwirth, Börte Sagaster, and Judith Pfeiffer at the *Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* in Istanbul from May 16th through 18th of the same year. Whereas our present volume attempts to cover the ghazal tradition in its vast range, the Istanbul volume focuses on the Ottoman and Turkic ghazal and strives to contribute to the memorialising of Ottoman imperial culture that currently enjoys renewed attention in Turkish intellectual society.

It is our hope that this volume will convey something of the fascinating power exerted by the genre of the ghazal. A rich array of international research formed the basis of this initiative. It drew special inspiration from the work of one scholar who, like virtually no other before her, has contributed to bringing to light the aesthetic aura of Arabic poetry, and in particular that of the ghazal genre. As an expression of our esteem, this volume is dedicated to Renate Jacobi.

TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE GHAZAL

The beginning of a long history

The prehistory of the ghazal begins around the fifth century on the Arabian peninsula. There the idea had developed to prelude poems composed for purposes not related to love with some verses that recorded a love episode experienced in the past. A poem thus emerged that was characterised by the sequence of two different, even contrasting themes in terms of their moods: the first displayed a melancholic longing while the other was mostly heroic in nature. This combination served to palpably increase the emotional effect of the poem.[3] As the prelude did not pursue any pragmatic intent, the poet was able to concentrate completely on its artistic and aesthetic shape, thus opening up new horizons for Arabic poetry and creating a perspective that, situated in a purely artistic poetry, went beyond any pragmatic objective.

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could not be included in this volume. In their place the editors have obtained contributions by Renate Jacobi, Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, Th. Emil Homerin and Simon Kuntze on related subjects.

3 Another example (while certainly of another nature) for the combination of two disparate themes is evident in the "entry through nature" of the troubadour songs. Another type of combination is treated in T. M. Johnstone: Nasīb and Mansöngur. In: *JAL: Journal of Arabic Literature* 3 (1972), 90-95.

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What is most important about this development, within our present framework, is the introduction of the love theme for the first time in Arabic poetry. The new pattern of the qaṣīda as a thematically multipartite poem, with an introductory section on love called the nasīb, was to prove very successful, as is witnessed by a career that was to last over one and a half millennia.

The essential components in terms of content and form of what we today understand as ghazal were thus already apparent by the beginning of the seventh century. At that time, the forerunners of the ghazal deal with the theme of love, and these poetic texts consist of metrically identical verses that use monorhyme, the first two half verses of the opening verse often constituting an additional rhyming pair. But here the theme of love is still only one part of a polythematic poem. There is not one single poem dating from the pre-Islamic era that is exclusively dedicated to love. Since individual poems focusing on other themes contained in the polythematic qaṣīda exist in abundance, it appears that no independent love poems existed in these early times.[4] More than another century was to pass until the need for such love poems emerged.

The scholar to whom this volume is dedicated has examined the emergence of the ghazal in great detail.[5] The societal upheavals during the era of the conquests, as integration into tribal structures was loosened, created the preconditions for the emergence of independent love poems. The poet Abū Dhuʾayb (d. 28/649), who himself took part in the conquests, has left us some of the oldest examples of fully developed ghazal poems. These few examples are useful for demonstrating that not only the societal rank of the individual had changed, but also that this change led to a new understanding of the phenomenon of love itself, a change without which the ghazal would not have emerged in the form now known to us. No longer exclusively focused on a retrospective view of an earlier love relationship now past, the sole theme of the pre-Islamic nasīb, this shift now allowed new perspectives on the present and future to emerge and to flank the orientation to the past.

In the love poetry of the Umayyad era, two traditions can be distinguished as separate ideal types, which in reality were often merged together in a variety of combinations or were mixed with the pre-Islamic

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4 See Thomas Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts. Eine literatur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studie des arabischen Ġazal*. Wiesbaden 1998.

5 Renate Jacobi: Die Anfänge der arabischen Ġazalpoesie: Abū Ḏuʾaib al-Huḏalī. In: *Der Islam* 61 (1984), 218-250.

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nasīb tradition. One type pertains to the urban milieu of the Ḥijāz (Medina, Mecca, al-Ṭā'if) and was made famous by ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa (d. 93 or 103/712 or 721). Here poets tell of their amorous encounters and flirtations and produce song texts for male and female singers who had become important contributors to early Arabic-Islamic urban culture. In contrast to this *ḥijāzī* trend of love poetry, the *ʿudhrī* form, named after the tribe of ʿUdhra, emerged in the Beduin milieu (although it should not be imagined that all of its poets, singers and listeners were necessarily Beduins). Jamīl (d. 82/701) is its most famous representative. The poet, and sometimes the poetess, appears in this poetry as a partner captured in a love relationship, the intensity of which would have been unimaginable in the pre-Islamic nasīb. The lover is now totally absorbed by his/her own love. There is no room for anything else. Love defines an asocial space for itself and demonstratively confronts its social environment. Since external conditions render the fulfilment or the perpetuation of this love impossible, the only outlet that remains for the lover is death. This kind of love that has become literature through this kind of love poetry is called *ʿudhrī* love after its most famous representatives. And although not all poets of this mode belonged to the ʿUdhra tribe, they could still claim that "my tribe is that of the Asra (i.e. ʿUdhra) who die when they love."[6] It is noteworthy that *ʿudhrī* love does not manifest itself exclusively in the poems – and in the case of less important poets in this trend not even primarily – but rather in the lovers as a couple, one of whom is the poet. The *ʿudhrī* poet is always a *persona* in a love story that is illustrated in the poems. The more famous the couple, the more legendary this love story became, and so these poems are always more apocryphal. The existence of the most famous lovers, Majnūn and Laylā, is thus historically the most doubtful.

In an astoundingly short time, a wealth of love poetry of the most divergent kind, of love stories and musical traditions had emerged that formed a sufficient material basis and starting point for an array of expressive modes which could be used by the most diverse social groups and individuals. The caliph poet al-Walīd ibn Yazīd (d. 126/744), the last ghazal poet of the Umayyad era, no longer fits into the *ʿudhrī-ḥijāzī* scheme but forms from traditional elements "poetry of unique charm, playful and passionate, adoring and demanding, a curious mixture of sensual, courtly and ʿUdhrī love," as we can read in the contribution by R. Jacobi (p. 136). With al-Walīd, we have left behind the formative phase of the ghazal and

6 "*Und mein Stamm sind jene Asra, welche sterben, wenn sie lieben.*" Heinrich Heine: Der Asra. In: *Heines Werke in fünf Bänden*. Weimar 1959, vol. 1, 196.

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enter into a series of transformations which led to new literary forms and to a remarkable differentiation in the meaning of the ghazal discourse for society as a whole. It is therefore fitting that this volume starts chronologically with al-Walīd.

Transformations of Language

Worldwide the ghazal displays a more astounding record than even the sonnet and not just because it enjoys a head start of six centuries over the sonnet. From Arabic, the ghazal spread via Persian into Turkic in one direction and in another to India and further eastward into the Malay-Indonesian area. Through its adaptation in German and Russian the ghazal even crossed the borders of large cultural domains – unlike the sonnet. If the ghazal, despite extending for a period of almost one and a half millennia and spatially ranging from Mauritania to Indonesia and from Sweden[7] to India, has nevertheless been granted little attention by Western literary studies, this is due – apart from Eurocentric prejudices – in the first instance to the poor state of research in Oriental literatures in general. Thus, entire periods and regions of the relevant literatures have scarcely yet been researched. And even in the better researched literatures, the concentration on both genuine and alleged "heydays" has lead to a distorted image, one that is more of a hindrance to gaining a comprehensive picture of the development of a genre, quite apart from the fact that there is hardly a scholar who fully addresses more than one or at the most two literatures of the ghazal. Hardly anyone could present a *tour d'horizon* like Ch. Bürgel, who presents here a wide range of varying manifestations of "the mighty beloved" theme in Arabic, Persian, Turkic and Urdu.

The most important step in the spread of the ghazal was unquestionably that from Arabic into Persian, for not only did many of the most important ghazal poets write in this language but, furthermore, it was mainly through Persian literature that the ghazal was brought into other language areas. J. S. Meisami is certainly on target in seeing the rise of the Persian ghazal as "analogous to the independent Arabic poems on love, wine, and various other topics" (p. 327). Other theories which identify the origins of the Persian ghazal in an autochthonous Persian folk literature or in the nasīb of the Persian qaṣīda, owe their success in the first instance to an ignorance, still prevalent until recently, of the Arabic ghazal of the 4th/10th century, that is, precisely the period in which the first ghazal poems emerged in Persian.

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7 Cf. the Swedish poem "En ghasel" by Gustaf Fröding (1860-1911).

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Here, too, the Eurocentric canonisation of individual poets and epochs has diminished overall awareness. If we compare the themes and motifs of the Arabic ghazal of this time with those of the early Persian ghazal, there emerges such an extensive correspondence that no serious doubts can be raised as to the provenance of the Arabic ghazal. For instance, in the Arabic ghazal of the period after Abū Nuwās the catalogue of the beloved's beauty characteristics are virtually identical to those given in the Persian ghazal. Only the ideal of the small mouth and the double chin are missing in the Arabic version and first emerge in Persian love poetry, as R. Würsch shows in her contribution.

By contrast, the transition of the ghazal from Persian into Turkic is unproblematic. The Turkic ghazal in its Eastern (Čaghatay) and Western (Ottoman) expression is in the beginning a continuation of the Persian ghazal by other means, but then here, too, an autonomous development began to unfold, as the contributions by W. Andrews/M. Kalpaklı and J.T.P. de Bruijn show. With the transition into Urdu and the rest of the Indo-Islamic languages, we are once again confronted with the grave problems encountered by the status of the history of scholarly research in these areas, for this transition took place at a time when the "Indian style" (*sabk-i hindī*)[8] dominated in the Persian ghazal, a style that aroused extreme aesthetic reservations amongst Western experts in Oriental studies. The Urdu ghazal – probably the most lively ghazal tradition today – could thus only be considered marginally in the present volume within the comprehensive contribution by Ch. Bürgel.

The ghazal represents a particularly characteristic art form of Islamic culture, here comparable to the *muqarnaṣ*, although it is not a religious Islamic art form (apart from its Sufi transformation). Indeed, it was even viewed by strict religious scholars with scepticism, if not with downright disapproval. It is precisely those transformations which go beyond the Islamic bearers and even beyond the Islamic cultural circle that are of great interest here. It was on the Iberian peninsula that the Arabic ghazal cultivated by Muslims was taken over by Jews and emulated in Hebrew. Examples of the most important representatives of this tradition are presented in the contribution by A. Schippers. That the Arabic ghazal in al-Andalus would go on to help troubadour poetry see the light of day can be briefly mentioned here as well, although this step leads us thematically beyond the scope of the present volume.

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8 Cf. the contribution to the parallel volume by Michael Glünz: The Indian Style in Ottoman Lyric Poetry. A Far Cry from the Origins of the Ghazal.

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The ghazal executed a real leap in the first years of the 19th century when it was introduced into German literature. The Orient offered an alternative to antiquity as the dominating model. The ghazals of the Persian poet Ḥāfiẓ, which were made accessible to German readers in the stylistically poor translation by Hammer-Purgstall, received an avid reception. Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan* became the starting-point for the whole of the "West-Eastern school" of German poetry. Goethe nevertheless approached the form of the ghazal – or as it was called in German *Ghasel* (or *Gasel*) – with hesitation, as H. Birus shows in his contribution. Paradoxically, however, it is precisely the form of the ghazal which was to allow the *Ghasel* to rapidly find a place in German literature beyond Oriental connotations. Friedrich Rückert's *Ghaselen*[9] are not only made up of his Ḥāfiẓ translations; he also used this form in more than a dozen of his *Kindertotenlieder* without any reference at all to the Orient. With August von Platen's melancholic *Ghaselen* the genre reached a pinnacle. The "Young German" Dingelstedt tested out the suitability of the *Ghasel* for satiric purposes. The Swiss Heinrich Leuthold and the Baudelaire translator Max Bruns wrote *Ghaselen* without any Oriental reference. However, as H. Birus points out in his contribution, if the ghazal does away with all allusions to its Oriental origin, it may become difficult to perceive its *raison d'être* as an autonomous form of poetry. Nonetheless, even in the 21st century, the *Ghasel* remained a presence in German literature.[10]

Transformations of Form

A genre or a literary form can survive for more than a millennium only if it displays a particular ability to adapt. But precisely this ability to adapt must perforce lead to a situation where ultimately very different manifestations emerge, which can then be recognised as related only through an awareness of their genesis.

The ghazal's ability to adapt is due in large part to an interdependence between content and form. Nonetheless, questions about the relationship between content and form have frequently led scholars astray, without a willingness first to cross linguistic and cultural borders through

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9 See the contribution to the parallel volume by Hartmut Bobzin: Rückert as Translator and Imitator of Persian Ghazal Poetry.

10 For example, see "Ghasel." In: Harald Hartung: *Langsamer träumen. Gedichte.* München et al. 2002, 69.

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interdisciplinary inquiry. The question as to whether the ghazal should be defined through its content or its form can never be answered unambiguously, not even for any manifestation in any given individual language. Claims that the Arabic ghazal should be defined through its content and the Persian through its form soon prove to be a dead end. In the end, both axioms – the relationship between form and content is arbitrary or between both there exists a clear dichotomy – must be principally called into question. Otherwise the phenomenon of the ghazal cannot be understood at all. Interestingly, the problems resulting from attempts to determine the relationship between form and content in the Arabic ghazal have nothing to do at all with those which analogously have arisen for the German *Ghasel*, to mention only this extreme; nevertheless, the problematic question of the relationship between form and content is and has been a constant in the history of the ghazal.

For the Arabic ghazal, the main question is the relationship between the ghazal and the nasīb. Whereas Arab literary theory treats these terms synonymously, as B. Gruendler shows in her contribution, it has become custom in Western Arab studies to distinguish between the two terms. The difference is one that is formally defined, with the term nasīb used for the introductory section of the qaṣīda with a love theme, and the term ghazal used for the independent love poem. At the same time, though, this formal characteristic is probably of secondary nature. The primary difference is rather that, on the one hand, there is a tradition of love poetry which goes back to the pre- and early Islamic nasīb, while, on the other hand, there is a tradition that stems from the independent, relatively short love poems of the Ḥijāzian and ʿUdhrian, later the courtly and urban poets and singers. While it is true that the latter tradition descends genetically from the former, it developed nonetheless so quickly and fundamentally as a distinct and autonomous form that as a rule it is little trouble to ascribe a verse to one of the two lines of tradition. The difference between nasīb and ghazal – a perfectly meaningful distinction founded in the material itself – thus resides in how both follow different intertextual lines. In terms of ideal types, this difference can be formulated as follows:

(1) The nasīb is a text that intertextually refers back to the pre- and early Islamic qaṣīda introduction, which is why it is set in the Beduin milieu. Thematically, the nasīb can basically be ascribed to the following three topics, as R. Jacobi has elaborated: a) the *deserted campsite*, where the poet abides at the traces of a forsaken campsite, shedding tears; b) the *vision* of the beloved, the *khayāl*, that the sleepless poet perceives while he spends the night in the desert; and c) the *morning of separation*,

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during which the poet watches the members of the beloved's tribe depart.[11] Formally, the nasīb in the poems forming the starting point of the intertextual tradition is the first section of a polythematic poem.

(2) The ghazal is a text that intertextually refers to the tradition of independent love poems, as formed during the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries. For the fully developed ghazal of the 9th and 10th centuries, which can be regarded as the starting point for the entire ghazal of the following millennium, it holds that nearly all its themes and motifs can be subsumed under five different categories, namely: 1) *praise* of the beloved's beauty; 2) a *complaint* made by the lover, who cannot (or not yet, or no longer) attain a union with the beloved; 3) a *declaration* of passionate, unsurpassable and unavoidable love; 4) a *reproach* directed against the beloved, who does not satisfy the expectations of the lover in response to his expressions of unselfish love; and finally 5) a *portrayal*, i.e. the description of successful or unsuccessful encounters with the beloved or the depiction of the beloved's individual traits, such as his/her religion, race, eye colour, social position, or his downy beard.[12] In formal terms, those ghazal poems that form the starting point for the intertextual tradition are independent poems of shorter or, at the most, medium length.

The intertextual tradition thus includes criteria in terms of both content as well as form. As both traditions are part of the literary community's consciousness, a poet can either refer solely to one strand of the line of tradition – or however to both simultaneously. Hence, we can find introductions to qaṣīdas which clearly match the thematic catalogue outlined above for the ghazal and not the nasīb, as for example in the panegyric poems by al-Buḥturī (206-284/821-897) addressed to the caliph al-Mutawakkil. On the other hand, there are poems found in the ghazal chapter of the dīwān of Ibn al Muʿtazz (247-296/861-908) which just as clearly refer back to the intertextual line of the old Arabic, Beduin-style nasīb, even while remaining independent poems.[13] In the current volume this problematic distinction is taken up above all by A. Schippers, who examines the relationship between the nasīb and ghazal traditions for the Arabic and Hebrew love poetry of the 11th and 12th centuries in al-Andalus. He is able to show that it is relatively easy to assign every individual

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11 Renate Jacobi: *Studien zur Poetik der altarabischen Qaṣide.* Wiesbaden 1971, 13-49; cf. also *eadem*: "Nasīb." In: *EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam²*, VII, 978-983.

12 Cf. Bauer: *Liebe.*

13 See the contribution to the parallel volume by Thomas Bauer: The Arabic Ghazal. Formal and thematic aspects of a problematic genre.

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verse to one of the two traditions even though the borders between the nasīb and the ghazal are frequently blurred. If the relationship between these traditions – and thus indirectly also that between form and content – may appear problematic to scholars today, for the poets it represented an extension of their possibilities and a stimulus for their creativity.

J. Hämeen-Anttila also emphasizes that the poets were very conscious of the traditions and the genre conventions in which they wrote. In his examination of Abū Nuwās' work (d. c. 198/813), he shows how poems addressed to girls are more conventional and barely transgress the genre boundary of the ghazal, whereas the ghazals addressed to youths were at this time a new genre still in gestation, which is why a greater thematic breadth and numerous instances of overlapping with other genres (*mujūn*, *khamriyya*) is evident.

For the Arabic poetry of the Mamluk period, the study of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's (773-852/1372-1449) dīwān by Th. Bauer shows the paramount importance lent to the love poetry of the ghazal type at this time. It can also be shown that formal criteria were of importance for assigning a poem to the ghazal genre. For although typical ghazal themes were dealt with in introductions to panegyric poems, in the form of epigrams, or in stanza poems, only those poems in the traditional *qarīḍ* form exclusively devoted to the theme of love were qualified *expressis verbis* as ghazal. Ibn Ḥajar's poem cited as an example shows in turn that polythematic poems, which at times were of extraordinary length, were composed within this framework (which if they were Persian poems would no longer have been accepted as a ghazal).

In Persian, the ghazal appears at first easy to define, and in fact exclusively through formal criteria: five to twelve verses; continuous rhyme plus a double rhyme in the first verse; often echo rhyme (*radīf*) as well as the mentioning of the poet's pen-name in the last verse (*takhalluṣ*). Theoretically, any theme can be dealt with in this form, but in practice once again it emerges that the reception of this form is inevitably connected to the ghazal tradition focused on content. So, for example, the panegyric ghazals analysed by J. Meisami in her contribution begin as common love poems, and indeed some of them can only be distinguished from ghazals with a love theme by identifying the external textual context. Once again it is the creativity of the poet that allows the ghazal to be used for various purposes, through skilful manipulation of its "conventional" elements and exploitation of its connotative potential.

R. Würsch examines the extent to which phenomena of content also have an impact on the perception of the Persian ghazal as it is

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formally defined. Although Würsch's contribution is focused on an epos of Niẓāmī (d. 605/1209), the love relationships in this epos do not correspond to those of the epic tradition but rather those of the ghazal. Niẓāmī transforms, as it were, the content of the Persian ghazal in the form of the epos, something that would not even have been possible if a distinct emphasis on content had not also been tied to the ghazal in Persian literature. In her contribution, P. Furrer shows how through a few language devices, including especially through the description of a male beloved, a modern Turkish novelist creates intertextual references to the Ottoman ghazal.

Even in the extreme case of the German *Ghasel*, which is exclusively defined by formal criteria, content components should not be overlooked, as in the examples of intertextual reference back to the Ḥāfiẓ and Rūmī reception of Hammer, Goethe and Rückert. The problematic relationship between form and content is attested by reference works which again and again name Goethe as one of the first German *Ghasel* poets.[14] However, as the contribution by H. Birus in this volume shows, Goethe never wrote a *Ghasel*, at least not one that completely fulfils the formal criteria for a *Ghasel*. Nevertheless, Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* became a reference point for all later *Ghasel* poets, because in it the Orient intertextuality is realised as an ideal type. This intertextual line was difficult to escape. Platen, who – unlike Rückert – translated ghazal poems by Ḥāfiẓ into German in stanza form and not in the *Ghasel* form, used the form of the *Ghasel* to express highly personal experiences. He enthusiastically wanted to leave behind the Oriental tradition of the ghazal: "The Orient is finished, now look at the form as our own."[15] And yet, as the mask of Ḥāfiẓ in the form of the ghazal served him as a means for expressing feelings, which was otherwise prohibited by the repressive sexual morality of the Christian West, the intertextual reference to the Orient remained apparent in his *Ghasel*, as was also the case with Georg Friedrich Daumer, who also donned the mask of Ḥāfiẓ to poetically pronounce his *Weltanschauung* (and is thus mostly misunderstood as a far too free translator of Ḥāfiẓ). H. Birus views the poets who wrote *Ghaselen* without an Oriental quality as even the "more or less all happy exceptions" (p. 429).

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14 Gero von Wilpert: *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur.* Stuttgart [7]1989, 344-5; Hans Dieter Schlosser: *dtv-Atlas Deutsche Literatur.* München [8]1999, 194.

15 Cf. the contribution by H. Birus, 415ff. See also the contributions to the parallel volume by Petra Kappert: Die Ghaselen in August Graf von Platens orientalischer Dichtung, and Gregor Schoeler: August Graf von Platens Ghaselen.

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Transformations of Love and the Love Poem

Love is the sole theme in the Arabic ghazal, as well as the most important theme in the Persian ghazal and the lines of ghazal tradition stemming from it. And yet this says far less than is generally believed. One may be tempted to assume that love poetry is easier to understand for the modern reader than the genre of panegyric poetry, because after all everyone knows what love is, while the social conditions for panegyric poetry have ceased to exist. But one should not lose sight of the fact that emotions are also subject to transformation processes. For beyond biological constants, immutable in historical periods, emotions like love definitely have their own history and historical mutability, as the discipline of mentality history shows. If we view the extensive scope of the emotional worlds presented in the ghazal poems in this volume, then there exists sufficient reason to doubt whether the emotions expressed are compatible with one another or are equally open to the comprehension of the modern reader. We must therefore reckon with *(a) the transformation of the emotion "love" itself.*

But it is not only the lover and his emotions that are subjected to change. A glimpse at the addressee of the love poems in this volume shows that even the object of love also changes over time. Certainly, the fact that from the time of Abū Nuwās onward love poems could be addressed to both girls as well as youths – J. Hämeen-Anttila's contribution identifies common features and differences – points to a transformation of the individual emotional world of the lover. And yet, when we view the social environment prevailing in the "age of the beloved," one that W. Andrews and M. Kalpaklı illustrate so strikingly in their contribution, then it becomes clear that this explanation does not go far enough. And this becomes even more obvious when the beloved is identical with the ruler, as in the panegyric (J. Meisami), or with God, as in the mystical ghazal (Th. E. Homerin, S. Kuntze). We must therefore reckon with *(b) the transformation of the social function of love* as well.

However, not only a lover and a beloved belong to a love poem (in contrast to what we are used to, both roles are clearly distinguished from one another in Islamic love poetry). There is the audience which is also a participant, so to speak, in the experience of love. It is often a peculiar consequence of an all too successfully staged "performance" between the lover (as poet) and the beloved (as addressee) that causes us to forget that the poem revolves precisely around a playing out of the emotions experienced by those two in front of, and requiring, the audience as part of the experience. Perhaps modern observers encounter difficulties in

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trying to understand this because they take their orientation from the concept of lyric poetry that has predominated since the early 19th century, where the poet expresses his/her most intimate feelings in a way that is as "honest" as possible. While this may lead to plumbing the depths of the subjective emotive potential, at the same time it greatly restricts the scope for which the poem can then be used. A poem composed under such premises is nothing more than a poem of a lover on love, and it is to be assumed that the numerous anthologies containing the "most beautiful love poems" which fill our bookstores are in fact purchased by lovers or are to be given to them as gifts, or by those who wish to reminisce over earlier loves.

As the texts presented here suggest, this orientation was certainly only one of several ways love poetry was used in the pre-modern Islamic world and quite often not even the most important. We are thus dealing with *(c) the transformation of the social and emotional function of love poetry*, a function that is often overlooked, precisely because it runs so counter to the expectations held by the modern reader. A few fundamental considerations thus first need to be discussed here.

Any engagement with the ghazal phenomenon is necessarily one that compares cultures, and in a double sense. First, as a phenomenon that transgresses the borders of language and culture, the ghazal can be grasped to any significant degree only through cultural comparisons. Just as important, however, is the fact that the observer is a member of a globalised Western modernity (which also holds true for contemporary Arab and Iranian literary scholars). When opinions are given on pre-modern cultures, scholars therefore necessarily compare cultures, for such judgements can only be made contemporaneously with the conceptual instruments of their time. Of course, scholars are aware of this problem as a rule and have developed from the outset a particular sensibility for the radical otherness of their research topic. And yet, frequently enough the search for this otherness and the attempt to explain it do not lead to satisfying results – and the ghazal phenomenon delivers a vast array of examples. It would appear that the reason for this lies in neglecting to replace, or at the least supplement, a homologous viewpoint with an analogous one.

The concepts "homologous" and "analogous" can be best explained by using an example taken from biology. There organs which are traced back to the same basic type but are different in shape and function (e.g. the forelegs of mammals and the wings of birds) are known as "homologous organs." Conversely, "analogous organs" are those which display the

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same function but have a different building plan and another origin (e.g. the wings of insects and birds). The common approach when comparing cultures (as, e.g., when researching a non-modern culture) is to investigate a phenomenon in the target culture that also exists – at least in name – in the world of the scholar. The attempt is undertaken to describe the differences between the two phenomena, and this is then believed to be a satisfactory completion of the task posed. However, all too often such comparisons end with remarks on a deficiency in the target culture. And in fact there are only a few studies on literature (or historiography, or Islamic theology etc.), which do not contain passages where it is lamented in a regretful tone what literature (or historiography, or Islamic theology, etc.) still then actually had to achieve if they wanted to be genuine literature etc. Not to mention extreme cases of this viewpoint, such as the repeatedly expressed lament that Islamic culture suffers from the lack of a period that could be called a "Reformation" or "Enlightenment." Such views are given without even considering whether Islamic culture had ever experienced those problems which the Reformation and the Enlightenment occurred in response to and sought to resolve, or what then would have been the constitution of an analogous phenomenon in the Islamic world (and whether perhaps there was such one after all). This is especially important, since any homologous phenomenon would not have made sense in that culture at that time, or even have served the same function in that culture.

Obviously it is often difficult to understand that the habitat given to us humans by nature can be furnished in very different ways and that similar looking pieces of furniture can exercise quite different functions in individual dwellings. A certain type of furniture may serve here as a chair, there as a table or a bed. On the other hand, one function can be fulfilled in a variety of dwellings through different furnishings: a carpet, a cushion or a chair may be used for seating. And single functions in a variety of dwellings can be distributed across different furnishings or cannot evolve in one dwelling the same way they can in another.

In Islamic studies, gradually those phenomena we call "theology" and "law" came to be seen as existent in Islamic culture in ways that are quite different from the institutions we have erected to fulfil analogous functions. However, it is much more difficult to assume a similar perspective in the case of emotions which we are inclined to consider as immutable in time and place. This is all the more so virulent as the greater part of humankind's cultural activities mainly serve to cover emotional fields given to us by nature, and many categorisations serve no other purpose than to delimit these emotional areas from one another and to bring them

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into a culturally-approved order. But this order holds no validity beyond the individual cultures. These considerations are relevant for all three forms of transformation that love and love poetry are subjected to.

(a) Transformations of love and sexuality. We already mentioned in the introduction the change in mentality that was mirrored in the transition from the pre-Islamic nasīb to the ghazal of the Umayyad period – indeed without such a transitional development there would probably never have been a form called the ghazal. Already soon after the last ghazal poet of the Umayyad period, a further change becomes noticeable, such as in the poems of Muslim ibn al-Walīd. This change reflected a stronger and more individualised expression as the poet depicts his love to Salmā with an innovative transformation and recombination of traditional topics and motifs (see the contribution by R. Jacobi). The historical development in terms of mentality becomes even more pronounced however in the poetry of Abū Nuwās, and it is no coincidence that two contributions are devoted to him (J. Hämeen-Anttila and G. Schoeler). For, after all, it was Abū Nuwās who was to formatively shape Arabic love poetry for the entire millennium to follow, as no other poet would do. One of the most far-reaching features of his love poetry is the fact that his poems are addressed not only to girls, as was usual, but now also to youths. A great deal has been made of this change and profound psychological considerations on Abū Nuwās have been made, while forgetting that Abū Nuwās merely picked up a theme that "was in the air." This is shown by the fact that homoerotic love poems are already in evidence amongst the contemporaries of Abū Nuwās and were to remain established into the modern epoch. Indeed, the love object of the Persian and Ottoman-Turkish ghazal is almost exclusively a youth. How ghazal poems interact with a culture of actual lovers and beloveds in a 16th century Ottoman town is demonstrated by W. Andrews and M. Kalpaklı and again by T. Kortantamer.

The existence of this same-sex love has resulted in a series of misunderstandings of Islamic culture that are more serious than merely irritating: Islamic culture was examined and studied through the lens of the West's own criteria of how love should function and with what kinds of sexuality, and the universality of these criteria for Islamic culture was rarely, if ever, questioned. This bias has kept many from studying the ghazal at all. Others silently performed a sex change on the loved person and transformed all masculine forms into the feminine (these failed however with the countless references to a downy beard). Others in turn had the presumption to formulate the strangest psychological or cultural history theories. No satisfactory result could emerge from all this, for the

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pre-modern perception of love and sexuality in the Islamic world is simply not homologous to that of the modern West. It is therefore not possible to apply unchanged the Western concept of homosexuality, in existence since the end of the 19th century, to the Islamic pre-modern epoch (and, by the way, neither to the Western pre-modern epoch).

The concept of homosexuality doubtlessly exerts a social effect in the present. Countless people – not only in Western industrial societies – understand themselves to be homosexual and view their gay and lesbian existence as part of their identity. However, this is the result of a century-long emancipation process, in the course of which love relationships between men[16] were regarded at first as sinful, then as pathological and thus combated by whatever means possible. It was precisely at this time – as the most rigorous and allegedly scientifically grounded approaches were undertaken against male-male sexuality – that the harshest collision between Western and Islamic culture also occurred. Western colonialism took up the theme of "natural" vs. "perverse" sexuality in order to justify an alleged *mission civilisatrice*. In the different reflections of the West, the Islamic world at one time appeared as a culture that represses sexuality (key terms: status of woman; veil), at another time as being wild and promiscuous – a cliché already dominant in the Middle Ages.

The Islamic world, which in many cases itself adopted such colonialist views, took over colonialist moral judgements wherever homologous concepts were to be found. However, Islam did not take over the corresponding transformations of these judgements as they occurred in the Western world during the second half of the 20th century. This is especially true where the concept of homosexuality and the judgements that were once connected with it are concerned. A closer look reveals, furthermore, that the Western concept of homosexuality is incompatible with both the usual notions of sexuality and gender in the pre-modern Islamic world, as well as with the religious norms placed upon sexuality. The ideas about sexuality were orientated not towards sex but rather towards the gender of the those involved. The social norm did not distinguish between sexuality adhering to the norm, that is, a relationship between a male and a female partner (heterosexuality), and a deviant sexuality, that is, a relationship exclusively between males (homosexuality). Rather, the distinction shaping the social norm was between an active partner of male gender

16 Love relationships between women found far less attention – and here the pre-modern Islamic world, which was indeed also patriarchal, coincidentally hardly conducted itself any differently.

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(a grown man) and a passive partner of non-male gender, who could either be of the female sex or a youth not yet able to grow a beard (he may also be an eunuch or an effeminate, a *mukhannath*, but these groups hardly ever appear as objects of love). A further difficulty is posed by religious norms, which in turn were also orientated towards the relationships described above. The prohibition of *liwāṭ* does not refer to homosexuality but rather to a sexual practice, just as pre-modern Christianity prohibited certain sexual practices, but not any accompanying sexual inclination. For men in Islamic societies though it was only natural to find young men and women equally beautiful and to fall passionately in love.[17] This situation is similar to that found in ancient Greece and Rome. This love and its literary expression would come into conflict with religious norms especially when it was feared that it could occasion and incite sinful actions. In his contribution Th. E. Homerin mentions the problems religious scholars had with the ghazal.

As a consequence, the rashly formulated equation "homoeroticism = homosexuality = *liwāṭ* = deviant" led the Islamic world to view the ghazal heritage with extremely mixed feelings from the end of the 19th century onwards. A productive reappraisal of this tradition still remains to be undertaken. Instead, far-reaching conflicts are encountered wherever the ghazal tradition or the ideas of love and sexuality expressed in this tradition reach into modernity. How the theme of homosexuality in connection with the ghazal tradition is interrelated with ideological positions and forms part of contemporary political debate – this is a complex of issues that P. Furrer draws our attention to. Equally problematic are the echoes of a ghazal-imprinted mentality discussed in the contribution of S. Guth, who analyses an Egyptian novel of the 1980s which perhaps may be regarded as a parody of the ghazal protagonist, the passionate lover.

(b) Transformation of the social function of love. Towards the end of the Mamluk era, the Mamluk dignitary Uways al-Ḥamawī (d. 910/1504) fell out of favour and landed in prison. To comfort himself, he worked on compiling an anthology with the title *Sukkardān al-ʿushshāq*.[18] While two hundred years before Ṣafī al-Dīn ibn al-Buḥturī focused on prison-

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17 A number of publications have appeared on this subject during the last decade. Here it may suffice to mention: J. W. Wright jr. and Everett K. Rowson (eds.): *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*. New York 1997; Bauer: *Liebe*, 150-184; Arno Schmitt: "*Liwāṭ* im *Fiqh*: Männliche Homosexualität?" In: *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 4 (2001-2002), 49-110.

18 Cf. Wilhelm Ahlwardt: *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin: Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften* [Berlin 1887-1899], no. 8407.

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related themes (ingratitude, imprisonment, death) in the anthology he also compiled in prison,[19] the book of Uways revolved around love to a considerable extent. What is of particular interest here is the fact that two love discourses merge in this book which otherwise mostly run parallel to one another, namely the discourse of the ghazal and the discourse of love treatises and stories in prose.[20] But what moved Uways to seek comfort with the theme of love in prison?

Here, too, a homologous view – one speaks of love when confronted with the phenomenon of love – hardly brings us any farther ahead. Yet love is one of the strongest emotions, and consequently the ghazal is one of the most emotionally charged genres. It is also simultaneously accessible to all members of the literary community and can thus provide an emotionalised atmosphere with a cathartic function, even in contexts far removed from every present love relationship.

If this should at first amaze the modern observer, then this is because poetry is no longer capable of creating a comparably encompassing emotional atmosphere. And yet we should also consider the fact that we live in a world in which countless people read detective novels and murder mysteries, although they themselves neither possess hidden criminal talent nor entertain personal relations with criminals. Yet they gain emotional satisfaction (entertainment, relaxation, catharsis) from their reading. These observations justify the assumption that the omnipresence of love poetry in the pre-modern Islamic world can itself be traced back to how the production and reception of love poetry actualised emotions which surpassed the emotional spectrum that we now view as constituting love between two people. Such poetry made it possible for these emotions to be expressed in language.

In this way, the paradigm of a love relationship between a lover and a beloved can also be used to structure the relationship between a poet and a prince, especially as the relationship between an active lover and a passive beloved forms a perfect parallel to the relations evident in a social hierarchy. Given this premise, it becomes understandable that the ghazal could be used for the purposes of panegyric, as presented by J. Meisami, a development that unfolded first in Persian (and its subsidiary languages) and remained peripheral in Arabic. It is important though to emphasise that this development in Persian was made possible because of the traditional

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19 *Uns al-masjūn wa-rāḥat al-maḥzūn.* Ed. M. Adīb al-Jādir. Beirut 1997.

20 A similar division can be identified in Persian literature. Here the ghazal stands opposite the epos, cf. the contribution by R. Würsch.

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content of love as the ghazal's central theme, and not by virtue of any formal considerations or qualities of the ghazal.

This also holds true for the development that was to crystallise as perhaps the most important one in the history of the Islamic ghazal, that is, the rise of the mystical ghazal. In the mystical ghazal, the relationship between man and God formed the central theme and hence became the most important genre in Islamic religious poetry, next to the eulogy of the prophet. This transformation of the ghazal is consequently represented in turn by two detailed contributions (Th. E. Homerin and S. Kuntze, but also see those by J. T. P. de Brujn and R. Würsch). Th. E. Homerin shows how Ibn al-Fāriḍ transformed two courtly panegyrics by al-Mutanabbī into mystical ghazals. S. Kuntze analyses how the themes of secular love poetry are adopted into mystic poetry.

The focus of B. Embaló's contribution is on a completely different type of beloved. Embaló analyses texts by Nizār Qabbānī (1923-1998) and Maḥmūd Darwīsh (b. 1941) which present the city of Beirut as the female partner of the male poet and author. She asks to what extent images and concepts of the ghazal tradition can still be detected in the texts of these contemporary authors. Equally striking is Maḥmūd Darwīsh's staging of a mythic relationship between a female beloved of cosmic dimension, the land of Palestine, and her partner, the poet. The poem discussed by A. Neuwirth echoes the mystic poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ's famous ghazal *al-Jīmīya* that celebrates the passion of a human lover for his divine beloved. Darwīsh's poem thus attests a "genealogical relation" that exists between the mystical ghazal of classical Arabic culture and modern secular resistance poetry.

Poems by Maḥmūd Darwīsh are also the subject of the contribution by V. Klemm. In these poems the object of love is a Jewish woman, although readers tend to understand them as a political message and identify the woman with Palestine. In the end, it is exactly these political circumstances that makes the fulfilment of the love affair impossible. As is often the case in Arabic love poetry, the realisation of love is shattered by hostile external circumstances. But in the eleven and a half centuries lying between the unfulfilled love affairs of Muslim ibn al-Walīd and Salmā and Maḥmūd Darwīsh and Rītā, not only love poetry but indeed love itself and its social setting have been drastically transformed. It is therefore only consequential that we end our tour through Arabic love poetry, one that started chronologically with al-Walīd, with two articles on this modern Arabic poet.

(c) Transformations of the function of the ghazal. A love poem addresses the love expressed by a lover to a person who is loved.

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What could thus be more obvious than to see the function of the love poem as residing in communicating the nature of this relationship and its specific circumstances? And yet we encounter problems even with such a straightforward definition. In fact, there are poems in which the communicative situation depicted – the lover tells the beloved something in the familiar form of the second person – is the *raison d'être* of the poem. G. Schoeler presents such a poem by Abū Nuwās in his contribution – and it is no coincidence that this poem is particularly difficult to understand. For its purpose is after all to communicate something to the beloved, who brings prior understanding to what is not clear to us. Whether we, the listeners, also understand was irrelevant to the poet. Poems like these are still present everywhere today. Yet their literary value is weak, for their pragmatic value, namely the conveying of information, takes centre stage. Poems that are literary in the narrower sense have to be distinguished from these (G. Schoeler also presents one of them). In these poems the addressee of the poem is not identical with the audience intentionally addressed by the poet. The poem now becomes polyvalent. It is situated in a triangular relationship between the poet, who embodies the lover, the addressee, who embodies the beloved (and who can perfectly well be fictive), and the reading or performative audience, who bestow on the poem their own meanings and who connect their own emotional reactions to the poem. This emotional reaction is reinforced by the musicality of the ghazal. In fact, many ghazal poems are song texts. This circumstance is mentioned again and again (the musical quality of ghazal poems is dealt with in detail in the contribution by R. Jacobi), and yet for us today the disadvantage remains that the melodies to these texts are lost.

The emotions which the poet has as he writes and the audience have as they hear or read a ghazal do not necessarily have to have anything to do with love, and so must by no means everywhere be love where there is a love poem. Indeed, already the pre- and early Islamic nasīb owed its existence mostly not to the need of the poet to write about a past love experience; rather, the need to find an introduction that forms an atmospheric starting point or counterpart to the rest of the poem.

Consequently, when we consider that various kinds of love poetry have accompanied the Islamic world from its very beginnings and when we look at the general significance of the ghazal in society as well as the fact that many other emotive relationships were fashioned in the ghazal form, then it does not appear surprising that we should also find the ghazal or reminiscences of the ghazal in those arenas of the Islamic world where ghazal does not, in fact, function as a love poem.

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This holds in a certain way already for the *perde gazeli*, a ghazal used to introduce a *karagöz* play. This form of poetry thrived during the 19th century. Here the ghazal serves to describe the didactic function of shadow theatre. Examples are presented and analysed in the contribution by J.T.P. de Bruijn.

Even if it did not appear in the form of complete poems, the ghazal could still fulfil social functions. Broken into motifs, the smallest meaningful units of poetry, the ghazal was the subject of *maʿānī* books. In these collections, the motifs of different forms of love poetry were isolated and arranged in a new order. As B. Gruendler shows in her contribution, one of the main functions of these collections was to provide its readers with topics of conversations in literary gatherings. To have comprehensive knowledge of the ghazal could indeed prove beneficial to one's social career.

Even today, the subject of love and its communication in the form of poetry has not ceased to play a socially more important role in the Islamic world, than as is the case in Western societies. The contributions by B. Embaló, P. Furrer, V. Klemm and S. Guth each show in their own way that the ghazal of the past as well as of modern forms of love poetry can assume a high level of social relevance and play an important role in the political struggles of our day.

In summary, we can say that the theme of this volume, namely the ghazal, its historical development and the development of its significance in Islamic society, is far more than the history of a literary genre. For in the societies of the pre-modern Islamic world, this literary form had a significance that is scarcely imaginable for people in modern Western societies, in which the significance of poetry has sunk to a unique low in world history. And fundamental social and cultural parameters are manifested in this genre and its transformations over time to an extent not expressed in other text groups. It is only because of its extensive cultural significance that the ghazal could become one of the most successful genres or literary forms of humankind. And, after countless transformations, the significance of its theme reaches into the present, in which the ruins of the ghazal tradition inspire writers in their search for a new and nevertheless independent identity through a rearranging of its elements. Finally, through its diverse, even often contradictory reception, the ghazal confronts the Western world with its own prejudices in a remarkable way – but also with its visions. It hardly needs to be mentioned that a contribution such as this volume is hardly capable of more than touching on themes, sketching deficiencies, and providing the stimulus for the removal of the latter. But,

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above all, it is hoped that this volume may contribute to making clear how necessary interdisciplinary cooperation is, whereby success in this regard will be secured only if the culture of global Western modernity concedes one thing: that is, what it regards as important for itself is not necessarily of prime importance for all other cultures, and that there may be things which were/are more important for peoples of other epochs and/or other cultures than what drives the leading figures in the societies of modern capitalism. If the understanding of other expressions of human culture is still to have any significance at all, then the homologous viewpoint also will need to be given up and an analogous viewpoint must take its place. This one first of all traces and investigates the significance individual thematic areas and discourses in Islamic culture possessed for its members. It allows this significance to remain unquestioned, and then asks about the functions which these areas and discourses could have fulfilled for the people; and only then, after these steps, searches for possible parallels in its own culture, whereby this search is to take its orientation from the question as to why the findings gained are often so difficult to comprehend for members of Western modernity. Such an approach would guarantee that the self-understanding of their own lived reality is given due weight, thus forming the prerequisite for what can be characterised as, greatly simplified, an unprejudiced attempt to understand other cultures. No further reasons need to be given as to why the ghazal must assume a key position in such an endeavour.

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Ghazal in Classical Arabic Tradition

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IBN ḤAJAR AND THE ARABIC GHAZAL OF THE MAMLUK AGE

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Introduction

In the 9th/15th century, as al-Suyūṭī tells us in his biographical dictionary of the VIPs of the century, seven "shooting stars" were sparkling in the heaven of poetry in Egypt, for it happened at this time that seven of the most important poets bore the name *Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad*, hence engendering the word play "the seven *Shihāb al-Dīn*s" = "the seven *shuhub*" = "the seven shooting stars."[1] Today, however, one would need quite a large telescope to detect even a faint glimmer of these celestial bodies which had once shone so brightly. Due to the almost complete neglect, or may I even say, the contempt and disparagement this literary epoch has suffered from both modern Western and Arab scholars alike, the works of these poets have yet to be edited or even studied, and none of the seven has been granted an entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* or the *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*.

There is, however, a single exception. One of these Shihāb al-Dīns was none other than Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, whose fame as the most ingenious scholar of ḥadīth in post-formative Islam has endured. Yet most people are quite surprised when they learn that Ibn Ḥajar was also a gifted and prolific poet, highly esteemed by his contemporaries, praised by al-Suyūṭī, and considered a great master of the *tawriya* by Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī, who fills many pages of his *Khizānat al-adab* with quotations from the work of Ibn Ḥajar.[2] The importance that Ibn Ḥajar assigned to his own poetic production is shown by the fact that he himself composed three different recensions of his Dīwān, of which at least two

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1 al-Suyūṭī: *Naẓm al-ʿiqyān fī aʿyān al-aʿyān*, ed. Philip K. Hitti. New York 1927, entries 20, 34, 37, 39, 42, 43.

2 Cf. Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī: *Khizānat al-adab wa-ghāyat al-arab*. 2nd. ed., 2 vols. Beirut 1991, vol. 2, 226-8. – It is quite characteristic for the state of our knowledge about Mamluk poetry that even the author of the article on Ibn Ḥajar in the *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature* does not mention Ibn Ḥajar's literary efforts.

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have survived, a larger and a smaller one.[3] We will focus our attention on the smaller recension, a selection of precisely those of his poems which Ibn Ḥajar considered to be especially brilliant as well as exemplary for their respective genre. Hence, this Dīwān shall allow us to construct a preliminary but representative image of the poetry in the middle period of the Mamluk Age.

The Theme of Love in Ibn Ḥajar's Dīwān

For his Dīwān Ibn Ḥajar designed a sophisticated plan to present the material. His arrangement of the poems is based on the number seven. The poems are organized into seven chapters and each chapter is comprised of seven poems, yielding a total of 49 poems (if one disregards the exceptional structure of Chapter Seven). The following chart lists the chapter headings, the total number of lines in each chapter, the number of lines dedicated to love poetry, and the percentage of these lines in the respective chapter:

chapter	lines total	lines about love	% love
1 *al-Nabawiyyāt*	348	126	36
2 *al-Mulūkiyyāt*	325	93	29
3 *al-Amīriyyāt*	338	129	38
4 *al-Ghazaliyyāt*	186	186	100
5 *al-Aʿrāḍ al-mukhtalifa*	309	12	4
6 *al-Muwashshaḥāt*	147	135	92
7 *al-Maqāṭīʿ*	150	106	70
Total	1803	787	43

Chapter Four is dedicated entirely to the *ghazaliyyāt* and it is this chapter that will naturally attract our main attention. But it would be rash to confine ourselves exclusively to the ghazal section because this is not the only chapter that contains love poetry – indeed, the contrary is the case. In fact, *all* chapters contain some sort of love poetry. Therefore, in order to obtain an overview of the different forms of love poetry in the Mamluk age, we must also take the other chapters into consideration.

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[3] Cf. my review of Nūr ʿAlī Ḥusayn's edition of Ibn Ḥajar's *Dīwān* in: *Mamlūk Studies Review* 4 (2000), 267-69. All references in this article are to the following edition: Shihāb al-Dīn Abū ʿAmr: *Uns al-Hujar fī Abyāt Ibn Ḥajar*. Bayrūt 1409/1988.

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Chapter One, *al-nabawiyyāt*, is made up of seven poems in praise of the Prophet, a genre that enjoyed great popularity only from the 7th/13th century onwards. By the time of Ibn Ḥajar though, it was considered a more or less indispensable part of all poetry. Many poems in praise of the Prophet open with a nasīb. It was, however, not easy to decide the degree of eroticism that could be tolerated within this pious genre. Yūsuf al-Nabhānī, the compiler of a famous collection of *madā'iḥ nabawiyya*, had originally intended to leave out all poems that contain descriptions of beautiful girls and youths; he changed his mind however when he realized this would mean abandoning some of the most beautiful poems.[4] Perhaps even some of the seven poems by Ibn Ḥajar (which are completely included in al-Nabhānī's anthology) might have been subjected to this objection: for example, in poem no. 3 we find a rather detailed poetic description of a beautiful youth in lines 13 to 18. But in general, Ibn Ḥajar's nasībs to his *madā'iḥ nabawiyya* are unobjectionably chaste. It deserves to be noted, however, that all of his seven poems in praise of the Prophet start with a nasīb that on average takes up more than a third of the poem.

Chapters Two and Three contain examples of Ibn Ḥajar's secular panegyric poetry. Chapter Two, *al-mulūkiyyāt*, is dedicated to poems in praise of the caliph and of several princes, mainly from the Rasūlid dynasty of Yemen, one of the few Arabic-speaking dynasties of this time whose court heartily welcomed poets. The dearth of poetry-loving princes in the Mamluk period was more than compensated by the great number of *aʿyān* who were interested in poetry and often composed poetry themselves on a more or less professional level. Seven odes on such members of the military and civilian elite form Chapter Four, *fī l-amīriyyāt wa-l-ṣāḥibiyyāt*. The formal standards of panegyric poetry had remained more or less the same since the time of Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī. The poems are usually bipartite and start with a nasīb that can continue either the tradition of the pre-Islamic nasīb or that of the often homoerotic ghazal in the tradition of Abū Nuwās and other poets from the early Abbasid period.[5] Both types are represented in Ibn Ḥajar's poems, as the distinction between both categories had weakened by the onset of the Mamluk period and motifs from both traditions are often intermingled in a single nasīb.

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4 Yūsuf b. Ismāʿīl al-Nabhānī: *al-Majmūʿa al-Nabhāniyya fī l-Madā'iḥ al-Nabawiyya*. 4 vols. Bayrūt s.a., vol. 1, 14f. Cf. also the discussion in Ibn Ḥijja: *Khizānat al-Adab*, vol. 1, 36-40.

5 On this distinction cf. Thomas Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden 1998, 185-97; and id.: The Arabic Ghazal: Formal and thematic aspects of a problematic genre. To appear in: A. Neuwirth, J. Pfeiffer and B. Sagaster (eds.): *The Ghazal as a Genre of World Literature*. Würzburg (BTS 84).

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There is only one single poem (no. 7 of the *mulūkiyyāt*, in praise of the caliph) in which Ibn Ḥajar refrains from starting with an amatory prelude. As in the poems of the first chapter, the nasīb takes up about one third of the poem.

The following Fourth Chapter, *al-ghazaliyyāt*, is entirely dedicated to love poetry. The length of its seven poems ranges from between 12 to 51 lines, clearly surpassing the average of the Mamluk ghazal. In most of these poems motifs from the nasīb and ghazal traditions occur together, though in most of them an elegiac tone prevails. An interesting combination of both is presented in the sixth poem. Here seven lines form a kind of introduction in the vein of the old Arabic nasīb. This part (so to say the nasīb to a ghazal, if this formulation would not reduce the term nasīb to a formal parameter) is followed by twelve lines in which the poet describes the lover's union with a beautiful youth. Such "visit poems" were quite popular in Abbasid times, especially with Ibn al-Muʿtazz, but it seems somewhat surprising to find a Mamluk scholar of ḥadīth engaged in this genre.[6]

There is not much to say about Chapter Five, in which different subjects such as private correspondence and elegies are presented. Only the first poem has a short nasīb.

Much more interesting is Chapter Six, the section comprising *muwashshaḥāt*. This form of strophic poetry became increasingly popular during the Mamluk age, eventually even surpassing the ghazal in the *qarīḍ* metres during the Ottoman period. The content of the *muwashshaḥāt* is hardly distinguishable from that of the *ghazaliyyāt*. Both deal almost exclusively with love and they do so in a more or less identical way. The style of the *muwashshaḥāt* seems to be somewhat lighter, making less use of more elaborate and complex rhetorical devices. Only a single *muwashshaḥ* deals with a subject other than love. It is no. 6 in which, after a nasīb, the poet praises the Ḥanafite chief qāḍī. This proportion is probably typical for the Mamluk *muwashshaḥ*. For although in principle every poetic subject can be dealt with in the form of a *muwashshaḥ*, love poetry remains its proper domain.

Of equal relevance for the study of love poetry is section seven, *al-maqāṭīʿ*, dedicated to epigrams, each of which is comprised by exactly two lines. These two-line epigrams started their proper career in the 3rd/9th century[7]

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6 In: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*, 510-2, I called such poems "Besuchsgedichte" because many of them start with the word *zāra* or *zārat* "he/she came to visit me."

7 On the history of the Arabic epigram cf. Geert Jan van Gelder: Pointed and Well-rounded: Arabic Encomiastic and Elegiac Epigrams. In: *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 26 (1995), 101-40.

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and reached the absolute peak of their popularity in the Mamluk age when many a book was dedicated exclusively to the collection of such epigrams.[8] It is therefore not surprising that Ibn Ḥajar included a chapter of epigrams in his Dīwān, even at the expense of violating his principle of arrangement, since seven epigrams would be an all too meagre number to make up a whole chapter. Ibn Ḥajar thus decided that ten epigrams would equal one qaṣīda. Consequently the chapter is comprised of, at least in theory, seventy epigrams.[9] The main subject of these epigrams is again love. Fifty-three of its 75 epigrams can be reckoned as belonging to the ghazal genre. In these two-liners, topics characteristic for the ghazal are presented in an epigrammatic, pointed form. Among them we find epigrams on young men whose names or professions are used for a play on words or some similar point. These poems represent the Arabic counterpart to the Persian and Turkish *shahrāshūb* genre. Considering the stylistic predilections of the Mamluk era, it is not surprising that the point of many of these epigrams is formed by a *tawriya*. The *tawriya*, a form of *double entendre*, was considered by the Mamluk poets to be the most noble and exalted stylistic device, and Mamluk *literati* were proud of the fact that their age surpassed the previous periods of Arabic literature in the art of the *tawriya*.[10] In the translations appended I have marked the *tawriya*s by underlining one of the meanings the poet alluded to and giving the other in italics. In the following example, the last word can either be interpreted as a form of the noun *shafatun* "lip" or the verb *shafā* "to heal" (p. 340):

سَأَلُوا عن عاشِقٍ في قَمَرٍ بادٍ سَنَاهُ:
أَسْقَمَتْهُ مُقْلَتَاهُ؟ قُلتُ: لا بل شَفَتَاهُ!

They asked about one who is passionately in love with a moon radiant with splendour:
"Did his beloved's eyes cause him sickness?" – "No," I responded, "<u>his lips</u> / *they healed him*!"

Summing up, we can see that a total of 43% of the lines in Ibn Ḥajar's Dīwān deal with love. Love is thus a topic (*gharaḍ*) of first-rate importance in this Dīwān. Even more lines are dedicated to the subject of love than

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8 The most widespread collection of *ghazal* epigrams was the *Marāti' al-Ghizlān fī l-Ḥisān min al-Ghilmān* by Ibn Ḥajar's comtemporary Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Nawājī (788-859/1386-1455). This anthology, in which many of Ibn Ḥajar's epigrams are cited, is extant in many manuscripts but still awaits edition.

9 As a matter of fact, it is comprised of 75, for whatever reason.

10 Cf. S.A. Bonebakker: *Some Early Definition of the Tawriya and Ṣafadī's Faḍḍ al-Xitām 'an at-Tawriya wa-'l-Istixdām*. The Hague et al. 1966.

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to that of praise. If my impression of Mamluk poetry proves correct, it may even be possible to generalize this observation. Whatever the case, it is certain that love poetry played a dominant role in Mamluk literature and that in comparison to the preceding periods of Arabic literature its importance had increased. If we take into account the stylistic and formal plurality in which love poetry manifests itself during Ibn Ḥajar's time, it is perhaps no exaggeration to even state that the Mamluk age was the "Golden Age" of Arabic love poetry.

The arrangement of Ibn Ḥajar's Dīwān can also give us some hint as to the perception of the ghazal genre in this epoch. It is generally assumed that the Arabic ghazal is defined by its content, whereas the Persian and Turkish ghazal is defined mainly by its form. Whereas this is certainly true in general, I have argued elsewhere that it is not appropriate to entirely neglect formal criteria when defining the Arabic ghazal.[11] As Ibn Ḥajar's Dīwān shows, the theme of love is not identical with the ghazal genre, although Arabic terminology permitted no distinction to be made between both usages. If Ibn Ḥajar had been asked about the main topic of his introductions to panegyric odes, his *muwashshaḥāt*, and most of his epigrams, he would have called it ghazal – what else could he have called it? Furthermore, the ghazal was perceived as a distinct poetic genre, as is shown by the fact that Ibn Ḥajar included a separate chapter in his Dīwān comprising of his *ghazaliyyāt*. Obviously the poems that could be assigned to this chapter had to fulfil certain formal requirements, such as being in the traditional qaṣīda form (i.e. non-strophic poetry), as being longer than epigrams, and as not forming to the first part of a polythematic ode. As far as the themes and motifs of love poetry are concerned, there is hardly any distinction between those used for introducing panegyric qaṣīdas and those used in independent ghazal poems. The distinction between the nasīb tradition and the ghazal tradition that is still very apparent in Abbasid times plays a minor role in the Mamluk era.

Ibn Ḥajar's "Red Sea Ghazal"

After this general survey it may be instructive to have a closer look at an individual ghazal poem. Of course it is not possible to find a single poem that contains everything characteristic of the Mamluk ghazal. On the contrary, the poem chosen here displays several features that are rather

11 Cf. note 5 above.

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untypical, such as its extraordinary length and its polythematic structure. Nevertheless, it contains some traits that give this poem a distinctly Mamluk flavour, allowing us to recognize that the Mamluk ghazal is not simply, as it may sometimes seem to be at a brief glance, an unoriginal imitation of the Abbasid ghazal. The selected poem is no. 7 in the *ghazaliyyāt*-section of Ibn Ḥajar's Dīwān. Due to the circumstances of its composition and the basic situation portrayed in it, I will call it Ibn Ḥajar's "Red Sea ghazal." Text and translation are given in an appendix to this article.

Nostalgia and City Panegyric

Ibn Ḥajar's poem is one of the longest ghazals I am aware of. With its 51 lines it is considerably longer than even most of his polythematic panegyric odes. Whereas ghazals of 20 to 25 lines are quite common, 51 lines are exceptional for a ghazal in all periods of Arabic literature. If it were a Persian or Turkish poem, its length would have disqualified it from even being called a ghazal. What is even more striking is the fact that this ghazal is a polythematic poem. Three sections are discernible which can respectively be called "city panegyric" (1-14), "travel account" (15-36), and "general *tashawwuq*" (37-51). All three sections are unified by a single situation: the poet undertakes a sea voyage taking him from his home in Cairo to the Ḥijāz. On this journey he expresses his love and his yearning for all that he loves and has now left behind.

With its melancholy, its longing for a distant place and past love affairs the mood of this first section is reminiscent of that of a traditional nasīb. As is the case with poem no. 6 of the ghazal section, one is again tempted to speak of a nasīb introducing a ghazal. The beloved of the first part is Egypt, the poet's homeland. The literary motif of the "longing for one's homeland" (*al-ḥanīn ilā l-awṭān*) is well attested in all periods of Arabic literature.[12] One should note, however, that Ibn Ḥajar shared the exuberant interest of his contemporaries in the genre praising the Prophet. In this genre it became customary to direct the *ḥanīn ilā l-awṭān* not at one's own homeland, but to express one's longing for the Holy Cities in the Ḥijāz. It is thus not without irony that the poet, who happens to be on a journey to the Ḥijāz, expresses his longing for the country that he has just left behind. His yearning goes, so to say, in the wrong direction, and we are hence

12 Cf. the contributions by Wadad al-Qadi, Kathrin Müller, Susanne Enderwitz, and Yumna el-Id in: A. Neuwirth et al. (eds.): *Myths, Historical Archetypes and Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature*. Beirut 1999, 3-84.

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prepared for a confrontation with the dark side of pilgrimage. This is not the only case in which life's inconsistencies are raised as a subject in this poem. After all, despite its often light and witty character, the ghazal was reckoned among the earnest genres (*al-jiddiyyāt*), not among the jocular ones (*al-hazliyyāt*).[13]

Egypt is treated in these lines in the manner of a city panegyric (or, as we should perhaps say in this case, country panegyric), a genre still awaiting further study.[14] This city panegyric serves here to introduce the general theme of travel. Furthermore, its motifs are imbued with images and formulations of the ghazal. Already the "moons" mentioned in line 1, which will make their more obvious appearance in line 10 (*aḥbābī*), call to mind the beloved (mentioned in the plural). In line 2, the poet seeks "union" (*waṣl*) with the beloved, in this case Egypt. Wine (hinted at in line 3) and a garden establish the appropriate environment for the amorous encounters of lines 12-14. While Egypt itself seems to put the beloved at the poet's disposal in these lines, they nonetheless outstrip Egypt's fragrance (line 6) and her natural beauties. The beloved themselves are depicted in a way typical of the (mostly homoerotic) ghazals of the Abbasid and Mamluk age. They are not identical with the single beloved of the rest of the poem, who is the poet's wife and could by no means be portrayed in this way. But this description gives the poet the possibility to compose at least a few somewhat erotic lines, which create a necessary counterbalance within this unusually pensive ghazal.

The image of Egypt in this passage is that of undisturbed harmony. Egypt is the unattainable beloved, a utopian place where there is harmony between man, culture, poetry and nature: man is represented by the lyrical first person and the inhabitants of this country (line 7); culture is represented by the Qur'ān (lines 2 and 5); poetry is alluded to in the name of the poet Bashshār (line 1); and nature is described in several places. In several respects, Egypt takes the place of the Najd, which is the classical object of nostalgia in the Arabic nasīb,[15] or of the Ḥijāz in *madīḥ nabawī* and mystical poetry.

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13 Cf. the structure of Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-Muḍḥik al-ʿAbūs*, in: Arnoud Vrolijk: *Bringing a Laugh to a Scowling Face*. Leiden 1998, in which the *ghazal* poems are assorted to the first section (*al-jiddiyyāt*).

14 Some notes can be found in Geert Jan van Gelder: Kufa vs. Basra: The Literary Debate. In: *Asiatische Studien* 50 (1996), 338-62; in the same vol. on p. 290 the partial translation of an ode on Damascus by the present author.

15 Cf. Jaroslav Stetkevych: *The Zephyrs of Najd*. Chicago 1993.

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Marital Bliss and Maritime Forlornness

The city panegyric ends with a transition (line 15) that leads into an illustration of the poet's pitiful state, trapped on a vessel amidst the tyrannic ocean. The passage that follows, extending to line 36, is what I would call a travel account. It starts with six lines which form perhaps the most original part of the whole poem, a description of the ship on which the poet travels.[16] In this paragraph the poet displays a distinct sense of humour and irony; nonetheless there is a serious background. The description is cast in the form of a riddle and made up of a series of conceits based on the equation of the ship with a mount or, as in the last line of the series, with a house. The images that are obtained by means of metaphor are subsequently tested for their congruence with the real word. This test reveals a discrepancy between both. The result is a paradox that in turn leads the attention of the listener back onto the path of its linguistic construction. This technique was developed in the 3rd/9th century and extensively used in the ghazal by poets like Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 296/908) and al-Waʾwāʾ (d. c. 370/980).[17] Although still widely used in Mamluk times, this device was not developed further into an overall basis of poetry, as in the case of the "Indian style" of the Persian ghazal. Instead, it was relegated to secondary status in Arabic Mamluk poetry by the *tawriya*. In the passage in question, one of the paradoxes is obtained by a *tawriya*, not a metaphor. In line 18 the poet makes use of the double meaning of the word *jāriya,* which may mean either "ship" or "slave girl." By taking for granted the wrong meaning "slave girl," the poet obtains the paradox that for her part this slave girl enslaves everybody who "penetrates" her (another *tawriya*, since *tabaṭṭana* has a different meaning if it is related to the meaning "ship" or to the meaning "slave girl").

It is perhaps no coincidence that this line stands out in terms of its subject as well as its stylistic basis. The subject of untamed and dangerous sexuality that is presented here by means of a linguistic ambiguity gives a clue to the role of the ship in this ghazal. Obviously the ship is the counter-image to the beloved, who turns out to be the poet's wife. The ship and the sea embody everything that is outside the bonds of society. Even the regularities of everyday experience are suspended. The mount is quicker

16 The subject was not entirely new. Already in pre-Islamic times the poet Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim had complained about his maritime experiences. This poem and other pre- and early Islamic descriptions of seafaring are discussed in detail by James E. Montgomery: *The Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah*. E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust 1997, 166-208. I do not think, however, that Ibn Ḥajar alludes to these poems.

17 Cf. Bauer, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*, 134ff.

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on rugged than on flat ground (line 17) and it makes the traveller immobile while it is constantly on the move (line 21). No wonder then that it is not the object of love. It has only sexuality to offer, a sexuality that is either devouring (line 18) or ambiguous, as line 19 shows. An Arab reader could hardly have overlooked the sexual connotation of the pair of opposites "back" vs. "belly" that had already been introduced into Arabic literature by al-Jāḥiẓ.[18] Whereas the paradox of this line is once more based on a metaphor, in line 20 the poet again reverts to a different device. It is called *ta'kīd al-dhamm bi-mā yushbih al-madḥ*, "blame in the disguise of praise." There is no good in this ship, he says, save that her passengers are driven by fear and despair to read the Qur'ān and to pray. Praying and studying the Qur'ān is a good thing, but the way it is obtained is not good at all. But we realize that even negative phenomena may have a positive result. And, what is even more important, the poet introduces here another central subject of this ghazal. It is the striving to overcome the dangers and vagaries of life through cultural activity.

Now, after the poet has taken us with him on the ship, he describes a sleepless night he spends on board, a night full of yearning and despair. The passage starts with a reference to the theme of resorting to cultural activities again (line 22), gradually moves from the expression of loneliness and pain to the affirmation of sincere love and ends with a remarkable final passage, one which forms a clear counterpoint to the equally remarkable passage with which it started. This concluding section runs from lines 33 to 36. In these four lines the poet expresses his tender feelings in a very simple style. He asks the wind to deliver his greetings to the beloved and to assure her of his lasting love. This is not unusual. What is really unusual however is line 35, where the poet asks the wind to bring greetings to his beloved, adding "but don't tell her anything about my illness, my lasting sleeplessness, and my permanently running tears, lest this may cause her pain." Obviously the poet is afraid that even from such a long distance his wife's calm may be disturbed. She is still, after all, in Egypt, the realm of harmony as it was depicted in the first part of the poem.

A statement like this is contrary to what lovers normally do in ghazal poetry. Usually they are very keen to inform the beloved about their pain as a lover.[19] But in these cases the beloved is almost always a person whose favour has still to be won or to be regained, whereas in this poem the

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18 Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ: *Risāla fī Tafḍīl al-Ẓahr ʿalā l-Baṭn*, trans. William M. Hutchins: *Nine Essays of al-Jahiz*. New York et al. 1988. 167-73.

19 Cf. the theme of "accusation" in Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*, 426-54.

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beloved is obviously the poet's own wife, as we can detect from both this line and line 33. What we therefore have in this poem is a scene of marital bliss, an expression of the mutual love of a married couple.

A love poem on the poet's own wife is a rare find amongst Arabic, (and perhaps even more so) Persian and Turkish ghazals. It is conceivable that in the case of Ibn Ḥajar this may be due to the fact that he was a religious scholar. This though is obviously not the case. In most of his other poems, the young men and women who are depicted as the object of love do not differ at all from those of other poets; nor is his love poetry more chaste and spiritual than that of his more worldly colleagues. The fact that Ibn Ḥajar makes his own wife the subject of a poem reflects rather a general tendency of Mamluk literature to deal with more private and personal matters than was the wont of the centuries before.

The *aʿyān* of Mamluk society, the scholars, *qāḍī*s and civil servants, had taken over the role of the primary addressee of poetry from the princes and generals. They composed panegyric odes to each other of the most prestigious kind, commemorated each other's death in their elegies and elevated what was once only occasional poetry, undemanding artistically, such as congratulatory poems or poems accompanying presents, to the level of works of art. As a result, the Mamluk era became a period of Arabic literature in which life and poetry were perhaps more intimately intertwined than at any other time. In this context it is not surprising to find a poet who composes a sophisticated poem about his longings for his own wife and publishes it in his Dīwān.

The Ambiguities of Life and Language

Finally, let us take a brief look at the last section of the poem, starting at line 37. It is a very general expression of the pangs of unfulfilled love. The beloved here is not necessarily identical with that of the middle section. One of the functions of this section is to create a counterbalance to the first section, the city panegyric, which it matches almost exactly in length, thus providing the poem with a symmetrical structure. Further, this section adds a number of *tawriya*s to the poem. Altogether at least 16 lines of the poem contain a *tawriya*.[20] Nearly half of them are to be found in this last section, which we can thus consider to be more or less made up of *tawriya*s. Whereas we find nearly all comparisons in the first section (lines 1, 2, 12, 29),

20 Cf. lines 1, 7, 8, 18, 22, 26, 28, 30f., 36, 38?, 39, 40, 43, 44, 47, 50, 51.

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the middle section is dominated by the metaphor and the last by the *tawriya*. The distribution of semantic stylistic devices thus corresponds to their historical development, but also forms a line of gradually increasing ambiguity.

Western and Arab scholars alike often regarded the *tawriya* as a nice but superficial intellectual game. Perhaps a poem like the present one can show that there is more to this game and can give us a hint of the deeper meaning of the *tawriya* in the Mamluk age. Ibn Ḥajar's poem is a ghazal, but it is not only a poem about love: it also deals with loss, loneliness, anxiety, uncertainty, and the feeling of being a stranger in an alien and unpredictable world. However, Ibn Ḥajar was a scholar and like almost all poets of this period he had trained as a religious scholar, a fact that certainly accounts for the popularity of the *tawriya* in this age. As a scholar, there was one fixed point in his life, namely scholarship, i.e. reading, studying, writing, composing poetry, in sum, all manner of creatively handling language which pursued the aim of detecting and interpreting the divine law governing this world. This is alluded to several times in the poem. Besides the numerous references to Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, to historical figures and to literature in general (as in line 38, from which we can conceive that poetry is more reliable than reality), I will only point out line 22, where the poet declares that books are his only comfort. But even this final and sole comfort is something ambiguous, for books cannot provide absolute certainty as language itself is ambiguous. The poet shows us this in this very line, in which the word *asfār* can either be read as the plural of *safar* "journey" or as the plural of *sifr* "book." And this ambiguity is demonstrated amply by the many other *tawriya*s in this poem.

The famous poet and writer Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī, Ibn Ḥajar's contemporary and admirer, advises everybody to study the *tawriya* carefully and quotes a statement from al-Zamakhsharī: an understanding of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* can help a great deal in mastering the *tawriya* because all these texts are governed by the same law of ambiguity.[21] The *tawriya* is therefore nothing other than the human imitation of the ambiguity inherent to the divine revelation itself. Man will never succeed in giving a definite interpretation of it, will never get beyond a certain level of probability and will never be in the possession of absolute certainty. Therefore, our poet's hope to overcome the uncertainty of the world and the forlornness of the stranger by taking refuge in the world of learning is denounced by the text

21 Cf. Ibn Ḥijja: *Khizānat al-Adab*, vol. 2, 40.

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itself, by the ambiguity of its own words. Thus we can understand why the poem ends with two lines of despair and hopelessness, two lines which we can only hope that his wife never read. In these lines the poet declares that all his endeavours to find security have been in vain and, of course, he expresses this with five *tawriya*s. Every *tawriya* has a second meaning pertaining to an overall field of economy.

Since ambiguity and uncertainty are necessarily inherent to the texts themselves, thereby reflecting the basic condition of our life in this world, even the study of texts and the reading of books cannot provide the comfort the poet was seeking. The harmony that was first projected into an ideal image of Egypt, but was lost by setting out for a journey, is not regained. Though the structure of the poem is conspicuously symmetrical, the poem does not end where it started. The initial harmony, which already was of a utopian kind, cannot be restored. The poem thus undergoes a development that can be illustrated by the following chart:

1 city panegyric (14 lines): *harmony established*

2 sea journey (21 lines)

2.1 ship – [negative]: *temptation, harmony disturbed*

2.2 poet – [transition]: *attempt to find harmony in culture*

2.3 wife – [positive]: *harmony must not be disturbed*

3 *tawriya* passage (15 lines): *harmony challenged*

In the end, there remains only a last refuge, and this is to accept the divinely ordered ambiguity of life and to celebrate it in one's own creative play with words. For the poets in the Mamluk age with their scholarly training, the play with words must have been more than a mere play. It must have been a reflection of their own perception of the condition of man in this world. And it is, I think, easy to understand now that no other style could have matched better Ibn Ḥajar's desire to express the strangeness of men in this world, which is the final message of this *ghazal*.

Ibn Ḥajar's poem has a structure reminiscent of that of the polythematic qaṣīda. Nevertheless, it is clearly recognizable as a *ghazal*, even if we disregard the author's own assignment. The poem's immediate subject is love. This theme remains visible in all its different sections, so that there is no need to modify the definition of the *ghazal* as principally being a monothematic poem about love. Behind the theme of love we notice,

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however, a profound preoccupation with existential questions concerning one's own life. In pre- and early Islamic times poets such as Labīd, Zuhayr, or Kaʿb would have dealt with such a subject in *fakhr* poems. This genre had ceased to play any role in the Mamluk period. Instead, the ghazal had opened itself to the treatment of private and personal matters of the most different kinds. With its personal subject and the virtuoso employment of the *tawriya* this poem shows two typical features of Mamluk poetry. At the same time, it is an excellent example of how the ghazal genre possessed a capability for development and its versatility. Furthermore, this poem shows that the Mamluk age is certainly not the least interesting period of Arabic literature and may encourage further studies in this fascinating field.

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Appendix: Text and Translation[22]

١ متى يتجلّى أُفْقُ مصرَ بأقماري[23] وأروي عن اللُقْيا أحاديثَ بَشّارِ
٢ وأقرأُ آيَ الوصل من صُحْف أوجهٍ مواضعُ ختْمِ اللَثمِ فيها كأعشار
٣ وأهتزُّ كالنشوانِ من فَرَح اللقا بلا مِنَّةٍ عندي لكاسات خَمّار
٤ إلى مصرَ واشوقاً لمصرَ وأهلِها تشوُّقَ صبٍّ للنَوَى غيرِ مُختار
٥ ويا وحشتي يا مصرُ منكِ لبلدةٍ لداخلها بالأمن بُشرى مِنَ الباري
٦ تَهُبُّ نسيماتُ الشمال بأرضها فينشقّ منها الأنفُ جَوْنةَ[24] عطّار
٧ مُحسَّدةٌ لا قَدْحَ فيها لعائب على أنّ زَنْدَ الفضل من أهلها واري
٨ إذا فاخروها قام صارمُ نِيلها بمقياسِ صدقٍ كاسراً كلّ فخّار
٩ مراتعُ لذّاتِي ومَلهَى شبيبتي ومبدأُ أوطاني وغايةُ أوطاري
١٠ ومَنْزِلُ أحبابِي ومَنْزِه مُقلتِي ومطلعُ أقماري ومغرب أفكاري
١١ لبستُ ثياب اللهو فيها خلاعةً وقامت على خَلعي عذاريَ أعذاري
١٢ فكم من غزالٍ لي بِها كغزالةٍ تملّكَ روحي بِالتفات وإسفار
١٣ ومِن قمرٍ للبدر من نورِ وجهه سرارٌ ومَحْقٌ بعد تِمٍّ وإبدار
١٤ ينمُّ علينا عرفُه حين ينثني فيهْزَا بأغصانٍ ويُزري بأزهارِ
١٥ أأحبابَنا أُصلِيتُ في البحر بَعدَكم بناري[25] وأنتمْ في رياضٍ وأنْهار
١٦ رمتْني النوى حتى ركبتُ مطيَّةً أحاديثُها فيها غرائبُ أسمار

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22 تابعت تحقيق شهاب الدين أبي عمر الذي نشر تحت عنوان (أنس الحجر في أبيات ابن حجر) في بيروت عام 1988/1409 وقارنت نصه بتحقيق ديوان ابن حجر العسقلاني لفردوس نور علي حسين ، مدينة نصر 1996/1316، وأثبت الاختلافات في الحاشية .

23 تحقيق حسين: بأقمار

24 تحقيق حسين: جُونة

25 تحقيق حسين: بنارِ

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١٧ إذا السهلُ أوفى أبطأت في مَسيرها وتسرعُ في الأمواج سيرًا بأوعار
١٨ وجاريةٌ لكنّها تسترقُّ مَن تَبَطَّنَ فيها مِن عبيد وأحرار
١٩ وإن[26] رُحِلَتْ في البطنِ تمشي سريعةً على ظهرها فاسمعْ عجائب أخباري
٢٠ ولا خيرَ فيها غير أنّ نزيلَها نديمٌ لقرآن مُديمٌ لأذكار
٢١ وأعْجَبُ ما أحكيه أنّي مسافرٌ مُقيمٌ ولكن منزلي أبداً ساري
٢٢ وفي سفري لم ألقَ لي من مؤانسٍ سوى الكُتْبِ أجلو الهمَّ منها بأسفار
٢٣ أبيتُ سميرَ الأُفق أحسبُ أنكم كواكبُه حتى تعشَّقتُ سُمَّاري
٢٤ وفارقتُ أنفاسَ الحبيب وثغره فطال الدُجى من فقد صبحي[27] وأسحاري
٢٥ بكى ناظري بالدمع والدمِ والكرى فمُذْ نفِدَتْ طُرّاً بَكاكُمْ بأنوار
٢٦ فما أظلم الدنيا بعيني وقد نأتْ وُلاة غرامي العاذلون وأقماري
٢٧ لبستُ ثياب الليل حزناً على اللقا وصرتُ لِذيل الدمع ايَّة جرّارِ
٢٨ وما في ضميري غيركُمْ مذْ فقدتُكُمْ فحذْفُكُمُ عن مقلتي حذفُ إضمار
٢٩ وأنتمْ مُنى روحي وهَدْيُ بصيرتِي وتنويرُ أبصاري وتيسيرُ إعساري
٣٠ نزلتُمْ بقلبي وهْو عمّارُ حبّكمْ فأضرمتمُ[28] دار الضيافة بالنار
٣١ ففي البينْ لا تبغُوا له القتلَ إنَّ مِن علامةِ أهلِ البغي مقتَلُ عمّارِ
٣٢ لعلَّ[29] النوى ليستْ بعارٍ لأنَّني عهدتكمُ لا تُغْمضون على عار
٣٣ فيا نسماتِ الريح بالله بلِّغي سلامي على روحي المقيمة في داري
٣٤ سليها تسامِح مقلتي بمِنامها لتحظى بطيب الوصل مِن طيفها الساري

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26 تحقيق حسين: إذا
27 تحقيق حسين: من بعد صبحِ
28 تحقيق حسين: فأحرقتُم
29 كذا في تحقيق حسين ، وفي تحقيق ابي عمرو: أظنّ

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٣٥ ولا تخبريها عن سقامي يسوؤها ولا سهري الباقي ولا دمعيَ الجاري
٣٦ وقولي لها إنّي على عهد حبِّها مقيمٌ وإن لم تُطْوَ شُقَّةُ أسفاري
٣٧ رحلتُ بلا قلبٍ و لا أَنَسٍ ولا لذيذ منامٍ وهْي أُنْسي وتذكاري
٣٨ وأذكر داراً قد حوَتْ طِيبَ عَرفها فأرتاحُ في الأشعار للرَنْد[30] والغار
٣٩ ومَن رضيَ الآثارَ من بعد عينه فمَنْ لِيَ مِن معشوقِ قلبي بآثار
٤٠ فإنْ أصبحَتْ مَنْ هامَ قلبي بِحسنها[31] مهاجرةً أَمْسَتْ دموعيَ أنصاري
٤١ كفى حزَناً أن لا نصيرَ سوى البكا لتخفيف أحزانٍ وإخفاء أسراري
٤٢ وما استعبرَ العُشَّاقُ إلا ليدفعوا يدَ الحُزْنِ جهلاً عن قلوبٍ بأبصار
٤٣ أُسِرُّ غرامي من عذولٍ وحاسدٍ فإعلانُ صبري لا يشابه إسراري
٤٤ بُليتُ بمن لم يدرِ مِقدارَ صبوتِي فيا لَهَفِي بعد الرحيل على الدارِ
٤٥ وأَبسمُ لكن لو بدا لكَ باطني ظهرتَ على نارٍ به ذاتِ إعصار
٤٦ ورُبَّ صديقٍ ضاقَ بالبين صدرهُ وما كلُّ مَن لاقى الفراق بصبَّار
٤٧ يقول أُواري لوعَتِي[32] أو أبُثُّها وما حالُ زندِ الصبر قلتُ له واري
٤٨ لقد غرَّني داعي الفراق فها أنا وردتُ ولم أعلم عواقب إصداري
٤٩ حليفُ لأشجانٍ طليقُ مدامعٍ صديقٌ لأحزانٍ أسيرٌ لأفكاري[33]
٥٠ وأنفقتُ عُمري للوصول إلى اللقا فما نِلْتُ ممّا أرتجي عُشْرَ مِعشار
٥١ سوى أنَّ همِّي في فؤادي مقرَّرٌ وراتبُ دمعي بعدهم مطلقٌ جاري

30 تحقيق حسين: للزند ، وهو خطأ بيّن
31 تحقيق حسين: بحبّها
32 كذا في تحقيق حسين ، وفي تحقيق ابي عمرو: لومتي
33 تحقيق حسين: لأفكار

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1 When will the horizon of Egypt be disclosed again by my moons? When will I transmit again the traditions of the bringer of glad tidings / *Bashshār* about reunion?[34]
2 And when will I read the verses of union from the leaves of faces in which the seal imprints / *complete recitation* of kisses resemble the *ʿushr*-marks.[35]
3 And out of the joy of reunion sway as if I were drunk without having received the benefit from the cups of a wine merchant?
4 To Egypt, oh yearning for Egypt and its people, a yearning like that of a man struck by excessive love who did not opt for separation.
5 Oh my loneliness, oh Egypt, oh what a country you are! The creator himself has brought the glad tidings that he who enters it will enjoy security.[36]
6 Oh country where the north wind's soft breezes blow, from which the nose can smell a perfumer's jar!
7 Despite all envy the faultfinders can find nothing to reprove / *no means to kindle the fire of reprove*, and yet the flint of bounty strikes bright flames in the hands of its inhabitants.
8 When the faultfinders vie in glory with Egypt, the cutting sword of the Nile rises and defeats all boasters / *shatters all pottery* with the Nilometer of truth.
9 Egypt, pasture of my pleasures, delight of my youth, my first homeland, my last desire,
10 Abode of those who I love, pleasure ground of my eyeballs, place where my moons rise and my thoughts set.
11 There I put on the garment of amusements dissolutely, while my excuses fulfilled their duty to stripe me off all restraint.
12 How many a gazelle resembling a rising sun did I have there that seized my spirit when it turned its face and when it began to shine,[37]

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34 In the excellent commentary by Shihāb al-Dīn Abū ʿAmr in his *Uns al-Ḥujar fī Abyāt Ibn Ḥajar* the reader can find a comprehensive treatment of the rhetoric devices in this poem. In general, I will not repeat his notes here.

35 The mention of the *ʿushr* marks, which mark every tenth of the Qur'ān, and the words *āy* and *ṣuḥf* (*metris causa* for *ṣuḥuf*) suggest that the word *khatm* is also a *tawriya* that went unnoticed by Abū ʿAmr. *Khatm* (or *khatma*) is the term for the recitation of the entire Qur'ān or a collection of *ḥadīth*. Ibn Ḥajar composed one of his odes in praise of the Prophet on the occasion of a *khatm* of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.

36 Allusion to Q 12/99: *udkhulū Miṣra in shāʾa llāhu āmināna*.

37 Note the *laff wa-nashr*: *iltifāt* refers to *ghazāl*, *isfār* to *ghazāla* "rising sun."

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13 And many a moon who, by the light of his face, made the full moon wane and darken after it had been full and bright.
14 As he bends to and fro, his fragrance spreads to us. Thus he derides the twigs and disparages the flowers.
15 Oh my beloved! After I have left you, I have been set on fire on the sea while you stay amidst meads and rivers.
16 Distance has afflicted me to such a degree that I even ride a mount about which one can only report by telling the most strange nightly tales.
17 When she approaches the smooth land, she slows down her course, but when the billows surge, she speeds up in rugged ground.
18 A slave girl / *ship* is she, but whosoever penetrates her / *enters her belly* is made her slave, be he a slave or a free man!
19 Though people – now listen to my amazing stories! – travel in her belly, she moves along quickly on her back![38]
20 There is no good in her save that he who boards her will be a confidant of the Qur'an and a persevering prayer.
21 But the strangest thing I can relate is that I am an immobile traveller whose home is constantly on the move!
22 On my journey I could not find a companion apart from writings. Thereby I removed my anxiety by means of books / *journeys*.
23 I spent the night (sleepless) as a conversation partner of the horizon and imagined you to be its stars until I started to fall in love with my nightly entertainers.
24 I parted with the breath and the teeth of my beloved. Therefore night's darkness had no end, since I have lost my daybreak and my dawn.
25 My eye wept tears and blood and sleep, and after they all had been consumed completely, it wept its sight for you.[39]
26 How dark / *tyrannical* has the world become in my eyes since / *though* those in charge of my passion / *torment* are far away: the reprovers and my moons!
27 I put on night's garment out of grief (over the impossibility) to meet you – how had I to drag the trail of tears!

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38 Due to its protruding form, the lower, submerged part of the ship is considered to be its back. Therefore, the ship is an inversion of a camel.

39 *Nūr al-ʿayn*, the "light of the eye" (cf. German "Augenlicht") is the eyesight. I did not imitate this image in the translation. The rhetoric device is called *mushākala*, cf. Abū ʿAmr's commentary.

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28 Ever since I have lost you, I don't have anybody in my mind apart from you. Therefore, your being removed from my eyes engenders the removal of my thoughts / *elision of elipsis*.
29 You are the desire of my soul, the guideline of my insight, the lightening of my eyesight, the relief of my distress.
30 You took lodgings in my heart, which is the habitation / *ʿAmmār* of my love for you, but then you set fire to the guest house!
31 So do not unjustly seek by your parting to kill the heart / *ʿAmmār*, for we know that it is the wont of those who seek injustice to kill ʿAmmār![40]
32 Maybe, though, there is no shame in separation, since I have always known you as a person who could never tolerate anything shameful.
33 Oh ye wind's breezes, by God, bring my greetings to my spirit that dwells in my home!
34 And ask her the favour to grant my eyes her vision in my dreams so that her nightly apparition may attain a pleasant union with me!
35 But don't tell her anything about my illness, my lasting sleeplessness, and my everflowing tears, lest this may cause her pain,
36 And say to her that I will immovably stick to my love for her, even if I have not come to an end with the hardships of travel yet.[41]
37 I departed without heart, without sociability and without the sweetness of sleep, since she is my intimacy and towards her are dedicated all my thoughts.
38 I think of a house that is filled by the scent of her perfume. Therefore, in reading poetry I find my pleasure if I come across laurel and bay-tree.
39 But who is satified with traces after having had the real thing? And who will even bring me tidings from the beloved of my heart?
40 If she whose beauty is the passion of my heart has gone far away / *become one of the Muhājirūn*, my tears will come to my aid / *be my Anṣār*.
41 It is sad enough that there is no helper besides weeping to soften my sorrows and to conceal my secrets.

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40 ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir was a companion of the Prophet. "A notable prophecy attributed to Muḥammad concerns the death of ʿAmmār at the hand of the 'rebel band,' which he condemns to Hell" (H. Reckendorf in: *EI²:Encyclopaedia of Islam²* , I, 448b).

41 Abū ʿAmr points to a *tawriya* in the word *muqīm*, which may also mean "staying at the same place" (as opposite to "travelling"; cf. line 21). I did not mark this in the text since it is already reflected in the word "immoveably."

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42 The reason why passionate lovers shed tears is that in their ignorance they try to remove the hand of grief with their glances from the heart.

43 I conceal my passion from those who censure and envy me, but my manifestation of steadfastness does not bear any resemblance to my concealment / *something that would bring me joy.*

44 I have been afflicted with love for one who does not know the extent of my desire for him – oh my grief, after departure, for the abode / *him who knows*![42]

45 I smile, but if you could see what happens inside me, you would notice in me a fire with a whirlwind.[43]

46 Many a friend whose equanimity had been disturbed by departure – not everyone who endures separation is a patient endurer –

47 Used to ask: Shall I conceal my anguish or reveal it? What is the state of the firestick of endurance? And I answered: Conceal it! / *It has taken fire*![44]

48 I have been beguiled by one who urged me to part. Here I am now, plunged into an affair the outcome of which I do not know:

49 A confederate of grief, one whose tears have been set free, a friend of sorrows, a captive of my lonely contemplations.

50 I spent my whole life with the endeavour to attain / *for the receipt of* union, but I did not gain a hundredth of what I had hoped for.

51 (I gained nothing) but grief that has settled down / *has been assigned to me* in my heart and steady / *a set pension of* tears that have been set free / *exempted (from taxes)* after my separation from you and are running / *are my salary.*[45]

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42 "He who knows" (*ad-dārī*) should, of course, be spelt with final *yā'*. But this is irrelevant in the case of a *tawriya*.

43 Q 2/266: *fa-aṣābahā iʿṣārun fīhi nārun fa-ḥtaraqat.*

44 Contrary to Abū ʿAmr, I would consider the device in this line an *istikhdām*, not a *tawriya* proper, since both meanings of *wārī* are actually needed.

45 If I correctly understand al-Nābulusī's notes on the *tawjīh* (cf. Pierre Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician or The Schemer's Skimmer*, Wiesbaden 1998, no. 67), Ibn Ḥajar's lines present several *tawriya*s and not a *tawjīh*, since the lines give a correct meaning even if we suppose the technical meanings of the words to be intended. This is also Abū ʿAlī's analysis. I am not so sure, however, as far as line 2 is concerned.

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MOTIF VS. GENRE

Reflections on the Dīwān al-Maʿānī of Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī

Beatrice Gruendler
(Yale)

The ghazal broadly conceived is well-travelled in world literature. Its forays reach beyond the languages of Islam to medieval Hebrew and Romantic German lore. One might argue that this multiversatility comes naturally to the ghazal. Already in its Arabic beginnings, love poetry fulfilled various functions beyond its thematic intent. It served to introduce a qaṣīda's ulterior goal (praise, boast or message) or to set the stage for a religious sermon. Interpreted figuratively, love poetry became a foil for allegiance to a ruler, and mystical union with the divine. Lastly, love poetry thrived when dissected into its smallest quotable parts, or motifs.

The present contribution focuses on this last modus vivendi of the ghazal. The sum of poetic motifs (*maʿānī sg. maʿnā*), touching upon any form or aspect of love, exceeds the semantic range of the ghazal in its strict sense of a generic category. This calls into question the sole reliance on genre in dealing with classical Arabic verse. Poetic motifs certainly signaled a thematic context to initiated audiences, but they also led a life of their own in situations where long compositions had no place.

A brief look at the terminology is in order. In modern parlance, the nasīb denotes a former love that merely introduces a polythematic qaṣīda, whereas the ghazal designates an independent poem about a present relationship, though the boundaries between both terms can be blurred.[1] Medieval poetic critics, however, did not distinguish and used both terms

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[1] See Renate Jacobi: Time and Reality in *Nasīb* and *Ghazal*. In: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 16 (1985), 1-17 and, for a very nuanced distinction, Thomas Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden 1998, 185-97 esp. 196. The modern understanding of ghazal as an independent love poem is a retroactive expansion of the Persian ghazal, which gained currency in Europe earlier than its Arabic counterpart; see Gregor Schoeler: Die Einteilung der Dichtung bei den Arabern. In: *ZDMG* 123 (1973), 9-55 esp. 16.

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(and others) indiscriminately.[2] Theoreticians from the third/ninth to the fifth/eleventh century classified poetry by the thematic intentions (*aghrāḍ* s. *gharaḍ*) of single verses or verse groups and traced these to underlying attitudes. They labeled anything concerned with love interchangeably nasīb, ghazal, *tashbīb* or *tashabbub*.[3] In the rare case of a distinction made between nasīb and ghazal, it did not depend on the unique or combined treatment of love within a poem but other criteria. For instance, Qudāma b. Jaʿfar (d. 337/948) and, based on him, Ibn Rashīq (d. 456/1063 or 463/1071) distinguished ghazal, as the poetic idea of a man's attraction (*ṣabwa or taṣābī*) to a woman, from nasīb as the poetic manifestation of that attraction.[4] Another group of literary scholars, concerned with the practical subdivision of poetry, were the recensers of dīwāns. With the wealth of genres in the Abbasid period, they increasingly favored the order by theme over the older one by rhyme letter. Other than the theoreticians, the recensers dealt with whole poems and they implicitly acknowledged the emergence of unithematic genres, such as the ghazal, by creating separate chapters for them. But similar to the theoretical literature, the headings for dīwān chapters containing unithematic love poems alternated among the

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2 Cf. Schoeler: *Einteilung*, 16, 29 and Bauer: *Liebe*, 185-86.

3 Nasīb is chosen as a *gharaḍ* by Qudāma in his *Naqd al-shiʿr* (as praise specific to women forming a counterpart to *madīḥ*) and, following him, by al-ʿAskarī in his *Kitāb al-Ṣināʿatayn*. (On his *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, see n. 15). Ibn Rashīq cites nasīb in his *ʿUmda fī maḥāsin al-shiʿr* variously (a) as one of the basic types (*arkān*) in his first anonymous list, (b) qualified as *riqqat al-nasīb* and ascribed to the [affective] foundation (*qāʿida*) of emotion (*ṭarab*) in his second list – comparable to Ibn Qutayba's *shawq* as one of the poetry's driving forces (*dawāʿī*) – (c) again as *gharaḍ* in his third list, credited to al-Rummānī (d. 384/994) and finally (d) it appears in his own chapter subdivision; see Schoeler: *Einteilung*, 13, 22, 24-26, 28.

Ghazal is subsumed by Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Wahb al-Kātib (fl. mid-fourth/tenth century) in his *Burhān fī wujūh al-bayān*, together with *ṭard, ṣifat al-khamr* and *mujūn* under the heading of light poetry (*lahw*) as one of four basic attitudes (*funūn*); following him ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Nahshalī (d. 405/1014) groups it together with description, portrayal (naʿt) and comparison under the same heading and again as one of four basic attitudes (*aṣnāf*). This constitutes Ibn Rashīq's fourth list; see *ʿUmda*, 17-18, 26.

Cognate terms are *tashbīb* and *tashabbub*. The former is used by Thaʿlab (d. 291/904) in his *Qawāʿid al-shiʿr* for one of poetry's branches, and it is also grouped by an anonymous critic together with several other terms under the heading of *madḥ* as one of only two basic types (*nawʿān*) in Ibn Rashīq's fifth and last cited list; see *ibid.*, 10, 27. For al-ʿAskarī's use of these terms, see n. 15.

4 Schoeler: *Einteilung*, 16, and Ibn Rashīq: *al-ʿUmda fī maḥāsin al-shiʿr wa-ādābihi wa-naqdihi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyiddīn ʿAbdalḥamīd. Beirut 1981 rpt, vol. 2, 117. al-Ḥātimī notes the nasīb's introductory function in a poem without discussing the ghazal, see *ibid.*

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same terms,[5] unless the poems were split according to the beloved's gender into *mudhakkarāt* and *mu'annathāt*, as in the case of Abū Nuwās. In the much later *Dīwān* of Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d.c. 750/1349), three cognate terms are combined into the rhyming chapter heading *Fī l-ghazal wa-l-nasīb wa-ṭarā'if al-tashbīb*.[6]

The interchangeable medieval terms nasīb, ghazal, *tashbīb* and *tashabbub*, were more flexible than today's generic concept of ghazal, for they included any poetic articulation of love, even if it appeared in a poem serving another purpose, such as an ode (*qaṣīda*) or flyting (*naqīḍa*). The theoreticians' thematic classification into *aghrāḍ* did not discriminate between sections and independent poems, as long as these kept to one theme. But even if most genres invented in Islamic times, such as ghazal, *khamriyya* and *waṣf*, practically fitted under one major theme, the theoreticians were still unaware of the modern concept of genre. As a result, to define ghazal as a genre – itself an indispensable approach – necessarily excludes some Arabic love poetry. Such passages of love poetry that do not amount to ghazals in the modern sense remain, however, within the purview of motif anthologies, which thus provide a third way of classifying poetry. This is why the motif has been chosen for this investigation; as the smallest meaningful unit of poetry it offers advantage different and complementary to that of genre.[7]

The theme of love in particular gave rise to a genre of treatises devoted to its aspects and events as represented in poetry and prose.[8] However, the question pursued here concerns the place of love within the entire spectrum of classical Arabic poetry.[9] This is covered in *ma'ānī* collections, among

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5 Nasīb is used as chapter heading in the recension of al-Mutanabbī's (d. 354/965) *Dīwān* by Maḥmūd b. Salmān al-Kātib al-Ḥalabī (d. 1325); see *ibid.*, 47.
Ghazal is used in the *Dīwān* of Abū Tammām (d. 232/845) by 'Alī b. Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. 375/985), that of Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 296/908) by al-Ṣūlī (d.c. 335/946), and that of Ḥusāmaddīn al-Ḥājirī (d. 1235). Augmented to *raqīq wa-ghazal* it appears in the *Dīwān* of al-Buḥturī (d. 284/897) by 'Alī b. Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī; see *ibid.*, 42, 44-45 and 48.

6 *Ibid.*, 49.

7 Besides *ma'ānī*, there are also other ways of partitioning poems, e.g., by a figure of speech (*al-Tashbīhāt* by Ibn Abī 'Awn) or *aghrāḍ* (*al-Ḥamāsa* by Abū Tammām). The more detailed thematic subdivision of al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsa* likens it to *ma'ānī* books except for the lack of commentary; cf. Brahim Najar: *La mémoire rassemblée: poètes arabes "mineurs" des IIe/VIIIe et IIIe/IXe siècles*. Paris 1987, 168.

8 See Lois A. Giffen: *Theory of Profane Love among the Arabs: The Development of the Genre*. New York et al. 1971, 3-50 and Stefan Leder: *Ibn al-Ǧauzī und seine Kompilation wider die Leidenschaft: Der Traditionalist in gelehrter Überlieferung und originärer Lehre*. Beirut/Wiesbaden 1984 (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 32), 54-57.

9 There are further ways of anthologizing poetry, such as alphabetically (Muḥammad b. Aydamur, *al-Durr al-farīd*) or by poet, either chronologically (Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi'r wa-l-shu'arā'*) or geographically (al-Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr*); cf. Najar: *Mémoire*, 168.

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which the one by the literary critic, poet and philologist Abū Hilāl al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAskarī (d. after 395/1005) from ʿAskar Mukram in Khūzistān stands out as the most mature.[10]

According to the sparse information about him, he earned his living by selling cloth, incongruous with an alleged royal Sasanian descent. He belonged to the circle of Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAskarī (d. 382/992), his main source and teacher, who enjoyed the esteem of the Buyid vizier al-Ṣāhib b. ʿAbbād (d. 385/995). This illustrious literary patron had vainly tried to lure the scholar to his circle in Rayy, and ended by visiting him personally in his hometown in 379/989. Nonetheless neither the *ṣāḥib* nor his predecessor Ibn al-ʿAmīd (d. 360/970) can be regarded as patrons of Abū Aḥmad's disciple.[11]

Abū Hilāl's *Dīwān al-Maʿānī* is one of thirty-three recorded *maʿānī* and *tashbīhāt* works, which arose since the mid-second/mid-eighth century.[12] Among the four that survive, each has its own agenda,[13] and only Abū Hilāl presents a purely literary selection and evaluation of the motifs. The following reflections based on al-ʿAskarī's work cannot therefore be generalized.

In his *Dīwān al-Maʿānī*, al-ʿAskarī uses the term *maʿnā* in two related ways, first, as a formulated, or not-yet formulated, idea, thought or concept, translated as "motif," and second, as a theme, close to *gharaḍ*.[14] If one looks

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10 Joseph Sadan: Maidens' Hair and Starry Skies: Imagery System and *Maʿānī* Guides; the Practical Side of Arabic Poetics as Demonstrated in Two Manuscripts. In: *Israel Oriental Studies* 11 (1990), 57-88 esp. 69. On Abū Hilāl see George J. Kanazi: *Studies in the Kitāb aṣ-Ṣināʿatayn of Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī*. Leiden 1989, 1-22, s.v. (J.W. Fück) in: *EI²* I (Leiden 1960), 712, and s.v. (W. Heinrichs) in: Julie S. Meisami et al. (eds): *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*. 2 vols. London et al. 1998, vol. 1, 35-36.

11 See Kanazi: *Studies*, 12-13.

12 See Fuat Sezgin: *GAS* II, 57-60. Wolfhart Heinrichs considers books limited to comparisons, such as Ibn Abī ʿAwn's (d. 322/934) *Tashbīhāt,* as a variation of *maʿānī* books; see idem: Poetik, Rhetorik, Literaturkritik, Metrik und Reimlehre. In: Helmut Gätje (ed.): *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie II: Literaturwissenschaft*. Wiesbaden 1987, 177-207, esp. 179.

13 al-Ushnāndānī's (d. 288/901) *Maʿānī al-shiʿr* [ed. ʿIzzaddīn al-Tanūkhī. Damascus 1389/1969] follows no thematic order as opposed to Ibn Qutayba's (d. 276/889) *K. al-Maʿānī al-kabīr fī abyāt al-maʿānī* [ed. Fritz Krenkow. 3 vols in 2. Hydarabad 1368-1369/1949-1950]. But both merely explain difficult, mostly pre-Abbasid, verses. The anonymous *Majmūʿat al-maʿānī* [ed. ʿAbdassalām Hārūn. 2 vols. Beirut 1412/1992] contains extremely detailed chapters, focused mainly on wisdom and advice poetry, but lacks any commentary. Three further *maʿānī* books formerly attributed to al-ʿAskarī (Sadan: Maiden's Hair, 60 n. 11) have been identified with the *Dīwān*; see Kanazi: *Studies*, 203.

14 Kanazi: *Studies,* 84 lists two further meanings of *maʿnā* as used in Abū Hilāl's other works, i.e., the meaning of a word, phrase or construction and the quality or character of a certain object.

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at the longer citations in his *Dīwān*, such as a lovers' dialogue of nearly twenty verses, it seems that al-ʿAskarī intended, more than the theme, its dramaturgic realization in the manner of an expanded, composite "macro-motif." The two senses of *maʿnā* thus converge essentially as "formulated ideas," varying only in scope. However, the focus here is not the *maʿnā* per se but its role as a counterpoint to literary genre. In the following, al-ʿAskarī's book is shown to exemplify how the *maʿnā* acts as a highly inclusive principle of organization. In a further step, the argument will be made for a second, practical function of the maʿnā as module of formal conversation.

I. Motif and Organization

Thematic groups of motifs divide al-ʿAskarī's dīwān into twelve chapters, the fourth of which, *Fī l-tashabbub (-ghazal/nasīb)*[15] *wa-awṣāf al-ḥisān [wa-mā yajrī maʿa dhālika]*, discusses love and the beloved. The chapters fall into many subsections, each illustrated by one or more extracts of poetry, rarely prose, of varying length with a brief judgment of their quality and an occasional commentary. The verse includes *rajaz*[16] and *qarīḍ*, and the authors range from the Jāhiliyya to al-ʿAskarī and his contemporaries. With this large repertory to draw from, the fourth chapter reunites extremely diverse genres and concepts of love. Nothing but the connective logic of motifs holds these together. Like the monorhyme (*qāfīya*) in an ode, the *maʿnā* forms the "string" on which the quoted passages are strung – with the difference that its semantic nature permits various modes of arrangement.

I.1. The poetic-critical arrangement

At the first level the chapter on love is subdivided by poetic-critical considerations into an introduction and two sections (see Appendix A).

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15 *Tashabbub* appears in the title and closing line of the chapter in the printed edition of al-ʿAskarī: *Dīwān al-Maʿānī*. 2 vols in 1. Cairo 1933-1934, vol. 1, 222 and 285 and figures as one of six categories (*aqsām*) of Jāhilī poetry (*ibid.*, 91). The edition is based on the MS owned by Muḥammad Abduh and Muḥammad M. al-Shinqīṭī, perhaps identical with MS Cairo 18881 *zāy*, which was not available for comparison. The MS Br. Mus. Add. 23,443 (with dated ownership mark from 1128/1715, referred to hereafter as "MS"), which is superior to the printed edition, reads *nasīb* in both places. The table of contents in both MS and the printed edition and another, fourfold classification of verse (*ibid.*, 31-32) have ghazal in confirmation of the terms' historical equivalence.

16 E.g., 279:17-20, 281:11 and 285:2.

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The introduction reunites verses considered "best love poetry" and excerpts about love's power and intensity; the first section[17] lists elegant descriptions of sub-themes of the beloved's physique and the lovers' relationship; and the second presents well-rendered or novel motifs.

The "best love verse" (*ansab/araqq/aghzal bayt*[18]) is a critical category from the pre-systematic phase of Arabic poetics, which lived on in literary *akhbār*.[19] al-ʿAskarī supplemented this type with longer passages, two of them entire poems, which he also deemed unique (*min afrād al-maʿānī, al-mukhtār min al-nasīb*). They open and close the introduction except for an addendum to it, appearing in the first section (see Appendix B). The quotes immediately reveal al-ʿAskarī's flexible concept of the *maʿnā*, which may exceed the single verse, and his taste for variety. By combining different critical opinions including his own, he is able to adduce ten quotes from five different genres, each epitomizing love (see Appendix C). He begins with the pre-Islamic epigone Imruʾulqays (d.c. 550), citing a verse from the nasīb of his *Muʿallaqa:*

mā dharafat ʿaynāki illā li-taḍribī
bi-sahmayki fī aʿshāri qalbin muqattali

Your eyes only cried to shoot your arrows
into the pieces of a broken heart (222:11).[20]

al-ʿAskarī's choice followed the literary tradition. al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 213/828) considered it to be *aghzalu bayt*.[21] Aḥmad b. ʿUbayd b. Nāṣiḥ (d. 273/887), a student of al-Haytham b. ʿAdī, relates an anecdote in which this verse makes Imruʾulqays "best poet" (*ashʿaru l-nās*) before Ṭarafa and al-Aʿshā.[22] At the same time the *persona* of the humiliated lover – even if only momentarily – stands out in pre-Islamic times, where unattainable love was usually shrugged off with heroic self-control. al-ʿAskarī explains the image of the lover's heart as being first broken by love and then pierced

17 The title is implicit and only referred to in later addenda, e.g., 281:20.

18 Cf. also *ansabu* as synonym for *aghzalu* in Ibn Jinnī: *al-Khaṣāʾiṣ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Najjār. 3 vols. Cairo 1952 rpt, vol. 1, 43:6, 8.

19 Cf. Heinrichs: Poetik, 179. For examples, see note 22 and the second part of this article.

20 See Ibn al-Anbārī: *Sharḥ al-Qaṣāʾid al-sabʿ al-ṭiwāl al-jāhiliyyāt*, ed. ʿAbdassalām Muḥammad Hārun. Cairo 1980, 47-48, verse 22.

21 See Ibn Rashīq: *ʿUmda*, vol. 2, 120 ult.

22 See Ibn al-Anbārī: *Sharḥ*, 47-48. In another anecdote, cited in note 26, the verse is proposed but not accepted as *ansabu bayt*.

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by the beloved's arrow-like tears. The choice of the next verse by Jarīr (d. 111/729, unidentified by al-ʿAskarī, 222:17) rests on the authority of Ibn Sallām (d. 232/846-47):

> *wa-lammā ltaqā l-ḥayyāni ulqiyati l-ʿaṣā*
> *wa-māta l-hawā lammā uṣībat maqātiluh*
>
> When two tribes meet, they lay down the staff (sc. settle down together), and desire dies when its mortal spots are hit (222:18).[23]

The verse states that the reunion of lovers (i.e. their tribes) kills desire, inverting the common assumption of separation as kindling it. It derives from the nasīb of a flyting by Jarīr aimed at his favorite foe al-Farazdaq, whereas the source of the first quote was a memorial qaṣīda. Their concepts of love are diametrically opposed; Imruʾulqays's love thrives in the presence of his beloved, Jarīr's love in her absence. Accordingly, the two verses apply the metaphor of shooting a prey differently; in Imruʾulqays's verse the target is the lover's heart, in Jarīr's verse the figurative animal of love itself. al-ʿAskarī identifies two radically different kinds of love in the pre-Abbasid nasīb, both in conformity with the literary tradition. The third exemplary verse by al-Aḥwaṣ (d.c. 110/728, unidentified by al-ʿAskarī, 222:19-20[24]) derives probably from a truncated nasīb.[25] It presents the passion of love as a fire, stoked by union. al-ʿAskarī observes again the literary tradition, for according to al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (d. 256/870), the caliph al-Mahdī (r. 158-169/775-785) himself preferred the verse over two others by Imruʾulqays (cited above) and Kuthayyir (268:12, discussed below).[26] Ibn Rashīq similarly praised it as *aghzal bayt* over two others by Jamīl and Jarīr (222:18).[27] But then, al-ʿAskarī adds two further formulations of the motif from early courtly ghazals, one by Abū Nuwās (223:2), which he calls more eloquent (*ablagh*), and another complete

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23 Cf. Jarīr: *Dīwān*, ed. Karam al-Bustānī. Beirut 1991, 384 v. 6, Ibn Sallām: *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir. 2 vols. Cairo 1974, vol. 1, 380 (*baytu l-nasīb ʿindī...*) and 413 (as one of Jarīr's much-cited proverbial verses (*muqalladāt*)), and *WKAS: Wörterbuch der Klassischen arabischen Sprache* II, 1183a.

24 al-Aḥwaṣ: *Shiʿr al-Aḥwaṣ al-Anṣārī*, ed. ʿĀdil Sulaymān Jamāl et al. Cairo 1970, 195 no. 145:3.

25 Considering the arrangement of quotes by al-Iṣbahānī (see next note), the truncated nasīb may have belonged to the preceding *hijāʾ* (al-Aḥwaṣ: *Shiʿr,* no. 144); see *ibid.*, 194, editor's note to no. 145.

26 See Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī: *al-Aghānī*. 25 vols. Beirut 1955 rpt, vol. 4, 267-68.

27 See Ibn al-Rashīq: *ʿUmda*, vol. 2, 121.

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ghazal poem by Ibn al-Rūmī, which he considers the best rendition of this motif:

uʿāniquhā wa-l-nafsu baʿdu mashūqatun
ilayhā wa-hal baʿda l-ʿināqi tadānī?

*wa-(*D: *fa-)althamu fāhā kay tamūta ḥazāzatī*
*fa-yashtaddu mā alqā mina l-hayajāni (*D/MS: *hayamānī*)

wa-mā kāna miqdāru lladhī bī mina l-jawā
li-yashfiyahū mā tarshufu l-shafatāni

fa-inna (D/MS *ka-anna*) *fuʾādī laysa yashfī rasīsahū (*D: *ghalīlahū*)
siwā an turā l-rūḥāni tamtazijāni (D: *yarā l-rūḥayni yamtazijāni*)

I embrace her, but my soul is still yearning
for her – is there a coming closer beyond embrace?

I kiss her mouth to let my heartache die,
but the desperate love (MS: thirst) I feel surges!

The extent of burning passion within me
cannot be stilled by that which two lips sip.

(D: As if) the fever (MS: thirst) of my heart cannot be stilled unless the two spirits are seen mingling (D: until [my heart] sees the two spirits mingle. 223:4-7, MS fol. 66r: 17-20)[28]

In increasing intensity, the three examples illustrate the predicament of the lover who, craving fulfillment, only succeeds in renewing desire. al-ʿAskarī rightly credits Ibn al-Rūmī with perfecting the motif through the union of souls.

The next cluster concludes the introduction. The sixth (anonymous) exemplary extract[29] is a couplet, prefaced as *min afrād al-maʿānī*. It captures the plight of forbidden love; the poet-lover withholds his glances and the beloved her actions (228:7-8). The seventh exemplary verse from a *ḥijāzī* ghazal by al-Aḥwaṣ proclaims his love as outlasting the world in a hyperbole (228:10)[30] The verse may have compromised a Medinan noblewoman, as

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28 Cf. Ibn al-Rūmī: *Dīwān*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār et al. 6 vols. Cairo 1973-1981, vol. 6, 2475 no. 1356. "D" stands for *Dīwān*.

29 The second verse *wa-nabʾatuhā* (MS fol. 67v:8) *qālat laqad niltu wuddahū wa-mā ḍarranī bukhlun fa-kayfa ajūdu* half paraphrases and half quotes a line by Jamīl (*idhā fakkarat qālat qad-adraktu wuddahū wa-mā ḍarranī bukhlun fa-fīma ajūdu*); see Jamīl: *Dīwān*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār. Cairo 1958, 63:2.

30 al-Aḥwaṣ: *Shiʿr*, no. 49:9.

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the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar II. (r. 99-101/717-720) cites it as proof of the poet's depravity and deserved exile.[31]

An addendum of exemplary verse appears interspersed in the first section. The eighth and ninth exemplary verses derive from *ʿudhrī ghazals* of Kuthayyir (d. 105/723). Based on an anecdote narrated by ʿUmar b. Shabba (d. 264/877), the Umayyad poet cites the first, portraying the beloved as omnipresent to the lover (268:12),[32] as singled out by popular judgment. Then he cites a second verse which he prefers himself, comparing his beloved to a malady and its cure in a paradox (268:14).[33] After a short digression al-ʿAskarī finishes the list with a contemporary passage, which he calls "exquisite" (*al-mukhtār min al-nasīb*) by the poet-adīb and nephew of Sayfaddawla, Abū l-Muṭāʿ Wajīhaddawla b. Nāṣiraddawla (d. 428/1036). He transfers the locus of the paradox to the beloved's forelock, making it the imaginary cause of love's pain and pleasure. The motif mostly applies to boys, which makes this excerpt the only one addressed to a male beloved:[34]

Afdī lladhī zurtuhū wa-l-sayfu yakhfurunī
(Y: *bi-l-sayfi mushtamilan*)
wa-laḥẓu ʿaynayhi amḍā min maḍāribihī

fa-mā khalaʿtu nijādan (Y: *nijādī*) *fī l-ʿināqi lahū*
ḥattā labistu nijādan min dhawāʾibihī

fa-bāta anʿamanā bālan (Y: *fa-kāna anʿamanā ʿayshan*) *bi-ṣāḥibihī*
man kāna fī-l-ḥubbi ashqānā li-ṣāḥibihī

I pledge my life for him whom I visited with a sword shielding me, (Y: girded with a sword), but the glance of his eyes is sharper than its blows.

No sooner did I remove my swordbelt to embrace him
than I donned a swordbelt in the guise of his forelock.

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31 al-Iṣbahānī: *al-Aghānī*, vol. 4, 249-51, esp. 250. Cf. also Ibn Sallām: *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2, 655-58, esp. 657 and, for a shorter version, Ibn Qutayba: *al-Shiʿr wa-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. M.J. de Goeje. Leiden 1904, 330-31. Note again the varying terms for composing love poetry: *yushabbibu* (Ibn Sallām: *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2, 656:1), *yansibu* (al-Iṣbahānī: *Aghānī*, vol. 4, 249:7), *yarmī bi-l-ubnati wa-l-zinā* (Ibn Qutayba: *Shiʿr*, 330:2).

32 *Dīwān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās. Beirut 1971, 523; it belongs to the verses attributed to Kuthayyir.

33 *Ibid.*, no. 2:10 and al-Iṣbahānī: *al-Aghānī*, vol. 4, 269. Both have the different ending *ilayhi ṭabību*.

34 Bauer: *Liebe*, 242-43.

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Thus [a forelock] soothed us (Y: sweetened our life) with its owner all night,
[a forelock] that had made us suffer in the love for its owner (269:1-3).[35]

With this, the genres from which the foregoing motifs are drawn include the pre-Islamic memorial qaṣīda, the Umayyad *naqīḍa* and *qaṣīda*, the *ḥijāzī* and *ʿudhrī ghazal* and the early and late Abbasid courtly ghazal. In choosing them al-ʿAskarī combined a fine knowledge of the classical lore with a modern sensibility.

The first and longest section is devoted to motifs selected for their illustration of love and its *personae*. As their listing follows a thematic suborder, they are discussed under the next point.

The examples of al-ʿAskarī's second section are selected purely for their excellence as motifs. This bipartition into verse "documenting" love (first section) and verse turning it into literature (second section) is also found in love books.[36] This section further widens al-ʿAskarī's spectrum of genres and foregrounds his appreciation of modern (*muḥdath*) motifs, whether variations on the old or new creations (see Appendix D). al-ʿAskarī even includes poorly phrased verse (*sabk/raṣf radīʾ*) with words (*alfāẓ*) lacking beauty (*ṭalāwa*), if they contain new ideas.[37] Pre-Islamic motifs are included mainly as points of departure for modern developments. The stopping at traces and their description is given a gingerly paragraph – incipits of Imruʾulqays and Jarīr and four other quotes – justified by not wanting to burden (*aḍjara*) the reader (275:10-276:4). The *khayāl* receives far more space, as it enjoyed popularity among modern (*muḥdath*) poets, who provide all but three of the fifteen extracts (276:17-279:9). In pre-Islamic times the *khayāl* was a frightening ghostly shadow of the beloved, but it lost this negative connotation in the mid-seventh century, when it metamorphosed into a gentle vision of the beloved, visiting the poet-lover in his dreams.[38] al-ʿAskarī begins with two unsual older verses from which

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35 al-Thaʿālibī: *Yatīmat al-dahr fī maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyīddīn ʿAbdalḥamīd. 4 vols in 2 pts. Cairo 1956-58, vol. 1, 92. "Y" stands for *Yatīma*.

36 Notably Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī: *Kitāb al-Zahrah: The First Half*, ed. Alois R. Nykl. Chicago 1932 (chapters 28-47 are devoted to *aṭlāl, khayāl*, sleeplessness, emaciation, *shayb* and the like) and al-Washshāʾ: *al-Muwashshā aw al-ẓarf wa-l-ẓurafāʾ*, ed. Karam al-Bustānī. Beirut 1965 (chapters 36-39 treat books and letters by *ẓurafāʾ* and chapters 40-58 love poems written on walls, various utensils, and even cheeks). A counter example is Ibn Ḥazm: *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma fī l-ulfa wa-l-ullāf*, ed. Ḥasan Kāmil al-Ṣayrafī et al. Cairo 1964, 3:3, who dismisses the ancient Arab literary conventions as irrelevant, "Their way is not ours."

37 Cf. 277:18, 283:18.

38 Renate Jacobi: The *Khayāl* Motif in Early Arabic Poetry. In: *Oriens* 32 (1990), 50-64 esp. 58-59.

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the motif's positive modern version stems.[39] In the first, the *mukhaḍram* poet Qays b. al-Khaṭīm (d.c. 620) dreams of a leisurely, if deceptive, union with his lady (276:18-20).[40] In the second, attributed to ʿAmr b. Qamīʾa (fl. 6th c.), the poet imagines the beloved's khayāl as refusing herself to his own *khayāl*.[41] The remainder of the excerpts, ranging from al-Numayrī (d. 73/692) to al-ʿAskarī himself, elaborates the beloved's arrival, appearance, the pleasures of union, but also the pangs of sleeplessness and lone awakening the morning after. Beyond *aṭlāl* and *khayāl*, the majority of the motifs are modern creations, such as the love of black women (276:4-17), which is also identified by al-Ṣūlī as a subject in which the moderns outdid the ancients.[42] Here belong the lengthy passages on intercourse and descriptions of the female organ (279:10-14 and 279:15-281:11 in sixteen examples). Clearly distinguished from the more lyrical motif of the lovers' embrace (*ʿināq*, 243:15-244:14) adduced in the first section,[43] these passages flaunt salacious detail in a jocular, parodic tone, which identifies them as obscene poetry (*mujūn*) – adding a further genre to al-ʿAskarī's list. *Mujūn* poetry was indeed an innovation of the Abbasid age, notably practiced by Abū Nuwās,[44] though the distinction from ghazal is sometimes only one of degree.[45] al-ʿAskarī includes *mujūn* for its novelty in aesthetic agreement with al-Ṣūlī (with whom he shares a quote[46]) and popular acclaim, reported on al-Ṣūlī's authority, "People preferred the words of Abū Najm and were impressed with their beauty…."[47] The section concludes with single quotes

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39 *Min hātayni l-qiṭʿatayni akhadha l-muḥdathūna akthara maʿānīhim fī l-khayāl*, 277:3-4.

40 Jacobi: *Khayāl*, 59 selects the same passage to show the motif's transformation.

41 The motif of the two *khayāls* contradicts the verse's early attribution; cf. Renate Jacobi: *al-Khayālāni* – A Variation of the *Khayāl* Motif. In: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 27 (1996), 2-12 esp. 4.

42 al-Ṣūlī: *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, ed. Khalīl Maḥmūd ʿAsākir et al. Cairo 1937 rpt, 25:2-5.

43 Cf. Bauer: *Liebe*, 505. For discussion of an embrace merely hinted at, see Renate Jacobi: Ibn al-Muʿtazz: Dair ʿAbdūn: A Structural Analysis. In: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 6 (1975), 35-56 esp. 38-39 v. 10 and 51-52.

44 See Ewald Wagner: *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung*. 2 vols. Darmstadt 1987-1988, vol. 2, 67, 84-85. For examples, see Ewald Wagner: *Abū Nuwās: Eine Studie zur arabischen Literatur der frühen ʿAbbāsidenzeit*. Wiesbaden 1965, 98-110, 143-205.

45 Cf. Bauer: *Liebe*, 508.

46 280:8-11, al-Ṣūlī: *Akhbār*, 24:10-25:1 and Ibn al-Rūmī: *Dīwān*, vol. 4, 1656 no. 1286:58-60.

47 279:15:16. This point is rightly emphasized by Julie S. Meisami: Arabic *Mujūn* Poetry: The Literary Dimension. In: Frederick De Jong (ed.): *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry and in the Representation of Women in Arabic Literature*. Utrecht 1993, 8-30.

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of complex motifs that do not fit under any larger heading and are simply presented as "a novel (*badīʿ*) motif" or "another motif."

I.2. The thematic arrangement

The long first section on *waṣf* obeys a thematic order as a strategy for exhaustive coverage. Its first half centers on the physical description of the beloved, beginning with face, complexion, eyes and glance, mouth, temples and hair, then proceeding down her figure to breasts, waist and buttocks, and finally to peripheral adornments like dyed fingertips, jewelry, tears and scent (229:12-262:7). The quotes are variously introduced as "the best/most eloquent said about…," "so-and-so excelled/innovated" or simply "something good/eloquent/charming/new/beautiful said about…."[48] The linear head-to-toe progression harks back to *waṣf al-ḥabīb* or *waṣf al-nāqa* passages of odes, early lexical monographs, such as al-Aṣmaʿī's *Khalq al-insān*,[49] and manuals on secular love.[50]

The first section's second half is devoted to the love relationship and its protagonists, proceeding from beloved to lover. Its quotes are arranged around three larger themes, which roughly coincide with the "circles of themes" (*Themenkreise*) proposed by Thomas Bauer.[51] The first concerns the actions of the beloved (*ḥabīb, maʿshūq*), dazzling, ignoring, blaming and mistreating the lover (*muḥibb, ʿāshiq,* 263:4-266:6). The second circle shows the lover's emotional responses in an increasing order of intensity: hope, plea and attempted self-sufficiency, then grief about distance and separation, followed by the acceptance of death or lifelong suffering (266:7-270:15). This part recalls the order of chapters in some love manuals that follow the relationship similarly from hopeful beginnings to drastic outcomes.[52] The third circle concerns the lover's inner and outer tribulations, such as heartbeat, emaciation and solitude of the soul. These emotions may be

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48 *Aḥsanu/ajwadu/ablaghu mā qīla fī..., wa-qad aḥsana/abdaʿa, min al-jayyidi/balīghi/ẓarīfi/ṭarīfi/malīḥi ma qīla fī....*

49 See August Haffner (ed.): *Texte zur arabischen Lexikographie. Nach Handschriften herausgegeben.* Leipzig 1905, 158-233.

50 See n. 36.

51 Bauer: *Liebe*, 198-200, to wit, *Vorwurf, Erklärung* and *Klage* in al-ʿAskarī's order. The first section's former half corresponds with Bauer's *Preis*.

52 E.g., Ibn Dāwūd: *al-Zahrah* (see n. 36), chapters 10-27 and Ibn Ḥazm: *Ṭawq* (see n. 36), chapters 3-27 as given in the first list of the preface; *ibid.*, 3.

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brought on by places or people, such as the remains of the beloved's abode or the *persona* of the blamer (270:16-274:19). Nonetheless the progression by thematic circles is not as patent as the physical head-to-toe sequence of the first half. In a love affair, depending on the perspective, many steps might be repeated or attributed to either the lover or the beloved.

al-ʿAskarī's thematic order is neither novel nor all-dominating. Rather he avails himself of it as an *aide-mémoire* to cover every aspect of love. Whenever the opportunity arises, he expands upon it, as can be seen in the description of the mouth (238:2-244:14). After verses describing its parts – white teeth, sweet breath and saliva – al-ʿAskarī digresses to actions the mouth performs, such as speech. The first motif is taken from al-Quṭāmī, a Christian convert (d. 101/719):

fa-hunna yanbidhna min qawlin yuṣibna bihī
mawāqiʿa l-māʾi min dhī l-ghullati l-ṣādī

They scatter words that hit like [drops of] water
quenching a man's burning thirst (242:11).

Another motif derives from Ibn al-Rūmī:

wa-ḥadīthuhā l-siḥru l-ḥalālu law-annahū (D: *annahā*)
lam yajni qatla l-muslimi l-mutaḥarrizi

in ṭāla lam yumlal wa-in hiya awjazat
wadda l-muḥadditha (D: *-muḥaddathu*) *annahā lam tūjizi*

sharaku l-qulūbi (D: *l-nufūsi*) *wa-fitnatun mā mithluhā*
li-l-muṭmaʾinni wa-ʿuqlatu l-mustawfizi

Her conversation is licit magic if only it (D: she) did not
commit the murder of a prudent Muslim.

If long, it is not found tiresome, and if she cuts it short,
her interlocutor (D: listener) wishes she had not.

A snare of the hearts, an unrivalled trial for the tranquil [man],
a shackle [tying down] the one ready to rise (242:20-ult.).[53]

If one compares the motifs adduced for the sub-theme of women's conversation with those on white teeth, the images for the former sub-theme show more variation. Teeth receive only three images within five quotes: hail grains,

53 Ibn al-Rūmī: *Dīwān*, vol. 3, 1164 no. 944 where vss. 2 and 3 are reversed.

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camomiles and pearls.[54] In contrast, conversation attracts seven images within a mere four quotes: thirst-quenching water (quoted above), scattered pearls, honey, licit magic, a snare, a shackle and a trial. Only the scattered pearl image is based on a pre-existing one, the pearl-for-teeth metaphor – and what true *muḥdath* poet could resist combining the pearl's two counterparts?

hiya l-durru manthūran idhā mā takallamat
wa-ka-l-durri manẓūman idhā lam takallami

She is [like] scattered pearls when she speaks
and like strung pearls when she does not (242:13).

Ibn Tabāṭabāʾ (d. 322/934) is even more succinct:

mithla durrin manẓūmin
bayna durrin munaḍḍadi (MS: mubaddadi)

Like pearls strung
in-between pearls arranged (MS: scattered; 238:20).

Ibn Tabāṭabāʾ's verse occurs earlier in the sub-theme of teeth, where its double pearl image for both teeth and speech may have inspired al-ʿAskarī to his excursus. But the digression progresses from women's conversation to their bashful behavior. This is accomplished with a single prose account. al-Haytham b. ʿAdī (d. 207/822) narrates how his teacher Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥassān once asked him for a verse describing female modesty.[55] al-Haytham proposed a verse by Ḥātim Ṭāʾī about a woman keeping to her home, then another by al-Aʿshā about a woman with a cautious gait. Neither response satisfied Ṣāliḥ, who produced the "correct" solution: a verse by [Abū] Qays b. al-Aslat (d. shortly after 622).[56]

wa-yukrimuhā jārātuhā fa-yazurnahā
wa-taʿtallu ʿan ityānihinna fa-taʿtadhir (MS: fa-tuʿdhiru)

Her neighbors esteem her and visit her,
but she gives excuses and apologies for not coming to them. (243:14).

From virtuous comportment al-ʿAskarī proceeds to a third type of action, sexual union (*ʿināq*), shown here with one example by Ibn al-Muʿtazz:

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54 Cf. Bauer: *Liebe*, 302.

55 In other versions of this account, the setting is a *majlis*; see Stefan Leder: *Das Korpus al-Haiṯam ibn ʿAdī*. Frankfurt 1991, 117-20.

56 *GAS* II, 287.

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ka-annanī ʿānaqtu rayḥānatan
tanaffasat fī laylihā l-bāridi

fa-law tarānā fī qamīṣi l-dujā
ḥasibtanā min jasadin wāḥidi

As if I embraced a bouquet of basil
that breathed in the cool night.

If you saw us in the shirt of darkness,
you would think us to be of one body (243:19-20).[57]

Again al-ʿAskarī garners an astounding variety of images from five cited motifs. Embracing lovers are likened to one body in the shirt of darkness (quoted above), a *lām-alif* ligature, a double-twisted strand of pearls, a necklace of necks, a veil of cheeks, and a cloak. This concludes the excursus. While animated chatter, bashful reserve and passionate embrace involve more than the beloved's mouth, this body part is essential to perform them and offers the most suitable place in the physical catalogue for their incorporation.[58] Having exhausted the sub-themes involving the mouth, al-ʿAskarī resumes his thematic checklist with verses about hair, earlocks and the first fluff of the cheek.[59] The little detour has added a kaleidoscope of motifs. The ease with which the author expands the thematic sequence shows it to be a means not a goal. Poetic and semantic order then insure a maximum of possible subsections. Within these however, other modes of arrangement safeguard variety.

I.3. The chronological arrangement

In some longer subsections, al-ʿAskarī adduces his collectibles in a loose chronological order. This applies less to the life dates of individual poets than to their stylistic epoch. The *khayāl* subsection is thus divided into motifs by "the ancients" (*qudamāʾ*, 276:17) from the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period and those by "the moderns" (*muḥdathūn*, 277:3-4)[60] from

57 For the entire quatrain, see Bauer: *Liebe*, 510-11.

58 Graphic descriptions of intercourse and related organs other than the mouth (279:10-281:11) are presented separately in the second section.

59 The latter two motifs, mainly used for young men, show al-ʿAskarī's notion of the beloved to include both genders.

60 See the same order of quotes in the themes of poetry (8:2-9:6) and, more implicitly, women's speech (242:19).

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the Abbasid period. al-ʿAskarī can then easily pinpoint the indebtedness of (good) modern developments to earlier models (*akhadhahū*, 232:7, 277:3-4, 281:20-288:13). Inversely he appreciates invention (*ibtikār*, 283:15), a novel motif (*min badīʿ al-maʿānī,* 285:4) or a new formulation ([*mā*] *subiqa ilā*, 277:14). The same interest in creativity makes him gather unusual motifs in spite of poor phrasing, syntax or vocabulary (277:18, 283:18-19).

I.4. The contrastive arrangement

Another way of concatenating quotes is by contrast. al-ʿAskarī occasionally places one poetic solution of a theme behind its opposite, attaching it with the phrase *fī khilāfi dhālika.*

For instance, under the heading of love for black women, al-Jāḥiẓ praises the black face as infinitely beautiful by mock analogy with a gigantic black beauty spot, whereas another poet calls it a disorienting darkness (276:14). *Mutatis mutandis*, the nocturnal visit of the beloved's apparition cools the desire of al-Buḥturī, but stokes that of al-ʿAskarī (279:6).[61] In the *Dīwān*, this practice of assembling opposites is not spelt out. It is, however, explained by the author of the anonymous *Majmūʿat al-maʿānī*, who states in his preface, "I added to each motif its cognate and opposite, because of the correspondence [that exists] between opposition and similarity."[62] But not all contrasts are binary opposites; the above-shown digression on women's behavior for instance, leads from their speech to their bashfulness (which is more than silence) and then again to intercourse (which is far more than pertness). Underlying these contrasts is al-ʿAskarī's aim of exhaustive treatment. By creating a collage of differing realizations of a sub-theme, he ensures optimal coverage. This shows not only in his expansion of the thematic catalogue in the first section but in his treatment of other chapters as well.[63]

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61 See further differences about proximity of the beloved's abode (282:20) and the charms of a young man (285:15).

62 *Aḍaftu ilā kulli maʿnan mā yujānisuhū wa-mā yuḍādduhū li-l-mulāʾamati llatī bayna l-ḍiddiyya wa-l-mithliyya*; cf. *Majmūʿa,* 3 (see n. 13).

63 Cf. the remarks on chapters five and ten (foods and insects) by Aḥmad Sulaymān Maʿrūf: *Min Kitāb al-Maʿānī*. 2 vols. Damascus 1984. Similarly, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr: *Bahjat al-majālis wa-uns al-mujālis*, ed. Muḥammad Mursī al-Khūlī et al. 2 vols. Cairo n.d., vol. 1, 36:13-14.

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I.5. The contextual arrangement

A final manner of placing motifs within subsections is by context. al-ʿAskarī at times cites a motif by a single verse but then returns to the quote's context to add the passage from which it was extracted. The much longer passage is similarly presented as *maʿnā*. This contextual arrangement first appears in the opening part containing motifs illustrating the power of love. Among the situations that exemplify love's power is the lover's extreme urge to reach the beloved's abode or his great caution in paying her a clandestine visit. Here al-ʿAskarī adduces Imruʾulqays's famous line in which the poet compares his stealthy approach to the murmer of air bubbles rising to the water's surface. But al-ʿAskarī gives preference to another verse by Waḍḍāḥ al-Yaman (d.c. 93/712) with falling dew as a *secundum comparationis*, which is completely inaudible. This line alone would have sufficed to illustrate the respective sub-theme. But al-ʿAskarī opts to cite almost the entire poem (here partially quoted), repeating the earlier quote in closing line:

qālat: fa-hādhā l-baḥru mā baynanā?
qultu: fa-innī sābiḥun māhiru

qālat: a-laysa llāhu min fawqinā?
qultu: balā wa-hwa lanā ghāfiru

qālat: fa-ammā kunta aʿyaytanā
fa-ʾti idhā mā hajaʿa l-sāmiru

wa-squṭ ʿalaynā ka-suqūṭi l-nadā
laylata lā nāhin wa-lā zājiru.

She said: "And this ocean between us?"
I said: "I am a superb swimmer."

She said: "Is not God above us?"
I said: "Oh yes, for he forgives us!"

She said: "Because you have exhausted us
[with your arguments],
come when the nocturnal talkers slumber

And drop on us like dew in a night without him
who forbids and who disturbs (226:7-10)."[64]

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64 Cf. Ḥ.J. Ḥaddād (ed.): Waḍḍāḥ al-Yaman, ḥayātuhū wa-mā tabaqqā min shiʿrihī. In: *al-Mawrid* 13 (1404/1984) vol. 2, 103-36, esp. 115 no. 7 in ten verses with numerous variants and a different order. Cf. also A.H. Kinany: *The Development of Gazal in Arabic Literature, Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Periods*. Damascus 1950.

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The caricatured lover's debate is typical for the *ḥijāzī ghazal*. Here, the woman's apprehensions not only sweeten her final surrender but also make her plea for the suitor's silent arrival a perfect conclusion. al-ʿAskarī so appreciates this motif as to add another by al-Muʾammil b. Umayl (d.c. 190/806) from the early Abbasid period. It is more complex and deftly exploits the tension between faith and desire:

fa-qultu lammā badā takhaffuruhā:
jūdī wa-lā yamnaʿ annaki l-khafaru

qālat: tawaqqar wa-daʿ maqālaka dhā
anta mruʾun bi-l-qabīḥi mushtahiru

wa-llāhi lā nilta mā tuṭālibu aw
yanbuta fī baṭni rāḥatī shaʿaru

lā anta lī qayyimun fa-tukhbiranī
wa-lā amīrun ʿalayya muʾtamiru

qultu: wa-lākin ḍayfun atāki bihī
taḥta l-ẓalāmi l-qaḍāʾu wa-l-qadaru

fa-ḥtasibī l-ajra fī (MS:) *inālatihī*
wa-bāshirī qad taṭāwala l-ʿasaru

qālat: faqad jiʾta tabtaghī ʿamalan
takādu minhu l-samāʾu tanfaṭiru

fa-qultu lammā raʾaytuhā ḥarijat
wa-ghashiyathā l-humūmu wa-l-fikaru:

lā ʿāqaba llāhu fī l-ṣibā abadan
unthā wa-lākin yuʿāqabu l-dhakaru

qālat: laqad jiʾtanā bi-mubtadaʿin
wa-qad atatnā bi-ghayrihi l-nudhuru

qad bayyana llāhu fī l-kitābi fa-lā
wāziratun ghayra wizrihā taziru[65]

qultu: daʿī sūratan lahijti bihā
lā tuḥrimanna (MS: *tuḥrimannā*) *ladhdhātinā l-suwaru*

wajhuki wajhun tammat maḥāsinuhū
lā wa-abī lā yamassuhū saqaru

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65 A paraphrase of Sūrat al-Anʿām 6/164. Cf. also Sūras 17/15, 35/18, 39/7 and 53/35-38, which traces the warning to Moses and Abraham.

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I said, when her shyness showed,
"Be generous, may shyness not stop you!"

She said, "Be still, leave this talk,
you are a man, famous for ugly things.

By God, may you not get what you ask for,
lest hair grow on the inside of my palm.

You are neither husband to tell me,
nor sovereign to order."

I said: "But I am a guest whom decree and fate
have brought to you under the shield of darkness."

"Reckon upon the reward [of God] for giving him
[your affection],
and be merry, for hardship has been long."

She said: "You came to desire an act
from which heaven nearly rents asunder."

I said when I saw that she was hurt [by my words],
and thoughts and sorrows were plaguing her:

"May God never punish a female in love!
Though a male will receive punishment."

She said: "You have brought us a [false] invention.
Messengers have told me the opposite.

God clarified in the Book:
No soul will carry another soul's burden."

I said: "Leave a *sūra* you have grown enamored with,
may not *sūras* ban (MS: us from) our pleasures!

Your face is beauty perfected[66]
No, by my father, hellfire will not touch it!" (226:17-227:6)

In both passages a lover defeats point by point the objections of his beloved until she finally succumbs. This vigorous persuasion is another facet of the forces at work in the lover, as shown earlier in his speedy or stealthy advance. But the pieces' length calls for explanation. Some of the above-mentioned exemplary *maʿānī*, though entire ghazals, did not exceed a quatrain; they are dwarfed by the second dialogue of eighteen verses. Nonetheless,

66 Lit: "one whose beauties are complete."

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al-ʿAskarī understands the dialogues as indivisible compositional units and praises them as unique. "This sort is the most difficult to attempt in poetry, and there is hardly anything better on this motif (*maʿnā*) than these two extracts" (227:7-8). Both short and long *maʿānī* are best understood as "renditions of a given theme." The flexible scope of al-ʿAskarī's motif, from a single trope to a complex dramaturgic device shows that he had a sense for thematic coherence and larger forms.

To summarize briefly, the five modes of arrangement listed above (I.1.-5.) show the unit of the motif as connecting widely divergent ideas of love and assembling a maximum of poetic realizations of these across periods and styles. This breadth could never be accomplished by remaining within the confines of one poetic genre, and it proves the poetic motif to be the more comprehensive organizing principle.

But why would such a vast coverage be needed? Joseph Sadan sees *maʿānī* collections as an aid for composition. Here it will be argued that they enhanced conversation for which both the motifs' wide range and their brevity were ideally suited. Is it by accident that both cases in which al-ʿAskarī stretches the order and definition of the *maʿnā* – the beloved's speech and the lover's argument – apply to conversation or does this echo a more practical concern? This question, whether the *maʿnā* had any relevance beyond the written page, is addressed in the remainder of the article.

II. Motif and Conversation

Taking al-ʿAskarī's book as a reflection of intellectual life in the late 4/10th century, one might inquire as to how far the (simple or complex) poetic motif had a *modus vivendi* in conversational practice. More precisely, the short self-contained motif appears to have suited the literary sessions hosted and frequented by members of the ruling elite. al-ʿAskarī himself claims in the preface that his *Collected Motifs* offered aspirants to elite circles the very knowledge they needed to display. "This is a kind of speech an educated person is always asked for in crowded sessions and at large gatherings, when one wants to find out his extent of knowledge and capacity of memory..." (7:7-8). For proof he relates three accounts of *literati*, quizzed in such settings, from Abbasid and Buyid days.

The first takes place in the circle of the Buyid vizier Ibn al-ʿAmīd (d. 360/970) in Rayy and is witnessed and narrated by al-ʿAskarī's old teacher Abū Aḥmad. A supposedly educated candidate for the circle responds with silence to a question posed about a poetic motif. "Compared with your

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brains a turtle is a cheetah!"[67] (7:10-8:3), the host drily snaps. The man's ignorance is exposed, he vanishes from the scene, and the narrator steps in with a correct and exhaustive choice of motifs. The second anecdote recounts a meeting between the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 198-218/813-833) and the Baṣrian grammarian al-Naḍr b. Shumayl (d. 203/818 or 204/819) in Marw (9:ult-12:11).[68] The third captures a literary session hosted by the caliph al-Wāthiq (r. 227-232/842-847) on the theme of wine drinking, in the course of which he summons the *adīb* Abū Muḥallim to appear (d.c. 248/862[69]; 12:12-ult). In every account, prompt apposite delivery of poetic motifs garners a speaker recognition and reward, and lack of it the opposite. "If he is the first to respond, his status becomes high and his case grand; and if he quits the field and his weight appears light (lit: his scale rises), desire for him fades and the hearts turn from him" (7:8-10).

As a second argument al-ʿAskarī alleges his readers' demand to produce his chapters in separate fascicles "lighter to carry and easier to learn" (14:penult.). Indeed both the British MS and the printed edition preserve a format of separate volumes, each beginning with the mandatory *basmala, ḥamdala* and preface.[70] Though an actual dissection might not have ensued,[71] thematically defined motif collections of this kind survive, for instance, from Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) on astro-meteorology, alcoholic drinks and games of chance,[72] Ibn al-Muʿtazz

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67 The translation of *Findun ʿinda khāṭirika Ḥudāja* lacks the double allusion to Arab lore, which al-ʿAskarī explains subsequently (9:7-15).

68 Cf. the three versions in al-Zubaydī: *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwiyyīn wa-l-lughawiyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm. Cairo 1973 rpt 1984, 55-60.

69 *GAS* II, 331.

70 On this convention, see Adam Gacek: Technical Practices and Recommendations Recorded by Classical and Post-Classical Arabic Scholars Concerning the Copying and Correction of Manuscripts. In: François Déroche (ed.): *Les Manuscrits du Moyen-Orient: Essais de codicologie et de paléographie*. Paris 1989, 51-60 and pls. XX B - XXXII B, esp. 52.

71 The two known MSS cited in n. 15 are complete, and at least in the British MS, page and chapter breaks do not coincide. The MS's accessible presentation with clearly marked beginnings (overline) of each subsection and an inverted heart shape marking the end makes it easy to find a motif on any given subject.

72 *K. al-Ashriba*, ed. Yāsīn Muḥammad al-Sawwās. Damascus et al 1999; *K. al-Maysir wa-l-qidāḥ*, ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb. Cairo 1343 rpt 1385; and *K. al-Anwāʾ*, ed. Charles Pellat et al. Hydarabad 1956. Among these, the *K. al-Maysir* was gathered into the *Maʿānī al-Kabīr* as an abridged paraphrase with almost identical verse material – the reverse of al-ʿAskarī's procedure. But in conceiving his encyclopedia *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* (described by Gérard Lecomte: *Ibn Qutayba*. Damascus 1965, 121 as a prose counterpart to his *Maʿānī al-kabīr*) Ibn Qutayba, like al-ʿAskarī, singled out certain themes (history, poetry, alcoholic drink, and dream interpretation) for monographic treatment. See *ibid.*, 129 and Ibn Qutayba: *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, ed. Yūsuf ʿAlī Ṭawīl. 4 vols. in 2. Beirut 1985, vol. 1, 49.

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(d. 296/908)[73] on the etiquette of drinking and al-Sarī al-Raffā' (d.c. 360-366/970-976) on love, scents and wine.[74] Besides attesting to his collection's popularity, al-ʿAskarī's editorial idea betrays a practical, didactic motivation.[75] "Everyone must be charged according to his strength and obliged according to his ability....To render wisdom easy is another wisdom that drapes [the first] in love and creates desire for it" (14:ult.-15:2).

To verify al-ʿAskarī's claim whether and how people were questioned about *maʿānī* would require a systematic survey of literary sessions in his and the preceding century, which cannot be undertaken here.[76] The following preliminary observations only plot points of orientation for future investigation. Two well-known records of educated conversation from the Buyid era, the *Tabletalk* [77] by al-Tanūkhī (d. 384/994) and the *Book of Enjoyment and Good Company* [78] by al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023) neglect poetry in favor of prose.[79] However the kind of poetic circle al-ʿAskarī describes can be found in the typology of *majālis* drawn up by Brahim Najar,[80] to wit, his third category of *majālis* in which noted scholars disputed poetic issues under the observing eyes of caliphs or high functionaries. In these, successful performance was indeed bound up with social climbing.

Unfortunately al-ʿAskarī's accounts offer only snapshots of what were evening-filling events. Although unable to reconstruct these, it is possible to investigate the conversational function of *maʿānī* in comprehensive accounts found in *adab* compendia. These are of course embellished, edited stories,

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73 *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl fī tabāshīr al-surūr*, ed. Jūrj Qanāziʿ (George Kanazi) et al. Damascus 1410/1989. The authorial agendas of the two wine-books greatly differed. Ibn Qutayba reviews the arguments from Koran, Sunna, *akhbār* and poetry for and against the licitness of wine, whereas Ibn al-Muʿtazz preaches with verse the manners of courtly conviviality.

74 *al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb wa-l-mashmūm wa-l-mashrūb*, ed. Miṣbāḥ Ghalāwunjī et al. 4 vols. Damascus 1406-1407/1986-1987. This differs from the other works in leaving the poetic selections uncommented.

75 Cf. Sadan: Maidens' Hair (see n.10), 60 and 69.

76 For preliminary overview and secondary literature, see Beatrice Gruendler: *Praise Poetry in Medieval Baghdad: Ibn al-Rūmī and the Patron's Redemption*. London 2003, 3-12, and Wen-chin Ouyang: *Literary Criticism in Medieval Arabic-Islamic Culture*. Edinburgh 1997, 66-89.

77 *Nishwār al-muḥāḍara wa-akhbār al-mudhākara*. 8 vols. ed. ʿAbbūd al-Shāljī. Beirut 1391-1393/1971-1973.

78 *K. al-Imtāʿ wa-l-muʾānasa*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn et al. 3 vols. Cairo 1953.

79 See also the absence of poetry in the circles described by Joel L. Kraemer: *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*. Leiden 1986, 103-206.

80 Najar: *Mémoire*, 157-58 (see n. 7). His typology is based on access to and composition of the sessions.

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not minutes, but they are nonetheless modeled upon practices current at their time of composition.

The format of session generally differed between free-ranging mutual recitation of poetry (*mudhākara*) and a protocol of question and answer. This emerges from the first encounter between al-Rashīd (r. 170-193/786-809) and al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 213/828), recorded by Ibn ʿAbdrabbih.[81] One night the sleepless caliph seeks someone versed in poetry (*yuḥsinu l-shiʿr*) to deceive the remaining hours until dawn. al-Aṣmaʿī, who had been lingering at the palace gate for such an opportunity, volunteered his services. Dazzled at the first glimpse of the caliph and his vizier, Yaḥyā b. Khālid,[82] the philologist soon regains composure, pays his formal respects and inaugurates the session: "Will the Commander of the Faithful ask me and I respond, or shall I start and hit the mark?" (*a-yasʾalunī amīru al-muʾminīna fa-ujība am abtadiʾu fa-uṣība*).[83] al-Aṣmaʿī's question shows that this *impromptu* meeting lacked a set protocol and that the host was responsible to select one. "Are you a poet or a transmitter," al-Rashīd in turn inquired and then quizzed al-Aṣmaʿī, who had identified himself as the latter, about a range of Umayyad lore (proverb etiology, *rajaz* and *qaṣīd* verse, *scholiae* and related *akhbār*). This examination (*ikhtibār*, 310:12) was formally concluded toward the end of the night, when al-Rashīd switched to the freer format: "I am not asking this as an exam question (*suʾāl imtiḥān*) – you are not responsible for this – but I am making it a basis for [mutual] recitation (*mudhākara*). If anything falls outside your knowledge, you should not feel uneasy with me therefore" (315:7-9). Needless to say, al-Aṣmaʿī's stellar performance was remunerated with 59,000 *dirhams*.

The contents of a session could either be free-wielding, as with al-Rashīd, or limited to a theme. For instance a meeting could be devoted to *al-shiʿr wa-l-shuʿarāʾ*[84] (identical with the later book title) and conducted with questions either about individual poets or themes of poetry.

An early example of a question-answer session about the first poets is recorded by Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī (d.c. 363/972) between an Umayyad

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81 *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn et al. 7 vols. Cairo 1359-1372/1940-1953, vol. 5, 309-17.

82 His disgrace in 183/799 provides the event's ante quem.

83 *Ibid.*, 310-11.

84 See Thaʿlab: *Majālis*, ed. ʿAbdassalām Muḥammad Hārūn. 2 vols. Cairo 1987, vol. 1, 235:3 and 10.

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caliph and Jarīr (d.c. 111/729) and narrated by the poet's grandson ʿUmāra b. ʿAqīl (d.c. 232-247/847-861):[85]

> ʿAbdalmalik, or his son Hishām, asked Jarīr:
> "Who is the best poet (*ashʿaru l-nās*)?"
> Jarīr responded:
> "The son of twenty [summers] (sc. Ṭarafa)"
> "What is your opinion about the two sons of Abū Sulmā (sc. Zuhayr and his son Kaʿb)?"
> "Their poetry is luminous, O Commander of the Faithful."
> "What do you say about Imruʾulqays?"
> "Poetry fitted this scoundrel like a shoe. I swear by God, if I caught up with him, I would lift up the trailing hems [of his shirts]."
> "What do you say about Dhū l-Rumma?"
> "He mastered fashionable, archaic and excellent poetry like no other."
> "What do you say about al-Akhṭal?"
> "The tongue of the Christian-born was not able to bring out [all] the poetry from his heart before he died."
> "What do you say about al-Farazdaq?"
> "In his hand, by God, O Commander of the Faithful, lies a bow of hard ashwood he holds with firm grip."
> "I do not think you have left anything for yourself!"
> "I did, by God, O Commander of the Faithful. I am the metropolis of poetry whence it emerges and whither it returns. I have composed love poetry and caused rapture. I have satirized and wrought demise. I have praised and brought elevation.[86] I have abounded in *ramal*. I have produced a sea of *rajaz*. Thus I composed all shades (*ḍurūb*) of poetry, whereas each of them only composed one."
> "You have spoken true."

This and other elative questions (*man ashʿaru l-nās/mā taqūlu fī fulān*) characterize the pre-systematic phase of literary criticism, which may reach back as early the second/eighth century,[87] and which finds expression in al-Aṣmaʿī's *Fuḥūlat al-shuʿarāʾ*.[88] Later when literary criticism came into its

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85 *al-Aghānī*, vol 8, 51-52 (see n. 26). The translation omits the inquit formulae. Cf. the ultra-short version *man ashʿaru l-nāsi? Imruʾulqaysi idhā rakiba wa-l-Nābighatu idhā rahiba wa-Zuhayrun idhā raghiba wa-l-Aʿshā idhā ṭariba*. "Who is the best poet? Imruʾulqays when riding, al-Nābigha when in fear, Zuhayr when pleading, and al-Aʿshā when in bliss"; Ibn Qutayba: *ʿUyūn*, vol. 2, 200. See also Ibn ʿAbdrabbih: *Iqd*, vol. 5, 270-71 and 327 with different poets (Labīd, al-Ḥuṭayʾa, Jarīr).

86 Emendation *asnaytu*, cf. al-Iṣbahānī: *al-Aghānī*, vol 8, 52 n. 4.

87 Heinrichs: *Poetik* (see n. 12), 179.

88 al-Sijistanī: *Suʾālāt Abī Ḥātim al-Sijistānī li-l-Aṣmaʿī wa-radduhū ʿalayhi Fuḥūlat al-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAwda Salāma et al. Cairo 1414/1994.

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own, the question format along with the list of "the greats" metamorphosed into a plot element in fictional accounts. Here belong, for example, *al-Maqāma al-Qāriḍiyya*, by al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008), the first section of *Risālat al-Tawābiʿ* by Ibn Shuhayd (d. 426/1035), who dramatizes the list of poets as imaginary visits to their *jinns*,[89] and the *Masāʾil al-intiqād*[90] by Ibn Sharaf al-Qayrawānī (d. 459/1067), a dialogue between the author and a fictive *shaykh*.[91] In the debates among these, the enumerated poets are supplied with vague epithets designed above all to display the speaker's eloquence. The list itself becomes curiously janus-headed: predictable at the top – with Imruʾulqays, Ṭarafa or Zuhayr – it remains open at the end, belaying its semblance of a canon. Like Jarīr, the protagonists add themselves to the "greats," whether by receiving fictional *ijāzas* from poets' *jinns,* as Ibn Shuhayd, or by mockingly reversing the poetic hierarchy, as Abū l-Fatḥ al-Iskandarī. Returning however to the historical model for such an exam about poets, a motif collection would not have prepared a candidate for it as well as a *ṭabaqāt* book on poets.

The case is different with the second type of elative questions about poetic themes (*mā amdaḥu/ansabu/aghzalu bayt* etc., *mā aḥsanu mā qīla fī*...), which continues to be a feature of courtly sessions up to the Buyid period. al-Masʿūdī preserves several such occasions in his *Murūj al-dhahab*. al-Muʿtamid (r. 256-279/870-892), for instance, spent one night asking his familiar Ibn Khurradādhbih (d. 300/911?) about music and song. The following morning he reconvened all the participants and interrogated another courtier about dance.[92] In these meetings, however, the answers were given in prose. Poetic sessions on specific themes are recorded from the rule of al-Mustakfī (r. 333-334/944-946). One was devoted to reciting poetry about wine and its effect (*tadhākarū l-khamra wa-afʿālahā*). In the midst of the session, one courtier suddenly erupted into such a plethora of quotes on the unique aspects of wine by Abū Nuwās that the caliph broke the oath of abstention he had sworn at his enthronement.[93] For another session the caliph even pre-announced the description of different foods as the theme of an upcoming session. He opened it asking, "What has each

89 *Risālat al-Tawābiʿ wa-l-zawābiʿ*, ed. Buṭrus al-Bustānī. Beirut 1387/1967, 91-114.

90 Charles Pellat (ed.): *Questions de critique littéraire* (Masāʾil al-intiqād). Algiers 1953.

91 Though these sections follow a different narrative format, the underlying list of poets is similar.

92 al-Masʿūdī: *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbdalḥamīd. 4 vols. Beirut 1406/1986, vol. 4, 131-38.

93 *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 264-67, esp. 267.

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one of you prepared?" and as the participants took turns in fulfilling his request, quoting Ibn al-Muʿtazz, Ibn al-Rūmī, Kushājim and others, he complimented each one and ordered the delicacy to be prepared on the spot – except asparagus (*hilyawn*), which was unfortunately out of season. The caliph's unprepared old teacher had to digress to a garden description – several decades later he might have simply consulted al-ʿAskarī's fifth chapter on "the evokation of fire, cooking, kinds of foods and descriptions of wine." In the preceding wine session, the loquacious participant explicitly refers to a book he used.[94]

The thematic sessions became literature in turn (*duwwinat*). al-Masʿūdī lists, in addition to the subjects already mentioned, chess, the qualities of the perfect courtier (*nadīm*), his right and duties, the order of seating, and the etiquette of eating, drinking and stepping out, as well as the literary sessions of bygone generations and dynasties as subjects of *adab al-nadīm* books.[95] In fact the very existence of such a genre lends support to the existence of conversational norms.

al-ʿAskarī's thematic and poetic-critical arrangement of motifs finds then at least sporadic justification in the customs recorded immediately before his own lifetime. Did his other modes of arrangement respond to conversational practices as well? Again, a limited answer can be attempted. In the first account of al-ʿAskarī's preface, the chronological order obtains. In answering Ibn al-ʿAmīd's question for the best description of poetry (*aḥsanu mā qīla fī ṣifat al-shiʿr*) Abū Aḥmad responded with two kinds of quotes by an unnamed "ancient [poet]" (*qadīm*) and the famous modern (*muḥdath*) poet Abū Tammām (8:4-9:6).[96] This diachronic array describes poetry exhaustively as well-wrought, withstanding time, far-spreading, easy to remember, enjoyable, ennobling, effective, bringing honor to him who recites it, and pleasing even those not praised by it.

The second account shows the contrastive order. al-Maʾmūn asks his guest for the best descriptions of the different attitudes a man can take towards another. In response, al-Naḍr produces a spectrum of poetic characterizations, including a shameless panegyrist, a selflessly loyal relative and a humble scholar.

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94 *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 264:8-9.

95 Whether the striking overlap in order and wording between the chapter headings given by al-Masʿūdī (*Ibid.*, vol. 4, 138:4-7 and 138:18-139:3) and those of Kushājim: *Adad al-nadīm*. Bulaq 1298/1881 are due to influence or genre convention will have to remain open.

96 *Dīwān bi-sharḥ al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbduh ʿAzzām. 4 vols. Cairo 1976, vol. 3, 109-10 no. 128:46-50 and vol. 1, 421-22 no. 40:45-50.

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One can then conclude that the *Dīwān al-Maʿānī's* dominant order matched recorded literary sessions from the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, and that others of its ordering principles may similarly reflect the conduct of courtly conversation. In particular the short format of poetic passages suited the interactive role of the motif in conversational practice. Even if this role was at cross-purposes with the appreciation of complete poems, or genres, it was equally, if not more, relevant to the successful medieval *udabāʾ*. As a commented motif-based digest of individual poets' *dīwāns*, al-ʿAskarī's *Dīwān al-Maʿānī* sufficed to make aspiring *literati* fully conversant in poetry.

Appendix

A. Synopsis of Dīwān al-Maʿānī, chapter four

Introduction
"Best" (*araqq, ansab*) verses and general verses about love (*ḥubb, tashabbub, ʿishq;* 222:10-228:10).
Transitional motif: the beauty of the beloved in the eye of the lover.

Section I
Descriptive verse
1. The beloved's physique (*fī ṣifat al-nisāʾ*; 229:12-262:7).
   Transitional motif: love of virgins.
2. The relationship of the lovers (*fī ṣifat al-ḥubb, fī ṣifat al-ʿāshiq*; 263:4-274:19).

Section II
Eloquent motifs (*min faṣīḥ al-shiʿr al-dākhil fī hādhā l-bāb, min badīʿ al-maʿānī*) (274:20-285:ult.).

B. Later addenda to certain points (*mimmā yalḥaqu bi-mā taqaddama/bi-l-faṣl al-awwal, wa-qad taqaddama*)

To Introduction (222:10-228:10):
268:9-269:6

To Section I.1. (229:12-262:7):
269:7-10 on [earlocks and] fluff on cheeks treated 247:6-250:1.
285:1-4 on the perfect balance of the beloved's beauty.

To Section I.2. (263:4-274:19):
281:20-282:16 on the lover's heart being his enemy.

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283:5-8 on the praise of parting, treated 270:8-15.
283:9-14 on the lover's wretchedness, treated 266:21.
284:6-11 on the lover's tears, treated *ibid.*
284:12-16 on the beloved as being her lover's world.

C. Authors and genres of "best love poetry"

(Poets not identified by al-ʿAskarī are bracketed.)

1. Imruʾulqays (d.c. 550), from nasīb of pre-Islamic memorial qaṣīda, a *Muʿallaqa* (222:11).
2. [Jarīr (d. 111/729)], from nasīb of *naqīḍa* (222:18).
3. [al-Aḥwaṣ (d.c. 110/728)], from nasīb (222:ult.).
4. Abū Nuwās (d.c. 198/813), from early courtly ghazal couplet (223:2).
5. Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283/896), early courtly ghazal (223:4-7).
6. [Jamīl?], from *ʿudhrī* ghazal (228:7-8).
7. [al-Aḥwaṣ], from *ḥijāzī* ghazal (228:10).
8. Kuthayyir (d. 105/723), from *ʿudhrī* ghazal (268:12).
9. Kuthayyir, from *ʿudhrī* ghazal (268:14).
10. Wajīhaddawla (d. 428/1036), late courtly ghazal (269:1-3).

D. Detail of section II: Eloquent motifs

(Points of suspension indicate the addenda listed in B.)

[The Eastwind stirring desire] (274:20-)
[The lover taking blame for the beloved] (275:5-)
Stopping at campsite traces (275:10-)
Love of black women (276:4-)
The *khayāl* (276:17-)
Intercourse (279:10-)
Descriptions of female organ (279:15-)
Love of old women (281:12-)
[Imbalance between lovers' hearts] (281:17-19) …
Close traces vs. distant beloved (282:17-)
The lover's lament (283:1-4) …
Novel motif [of the lover's dry eye as being punished with not being shown the beloved] (283:15-284:5) …
Novel motif [of the lover's glance cutting the beloved's cheek, which takes revenge on the lover's heart] (284:17-)
The balanced beauty of the beloved's body (285:1-)
Novel motif [of the omnipresent beloved] (285:4-)
Taking leave (285:7-)
Best version of motif [of the beloved as lost gazelle of the cities] (285:10)

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Motif [of love as fading with beauty] (285:17-)
Motif [of the distance from the beloved as relative to the direction of the lover's journey] (285:19)
Motif [of the sunrise as announcing separation] (285:20).

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ABŪ NUWĀS AND GHAZAL AS A GENRE

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Abū Nuwās (d. 814 or 815) was undoubtedly one of the most innovative and many-faceted Arab poets of all times.[1] Best known for his wine poems, he was equally at ease with ghazal and *ṭardīya*, the hunting poem, and he tried his hand at several other genres as well. In fact, Ibn Qutayba[2] draws attention to the wide learning of Abū Nuwās, stating that Abū Nuwās was versatile in many fields of knowledge (*kāna Abū Nuwās mutafanninan fī l-ʿilmi qad ḍaraba fī kulli nawʿin minhu bi-naṣīb*) and mentioning in particular *ʿilm al-nujūm* which in modern times equals astronomy, astrology and meteorology.[3]

Abū Nuwās' innovations were shared by other writers, too. He was writing in a period when literary life took new insights from the flourishing Abbasid urban culture with all its refinement and Arab poetry was becoming the exquisite art it later was. In the field of love poetry, the most famous – or infamous to some of his contemporaries as well as to Victorian scholars[4] – innovation of Abū Nuwās and some of his contemporaries was the transposition of heterosexual, "female" ghazal, *muʾannatha*, into homoerotic, "male" ghazal, *mudhakkara*. I shall use female vs. male ghazal

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1 The cornerstone of all Abū Nuwās studies is the epoch-making monograph of Ewald Wagner (*Abū Nuwās: Eine Studie zur arabischen Literatur der frühen ʿAbbāsidenzeit*. Wiesbaden 1965). The wine poetry of Abū Nuwās has recently been studied by Philip F. Kennedy (*The Wine Song in Classical Arabic Poetry: Abū Nuwās and the Literary Tradition*. Oxford 1997) but his love poetry still awaits a thorough new treatment, which the critical edition of Wagner has made possible (Ewald Wagner (ed.): *Der Dīwān des Abū Nuwās* [vol. 4: Gregor Schoeler]. Wiesbaden 1958-88; vol. V remains unpublished to date).

2 *Ash-Shiʿr wa-sh-shuʿarāʾ* (= Ibn Qotaiba: *Liber poesis et poetarum*, ed. M.J. de Goeje. Repr. s.a. & s.l. Lugduni-Batavorum 1904), 503. For the learning of Abū Nuwās in general, see Wagner: *Abū Nuwās*, 24-39.

3 On the term *ʿilm al-nujūm*, see Manfred Ullmann: *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam*. Leiden 1972, 271.

4 Recently Thomas Bauer (*Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden 1998, 150-62) has criticized the efforts of some scholars and especially translators to mask the homoerotic love poetry as something else by using feminine forms instead of masculine.

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as synonyms for *mu'annatha* and *mudhakkara* for ghazals ostensibly written to a female, respectively male beloved.[5]

Abū Nuwās' innovation[6] led to more complex patterns of love poetry; besides the earlier love poetry where the male poet wrote to his female beloved (M > F), there was now another pattern, that of a male poet writing to his male beloved (M > M). Later, the *mudhakkara*, in fact, almost drove *mu'annatha* out of contention and female ghazals became something of a rarity.[7]

If we consider the Arabic love poetry of the Classical period in general, we see that in addition to the patterns (M > F) and (F > M), we have female poets writing either to their male beloved (F > M), or, when the female poet takes the guise of a male poet, to her female beloved ("M" > F) or even to her male beloved ("M" > M). What seems to be missing are the cases where a male poet takes the guise of a female poet and writes to his beloved ("F" > M or F),[8] or a female poet writes, as herself, to her female beloved (F > F).

When studying the ghazal as a genre, Abū Nuwās' production allows some rather interesting questions to be posed. Unlike some of his colleagues, Abū Nuwās did not limit his poetry to only one genre but his dīwān contains most genres of the time in a kind of balanced selection – to

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5 Like the love poems of al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, expertly studied by Bauer: *Liebe*, 56-73 (see also Susanne Enderwitz: *Liebe als Beruf: Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf und das Gazal*. Stuttgart 1995 (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 55)), those of Abū Nuwās are also very much dependent on ideology. It is rather obvious that the poems grew from a fictitious reality, a kind of manneristic universe where Poets have to love *Sāqīs*, and flowers are frozen into jewels.
Yet this does not, of course, mean that there were no real love affairs behind the poems; it only means that the poems lead a life of their own, and Abū Nuwās fulfills the role of the Lover. For the collectors of the dīwān, the poems were, on the contrary, directly related to reality and to Abū Nuwās' own feelings.
In his preface to the *mu'annathāt* (*Dīwān* IV:1-2), Ḥamza tackles the question of Abū Nuwās' lovelife and states that many people believe that all his love poetry (*nasīb*) was directed to males. This is not true, says Ḥamza; the truth is that the poet also loved (*ʿashiqa*) women and flirted with them (*shabbaba bihinna*). Ḥamza proceeds to list his female objects of love, disregarding any difference between real emotions and literary poses. For Ḥamza, the two kinds of ghazal of Abū Nuwās equal his real lovelife.

6 As Bauer: *Liebe*, 150, rightly notes, Abū Nuwās was the first major poet to write homoerotic ghazals.

7 *Ibid.*, 151.

8 In cases where the authenticity of the production of a female poet is dubious, there may, of course, have been male poets whose verses became attributed to a female poet, but as the attribution was more or less *bona fide* and the male poet did not want his identity to shine through, there is no reason to speak of any cross-gendered verses in this case (i.e. they cannot be taken as "F" > M or F).

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be sure, *khamrīya* and ghazal, as well as *ṭardīya*, are overrepresented in his dīwān, but the dīwān does contain a large number of Classical qaṣīdas in the chapter of *madā'iḥ*, panegyrical poetry (*Dīwān* I:106-298), as well as all other genres of the early ninth century.

As a genre, ghazal is a cognate of some other genres, mainly *khamrīya*, some subgenres of *waṣf* (descriptive poetry), and *mujūn*, the erotic or sexual, ribald poetry.[9] The genre of ghazal may further be divided into various subgenres, and in the dīwān of Abū Nuwās, the main dividing line within the genre falls easily between his *mu'annathāt* and *mudhakkarāt*.

The wide production of Abū Nuwās makes his dīwān a good starting point for analyzing the limits of the genres,[10] which is made easier by the excellent edition of Ewald Wagner and, for the fourth volume, Gregor Schoeler. The dīwān offers an opportunity to study the different – but to some extent intertwined – genres in contrast with each other. The question posed here is: To what extent were the poems of different genres and subgenres, mainly *mudhakkarāt*, *mu'annathāt* and *khamrīyāt*, felt to belong to different genres and what effects did this have on the composition of the poems? – Since the fifth volume of the edition has not yet appeared, I cannot deal extensively with the *mujūn* poems.[11]

It goes without saying that the topic is vast and would need a very thorough treatment, so I shall limit myself to a less studied point of view, viz. the attitude of the collectors towards their material, as well as to a few points in the poems' technique.

This leads to a further point; my focus in this article is not so much on defining what the ghazal is from a modern viewpoint but what the term meant for Mediaeval *literati*. This attitude has, I think, the obvious advantage of freeing us from defining the material by our own standards and then using the limited corpus to our own liking. This, incidentally, has caused categorical comments to the effect that the ghazals of Abū

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9 It is also naturally a cognate of the nasīb, the initial part of the qaṣīda, but their comparison is problematic because nasīb is not an independent genre, but merely part of another genre.

10 Drawing a line between *mudhakkara* and *mu'annatha* is considerably more difficult in later dīwāns, since there is usually no division into these two subgenres of ghazal in the manuscripts. See also Bauer: *Liebe*, 159.

11 Much of his *mujūn* poetry is already available in Jamāl Jum'a (ed.): *Abū Nuwās, al-Nuṣūṣ al-muḥarrama*. 2nd edition. Bayrūt 1998. But as the book is a selection of poems from different chapters of the dīwān, it is not comparable with the meticulously edited dīwān.

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Nuwās "do not contain any obscenities"[12] which is almost true but would necessitate eliminating several poems from the chapter of *mudhakkarāt* as not being love poems *because* they are obscene. Thus, ghazals are not obscene because if they are, we do not count them as ghazals.[13]

On the other hand, it is clear that the Mediaeval scholars responsible for organizing the dīwān of Abū Nuwās did not always share our viewpoints on genre and they organized their material according to criteria which to us sometimes seem secondary. Thus, e.g., *Dīwān* IV:373 (*mudhakkara* 369) is actually a parody of Bedouin nostalgia with its topoi, and only the last line mentions, more or less in passing, the gazelles of Baghdad which has led Ḥamza to include the poem in this section:

> More beautiful than it [a Bedouin encampment] and its kind / are the gazelles of Baghdad around the valley.
>
> *aḥsanu minhā wa-min naẓā'irihā / ghizlānu Baghdāda ḥawla wādīhā*

Likewise, the section of *khamrīyāt* contains, as a kind of appendix, a chapter (*Dīwān* III:356-68) labelled "fragments which resemble wine songs. This section can be joined to the chapter of wine songs because of the mentions of the etiquette of symposia, etc.." (*fī muqaṭṭaʿātin tunāsibu l-khamrīyāt.* (...) *wa-hādhā faṣlun yajūzu an yanḍamma ilā bābi l-khamrīyāti limā yaḥwī min dhikri ādābi l-majālisi wa-rtisāmi ā'īnāti l-muʿāsharati wa-rusūmi l-mu'ānasa*; nos. 313-27). The poems in this chapter are connected with *khamrīyāt* only through rather secondary features.

Nevertheless, I feel that starting from the views contemporary with the poet, or slightly later, has its own advantage and this viewpoint gives us something which can be used in addition to – but not in exclusion of – modern genre analyses.

The themes in the genres of ghazal and *khamrīya*, as well as ghazal and *mujūn*, are closely related. The wine song may be a poem on the theme of wine and wine drinking but the description of the *sāqī* as the beloved often takes up a considerable part of the poem and the *sāqī* or a songstress,

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12 Art. Abū Nuwās (Gregor Schoeler) in: *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* I, London and New York 1998, 41-43. Likewise Bauer: *Liebe*, 152 note 6, denies that "die Gedichte an Jünglinge obszöner seien als die an Mädchen." Bauer's argument is correct if we study obscenity in correspondence with gender from a modern viewpoint only – there are obscene poems written about women – but, at least in Abū Nuwās' case, if we take into consideration the classification of the genres in the dīwān, this is no longer quite true.

13 Note that this line of thinking is already attested in the recension of al-Ṣūlī (*Dīwān* IV:8, quoted below) who received a version of Abū Nuwās' poetry where the ghazals and the *mujūn* poems were mingled, and he himself separated the two.

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qayna, is rarely totally absent. Likewise, the love poems often contain at least some reference to wine, and if the *mujūn* do tend towards the obscene, the section of *mudhakkarāt* especially does contain pieces that are a distant echo of the chaste love of earlier love poetry. Thus, it is the focus of the poem which defines its genre: ghazal is a poem focusing on love themes, even though it may contain references to wine and, I would add, even if it does contain something that is obscene and was probably felt to be obscene by the contemporary audience.[14]

Within ghazal, the question of the sex of the beloved is also not as clear as a non-specialist might think, as the grammatical references do not always betray the gender of the beloved,[15] and both male and female beloved are described in much the same way.

Yet these thematic differences are not the focus of the present study. Instead, I shall take a closer look at one technical innovation of Abū Nuwās and his generation, to see how it was applied to different genres. But before that I shall begin with a few notes on the organization of the dīwān in the different recensions.

The dīwān with which I am working, mainly in the recension of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī but also taking into account the other recensions used by Schoeler in his edition, viz. "Tūzūn" and al-Ṣūlī, is the work of later scholars, not the poet himself. Thus, we have some variation in the classification of the poems in this dīwān organized according to genre; some of Ḥamza's *mu'annathāt* are *mudhakkarāt* or *khamrīyāt* in al-Ṣūlī's recension and vice versa.

The question of the authenticity of the poems is rather difficult to solve. In this paper I am working with the material attributed to Abū Nuwās by Ḥamza, but with due reference to al-Ṣūlī's critical remarks.

The dīwān of Abū Nuwās was collected by Ḥamza from different sources, as he himself admits saying that he collected the poems from

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14 An interesting question is what is obscene, and to whom. Bauer has pertinently emphasized (*Liebe*, 8) that obscenity is a very relative category ("... daß gerade Obszönität ein sehr kulturspezifischer Begriff ist und, [...] sich sogar innerhalb kurzer Zeit die Maßstäbe für das, was als obszön gilt und was nicht, stark verändern können"). In this article I am using "obscene" to describe features that are typical of *mujūnīyāt*: thus, a ghazal poem which resembles the *mujūn* poems is obscene.

15 The question of grammatical vs. natural gender in the love poems has now been very accurately studied by Bauer, who (*Liebe*, 162) comes to the conclusion that grammatical gender does usually correspond to the natural gender of the beloved. It has to be added, though, that Bauer's discussion is based on complete poems; when selecting a few verses for, e.g., anthologies, the danger of confusing the gender of the beloved is greater.

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books without a formal transmission of them (III:368: *min buṭūni l-kutubi min ghayri samāʿin lahū wa-lā qirāʾa*), and the organization of the poems thus ultimately originates with the collector, not the poet himself.

The question of how conscious Abū Nuwās was of the genres he wrote in, is intricately linked with the question of the compilation of his dīwān, and it may not be superfluous to discuss briefly the possibility that he had himself, if not compiled a dīwān of his poems, then at least kept some kind of organized records of them.

It seems that the notes of Ḥamza in the preface of his recension have contributed to the general acceptance that Abū Nuwās could not have collected his poems and, accordingly, that he was more or less unaware of the exigencies of genres when writing his poems. Ḥamza does claim that there was no reliable manuscript of the dīwān (*Dīwān* I:3: *nuskhatun ṣaḥīḥatun muʿtamada*) at his disposal. He also draws attention to the fact that there are poems transmitted in Egypt only, while there are others known solely to Iraqis (*Dīwān* I:3-6).[16]

Thus, Wagner denies the possibility of Abū Nuwās himself publishing his dīwān: "An eine Veröffentlichung in Buchform dachte er dabei noch nicht. (...) Das Zusammenstellen der Dīwāne überließen die Dichter zu Abū Nuwās' Zeit noch der Nachwelt."[17] Later,[18] though, Wagner does modify this statement in the light of the evidence discussed below,[19] but the difference between publishing one's poems and compiling a collection of them without necessarily publishing it, has not always been understood by later scholars,[20] especially since Wagner himself emphasizes the *unsystematic* character of the possible activity of Abū Nuwās in keeping a record of his poems.

As far as Abū Nuwās' being aware of genres is concerned, Bauer writes: "Abū Nuwās selbst hat sich sicherlich wenig um die Gattungszugehörigkeit seiner Gedichte gekümmert" but then immediately continues: "doch läßt die Lektüre der *muǧūniyyāt* des Abū Nuwās nur den Schluss zu, daß auch er diese Gedichte nicht als Liebesgedichte betrachtet hat."[21]

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16 There are also, according to Ḥamza (*Dīwān* I:6), other indications that not all poems of Abū Nuwās have been preserved but these are less convincing.

17 Ewald Wagner: *Die Überlieferung des Abū Nuwās-Dīwān und seine Handschriften*. Wiesbaden 1957, 303-73, 308.

18 *Ibid.*, 311.

19 "Man kann daher annehmen, daß Abū Nuwās selbst schon einen Teil seiner Gedichte *unsystematisch* [emphasis added, J.H-A] aufgeschrieben hat oder hat auf- und abschreiben lassen und sich somit bei seinem Tode Hss. mit Gedichten von ihm vorfanden."

20 Schoeler: *Abū Nuwās*, 43a ("Abū Nuwās did not compile his poems himself").

21 *Liebe*, 9.

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I would claim that neither of these claims is quite self evident. First of all, we should be very careful in reading exactly what Ḥamza says. Ḥamza does not deny the existence of a dīwān – he even speaks of copies of Abū Nuwās' poems (*Dīwān* I:8: *wa-qad wajadtu fī nusakhi shiʿrihī…*) – and we know of earlier recensions of the dīwān[22] even though these have not been preserved. Ḥamza even speaks of manuscripts in the possession of the poet himself.[23]

Thus, it seems very probable that Abū Nuwās had, in fact, kept some kind of record of his own poems, even though later compilers and critics were definitely more eager than the poet himself to compile a complete dīwān.

There is, furthermore, an interesting passage in the recension of al-Ṣūlī, which makes it questionable how *unsystematic* the records kept by Abū Nuwās were after all. According to al-Ṣūlī, Abū Nuwās himself had divided his poems into ten different parts – genres that is (*Dīwān* IV:8):

> People combine the ghazals and the *mujūn* poems but we have separated them as was his habit in his poetry; he divided his poems into ten parts.
>
> (*wa-l-nāsu yajmaʿūna bayna l-ghazali wa-l-mujūni wa-afradnāhumā naḥnu ʿalā mā kāna min rasmihī fī shiʿrihī fa-innahū qassamahū ʿasharata aqsām*).[24]

To my mind, this implies a rather clear sense of collected poems, organized according to genres. Abū Nuwās was a learned poet[25] and must thus have been aware of the habit of philologists of collecting poems into dīwāns, especially since famous philologists like Khalaf al-Aḥmar and Abū ʿUbayda were among his teachers[26] and both were philologists who were eager to collect ancient poetry.

The passage of al-Ṣūlī also shows that Abū Nuwās was aware of writing poems belonging to different genres. The later compilers must, of course, have been more acutely aware of the question of genre, yet

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22 Wagner: *Überlieferung*, 311.

23 *Ibid.*, 310-11.

24 According to Ibn al-Nadīm, quoted in *ibid.*, 311, the division into ten chapters originated with Yaḥyā ibn al-Faḍl, the transmitter of his poems, on whose identity, see *ibid.*, 313.

25 See also the story in *Dīwān* I:12, according to which Abū Nuwās knew the production of 80 female poets. Even though the number is obviously exaggerated and the story most probably apocryphal, it shows that he was considered to have been a learned poet.

26 Wagner: *Abū Nuwās*, 26-31. For Khalaf (d. c. 180/796) and Abū ʿUbayda (d. between 207/822 and 213/828), see Fuat Sezgin: *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*. 9 vols. Leiden 1982-84, vol. 9, 126-27 and vol. 8, 67-71, respectively.

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it seems probable that Abū Nuwās did realize that he wrote within the traditions of several different genres and quite possible that he had kept for himself some kind of an archive of his poems, divided into ten chapters.

What Ḥamza said need not be in contradiction to this. His testimony only shows that Abū Nuwās was no diligent philologist who would have collected each scrap of his poems into a systematical whole nor had he published his dīwān, i.e. set it into circulation in a final and polished form.

Abū Nuwās may thus have himself compiled his poems even more systematically than has been presumed, but the information provided by Ḥamza and the fact that his poems circulated in wildly differing recensions, shows that the possible compilation of Abū Nuwās did not serve as the direct basis of later recensions: in a word, his own "recension" – if it is not preposterous to use the word for a less than meticulously kept record of his poems – was never published in the strict sense of the word.[27]

Thus, the organization of the material we have does not directly derive from the poet himself. As there also was no definitive recension which would have driven others out of the market, we have several recensions which are at least partly independent from each other. As it comes to organization according to genres, there are differences between the recensions, and a poem may be placed in different chapters in different recensions.

As can be expected, the main overlapping in the organization of the poems is between *mudhakkarāt* and one of the three genres *mujūnīyāt*, *mu'annathāt*, and *khamrīyāt*. There is less overlapping in the three genres of *mujūnīyāt*, *mu'annathāt* and *khamrīyāt* between themselves.

What is worth attention is that there is particularly little overlapping between *mu'annathāt* and *mujūn*. An obvious explanation for this is, I think, that the female ghazal was much more firmly rooted in the tradition which allowed less space for the poet. Of course one could – and did – write obscene poems about women, but these were not considered love poems, ghazals, at all and fell outside the genre, as well as the chapter, of *mu'annathāt*, and they were set in a separate section of the poems (*mujūnīyāt*), as seen in the dīwān recensions. Obscene poems are conspicuously lacking in the section of *mu'annathāt*.

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27 There is no reason to claim that there cannot have existed a collection by the author himself if this has not been preserved. Preservation and publication in the strict sense needs someone to accomplish that. In Abū Nuwās' case, there may not have been anyone ready to publish his dīwān – in fact, the Nawbakht family does seem to have treasured the poems within the family without putting them into circulation (Wagner: *Überlieferung*, 310, 313).

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The *mudhakkarāt*, on the contrary, were not yet a fixed genre (or subgenre), and there was probably hesitation about how to classify a poem where a male beloved said 'yes' instead of the customary 'no' of the female beloved. The comment of Ḥamza is most elucidating (IV:144, beginning of the chapter of *mudhakkarāt*): "I have left away from this (chapter) those of his poems which contain indecent words and have postponed them for the chapter of *mujūn*" (*akhlaytuhū min shiʿrihi lladhī huwa fāḥishu l-lafẓi wa-taraktuhū li-bābi l-mujūn*). Thus, he left something away on moral grounds although it did, in his eyes, belong to the *mudhakkarāt*. The poems were placed in the chapter of *mujūn* even though they were, in fact, *mudhakkarāt*.

The same idea is seen in the preface to the *muʾannathāt* where Ḥamza writes that he let the chapter of *muʾannathāt* precede that of *mudhakkarāt* since the latter are close to *mujūn* because of the similarities in some of their words and many of their themes (IV:1: *wa-qaddamtu hādhā l-bāba ʿalā bābi l-mudhakkarāti li-tajāwuri l-mudhakkarāti maʿa l-mujūnīyāti li-mā bayna l-bābayni mina l-tashākuli fī baʿḍi l-alfāẓi wa-kathīrin mina l-maʿānī*).

Thus, for Ḥamza the natural (or the traditional) order of the dīwān would presuppose *mudhakkarāt* coming before *muʾannathāt*, and he has reversed the order on purpose since there is a similarity between *mudhakkarāt* and *mujūn* but, implicitly, not between *muʾannathāt* and *mujūn*. The other order was used by al-Ṣūlī and "Tūzūn."[28]

The section of *mudhakkarāt* does contain poems which might as well have been included in the section of *mujūn* and indeed were so organized in other recensions. Thus, e.g., *Dīwān* IV:342 (*mudhakkara* 312) is obscene, to say the least,[29] and one could hardly think of a similar poem in the chapter of *muʾannathāt*.

On the other hand, the overlapping between *mudhakkarāt* and *muʾannathāt* reveals how similar the subgenres are, using the same themes and a very similar vocabulary. Many poems need a background story to

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28 *Dīwān* IV, preface, p. B; Wagner: *Überlieferung*, 323-24. "Tūzūn" is here dependent on al-Ṣūlī's recension, which according to *ibid.*, 323 follows in the order of chapters that of Yaḥyā ibn al-Faḍl and Ibn al-Sikkīt. We can see that Ḥamza is the innovator who brought thematically similar genres closer to each other in the recension. – The fourth recension of the dīwān is arranged alphabetically (*ibid.*, 326) and is thus not relevant to our discussion.

29 The last three lines of this poem of seven verses read:
ʿalayka bi-l-murdi fa-rkab fī marākibihim / inna l-qiḥāba maṭīyātu sh-shayāṭīnī
aḥrāḥuhunna kharāṭīmun mushawwahatun / ka-annahā baʿḍu afwāhi l-sarāḥīnī
shattāna bayna ḥirin yulghīka fī waṣlin / wa-bayna ṭaʿnika fī tisʿin wa-tisʿīnī.

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show who the beloved was. If it was a boy, the poem went into the section of *mudhakkarāt* and if it was a girl, then it was a *mu'annatha*.[30]

The overlapping between the ghazal in its two different forms (the male and the female ghazal) and the *khamrīya* is explained by the fact that both genres contain the same elements, and often it is only the focus of the poem that makes the difference. Yet, Abū Nuwās himself used slightly different techniques for his ghazals and his wine songs.

The following statistics shows the overlapping of *mudhakkarāt*, *mu'annathāt*, *mujūn* and *khamrīyāt* in the main recensions of the dīwān, viz. Ḥamza and al-Ṣūlī, with some attention given to "Tūzūn":[31]

Ḥamza/*Mu'annathāt* (*Dīwān* IV:8-132, nos. 8-173):[32]
7 poems in al-Ṣūlī, *mudhakkarāt*.[33]
1 poem in al-Ṣūlī, *mujūn*.[34]
1 poem in al-Ṣūlī, *khamrīyāt*.[35]

Ḥamza/*Mudhakkarāt* (*Dīwān* IV:144-383, nos. 1-391):[36]
21 poems in al-Ṣūlī, *mu'annathāt*.[37]
4 poems in al-Ṣūlī, *mujūn*.[38]
2 poems in al-Ṣūlī, *khamrīyāt*.[39]

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30 In his preface (Wagner: *Überlieferung*, 322), al-Ṣūlī draws attention to the misplacement of some poems into the wrong genre. Without knowing the background story, one is sometimes at a loss as to how to read the poem.

31 Note that Ḥamza is more liberal than al-Ṣūlī in attributing poems to Abū Nuwās; many of the following poems are labelled as *manḥūl* by al-Ṣūlī. There are also more poems in the recension of Ḥamza than in that of al-Ṣūlī.

32 The first seven poems come in the Prologue to this section, and the final poems belong to the class of *manḥūl*, etc.

33 Nos. 9, 48, 56, 84, 134, 140 (also in the chapter *mu'annathāt/manḥūl*) and 166. In "Tūzūn" nos. 44, 66 and 129 come in addition.

34 No. 66. In "Tūzūn" this poem belongs to *mudhakkarāt*.

35 No. 139 – In addition to these poems, there come in the final sections three poems (nos. 176, 182 and 183) which are found, respectively, in chapters *khamrīya*, *naqā'iḍ* and *mudhakkarāt* in different recensions.

36 The final poems are *manḥūl*, etc.

37 Nos. 1, 38, 40, 55, 73, 74, 86, 99, 103, 106, 125, 133, 135, 181, 182, 230, 231, 233, 238, 255, 318. In the final sections poems nos. 401, 402, 404 and 409 are *mu'annathāt* in al-Ṣūlī. In "Tūzūn" no. 93 also belongs to *mu'annathāt*.

38 Nos. 167, 252, 300 and 316.

39 Nos. 122 and 290. In addition no. 156 comes in al-Ṣūlī, *hijā'*, and no. 264 in al-Ṣūlī, *madīḥ*. The poems nos. 415, 424 and 436 are, respectively found in chapters *madīḥ*, *hijā'* and *mu'annathāt* in different rescensions.

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Ḥamza/*Khamrīyāt* (*Dīwān* III:2-348, nos. 1-304):

9 poems in al-Ṣūlī, *mudhakkarāt*.[40]

1 poem in al-Ṣūlī, *mu'annathāt*.[41]

6 poems in al-Ṣūlī, *mujūn*.[42]

Thus, it can be seen that the different compilers have been in overall accordance in placing poems in the different chapters of ghazal, *khamrīyāt* and *mujūn*, and the only major overlapping is between the two chapters of ghazal, *mudhakkarāt* and *mu'annathāt*.

Mudhakkarāt, though, have clearly more overlapping with both *mujūn* and *khamrīyāt* than do *mu'annathāt*. This is, in fact, rather conspicuous, as one of the standard figures in the *khamrīya* is the *qayna*, the slave girl who not only serves wine and the final "*kharja*" but is also the target of the amorous feelings of the wine imbibing poet, which might lead to presume more overlapping between the genres. Obviously, the more conservative character of the female love poems has had its influence: the girl in the tavern was not eligible for the beloved of the female ghazal whose character had been developing for some three centuries, beginning with the nasīb, the erotic prelude, of the qaṣīda. Thus, the more erotically loaded poems set in the tavern were not conceived as *mu'annathāt* love poems by any of the compilers.

However, the male ghazal of Abū Nuwās had almost no pre-existing models, and even a somewhat coarser poem could be labelled a *mudhakkara*.

The overlapping between *khamrīyāt*, *mudhakkarāt* and *mujūn* is further seen in the existence in the recension of Ḥamza (*Dīwān* III:348-55, *khamrīyāt* nos. 305-12) of a chapter labelled "poems that are between wine songs and *mujūnīyāt* as well as between wine songs and male ghazals" (*fī l-qaṣā'idi llatī bayna l-khamrīyāti wa-l-mujūnīyāti wa-baynahā wa-bayna l-mudhakkarāt*) which contains eight poems. Naturally enough, there is no chapter between the overlapping of *khamrīyāt*, *mujūnīyāt* and *mu'annathāt*.

In a wider frame, both male and female ghazals do belong in the proximity of wine songs, both sharing many themes and technical details.

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40 Nos. 41, 94, 142, 143, 144, 148, 261, 292 and 295. In addition, "Tūzūn" places nos. 167 and 177 into *mudhakkarāt*.

41 No. 118. In addition, "Tūzūn" places no. 251 into *mu'annathāt*.

42 Nos. 152, 163, 197, 201 (also in *khamrīyāt/manḥūl*), 254 (also in *khamrīyāt/manḥūl*) and 272.

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In general, the *khamrīyāt* of Abū Nuwās are technically much more elaborated than his ghazals, which tallies with the fact that *khamrīya* became his trademark.[43] At least, he seems to have put much care in structuring the wine songs which are, moreover, usually longer than the majority of the love poems. Perhaps the most conspicuous feature in the wine songs is the use of a literary quotation as a kind of "*kharja*,"[44] which is found in many of the *khamrīyāt* and which gives the poems a learned tincture.[45]

This feature is not found in all *khamrīyas* but it is frequent enough to be considered a conscious stylistic feature. The "*kharja*" of the *khamrīyāt* has received some attention,[46] mainly because Abū Nuwās is crucial for understanding the development of Andalusian lyrical poetry which, in its turn, has raised considerable debate concerning the origins of Western vernacular poetry and the troubadours.[47]

Briefly taken, the "*kharja*" of Abū Nuwās is a literary quotation in the final verse (a longer "*kharja*" may sometimes take more than one line), which is often but not always put in the mouth of the *qayna*, the female singer and entertainer, or the *sāqī*, the servant boy, mostly in a tavern

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43 The importance of Abū Nuwās as a love poet should not be underestimated, though. His importance may be seen from the statistics in Wagner: *Abū Nuwās*, 449-55, and Bauer: *Liebe*, 73-77.

44 I use the term "*kharja*" (always in quotation marks) to imply that there is a certain resemblance to the Andalusian *kharja* (without quotation marks). In addition, I believe that there is a genetic relation between the two, but that is not material for the present analysis. If one objects to this genetic relation, one might prefer calling the "*kharjas*" merely exit lines.

45 Another feature of the *khamrīyāt* which is more or less lacking in the ghazals is a loose cyclical composition where the last verse mirrors the first one. This feature, which has received little attention, is rarer than the use of "*kharja*" but some examples are so conspicuous that they cannot be taken as haphazard. E.g. (*Dīwān* III:332 *khamrīya* 286, vv. 1 and 10, the last verse):
aḥsanu min waṣfi dārisi l-dimani / (…)
fa-tilka ashhā min naʿti diʿbilatin / *wa-min ṣifāti l-ṭulūli wa-l-dimanī*
In the ghazal, the cyclical structure is rare and usually very weak, so that in some cases the echoing of the first verse in the last may in fact be accidental and not too much significance should be attached to it. It may be that the *muʾannathāt* show a slight preference for this feature in contrast to the *mudhakkarāt* where this is almost totally lacking, except for some weak cases with – probably – no real significance.

46 See especially Alan Jones: Final *Taḍmīn* in the poems of Abū Nuwās. In: Alan Jones (ed.): *Arabicus Felix: Luminosus Britannicus: Essays in Honour of A.F.L. Beeston on his Eightieth Birthday*. Reading 1991, 61-73.

47 The vast scholarly literature on the *kharja* is most recently updated in Richard Hitchcock and Consuelo López-Morillas: *The Kharjas: A Critical Bibliography.* Supp. no. 1. Valencia 1996.

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which is the setting of many wine poems. Typical "*kharjas*" are, e.g., the following (all from the chapter of *khamrīyāt*):

no. 2 (*Dīwān* III:6):

> How often did she sing, although there was no blame: "Stop blaming me: blaming only incites!"
>
> *kam qad taghannat wa-lā lawmun yulimmu binā: / "daʿ ʿanka lawmī fa-inna l-lawma ighrāʾū"*[48]

no. 6 (*Dīwān* III:11):

> Oh, I remember a youth who (...) sang most gracefully and shyly: "Passion is suspended in the snares of ash-Shaʿthāʾ[49] – yet death is a snare for passions."
>
> *wa-fatan* (...) / *ghannā bi-ḥusni labāqatin wa-ḥayāʾī:*
> *"aliqa l-ḥawā bi-ḥabāʾili sh-shaʿthāʾī / wa-l-mawtu baʿḍu ḥabāʾili l-ahwāʾī"*[50]

As can be seen from these two examples, the "*kharja*" may equally well be an autoquotation as a quotation from another poet.[51]

The "*kharja*" is also of great interest in the ghazals. The typical "*kharja*" of the wine songs, the literary quotation put in the beloved's mouth, is rare in the ghazals of Abū Nuwās, although it is found in other contemporary ghazal poems, like those of al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf who, e.g., uses (*Dīwān*, 81)[52] two lines of a famous poem by Kuthayyir[53] as a "*kharja*":[54]

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48 Quotation from Abū Nuwās' own poem (*Dīwān* III:2, the first verse of *khamrīya* 1).

49 "The disheveled" – according to the background story, she was a slave girl of ʿAbdalmalik. It is worth noting that here a heteroerotic poem is set in the mouth of a male singer.

50 Quotation from Abū l-Najm al-ʿIjlī: *Dīwān of Abū 'n-Naǧm. Materials for the Study of Raǧaz Poetry*, ed. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila. Helsinki 1993. No. 1:1 – it is not a coincidence that both of these "*kharjas*" are borrowed from the first verse of a poem; it seems that the first verse is here given as a kind of tag, an abbreviated reference for the whole poem. Not all "*kharjas*" are, though, quotations from the beginning of a poem.

51 "*Kharjas*" in the *khamrīyas* may also contain maxims and messages.

52 *Dīwān al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf*. Bayrūt 1978.

53 *Dīwān Kuthayyir ʿAzza*, ed. ʿAdnān Zakī Darwīsh. Bayrūt 1994, 69.

54 Translation in Bauer: *Liebe*, 56.

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I said to her, like before me Kuthayyir had said to ʿAzza when she turned away,
and I followed his example: "'Azza, when the soul gets used to some misfortune, it can bear it.
Then, do good or bad; in neither case shall we blame or hate you!" – not even if she does hate.

fa-qultu lahā mā qāla qablī Kuthayyirun / li-ʿAzzata lammā aʿraḍat wa-tawallatī
qiyāsan lahū: "yāʿ Azza kullu muṣībatin / idhā wuṭṭinat yawman lahā l-nafsu dhallatī
asīʾī binā aw aḥsinī lā malūmatan / ladaynā wa-lā maqlīyatan in taqallatī"

One of the few clear cases of "*kharja*" in Abū Nuwās' ghazals is *Dīwān* IV: 356 (*mudhakkara* 337):

I'll never forget his words to me, when he leaned back and sang:
"You who turn away from us, tell what you dislike in us."

lastu ansā qawlahū lī / wa-ttakā thumma taghannā:
ayyuhā l-muʿriḍu ʿannā / hāti mā rābaka minnā

The poem does not have a wine theme and is thus a pure love song, which is remarkable: the "*kharja*" is here used in a definitely and purely amorous context. Unfortunately, though, this particular poem is found only in the recension of Ḥamza which means that I cannot with absolute confidence attribute it to Abū Nuwās.

An untypically explicit quotation is found in *Dīwān* IV:222 (*mudhakkara* 106, according to Ḥamza; in the recension of al-Ṣūlī this is among the *muʾannathāt*):

Because I love you, I love a certain verse among the poems of Bashshār:
"O Mercy[55] of God, settle at our stopping places and be our neighbour!
What a neighbour you would be!"

aḥbabtu min shiʿri Bashshārin li-ḥubbikumū / baytan shughiftu bihī min shiʿri Bashshārī:
"yā raḥmata llāhi ḥullī fī manāzilinā / wa-jāwirīnā fadatki l-nafsu min jār"[56]

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55 Here there is a word play: according to the background story, this poem was addressed to Raḥma (lit. "Mercy") ibn Najāḥ.

56 *Dīwān Bashshār ibn Burd*, ed. Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭāhir Ibn ʿĀshūr. 4 vols. al-Qāhira 1950-66, vol. 3, 161.

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One might note the setting of the verse: Abū Nuwās does not put it into the mouth of his beloved, as he would probably have done in a *khamrīya*, but instead quotes the line himself.

In another poem (*Dīwān* IV:339, *mudhakkara* 304), probably misattributed to Abū Nuwās – according to al-Ṣūlī, this is "*mina l-manḥūli ilayhi*" – the "*kharja*" is put into the mouth of the *sāqī*, but one has to note the context of the poem; in fact, what we have is a wine poem set in the chapter of *mudhakkarāt* by the compiler:

> He kept serving us wine which had stayed for years in private rooms
> and he sang skillfully: "Oh you encampments of those who have ridden away!"
> Yes, serve us wine until the pilgrimage draws near – but do not serve it for niggards! –
> and when the pilgrimage draws near, we shall direct it to Sāmirīn
>
> *ẓalla yasqīnā mudāman / ḥallat-i l-khidra sinīnā*
> *wa-yughannīnā bi-ḥidhqin / "yā diyāra l-ʾāʿinīnā"*
> *fa-sqinā ḥattā awāni luḥajji lā tasqi l-ḍanīnā*
> *fa-idhā mā qaruba l-ḥajju ḥajajnā l-Sāmirīnā*[57]

So also in *Dīwān* IV:165 (*mudhakkara* 27, this one is also found in "Tūzūn"):

> He turned and sang to the notes of the wailing flute: "Are you travelling [away]; nay, you are avoiding [us]".
>
> *wallā fa-ghannā lanā wa-l-naʾyu*[58] *muntaḥibū: / a-zāʾirun anta lā bal anta mujtanibū*

Here we might note the internal rhyme in this final verse, a very strong marker, as well as the fact that wine themes are found in the poem only *en passant*. The internal rhyme is often produced in the "*kharja*" by accident, as the quoted verse usually is the first one of a poem. Here, on the contrary, it is produced on purpose, as the poet quotes only one hemistich but lets it be preceded by his own hemistich which rhymes with it. Consequently, the verse looks like a *maṭlaʿ*, the first verse of a poem, without actually being one.

The "*kharja*" may also contain a maxim, as in *Dīwān* IV:25 (*muʾannatha* 30), this poem being found also in the "Tūzūn" recension:

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57 As can be seen from this example, the "*kharja*" may sometimes be followed by a line or two, although this is comparatively rare.

58 So in the edition; read: *nāy*.

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She smiled, then quoted a saying which the Persians know to be true:
"Never give something to a child, else he'll ask more fiercely for more."

fa-btasamat thumma arsalat mathalan / yaʿrifuhu l-ʿujmu laysa bi-l-kadhibī:
lā tuʿṭiyanna l-ṣabīya wāḥidatan / yaṭlubu ukhrā bi-aʿnafi l-ṭalabī

In *Dīwān* IV:336 (*mudhakkara* 299), the literary quotation has been replaced by a pithy saying resembling a maxim without actually being one:

Always when I came or lamented my love and let him know it,
he said, on purpose, to my companion, aloud, not even lowering his voice:
"What's the matter with this man who speaks to one who has not spoken to him!"

kullamā jiʾtu aw shakawutu hawāhu[59] *fa-uʿlimuh*
qāla ʿamdan li-ṣāḥibī / muʿlinan laysa yaktumuh:
mā li-hādhā l-fatā yukalulimu man lā yukallimuh

Such "*kharjas*," which resemble the "*kharjas*" in the *khamrīyas*, are not too frequent in the ghazals, but there are other similar ways Abū Nuwās has used to end his poems.[60]

Both the *muʾannathāt* and the *mudhakkarāt* often end in a first person singular quotation, spoken by the poet. These have a functional similarity with the "*kharja*," giving a kind of punch line to mark the ending of the poem. The two techniques used by the same poet are obviously related.

The final first person quotations are almost never literary quotations,[61] and they are obviously genetically related to the message in the qaṣīdas.[62] In fact, the "*kharja*" of the wine poem may also be seen as a development of this message or the final *mathal* quoted by the qaṣīda poet. Final first

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59 For the rare variant of khafīf with (–∪–∪) in the first foot, see W. Wright: *A Grammar of the Arabic Language* [1896-98]. 3rd edition, revised by W. Robertson Smith and M.J. de Goeje, repr. Cambridge 1981, vol. 3, 367 (§221). One might, of course, also scan this as *hawāhū*.

60 As an aside, it could be mentioned that Abū Nuwās seems to have been very much interested in the final verses of his poems. I have discussed the endings of Abū Nuwās' poems briefly in a Finnish book (Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila: *Reunamerkintöjä: Esseitä ja käännöksiä Lähi-idän kirjallisuudesta* [Marginal Notes. Essays and Translations from Near Eastern Literatures]. Suomen Itämaisen Seuran suomenkielisiä julkaisuja 25, 1997), 131-39.

61 The quotation from Bashshār ibn Burd, quoted above, is, in a certain sense, an exception to this.

62 Ewald Wagner: *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung.* 2 vols. Darmstadt 1987, vol. 1, 64-67, 108-16.

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person quotations are used in both *mu'annathāt* and *mudhakkarāt* with roughly the same frequency. E.g. *Dīwān* IV:127 (*mu'annatha* 163):

> I cry loudly out, without trying to conceal it – let people rebuke me if they want:
> "People, listen to me: ʿInān is the girl friend of al-Ḥasan!"
>
> *aṣīḥu jahran lā astasirru bihī / ʿannafanī fīhi man yuʿannifunī:*
> *yā ayyuhā l-nāsu minniya stamiʿū: / inna ʿInānan ṣadīqatu l-Ḥasanī*

Dīwān IV:51 (*mu'annatha* 62 – according to al-Ṣūlī this poem is misattributed):

> I said, tears (running from) my eyes, and my yearning increased and was led by it:
> "You're a decent girl,[63] but that one: she got her harshness from ʿĀd!"
>
> *fa-qultu wa-l-damʿu ʿalā maḥjirī / yunmā bihi l-shawqu fa-yanqādū:*
> *anti mina l-nāsi wa-lākinna dhā / aʿārahū qaswatahū ʿĀdū*

Like the "*kharja*," the final first person quotation may contain a maxim like in *mudhakkara* 33 (*Dīwān* IV:169: *wa-fham, fadaytuka, baytan sā'iran mathalan* (…) "Bless you, understand the verse which is a well-known maxim (…)") and it may also be given explicitly as a message sent to the beloved, as in *mudhakkara* 122[64] (*Dīwān* IV:232):

> Who shall tell my message to my prince and say: "May Abū Nuwās be a ransom for you!"
>
> *alā man mublighun ʿannī amīrī / yaqūlu lahū: fidāka Abū Nuwāsī*

The final first person quotation is usually addressed to the beloved but the last verse may also contain an undirected exclamation, as in *mudhakkara* 277 (*Dīwān* IV:323):[65]

> I cried out, the host of lovers around me: "With my soul (I ransom) the one who banishes my sleep!"
>
> *fa-ṣiḥtu wa-ʿaskaru l-ʿushshāqi ḥawlī / bi-nafsī man nafā ʿannī manāmī*

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63 Abū Nuwās addresses the female friend of his beloved, who had shown him compassion and understanding.

64 In al-Ṣūlī's recension, this is found in the chapter of *khamrīyāt* and is moreover taken as misattributed.

65 This poem is in *wāfir*, not *kāmil* as stated in the edition.

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These final first person quotations may vary in length, thus also showing less rigidness than the "*kharja*" of the *khamrīya*. They may be preceded by dialogue[66] which naturally weakens the effect of the final first person quotation and makes the "*kharja*" a less clear marker of the end of the poem.

The use of "*kharja*" differently in *khamrīya* and ghazal shows that the poet himself has made a distinction between the two. On the other hand, the fluidity of the genres is seen in the partial overlapping of technical features, and it is obvious that for Abū Nuwās the genres were not straight jackets into which he had to squeeze his poems.

That Abū Nuwās was, nevertheless, very conscious of the poetic tradition of female ghazal can be seen in occasional references to earlier lovers. In *mu'annatha* 23 (*Dīwān* IV:18)[67] he lists Muraqqish, Jamīl and ʿUrwa, and in *mu'annatha* 63 (*Dīwān* IV:51) he mentions ʿUrwa al-ʿUdhrī, *al-ʿāshiq al-Nahdī* and, later in the poem, Nābigha al-Jaʿdī, one of the favourites of Abū Nuwās, the last mentioned not so much as a lover, but as a master poet. Finally, in *mudhakkara* 100 (*Dīwān* IV:216)[68] he lists Jamīl ibn Maʿmar and Qays ibn Dharīḥ.

Unfortunately, two of these passages come from poems deemed misattributed by al-Ṣūlī, but if we still believe in their authenticity or in the authenticity of the third poem, Abū Nuwās was very conscious of belonging to a long tradition of love poets. One might draw attention to the fact that the only "genuine" passage – according to al-Ṣūlī – comes from the *mu'annathāt*, not the *mudhakkarāt*.

The sense of continuity of the female love tradition seems, in fact, to have become a *topos* itself in ghazal poetry, and several poets included such lists in their poems. The contemporary of Abū Nuwās, al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf included such a list in his dīwān,[69] listing Jamīl, ʿUrwa and Muraqqish, and centuries later Ibn ʿArabī (*Tarjumān* XI:16)[70] listed Bishr, Qays and Ghaylān (Dhū l-Rumma) as the models for his mystical love.

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66 E.g. *mudhakkara* 54 (*Dīwān* IV, 183-84); according to al-Ṣūlī, this poem is *manḥūl*.

67 According to al-Ṣūlī, this poem is misattributed. It is duplicated by *mudhakkara* 40 (*Dīwān* IV, 172-73; *mu'annatha* in the recensions of al-Ṣūlī and "Tūzūn," also misattributed according to al-Ṣūlī).

68 According to al-Ṣūlī, this poem is misattributed.

69 P. 15, translated in Bauer: *Liebe*, 57. Ibn al-Aḥnaf also included a list of models for his beloved (*Dīwān*, 240; Bauer: *Liebe*, 57, and note 6).

70 Reynold A. Nicholson (ed.): *The Tarjumān al-Ashwāq: A Collection of Mystical Odes by Muhyi'ddīn Ibn al-ʿArabī* [1911]. Repr. with a preface by Martin Lings London 1978.

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The sense of continuity in the female ghazal is in contrast with the relative freedom of the male ghazal which Abū Nuwās was more prepared to mix with sexual motifs, leaving the chaste love tradition in favour of a fulfilled, erotic love.

The *mudhakkarāt* also came closer to wine poems but the technical finesses of the *khamrīya* are only rarely taken over to *mudhakkarāt*. The division between *khamrīya* and *mudhakkara* (or *mu'annatha* for that matter) is seen in the reluctance to use the favoured "*kharja*," literary quote, in its clearest form in the love poems, an innovation which later was welcomed by Andalusian writers.

If considered separately, the love poems of Abū Nuwās might seem to represent an early stage in the development of "*kharja*" and might seem chronologically earlier than his wine poems, where we already find a rather fixed "*kharja*." Yet as we know, this was not the case; the love poems and the wine poems – notwithstanding difficulties in attribution – are from the same years of the poetic activity of Abū Nuwās, and the differences in their technique show a conscious selection of different techniques for different genres on the part of the poet himself.

In love poems, Abū Nuwās often could well have used a "*kharja*" as he did in the wine poems. An example of such "missing" "*kharja*" might be *mu'annatha* 29 (*Dīwān* IV:25) which ends in:

> As I came to her I heard a song that hurt the heart and hit the mark.
>
> *wa-idhā ji'tuhā sami'tu ghinā'an / mūji'an li-l-fu'ādi minnī muṣībā*

In a wine poem, Abū Nuwās would probably not have been able to resist inserting a literary quotation after this verse.

Thus, we can say that Abū Nuwās wrote his poems well aware of the fact that he was writing within a tradition or, better still, within several traditions. In selecting his technique, he kept an eye on the genre he was writing within which also means that in the genre in which he had the least tradition to build on, viz. the male ghazal, he could take more liberties than in the more fixed genres of female ghazal and *khamrīya*.

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MYSTICAL IMPROVISATIONS

Ibn al-Fāriḍ Plays al-Mutanabbī

Th. Emil Homerin
(Rochester)

From the start, love and poetry have been intimate companions with Islamic mysticism. The love between God and humanity is an essential element of the Sufi tradition, and this relationship, with its many permutations, is central to Arabic religious verse. This poetry, like love and mysticism, is more or less oblique, for it shares with them a fundamental problem regarding language, namely, how does one discuss the larger world of experience with language that has evolved to satisfy specific everyday needs. With striking images and metaphors, structural and phonemic patterning, and the beat of rhyme and meter, a poem can evoke moods and convey meaning by drawing attention to language via language itself. In this way, a poet urges others to listen more closely and so invest renewed attention in their immediate surroundings, which are psychological and spiritual, as well as physical and temporal.

Verse, then, marks a return, a recollection, and a remembrance that are of equal importance to love and mysticism, and it was only natural that Muslim mystics turned to love poetry to voice their feelings and beliefs. Early Sufi love poetry draws many of its themes and images directly from the Arabic ghazal tradition, whether embodied in the pre-Islamic nasīb, the chaste laments by Jamīl (d. ca. 82/701) and other *ʿUdhrī* poets, or in the playful love songs of ʿUmar Ibn Abī Rabīʿa (d. ca. 102/720).[1] But Islamic mysticism, Arabic poetry, and love have reciprocal relationships, and by

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1 Th. Emil Homerin: Tangled Words: Toward a Stylistics of Arabic Mystical Verse. In: S. P. Stetkevych (ed.): *Reorientations: Essays on Arabic and Persian Poetry*. Bloomington 1994, 190-98. Also see Renate Jacobi: Abbasidische Dichtung. In: H. Gätje (ed.): *Grundriß der arabischen Philologie*. Wiesbaden 1987, vol. 2, 41-64, and her Time and Reality in *Nasīb* and *Ghazal*. In: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 16 (1988), 1-17. For an overview of Sufi verse, see Martin Lings: Mystical Poetry. In: Julia Ashtiany et al. (eds.): *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: ʿAbbasid Belles Lettres*. Cambridge 1990, 235-64, and Annemarie Schimmel: *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam*. New York 1982, 1-48. Concise discussions of Arabic *ghazal* literature may be found in Julie Scott Meisami: Ghazal. In: J. S. Meisami and Paul Starkey (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*. New York 1998, vol. 1, 249-50, and Art. Ghazal (R. Blachere) in: *EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam²* II, Leiden 1954, 1028-33.

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the 4th/10th century, many professional poets found inspiration in Sufism. al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965) employed the mystical language of antithesis and paradox to amaze and praise his royal patrons, while the Andalusian poet Ibn Zaydūn (d. 463/1071) relied upon mystical allusions to intimate the spiritual nature of his abiding love for a fickle lover. Such unions were encouraged and strengthened by medieval views of love, particularly those influenced by neo-Platonism, which saw all forms of love as emanating from one divine source.[2]

Nevertheless, permissible love relationships, as well as their forms of public expression, were matters of particular concern to religious scholars and litterateurs, alike. The theologian and mystic al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) warned that public recitation of love poetry might arouse lust and unseemly behavior among the ignorant masses, and the Hanbali scholar Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) was scandalized when amorous verses by Ibn al-Rūmī were recited from the pulpit during a Friday sermon. By contrast, the literary critic al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038) censured al-Mutanabbī for using the Sufis "tangled words and abstruse meanings" in his poetry, while others criticized Sufi poets for composing love poetry all together.[3] This seems to have been the case when Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 637/1240) compiled a collection of his qaṣīdas and ghazals entitled the *Turjumān al-ashwāq* ("The Interpreter of Desires"). In the original preface to this work, Ibn al-ʿArabī noted that when he arrived in Mecca in 598/1202, he began to study with an Iranian scholar who had a daughter named Niẓām. This woman's physical and spiritual beauty inspired Ibn al-ʿArabī to compose poems using the "nasīb style" and expressions from ghazal poetry which, he said, fell far short of his true feelings:[4]

> Nevertheless, I have put into verse for her sake, some of the longing thoughts suggested by those precious memories, and I have uttered the sentiments of a yearning soul and have indicated the sincere attachment, which I feel, fixing my mind on the bygone days and those scenes, which her society endeared to me. Whenever I mention a name in this book, I always allude to her, and whenever I mourn over an abode, I mean

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2 Th. Emil Homerin: In the Gardens of az-Zahrāʾ: Love Echoes in a Poem by Ibn Zaydūn. In: E. Waugh and F. M. Denny (eds.): *The Shaping of An American Islamic Discourse: A Memorial to Fazlur Rahman*. Atlanta 1998, 215-32.

3 Th. Emil Homerin: Preaching Poetry: The Forgotten Verse of Ibn al-Shāhrazurī. In: *Arabica* 38 (1991), 87-101, esp. 87-90, and Homerin: *Tangled Words*, 194-97.

4 Ibn al-ʿArabī: *Turjumān al-ashwāq*. Beirut 1966, 9-10, transl. R. A. Nicholson: *The Tarjumān al-ashwāq*. London 1911, 3-4.

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> her abode. In these poems, I always signify divine influences, spiritual revelations, and sublime analogies according to our most exemplary way (ṭarīqa) – for the next world is dearer to us than this one – and due to her understanding of what I was alluding to. May God preserve the reader from thinking of anything unbecoming to souls that scorn evil, and to lofty spirits that are attached to the things of heaven!

Still, a number of these love lyrics have no clear mystical referents, leaving them open to more worldly interpretations, and so an overly literal reader objected that Ibn al-ʿArabī, a religious scholar, should compose erotic verse. As a result, Ibn al-ʿArabī compiled a new edition of the *Turjumān al-ashwāq*, claiming that his use of "the erotic style and form of expression" (*lisān al-ghazal wa-l-tashbīb*) was allegorical in intent; because people liked erotic poetry, it was a useful medium for his mystical message. However, to avoid further misunderstandings, Ibn al-ʿArabī added an extensive commentary on the spiritual and mystical allusions to be found in each poem.[5]

The verse of Ibn al-ʿArabī's older Sufi contemporary, ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235) has faced similar criticism on occasion. al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ahdal (d. 855/1451) dismissed Ibn al-Fāriḍ's love poems as comparable to verse by the pre-Islamic Arabs; while a Muslim was permitted to listen to such infidel poetry, it was better left alone. Ibn al-Ahdal was also an outspoken opponent of the monistic mystical doctrines in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's celebrated *Naẓm al-sulūk* ("Poem of the Sufi Way"), while others also took exception with the poem's depiction of God as a feminine beloved.[6] More often, however, scholars and litterateurs have praised Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poetic genius and rhetorical skill, while his Sufi commentators and hagiographers have sought to uncover the spiritual meanings within his verse, which they ascribe to Ibn al-Fāriḍ's profound mystical experiences:

> In most of his moments of inspiration, the Shaykh was always perplexed, eyes fixed, hearing no one who spoke, nor even seeing them. Sometimes he would be standing, sometimes sitting, sometimes he would lie down on his side, and sometimes he would throw himself down on his back wrapped in a shroud like a dead man. Ten days, more or less, would pass while he was in this state, he neither eating, drinking, speaking,

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5 *Ibid.* For a more recent translation of many of these odes, see Michael Sells: *Stations of Desire*. Jerusalem 2000.

6 al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ahdal: *Kashf al-ghiṭāʾ*. Tunis 1964, 199-201. Also see Th. Emil Homerin: *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fāriḍ, His Verse, and His Shrine*. 2nd ed. with a new introduction. Cairo 2001, 62.

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> or moving... Then he would regain consciousness and come to, and his first words would be a dictation of what God had enlightened him with of the ode *Naẓm al-sulūk*.[7]

This classical account of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's trance and verse reflects several medieval Muslim notions regarding poetic and religious inspiration. First, the trance confirms the inspired quality of the poet's verse which, then, should not be confused with the contrived poetry of academic artifice. Like the pre-Islamic poets and sooth-sayers, and the legendary Muslim poets driven mad by love, Ibn al-Fāriḍ has tapped deep spiritual sources. Yet his inspiration is not from a *jinni* or Satan, but from God, and this attests to the profound truth of the poet's religious message. After being lost in divine love, Ibn al-Fāriḍ recovers to spontaneously recite verse, which would later compose his most famous mystical poem. Such miraculous tales of Ibn al-Fāriḍ were popularized and passed on by generations of his admirers, and they form an important chapter in the story of the poet's posthumous sanctification. But this image of Ibn al-Fāriḍ as an ecstatic Gnostic obscures important literary dimensions of his work, especially questions regarding his literary benefactors and their influence. For Ibn al-Fāriḍ's polished and highly mannered poetry challenges persistent views of him as a manic oracle reciting from the depths of mystical trance. His odes are carefully crafted works replete with intricate rhetorical displays, and Ibn al-Fāriḍ's learned poetic skill is also evident in his conscious references to verse by earlier Arab poets.[8]

In a 17th century grammatical commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's dīwān, al-Būrīnī (d. 1024/1619), occasionally noted the poet's direct dependence on amorous verses by his predecessors, including al-Buḥturī (d. 284/897),[9] and, more recently, Arberry believed that Ibn al-Fāriḍ was indebted in several places to Imruʾ al-Qays and ʿUmar Ibn Abī Rabīʿa. Further, Ibn al-Fāriḍ was clearly influenced by several of his older contemporaries including the

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7 ʿAlī Sibṭ Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Dībājah. In: ʿAbd al-Khāliq Maḥmūd (ed.): *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*. Cairo 1984, 29, transl. Th. Emil Homerin: *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Sufi Verse, Saintly Life*. New York 2001, 313. Also see Homerin: *From Arab Poet*, 24-32.

8 Homerin: *From Arab Poet*, 22-24. Also see A. E. Khairallah: *Love, Madness and Poetry*. Beirut 1980, and A. J. Arberry: *The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Fāriḍ*. London 1952/1956, vol. 2, 11.

9 al-Būrīnī: *Sharḥ Dīwān Sulṭān al-ʿāshiqīn Sayyidī ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, ed. Rushayyid Ibn Ghālib al-Daḥdāḥ. Cairo 1888, vol. 1, 135, 146. Other poets whose verse is often quoted by al-Būrīnī include ʿUmar Ibn Abī Rabīʿa, Abū Tammām (d. 232/846), Ibn Khayyāt (d. 517/1123), al-Arrajānī (d. 544/1149), Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk (d. 608/1211), and Ibn ʿUnayn (d. 615/1216).

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famous mystical theologian and poet Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), as Yūsuf Samī al-Yūsuf has argued persuasively; Ibn al-Fāriḍ also improvised on a ghazal by the Egyptian Sufi poet Ibn al-Kīzānī (d. 560/1166).[10] However, the poet who may have exerted the strongest influence on Ibn al-Fāriḍ was al-Mutanabbī. Every competent Arab poet and litterateur of the twelfth century was well acquainted with al-Mutanabbī's esteemed poetry. al-Būrīnī often cited verses by al-Mutanabbī in commenting on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's dīwān, and he recorded several examples of direct borrowing. Arberry pursued al-Būrīnī's leads and discovered that Ibn al-Fāriḍ had gone so far as to pattern two of his poems, the *al-Lāmīya* and the *al-Dhālīya*, after two poems by al-Mutanabbī. Arberry charted the rhyme-words and a few of the themes and images common to the poems, and further analysis will reveal the extent to which Ibn al-Fāriḍ mystically improvised on this master poet.[11]

Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *al-Lāmīya* is a beautiful love poem of sixty verses, in the meter *ṭawīl*, rhyming in the letter *Lām*, or "L," and modeled on a panegyric by al-Mutanabbī, which begins:[12]

ʿazīzun asan man dā'uhu l-ḥadaqu n-nujlu
ʿayā'un bihi māta l-muḥibbūna min qablu

How a man hurts
afflicted by beautiful eyes;
so many lovers died, victims
of this incurable disease.

If you want, look at me;
the sight of me
should warn you:
passion is not easy.

It is nothing,
just a glance after a glance,
but it snares the heart,
and sets reason loose.

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10 Arberry: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 26, 37, and Yūsuf Samī al-Yūsuf: Baʿḍ yanābīʿ Ibn al-Fāriḍ. In: *al-Maʿrifa* 31:350 (1992), 86-112. For Ibn al-Fāriḍ's use of Ibn al-Kīzānī's verse see: *Dīwān*, 202, and ʿAlī Safā Ḥusayn: *Ibn al-Kīzānī*. Cairo 1966, 129.

11 See al-Būrīnī: *Sulṭān*, vol. 1, 89; vol. 2, 89, and Arberry: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 49-50, 77-78.

12 al-Mutanabbī: *Dīwān*, ed. Mustafā al-Sayqā et al. Cairo 1936, vol. 3, 180-191. In v. 1, I follow Arberry (*Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 77) in reading *al-ḥadaqu* for *al-ḥadaqa* cited in the Cairo edition of al-Mutanabbī's *Dīwān*.

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Love for her flowed
like blood in my veins,
and I was obsessed
by her alone.

al-Mutanabbī begins this ode with a nasīb and the familiar ghazal themes of the vanity of love and the sorrow it brings upon the lover. He then goes on to recount how love has left him emaciated and the object of ridicule. Still, he is deaf to his blamer, and sleeplessly passes his night in hopes of meeting his beloved, who is as beautiful as the moon (vv. 5-9):

I love one
like the full moon,
but I complain to one
who has no peer,

To one unique in all the world,
Shujāʿ Ibn Muḥammad,
the valiant,
benefit to God and himself!

Here, al-Mutanabbī makes his transition from the nasīb by beseeching his patron to rectify this sorry state (v. 9), and this initiates a long description of his liege lord. al-Mutanabbī lauds Shujāʿ's noble Arab lineage to the prophet Muḥammad and, indeed, had God wished to send other messengers, it would have been by means of this worthy descendent (vv. 11-12). Next, al-Mutanabbī celebrates his master's swift blade and daunting courage in battle; though his worthy foes eye his fall, they only see his spear points, which blind and kill them (vv. 13-21). With the obvious metaphor of blinding as death, al-Mutanabbī again refers to eyes and vision to draw attention to key themes. For in Arabic, the word *ʿayn* may mean "spring," "eye," and one's "inner self," and so, *ʿayn* and related terms for eyes often have the double meaning "eye/self-I." Eyes and glances, then, dominate the opening verses of this panegyric where the emotional and psychological tumult of love is apparent; the poet's love began with a glance, and the beloved's wide eyes have since afflicted him with sleeplessness (vv. 1, 3, 8). Further, in this panegyric, al-Mutanabbī depicts others as looking at this powerful knight, particularly during battle (vv. 18), and he calls his listeners to do the same (vv. 15-16). In this way, al-Mutanabbī progressively adds to his iconic image of his noble master and builds toward a conclusion proclaiming his lord's

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boundless, life-giving generosity (22-29):[13]

Grieve for a soul
blind to you for a moment,
and bless the eye
beholding you every hour!

So the poor need not worry,
watching for your lightning,
for there is no barren land
where you are its pouring rain!

Ibn al-Fāriḍ begins his *al-Lāmīya* with an elaboration of al-Mutanabbī's warning to those who think love is an easy affair:[14]

huwa l-ḥubbu fa-slam bi-l-ḥashā mā l-hawā sahlu
fa-mā khtārahu muḍnan bihi wa-lahu ʿaqlu

It is love, so guard your heart,
passion is not easy;
wasted by it, would you choose it,
if you had reason?

Live free of love,
for love's ease is hard;
it begins in sickness,
and ends in death.

But to me, death in love
by drowning desire,
is life revived
by my beloved.

I have warned you,
knowing passion and my enemy,
so choose for yourself
what is sweet.

But if you want to live well,
then die love's martyr,

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13 Regarding the poetic *ʿayn* see S. Stetkevych: *The Mute Immortals Speak*. Ithaca 1993, 177-79, and Homerin: *az-Zahrā'*, 225-26. For an insightful discussion of panegyric poetry, in general, and of al-Mutanabbī, in particular, see Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych: Abbasid Panegyric and the Poetics of Political Allegiance: Two Poems of al-Mutanabbī on Kāfūr. In: S. Sperl and C. Shackle (eds.): *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*. Leiden 1996, vol 1, 35-63; vol. 2, 92-105, 421-22.

14 Ibn al-Fāriḍ: *Dīwān*, 185-188.

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and if not, well,
love has its worthy ones.

Not to die in love
is not to live by love;
before you harvest honey
you must surely face the bees.

Ibn al-Fāriḍ borrowed the maxim of the honey and the bees from another poem by al-Mutanabbī, and there is a reference to yet a third poem by al-Mutanabbī in v. 8 where Ibn al-Fāriḍ says:[15]

wa-qul li-qatīli l-ḥubbi waffayta ḥaqqahu
wa-lil-muddaʿī hayhāta mā l-kaḥalu l-kuḥlu

Say to love's victim:
"You paid the price,"
but to the pretender:
"Coal black eyes are not of kohl."

al-Mutanabbī had used a similar image to acclaim a patron's genuine forbearance:

li-anna ḥilmaka ḥilmun lā takallafuhu
laysa t-takaḥḥulu fī l-ʿaynayni ka-l-kaḥali

Your forbearance
is never feigned –
kohl-made eyes
are not coal-black.

In addition to these borrowed motifs, Ibn al-Fāriḍ reused all but six of the twenty-nine rhyme words from the model poem.[16] Yet, despite formal

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15 *Ibid.*, 185. See al-Būrīnī: *Sulṭān*, vol. 2, 89, Arberry: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 78, n. 6, and al-Mutanabbī: *Dīwān*, vol. 3, 288-89, v. 9 for the motif of the bees and the honey. For *kohl* motifs, see al-Būrīnī: *Sulṭān*, vol. 2, 89, Arberry: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 79, and al-Mutanabbī: *Dīwān*, vol. 3, 87, v. 43.

16 See Arberry's chart: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 78. The Cairo edition of al-Mutanabbī's *Dīwān* gives twenty-nine verses in this poem, not thirty-one, as does the Beirut edition used by Arberry. The missing verses are v. 5 of the Beirut edition, ending in *kaḥlu*, and v. 6 ending with *dakhlu*. If the Beirut edition is correct, then al-Mutanabbī used *kaḥlu* twice, once in v. 5 and again in v. 20; he did not repeat any other rhyme words however. As for *dakhlu*, this word does not appear in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *al-Lāmīya*. Further, v. 56 of the Cairo edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* is v. 58 in Arberry's published edition of the Chester Beatty MS; *Mystical Poems*, vol. 1, 38. Verse 28 of the Chester Beatty MS is not found in the Cairo edition, nor is v. 38, which is identical to v. 4 of al-Mutanabbī's poem. Arberry found this last verse in the margin of the Chester Beatty MS and so included it in the text; *Mystical Poems*, vol. 1, 37; vol. 2, 78.

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similarities, there remains an obvious difference between the poets' concerns and subjects. al-Mutanabbī's opening sketch of the beloved and the pains of love forms a lyrical introduction meant to convey his love and loyalty toward his patron who will rectify the poet's complaints. Unquestionably, al-Mutanabbī hoped to be rewarded for his exaltation of his lord and his public allegiance to him, the poem's main subjects (vv. 9-29). By contrast, Ibn al-Fāriḍ begins his ghazal with what might be termed a "creed of love," which sets the poem's tone and mood as the poet traces the effects of love upon the lover. The antitheses of his nasīb – ease and hardship, sickness and health, life and death – send spiritual vibrations resonating throughout the poem where love is eternal (10-30):

Ancient is my tale
of love for her;
it has, she knows,
no beginning, no end,

And there is none like me
in passion for her,
while her enchanting beauty
has no equal!

This "ancient tale" alludes to the primordial covenant made between God and humanity in pre-eternity. *ʿUdhrī* poets claimed that their loves were foreordained then, while Ibn al-Fāriḍ and other Sufis looked to the covenant as a sign of the everlasting love between God and His worshipers.[17]

Perhaps following al-Mutanabbī, Ibn al-Fāriḍ also refers to eyes and vision; those who envy are blind (v. 12), while the true lover is sleepless, crying bloody tears (vv. 22-23, 28). But Ibn al-Fāriḍ often makes a subtle contrast between the eye and the heart, the locus of spiritual manifestations (vv. 1, 13, 20, 44, 56, 59). There, the lover holds and beholds his dear beloved as he seeks to eradicate any lingering trace of selfishness (vv. 34-36):

Wasting away, I disappeared;
my visitor could not find me.
How can those visiting the sick
see one without a shadow?

So no eye ever stumbled
across my track,
for those wide eyes
left no trace of me in love.

17 See Homerin: *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, 24-27, and Homerin: *az-Zahrāʾ*, 217, 225-26.

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Yet, when I remember her,
a resolve rises within me,
and when she is mentioned,
my cheap spirit grows rich.

Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical intent is further distinguished from al-Mutanabbī's more earthly and political concerns by the direct reference to the martyrdom required to live the sweet life of love (vv. 36-60). This difference is seen clearly at the ends of their poems. Anticipating his patron's munificence, al-Mutanabbī addresses him in the penultimate verse:

wa-waylun li-nafsin ḥāwalat minka ghirratan
wa-ṭūbā li-ʿaynin sāʿatan minka lā takhlū

Grieve for a soul
blind to you for a moment,
and bless the eye
beholding you every hour!

Ibn al-Fāriḍ alters this verse to declare a more spiritual fealty as he concludes an oath to his love (v. 56):

la-anti ʿalā ghayẓi n-nawā wa-riḍā l-hawā
ladayyā wa-qalbī sāʿatan minki mā yakhlū

Whether in parting's anger
or passion's acceptance,
you are with me,
my heart holding you every hour.

By substituting the word *qalb* ("heart") for *ʿayn* ("eye"), Ibn al-Fāriḍ transforms al-Mutanabbī's courtly image of the poet humbly beholding his patron into one of the lover devoutly recollecting his beloved within the heart. Thus, Ibn al-Fāriḍ returns to his opening image of the heart emptied of selfishness and filled with the beloved. This, in turn, evokes images of the popular Sufi exercise of *dhikr*, "recollection" or meditation on the presence of God within oneself, a practice supported by the divine saying (*al-ḥadīth al-qudsī*): "My heavens and earth do not embrace Me, but the heart of My faithful servant does embrace Me!"[18]

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18 For more on the Sufi understanding of the heart and this tradition, see William C. Chittick: *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*. Albany 1989, 106-109. For Ibn al-Fāriḍ's view of *dhikr*, see Homerin: *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, 30-34.

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In his *al-Dhālīya*, Ibn al-Fāriḍ performs a similar transformation from panegyric to mystical ghazal. In this case, Ibn al-Fāriḍ followed al-Mutanabbī's verse more closely, and he openly acknowledges his debt to the great poet. Composing a poem rhyming with the letter *dhāl* is difficult owing to the small number of words ending with this letter, – and both poets appear to have written only one poem with this rhyme. al-Mutanabbī dedicated his *al-Dhālīya* to Musāwir ibn Muḥammad al-Rūmī, a vizier and early patron of the poet. al-Mutanabbī opens his panegyric with a rhetorical question meant to underscore the striking royal depiction of the lion walking before the equally majestic vizier.[19]

a-musāwirun am qarnu shamsin hādhā
am laythu ghābin yaqdumu l-ustādhā

1 Is this Musāwir
or the sun's first rays,
or a lion of the jungle
leading the master?

2 Sheath the sword
you drew in haste,
its sharp edge
hacking men to bits.

3 Suppose you break
Ibn Yazdādh and his troop.
What's next? Is all mankind
his terrible tribe?

4 You met them,
leaving their faces
torn from their necks,
their guts in shreds,

5 On a battlefield
where wretched death

19 al-Mutanabbī: *Dīwān*, vol. 2, 82-85. This poem was composed around 330/941 in the meter *kāmil*. Concerning the occasion of its composition and Musāwir see R. Blachère: *Abou T-Tayyib al-Motanabbī,* Paris 1935, 109. It should be added that a poem ascribed to Ibn al-Fāriḍ beginning: *mā bayna ḍāli l-munḥanā wa-ẓilālihi* is also a *lāmīya* with similarities to a poem by al-Mutanabbī: *Dīwān*, vol. 3, 53-65. Both are in the meter *kāmil*, and eight of the thirteen rhyme words in *mā bayna ḍāli* (and esp. v. 10; al-Būrīnī: *Sulṭān*, vol. 2, 5, and al-Mutanabbī: *Dīwān*, vol. 2, 53 v. 2) correspond to words or phrases in al-Mutanabbī's poem. These similarities would seem to strengthen the case of *mā bayna ḍāli* as an authentic poem by Ibn al-Fāriḍ.

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stood over them
and stripped their lives away.

6 Their frozen souls
ran as you reached them,
then you slaked their thirst
with steel.

7 When they saw you,
they saw your father
Muḥammad in mail,
and your uncle Muʿādh.

8 With a quick blow to the necks,
you silenced their tongues
from shouting:
"There is no knight save him!"

9 You crashed down
upon the fool
with a stormy brow
raining and pouring pain,

10 So you caught him
and soaked his cloak in blood,
while he pissed
down his thighs.

11 Your keen Yemeni sword
barred his way;
he had no retreat
to Aleppo or Baghdad.

12 He sought high rank at the front,
but he was from nowhere,
from Karhayā
or Kalwādh.

13 Did he expect
spears to be sweet
like dates
from Barnī or Azādh?

14 He had never faced,
before you,
a lancer who savored
jousting thrusts,

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15 A man
whose life is sour
until he executes
his decree,

16 A seasoned warrior:
coats of mail, his comfort,
his silk against the cold,
his cotton in blazing heat.

17 A wonder you seized him,
more wondrous still
had you not plundered
the likes of him!

al-Mutanabbī opens his panegyric with a raging Musāwir returning from battling the Yazdādh tribe and ready for more. Musāwir, like his father and uncle before him, is an experienced veteran whose sharp blade hacks through his terrified enemies, leaving their bloody corpses strewn on the battlefield (vv. 1-7). Verse 8 is exceptional as al-Mutanabbī underscores his patron's prowess with a powerful phrase:

aʿjalta alsunahum bi-ḍarbi riqābihim
ʿan qawlihim lā fārisun illā dhā

With a quick blow to the necks
you silenced their tongues
from shouting:
"There is no knight save him!"

Lā fārisun illā dhā ("There is no knight save him!") echoes the first half of the traditional saying: *lā fatāḥ illā ʿAlī wa-lā sayfa illā Dhū al-Faqār* ("There is no hero save ʿAlī and no sword save Dhū al-Faqār"). ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad, and within Islam, he has been extolled as the warrior par excellence, as he wielded the famous notched sword, Dhū al-Faqār.[20] To draw such a parallel between a patron and the noble ʿAlī might be perceived as impious exaggeration, but then al-Mutanabbī teases his audience, for the warrior's blade is swifter than his foes' insolent tongues. Thus, it is left to the poet to sing this praise of his mighty hero, and he concludes this short panegyric by comparing the battle-hardened Musāwir to his unworthy, inexperienced foe (vv. 9-17).

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20 Art. Dhū al-Fakār (E. Mittwoch) in: *EI²* II, 233, and Art. Futuwwa (Cl. Cahen) in: *ibid.*, 961.

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Composing his *al-Dhālīya* in the same meter and rhyme, Ibn al-Fāriḍ used seventeen of al-Mutanabbī's eighteen rhyme words. Such a conscious patterning of an earlier poem required by tradition that Ibn al-Fāriḍ expand and improve upon the original, and so his *al-Dhālīya* is more than three times longer than that of al-Mutanabbī. Ibn al-Fāriḍ occasionally re-used the same rhyme word but with different meanings, adding yet another stylistic flourish to his poem, which likewise begins with a rhetorical question:[21]

ṣaddun ḥamā ẓama'ī limāka li-mādhā
wa-hawāka qalbī ṣāra minhu judhādhā

1 A barrier blocked your dark lips
from my burning thirst;
why, since love of you
has hacked my heart to bits?

2 If you are content to stay
as I go to my ruin
drowning in passion,
I will savor it.

3 You plundered my healthy heart,
so give it back
as my last request,
though it be torn to shreds.

4 O archer
shooting eye arrows
from the bow of your brow,
piercing the heart,

5 How could you leave me?
One who slanders me
is full of malice,
and crazy ravings,

6 And one who attacked me
to keep me from you,
he was confused,
a hypocrite and liar!

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21 Ibn al-Fāriḍ: *Dīwān*, 63-70. Also see Arberry's transl.: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 45-56; and the French transl. Emile Derminghem and Bachir Messilkh: *Ibn al-Faridh: 2 poèmes mystiques*. Montpellier 1952, 11-14. Arberry's chart comparing the rhyme words of the two poems (*Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 50) omits the rhyme word *afkhādhā*, which is found in the Cairo edition of al-Mutannabī's *Dīwān*, v. 10, with the meaning "thighs"; Ibn al-Fāriḍ also used the word, but with an alternative meaning of "clans" (v. 30).

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7 O blamer,
you will not find me forgetting
one who seized and holds
mankind's loveliness.

8 How handsome he is,
a fawn making fair
his trading my fair state
for a squalid life.

9 He appeared
with beneficence and beauty,
bestowing rare things,
plundering souls;

10 A sword his eyelids
draw against the heart;
I see their languor
its whetstone;

11 A sudden death
he springs upon us,
bringing to mind victims of Musāwir
among the Banī Yazdādh.

12 No wonder he made
his downy cheek a sword belt
since he is quick to strike,
leaving his victims to die.

13 There is magic in his eyes!
Had Hārūt beheld their power,
he would have found there
his mentor and master.

14 Blamer, you rave on
the full moon in the sky above;
such crazy talk!
That is not my friend.

15 Sun and gazelle
fell captive to his face
as he looked back at them;
both sought refuge in him.

16 He was finer than
the fragrant east wind;
his delicate nature scorned
even a shirt of finest silk.

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17 His tender cheek complained
against its blushing rose,
but his hard heart
told of steel.

18 The mole burning on his cheek
consumed anyone tied to him
by a passion
rejecting salvation.

19 The dark red of his lips
is cool and sweet to kiss
in the early morning before the toothpick;
he reigned over musk, scenting it.

20 From his mouth and glance
is my drunken state;
I see a vintner
in his every limb!

21 The belts on his narrow waist
said it all
when the silent signet rings
hurt his little pinkies.

22 The belts were delicate;
his waist was fine,
like the words of my love song
and their meanings refined!

23 Like the bough, his stature,
bright as the morning;
like a long dark night, his hair
falling down his back.

24 My love for him taught me
austerity since he was like
Muʿādh in chastity,
fearful of the world to come.

25 So I threw away all shame
to veil him
and protect him
from a kiss on the cheek.

26 In Minā's Khayf are Arabs dear to us
but before them stands
the death of desire,
foe to a lover seeking refuge there.

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27 And in the winding tract of that sacred vale
a stag stood
guarding with sharp eye-arrows
a pool.

28 It was formed
by lovers' tears
as they fell on the mountain slopes
and flowed in the valley.

29 How many canals
came to this sandy ground,
not to the river,
begging a drink!

30 Before the troop divided,
we were a mighty tribe,
but the long journey
broke us into clans.

31 I was soon alone after union,
far away in Syria,
while they pitched their tents
near Baghdad.

32 The distance gathered
fear within me
that had before been scattered
when I was close to them.

33 Like a brief shower on stone
are their promises made at Ṣafā
But why? I am pure
and will not break the bond!

34 Bearing their absence is bitter myrrh,
yet bearing with them
seems to me a pain
sweet as dates of Azādh

35 Solace was hard to find,
grave my rapture with them
who were shelter in the deep of night,
but then they cut the tie.

36 O white gazelle of the desert plains,
leave me alone,
for they colored my eyes with dark black kohl;
do not make me look away in sadness.

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37 I swear by him
whose torturing me
I find sweet as I savor
his degrading me,

38 My eye never found
anyone lovely but him,
and though he took another, not me,
I remained true.

39 Those who slipped in to spy,
watching without being seen,
saw only a man
shattered by grief.

40 He was a lion taming
the lions of the jungle
until he fell victim
to a young gazelle.

41 So it happened
that passion's fire filled him;
he sees its burning
but no relief.

42 Bewildered he is now;
if you met him, you would say:
"I see him pulled
every which way!"

43 Thirsty; his ribs embrace a sorrow
beyond the doctors' power,
so he clinched his teeth
as pain bit deep,

44 At the point of death;
stung within and plundered of life,
his sleepless state proved him to be
a match for Mimshādh.

45 A plague seized him,
and he suffered
to see on his body
the oozing ganglion.

46 Patiently, he put on
black garments of grief
to mourn when youth died,
shattered in his silver temples.

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47 So his enemies were pleased
to see his youthful prime
loose as a shirt,
his hair, turban white.

48 Cold beds: there is no end
to their spreading sorrow.
So fate commands
and executes its decree.

49 His eyes never hold back,
but always give,
raining and pouring tears
for the lovers' cruel ways.

50 He showered the mountains
with teardrops
when the clouds refused,
and filled their hollow pools.

51 When the women visiting the sick
saw him, they said:
"If anyone be slain by passion,
surely it is this one!"

Similar to al-Mutanabbī, Ibn al-Fāriḍ begins his ghazal praising a hero, but one of love, not of war. In the opening verses of his panegyric, al-Mutanabbī recounts Musāwir's battle with his foes, whereas Ibn al-Fāriḍ describes the beauty and prowess of his conquering beloved and the wounds he inflicts when plundering his lover's heart (vv. 1-13). Ibn al-Fāriḍ pays homage to al-Mutanabbī by comparing his fearsome beloved to Musāwir, scourge of the Banī Yazdādh. Yet, the beloved is not a hardened warrior, but a young man, slender like a gazelle, with a soft cheek, and eyes so enchanting that they would captivate Hārūt, a fallen angel who taught magic to human beings.[22] Ibn al-Fāriḍ shifts further away from the knightly motifs of the panegyric to present this image of his more refined beloved. al-Mutanabbī praises his patron's marshal skills and power as he rips the faces from his foes (v. 4), while Ibn al-Fāriḍ refers to the beloved's radiant face (v. 15):

ʿanati-l-ghazālatu wa-l-ghazālu li-wajhihi
mutalaffitan wa-bihi ʿiyādhan lādhā

22 Art. Hārūt wa-Mārūt (G. Vajda) in: *EI²* III, 236-37.

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> Sun and gazelle
> fell captive to his face
> as he looked back at them;
> both sought refuge in him.

Some of the more mystical passages of the Qur'ān mention God's face or countenance (*wajh*), which is present throughout creation (2:115). Save "God's face," all things will perish (28:88), but on the judgment day, He will look with mercy upon those of His creatures whose "faces submit" (*ʿanati l-wujūhu*) humbly to Him (20:110). Similarly, the Qur'ān repeatedly urges believers to "seek refuge in God" (e.g., 16:98), before whom even the sun and moon bow down (22:18).[23] But this holy image of the beloved becomes more earthly in the verses that follow, which depict him as a delicate, pampered youth, with cool lips, a sweet kiss, and a fragrant scent. Like a fine wine, he intoxicates the lover (vv. 16-23), though a restrained spiritual relationship may be implied by Ibn al-Fāriḍ's use of several terms with established Sufi meanings (v. 18: *wajd*/passion, rapture, v. 20: *sukr*/ intoxication, v. 24: *tanassuk*/austerity, asceticism). Whereas Musāwir, in the heat of battle, resembles his manly uncle, Muʿādh, the beloved of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem resembles the handsome ascetic Muʿādh ibn Jabal, a pious and dear companion of the Prophet Muḥammad (v. 24).[24] This led Arberry to assert:[25]

> The choice of the name is thus particularly apposite, apart from its rhetorical elegance. The reference suggests that the poet now has in mind a mortal beloved, no doubt a handsome disciple, in whom he is seeing after Sufi fashion the embodiment of the Divine Beloved.

Ibn al-Fāriḍ's description of the beloved in the *al-Dhālīya* is one of the more detailed and embodied examples to be found in any of his poems. This beloved is also exceptional in that he is male, not female, which is generally the case in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verse. Nevertheless, the poet's close imitation of al-Mutanabbī's poem required a male beloved, as well as the

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23 See ʿAbd al-Ghānī al-Nābulusī: *Kashf al-sirr al-ghāmiḍ fī sharḥ Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, microfilm of MS 4104 (3223). Princeton: Yahuda Section, Garrett Collection, Princeton University, fol. 70b, and Arberry: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 51, n. 15.

24 al-Būrīnī: *Sulṭān*, vol. 2, 98, and Arberry: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 53, n. 24; Muʿādh was martyred in 17 or 18/638-39; see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī: *K. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*. Beirut 1968, vol. 10, 186-88, and Ibn al-ʿImād: *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab*. Cairo 1931, vol. 1, 29-30.

25 Arberry: *Mystical Poems*, vol 2, 53, n. 24.

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use of the rhyme word *Muʿādh*, Arberry's questionable remark aside. The Qur'ānic references in v. 15 might suggest the beloved is God, though not as convincingly as in his *al-Lāmīya*. There, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's allusions to the pre-eternal covenant, annihilation and union in love, the heart and *dhikr*, all imply a divine beloved. In the *al-Dhālīya*, the beloved's male gender together with mention of the toothpick (v. 19: *siwāk*) might allude to the Prophet Muḥammad, who according to tradition, used the toothpick first thing in the morning.[26] But such prophetic or religious allusions were standard in earlier *ʿUdhrī* ghazals, as poets praised their ideal loves, and similarly, in the *al-Dhālīya*, Ibn al-Fāriḍ presents the Muslim ideal of a handsome, delicate youth. Significantly, this young, healthy and handsome beloved stands in marked contrast to the lover's fallen state that later becomes the poem's focus.[27]

In vv. 21-22, Ibn al-Fāriḍ boasts that the beloved's thin belts and slender waist are comparable to the delicate and refined quality of his nasīb (vv. 21-22). Frequently in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verse, such self-praise marks a transition, and here the poet introduces the standard ghazal theme of the lover's perseverance before the cruelties of his beloved. While the beloved resembles Muʿādh ibn Jabal in piety and beauty, the lover must learn from Muʿādh's martyrdom and purge his self-regard and willful desires if he is to protect the beloved from others and from himself (vv. 24-25). The poet's reverie deepens as he recalls the beloved far away in Arabia. There a stag once guarded a pool of lovers' tears in a sacred precinct (*ḥimā*), and this powerful mythic image suggests both the sexuality of the stag, and the water's curative powers (vv. 26-29). The reverie of the nasīb persists as the poet sadly recalls the departure of the tribe, which has dispersed, but not in search of new pastures as in pre-Islamic odes. Ibn al-Fāriḍ's references to al-Khayf, Minā, "the gathering," and al-Ṣafā in Mecca (vv. 26-27, 30-33) allude to the *ḥajj*, suggesting that the sacred pool is the well of Zamzam. According to Arab poetic tradition, the *ḥajj* is a time of rendezvous for Arab lovers, while for lovers of God, the pilgrimage is a hallowed occasion for contemplation and prayer. Ibn al-Fāriḍ often combines both elements in his poems of

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26 See Annemarie Schimmel: *And Muḥammad is His Messenger*. Chapel Hill 1985, 43.

27 Concerning religious allusions in earlier *ʿUdhrī ghazals*, see Andras Hamori: *The Art of Medieval Arabic Literature*. Princeton 1974, 38-47, and Homerin: *az-Zahrā'*, 217-30. For more on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's divine beloved, see Homerin: *From Arab Poet*, 8-9; *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, 19-37, and his: Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Rubaʿiyat, Ghazal, Qasida. In: John Renard (ed.): *Windows on the House of Islam*. Berkeley 1998, 194-200.

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meditation on life and love, which feature many of the rituals and places of the Muslim pilgrimage.[28]

The tribe of the *al-Dhālīya*, then, is the community of Muslim pilgrims who, upon completion of the *ḥajj*, depart by various routes. The lover longs to know why the pacts he made with them in Mecca were so quickly broken. Yet, if this is the beloved's wish, then he will deem it good, though separation is unbearable after the joys of union (vv. 33-35). The lover swears to his continued fidelity to the covenant and concludes with the description of his pitiful state; once a great man, a lion like al-Mutanabbī's Musāwir, the lover now resembles Mimshādh al-Dīnawarī, a Muslim ascetic worn out by sleepless devotion to God.[29] The raging fire of love has left him confused, thirsting, and near death (vv. 36-44). Infected with the plague of love, the lover's body has lost its youth; fate has left him old, decrepit, and alone. Wasted by the pains of separation and haunted by memories of lost love, the lover – like the *ʿUdhrī* lover/poet *Majnūn* – wanders distraught, a victim of undying passion (vv. 45-51).

With this ending, Ibn al-Fāriḍ has, in effect, reversed the object of praise found in al-Mutanabbī's poem. True, Ibn al-Fāriḍ lauds the conquering beloved, but beginning with v. 24, his hero becomes the victim broken by love. This role change underlies the contrasting allusions made by both poets with the name Muʿādh. But the poets' differing goals are more vividly revealed by comparing two points of climax. In v. 8 of al-Mutanabbī's poem, Musāwir's victims realize at the moment of death that "There is no knight save him!" But Ibn al-Fāriḍ's final verse praises the slain and not the slayer:

qāla l-ʿawā'idu ʿinda-mā abṣarnahu
in kāna man qatala l-gharāmu fa-hādhā

When the women visiting the sick
saw him, they said:
"If anyone is slain by passion,
surely it is this one!"

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28 Regarding the pilgrimage and Ibn al-Fāriḍ's numerous references to it, see Homerin: *From Arab Poet*, 8-9, and *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ*: 8-10, 304-08. Also see Arberry: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 53, n. 27.

29 Mimshādh al-Dīnawarī (d. 299/912) was an ascetic famous for his sleepless nights spent in prayer. See al-Būrīnī: *Sulṭān*, vol. 2, 104-05; Abū Nuʿaym al-Isfahānī: *Ḥilyāt al-awliyā' wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā'*. Repr. of the Cairo 1932 ed. Beirut 1980), vol. 10, 353-54; al-Sulamī: *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīya*, ed. Aḥmad al-Sharbasī. Cairo 1962, 76-77, and Arberry: *Mystical Poems*, vol. 2, 55, n. 44.

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This verse strikes the same theme as v. 34 of the *al-Lāmīya*, but with a different tone. In the *al-Lāmīya*, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poetic *persona* is that of a wise and experienced teacher advising a young man on matters of true love. Therefore, he recounts his own experience of self-sacrifice that led to his annihilation in love, so that now his beloved abides in his heart. But this joy is absent from the *al-Dhālīya*, where the poetic *persona* is that of the imperfect lover. For in answer to the rhetorical question that began the poem, the selfish lover still exists. So he must continue to suffer his slow, ignominious death in hopes of a union to come. al-Mutanabbī's courtly panegyric is now a faint echo in the love lament of a mystical ghazal.

Yet, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *al-Dhālīya* represents a literary as well as spiritual endeavor. In his *al-Lāmīya*, Ibn al-Fāriḍ was less rigorous in his adherence to a specific work by al-Mutanabbī while composing a beautiful and independent poem. However, in the *al-Dhālīya*, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's desire to use and play on al-Mutanabbī's motifs and rhyme words resulted in several difficult, if necessary, verses (e.g., vv. 5, 14, 21, 29, 34, 43-44). Further, in v. 22, Ibn al-Fāriḍ boasts of his poetic skills and this, too, strongly suggests a literary motive in composing the *al-Dhālīya*. For the imitation of a poem by al-Mutanabbī, the recognized master of Arabic poetry, should only be dared by another self-confident poet, and Ibn al-Fāriḍ's very original improvisations on al-Mutanabbī' must have delighted his learned companions whether they were Sufi adepts, established poets or, like Ibn al-Fāriḍ, both.[30]

30 For other recent translations with analysis of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verse, see Homerin: *From Arab Poet*, 4-9, *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, 41-291, *Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Rubaʿiyat, Ghazal, Qasida*, 194-200; Stefan Sperl: Qasida Form and Mystic Path in 13th Century Egypt: A Poem by Ibn al-Fāriḍ. In: S. Sperl and C. Shackle (eds.): *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*. Leiden 1996, vol. 1, 65-81, vol. 2, 106-11, 423-24, and Jean-Yves L'Hôpital: *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Poèmes mystiques*. Damas 2001.

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AL-WALĪD IBN YAZĪD, THE LAST GHAZAL POET OF THE UMAYYAD PERIOD

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Ghazal poetry is one of the great achievements of Umayyad literature, in some respects never to be surpassed. It served as an expression of the problems and tensions in Umayyad society and constituted the principle means for poets to develop new concepts and models for identification. This is valid for both variants of Umayyad ghazal poetry, the *ʿudhrī* ghazal, with Jamīl ibn Maʿmar (d. 82/701) as its chief representative, and the *ḥijāzī* school of ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa (d. 93/712 or 103/721). The first was most innovative on the conceptual level. *ʿUdhrī* love (*al-ḥubb al-ʿudhrī*), as far as it is a genuine Umayyad concept,[1] denotes a consuming passion for an unattainable beloved, chastity, and faithfulness until death. The melancholy mood of Jamīl's verses and his preoccupation with death are characteristic elements of *ʿudhrī* poetry. As for the *ḥijāzī* school, it had a lasting effect on ghazal poetry and contributed in a fundamental way to the formation of the genre. In the dīwān of ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa a tendency to use rare metres is to be observed for the first time, possibly due to the fact that his poems were destined to be sung. The careful composition of his texts on several linguistic levels, the urban vocabulary devoid of *gharīb* and the narrative structure with extensive use of dialogue – these are some of the traits taken up and developed further by future generations of poets. ʿUmar's gay,

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1 There is some confusion and dispute about the term *ʿudhrī* in modern research. It is mainly due to the fact that ʿAbbāsid authors sometimes call the concept of 'courtly love' developed in their own time *al-ḥubb al-ʿudhrī,* thus projecting it back into an idealized Bedouin past. Since the distinction of *ʿudhrī* and courtly love is relevant to the present study, my own understanding of the two concepts must be defined. In addition to the elements of *ʿudhrī* love stated above, the courtly ideal includes the following aspects: 1. The beloved is placed above the lover, although she might be his inferior socially. 2. The beloved is cruel and despotic; the lover has to endure her tyranny with complete submission. He is her 'slave' (*ʿabd, mamlūk*) *or* 'client' (*mawlā*). 3. Love is a virtue leading the constant lover to moral perfection, and a code of refined behaviour. It is evident that courtly love could not have originated among Bedouins in the Umayyad era. It belongs to the intellectual climate of ʿAbbāsid urban society. Cf. also the arts. Courtly love (J. Meisami) and ʿUdhrī poetry (R. Jacobi) in: *EAL: Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, 2 vols., London et al. 1998, vol. 1, 176-77; vol. II, 789-90.

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frivolous attitude towards love and the beloved, however, seems to be his individual note, as too the interest in human relationships and the dramatic conflicts which are always to be resolved to his own satisfaction and on a cheerful note.[2]

At the beginning of the 7th century, when the first generation of ghazal poets was about to disappear, the ill-fated caliph al-Walīd ibn Yazīd (b. 90/708-9) was still a child or a young boy at the most. He was a contemporary of Bashshār ibn Burd (ca. 95-167/714-784), a fact one tends to forget on account of his premature death in 126/744. Like Bashshār he is a poet of transition, consummating certain trends of Umayyad lyricism and preparing the way for the brilliance of ʿAbbāsid 'modern' (*muḥdath*) poetry. But he is more than a successor or precursor of other poets. al-Walīd is, above all, a gifted, creative poet in his own right, whose verses reveal a peculiar aesthetic quality unknown in Arabic poetry beforehand. It is the principle aim of this article to attempt a definition of the essential quality of his verse.

A further question to be raised is his role in the history of Arabic ghazal poetry. al-Walīd himself was aware of belonging to a poetic tradition and made it plain whose poetry he admired. He voiced his ambition to match the most famous ghazal poets of the preceding generation, indeed, he boasted of having already reached his goal (No. 42,3):[3]

qultu qawlan li-Sulaymā muʿjiban / mithla mā qāla Jamīlun wa-ʿUmar

I made beautiful verses for Sulaymā, similar to the verses of Jamīl and ʿUmar.

It will be part of the following analysis to ascertain in what way he had been influenced by *ʿudhrī* and *ḥijāzī* ghazal poetry, and whether he contributed to the development of the genre. This question is related to but not identical with the renown he enjoyed in medieval Arabic sources. Judging from biographical references and quotations of his verses in works of *adab*, al-Walīd's prestige hardly matched that of other Umayyad poets. There is

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2 For a more detailed survey of Umayyad ghazal poetry cf. my article: Omaijadische Dichtung. In: *GAP: Grundriß der arabischen Philologie* II, Wiesbaden 1987, 32-40.

3 The study is based on Francesco Gabrieli's second revised edition: *Dīwān al-Walīd ibn Yazīd*. Beirut 1967. It is almost identical with his first edition preceded by an essay: Al-Walīd ibn Yazīd. Il califfo e il poeta. In: *Rivista degli Studi orientali* 15 (1934), 1-64 (= Gabrieli[1]). Some additional fragments have been collected by Dieter Derenk in his monography on al-Walīd: *Leben und Dichtung des Omaiyadenkalifen Al-Walīd ibn Yazīd: Ein quellenkritischer Beitrag*. Freiburg, 1974. The few ghazal verses among them have been included in the analysis, but they are not counted in the statistics given below.

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not even a dīwān. His verses seem to have been transmitted orally at first by friends and musicians, only to be included later in various works of *adab* and historical surveys. Presumably a considerable part of his work is lost; although precisely his best verses may have survived on the basis of their being set to music. Not surprisingly, therefore, the bulk of his poetry, as we have it, has been preserved by Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbāhānī in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, where his biography comprises 84 pages.[4] Most of the texts quoted were made into songs, some of them by al-Walīd himself.

Political reasons may have caused a certain reserve on the part of ʿAbbāsid scholars and *literati* towards al-Walīd and his poetry. Shortly after his death the new dynasty was established. It was only to be expected that his former friends and clients, the poets and musicians he had supported, dissociated themselves from him, and this would also explain why a scholar like Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) failed to devote a biography to al-Walīd in his *Kitāb al-Shiʿr wa-l-shuʿarā'*, although he dedicated separate entries to a considerable number of mediocre Umayyad poets. Not even Ibn Dā'ūd (d. 297/910) in his anthology of love poetry, *Kitāb al-Zahra*, saw fit to include ghazal verses by al-Walīd. In addition to the political aspect, an explanation from a literary point of view might be considered. ʿAbbāsid poetry from the 9th century onwards tended towards an ornate style with complicated imagery and conceits that has been compared to the poetry of mannerism in European literature. al-Walīd's simple, apparently artless verses were certainly not in keeping with the aesthetics of later ʿAbbāsid poetry and it is hardly surprising, therefore, that they have not been appreciated neither by literary historians, nor the critics of the time.

In contrast to medieval authors, Western Arabists have been delighted with al-Walīd's poetry, especially with his ghazal. The first to admire him profoundly was Francesco Gabrieli, the collector and editor of his verses. Régis Blachère praised the *'souplesse'* of his language,[5] and Christoph Bürgel called him 'one of the greatest poets of his time,'[6] a verdict I myself wholeheartedly support. I regard this difference in judgement to be of interest for the present study. The history of reception is an openended process, and reception theory has taught us to use any discrepancies observed functionally, i.e. as a means of understanding and evaluating a

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4 Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbāhānī: *Kitāb al-Aghānī*. 24 Vols. Cairo 1345-1394/1927-1974 (with pagination of the edition Bulaq 1285, 20 Vols.), vol. 7, 1-84.

5 Le prince Umayyade al-Walīd (II) Ibn Yazīd. In: *Mélanges Gaudefroy-Demombynes*. Caire 1935, 103-23 = Idem.: *Analecta*. Damas 1975, 379-99, here 399.

6 The Lady Gazelle and her Murderous Glances. In: *JAL: Journal of Arabic Literature* 20 (1989), 1-11, here 3.

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text or a group of texts. In the case of al-Walīd, the divergent assessment between medieval and modern scholars and critics may assist us in discovering and defining the essential quality of his ghazal.

Owing to his political role, we know more about al-Walīd, his life and personality than about most medieval Arabic poets. Some stories may be fictitious and there is doubtless a certain amount of exaggeration and literary embellishment. But the biographical data seem reliable on the whole and the anecdotes transmitted in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* and other sources reveal a coherent pattern in his life and character. The following biographical sketch only highlights those points which seem relevant to his poetry. At the time of Yazīd's death (reg. 101-105/719-724) al-Walīd was about fifteen years old. His father was a connoisseur of music and had spent his life in pleasure and dissipation. It is to be assumed that his son was introduced to a similar life style at an early age. He showed a remarkable talent for music and seems to have received a thorough musical education. He could play several instruments and was also an accomplished composer. According to the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, he set some of his poems to music himself. Two events, one touching his political future, the other his private affairs, proved to exert a great influence on his life and contributed to its premature ending, so I believe, in that they motivated his scandalous conduct to some extent. At a time when al-Walīd was still under age, Yazīd designated his brother Hishām ibn ʿAbdalmalik (reg. 105-125/724-743) as caliph, while nominating his son as second in line. As a consequence, al-Walīd had to wait twenty years for the caliphate, a period which he bore with exceedingly ill grace. The enmity between him and his uncle Hishām, his opposite in character and inclinations, is amply documented in the sources, as also in the poet's verses. Hishām made several attempts to contrive al-Walīd's exclusion from the line of succession on account of his licentious life style but failed. At his death, as might be expected, al-Walīd's rejoicing knew no bounds. His triumph was of short duration however. He continued his life of pleasure and dissipation, openly boasting of it, and was assassinated in 126/744, after 14 months of his caliphate.

The second event proved equally trying for his patience. At the age of fifteen, already married, he fell in love with Salmā, his sister-in-law. He divorced his wife and asked for Salmā in marriage, but her father, Saʿīd ibn Khālid, refused, allegedly as a result of Hishām's intervention. al-Walīd thus had to wait for Salmā, who was married to another man, until he became caliph. He then enforced the marriage but she died after a period of days. The mythical numbers 7 and alternately 40 are given in the

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Kitāb al-Aghānī.[7] It is appropriate, I think, to devote a few words to the tragedy of Salmā, whose feelings in the affair are passed over in silence by the sources. There is no indication that she ever cared for al-Walīd. On the contrary, in some of his verses he mentions how she blamed him for the quarrel with her father; nor are the two lines he has her say (No. 34), where she proclaims envying her sister, conclusive evidence of her affection. After twenty years, no longer young, she is forced to marry a man she could not even have esteemed, a libertine whose reputation was the worst conceivable. If the reports of the affair are authentic, her death may be viewed as an escape from an intolerable situation.

al-Walīd's thwarted love for Salmā inspired most of his ghazal verses. He also composed two short elegies for her, but the texts we have could be fragments. It was during these twenty years of waiting and frustration that he produced most of his poetry. He acted as patron of singers and musicians and himself performed at his musical sessions. al-Walīd was also interested in architecture and had several castles built in Syria, among them Khirbat Mafjar, as has been suggested by Richard Hamilton,[8] and in all probability Mshattā. His pursuits and recreations were not limited to the arts however. His musical sessions were not only famous for their splendour and the high standard of performance, but also notorious for their excessive drinking and debauchery. As al-Walīd himself avowed, music, wine and women were the pleasures he desired and sought to combine (No. 22, 2). In fact, the quantity of wine he was able to consume used to amaze his entourage. According to numerous stories, he was inordinately proud of this, as he was of his physical strength, which he used to demonstrate by feats of prowess in hunting and sports. His need to show off and to prove himself appears to have been almost pathetic.

Taken together the reports about al-Walīd ring true, even if some of them may have been invented. They suggest a complex character, a man of various talents and strong passions, sensitive and sensual, whose temper had never been curbed. His inability to endure restraint is perhaps the ultimate cause of his tragedy. After his ambitions and desires had been frustrated, he defied society and showed contempt for its values in words and deeds. There is an adolescent rage and revolt about him which lasted until his death. His immoderate, eccentric life style is compensated, however, by discipline and moderation in his art. His life may have been a series of excesses and violations of good taste, but his verses are perfectly balanced and bear witness to the creative inspiration and aesthetic sensibility of a great poet.

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7 *Aghānī* 7, 65 and 31.

8 *Walīd and his Friends: An Umayyad Tragedy.* Oxford 1988, 16-63.

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Some of the factors just mentioned seem to me to be of special significance and will be used as a basis for advancing some hypotheses.

al-Walīd was an accomplished musician and composer. Producing poetry and setting it to music may have been a related process, the two arts influencing each other. Since we do not have his music, there is no way to directly prove this, but we do know that most of his verses were destined to be sung. The 'musical' quality of his texts is quite exceptional, moreover, as I intend to show. There can be no doubt that he was susceptible to sound and rhythm to a high degree. Whether he used compositional techniques in his poetry, as I have suggested in a previous article, is impossible to establish, but I should like to nonetheless let it stand as a hypothesis.[9]

Being a member of the ruling class and caliph designatus, al-Walīd had no need to please a patron or an audience. He was free to follow his taste and inspirations, and, above all, he was not forced to dissemble. Poetry was his recreation, not his métier. As a result, his poetry seems unconventional, even where he uses conventions, and more personal and subjective, or perhaps one should say 'sincere', than classical Arabic poetry appears to be as a rule.

It is evident from all we know about al-Walīd that he was sensual and passionate, a poet who might be expected to compose love poems of undisguised eroticism. Indeed, some of his ghazaliyyāt and *khamriyyāt* testify to his natural bent, although they are never obscene. Through a whim of fate, al-Walīd of all people found himself in the position of a *ʿudhrī* lover, a man who had asked for his beloved in marriage and was rejected by her family. He attempted to sublimate his frustration in the *ʿudhrī* manner, but chastity and faithfulness were not among his virtues. The result is poetry of unique charm, playful and passionate, adoring and demanding, a curious mixture of sensual, courtly and *ʿudhrī* love.

My study of al-Walīd's ghazal is concerned primarily with these three aspects. Gabrieli's edition of his dīwān consists of 102 poems and fragments, 428 verses in all. Of these, 43 texts can be classified as ghazal, a total of 183 verses. Thirty-two texts, possibly more, are addressed to Salmā. The remaining corpus consists of 14 *khamriyyāt*, 4 elegies, a religious *urjūza* (No. 37, 19 verses) he allegedly recited in place of a *khuṭba*, a qaṣīda

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9 Theme and Variations in Umayyad Ghazal Poetry. In: *JAL* 23 (1992), 115; Experts on music tend to be sceptical, however, and reject the theory of a mutual influence of music and poetry. Cf. the articles Music and poetry (O. Wright) and Singers and musicians (H. Kilpatrick) in: *EAL* II. London et al. 1998, 555-56 and 724-25.

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with nasīb and a political theme (No. 68, 14 verses), and a number of texts devoted to boasting and invectives, *fakhr* and *hijā'*. Thus love and wine are his favourite subjects, and, indeed, ghazal and *khamriyya* are the two genres on which his fame rests. It is not always easy to distinguish between them. In the present study, only poems limited to the amatory theme will be counted as ghazal.

Words as music

Two formal aspects of al-Walīd's dīwān in general and his ghazal in particular deserve special attention, the comparative shortness of his texts and the degree of their metrical variability, together with a preference for rare metres. When considering the average length of al-Walīd's poems, we must realize, of course, that some of the texts are certainly fragments. In fact, Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī mentions occasionally that verses have been selected from a longer poem to be made into a song.[10] However, on account of their carefully structured opening and closing lines most of his poems give the impression of being complete. Except for the two comparatively long poems mentioned above, there are no texts exceeding 10 verses in his dīwān, as evidenced in the chart below:[11]

Verses	Texts (total)	Percentage	Texts (ghazal)	Percentage
1	4	3.92%		
2	17	16.66%	5	11.62%
3	22	21.56%	7	16.27%
4	25	24.50%	14	32.55%
5	10	9.80%	8	18.60%
6	17	16.66%	8	18.60%
7	2	1.96%		
8	2	1.96%	1	2.32%
9	1	0.98%		
≥10	2	1.96%		
	102		43	

10 *Aghānī* 7, 30.

11 There are two poems in *rajaz* with two lines and one final hemistich (Nos. 79, 88). They are counted as 3 lines.

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The most interesting information to be derived from the chart is the high percentage of poems with four lines in the dīwān (24.50%) and the percentage increase in the corpus of ghazal (32.55%). The next group is formed by poems with three, five and six lines, the percentage differing slightly within the dīwān and the ghazaliyyāt respectively. Evidently al-Walīd favoured the four-liner for his ghazal and rarely composed love poems of more than six verses. An explanation for this would be that his ghazal verses were destined to be sung, thus requiring a short text as basis for the composer. al-Walīd's favouring of the ghazal with four lines seems interesting in view of the growing trend towards the four-liner in ʿAbbāsid ghazal poetry pointed out recently by Thomas Bauer in a paper on Abū Tammām,[12] and by Tilman Seidensticker in an article on the disputed origin of the Persian *rubāʿī*.[13] The trend is documented in the dīwān of Abū Nuwās (25%) and the poetry of Abū Tammām (55%), and reaches its climax in the ghazaliyyāt of Khālid al-Kātib with almost a 100% rate. al-Walīd's ghazal corpus is too small to permit safe conclusions, but it seems possible that he initiated the development and that this development is closely connected with his texts being made into songs.

The second aspect, al-Walīd's choice of metres, is equally significant. He employed 13 metres and, in addition, 5 shortened (*majzūʾ*) metres in his dīwān, a total of 18 different metres. In his ghazal verses 14 metres are used. In view of the relatively small corpus we have the variability of his metrics is amazing. According to the statistical data provided by Jamal Eddine Bencheikh in his *Poétique arabe*, no Umayyad poet equals him in this respect, and among the early *muḥdathūn* only Abū Nuwās employs the same variety of metres, although with more conventional preferences.[14] Since no numerical information on al-Walīd's metrics is given by Bencheikh or, as far as I know, is to be found elsewhere, the chart below may prove to be useful. The metres are arranged in the order of frequency in the dīwān, their percentage varying slightly within the corpus of ghazal:

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12 Abū Tammāms Contribution to ʿAbbāsid Ghazal Poetry. In: *JAL* (1996), 13-21, here 19.

13 Die Herkunft des Rubāʿī. In: *Asiatische Studien* 53 (1999), 905-36, here 916-31.

14 *Poétique arabe: Essai sur les voies d'une création.* Paris 1975, 212.

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	Texts (total)	Percentage	Texts (ghazal)	Percentage
Ramal majzūʾ	15	14.70%	9	20.93%
Wāfir	15	14.70%	7	16.27%
Khafīf	14	13.72%	5	11.62%
Ṭawīl	13	12.74%	2	4.65%
Ramal	5	4.90%	5	11.62%
Kāmil	5	4.90%	3	6.97%
Hazaj	5	4.90%	3	6.97%
Basīṭ	5	4.90%	2	4.65%
Mutaqārib	4	3.92%	1	2.32%
Sarīʿ	4	3.92%	1	2.32%
Rajaz	4	3.92%		
Madīd	3	2.94%	2	4.65%
Munsarīḥ	3	2.94%	1	2.32%
Wāfir majzūʾ	2	1.96%	1	2.32%
Khafīf majzūʾ	2	1.96%	1	2.32%
Mujtathth	1	0.98%		
Mutaqārib majzūʾ	1	0.98%		
Kāmil muraffal	1	0.98%		
	102		43	

From the Jāhiliyya up to the 9th century, the period covered by Bencheikh's statistics, there is no dīwān with a similar distribution of metres. In the Umayyad period, as in the *jāhiliyya*, the four most frequent metres are *ṭawīl*, leading with 40-70%, followed by *wāfir*, *kāmil*, *basīṭ*. In early ʿAbbāsid poetry *ṭawīl* still holds first place, but reduced to 20-25%. By way of contrast, al-Walīd's favourite metres are *ramal majzūʾ*, *wāfir* and *khafīf*, with *ṭawīl* taking fourth place in the dīwān and seventh place within the corpus of ghazal, where *ramal*, a metre only used for ghazal by al-Walīd, attains the same percentage as *khafīf*. As regards his *khamriyya*, similar preferences are to be observed. *Ramal majzūʾ* (4), *khafīf* (4), and *sarīʿ* (2) are his favourites, whereas he composed no wine song in *ṭawīl*, *wāfir*, *kāmil* or *basīṭ*. Since we may be fairly certain that most songs

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performed at al-Walīd's musical sessions were about love and wine, his ghazal and *khamriyya* were probably always set to music, which would account for his choice of short, lively metres. It also appears that he liked to experiment, more so than other poets, with a great variety of metres. Despite the average shortness of his verses, he observed the caesura as a rule. There are only seven lines in the entire dīwān where words extend beyond the caesura.

Both factors, the comparative shortness of al-Walīd's texts and his favouring rare metres with lively rhythm, suggest a connection of his verses with music. But we can go further than this. The principle technique he applies for structuring his poems is repetition, used with subtle variations on different linguistic levels. It is conspicuous on the phonological level, but repetition of words or syntactic parallelism is also in evidence. The result is a peculiar sound quality of his verses, a 'musical' quality, as I would like to call it, which seems to be one of the distinctive features of his poetry. I will quote two poems in full to illustrate this point. Both poems are composed in al-Walīd's favourite metre, *ramal majzū'* (No. 10):

1 *yā Sulaymā, yā Sulaymā / kunti li-l-qalbi ʿadhābā*
2 *yā Sulaymā bnata ʿammī / barada l-laylu fa-ṭābā*
3 *ayyumā wāshin washā bī / fa-mla'ī fāhu turābā*
4 *rīquhā fī l-ṣubḥi miskun / bāshara l-ʿadhba l-ruḍābā*

1 Sulaymā, Sulaymā, you are tormenting my heart.
2 Sulaymā, my cousin! Cool and fragrant is the night.
3 Whosoever slanders me, stop his mouth with earth!
4 Her saliva in the morning is musk touched with sweet saliva.

The poem gives the impression of lightness and swift movement. This is due partly to the metre and partly to its phonological structure, above all to the scarcity of emphatic consonants. In his *Esquisse d'une phonologie de l'arabe classique*[15] Jean Cantineau gives a statistical survey of phonemes in Arabic, dividing them according to their frequency into five groups. The last group consists of nine consonants Cantineau called *'consonnes rares'* (*sh*, *ḍ*, *j*, *ṣ*, *th*, *z*, *ẓ*, *gh*, *ṭ*). In the ghazal quoted above, five 'rare consonants' are absent, and the emphatics *ḍ* and *ṣ* occur only once in the last line. A similar scarcity or absence of rare consonants is to be observed in several texts (cf. Nos. 44, 74, 77, 90), as also in the poem to be quoted below. Such a scarcity cannot be explained by the average shortness of al-Walīd's texts,

15 In: *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 43 (1946), 109.

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for there are also short poems in which almost the whole spectrum of the alphabet is manifest (cf. No. 64).

Another striking feature of al-Walīd's ghazal is his repeating of the name Salmā and its variants (Sulaymā, Salāma, Umm Sallām). As far as I can see there is no Arabic poet, not even Majnūn, who has made the name of his beloved a hallmark of his poetry in such a distinctive manner. One gains the impression that al-Walīd is enchanted with the very sound of her name. In the present case, the name Sulaymā dominates the first two lines of the ghazal (cf. also No. 63), but the patterns of repetition are by no means uniform. Her name is repeated in various designs three or four times in one poem as a rule, thus determining its sound structure like a leitmotif.

The poem consists of independent statements, but they are linked together by different means. As in most of al-Walīd's love poems, the message is a mixture of complaint, longing, anger or self-assertion and praise of the beloved. In the opening line he voices his complaint, the emotional impact being enhanced by the repeated address to the beloved, once more repeated in line 2A. Complaint and longing are intensified by the poet's allusion to the 'fragrant night' (2B), since in such a night the beloved should be present. In line 3 the mood is broken abruptly, a phenomenon not unusual in al-Walīd's poems. The poet expresses his anger towards those who separate him from Salmā and seeks her solidarity. All three verses are connected by their mode of speech, the poet directly addressing Salmā. The closing line, as occurs in several texts, is distinguished by a change from the second to the third person and contains an allusion to her charms. There is a further link between the lines we should note, namely the correspondence of *ʿadhāb* in line 1B and *ʿadhb* in 4B, torment and sweetness being contrasted and united in one. Another instance is the link between lines 3 and 4 on the phonological level (*wāshin/washā/bāshara*). The verb *bāshara* also denotes 'to sleep together,' a *double entendre* hardly fortuitous in a poem by al-Walīd. The opposition between the slanderer's mouth to be closed by force and Salmā's sweet saliva, together with the phonological evidence, suggests a careful structuring of the text.

The second ghazal to be analyzed seems even more striking in its harmonious sound quality. The principle of repetition is very much in evidence on all linguistic levels (No. 94, *ramal majzūʾ*):

1 *wayḥa Salmā law tarānī / la-ʿanāhā mā ʿanānī*
2 *mutlifan fī l-lahwi mālī / ʿāshiqan ḥūra l-qiyānī*
3 *innamā aḥzana qalbī / qawlu Salmā idh atānī*
4 *wa-la-qad kuntu zamānan / khāliya l-dharʿi li-shānī*

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5 *shāqa qalbī wa-ʿanānī / ḥubbu Salmā wa-barānī*
6 *wa-la-kam lāma naṣīḥun / fī Sulaymā wa-nahānī*

1 Alas, Salmā! If she could see me, she would grieve about what grieves me,
2 That I spent my wealth on pleasures, desiring singing girls with beautiful eyes.
3 My heart was filled with sorrow, when Salmā's words were reported to me.
4 Yet there was a time, when I lived free of cares.
5 Now, loving Salmā, my heart aches, I grieve and waste away.
6 How many friends blame me for loving Sulaymā, and advise me to give her up!

The poem gives the same impression of light, swift movement as the first text due to the short, lively metre and the absence of rare consonants, especially emphatics. From Cantineau's fifth group six consonants are lacking (*ḍ*, *j*, *th*, *ẓ*, *gh*, *ṭ*) and *ṣ* only occurs once in the closing line. We can further observe repetition of the sequence of vowels present in the rhyme (*ā*/*a* – *ī*/*i*) throughout the poem. The effect is a peculiar harmony of sound, enhancing the impression of lightness produced by the metre. The beloved's name is repeated in every second line (1 – 3 – 5) and once more in the last line in the form of Sulaymā, a variation emphasizing the distinctive character of the closing line. In contrast to the preceding ghazal, there is internal rhyme in the first verse, which is rather unusual in al-Walīd's poetry. Only 25 texts in his dīwān have internal rhyme in the opening verse, among them 14 ghazaliyyāt. The text, like many of al-Walīd's poems addressed to Salmā, conveys a mixture of different emotions, longing and complaint, sorrow for having incurred Salmā's displeasure and, finally, a vague regret for the carefree days before he fell in love with her.

The two poems just discussed are similar in their 'musical' quality and close structuring on the level of sound, but they are by no means uniform regarding their pattern of repetition and thematic sequence. I have vainly studied the material for regular patterns. Each text reveals a new, unexpected design, the common factors being the poet's special attention to sound and rhythm and the principle of repetition. Perhaps the most striking example of al-Walīd's ingenuity is provided by a text based on the motif of the *aṭlāl* (No. 44). Since I have analyzed it in a previous paper,[16] it is sufficient here to refer to it briefly. In the opening line the leitmotif,

16 *Theme and Variations*, 114-17.

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the 'deserted campsite,' is stated and subsequently rephrased, each verse repeating one and only one term from the first line. The narrative character of the motif is completely abandoned. Its function is merely to evoke a melancholy mood.

In the next two sections other aspects will be discussed, but the texts to be quoted could all be taken as evidence of the point I want to make. Although the exact relationship between verse and music in al-Walīd's dīwān cannot be determined, it seems safe to conclude that he was particularly sensitive to sound and rhythm and used both factors for structuring his poems to an unusual extent, a sensitivity explained by the fact that he was a musician and composer.

Convention and originality

Umayyad ghazal poetry in all its variants reveals intertextual relations with the pre-Islamic nasīb. The Bedouin setting and conventional motifs and images provide a frame of reference, an erotic code shared and understood by the urban poets and their audience. But the function of the Bedouin *topos* varies considerably in the verses of individual poets, as does the concept of love associated with it. For example, when either ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa or Jamīl uses the motif of the *aṭlāl*, the emotional impact and its justification as well as the techniques for integrating the *topos* are by no means identical. The same holds good for al-Walīd, who, although depending on the achievements of the earlier ghazal poets, develops his own kind of intertextuality. Thus, whereas ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa tends to retain the narrative function of pre-Islamic motifs and to explore their dramatic potential, as a rule al-Walīd disregards the narrative structure and employs conventions as mere erotic signals or as a means of creating a melancholy atmosphere. His methods of contrasting conventions with innovative traits are manifold and ingenious; not the least effective among them is the metre he selects. In a ghazal composed in *hazaj* or *ramal majzū'*, the story of the 'deserted campsite' necessarily loses some of its ancient flavour, as in the following two lines of a ghazal in *hazaj* (No. 73):

1 *ʿaraftu l-manzila l-khālī / ʿafā min baʿdi aḥwālī*
2 *ʿafāhu kullu ḥannānin / ʿasūfi l-wabli haṭṭālī*

1 I recognized the deserted campsite, fallen in decay after many years.
2 Its decay is caused by generous clouds shedding rain at random, incessantly.

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It is impossible to mistake these lines for the beginning of a nasīb, although the phrasing is conventional. The rhythm, the short line, the element of repetition and the somewhat pleonastic reference to the rains indicate a later period and a different genre.

Apart from occasional allusions to *topoi* like the 'calumnator' (*wāshī*) in the poem quoted above (cf. p. 154) or 'hoariness' (*mashīb, shayb*, Nos. 9 and 25), al-Walīd employs conventions of the nasīb either in praise of the beloved, or he selects one of the narrative *topoi*, the *aṭlal* or the *khayāl*, and integrates it by various techniques into his texts. As to the first category, only two allusions to the beloved's beauty and attraction can be classified as *topoi*, the comparison of her saliva in the morning to musk or wine (cf. Nos. 10, 25, 73) and the metaphor 'gazelle' (*ẓabya, ghazāl*), his favourite image for Salmā. It seems significant that al-Walīd chooses the conventional comparison of the beloved's saliva with some fragrant essence or liquid as the main reference to Salmā's charm. She is wine to him, a means of intoxication. As to the image of the gazelle, it inspired one of his most original poems (No. 24). al-Walīd relates in it how he encountered a gazelle while hunting. As the animal reminded him of Salmā, he was unable to kill it and let it go free. This ghazal has been translated repeatedly by modern scholars.[17]

The two narrative *topoi* of the nasīb, the *aṭlāl* and the *khayāl* or *ṭayf*, are sometimes only referred to in the opening or closing lines, so as to evoke a feeling of sorrow and longing. Several poems are based on the narrative from beginning to end, however, with all the conventional details of the pre-Islamic motif in evidence. Yet we recognize at once the late origin of al-Walīd's version. The following ghazal, an adaptation of the *khayāl* motif, is an illustration of this point (No. 77, *madīd*):

1 *ṭaraqatnī wa-ṣiḥābī hujūʿun / ẓabyatun admāʾu mithla l-hilālī*
2 *mithla qarni l-shamsi lammā tabaddat / wa-staqallat fī ruʾūsi l-jibālī*
3 *taqṭaʿu l-ahwāla naḥwī wa-kānat / ʿindanā Salmā alūfa l-ḥijālī*
4 *kam ajāzat naḥwanā min bilādin / waḥshatin qattālatin li-l-rijālī*

1 At night, while my friends were asleep, a fawn coloured gazelle visited me, like the crescent moon,
2 Like the horn of the sun, when it appears, rising above the mountain tops.
3 She endured many terrors on her way towards me, yet Salmā used to keep to her luxurious chambers.

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17 Gabrieli[1], 27; Bürgel: *The Lady Gazelle*, 3; Hamilton: *Al-Walīd and his Friends,* 168; Jacobi: *GAP* II, 40.

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4 How many lands she crossed towards us, wild deserts, murdering men.

Although the terms *khayāl* or *ṭayf* are not mentioned in the text, the verb *ṭaraqa* at the beginning, one of the formulaic openings of the motif, indicates the *topos*. All the details of the traditional version are present, the sleeping friends, the terrors of the journey, the fearful deserts the 'vision' had to cross and the poet's reflection on her indoor habits. Why, then, do we at once recognize the poem's late origin? To begin with, al-Walīd's substitution of a metaphor (*ẓabya*) for the apparition is an innovative trait, as is also the allusion to its beauty. In pre-Islamic texts the *khayāl* is never described but only referred to as a fleeting impression.[18] Even more striking are the two comparisons in praise of the beloved, the 'crescent moon' and the 'sun rising above the mountains.' Although I would not insist that this is the first contemplation of a sunrise in Arabic poetry, the image nevertheless seems exceptional and forms a marked contrast to the conventional frame of the motif. It is one of several indications in al-Walīd's dīwān of his sensitivity to nature. Finally we should note his choice of the term *ḥijāl*, which also means 'bridal chambers.' It is unusual in the context of the *khayāl* motif, and although it forms part of the rhyme, the choice is significant, for it is associated with the poet's wishes. The ghazal constitutes a perfect illustration of al-Walīd's technique of blending conventional and original elements in his dīwān.

The image of the sun rising above the mountain tops brings us to the second aspect to be discussed in this section, al-Walīd's originality, his transcending of convention by following his own inspirations. It seems that there are two domains stimulating his imagination in particular, nature, as in the image just discussed, and religion. The first is a source for some of his most ingenious and delightful inspiration; the second is sometimes exploited with blasphemous intent. Both are united in the metaphor *janna* (garden, paradise), applied to Salmā in several poems. The two connotations of the term, the terrestrial and the celestial aspect, are always present, but 'paradise' seems to be the dominant notion, as in the following hemistich (No. 19,3): *thumma lā zilti jannatī mā ḥayyīti*. 'Then may you never cease to be my paradise, as long as you live.' The image is also used in a wine song, a curious mixture of *khamriyya* and ghazal. After four lines devoted to the subject of wine, al-Walīd ends the poem by speaking of Salmā (No. 87, *khafīf*):

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18 On the history of the motif cf. my article: The Khayāl Motif in Early Arabic Poetry. In: *Oriens* 32 (1990), 50-64.

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5 *layta ḥaẓẓī min al-nisā'i Sulaymā / inna Salmā junaynatī wa-naʿīmī*
6 *fa-daʿūnī min al-malāmati fīhā / inna man lāmanī la-ghayru raḥīmī*

5 Would that my share of women were Sulaymā. Salmā is my paradise and my heavenly joy.
6 Have done with blaming me on account of her! He who blames me is truly merciless.

Metaphorical identity is emphasized by the diminutive (*Sulaymā/junayna*). The terms *naʿīm* and *raḥīm* support the religious connotation of *janna*.

The most elaborate use of the image is made by al-Walīd in his *marthiya* for Salmā (No. 51). This time emphasis is placed on the terrestrial aspect. In the poem Salmā is compared to a well-protected garden rich with fruit. In spring, in the most auspicious season, the garden is suddenly invaded by autumn and destroyed. The simile is evidence of al-Walīd's susceptibility to nature and of his inclination to project his emotional state onto his surroundings. Another instance is his famous dialogue with a bird (No. 74). This poem will be analyzed at the end of the article.

Allusions to religion pervade al-Walīd's dīwān, a somewhat surprising observation in view of his reputation for irreverence. It is true that he tends to use religious hyperbole with intent to shock, but there are also statements suggesting genuine religious feeling. I believe that they are not necessarily insincere. As amply documented in the sources, al-Walīd was inconsistent in his views and attitudes. In his ghazal, allusions to religion occur primarily in praise of the beloved, who is invested with divine qualities. Several examples will be given in the following section when I discuss al-Walīd's concept of love. In the present context one ghazal will be quoted in full to show his religious inspiration and, at the same time, his intention to scandalize people. The text is one of the few love poems not addressed to Salmā. It tells the story of his meeting with a Christian girl (No.32, *kāmil*):[19]

1 *aḍḥā fu'āduka yā Walīdu ʿamīdā / barazat lanā naḥwa l-kanīsati ghīdā*
2 *lā ziltu ūmiquhā bi-ʿaynay wāmiqin / ḥattā baṣartu bihā tuqabbilu ʿūdā*
3 *ʿūda l-ṣalībi fa-wayḥa nafsī man ra'ā / minkum ṣalīban mithlahū maʿbūdā*
4 *fa-sa'altu rabbī an akūna makānahū / wa-akūna fī lahabi l-jaḥīmi waqūdā*

19 This is one of the few poems where Gabrieli's two editions deviate slightly. I have chosen the shorter version of Gabrieli[1], which seems to me more convincing. The second edition has one additional verse and a different arrangement of the hemistich.

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1 Your heart, Walīd, was lovesick this morning, when she appeared on her way to church, a tender girl.
2 I kept staring at her with loving eyes, until I saw her inside kissing a piece of wood,
3 The wood of the cross. Upon my soul, who among you ever saw a cross thus revered?
4 Then I asked my Lord to put me in its place, and to let me burn as firewood of hell.

The ghazal gives the impression of an authentic experience. It is a perfect example of al-Walīd's inclination to use hyperbole and, at the same time, to mock religion, in this case Christian worship and Islam in one breath, since he is willing to forfeit his own salvation. An original inspiration is his contrasting the two kinds of wood, the cross and the wood of hellfire. His transformation into the first necessarily results in the second fatal transformation he is willing to risk for a kiss from the Christian girl. The poem is charming and shocking at once, a mixture characteristic of al-Walīd's most ingenious poems.

The text is also interesting from another point of view. It is a 'narrative' ghazal, a form developed and perfected by ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa.[20] Its structure is linear, that is to say, the story advances in chronological order from beginning to end, the closing line containing the solution of a conflict or another point the poet is leading up to by way of climax. al-Walīd uses the narrative structure but adapts it to his own purpose. When comparing the ghazal to the love poems by ʿUmar, we notice a dissimilarity of focus. Whereas ʿUmar always recounts a sequence of events taking place in the external world, usually a conflict or a happy adventure, al-Walīd mentions a single event affecting him and narrates his own subsequent reactions. The 'real story' takes place within him. In the ghazal under discussion, no contact between him and the Christian girl is referred to, although we may assume that such contacts were to follow. The poet has no inclination to talk about them, however, since his attention is focussed on his own reactions and emotional state. This is one of the characteristic features of al-Walīd's ghazal, together with the frequent change in the mode of speech in his verses, his addressing the beloved, his friends or himself. The result is an impression of lively emotions and utter subjectivity.

20 Cf. *GAP* II, 38-39.

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al-Walīd – an ʿUdhrite manqué?

Love in al-Walīd's ghazal is a notion as complex and contradictory as his character. It would be futile to look for consistency in his love poems and even if they reveal conflicting attitudes there is no reason to doubt their authenticity. The point to rely upon is his sincerity, as he had no need to dissemble, nor would his pride permit it. We know that he admired Jamīl, and we may assume that he believed to convey the spirit of *ʿudhrī* love in his verses. But since chastity and faithful devotion were alien to his character, avowals of pure love are counteracted by other statements, sometimes in the same poem. His formidable ego tends to assert itself; his feelings of anger and frustration, rising after Salmā had been denied him, occasionally supersede his love for her, as in the following ghazal (No. 78, *munsariḥ*):

1 *anā l-Walīdu l-imāmu muftakhiran / unʿimu bālī wa-atbaʿu l-ghazalā*
2 *ahwā Sulaymā wa-hiya taṣrimunī / wa-laysa ḥaqqan jafāʾu man waṣalā*
3 *aṣḥabu burdī ilā manāzilihā / wa-lā ubālī maqāla man ʿadhalā*
4 *gharrāʾu farʿāʾu yustaḍāʾu bihā / tamshī l-huwaynā idhā mashat fuḍulā*

1 I am Walīd, the Imam, speaking with pride. I live as I please, seeking love.
2 I am enamoured of Sulaymā, but she is deserting me. It is not fair to treat a lover cruelly.
3 I drag my cloak towards her dwellings, heedless of what people say in blame of me.
4 Her face is bright, her hair abundant, she is spending light. Gracefully and proud she walks in her skirts.

The poem is an expression of al-Walīd's defiance, as clearly indicated in the first line. His reference to Sulaymā in line 2 speaks more of anger than of love, and in line 3 he explicitly violates the first principle of a true lover, i.e. to protect the beloved's reputation. The correspondence of the two statements *unʿimu bālī* (line 1) and *lā ubālī* (line 3) emphasizes the poet's wilful, headstrong attitude. The closing line, as noted in several of al-Walīd's poems, alludes to Salmā's beauty and charm in a conventional manner. It is the note of defiance in his ghazal, a dominant factor in the whole dīwān, which sometimes tends to impair his verses.

A second factor jeopardizing al-Walīd's attempts to compose verses 'like Jamīl' is his sensuality. In one of his poems not addressed to Salmā (No. 99) he tells the story of a night spent with a woman. The ghazal

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resembles love poems by ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa but is more explicit in its eroticism. It gives us a glimpse of what his ghazal might have been like had Salmā been granted to him. As it is, the majority of his poems speak of longing, desire and frustration, but, even when alluding to his love for Salmā, his voluptuous disposition none the less sometimes shines through, lending his verses a realistic touch. In a poem he allegedly composed before his death, as the castle was already surrounded by enemies,[21] he places her in a line with other sensual pleasures (No. 66, *ṭawīl*):

1 *daʿū lī Sulaymā wa-l-ṭilāʾa wa-qaynatan / wa-kaʾsan a-lā ḥasbī bi-dhālika mālā*
2 *idhā mā ṣafā ʿayshun bi-Ramlati ʿĀlijin / wa-ʿānaqtu Salmā lā urīdu badālā*

1 Leave me Sulaymā, wine, a singing girl and a goblet! I do not ask more of the world.
2 If life is pleasant in Ramlat ʿĀlij[22], and I hold Salmā in my arms, I would not change places with anyone.

In the following four verses al-Walīd expresses his contempt for political power, ending the poem with the *aṭlāl* motif intended as a symbol for the transitory nature of human affairs. The poem is quoted in many sources on account of its political implications. The story of his death appears fictitious or at least embellished, but the poem fits in with al-Walīd's habitual air of defiance. The way he refers to Salmā, who must have been dead at the time, forms a marked contrast to the tender, chaste love expressed by Jamīl for Buthayna.

Of course, this is not the whole picture. al-Walīd is a poet of transition who, like Bashshār ibn Burd, paved the way for the courtly attitude of early ʿAbbāsid poetry. One of the elements of courtly love is the distance between lover and beloved. The lady is placed far above the poet who invests her with magical, even divine qualities. In al-Walīd's ghazal hyperbolical statements about Salmā are occasionally taken from the religious domain, as already pointed out in the previous section. I believe that his motivation is twofold: a genuine desire to exalt her, to express his adoration; and, at the same time, a perverse impulse to scandalize his audience. In a ghazal of only three lines the second motive seems to prevail (No. 5, *ramal majzūʾ*):

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21 *Aghānī* 7, 79.

22 A sandy desert north of Nejd. Cf. Ulrich Thilo: *Die Ortsnamen in der altarabischen Poesie.* Wiesbaden 1958, 28.

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1 *wuṣifat ʿindī Sulaymā / fa-shtahā qalbī yarāhā*
2 *law yarā Salmā khalīlī / la-daʿā Salmā ilāhā*
3 *wa-raʾā ḥīna yarāhā / rabba ṭāsīnin wa-ṭāhā*

1 Sulaymā was praised in my presence, and my heart yearned to see her.
2 If my friend were able to see Salmā, he would call Salmā a god.
3 And when he sees her, he would see the Lord of Ṭā-Sīn and Ṭā-Hā.

The poem is a characteristic specimen of al-Walīd's 'musical' ghazal with its repetitive traits, here the name of the beloved and the verb *raʾā*. It may well be authentic, although it is not transmitted in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*. The point in question however is al-Walīd's allusion to religion. The statement in line 2 might be considered as a mere hyperbole, but the last remark is clearly blasphemous, since it refers to God in the Qurʾān.[23]

A similar instance occurs at the end of a ghazal beginning with al-Walīd's meta-poetic statement quoted above (cf. p. 145), his boasting of his fame as a poet (No. 42, *ramal*):

4 *law raʾaynā li-Sulaymā atharan / la-sajadnā alfa alfin li-l-atharī*
5 *wa-ttakhadhnāhā imāman murtaḍan / wa-la-kānat ḥajjanā wa-l-muʿtamar*
6 *innamā bintu Saʿīdin qamarun / hal ḥarijnā in sajadnā li-l-qamar*

4 If we were to see a statue of Sulaymā, we would prostrate ourselves before it a thousand times.
5 We would regard her as a blessed Imam, and she would be the aim of our Pilgrimage and the place of the *ʿUmra*.
6 The daughter of Saʿīd is a full moon. Is it a sin to prostrate oneself before the moon?

Again the two aspects are manifest in the text, the poet's wish to exalt Salmā and his urge to shock pious Muslims by identifying her with the sanctuary in Mecca.

Hyperbole from the religious domain is a characteristic of courtly poetry, starting, as is generally assumed, with Bashshār ibn Burd. It is anticipated in al-Walīd's poetry, although it is not yet the dominant trait. Besides evidence of sensual and courtly love in his dīwān, there are verses conveying an exclusive devotion and depth of feeling in the simple and unsophisticated manner of Jamīl, as in the following hemistich (No. 33,2): *Salmā hawāhu lā yaʿrifu ghayrahā*. 'Salmā is his love, he knows no other,'

23 al-Walīd refers to the 'mysterious letters' at the beginning of *sura* 28 and 20.

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or the avowal (No. 3,4): *fa-Salmā mala'at arḍī wa-samāhā*. 'And Salma fills my earth and my heaven.' (cf. also Nos. 11,3; 12,2). In some poems al-Walīd almost succeeds in expressing his love for Salmā in the *ʿudhrī* manner (cf. No. 47), but a close reading reveals betraying inconsistencies. In one of his most artistic poems, a ghazal admired not only by modern scholars but also by Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī,[24] he comes very close to *ʿudhrī* poetry. Since I have analyzed this poem in a previous article,[25] here I will quote only three lines in support of the point I wish to make. The ghazal consists of six verses and is tightly structured, the lines 2-5 forming one sentence. Lines 3-5 begin with the anaphora *wa-man* in reference to the poet himself (No. 64, *wāfir*):

3 *wa-man law mitti māta wa-lā tamūtī / wa-law unsiya lahū ajalun bakākī*
4 *wa-man ḥaqqan lawu ʿṭiya mā tamannā / min al-dunya l-ʿarīḍati mā ʿadākī*
5 *wa-man law qulti mut fa-aṭāqa mawtan / idhan dhāqa l-mamāta wa-mā ʿaṣākī*

3 (A man) who, if you died – but you shall not die (or: do not die!) – would die as well, and if he were forgotten by fate, would mourn you,
4 And who – verily! – if he were to be granted what he wished of the whole world, would wish none but you,
5 And who, if you told him: Die! – and if he were able to die, would taste death and not oppose you.

al-Walīd's avowal in line 3 has a parallel in the dīwān of Jamīl,[26] whereas line 5 presupposes the despotic beloved of early ʿAbbāsid poetry, e.g. ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf's Fawz.[27] However, we cannot overlook a certain reserve in both verses. Jamīl might welcome death if Buthayna died, but al-Walīd is not inclined to die, whatever happens, nor would he willingly embrace death at anybody's command. Consequently, in line 3 he utters the firm conviction that Salmā is not going to die, and in line 5 he inserts a mental reservation: 'If he were able to die.' It could be argued perhaps

24 *Aghānī* 7, 38.

25 Renate Jacobi: Zur Ġazalpoesie des Walīd ibn Yazīd. In: Wolfhart Heinrichs and Gregor Schoeler (eds.): *Festschrift Ewald Wagner zum 65. Geburtstag*. 2 vols. Beirut 1994, vol. 2, 145-61.

26 Cf. *Dīwān Jamīl*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār. 2nd ed. Cairo 1967, 51, 6.

27 Cf. *Dīwān al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf*, ed. ʿĀtika al-Khazrajī. Cairo 1954, No 103, 4-5.

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that al-Walīd deliberately uses the *topos* of the lovers' death in parodist intent. I would reject this for two reasons. In the first place, the notion of the 'despotic beloved' and the lover's submission to her demands had not yet become a convention at the time of al-Walīd. In the second place, as far as I can see, parody is entirely absent from the poet's dīwān. His poetry is sometimes playful and facetious, but he lacks the ironic detachment of the parodist. Finally, I should like to draw attention to the emphatic *ḥaqqan* in line 4. Instead of strengthening the poet's statement, it underlines its incredibility. In the ghazal under discussion, and particularly in the lines quoted, al-Walīd composed verses 'like Jamīl,' or at least attempted to do so, voicing his love for Salmā in the *ʿudhrī* manner. But in this he could not succeed, for *ʿudhrī* love was alien to his tempestuous nature.

However sincerely al-Walīd sought to attain the heights of *ʿudhri* love, future generations of scholars and *literati* were not deceived. al-Walīd and Salmā have never been accepted among the ranks of great lovers in Arabic literary tradition. In the register of famous couples provided by al-Washshā' (d. 325/937) in his *Kitāb al-Muwashshā*,[28] where even the light-hearted ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa and other unlikely lovers are mentioned, al-Walīd and Salmā are omitted, and al-Sarrāj (d. about 500/1106) in his collection of stories about unhappy lovers, *Maṣāriʿ al-ʿushshāq*, only recounts al-Walīd's meeting with the Christian girl referred to above (cf. p. 161f.).[29] At the beginning of this article I suggested political and aesthetic reasons for the neglect of al-Walīd in several sources. A further motive may be added. al-Walīd's ghazal does not fit in with the 'courtly spirit' (*ẓarf*) propagated by al-Washshā', nor is it in keeping with *ʿudhrī* love, although there are traces of both concepts in his verses. Within Arabic literary tradition his position is unique. His poetry is highly individual, subjective and not determined by the erotic code of his time. In expressing his emotions he speaks the truth, but it is always the truth of the moment and nothing else, a fact that makes his verses delightful and sometimes irritating. It explains his success as a poet and also his failure.

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28 Rudolph E. Brünnow (ed.): *Kitāb al-Muwaššā*. Leiden 1886, 54.

29 al-Sarrāj: *Maṣāriʿ al-ʿushshāq*. Beirut 1958, 168.

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Conclusion

Two questions raised at the outset of the analysis remain to be discussed. Both are concerned with al-Walīd's poetry from a diachronic point of view. The first regards his role in Arabic literary history, the influence previous ghazal poets may have had upon him, and his own contribution to the development of ghazal poetry. The second question concerns the reception of his verses. As noted above (cf. p. 145f.), there is a curious discrepancy of judgement on the part of medieval and modern scholars respectively. The attitude of medieval critics towards him has been explained, if only tentatively, in the course of the article. It might assist us in defining the essential quality of al-Walīd's poetry if we are able to understand the underlying reasons for his being valued highly by modern Arabists.

As to the first issue, it will be sufficient to summarize some of the observations made in the course of the investigation. At the time of al-Walīd, *ʿudhrī* love was accepted as a social ideal, a model adopted, if only in theory, by educated circles of Umayyad society. It is doubtful whether Jamīl's chaste, faithful love for Buthayna would have appealed to al-Walīd were it not for his own unfortunate situation. As it is, he accepted the model but was unable to live up to it and to successfully convey it in his verses. Thus, one might call him a *ʿudhrite manqué*, a man who sincerely sought to proclaim *ʿudhrī* love but failed, since it was incompatible with his disposition.

ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa's poetry, on the other hand, could hardly appeal to him conceptually. The two poets were opposites by nature, the gay, flirtatious ʿUmar having nothing in common with a sensual, passionate character like al-Walīd. Regarding form and structure however, ʿUmar was his master and it was his innovative traits he took up and continued, bringing them to their ultimate perfection. al-Walīd's 'musical' ghazal is the consummation of a trend initiated by ʿUmar. The principal elements of the *ḥijāzī* school are all present in his poems, the tight structuring of the texts, the flexible urban language, the frequent use of direct speech and, above all, the form of the narrative ghazal. But al-Walīd did not simply imitate his model. He adapted ʿUmar's techniques to his own requirements, as evidenced in the ghazal about the Christian girl (cf. p. 161f.). The story is told in the manner of the *ḥijāzī* school, but the experience related is unlike events told by ʿUmar. It is focussed on the poet's emotional state.

Although al-Walīd's influence on later poets is outside the scope of this article, I would nevertheless like to offer a few suggestions. I would

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agree with Gabrieli[30] that he paved the way for ʿAbbāsid *muḥdath* poetry. Like Bashshār, he seems to have contributed to both the development of the concept of courtly love as well as to the emergence of an urban poetic language. Furthermore, it is conceivable that he initiated or at least promoted the trend towards love poems with four lines, which culminated in the poetry of Khālid ibn Yazīd in the 9th century.

I propose to treat the second issue raised by analyzing a ghazal that has been appreciated and repeatedly translated by Western Arabists.[31] Evidently there is a common notion among modern scholars that something fundamental about al-Walīd's art can be grasped from it. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, on the other hand, transmitted it with the remark: *min sakhīfi shiʿrih*. 'One of his weak poems.'[32] (No. 74, *ramal majzūʾ*):

1 *khabbarūnī anna Salmā / kharajat yawma l-muṣallā*
2 *fa-idhā ṭayrun malīḥun / fawqa ghuṣnin yatafallā*
3 *qultu man yaʿrifu Salmā / qāla hā thumma taʿallā*
4 *qultu yā ṭayru dnu minnī / qāla hā thumma tadallā*
5 *qultu hal abṣarta Salmā / qāla hā thumma tawallā*
6 *fa-nakā fī l-qalbi kalman / bāṭinan thumma taʿalla*

1 I was told that Salmā had gone out on the day of the Friday prayer.
2 There was a graceful bird idling on a twig.
3 I said: 'Who knows Salmā?' He said.'Hā', leaping higher.
4 I said: 'Please, bird, come nearer to me!' He said:'Hā', swinging to and fro.
5 I said: 'Did you see Salmā?' He said:'Hā', and turned from me,
6 Opening a secret wound in my heart. Then he flew away.

The text manifests most of the formal elements noted in the course of the analysis. The dominant principle is repetition on several linguistic levels. The name Salmā is repeated in every other line, as in the ghazal already quoted (No. 94). Syntactic parallelism is more pronounced than in any of al-Walīd's poems. Lines 1-2 and 6 constitute the frame of the dialogical pattern *qultu/qāla*, which is more strictly observed than in ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa's texts. The ghazal is simple in its wording, devoid of rhetorical

30 Gabrieli went so far as to call al-Walīd *'padre e maestro'* of the *muḥdathūn*. Gabrieli[1], 33.

31 To give only a few references: Gabrieli[1], 32; Blachère: Le prince Umayyade, 395; Hamilton: *Walīd and his friends*, 169; Jacobi: Die arabische Qaṣide. In: Wolfhart Heinrichs (ed.): *Orientalisches Mittelalter*. Wiesbaden 1990, 216-41, here 224.

32 *Aghānī* 7, 36.

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brilliance. There is no metaphor or sophisticated idea to be admired, nor is the message in any way remarkable. A lover is thrown into despondence by the temporary absence of his beloved and in vain seeks consolation. He starts an imaginary conversation with a bird, a sujet extraneous to the inventory of Arabic love poetry. Thus we can easily understand why Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī and other ʿAbbāsid scholars failed to appreciate the poem.

Modern experts on Arabic poetry tend to differ. After quoting the ghazal, Gabrieli speaks of the '*leggerezza saltellante di questi piccoli lieder*' in the poet's favourite metres.[33] It is a levity prepared by ʿUmar's ghazal but never attained. The same applies to the structural unity of the text, a trait valued highly in modern aesthetics, but rarely remarked upon by medieval critics. The fundamental difference of judgement concerns another point however. In his ghazal al-Walīd projects his melancholy mood onto the external world and receives an echo enhancing his distress. Except for the closing line, nothing is said explicitly; it has to be deduced from the poet's pointless questions. For a fleeting moment, reality is imbued with the poet's emotions; something elusive and transitory is caught and given permanence by the text. Medieval Arabic poetics did not reflect upon a phenomenon such as this. To recognize it at all presupposes a modern attitude.

The ghazal is a lyrical poem in the Romantic understanding of the term, something rarely encountered in classical Arabic literature. The merging of inside and outside, the ambivalence of melancholy and playfulness, is the essence of its charm, and the essential quality of al-Walīd's best verses. To my mind, it is his most revealing poem, showing the poet, about whom not much good has been said, as he was, pathetic and vulnerable, and well aware of both. With his usual perceptiveness Gabrieli calls al-Walīd a 'modern' poet at the end of his essay,[34] not in the meaning of *muḥdath,* but in the contemporary understanding of the term. But we must be careful in interpreting such a term today, for the history of reception has in the meantime reached a different stage. Gabrieli wrote his essay in the thirties. To him 'modern' meantS the 19th and early 20th century. In our time, no doubt, al-Walīd, like Eichendorff, Wordsworth and other Romantics, is certainly out of date.

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33 Gabrieli[1], 32.

34 *Ibid.* 33.

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LOVE AND GOD

The Influence of Ghazal on Mystic Poetry

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There are obvious parallels between mysticism and love. Like love, mysticism seems to be a universal phenomenon when it is described as the longing for unity with a higher being. This longing does not necessarily need a theistic or monotheistic background.[1] Both describe a phenomenon of relationship and both phenomena are defined quite vaguely, thus granting anyone writing or talking about it a wide conceptual scope.

There are different trends in Arab love poetry and these all express varying forms of relationship to the beloved: the love may be fulfilled or not; the beloved may be seen as unreachable or like a shining light or a human just like the lover with the same feelings; there may have already been a loving union or not; or it is clear that precisely this loving union would end the pure love described; and thus it is possible that love itself is praised or the beloved or the lover. All these possibilities are to be found in the different trends of love poetry, more so in one, less in another. Such different trends in mysticism soon became the respective expressions of different parties. The issue here was the definition of love itself. Some mystics defined love solely as obedience, while others expressed their absolute love for God, and another group thought love to be the last veil and barrier between lover and beloved and therefore prayed union, not love.

In mysticism the different trends excluded one another earlier because theologians were quick to explain the consequences generated by the different aspects of love. But in secular love poetry there were models for expressing these differences, even if the poets, unlike the mystics, did not question the relationship between fulfilled union and love. There were tendencies, for example in the so-called *ʿudhrī* poetry, to see only the absolute union as fulfilled love, a union attained in the lover's soul and not in reality, where the beloved remains unattainable because of social circumstances. For the mystic, this was a model for expressing the oneness of their soul with God.

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[1] Peter Gerlitz: Mystik I: Religionsgeschichtlich. In: *TRE: Theologische Realenzyklopädie* XXIII 1994, 543-547, 535.

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As God is not perceivable through our given senses, it was the form of love neglecting the sensorial world in particular which exerted a great impact on mystic poetry. But because many mystics stressed the passionate aspect of their love, for which they were strongly criticised, they also took up themes from sensual love.

I first want to show the topics which emerged in secular love poetry. I will then analyze the adoption of these motifs in mystic poetry. In the last section I intend to portray the Sufis' view of the relationship between profane and holy love. Why is it possible for them to take up erotic poetry?

The development of love poetry until the 10th century

Arab poetics distinguishes between a single topic poem, the *qiṭʿa*, and the polythematic qaṣīda. No independent love poem from the pre-Islamic period has survived. In poetry this topic was dealt with only in the amatory prelude of the qaṣīda, called nasīb by modern Orientalists. The independent love poem is called ghazal. We can conclude from the common scheme used in the qaṣīdas that the poets known to us used an existing tradition.

Different *topoi* were used for the introduction. They all deal with a past relationship. The poet discovers a deserted campsite and recognizes it as the place where he once had a love affair. Or one morning he discovers that the beloved's tribe is about to depart. Sometimes the poet is in the desert with companions and at night he alone perceives a vision of his beloved.[2] Corresponding to the Bedouin *murūwa* (virtue) and accepting the advice of his friends, he leaves behind this pessimistic mood. He compensates the loss by turning his attention to his camel or to memories of his glorious past. The qaṣīda ends with self-praise, panegyric, mockery or the like.

So, only past relationships are described in the pre-Islamic qaṣīda. Due to the great distance it is impossible to restore the relationship.[3] In leaving his lovesickness behind the poet remembers the task he has to fulfil for his community. To remain in his melancholy mood would be to act not only irrationally but also anti-socially, and so he has to forget the joy he felt with the beloved who is now gone.[4]

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2 Renate Jacobi: Nasīb. In: *EI*^{2}: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*^{2} VII, 978-983, 979.

3 Ilse Lichtenstädter: Das Nasib in der altarabischen Qaṣīde. In: *Islamica* 5 (1932), 17-96, 27.

4 Thomas Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts.* Wiesbaden 1998.

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Only in the early Islamic nasīb were those existing love affairs described which the poet wished to maintain. Hence, the idea of fidelity was introduced into love poetry. This went hand in hand with the separation of the individual from the community of the tribe and so established a process of individualization. The beloved now became an active person with an individual character who gave the hero more than the passing joys of sexual pleasure.[5]

In the second part of the 7th century, independent love poetry, the ghazal, emerged. While the ghazal did not replace the nasīb, it certainly influenced its development. Urban society arose in the Umayyad period. Literary forms and traditional topics were preserved; but significantly different values emerged and co-existed with traditional Bedouin virtue. Pre-Islamic loyalty of the individual to the collective of the tribe was now joined by the loyalty to Islam and to the military leaders under whom the Arabs conquered neighbouring countries without destroying the clans and tribes as entities.[6] The person gained individuality and self-consciousness. No longer solely interested in describing his surroundings, the poet turned inward towards his inner self and his feelings towards others. The naive and objective view of the outer world was replaced by an insight into the artist's very own subjectivity, a shift which in turn influenced his view of the outer world.

In the 9th century the poet increasingly used metaphors in rendering the outer world of the nasīb and so internalised it. The heart of the poet became a campsite where the trace of love is yet to be effaced.[7] Only now did the qaṣīda assume the "courtly" form Ibn Qutayba describes. The nasīb was followed by the strenuous camel ride and the panegyric. In the pre-Islamic nasīb the contrast between the melancholic remembrance of a past love and the subsequent heroic description of the poet as a younger man showed the stoic calmness of the poet-hero. Now, however, the contrast between the nasīb and the panegyric gained a universal dimension: the transitory nature of love is set against the eternal order represented by the praised one and the loss of the beloved is compensated by the grace of the caliph.[8]

In the Bedouin environment the love portrayed in the ghazal tended to remain unfulfilled. The ʿUdhra tribe in particular became famous for this

5 Jacobi: *Nasīb*, 981.

6 Bauer: *Liebe*, 40f.

7 Jacobi: *Nasīb*, 982a.

8 *Ibid.*, 982b.

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"chaste" love poetry and it is after them that this poetry is called *ʿudhrī*. The poetry dealing with love finding fulfilment is called *ḥijāzī* as this was more prominent in the urban environment of the Ḥijāz.

While *ʿudhrī* poetry took up the elegiac mood of the nasīb, the unreachable beloved was not banned from the poet's mind. The beloved had to be inaccessible for the lover for an experience of true love to develop. The beloved was simply irreplaceable and the poet now found no solace with another lover or with his camel. He experienced an eternal love that was as powerful as fate. The faithfulness of the loving poet led to sickness and madness. He accepted death as a possible solution. His acceptance of the beloved was so unconditional that he even longed to disappear or dissolve. The wish for total union led the lover to prefer the "other I" to his own self.[9]

At the end of the Umayyad period the so-called courtly love poetry developed. This form of poetry has several *topoi* in common with the *ʿudhrī* ghazal: the unreachable, distant beloved; the lover's submissiveness to her; and his sickness due to the beloved being inaccessible.[10]

Thomas Bauer has described this form of love poetry as the outcome of the "ideology of servile love." According to Bauer, poets like al-ʿAbbās Ibn al-Aḥnaf (d. 804/9) described a normative conception of love. This conception worked as a demarcation from those who are not (capable of) loving (really). Ibn al-Aḥnaf was referring to "the lovers," later known as "the refined," a group defined by an ideology of love shared by all group members.[11] This ideology of love followed the pattern set by the *ʿudhrī* love. In the courtly ghazal the unfulfilled love became a sign of identification. Stylizing himself as a real lover became more important for the poet than the panegyric for the unreachable beloved.

Individuality and subjectivity of the poet

Love to a single person has an anti-social tendency. The love one experiences is not conveyable to another person. Exchanges about the positive or negative aspects of a third person may be communicable, but this rational discourse certainly cannot provide the feeling called love with a basis. Love houses a secret in the lover, one we are hardly capable of expressing.

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9 Bauer: *Liebe*, 47 f.

10 Ewald Wagner: *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung*, 2 vols. Darmstadt 1987/8, 79.

11 Bauer: *Liebe*, 59.

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This is why love remains an irrational remnant in a society in which social bonds are regulated. The beloved may resist social norms by confining himself to absolute emotionality. In pre-Islamic Arab society, those wanting to be faithful to a distant and unreachable lover were acting against the Bedouin virtue of serving the collective. A short-lived affair with a woman however, lasting say for the duration of a spring camp, did not contradict Bedouin virtue in any way. On the contrary, the many affairs mentioned in the self-praise honoured the poet. The Arabs of the Jāhilīya simply knew nothing like a bond between two persons demanding permanence and which for them would have threatened to destroy other social relationships. Completely alien to them was the attitude, for us today and even already for the Arabs of the 9th century, constitutive for "love": the will for union and the wish to become involved with another person. Such an attitude requires as its foundation a strong sense of individuality and subjectivity. Both were not given in pre-Islamic poetry. The single person perceived himself as a part of the whole, as a responsible member of the community. There was no drive to stylize the self or others as original individuals.

But a conflict is already discernible in the nasīb. Here a crisis of the poet was described, a crisis resulting from his double loyalty towards his own feelings, the longing for lost pleasures, and towards the expectations of others, represented by the poet's companions, who urged him to forget the beloved. True, the poet decided against his melancholia, but the possibility of deviating from the social norm was certainly at hand.

Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī (d. 649) already expressed the wish to love a woman forever.[12] For him, the collective tribal ethics had become questionable. Even if he decided to uphold generally accepted reason (*ḥilm*) and thus forget the beloved, it remains doubtful whether this decision was of any benefit for the poet. Furthermore, it is not even clear whether whoever is judging the lover's actions is himself not in a state of folly (*jahl*).[13] The unequivocal nature of the pre-Islamic poetry has been lost. The objective norm has come into conflict with the subjectivity of the individual.

The generations following Abū Dhu'ayb were even more emphatic in their refusal to adhere to the old tribal ethics. In a poem ascribed to Abū Dhu'ayb but probably composed at the end of the 7th century by Sulaymān Ibn Abī Dubākil, the traditional norm of behaviour was given up in favour of a personal decision. The poet's subjectivity now ousts the objective

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12 Renate Jacobi: Die Anfänge der arabischen Ġazalpoesie: Abū Ḏu'aib al-Huḏalī. In: *Der Islam* 61 (1984) 218-250, 248.

13 *Ibid.*, 240 f.

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representation of reality in classical qaṣīda poetry. To the poet, a land, even if it is fertile, seems "waste and dried up" when his beloved is not there. The poet would even love an enemy, if this enemy loved his beloved.[14] No objective world view and no standard of reason (*ḥilm*) are given anymore. The poet's passion makes him see the world as no one else does.

In the age of Abū Dhu'ayb, this loss of the conception defining the individual as part of a fixed system was still experienced as a deficiency. This also explains the pessimistic mood and the insecurity expressed in his poetry. This pessimism is then taken over in *ʿudhrī* poetry, a poetry stemming from a Bedouin milieu, in which the pre-Islamic tribal ethics still had a strong influence. This poetry emphasizes the anti-social and self-destructive aspect of love.[15] The poet becomes a pariah. Kuthayyir wants himself and his beloved ʿAzza to be two camels with scabies, so that no one would be interested in them.[16] In the story of Majnūn and Laylā the lover becomes mad and ends up playing with stones in the desert and making friends with those animals similar to his beloved.[17]

With the so-called courtly love poetry, the sentiment of the suffering lover now becomes communicable in certain sections of society. al-ʿAbbās, the court poet of Hārūn al-Rashīd, expressed the anti-social aspect of love in his poetry. Unlike Majnūn, he was not living as an outsider in the desert. Rather than flee, he sought to provoke society. He made sure that his life style clearly distinguished him from the mediocre mass, making him a member of a certain group, the "lovers." Love itself, and therefore the lover, have become more important than the beloved.

The poet experiences the union with the beloved – unattainable in reality – in his inner self: "God mixed her spirit with my spirit, so they both became one in my body," says al-ʿAbbās. This line has several parallels in the dīwān of al-Ḥallāj.[18]

Unlike the *ʿudhrī* and the courtly love poetry, the *ḥijāzī* ghazal did not adopt the elegiac mood of the nasīb, recalling instead the description of the poet's adventures in the self-praise of the pre-Islamic qaṣīda poetry.[19]

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14 *Ibid.*, 241 f.

15 Renate Jacobi: ʿUdhrī. In: *EI*^{2} 10: 774-776, 775b.

16 Wagner: *Grundzüge* II, 77.

17 I. J. Kračkovskij: Die Frühgeschichte der Erzählung von Macnūn und Lailā in der arabischen Literatur. Übers. v. Hellmut Ritter. In: *Oriens* 8 (1955), 1-50, 28.

18 Renate Jacobi: Abbasidische Dichtung (8-13. Jahrhundert). In: *GAP: Grundriß der arabischen Philologie* II, Literaturwissenschaft. Wiesbaden 1987, 41-62, 47. See below p. 23.

19 Wagner: *Grundzüge* II, 60.

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The urban *ḥijāzī* poetry partly adopted the form of the nasīb. But, as when ʿUmar Ibn Abī Rabīʿa uses a traditional motif such as the mourning at the traces left behind, the poem could now be ended with a remark by his beloved the poet remembers: "Yes, here comes the man we love, he hasn't neglected us."[20] Here it is not the poet who praises himself, as in the pre-Islamic qaṣīda, but the beloved, and the praise enters the elegiac mood of the nasīb and lends irony to the melancholy of the remembrance. This gives the poetry a light-hearted turn and creates a joyful atmosphere. And it is not only the poet who loves; he is faced with a likewise loving woman. Formally, the poetry reflects this equality between the lovers by the frequent use of dialogue.

The poet attributes individuality not only to himself but also to his beloved. No longer confronted with an unreachable being shining like light, his subjectivity is now limited as he faces a very real person different in essence than the sole thoughts of the poet.

The type of love

In the Christian context there exists a differentiation between *eros* and *agape* and in Islamic theories of love between *ḥubb* and *hawā*, respectively *ʿishq*. In both the Christian and the Islamic spheres this represents the effort to remove a certain aspect of love from human eroticism and to describe it as non-sensual.

In Islamic poetry the different words are used as synonyms. Only in the theory of love is the love called *ʿishq*, which requires a similarity (*mushākala*) between the souls of the lovers and like *hawā* is described as passionate, set apart from *ḥubb*, the love for God, God's love, the love for the child, for the parents, etc.[21]

The *ḥanbalī* theorists of love opposing passionate love tried to develop a corresponding "love ethics" in the Islamic area. Muḥammad Ibn Zakarīya al-Rāzī condemned passionate love because the passionate lover loses all self-control and becomes animal-like. al-Kharāʾiṭī viewed *hawā* as a "devilish desire" keeping man away from love and obedience against God. Once addicted to sensual and passionate love, there is no salvation and this love must be avoided, following the prophetic tradition, by lowering one's

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20 Jacobi: Theme and variation in Ummayad *ghazal* poetry. In: *JAL: Journal of Arabic Literature* 23 (1993), 109-119, 118.

21 Susanne Enderwitz: *Liebe als Beruf: al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf und das ghazal.* Beirut 1995 (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 55), 172, note 232.

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eyes. He recommended moderate love (*ḥubb*).[22] It becomes clear though that a certain type of love is condemned in the theoretical works, one which is erotic, sensual and passionate. The critics stressed the irrational aspect of passionate love, something the poets and other theorists did not deny. Especially the irrationalism of love expressed in the lover's poems fascinated these "advocates of passion."

For their central theme the *ʿudhrī* and courtly poets did not select fulfilled love but their suffering from unfulfilled passion. According to Khālid Ibn Yazīd (d. 876 or 883), the lack of *ṣabr* is the distinctive feature of the lover. Even if treated badly, the lover cannot renounce the beloved. al-Waʾwāʾ declared that he wanted to be the ransom "for one, where I can rather bear him treating me bad than leaving me"[23] and thus defined the terms of love common to all love poets. In *ḥijāzī* love poetry as well, the lover does not make his love conditional on the good behaviour of his beloved. A woman whom one would rather do without than bearing her bad treatment is any case not a true love. This is why the only *ṣabr* the theorist Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyya can attribute to the lover is the "*ṣabr ʿala ṭāʿatihī*" – the bearing the obedience to the beloved.[24] But in love poetry this "virtue" appears quite irrational. The lover cannot help but being obedient to the (cruel) beloved. The "bearing the obedience to the beloved" indicates only the absolute lack of *ṣabr*. "True love" is irrational and the poet declares that he will remain faithful even if this is detrimental; his faithfulness is demonstrated by bearing this suffering.

Love enters the heart through the senses. To avoid passionate love the Ḥanbalites advised a lowering of the eyes. Hence the passion described in love poetry is originally a sensual one. In courtly and *ʿudhrī* poetry it is the fateful first meeting that forces the lovers to realize their destiny: that they belong together. The eyes of the beloved also have an intoxicating and enchanting effect on the lover, these may even fire at him, either hurting the lover or leaving him love sick.[25] This sensual experience becomes subjective in the ghazal, more so in the *ʿudhrī* as in the *ḥijāzī* poetry. ʿUmar Ibn Abī Rābīʿa has his beloved ask other women if she really is as beautiful as ʿUmar has described her and these answer laughing: "Every loving eye considers the one it loves to be beautiful."[26] But only in the *ʿudhrī* ghazal

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22 Lois Giffen: Love Poetry and Love Theory in Medieval Arabic Literature. In: G. E. von Grunebaum (ed.): *Arabic Poetry: Theory and development*. Wiesbaden 1973, 120f.

23 Bauer: *Liebe*, 394.

24 *Ibid.*, 390ff.

25 *Ibid.*, 280ff.

26 Wagner: *Grundzüge* II, 63.

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does the "inner eye" of the lover become more powerful than the sensually perceptible reality. ʿUmar is aware that he perceives his beloved unlike a third person, but this is though still with his own eyes. To the *ʿudhrī* and courtly poet however the beloved is far away, even though his heart is filled with her. "You fill my heart so much that I can't see you anymore," says al-ʿAbbās to his beloved. In one poem he stages an argument between the heart and eye about which of them is to blame for love.[27] Abū Nuwās also has the heart blame the eye for burdening it with the passion of love.[28] This is the process through which love is de-sensualized. The ideal of a beauty perceivable to all loses its importance, whereas the sentiment of the lover and the image of his beloved he carries in his heart gains in importance and soon surpasses the sensual beloved in becoming real.

The maladies of love and the dissolution of the individual

Love is experienced in *ʿudhrī* and courtly poetry as a fate that brings forth illness. Unsuccessfully the lover seeks union with the beloved. But in later ʿAbbāsid poetry as well, the lover suffers from love, not because his yearning for union stays unfulfilled but due to the phenomenon of love itself. The lover realizes that there is some deficiency in his being precisely in the moment that he perceives the beauty and goodness of the beloved person. The yearned for unification is to compensate for this lack.[29] But the yearning for union is a conflicting experience, for the lover knows that the fulfilment of his wish will lead to his own self-sacrifice. The lover needs the beloved and he suffers because of her – she is at once the illness and the remedy.[30]

The mental and physically symptoms of the lover are described as consequences of his passion. From the pre-Islamic up to the Umayyad period outer circumstances preventing a relationship were the cause for this suffering. Already in Umayyad times relationships were described in which the lovers no longer personified figures but were in fact depicted as individual personalities. Hence, the reason for not achieving a union could now be located in a decision made by one of the lovers. The capricious and coquettish beloved now joined the outer circumstances as a cause for the lover's suffering.[31] In pre-Islamic poems the will of the beloved was already

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27 Jacobi: *Abbasidische Dichtung*, 47.

28 Bauer: *Liebe*, 345.

29 M. Arkoun: ʿIshk. In: *EI*^{2} IV. 1978, 118-119.

30 Bauer: *Liebe*, 348f. and Enderwitz: *Liebe*, 175.

31 Bauer: *Liebe*, 343f.

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made responsible for separation, without however grounds for accusation appearing in the text. Through the love of the poet alone the beloved wins dangerous power, regardless of their behaviour.

The mania of Majnūn manifests itself because the beloved is unattainable. But the anecdotes about their first encounter already show them to be totally absorbed in their feelings: Majnūn's family sends him to Laylā's family for fire. Fully absorbed, they talk until the fire wood is almost out, forcing Majnūn to take off pieces of his clothing to keep the fire burning, leaving him standing nearly naked before Laylā. So, the lover is "burnt" already upon the first meeting with Laylā. The insanity shows through in the breaking of social norms. Madness is the consequence of the separation from the beloved, but it cannot come to this without the lover's mania, already indicated at the first encounter by his rapt absorption.

The lover's secret

For the listeners of the pre-Islamic qaṣīda it was probably of no consequence if the name given the beloved in the poem was the real name of a poet's beloved or not. Contrary to the Umayyad period, the poet-hero in the qaṣīda represented a role. Conventions forced the poet to remember the parting from the beloved in the nasīb. Yet the relationship to her was as unimportant as the beloved herself. Only in the Umayyad ghazal was an existing relationship with a woman, portrayed with her own features and who really appears in person, described. Poets started to describe a possible love, focusing on a concrete person. Tensions thus emerged between the lovers' private spheres, for these spheres had to be protected from the other's inquisitiveness and the poem had to maintain its public character. From Umayyad times it seemed improper and even dangerous to name the beloved by her real name. Naming was seen as an exposure because the poet described his sexual affair with another man's woman, so even if he were to clearly admit and name his fantasies as being fictions the one cuckolded in the poem was nevertheless ridiculed.

In the real *ḥijāzī* poetry the lover, according to his own statement, wishes to keep the name of his beloved a secret in his own interest; on the other hand however, as he also wishes to tell of his love, he reveals something about her. In a poem by Abū Nuwās the name-enigma is presented as a *topos*, revealing the name quite clearly in a secret: "A *jīm*, for which I found two *nūns*, between them an *'alif*, if one spells her name."[32] Janān is not

32 Bauer: *Liebe*, 467.

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difficult to decipher, as the poet himself declares in the following line. Here the poet is not concerned with keeping the name of the beloved secret but rather wants to allude to the poetic dilemma he faces: the wish to make the love known and the inhibitions on publishing a private world.

This dilemma is preceded by the unsuccessful attempt to keep the love a secret. The lover is incapable of holding back his tears and his gaze reveals to all his condition. The lover follows an inner compulsion to reveal his secret. al-Tallaʿfarī explains his compulsive divulgence of his love secret as coming from the illness plaguing his heart.[33] The wish to disclose is the distinguishing mark of the lover; but to protect his love he is sworn to secrecy. In this compulsive divulgence the urban poets joined up with Majnūn, whose lack of restraint in his love-madness made the fulfilment of his longing impossible.

al-ʿAbbās disapproves of every lover who is cautious. Only when the secret cannot be kept, the "young man is defeated."[34] al-ʿAbbās defines love as "revelation and secret." The lover personifies discretion. He names his beloved but it is not her real name; he describes her but with false attributes. It seems possible that everything al-ʿAbbās says about his beloved Fawz does not correspond to any real person. When all may be deception, the question arises if one can assume a reality of the beloved at all.[35] But like Abū Nuwās in the verse cited above, al-ʿAbbās seems to be interested in "love" and its implications of secret and revelation, less in the beloved herself.

Discretion is the theme of fulfilled love, for there exists only here an intimacy which has to be preserved and which remains untouched in the poems. If it is dealt with, then it is generally used to ridicule someone else. But normally a veil is drawn over the union: "Then happened what happened, which I shall never tell. So think the best of it and do not ask!" says Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 908) after describing a love affair with a young monk.[36] This verse found its way into mystical literature through al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111), who is later even mentioned as the author.[37]

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33 *Ibid.*, 388.

34 Enderwitz: *Liebe*, 220.

35 Susanne Enderwitz: Wer ist Fauz? Zur Realität der Geliebten im arabischen Ġazal. In: Frederick de Jong (Ed.): *Verse and the Fair Sex.* Utrecht 1993, p. 56-65, 59ff.

36 Renate Jacobi: Ibn al-Muʿtazz: Dair ʿabdūn: A structural Analysis. In: *JAL* 6 (1975), 35-56, 39.

37 Ibid., 52, footnote 29.

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Love in mystical poetry

As I mentioned in the preceding section, passionate love poetry stresses the irrationality of love as well as the pain and the secret of the lovers. Mystical poetry can be described as love poetry, the object of the love being God.

In the following section I shall examine and compare the themes common to both trends of poetry. First I will describe the relationship between mystical poetry and religious prophecy. Then I will deal with the question as to which functions the conventions of love poetry assume in mystical poetry.

Poetry and revelation

It is repeatedly pointed out in the Qur'ān that what was taught to Muḥammad and what he preached is not poetry (Sūras 36,69; 69,40f; 21,5; 52,30; 37,36). Interestingly enough, his adversaries accuse him in the Qur'ān of being obsessed (81,22), a soothsayer (52,29; 69,42), or a mere poet. This is interesting because as a man in contact with a higher form of knowledge and whose words were meant to be powerful, the poet commonly enjoys respect. But although Muḥammad used the *saj'* – the so-called rhyme-prose of the soothsayers – for his preaching, forming it to suit his own requirements, and sometimes even used expressions similar to those of the poets, he refused to be identified with them. He accused them of "that they say what they practise not" (26,226)[38], and of letting their followers stray into evil (26,224).

Muḥammad was not obsessed and no *jinn* inspired him. But he was the messenger sent by God, who preaches "one" truth. Even if Muḥammad was in the first instance addressing the Arabs, he nevertheless laid claim to proclaiming the universal word of God that had already been perceived by others before him. He sought not to elevate himself onto a sphere unattainable to others; rather he functioned as a vessel receiving the absolute truth of God and thereby stayed a man like any other.[39] Implicitly this conception is opposed to that of the pre-Islamic idea of the poet as a man receiving something unknown from a *jinn* or a *shayṭān*, for all knowledge and insight comes from God and this is revealed to the Arabs by Muḥammad.

This is how poetry was "de-sacralized":[40] no longer able to claim supernatural inspiration, in the religious sphere it could only serve to confirm the message received by Muḥammad.

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38 Citations from *The Holy Qur-ān. English Translation of the meanings and commentary.* al-Madina al-Munawarah 1410h.

39 G. E. von Grunebaum: *Der Islam im Mittelalter.* Zürich 1963, 119ff.

40 As'ad E. Khairallah: *Love, Madness and Poetry: An Interpretation of the Maǧnūn Legend.* Wiesbaden 1980.

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Already prior to Islam, poetry no longer possessed solely a magical function but in part also an artistic one. In qaṣīda poetry the message of the poet was known beforehand, so the artistic originality became important and not the truth revealed.[41] But with the monotheistic claim of Islam for an absolute truth, the poets following Muḥammad were excluded from every possible source of revelation that could contradict his message. In early Islam this was not directed against religious poetry, which developed with few exceptions only in the early ʿAbbāsid period.[42] Until then, the criticism made by religious Muslims was directed at the poetic expression contradicting Islamic moral values. But with the rise of mystical poetry the problem arose anew and became more fundamental. On the one hand, the Sufis could rely on the Qurʾān verse 26, 224-227: "And the Poets – it is those straying in evil [...] and they say what they practice not. Except those who believe, work righteousness, engaged much in the remembrance of Allah...," i.e. exclude those as believers of God from the verdict, just like the "court poet" of Muḥammad, Ḥassān Ibn Thābit; on the other hand, the fact that a poetry relying on a revelation by God different to that of the revelation to Muḥammad – the seal of the prophets – merely existed, put the Sufis in a latent contradiction to the Qurʾān's claim of exclusivity.
The question at issue is what Sufi poetry claimed to be.

The Islamic mystic has a personal experience of God, one that distinguishes him from other believers. In the *unio mystica* he perceives the union with God visually and ecstatically. According to the Sufis, this experience was in accordance with the Qurʾān Sūra 5, 59 (54). "He will love and they will love him" was for them the proof of their idea of mutual love between God and man. The Sufis see this love as a passionate longing for unity from both sides. And as ultimately God is all in one anyway, a confrontation between God and mankind and between this and another world is alien to the mystic. In the core of his soul, man is in union with God. Godly grace is required to perceive this hidden unity. The vision of unity leaves every dogmatic definition of God behind. The mystic necessarily perceives any such definition as a veil between man and God.[43]

I would like to stress three points in which the mystic opposes other trends in Islam. Firstly, he understands love not as obedience towards God but presupposes the possibility of a personally perceivable relationship to

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41 Wagner: *Grundzüge* I, 33; Khairallah: *Majnūn*, 34.

42 Wagner: *Grundzüge* II, 8, 62.

43 Hartmut Rosenau: Mystik III: Systematisch: Theologisch. In: *TRE* XXIII. 1994, 581-589, 583.

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God. This personal relationship is not grounded in theological definitions held by other Muslims; rather it opposes these as objectifying definitions of a non-objectifiable reality. Thus secondly, the mystic actually seems to find entry to God without being dependent on God's revelation to Muḥammad. Figuratively speaking, mysticism takes every single human as being inside the sphere of God, but a special relationship to God is attributed only to those who realise this fact. Hence thirdly, in this respect mysticism is elitist and the common distance to God held by all in the Muslim community is no longer given. As there exists no analogy to the mystic's experience of God, so too is there no suitable vocabulary for expressing this experience. As in love poetry, communicating the experience is a problem, for the reader has only the choice of either believing in the possibility of such an experience or rejecting it, independent from the evidence given by the mystic.

Paradoxically, by emphasising God's unity and denying all existence outside of God, the pre-Islamic idea of the inspired poet once again became conceivable.[44] Like the pre-Islamic poet, the mystic experiences a supra-sensory reality.

One can say that the irrational, passionate and personal aspect of faith is stressed in mystic poetry, while Islamic theology wants to make faith communicable and is therefore exoteric, universal and dogmatic.[45]

To express their experience the mystic poets found a model in love poetry. There they found the irrational trend, the passion and non-conveyable nature of the mystic experience. As the lover may *in extremis* alienate himself from society, so too the eremitic mystic can distance himself from his religious community, which perceives him, at best, as a "holy fool" or executes him as a heretic.

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44 Khairallah: *Majnūn*, 48.

45 In Christian theology Martin Luther differentiates between the "claritas interna" and "claritas externa" of the scripture: the inner claritas is not attainable by anyone, but is given by the Holy Ghost. The outer claritas is perceivable by anyone reading the scripture. Luther does not give any explanation as to *how* the inner claritas is perceived by the believer: "Who has it, has it," nothing else has to be said about it, nor is it possible. So the inner claritas is not communicable, unlike the outer claritas which is the claritas of the scripture preached in church and mission (Bernhard Rothen: *Die Klarheit der Schrift. Bd. 1: Martin Luther: Die wiederentdeckten Grundlagen.* Göttingen 1990, 83ff.). Thus the expression "irrational" is meant to designate the experience of faith in mysticism as not being accessible to ratio in the first place; and not as being in dissonance with any ratio.

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The secret of mysticism

The problem facing the mystic who wants to express his experience with God is that the vocabulary at his disposal applies exclusively to the sensory world. It is thus inevitable that his words can never express the actual lived experience, as the mystics say, "words stay on the coast."[46] He cannot expect his audience to comprehend his experience existentially; on the contrary, he has to fear that his own attempt to give expression to his experience may result in an inappropriate objectification of his relationship to God. Some Sufis therefore use paradoxes to express the fact that words are incapable of grasping this reality. Nevertheless, if they wish to be comprehensible for their audience, they must remain in the conceptual range of the material world they share with their audience. Silence could also be an option and, indeed, some mystics hold the opinion that it is necessary to withhold the secret of the *unio mystica*, in the end not communicable, from the public outside the esoteric circle.

The later mystic al-Ghazzālī used a verse from Ibn al-Muʿtazz to convey how the loving union simply defies expression: "Then happened what happened, which I shall never tell. So think the best of it and do not ask."[47] This is how Ibn al-Muʿtazz ended the scene of sexual union with a young monk. With this expression al-Ghazzālī turned against naming the nearness of God. An example for this seems to be al-Ḥallāj saying, "*Anā l-ḥaqq*," "I am the truth," that is, I am God.

Argument exists in the Sufi community about the nature of love between God and man. al-Ḥallāj and his apologists understood this love as a passionate one, a love that makes it impossible for the lover to keep his love secret. Paradoxically, it was al-Ḥallāj who followed an esoteric mysticism by openly speaking about his ecstatic identity with God, whereas later al-Ghazzālī mediated between orthodoxy and Sufism and opened up mysticism for the whole Islamic community.[48] This was also possible due to the fact that the saying from al-Ḥallāj may also be understood as how the

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46 Annemarie Schimmel: *Mystische Dimensionen des Islam: Die Geschichte des Sufismus*. Frankfurt a. M. 1995, 21.

47 Jacobi: *Ibn al-Muʿtazz*, 39.

48 Here again it is Luther's differentiation between inner and outer claritas which may explain this paradox: one can say that al-Ghazzali accepts the difference between an aspect of faith which is not communicable and one that is. He learns about this inner sphere through experience, his "personal miʿraj"(Schimmel: *Dimensionen*, 42). This makes him a mystic, but he also knows of the necessity to preach not the inner but the outer claritas, even if the distinction is not as clear as described here.

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revelation of God is indiscernible to man. As God is the only really existing being, he is the only one able to perceive himself and therefore truly reveal his existence. Thus, by saying "I am the truth" Majnūn declared himself to be non-existent and revealed the existence of God as if God talks through Majnūn's tongue.[49]

Just like the lover, the mystic is aware that there will be those who reproach him for his excessiveness.[50] As both experience something that exceeds the bounds of common sense, they have to confront the ignorance of others. To other Muslims the mystic seems to be a heretic because he needs no mediating instance to assure himself of God's healing presence and on this basis comes to his own expressions of faith. Actually, everything is revelation and perception of this is granted to the mystic. But for the reader the question naturally arises as to the content of what is depicted. Like al-ʿAbbās, the mystics talk about the secret character of their poetry. Just like the lover, they refuse to name their beloved and talk about the "*fulān*," the "what's-his-name." "People know for certain that I am in love, but they do not know whom I love," declares Shiblī,[51] citing al-ʿAbbās: "With me they associated love, whenever there was talk about me, but they didn't know who it is I love."[52] Also the decipherable name-enigma occurs in mystical poetry. al-ʿAbbās openly declares the secret character of the object of his love: Fawz is not her real name, the features described to her in the poems are fictitious. He declares that he does not want to expose his beloved. But the mystic keeps his secret for another reason: by not naming his beloved he is refusing to objectify and so dogmatise his incomprehensible experience with God. The saying also becomes a polemical weapon against the "orthodox" who believe to know all too well who the mystic loves. They reprove him for a nearness to God that seems unacceptable. Thus the relationship between secrecy and revelation becomes also a problem of dogmatism. The mystic quoting al-ʿAbbās is not only expressing his inability to keep the secret but also the truth that only by loving God, and this means rejecting oneself, can God be perceived.

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49 Richard Gramlich: *Der eine Gott: Grundzüge der Mystik des islamischen Monotheismus.* Wiesbaden 1998, 352f.

50 Martin Lings: Mystical Poetry. In: J. Ashtiany (ed.): *Abbasid Belle-Lettres.* Cambridge 1990, 235-264, 245.

51 Annemarie Schimmel: *As through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam.* New York 1982, 27f.

52 Enderwitz: *Wer ist Fauz?*, 64.

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But al-ʿAbbās also sought more than just protecting his beloved. For this, silence would have sufficed. He strove to make the secret of love and its paradoxical character of concealment and revelation a theme of his poetry. Neither in courtly love poetry is it only discretion, nor in mystical poetry is it the *theologumena* of God's unknown name which compels the poet to keep the secret. The secret is not only the barrier to language but the centre of the message. It is, so to speak, a holy space and nothing profane should enter it.

Poetry is the appropriate medium for simultaneously revealing and keeping the secret of love. The world and the earthly love described in mystical poetry is a symbol for God and the love felt for him, the totally Other, whose presence is nonetheless part of the described world, appropriately symbolised in poetry.

The passion of the Sufis

As indicated above, it is the passionate experience of the mystic that prevents him from absolutely keeping the divine secret. Ghālib (d. 1869) names al-Ḥallāj as an example of the "shallow vessel," that is a vessel unable to hold this superabundance of Godly grace.[53]

Just as it happens to Majnūn, the hearts of those loving God overflow. Reason would dictate silence. Majnūn is rejected by Laylā's family because he exposed her and her family by publicly expressing his love. The mystic knows that his love for God means that he perceives God in a way unknown to another believer. His statements contradict the faith of other Muslims and he has to fear accusations of being a heretic. But for the passionate lover the common idea of rationality is irrelevant and the mystic leaves his fear of being accused of heresy unexpressed.

But also within mysticism there was no common opinion as to what love between God and man is like. There were moderate mystics who taught, like the theologians, that love between God and man could only designate a relation of obedience. This was grounded on the idea of a unity held by all mystics: if the will of the lover becomes one with the beloved's will, how could the lover not obey the beloved?

Other mystics, such as Rābiʿa, stressed the power of love more than the reality of a union that knows only one will: "Even if you would expel me from your door, I wouldn't leave for the love I carry in my heart for you."[54] This attitude was criticised by Sufis who opposed any notion of

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53 Schimmel: *As through a Veil*, 217f., note 22.

54 Schimmel: *Dimensionen*, 69.

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a will other than God's. Rābiʿa was not opposed though to the longing for unity, her concern was the power of a love that remains unaffected by the behaviour of the beloved. She took a topic from *ʿudhrī* and courtly love poetry and integrated it into mysticism. In ʿAbbāsid love poetry the beloved's cruelty makes no impression on the lover, whose feelings remain steadfast. By portraying the beloved as necessarily cruel, the poet described love as an absolute passion, one that remains unwavering, irrespective of whether there is any possibility of realising the implicit desires. And as the lover is unable to change his feelings, it is impossible for him to follow the logic of generally accepted reason. This was the expression of absolute and pure love. Rābiʿa thus found it impossible to give up her love. She is famous for preaching a love not determined by reward and punishment. She wants to burn paradise and extinguish the fire of hell because those loving God should not do so for their reward or fear of punishment. As Yaḥyā Ibn Muʿādh said, she distinguishes the ascetic, who wants to be invited to God for the buffet, from the loving mystic, who wants to come to God for the sake of God alone.[55] The former loves God conditionally, the latter absolutely and unconditionally. Rābiʿa submits herself completely to the absolute love for God; even if God should disapprove, she could not rescind her love. Thus, there is a latent contradiction between Rābiʿa's stress on the absoluteness of love and those mystics who claim the unity of will between lover and beloved and therefore declare love itself to be the last veil between the mystic and God, a veil that is to be torn asunder. Love is understood here as a condition between two persons. Junayd defines love as unity (d. 910): "Love between two is not correct, if not one says to the other: Oh, You I";[56] but the moment this is said, love is no longer the longing for the other but is transformed into contentedness. "Oh you I" is the last thing the lover can say as a lover. As I mentioned above, al-ʿAbbās' verse "God mixed her spirit with my spirit…" has several parallels in mystical poetry.[57] al-Ḥallāj described in his poetry the two souls in one body, which intermingle "just as wine is mixing with pure water."[58] Finally, the mystic himself is God. In mysticism the idea of unity is the central theme of theology. Controversial is the relation to love. As I see it, this problem does not arise for al-ʿAbbās: for him, the intermingling of the

55 Louis Massignon: *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam,* 4 vols. Tr. Herbert Mason. New Jersey 1982, III 41, note 106.

56 Schimmel: *Dimensionen*, 193.

57 Jacobi: *Abbasidische Dichtung*, 47.

58 Massignon: *Passion* III, 41.

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souls is a hyperbolic expression for absolute love. Unlike the mystics, he is not concerned with questioning the relationships constituting love, which presuppose duality and absolute unity.

Suffering in mystical poetry

As in the ghazal, in mystical poetry we encounter the suffering of the lover and his wish for redemption in death, i.e. the dissolving of the self or, in the language of German mysticism, *Entwerden* (*fanā'*; "de-becoming"). And as the lover describes in the ghazal how love itself is the illness he suffers from, irrespective of fulfilment, the Sufis suffer not only from the distance to God after the *unio mystica* experience, but also because they realise that God himself is the ground of suffering.[59] al-Ḥallāj declared that God takes everything away from the lover, so that he solely relies on God. Those nearest to God suffer the most.[60] Junayd said that poverty is an affliction and the only way to glory. Here poverty is not only meant in a material sense but as a state of absolute privation of any human attributes. Only after nothing is "his" anymore can the qualities of the beloved find their way into the lover.[61] Union and love are realised by suffering: "He himself is the suffering, while the happiness comes from him."[62]

Here, a clear distinction between love and the subject/object of love, as in the ghazal, no longer exists. In ghazal poetry the lover suffers from both the beloved's cruelty and his own feelings. al-Ḥallāj and Junayd both described the lover's suffering, necessary for attaining union, as God's will. God is at the same time lover/beloved and the love itself. Of course, the suffering is now phrased religiously: it was God visiting the lover and this visit was understood as a trial and purification and accepted as necessary for the lover's self-privation.

It is remarkable that the theme of mystical poetry, similar to *ʿudhrī* poetry, is not so much the object of love but the suffering of the lover. Majnūn, who had no need for the sensual reality of the beloved, is a suitable example for the Sufis: God's transcendence is not abolished. But, at the same time, the Sufi can depict the suffering he becomes aware of, the suffering involved in loving God.

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59 Schimmel: *Dimensionen*, 199.

60 *Ibid.*

61 *Ibid.*, 94.

62 *Ibid.*, 112.

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This suffering also shows that the love for God is unconditional. The faithful lover enjoys the affliction God sends him, says Dhū'n-Nūn. But the lover should not boast of his love, for whoever does so does not really love God.[63] Already Rābiʿa wanted nothing other than this love and nothing in return for it. Yaḥyā Ibn Muʿādh says: "True love doesn't decrease because of the beloved's cruelty nor does it increase because of his grace, but it stays as it is."[64] This is the love we know from courtly poetry: it is a destiny decreed by God and it may contradict reason, but the lover cannot alter fate. Precisely the irrationality and this capacity for suffering demonstrate the authenticity of his love.

The Sufi poets also knew of the pain entailed in the separation from God. They search for and find the already given unity with God that lasts forever. But if this unity is an eternal one, how can one then lament over separation? And in fact some Sufis oppose talking about separation, for it is a mere illusion. On the other hand however, whoever contradicts the possibility of separation denies God's omnipotence, just as whoever denies the union denies the creator, as Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj says.[65] God cannot be compelled by man.

"May God make you fear his nearness!" wrote Dhū'n-Nūn to a colleague who wished him "intimacy with his nearness." "Because if he makes you familiar with his nearness it is your decision, and if he makes you fear his nearness it is his decision."[66] The true lover shall say "as you want" and accept the pain of separation. The pain of separation and trial become one: the lover is not to become self-satisfied in his love.

Poets like Abū Tammām and Ibn Dāwūd knew about the subjectivity of the experience of nearness and distance in profane love.[67] The mystic *theologumena* of actual nearness to God explains the experience of distance as a subjective one; but this subjective experience is the work of God. What remains for the lover is the memory: "The night of separation, be it long or short, / Mine intimate friend is hope of Thee, memory of Thee" says al-Ḥallāj.[68] Despite the separation, intimacy remains in hope and memory. al-Nūrī asks for the recurrence of the union, for his consciousness was

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63 *Ibid.*, 75.

64 *Ibid.*, 85.

65 Richard Gramlich: *Schlaglichter über das Sufitum: Abū Naṣr as-Sarrāǧs Kitāb al-Lumaʿ eingeleitet, übersetzt und kommentiert.* Stuttgart 1990, 477.

66 *Ibid.*, 120.

67 Bauer: *Liebe*, 353ff.

68 Lings: *Mystical Poetry*, 237.

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overwhelmed and suspended during the unity with God: "Be unto me as Thou wast when I was not, / O Thou for whom I am beset by calamity and sorrow!"[69]

Holy or profane love

The de-sensualisation of the beloved and love itself in the profane love poetry of the early ʿAbbāsid period made it possible for the mystics to use this poetry. In the story of Majnūn love becomes detached from the real person and is internalised.[70] Shiblī saw Majnūn as an ideal for the true mystic because his consciousness is filled completely with God-Laylā. The true lover cannot return to his habits because he has lost his ability to distinguish, all the content of his senses has vanished in the face of the One and the lover can perceive nothing else.[71]

Shiblī and other mystics did not question the fact that the beloved is not at all God in the story of Laylā and Majnūn. Such a reading of the text was made possible for the Sufis by their mystic world view, which let them perceive the material world as a symbol for the actual and true being. This has a parallel in the mystic interpretation of the Qurʾān. Here and there the mystic realises the "inner sense" of the written word. The mystic can perceive absolute beauty itself, identified with God, in the beauty of a human being. In the later ʿAbbāsid period the mystic Ibn al-ʿArābī (d. 1240) described in his *Tarjumān al-Ashwāq* ("Translator of the Passions") his passion for a 14-year-old beauty. In the preface he explains what she means for the mystic: she is a semi-transparent veil between this world and the next and through her he beholds the divine beauty.[72]

It is thus impossible to distinguish between the description of mystic and profane love. True, the tendency to interpret erotic verses, singing in the "outer literal sense" from a beloved human being, as a mystic theme relating to God is a late invention. But Rābiʿa's poetry already oscillated between these spheres. Geert Jan van Gelder has established that the poem "I love you with two loves," normally ascribed to her or other mystics,

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69 *Ibid.*

70 Ritter, in: Kračkovskij: *Macnūn*, 49.

71 *Ibid.*, 50.

72 Lings: *Mystical Poetry* 250f.; J. Christoph Bürgel: Die beste Dichtung ist die lügenreichste: Wesen und Bedeutung eines literarischen Streites des arabischen Mittelalters im Lichte komparatistischer Betrachtung. In: *Oriens* 23/4 (1974), 7-102, 90ff.

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is also included anonymously in Ibn Qutaybas *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* in a chapter entitled *Kitāb al-ikhwān, bāb al-maḥabba* dedicated to poems of friendship and profane love and in the *Kitāb al-aghāni*, where it is ascribed to a relatively unknown poet named Ādam Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.[73] Van Gelder views the poem ascribed to Ādam – which differs from the version ascribed to Rābiʿa – as the original, firstly because the ascription to Ādam is earlier and, secondly, it is less probable that the original poem would be wrongly ascribed to a minor poet.[74] We have seen that in mystic poetry the reader is requested to perceive the beloved as God even when the poem is left in its profane character. So it is probable that this poem, originally referring to a beloved human, was re-modelled. The "two loves" referred to in the profane and in the religious versions are originally (if the poem ascribed to Ādam is the original) those assigned to the lover and to the beloved. The love felt by the lover is the fateful love, thus founding its exclusiveness, while the love of the beloved is her beauty. The last line assigns the responsibility for both loves to the beloved:

> "I love you with two loves, one yours, one mine
> A natural love, and nothing is honoured with it besides you
> A love of beauty, for I haven't seen anything alike before I saw you
> And not I grant you a favour, but with you is the favour in one and the other."[75]

The last line sounds like a criticism of al-ʿAbbās' courtly pride, who as the lover takes himself to be the more important person. He presupposes that the love is exclusively with the lover. But here, however, even the responsibility for the love perceived by the lover is assigned to the beloved. This must have been important for Rābiʿa and other mystics, for it would have been blasphemous and arrogant to praise oneself for the love for God. Only his grace permits the lover to love him and God's love is prior: "...He will love as they will love Him..." (Sūra 5, 59/54) states the Qurʾān. For the mystics, this was an argument against those theologians denying the possibility of a mutual love between God and man and it was understood as establishing a temporal order: God loves first. I believe that the stress here is put on the assignment of the love to God alone. In this respect it is not

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73 Rābiʿa's Poem on the two kinds of Love: a Mystification? In: Frederick de Jong (ed.): *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry in the representation of women in Arabic literature*. Utrecht 1993, 66-76, 68f.

74 *Ibid.*, 70.

75 My trans., following the Arab text given in appendix C in Van Gelder: *Rābiʿa*, 76.

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important which love has a "higher" value; both originate from God and are therefore holy. Astonishing is the exclusivity, which lets later readers think of a solely religious background. Van Gelder estimates that there are a lot more mystic poems with a secular origin.[76] A Sufi, for whom the material world as such is nothing but a symbol or mirror of the uncreated being, would not be interested in such a distinction.

The parallels in content described here, the religiosity of the feeling of love itself and, finally, the Sufis' symbolic world view made it possible to mingle the sacral and holy sphere, both in mystic as well as in love poetry.

76 *Ibid.*, 73.

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ABŪ NUWĀS'S *GHAZAL MUʾANNATHĀT* NO. 25[1]

Gregor Schoeler
(Basel)

> Before the scholarly examination of a literary text can begin, some philological prerequisites must be satisfied. They are called philological prerequisites and are shared by all sciences that use texts as the basis of their work (…) In whatever way a text is to be examined – the first prerequisite is that the text itself can be deemed reliable.
>
> (Wolfgang Kayser[2])

1. *rubba laylin qaṭaʿtuhū bi-ntiḥābī*
rubba damʿin haraqtuhū fi t-turābī
2. *rubba thawbin nazaʿtu yuʿtaṣaru d-dam-*
ʿu wa-baddaltu ghayrahū min thiyābī
3. *lam yajiffī l-manzūʿu ʿanniya ḥattā*
ballati l-ʿaynu dhā bi-ṭūli ntiḥābī
4. *rubba silmin qad ṣāra lī minki ḥarban*
rubba nafsin kallaftumūhā ʿitābī
5. *ayyuhā l-ʿādhilūna uffin lakum! fi-*
kum wa-rabbī jalāfatu l-aʿrābī
6. *innamā yaʿrifu ṣ-ṣabābata man bā-*
ta ʿalā sukhṭatin mina l-aḥbābī
7. (1.) *abʿada llāhu yā Sulaymānu qalbī*
huwa ayḍan yahwā bi-ghayri ḥisābī
8. (2.) *qul lahū: dhuq! Wa-law ʿalimta bi-amrī*
lam tubaddil qaṭīʿatan bi-t-taṣābī
9. (3.) *khaliqa*[3] *l-ḥubbu li-nqiṭāʿi t-talāqī*
wa-tudassu r-rushā ilā l-kuttābī
10. (4.) *fa-idhā ṣāra ṣakku rizqika minhum*
khatamūhū bi-khātami l-awṣābī

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1 Abū Nuwās al-Ḥasan b. Hāniʾ al-Ḥakamī: *Dīwān*. Part I-III, ed. Ewald Wagner. Cairo et al. 1958-72. Stuttgart 1988. Part IV, ed. Gregor Schoeler. Wiesbaden 1982, IV, p. 19f.); id.: *Dīwān*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbdalmajīd al-Ghazālī. Cairo 1953, p. 274; id.: *Dīwān*, ed. Maḥmūd Wāṣīf. Cairo: Iskandar Āṣāf 1898, p. 363.

2 *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk. Eine Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft.* Bern et al.[13] 1968, p. 27.

3 Variant: *laṭufa* (Tūzūn recension).

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1. Many a night have I spent crying, many a tear have I shed onto the earth;
2. Many a garment have I took off to let the tears be wrung out putting on another one instead;
3. The one I had taken off had not yet dried, when the eye had soaked this one (the one I had just put on) by the continuing shedding of tears.
4. [O my beloved] many a peace have you turned into war for me; many a person have you charged with blaming me.
5. Shame on you, blamers! By my Lord, you are as rough as the Bedouins!
6. Only he knows burning love who has spent the night in (constant memory of) the beloved ones' wrath!
7. (1.) May God, o Sulaymān, remove my heart! It, too, loves without counting the cost.
8. (2.) Say to it: (Just) taste it! If you knew about my state, you would not exchange a separation for being in love.
9. (3.) Love has become worn out,[4] for the meeting have broken off; and the scribes are slipped bribes,
10. (4.) (But) when they issue the cheque for your provision, they stamp it with the seal of sufferings.

The aim of the following remarks is threefold: firstly to show that the above quoted and translated ghazal Abū Nuwās's *mu'annathāt* no. 25 is in reality two poems (henceforth referred to as ghazal *a* and ghazal *b)*. By a mistake of transmission these two poems which are composed in the same metre (*khafīf*) and the same rhyme (*-ābī*) have grown into one. The first – shorter – part of this paper will thus be concerned with textual criticism.

Secondly both poems shall be approached by way of interpretation. In the case of ghazal *b* any interpretation can only be an attempt, as matters stand. Nevertheless, this attempt will implicitly confirm the text critical findings that poem *b* is a composition independent of poem *a*. The interpretations are also intended to demonstrate characteristics and diversity of the ghazal genre at a time which was particularly important for its development. Furthermore the versatility of love poetry attributed to Abū Nuwās shall be shown.

The third aim is more general. A principle shall be brought back to mind and demonstrated with examples, a principle which all text-based sciences share. Following a formulation by W. Kayser,[5] it goes: "Before the

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4 Variant: "(Love) is (/was/became) ingenious" (Tūzūn recension).

5 See the original quotation in the motto.

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scholarly examination of a text can begin, some philological prerequisites must be satisfied."

I

The poem *mu'annathāt* no. 25 is found in this form only in the Ḥamza recension of the Abū Nuwās dīwān. The three Ḥamza manuscripts collated for the critical edition as well as a Ḥamza manuscript from Cairo which is the basis of the old Cairo prints, among them the edition Maḥmūd Wāṣif of 1898,[6] do not differ in their textual form except for a few insignificant variations. However, in the popular edition of the Abū Nuwās dīwān by al-Ghazālī, which in the case of the poem under discussion is equally based on the Ḥamza transmission, verse 5 is missing.[7]

In al-Ṣūlī's recension only verses 1 and 2 are found. Since he regards the poem as wrongly attributed to Abū Nuwās[8] – he lists it in the section *min al-manḥūl ilayhi* after the poems with the rhyming letter *bā'* which he regards as genuine – al-Ṣūlī as is his habit only cites the beginning of it. Thus we cannot know how many verses the complete poem that al-Ṣūlī had in front of him consisted of. In the third recension of the Abū Nuwās dīwān which probably goes back to Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad Tūzūn, only verses 7-10 are found. However, there they have the form of an independent poem, since they are introduced by *wa-qāla.*

From these text critical findings, two theoretical possibilities ensue:

(1.) Our ghazal was originally one poem which only Ḥamza transmitted completely. al-Ṣūlī cited only the first two verses and Tūzūn only the last four.

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6 p. 363.

7 p. 274.

8 The question of this poem's genuineness shall not be discussed here. The following remarks may suffice: content and style do not raise doubt as to its genuineness; and yet, we cannot entirely rule out that the poem was composed by a very adroit imitator of Abū Nuwās. Probably al-Ṣūlī who judges on the basis of his literary feeling (cf. E. Wagner: *Die Überlieferung des Abū-Nuwās-Dīwān und seine Handschriften.* Mainz 1958, p. 323), is often right when he calls poems *manḥūl.* That he is sometimes mistaken is clear from cases where an older and even more competent transmitter of Abū Nuwās' poetry, Abū Hiffān, *rāwī* and contemporary of Abū Nuwās, considers and transmits poems as genuine which al-Ṣūlī lists as imputed to Abū Nūwās (e.g. *Dīwān* III, p. 332, no. 287). Furthermore, not infrequently al-Ṣūlī cites a ghazal in the chapter *al-mu'annathāt* as genuine and the same poem in the chapter *al-mudhakkarāt* as imputed to Abū Nūwās (e.g. *Dīwān* IV no. 57, no. 84, no. 139, no. 140). My own supposition is that the poem in question is genuine.

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(2.) Our ghazal is a conflation of two poems (first poem: verses 1-6; second poem: verses 7-10) which took place in the course of Ḥamza's transmission. This could of course have happened on account of the shared metre and rhyme.

In my edition of the ghazal section of the Abū Nuwās dīwān I opted for the first possibility, i.e. I considered and printed the text as one poem. However, in the corrections of the volume on ghazal[9] I chose the second possibility.

On the following pages I would like to demonstrate that there are literary reasons, too, which point to *mu'annathāt* no. 25 consisting of two independent compositions.

II

Poem *a* – but only its first part – has already been the object of scholarly interest. This is due to the ingenious twist which the poet gives to the motif of tears or, more precisely, the motif of the amount of tears shed because of a lover's grief. Ewald Wagner in his monograph on Abū Nuwās, in the chapter on love poems, presented the first three verses in translation, precisely as an example for the motif of tears.[10] After that, Thomas Bauer interpreted these verses in detail in his book *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*.[11] We shall return to this interpretation. The second part of the poem where the poet addresses the beloved and then takes issue with the blamers, has, as far as I can see, not yet been paid attention to.

Ḥamza lists the ghazal among the *mu'annathāt,* the love poems to women, and says that it is addressed to the slave singer ʿInān (*wa-qāla fī ʿInān*),[12] a woman to whom Abū Nuwās dedicated many a poem. It is impossible to verify this information since firstly the text of the poem itself does not offer the slightest hint – not even the gender of the addressed person can be established beyond doubt since the *minki* in verse 4 could also be read as *minka* and since the *kallaftumūhā* in the same verse is grammatically even more likely to relate to male persons. Secondly, the

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9 In the appendix of part III (*al-khamrīyāt*) of the *Dīwān*, ed. by E. Wagner, p. 448.

10 E. Wagner: *Abū Nuwās. Eine Studie zur arabischen Literatur der frühen Abbasidenzeit.* Wiesbaden 1964, p. 313.

11 Th. Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts. Eine literatur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studie des arabischen Ġazal.* Wiesbaden 1998, p. 363 f.

12 On ʿInān see Wagner: *Abū Nuwās*, p. 162 ff.

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transmission of al-Ṣūlī is silent on the addressed person and thirdly, the secondary transmission appears not to know the poem at all.[13]

In his fundamental study, Thomas Bauer pointed out five large thematic complexes for the Arabic ghazal in Abbasid times: praise (description of beauty), lamentation, explanation (depiction of the poet's feelings and expectations), reproach (depiction of the actions of the beloved), information and description (status, profession and religion of the beloved, places and occasions, third parties). The first three verses of our poem clearly belong to the theme 'lamentation'; the lover's weeping which is dealt with in these verses alone is one of the important motifs of this theme. The fourth verse may be assigned to the theme 'reproach,' and the last two verses where the blamers are fended off, to the theme 'information.'

The first verse is particularly artistic. It contains the figures *epanaphora* (repetition of a word at the beginning of a verse or a hemistich; *takrīr*) (*rubba x – rubba y*) and *muwāzana* (complete congruence of semantic and positional correspondence of the wording). The figure *epanaphora* is continued in the first *miṣrāʿ* of the second verse (*rubba z*). The third verse contains an antithesis (*muṭābaqa*): to dry – to wet, and a weak form of the figure *radd al-ʿajuz ʿalā ṣ-ṣadr* (*rubba thawbin – thiyābī*). The transition from the first to the second theme in verse 4 structures the poem which consists of six verses into two parts of equal length. The formal connection between these two parts is very skilfully designed in that the *epanaphora* of the first verses is taken up again at the beginning of verse 4 (*rubba w*). The first *miṣrāʿ* of verse 4 (which contains the reproach addressed to the beloved) is determined by the antithesis peace-war; the second *miṣrāʿ* already leads up to the last theme, the conflict with the blamers (verse 5-6). The transition here works logically and is very adroitly manufactured (the beloved is reproached with being responsible for the frequent blame; those who voice the blame are addressed in the following verse). Verse 5 begins – after the blamers have been addressed – with a downright vituperation and culminates in the comparison of the blamers' unsympathetic and uncomprehending behaviour with the roughness of Bedouins. The last verse is gnomic, it expounds a universal truth ("only he knows burning love who…"); it is aimed at the blamers, of course, who are still being addressed: they do not know true love and thus are not capable of judging the behaviour of the lover.

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13 This information is by courtesy of Professor Ewald Wagner who has collected all verses attributed to the poet in a card catalogue. Professor Wagner was also kind enough to communicate his thoughts on poem *b* to me (see below). I thank him sincerely for his help.

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In a sense this last verse summarises the three themes of the poem: it is addressed to the blamers who are reproached with a lack of understanding which is due to their lack of empathy and personal experience (theme 'information'); the verse explicitly refers to the nights (spent crying) described in the beginning (theme 'lamentation'); for these nights the beloved is at least indirectly blamed (theme 'reproach'). Hence the poem comes to a logical and harmonic conclusion.

The two most important motifs of the poem, the tears and the blamers, are entirely conventional and are already found in pre-Islamic poetry. On the motif of tears I shall comment below. The figure of the female blamer is found in pre-Islamic poetry especially in the descriptions of wine and banquets. There, she embodies society's norm that the often excessive generosity, i.e. prodigality of the men should be rejected.[14] In Islamic wine poetry the female blamer (or the male or anonymous blamers) still personifies the norm, however now this norm is determined by the Islamic prohibition of wine. Abū Nuwās used the motif in this function in many of his *khamrīyāt*, frequently as an introduction but also sometimes as the conclusion of the poems.[15] – In love poetry "the problem of defending a private world against society is – more or less subliminally – omnipresent anyhow."[16] Thus the blamers play a particularly significant role in *ḥijāzī* and *ʿudhrī* love poetry.[17]

"Defence of a private world against society": thus the concern of the poem might be phrased, in a first approach. Quite obviously the criticism which the poem rejects so violently is aimed at the excessive pain and the many tears which are described in the beginning. However, maybe it aims "at the mere fact of loving." The objections would thus express "the unease (of society) with the inevitable withdrawal from public life into the shielded space of a love relation."[18] This is exactly what the blamers reproach the poet with, "that he is eaten up with grief because of such a trifling thing as love."[19]

However, this interpretation does not do justice to the poem's hyperbolism in the description of the weeping. Bauer in his interpretation

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14 Cf. for this and the following Bauer: *Liebe*, p. 522 ff.; on the motif of the blamer see E. Wagner: *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung*. Vol. I-II. Darmstadt 1987-1988, I, p. 110 f. and index (Tadler, Tadel); and II, index.

15 For examples see Wagner: *Abū Nuwās*, p. 291 ff.

16 Bauer: *Liebe*, p. 523.

17 See the example in footnote 23 below!

18 Bauer: *Liebe*, p. 523.

19 *Ibid.*

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of the first verses takes account of the fact that in such places "no more can be done than cautiously approach what the poet may have meant and what his audience may have understood."[20] In this spirit, Bauer supposes that Abū Nuwās intentionally treats the conventional motif of tears with irony and thus alienates it, and that the contemporary listener would have understood the verses accordingly. Bauer thus adopts an approach which Renate Jacobi successfully applied in her important article *Altarabische Topoi in der Abbasidendichtung: Zur Technik und Funktion der Verfremdung*. Amongst other examples Bauer shows: while the early Islamic poet Rabīʿa b. Maqrūm says that the tears "flow in streams over his beard and coat," for Abū Nuwās this will not do: he soaks one garment after the other with his tears.[21] What we have here is obviously not merely an intensification of the pre-Islamic hyperbolism which aims at illustrating reality. Rather, Abū Nuwās's wording transgresses the border to the ridiculous – surely also in the perception of his contemporary audiences. This transgression takes place for instance when Abū Nuwās claims that his garments had to be wrung out on account of the many tears. Also, the assertion that the poet "takes off one dripping wet garment after the other and exchanges them for fresh ones" is "not exactly a touching display of grief."[22]

The motif of the blamers is apparently not taken seriously by Abū Nuwās, either. He treats it with irony and alienation just as he had done with the motif of tears previously. In any case, not only does Abū Nuwās reject the blamers' reproaches,[23] he downright insults and ridicules them.[24]

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20 See R. Jacobi: Altarabische Topoi in der Abbasidendichtung: Zur Technik und Funktion der 'Verfremdung'. In: M. Forstner (ed.): *Festgabe für Hans-Rudolf Singer.* Part 2. Frankfurt et al. 1991, p. 757-771, here: p. 364.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 363.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 364.

23 The original, not ironical motif in *ʿudhrī* love poetry may be seen in the following verses by Jamīl: *Dīwān*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār. Cairo ²1968, p. 59: *wa-ʿādhilūna laḥawnī fī mawaddatihā yā laytahum wajadū mithla lladhī ajidū – lammā aṭālū ʿitābī fīki qultu lahum: lā tufriṭū baʿḍa hādhā l- lawmi wa-qtaṣidū – qad māta qablī akhū Nahdin …*, The blamers reviled me for my love for her. If only they suffered as I suffer! – When they kept on reproaching me because of you, I said to them: 'Do not exaggerate, some of your blame (suffices)! Be moderate!' – Before me, already the member (of the tribe) of the Nahd (=ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAjlān) died (of love)…" It is to be noticed that here it is the blamers who revile while in our poem it is the other way round: the blamers are reviled by Abū Nuwās. - Cf. also the poem Abū Nuwās *muʾannathāt* no. 23 (German translation in G. Schoeler: Arabistische Literaturwissenschaft und Textkritik. In: *Der Islam* 53 (1978), p. 327-339, here: p. 332f.) where the poet obviously alludes to (or, in other words, 'inter-textually' relates to) this (or a similar) poem by Jamīl.

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The actual point of the verse is that Abū Nuwās equates his critics with the 'rough' Bedouins, i.e. that other group of people of whom he constantly makes a laughing-stock. Renate Jacobi has shown in her aforementioned article that "the 'new aesthetic signal', the message which Abū Nuwās does not tire to proclaim, (is) the distance that separates the educated urban Abbasid poet from his Bedouin predecessor. The latter, on his cultural level and within the frame of his value system, is denied true enjoyment of life."[25]

The last verses of our poem elucidate that in the eyes of Abū Nuwās not only are the Bedouins denied true enjoyment of life, they also lack the right attitude towards love. According to our poet they indeed do not know true love. However, this reproach is only indirectly addressed at the Bedouins; directly it is hurled at the blamers whose cultural level – thus goes Abū Nuwās's pointed reasoning – is precisely that of the Bedouins.

Do we have before us a 'literary' or a 'pragmatic' (non-literary, purely occasional) poem?[26] It is a literary poem beyond doubt. The ghazal is so artistic that it cannot have been composed merely for a single recipient and a practical purpose. It must have been intended for a larger well-read audience, an audience capable of grasping its rhetorical subtleties and its wit. This does, however, not rule out that the poet may at the same time have pursued "unequivocally pragmatic aims."[27] Let us assume Ḥamza is right and the poem was addressed to ʿInān. She was a trained slave singer, but above all a gifted poetess "who was acknowledged by her male colleagues as their peer."[28] Several of her poems are extant. If Abū Nuwās had wanted to impress her, he would have succeeded best with a highly artistic and witty poem. Hence, it is unlikely that ʿInān would have felt flattered by Abū Nuwās' assertion in the poem that he shed so many tears because of her; but she will have appreciated the witty ingenuity that lies in the hyperbolism of the conventional motif of the amount of the lover's tears, and she will also have appreciated the comparison of the blamers' roughness with that of the Bedouins.

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24 Abū Nuwās makes fun of the blamers in other places, too, e.g. in the following verse of a wine poem (*Dīwān* III, no. 226, v. 9) *daʿawtu Iblīsa thumma qultu lahū: lā tasqi hādhā sh-sharāba ʿudhdhālī*, "I called Iblis, then I spoke to him: Do not give my blamers this (exquisite) wine to drink!"

25 Jacobi: *Altarabische Topoi*, p. 365.

26 On the distinction see Bauer: *Liebe*, p. 455ff.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 456.

28 Wagner: *Abū Nuwās*, p. 164.

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III

The second ghazal appears to be a 'pragmatic poem.' Its meaning is very difficult to grasp. Hence the following paraphrase with comment and interpretation is merely tentative.[29] In the first verse one Sulaymān is addressed whose identity cannot be determined with certainty. Maybe Sulaymān b. Abī Sahl b. Nawbakht is meant, a member of the distinguished secretarial family of the Banū Nawbakht whom Abū Nuwās exalts in laudatory poems, but also reviles in derisive poems. Abū Nuwās spent a lot of time with Sulaymān.[30] – It is unlikely that this Sulaymān was a *maʿshūq*; what speaks against it is the fact that the two dīwān recensors – and particularly Tūzūn who considers the verses as an independent poem – did not list it among the *mudhakkarāt* but the *muʾannathāt.*

In the first verse the poet curses his own heart because it loves, as the Qurʾān so often puts it, *bi-lā* (or *bi-ghayri*) *ḥisābin,* "without counting the cost," i.e. without asking and receiving a return.[31] A similar motif is found in *muʾannathāt* no 38 (p. 32-34) where first, however, not the heart but the soul is addressed.[32] The motif is also related to the *topos* "blame of the eye" (cf. the same poem[33]). Both times an organ is blamed for the unhappy state of the lover. – The 'also' (in: it also loves without counting the cost) could point to the fact that the case described is not the only one where there was no return payment. It will soon emerge that in another case it was a cheque which Abū Nuwās had for specific reasons not received.

Verse 2 is difficult to understand. If I am not mistaken, the poet calls on Sulaymān (or himself) to tell his heart: "Just try and do not love any longer without asking for a return, i.e. stop loving, quit the beloved; then I will feel better! If you knew how much I suffer, you would no longer give love and be requited only with separation."

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29 For a revised interpretation see the postscript!

30 Wagner: *Abū Nuwās*, p. 62f.

31 E.g. sūra 3:27 and 37; sūra 24:38; sūra 38:39; sūra 40:40.

32 *yā nafsi kayfa laṭufti li-ṣ-ṣabri ḥattā ṣabartī – a-lasti ṣāḥibatī yawma waddaʿūnī a-lastī – balā fa-laytaki minnī yawma l-firāqi ṣaqaṭtī* (…) *– man li-l-fuʾādi l-muʿannā mina l-firāqi l-mushittī,* "O soul, how friendly (or: ingenious) you were to patience until you (eventually) became patient (i.e. endured the grief unflinchingly)! Are you not my mistress when they bid me farewell, aren't you? Yes! But – o would God you had fallen from me on the day of farewell! (…) Who affords the tortured heart relief from the farewell that separates (us)?"

33 *yā ʿayni mā laki? lammā awraṭti qalbī sakantī,* "O my eye, what is the matter with you? When you got my heart into trouble you remained calm."

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In the first *miṣrāʿ* of the third verse the fading of love is explained by the meetings breaking off.[34] In the second *miṣrāʿ* the poet changes the subject and relates the other case where a service of his was not requited with a return service. He recounts that the scribes in the administration were paid bribes, as was the custom at his time.[35] 'Despite this' (in case the money was from the poet) or 'because of this' (if it came from his opponents) the officials did not make a valid, usable cheque payable to him.[36] This is what the last verse seems to say which, like the first verse, is directly addressed to Sulaymān: When, o Sulaymān, the "cheque of your provision," i.e. your money order (with the remuneration for a laudatory poem?), arrives, then the scribes will have stamped this cheque "with the seal ring of sufferings," i.e. they will have imprinted a false seal onto it and thus rendered it worthless.[37]

If I am right, two themes are linked in the poem. The poet complains that he could not 'settle accounts' for two services: his love which was not returned, and his laudatory poem(?) the payment for which is overdue. The connection of these two themes is certainly original and might have had a humorous effect. In the case of the owed money order the poem's addressee, Sulaymān, was able to redress the problem. And it was probably the wish for this to happen that constitutes the concrete purpose (*gharaḍ*) which prompted Abū Nuwās to compose the poem.[38]

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34 The Tūzūn transmission has here: "Love is ingenious since the meeting broke off" (cf. n. 3 and 4). The meaning would then be the following: the lover makes every effort to bring about a meeting with the beloved. If we follow this reading, a meaningful connection can be established with the second *miṣrāʿ* in that they form a parallel of two efforts: just as Abū Nuwās employs every means to attain a meeting with the beloved, so does he employ every means (i.e. also the illegal means of bribery) to get his money.

35 See n. 37!

36 On cheques in medieval Islam cf. A. Mez: *Die Renaissance des Islam*. Heidelberg 1922, p. 447f. and W. Hinz: Das Rechnungswesen orientalischer Reichsfinanzämter im Mittelalter. In: *Der Islam* 29 (1950), p. 20ff. – For this information I am indebted to Professor Tilmann Seidensticker, Jena, whom I also thank for communicating his thoughts on this poem to me.

37 "If he (the recipient of the cheque) is stubborn and not judicious, a number of cheques on tax funds are made payable to him, these funds lying hundreds of miles apart. To reach these places will cost him more than his claim is worth. If, however, he is judicious, i.e. willing to give up an adequate portion of his claims to the officials of the *dīwān*, then he will personally receive a single cheque for the whole amount on an easily accessible fund nearby, so that he can go and cash it right away." (Hinz: *Rechnungswesen*, p. 21.)

38 Here, the ghazal theme is linked with another theme which the indigenous Arab critics would most likely have placed under the heading "demand and asking for the fulfilment of a promise" (*iqtiḍāʾ wa-istinjāz*). (Ibn Rashīq: *al-ʿUmda fī maḥāsin ash-shiʿr wa-ādābihī wa-naqdihī*. I-II, ed. M. M. ʿAbdalḥamīd. Beirut [4]1972, II, p. 158-160; cf. G. Schoeler: Die Einteilung der Dichtung bei den Arabern. In *ZDMG: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 123 [1973], p. 9-53, here: p. 28.)

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Now whether this interpretation is correct or not – we obviously have a 'pragmatic' poem before us. The Sulaymān addressed in the beginning is probably the only recipient whom the poet had in mind upon composing the poem. And the addressee was meant less to "perform an act of literary reception" than rather to "draw the consequences,"[39] i.e. – if our interpretation is correct – to see to it that the scribes in the administration make a usable cheque for the promised amount payable to him.

Professor Wagner suggests a different interpretation.[40] The main difference between his and our interpretation is that he understands the word *qaṭīʿa* in verse 2 to mean 'fief' and not 'separation.' Wagner assumes that Sulaymān, if he belonged to the Banū Nawbakht, was a 'scribe' (state secretary) and enjoyed the respective privileges of such a position. "Maybe Abū Nuwās had envied him and received the answer: 'You have your love affairs! What do you need fief and bribes for?' Then would have followed Abū Nuwās's answer: 'May God, o Sulaymān, remove my heart! It, too (i.e. like the other lovers), is wont to love without calculating (the consequences) (contrary to the scribes). Say to him (to Sulaymān): Taste (love just once)! If you knew about my state, you would not exchange your fief (i.e. your income) for love. For love wears out because the meetings break off, but bribes are always paid out to the scribes. But when the cheque for your (i.e. somebody's) provision arrives, they will have stamped it with the seal of suffering (or of illness, i.e. with a false seal, so that one cannot cash it. The meaning is that the scribes cheat despite the bribes)."

Wagner agrees with us in that the poem is 'pragmatic' and definitely independent from ghazal *a*.

IV

The interpretations should by now have corroborated the text critical findings that *mu'annathāt* no. 25 is made up of two poems. Despite the identical metre and rhyme they are too different from each other to form one coherent composition. Furthermore, poem *a* comes to a harmonic conclusion with the gnomic verse 6, and poem *b* starts with an address to a person, this being a typical beginning for a poem. Sulaymān was not mentioned in poem *a*. What is more, it is said to be addressed to a woman, ʿInān. These points ought to suffice.

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39 Thus Bauer: *Liebe*, p. 456, on a comparable poem.

40 In a letter dated October 1st, 2000.

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The question how it could happen that the two ghazals grew together is easily and with great certainty answered: the two poems that, we recall, share metre and rhyme followed each other in the archetype, and the heading *wa-qāla*, which separates the poems in Arabic dīwāns, was lacking for poem *b* or was dropped for whatever reason. This is not an isolated case: we shall observe the same phenomenon in another example below. – The conflation must have taken place at a very early stage of transmission, since the complete Ḥamza transmission has the same contaminated text. Possibly the *wa-qāla* was already missing in Ḥamza's manuscript.

If we were to possess only the Ḥamza recension, the problem in question might never have been recognised. And if it had – for instance in the course of an interpretation – one could not have solved it definitely. Clarification was possible only by a comparison with the Tūzūn recension. This demonstrates the scientific value of the "eclectic method"[41] applied in the critical edition of the dīwān of Abū Nuwās. This method subjects not only one recension's characteristics and variants to a synopsis, but several.

V

It is a simple error of transmission, possible at all stages of transmission, that two consecutive poems with the same metre and rhyme 'grow together' because of a missing *wa-qāla* which would indicate their separation. Ewald Wagner recently drew attention to the fact that the two wine poems *Dīwān* III, no. 8:

shajānī wa-aḍnānī tadhakkuru man ahwā
fa-albasanī thawban mina ḍ-ḍurri mā yublā

and *Dīwān* III, no. 17:

adīrā ʿalayya l-kaʾsa tankashifu l-balwā
wa-taltadhdhu ʿaynī ṭība rāʾiḥati d-dunyā

melted into one poem in the popular edition of the Abū Nuwās dīwān by al-Ghazālī (p. 118).[42] Wagner could show that the error has its origin (directly or indirectly, i.e. via a print) in a manuscript belonging to the Tūzūn recension where the two poems are found consecutively. In the two Tūzūn manuscripts used for the critical edition the two *khamrīyāt* follow

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41 Cf. K. Petráček: Review of *Der Dīwān des Abū Nuwās*. Teil IV, ed. G. Schoeler. In: *Archiv Orientalni* 53 (1985), p. 292-293, here: p. 293.

42 E. Wagner: Review of Philip F. Kennedy: *The Wine Song in Classical Arabic Poetry*. In: *ZAL* 37 (1999), p. 90-94, here: p. 92.

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each other, too, but they are separated clearly by a *wa-qāla*. This is not the case in the 1860 Cairo lithography of the Abū Nuwās dīwān (p. 122 f.) which is mainly based on a manuscript of the Tūzūn recension. It is also not the case in the print by Maḥmūd Wāṣif (p. 238 f.), even though this edition is principally based on a manuscript of the Ḥamza recension. For this poem (as well as a few others in the same chapter), however, the Wāṣif edition follows a manuscript of the Tūzūn recension, most likely the same as the lithography (the variants prove this beyond doubt). In these two (bad) prints the separating *wa-qāla* between the poems has disappeared so that the two wine poems melted into one. For the production of his text, the editor al-Ghazālī used either one of the two prints – I am inclined to think the Wāṣif edition – or the manuscript(s) on which they are based.

The definitive proof that the two *khamrīyāt* are really independent compositions is supplied by Ḥamza's recension of the dīwān where they are separated from each other by eight other poems.[43] (In the recension of al-Ṣūlī both poems are missing.) – Thus the text critical findings in this case are unequivocal.

To these arguments must be added the literary ones, as Wagner remarked: "Arguments for the independence of the second poem are also the rhyming hemistichs of the first verse and the fact that it begins with a dual imperative."[44]

This flood of arguments makes it all the more incomprehensible that a recent study of the poetry of Abū Nuwās, Philip Kennedy's book *The Wine Song*, bases its discussion of the poem (or rather the poems) on the uncritical text of the al-Ghazālī edition.[45] This means that the two *khamrīyāt* are considered as one and interpreted accordingly. After finishing his interpretation, the author apparently did have a glance at the critical edition and realised that they are two poems. But he asserts "however, the conflation into one composition is supported by the ensuing analysis which highlights the artistry typical of the poet." (Almost) needless to say, an 'analysis' by which someone seeks – by *divinatio* – to prove something that textual criticism has clearly ruled out, is worthless.

More than 20 years ago I tried to demonstrate in an article entitled *Arabistische Literaturwissenschaft und Textkritik* that the critical editor of a literary text is well advised to acquaint himself with the problems

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43 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

44 *Ibid.*

45 Ph. F. Kennedy: *The Wine Song in Classical Arabic Poetry: Abū Nuwās and the Literary Tradition*. Oxford 1997, p. 84-85; cf. Wagner: *Review*, p. 92.

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discussed in the scholarly study of literature.[46] In those years I was editing the ghazal part of the Abū Nuwās dīwān. I would not have thought then that at a time when the critically edited text is available to everyone it would be necessary to demonstrate again[47] that for every scholarly consideration of Abū Nuwās the critical edition of the dīwān – including the corrigenda[48] – is indispensable. One simply cannot do scholarly work with an uncritical edition that lacks a reliable textual basis and thus contains not only numerous 'ordinary' mistakes but also contaminations and many omissions – there are many instances of verses and complete poems missing – as well as a lot of false material into the bargain.

Postscript

In the following I want to suggest a reading of ghazal *b*, which – as I believe today – is superior to the ones given in the paper above.[49]

1. *abʿada llāhu yā Sulaymānu qalbī*
   huwa ayḍan yahwā bi-ghayri ḥisābī
2. *lahū: dhuq! wa-law ʿalimta bi-amrī*
   lam tubaddil qaṭīʿatan bi-t-taṣābī
3. *khaliqa l-ḥubbu li-nqiṭāʿi t-talāqī*
   wa-tudassu r-rushā ilā l-kuttābī
4. *fa-idhā ṣāra ṣakku rizqika minhum*
   khatamūhū bi-khātami l-awṣābī

1. May God, o Sulaymān, remove my heart! It, too, loves without counting the cost (or: immeasurably).
2. Say to it: 'Taste (i.e. bear) it (i.e. my grief/sufferings),' but if only you knew about my state (how I feel), you would not swap separation for love.
3. Love has become worn out, for the meetings have broken off (or: meetings are no longer feasible), though the scribes are slipped bribes;
4. (But) when they issue the cheque (or voucher) for your provision, they stamp it with the seal of misery.

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46 p. 327ff.

47 See already my remarks in the introduction to the edition, *Dīwān* IV, p. X and XVIIIf.

48 The corrigenda for vol. IV are to be found at the end of vol. III, p. 447ff.!

49 I am obliged to Dr. Ephrem Malki, Saarbrücken, for a fruitful discussion of the poem. The new reading here was mainly inspired by him.

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The main difference between this interpretation and the ones given above lies in the fact that I no longer take the 'scribes,' the 'cheque for provision' and the 'seal' to be real, but as a *metaphora continuata* which results from analogies, within which a complex analogue has been projected onto the topic.[50]

> (Approximate paraphrase): "Just as you bribe the scribes in the dīwān to obtain a valid, usable cheque and then receive a worthless cheque, so have I done everything in my power to bring about a meeting with my beloved, but in the end was left with a lover's grief and sorrow."

Abū Nuwās quite often uses imagery from the sphere of administration (or politics) in such a context. For example, in one poem he speaks of "the dīwān of the people of love," in which he himself is "a man of humbleness and servility" (*in kuntu fī dīwāni ahli l-hawā akhā khudūʿin wa-akhā dhullin*).[51]

A 'cheque' and a 'scribe' in the administration, who seals the cheque, are mentioned in the following short poem (ghazal *mudhakkarāt* no. 300):

1. *qad ṣukka lī bi-l-qurbi min sayyidī*
   wa-dāra ṣakkī fī d-dawāwīnī
2. *wa-stuʾdhina l-kātibu fī khatmihī*
   wa-qad duʿī li-l-khatmi bi-ṭ-ṭīnī

1. A cheque (or voucher) was issued in my name to bring me close to my Lord (i.e. my beloved)[52], and my cheque did the rounds of the *diwans* (departments).
2. The scribe was asked for permission to seal, when clay for the seal had been requested.

The 'cheque to bring me close to the beloved' mentioned here is almost the exact opposite of the 'cheque for provision' (mentioned in ghazal *b*) to which the 'seal of misery' was affixed.

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50 Cf. W. Heinrichs: Scherzhafter *badīʿ* bei Abū Nuwās. In: E. Wagner and K. Röhrborn (eds.): *Kaškūl: Festschrift zum 25. Jahrestag der Wiederbegründung des Instituts für Orientalistik an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen*. Wiesbaden 1989, p. 23-37, here: p. 24.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 36 (Ms. Fatih 3775, fol. 105b).

52 "Closeness to the beloved" represents here the amount owed; cf. *ibid.*

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Permutations and Deconstructions of Ghazal in Modern Arabic Literature

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BEIRUT
THE CITY-WOMAN AND HER OBSESSED LOVERS

Birgit Embaló
(Berlin)

City, woman and poet

When we think of Beirut almost immediately some widespread images and clichés of the city come to our mind, like 'Paris of the East.' The American *Life* magazine described Beirut in 1966 as "a kind of Las Vegas–Riviera–St. Moritz flavored with spices of Araby."[1] Later, in the eighties, the image of "the destroyed city as a universal metaphor for the horrors of civil war strife"[2] predominated the view of Beirut in the media and in the political discourse, especially in the Western world.

Besides such images which are directly inspired from some visible patterns of urban life fictional depictions of the city tend to be representations of *ideas*. Various dimensions of meaning and depiction unfold from the perception of cities as a *spatial symbol of culture and society*.[3] Contemporary Arabic Literature has created its own *mental maps*[4] of Beirut, drawing upon the imaginary relations which are established with the reality of the war-ravaged city.[5]

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1 Sandra Mackey: *Lebanon: the Death of a Nation*. New York: Congdon & Weed, 1989, 4: "The inconsistency between Lebanon's prewar image and the reality of its society was seldom recognized, leaving the real Lebanon buried under the allure of that magic time from 1955 to 1975 nostalgically called the "Golden Age"."; cf. also the description of the Lebanese society and cultural life of Beirut in David C. Gordon: *The Republic of Lebanon*. Boulder: Westview Press and London: Croom Helm, 1983, 40-41, 43-48.

2 This is the position of the Lebanese prose writer and journalist Ilyās Khūrī, speaking about the fragmentation of nations and the failure of the nation state concept due to civil war conflicts which indicate the loss or absence of national identity patterns in various countries, predominately in the 'Third World,' Interview with Khūrī by Yusrā al-Amīr: "Ḥiwār ma'a Ilyās Khūrī," in: *al-Ādāb* 41.7-8 (1993), 58-74; 70.

3 Sigrid Weigel: Traum - Stadt - Frau. Zur Weiblichkeit der Städte in der Schrift, in: Klaus Scherpe (ed.): *Die Unwirklichkeit der Städte. Großstadtdarstellungen zwischen Moderne und Postmoderne*. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: rororo, 1988, 173-196; 174-175.

4 For this term I refer to Scherpe (ed.): *Die Unwirklichkeit der Städte*, 7-8.

5 For some of these literary images of Beirut cf. the rich and well-documented study of Muna Takieddine Amyuni: *La Ville Source D'Inspiration. Le Caire, Khartoum, Beyrouth, Paola Scala Chez Quelques Ecrivains Arabes Contemporains.* Beirut:

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In this contribution some texts (poetry and prose) will be analyzed which present the city of Beirut as female partner of the male poet and author. The writings of the famous Syrian love-poet Nizār Qabbānī and the internationally highly reputed Palestinian poet Maḥmūd Darwīsh demonstrate that the relation between the poet and 'his' city is expressed first and foremost in terms of a love-affair with an allegorical female figure, the *city-woman*. Her erotic attraction and her seductive arts form one of the main literary images of Beirut. However, we will see that these female depictions are used with quite different ends.

In the late decades of the twentieth century, which we certainly have to call the *post-ghazal*[6] time, how does the relation between the male poet and 'his' city-woman look like? Do contemporary authors still rely on ghazal-poetry by adopting motifs, patterns and poetical techniques or by re-interpreting the literary concept(s) of classical Arabic love-poems? Do they use elements of ghazal in an affirmative way, or do they build up a distance to the ghazal tradition that leads to new intertextual interpretations and variations of the classical pretexts of Arabic love poetry (especially some of its outstanding or most prominent features)?[7]

I will focus my interpretation on fictional images of Beirut which have been elaborated by male poets. According to my knowledge Arab women

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Orient-Institut 1998 (Beiruter Texte und Studien; 63), 103-171, see as well my article: Birgit Embaló: The City, Mythical Images and their Deconstruction. The Image of Beirut in Contemporary Works of Arabic Literature, in: Angelika Neuwirth, Sebastian Günther, Birgit Embaló, Maher Jarrar (eds.): *Myths, Historical Archtetypes and Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature. Towards a New Hermeneutic Approach.* Beirut: Orient-Institut 1999 (Beiruter Texte und Studien; 64), 583-603.

6 Ghazal is understood here, according to the definition in the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* as "poetry about love whether incorporated into the qaṣīda or in an independent, brief poem." Art. "ghazal," in: Julie Scott Meisami, Paul Starkey: *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*. London, New York: Routledge 1998, 2 vols., 249-250. For the figure of the obsessed lover and the *Majnūn*-legend see Asʿad E. Khairallah: *Love, Madness and Poetry. An Interpretation of the Majnun Legend*. Wiesbaden, Beirut 1980 (Beiruter Texte und Studien; 25); and Khairallah's article: The Individual and Society. Ṣalāḥ ʿAbdaṣṣabūr's Laylā wal-Majnūn, in: Johann Christoph Bürgel, Stephan Guth (eds.): *Gesellschaftlicher Umbruch und Historie im zeitgenössischen Drama der islamischen Welt*. Beirut 1995 (Beiruter Texte und Studien; 60), 161-178; for modern interpretations of the *Majnūn*-legend see also: Angelika Neuwirth: Idealität und Verwirklichungsängste. Zu einer modernen Bearbeitung des Majnūn-Laylā-Stoffes bei Ṣalāḥ ʿAbdaṣṣabūr, in: *ibid.* 205-234.

7 For different types of intertextuality and the intertextual potentialities of contemporary Arabic poetry cf. my article Intertextuelle Bezüge zeitgenössischer arabischer Poesie zur arabischen Dichtungstradition, in: Verena Klemm, Beatrice Gruendler (eds.): *Understanding Near Eastern Literatures. A spectrum of Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Wiesbaden: Reichert 2000 (Literaturen im Kontext; 1), 37-57.

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writers (poets) so far did not present images based on gender-criteria of the city that contrast the male vision, i.e. a woman's love-affair with the male-city Beirut or an explicitly different view of the city-woman aiming at the deconstruction of the predominantly male discourse which very often employs female images and the woman's body as (the) essential signs of the city.

The francophone Lebanese poetess Nadia Tuéni uses very similar images of womanliness for the characterization of Beirut as her male colleagues. Her poem *Beyrouth* (1979)[8] starts with a comparison between Beirut and the courtesan. The city is continuously addressed as "she": Beirut is a woman, indeed with very different faces which point to her ability to assemble all these multiple identities in her body whereas she remains in any case a female, a city-woman:

> Qu'elle soit courtisane, érudite, ou dévote
> (…)
> Qu'elle soit religieuse, ou qu'elle soit sorcière,
> ou qu'elle soit les deux, ou qu'elle soit charnière,
> (…)
> qu'elle soit adorée ou qu'elle soit maudite,
> qu'elle soit sanguinaire, ou qu'elle soit d'eau bénite,
> qu'elle soit innocente, ou qu'elle soit meurtrière,
> (…)

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8 We have to bear in mind here the conventional identification between woman and the homeland, especially in modern Palestinian poetry. Generally speaking, the city in modern Arabic literature is nearly always associated one-sidedly with a female as it is obvious from previous studies; cf. Shumuel Moreh: Town and Country in Modern Arabic Poetry from Shawqī to Sayyāb, in: Sh. M.: *Studies in Modern Arabic Prose and Poetry*. Leiden: Brill, 1988, 136-186; Iḥsān ʿAbbās: al-Mawqif min al-madīna, in: I. ʿA.: *Ittijāhāt al-shiʿr al-ʿarabī al-muʿāṣir*. Kuwayt: al-Majlis al-waṭanī li-l-thaqāfah, 1979, 111-136.

For the overwhelming majority of writers, male and female alike, it seems to be a self-evident issue to speak about the city-'woman' Beirut. Arabic academic research in this field did so far not reflect thoroughly on the problem of gender based city-images in contemporary Arabic poetry, cf. Muna Takieddine Amyuni's *La Ville Source D'Inspiration*, 135-171. She does not discuss this issue from a gender point of view but on the contrary underlines the strong affinity between woman and city: "Ville et femme ont des affinités primordiales, car les deux sont sources de vie, d'amour et de mort. Leur relation est peut-être encore plus viscérale que celle de l'homme et de la ville" (187). Evelyine Accad (*Des Femmes, Des Hommes Et La Guerre. Fiction et Réalité*. Paris: côté-femmés éditions, 1993, 204-217) concludes that women do not make use of the identification of female, city and whore like their male colleagues but do not criticize this male approach until now except with silence, i.e. through the non-utilization of these metaphors. Mai Ghoussoub, a London based Lebanese writer and sculptor, may be one of the first woman writer's to ironize the gender based city-images. See the chapter on Beirut night life in a downtown local cabaret called Masrah Farouk in her memoir to Beirut: *Leaving Beirut. Women and the Wars within*. London: Saqi Books 1999, 34-40.

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> Beyrouth est en orient le dernier sanctuaire,
> ou l'homme peut toujours s'habiller de lumière.[9]

Since the 'Whore of Babylon' in the Revelation of St. John the Divine city and woman have been continuously identified: The metaphorical transformation of the city into a woman and the embodiment of the city in her body and beauty represent a constant phenomenon and literary means in modern Arabic 'city-writings' as well as in much Western prose and poetry.[10]

> Hidden underneath the image of a female figure, *al-madīna* as the city or as Society occupies the very center of an allegorical subtext in numerous works of modern literature. (...) The stereotypical appearance of the female personification of society in modern Arabic Literature is hardly explicable without considering an encounter with comparable allegories frequent in western literature since the French Revolution.[11]

Beirut as much as other Near Eastern cities is depicted as the beloved, as a *femme fatale* and a prostitute. The poet is torn between his love for this city-woman and his hatred of her who rejects him.[12] The dialectic of the lusty, seductive city-woman prevails in much of the city-images of modern Arabic literature.[13]

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9 Nadia Tuéni: liban: 20 poèmes pour un amour, in: *Les Œuvres poétiques complètes*. Beirut: Editions Dar Nahar, ³1986, 275-298; 278. English translation by Dar Nahār:

> Let her be a courtesan, a scholar or a saint
> (...)
> Let her be a nun or sorceress or both
> Or let her be the hinge
> (...)
> let her be adored or let her be cursed
> let her be thirsty for blood or holy water,
> let her be innocent or let her be murderess.
> (...)
> Beirut is the last place in the Orient
> Where man can dress himself in light.

10 For the images of the city-woman in Western Literature and its development cf. Weigel's article, *op. cit.* Fn 3; Marina Warner: *Monuments & Maidens. The Allegory of the Female Form*. London 1985; Karlheinz Stierle: *Der Mythos von Paris*. München 1993.

11 Angelika Neuwirth: Introduction, in: Angelika Neuwirth, Sebastian Günther, Birgit Embaló, Maher Jarrar (eds.): *Myths, Historical Archtetypes and Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature*, xix-xx.

12 Cf. Embaló: The City, Mythical Images and their Deconstruction, 588-589.

13 See Moreh: *Studies*, 154; 'Abbās: *Ittijāhāt*, 114-115. We should bear in mind once again that nearly all the literary works under consideration in these studies have been written by male authors.

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Direct Arab prototypes for the female personification of the city (and the society it stands for) can be found for example in Abū Tammāms celebrated poem for the commemoration of the conquest of *ʿAmmūrīya*, the Byzantine strong-hold which after more than two hundred years of embattlement finally felt to the ʿAbbasid caliphat in 838. The conquered city is described as "a virgin, whom the hand of fate had not deflowered."[14] Once the victorious male acquire power over the female city the poet mixes the image of the conquered city with their open sexual aggression and the raping of the city's women.[15]

Representations of the city: from idealization to a space of crisis

In a considerable amount of works from classical Arabic literature the city was depicted in idealized terms as the most desirable space of human life, quite often portraying it as *Paradise on earth*.[16] With its green places, its springs, rivers and gardens, its location amidst mostly semi-arid landscapes the city became an oasis and secure asylum; its beauty and waters were compared with the Garden of Eden.[17] At the turn to the twentieth century Arab capitals were still imagined by similar metaphors: In Aḥmad Shawqī's verses Cairo is "a spring of paradise" (*ʿayn min al-khuld*), Damascus with its gardens is described as "Paradise" (*janna*), comparing the river of Baradā with Riḍwān, the doorkeeper of Paradise.[18]

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14 Translation taken from the article of Suzanne P. Stetkevytch: "The Abbasid Poet interprets History. Three Qasidahs by Abū Tammām," *JAL* 10 (1979), 49-64.

15 Cf. Heiko Wimmen: ʿAmmūriyyah as a Female Archetype. Deconstruction of a Mythical Subtext from Abū Tammām to Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā / ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Munīf, in: Angelika Neuwirth, Sebastian Günther, Birgit Embaló, Maher Jarrar (eds.): *Myths, Historical Archtetypes and Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature*, 573-582; 574-575.

16 Generally speaking, this 'city-paradise' consisted of some elementary and repeatable patterns. Cf. Gustave E. von Grunebaum: *Kritik und Dichtkunst. Studien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1955, 54-55. Especially impressive is the magnificant glorification of al-Baṣra, the native town of Abū Qāsim Muḥammad al-Ḥarīrī, in his last *maqāma* (al-Baṣrīya).
Critical views of the city and urban life which were also quite common in classical *adab*-works did not result in a general refusal of the city and the urban model. On the contrary, it seems that the high valuation of the city as an outstanding achievement of civilization – based on its superiority to country and especially Bedouin life – never decreased, cf. Grunebaum: *ibid.*, 56-57.

17 Cf. Moreh: *Studies*, 137.

18 Aḥmad Shawqī: *al-Shawqīyāt*. Cairo 1930, Vol. II, 128f. See also Moreh: *Studies*, 138 for further detail.

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From the 1950s new images of the city emerged in the poetry of the younger generation of the *Free-Verse-Movement* who had been influenced by socialist and existentialist writings alike. Poets like ʿAbdalwahhāb al-Bayātī, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb and Adūnīs, who all had grown up in the countryside, were shocked by the capitals of their homelands ever since their first encounter with the modern Arab metropolis. Instead of being the appropriate space for realizing their visions of liberty – intellectual and individual freedom – the Arab capitals turned out to be ugly, destructive and corrupt places. In the poetry of these leading modern Arab poets the metropolis (or capital city of their respective homelands) is seen as spatial representation of modern Western civilization, particularly its negative aspects, i.e. exploitative capitalism, decline of moral values, spiritual emptiness and loss of emotional safety.[19]

Their images make it very obvious that the representation of 'the city' (*al-madīna*) has almost totally changed: from a predominately idealistic depiction in classical Arabic literature into a portrayal of a hostile and threatening environment. At the same time the countryside also appears in negative terms. Whereas the city has become the victim of industrialization and modernization, the rural areas are attacked due to backwardness, poverty and feudal structures.[20]

Thus, no spatial dimension is available to which the poet could direct his dreams and where he could find a place to fulfill his most inner wishes. It is very likely that due to this spatial 'crisis' we often find ambiguous visions of the city-woman between love and hate, lust and desire, attraction and rejection, in short: the dialectics of love (*eros*) and death are at work.[21]

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19 Cf. ʿAbbās: al-Mawqif min al-madīna, 112.

20 Cf. Moreh: *Studies*, 147, 151.

21 al-Sayyāb, al-Bayyātī and Adūnīs, to mention only some poets, have identified the city with a prostitute and a seductive woman in several poems. In "Faṣl min al-dumūʿ" (in: *Kitāb al-Taḥawwulāt*. Beirut 1965, 45-58) Adūnīs expresses the love-hatred relation with the woman-city Damascus in frank negative sexual imageries. In a poem of the late seventies "Quddās bi-la qaṣd" (in: *Kitāb al-qaṣāʾid al-khams talīhā al-muṭābaqāt wa-l-awāʾil*. Beirut 1980, 85-114) the poet is overwhelmed by his love for a young woman who is identified with the city of Damascus as much as the city for her part desires his body:

> I believe that you are the last body I contain,
> That is why I am afraid of you, o woman-city,
> But
> Take me to yourself
> O house of seduction, desire and ecstacy
> Whisper to me tenderly of your invisible world
> Fuse me in you, join me to you (...)

Translated by Issa J. Boullata in his article Textual Intentions: A Reading Of Adonis Poem 'Unintended Worship Ritual,' *Middle East Journal* 21 (1989), 541-562; 545.

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It was the special merit of the famous Egyptian poet and dramatist Ṣalāḥ ʿAbdaṣṣabūr to provide us with one of the first fine contributions of this ambivalent city image as well as a contemporary interpretation of the Majnūn legend.[22] In his play *Laylā wa-l-Majnūn* (1970) Cairo is simultaneously presented as a seductive young woman, the raped beloved and the mother (i.e. the Egyptian nation). ʿAbdaṣṣabūr's play is considered highly important for the further development of the image of the city-woman and her male partner/the Majnūn-poet due to the fact that the Egyptian author doubts the demand and ability of the contemporary Arab poet to give identity to his city and to reaffirm his role as her representative speaker. Thus, ʿAbdaṣṣabūr draws our attention to the problematic self-image of the poet/the intellectual in contemporary Arab society. His Majnūn fails while Laylā — the ambivalent modern city/society — survives through her vitality.[23]

The identification of woman and city operates on the level of the female body and its double-edged evaluation. Her body is the vanishing point of longing and of fear at the same time.[24] The city in Arabic literature has acquired a double connotation: it is viewed as a space of desire and at the same time as a space of aberration, of endangering the social order.[25]

Who are the lovers of Beirut?

One may wonder why Beirut attracted so many Arab writers, and especially poets have composed love poetry for the city. This phenomenon is easily understandable when we take the general cultural background into consideration. Intellectuals, artists and creative writers from all over the Arab world have found their adopted homeland and their creative *waṭan* in the pre-war city and even in Beirut at war-times (the early seventies). No other city in the Near East could offer such cultural temptations and open-mindedness or provide the appropriate environment of freedom on all levels which is necessary for creativity. The foremost exponents of contemporary Arab avant-garde poetry (like Adūnīs, Yūsuf al-Khāl, Unsī

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22 I am most grateful to my colleague Prof. Angelika Neuwirth for her remarks concerning the importance of ʿAbdaṣṣabūr's play for the image of the city-woman.

23 Cf. Introduction (7-23) by Angelika Neuwirth to the German translation of Ṣalāḥ ʿAbdaṣṣabūr's *Laylā wa-l-Maǧnūn*: *Layla und der Besessene*. Ed. Angelika Neuwirth. Transl. Ibrahim Abu Hashhash, Harald Funk, Gabriele Müller, Angelika Neuwirth et al.. Bamberg 1991.

24 Cf. Weigel: Weiblichkeit, 40-41.

25 Cf. Neuwirth: Introduction, xix-xx.

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al-Ḥājj, Khalīl Ḥāwī and others) gathered together in Beirut, founded their magazines and developed their poetical and literary theories in the Lebanese capital. [26]

Among other leading Arab *literati* the significance of Beirut as the Arabic capital of liberty and creativity holds especially true for Nizār Qabbānī and Maḥmūd Darwīsh. Both of them spent formative periods of their creative life in Beirut. Indeed, Qabbānī has written quite a lot of his important poems in Beirut, as for example *Kitāb al-ḥubb*, *Qāmūs al-ʿāšiqīn* and *Qaṣīdat Balqīs*. Darwīsh composed some of his major works in Beirut, among them texts concerning the Palestinian revolution and the city of Beirut, partly written in the aftermarch of his Lebanese experience: *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt* (The poem of Beirut, 1981), *Aḥmad al-Zaʿtar* (Ahmed, the man of thyme, 1976, on the heroic resistance of the Palestinian camp Tall al-Zaʿtar), *Madīḥ al-ẓill al-ʿalī* (Praising the high shadow, 1983, i.e. the Palestinian revolution and besieged Beirut) and finally his elegy and farewell for besieged Beirut *Dhākira li-l-nisyān* (Memory for Forgetfulness, 1986). After the siege of Beirut and his *hijra* to another exile, namely to Paris, Darwīsh called his Beirut period (1972-1982) *junūn Bayrūt*, the *madness* of Beirut, pointing simultaneously to his obsessive love for the city and to the extremely difficult conditions for creative writing while the poet is engaged so deeply in the political scene as Darwīsh was in the milieu of the Palestinian revolution in Beirut.[27]

We can notice that the obsessed lovers of Beirut are predominately Arab poets who came into the city from outside, were adopted by its cosmopolitan climate and fascinated by its very rich cultural life. All of them fall in love with the city as asylum of liberty amidst the desert and often expressed this feeling of a whole generation of Arab literary elite by writing love poetry for Beirut, the female, the adored woman.

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26 For the extraordinary cultural role of Beirut and its intellectual and literary scene see: Muna Amyuni: *La Ville*, 158; Angelika Neuwirth, Andreas Pflitsch: *Agonie und Aufbruch. Neue Libanesische Prosa*. Beirut: Dergham 2000, 8-13.

Maḥmūd Darwīsh describes the cultural and creative Beirut in *Dhākira li-l-nisyān* (*Memory for Forgetfulness*. English translation by Ibrahim Muhawi, Berkely, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995) in the following words: "This city printed books, distributed newspapers, and held seminars and conferences to solve the world's problems, but paid no attention to itself. It was busy sticking out a mocking tongue at the sand and the repression on all sides on it. It was a workshop for freedom" (English translation, 52-53).

27 Cf. Maḥmūd Darwīsh: "Aṣbaḥtu qādiran ʿalā l-qatl," Interview given to Jirbil Dāghir for the Parisian Arab journal *al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, 13.10.1982, 48-55; 50.

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Freedom is the decisive criteria mentioned as main reason for their love-affair with Beirut. Nizār Qabbānī says: "We have shot on you with tribal spirit. So we killed a woman … called liberty."[28] For the Lebanese poetess Nadia Tuéni Beirut is "the last sanctuary for freedom in the Arab world."[29] Maḥmūd Darwīsh calls Beirut a "workshop of freedom,"[30] while Adūnīs compares Damascus, the "closed city" (*madīnat al-nihāyāt*) with Beirut "the open city" *(madīnat al-bidāyāt*), pointing by this to the enormous capability of the Lebanese capital for free dialogue with contemporary issues in a cosmopolitan climate.[31]

On the other hand, Lebanese poets did not love Beirut with this obsession; rather they had developed a critical point of view towards their capital, complaining of the city similar to Adūnīs laments of Damascus or Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb's of Bagdad. Certainly the most tragic love-affair with Beirut was that of Khalīl Ḥāwī who committed suicide on the first days of the Israeli invasion (June 1982), as he interpreted this new Israeli attack against Lebanon as the definite and irrevocable end of Beirut's freedom and extraordinary position in the Arabic culture. Suffering from depression since a long time Ḥāwī could not stand this last blow.[32]

Nizār Qabbānī: Beirut, Balqīs and "The Queen of the World"

Coming back to Beirut from his London exile for a reading at the AUB in December 1992 the Syrian poet Nizār Qabbānī (1923-1998) opened the evening with a lyrical speech, entitled *Ḥurrīya lā tashīkh* (Freedom is ageless), on his never-ending love for Beirut, presenting the following verses of pure love poetry:

Ayyuhā l-aḥibbā'
Anā majnūnu Bayrūt
Wa-lan yastaṭiʿa aḥadun an yakhṭafahā minnī .. au yaktub
ʿanhā afḍala minnī .. au yughāzilahā aḥsana minnī

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28 Yā Sitta l-dunyā yā Bayrūt, in: *Ilā Bayrūt al-unthā … maʿa ḥubbī*. Beirut: Manshūrāt Nizār Qabbānī, 1977, 27-47; 30.

29 Tuéni's poem *Beyrouth* (1979), Fn 9.

30 Darwīsh's prose-elegy *Dhākira li-l-nisyān* (*Memory for Forgetfulness*), Fn. 24, 52-53.

31 Ṣaqr Abū Fakhr: *Ḥiwār maʿa Adūnīs: al-ṭufūla, al-shiʿr, al-manfā*. Beirut: al-Muʿassasa al-ʿArabīya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashr, 2000, 59-66.

32 For Ḥāwī's poetical writings and his depressive mental status cf. Foud Ajami: *The Dream Palace of the Arabs. A Generation's Odyssey*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998, 82-100.

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Hādhā laysa kalāman sirrīyan .. lakinnahu kalāmun turaddiduhu kullu amwāj allatī talʿab ʿalā shāṭiʾ fundūq as-Sān Jūrj (St Georges).[33]

Dear Friends,
I am the obsessed lover of Beirut
Nobody will be able to wrench her from me .. or to write
About her superior to me .. or to flirt with her better than I
These are no secret words .. no, these words are echoed by all
the waves that play with the beach at Hotel St Georges.[34]

This short passage combines the essence of Qabbānī's love poetry for Beirut which he has written over a time period of roughly forty years. By reaffirming his obsessed love, his being the Majnūn lover of Beirut who composes the most impressive love poetry for his beloved Qabbānī places himself in the tradition of Majnūn lovers of classical ghazal.

At the same time the Syrian poet obviously is involved in a contemporary *munāẓara* (poetry dispute[35]) with his most important opponent in love poetry for Beirut, the Palestinian Maḥmūd Darwīsh. After presenting the Palestinian (love-)vision of the city in his long poem *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt* (1981) – which is undoubtedly the best single poem about contemporary Beirut – Darwīsh had complained of the non-existence of critical profound poetry about Beirut in *Dhākira li-l-nisyān* and in later interviews. [36]

Some very important elements which are central to classical ghazal-poetry can be identified quite easily in the above verses of Qabbānī: obsessed love (*junūn*), the beloved is unattainable, i.e. Beirut as the brilliant city in its pre-war shape does not exist anymore. Through his longing for her in

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33 Niẓār Qabbāni: Bayrūt .. ḥurrīyatun lā tashikh, in: *al-Aʿmāl al-nathrīya al-kāmila*. Vol. 8. Beirut: Manshūrāt Nizār Qabbānī, 1993, 765-775; 773.

34 Translations into English of Arabic poetry are, if not noted differently, by the author of this article.

35 For this kind of debate and its development in various fields of writing including *belles lettres* from the classical period onwards cf. E. Wagner: art. Munāẓara, in: *EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam²*, Vol. VIII, 563-568.

36 In *Dhākira li-l-nisyān* Darwīsh says: "Beirut has not been the subject of song, and Lebanese poetry has not used the word "Beirut," though it fits into all the Arabic meters. A musical name which can flow smoothly into a verse or a prose poem." (*Dhākira li-l-nisyān/Memory of Forgetfulness*, 37). See also Mahmoud Darwish: *Palästina als Metapher. Gespräche über Literatur und Politik*, 77-78. This is a collection of interviews (mostly in Arabic) which was published in French under the title *La Palestine comme métaphore* by Actes-Sud, Paris 1997, and in German by Palmyra, Heidelberg 1998. The statement of Darwīsh concerning Beirut is part of an interview given to ʿAbbās Baydūn, originally published in Arabic in the magazine *al-Wasaṭ* (Beirut) in 1995.

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ghazal-poetry the poet tries to get over the loss of real Beirut (or his image of her likeness) in his poetical imaginations.

Nizār Qabbānī[37] is considered one of the most popular and famous contemporary Arab poets of love poetry. After the traumatic June war 1967 he also started composing bitter political verses against the Arab mentality and the backwardness and tyranny of its authoritarian regimes. He heavily blamed Arab political leadership for the lack of a strong position against Israel. Quitting the Syrian diplomatic service in 1966 after more than two decades of work in the political arena, Qabbānī settled down in Beirut. Thus, he finally made the Lebanese capital which had been his intellectual and cultural homeland ever since, his real home too:

> Beirut moistened me with the rain of poetry from head to foot. She supplied me with provisions of poetry from which I still eat when I am hungry. I cannot compare Beirut with any other city, she stands on one side … and all the women of the world are on the other side.[38]

For Qabbānī Beirut is also the *locus* of his personal destiny and love-story. After getting a divorce from his first Syrian wife, the love of his life, the Iraqi teacher Balqīs al-Rāwī moved to Beirut as a cultural attaché of the Iraqi Embassy and they married in 1973.[39] According to Qabbānī, Balqīs had inspired his love poetry "like no other woman did."[40] Many verses of the collection *Ilā Bayrūt al-unthā .. maʿa ḥubbī* (*To Beirut, the female .. with my love*), which will be discussed in some detail below, illustrate how he masterly interweaves the image of the real woman he tenderly loved with the city of Beirut, political lament and a sad awareness of contemporary Arab history.

Balqīs was killed in 1981 when pro-Iranian terrorists blew up the Iraqi Embassy in Beirut where she worked. After her tragic death Qabbānī who

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37 A brief sketch of Qabbānī's life and work is presented by Andreas Pflitsch: "Nizār Qabbānī (1923-1998). Von Dichtung belagert, bedrängt und besessen," in: *Beiruter Blätter* 5 (Orient-Institut Beirut, 1997), 87-91; for Qabbānīs poetical self-conception cf. Stefan Wild: Nizār Qabbānī's Autobiography: Images of Sexuality, Death and Poetry, in: Roger Allen, Hilary Kilpatrick, Ed de Moor (eds.): *Love and Sexuality in Modern Arabic Literature*. London: Saqi Books, 1995, 200-209; a general overview of his work is given in the two-volume study: Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm (ed.): *Nizār – shāʿir kulla l-ajyāl*. Kuwait 1998.

38 Nizār Qabbānī: *al-Aʿmāl al-nathrīya al-kāmila*. Vol. 8. Beirut: Manshūrāt Nizār Qabbānī, 1993, 551.

39 Cf. Adel Darwish: Nizar Qabbani: The Poet who challenged Arab Taboos, in: *Middle East Review of International Affairs* (Meria), 10.6.1998, 1-6; 2-3.

40 Cf. Adel Darwish: *Nizar Qabbani*, 3.

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had spent most of the war-time in Beirut left the 'beloved' to take refuge in Switzerland and later in London. Thus, different layers of ghazal-poetry overlap in Qabbānī's Beirut poems:

1. the very special, personal love relation with his wife,
2. the love for Beirut as cultural homeland of the Arab intellectual and literary elite,
3. the tragedy of the loss of the beloved city-woman, i.e. destruction and death on the individual and collective level in war-ravaged Beirut.

Apart from some poems about the cities in which he lived due to his diplomatic work (Cairo, Ankara, London, Madrid, Peking) Qabbānī has written extensively about Damascus, first and foremost expressing his longing for his home-town in romantic poetry.[41] Connected firmly with his mother, Qabbānī's poems about the Syrian capital are focused on his love for his city and the ideal childhood he spent in a traditional Damascene environment:

> Damascus is the womb in which I have learnt poetry,
> she taught me the literary expression
> she has given me the alphabet of Yasmin.[42]

The city-images of this 'mother-home' stand side by side with his poems for Beirut who is Qabbānī's woman in a wider and comprehensive meaning: she is his beloved (the romantic and erotic love), she is his wife (for whom he feels loyalty and responsibility) and she is the mother of his two children with Balqīs as well as the substitute for the poet's own mother after her death in 1978.

Qabbānī dedicated the collection *Ilā Bayrūt al-unṭā maʿa ḥubbī* (*To Beirut the female, with my love*)[43] entirely to Beirut. It was published in late 1976 after the first period of the Lebanese strife, the 'two years war' of 1975-76.[44] In all the poems he addresses Beirut as the *city-woman* and his beloved. In other texts, also mostly written after the outbreak of the Lebanese war, the Syrian poet deals with Beirut in similar images,

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41 The poems of Damascus are collected in: Nizār Qabbānī: *Dimashq Nizār Qabbānī*. Damascus: Dār al-Ahālī, 1995 and Beirut: Manshūrāt Nizār Qabbāni, 1999.

42 Nizār Qabbānī: *Dimashq Nizār Qabbānī*, 63. Nizār uses the term *raḥm*, the womb of his mother, which evokes the Arabic term for mercy/*raḥma*.

43 Beirut: Manshūrāt Nizār Qabbānī, 1976.

44 The first two years of war-strife in Beirut 1975/76 are called in Arabic: *ḥarb as-sanatayn*, i.e. "the two years war."

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always describing the city in terms of ghazal-poetry as his "lady" and his "*ḥabība*."[45] In the most impressive poem of his Beirut collection, *Yā Sitta l-dunyā yā Bayrūt* (*Beirut! O Queen of the World*),[46] Qabbānī presents the city of Beirut as the ultimate perfection of womanliness and beauty.

> There was nothing before you …
> nothing after you …
> nothing like you
> you are the essence of time.[47]

With the reference to the Lebanese capital as *Queen of the World* an intertextual relation with city-images of classical Arabic Literature is already established in the poem's title. Indeed, Qabbānī's vision of Beirut in *Yā Sitta l-dunyā yā Bayrūt* (*Beirut! O Queen of the World*) remains to a large extent within the frame of an *idealized female city*, as it was shaped in classical literature (see above), endowing the city with mythical significance through paradisiacal metaphors.

The *city-woman* Beirut is a radiant princess, her body is as delicate as a nymph; she is a beautiful pearl, the lily of the world, a Damask rose and the jewel of the night.[48] Parallel to this discourse of *beauty* a second discourse of *destruction* focuses on the bleeding wounds of the *city-woman* and the mutilation of her unique beauty through the civil war.[49]

Beirut – the *Queen of the World* – harmed the Arabs with her irresistible seductive power so much that they misused their beloved woman and fired on their mistress with tribal spirit.[50] Instead of treating the *Queen of the World* with dignity and the appropriate love and respect, they victimized

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45 See among others the poem *Maʿa l-Bayrūtīya*, in: *al-Aʿmāl al-shiʿrīya al-kāmila*, Vol. I, 689-692 (Beirut: Manshūrāt Nizār Qabbānī, 1978); the collection *Uḥibbuki, uḥibbuki wa-l-bāqīya taʾtī*, in: *al-Aʿmāl al-shiʿrīya al-kāmila*, Vol. I; *Arbaʿu rasāʾil sāḏija ilā Bayrūt* and *Muḥāwala tashkilīya li-rasm Bayrūt*; in: *Tazawwajtuki..ayyatuhā l-ḥurrīya*. Beirut: Manshūrāt Nizār Qabbānī, 1987, 95-106.

46 In: *Ilā Bayrūt al-unṯā*, 27-47; English translation of the poem by Mona Takyeddine Amyuni: *Beirut! O Queen of the World*, in: *The Literary Review* (Bearing Witness: Recent Literature from Lebanon), Vol. 37, 3 (Spring 1994), 498-502. All references and quotations of the poem are taken from this translation.

47 *Beirut! O Queen of the World*, 499.

48 *Ibid.*, 499, 501.

49 The golden nails of the Queen of the World were cut, the joy in her green eyes was killed, her lovely lips burnt, her face slashed with a knife and the ashes of civil war spread on her breast (*Beirut! O Queen of the World*, 498-499).

50 *Ibid.*, 500.

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her, made love to her like migrant Bedouins and left her alone, burdened with their sins.[51]

Qabbānī reflects on the Lebanese civil war in terms of a love-affair between the *city-woman* and the male warriors. In his view the latter have fallen victim of female seduction, whereas the city-woman, the true victim, is blamed to be responsible for her own destruction due to her *erotic* power. By exchanging the roles of victim and culprit Qabbānī gives a distorted picture of the male-female relations and exculpates the unjust lovers of the *city-woman* Beirut from the responsibility of their acting.

For Qabbānī the reputation of the (male) warriors can be re-established by the means of confession, including the remission of their sins. At the end of the poem the purified lover wants to reunite with his *city-woman*. He has fallen in eternal love with Beirut in spite of her mutilation, urging her to accept his love again:

> I still love you, fair Beirut
> Terror-struck Beirut (...)
> I still love you impassioned Beirut
> City of slaughter
> I still love you despite human folly (...)
> Why don't we start again right now?[52]

With the longing for a mythical rebirth of the *city-woman*/the *lost paradise* Beirut Qabbānī closes this poem. The poet begs the *Queen of the World* to awake from death to her previous glory and majestic beauty,[53] identifying her with ʿIshtār (Astarte). Thus, the sacrifice and bloodshed of Beirut at war are transformed into a sign of hope for new life and the *rebirth* of the city (501).[54]

In a long elegy (*rithāʾ*), entitled *Qaṣīdat Balqīs*,[55] in which Qabbānī mourns for his beloved wife immediately after her tragic death, we can find some similar images that demonstrate how far the real woman and the city of Beirut are intermixed in the poetical visions of Qabbānī. The poem includes the *la-tabʿad* topos of classical elegy, imploring the dead to not forsake the living people:

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51 *Ibid.*, 498, 500.

52 *Ibid.*, 502.

53 *Ibid.*, 499, 501.

54 For a more detailed interpretation of this poem cf. my article (Fn 5).

55 Written immediately after the death of Balqīs on 15.12.1981 and published for the first time in Qabbānī's handwriting in *al-Mustaqbal* (Beirut), No 259, 6.2.1982. English translation in: Foud Ajami: *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*, 113-114.

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Balqīs, don't be absent from me,
After you, the sun doesn't shine on the shore.
(...)
Balqīs ... oh princess,
You burn caught between tribal wars
What will I write about the departure of my queen?
Indeed, words are my scandal...
Here we look through piles of victims
For a star that fell, for a body strewn like fragments of a mirror
Here we ask, oh my love:
Was this your grave
Or the grave of Arab nationalism?
(...)
Balqīs ...
I beg your forgiveness.
Perhaps your life was the ransom of my own,
Indeed I know well
That the purpose of those who were entangled in murder was to kill my words
Rest in God's care, oh beautiful one,
Poetry, after you, is impossible.[56]

Beirut, the *Queen of the World*, is now presented as the victim-city, the "Star of the East" (*Kawkab al-sharq*) has fallen down, the city and Balqīs' body being killed by the civil war and splintered into fragments of a mirror so that they lost their identity and became a grave. The poet fears that the death of his beloved Balqīs-Beirut might lead to his falling into silence, to the incapability to compose any further (love-)poetry. The fear of the loss of creativity has to be interpreted as a literary topos, i.e. the expression of the poet's pen of the *crisis of letters* and an outcry to stop writing against such unbearable hardship as the current Arab political condition.[57]

In the poem *Seven lost letters to Beirut, the female* (*Sabʿa rasāʾil ḍāʾiʿa ilā Bayrūt al-unthā*, from the collection *Ilā Bayrūt al-unthā maʿa ḥubbī* (1976, 51-64) Qabbānī makes use of main thematic units of classical ghazal poetry in a more or less conventional interpretation.

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56 *Innanī la-ʿarifu jayyidan*
an alladhīna tawaraṭū fi l-qatl kāna murāduhum
an yaqtulū kalimātī
Translation according to Ajami: *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*, 113-114.

57 *Ibid.*, 112, 114.

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The poet presents himself as a Majnūn, as an obsessed lover of poetry and of the woman – Beirut.[58] At the same time his love is completely dominated and overshadowed by the destructive and destroying war situation in Beirut. The war damaged the landscape and topography of Beirut on such a large scale that the poet can hardly remember the face of his beloved. The poet himself as representative of the inhabitants of Beirut and above all its literary elite, is no better off: His hands, his body and his lips have been mutilated by the war.[59] Thus, he is not able to love anymore or to write poetry. The poems themselves have also been deformed by the thousand bullets that entered into the body of poetry. Therefore, to meet the beloved and to unite with her proves to be impossible:

> Thousands of roadblocks
> Stand between your eyes and me
> They have fired on the dream and they have killed it
> They have fired on the love and they have killed it
> They have fired on the sea, the sun, the flowers
> And the children's books, they have cut the long hair of Beirut
> And they have stolen the beautiful life in her.[60]

The loss of the beloved *city-woman* constitutes the main subject in the third (love-)letter. Qabbānī successfully presents the *city-woman* as a real human being gaining vitality and truthfulness through depicting some scenes of everyday life in Beirut, for example important localities in the city and famous Beiruti food:

> They robbed the Thyme-bread (*manqūsha*) from our hands
> They took away the seaside-promenade (Corniche) and the mussels
> They robbed the sand which was covering our bodies
> They took away the age of poetry (*zaman al-shiʿr*), o my beloved pearl
> And the poems which sprang from our fingers like red cherries.[61]

Beirut was likewise robbed off all attributes and qualities of a lovely city. They – the never identified collective enemy – have even stolen the sapphire (*al-yawāqīt*) which the poet brought from the end of the world for the robe of his princess.[62]

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58 Qabbānī: *Sabʿa rasāʾil ḍāʾiʿa ilā Bayrūt al-unthā*, 51.

59 *Ibid.*, 53.

60 *Ibid.*, 54.

61 *Ibid.*, 55.

62 *Ibid.*, 56.

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These enemies of Beirut whom Qabbānī directly addresses in another poem from 1988, calling them "the friends of the wound in Beirut,"[63] have sold the beloved Beirut (the moon-round face/*Qamr Bayrūt*) and given up Beirut-paradise (*janna*) to live in ruins – *aṭlāl* – instead.[64]

The beloved is completely unattainable and/or non-existent. She cannot be touched by her lovers anymore, however hard they try. Nevertheless, in accordance with the ghazal tradition only the beloved can bring salvation to the poet. At the end, the poet expresses his deep desperation and grief for the destruction of the beloved city, without leaving much hope for a revival of the beloved and their love-relation in the near future.

Ayna anti al-āna ... yā man lam ajid fī hādihi l-ghāba ...
ṣadran yaḥtawīnī ... ghayr anti?[65]

(Where are you now … you for I didn't find in this brushwood anyone
on whose heart I could rest than you?)

The loss of the beloved - no substitute for Beirut

As much as the poet may wish to forget Beirut, the beloved mistress, Qabbānī is unable to soothe the lover's grief through suppression. The topography of Beirut, the landscape of the city is carved in his memory with all detail. This beloved does not release him, poet and city are for ever joined together as their common destiny:

I tried to eliminate the city of Beirut from my memory
And to cancel all the streets in her
And all the restaurants and theatres
I tried to avoid all the cafés that know us both
And feel with a longing for us both
(…)

But your love is still rejecting all solutions
And takes hold of the soul at the end of the night like the sirens of the ship.[66]

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63 Arbaʿ rasāʾil sādhija ilā Bayrūt, in: *Tazawwajtuki ayyatuha l-ḥurrīya* (1988), 95-98; 96.

64 *Ibid.* 96-97.

65 *Sabʿa rasāʾil*, 56.

66 From the poem *al-Istiqāla*, in: *Uḥibbuki uḥibbuki wa-l-bāqīya tāʾtī, al-Aʿmāl al-shiʿrīya al-kāmila*, Vol. I, Beirut: Manshūrāt Nizār Qabbāni, 265-270; 268.

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Further poems of Qabbānī's Beirut collection like *Bayrūt maḥzīyatukum, Bayrūt ḥabībatī* and *Ilā Bayrūt al-unṭā maʿa l-iʿtiḏār* also reaffirm that the beloved Beirut is irretrievable. As much as the poet looks for a new beloved in exile, his efforts are doomed to failure.

> Like mad people we shouted from the top of the ship:
> You are Beirut
> And there is no other Beirut but you.[67]
>
> I explained to Beirut
> That thirty years of love are sufficient
> But she apologized to accept my excuse.[68]

Beirut is the uncontested poetical homeland of Qabbānī and as such a very high estimated place in the poet's biography: there exists no substitute for her: "*Lā badīla li-Bayrūt siwā Bayrūt*," meaning: "there is no option for Beirut than Beirut itself."[69] Qabbānī has been inspired by her very much as she taught him poetry, culture and civilization: "When I call her Sitta l-dunyā (*Queen of the world*) this name is not at all sufficient for the role she played. Where ever I shall stay in this world, it will be a place of transit which cannot eliminate Beirut from the map of my heart."[70]

Post-war images of Beirut, the city-woman

Nizār Qabbānī does not unfold an explicit and concrete vision of post-war Beirut. In some poems of the late eighties, like *Muḥāwala tashkīlīya li-rasm Bayrūt*[71] the idea of Beirut's *rebirth* and the return of the beloved to her previous glory come along as a fond wish without too much insistence of its virtual realization.

According to Fouad Ajami[72] Qabbānī made a statement on pre-war Beirut, the city of poetry and pleasures, and the situation in the early nineties urging the Arab people to break with mythical images of Beirut:

> We must have the courage to admit that the war in Lebanon has overturned the old Lebanon. Some of us may dream of young Beirut, of

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67 *Bayrūt maḥzīyatukum, Bayrūt ḥabībatī*, 80.

68 *al-Istiqāla*, 270.

69 Nizār Qabbānī: *al-Aʿmāl al-nathrīya al-kāmila*. Vol. 8, 527.

70 *Ibid*, 551-552.

71 in: *Tazawwajtuki ayyatuhā l-ḥurrīya*, 100-106.

72 Ajami: *Dream Palace of the Arabs,* 112, unfortunately this source from Qabānī is not mentioned in detail.

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> the playful city that enthralled millions of men, but we must be realistic and consider the city before us. Nothing remains of old Beirut except the scent of it that blows from old notebooks.[73]

Let us come back now to Qabbānī's speech *Ḥurrīya lā tashīkh* (Freedom is ageless)[74] at the AUB in December 1992. To my knowledge it was his last poetical manifest to Beirut and the only one written after the end of the 'civil war' in Lebanon (after the Ṭā'if-Agreement).

Ḥurrīya lā tashīkh demonstrates that the poet did not change his idealized image of the beloved city-woman Beirut substantially due to the war experience. Although Qabbānī admits that men and women are changing with the passing of time and even love itself might be a subject to change,[75] the city of Beirut remains Qabbānī's myth. In contradiction to the poet's above mentioned position against the mythization of Beirut the city in his speech *Bayrūt ... ḥurrīya lā tashīkh* seems to rebel time and again against the natural rhythm of life, time and death: she is the eternal young woman, living in a continuous re-creation process, based on freedom as the decisive factor that lets her stay for ever young and the beloved lady:

> After seventeen years I embrace the beautiful Beirut,
> I embrace her as the friend, as the mistress, as the young girl who refuses to get old
> Is Beirut still a young girl? They may ask
> Yes, .. yes, she is still the prettiest one (*sitta l-ṣabāyā*)
> Freedom is the secret prescription and the magic which prevent
> Beirut from getting old.
> Only free cities do not have deep lines in their faces.[76]
> (...)
> I embrace Beirut as if I am embracing a girl in her school uniform (...)
> Her face is still as round as the moon
> And her laughter sparkles as bright as a piece of crystal
> Her eyes keep all the myths of the Mediterranean Sea.[77]

Qabbānī soon drops into pure *nostalgia* remembering those places of (pre-war) Beirut where he spent important and happy days of his life, like the Corniche with the sellers of *manqūsha*, the small boats of the fishermen at the harbor of Ain Mreise, the cafés in Hamra-Street, the garden of the

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73. Qabbānī in: Ajami: *ibid.*, 113.
74. Bayrūt .. ḥurrīya lā tashīkh, in: *al-Aʿmāl al-nathrīya al-kāmila*, 765-775.
75. *Ibid.*, 765.
76. *Ibid.*, 768.
77. *Ibid.*, 769.

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American University of Beirut, and the Riad el-Solh Place at the heart of Beirut.[78]

More than ever before Qabbānī presents himself in 1992 as the Majnūn-lover of Beirut. Nobody loves the city as much as he does despite of his long absence and exile. These only intensified his love and further deepened his relation with the beloved Beirut (see above p. 227f.). The Syrian poet totally identifies himself with the city.[79] She is his home, whereas he continuously feels estranged and as an eternal wanderer in the many other cities he lived in or visited. Only in Beirut his feet stand on firm ground:

> In Beirut, I feel myself at home .. and in my bed. The ground beneath me has stopped trembling. I feel that I moved from my rotten ship to safe land.[80]

Beirut is Qabbānī's myth of love and of creative work alike.[81] Only in Beirut is he able to write poems, this city has given him an amount of liberty ("the bread of freedom"[82]), cultural and intellectual heritage and inspiration ("the fruits of thinking"[83]) no other city could ever offer him. Therefore it is extremely difficult for Qabbānī to come to a mutual understanding with other cities. Beirut is so deeply involved in the "mechanism of creative writing" (*mikānīkīyat al-kitāba*) that the poet forgets reading and writing when he leaves Beirut.[84]

Maḥmūd Darwīsh: The Dialectics of Love and Death and a new interpretation of the Majnūn-lover

The beauty and seductive power of the beloved *city-woman* also prevail in Maḥmūd Darwīsh's long poem *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt/The Poem of Beirut* (1981),[85] a love hymn and elegy for Beirut. The Palestinian poet adores Beirut as his *waṭan* in exile for offering him the utopian landscape of

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78 Cf. *ibid.*

79 Cf. *ibid.* 773, 775.

80 *Ibid.*, 774.

81 *Ibid.*, 772.

82 *Ibid.*, 774.

83 *Ibid.*

84 Nizār Qabbānī: *al-Aʿmāl al-nathrīya al-kāmila*. Vol. 8, 483.

85 First published in the journal *al-Karmil* (Beirut), 1 (1981), 17-38; it was included later in Darwīsh's collection *Ḥisār li-madāʾiḥ al-baḥr* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿAwda, 1985). In the following I am referring to the text in *Ḥisār li-madāʾiḥ al-baḥr*, 89-116. All translations from this poem into English are mine.

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intellectual and political liberation in the Arab world. Beirut is "more beautiful than the poems about her and easier than the people's talk, she seduces us with a thousand open cities and new alphabets."[86] The Lebanese capital is depicted as the "last and only tent, the last and only star"[87] of the Palestinians. This refrain is repeated several times in the poem. The Arab world appears as a see of gallows, a devastated landscape without hope.[88] At the same time Darwīsh presents a sad and simultaneously ironical view of the victim-city (war-slaughtered Beirut), the deformation and decline of Beirut by the new-rich, the capitalistic forces, the different war lords and militia. He also anticipates the Israeli siege of 1982 in this poem, expressing his fears and the Palestinian fate to loose Beirut for ever:

> Beirut! Where does the path begin which leads us to the arcades of Cordoba?
> I cannot go to exile a second time
> I cannot love you twice
> I do not see in the sea anything but the sea
> But here I revolve around my dreams
> Beseeching the earth a head for my exhausted soul.[89]

Like Nizār Qabbānī, Darwīsh pulls all the stops of the *city-woman*. Beirut is described as "the place of the first love" and "of sweet-scented clouds."[90] The tragic affinity of love and death which constitute a constant subject in the poetical concept of Maḥmūd Darwīsh, as well as in Palestinian poetry in general,[91] form the basis of the relation between the poet and Beirut, the city-woman, from the very beginning of this qaṣīda. Certainly Darwīsh's obsession for Beirut has to be looked upon as a projection of his obsessive love with Palestine itself.

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86 *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt*, 91.

87 In Arabic: *khaymatunā/najmatunā al-aḫīra, khaymatunā/najmatunā al-waḥīda.*

88 *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt*, 93.

89 *Ibid.*, 94.

90 *Ibid.*, 89.

91 Ever since Maḥmūd Darwīsh's famous poem *ʿĀšiq min Filasṭīn/A Lover from Palestine* (1966) passionate love for the woman, whether she is Palestine personified or an allegory for the Palestinian exile, embraces the danger of being killed in order to reach the beloved woman and to unite with her. For the very popular personification of Palestine in a woman and the poet's love for her in modern Palestinian Poetry cf. Birgit Embaló, Angelika Neuwirth, Friederike Pannewick: *Kulturelle Selbstbehauptung der Palästinenser. Survey der modernen palästinensischen Dichtung*. Beirut: Orient-Institut 2001 (Beiruter Texte und Studien; 71).

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A star is wandering around between me and my darling, *ḥabība*-Beirut
Never before did I hear my blood crying out the name of a beloved (darling) who for her part has fallen deeply asleep on my blood.[92]

The poet's love-fire for Beirut will never die down.[93] Darwīsh employs natural images like "apple of the sea," "daffodil of marble," "butterfly of stone"[94] to depict the womanliness and beauty of the city. Beirut, the woman, is also portrayed with frank erotic images and the metaphors of classical ghazal: she is the poet's gazelle (*ẓaby*) and a blackbird wing.[95] The city-woman burns her lovers with the fire of her thighs; her female attraction has deadly effects.[96]

Laylā does not trust me
But I trust her nipples when they tremble
She has seduced me with her graceful gait:
The neck of an antelope, the thighs of a gazelle, the wings of a blackbird, the flash-up of a candlestick.
Whenever I embraced her, she demanded stray bullets from me
A king and a new king
Until when will we play with this death?
(...)
I don't know
But I might kill you or you might kill me.[97]

These and similar images are employed to establish a total identification between the *city-woman* Beirut and the Palestinian. With the personification of Beirut in Laylā, the beloved of the famous Arab romance *Majnūn Laylā* Maḥmūd Darwīsh enters a fruitful dialogue with the ghazal-genre. The modern poet takes over some of the main characteristics of the legendary Majnūn, i.e. his passionate love and the will to sacrifice himself for his mistress, to come to terms with the Palestinian situation in war-time Beirut.

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92 *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt*, 89.

93 *Ibid.*, 94:

Beirut
Witness of my heart
I leave her streets and I leave myself
Linked by an endless poem
And I say: My (love-) fire shall not die down.

94 *Ibid.*, 89, 116.

95 *Ibid.*, 109.

96 *Ibid.*

97 *Ibid.*

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In the dialectics of *love* and *death* Beirut, the real city, is as unattainable for the Palestinian lover as was the ancient Laylā who is said to have been married to another man.[98] Modern Laylā, the city-woman, for her part does not trust her lovers. Thus, they are unable to join their mistress: Whenever the Palestinians want to make love to Laylā-Beirut, she demands another stray bullet from them and makes them sink more and more into the war labyrinth.[99] But to give up the hope of uniting with Laylā-Beirut would indeed mean to kill the 'myth' Beirut, the dream of liberation and identity in exile. The poet has prepared his pistol. If he will kill himself for the sake of the love of a city which no longer seems to be his, or if he will banish this dream-town from his mind, is left open in this modern interpretation of the popular romance.

The emotional intensity of Palestinian love for Beirut does not block the poet's view for its tragic dimension. Beside the subject of the seductive city-woman Darwīsh stresses on another aspect of gender-images: loyalty and betrayal. Surrendering herself to capitalistic profit[100] and abandoning moral values Beirut has violated the *love-pact* with the Palestinians and left the revolutionaries in the lurch. The city has been transformed into a center for amusement and luxury, into a "paper city" with an architecture of devastation, it has become an amorphous, fragmented being which exports martyrs to import whisky.[101]

Whereas the *Queen of the World* in Qabbānī's poem *Yā Sitta l-dunyā yā Bayrūt* was wounded and exploited by unjust lovers, the Palestinian view of the relation between the city-woman and her lover is more complex. The war has disfigured Beirut to the degree that she exploits and betrays her true lovers, the *Majnūn-type* of lover. Nevertheless, in Darwīsh's visions the image of the city-woman remains ambivalent. As much as Beirut is held responsible for her decline, she is represented as a victim of the war. At this stage, in 1981, Darwīsh keeps confessing his love for an idealized image of the *city-woman*. At the end of *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt* he takes us to the world of poetic visions to capture what is left from his beloved woman. The city-woman is now imagined as wounded as the Palestinians themselves:

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98 Cf. Charles Pellat: art. Madjnūn Laylā, in: *EI²*, Vol. VII, 1102-1103.

99 *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt*, 109.

100 Beirut's price is going up and down like the Dollar exchange rate (*Qaṣīdat Bayrūt*, 108).

101 *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt*, 98, 106-107.

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> She is a woman of blood, formed in rainbows (...)
> A moon that has been smashed to pieces on the banks of darkness,
> Beirut: she is a sapphire, when she shines with her brilliance on the back of the dove,
> She is a dream that we will carry with us and dream whenever we like (...).[102]

In spite of her dark sides Beirut has not lost her attraction for her true lovers: She is seen as a sapphire and the last and only ray of hope for the Palestinians. Like the old Majnūn, for whom the idealized image of Laylā took the place of his lost beloved,[103] the Palestinians carry their *dream landscape* with them. Finally, Beirut is depicted in a child which has shattered all tables of legacy and all mirrors before it went to sleep. It is for this innocent, rebellious spirit and the power of renewal inherent in the city that it still deserves Palestinian love.[104]

The seductive City-Woman and the end of an impossible love

In his prose written elegy and farewell for besieged Beirut, *Dhākira li-l-nisyān/Memory for Forgetfulness* (1986),[105] homeland and exile, the Palestinian towns Jaffa and Haifa and the Lebanese Beirut merge into each other. Darwīsh's beloved Beirut is not endowed with the innocence and natural beauty of the homeland. The city is portrayed as victim slaughtered on the altar of controversial ideologies and concepts in the Lebanese war; at the same time it is a "meeting place of contraries (...) or a lung which a mixture of people, killers and victims among them could use to breathe."[106]

Some years after departure from Beirut the Palestinian poet regards the city from a more distant point of view than in *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt*. Now he compares his (former) mistress to a sunflower without any distinctive identity, accusing her of betrayal and lacking willpower:

> Perhaps everyone realized there was no Beirut in Beirut: for this lady sitting on a stone is like a sunflower that follows what doesn't belong

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102 *Ibid.*, 116.

103 Cf. Neuwirth: Idealität, 229-232.

104 Cf. *Qaṣīdat Bayrūt*, 116.

105 The Arabic original was first published in the Palestinian journal *al-Karmil* 21-22 (1986), 4-96. All quotations from the text are taken from Ibrahim Muhawi's translation (with a brilliant introduction): *Memory for Forgetfulness. August, Beirut, 1982*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995. A first shorter analysis of this text is included in my article "The City, Mythical Images and Their Deconstruction," cf. footnote 5.

106 *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 93.

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to her, dragging lovers and enemies alike around a cycle of false appearances (...).[107]

On the one hand Beirut is depicted as a *femme fatale* in frank negative images by virtue of her being a prostitute at everybody's easy disposal.[108] On the other hand the Palestinian poet who had spent ten years of his life here (since 1972) re-discovers her amazing beauty all over again when he is confronted with the loss of the town in 1982. Amidst of flying monsters which spit their fire on Beirut the protagonist wanders through the city in utter loneliness, as mad and suffering as the old Majnūn, to take his leave from his lost paradise. He and the other lovers of Beirut are going to be expelled from the city like Adam from paradise before them.[109]

Maḥmūd Darwīsh is torn between the impossible love for Beirut and his firm will to survive the blockade of the city. To make love with his city-woman once again becomes itself an act of *junūn*, a kind of madness in order to resist. "A mare born from the praise poetry of the Arabs" he calls Beirut, she is *jīm* for being "the dawning of madness" (*maṭlaʿ al-junūn*), "the dawning of hell" (*maṭlaʿ al-jahannam*), "the dawning of paradise" (*maṭlaʿ al-janna*), "the dawning of all passions that can win a war by an act of love not realizable except in the fear of death."[110]

As much as he still loves Beirut ("Don't ask if I love you, because you know how my body searching for its safety in another body, worships yours."[111]), the Palestinian poet is aware of the destructive force of his beloved – i.e. seduction and betrayal - and of the need to overcome her in order to survive, as she has surrendered herself to the enemies, the Israeli army which is going to enter Beirut:

I am not yet dead and know not if I'll grow
One day older, to see what can't be seen
Of my cities. Let Beirut be what it wants to be
This, our blood raised high for her
(...)

Here, within her, I live,
A banner from my own shroud.

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107 *Ibid.*

108 *Ibid.*, 91, 93.

109 *Ibid.*, 53.

110 *Ibid.*, 126-127.

111 *Ibid.*, 131.

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Here I leave behind what's not mine.
And here, I dive into my own soul,
That my time may start with me.
Let Beirut be what it wants to be.
She will forget me,
That I may forget her.[112]

In the highly complex and multi-layered text of *Dhākira li-l-nisyān* dream and reality, past, present and future, time and place merge into each other. The book opens and ends with a quite obscure, difficult dialogue between the poet and his coffin, i.e. between the poet and his impossible beloved. In a dream sequence Darwīsh recollects his passion for the Israeli woman Rītā,[113] the love of his youth, finding himself laying on her knees on the morning of the 'Hiroshima-day' in Beirut in August 1982, while she is demanding him not to die in the besieged city.

In order to characterize his relation with this first beloved thirteen years after the poet's departure from Palestine to exile (1969) Darwīsh alludes to an early poem *A beautiful woman in Sodom*,[114] where he wrote: "Each would kill the other outside the window." The obsession for Rītā and the poet's everlasting desire to love her can be grasped from a long passage of love poetry and erotic images where Darwīsh remembers their nights in the Galilee[115]:

> Passion generated from passion. A rain that didn't stop. A fire that couldn't be put out. A body without end. A desire that lit up the bones and the darkness. We didn't sleep except to be awakened by the thirst of salt for honey (...) Cold and hot was this night. (...) *Each would kill the other outside the window.*[116]

At the same time the poet is highly aware of the lethal effects of this love. He now goes beyond his somewhat romantic former vision that there might have been a place for loving Rītā inside the house, inside the homeland,

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112 *Ibid.*, 153.

113 The love-story with Rītā, an Israeli woman, has been the subject of several poems of Darwīsh since the late sixties. For the figure of Rītā in Darwīsh's early poetry cf. the contribution of Verena Klemm in this volume; for the meaning of Rītā as woman as such and as the poet's mirror in Darwīsh's latest poetry cf. Ilyās Khūrī: Rītā wa-shi'rīyat al-muthannā, in: *al-Ṭarīq* (Beirut), Vol. 60.2 (March-April 2001), 126-141.

114 This poem first appeared in 1970 in the collection *al-'Aṣāfīr tamūtu fī l-Jalīl/The Birds are dying in Galilee* (*al-A'māl al-kāmila*, Beirut: Dār al-'Awda 1984, 294-297).

115 *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 120-123.

116 *Ibid.*, 123.

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inside Israel/Palestine. Thus, Darwīsh concludes this passage of his love memories in *Dhākira li-l-nisyān* feeling doubtful of his former love for Rītā. Now the bitter insight predominates that "each is killing the other by the window"[117] because both the Palestinian poet and the Israeli beloved cannot liberate themselves from the surrounding political conflict/the mutual rejection which even determines the most personal relationship between those two people.

It seems to me that the memory of the poet's first impossible love and his partly new understanding of that past serve as a model for dealing with his actual mistress, the city-woman Beirut. The love-hatred relation with her is best reflected in the metaphor "*Bayrūt, yāqūt, tābūt*" meaning: "Beirut: (my) sapphire, (my) coffin,"[118] which reveals the dialectics of eros/ seduction and death in a very intensive and dense imagery. While Beirut for the Palestinians is considered as "the final barricade beyond which is the desert or the sea,"[119] in the constant war situation it simultaneously became a small street "with the name Yamūt."[120]

The poet survives the 1982 Israeli siege and at the end of the book he resists the fire of Beirut's belly too. The 'wild' city-woman tries to seduce him once again with a final "snake's hiss"[121]: dying Beirut wants the Palestinian to be her coffin that she may be his coffin, until he leaves.[122]

It is only in death that the seductive power of the city-woman is vanishing and the poet breaks away from an idealized image of his lost mistress. The sapphire Beirut has turned into the absolute opposite, into a coffin. The city's courage and her zest for living were killed through the brutal Israeli blockade which lasted for one hundred days. Thus, Darwīsh now puts an end to the female power of the *city-woman*, claiming in the final dialogue/dream of *Memory for Forgetfulness* that he does not know anymore if he had ever loved Beirut, or the woman, or Rītā, – all of whom are fusing together in the poetic imagery – and that he certainly does not love her at present.[123]

Paradoxically, the Palestinian frees himself from obsessive love for Beirut, from her seductive arts and from self-sacrifice for the unattainable

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117 *Ibid.*, 126.

118 *Ibid.*, 91.

119 *Ibid.*, 49.

120 I.e. he dies, *ibid.*, 178.

121 *Ibid.*, 177.

122 *Ibid.*

123 *Ibid.*, 182.

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mistress – one of the most important features of the traditional *Majnūn*-figure – in the apocalyptic scenario of the siege. The poet does not become absorbed in despair facing the hopeless situation of the besieged city. Instead, he has made madness his guideline against all this loss for strengthening the collective will of the Palestinians:

> Nothing is left for us except the weapon of madness. To be, or not to be.
> Not to be, or not to be. Nothing is left except madness.[124]

Maḥmūd Darwīsh declares that from now on he is "crazed by life."[125] Thus, the Palestinian dialectics of *passionate love and death* are finally overpowered by the *love and spirit of life*. In the time of collective extermination as it was the case for the Palestinians in 1982 to ensure the bare survival of his own people in exile definitely becomes the most important task of the engaged poet. Those Palestinians who were leaving Beirut embarked in the sea without any clear vision of their future or where they might end up, those who stayed in town were frightened to death.[126]

Conclusions

Contemporary Arab poets give expression to love-affairs that likewise take place in the actual reality of both, the poet and his society. As we have seen from the examples of love poetry for Beirut discussed in this contribution the individual and the public voice of the poet easily merge together: How far could classical Arab ghazal-poetry serve as a literary model to be revived or to be relied on in these love-poems for the city-woman Beirut?

I have shown in some detail that images based on the womanliness of the city, her female body and her seductive arts display an important role in contemporary city-writings in the Near East. Arab poets in the last decades of the 20th century refer to the ghazal-genre, mainly through (the revival of) some of its prominent thematic and structural patterns and through modern interpretations of the famous romance of Arabic literature, *Majnūn-Laylā*. In both cases, with Nizār Qabbānī and Maḥmūd Darwīsh, the female city as

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124 *Ibid.*, 118.

125 *Majnūn fī l-ḥayāh*, *ibid.*, 178.

126 Maḥmūd Darwīsh calls upon Beirut that they may both lift up their coffins on the balcony within the sights of the Israeli jets and bombs in order to unite in another way, through their common will to live and through resistance in dignity: "The balcony is life's defiance of death. It is resistance to the fear of war. I don't want to be afraid. I don't want to be ashamed," *ibid.*

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allegorical figure and real women from the poet's personal life experience fuse into one another in the poetical imagination.

Nizār Qabbānī's poems include traditional motifs. He insists on an idealized image of the city-woman, based upon female clichés like *Queen of the World* and the Phoenix-like rebirth of the lost city-paradise – war-ravaged Beirut – out of her ruins. In his altogether romantic view the reconciliation between the beloved city and her lover is still possible. With Qabbānī the employment of patterns from classical ghazal takes mainly a conventional form: the unattainibility of the city-woman Beirut in its pre-war shape, her constant idealization and the poet's romantic suffering from the loss of his beloved. Qabbānī's Majnūn-lover directly emerges from the classical prototype: his never-ending yearning for an idealized image of Beirut-Balqīs continuously endows him with creative inspiration for his poetry. As Asʿad E. Khairallah has shown the Majnūn-figure can quite easily pass through different times, settings and cultures in a process of constant metamorphosis without losing its identity as long as the three essential angles of his character – love, madness and poetry – are kept intact.[127]

The Syrian poet's 1992 speech *Bayrūt … ḥurrīya lā tashīkh* does not include an outline for future Beirut or any vision of the post-war city. Instead, the poet is looking back to the idyllic past. His Majnūn-figure represents the total refusal of the current state of the city. Qabbānī makes his audience take part in this literary rebellion against the actual image of Beirut, bombed into ruins by 15 years of war. With childlike innocence and simplicity he guides us into his dream scenario of a beautiful place named Beirut. It is from here that Qabbānī's poetry gains its power for the average Arab audience.

Nevertheless, in the first part of his speech Qabbānī reflects on the role of poetry in the contemporary Arab world. He confesses that God has predestined our Arab poets (*kutiba ʿalaynā*) to invent a Paradise even when they are living amidst of hell. Here Qabbānī frankly admits that Arab poets nowadays are lying (*kādhibūna*), claiming that they do this for the sake of their audience, i.e. to help them to come to terms with the ugliness of their political and social reality. Poetry in this sense is "a cosmetic operation for our faces which were burnt through endless defeat."[128]

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127 Cf. Khairallah: "The Individual and Society," 163.

128 Nizār Qabbānī: *Bayrūt .. ḥurrīya la tashīḥ*, 768. With this statement Qabbānī uncovers the ideological background his poetry might take to pave the way for the acceptance of the given society and political order. By laying the responsibility for the poet's creative writing – i.e. the invention of paradise in the poetic imaginary – into God's hand (*kutiba ʿalaynā*) Qabbānī protects himself against critical views. It is very unlikely for the faithful majority of his people to question or even to oppose his mainly nostalgic Beirut images.

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Thus, Qabbānī's love poetry for Beirut mainly displays an affirmative function, the arrangement with the current political and social system through upholding the myth of Beirut (myth of love and creativity). Qabbānī's Majnūn-lover is keeping alive an idealized image of his 'Laylā'-Beirut, without taking into consideration how far he might depart from real Beirut and from literary credibility in the late 20th century.

Another poet, Maḥmūd Darwīsh, who belongs to the literary avant-garde and is regarded as one of the foremost representatives of critical writing in the Arab world, brings forth an innovative imagery of the city-woman Beirut, her lovers and the Palestinian destiny. Like some contemporary Arab poets before – for example the Egyptian Ṣalāḥ ʿAbdaṣṣabūr in his play *Laylā wa-l-Majnūn* – Maḥmūd Darwīsh makes use of the legendary figure Majnūn in various ways:

1. through a major change of setting from the Bedouin environment to modern city life,[129] which we can of course find in Qabbānī's poems too;
2. through building up a firm connection between this old love-story and actual historical events in the frame of a modern interpretation.

Darwīsh's transposition of patterns of the famous Arab romance into our time goes far beyond Qabbānī's more conventional use of its elements. It enables the engaged poet to build up a new vision of the relation between poet and society with special emphasis on the Palestinian dimension. It seems very likely that Darwīsh like ʿAbdaṣṣabūr some fifteen years before him has been mainly inspired by Louis Aragon's epic romance *Le Fou d'Elsa*, the famous contemporary Western adaptation of the *Laylā wa-Majnūn* romance in the sixties.[130]

As I have elaborated in my analysis of *Dhākira li-l-nisyān* madness is the Palestinian's only weapon or strategy to confront the reality of the siege and to fight against their destiny/death in Beirut. Only by virtue of madness can the Palestinian poet ensure his people's survival at large and his own as their speaker in society. He has gone totally mad: In a surrealistic walk through

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129 Cf. Khairallah: *The Individual and Society*, 164ff, esp. 166. The original setting in the Bedouin milieu still prevailed in Aḥmad Shawqīs verse drama, entitled *Majnūn Laylā* from 1916. Obviously, ʿAbdaṣṣabūr was the first Arab author who in 1970 ventured a complete transposition of the story into a modern context, the Egyptian city. Khairallah argues that he was following by this the line set by the surrealistic Marxist Louis Aragon. In his epic romance *Le Fou d'Elsa* (1963) the French poet had changed the setting to the embattled town of Granada in the late 15th century.

130 Cf. *ibid.*, 169ff.

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besieged Beirut his own body has turned from his real dimension into words. It has left his earthly existence for the poet's complete union with his poetry in the sphere of the imaginative.[131] This concept comes quite near to the Surrealistic French writers understanding of love and madness "as not only poetic, but also superior cognitive channels to the real, or the surreal."[132]

Darwīsh has successfully developed a contemporary type of *Laylā wa-Majnūn* in the frame of a modern setting and meaning. His Laylā is neither innocent nor passive, above all she is a seductive woman, similar to the city-woman in a lot of other contemporary Arabic poetry (see above). Darwīsh's woman appears to be a complex, ambivalent and changing figure who represents both: the idealized image of a lost beloved and the real city of Beirut - disfigured beyond recognition – the latter now being a travesty of her former image.[133]

The Palestinian poet was able to transform his poetical dialectics of *love* and *death* into a new concept. When his beloved sapphire Beirut turns into a lethal love (his coffin), he finally cuts down the love-pact with her, convinced of the necessity to overcome this lost mistress. As I have shown Qabbānī on the other hand is not giving up the idea of his beloved city-woman and cannot imagine any substitute for Beirut. The main difference between him and the Palestinian Majnūn lies in the fact that the latter liberates himself from the tradition of the classical Majnūn-lover: He no longer sacrifices himself for the unattainable beloved, in the tradition of Islamic mysticism, and does not go on struggling for the love of a city-woman who is demanding his death.

Certainly, the Palestinian poet is still (or more than ever) a rebel who will not give up. Passing over the features of the old Majnūn, Maḥmūd Darwīsh has worked out a new vision of love: This is passionate love for life itself (*majnūn fī l-ḥayāh*), meaning love of the self and love of the own body which in the Palestinian case has certainly to be understood as a metaphor for his people's body to assure their existence in exile.[134]

We can conclude that Darwīsh's Majnūn is increasingly realistic, and the relationship is not romantic anymore. This contemporary Majnūn does not stand up for defending a lost past. Instead, he is focusing on the future

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131 *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 51.

132 Khairallah: *The Individual and Society*, 163.

133 For the travesty of the city from her former image cf. Neuwirth: Idealität, 220.

134 Shortly after the Palestinian fighters had been expelled from Beirut the refugees in the Sabra and Shatila camps in September 1982, they fall victim of the most brutal massacre ever carried out against the Palestinians.

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which meant from the point of view of 1982 for the Palestinians simply to survive and free themselves from all what may kill them.

Finally, I would like to point to two other innovative interpretations of the Majnūn-figure in post-war Lebanese francophone novels. They are of special interest in our context as texts about the 'city-woman' Beirut written after the end of the war in the nineties.

Selim Nassib, a Persian Jewish author who lived in Beirut until he left for France in 1969 – evokes Aragon's *le Fou d'Elsa* already in the title of his novel *Fou de Beyrouth* (*The Passionate Lover of Beirut*, 1992).[135] Nassib puts himself in the tradition of this Western interpretation of the Majnūn-figure, namely to equate the story of the loss of the beloved with the loss of history and collective identity.[136]

The narrator of *Fou de Beyrouth* loses his mind while witnessing the violation and killing of his beloved Nina by the hands of some militia men. He is not able to act for the defense of his woman – the city – in the symbolic discourse of the novel. The man goes totally mad and similar to the old Majnūn moves to the desert, which in this modern story is located in the war-ruins of Beirut's central district. There he tries to overcome his loss and suffers from paranoid hallucinations which make him increasingly afraid and aggressive. This state of fear and isolation finally leads the man to kill a boy who has entered the war-ruins where the estranged Majnūn sought refuge. They became the last place for this modern variation of the obsessed lover whose identity completely perished away with the break-up of his city into an amorphous being and the final killing of the beloved woman.

Ghassān Fawwāz, a South Lebanese leftist and professor of sociology, also emigrated to France after the outbreak of the civil war in 1976. In his picaresque post-war novel *Les moi volatils des guerres perdues* (*The buzzing I's of lost wars*)[137] he projects the love-story of Majnūn and Laylā into the social milieu of the Beiruti underworld. The lover of the Egyptian whore 'Beyrouth' is called Fāris, as a very distinct and ironic allusion to the

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135 Paris: Balland, 1992.

136 Cf. Neuwirth, Pflitsch: *Agonie und Aufbruch. Neue Libanesische Prosa*, 147. According to Nassib, he is attached to Beirut very deeply, always searching for his lost identity here. Actually, the author came back after the war to re-discover his home and the places of his childhood in the *centre ville* district, now laying in ruins. For some biographical detail and the multicultural background of Nassib cf. "'Ishtu fī lā-makān ismuhu Beirūt," his interview given to Ilyās Khūrī and Bassām Ḥajjār, in: *Mulḥaq al-Nahār*, (Beirut), 10.6.1995, 4-7.

137 Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1996.

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self-perception of Arab men. Beyrouth is said to be pregnant from Fāris and to have been murdered by some militia men, but later in the novel the anti-hero has to find out that Beyrouth is not dead at all, instead she betrays him with a friend. Finally Fāris shoots them both during their wedding party. The death of the beloved which indicates the total moral failure of the city-woman is mingled with nightmare-like scenes of the Israeli invasion, the massacres of Sabra and Shatila and eventually the killing of Fāris.[138]

Side by side with the poems and prose poetry of Nizār Qabbānī and Maḥmūd Darwīsh these two Lebanese novels significantly confirm the migration of motifs and structural patterns of Arabic love poetry and the Majnūn legend through different historical periods, cultures, genres and languages in modern Near Eastern literature and the flexibility inherent in them for a contemporary meaning in the age of globalization.

138 Cf. Neuwirth, Pflitsch: *Agonie und Aufbruch. Neue Libanesische Prosa*, 83-84.

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ʿISHQ IN THE TIMES OF INFITĀḤ

Yaḥyā al-Ṭāhir ʿAbdallāh's "Ughniyyat al-ʿĀshiq Īliyyā"

Stephan Guth
(Bern)

The objective of this study is two-fold. On the one hand, it aims at shedding some light on a modern 'concept' (if it can be called a 'concept') of *ʿishq* "passion-love,"[1] as emerging from a short story entitled *Ughniyyat al-ʿāshiq Īliyyā* "Īliyyā the Lover's (or Loving Īliyyā's) Song,"[2] written around 1975 by the Egyptian Yaḥyā al-Ṭāhir ʿAbdallāh (1938-1981).[3] The *ʿāshiq Īliyyā's* love is the way passionate love is experienced (or thought to be experienced) by the notorious 'man in the street,' in our case a lower employee living in Cairo, under the specific circumstances of the early 1970s, a form of *ʿishq* which, for reason to become clear below, I have chosen to label love "in the times of *infitāḥ*" (economic liberalisation, sometimes also translated as "Westernisation" straightforwardly).[4] On the other hand, I would like to pay

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1 This is how M. Arkoun translates the term in his article "ishḳ." In: *EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam²*, vol. IV.

2 Text in *al-Kitābāt al-kāmila*. Cairo et al.: Dār al-Mustaqbal al-ʿArabī ²1994, 183-192; no English or French translation of this story has come to my knowledge so far. A German translation by Erika Pabst (Yachya at-Tahir Abdallah: "Das Lied des Liebenden Ilya") was published in Doris Kilias (ed.): *Erkundungen: 32 ägyptische Erzähler*. Berlin 1989, 215-225.

3 For biographical (and some bibliographical) information cf., e.g., Denys Johnson-Davies's "Introduction" to his translation of selected short-stories, published as Yahya Taher Abdullah: *The Mountain of Green Tea*. London 1984, vii-xii; Hartmut Fähndrich and Irmgard Schrand: Nachwort, in: Jachja Taher Abdallah: *Menschen am Nil: zwei ägyptische Novellen* [*al-Ṭawq wal-aswira* and *Taṣāwīr min al-turāb wal-shams*], transl. by Hartmut Fähndrich and Irmgard Schrand. Basel 1989, 179 ff.; entry "ʿAbdallāh, Y. Ṭ." In: Robert B. Campbell (ed.): *Aʿlām al-adab al-ʿarabī al-muʿāṣir*. Beirut 1996 (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 62), vol. II, 901-3; a short bio-bibliographical section is also contained in the appendix on "Imprisoned Writers" in Marina Stagh: *The Limits of Freedom and Speech: Prose literature and prose writers in Egypt under Nasser and Sadat*. Stockholm 1993, 326-7.

4 The present investigation is, in a way, a continuation of an earlier, though more detailed, study of mine on the concept of 'love' (and male 'honour') to be encountered with the Egyptian lower middle-classes (in that case some twenty years before *Infitāḥ*): *Liebe und Mannesehre: Szenen einer muslimischen Kleinbürgerehe, beleuchtet anhand des Romans "Der Ölzweig" (Ġuṣn az-zaytūn) von M. ʿAbdalḥalīm ʿAbdallāh*. Berlin 1987. For research on related subjects cf. esp. the collection of articles in Roger Allen et al. (eds.): *Love and Sexuality in Modern Arabic Literature*. London 1995. – All these studies can be considered valuable contributions to a history of modern concepts of 'love' still to be written.

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the author a visit in his workshop in order to have a look at the narrative devices and strategies he uses in his attempt to grasp the characteristics of the way his hero experiences *ʿishq*. I will draw special attention on one specific aspect more than on others, the creation of narrative space.[5]

The story's plot is rather simple. There is almost no 'action': all that 'happens' is that an 18-20 year old employee named Īliyyā strolls through a cinema boulevard and some side streets of central Cairo by night, all the time thinking of his beloved, Sāmiya, who has had to leave the capital and himself, following her father who has been transferred to the Ṣaʿīd (Upper Egypt). The reader follows Īliyyā up and down the boulevard, is made to share what he sees and hears, and we are also granted insight into his thoughts, his wishes, memories, and feelings. In between, the text comes back time and again to describing the scene through which Īliyyā is moving, the streets of Cairo early after sunset.

Yaḥyā al-Ṭāhir ʿAbdallāh has decided to use a third-person narrator, and this, together with the past tense he employs, creates a kind of distance between the story's hero and the position from where he is looked at. At the same time, however, the narrator adopts Īliyyā's way of thinking and feeling, not permitting himself to comment on it but functioning almost totally as a medium that allows the reader a very sympathetic access into the hero's mind and heart. Not only is there nothing more reported than what Īliyyā sees, thinks, remembers, etc., but this is also done in a language that is essentially Īliyyā's. A position that is so close to the 'man in the street,' but at the same time maintains a distance *vis-à-vis* the stories' protagonists that allows to examine their world also from outside, is very typical of Yaḥyā al-Ṭāhir ʿAbdallāh. The author (who was born in Karnak, Upper Egypt, in 1938 and lost his life in a car accident in 1981) has made it his task throughout his life to make the voices of the voiceless heard, the voices of the ordinary people, the poor, the destitute, the marginalised – in short, the silent majority of the lower layers of Egyptian society, from which he himself came and always felt he belongs to, although he had managed to escape the closedness and silence of a life of those strata in that he had become an author, a story-teller and an intellectual, though largely self-taught, and in this way had gained the distance that enabled him to reflect on his and his class's conditions, to overlook his and their situation. Because he knew no foreign language

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5 For a study of the narrative construction of space on a broader scale in modern Egyptian fiction cf. my "The Poetics of Urban Space: Structures of Literarising Egyptian Metropolis," in: *Arabica* 46 (1999), 454-481, with further references.

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and in his narrative art fell back on popular traditions of story-telling, seeing himself as a modern *ḥakawātī*, some critics have even labelled him the most Egyptian of all Egyptian writers. With his stories he wanted to appeal to the literate and the illiterate alike, to draw the reading public's attention to their fellow human beings, the silent masses, and to tell those masses stories that would make them aware of their own situation (he knew all his stories by heart and used to tell them in public places like coffee-houses etc.). Thus, the narrator does not only reflect the author's own position, but combines in himself already the qualities of those to whom the story is dedicated: *ilā ṣāḥib al-qalb al-abyaḍ wal-ʿaql al-abyaḍ* "to those with a white heart and a white mind," says the line immediately following the story's title.

The people whom ʿAbdallāh shows in his stories mostly are locked up in their own circumstances. This holds true for "Loving Īliyyā's Song" too – not only in a literal, i.e. spatial, sense however, but also in a metaphorical one, the connection between both of which I will try to show in the following.

The surroundings in which ʿAbdallāh places his Īliyyā are essentially urban, modern metropolitan. Like for many other modern authors,[6] for ʿAbdallāh too this means that space has to be filled to the utmost in his narrative. In our case it is filled with people and goods alike.

The *zaḥma*, the crowd, is everywhere. They are leaving the cinemas or waiting in front of them, walking along the windows of the shops, pushing and shoving through the streets like a sticky, glutinous, amorphous mush.

Besides the crowd, space is filled with posters, advertising, neon lights, it is a Cairo packed to the brim with shoes, perfumes, watches, lighters, radios, TV sets, and other consumer articles displayed in the windows of shops which bear names like "Micky, Rivoli, Star, Happy Home, or Silver Shoes" (cf. 184)[7] – in short, the Cairo of the consumerism that swept over Egyptian society as a result of Sadat's 'open door' (*infitāḥ*) policy.[8] People are

> "queuing in front of sellers of fridges and quenching the heat in their chests with bottles of Coca-Cola, Pepsi Cola, Sicco Lemon, Sicco Orange, Sicco Strawberry, and other cool drinks of the like" (186).

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6 Cf., e.g., also Yūsuf al-Shārūnī in *al-Ziḥām* (1963).

7 Numbers in brackets refer to the *al-Kitābāt al-kāmila* edition (see fn. 2).

8 For a detailed study of the literary echoes of this policy and the changes in society brought about by it see my *Zeugen einer Endzeit: Fünf Schriftsteller zum Umbruch in der ägyptischen Gesellschaft nach 1970*. Berlin 1992.

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This world is also essentially a world of – and like – cinema, a virtual world of horror, sex and crime, and also a dream world of prefabricated images of happiness and emotions in general. Īliyyā notices, e.g., a poster in a cinema entrance:

> "The girl whom they call the 'Cinderella of the Arab Screen' wore a low-backed *maillot* and was sleeping under an umbrella on the beach, and in front of her: the sea, gently foaming" (184).

In addition, it is a world governed and manipulated by state power and propaganda: the author shows the space also as one pervaded (through loud-speakers, TV, radios etc.) by official announcements against Israel (that is still threatening Egypt with air-raids) and pathetic calls for heroic endurance.

In the *zaḥma*, the world of consumerism, and the ubiquitous presence of state authority, Īliyyā feels extremely lonely and sad without his beloved Sāmiya at his side. The text which, whenever it mentions Sāmiya repeats that she "is not walking besides him now" (183, and *passim*), takes up this phrasing in expressions like "the masses of people (*al-kathra min al-nās*) who are walking with Īliyyā in the same street" (184) and in this way connects the beloved and the masses, demonstrating that her place has immediately been filled by the anonymous crowd. The Cairo of *infitāḥ* has nothing to offer him to make up for his loss:

> "all Īliyyā the Lover could do since he was walking alone was to let his eyes wander over the shops and read their names, look at the numerous posters, advertising slogans on the walls and neon lights [...]" (184).

On the contrary, the coloured flashings emanating from the neon lights into the urban space only add to his loneliness: ʿAbdallāh again and again places Īliyyā *taḥt al-ḍaw'* "under the lights" and insists on repeating that under these lights Īliyyā is *waḥīd* "alone" and *ḥazīn* "sad" (185).

Within the crowd that occupies all urban space ʿAbdallāh's narrative shows the people having lost their individuality. The young men Īliyyā notices walking besides him, for instance, do not appear to him as persons, but rather as a kind of living dummies: Īliyyā categorizes them not by their faces or by what he hears them say, but according to the skirts they wear, the way how they wear them, and the sort of chest to be seen, and even then there are no more than a few distinguishing features:

> "The young men wore skirts, either short-sleeved or with rolled-up sleeves [...], all of them had allowed themselves to leave the uppermost button of their skirts open, so that their nude bare chests appeared, sometimes

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> covered with hair, sometimes with down, most times however they were smooth. All that bright light that fell on the chests made their skins shine, and Īliyyā saw chests as black as marble, chests as dark brown as coffee-pots, simply brown chests, but also light brown and blond and dark yellow and simply yellow chests; from some of the necks thin chains were dangling, ending on the chests in a small *muṣḥaf* or a crucifix made of silver or bronze or brass or real gold or counterfeit gold" (188).

Most remarkably, this enumeration of the young men's attributes blends, without any break, into an enumeration of what else Īliyyā perceives in his surroundings: while chains are dangling on the chests,

> "out of some shops love-songs reached Īliyyā the Lover's ears, coming from record players or tape recorders or radios" etc. (188).

In this way, ʿAbdallāh makes the *zaḥma* resemble the *infitāḥ* products, melting both into one and creating a space pervaded by a continuum in which human beings are hardly distinghuished from consumer articles.

The effect of such an environment on Īliyyā is a loss of orientation – which the author, of course, likewise expresses in spatial terms. The very first sentence of the story is: *kāna l-ʿāshiq Īliyyā yasīru bi-lā hadaf* "Loving Īliyyā was walking aimlessly," i.e. the space he is moving around in is unstructured, has no beginning, no end, his path is lacking any points of reference. In this situation, Īliyyā's main 'action' is to think of his beloved, Sāmiya. And it seems that for him, to love Sāmiya is the only way to assert himself as an individual against the ubiquitous masses, against drowning in the anonymity of the crowd. If Sāmiya were by his side he would be able to escape that crowd which is "to Īliyyā's *right* and to Īliyyā's *left* and *in front of* Īliyyā and *behind* Īliyyā" (186, my italics), he would take Sāmiya's hand, and they both would "fly *over* people's heads like angels" (189-90, my italics): there is no escape from the crowd except through love, which Īliyyā imagines as elevating him into a supra-natural heavenly state.

Because love for Īliyyā is the only way to stand his ground, to defend the space of his own individuality against its being taken over by the anonymous crowd, he has to continue loving Sāmiya and cultivate his loneliness and grief. This is why he is so eager to appear before himself as a real *ʿāshiq*[9] – when, e.g., he reflects on why he is thinking suddenly on

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9 It is true that the word *ughniyya* "song" appears in connection with the word *ʿāshiq* in the story's title, that Īliyyā is a representative of the ordinary people and that one of his characteristic features is his wandering around. But it is, in my opinion, still very unlikely that the term *ʿāshiq* should be translated not simply as "loving," or "Lover," but

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the problem why asses, mules and horses, in spite of their stupidity, do not fall into the holes left open from street repairs he tells himself that there can certainly be "no other reason for it than that he was confused (*murtabik*) and in love (*ʿāshiq*)" (191-2). And this is why he also willingly tries to weep (*ḥāwala l-bukā' wa-kāna rāghiban fīhi*, 184), why he is proud of the "loftiness (*jalāl*) of his sad appearance" (188) and why he likes to feel himself suffering and experiencing "delicious pains" (*al-alam al-ladhīdh*, 189).

Passionate loving as a possibility to counter deindividualisation and anonymisation through the *zaḥma* in an *infitāḥ*'ian Cairo? – The author shows that for Īliyyā himself this might work quite well: he has been happy with Sāmiya at his side and can, in the story's final paragraph, also imagine to marry her. But ʿAbdallāh is eager to point out the 'tragic' thing about it as well: In his attempts to escape deindividualisation, the average Cairo citizen Īliyyā has already become a victim of that deindividualisation, because his feelings are not individual, authentic feelings anymore, they are pervaded since long by the clichés and kitsch from the assembly-line of *infitāḥ's* dream production: Love for Īliyyā means that

> "if the girl Sāmiya were with me now, we would enter a film 'for adults only' [...], and we would sit in a place with a glass front, I would drink

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as "*âşık*," i.e. in the specific sense the word has acquired "[a]mong the Anatolian and Ādharbāydjānī Turks, from the late 9th/15th or 10th/16th century" onwards, denoting a person belonging to the "class of wandering poet-minstrels, who sang and recited at public gatherings. Their repertoire included religious and erotic songs, elegies and heroic narratives" (Bernard Lewis, art. "ʿāshiḳ." In: *EI²*, vol. I). Although there is no scholarly consent on the question whether the *âşık* is a successor of the old, pre-islamic bard (*ozan*), or not (cf. entry "*âşık*" in *TDEA: Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul 1977, vol. I, 184 ff.), the *âşıklar* seem to be a phenomenon restricted to Turkic peoples, without an equivalent among Arabs, and also not in Egypt. El-Said Badawi and Martin Hinds: *Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*. Beirut 1986, *s.r.* "*ʿ-sh-q*," do not mention any meaning other than "lover," nor do books on Arabic folk literature, to all my knowledge, deal with anything called "*ʿāshiq* poetry." The "song" Īliyyā sings is therefore not a song in the *âşık* tradition but rather in that of popular singers like Umm Kulthūm or ʿAbdalḥalīm Ḥāfiẓ. Had ʿAbdallāh wanted it to be an *âşık*'s song he would probably also not have labelled it a *ughniyya*, a term that points to the tradition of 'normal' singing (*ghinā'*). – For detailed information about the Anatolian *âşıklar*, their music and poetry cf., besides the above-mentioned *TDEA* entry, e.g., Kurt and Ursula Reinhard: *Musik der Türkei*, vol. II: *Die Volksmusik*. Wilhelmshaven 1984, 104 ff. (and *passim*); Pertev Naili Boratav: *100 [Yüz] Soruda Türk Halkedebiyatı*. İstanbul, ⁶1992, esp. the chapter on "Ḍşık Edebiyatı" (pp. 20 ff.); id.: La littérature des ʿāšïq, in: *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta*, vol. II, Wiesbaden 1964, 129-147. A study of a famous *âşık* is Elisabeth Siedel: Aşık Veysel [1894-1973] und sein Publikum, in: *Die Welt des Islams* 29 (1989), 83-100.

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> beer, and Sāmiya would have a lemonade, or an ice-cream, or drink beer too if she wanted" (188),

i.e., the togetherness of a pair of lovers consists of nothing but shared consumption of the goods and entertainments offered by *infitāḥ*! Happiness is modelled according to the impersonal, standardised shapes created in the movies, presented on TV, in songs on the radio,[10] and it is not by accident that Īliyyā's former girl-friend who had left him for another man had done so because she hoped to become a *film* actress and would "one day have a red car and a villa on the Nile" (191) – as actresses surely use to have... The "delicious pain" that our *ʿāshiq* needs for his *ʿishq* will likewise be effected through an imagination for which obviously a cheap horror film served as a model: Although he tells himself that it is a *khurāfa* ("fantastic nonsense"), Īliyyā likes the idea that Sāmiya in the Ṣaʿīd perhaps has been devoured by a monster (189)! And also what he and his beloved did before they had to part seems to be nothing but a copy of heroico-sentimental cinema:

> "Both of them had made a cut in their finger, and with blood Īliyyā had drawn, on a sheet of paper, his heart pierced by an arrow, had written under it his and Sāmiya's names, and given it to Sāmiya, and Sāmiya had done the same" (189).

From this and other passages it becomes clear that Īliyyā's real 'tragedy' is essentially an ironical tragedy, realized textually as tragic irony.[11] (Here, by the way, we have again, on the side of the narrator, a combination of a very high degree of sympathizing with the 'man in the street' on the one hand, and on the other a distance: pity on the poor fellow here, smiling down on him there). Īliyyā's 'tragedy' is not only what he himself perceives as his misfortune – the fact that Sāmiya is no more "walking besides him now," which of course means a great loss for him but is not *really* tragic, is it? His real tragedy is the tragedy he himself is not aware of: the ironical tragedy that, in order to maintain his identity as an individual and defend himself against the anonymizing pressure

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10 Cf. also the fact that Īliyyā's dream of escaping the real world consists of taking Sāmiya by her hand and "flying above the heads [of the crowd] like angels do *on pictures and drawings*" (189-90, my italics).

11 For irony as a narrative strategy in another work of Y. Ṭ. ʿAbdallāh's (and those of three other Egyptians) cf. Ceza Kassem Draz: In Quest of New Narrative Forms: Irony in the Works of four Egyptian Writers. Jamāl al-Ghīṭānī, Yaḥyā al-Ṭāhir ʿAbdallah, Majīd Ṭūbyā, Ṣunʿallah Ibrāhīm (1967-1979), in: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 22 (1981), 137-159.

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exercised on him by the crowd, he cannot but use the impersonal clichés and unauthentic patterns of *infitāḥ* which the masses have succumbed to and which tend to dissolve all individual personality and authentic feeling.

That Īliyyā is tragically trapped is expressed on several levels, among them those of space and language. Near the end of the story, e.g., ʿAbdallāh lets his hero take a side street; this street, however, turns out to be a dead-end street (191): there's no way out, with closed space equalling the hopelessness of Īliyyā's situation. Linguistically, the fact that he is a prisoner of prefabricated modes of feeling and thinking is paralleled, e.g., by the uniformity of attributes: the name Īliyyā, for instance, in almost all instances appears as *al-ʿāshiq Īliyyā*, and Sāmiya makes her textual appearance with the unchanging epithet *allatī lā tasīru bi-jānibihi l-ān*, Sāmiya "who is not walking besides him now."

Irony, too, may be effected linguistically. The word *ʿāshiq*, e.g., which alludes to the whole concept of *ʿishq* – a form of *ʿishq* that has, of course, nothing to do anymore with the *ʿishq* of 'courtly' or mystical ghazal but has degenerated and come to mean the flattened romanticism, the shallow emotionalism and melodramaticality of the *aghānī ʿāṭifiyya*, the sentimental love songs sung in the movies, broadcast on the radio, resounding from every shop by which Īliyyā passes – the term *ʿāshiq* itself seems to be a bit out of place for our hero, and it becomes even ridiculous when an ironical contrast is established between Īliyyā's wish to feel himself experiencing *ʿishq* and the banality of the problems our *ʿāshiq* encounters:

> "Īliyyā tried to weep, and he wished very much to do so but he failed: the strings of an orange that had got stuck between his teeth disturbed him; he kept searching them with his tongue until he finally got hold of them and spat them out in the air" (184).

An ironical contrast is however also produced in terms of space. What in the story's title is lyrically announced as an *ughniyya*, a poetical love song, unfolds in a totally unpoetic, unlyrical, banal environment: the *zaḥma-infitāḥ* continuum. And in the last paragraph the author makes our *ʿāshiq* even pass by a site where repairs on the *majārī*, Cairo's rotten sewage system,[12] are carried out, and lets loving Īliyyā consider how beloved

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12 The rotten sewage system has become almost a topos in the literature of the Sadat era. Muḥammad Salmāwī, e.g., wrote a whole play (in the vernacular) about "Two in the Drain": *Itnēn fī l-ballāʿa*. Cairo 1987.

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Sāmiya would probably react if he fell into such a muddy, ugly stinking hole. What an unpoetical ending for a story which in so many respects recalls the old poetical forms of *ʿishq*![13]

13 On the surface, Īliyyā's love is modelled in accordance with the Great Tradition. For him, too, *ʿishq* is an "irresistible desire [...] to obtain possession of a loved object or being," and it "betrays" in him, too, "a deficiency, a want, which he must supply at any cost in order to reach perfection (*kamāl*)" (Arkoun: "ishḳ"). When compared to "the most searching and realistic analysis" of mediaeval *ʿishq*, Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, Īliyyā's love proves to share almost all of the features described there: "Purified of all carnal demands, this passion is sublimated into an attitude of adoration which provokes a mental imbalance [...]. It is a state of spiritual servitude to an idealised female figure, upon which the 'courtly' sentiments of a soul in ebullition (*ghalayān*) crystallize" (*ibid.*).

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POEMS OF A LOVE IMPOSSIBLE TO LIVE

Maḥmūd Darwīsh and Rītā

Verena Klemm
(Würzburg)

"My first real love affair," said Maḥmūd Darwīsh in an interview with the poet ʿAbbās Baydūn "was with a young Jewish woman." "Was that an ambiguous relationship?" his colleague wanted to know. "Inevitably. This kind of relationship was bound to be ambiguous... especially the relations to the parents of my beloved... I was in love with a woman whose father was Polish and mother Russian. Her father rejected me, and not just because I'm an Arab. By the way, I didn't always feel at the time as if I were a target of racism or deeply rooted hatred. But it was the war of June 1967 that turned it all around. Figuratively speaking, it lodged itself between both our bodies, transferring our incompatibility to the unconscious..."[1]

A prose rendering of his relationship with the Jewish woman concerned can be found in Darwīsh's *Diary of Everyday Sadness* [*Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-ʿādī*] (Beirut 1973).

> "When I saw her for the first time she clouded my thoughts. I pulled her into the house. I said to her: Consider this as love.
> She laughed. She laughed in the darkest hours.
> I addressed her by an alias, because it sounded finer. I kissed her. And between one kiss and the next I longed for her and I felt that she would drift away from me if only for one moment I stopped kissing her.
> Between sand and sea she said: I love you.
> Between desire and torment I said: I love you.
> And as the officer asked her what she was doing here she replied: Who are you? And the officer asked: What about you? Who are you?
> She answered: I am his love. I came with him to the prison gate to say goodbye, you murderer. What are you going to do him?

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1 Mahmud Darwisch: *Palästina als Metapher: Gespräche über Literatur und Politik.* Heidelberg 1998, 23f. I would like to thank Ralph Noble for his assistance with the printed version of this text. I am also indebted to Prof. Dr. Beatrice Gruendler, Stefan Weidner, Annette Oevermann and Stefan Saffert. Ilyas Khūrī's study Maḥmūd Darwīsh: al-shiʿr wa-l-ḥubb. "Rītā" wa-shaʿriyyat al-mutahannā. In: *al-Ṭarīq* 2 (2001), 126-140, appeared too late to be included into the present article.

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> He said: Watch it, I am an officer. She replied: Next year I'll be an officer as well, you murderer! And she produced her induction notice. Then, smiling, he saluted to her, while he pulled me by my arm into the prison cell.
> The next year war broke out. I returned to my prison cell and thought of her: What would she be doing now? Was she among the conquerors in Nablus or any other city, carrying a rifle? Was she then ordering men to raise their arms or to kneel on the floor before her? Or was she questioning or even torturing an Arab girl as young as she and as pretty as she once was?
> She did not say goodbye.
> And you did not say to her: Come here … come a little closer."[2]

"But even without the war," said Maḥmūd Darwīsh to ʿAbbās Baydūn "this love could not have been happy. It could not go deep. Only inclinations, desires and feelings remained, without a horizon…" It was "the social and cultural" as well as "the national difference" that "kept the bodies from loving one another or continuing the love affair."[3]

In the years in which Maḥmūd Darwīsh experienced this tragic love, he had already distinguished himself within the Arab minority of Israel as a poet. One year before the war of June 1967, his third collection, *ʿĀshiq min Filasṭīn* [*A Lover from Palestine*] was published (Beirut 1966). It was his breakthrough as a poet: no longer limited to his isolated community, his renown spread throughout the whole Arab world.[4] At the time he was 25 years of age and working as an editor for the newspaper *al-Jadīd* in Haifa. Because of his literary activities he was arrested repeatedly by the authorities of the young Israeli state. Ghassān Kanafānī, who made the emerging Palestinian poetry scene known in the Arab world,[5] praised the young committed poets (in the same year) as "poets of resistance" (*shuʿarāʾ*

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2 Maḥmūd Darwīsh: *Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-ʿādī*. Beirut 1973, 75f.

3 Darwisch: *Palästina als Metapher*, 24, 168.

4 For his biography and work see, among others: Art. Maḥmūd Darwīsh (Stefan Weidner) in: Heinz Ludwig Arnold (ed.): *Kritisches Lexikon zur fremdsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*. 44th supplement, 1-16.

5 See his study *Adab al-muqāwama fī Filasṭīn al-muḥtalla* ([*Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine*] Beirut 1966), which was followed by *al-Adab al-filasṭīnī al-muqāwim taḥt al-iḥtilāl 1948-1968* (*The Palestinian Literature of Resistance under Occupation 1948-1968*), Beirut 1968. On the role and influence of this study on Arab critics and literary figures, see Verena Klemm: *Literarisches Engagement im arabischen Nahen Osten: Konzepte und Debatten*. Würzburg 1998, chap. 5 as well as id.: Different Notions of Commitment and Committed Literature in the Literary Circles of the Mashriq. In: *Journal of Arabic and Middle Eastern Literatures* 3, vol. 1 (2000), 51-62.

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al-muqāwama). He attributed the enthusiasm Darwīsh stirred up amongst his community to his love poetry (ghazal), in which he knew how to merge his love with the beloved land of Palestine to form one inseparable entity: "In the poems Darwīsh wrote in the mid-Sixties, we find that he made the deep and secret relationship between a woman and the land (*al-waṭan*) into one inseparable love affair."[6] Angelika Neuwirth has analysed the title poem of the dīwān *ʿĀshiq min Filasṭīn* and understood it in both form and in subject as a "modern pendant" to and a "new, freer creation" of the old Arabic qaṣīda. Like Kanafānī, she sees in it the beloved as "the quintessential Palestinian woman, yes, even as an embodiment of the Palestinian country itself."[7]

Darwīsh's young Jewish woman, on the other hand, does not appear in those early poems that he had developed from the traditional poetic forms of qaṣīda and ghazal (see, for example, his poems *Uhdīhā ghazalan* [*I Give Her a Ghazal*] and *Abyāt ghazal* [*Ghazal Verses*] from the above-mentioned collection). Yet she figures in some poems of the following two collections (1967, 1970), in which, as he revealed in another interview, he gave her the pseudonym *Rītā*. He made clear that "whenever I write a love poem it is said that it is a poem about the land (earth, *al-arḍ*) and that "Rītā" is Palestine. "Rītā" is an erotic poem, but nobody believes me."[8]

Indeed: Maḥmūd Darwīsh's poems about Rītā are less an echo of the classical ghazal than innovative poetic illustrations of a very personal experience of suffering in a political conflict dominating the life of everyone caught up in it. There is no love poetry of the Arab past that can be read and understood against such a concrete personal and political background in the way these poems can. Hence, we can almost be sure that the first-person speaker in these poems may be identified with the poet himself.

Taking three of his poems as examples, I want to show how Maḥmūd Darwīsh expresses the specific problematic nature of his love for Rītā in an increasingly complex and individual way. The poems are taken from the collections *Ākhir al-layl* ([*The End of the Night*], Beirut 1967) as well as *al-ʿAṣāfīr tamūtu fī l-Jalīl* ([*The Birds Die in Galilee*], Beirut 1970). These are two of the five collections Darwīsh compiled between

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6 Kanafānī: *Adab al-muqāwama,* 30-32 (citation 30f.).

7 Angelika Neuwirth: Das Gedicht als besticktes Tuch: Mahmud Darwischs Gedicht "Ein Liebender aus Palästina". In: Gisela Völker et al. (eds.): *Pracht und Geheimnis: Kleidung und Schmuck aus Palästina und Jordanien.* Köln 1987, 113ff..

8 Darwisch: *Palästina als Metapher*, 167 (talk with the Israeli writer Helit Yeshurun).

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the June 1967 War and his withdrawal into Beirut exile (1971).[9] I do not want to extend my study of the poems to deal with the multiple interplays between metre, sound stratum, poetic syntax and images. Although only such an analysis would do justice to the overall significance of the poems, here I would like to devote my attention solely to the innovative power of their imagery.

1. Rītā wa-l-bunduqiyya [Rītā and the Gun] (1967)[10]

Between Rītā and my eyes... a rifle

بين ريتا وعيوني... بندقيه

These are the beginning and ending lines of this comparatively brief (33 lines) poem. It is written in short lines and changing end rhyme as well as in a light and free rhythm, which may seem rather untroubled, perhaps even playful to the listener. The poem contains several traditional motifs of love poetry, although in simple and modern form: the first-person speaker praises the beloved's irresistibility and merges her with a deity who looks out of Rītā's "honey" eyes so that all who see her cannot help but pray and bow down before her.[11] In subsequent lines, the poet remembers days of happiness:[12] here, the beloved appears as a young innocent girl whom he had kissed while she lay nestled against him, her beautiful braided hair across his arm. The poet then characterizes the ease and carefree nature of their earlier relationship, using short poetic images:

Oh, Rītā...
Between us millions of birds and pictures
And many rendezvous (or: promises)

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9 Robert Campbell (ed.): *Aʿlām al-adab al-ʿarabī al-muʿāṣir: Siyarun wa siyarun dhātiyya. Contemporary Arab Writers: Biographies and Autobiographies*. 2 vols., Beirut et al. (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 62) 1996, vol. 2, 554-57.

10 *Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh*, 10th ed. Beirut 1983, 192-94.

11 On the motif of the eye and the effect of the gaze, cf. Thomas Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden 1998, 280-96. On the subject of irresistibility so strong that even religious taboos are ignored, see *ibid.* 213ff., 401ff..

12 The recollection on past happiness is a vital thematic element of a nasīb. Cf. Renate Jacobi: *Studien zur Poetik der altarabischen Qaṣide.* Wiesbaden 1971, 14.

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آه ريتا...
بيننا مليون عصفور وصوره
ومواعيد كثيره

An unexpected turn at the end of the verse describes a rifle that opens fire:

اطلقت نارا عليها... بندقيه

In the following verse, the poet conjures up past scenes of unity. He appears merely in the sensual aspect of the lover: Rītā's name is a festivity in his mouth, Rītā's body a marriage in his blood:

اسم ريتا كان عيدا في فمي
جسم ريتا كان عرسا في دمي

For two years, as he claims – and most likely stating the reality –, he was lost to Rītā. The scenes of erotic love are enhanced by images of mystical unification: a bond is formed with the most beautiful goblet, a burning of the lovers in the wine of lips, a being born again.

Rītā as a goddess and as an innocent little girl, love as a feast for the senses – further aspects of the relationship are hardly illustrated beyond simple images from the timeless spheres of childhood, pastoral life and celebration. The poet assigns to his *alter ego* in the poem the sole role of a tender and ardent lover. Only the rifle, a modern metonymy taken directly from the cruel political reality, runs as a line of tension throughout this idyll, disrupting the scenes of love and harmony in every verse.

The final part of the poem is introduced like a dramatic narrative:

Once upon a time

كان يا ما كان

Now Rītā is no longer addressed but the silence of dawn, to which the abandoned lover relates a final image of harmony and of flowing-into-one-another:

Oh silence of dawn
In the morning my moon had emigrated far
into the honey eyes

يا صمت العشيه
قمري هاجر في الصباح بعيدا
في العيون العسليه

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At the same time, and now with one single new-found image, the whole field of tension of this dehumanizing conflict is opened up. The city (*al-madīna*) is no longer a secure realm for the emigration (*hijra)* of the loving poet into the eyes of his beloved.

And the city
Swept out its singers – and Rītā.

والمدينة
كنست كل المغنين، وريتا

The city, which must certainly represent the dominant society, ends their love with just one disparaging, decisive gesture. The city abhors the lovers, giving them no chance. The end is irreversible, sweeping the lovers out of society once and for all. Poetic imagery and political reality are interposed.

In *Rītā wa-l-bunduqiyya,* love is portrayed as an erotic and spiritual unity. It is destroyed by the rifle and the city, which both stand for an aggressor attacking from the outside.[13]

2. al-ʿAṣāfīr tamūtu fī l-Jalīl [The Birds Die in Galilee] (1970)[14]

A different explanation is given by the title poem of the collection *al-ʿAṣāfīr tamūtu fī l-Jalīl.* Here the reason why their love fails lies within the lovers themselves. The poem is also rather brief (45 lines) and written in a metrically free form. Rītā and the first-person speaker, who here again seems to be the poet talking about his real love, are unable to come together because of the different worlds from which they come. These worlds live and act in their respective souls as well and determine their behaviour towards each other.

Thus Rītā plays the part of estranged stranger in the poet's world:

She cages in a camera
Twenty gardens
And the birds of Galilee…

ورمت في آلة التصوير
عشرين حديقه
وعصافير الجليل

13 Purely external circumstances are usually also the reasons for the failure of the love relationship in pre-ʿabbāsid ghazal poetry: cf. Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*, 341, 350ff.

14 *Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh*, 261-64.

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She then goes somewhere far beyond the sea to search for a new sense of truth. The poet stays behind, dreaming in his land, which he experiences as:

(My homeland is) a laundry line
For the veils soaked with spilled blood

وطني حبل غسيل
لمناديل الدم المسفوك

Rītā has no contact with him. All he has is her absence and her silence. In his memory their times of being together merge into death, which personified in the atmosphere of the land has invaded him as well:

We are two faces, death and me

وانا والموت وجهان

And the love given to Rītā was nothing more than:

The mystery of a faded pleasure at the border station

سر الفرح الذابل في باب الجمارك

well as the repeated shared appearance of the poet and of death on Rītā's brow and in front of her window.

In the middle of the poem, the poet addresses Rītā directly and questions her in detail about the reason for her flight. Yet Rītā's silence imbues the whole atmosphere, exerting its effect on the old city, the starry sky at night and the fertile trees of the land. The love of yesterday and the loneliness of today are indistinguishable. This love and the injustice committed in the land are also indistinguishable. In view of a love that is doomed to failure, the poet asks his beloved to celebrate their downfall in the blood of the land:

Come, let us join the massacre!

تعالي ننتمي للمجزره!

The poet has realized that his erotic love affair with his Jewess is incompatible with loyalty to his own threatened people in the present reality. Toward the end of the poem, a melancholic, autumnal feeling of the end of carefree illusions remains:

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Flocks of birds
Fall like abundant leaves
Into the fountain of time
I have torn out the blue wings

سقطت كالورق الزائد
اسراب العصافير
بآبار الزمن...
وانا أنتشل الاجنحة الزرقاء

In the course of all these painful experiences, the poet has developed a new, indelible self-image. He discloses it to Rītā in the last lines:

Oh Rītā
I am the stone on the grave that grows
Oh Rītā
The chains engrave
into my skin
The outline of my home country

يا ريتا،
انا شاهدة القبر الذي يكبر
يا ريتا،
انا من تحفر الاغلال
في جلدي
شكلا للوطن...

Like Rītā, the poet, too, knows other worlds than those of love. And he sees himself as more, possibly even as someone more significant than an unfulfilled lover. His patriotic duty carries much more weight and importance than his actions as a foreigner's lover, since he is the witness and herald of oppression in his land, the history and identity of which are engraved into his character.

3. Rītā...aḥibbīnī [Love Me, Rītā] (1970)[15]

The poem *Rītā...aḥibbīnī* is from the same collection *al-ʿAṣāfīr tamūtu fī l-Jalīl*. It has 118 lines and again is composed with changing metrical patterns and rhymes.

15 *Ibid.*, 274-80.

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In the poem the first-person speaker describes the scenery of a city. It is called Athīnā (Athens), a depressing place where control and constraint prevail. "Love is forbidden" [*wa l-ḥubbu mamnūʿun*] in Athīnā, a statement that is repeated several times. In Athīnā, which without doubt stands for the state of Israel, two worlds pervade one another: an outer world and the poet's dream world. But there is life only in this dream world. The city, in contrast, is old and archaic: in it, a rigid order reigns that blots out life and love. Certain motifs seem to have been taken directly from the Israeli reality and inserted into the poem without veiled symbolism:

Sleep! Here police abound
Here police, like olive trees, abound

نامي! هنا البوليس منتشر
هنا البوليس، كالزيتون، منتشر

Within this comprehensive police system, the poet speaks and dreams in a place where the constraints of the city are at their most oppressive: prison. Again he presents himself as a solitary bard and a prisoner in chains far from his instrument (*santūr*) and the body of his beloved. Rītā, the addressee, is absent and silent. In a refrain that is repeated four times (slightly altered the last time) the prisoner asks her to love him and then to die so that his yearnings may die in Athīnā as well.

Rītā … love me! And die in Athīnā
Like the scent of jasmine
So that the prisoner's yearnings may also die.

ريتا... احبيني! وموتي في اثينا
مثل عطر الياسمين
لتموت اشواق السجين...

Death for the sake of love is contrasted with the cold and cruel death that pervades the descriptions of the outer world in the poem. This latter death is depicted as decay and paralysis, as the night of crimes, as the suicide of heroes and as the separation of Athīnā's lovers.

Sorrow has become Greece's identity
Greece is seeking its childhood
But childhood is lost to it
The columns of the temple collapse
The noblest heroes die by their own hands

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And lovers go separate ways
At the culmination of their masculinity and femininity.

الحزن صار هوية اليونان،
واليونان تبحث عن طفولتها
ولا تجد الطفوله
تنهار اعمدة الهياكل.
الفرسان ينتحرون.
والعشاق يتفرقون.
في أوج الأنوثه والرجوله.

In the middle of the poem, one verse stands out from the formal and substantial framework. In an anaphora, the poet defines his exile (*manfā*), which at this time is merely existential and internal. First, he names the people of his land as his exile: farmers, but also prison guards. He names the festivities that have become "embalmed," i.e., stiff and lifeless. He names a beloved who fastens the garment of her lover to the edge of a cloud – an image that perhaps expresses the fleetingness and vagueness of love.

My exile: peasants imprisoned in the language of affliction
My exile: prison guards exiled in my voice and in the melody of the rabāba
My exile: embalmed festivities … and an inscribed sun
My exile: a beloved who fastens her lover's garment to the edge of clouds
My exile: all the maps of the world and the stamp of affliction

منفاي: فلاحون معتقلون في لغة الكآبه
منفاي: سجانون منفيون في صوتي... وفي نغم الربابه
منفاي: اعياد محنطة... وشمس في الكتابه
منفاي: عاشقة تعلق ثوب عاشقها علي ذبل السحابه
منفاي: كل خرائط الدنيا وخاتمه الكآبه

Back in an outer world full of violence and sadness, the poet dreams of his love. In his dream the chains of the repressive system dissolve. Its violent present merely serves as the starting point for the fantasies that raise the poet high above the outer reality. The beloved appears as an afflicted but also as a passionate body, full of summer and beautiful death. The poet may be identifying Rītā, on this one occasion, with the mythical power of the ancient land of Palestine. Beyond her earthly body she assumes a dimension beyond space and time. The poet sees the dead of the land

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fighting for her as clearly as the trees of a garden. He pleads with Rītā to embrace them with her mythical arms. In this way he would be able to accept his exile and continue the long search for his ancestors, i.e., his own roots in the land.

In a dream, your arm is transparent
Below it, an ancient sun
The dead are colorless, yet I see them
As I see the trees of the garden
They are fighting for you
Embrace them with mythical arms that brought forth the truth
Allowing me to justify exile and to hold up my brow
And to continue the long quest
For the secret of my ancestors and the first corpse
That broke through the limits of the inconceivable.

في الحلم، شفاف ذراعك
تحته شمس عتيقه
لا لون للموتى، ولكني أراهم
مثل اشجار الحديقه
يتنازعون عليك،
ضميهم باذرعة الاساطير التي وضعت حقيقه
لأبرر المنفى، وأسند جبهتي
وأتابع البحث الطويل
عن سر اجدادي، واول جثة
كسرت حدود المستحيل.

Maḥmūd Darwīsh's poem *Rītā...aḥibbīnī* is a complex expression of the political and existential dimensions in which the poet situates his life and his love. The poet is in a state of multiple exiles. He is all of reality, a prisoner, the bard of his people, who are exposed to a system of hostility just as he and Rītā are. He draws his power from the dream; he dreams of surrealistic landscapes in which erotic love merges with supernatural powers out of the land's history.

In the dream of the last sequence his qaṣīda finally comes alive and spreads out its revolutionary power. It brings about change, renewal and the end of rigidity. The beloved, who was just about to leave, suddenly turns around and comes back, and olive trees regain their green and songs spread. The land, struck by lightning in an apocalyptical scene, is reborn. Thus it becomes the home for a love that has finally become liveable.

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In the dream, black eyes widen
Chains quiver…
Night withdraws…
The qaṣīda rings out
By its earthly imagination
Imagination drives it on… and on
With the fierceness of wings of certainty
And I see you as you recede from me
…Draw near to me
Toward a new divinity
My hands are in chains, yet
I pluck the strings of my distant santūr incessantly
And I arouse your body…
Greece will be born…
Songs will spread.
The olive tree will regain its green
Lightning will pass openly through my homeland
And two lovers will discover childhood…

في الحلم، تتسع العيون السود
ترتجف السلاسل...
يستقيل الليل...
تنطلق القصيده
بخيالها الارضي،
يدفعها الخيال الى الامام... الى الامام
بعنف اجنحة العقيده
وأراك تبتعدين عني
آه... تقتربين مني
نحو آلهة جديده.
و يداي في الاغلال، لكني
أداعب دائما اوتار سنطوري البعيده
وأثير جسمك...
تولد اليونان...
تنتشر الاغاني.
يسترجع الزيتون خضرته...
يمر البرق في وطني علانية
ويكتشف الطفولة عاشقان...

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Closing Remarks

Thanks to Maḥmūd Darwīsh's autobiographical remarks, we can understand the poems about Rītā as a way of coming to terms with an unhappy love to a Jewish woman. Hence, the three poems exemplify an innovative and individual imagery of love emerging from the aggressive and fragmented reality of the modern Middle East.

The subject of *Rītā wa-l-bunduqiyya* is the destruction of prior bliss by aggressive and hostile external forces. The destruction of love by purely external factors is a traditional motif familiar to us from classical Arabic love poetry. The lover and his beloved take on impersonal roles transcending the reality of their actual relationship.

The two other poems, however, intensify the existential dimensions of love, whose identification, treatment and depiction in poetry is allowed only by the conventions of the modern age. There was no previously existing literary model that Maḥmūd Darwīsh could revive (assuming he wanted to) for an intertextual illumination of the dimensions of this suffering. Thus, *al-ʿAṣāfīr tamūtu fī l-Jalīl* speaks of the mutual estrangement caused by the lover's different worlds. This estrangement works against love from within. The poet seems to resign. He nonetheless realizes that his experiences as a Palestinian have formed him deeply and permanently and that to proclaim the suffering of his people is his *genuine* mission.

In *Rītā...aḥibbīnī* he raises himself above the choice between love and country. The poem is a complex painting in words of the hostile surroundings to which love, as a part of the whole, is exposed and in which it must inevitably fail. Maḥmūd Darwīsh imagines a solution which he continues to pursue today, far from concrete prison walls and unfulfilled love: the abolition of injustice and of segregation in his country through the power of words and poetry.

In 1992, more than 20 years after the poem *Rītā... aḥibbīnī*, Darwīsh's 11-part poem *Aḥad ʿashara kawkaban ʿalā ākhir al-mashad al-andalusī* [*Eleven Stars above the Final Andalusian Scene*] was published. It included a further long sequence about Rītā: *Shitāʾ Rītā* [*The Winter with Rītā*].[16] The homeless wanderer, who after the forced withdrawal of Palestinians from Beirut at the outset of the Eighties first settles in Cyprus, then (for a longer time) in Paris, has come to earn wide recognition not only across the entire Arab world but also internationally. His unique lyric style

16 Maḥmūd Darwīsh: *Aḥad ʿashara kawkaban ʿalā ākhir al-mashad al-andalusī*. Beirut 1992, 69-80.

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unfolds on a metaphorical-symbolic plane on which paradigmatic and historical circumstances as well as human and mythic symbolic figures are prominent. Nevertheless, Darwīsh never loses his emotional connection to the fundamental human experiences in which the subjects of his poetry are rooted.[17] Thus, he transcends many of the usual poems concerned with Palestinian historical experience to express a universal condition of inner and outer exile that permeates the history of all peoples. On the other hand, the said poem reflects, in fairly specific terms, the resigned attitude of the disappointed PLO functionary (until 1993) in view of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, which he sees as the betrayal of the political and human utopia of Palestine by his people's officiating leaders.[18] In these passages, which are titled with her name, Rītā is not principally a figure calling to mind unrealised personal happiness. Rather, she is elevated above the narrative of a former shared relationship, whose references to reality are inextricably intertwined with surrealist and lyric symbols.

The poem, accordingly, concludes as follows:

> The guard permitted me no door for entry, so I propped myself up on the horizon
> And I looked down below
> I looked up above
> I looked around
> But I found no
> Horizon to look at; I found in the light nothing except for my own gaze
> Returning to me… I said: come back to me once again, for I have seen
> One who tried to see a horizon that a messenger
> Restored with a letter consisting of two words: I and You.
> (…)
> (…) Rītā turns lonely around Rītā:
> No earth for two bodies in one body; no exile for an exile
> In this small room: to go out is to come in
> We sing in vain between the abysses; let us journey… so that the way will be clear
> I cannot… nor I, she said and she did not say
> (…)
> Take me somewhere far away
> Take me somewhere far away, sighed Rītā:
> This winter is long

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17 Cf. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (ed.): *Modern Arabic Poetry: An Anthology.* New York 1987. Introduction, 29f.

18 Weidner: *Darwīsh*, 13 f. (see note 4).

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And she smashed the color of the day against the iron of the window
And she laid her small revolver on the draft of the qaṣīda
And she threw her stockings on the chair, and the cooing was shattered
And she went away into the unknown, hidden, and it was time for me to depart.

لم يترك الحراس لي بابا لأدخل، فأتكأت على الافق
ونظرت تحت،
نظرت فوق،
نظرت حول،
فلم أجد
افقا لأنظر، لم أجد في ضوء الا نظرتي
ترتد نحوي. قلت: عودي مرة اخري الي، فقد أرى
احدا يحاول ان يرى افقا يرممه رسول
برسالة من لفظتين صغيرتين: انا، وانت
(...)
(...) تدور ريتا حول ريتا وحدها:
لا ارض للجسدين في جسد، ولا منفى لمنفى
في هذه الغرف الصغيرة، والخروج هو الدخول
عبثا نغني بين هاويتين فلنرحل... ليتضح السبيل
لا استطيع، ولا انا، كانت تقول ولا تقول
(...)
خذني الى ارض بعيدة
خذني الى ارض بعيدة، اجهشت ريتا: طويل هذا الشتاء
وكسرت خزف النهار على حديد النافذة
وضعت مسدسها الصغير علي مسودة القصيدة
ورمت جواربها على الكرسي، فأنكسر الهديل
ومضت الى المجهول حافية، وادركني الرحيل

Darwīsh's nonviable relationship with Rītā, a Jewess, forms the factual background and moving force of a number of poems that helped shape the development of modern Arabic poetry. In *Rītā wa l-bunduqiyya*, Rītā assumes the ironically tinged literary role of the adored, childlike, innocent beloved. In the two other poems from this period, the real love relationship becomes evident; the apartheid conflict in the state of Israel is crystallized in its failure. For the poet, who in these years emerged as the poetic spokesman of the discriminated Arab minority, Rītā is the subject of a bitter existential and political process of experience. Decades

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later, in the poem *Shitā' Rītā*, she will be completely elevated above her individual personality. For the exiled Palestinian Maḥmūd Darwīsh, who even internationally unquestionably represents the avant-garde of a modern literature that in a wider sense is politically and humanely motivated, Rītā appears as the nostalgic symbol of coldness and estrangement among human beings in a world whose masters grant love no home.

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VICTIMS VICTORIOUS

Violent Death in Classical and Modern Arabic Ghazal

Angelika Neuwirth
(Berlin)

1 *Coping with violent death: The case of an ancient Arabian elegy*

An ancient Arab poem particularly cherished by Goethe opens with the following line:

> Inna bi-sh-shiʿbi lladhī dūna salʿin
> la-qatīlan damuhū mā yuṭallū.[1]

It was translated by Goethe as:

> *Unter dem Felsen am Wege*
> *Erschlagen liegt er,*
> *In dessen Blut kein Tau herabträuft.*[2]

This has been rendered in English as:

> On the mountain path that lies below Salʿ /
> lies a murdered man whose blood will not go unavenged[3]
> (verbally: whose blood will not mix with morning dew).

The poem – the famous elegy, *marthiya*, attributed to Ta'abbaṭa Sharran (though its metaphors betray a later re-shaping) which is familiar to any educated Arab native-speaker through Abū Tammām's celebrated anthology *al-Ḥamāsa* – laments the death of a tribal chief, praising him as a valiant warrior, as a leader who enjoyed the loyalty of his followers, and as a generous host. It pursues the process of how his avenger restores the

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1 Ta'abbaṭa Sharran, in: Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Marzūqī: *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa*. Cairo 1951, II, 827; *Sharḥ at-Tibrīzī*. Damaskus n.d., I, 341-7.

2 Goethe: *West-östlicher Divan*, hrsg. und erl. v. Hans-J. Weitz. Frankfurt 1974, 131-135.

3 Transl. by Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych: *The Mute Immortals Speak. Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual*. Ithaca et al. 1993, 58-60. See for an analysis of the entire poem, *ibid.*, 55-83.

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integrity of the tribal society which has been violated through the murder of one of its most prominent members. The hero has died violently – a statement which gains singular pathos through its combination with the promise of immediate revenge, of the restitution of societal norms: not a single night will pass before revenge is taken for the dead man. The promise is enhanced by the last will of the deceased who has laid the obligation of revenge on the shoulders of his closest kinsman, the poet's *persona*, a circumstance that invites the poet to include a brief self-praise which then leads over to the panegyric on the deceased. Towards the end of the poem the revenge is proclaimed as having been successfully carried out, it has resulted in a devastating physical and even moral loss on the side of the enemy group through which the integrity of the violated tribe is restored. The poem ends in a '*nunc est bibendum*,' in the enactment of a meal:

Ḥallati l-khamru wa-kānat ḥarāman
wa-bi-la'yin mā alammat taḥillū.

Wine has become licit again after being forbidden
It took trouble to make it licit again.

The meal is not only enacted on the heroic level, but mirrored in the animal realm, it is recast in a sarcastic description of hyenas consuming the corpses of the enemy's dead. The circle has been closed, norms have been restored, the customary social space warranting a safe regression to a preconscious state, realized in intoxication, *khamr*, has been regained.

The *marthiya* has been celebrated by western critics for its description of uncompromising heroic attitudes.[4] In the east, as we shall see, it lent itself to a political reading as a text showing in an exemplary way how to act when the violation of norms threatens to uproot tribal or communal identity and coherence.

2 *Writing the Palestinian tragedy*

Politically committed poems expressing the necessity to re-establish violated norms have been prominent throughout the history of Arabic poetry and are particularly frequent in modern Arab poetry. The following article will discuss a famous case: a poem written by a Palestinian poet in 1966, Mahmud

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4 See Goethe: *Divan*, 131-134, and Friedrich Rückert: *Hamasa oder die ältesten arabischen Volkslieder*. Gesammelt v. Abu Temmam, übers. und erl. v. Friedrich Rückert. Stuttgart 1846, 299-302.

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Darwish,[5] then still in the beginning of his poetical career. It reveals itself as a Palestinian poem by its very title: *ʿĀshiq min Filasṭīn*[6] – "A Lover from (or: of) Palestine." It is not an elegy, although it contains the statement that poetry in the given political situation cannot be but elegiac.[7] Since, however, it presents itself explicitly as the communication of a passionate lover, an *ʿāshiq*, it should be recognized at the same time as a modern ghazal, reflecting models of the classical tradition. In view of its sequence of themes the poem comes close to still a third genre, namely a qaṣīda. The generic classification is no merely formal matter. A qaṣīda is a highly traditional poem which in its original ancient Arab context is highly norm-asserting, confirming the values cherished by the tribal society, without losing its coherence-generating power during its later developments.[8] The ghazal, particularly the mystical ghazal, is in contrast rather subversive, establishing a counter-reality not committed to established norms but rather to counter-norms aiming to serve the private realm of desire, even the unconscious, and to create a social space of its own. In view of the catastrophic dimension of the Palestinian tragedy it is obvious that traditional societal order has failed, and that transmitted values have proven unfit to warrant the dignity of the Palestinian people. There is no societal structure and no value system that could be affirmed whole-heartedly. This being said and keeping the claim of the poet's *persona* to be a "passionate lover," the protagonist of a ghazal poem, in mind, we have to expect an unconventional new reading of the two old genres.

2.1 *A poem between qaṣīda and ghazal*

Structurally, Darwish's poem mirrors the classical qaṣīda, and has been read as such by more than one critic.[9] Though beginning with a ghazal-inspired

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5 See for Mahmud Darwish (born 1942 at Birwa/Galilee) Birgit Embaló, Angelika Neuwirth and Friederike Pannewick: *Kulturelle Selbstbehauptung der Palästinenser. Survery der modernen palästinensischen Dichtung*. Beirut et al. 2001 (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 71), 1-67, 216-247.

6 *Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh*. Beirut 1981, I, 1981-85. The poem has been discussed by the present author from a different angle, namely its intertextuality, see Angelika Neuwirth: Darwish's Re-staging of the Mystic Lover's Relation Towards a Superhuman Beloved, in: Stephan Guth et al. (eds.): *Conscious Voices. Concepts of Writing in the Middle East*. Beirut 1999 (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 72), 153-178. Some of the observations presented there have to be summarized in the present context.

7 Verse 19: *lam nutqin siwā marthiyata l-waṭani.*

8 See Stefan Sperl et al. (eds.): *Qaṣīda Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa. Classical traditions and modern meanings*. Leiden 1996.

9 Khalid Sulayman: *Palestine and Modern Arab Poetry*. London 1984, 156-160. Angelika Neuwirth: Das Gedicht als besticktes Tuch: Mahmud Darwischs Gedicht 'Ein Liebender aus Palästina,' in: Gisela Völger et al. (eds.): *Pracht und Geheimnis: Kleidung und Schmuck aus Palästina und Jordanien*. Köln 1987, 110-117.

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proemium, an amorous invocation of the beloved (1-9), it contains all the elements required for a classical qaṣīda, starting with a lament about loss in the past, a kind of nasīb (I; 10-39), followed by attempts of the speaker to reassure himself of his psychological strength and his social rank – attempts pursued through a movement in space, a *raḥīl* (II; 40-66). This part again leads over to the conveying of a message, a *balāgh* (IIIa; 67-95), culminating in a praise of the addressee, a *madīḥ* (IIIb; 68-96) and a closing self-praise, a *fakhr* (IIIc; 97-111). It is this markedly classical overall structure evoking a particular constellation of *dramatis personae*, that makes the peculiarity of the modern poem with its staging of new protagonists all the more apparent. – To mention only one of the most striking differences between the classical qaṣīda and the modern poem: the beloved in Darwish's nasīb has in no way definitely departed from the scene, but, on the contrary, remains a present absentee. Not only is she directly evoked as the addressee in the introductory section, but she also returns as the *mamdūḥa* in the later parts of the poem – a clear mark of ghazal interference with the qaṣīda genre. – Moreover, she is not an individual person but rather a personification of a distant Other, again a trait evoking the ghazal, although of the mystical rather than the erotic type. As for the poet's *persona*, it is striking that the lament of loss (nasīb: 10-39) is preluded by a distinctly ghazal-tinted proemium, an articulation of how the poet is enchanted by his addressee who is imagined as being present. He finds himself in a state of inspiration, an apt state to invert the memory of the experience of loss that is recorded subsequently. Thus, what is at stake in the modern poem it is no longer the heroic overcoming of a melancholic mood in view of the ultimate transience of all happiness. It is rather an encounter, at once painful and enriching, with the tragic that has affected the deepest layers of the speaker's mind. He will only regain his mental composure at the end of his *raḥīl*, his imagined journey, when the ban of separation from his beloved is lifted by the power of his imagination. Hence, the poem presents a peculiar melange of the ancient qaṣīda, reflected in its structure, and the classical ghazal, reflected in its mood.

2.2 *The ghazal key: pain of love (the amatory proemium, vv.1-9)*[10]

The following reading will focus on the ghazal elements rather than the qaṣīda characteristics of the poem. Let us start with the introductory section which overtly betrays the ghazal lover's passionate attitude towards his beloved:

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10 The term proemium appears appropriate, since the introductory section invokes the inspiring other, not completely unlike the invocation of the muses in classical poetry.

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ʿUyūnuki shawkatun fi l-qalbi
tūjiʿuni wa-aʿbuduhā
wa-aḥmīhā mina r-rīḥi
wa-ughmiduhā warāʾa l-layli wa-l-awjāʾi ughmiḍuhā
fa-yushʿilu jurḥuhā ḍawʾa l-maṣābīḥi (...)
wa-ansā baʿda ḥīnin fī liqāʾi l-ʿayni bi-l-ʿayn
bi-anna marratan kunnā warāʾa l-bābi ithnayn.

Your eyes are a thorn in the heart;
It pains me, yet I adore it
And shelter it from the wind.
I plunge it into my flesh
Hiding it from night and sorrow,
And its wound ignites the lights of stars (...)
When our eyes meet, I soon forget
That once, behind bolted doors,
The two of us were united.[11]

The lover-beloved relationship reflected here is clearly a dominance-submission relationship (very much unlike that of the qaṣīda's nasīb) such as maybe considered characteristic for the classical ghazal, particularly the mystical. It is dominated by paradoxes (feeling pain does not lead to the desire to be cured but to adoring the source of pain, enhancing the pain and preserving its source; a violation through wounding does not result in restrictive self-exclusion, but in a spiritual extension of the mind, an illumination; an intimate encounter leads not to the remembrance, but to the forgetting of the past), not entirely unfamiliar from classical poetry, but presented here in a much less rhetorical way. The source of pain seems to remain anthropomorphic, allowing to be sheltered and pressed to one's body, to be hidden from night and sorrow. It is a strange merger between a hyperbolic metaphor (thorn wounds heart)[12] and an imagined love scene (lover embraces beloved), that certainly exposes a deeper layer of the speaker's unconscious. As Walter Andrews[13] has pointed out, on the

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11 *Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh*, I, 81. Translation, slightly modified, by Khalid Sulaiman: *Palestine and Modern Arabic Poetry*. London 1984, 156-160.

12 See for the commonplace metaphor of the heart wounded by an arrow shot from the eyes of the beloved which appears since Umayyad poetry: Régis Blachère: Les principeaux thèmes de la poésie erotique au siècle des Umayyades de Damas. In: *Analecta*. Damascus 1975, 333-378.

13 Walter Andrews: A revisionist thesis for the esthetics of the Ottoman Gazel. In: *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi* XXIV-XXV (1986), 1-21, 17f. See also Walter Andrews: *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song. Ottoman Lyric Poetry*. Seattle et al. 1984, 150ff..

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most immediately manifest level, the ghazal treats a very specific set of painful and anxiety producing emotional states. "The obsessive passion/ intoxication theme clearly represents the experience of abandoning control to the unconscious. Loss of conscious control is, not surprisingly depicted as dangerous, frightening and painful. It is initially associated with the suicidal, self-destructive behaviour of the great heroes of romance (Ferhad, Majnun), with burning anguish, alienation from society, loneliness and poverty."

2.2.1 The *locus classicus* of inspiration: the introductory section of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's ghazal, *al-Jīmīya*

Indeed, in Darwish's amorous introduction, the consciously realizable world is absent from the scene which is exclusively occupied by the poet's *persona* and his addressee, it is the battlefield (*muʿtarak*) as the mystic poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ has expressed it, "where eyes encounter souls," a symbolic space of violent contacts between the eyes of both partners – *liqāʾu l-ʿayni bi-l-ʿayn*, as Darwish puts it – or the soul, *muhja*, of the speaker/lover and the gazes, *aḥdāq*, of the beloved, – in the wording of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's famous *Jīmīya* itself:

Mā bayna muʿtaraki l-aḥdāqi wa-l-muhajī
ana l-qatīlu bi-lā ithmin wa-lā ḥarajī [14]

Where eyes encounter souls in battle fray
I am the murdered man whom 'twas no crime to slay.[15]

This programmatic verse brings us back to the initially quoted verse by Taʾabbaṭa Sharrran. Obviously, Ibn al-Fāriḍ quotes the second hemistich of the *maṭlaʿ*, the beginning verse, of Taʾabbaṭa Sharrran's *marthiya* in his first verse to enhance his argument of the total invalidation of norms that has resulted from this passion. In both poems the word "murdered man" (*qatīl*) figures prominently in that position. The violent death of the hero in the paradigm of social reality presupposed for Taʾabbaṭa Sharrran, a death caused by an inimical group, had called social norms into question, and therefore necessitated an immediate violent response, *damuhū lā yuṭallu*

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14 Ibn al-Fāriḍ: *Dīwān*. Beirut 1903, 72-75.

15 The English transl. is that of Reynold A. Nicholson: *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*. Cambridge 1921, 175. The entire poem has been transl. by Arthur Arberry: *The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Farīḍ*. Dublin 1956, 27-34.

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– his blood will be avenged before the passing of a single night – , so as to re-establish the tribal norms. As reflected in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem, the violent death of the hero in a reverse projection of reality generated by passion has, however, now become licit. Neither a crime – *ithm* – nor the trespassing of an interdiction – *ḥaraj* – is implied, since that death was caused not by an inimical force, but by a powerful lofty being, duly deserving the self-sacrifice of the devotee as an adequate expression of faithfulness.

The hero who in the ancient poem was capable of annihilating and restoring norms is presented in the classical poem as deprived of such a magic power, to the contrary; here his suffering of violation carries no relevance as to the normative practises usually demanded in such a case. Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem thus presents a clear inversion of Ta'abbaṭa Sharran's introductory section.

The discourse has, of course, gone through yet another turn in Mahmud Darwish's poem. What has taken extreme form in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's hyperbolic language – that the gaze is a killing gaze, that the lover lies dead on the ground and that the central legal norm has been invalidated – namely that violence is legitimate only in cases, when a delict (*ithm*) has preceded and that it always brings about the burden of a retribution – has, of course, taken a milder form with Darwish: here the gaze is only wounding, the lover is not dead, and the norm annulled is only a behavioural custom, namely that the victim of violence should desire the end of his suffering, whereas the poet's *persona* wishes the violence to continue. Such an attitude which is familiar in *ʿudhrī*-love, is not explicitly attested for the mystical lover who though willing to endure his sufferings patiently desires redemption.

Still the attitudes in the mystical and the modern poem are in other terms closely related, the "hero" in both cases appears dispossessed of his norm-affirming power, but is strongly re-empowered emotionally. Above all, in the modern poem the classical evocation of the mythic metaphor of the norm-deleting power of the gaze remains so forceful, that the speaker's mental state is deeply affected by the overpowering charisma of the other. This attests a condition analogous to that of the mystic, whose behaviour appears as obsession and – in legal terms – makes sense only when acknowledged as self-sacrifice.

2.2.2 A modern replique: ʿAbdarraḥīm Maḥmūd's *marthiya* on the Martyr

Indeed, this particular reading of the Sufi ghazal and perhaps in particular of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poems had achieved popularity already with the poets of

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the Palestinian National Movement of the thirties. The pathetic perusal of the ghazal paradigm of passionate love culminating in self-sacrifice as the expression of one's devotion to the ideal of the homeland, is, of course, a wide-spread phenomenon in the Near East of the post-colonialist era, not limited to the Arab speaking world.[16] Resistance fighters not only perceive themselves as "passionate lovers" of their homeland, but sometimes are explicitly labelled as *ʿushshāq* – their mental attitude thus turning into an official designation. It is thus not surprising that Ibn al-Fāriḍ's inversion of Taʾabbaṭa Sharran's norm-affirming perception of the violent death suffered by the warrior, is reflected in one of the most famous poems of pre-*nakba* Palestinian poetry, ʿAbdarraḥīm Maḥmūd's *marthiya 'al-Shahīd'* (The Martyr). In this poem Maḥmūd advocates – very much in the vein of mystic poetry – a likewise "subversive" understanding of violent death, one that is declared not only licit but even desirable, indeed, it is rendered as a kind of fulfilment of life endowing the dead warrior with consummate beauty. ʿAbdarraḥīm Maḥmūd, who was an active fighter himself and was killed in battle during the war of 1948 is considered as one of the most influential poets of the pre-*nakba* Palestinian National Movement:

Wa-jismun tajaddala fawqa l-hiḍābi
tunāwishuhu jāriḥātu l-falā
fa-minhu naṣībun li-usdi s-samāʾi
wa-minhu naṣībun li-usdi th-tharā
kasā damuhu l-arḍa bi-l-arjuwāni
wa-athqala bi-l-ʿiṭri rīha ṣ-ṣibā
waʿaffara minhu bahīya l-jabīni
wa-lākinna ʿufāran yazīdu l-bahā
wa-bāna ʿalā shafatayhi btisāmun
maʿānīhi hizʾun bi-hādhi d-dunā [17]

A body lies there – prostate between mountain paths
Wild animals of the forests are contesting over him
The lion of heavens will have his share,
So will the lion of the earth
His blood has covered the earth with purple and made the east wind heavy with musk

16 See Jan Marek: Die Darstellung der Realität in der Urdu-Dichtung von Faiz Ahmad Faiz, in: J. C. Bürgel et al. (eds.): *Die Vorstellung vom Schicksal und die Darstellung der Wirklichkeit in der zeitgenössischen Literatur islamischer Länder*. Berlin et al. 1983, 153-168.

17 *Dīwān ʿAbdarraḥīm Maḥmūd*. Beirut 1999, 122.

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Musk also covers his beautiful forehead – in a way that still increases its beauty
A smile is on his lips expressing disdain of this detestable life.

Though Mahmud Darwish does not refer to Maḥmūd ʿAbdarraḥīm's poem in *ʿĀshiq* and in his later poems on martyrs rather cling to Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb's imagery,[18] it appears that the poetry of the National Movement of the thirties constitutes an important link in the transmission of the idea of passionate love of the Other (*ʿishq*, originally extended to God, is claimed for the homeland in Nationalist thinking as reflected in modern poetry) as the new context of violent death suffered by a young man in an act of resistance. Violent death is thus turned from a morally and ritually unacceptable experience of the collective into a positive, indeed desirable event. Reality is inverted as it was in the mystic ghazal. In the modern poem, however, this refers not only to the personal realm of the passionate lover, but to the perception of the political community as such. Although in *ʿĀshiq* still concerned with the societal role of the poet, during the seventies and eighties, Mahmud Darwish will devote a large number of poems to the celebration of the *fidāʾī's* violent death as self-sacrifice, precisely in a period when he claims the resistance fighter as his *alter ego*.

2.3 *Absence of space, time and language (the nasīb, vv. 10-24)*

kalāmuki kāna ughniyah
wa-kuntu uḥāwilu l-inshād
wa-lākinna sh-shaqāʾa aḥāṭa bi-sh-shafati r-rabīʿīyah
kalāmuki ka-s-sunūnū ṭāra min baytī
fa-hājara bāba manzilinā wa-ʿutbatanā l-kharīfīyah
warāʾaka ḥaythu shāʾa sh-shawqu
wa-nkasarat marāyānā
fa-ṣāra l-ḥuznu alfayni
wa-lamlamnā shaẓāyā ṣ-ṣawti
lam nutqin siwā marthiyata l-waṭani
sa-nazraʿuhā maʿan fī ṣadri qīthārin
wa-fawqa suṭūḥi nakbatinā sa-naʿzifuhā
li-aqmārin mushawwahatin wa-aḥjāri
wa-lākinnī nasītu nasītu yā majhūlata ṣ-ṣawti
raḥīluki aṣdaʾa l-qīthāra am ṣamtī

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18 Ibrahim Abū Hashhash: *Tod und Trauer in der Poesie des Palästinensers Maḥmūd Darwīš*. Berlin 1994.

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Your words were a song
I tried to sing.
But agony encircled the lips of spring.
Like swallows, your words took wing.
Led by love, they deserted the gate of our house
And its autumnal threshold.
Our broken mirrors shattered
My sorrow into a thousand pieces;
We gathered the splinters of sound.
We could perfect only our country's elegy.
We will plant it in the heart of a guitar
And play it on the terraces of our tragedy
To mutilated moons and to stones.
But I have forgotten... tell me, you of the unknown voice,
Was it your departure that rusted the lyre or was it my silence?

The nasīb presents itself as a flashback, evoking the departure of the beloved, who is represented by her voice: What has occurred is more grave than physical absence, it is the impossibility of communication between the lover and the beloved, the muteness of the protagonist which has manifested itself in the loss of both partners' identity, in their inability to recognize one another. The 'remainders' of their perceptive capacity do not suffice to produce language, except for the limited articulation of pain: that is an elegy. Again this will not be listened to by anyone, but made to sound only in the midst of an inanimate space. Spring, the seasonal backdrop of the ancient nasīb, has aged speedily to become autumn, where youthful and cheerful articulation (lips of spring) has given way to mute reclusion in a shelter from the cold (autumnal threshold). The dilapidated campsite whose herd stones in the ancient poem serve as a minimal marking to enable the traveller to recognize his prior site of residence has turned into an apocalyptic site, whose stones reflect mutilated cosmic bodies. The scene is not only deserted but devoid of animate beings once and for all.

The nasīb thus illustrates not the transient loneliness of the traveller but rather the existential loneliness of the speaker who, while painfully bound to the unattainable Other, is incapable to communicate with her. It is this situation which makes him submit to the only message he can receive from her, namely pain, which he celebrates as a redeeming experience. He thus moves close to the mystic lover who is capable of transforming the situation of separation into an imagined intimate encounter.

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2.4 *Topography of desire: the Garden*

The situation of the mystic lover, his being dominated by the unconscious, has been described by Walter Andrews as an extremely perilous emotional situation. It is resolved in the mystic ghazal in the existence of a poetically created climate of socially acceptable contexts in which abandonment of conscious control is both safe and interpretable in a positive manner. Here the space of the garden is of particular significance since it – to quote Walter Andrews[19] – "contains the irrational/unconscious behaviour and walls out the forces of an inimical, authoritarian consciousness. The notion of enclosure, of security and of a location permitting a safe regression of a preconscious state, relate the garden to the primal locations, to the home" and – one might add – to lost paradise.

2.4.1 The *locus classicus*: Ibn al-Fāriḍ's garden scenario

A particularly rich garden description of this kind is contained in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's celebrated *Jīmīya,* already quoted above.[20] Here the absent beloved is perceived as represented in a set of images converging in the vision of a *locus amoenus*, an idyllic space – that can be realized through all the five senses alike:[21]

Tarāhu in ghāba ʿannī kullu jāriḥatin
fī kulli maʿnan laṭīfin rā'iqin bahijī (vision)

Though he be gone mine every limb beholds him
In every charm and grace and loveliness

Fī naghmati l-ʿūdi wa-n-nāyi r-rakhīmi idhā
ta'allafā bayna alḥānin mina l-hazajī (audition)

In music of the lute and floring reed
Mingled in consort with melodious airs

Wa-fī masāriḥi ghizlāni l-khamā'ili fī
bardi l-aṣā'ili wa-l-iṣbāḥi fi-l-balaji (perception of coolness)

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19 Andrews: *Revisionist thesis*, 18.

20 It has been adduced earlier to throw light on the intertextual relationship between *ʿĀshiq min Filasṭīn* and Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Jīmīya*, see Neuwirth: *Re-staging*.

21 Note the frequent use of *mafāʿil-* or *fawāʿil*-structures (*fī masāriḥ, fī masāqiṭ, fī masāḥib*) which maybe echoed in Darwish's similarly sounding (*ra'aytuki) fi l-mawāqid, fi sh-shawāriʿ, fi z-zarā'ib* at the end of his *raḥīl* (vv. 55f.).

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And in green hollows where in cool of eve
Gazelles roam browsing, or at break of morn

Wa-fī masāqiṭi andā'i l-ghamāmi ʿalā
bisāṭi nawrin mina l-azhāri muntasijī (perception of freshness)

And where the gathered clouds let fall their rain
upon a flowery carpet woven of blooms

Wa-fī masāḥibi adhyāli l-nasīmi idhā
ahdā ilayya suḥayran aṭyaba l-arajī (smelling)

And where at dawn with softly trailing skirts
The zephyr brings to me his balm most sweet

Wa-fi t-tithāmiya thaghra l-ka'si murtashifan
rīqa l-mudāmati fī mustanzahin farijī [22] (tasting)

And where in kisses from the flagron's mouth
I suck wine dew beneath a pleasant shade [23]

2.4.2 Itinerary through the broken structures of the garden (the *raḥīl*: vv. 27-56)

Signs of such a garden, of a safe space to contain the lover's passion, are likewise traceable in Darwish's poem – once we read the poet's *persona's* journey as a *raḥīl*. His prolonged visual pursuit of the beloved then becomes recognizable as the reverse projection of a garden scene. It is, of course, a garden stripped completely of the aura of a *locus amoenus*, a fragmented panorama of Palestine, made up by diverse scenarios of suffering and misery, the harbour, *locus* of the involuntary emigration, hilltops grown with thorny shrubs, destroyed storerooms of poor peasant houses, night-clubs, *loci* of violation of human dignity, and refugee-camps. As in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem, in Darwish's qaṣīda, too, the beloved is absent but recognized by the lover in particular attributes of the ritual space of encounter, of the garden:

Ra'aytuki amsi fi l-minā'
musāfiratan bi-lā ahlin bi-lā zādi

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22 Ibn al-Fāriḍ: *Dīwān*.

23 Transl. Nicholson: *Studies*.

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rakaḍtu ilayki ka-l-aytāmi
asʾalu ḥikmata l-ajdādi
li-mādhā tusḥabu l-bayyāratu l-khaḍrāʾ
ilā sijnin, ilā manfan, ilā mināʾ
wa-tabqā raghma riḥlatihā
wa-raghma rawāʾiḥi l-amlāḥi wa-l-ashwāqi
tabqā dāʾiman khaḍrāʾ
wa-aktubu fī mufakkiratī
uḥibbu l-burtuqāla wa-akrahu l-mināʾ
wa-urdifu fī mufakkirati
ʿala l-mināʾ
waqaftu wa-kānati d-dunyā ʿuyūna shitāʾ
wa-qashru l-burtuqāli lanā wa-khalfī kānati ṣ-ṣaḥrāʾ
Raʾaytuki fī jibāli sh-shawki
rāʿiyatan bi-lā aghnām
muṭāradatan wa-fi l-aṭlāl
wa-kunti ḥadīqatī wa-anā gharību d-dār
aduqqu l-bāba yā qalbī
ʿala l-qalbi
yaqūmu l-bābu wa-sh-shubbāku wa-l-ismintu wa-l-aḥjār

Raʿaytuki fī khawābi l-māʾi wa-l-qamḥi
muḥaṭṭamatan
Raʾaytuki fī maqāhi l-layli khādimatan
Raʾaytuki ʿinda bābi l-kahfi ʿinda l-ghār
Raʾaytuki fī shiʿāʿi d-damʿi wa-l-jurḥi
wa-anti r-riʾatu l-ukhrā bi-ṣadrī
anti anti ṣ-ṣawtu fī shafatī
wa-anti l-māʾu anti n-nār

Raʾaytuki ʿinda bābi l-kahfi ʿinda n-nār
muʿallaqatan ʿalā ḥabli l-ghasīli thiyāba aytāmik

Raʾaytuki fi l-mawāqid... fi sh-shawāriʿ
fi z-zarāʾib... fī dami sh-shamsi

Raʾaytuki fī aghāni l-yutmi wa-l-buʾsi

I saw you yesterday at the harbour
You were a lonely voyager, without provisions.
I ran to you like an orphan
Asking the wisdom of our fathers:
Why does the green orange grove –
Dragged to prison and port,
And in spite of the scent of salt and longing –
Why does it always remain green?

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And I wrote in my diary:
I love the orange, but I hate the harbour
And I write in my diary again:
I stood at the harbour
And watched the world with eyes of winter.
Only the orange peel is ours, behind me was the desert.

I saw you on briar-covered mountains
You were a shepherdess without sheep
Pursued among the ruins
You were my garden when I was away from home.
I would knock on the door, my heart,
For on my heart
The doors and windows, cement and stones are laid.

I saw you in wells of water and in granaries
Broken. I saw you in nightclubs waiting on tables

I saw you in rays of tears and wounds
You who are a pure breath of life,
You who are the voice of my lips
You who are water… you who are fire.

I saw you at the mouth of the cave,
Drying your orphan rags on a rope.

I saw you in stores and streets,
In stables and sunsets.

I saw you in songs of orphans and wretches.

Since this *raḥīl* is an imaginary journey of the poet through his desolate homeland, a panorama of vistas of the beloved, viewed from his perspective, it is a rather passive movement. The *raḥīl* is therefore primarily an answer to the classical, i.e. mystical, poet's description of the garden, though inversions of several early nasīb *topoi* do occur. The travelling woman recalls the *ẓuʿun*, Beduin women departing on camel-back – a clear inversion of the nasīb *topos* of the "morning of separation," where the departing women are portrayed as leaving on luxuriously equipped mounts. If we follow several images that invert the *locus amoenus* theme of the classical ghazal – the shepherdess without sheep, resorting to mountains covered with thornbushes, the woman at the mouth of the cave, busy with washing for her orphaned children –, we see that in all these cases the woman is depicted as devoid of feminine charms. On a further level the symbols of fertility appear as inverted: "I saw you in jars of water, and in granaries,

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broken." Likewise the woman's dignity is violated: "I saw you in nightclubs waiting on tables." She has become the emblem of suffering instead of joy: "I saw you in rays of tears and wounds."

There is thus the imagination of an extended space where the beloved is in a mystical way present and close to the lover. But it is a reverse projection of the enclosed garden, a space stripped of its integrity and its aura. Finally, the *peripeteia* is reached: the scene is suddenly flashed by an illumination: The long sequence of visions of the beloved in the state of need and humiliation encounters an abrupt turn in a last image when she presents herself endowed with a clearly erotic emanation – she appears rising from the sea, or sleeping on the seaside, displaying the notion of life in its most perfect aesthetic form, the verse attesting eroticism regained and the symbolism of fertility and beauty revived (vv. 57-58):

Ra'aytuki mil'a milḥi l-baḥri wa r-ramli
wa-kunti jamīlatan ka-l-arḍi, ka-l-atfāli ka-l-fulli

I saw you all covered with salt and sand,
Your beauty was of earth, children and jasmine.

2.5 *Recovery of the Garden, creation of a companion for Adam (madīḥ, vv. 60-66)*

The sudden illumination is akin to a mystic experience. It is obviously rooted in a biographical event Darwish recounts in his "Diary of the daily sadness."[24] "Suddenly you remember that Palestine is your land. The lost name leads you to lost times, and on the coast of the Mediterranean lies the land like a sleeping woman, who awakes suddenly when you call her by her beautiful name. They have forbidden you to sing the old songs, to recite the poems of your youth and to read the histories of the revolutionaries and poets who have sung of this old Palestine. The old name returns, finally it returns from the void."

With this last vision the poet's *persona* achieves a new state of mind: having been helpless like an orphaned child – *ka-l-aytām* – clinging to the Beloved as a mother figure, he now becomes adult and thus legally capable: he swears. His oath is an expression of absolute devotion (vv. 60-66):

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24 *Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-'ādī.* Beirut 1978, 140. Transl. by Richard van Leeuwen: The Poet and His Mission. Text and Space in the Prose works of Mahmud Darwish, in: Stephan Guth et al. (eds.): *Conscious Voices. Concepts of Writing in the Middle East.* Beirut 1999 (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 72), 261f..

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Wa-uqsimu:
min rumūshi l-ʿayni sawfa akhīṭu mandīlan
wa-anqushu fawqahū shiʿran li-ʿaynayki
wa-isman ḥīna asqīhi fuʾādan dhāba tartīlan
yamuddu ʿarāʾisha l-ayki
sa-aktubu jumlatan aghlā mina sh-shuhadāʾi wa-l-qubuli:
filasṭīnīyatan kānat wa-lam tazali

I swear to you:
I shall weave a veil – *mandīl* – from my eyelashes
Embroidered with verses for your eyes
And a name, when watered with my heart
Will make the trees spread their branches again
I shall write a sentence on the veil
More precious than kisses and the blood of martyrs:
Palestinian she is and will remain.

The verses (*shiʿr*) promised here, which follow a few lines later (96-102) forming a poem within the poem, are an orchestration of the Beloved's name, *Filasṭīnīya,* Palestinian. But already in the oath itself, the name is highly celebrated, being framed in a sentence (*jumla*) that clearly re-echoes the Qurʾānic creational imperative, *kun fa-yakūn, Fiat et factum est.*[25] *Filasṭīnīyatan kānat wa-lam tazali.* Indeed, this creational statement receives breath of life, through the poet's heart: the poet dedicating his soul (*fuʾād*) to her eyes (*ʿaynān*), by making her name a song, a poem. Again, as in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem, an exchange between soul and eyes, *muhja* and *aḥdāq*, is dramatized. Through a complex metaphor, this oath, an overtly meta-textual section, placed exactly in the centre of the poem, presents the process of the poetical creation of the beloved, as a production of a textile, a garment for her, made from parts of the body of the poet himself, who thus not unlike Adam achieves a kind of self-sacrifice to contribute to the creation of Eve/Palestine. This new, poetic bestowal of identity demanding the utmost extent of the poet's devotion, realized by endowing the beloved with language, is deemed comparable, even superior to a real, i.e. bloody sacrifice: it is *aghlā mina sh-shuhadāʾi*, more precious than the martyrs' sacrifice.

The veil, the poetic *mandīl*, he wove from his eyelashes, i.e. the most subtle emblem of his sensitivity, maybe meant to cover her, allowing her to become visible in public. It serves as well, however, as a symbol of her

25 Qurʾān 2:218, 3:47, 3:59.

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investiture into a new role, which in view of the traditional Palestinian custom to offer garments as wedding presents, has to be interpreted as that of a bride.

When judging his own offering, the poet, who through his creative work bestows on her a new identity, does not hesitate to rank himself among the bearers of the highest standing in love: the martyrs, *al-shuhadāʾ*, to whom his voluntary suffering declared in the beginning had already brought him close. Here, martyrs are taken in the sense of martyrs of love. Indeed, evoking the well-known prophetic ḥadīth legitimizing the philosophy of love, of *ʿishq*, "*man ʿashiqa wa-ʿaffa wa-māt – māta shahīdan*"[26] – "he who loves passionately, but remains chaste and dies, dies as a martyr" – he even judges his offering superior to self-sacrifice:

Sa-aktubu jumlatan aghlā mina sh-shuhadāʾi wa-l-qubuli

I will write a sentence more precious than the blood of martyrs

This is a daring claim that alludes to the classical ghazal discourse. It is not surprising that the evocation of the famous ḥadīth has a parallel in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Jīmīya* which may be echoed in Darwish's poem:

Man māta fīhi gharāman ʿāsha murtaqiyan
mā bayna ahli l-hawā fī arfaʿi d-daraji [27]

Whosoever dies in ardour for his sake, liveth evermore raised up
among the people of passion, even to the most exalted degree.

And there are more parallels. Indeed, what has been achieved – in terms of the classical ghazal development – is no less than the recovery of the distorted garden: The vision of the beloved restored to her original beauty has allowed the poet to regain his familiar safe space. Thus, the new First Man, Adam, is married to a mythical woman or to the Garden, to Eden, to Palestine. The token of the validity of this cosmic union is his poetry. The beloved, now appearing as his bride, is presented through special metaphors reminding of the Qurʾānic imagery that makes woman a field to be cultivated by the husband, *nisāʾukum ḥarthun lakum*[28] – "your wives are

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26 The saying, known as the *ḥadīth al-ʿishq*, is transmitted in uncanonical ḥadīth collections, see for its social context and development of meaning, Stefan Leder: *Ibn al-Ǧauzi und seine Kompilation wider die Leidenschaft. Der Traditionalist in gelehrter Überlieferung und originärer Lehre*. Beirut et al. 1984 (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 32), 271-275.

27 Ibn al-Fārid: *al-Jīmīya*, v. 14.

28 Qurʾān 2:223.

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fields for you" – she can thus, without emotive pathos, be compared rather unpathetically to wheat, *qamḥ,* to field crops essential for survial as well as to lofty palm trees, *nakhīl*, symbols of pride and dignity (vv.67-75).

Wa-anti ḥadīqati l-ʿadhrāʾu
mā dāmat aghānīnā
suyūfan ḥīna nashraʿuhā
wa-anti wafīyatun ka-l-qamḥi
mā dāmat aghānīnā
samādan ḥīna nazraʿuhā
wa-anti ka-nakhlatin fi l-bāli
mā nkasarat li-ʿāṣifatin wa-ḥaṭṭābin
wa-mā jazzat ḍafāʾiruhā
wuḥūshu l-bīdi wa-l-ghābi

You are my virginal garden
As long as our songs
Are swords when we draw them.
You are faithful as wheat
As long as our songs
Nourish the land.
You are a palm tree in the mind,
Felled by neither wind nor woodman's axe
Your braids have been spared
By the beasts of desert and woods.

A merger between land, vegetation and woman has taken place. She is presented in terms of images by her lover in a similar way, as she would represent herself, he using the same images in poetry that she uses in embroidery: cosmic emblems, vegetation.[29] The beloved has thus emerged from mythic anonymity, she has been created as an individual, no longer being the land, *al-arḍ*, but as beautiful as the land, *jamīlatun ka-l-arḍ*, and bearing a name: *Filasṭīnīya*, while he has emerged from among the self-annihilating lovers, the *shuhadāʾ*, as a poet, bearer and bestower of identity.

2.6 *Strife (fakhr, vv. 103-121)*

Ḥamaltuki fī dafātiriya l-qadīmati
nāra ashʿārī
ḥamaltuki zāda asfārī

29 See Neuwirth: *Gedicht.*

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wa-bi-smiki ṣiḥtu fi l-wudyān
khuyūla r-rūmi aʿrifuhā
wa-in yatabaddali l-maydān
khudhū ḥadharan
mina l-barqi lladhī sakkathu ughniyatī ʿala ṣ-ṣawān
anā zaynu sh-shabābi wa-fārisu l-fursān
anā wa-muḥaṭṭimu l-awthān
ḥudūda sh-shāmi azraʿuhā
qaṣāʾida tuṭliqu l-ʿuqbān
wa-bi-smiki ṣiḥtu bi-l-aʿdāʾ
kulī laḥmī idhā mā nimtu yā dīdān
fa-bayḍu n-namli lā yalidu n-nusūr
wa-bayḍatu l-afʿā
yukhabbiʾu qashruha th-thuʿbān
khuyūla r-rūmi aʿrifuhā
wa-aʿrifu qablahā annī
anā zaynu sh-shabābi wa-fārisu l-fursān

I carried you in my old notebooks;
You were fire for my verses,
Provision for my excursions.
In your name I shout to the valleys:
I know the Romans' horses
Though the battlefield has changed
Beware of the lightning
My song engraved on granite
I am the fire of youth and the knight of knights
I am the iconoclast
The lands of Syria I will fill with poems
Rising like eagles hovering over the Levantine borders
In your name I shout at the enemy
Worms, feed on my flesh if I sleep
The eggs of ants do not hatch eagles
And the shell of an adder's egg
Conceals but a snake.
I know the Romans' horses
But I also know that a am the fire to youth and the knight of knights.

A covenant is now concluded, which in exchange for his emancipatory act renders to the poet his sensual faculties, enabling him to speak up audibly as a poet, to sing triumphant songs, finally allowing him to break through the restricted space between the harbour and the desert and to re-occupy his territory. He himself cultivates the land by creating poetry:

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Ḥudūda sh-shāmi azraʿuhā
qaṣāʿida tuṭliqu l-ʿuqbān

The lands of Syria I fill with poems
Rising like eagles hovering over the Levantine borders

He himself thus rises onto a common rank with his beloved, suspending the mythic gap between himself an the adored Other – a development not feasible for Ibn al-Fāriḍ, whose poem ends with the experience of being accepted graciously as a devotee of his beloved, remaining however on his modest rank, in a liminal stage.

Laka l-bishāratu fa-khlaʿ mā ʿalayka fa-qad
dhukkirta thamma ʿalā mā fīka min ʿiwajī.

Good tidings I bring thee, so strip thee of your burden: Thou hast
been remembered yonder despite the faults that are in thee.

3 *Conclusion*

Darwish's poem, we may conclude, portrays a poetic progress that leads his *persona* from an elegiac to a heroic mood, from the lament of loss (*ghazal*, *nasīb*) to self-assertion and the capability of strife (*fakhr*), from defying societal norms to reclaiming them. The poem appears to refer to the very tradition of ancient heroic warriors, precisely ʿAntara, a poet congenial with Ta'abbaṭa Sharran, whose poem was adduced in the beginning. It is ʿAntara's motto that is quoted in the closing verse:

Anā zaynu sh-shabābi wa-fārisu l-fursān.

I am the fire of youth and the knight of knights.

But this poetic progress is not simply a reflection of the similar movement achieved by the traditional sequence of themes and moods characteristic of the ancient qaṣīda. As we observed, the lament of loss in Darwish's poem is not about a personal relation disrupted for external reasons, but about existential loss, the recollection of an event of tragic dimension. To trace Darwish's poetic progress, the overcoming of the elegiac mood and the acceptance of the traumatic experience as a possible source of inspiration, we have had to traverse a long path taking us through the history of Arabic poetry. The intertextuality of the poem itself is apt for reflecting the phases of that development. It discloses traces of the successively changing

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perspectives in Arabic poetry concerning the validity of societal norms. The first two stages are easy to discern: if the world of the ancient Arab poet allowed for heroism to restore violated norms, the world of the classical ghazal poet had changed substantially, to quote Andras Hamori:

> "In an age that feels that human experience is tied together from above, where the spiritual refuses itself to poetry, there poetry in its exclusion must find human experience incoherent. With that incoherence, obsession supplies a point of orientation [...]. Islam replaced the pagan's heroic death with martyrdom; poetry within the fragmented experience it chose for its own, equated martyrdom with the disastrous end of obsession."[30]

As to the notion of obsession in the mystical ghazal, Walter Andrews has shown that "the love/intoxication themes and each feature of the ritualized acting out of obsession in the poetry are traditionally recognized as analogues for aspects of the progress toward mystical union."[31] Thus, in the pre-modern context of the ghazal, an anti-reality to the dominating *sharīʿa*-based world-view has been established. It is ruled by the principle of replacing traditional norms by anti-norms that allow for the subconscious, irrational, or passion, to be lived out safely. Violence and sufferance have changed their value.

It is this achievement which the modern poet can rely on. His position confronting the devastating reality again requires heroic determination. As against the ancient heroic *shāʿir* who was responsible for the maintenance of the norms and against the *ʿāshiq* of classical ghazal poetry, the builder of an anti-reality, the modern poet has a new objective. In a modern post-colonial world where norms are already found invalidated – not subverted in order to reclaim human freedom but manipulated to enslave man – the vision of the poet is demanded for another task: to reclaim a place in reality however alienated. This is not achieved by retreating into an anti–reality shared exclusively with co-celebrants of passionate rites, but by a passion that is more precisely described as com-passion, by saving the humiliated Other, the homeland, society, or collective memory from oblivion, by making the beloved visible and restoring his/her aura. The strife for the restoration of norms in this understanding can be realized through the option of armed struggle as we observed with ʿAbdarraḥīm Maḥmūd and as many of Mahmud Darwish's poems from the seventies and eighties attest.

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30 Andras Hamori: *On the Art of Medieval of Medieval Arabic Literature*. New York 1974.

31 Andrews: *Revisionist thesis*, 13.

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It is, at the same time, not least a textual strife that takes place in the art of the poet. Real violence, previously demanded to re-establish violated norms, was reshaped, in the Sufi paradigm, to manifest itself in the notion of self-sacrifice: the Sufi lover suffers voluntarily deriving illumination from the violence that affects him. In Mahmud Darwish's early poem *ʿĀshiq min Filasṭīn*, the poet's *persona* affected by the remembrance of shattering violence accepts its memory as a way to inspiration. Turning voluntary suffering into a creative act, he interprets his poetic expression of pain in the Sufi vein as an act of self-dedication. Writing poetry in this way appears to be a sublime, a metaphoric manifestation of self-sacrifice.

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Ghazal between Diverse Traditions

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THE MIGHTY BELOVED

*Images and Structures of Power in the Ghazal from Arabic to Urdu**

Johann Christoph Bürgel
(Bern)

The power or might of the beloved is one of the dominant and permanent motifs of the Persian ghazal. I will therefore devote the first part of this essay to the subject, following it through the centuries from its roots in early Arabic love poetry to the great masters of the Persian ghazal – principally Rūmī and Ḥāfiẓ – with brief glances at the Ottoman and the Urdu ghazal as well. In the second part I will concentrate on a few of the rhetorical devices and structural features through which this dominant motif is realised: the techniques, in other words, whereby the poet is able to render the alleged power of the beloved not only imaginable but perhaps even believable.

1

This powerful beloved does not exist in pre-Islamic nasīb, where the poet himself is the hero and his beloved only serves to enhance his own glory, wherefore he very often boasts of his conquest of more than just one lady, as Imru' al-Qays does in the long nasīb of his famous *Muʿallaqa*. The same is the case in the *ibāḥī* or libertine love poetry of early Islam, particularly in the poetry of ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa, who boastfully tells of his encounters with more than a dozen different ladies, even though he never courts two at a time in one poem.[1]

It seems that the powerful beloved first appears in ʿUdhrite poetry, and, remarkably enough, that from the very beginning the images used

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1 Cf. J. C. Bürgel: Love, Lust, and Longing: Eroticism in Early Islam as Reflected in Literary Sources. In: A. L. al-Sayyid-Marsot (ed.): *Society and the Sexes in Medieval Islam: Sixth Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference.* Malibu 1979, 81-117; J. C. Bürgel: Liebestheorien. In: W. Heinrichs (ed.): *Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft.* Wiesbaden 1990, vol. 5, 482-98.

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to evoke this power are full of violence, arising mainly from the spheres of tyranny and war. Jamīl is certainly one of the first to attribute to his beloved a deadly power: the missiles with which she shoots him (he does not yet say that these are her looks or her eyelashes) are more lethal than an arrow shot by a nobleman's hand.[2] The motif of the murderous power of the beloved remains central over the centuries. One of the ways to express it is to compare the beloved to a gazelle turning from quarry to hunter:[3] as does Bashshār ibn Burd (ca. 96-167/ca. 715-783) in a love poem of 21 verses addressed to Su'ād:

> This slender one surprised me! When she appeared to ward off the lion,
> he turned away, tamed!
>
> A lion chased by so graceful a gazelle! Never before you did a gazelle
> hunt a lion![4]

The second instance from Bashshār's dīwān is somewhat longer. In a poem of 26 verses, no less than ten deal with the differences between the gazelle (the animal) and the lady gazelle who is hunting the poet-lover. For our context, it is sufficient to quote the following three verses:

> Gazelles are caught by snares.
> She, however, has a charm against traps.
>
> My arrow misses her, whenever I shoot.
> But when she aims, she shows her skill.
>
> So when she had shot, my heart was hit
> by a piercing arrow of hers.[5]

The murderous glance is still absent in these examples, although they do appear in verses by his later-born contemporary al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf (133- ca.193/750- ca. 808):

> *rīmun ramā qāṣidan qalbī bi-muqlatihi*
> *afdīhi min qāṣidin qalbī wa-aḥmīhi*

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2 Th. Nöldeke: *Delectus veterum carminun arabicorum*. Berlin 1890, 11.

3 Cf. J. C. Bürgel: The Lady Gazelle and Her Murderous Glances. In: *Journal of the Arabic Literature* 20 (1989), 1-11.

4 *Dīwān*, ed. M. al-Ṭāhir ibn ʿAshūr. Cairo 1954, vol. 2, 166. The lion is of course the poet himself!

5 *Ibid.* II, 214.

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A fawn shot with its eyeballs, aiming at my heart,
my heart's hunter, whose ransom and protector I am.[6]

In another verse by the same poet the mere appearance of the gazelle makes the hunter die:

innī aṣīdu – wa-mā li-mithlī quwwatun
ẓabyan yamūtu idhā ra'āhu l-qāṣidu

I hunt – but one of my like has no power –
a gazelle, whose hunter dies as soon as he beholds it.[7]

Similar verses are to be found in later love poetry, for example by the caliph-poet Ibn al-Mu'tazz, who starts one of his poems with a long conjuration in the form of Qur'ānic oaths, all designed to enhance the deadly power of his beloved:

No! By the pomegranates that are her bosoms
etc.
never saw my eye something like that gazelle:
...
a soldier is wont to kill
with his lance or his sword;
but she kills with her eyes, her cheeks, her neck.[8]

If we now skip a few centuries we find a poem by Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240) beginning with the line:

After having killed with her looks, she resurrects with her speech
as if she were, while she is doing this, Jesus.[9]

In the dīwān of Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273) we read for example the following lines, addressed to his mystical friend:

du chashm-i āhuwānash shīr-gīrast
ka-z-ū bar man rawān bārān-i tīrast
kamān-i abruwān u tīr-i muzhgān
guwāhānand k-ū bar jān amīrast

His two gazelle-like eyes are lion-hunters,
from which a rain of arrows is coming over me.

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6 *Dīwān*, ed. Karām al-Bustānī. Beirut 1965, 319.

7 *Dīwān* 102u.

8 *Dīwān*, ed. Karām al-Bustānī. Beirut 1961, 173.

9 Reynold A. Nicholson (ed.): *The Tarjumān al-ashwāq: A collection of mystical odes*. London 1978, no. 2.

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The bow of his eyebrows and the arrows of his eyelashes
are witnesses that he is a lord over men's souls.[10]

The vital background, the "Sitz im Leben," of this lethal power of the beloved is of course the well-known phenomenon of lovesickness.[11] Young people of both sexes apparently fell ill or even died of unfulfilled love, their stories fill many volumes of medieval Arabic literature. It is sufficient to think of the famous collections of tales to that effect, gathered under the title of *Maṣāriʿ al-ʿushshāq* or "Battlefields of the Lovers." Ibn Ḥazm in his *Tawq al-ḥamāma* reports cases from his region concerning victims he knew personally. In most such stories, however, the fault is not with the beloved but lies rather in a social structure and public morality that do not allow young people to meet or even know each other before marriage. Thus love stories commonly centred on a free man and a slave girl, whom he had seen for example at the slave market but was unable to buy, a situation we encounter more than once in stories of the 1001 Nights.[12] The Persian and Ottoman ghazal solved the problem by substituting a boy for the girl. But the ghazal may of course also be addressed to a slave girl or a courtesan as it is clearly the case with Urdu poets like the outstanding Ghālib (1797-1869).[13] Whereas we know of no famous poet who died of love after the first generation of the Udhrites, the topic of lovesickness became a *topos*. al-ʿAbbās describes the fatal infatuation with almost medical exactness in a short poem:

My heart, because of its cruel destiny,
was given a gazelle, graceful, of languid, enchanting looks.

Her charm chased after my reason and was aided therein
by her mouth and her pupils in paralysing my spirit,

so her eye affected my body, until the malady has learned it,
and I knew no more how to escape from it,
nor did the wise man I asked for advice.

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10 *Dīwān*, ed. Furūzānfar, no. 362, 1-2.

11 Cf. J. C. Bürgel: Der Topos der Liebeskrankheit in der klassischen Dichtung des Islam. In Th. Stemmler (ed.): *Liebe als Krankheit. Vorträge eines interdisziplinären Kolloquiums*. Tübingen 1990, 75-104; Hans Hinrich Biesterfeld and Dimitri Gutas: The Malady of Love. In: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984) 21-55.

12 Bürgel: *Love, Lust, and Longing*, 101-15.

13 Cf. the Urdu novel Umrao Jan by Mirza M. Rusva, trans. into German by Ursula Rothen; on Ghalib cf. A. Schimmel: *A Dance of Sparks: Imagery of fire in Ghalib's poetry*. London 1979.

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The start of such love is griping affliction
and grief that scares away sleep, and its finish is death.[14]

The trend to exaggerate even urged Persian poets and their followers in other Islamic languages to make their beloved guilty not just of one murder, but of many. Ḥāfiẓ, in a ghazal about his friend, warns himself while accusing the beloved:

Don't yield, o my heart, to his lasso-like curl,
for there you see necks cut without blame or outrage!

Your eye drank our blood within an eyelid's winking and it pleases you.
O soul, it is not legal to protect a murderer![15]

Another ghazal by Ḥāfiẓ swings from deadly locks to deadly looks:

The curl of your lock is a trap for unbelief and belief, but this is just one piece out of its (the curl's) workshop.

Your grace is a wonder of beauty but
the spell of your twinkling eye is true sorcery (or magic).

How could one save one's soul from your cheeky eye,
which steadily lies in ambush with its bow drawn.

A hundred bravoes upon that black eye,
that creates miracles in the killing of lovers.[16]

Of course, one is reminded here also of a figure like Turandot in Niẓāmī's *Haft Paykar*, who, after having caused the death of thousands of wooers, ends up by marrying the one who overcomes all the pitfalls that killed the others. Centuries later, Ghālib again varies the old motif:

Why should my murderess be afraid? What will she have on her neck?

Nothing, but the blood, that, since I am alive, has been streaming from my eyes.

Or in the following verse with a typical change of the pronoun (*her* and *you* both refer to the beloved):

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14 *Dīwān*, 176.

15 *Dīwān*, ed. M. Qazwīnī and Q. Ghanī. Teheran 1941, 94, 4-5. In the following quoted as *QG*.

16 *QG* 55, 1-4.

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> The deadly dagger of her eyelashes, the inescapable arrow of her pride – you could not even risk to look at your mirror image [without being killed by it yourself]![17]

I think we need go no further in proving the longevity of this motif of the murderous eye. And of course, it is not the only metaphor by which the power of the beloved may be expressed. Another technique frequently used by the poets is to invest the beloved with either demonic or divine qualities. Let us start with the demonic aspect. At the end of one of his ghazal-like poems, and one that is in fact exclusively devoted to the praise of the beloved's power, Majnūn states that his beloved Laylā:

> *Hiya l-siḥru illā anna lil-siḥri ruqyatan*
> *wa innī lā ulfī lahā l-dahra rāqiya*
>
> She is pure magic (= a sorcerer), yet while there are remedies against (normal) bewitchment I will not find a healer for hers.[18]

Another poet, al-Muqannaʿ, who veiled himself because of his own extraordinary beauty, praises his beloved as a 'demon' (*jinniyya*) among mortal women etc. It is from this demonic component that all female vices proceed. But it is also her (or his) magic power that in late Persian love poetry enables the beloved to perform all kinds of miraculous feats, so that finally the power itself appears to have cosmic dimensions. In the ʿUdhrite love lyrics, we can sense the endeavour to sacralise this power.

When Majnūn pretends that Laylā possesses the power of resurrecting him after his death,[19] this clear reference to Jesus reminds us of the fact that ʿUdhrite poets liked to invest their beloveds with sacred or quasi-divine qualities. Thus Jamīl sang of Buthayna that she surpassed other women as the full moon surpasses the star, or as the Qur'ānic Night of Power surpasses a thousand months,

> *laqad fuḍḍilat ḥusnan ʿalā l-nāsi mithlamā*
> *ʿalā alfi shahrin fuḍḍilat laylatu l-qadri* [20]

The religious glorification continues in other poets both in Andalusia and in the East. Thus we read in the dīwān of the famous minstrel al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf such eulogizing verses as the following:

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17 D.J. Matthew and C. Shackle: *An anthology of classical Urdu love lyrics.* London 1972, 127, 125.

18 *Aghānī* II, 70.

19 A. Khairallah: *Love, Madness, and Poetry: An Interpretation of the Maǧnūn Legend.* Beirut 1980, 74.

20 *Aghānī* VIII, 151; a clear reference to the famous statement in Sura 97: *laylatu l-qadri khayrun min alfi shahrin.*

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Ka'annamā kāna fī l-firdawsi maskanuhā
fa-jā'ati l-nāsa lil-āyāti wal-ʿibari
lam yakhluq Allāhu fī l-dunyā lahā shabahan
innī la'aḥsabuhā laysat min al-bashari

Her abode seems to be in Heaven
and she has come to mankind as a miracle (*āya*) and a reminder.
God has not created the like of her on earth
I consider her as a superhuman being.[21]

And Ibn Ḥazm asks his beloved:

a-min ʿālami l-amlāki anta ami nsiyyu
abin lī faqad azrā bi-tamyīzī l-ʿiyyu
arā hay'atan insiyyatan ghayra annahu
idha uʿmila l-tafkīru fal-jirmu ʿulwiyyu

Are you from the world of the angels, or are you a mortal?
Explain this to me, for inability [to reach the truth] has made a mockery of my understanding.
I see a human shape, yet if I use my mind, then the body is [in reality] a celestial one.[22]

al-ʿAbbās pretends that the beauty of all female faces prostrates itself before the beauty of the face of his beloved:

inna l-nisā'a ḥasadna wajhaki ḥusnahu
ḥusnu l-wujūhi li-ḥusni wajhiki sājidu [23]

The apotheosis of the beloved leads to her or his gradually being invested with powers of cosmic dimensions, as we shall presently see. Statements to this effect in verses by Jamīl, al-ʿAbbās etc. appear very moderate if compared with what Rūmī, Ḥāfiẓ and later poets attributed to the object of their love. As there are evidently literary and ideological sources apart from the mere endeavour to describe the overwhelming experience of love, the question arises as to where does this dazzling, intoxicating power of the "friend" (*dūst, yār*), the "idol" (*nigār, but* etc.) come from. Although I think such power has several roots, I believe that one element is of central importance: that is the concept of the perfect man, which was developed

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21 *Dīwān* 166.

22 J. T. Monroe (ed.): *Hispano-Arabic poetry: A Student Anthology*. Berkeley 1974, no. 8c.

23 *Dīwān* 102, 4.

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by mystic thinkers like Ibn ʿArabī and made use of by Rūmī, Ḥāfiẓ and others. According to mystical speculation, as developed in Ibn ʿArabī's as well as later writers' works, the perfect man, *al-insān al-kāmil*, was the purest manifestation of the divine qualities on earth. The mystics found it embodied in the *shaykh* of their order, but also in Muḥammad and the prophets preceding him. The idea then crept into panegyrical poetry, where it merged with the pre-Islamic Oriental, mainly Iranian tradition of the God-King, and from there it impregnated the love ghazal. In this way, among others, the mystical ghazal became many-layered in its meaning.

The supernatural power of the beloved manifests itself through its emanative energy – for it is the beloved who bestows beauty and everything to do with beauty upon other beings. This can also be explained as an immanent development of Persian poetry, with its ever growing tendency to use hyperboles in the description of beauty and power. An initial comparison (A resembles or is like B) is soon replaced by an identification of the *primum* and the *secundum comparationis*: A is B. In the metaphor the *secundum* replaces the *primum*, i.e. the poet says full moon, but means the beautiful face. The next step is then that the *primum* surpasses the *secundum* or even bestows upon it its qualities. The moon has its shine from the beautiful face. The final point is reached when the *primum* becomes invested with magical power and is made the cause of natural phenomena that in reality have nothing to do with it, e.g. the moon vanishes because it is ashamed of the human face's beauty. All these procedures serve the magnification of the beloved's power, as in the following verse by Ḥāfiẓ:

tāb-i binifsheh mīdahad ṭurre-i mushk-sāy-i tu
parde-i ghuncheh mīdarad khande-i dil-gushā-yi tu

Your musk-scented curls give the violet its glow,
your heart-opening smile rends the bud's veil.[24]

or in Rückert's free, but beautiful German rendering:

Die Veilchen setzt in Verwirrung ein Lockenwallen von dir.
Und Knospen sprenget ein Lächeln der Mundkorallen von dir.[25]

The power of the beloved is however only the one pole of this play, the other being the lover's willingness to submit to and accept every whim,

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24 *QG* 411, 1.

25 *Dreiundsechzig Ghaselen des Hafis*, transl. Friedrich Rückert, ed. Wolfdiedrich Fischer. Wiesbaden 1988.

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every crudeness and cruelty from the beloved. This again has its counterpart in reality, its "Sitz im Leben," on various levels. It may be the behaviour of a courtesan as described in Jāhiẓ's *K. al-qiyān* (The Book of the Female Singer-slaves), to whose caprices the lover submits,[26] or as in the following words of Ḥāfiẓ, which are probably directed rather to a beautiful lad:

> May you scold me or curse me, I'll pray for you!
> The bitter answer is beautiful in a ruby-like sugar-sweet mouth.[27]

In the case of actual killing, we find the real-life correspondence in the situation of those despotic societies, where the arbitrary killing of people, among them courtiers and sometimes even of poets, was nothing exceptional. Thus, if "friend" refers to a prince, as it actually does for example in quite a number of ghazals by Ḥāfiẓ,[28] his killing of hundreds of lovers may in a sublime ironic way refer to his cruelty. Suffice it to recall that Mubāriz al-Dīn, a bigoted prince of Shiraz at the time of Ḥāfiẓ, is reported to have killed during his rule about 800 people in his palace, interrupting his reading in the Qur'ān.[29] This number may be exaggerated, but arbitrary killing did happen, as is testified by the unnatural death of so many caliphs, courtiers and princes. Still, the frequent affirmations to be ready to die through the beloved's hand, even to long for his lethal blow, arrow or whatever, do not sound very convincing in most of the cases, or so it seems to me.

> Ḥāfiẓ, the blood-imbued ruby is the thirsty lip of my friend,
> in order to see him, it is for me to give up my soul.[30]

Such claims become meaningful rather as reference to certain figures either of history or, even more so, of fiction. Incidentally, the Persian ghazal is full of allusions to epical poetry, an aspect still devoted too little attention, let alone investigated. Furthermore, they do have a convincing counterpart in historical reality, if we include in that realm the mystic's professed longing to be killed by God (e.g. on the battlefield of the holy war) and so to be united with him. There is a very beautiful ghazal by Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī that expresses this idea in a number of graceful and moving metaphors and with the chain rhyme *mīram* "I die" or "shall die":

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26 *The Epistle on Singing-girls of Jāḥiẓ*. Trans. A. F. L. Beeston. Warminster 1980.

27 *QG* 3, 6.

28 Cf. R. Lescot: Essai d'une chronologie de l'œuvre de Hafiz. In: *Bulletin d'études orientales* 10 (1944).

29 Art. Ḥāfiẓ (H. Ritter) in: *İslam Ansiklopedisi* V, Istanbul 1950, 65-71.

30 *QG* 51, 1.

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Ay khushā rūz ke pīsh-i chu tu sulṭān mīram
pīsh-i kān-i shakar-i tu shakar-afshān mīram

O blessed the day, when before a sultan like you I shall die,
before a sugar-source like you, sugar-strewing, I shall die.
...
If you pour the lethal draught into my cup,
I will kiss the cup and, drunken and strutting, I shall die.[31]

Ḥāfiẓ has a ghazal on the same motif, this time with the chain rhyme *mīramat* "I shall die for/to you."

Mīr-i man khush mirawī k'andar sar-u-pā mīramat
khush kharāmān shaw ke pīsh-i qadd-i ra'nā mīramat

My prince, you are striding so gracefully, that to your head and feet I will die,
strut gracefully, so that for you, before your handsome stature, I may die![32]

Space does not permit here for a detailed comparison, but it seems to me that in this poem Rūmī is addressing God, whereas Ḥāfiẓ addresses a human being. Let me just point to a little pun, contained in both ghazals: *mīram* means not only "I die," but also "I am a prince." This double sense is particularly meaningful in Rūmī, where it suggests that one becomes the prince of that sultan (God) through dying, which is exactly the mystical message contained in this poem.[33]

There are of course other devices to express one's willingness to submit to the beloved, one being the bipolar metaphor of chains, wherein the chains are the plaits of the beloved and the lover the one who needs to be bound by them because of his love-madness. In the pre-modern Islamic society, as in Europe, mad people were, at least in severe cases, put in chains.

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31 *Dīwān* 1639, 1 and 4. A German version of this ghazal is given in my anthology from Rūmī's dīwān: C. J. Bürgel (ed.): *Licht und Reigen: Gedichte aus dem Diwan des größten mystischen Dichters persischer Zunge*. Bern 1974, no. 92.

32 *QG* 92, 1.

33 For similar puns in Rūmī's poetry and their function cf. my article: Lautsymbolik und funktionales Wortspiel bei Rūmī. In: *Der Islam* 51 (1974), 261-81; also J. C. Bürgel: 'Speech is a Ship and Meaning the Sea': some formal aspects of the ghazal poetry of Rūmī. In: A. Banani, R. Hovanissian, and G. Sabagh (eds.): *Eleventh Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference. Poetry and mysticism in Islam. The heritage of Rūmī*. Cambridge (England) 1944, 44-69.

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ʿaql agar dānad ke dil dar band-i zulfash chun khushast
ʿāqilān dīwāne gardand az pay-i zanjīr [34]

If reason knew what pleasure the heart enjoys in the fetters of the beloved's plaits,
men of reason would prefer madness for the sake of these chains.

Another such device invokes the conventional embodiment of love's power to transform everything ugly or poor or disagreeable into things fair, rich and pleasant. As an example I quote a few lines from a ghazal by Rūmī in praise of the friend,

tā naqsh-i khiyāl-i dūst bā māst

As long as the friend's image is with me,
all of my life is for me a feast.
Where the friends come together,
by God, the steppe changes into the parlour room.
Where the heart's desire is fulfilled,
one thorn is better than a thousand dates.
If I sleep in the lane of my friend
my pillow and quilt are the Pleiades.
...
Where the reflection of his beauty shines,
mountain and earth become silk and brocade etc.

Rūmī then takes up the old motif of the beloved as a magician or in possession of magical power and goes on:

If I write his name upon the soil,
every particle of dust changes into Huris
and if I murmur a spell of his over the fire,
a brilliant face will look at me from the flames.
In short, even in the realm of non-being,
where ever I carry His name, it creates being.[35]

There are other ghazals in which the cosmic power attributed to the friend is much more in the foreground. Very often, Rūmī makes puns on the name of his friend Shams al-Dīn, Sun of the Religion or the True Faith, usually shortened to Shams-i Tabrīz Sun of Tabrīz. In a short ghazal of 7 verses, he evokes the overwhelming power of Shams through the image of a thunderstorm, in the middle of which the sun, Shams, emerges:

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34 *QG* 10, 4.

35 *Dīwān* 364.

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All of a sudden a thunderstorm bursts, neither roof nor door remain. It paralyses not only gnats, but even elephants.
But in the middle of this thunderstorm appears his beauty and splendour,
every atom begins to laugh in the splendour of that sun of morning brightness *(shams-i ẓuḥā)*,[36]
The atoms (or dust particles *dharre*) learn from that beautiful sun
a hundred new forms of being atoms (*dharregi*, "atomicity") that they had not possessed before.[37]

Sometimes Rūmī addresses the friend with the names of various Qur'ānic Prophets, implying that the addressee is the archetypal reincarnation of them:

O Joseph, come to this blind Jacob at last!
O hidden Jesus, appear upon the blue vault (of the sky)!
...
O Mose, with so many Sinais in your heart:
A cow is playing God, from the heart of Sinai, come!

– a reference to the golden calf. In a later verse of this difficult poem, Rūmī even compares Shams with the archangel Gabriel, alluding to the Qur'ānic report of a vision in which the prophet saw Gabriel coming as close as *qāba qawsayni aw adnā*, "two bows' length or nearer" (Sura 53: 9):

ay qāba-qawsayn-martabat w'ān dawlat-i bā makrumat
kas nīst shāhā maḥramat dar qurb-i aw adnā biyā

O you of the rank of *qāba qawsayn*, you noble prince,
nobody is your peer, come into the reach of *aw adnā*.[38]

From Rūmī we may easily proceed to another well-known mystic poet, the Turkish bard Yūnus Emre, who died in the 8th/14th century and thus lived between Rūmī and Ḥāfiẓ. In contrast to his predecessor, who he is reported to have met, Emre glorifies not a mystical friend, but himself. It is a kind of self-apotheosis reminiscent of early ecstatic mystics like Bāyazīd

36 A reference to the beginning of Sura 91 *wa-l-shams wa-duhāhā* = "by the sun and its morning brightness."

37 *Dīwān* 25, 5-7.

38 *Dīwān* 16, 1, 311.

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al-Bisṭāmī.[39] They speak in a state of complete trance, i.e. God speaks through them, as in many a poem by Ibn ʿArabī, where the lyrical I either identifies itself with God or speaks as if it was God himself.[40] In a number of poems with the chain rhyme *benim* "I am" or *bana* "to me" we read lines like the following in Emre's beautiful early Ottoman Turkish:[41]

Benim sâhib-kıran devran benimdir

I am the lord of the conjunction (of planets), the aeon is mine[42]

Benem ol aşk bahrısı denizler hayran bana
Deryâ benim katremdir zerreler ummân bana
..
Âdem yaradılmadan, can kalıba düşmeden
Şeytan lânet olmadan arş seyran bana

I am that flood of love, the seas are under my sway
the ocean is a drop to me (lit. of mine), just a few atoms is the ocean for me.
..
Ere Adam was created, and the soul fell into its mould,
ere Satan was cursed, the divine throne was my belvedere.[43]

Gökte Peygamber ile mi'râcı kılan benim

I am the one who together with the Prophet performs the miʿrāj in Heaven.[44]

Evvel benim âhır benim canlara can olan benim
Azıp yolda kalmışlar Hızır meded eren benim
..
Düz döşedim bu yerleri çöksü urdum bu dağları
Sayvan eyledim gökleri geri tutup duran benim

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39 References to ecstatic exclamations of Bāyazīd in A. Shariat Kāshāni : *La quête d'identité en poésie mystique persane. Approche psychologique sur la base de l'oeuvre de Djalāloddīn Rūmī.* Paris 1995-96, 170f..

40 Cf. J. C. Bürgel: *Allmacht und Mächtigkeit. Religion und Welt im Islam.* München 1991, 324.

41 I follow the Latin transliteration of Gölpınarlı.

42 Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı: *Yunus Emre: hayatı ve bütün şiirleri.* Istanbul 1981, CXXI, 1.

43 *Ibid.* CXXIV, 1+4.

44 *Ibid.* CXXVII, 1.

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I am the First and the Last, the one who bestows life upon the souls.
I am the Khizr who lends help to those bewildered on their way.
I am the one who spread these plains, nailed these mountains together,
the one who built the canopy of the skies and holds it in place.[45]

Ḥāfiẓ speaks in a rather different way of his friend. Or rather the way he attributes power, including cosmic power, is different. It is true that there are verses like the following –

bi-āhuwān-i naẓar shir-i āftāb bi-gīr
bi-abruwān-i du-tā qaws-i mushtarī bishkan

Capture the lion of the sun with the gazelles of your looks!
Break with your arched brows the bow of Jupiter![46]

– in which cosmic power is ascribed to the addressee. But in his dīwān, the dismantling of official power held by the reigning religious establishment is at least as important. The poet ascribes virtues to only three figures exempted from this exposure and placed in the company of Jesus and a few other Qur'ānic prophets: these are he himself, his anonymous friend, and the *pīr-i mughān* or prior of a Zoroastrian monastery. Actually, the role attributed by Ḥāfiẓ to the enigmatic Zoroastrian prior is unique: he is something like a saint, a guru, or a prophet. He is shown as a great sage, in possession of a magic glass or beaker in which he beholds the hidden riddles of the world; he is the one who has opened for Ḥāfiẓ the door to the inner meaning of things, who is trustworthy, keeps his promises (I'm the disciple of the Zoroastrian Prior. Don't toil, o Shaykh! Why? Because you made the promise, but he kept it![47]), and whose court is the refuge for all kinds of grief. Actually, Ḥāfiẓ made of this figure the symbol or the centre of a humanistic message which pervades his dīwān under its surface of tavern scenes, erotic play and passion.[48] It is the poet himself who confesses in one of the most revealing ghazals of his dīwān:

Mushkil-i khīsh bar-i pīr-i mughān burdam dūsh
k'ū be-ta'yīd-i naẓar ḥall-i mu'ammā mīkard

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45 *Ibid.* CXXIX, 1+4.

46 *QG* 399, 5.

47 *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, ed. Parwīz N. Ḫānlarī. Teheran s.a., 141, 8.

48 Cf. J. C. Bürgel: Ambiguity: A Study in the Use of Religious Terminology in the Poetry of Ḥāfiẓ. In: M. Glünz and J. C. Bürgel (eds.): *Intoxication Earthly and Heavenly. Seven Studies on the Poet Ḥāfiẓ of Shiraz*. Bern 1991, 7-39; cf. also note 87.

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dīdamash khurram u khande qadaḥ-i bāde be-dast
w-andar ān āyine sad gūne tamāshā mīkard

guftam īn jām-i jihān-bīn be-tu kay dād ḥakīm
guft ān rūz ke īn gumbad-i mīnā mīkard

Yesterday I brought my difficulty to the Prior of the Magians,
who with his mighty insight would solve all puzzles.

I found him cheerful, laughing, the wine-glass in his hand,
in which mirror he beheld a hundred images.

When, oh Sage, did He (i.e. God) give you this world-seeing glass, I asked him.
The day he created this blue vault, was his answer.[49]

I think that it is no coincidence that in this same ghazal Ḥāfiẓ puts into the mouth of the *pīr-i mughān* references to both al-Ḥallāj and Jesus, for they appear to me to be the two other poles of his humanism:

If the Holy Spirit deigns to lend again the help of its grace
others will perform the same things that Jesus did.

In another ghazal we read:

If you ascend pure and detached (*mujarrad*) like Jesus to the Heaven,
a hundred beams from your lamp will reach the sun (i.e. the sun will be outshone by your light).[50]

Ḥāfiẓ's message can be read as a recommendation of non-violence, as I have shown elsewhere. The power he attributes to himself is immaterial, purely intellectual or spiritual, but it is of cosmic range. In his ghazals, Ḥāfiẓ presents himself as gifted with a timeless, ever-lasting existence: in a particularly impressive ghazal he describes how angels gave him to drink from the wine of the manifestation of the divine qualities[51] – a verse that reveals Ibn ʿArabī's influence. At another place he presents himself as intoxicated by the wine of eternity.[52] Such lines reveal a mystical or rather Gnostic outlook on man's situation, the *conditio humana* in general; others concern Hāfiẓ in particular, claiming the same timeless existence for the poet, e.g. in this graceful *takhalluṣ*:

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49 *QG* 142, 3-5.

50 *QG* 407, 3.

51 *QG* 183, 1-3.

52 *mast-i bāde-i azal, QG* 45u.

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shiʿr-i Ḥāfiẓ dar zamān-i Adam andar bāgh-i khuld
daftar-i nasrīn u gul rā zīnat-i awrāq būd

Already at the time of Adam, in the garden of Paradise, the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ was
the leaves' ornamentation for the copy-books of the jonquils and the roses.[53]

And his poetry will last:

Ḥāfiẓ sukhan be-gūy ke bar ṣafḥe-i jahān
īn naqsh mānad az qalamat yādgar-i ʿumr

Ḥāfiẓ, speak (i e. make ghazals), for on the pages of the world
this design from your pen will last as a memory of life.[54]

The timelessness of poetry is also beautifully described in the following line:

ṭayy-i makān be-bīn u zamān dar sulūk-i shiʿr
k-īn ṭifl-i yakshabe rah-i yaksāle mīrawad

Look at the folding of space and time in the procession of poetry! How this child of one night goes the way of one year![55]

With the word *sulūk*, poetry is compared with a mystic pilgrimage, which again explains the meaning of *ṭayy-i makān u zamān*: the "folding of space and time" was one of the major miracles to be wrought by Sufi saints.[56] Poetry, and his own in particular, Ḥāfiẓ claims, is capable of performing this miracle.

Rūmī was even more confident as to the longevity of his poetry, as is revealed in the following self-address:

Make ghazals which will still be sung after a hundred centuries!
A tissue woven by God does not rot.[57]

As for Ḥāfiẓ, he rather emphasised the spatial radiance of his poetry. In a number of playfully boastful verses he mentions the success of his verses

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53 Khânları 202u. In the following quoted as Kh.

54 *QG* 253u.

55 *QG* 225, 4.

56 Cf. R. Gramlich: *Die Wunder der Freunde Gottes. Theologien und Erscheinungsformen des islamischen Heiligenwunders*. Wiesbaden 1987, 287f..

57 *Dīwān*, ed. Furūzānfar, no. 916u.

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in terms of geographical conquests. The magic of his poetry has reached Egypt and China,[58] has incited the Turks of Samarqand and the black-eyed beauties of Kashmir to dance,[59] his Persian sugar has reached Bengal and turned all Indian parrots into sugar-chewers.[60]

But he does not content himself with this terrestrial expansion. His poetry is of cosmic vigour, as he gracefully expounds in the following verses:

Ṣubḥdam az ʿarsh mī-āmad khurūshī ʿaql guft
qudsiyān gūʾī surūd-i Ḥāfiẓ az bar mīkunand [61]

In the morn there came a din from the divine throne. Reason said:
That sounds as if the saints were memorizing the songs of Ḥāfiẓ

dar āsmān nah ʿajab gar be gufte-i Ḥāfiẓ
surūd-i Zuhre be-raqs āwarad Masīḥā-rā [62]

In Heaven it is no wonder when with the words of Ḥāfiẓ
Venus incites to dance even the Messiah

ghazal gufti u dur sufti biyā ū khush be-khān Ḥāfiẓ
ke bar naẓm-i tu afshānad falak ʿaqd-i Surayyā-rā [63]

You made ghazals and pierced pearls, come and sing gracefully, o Ḥāfiẓ,
so that upon your poetry (*naẓm*, also: "string") the spheres will strew the gems of the Pleiades.

And addressing a prince:

surūd-i majlisat aknūn falak be-raqs āwarad
ke shiʿr-i Ḥāfiẓ-i shīrīn-sukhan tarāne-i tust.

Now, the music of your court is inciting the spheres to dance,
since your songs are the poetry of sweet-tongued Ḥāfiẓ.[64]

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58 Kh 421u.

59 *QG* 440u.

60 *QG* 225, 3.

61 *QG* 199u = Kh 194u with slight variations.

62 *QG* 4u = Kh 4u.

63 *QG* 2u = Kh 3u.

64 *QG* 34u; for Ḥāfiẓ's self-representation as a poet cf. J. C. Bürgel: Le poète et la poésie dans l'œuvre de Ḥāfiẓ. In: *Convegno internazionale sulla poesia di Ḥāfiẓ (Roma, 30-31 Marzo 1976)*. Rome 1978, 73-98.

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Poetry is potentially a form of power. This is particularly true for the Islamic world, where poetry has been a political instrument from the very beginning. We know this from the political role poetry played in the time of the so-called Jāhiliyya, and from the beginning of Islam, when some of the Mekkan poets constituted a danger to Muḥammad, confirmed by his relentless reaction to their attacks, both in words (negative statements about poetry in both Qur'ān and Ḥadīth) and in actions (some of these poets were assassinated by emissaries sent by the prophet). We find further confirmation in the (only apparently contradictory) fact that the Prophet himself had a number of poets in his service, such as Ḥassān ibn Thābit, who wrote the first Islamic qaṣīdas and whose satires were, according to a reported saying by the Prophet, more damaging to the Mekkans than a hail of arrows in the dawn.[65] Here Muḥammad speaks of the destructive power of poetry, but poetry of course also exerts the opposite effect, creating images that enhance the power of the *mamdūḥ*, the one who is being praised. The power of such poetry resides not just in its words and images, but in the structures whereby they take form. In this second part of my essay I will look at some of these power structures, not always clinging to the topic of the beloved but also not entirely losing sight of it. The fact that the mighty beloved is so often a metaphor for other figures of power – the prince, the caliph, the prior, God himself – makes this deviation to other aspects of poetic power not only advisable but imperative.

It is easy to comprehend that a metaphor is more powerful than a simple comparison because of its greater brevity and of the element of surprise it usually contains. It is clear that hyperboles are meant to overwhelm the listener or reader, and a combination of both metaphor and hyperbole must therefore be doubly effective.[66]

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65 Cf. the chapters on poetry in my books: *The Feather of Simurgh. The 'Licit Magic' of the Arts in Medieval Islam.* New York 1988, 53-88; *Allmacht und Mächtigkeit*, 221-55; cf. also C. J. Bürgel: Qasida as Discourse on Power and its Islamization: Some reflections. In: S. Sperl and Chr. Shackle (eds.): *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa.* Leiden 1996, vol. 1, 451-74.

66 Some of these functions were already described in Aristotle's Poetics and Rhetoric; they are also widely discussed in the respective treatises by al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīna, Ibn Rushd in the wake of Aristotle. The transforming power of poetry was compared to magic and alchemy by ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī in his fascinating Secrets of Rhetoric (*Asrār al-balāgha*). Cf. W. Heinrichs: *Arabische Dichtung und griechische Poetik: Hāzim al-Qarṭāǧannīs Grundlegung der Poetik mit Hilfe aristotelischer Begriffe.* Beirut 1969; C. J. Bürgel: Die beste Dichtung ist die lügenreichste: Wesen und Bedeutung eines literarischen Streites im Lichte komparatistischer Betrachtung. In: *Oriens* 23/24 (1970-71), 7-102.

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Another very simple but very effective means of creating power in poetry is through repetition. Repetition serves such means in other art forms as well, such as music and ornament, but it does so particularly successfully in texts. There are many such structures of repetition in the Qur'ān: think of the oaths for example, or of Sura 55, and there are similarly effective repetitive structures to be encountered in many *aḥādīth*, and other prose texts, as I have shown elsewhere.[67] In poetry, needless to say, and not only poetry of the Islamic world, repetition is of the greatest importance. The monorhyme constitutes for Islamic poetry a tight repetitive structure. Its power is strongly enhanced by the so-called *radīf*, a word or a number of words repeated after the rhyme, which is apparently a Persian invention. The degree of power a *radīf* imparts to a ghazal depends, of course, on the meaning it conveys. Now there is a striking difference between the way Rūmī made use of the *radīf* in his dīwān and the way Ḥāfiẓ used it. In Ḥāfiẓ, the majority of *radīf*s are constituted by some short word such as a pronoun or verb, of rather vague meaning, thus leaving much free play for the poet's thoughts. This is particularly the case with so-called compound verbs, such as *kardan* "to do," *zadan* "to beat," *giriftan* "to take," which can be combined with nouns of the most divergent meanings. Such *radīf*s, while having little to do with power structures, may give a common dynamic or theme to a ghazal. There are however some exceptions to this rule also in the dīwān of Ḥāfiẓ, for example a very powerful ghazal in praise of the supernatural strength and might of the dervishes, which has actually the chain rhyme *darvīshānast*:[68]

> The garden of the highest Paradise is the hermitage of the dervishes.
> It is a matter of magnificence to serve the dervishes.
> etc.

In Rūmī's dīwān on the other hand, – which with its 3000 ghazals is about six times the size of that of Ḥāfiẓ's comprising of about 500 ghazals –, we find a large variety of *radīf*s with rather precise instead of vague meanings, nouns like "madness" (*dīvanegī*), "ecstasy" (*bīkhudī*), "travel(ing)" (*safar*), "veil" (*ḥijāb*), "love" (*'ishq*), "halva" (a desert) (*halvā*), vocatives such as "oh cup-bearer" (*sāqiyā*), "oh heart" (*dilā*), imperatives such as "don't fear!" (*ma-tars*), "don't ask" (*ma-purs*), "start (or come to the) dancing" (*bi-raqs ā*), "stop here" (*bi-īst īnjā*), "don't sleep tonight!" (*makhusb*

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67 Cf. C. J. Bürgel: Repetitive Structures in Early Arabic Prose. In: F. Malti-Douglas (ed.): *Critical Pilgrimages: Studies in the Arabic Literary Tradition*. Austin 1989, 49-64.

68 *QG* 49.

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imshab) etc. Sometimes the *radīf* is a whole phrase taking the function of the refrain in a popular song, e.g. "Where is your home?" (*turā khāne kujā bāshad*).[69]

The function of the *radīf*, particularly in Rūmī's ghazals, is to a certain degree comparable to that of a *basso ostinato* or that of a counterpoint in music. Or we may compare it to an axis around which the ghazal turns and swirls. At any rate, with the repetition of the same word throughout the whole poem the *radīf* word is being charged with ever new meanings. It may serve intensification as in the ghazals the *radīf* of which is 'Shams-i Tabrīz' or 'Dimashq' respectively, the town where Shams had fled to before he was murdered in Konya; but it may also serve a sort of meditation, as for example in a ghazal with the *radīf safar*, "travel," as I have shown elsewhere.[70] Let me insert here a fine ghazal by Saʿdī which he sang in praise of the Prophet using the *radīf Muḥammad*.

māh furū mānad az jamāl-i Muḥammad
sarw nabāshad be-iʿtidāl-i Muḥammad

The moon pales before the beauty of Muḥammad.
The cypress lacks the balance and harmony (*iʿtidāl*) of Muḥammad.

The measure of the celestial vault has neither rank nor perfection
in comparison with the perfect measure of Muḥammad.

The promise of vision for everybody on the [Day of] resurrection
is the Night of *asrā*[71], the union with Muḥammad.

Adam and Noah, Moses and Jesus,
they all stand in the shadow of Muḥammad.

The earth is too narrow for the range of his energy (*himmat*),
Behold the range of his energy during the Last Judgment.

Even the splendour that adorns the Paradise,
perhaps it will satisfy Bilāl (the *mu'adhdhin*) of Muḥammad.

Sun and Moon do not shine in the land of the Saved.
There shines no light except the beauty of Muḥammad.

Earth and sky want to kneel down
to kiss the sandals of Muḥammad.

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69 For more detail see my *Speech is a Ship* (as in note 33), 48f..

70 *Ibid.* 50.

71 Allusion to Muḥammad's nightly journey, as mentioned in Sura 17:1.

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It is not befitting that sun and moon should beam
before the crescent-like brows of Muḥammad.

Since my eye beheld in a dream his beauty,
it finds no sleep, his image keeps it awake.

Saʿdi, if you are young and in love,
sufficient for you is the love of Muḥammad and of the clan of Muḥammad.[72]

Let me repeat at this juncture that repetition does not of necessity lead to monotony, as Western readers might be inclined to think (even though they would be aware of the role of repetition in political propaganda). On the contrary, it is a means of investing the poem with the power to enrapture and enthral the listener. In other words, carefully patterned structures of repetition may enhance the impact of a poem on the emotions of the public and thus influence public opinions, public attitudes and public actions. Strong *radīf*s have been used by Muḥammad Iqbal in his Persian and Urdu ghazals, all of which serve the propagation of his reformist ideas about Islam. Iqbal, who wanted his poetry to sound like the trumpet of Isrāfīl, the angel of death and of the Last Judgment, did not hesitate to make use of such structures in many of his poems.[73] An overall impression evoked by Iqbal's lyrics is the constant repetition of a limited number of ideas, which, incidentally, is in line with the time-honoured tradition of that poetry. Thus the ideas contained in the more than 120 ghazals of Iqbal's "Persian Psalter" (*Zabūr-i ʿAjam*) could be summarized in a few lines. One might say that this kind of repetition is aimed at hammering those ideas into the minds of the readers and listeners.

Two poems of the Urdu cycle Bāl-i Jibrīl have the *radīf sāqī* "cup-bearer."[74] Both address God under this sobriquet and borrow the imagery of the tavern for a religious message:

digar-gun hay jihan, taron ki gardish tez hay saqi!
dil-i har dharre men ghawgha-e rastakhez hay saqi!

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72 *Kulliyyāt*, ed. M. H. ʿAlami. Teheran 1917, 518.

73 For Iqbal see A. Schimmel: *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the religious ideas of Sir Muḥammad Iqbal.* Leiden 1963; C. J. Bürgel: *Steppe im Staubkorn: Texte aus der Urdu-Dichtung Muḥammad Iqbals, ausgewählt, übersetzt und erläutert.* Freiburg 1982.

74 *Kulliyyāt-i Iqbāl: Urdu.* Lahore et al. 1973, Bāl-i Jibrīl (in the following quoted as *BJ*) I, 7 and I, 8.

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The world has changed, the movement of the stars is now quicker, sāqī!
In the heart of every atom, there is the turmoil of resurrection, sāqī![75]

la phir ek bar wohi bada-wu jam ay saqi!
hath aja-e mujhe mera maqam ay saqi!
tin so sal se hayn Hind ke maykhane band
ab munasib hay tera fayz ho ʿam ay saqi!

Pass once more that wine and that glass, oh cup-bearer!
I ought to be reinstalled in my rank, oh cup-bearer!
For three hundred years the wine-taverns of India have been closed,
It is befitting that your emanation should become all-embracing, oh cup-bearer![76]

Very courageous in its provocative questions addressed to God is a ghazal of the same collection *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, in which Iqbal uses the *radīf "tera hay ya mera?* " "is it/are they yours or mine?"

1. *agar kachraw hayn anjum, asman tera hay ya mera?*
   mujhe fikr-i jihan kyun, jihan tera hay ya mera?

2. *agar hangamaha-e shawq se hay la-makan khali*
   khata kis ki hay ya rabb! la-makan tera hay ya mera?

and the last line:

5. *isi kawkab ki tabani se tera hay jihan rawshan*
   zawal-i adam-i khaki ziyan tera hay ya mera?

1. If the stars leave their courses, is the sky yours or mine?
   Why should I bother about the world? Is the world yours or mine?

2. If the infinite space is empty of the enraptures of longing,
   Whose fault is it, oh Lord? Is the infinite space yours or mine?

5. His star's brillance enlightens your world!
   The loss of this mortal man, is it yours or mine?[77]

In another ghazal, dealing with social problems, Iqbal uses the word *inqilāb* "Revolution" as a *radīf* and repeats it three times at the end of each of the ten distichs.

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75 *BJ* I, 7.

76 *BJ* I, 8.

77 *BJ* I, 2.

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khwaja az khun-i rag-i mazdur sazad la'l-i nab
az jafa-i dih-khudayan kisht-i dihqanan kharab
inqilab!
inqilab! ay inqilab!

The overlord makes his pure rubies from the blood of the worker,
the tyranny of the landlords has destroyed the fields of the farmers.
Revolution!
Revolution! O Revolution![78]

Another impressive example is one of his short Urdu ghazals in *Zarb-i Kalīm*, a poem of seven lines, where the poet uses the first part of the Islamic profession of faith *lā ilāha illā llāh* as a refrain, while at the same time defining the aim of Islam as the sharpening of the sword of Selfhood:

The hidden secret of the Self: No Godhood but God!
The Self is the sword, the whetstone: No Godhood but God![79]

The monorhyme and in particular the *radīf* constitute a rigid but not necessarily a tight structure. One of the constant aesthetic charms of the entire poem is the friction, the dialectic, or to return to the musical comparison, the counterpoint between the rigidity of such rigid formal elements – metre, length of the verse, monorhyme and *radīf* – on the one hand, and the movable parts of the text on the other. Here the fantasy and intelligence of the poet are challenged. Very often poets have not contented themselves even with such restrictions alone, but, in order to prove their artistic skill or to intensify the power of the poem, have added further confining structures, such as interior rhymes or assonances. The combination of three interior rhymes with the monorhyme, for example, turns many of Rūmī's poems into almost strophic structures. Rūmī did not invent this formal device; we find it already in the dīwāns of previous poets. Sanā'ī has a long ghazal in which he describes the journey to the beloved's tent and the anticipation and joy that fill him as he approaches his goal. To express this mounting excitement, he makes use of the three interior rhymes:

Rāhī chunān guzāshtam / bāgh-i Iram pindāshtam / az ṣabr tukhmī kāshtam / āmad be-bar baʿda l-taʿab
rūz āmade darmān-i man / āsūde az gham jān-i man / zi khayme-i jānān-i man / āmad be-gūsh-i man shaghab etc.[80]

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78 Zabūr-i ʿajam II, 30.

79 Zarb-i Kalim 15; German translation in Bürgel: *Steppe*, no. 5.

80 *Dīwān*, ed. Razawi, 26, 14-15.

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I went a path, I deemed it Paradise, of patience I had sown a grain, that bore fruit after much pain
My remedy had come, my soul was free of grief, from the tent of my friend a ting came to my ear.

Is this a Persian invention? I cannot tell. At any rate, the structure is there already before Sanā'ī, who died in 525/1131, in the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī, who died in 516/1122, for example in a poem of 20 verses, which, in the vein of Abū Nuwās, praises carousal and flirting in an easy-going, light-footed tone, of which I will quote just two lines (twelth Maqāma, *al-Dimashqiyya*)

Fa-dāwi l-kulūm/ wa-salli l-humūm/ bi-binti l-kurūm/allati tuqtaraḥ
wa-fāriq abāka idhāmā abāka wa-mudda sh-shibāka/ wa-ṣid mā sanaḥ

Cure the wounds, and solace the griefs with the daughter of the vines that has been proposed to you.
And part with your father, if he obstructs you, and spread your nets and chase the deer that emerges.[81]

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī has often used this form, even though he rarely kept to it until the end of a given poem. But there are ghazals with even tighter structures, built on an almost excessive repetition of words and rhymes.[82] One example is an enrapturing spring poem, in which the arrival of spring becomes a symbol for that of the longed-for friend, and the joy is expressed in the sounds even more so than in the meaning. It actually resembles a dance or, if you prefer, a richly and tightly woven carpet, which reminds us of Rūmī's self-confident statement quoted above, namely that the tissue of his ghazals will not rot: the *radīf* of this ghazal very befittingly is *āmad*, meaning "came" or "has come."

1 *Bahār āmad, bahār āmad, bahār-i mushkbār āmad*
nigār āmad, nigār āmad, nigār-i burdbār āmad

4 *ḥabīb āmad, ḥabīb āmad be-dildārī-i mushtāqān*
ṭabīb āmad, ṭabīb āmad, ṭabīb-i hushyār āmad etc.

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81 *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*. Beirut 1968, 114-17.

82 Cf. C. J. Bürgel: The Dynamic Character of the Imagery of Rumi. In: *Uluslararası ikinci Mevlâna Semineri bildirileri 15-17 aralık 1976*. Ankara 1977, 64-77; the same: Ecstasy and Order: Two Structural Principles in the Ghazal Poetry of Jalalo'd-Din Rumi. In: *Sufi: The Magazine of Khaniqahi Nimatullahi* 10 (1991), 20-25, repr. in: L. Lewisohn (ed.): The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1130-1500). 2nd ed., Oxford 1999, 45-59; cf. also F. Keshavarz: *Reading Mystical Lyric: The Case of Jalal al-Din Rumi*. Columbia 1998.

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Spring has come, spring has come, spring the musk-scented, has come!
The idol has come, the idol has come, the gracious idol has come!

The beloved has come, the beloved has come to the love of the longing!
The physician has come, the physician has come, the intelligent physician has come etc.[83]

Let me close this sweeping survey with a short glance at another device often to be met in ghazal poetry, particularly in Islamic languages other than Arabic: I refer to the quotation of or allusion to Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, or some famous verse of an earlier poet, in short to what is today being discussed under the catchword of intertextuality.

We have already noticed that references to the Qur'ān existed in early ʿUdhrite love poetry. And we have seen one example of how Rūmī made use of Qur'ānic quotations to enhance the glory of his friend Shams-i Tabrīz. In fact, Qur'ān and Ḥadīth are the two sources of power whose currents of energy pervade the entire writing of the Islamic world.

For a Persian, Ottoman or Urdu writer the tapping of this Arabic power station begins as soon as he inserts into his work an Arabic line of poetry, or writes a so-called *mulammaʿ*, a ghazal in which one *miṣrāʿ* of the two *miṣrāʿ*s of a *bayt* is in Arabic and the other in Persian. In Ottoman poetry, a skilful poet might have mixed three languages in using Arabic and Persian quotations. In Urdu the poetry of all four great languages might conceivably appear combined in one ghazal, although I do not know of such examples. The use of two languages is quite common however, even though bi- or trilingual poets generally prefer to create monolingual dīwāns in different languages. Thus, the great Ghālib, whom we mentioned above, wrote one very comprehensive dīwān in Persian and a small one in Urdu. Rūmī for one has a great number of Arabic ghazals, and also *mulammaʿ*s; Ḥāfiẓ has many Arabic quotations. I think this mixture of two languages in one poem is not just a showpiece, but has to do with the multilingual Islamic culture. This brings me back to Ḥāfiẓ and the humanist element of his poetry, as it is manifested in a very few verses. He clearly subscribes to the peaceful coexistence of religious confessions and linguistic idioms in the name of love:

Dar ʿishq-i khānqāh u kharābāt farq nīst
har jā ke hast partaw-i rūy-i ḥabīb hast [84]

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83 *Dīwān*, ed. Furūzānfar, no. 569.

84 *QG* 63, 3.

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In Love there is no difference between a cloister and a tavern,
for wherever it is there is a beam of the friend's face.[85]

hamekas ṭālib-i yārand che hushyār u che mast
hame jā khāne-i ʿishq ast che masjid che kunisht[86]

Everybody seeks the friend, be they sober or drunk,
Everywhere is the house of love, be it a mosque or a synagogue.

Yakīst turkī u tāzī dar in muʿāmele Ḥāfiẓ
hadīth-i ʿishq bayān kun bedān zabān ke tu dānī[87]

In this commerce, Arabic and Turkish are one, Ḥāfiẓ,
Utter the words of love in the language you know!

These statements might be put into the mouth of the *pīr-i mughān*: they represent his mentality and his tolerance. One aspect of this tolerance is non-violence, the physical opposite of coercive power. Such non-violent force is opposed to the power of the cruel tyrant and the poetical counterpart, for which it is symbol, the blood-thirsty beloved, who is, a few exceptions apart, not present in Ḥāfiẓ's poetry. We perceive this element in verses like the following:

Man az bāzūy-i khud dāram basī shukr
ke zūr-i mardum-āzārī nadāram

I am very grateful to my arm
that I do not have the power to torment people.[88]

And:

Mā mulk-i ʿāfiyat na be-lashkar girifteʾīm
mā takht-i salṭanat na be bāzū nihādeʾīm

We did not conquer the kingdom of well-being by armies
we did not erect the throne of sovereignty with power.[89]

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85 *QG* 63, 3.

86 *QG* 80, 3.

87 *QG* 476u.

88 Kh 318, 5.

89 Kh 357, 4; for the Zoroastrian element in the non-violence tradition see C. J. Bürgel: Zarathustra, Ḥāfiẓ, Goethe: Intuition, influence, intertextualité. In: *Colloquium Helveticum* 26 (1997), 51-70; J. C. Bürgel: Zoroastrianism as Viewed in Medieval Islamic Sources. In: J. Waardenburg (ed.): *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions*. New York 1999.

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I conclude with these lines for they are like a shining torch in a time hardly less violent than the epoch of Ḥāfiẓ, a manifestation of that counter-power "non-violence," which has produced so many astonishing changes for the better in recent times.[90]

Our observations have taken us through a long gallery of images of the mighty beloved, a figure very often endowed with supernatural powers. They have shown that power is the common denominator linking between the beloved, the sovereign, the prior of a mystical order and the dervish. They have also shown us that certain structures have been used to express, conjure and enhance the power of those figures. On the other hand, we have seen that the mighty beloved was not the only subject to involve notions of power. Power structures appear also in connection with other topics. But that they do exist in the ghazal as well as in the qaṣīda has been established by the material discussed above.

90 Cf. J. C. Bürgel: The Idea of Nonviolence in the Epic Poetry of Nizamî. In: *Edebiyat*, 9 (1998), 61-84.

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NASĪB AND GHAZAL IN 11th AND 12th CENTURY ARABIC AND HEBREW ANDALUSIAN POETRY

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This contribution is about the distinction between nasīb and ghazal as made by Renate Jacobi[1], Thomas Bauer[2] and others. They define nasīb as an elegiac evocation of memories in a Bedouin setting, and ghazal as the expression of an existent love affair, or of one that is not yet existent although there is still hope of coming into contact with the beloved. In ghazal, the beauty of the beloved, the sufferings of the lover and his reproaches to his beloved (or other forms of communication between lover and beloved) are described.

I will discuss the function of nasīb and ghazal in a selection from the oeuvres of three poets: the Arabic poet Ibn Khafāja (1058-1139)[3] and the Hebrew poets Moses ibn Ezra (1056-1138)[4] and Yehudah ha-Levi (1074-1141).[5] All three are considered exponents of the final stages of a long tradition of Arabic poetry, in which poetic themes and motifs have lost their primordial Bedouin character[6] and become highly rhetoricized and stylized. The two genres of love poetry are also considered expressions of youth and of old age, respectively.[7]

At first glance, elements of both nasīb and ghazal as described above are to be found in Ibn Khafāja's poetry. As far as his own terminology is

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1 Art. Nasīb (Renate Jacobi) in *EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam²* VII, Leiden 1992, 982.

2 Thomas Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts.* Wiesbaden 1998, 185-97.

3 See for this poet's style Magda M. al-Nowaihi: *The Poetry of Ibn Khafāja: A Literary Analysis*. Leiden 1993; Salma Khadra Jayyusi: The Rise of Ibn Khafāja. In: idem (ed.): *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*. Leiden 1994, 367-97.

4 Arie Schippers: *Spanish Hebrew Poetry and the Arabic Literary Tradition: Arabic Themes in Hebrew Andalusian Poetry.* Leiden 1994, 59-62.

5 *Ibid.*, 62-64.

6 I am aware that the artistic standards of pre-Islamic poetry were already highly developed, but from the point of view of later poets who practise rhetorization and conceptualization as a principle of art, pre-Islamic poetry must be labelled as 'primordial.'

7 See for the theme of old age: Arie Schippers: The Theme of Old Age in the Poetry of Ibn Ḫafāğa. In: *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 9 (1991), 94-104.

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concerned, there are several poems in which the poet refers to nasīb[8] as his love poetry, whereas ghazal refers to the aim or major subject [*gharaḍ*] of his poetry, such as his use of *taghazzul* ('making a poem of love').[9] In the following, however, I will illustrate the distinction and opposition between nasīb and ghazal as made by Renate Jacobi and others, provide some examples of nasīb-like as well as ghazal-like poetry by Ibn Khafāja, and investigate how far this distinction can be made in his poetry.

The poems in which Ibn Khafāja mentions Bedouin place names should be considered nasīb-like. Ibn Khafāja himself makes a statement in the prose part of poem number 150: these place names in his love poems have a nostalgic function.[10] They should be connected with his poems of old age, in which he deplores his lost youth and remembers his past love affairs. Poems in which Ibn Khafāja describes the beauty of a young lad or a rendezvous with a young girl can be considered ghazal-like, although these poems often contain mere manneristic concetti rather than descriptions of real love affairs.[11]

But in his poetry, the lines between ghazal and nasīb are sometimes blurred: Bedouin place names often also occur amidst typical ghazal motifs. In some of Ibn Khafāja's nasīb-like poems, other classical motifs also play a role, such as the passing of the watchman of the tribe, as they did in the famous *Muʿallaqa* of Imruʾu-l-Qays and the poetry of ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa.[12] In this connection, the theme of the wind as a messenger from the remote campsite is one of the more frequent motifs in Ibn Khafāja's poetry. A nasīb beginning in Ibn Khafāja's poetry can be an introduction to

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8 E.g. Ibn Khafāja: *Dīwān*, ed. al-Sayyid Muṣṭafā Ghāzi. Alexandria 1960, 24 (no. 1: 22); 248 (no. 189: 7).

9 *Ibid.*, 203 (no. 150: prose part). There are many poems with the heading: '*wa-qāla fī-l-ghazal*': *ibid.* 62 (no. 15); 83 (no. 43; '*yataghazzalu*'); 124 (no. 74); 236 (no. 178); 271 (no. 212); 280 (no. 219; '*yataghazzalu*') and others. In his preface (*ibid.*, 48) the poet speaks of "mixing love poetry with heroic poetry" ("*laff al-ghazal bi-l-ḥamāsa*"). Interesting remarks about nasīb and ghazal are to be found in al-Nowaihi: *The Poetry*, 54 (the boy's face as a former encampment), 145, 158.

10 *Ibid.*, 204 (no. 150; prose part).

11 Perhaps a more realistic love affair is described in: Arie Schippers and John Mattock: Love and War: a Poem of Ibn Khafāja. In: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 17 (1986), 50-68.

12 Arie Schippers: Ibn Khafāja (1058-1139): Analysis of a Laudatory Poem addressed to a Member of the Almoravid Clan. In: Otto Zwartjes et al. (eds.): *Poetry, Politics and Polemics, Cultural Transfer Between the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa*. Amsterdam et al. 1997, 13-33; this deals with poem no. 1 (*Dīwān*, 23-32). The poet boasts in line 3: "Many a maiden's apartment I came to at night, and only I made the dove's nest permitted to the falcon."

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a correspondence poem rather than a panegyric in the traditional sense: the poet is corresponding with friends rather than with *Maecenas*. Instead of a successive laudatory passage on a friend, an elegiac passage on his past friends can follow the elegiac nasīb. This is another connection between the nasīb poems and the poet's old age.

Here are some nasīb-like examples. The first lines of poem no. 7 – which ends as an elegy – go as follows[13]:

أَفِي ما تُؤَدِّي الرِّيحُ عَرْفُ سَلامِ ... وَمِمَّا يَشُبُّ الْبَرقُ نارُ غَرَامِ
وَإِلَّا فَمَاذَا أَرَّجَ الرِّيحَ سُحْرَةً ... فَأَذْكَى عَلَى الأَحشَاءِ لَفْحَ ضِرَامِ
أَمَا وَجُمَانٍ مِنْ حَدِيثِ عَلاَقَةٍ ... يَهُزُّ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْخُ عِطْفَ غُلاَمِ
تَحَلَّتْ بِهِ مَا بَينَ سَلْمَى وَمَنْعِجٍ ... سَوَالِفُ أَيَّامٍ سَلَفْنَ كِرَامِ
لَقَدْ هَزَّنِي فِي رَيْطَةِ الشَّيْبِ هِزَّةً ... أَرَتْنِي وَرَائِي فِي الشَّبَابِ أَمَامِي
فَلَوْلاَ دِفَاعُ اللهِ عُجْتُ مَعَ الْهَوَى ... وَجُلْتُ بِوَادِيهِ أَجُرُّ خِطَامِي
وَرُبَّ لَيَالٍ بِالْغَمِيمِ أَرِقْتُهَا ... لِمَرضَى جُفُونٍ بِالْفُرَاتِ نِيَامِ
بَطُولُ عَلَيَّ اللَّيْلُ يَا أُمَّ مَالِكٍ ... وَكُلُّ لَيَالِي الصَّبِّ لَيْلُ تَمامِ

1 Oh is in what the wind brings a smell of a greeting and belongs to what the lightning kindles, the fire of love?
2 And if not, what makes the wind so perfumed in the early morning, so that I kindle the blazing of a fire in my inner parts?
3 Oh by the pearls of a new love affair, in which an old man trembles as a bow supple as a young man.
4 The necks of the benevolent days of old adorned themselves between Salmā and Manʿij.
5 The pearls shook me so much in the fullness of old age that this trembling made me see before me the youth I had left behind.
6 Were there not the protection of God, I would have erred from the right way by love passion, and I would have crossed its wadi dragging the nose-ring of my camel.
7 Oh many a night I spent sleeplessly at al-Ghamīm because of sick-eyed gazelles sleeping at the Euphrates.
8 Long is for me the night, oh Umm Mālik, whereas all the nights of a lover are like one full night.

13 Ibn Khafāja: *Dīwān*, 52-53.

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Old place names from the Arabian Peninsula are mentioned, as are the Umm Mālik [otherwise Mālikiyya] from the Majnūn Laylā legend.[14] The motif of going among the watchmen of the tribe in the night, the burning passion and the secret love adventure are described in the following fragment:

وَخَضْخَضْتُ دُونَ الْحَيِّ أَحْشَاءَ لَيْلَةٍ يُخَفِّرُنِي فِيهَا وَمِيضُ غَمَامِ
فَقَضَّيْتُهَا مَا بَيْنَ رَشْفَةِ لَوْعَةٍ وَأَنَّةِ شَكْوَى وَاعْتِنَاقِ غَرَامِ
وَأَحْسَنُ مَا الْتَفَّتْ عَلَيهِ دُجُنَّةٌ عِنَاقُ حَبِيبٍ عَنْ عِنَاقِ حُسَامِ

11 I bathed myself in the inner parts of the night before I went to the tribe, and the lightning of a cloud made me red [put me ashamed] in that night.
12 I spent the night between sucking a burning pain, the sigh of a complaint and the embrace of love passion.
13 And what the dark clouds veiled was the embrace of a beloved rather than the embrace of a sword.

Then other place names follow and the wind is mentioned as a messenger between the past and the present of the poet-lover:

فَلَيْتَ نَسِيمَ الرِّيحِ رَفْرَقَ أَدْمُعِي خِلَالَ دِيَارٍ بِاللِّوَى وَخَيَامِ
وَعَاجَ عَلَى أَجْزَاعِ وَادٍ بِذِي الْغَضَى فَصَافَحَ عَنِّي فَرْعَ كُلِّ بَشَامِ
مَسَحْتُ لَهُ عَنْ نَاظِرَيَّ صَبَابَةً وَأَقْلِلْ بِدَمْعِي مِنْ قَضَاءِ ذِمَامِ
فَيَا عَرْفَ رِيحٍ عَاجَ عَنْ بَطْنِ لَعْلَعٍ يَجُرُّ عَلَى الأَنْدَاءِ فَضْلَ زِمَامِ
بِما بَيْنَنَا بِالْحِقْفِ مِنْ رَمْلِ عَالِجٍ وَفِي مُلْتَقَى الأَرْطَى بِسَفْحِ شِمَامِ
تَلَدَّدْ بِدَارِ الْقَصْفِ عَنِّيَ سَاعَةً وَأَبْلِغْ نَدَامَاهَا أَعَزَّ سَلَامِ
وَقُلْ لِغَمَامٍ أَلْحَفَ الأَرْضَ ذَيْلَهُ فَلَفَّ فِجَاجاً تَحْتَهُ بِإِكَامِ
أَمَالَكَ مِنْ ظِلٍّ يُبَرِّدُ مَضْجَعِي أَمَا فِيكَ مِنْ طَلٍّ يَبُلُّ أُوَامِي

14 Oh would it that the breeze of the wind made my tears twinkle amidst the dwelling places of Liwā and Khiyām.
15 And would the breeze stop at the valleys of a river in Dhu'l-Ghāḍa and shake hands on my behalf with the branches of every balsam tree.

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14 Laylā al-ʿĀmiriyyah, the beloved of the poet Majnūn [Qays ibn al-Mulawwaḥ or Qays ibn Muʿādh], was called Umm Mālik, cf. Fuat Sezgin: *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*. Leiden, 1975, vol. II, 389-93.

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16 I wipe out of my eyes [those tears] of love. Use, oh wind, some of my tears to get satisfaction.
17 Oh smell of a wind coming from the valley of Laʿlaʿ, which drags the tow of the reins over the dewdrops,
18 With what we had at al-Ḥiqf near Raml ʿĀlij and at Multaqā l-Arṭā near Safḥ Shimām.
19 Turn to the left and to the right in Dār al-Qaṣf and bring a precious greeting to its boon companions.
20 And say to a cloud which envelops the earth with his tail and wraps mountain roads under it with hills:
21 Don't you have shadow to cool my sleeping place, don't you have dew to moisten my thirst.

After this conversation with the wind, the poet goes on to the elegy: here there is no transition to a laudatory poem but general grief about the many acquaintances of the poet who have died:

وَأَيُّ نَدىً أَوْ بَرْدِ ظِلٍّ لِمُزْنَةٍ عَلَى عَقْبِ أَتْرَابٍ رُزِئْتُ كِرَامِ
وَقَفْتُ وُقُوفَ الثُّكْلِ بَيْنَ قُبُورِهِم أُعَظِّمُهَا مِن أَعْظُمٍ وَرِجَامِ
وَأَنْدُبُ أَشْجَى رَنَّةً مِنْ حَمامَةٍ وَأَبْكي فَأَقْضِي مِنْ ذِمَامِ رِمَامِ

22 What dew or coolness of a shadow of a rain cloud is good enough for generous comrades whom I lost?
23 I was standing still like mothers bereft of their children between the graves, honouring them because of the bones and the tombstones.
24 I was bewailing them with a moaning sadder than that of a dove, and I wept and fulfilled the honour of the rotten bones.

These lines manifest the poet's interest in describing nature: in his poems, there are always clouds – whose rains are like tails on the hills – wind, doves, lightning, dawn and dew, and there is the contrast between dark and light, black and white.

The contrasting of colours other than black and white is mainly to be found in the poet's more ghazal-like poems, as is witnessed by the following fragment from poem 113.[15] Here, the appearance of a phantom of the beloved (*khayāl*) is the only relic of the nasīb. In this composition we find characteristic features of a short ghazal poem by Ibn Khafāja, such

15 Ibn Khafāja: *Dīwān*, 153-54 (no. 113).

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as the equivalence of saliva and wine, two things that are often compared with each other. Moreover, there is mention of the colour contrast red/black between cheeks and hair, whose blackness introduces the embedding of the poem in a nature description, describing the slowly proceeding night and the arriving dawn.

وردَاءِ لَيْلٍ بَاتَ فِيهِ مُعَانِقِي طَيْفٌ أَلَمَّ لِظَبْيَةِ الْوَعْسَاءِ
فَجَمَعْتُ بَيْنَ رُضَابِهِ وَشَرَابِهِ وَشَرِبْتُ مِنْ رِيقٍ وَمِنْ صَهْبَاءِ
وَلَثَمْتُ فِي ظَلْمَاءِ لَيْلَةِ وَفْرَةٍ شَفَقًا هُنَاكَ لِوَجْنَةٍ حَمْرَاءِ
واللَّيْلُ مُشْمَطُّ الذُّؤَابَةِ كَبْرَةٍ خَرِفٌ يَدِبُّ عَلَى عَصَا الْجَوزَاءِ

1 A cloth of a night in which a phantom of a gazelle on a green sandy hill was the one who embraced me.
2 During this night I brought together his saliva and his wine: I drank saliva and red-yellow wine.
3 I kissed in the dark night of thick and long hair the twilight of a red cheek.

The description of the night-time is then introduced:

4 And a night grey of forelock because of old age, crept in its weakness, leaning on the stick of Gemini.

With its mainly ghazal features this poem contrasts with the preceding poem, which is more nostalgic and nasīb-like. But the appearance of the beloved as a phantom makes the poem ambiguous: is it a past love, or a love adventure that can be repeated in present time? In Ibn Khafāja's ghazal poems, as in the last poem, the focus is on the description of the beloved rather than on the nostalgic feelings of the poet, as is the case in the nasīb-like poems.

We can observe the same descriptive features in the following ghazal fragments. In poem number 116,[16] a rendezvous between the poet and his boy is described, with the stress on colour contrasts and colour comparisons:

وَأَغْيَدٍ حُلْوِ اللَّمى أَمْلَدٍ يُذْكِي عَلَى وَجْنَتِهِ الْجَمْرُ
بِتُّ أُنَاجِيهِ وَلاَ رِيبَةٌ تَعْلَقُ بِي فِيهِ وَلاَ وِزْرُ
وَاللَّيْلُ سِتْرٌ دُونَنَا مُرْسَلٌ قَدْ طَرَّزَتْهُ أَنْجُمٌ زُهْرُ
أَبْكِي فَيَسْتَحْيِي فَفِي وَجْنَتِي مَاءٌ وَفِي وَجْنَتِهِ خَمْرُ

16 *Ibid.*, 156 (no. 116).

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1 A young man, sweet of the redness of his lips and tender, on whose cheeks the coals are lit.
2 I spent the night whispering with him, while no suspicion or sin was attached to me during it.
3 Because the night was a veil hung down upon us, a veil which the brilliant stars had embroidered.
4 I wept, so that he was ashamed that on my cheek was water, and on his cheek wine.

A similar redness is to be found in the description of the boy in the next example [number 129],[17] which is embedded in a description of night-time showers and lightning. We find only descriptions here, and the surrounding nature is personified as though sharing the longings of the lover:

وَأَغْيَدَ مَعْسُولِ اللَّمى وَالمَراشِفِ صَقِيلِ المُحَلَّى والحِلَى والسَّوَالِفِ
أَنَخْتُ بِهِ والبَرْقُ يَهْفُو جَنَاحَهُ وَلِلدِيمَةِ الهَطْلاَءِ حَنَّةُ عَاطِفِ
فَنَادَمْتُ حُلْوَ البِرِّ واللَفْظِ وَالَمى جَمِيلَ المُحَيَّا والحِلى وَالعَوَارِفِ

1 A tender young man, honey-sweet from the redness of his lips, polished of traits, face and neck.
2 There I stopped, while lightning beat his wing and the abundantly raining cloud had the longings of a lover.
3 I was boon companion of one who was sweet of piety, and expressions, and redness of lips, comely of face, and beautiful of external qualities and benefits.

In number 212[18] as well, the descriptions of a boy and of the surrounding nature are paralleled. The former is embedded in nasīb-like motifs as the unattainable beloved, in the sense that only the cloud's lightning and its riding on the winds can bring messages to him, fulfilling at the same time the role of the traditional two friends of the wailing lover at the campsite and, furthermore, the occurrence of a Bedouin place name as the dwelling place of the beloved.

17 *Ibid.*, 171 (no. 129).
18 *Ibid.*, 271-72 (no. 212).

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يَا بَارِقاً قَدَحَ الزِّنَادَ وَعَارِضاً مُتَهَلِّلًا رَكِبَ الرِّيَاحَ فَسَارَا
قُولَا لِأَحْوَى باللِّوَى مُتَنصِّر عَقَدَ النُّحُولُ بِخَصْرِهِ زُنَّارَا
يَا غُصْنَ حُسْنٍ قَامَ يَنْشُرُ فَرْعَهُ وَرَقاً وَيَفْتُقُ نُورَهُ نُوَّارَا
مَا كَانَ ضَرَّكَ لَوْ هَصَرْتُكَ لَيْلَةً فَنَثَرْتَ مِنْ قُبَلٍ عَلَيَّ ثِمَارَا

1 Oh lightning cloud, who strikes fire with a steel, and oh cloud which appears in the sky raining abundantly and riding on the winds so that it goes on.
2 Say you both to a red-lipped one at al-Liwā who became a Christian (*mutanaṣṣir*), because meagreness has knotted around his waist a girdle [= *zunnār*; wordplay with *tazannara* = becoming slender].
3 Oh branch of beauty, who just spreads the locks of his hair as leaves, and opens his light as blossoms.
4 It would not damage you if I pull you towards me at night, so that you can scatter kisses on me as fruits.

Here the past of the nasīb and the presence of the ghazal are mixed: on the one hand, the remembrance and the too-distant beloved, and on the other hand, the hope of union with the beloved. Thus, judged on the basis of such poems like the latter, there appears to be a certain ambiguity when one tries to make a clear-cut distinction between ghazal and nasīb.

But when considering most of the poems by Ibn Khafāja which contain love motifs, I found that the Orientalists' distinction between nasīb and ghazal can be used with certain reservations. In my opinion, his ghazal poems are short poems with a description of the beloved boy comparable to those given in the aforementioned poems 113, 116, 129 and 212. As nasībs we can consider those longer pieces which often function as an introductory theme to a laudatory part of a poem and which can also be an elegy, such as the introductory part of poem 7. Moreover, nasīb-like passages in the poetry of Ibn Khafāja can also be poetic compositions in their own right, such as poem no. 74,[19] which contains the famous lines:

فَمَا أَنْسَهُ لَا أَنْسَ لَيْلًا عَلَى الْحِمَى وَقَدْ رَاقَ أَوْضَاحاً وَرَقَّ جَمَالَا
وَزَارَ بِهِ نَجْمَ السُّهى قَمَرُ الدُّجى فَبَاتَا بِحالِ الْفَرْقَدَيْنِ وَصَالَا
إِذَا مَا هَدَانِي فِيهِ بَارِقُ مَبْسِمٍ أَجَنَّ دُجى فَرْعٍ فَحِرْتُ ضَلَالَا

19 *Ibid.*, 124-25 (no. 74).

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7 Whatever I would forget, I shall never forget a night near al-Ḥimā, when he shined from brilliance and elegant of beauty.
8 The moon of darkness visited in this night the little star al-Suhā, so that they both spent the night as the two shining stars of Ursa Minor.
9 When a lighting mouth is my guide in this night, the darkness of his locks of hair cover it, so that I am erring in despair.

Even in this poem we find the description of the beloved boy with colour contrasts described in metaphorical terms adapted to the night-time surroundings (line 9). Normally, we would expect descriptions of boys only in ghazal.

The contents of an Ibn-Khafājian nasīb, however, often differ from those of the nasīb of early periods: not only because of their very consciously conceived rhetorical wordplay, but also because in the Ibn-Khafājian nasīb we find the expression of the poet's nostalgic feelings per se rather than with respect to individual love affairs.

This function of the Ibn-Khafājian nasīb – in which the solitude of the poet and his separation from his beloved ones of the past is stressed – is comparable with the function of the nasīb-like introductory parts of laudatory poems by the Hebrew Andalusian poet Moses ibn Ezra. Hebrew Andalusian poetry developed from a late Arabic model in which an overwhelming rhetorization of poetry had become normal practice.[20] The 'amazing, wonderful' style (*badīʿ*) that makes conscious accumulation of rhetoric embellishment a principle of art is clearly present in Ibn Khafāja's as well as Moses ibn Ezra's poetic oeuvre. Moses ibn Ezra explicitly states that he likes practising *badīʿ*-style. Hence, ancient topics such as those of the Bedouin nasīb were especially subjected to rhetoric elaboration. In Moses ibn Ezra's oeuvre, as in that of Ibn Khafāja, the elegiac nasīb passages written in old age – when he was sadder and wiser – contrast with his juvenile ghazal poetry. As far as his nasībs are concerned, Moses ibn Ezra is a very elegiac poet. In poem number 91,[21] Moses ibn Ezra wrote a nasīb-like introductory passage to a laudatory poem, which runs as follows:

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20 Arie Schippers: Symmetry and Repetition as a Stylistic Ideal in Andalusian Poetry: Moses ibn Ezra and Figures of Speech in the Arabic Tradition. In: M. Woidich (ed.): *Amsterdam Middle Eastern Studies*. Wiesbaden 1990, 160-73.

21 Mosheh ibn Ezra: *Shirē ha-Ḥol*, ed. H. Brody. Berlin 1935, vol. I, 90-91 (no. 91).

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[צא] ולה אלי בעץ אלאכואן ימדחה וישכו אלפראק ודלך

מְגוּרֵי אֹהֲבַי נוֹתְרוּ שְׁאִיּוֹת / וְשָׁבוּ אַרְמְנוֹתֵיהֶם כְּצִיּוֹת
וּמִשְׁלָח נוֹעֲדוּ לִבְנוֹת עֲפָרִים / וּמִרְמָס נִקְרְאוּ לִבְנֵי צְבִיּוֹת
וְתַחְתָּם רָבְצוּ הַיּוֹם נְמֵרִים / וְתוֹכָם נָעֲרוּ גּוֹרֵי אֲרָיוֹת
וְגַנִּים קִנְּנוּ שָׁם סִיס וְעָגוּר / לְקוֹנֵן נִקְּבְצוּ דַיּוֹת וְאִיּוֹת
אֲשׁוֹטֵט אַךְ עֲלֵי קִירוֹת נְטוּיוֹת / וְאֶסֹּב הַגְּדֵרוֹת הַהֲדוּיוֹת
וְעַפְרוֹתָם אֲחוֹנֵן אַט וְאֶרְצֶה / אַבָנִים מֵעַרְמוֹתָם לְחַיּוֹת
וְאַזִיל מִדְמֵי עֵינַי נְחָלִים / אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲבֹר חֹבֵל בְּצִיּוֹת
אֲדַבֵּר־בָּם וְאֵין מַקְשִׁיב וּמַשִׁיב / לְבַד תַּנּוֹת יְתַנּוּ תַּאֲנִיּוֹת
זְמָן יָדָה בְיָדוֹ הַחֲזָקָה / שְׁכוּנֵיהֶם וּבְזְרוֹעוֹת נְטִיּוֹת
וְעָלוּ כָל־מְשׁוֹשֵׁינוּ בְּרַגְלָם / וּבִידֵיהֶם נָפְשֵׁינוּ שְׁבִיּוֹת
וְאֵיכָה נִחֵיָה בִלְתָּם וְהֵיוּ / כְרוּחוֹת וַאֲנַחְנוּ הַגְּוִיּוֹת
הֲמַרְעֵי אֲנִי בְּכֹה וְאֵם־עַל / גְּדֹד אַחִים וּמִפְקַד הָאֲחָיוֹת
אֲשֶׁר יָזוּב בְּאֵשׁ נוּדָם כְּבֵדִי / וְהַחֵלֶב אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַכְּלָיוֹת
וְאִם אָנוּד עֲלֵי פֶּרוּד שְׁלֹמֹה / אֲשֶׁר דָּדָיו כְּנֹפֶת־צוּף לְפִיּוֹת
אֲשֶׁר הָיָה מָנָתִי מְגַבְּרִים / הֲיוֹת כָּל־הַחֲסָדִים לוֹ מָנְיוֹת
חֲמַדְתִּיהוּ בְּמַעֲלָלָיו אֲשֶׁר הֵם / לְכִתְרֵי בַעֲלֵי חָמְדָּה שְׁכִיּוֹת

1 The dwellings of my beloved people are abandoned like ruins, and their palaces have become again like deserts;
2 As a meadow [for the sending forth of cattle] they were prepared for the daughters of the does and as a place for the treading of lesser cattle they were claimed for the young gazelles.[22]
3 Instead of them lie nowadays panthers and amidst them are the roaring cubs of lions;
4 And gardens where swallows and cranes made their nests; now there are assembled vultures and owls to mourn;
5 I wander around now above destroyed walls and go along broken fences which have been cast down;
6 And I have some compassion for the dust [of these places] and I want stones to be revived from their barren lands;
7 I shed brooks of blood from my eyes [= my tears], [so large] that no sailor can traverse them in boats;
8 I speak there, but no-one is listening and only the jackals answer, utter lamentations;
9 With its mighty hand and stretched-out arms, Time threw their inhabitants away;
10 All their delights went away while our souls were captured by their feet and their hands [i.e. because of our love];
11 How should I live without them, when they are like souls and we are the bodies?

22 Here, gazelles are the beloved, and therefore have a different role as in pre-Islamic nasībs. See also note 23.

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12 Am I weeping for my friends who have left me, or because of the departure of my brothers or because of my separation from my sisters?
13 Because of the fire [i.e. burning pain] of whose departure my heart and the fat above my kidneys are melting away;
14 And, if I wail about separation from Solomon whose friendship [love] is like sweet honey to the mouth –
15 Who is my choice of all men, that all favours may be his portion –
16 This is because I desire him for his good deeds, which are precious stones for the crown of the praiseworthy man.

Here we see at the beginning how the poet describes the transformation of the Bedouin camp into a barren desert. However, his beloved ones are in the plural and described as daughters of the does and as young gazelles, which is quite anachronistic for a traditional nasīb because the gazelles that regularly appear in wine and love poetry by poets such as Abū Nuwās (768-817) do not really belong to the early nasīb, where the poet mostly deplores his separation from one beloved female. Here, before the camp was destroyed, gazelles were the beloved. We should keep in mind that in the nasīb of the pre-Islamic poets, gazelles were not considered beloved ones, but as wild animals which came to the encampment after its destruction.[23] In Moses ibn Ezra's poem, the wild beasts that came after the destruction of the encampment are panthers and lions. Then in the next few lines the gazelles turn into his brothers, sisters and friends who have departed, after which comes the transition to the laudatory part on his friend Solomon.

In Moses ibn Ezra's poetry, nasīb contrasts with ghazal. In his case, there are spectacular descriptions in *muwashshaḥ* form of rendezvous with young boys, love poetry which he later called 'juvenile sins.' To give an idea of these sins, here is a short passage from his *muwashshaḥ* number 249,[24] in which he describes his love affair with a young boy:

[רמט] ולה איצא

תַּאֲוַת לִבִּי וּמַחְמַד עֵינִי
עֹפֶר לְצִדִּי וְכוֹס בִּימִינִי:
[...]
נִפְתָּה וְקָמְנוּ אֶלֵי־בֵית אִמּוֹ
וַיֵּט לְעֹל סֻבָּלִי אֶת־שִׁכְמוֹ
לַיְלָה וְיוֹמָם אֲנִי רַק עִמּוֹ

23 See, for instance, Charles James Lyall (ed.): *The Mufaddaliyat, an Anthology of Ancient Arabian Odes*. Oxford 1918, poem XXV (by al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥilliza), line 5; "The gazelles wrapped themselves in the skirts of the shade and sought the noon-tide shelters they had made."

24 Ibn Ezra: *Shirē ha-Ḥol*, vol. I, 261-2 (no. 249).

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אֶפְשַׁט בְּגָדָיו וְיַפְשִׁיטֵנִי
אִינַק שְׂפָתָיו וְיֵנִקֵנִי׃

1 The wish of my heart and the lust of my eye
2 is a gazelle next to me and a cup of wine in my hand.
8 Finally he was seduced and we went to the house of his mother.
9 And he inclined his shoulder under the yoke of my love passion.
10 Night and day I was only with him.
11 I took off his clothes and he took off my clothes.
12 I kissed his lips and he sucked me.

Yehudah ha-Levi – a pupil and colleague of Moses ibn Ezra –continues in the same style. His introductory nasībs are heavily rhetoricized. In laudatory poem number 94,[25] Yehudah ha-Levi describes his sadness at the departure of his beloved. He compares his heart with the ruins of the deserted abodes:

עַיִן נְדִיבָה׃
תשובה לר׳ שלמה בן גיאת׃

[...]
הָלֹךְ וּבָכֹה עֲלֵי חָרְבוֹת נְוֵה אֹהֲבִים / לֹא מַאֲזֶנֶת לְקוֹל אַף לֹא מְדַבֶּרֶת
אֵין דִּי לְיַד הַנְּדֹד הַחְרֵב נְוֵיהֶם עֲדֵי / קִירוֹת לְבָבִי לְקֹרוֹתָיו מְקַרְקֶרֶת
יִתְנַכְּרוּ לִי כְּאִלּוּ לֹא יְדַעְתִּים אֲבָל / יַכִּיר לְבָבִי אֲשֶׁר עֵינִי מְנַכֶּרֶת
נֹכַח אֲדֹנָי נְתִיב הַנֹּדְדִים עִם שְׁנַת / עַיִן נְדִיבָה הֲמוֹן הוֹנָהּ מְפַזֶּרֶת

3 My eye goes weeping over the remnants of the encampment of the beloved, which do not hear a sound, let alone a speaker.
4 Was the destruction of their camp not enough, next to sleeplessness, so that the walls of my heart destroy its beams?
5 They are strangers to me as though I have never known them, but my heart recognizes what my eye does not recognize.
6 Towards my lord was the path of [their] wanderings taking away with them the sleep of my generous eye which scatters the multitude of its wealth.

Although in these introductory lines the poet speaks about a specific beloved who has departed from the campsite with his tribe, the description remains very abstract. Unlike in the ancient nasīb, the beloved here is probably a boy, not a maiden. A similar rhetoric description of the campsite can be found in Yehudah ha-Levi's poem 100.[26] Again he describes an interaction between the campsite and his heart:

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25 Yehudah ha-Levi: *Dīwān: Shirē ha-Ḥol*, ed. H. Brody. Berlin 1894-1930, vol. I [1901], 137-41 (laudatory poem no. 94).

26 *Ibid.*, 151-54 (laudatory poem no. 100).

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[ק]
מַה־לִּי לְרַוּת
אל ר׳ יהודה בן גיאת.

[...]
כִּי אֶעֱבֹר עַל־יְסוֹד בֵּית חַבָּבִי אֶשְׁאֲלָה / אַיּוֹ וְלֹא אֶשְׁאֲלָה אַיֵּה יְחִידָתִי
תֵּל אָהֳלֵי דוֹד אֶחַבֵּק וַאֲמָרֵר וְאֶבֶ־ / כֶּה שְׁמָמוֹתָיו וְהוּא יְבָכֶּה שְׁרֵפָתִי
נָסַע וְנָתַן בְּתוֹךְ גְּזֵרֵי לְבָבִי מְסִ־ / לוֹתָיו וּבֵין שְׁמָמוֹת בֵּיתוֹ מְסִלָּתִי
קִירוֹת בְּמַר צָעֲקוּ עוֹד מַה־לְּךְ פֹּה וּמִי / וָאֶעֱנֵם קֹט עֲדֵי אֶחְצֹב קִבּוּרָתִי
חֲצֵרוֹת יְדִידִי בְּבֵין חָצִיר הֵיתְגַּבְּרוּ / אֶבְכֶּה עֲלֵיהֶם וְיִמַּסּוּ לְבָכְיָתִי
מִיּוֹם נָדַד עָפְרֶכֶם לַחְמִי עֲפָרֶכֶם וְעַל־ / מִדְרַךְ הֲלִיכֵי צְבִי אָתוּר מְנוּחָתִי
אֵלֶּךְ וְאֶרְאֶה מְקוֹם חִבּוּק אֲשֶׁר הֶאֱבִיד / רוּחִי וְשָׁם אֶמְצָאֶה אוּלַי אֲבֵדָתִי
[...]
קִירוֹת לְבָבִי לְקִירוֹת אָהֳלוֹ יֶהֱמוּ / מִיּוֹם שְׁאִלְתִּים וְנִלְאוּ מִהְּשׁוּבָתִי
מִי יִתְּנֵנִי וְיִתֵּן־לוֹ לְבָבִי כְּאַבְ־ / נֵי בֵית מְעוֹנוֹ וּפֶן יֵרָךְ לְאַנְחָתִי

2 I came across the ruins of the abode of the gazelle in order to ask, where has he gone to, while I do not ask whither has gone my heart;

3 The remnants of the encampment of a lover I embrace, while I announce bitter complaints and I weep for their desertedness, and they (= the remnants of the deserted encampment) weep for my burning passion;

4 He has travelled away and ploughed his ways amidst the pieces of my heart, while I find my way between the deserts of his abode;

5 Ruined walls [of these remnants] cry with bitterness: "What is the matter with you that you are here, and who are you?"; I answer them: "Wait a moment in order that I may dig my grave";

6 The [destroyed] courtyards of my beloved dominate [these] grasses! I weep for them and they melt away because of my weeping [i.e. the traces of the camp are becoming effaced];

7 From the day that your gazelle has gone away, my bread will be the dust of your campsite; and in the [nearly effaced] footprints of a gazelle (i.e. my beloved) I will seek my rest;

8 I go to look for a place of embracing which my soul has destroyed, and would that my loss (= my death) might be there!

12 The walls of my heart have uttered [lamentations] to the walls of his camp, from the time when I asked them, but they were [too] weary to give answer to me;

13 Would that my heart gave it (= the camp) the stones of its own building, lest it should become weak because of my sighs!;

In the last part of this poem, as the poet speaks about his gazelle, the nasīb turns into a ghazal and the past turns into the present. The poet asks himself why his beloved has taken away his heart, and as a punishment for what:

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because the poet's eyes shed the blood of the lad's face, or because the poet stole a bit from the lad's roses [blushing cheeks]?

[...]
אֹמְרִים הֲיֵדַע אֲהוּבְךָ שִׁבְרְךָ אֶעֱנֵם / אֵיךְ לֹא יֵדָעוֹ וְהוּא חֹרֵשׁ בְּעָגְלָתִי
נַפְשִׁי הֲלֹא הָגְלָתָה עִמּוֹ וְלֵב נוֹעֲצוּ / עָלַי שְׁנֵיהֶם לְקָרֵב עֵת אֲסִיפָתִי
אִם נִשְׁפְּכוּ מִדְּמֵי פָנָיו בְּעֵינַי תְּמוֹל / הַעַל־דְּמֵי לֶחָיָו יִשָּׁפֵךְ מְרֹרָתִי
אוֹ הֶעֱוֵיתִי לְגַנֵּב מִוְרָדָיו מְעַט / הַאִם לְבָבִי אֲשַׁלֵּם עַל־גְּנֵבָתִי
עַל־שִׁיר אֲשֶׁר יַעֲנֶה אֵין עַל־עֲפָרִים פִּלֵּי־ / לִיָּה חֲמָסִי וְלִבְעָלָיו תְּלָנָתִי

14 People say: "Does your lover know your calamity?" and I answer them: "Why should he not know it, since he is ploughing with my calf [= my heart]"?
15 Has my soul not been carried away by him together with my heart? They have both taken counsel together to bring near the time of my death.
16 When by my eyes yesterday the blood of his face was shed (i.e. red tears taken from the redness of the beloved's cheeks), was my bitter gall shed because of the blood of his cheeks?
17 Or did I do wrong to steal from its roses a bit (i.e. plucking kisses from his cheeks)? Or do I pay with my heart for my theft?
18 For a poem which answers these questions, not for gazelles is my demand. My violence and complaint is directed to the masters [of poetry].

The nasīb becomes a ghazal and then turns into a laudatory poem, because the poet wants from his addressee a poem in return, in which the aforementioned question will be answered.

Conclusions

The three poets we have dealt with here were the greatest poets of eleventh- and twelfth-century Andalusia. All three have the same tendencies as far as their use of nasīb and ghazal is concerned. Nasīb and ghazal are rhetoricized, and sometimes the lines of distinction between the two are blurred: thus a phantom or a Bedouin place name appears in a short ghazal-like composition, and a manly gazelle appears in a nasīb-like composition. I mentioned in passing ghazal-like compositions by Moses ibn Ezra and Yehudah ha-Levi, which exist even in the form of *muwashshaḥāt*. It appears from Ibn Khafāja's and Moses ibn Ezra's nasīb-like compositions that they are looking back on a former, happy life. These poets use ghazal-like poetry to denote youth, and *nasib*-like poetry to denote old age. The individualistic, sad, elegiac style of these two poets makes the nasīb into a very individualistic genre. In Yehudah ha-Levi's poetry we found a ghazal and a nasīb structure together in one poem. However, it was easy to individuate what was nasīb and what was ghazal.

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Persian Ghazal

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THE PERSIAN GHAZAL BETWEEN LOVE SONG AND PANEGYRIC

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The Persian ghazal had its origins in the songs that were composed for and performed at courtly gatherings, and especially at the drinking-parties which were a regular feature of court life. The question of origins has been much debated: some scholars see the ghazal as stemming from indigenous Persian popular lyrics, others as having been derived from the introductory section (termed variously nasīb, *tashbīb*, or *taghazzul*) of the panegyric qaṣīda. My own view is that the Persian ghazal was, at first, analogous to the independent Arabic poems on love, wine, and various other topics which became popular in urban and court circles in the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries, first in the Hijaz and Syria and later in Baghdad. Few early examples of the early Persian sung lyric survive; for although the dīvāns of a few earlier poets – notably Rūdakī (d. after 339/950-1), who was an accomplished musician as well as a poet, and Manūchihrī (d. 432?/1040-1?) – contain what were clearly songs, these are exceptions. The informal, oral nature of the sung poem, plus the fact that it was performed by minstrels (who were of a lower social status than poets), presumably made it seem less worthy of preserving in a poetic collection dedicated chiefly to panegyrics in the qaṣīda form; the early dīvāns are, in any case, only partial collections, and the oldest extant collections date from the 16th and 17th centuries, when the "canon" of classical Persian poetry was becoming codified through an extensive project of compilation and imitation.[1]

From the late 5th/11th century onwards, Persian poets began to develop and modify the sung lyric and to incorporate ghazals in their dīvāns. As the

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1 On the question of the ghazal's origins see Jan Rypka: *History of Iranian Literature*. Dordrecht 1968, 95, and the references cited; Franklin D. Lewis: *Reading, Writing and Recitation: Sanā'ī and the Origins of the Persian Ghazal*. Ph.D. Diss. University of Chicago 1995, vol. 1, 43-69. On the ghazal's connection with music see the editor's note in ʿUthmān Mukhtārī: *Dīvān*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī. Tehran 1962, 567-76, n. 1. On the social status of the minstrel see J.T.P. de Bruijn: Poets and Minstrels in early Persian Literature. In: *Transition Periods in Iranian Literature. Actes du Symposium de Fribourg-en-Breslau (22-24 mai 1985)*. Paris 1987.

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ghazal gradually developed from sung lyric to technical form, it acquired formal features which had heretofore been proper to the qaṣīda: rhyme (*taṣrīʿ*) in the two half-lines of the *maṭlaʿ*, and self-naming, the use of the poet's pen-name ([*ism-i*] *takhalluṣ*) in the final or penultimate line. This latter device is said to have been introduced by Sanāʾī (d. 525/1131), and occurs in around half of his ghazals; it is used by other contemporary poets as well. Some poets employed their own names in the *takhalluṣ* – Ḥasan-i Ghaznavī (d. 556/1160-1), for example; others took their name from their profession or from some other qualification – ʿAṭṭār was a perfumer by trade; Ḥāfiẓ designates someone who has memorized the Koran – and others, like ʿIrāqī, from their place of origin; often the *takhalluṣ* was derived from the name or title of a patron, as in the case of Muʿizzī [d. 542/1147-8 or later], who took his name from the title of the Saljūq sultan Malikshāh, Muʿizz al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn.[2]

Formally, the *takhalluṣ* provides a built-in mechanism for closure; it is, in that sense, analogous to the *duʿā*, the prayer for the patron's long life and prosperity which concludes the panegyric qaṣīda. It has been suggested that this feature reflects the ghazal's increasing literarization, its passage from oral song to written poem; I shall return to this issue later. But despite its emerging status as a written form, the ghazal retained its close connection with music; and the influence of performance context on its thematics and style has a bearing on the form's later development. This influence is also seen in its prosodic characteristics, especially the preference for the so-called "lighter" metres and the frequent use of the *radīf*, a repeated word or phrase which follows the actual rhyme, which will be seen in several of the examples to be discussed. Some critics have attempted to make a distinction between sung or "rhythmical" and written or "literary" ghazals; but it should be remembered that even ghazals composed in writing were ordinarily performed (usually by a professional minstrel or by the poet's *rāvī*, his transmitter, sometimes by the poet himself). The status of the ghazal as sung poem is also largely responsible for the existence of variants in numerous poems, which should not be seen (as is often the case) simply as instances of scribal error; poems were frequently reworked for performance on different occasions – and even for different patrons – that those for which, and for whom, they were originally composed.[3]

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2 On the development of the *takhalluṣ* see Lewis: *Reading*, vol. 1, 95-99. On the poetic function of the *takhalluṣ* see Paul E. Losensky: Linguistic and Rhetorical Aspects of the Signature Verse (*Takhalluṣ*) in the Persian Ghazal. In: *Edebiyat*, n.s. 8 (1998), 239-71.

3 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 99-103.

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Generically, as its name implies, the ghazal is, par excellence, a love poem, and many of the Persian ghazal's topics and motifs derive ultimately from the independent Arabic love poems of the early Abbasid period. These are also called ghazal, but without the technical implications that came to accrue to the Persian ghazal; similarly, the introductory portion of the qaṣīda, the nasīb, is often termed *taghazzul*, "speaking about love," a fact which has undoubtedly reinforced the view that the ghazal is, in essence, nothing but a detached nasīb. The sung lyric also incorporated bacchic topics; and the formal or technical ghazal came to be used for gnomic, homiletic, religious and mystical themes, as well as for "jesting poems" (*hazliyyāt*). Virtually all of these themes (or more properly genres, *aghrāḍ*) may be found in the ghazals of Sanāʾī, whose dīvān is the first to include a large number – we should rather say a huge number – of ghazals; and since Sanāʾī had a profound influence on the ghazal's development, we may look briefly at that poet's career.[4]

This career illustrates, among other things, the changes in patterns of patronage which followed the defeat of the Ghaznavids by the Saljuqs in 431/1040. Having lost their western territories in Khurasan and Iraq, the Ghaznavids withdrew to their eastern courts in Ghazna and Lahore; and while poetry flourished at the court of Lahore, Ghazna itself experienced a cultural decline, and poetry did not see a real revival until the reign of Bahrāmshāh (515-552/1118-1151).[5] In the early years of his career Sanāʾī addressed panegyrics to a number of notables in Ghazna, in the hopes both of finding a reliable patron and of gaining entrée to the court of Masʿūd III (492-508/1099-1115). Disappointed in this, he left Ghazna for Khurasan, where he became attached to a number of religious notables (in particular Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr, the Imam of Sarakhs) for whom he composed religious poetry, much of which (especially that in ghazal form) was used to adorn sermons or was sung in religious gatherings. Sanāʾī also wrote ghazals for professional singers, for which he received payment. He returned to Ghazna in the reign of Bahrāmshāh, to whom he dedicated his homiletic *mathnavī* the *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa* as well as a number of panegyrics in both the qaṣīda and the ghazal forms.

While he may have had (or have developed) a personal preference for religious poetry, Sanāʾī's poetic output was clearly influenced by the type

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4 On Sanāʾī see further *ibid.*; J. T. P. de Bruijn: *Of Piety and Poetry: The Interaction of Religion and Literature in the Life and Works of Ḥakīm Sanāʾī of Ghazna*. Leiden 1987.

5 De Bruijn: *Of Piety and Poetry*, 34.

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of patronage he was able to secure. This patronage falls into three broad categories: religious; commercial (that of the professional singers for whom he wrote song-texts); and that various notables of the Ghaznavid court and, at the end of his career, of Bahrāmshāh. All three types of patronage are reflected in his ghazals, which include religious poems, love lyrics and – last but not least – panegyric. Because of its importance for the development of the form, it is on the panegyric ghazal that I shall focus here.[6]

It has been well established that in both Arabic and Persian the nasīb, or *taghazzul*, of the qaṣīda provides the necessary background, by analogy, to the panegyric proper, the *madīḥ*. The relations between the poet, in his *persona* of lover, and his often cruel and fickle beloved – who in Persian poetry is usually male – figure those between the panegyrist and his royal or noble patron. Thus, for example, when the poet complains of separation from his beloved and his longing for reunion, he often indicates by this means that he has fallen from favor with his patron and desires reinstatement. This thematic linkage may be expressed explicitly in the qaṣīda, where the poet may defend himself against the accusations of rivals or detractors; in the ghazal it is often only implicit (the ghazals of Ḥāfiẓ provide a good example).[7]

Sanāʾī was not the first poet to use the ghazal for panegyric. His older contemporary, Masʿūd-i Saʿd-i Salmān (d. 515/1121-2?), composed a handful of such ghazals for Masʿūd III (presumably at the time that that prince was governor of Lahore). These ghazals are all brief (between seven and nine lines), and do not feature the poet's self-naming – perhaps as a matter of etiquette, as it might have been seen as inappropriate for the poet to address or refer to himself by the same name as that of the ruler. (There is no lack of self-naming in Masʿūd's qaṣīdas.) Sanāʾī himself composed (according to my count) a total of 17 panegyric ghazals, all addressed to Bahrāmshāh. (These are included in the qaṣīda section of the dīvān, presumably because they are panegyrics.) They vary in length from 10 to 27 lines, and all include, at or near the end, the poet's self-naming. It was, however, Sanāʾī's younger contemporary, Bahrāmshāh's panegyrist Ḥasan-i Ghaznavī, who produced

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6 On the panegyric ghazal see further Julie Scott Meisami: *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*. Princeton 1987, 171-85.

7 See further Meisami: *Court Poetry*, 20-30, 47-54, 245-98. Stefan Sperl: *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry. A Structural Analysis of Selected Texts*. Cambridge 1989, 19-22. For Ḥāfiẓ in particular see Julie Scott Meisami: Allusion in Ḥāfiẓ. Joseph and His Brothers. In: Charles Melville (ed.): *Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P. W. Avery*. Cambridge (Eng.) 1990, 141-58.

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the greatest number of panegyric ghazals: of the 83 ghazals in his dīvān (which is far less voluminous than Sanāʾī's), 28 are explicitly panegyric (and a number of others appear to be addressed to the ruler or another patron, who is not named); the majority are addressed to Bahrāmshāh, and self-naming occurs in around half of them. (I should add, parenthetically, that other poets of this period also wrote panegyric ghazals, among them the Ghaznavid poet ʿUthmān Mukhtārī [d. after 513/1119], and, slightly further afield, the Saljūq panegyrist Muʿizzī. I have not been able to examine these poems in detail; but their existence seems to point to something like a trend.)

In the panegyric ghazal the emphasis is on the erotic, descriptive or bacchic motifs with which the poem begins, rather than on the panegyric (which may, indeed, be minimal); in this respect, it would be virtually indistinguishable from any other ghazal, were it not for the panegyric element with which it concludes, and for certain clues in its imagery and thematics. In its most developed form, a panegyric ghazal begins with a love-plaint or (less often) a descriptive or bacchic motif, then moves to the poet's self-naming (an optional feature in this period), and concludes with a few lines (sometimes only one) in which the *mamdūḥ* is named and praised. An example is seen in this panegyric by Sanāʾī addressed to Bahrāmshāh.[8]

1 Last night I went to the top of the lane to look upon the friend;
I saw night put to rout by the two bright cheeks of the friend.
2 So that they might gain honor before his neck and lip,
I saw the moon was the slave, Venus the servant of the friend.
3 All ears gathered sugar as from his speech there poured
sugared words from those two sugar-lumps of the friend.
4 All eyes became a place of spectacle for the soul –
not because of some juggler, but to look upon the friend.
5 Before a single eyelash of his gazelle-like eyes, gone weak,
the lions of the world became a thread of the turban of the friend.
6 Turned to octagons, like honeycombs, from twisting,
was the deaf granite rock, by the bloodthirsty glance of the friend.
7 Each moment a pretender, from his own prideful heart,
shed fresh blood, slaughtered by the twist of each curl of the friend.
8 When he travelled forth in his caravan, from his smile,
like the sphere itself,
it was bedecked with stars – the caravan of the friend.
9 His sweet lips joined together, for the sake of the order of life, the
justice of Nūshīrvān with the tyrannous eyes of the friend.

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8 Sanāʾī Ghaznavī: *Dīvān*, ed. M. T. Mudarris Raḍavī. Tehran 1962, 87-88.

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10 Last night, through his nurturing, my sustenance was gained; today
again a night of grief is mine, reproached by the friend.
11 Why should Sanā'ī tell this tale? for by way of lip and curl,
he has seen the whole world filled with the fame of one cast
aside by the friend.
12 There is a road to his private chamber by way of the roof of
the sphere;
the high resolve of the world's king dwells in the chamber
of the friend:
13 The mighty *shāh*, Bahrāmshāh, that *shāh* whose palm is ever
the cause of affliction for his foe and of relief for his friend.
14 May his blows, his mercy, his bad, his good, through
creating and destroying,
be forever the downfall of his foe and the support of his friend.

This highly mannered ghazal resembles a miniature qaṣīda in both its form and its diction. Its complexity is mirrored in the complex combination of the rhyme *-āra-i* (with the *iḍāfa* construction) and the *radīf dūst*, "friend," the sense of which shifts at the end of the poem. Its nasīb (if we may call it that) employs typical *madīḥ* topics – the ruler's might, his ruthlessness towards and triumph over his foes, his generosity towards his friends – expressed in the language and imagery of the love poem: the "friend's" bright face chases night away like a defeated army (1); the planets are ennobled by serving him (2); the "moon" and "Venus" are particularly appropriate to the sort of drinking-gathering at which this poem might have been performed, figuring the beautiful *sāqī* and the musicians; his eloquent speech is like sugared words poured from sugared lips (3), and so on. An allusion to the poet's detractors (likened to the false lover of ghazal, the *mudda'ī*, who becomes an important figure in the cast of characters of the ghazal, and especially in the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ), whose claims are defeated by the friend's twisting curls (7), is clarified by the suggestion of the poet's present deprivation of the favor he enjoyed in the past (10). The recurrent references to "observing" and "contemplating" the friend (1 and 4, with repetition of the initial rhyme of 1a, *naẓẓāra*, in 4b), and to his "caravan" (8), suggest the appearance of the ruler and his retinue (the "stars" who enjoy his favor) before his admiring subjects; while mention of "Nūshīrvān's justice," joined with the friend's "tyrannical eye" (9), recapitulates the ruthlessness/generosity doublet. The aporia (11), with the poet's self-naming and a clear reference to his own poetry (his ghazals, which sing of "lip and curl," have spread his fame throughout the world) paves the way for the *gurīzgāh* (12), the transition to the *madīḥ*, and to the identification of the "friend" as Bahrāmshāh (13); the

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standard doublet is now repeated in such a way as to effect a shift of focus and a change of meaning (the "friend" is now the ruler's well-wisher) and reiterated in the *duʿā* (14), in which the doublets *zakhm u raḥm*, "wounding and mercy," and so on again refer to the ruler's ruthlessness towards his enemies and generous support of his friends (amongst whom we must now include the poet himself).

Both the convention of homoerotic love that characterizes Persian lyric poetry in general, and the well-established analogy between "beloved" and prince or patron, clearly facilitate the use of the ghazal for panegyric. (Compare the Latin Augustans' use of homosexual love as a "framework for treating a personal relationship with an amicus."[9] While Sanāʾī's ghazal, with its ornate diction and complex use of imagery and of metaphor, clearly bespeaks its courtly context, the following ghazal by Ḥasan-i Ghaznavī, also addressed to Bahrāmshāh, which employs a far less mannered style, looks at first glance like a simple love poem.[10]

1 To the beloved I've given heart and life;
to join with him once more: ah, that were life!
2 I'll patiently endure this; for my hand
by separation's tyranny is bound.
3 I suffer from his absence pain so sore,
the lofty Sphere itself could not endure.
4 The separation of two intimate friends:
how speak of it? for it cannot be known.
5 Rejoice, Ḥasan, as you for his sake grieve;
he's both the affliction and the remedy.
6 I fear it will not reach Sultan's ear
that grief for him is sultan o'er my heart:
7 *Shāh* Bahrāmshāh, son of Masʿūd, who is
the very form of sovereignty, image of life.

In this ghazal the theme of separation is uppermost, and is emphasized throughout by such expressions as *gar ba-dū bāz rasam*, "should I rejoin him," *sitam-i hijrān*, "the tyranny of separation," and *firqat* and *hijrān* (the latter repeated in lines 2 and 4). Although the ghazal's panegyric intent is suggested by the reference to the "tyranny of separation" (*sitam-i hijrān*, 2; a common *topos* of love poetry) and by the play on *sulṭān*, in its two senses of "ruler" and "rule," in 6, in which *gham-ash* and *gham-i ū*, "grief for him"

9 Gordon Williams: *Figures of Thought in Roman Poetry*. New Haven 1980, 214.

10 Ḥasan-i Ghaznavī and Sayyid Ashraf: *Dīvān*, ed. M. T. Mudarris Raḍavī. Tehran 1949, 266.

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(repeated in both 5 and 6, with a subtle shift in meaning) is as ambiguous in the Persian as it is in English, it is not announced until the final line, where the *maʿshūq* of the opening becomes identified with the *mamdūḥ*, the object of both love and praise, and the *jānān*, the "beloved," with the *sulṭān* to whom the poem is addressed.

Here perhaps we may pause to ask whether there was any connection between the use of ghazal for panegyric and the development of its formal features of *taṣrīʿ* in the *maṭlaʿ* and, especially, the poet's self-naming, both of which were characteristic features of the Persian qaṣīda. For example, a panegyric by Farrukhī (d. after 422/1031) to Sultan Muḥammad of Ghazna features both a "renewed *maṭlaʿ*" (*tajdīd-i maṭlaʿ*; that is, repetition of the *taṣrīʿ* which characterizes the qaṣīda's opening line) and self-naming: "Farrukhī, as long as you can, drink only of this wine."[11] The same poet concludes a qaṣīda addressed to Masʿūd I, "In this feast may God make Farrukhī's praise an auspicious portent [*farrukh kunād*] for you."[12] Self-naming occurs often in the poems of Masʿūd-i Saʿd-i Salmān, though perhaps for different reasons: Masʿūd-i Saʿd sent many poems to various personages during his long years of imprisonment; these were performed by his *rāvī*, and the poet clearly wished to remind the poems' recipients of his identity, and indeed of his existence.

Elsewhere I have suggested that *takhalluṣ* (an elision for *ism-i takhalluṣ*, "the name in (or of) the *takhalluṣ*"), as a technical term relating to the ghazal, may have been derived from its meaning with respect to the qaṣīda, where it refers to the transition from the exordium to the *madīḥ* in a line or lines which generally incorporate the patron's name.[13] (The Persian term is *gurīzgāh*, literally "place of escape," equivalent to the Arabic *makhlaṣ*.) It may have been applied by analogy to the "exit line" of the ghazal, which includes the poet's name. This would account for the similarity in terminology. But it would be a mistake to consider the ghazal – even the panegyric ghazal – as merely a truncated qaṣīda, or a detached nasīb, as other factors undoubtedly contributed to the development of this feature. In the case of a poet like Sanāʾī, who composed many ghazals either as song-texts for professional singers or as accompaniments to sermons, self-naming may have served to identify the poet and distinguish him from the singer or preacher, or to construct for himself an authorative

11 Farrukhī Sīstānī: *Dīvān*, ed. ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Rasūlī. Tehran 1932, 106.

12 *Ibid.*, 155.

13 Meisami: *Court Poetry*, 262-63.

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persona for a certain type of poem.[14] Sanā'ī has, in fact, several conflicting *personae*: world-renouncing homilist, *sufi qalandar*, hedonistic winebibber and worldly lover, each appropriate to a particular type of poem. Moreover, for a poet in search of patronage, what better means of self-advertisement than to attach his name to poems which were widely circulated and enjoyed considerable popularity?

Sanā'ī may be said to have "legitimized" the ghazal by devoting so much of his output to it and by employing it for a wide variety of purposes. The inclusion of ghazals in dīvāns marks its rise to the level of "serious" literature, worthy of being preserved in writing; and eventually, from the mid-7th/13th century onwards, the ghazal was to eclipse the qaṣīda as the lyric form of choice. It has been argued that the increasing length and ornateness of the qaṣīda led poets and patrons alike to prefer the simpler ghazal; but this does not seem to happen until well into the Ilkhanid period, by which time the ghazal's diction had become permeated by religio-mystical adaptations of its courtly erotic and bacchic motifs.

I do not intend to dwell here on the mystical ghazal, which has received much discussion, and which raises problems of interpretation in the case of many poets, especially Ḥāfiẓ.[15] These difficulties of interpretation may be seen as early as Sanā'ī, as another example by that poet will show.[16]

1 Love's not a fable nor a foolish game;
the lovers' path admits of no complaint.
2 Since the beloved's beauty knows no bounds,
the lovers' pain is likewise without end.
3 Think not that, in this world, love holds its sway
by other means than stealing hearts away.
4 Better to raise love's banner plain on high;
for love does not allow hypocrisy.
5 Who's learned in scholarship's not learned in love:
true vision's not the same as what's received.
6 He who can lover from beloved tell:
the power of his love's not reached its goal.

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14 On the poetic *personae* of the ghazal see further Julie Scott Meisami: Persona and Generic Conventions in Medieval Persian Lyric. In: *Comparative Criticism* 12 (1990), 121-51; eadem: The Ghazal as Fiction: Implied Speakers and Implied Audience in Hafiz's Ghazals. In: Michael Glünz et al. (eds.): *Intoxication Earthly and Heavenly: Seven Studies on the Poet Hafiz of Shiraz*. Bern 1991, 89-103.

15 See for example Annemarie Schimmel: Ḥāfiẓ and His Critics. In: *Studies in Islam* 16 (1979), 1-33.

16 Sanā'ī: *Dīvān*, 826.

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7 You must lose – like your heart – all you possess;
for a true lover, a heart's not enough.
8 No one has passed from unbelief to guidance
for whom unbelief does not appear like guidance.
9 No one will reach a beloved through false claims,
if love's own essence runs not through his veins.
10 Know well, that that which is the goal's not won
save by the gift and favor that is given.

Many of the motifs in this ghazal, already common in the courtly lyric, will become standard ones in the mystical ghazal: the limitless beauty of the beloved, the perfect submission of the lover, the inevitable revelation of love's secret, the contrast between transmitted learning (the *ʿilm* that is acquired through *riwāyat*) and direct experience (*ruʾyat-i ṣidq*), the indistinguishability of lover and beloved, the paradox that what appears to others as unbelief (*kufr*) is, for the lover, right guidance (*hidāyat*), the reference to the *muddaʿī* who makes a claim (*daʿwā*) to be a true lover, but whose soul is not infused with love's essence (*maʿnā*). (We might note here the extensive play on words derived from similar, but not identical, Arabic roots – *rāyat*, "banner," *ruʾyā*, "vision," *rivāyat*, "transmission," along with the Persian construction *rūy va-rāyat*, "hypocrisy" – which subtly proclaims the poet's erudition and rhetorical skill in this apparently simple ghazal.) But is this a mystical ghazal? I am inclined to think not, although it has mystical overtones: the final line, with its emphasis on grace and favor, *tuḥfa u ʿināyat*, and its lesson that however hard the lover strives (and however sincere, pure and devoted his love), attainment of the desired goal is not up to him, but is in the power of the beloved to bestow or to withhold, is less appropriate to a mystical poem than to a courtly lyric, and directly suggests the power of a prince or patron, rather than of the divine beloved.

Already with Sanāʾī we can see that the mystical permutations of "secular" motifs are beginning to permeate the courtly lyric itself. With the increasing popularity of the ghazal among mystical poets, and its development by such figures as ʿAṭṭār, Rūmī and ʿIrāqī (to mention only three), this becomes increasingly the case. The ghazals of Saʿdī (d. 691/1292), for example, who developed the ghazal further at the court of Shiraz and who also wrote panegyrics, provide instances of this, though it should not be thought that Saʿdī was a "mystical" poet; the vast majority of his ghazals are secular love poems, gnomic adhortations, or disguised panegyrics.[17]

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17 See further art. Saʿdī (R. Davis) in: *EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam²* VIII, Leiden 1995, 719-23.

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Saʿdī is noted both for his development of the monothematic (or more properly monogeneric) ghazal and for firmly establishing the formal convention of the *takhallus*, as well as for his deliberate construction of a poetic (or authorial) *persona*. Not all subsequent poets followed Saʿdī's lead, however (nor, for that matter, that of his contemporary, the mystical poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī). And while the mystical ghazal (whether its "mysticism" is genuine or a stylistic feature) continued to gain in popularity, the panegyric ghazal was still practiced by later poets. It seems to have been especially popular in 14th century Shiraz, where it was practiced by (among others) ʿUbayd-i Zākānī and, in particular, Ḥāfiẓ. Many of Ḥāfiẓ's ghazals are panegyric in intent without appearing to be so (that is, there is no explicit naming of the *mamdūḥ*, though from the use of various epithets the audience undoubtedly knew to whom the poet referred). Many others, while not panegyrics, were clearly addressed to, or meant for the attention of, a royal patron, as is the case with the following ghazal.[18]

1 At dawn the bird of the meadow said to the new-risen rose,
"Less coquetry! for many like you have flowered in this garden."
2 The rose laughed: "Indeed, the truth does not disturb us;
but no lover ever spoke a harsh word to his beloved.
3 If you desire to drink the ruby wine from that bejewelled cup,
many a pearl must you string with the tips of your eyelashes.
4 The scent of love will never come to the nostrils of one
who does not sweep the sill of the wineshop with his forehead."
5 Last night in Iram's Garden, when, with the gentle air,
the hyacinth's curls were stirred by the dawn breeze,
6 I said, "O Throne of Jamshīd, where is your world-seeing Cup?"
It answered, "Alas, that waking fortune slept."
7 The words of love are not those which come to the tongue:
Saqi, bring wine, and cut short all this talk.
8 Ḥāfiẓ's tears have cast wisdom and patience into the sea:
what can he do? the burning of love's grief cannot be hidden.

The ghazal falls into three segments, each of which consists of a dialogue: between nightingale and rose, between poet and Jamshīd's throne, between poet and *sāqī*. Each dialogue takes place in a specific setting – garden, Garden of Iram, tavern (or, perhaps, drinking-party), and features a different speaking voice (or voices). The rose reminds the long-suffering nightingale

18 Ḥāfiẓ: *Dīvan*. M. Qazvīnī et al. (eds.). Tehran 1941, 56-57. For a more detailed discussion of this ghazal see Meisami: *Court Poetry*, 185-294.

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that the lover's role is, indeed, to suffer and to serve the beloved without complaint; Jamshīd's throne comments on the transience of worldly power; and in the final lines the poet laments the inexpressibility of love and calls for the solacing wine.

Were it not for lines 5-6, with their reference to Iram's Garden and Jamshīd's throne – emblems of vanished kingdoms – this ghazal might seem no more than a simple love-plaint (although the complexity of its diction and imagery already suggest that it is more than that). In fact, it is perhaps less a poem about love than about the transience of royal power, as is suggested by both its structure and its allusive imagery. Structurally (as I have discussed in detail elsewhere) the ghazal's three sections represent macrocosm (garden) and microcosm (wineshop), mediated by the ruler or the body politic (Iram's garden).[19] The rose is the king of flowers; the kingdoms of the Arabian king Shaddād, builder of the palace-city of Iram, and of the ancient Persian king Jamshīd, were destroyed as a warning against worldly vanity and the arrogance of power. In the face of this, the poet-lover of 7-8 can do nought but weep, and call for the comforting wine; and yet – as the poem shows – he is compelled by love to speak out, to voice this warning. To whom? To the prince who is his patron – and I would suggest that that prince is no other than Shāh Shujāʿ, the Muẓaffarid ruler of Shiraz (759-786/1357-1384), with whom Ḥāfiẓ was closely associated for most of his poetic career, and with whom his relations were not always unclouded.

Ḥāfiẓ was widely criticized (and not least by Shāh Shujāʿ) for combining different genres, with their related motifs and imagery, in his ghazals,[20] at a time when the monogeneric ghazal developed by Saʿdī was the preferred type. Some of Ḥāfiẓ's contemporaries – notably Kamāl Khujandī – also held the view that seven lines was the ideal number of lines for the ghazal, and found Ḥāfiẓ's ghazals wanting in this respect also. But Ḥāfiẓ was both a highly independent poet and an innovator; and among his innovations was a deliberate rapprochement of the ghazal with the qaṣīda, as is seen in my final example, a panegyric ghazal which clearly adapts the qaṣīda form, though in a way somewhat different from Sanāʾī's ghazal to Bahrāmshāh discussed earlier.[21]

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19 *Ibid.*, 293-94.

20 G. J. H. van Gelder: *Beyond the Line. Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem*. Leiden 1982, 207.

21 Ḥāfiẓ: *Dīvān*, 268-69.

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1 The crown of the king of flowers has appeared on the meadow's edge;
O Lord, may his arrival, for cypress and jasmine, be blessed.
2 That royal accession was both fitting and with grace;
so now let everyone take up his proper place.
3 Give Jamshīd's seal good tidings of the beauty of your ring,
which the Greatest Name has loosed from the hand of Ahriman.
4 May this house ever prosper, from the dust of whose threshold
each moment with the All-Merciful's breath the wind of Yemen blows.
5 The grandeur of the son of Pashang and his world-conquering sword
have become, in all the *Shāhnāmas*, a tale in gatherings told.
6 Your polo-horse of the sphere has become tame beneath the saddle;
O kingly horseman, you've entered the field; now strike the ball.
7 The kingdom's stream is watered by the shining blade of your sword;
now plant the tree of justice; uproot those who wish you ill.
8 Hereafter, no surprise if, from your nature's sweet perfume,
Aydhaj's plain give forth the scent of the musk-sac of Khotan.
9 Those who sit in the corner await your beauteous epiphany:
cast the veil from your face, and tilt your cap awry.
10 I asked advice from Reason, who said, "Ḥāfiẓ, drink wine;"
sāqī, on the advice of a trusted counselor, bring the wine!
11 O breeze, entreat the cupbearer of the Atabeg's feast
to grant to me a draught from that gold-scattering cup.

The opening spring song (1-2) reveals the ghazal's panegyric intent: it celebrates the "rose's" "princely accession" and his regaining of his royal seal from the demon who had usurped it. The poet utters a prayer for the prosperity of the ruler's house (4), moves to explicit praise (5-9), and concludes with self-naming and an evocation of the setting in which the ghazal is performed (10-11). The poem conflates the language of panegyric with that of the love poem in the images of garden, polo game (battle), and veiled beloved; there is even, at the centre, a *gurīzgāh* with an allusive reference to the *mamdūḥ* (*shāhsavār*, "kingly horseman"); a (slightly out-of-place) *duʿā* (4); and a concluding request for wine (and gold) which establishes the ghazal's status as performance, at a drinking-party or a feast.

This ghazal raises specific questions concerning its structure, its topical significance, and the identity of its dedicatee. There are three specific references to a possible *mamdūḥ*: to the "son of Pashang" (5), to

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the "kingly horseman" (*shāhsavār*, 6), and to an (unnamed) "Atabeg" (11). Ḥāfiẓ's Turkish commentator Sūdī glossed the opening line as alluding to the restoration of Shāh Manṣūr after he had won back his throne from the rebellious Turkmens of Shiraz, and line 2 as referring to the unfitness of the Turkmens, who are ignorant of matters of government, to rule: "But now the throne has found him who is fitting and is its rightful king. Thus let all others occupy their own places: meaning, viziers, judges, army, secretaries and other officials should each know his own duty and occupy his proper place."[22] But Sūdī was not that well informed of the history of 8th/14th century Fars, it seems; and the ghazal's wording suggests otherwise. Shāhsāvar was an epithet of Ḥāfiẓ's patron, the Muẓaffarid ruler of Shiraz Shāh Shujāʿ, whose *kunya* was Abū al-Fawāris. The allusion to "Jamshīd's seal" (3) – i.e., Solomon's seal; the two rulers are often conflated – which God's name has "restrained from the hand of Ahriman" (we may recall the legend of the demon who stole Solomon's seal-ring and ruled for a while in his place)[23] – does indeed suggest a ruler's restoration, and might refer to Shāh Shujāʿ's retaking Shiraz from his brother Maḥmūd in 767/1366; but this too seems doubtful.

Let us look a bit more closely at some of the ghazal's allusions and topical references. Line 4 alludes to the ḥadīth, "I find the Wind of Mercy comes from the direction of Yemen" (*inni la-ajidu rīḥ al-raḥmān min qibal al-Yaman*); Sūdī glosses, "May this house ever manifest the odor of justice and nobility."[24] We might bear in mind that the wind that comes from the "direction of Yemen" is a south wind. "Pashang" (5), says Sūdī, was a famous brigand, whose bold and warrior-like son, "like Tīmūr and the Qizilbāsh, conquered many regions in a short time," and whose deeds (like Tīmūr's) were recorded in books of history and *shāhnāmas*.[25] He was identified by M. Muʿīn as Pīr Aḥmad-i Pashang, the son (and eventual sucessor) of Shams al-Dīn Pashang (r. 756-780/1355-1378), one of the Atabegs of Luristan, whose capital was Aydhaj (or Īdhaj);[26] R. Lescot held that the ghazal was dedicated to Shams al-Dīn Pashang himself, who had been helped by Shāh Shujāʿ to regain his throne after he had been ousted by

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22 Sūdī Busnavī: *Sharḥ-i Sūdī bar Ḥāfiẓ*, transl. ʿIṣmat Sattārzāda. Tehran 1978, vol. 4, 2135.

23 Cf. Sūdī's comment, *ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 2136.

25 *Ibid.*

26 Parvīz Ahvar: *Kilk-i khiyāl-angīz yā Farhang-i Jāmiʿ-i Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*. Tehran 1984, vol. 1, 33-4, 154.

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Shāh Manṣūr.[27] Shāh Shujāʿ's role in this is clearly alluded to in lines 6-7; line 8, which juxtaposes Aydhaj (in Fars) with Khotan (in Turkistan), also recalls the numerous times that Ḥāfiẓ alludes to Shāh Shujāʿ (whose mother was Turkish) as the "Turk of Shiraz." Structurally, it thus parallels 4; and we may note that, since Aydhaj is to the south of Shiraz, the "southern wind" blows thence to the court of Shāh Shujāʿ.

Sūdī continues: the "corner-sitters" (9) are "the men of God and the *shaykhs* who await [the ruler's] beautiful epiphany;" the "cap" refers to the ḥadīth "I saw my beloved with his cap awry," in which the Prophet is equated with the *sufi shāhid*. (We may note here Shāh Shujāʿs reputation for beauty, and the numerous times Ḥāfiẓ refers to him as "Joseph" [Yūsuf].) The designation of reason as a wise counselor refers to another "proverb and ḥadīth," *al-mustashār mu'taman*, "he who is asked for counsel is trusted." The final line is an example of *ḥusn-i ṭalab*, and refers explicitly to the Atabeg and to his generosity.[28] This coda, with its address to the *ṣabā* (the traditional lovers' messenger), suggests that the poet is not present at the Atabeg's feast, but has sent the poem to him, from Shiraz, and is claiming his reward. The address to the *sāqī* in 10 further suggests that it was performed, in the first instance, at that court – perhaps without the final line (and, perhaps, without the explicit references to the Pashang princes and to Aydhaj), and was reworked for the purpose of sending it to the Atabeg's court. Whatever the case, in this poem, whose diction and imagery combine those of ghazal and qaṣīda, the poet has managed to praise not one, but two princes: the newly restored Atabeg, and his own patron Shāh Shujāʿ.

These examples by no means exhaust the potentials of the ghazal, nor the many and varied uses for which the form has been employed. Though it has earned its reputation as a love poem, the ghazal has been used for everything from gnomic and religious to political poetry, and the tradition of singing ghazals in various types of gatherings continues to this day. Various critics have commented on the ghazal's "stereotypical" nature, and on the rigid, constricting conventions of the so-called "traditional" ghazal. Reduced to words on a page, many ghazals do, indeed, look alike (this is especially true of those of Sanāʾī). But the ghazal was never intended as a

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27 Roger Lescot: Essai d'une chronologie de l'oeuvre de Hafiz. In: *Bulletin d'études orientales* 19 (1944), 79. These events took place around the early 760s/1360s; Shāh Shujāʿ struck coins in Aydhaj in 762/1361 and 764/1362-3. See art. Lur-i Buzurg (V. Minorsky) in: *EI²* V, Leiden 1986, 826-28; art. Atābakān-i Loristān (B. Spuler) in: *EIr: Encyclopaedia Iranica* II, London 1987, 896-98.

28 Sūdī: *Sharḥ*, vol. 3, 2139-40.

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fixed, immutable text; rather, it must be viewed as "a textual representation of a performance occurring in a specific context drawing on a nexus of genres and expectations, themselves in flux."[29] Remembering this, we can better understand the reasons for the ghazal's enduring attraction to poets and audiences alike.

29 Lewis: *Reading*, vol. 1, 11.

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ELEMENTS OF GHAZAL POETRY IN NIẒĀMĪ'S *MAKHZAN UL-ASRĀR*

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Niẓāmī's first epic, the *Treasure of Mysteries* (*Makhzan ul-asrār*), is an interesting work in many respects. With its conciseness and highly original imagery it ranks among the most complicated works taken from Persian poetry. It still presents numerous textual and linguistic issues, although we possess a very old manuscript, written only a few decades after Niẓāmī's death in 605/1209,[1] and a reliable critical edition of 1960.[2]

Let us consider a part of the introduction to *Makhzan ul-asrār*, which to my knowledge contains something unique in Persian *mathnawī* poetry. It is the encounter of the narrator in the first person, the lover, with the mystic beloved, depicted through the poetic repertoire of ghazal poetry. This image of the encounter is enhanced by love as a third feature, in addition to the lover and the beloved. In its external form, *Makhzan ul-asrār* is clearly a *mathnawī*, indeed the oldest surviving mystic-didactic *mathnawī* in Persian after Sanā'ī's *Ḥadīqat ul-ḥaqīqa*. Nevertheless, Niẓāmī's first epic shows a formal feature that is atypical of its genre: the poet mentions his name as a *takhalluṣ* in the last line of each chapter – a poetic device that was gradually adopted by Persian ghazal poetry and eventually became one of its formal characteristics.[3]

The encounter between the narrator in the first person, the poetic self, with the beloved forms a part of a mystical journey into the poet's own heart[4] and is the conclusion and climax of the introduction to *Makhzan ul-asrār*. Guiding the poet on this mystical journey as a mentor or "educator *shaykh*" is the heart, which is referred to as a lord (*khwāja*) and master of spiritual exercises (*rāyiḍ*). The poetic self is Niẓāmī's fictional counterpart: the heart

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1 London, India Office 989, dated 637/1239.

2 *Makhzan ul-asrār* (=*MA*), ed. A. Alizade (=*A*). Baku 1960.

3 Art. Ghazal (A. Bausani) in: *EI*² II, Leiden 1965, 1033. Christoph Bürgel: Das persische Gasel. In: Wolfhart Heinrichs (ed.): *Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft*. Bd. 5: *Orientalisches Mittelalter*. Wiesbaden 1990, 267.

4 For further details of this mystical journey, see Würsch: Niẓāmīs Reise ins eigene Herz als Erfahrung mystischer Wirklichkeit. In: *Asiatische Studien* 50 (1996), 547-61.

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addresses the narrator in the first person in its invitation to the journey with the words "Niẓāmī, enter!" (*Niẓāmī dar āy*).[5] On this nocturnal journey within the body, which is divided into two or three recesses (*khalwat*),[6] Niẓāmī first penetrates to his own personified inner organs (heart, liver, gall bladder, spleen, stomach, and kidneys). There follows the descriptions of a mystic garden and the encounter with the beloved, as well as the depiction of a carousal. At the carousal the theme of the relationship between the lover and his beloved recurs, this time, however, without the presence of the narrator in the first person.[7] As a typical motif in the context of wine, the cupbearer enters the scene. It remains uncertain whether he is to be identified with the beloved or is a different character. The encounter of the lover with the beloved is ended by the break of dawn. The lover, here again the mimetic Niẓāmī, is left behind alone. While wine as a motif plays a part in this inner journey, it is clearly subordinate to the love theme.[8]

In this episode of Niẓāmī's *Treasure of Mysteries*, both the lover and the beloved represent types that belong to the realm of personal experience of ghazal poetry in its Sufic form. First of all there is the poet's characteristic emotionality and the portrayal of his thoughts and feelings as they are perceived throughout the episode. The lover, and as such the mimetic poet, suffers from his condition. He says that his heart "has fallen into pieces" (*pāra gasht*).[9] His tears after the separation are visible proof of his affliction.[10] His cold breath causes the source of the sun to freeze.[11] The *topoi* of the absoluteness of the relationship[12] and the tyranny (*sitam*)[13] of the beloved are also touched upon.

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5 *Makhzan ul-asrār*, ed. W. Dastgirdī (=*D*). 3rd. ed. Tehran 1334, 50, 11 / 55, ult A.

6 While the recent *MA* editions distinguish between two recesses, we find the depiction of the carousal as a third recess in Nathaniel Bland's edition (London 1844), which is based on the oldest extant manuscript of *MA*. It is quite possible that this classification was the original one; the corresponding passages in Amīr Khusraw's and Jāmī's early counterparts to *MA* are also divided into three sections.

7 *MA* 62,8-66,4 *D* / 70,8-75,1 *A*.

8 *MA* 61,3 *D* / 68,5 *A* (wine as a remedy for the drunk). 65, pu *D* / 74,5 *A* (description and praise); 62,3 *D* / 70,3 *A* (pouring out the wine); 68,9 *D* / 78,2 *A* ("my taverns," *kharābāt-i man*) as a metaphor for Niẓāmī's heart in which this mystic carousal took place.

9 *MA* 60,5 *D* / 67,9 *A*.

10 *MA* 68,2 *D* / 77,5 *A*. 69,2 *D* / 78,7 *A*.

11 *MA* 69,3 *D* / 78,8 *A*.

12 *MA* 67,2 *D* / 76,2 *A*: the beloved as the verdure, the lover as a running stream; the lover as a bleacher, the beloved as the sun (with variants).

13 *MA* 67,1 *D* / 76,1 *A*.

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The beloved, who in Niẓāmī's epic is anonymous and referred to in the third person, is desirable not only to the lover but to everyone, whether they are high or low in society. His light upsets people and causes them to suffer symptoms of the mental disease called "phrenitis" (*sirsām*).[14] The description of the beauty of the beloved is crucial to the whole episode. Niẓāmī makes use of imagery that had become classical long before his time. Its elements generally correspond to those of Arabic ghazal poetry of the 9th and 10th centuries recently compiled by Thomas Bauer.[15] They include the cheeks,[16] the curls,[17] the (black) beauty spot,[18] the lips,[19] the teeth,[20] the eyes, particularly in the simile of arrows that strike the lover,[21] and above all the comparison of the beautiful human being with the moon. Niẓāmī calls his beloved a "Turk dressed in linen," who had turned his heart "like linen" (*chu qaṣab*) into a field of wounds.[22] Since linen cloth was widely believed to decompose under the influence of moonlight, it is no wonder that by the logic of conceits the beloved, as the moon, wounds the lover's heart, although he astonishingly sits there in an intact linen robe. The term "Turk" stands for the beautiful light-skinned human being. Here Niẓāmī's beloved, in keeping with the tradition of Persian ghazal poetry – is assumed to be male.[23] The youthful

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14 *MA* 65,9 *D* / 74,3 *A*. For *sirsām* cf. Michael W. Dols: *Majnūn. The madman in medieval Islamic society*. Oxford 1992, 57-58; 74-76.

15 Thomas Bauer*: Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts. Eine literatur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studie des arabischen Ġazal.* Wiesbaden 1998, 208-335.

16 *MA* 60,6 *D* / 67,10 *A*. 65,4 *D* / 73,9 *A*. 65,7 *D* / 74,1 *A* (in connection with the beads of sweat). 66, ult *D* / 75, ult *A* ("light").

17 *MA* 59,4 *D* / 66,4 *A*. 65,2 *D* / 73,7 *A* ("diffusing musk"). 65,4 *D* / 73,9 *A*.

18 *MA* 60,1-2 *D* / 67,5-6 *A*. 64,7 D/ 72,8 *A* ("Indian"; with blackness as *tertium comparationis*).

19 *MA* 60,3 *D* / 67,7 *A* ("ruby").

20 *MA* 60,7 *D* / 67, pu *A* ("marbles").

21 Eyes: *MA* 60,3 *D* / 67,7 *A* ("onyx"). 64,6 *D* / 72,7 *A* ("narrow almond"). 65,5 *D* / 73, pu *A* ("narcissus"). Coquetry, amorous glance (*ghamza, kirishma*): *MA* 60,6 *D* / 67,10 *A* ("magic"). 64,7 *D* / 72,8 *A* ("Babylonian"). 64,10-11 *D* / 73,1-2 *A* (in relation to archery). 65,10 *D* / 74,4 *A*. 66, pu *D* / 75, pu *A* ("arrow").The eye-lashes (*muzha*): 64,4 *D* / 72,5 *A* ("arrow"). 65,1 *D* / 73,6 *A* ("idol temple"). 65,4 *D* / 73,9 *A* ("dagger").

22 *MA* 66,8 *D* / 75,5 *A*; for another comparison of the beautiful human being with the moon, again connected with linen fabric, *MA* 59,3 *D* / 66,3 *A*.

23 Cf. Bürgel: *Das persische Gasel*, 265-66. The homoerotic aspects of Arabic ghazal poetry since Abū Nuwās are examined by Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*, 150ff. The terms "homosexual" and "heterosexual," coined in 19th century Europe, are completely unsuitable for characterizing the concepts of eroticism and sexuality in pre-modern Arabic-Islamic society; *ibid.* 167-74.

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beard (*sabz khaṭṭ*) in another line,[24] or the allusion to the famous male couple Maḥmūd-Ayāz,[25] suggest this even more strongly than the *topos* of the Turk.

The strong impact of ghazal poetry and its literary traditions on this episode of *Makhzan ul-asrār* is indicated by the fact that Niẓāmī makes no mention of homoerotic relationships in his later epics, which, while dealing with love, remain completely unaffected by the world of the ghazal. In his later epics descriptions of beauty mostly refer to women. It seems obvious that this difference reflects the homoerotic tradition of the ghazal on the one hand, and the romantic epic which usually deals with love between man and woman on the other. Maḥmūd and Ayāz are in fact the only male couple to have entered the domain of romantic *mathnawī*.[26]

Niẓāmī's portrayals of men in his later epics concentrate mainly on the points of their martial virtues and justice. *Khusraw u Shīrīn* is a good example of this: Shīrīn's beauty is celebrated in more than forty lines.[27] The painting of a portrait of Khusraw however, which is absolutely crucial to the development of the story, is mentioned in only one sentence: "He captured Khusraw's likeness exactly" (*ba-ʿaynih*).[28] This scene would have offered Niẓāmī the opportunity to display his mastery in the poetic description of beauty. After all, it is because of this painting that Shīrīn falls in love with Khusraw. It is only with the depiction of Khusraw's deeds – fighting, hunting, arranging carousals – and his qualities, like generosity and justice, that his personality is outlined in some more detail.[29]

In Niẓāmī's *Treasure of Mysteries* the mystic beloved is endowed with two physical assets that are evidently typical of Persian descriptions of beauty,

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24 *MA* 64,6 *D* / 72,7 *A*.

25 *MA* 66,3 *D* / 74, ult *A*.

26 *Mathnawī*s with the title *Maḥmūd u Ayāz* were composed by Fakhruddīn ʿAlī Ṣāfī (d. 939/1532-33), by Anīsī (d. 1014/1605-06), by Zulālī (d. 1024/1616), and by Ṣā'ib (d. 1087/1676-77). The manuscript of a further romantic epic on Sultan Maḥmūd and his slave, attributed to Ḥājjī Mīr Abū Ṭālib-i Māzandarānī, is in Berlin; Wilhelm Pertsch: *Verzeichniss der persischen Handschriften: Verzeichnisse der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, Bd. 4, Berlin 1888, Nr. 692/2; cf. Hermann Ethé: Neupersische Literatur. In: Wilhelm Geiger et al. (eds.): *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*. Vol. 2. Strassburg 1896-1904, 250.

27 *Khusraw u Shīrīn* (=*KhSh*), ed. W. Dastgirdī (=*D*). 2nd ed. Tehran 1333, 50-53.

28 *KhSh* 59,5 *D*.

29 *KhSh* 163 *D* (the fight with Bahrām, the usurper). *Ibid.* 129 (knocking down a lion with his bare hands). *Ibid.* 273-74 (justice). *Ibid.* 274-77 (carousal and generosity). Important elements of Niẓāmī's definition of gender role in *KhSh* — like man's bravery and woman's beauty — show some parallels to Western concepts and may have contributed to the success of Niẓāmīs romantic epics in the Western world.

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but were apparently of no or only minor importance in the Arabic praise of the beloved, at least up to the eleventh century:[30] the double chin and the tiny mouth.

The chin of the beloved, especially the double chin that stretches from ear to ear like a precious torque (*ṭawq*),[31] is celebrated by Niẓāmī as follows:

ghabghab-i sīmīn ki kamar bast az āb /
qaws-i quzaḥ shud zi taf-i āftāb //

"The silver double encircled by drops of water
became a rainbow through the brilliance of the sun."[32]

We can gather from this verse that beads of perspiration have accumulated on the double chin of the beloved and now, as it were, encircle it with water. The "sun" is his shining cheek. The well-known natural phenomenon of the rainbow, caused by sunbeams diffracted by raindrops, causes Niẓāmī to conclude that the sunlight of the cheek is broken up by the drops of perspiration and makes the double chin of the beloved shine in the colours of the rainbow. An unreal effect, the rainbow, arises from a real cause, namely perspiration. Furthermore, the beloved expands into a cosmic dimension when his cheek is here compared to the sun and his double chin to the rainbow – both celestial phenomena belonging to the macrocosm.

The other physical asset associated particularly with the Persian ideal of beauty, the tiny narrow mouth, is a motif frequently referred to in ghazal poetry. Niẓāmī's predecessor Sanā'ī, who is regarded as the first great Persian ghazal poet[33] and made the ghazal the most important vehicle of lyrical expression in Persian poetry[34], compares in one instance the mouth of a friend with a half-dinar due to its small size and his own face with a (golden) dinar due to its sallowness from grief.[35] In *Makhzan ul-asrār* Niẓāmī says of the mouth of his beloved:

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30 They are at least not included in Thomas Bauer's list of motifs.

31 Cf. Hellmut Ritter: *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmī's*. Berlin 1927, 30 (footnote 1).

32 *MA* 65,3 *D* / 73,8 *A*. Two more verses concerning the chin *MA* 59, 7-8 *D* / 66, ult-67,1 *A*, where the *ṭawq* is compared in an original manner with the ruff of the parrot.

33 cf. Bürgel: *Das persische Gasel*, 268 and the contribution of J.S. Meisami in the present volume.

34 Heshmat Moayyad: Lyric poetry. In: Ehsan Yarshater (ed.): *Persian Literature*. Albany 1988, 134.

35 Sanā'ī: *Dīwān*, ed. Mudarris-i Raḍawī. Tehran 1354, 932,3.

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basta chu ḥuqqa dihan-i muhra-dār /
rāhgudhar mānda yakī muhra-wār //

"The mouth containing the marbles was closed like a casket
one marble-like passage remained."[36]

The beloved is silent, as Niẓāmī also states elsewhere.[37] In this line the poet compares the mouth of the beloved with a casket, his teeth with marbles or the dice of the dice player. In the second hemistich, the simile refers to the narrowness of the mouth.

The image of the casket and marbles enables Niẓāmī to introduce love as a third feature: love acts as a dice player and uses the casket and the marbles to perform its tricks.[38] The lover-beloved-love triangle is characteristic of Persian ghazal poetry and already frequent in Sanā'ī, who is fond of weaving reflections on love into his love poems.[39]

In addition to the physical assets of the beloved, Niẓāmī mentions in the introduction to *Makhzan ul-asrār* qualities such as a breath like the fragrance of roses and a laugh like sugar.[40] Of major importance here are the gracefulness and elegance of the beloved depicted with the metaphor of "salt" (*namak*), very common in Persian. This metaphor allows the poet to make a meaningful connection between the grace and elegance of the beloved and the salt of tears one sheds for his sake.[41]

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36 *MA* 60,7 *D* / 67, pu *A*; further examples 60,4 *D* / 67,8 *A*, and 64,6 *D* / 72,7 *A*, where the *secundum comparationis*, *funduqa*, suggests narrowness as well. The narrow mouth is an element of Persian descriptions of beauty from the very beginning; for an early example, see Shahīd-i Balkhī, in: Gilbert Lazard: *Les premiers poètes persans (IXe-Xe siècles)*. Paris 1964, T. 1 (*traduction*), 64 (line 26), T. 2 (*textes*), 26. The hyperbolic invention in Persian poetry could go as far as to deny the existence of a mouth at all; cf. Friedrich Rückert: *Grammatik, Poetik und Rhetorik der Perser*. New ed. by W. Pertsch. Gotha 1874, 65.

37 *MA* 65,10 *D* / 74,4 *A*.

38 *MA* 60,8 *D* / 67, ult *A*. In the following love is contrasted with the intellect which "has seen the *dīw*" i.e. has become insane in view of love's activity; cf. *MA* 61,1 *D* / 68,3 *A*; another allusion to the intellect 65, ult *D* / 74,6 *A*.

39 For an analysis of the lover-beloved-love triangle in Persian ghazal, see J.T.P. de Bruijn: *Persian Sufi poetry: An introduction to the mystical use of classical poems*. Richmond 1997, 65. Three examples of Sanā'ī's frequent statements on love may be mentioned here: *Dīwān*, 806,13ff. (love as an ocean in whose abyss three hundred crocodiles are lurking); 826,5ff. (love not a child's game and not a fairytale); 827,4 (love as a fire in the heart and water in the eyes). There are also detailed reflections on love in Sanā'ī's: *Ḥadīqat ul-ḥaqīqa*, ed. Mudarris-i Raḍawī. Tehran 1329, 325ff.

40 *MA* 59,3 *D* / 66,3 *A*.

41 *MA* 59,4-5 *D* / 66,4-5 *A*. Further examples of this metaphorical meaning of *namak* are

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After the introduction to *Makhzan ul-asrār,* the love theme recedes into the background and gives way to paraenesis. Hereafter two main subjects inform the work: the call for justice – intended for princes – and the call for worldly renunciation – intended for the mystic. Accordingly, Niẓāmī's first epic has been received as a paraenetic work, in content closely akin to the literary genre "mirror for princes."

Niẓāmī himself points out the closeness of the experience portrayed in the introduction to *Makhzan ul-asrār* to the themes of the ghazal. Towards the end of the introduction he calls his poem a "litany of singers reciting ghazals" (*wird-i ghazālān-i ghazal-khwān*).[42] The term *wird* clearly refers to the mystic sphere, as the heart as an educator, *shaykh*, that initiates this whole inner journey and thus makes possible the encounter with the beloved, a beloved who remains inconceivable but is to be interpreted undoubtedly in a mystic sense. Here Niẓāmī is also keeping a tradition, since Persian ghazal poetry is likely to have already received important impulses from Sufism at an early stage. Though I cannot prove this, I assume that love and the pain of separation in the introduction to *Makhzan ul-asrār* can probably be understood as stages in the process of poetic creation. As for the inspirational power of separation, there is a similar phenomenon in the proem to Mawlānā-i Rūmī's (d. 672/1273) celebrated *Mathnawī*, where the eloquent lament of the reed pipe is the direct result of its separation from the reeds and is unthinkable without it. As Hellmut Ritter has pointed out, the reed pipe is a symbol of the Gnostic who longs for his lost original homeland, the "*Urheimat.*" This longing is at the same time the longing of love, and the original homeland longed for is reflected in the beautiful human being.[43] The love episode in Niẓāmī's *Treasure of Mysteries* may thus also be interpreted within the context of an eroticised Gnostic mysticism.

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given by Dihkhudā: *Lughatnāma*. Vol. 13. Tehran 1373, 20112. The similarity to Arabic *milḥ* and the denominative verb *maluḥa* "to be beautiful, handsome, pretty" should be noted. Neither the Syriac *melḥa* nor the Hebrew *melaḥ*, both very close to Arabic *milḥ*, show such a transfer of meaning. The only and late example in Hebrew is the puʿal participle *memullaḥ*, "scharfsinnig"; cf. Jacob Levy: *Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim*. Bd. 3. Leipzig 1883, s.v. *malaḥ*; it may be influenced by the classical languages which developed a similar metaphorization of "salt" towards "wit" — Latin more than Greek; see Art. Salz (H. Blümner) in: *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. 2. Reihe, 2. Halbband, Stuttgart 1920, 2091-92. Of course, the use of salt as a spice supports such shifts of meaning.

42 *MA* 66,4 *D* / 75,1 *A*.

43 Hellmut Ritter: Das Proömium des Maṯnawī-i Maulawī. In: *ZDMG* 93 (1939), 171.

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Love is the main subject in Niẓāmī's later epics, perhaps with the exception of the *Iskandarnāma*, the subject matter of which dictates the heroic theme. For his descriptions of beauty, Niẓāmī goes back to a poetic repertoire similar to that first employed in *Makhzan ul-asrār*. Nevertheless, all his later epics are absolutely alien to the sphere of ghazal poetry, because they are told from the point of view of an omniscient narrator in the third person and lack the emotional commitment and the poetic self, both of which are essential to ghazal poetry.

In his third epic, *Laylī u Majnūn*, Niẓāmī mentions a dīwān composed by him.[44] And in fact there is a minor dīwān accredited to him, which consists chiefly of ghazal poems.[45] But it is impossible to determine whether these poems were composed before, at the same time as or after *Makhzan ul-asrār*. In content they are related to the mystic love theme of the *Treasure of Mysteries*, but they scarcely reach the same intensity. Niẓāmī's first major work that can be dated is *Makhzan ul-asrār*, and it was inspired, as he himself says,[46] by Sanā'ī's mystic-didactic epic *Ḥadīqat ul-ḥaqīqa*. A comparison of the two works shows that Niẓāmī's account of the encounter with the mystic beloved has no model in Sanā'ī. It must have been his own poetic invention; this is in accordance with the poet's introductory statement in *Makhzan ul-asrār* that he has created something absolutely new. Although Niẓāmī's first epic, like the *Khamsa* in general, has often been imitated, this encounter of the lover with the beloved, which touches upon ghazal themes, seems to have remained unique. Such a conclusion is suggested by a closer look at the work of Niẓāmī's most important imitators, Amīr Khusraw (d. 725/1325) and Jāmī (d. 898/1492). In his *Maṭlaᶜ ul-anwār*, the counterpart to Niẓāmī's *Makhzan ul-asrār*, Amīr Khusraw describes in three recesses mystical journeys that are directed, in an original contrast with Niẓāmī, not inwardly but outwardly and that take place at different times of the day. The poetic self, the narrator in the first person, is present on all three journeys, but none of the characters it meets on these journeys is the beloved. In most cases these characters are religious guides,[47] once it is a "fellow sufferer" (*ham-andūh*) who is on a level with the poetic self.[48] Accordingly, there

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44 W. Dastgirdī (ed.): *Laylī u Majnūn*. 2nd. ed. Tehran 1333, 24,3.

45 Cf. François de Blois, in: C.A. Storey: *Persian Literature. A bio-bibliographical survey.* Vol. 5, Pt. 2: *Poetry ca. A.D. 1100 to 1225*. London 1994, 447-48.

46 *MA* 36,4-7 *D* / 36, pu-37,2 *A*.

47 Amīr Khusraw: *Maṭlaᶜ ul-anwār*, ed. T.A. Magerramov. Moscow 1975, 63,7 (*dastūr-i ᶜināyat*); 64,10 (*rāyiḍ-i tawfīq*); 78,4 (*khwāja*).

48 *Ibid.*, 71,8.

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is no description of the beauty of a beloved person, nor does the poetic self play the part of the lover. In Jāmī's counterpart to Niẓāmī's first epic, *Tuḥfat ul-aḥrār*, the recess has been replaced by "companionship" (*ṣuḥbat*), perhaps because Jāmī was allied with the Naqshbandiyya that was averse to seclusion as a spiritual exercise.[49] In all three parts in which this companionship is portrayed, the poetic self meets a spiritual guide (*pīr*), each time on a higher level.[50] In Jāmī, the love affair has been replaced by a master-disciple relationship in the tradition of the Sufi brotherhoods.

Niẓāmī's encounter of the loving poet with a beloved in the *Treasure of Mysteries*, a mystic-didactic *mathnawī*, was a poetic innovation which can be considered as a remarkable example of the ghazal's introduction into Persian epic tradition. Niẓāmī was undoubtedly inspired in this description by the themes and poetic resources of ghazal poetry on the verge of establishing itself as a principal genre in Persian literature. It is possible that *Makhzan ul-asrār* was preceded by Niẓāmī's own experimentation with the ghazal. It is, however, equally possible that Niẓāmī's inspiration came from Sanā'ī, not from his *Ḥadīqa*, which can be held responsible for the overall thematic concept of *Makhzan ul-asrār*, but from his love poetry.

Despite its cryptic and difficult language, the journey into the poet's own heart in *Makhzan ul-asrār* is one of those rare passages in Niẓāmī's work where the poet reveals his own emotionality, even if in the guise of the poetic self. The concept of the introduction to *Makhzan ul-asrār* and its realisation demonstrate an impressive boldness of creative invention. We would like to know more exactly how it was received by Niẓāmī's contemporaries.

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49 Cf. Fritz Meier: *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqšbandiyya: I. Die Herzensbindung an den Meister: II. Kraftakt und Faustrecht des Heiligen*. Istanbul 1994, 34-41.

50 Jāmī: Tuḥfat ul-aḥrār. In: Mudarris-i Raḍawī (ed.): *Mathnawī-i Haft awrang*. Tehran 1337, 389-94. 1. *pīr-i rawshan-ḍamīr*. 2. *pīr-i ṣāḥib-tamkīn*. 3. *pīr-i ḥaqīqat-bīn*.

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Ottoman Ghazal and its Reflection in Modern Turkish Literature

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THE OTTOMAN GHAZAL IN THE AGE OF BELOVEDS

Poems about Poetry

Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı
(Washington and Bilkent)

"... As in the case of the poet shaykhs of the past, the verses (of the moderns) should be possessed of double meanings and the union of opposites, and the intent and wish and heart's desire when speaking of wine and tavern, the grape and the glass, should be the attractions of drunkenness with divine love and the wine-worship of the glass of holy desire..."[1]

Aşık olanda sabr olur pişe
Öpmek ü koçmak olmaz endişe

Aşık-ı sadık olana mutlak
Merhabadur visal-i yar ancak[2]

To the lover what comes first is patience
Kisses and hugs are never considerations

For certainly to the lover who's sincere
"Hello" alone is union with his dear

In a previous paper we argued for recognition of a period of Ottoman Turkish high-culture lasting from the early sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries which we called "the age of beloveds."[3]

Our intent was to foreground the significance to poetic production of a particular social milieu in which romantic emotional attachments to notoriously "beautiful" young men were universally the rage. When this circumstance is taken into account, the "love poetry" genres, of which the

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1 Latifi: *Tezkire-i şuara*. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Halet Efendi 342, fol. 165a.

2 Mehmed Çavuşoğlu: Taşlıcalı Dukakin-zade Yahya Bey'in İstanbul Şehr-engizi. In: *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi* XVII (1969), 77.

3 Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı: Gazels and the World: Some Notes on the 'Occasionalness' of the Ottoman Poetry. In: *The Ghazal as a Genre of World Literature: International Symposium*. İstanbul 1999.

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gazel is the most prominent, carry with them a presumed relation to actual instances of romantic attachment. This is suggestively parallel to the case of the popular culture "*aşık*" whose poetry is informed by the narrative (*hikaye*), presumed to recount the actual life-story of the poet/singer, which relates his sorrowful and desperate search for an unavailable beloved or dream lover.[4]

In our paper we will argue that, in the case of Ottoman gazels during the long sixteenth century, the narrative, or presumed narrative is most generally the story of an encounter with one of the local "beauties," and emphasizes the emotional consequences of that encounter. In order to highlight some aspects of how this context influences the reading of a gazel, we will focus on a cycle of poems about poetry (*şi'r*) and the relation of "poetry," as conceptualized in these poems, to gazels and the supposedly non-fictional narratives about the behavior of lovers and beloveds that inform them. In addition this will require that we look briefly at the ethos of "poetic" or "poeticized" love and at the tensions and ambiguities existing between "romantic" or "spiritual/Platonic" love and sexual behaviors.

The poems about poetry, mentioned above, are clearly parallels or *nazires* but we have no idea which came first. They all have the same rhyme (in "*-ar*" with the *redif* "*şi'r*") and the same rhythm (*remel*), and include two poems by Zati, and one each by İshak Ġelebi, Yahya Bey, Fevri, and Emri. The Emri poem is only a partial parallel because it is in a different rhythm (*muzari*). We will take the following by Zati as our starting point:

Vasf-ı envar-ı ruhunla Matla'ul-Envar şi'r
Şerh-i esrar-i lebünle Mahzenü'l-Esrar şi'r

Bir murassa' tacdur başında anun matla'ı
Şehlere taklid ider bir tatlu şirin-kar şi'r

Kim görürse yüzini bir bülbül-i guya olur
Pür-gül-i ma'na-yı rengin ile bir gülzar şi'r

Şah-ı tab' anunla feth eyler belagat mülkini
Kişver-i dil açıcı bir tig-i cevher-dar şi'r

Müşteridür arifün ey meh meta'ı vaslına
Bi-mezak u cahil ile eylemez bazar şi'r

Ben disem şevk-ı lebünle okusan sen ey sanem
Mürdeler ihya ider nutk-ı Mesiha-var şi'r

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4 See for example: Umay Gümay: *Türkiye'de Aşık Tarzı Şiir Geleneği ve Rüya Motifi.* Ankara 1993. Also articles by İlhan Başgöz cited in Gümay 1993: XIX, notes 134-38.

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Mardur sahhar tab'umdan togar da'im benüm
Ademün aklın ugurlar Zatiya 'ayyar şi'r[5]

By describing the illuminations of your cheek,
a poem becomes the *Dawn of Illuminations*
By commentary on the secrets of your lip
a poem becomes the *Treasury of Secrets*

Its *matla* is a bejeweled crown upon its head
[Thus does] a poem of sweet behavior
imitate the monarchs

Whosoever sees its face
becomes like a speaking nightingale
[For] poetry is a flowerbed filled with
roses of colorful meaning

With it the ruler of natural talent
conquers the dominion of eloquence
The poem is a jewel encrusted sword
that captures the land of the heart

It is a customer, oh moon, for the wise one's
goods of union
The poem never does business
with the tasteless and stupid

If, longing for your lip, I should say,
"would you recite a poem,"
Oh idol, it would bring the dead to life
like the speech of Jesus

It is a serpent ever born
of my magician-talent
The poem is a highwayman, oh Zati,
that robs the wits of humankind[6]

Like the *nazire* series with the *redif* "gazel" mentioned in our previous communication, Zati's poem begins with the beloved, who is the purpose and center of the love poem. By also referencing Amir Husrev's *Matlau'l-Envar* and Nizami's *Mahzenu'l-Esrar* which it paralleled, he is able to tie himself – and the beloved – to the Persian tradition, to introduce the

5 *Zati Divanı* I, ed. Ali Nihad Tarlan. İstanbul 1967, 346.

6 Unless otherwise noted, all English translations are by the authors.

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"parallel" (*nazire*) theme, to mention the word "*matla*'" in the *matla*', and to conclude with an oblique reference to the crucial notion of "the secret" (*sırr/esrar*). In his second *nazire*, Zati casts the poem itself as a beloved:

Vasf-ı la'l-ı yar ile şeker-güftar şi'r
Lafz-ı şekker-bar ile bir tatlu nazüg yar şi'r [7]

By describing the beloved's ruby (lip)
the poem becomes a sweet-spoken beloved
With sugar-bearing words,
the poem becomes a sweet and delicate beloved

Both İshak and Fevri begin by focussing on the effects of the poem on the beloved:

Yüzine bakmazdı almazdı ele dildar şi'r
Kendüye mihr ü mahabbet itmese izhar şi'r [8]

The heart-holder wouldn't take up a poem
or look it in the face
If the poem didn't display love and affection
for him

Olmasa ah-ı derunum gibi ateş-bar şi'r
Ahen-i kalb-i nigara eylemezdi kar şi'r [9]

If the poem were not aflame
like the sigh from deep within me
It would have no effect
on the iron of the beloved's heart

Yahya picks up on the theme of the "secret" and ties it directly to the narrative of an interaction with the beloved:

Yüzine tutmuş nikab-ı hattı Yusuf-var şi'r
Şivesindendür hicab ile ider güftar şi'r

Çekdügüm derdi bilürdi nalemi guş eylese
Halüme vakıf olurdı okusa dildar şi'r[10]

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7 Tarlan: *Zati Divanı* I, 347.

8 Üsküblü İshak Çelebi: *Divan*, ed. Mehmed Çavuşoğlu and M. Ali Tanyeri. İstanbul 1989, 176.

9 Fevri: *Divan*. Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, Revan 763, fol. 139a.

10 Yahya Bey: *Divan*, ed. Mehmed Çavuşoğlu. İstanbul 1977, 349.

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Over its face the poem held the veil of writing
like Joseph
In its coquettish way, the poem speaks
in a veiled manner

If the beloved were to hear my cries,
he would know the pain I suffer
He would be aware of my condition
if he would read a poem[11]

The "secret" will, of course, have a host of associations when the spiritual/ mystical reading is brought to bear. However, we would like to draw special attention to the "real-world" social setting that we believe grounds all other readings. As an example of this setting in narrativized form, let us look briefly at a story found in the *Tezkire* of Aşık Çelebi from the entry for the poet Hayali:

> Bir gün yine, Selimi Muslı nam dilber ki hüsn ile dehrün şehr-aşubı ve şehrün vaz'-ı selimle matbu' vü mahbubı idi. Sünnet dügüni idüp, erbab-ı tab' cem' oldılar ve mehabib-i şehr dahi müstakil bir köşkde oturup birer şerer-i ışkla pervane gibi 'uşşaka yan başı gelüp her biri bezmde par par yanar birer şem' oldılar. Guyendeler ve sazendeler 'ud-nevazendeler susen gibi ser-ta-pa zeban olup hazırlar istima' itmege gül gibi başdan başa sem' oldılar. Hayali Beg dahi nim-mest saki-i mest sa'idinde olan sagar ayagı savuşup cam-ı endamı şikest gelüp oturdı. Turak Bali dirler bir dilber-i Turu'n-nurdı. Ol dahi ol cem'de eşcar içinde serv gibi nümayan ve ezhar arasında gül gibi füruzan idi. Bir rakib-i na-saz-ı keç-endam u bala-dıraz herif dahi ol köşk kapusında nigeh-ban idi. Anlar, bununla ebr-i tire ardında mihr-i sipihr gibi pinhan idi. Bu halde Hayali Beg galebe-i keyfiyyete münasib-i hal ba'zı ebyat okıyup ve bi'l-cümle keşf-i raz ve 'arz-ı niyaz itdi. Dilber bu encümende bu vaz'dan azürde-hatır olup hazırlar dehşetinden ve Hayali Beg satvetinden havf idüp izhar idemeyüp amma gamze-künan-ı ser-füru ve güruh-ı zülf ve çin-ebruyla dahi kana'at idemeyüp ber-mukteza-yı istigna-yı hubi ve celal-i kemal-i mahbubi zir-leb harf-zenan-ı ta'ne-künan dehan-cünban oldı. Çün Hayali Beg dilberün sevdügine vakıf oldı, bedihaten bu matla'ı didi, okıdı ve 'arif oldı. Matla':
>
> *Nigarun itdügi düşnam bana zevk-i canidür*
> *Nice zevk itmeyem ki 'alem-i gayb armaganıdur*

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11 For a more poetic translation of this poem see: Walter Andrews, Najaat Black and Mehmet Kalpaklı: *Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology*. Texas 1997, 101.

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Hakire nazire tekellüf itdi. Zuhur iden hasb-i hali nazire zımnında bu vechile eda itdüm, okıdum. Beyt:

Rakib-i div ki kasr-ı nigarun pasbanıdur
Bela-yı nagehanidür kaza-yı asümanidür[12]

One day a beloved named Selimi Muslı, who stirred the city of our day with his beauty and was loved and adored by the town for his wholesome behavior, held a circumcision feast. All the talented people gathered and the beloveds of the city sat in a separate pavilion and as sparks of love to moths each came together with the lovers and each burned like a candle in the party. Those who played the saz or lute and sang became all tongue from head to toe and those who were there to listen became all ear like the rose-blossom. Hayali came in half-drunk, like a wine-bowl on the arm of an intoxicated saki, shuffling his feet, his limbs like a broken glass, and sat down. A beloved like Sinai the Illumined named Turak Bali was there and when Hayali saw him in the gathering he gave a great sigh. I too was flirting with one of [the beloveds], who was like a cypress among trees in that gathering, bright as a rose among flowers. A guardian (*rakib*) crude, misshapen and tall, stood watch at the door and the beloveds were hidden by him like the sun of heaven behind a dark cloud. Under the influence of intoxication, Hayali Beg recited a few apropos lines completely revealing his secret and presenting his plea. The beloved, because this had happened in this company, in fear of those present and terrified by Hayali's effrontery could not openly reveal what he felt. But unable to content himself [by communicating] with glances from a lowered head, with the knot of his curls and the curve of his brow, he spoke reproachfully, with the proud independence of the beloved, by a pouting of the lower lip and a trembling of the mouth. When Hayali [thus] became aware that the beloved was attracted to him, he extemporized this *matla'* and recited it, thereby revealing his knowledge:

The beloved's reproaches are to me
the soul's delight
How should I not be delighted
they're a gift from the unseen world

This miserable one then tested himself with a parallel verse. I expressed my account of the situation in the form of a parallel in this manner:

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12 G. M. Meredith-Owens (ed.): *Aşık Çelebi: Meşa'irü'ş-şuara*. London 1971, fol. 273a-273b.

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That monstrous guardian
watchman of [my] beauty's palace
Is an unexpected disaster
a celestial calamity

Here we have a context which makes immediate and lively many of the common features of the 16th century gazel. We see that the world of lovers and beloveds in this period was an ambiguous and conflicted one for beloveds. They were celebrated, pampered, and showered with gifts and invitations. Prominent among the gifts that could gain the attention of a beloved was poetry. As a result poetry becomes commodified and poets often reference the world of commerce to make a case for the value of their products. For example:

[Zati]
Müşteridür 'arifün ey meh meta'ı vaslına
Bi-mezak u cahil ile eylemez bazar şi'r[13]

It is a customer, oh moon, for the wise one's
goods of union
The poem never does business
with the tasteless and stupid

[Zati]
Nice meyyal olmasun sarraf-ı tab'-ı pür-mezak
Zatiya bir dürcdür pür-lulu-yı şeh-var şi'r[14]

Why shouldn't the tasteful money-changer
be attracted?
Oh Zati, the poem is a coffer
filled with royal pearls

[İshak]
Bilmez idi kadrini söz cevherinün cevheri
Nakd-i tahsin-i kelama olmasa mi'yar şi'r

Fazl u ihsan ebr-i nisanı idelden terbiyet
Kulzüm-i tab'umda oldı lulu-yı şeh-var şi'r

Nazm kadrin bilmeyenler malik olmaz cevhere
'Aleme farza ki olsa ebr gevher-bar şi'r[15]

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13 Tarlan: *Zati Divanı* I, 346.

14 *Ibid.*, 347.

15 İshak Çelebi: *Divan*, 176.

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The jeweler would not know the value
of the word-jewel
If poetry were not the touchstone
of the coin of embellished speech

Since excellence and kindness
seasoned the cloud of April
Poetry has become a royal pearl
in the Red Sea of my talent

Those who know not the value of verse
will never posses a jewel
Even though everyone admits that poe
is a pearl-bearing cloud

However, beloveds were also subject to vicious gossip and even the possibility of punishment for public lewdness. Moreover, it is clear that there were a range of "beloveds" from sexually available male equivalents of the Venetian courtesans to handsome young men who had no desire whatsoever to be the focus of romantic attention. As a result, the bestowal of attention was dangerous for both lovers and beloveds. There are a number of stories about lovers killed by offended beloveds. For example, Helaki was stabbed by an angry beloved for expressing his affection too openly in a gathering. The poet Ferdi became the object of affection of a young man whose attachment became the subject of gossip all over town. Ferdi tried everything he could think of to discourage his lover but to no avail. Finally the lover told Ferdi that the only way the affair would end was if the beloved would kill his lover. So the two met in a rural park and the lover, dressed as if in a shroud, gave his dagger to Ferdi who slit the lover's throat and was known thenceforth as Ferdi the Lover-Killer (*aşık-kuş*). In some versions of the story Ferdi regretted his act and himself died of grief.

As a result, a language of glances, subtle signs, sighs, shy airs develops as exemplified by the Hayali story and enacted in the delicate ambiguities of the poetry, which seems never to say anything in an open and unequivocal way. What makes both the party and the poetry lively and exciting is precisely this tantalizing dance of cleverly ambiguous poems, powerful passions expressed and concealed by subtle signs, shy or unwilling beloveds, lovers intoxicated and maddened by desire. The maintenance of tension between the desire that draws the lover to his beloved and the very real dangers that keep them apart seems to be a necessary component of the situation. In the narratives, seeking or

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attaining a purely sexual union seldom has a good outcome: Me'ali is frightened and embarrassed,[16] Sihri is castrated,[17] Esiri is killed.[18]

Yahya argues in the introduction to his *Şah u Geda* that it is this emotional play and its intellectual and spiritual component which gives the most pleasure.[19] And this is why love for young men or boys who are both available publicly and have the intellectual resources to play the game is preferable to the love of women with its inevitably sexual, worldly, and familial overtones. So, he says, in attacking those who say they enjoy the traditional romances involving love between men and women:

İşidüp sözlerin didüm ne 'aceb
Bana hoş gelmedi bu sözler hep

Bir alay bi-mezak u zen-bare
Bir alay derd-mend ü bi-çare

Ne bilür sırr-ı ışk-ı pinhanı
Ne bilür vecd ü hal-i cananı

'Aşık oldur ki 'ışkı ile müdam
Eyleyüp uykuyı gözine haram

Seve bir serv boylı mahbubı
Derd-i 'ışkınun ola Eyyubı

Vire mir'at-ı cism ü cana cila
Bir celasun cuvana bende ola

'Işk-ı mahbub ile kim ola hazin
Eglemez anı Husrev ü Şirin[20]

I heard [their] words and said, how strange
These words were all unpleasant to me

One band is tasteless and woman-chasing
One band is suffering and without remedy

What does he know of the hidden secret of love
What does he know of rapture and ecstasy for the beloved

16 Meredith-Owens: *Aşık Çelebi*, fol. 113a-117a. (English translation of the story by Walter Andrews, see: Kemal Silay (ed.): *An Anthology of Turkish Literature*. Bloomington, Indiana 1996, 138-46.)

17 Meredith-Owens: *Aşık Çelebi*, fol. 151b-152a.

18 Latifi: *Tezkire-i şuara*, fol. 44a-44b.

19 Çavuşoğlu: *Taşlıcalı*, 77.

20 *Ibid.*

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He is a [true] lover who ever with love
Makes sleep unlawful to his eyes
Let him love a cypress-bodied beloved
Let him be like Job for the pain of love

Let him polish the mirror of body and soul
Let him be the slave of a robust boy

Who grieves over the love of a beloved boy
Will not be entertained by Husrev and Shirin

This insistence on the superior purity of love between males, le ads us to another significant point about these "poems about poetry." In none of them is there any overt claim that the love expressed in poetry (*şi'r*) is "really" about love of the Divine. There are indeed tropes which refer to religious themes, which is to be expected in a situation where there is no "secular" alternative. For example:

[İshak]
Ol cemali mushafun zikriyle hatm olsun kelam
Okıma İshak gayrı dilbere zinhar şi'r [21]

Let me seal my speech with mention
of that beauty's holy book
Oh Ishak, beware! Recite poetry
to no other beloved

[Fevri]
Olsa divanum 'aceb mi mushaf-ı erbab-ı 'ışk
Hizb ana her bir kaside 'aşr ana tekrar şi'r [22]

Is it any wonder that my divan
is a Holy Text for the masters of love
The kaside is a sixtieth part
and the poem a section of ten verses

However, in not one of these poems do we see the kind of assertion we see commonly and expect to see in poems from the mid-17th century on, something more or less to the effect that the "love" we see in gazel poetry is "really" a metaphor for spiritual or *hakiki* love. We do not mean to say that there were not a huge number of gazels from this period in

21 Çelebi: *Divan*, 176.

22 Fevri: *Divan*, fol. 139a.

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which "love" themes had spiritual referents or that the distinction between "metaphoric love" and "real love" was not made at the time. The quotation from Latifi at the beginning of this paper is a good example of the common understanding. What we do mean to say, at the very least, is this–and it can stand as the conclusion to our presentation: there is considerable evidence, including the poems about poems we have discussed here, that the Ottoman gazels of the sixteenth century interacted meaningfully with a culture of actual lovers and beloveds, which in turn provided a potential context and powerful reading of any gazel of the period. This also suggests that the common "metaphoric" and "aestheticized" reading of sixteenth century gazel poetry may be, at least in part, anachronistic and reads back on the sixteenth century a perspective that belongs more properly to a period from the seventeenth century on.

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THE *PERDE GAZELI* IN THE TURKISH *KARAGÖZ* SHADOW PLAY

Features and content

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In this article I want to pay attention to the features and content of the ghazal which occurs at the beginning of a *Karagöz* play. Many scholars ascribe a philosophical and mystical function to the *perde gazeli* because of the assumed mystical tradition of shadow theatre and the external resemblance of the *perde gazeli* to the classical Ottoman ghazal.[1] Andreas Tietze says:

> In this context, the mystical tradition of the shadow theater acquires significance. It cannot be stated that the shadow theater gained popularity as the vehicle of expression of a specific mystical order. But every shadow play, down to our own time, starts with a Prologue, a highly stylized sequence not connected with the play itself, in which the recitation of a 'Poem of the Curtain' occupies a prominent place. These poems are literary in style and of the ghazal type, which in varying ways express the idea of the symbolic nature of the shadow stage: the phantasmal character of the images on the screen symbolizes the transitory, illusory state of the things in this world as opposed to the ever-lasting reality of a level of consciousness transcending physical death. The spectator is advised not to see only the superficial meaning of the play but to penetrate into the depths of its symbolic meaning...[2]

However, can we really conclude from the form and content of the *perde gazeli* that the poem explains the mystical function of the shadow theatre?

A *Karagöz* play consists of several quite independent parts: *mukaddime* (*öndeyiş* or *giriş*, introduction), *muhavere* (*söyleşme*, dialogue), *fasıl* (the

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1 Metin And: *Geleneksel Türk Tiyatrosu*. Istanbul 1985, 312; Cevdet Kudret: *Karagöz* I. Ankara 1968, 18; Sabri E. Siyavu Gil: *Karagöz. Son histoire, ses personages, son esprit mystique et satyrique*. Istanbul 1951, 15-16; Andreas Tietze: *The Turkish Shadow Theater and the puppet collection of the L. A. Mayer Memorial Foundation*. Berlin 1975, 19; Helga Uplegger: Karagöz. In: *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta* II. Louis Bazin, et al. (eds.) Wiesbaden 1965, 160.

2 Tietze: *Shadow theater*, 19.

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play itself) and the *bitiş* (end play).[3] The *perde gazeli* forms part of the introduction. At first the screen is completely empty. To the accompaniment of a *nareke*, a small flute, the puppeteer then places a *göstermelik* (scenery placed before the beginning of the show). The music continues as the audience gathers and the puppeteer arranges his puppets. The puppeteer then removes the *göstermelik* and Hacivat enters the screen. He recites or rather sings one or several *semaʿi* or small poems. Then Hacivat exclaims: "*Hay Hakk*" (Oh, God) and recites the *perde gazeli*.[4] When reciting the *perde gazeli* and other poems in the introduction, Hacivat addresses the audience directly. This is the same technique used by Brecht in his alienation effect.[5] The *perde gazeli* functions here as a device to pull the audience into the world of the play. At the end of the play there is a small endgame in which Karagöz destroys the screen and Hacivat announces the play to be performed next time. Here again Hacivat addresses the audience directly. Between these two moments, the *perde gazeli* and the end play, the play takes place.

Karagöz shadow theatre was handed down orally until late in the nineteenth century after which some texts of *Karagöz* plays texts were printed. Scholars such as Georg Jacob, Hellmut Ritter, Selim Nüzhet Gerçek, and later Cevdet Kudret and Muhit Sevilen, collected, translated and published the texts. Metin And mentions two examples of *perde gazelleri*, cited by Evliya Çelebī, the famous 16th century Turkish travel writer, which reveals that the *perde gazeli* has formed a part of *Karagöz* plays for centuries.[6] In 1918 Hellmut Ritter wrote down the plays performed by Nazīf Bey, the last Ottoman court puppeteer. Nazīf Bey was 62 years old in 1918, which would suggest he was born around 1856. Although he did not perform outside the court, his contemporaries considered him an authority in his field.[7] Ritter published the plays in three volumes between 1924 and 1953,[8] and Cevdet Kudret published them in modern Turkish in the three-volume *Karagöz,* together with texts from the puppeteers, Hayālī Memdūh, Hayālī Küçük ʿAlī and some unknown performers.[9] A collection of fifteen plays by Muhittin

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3 For a detailed introduction see And: *Geleneksel*, 271-336.

4 And: *Geleneksel*, 311-15.

5 For the relationship between shadow theatre and Brechtian epic theatre see: Yüksel Pazarkaya: *Rosen im Frost. Einblicke in die Türkische Kultur*. Zürich 1982, 155-75.

6 And: *Geleneksel*, 312; Evliyā Çelebi: *Seyāhatname* I, ed. Ahmed Cevdet. Istanbul 1898, 655-56.

7 Hellmut Ritter: *Karagös türkische Schattenspiele* I, Hannover 1924, 3.

8 Hellmut Ritter: *Schattenspiele* I; Hellmut Ritter: *Karagös türkische Schattenspiele* II. Leipzig 1941; Hellmut Ritter: *Karagös türkische Schattenspiele* III. Wiesbaden 1953.

9 Cevdet Kudret: *Karagöz* I, II, III. Ankara 1968, 1969, 1970.

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Sevilen was published in 1969.[10] Muhittin Sevilen is in fact the real name of the puppeteer Hayālī Küçük Ali. The collection contains the corpus of plays he used in his performances. Hayālī Küçük Ali was born in Istanbul around 1885/1886 and worked at the Post Office until his retirement in 1944. He performed *Karagöz* from the age of eight and learned from all the great puppeteers of his time. He played for ordinary people and became a legend during his lifetime.[11]

Analysis of the perde gazelleri from the collections of Ritter/Kudret and Sevilen

All plays from the Ritter/Kudret and Sevilen collections contain *perde gazelleri* except for a few plays for which Kudret gives the names but no text. Sevilen records only three ghazals which are not in the collections of Ritter and Kudret. However all *perde gazelleri* appear in different plays in Ritter/ Kudret and Sevilen, which demonstrates the independence of the elements of the *Karagöz* play. The puppeteer composes his own performances by selecting elements from the known corpus and assembling them to suit his purpose. It is interesting to note that Sevilen uses one of the *perde gazelleri* Metin And found in the work of Evliya Çelebī; either he learned about it from Metin And, who was a friend, or it had been handed down orally for three centuries.[12] The style of these ghazals is 16th century *Sebk-i Hindī*.

These collections contain in all 34 *perde gazelleri*, 16 of which do not mention the name of the ghazal's author; the other 18 do. Eight ghazals are by Rāşid, six by Hüsnī and one each by İbn-i ʿĪsā Akhisārı, Hilmī (Mehmet ʿAlī Hilmī Dede), Hayālī and Nakşī. Rāşid, Hüsnī and Hilmī are poets who lived at the end of the nineteenth century. Rāşid (or Kemterī), who died in 1312/1896, is the Bektaşi dervish Rāşid Ali Baba, a court musician. In his *perde gazelleri* he used the pseudonym Rāşid, while in his other works he called himself Kemterī. After his retirement he lived for some time in Üsküdar, where he died. One of his *perde gazelleri* is carved on the headstone of what is said to be the grave of Karagöz in Bursa.[13] We know that Hüsnī died during the reign of ʿAbdülhāmid II (1876-1909).[14] Hilmī[15] is the pseudonym of Mehmet ʿAlī

10 Muhittin Sevilen: *Karagöz*. [1969] Ankara 1990.

11 Nihad Sami Banarlı: Karagöz'e dair. In: Sevilen: *Karagöz*, 11-13.

12 And: *Geleneksel*. 312; Sevilen: *Karagöz*, 143.

13 Kudret: *Karagöz* I, 98.

14 Kudret: *Karagöz* II, 12.

15 Kudret: *Karagöz* II, 482.

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Hilmī Dede, a Bektaşi sheik and poet who lived from 1842 to 1907.[16] İbn-i ʿĪsā Akhisārı and Hayālī are sixteenth century poets but we know nothing about Nakşī.

It is very interesting to observe that the *perde gazelleri* use only a limited number of metres.

- Of the ghazals, 21 have a form of *remel*: -∪--/-∪--/-∪--/-∪- (fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilün), 18 times; -∪--/-∪--/-∪--/-∪-- (fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün), twice; and ∪∪--/∪∪--/∪∪--/∪∪- (feʿilātün, feʿilātün, feʿilātün, feʿilün), once.
- Twelve of them use a form of *hezec*: ∪---/∪---/∪---/∪--- (mefāʿīlün, mefāʿīlün, mefāʿīlün, mefāʿīlün), 9 times; --∪/∪--∪/∪--∪/∪-- (mefʿūlü, mefāʿīlü, mefāʿīlü, feʿūlün), twice; and ∪---/∪---/∪-- (mefāʿīlün, mefāʿīlün, feʿīlün), once.
- One *perde gazeli* uses the metre *recez*, but it has the form of a *şarkı* and another *perde gazeli* has a broken metre.

Most of the *perde gazelleri* performed by the puppeteers Nazīf and Hayālī Küçük ʿAlī were apparently written in the nineteenth century. The poets regarded the *remel* and *hezec* metres as highly appropriate for *perde gazelleri*.

Some examples of content[17]

1. The *perde gazeli* below, which appeared in Nazīf Bey's play *Bahçe*[18] and Hayālī Küçük Ali's *Ferhat ile Şirin*[19] was carved on the headstone of what is reputedly the grave of Karagöz in Bursa. The grave was located in the graveyard of the Nakşbendi convent Bahri where the puppeteer Mustafa Tevfik was the sheik in about 1892. The graveyard was destroyed during the War for Independence (1918-1923) and according to Selim Nüzhet Gerçek and Sabri Esat Siyavuşgil the headstone is now at the museum in Bursa.[20]

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16 The scanning of perde gazelleri is based on Kudret: *Karagöz* I-III; I checked them. The ghazals which are in Sevilen: *Karagöz* I, but not in Kudret I scanned myself.

17 As no Ottoman text of the analysed poems was available to me, I have not attempted a transcription. Only the lengths of vowels and the letters *ʿayn* (in Arabic and Persian words) and *alif* (in the middle of a word) are marked, because they are important for scansion.

18 Kudret: *Karagöz* I, 171-72 and Hellmut Ritter: *Schattenspiele* III, 121-22.

19 Sevilen: K*aragöz*, 143.

20 Kudret: *Karagöz* I, 171, note 2; Selim Nüzhet Gerçek: *Türk Temaşası*. Istanbul, 1942, 61-62; Sabri Esat Siyavuşgil: *Karagöz*. Istanbul 1941, 147-48.

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- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Nak/ş-i/ sun/'un/ rem/z e/der/ hüs/nün/de /rü'/yet/ per/de/si
- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - -/ - ∪ -
Hā/ce/-yi /hük/m-i/ e/zel/den/dir/ ha/kī/kat/ per/de/si

- ∪ - - / - ∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/ - ∪ -
Sī/re/ti/ sū/ret/te/ müm/kün/dür/ te/mā/şā/ ey/le/mek
- ∪ - - / - ∪ - -/ - ∪ - - /- ∪ -
Hā/il/ ol/maz/ ʿay/n-i/ ʿir/fā/na/ ba/sī/ret/ per/de/si

- ∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/ - ∪ -
Her/ ne/ye/ im/'ā/n i/le /bak/san /o/lur/ iş/ ʿāş/i/kā
- ∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/ - ∪ -
Kıl/mı/ş is/tī/lā/ ci/hā/na/ hā/b-i/ gaf/let/ per/de/si

- ∪ - -/- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - /- ∪ -
Bu/ ha/yā/l-i/ ā/le/mi/ göz/den/ ge/çir/mek/tir/ hü/ner
- ∪ - -/ - ∪- - /- ∪ - -/ - ∪ -
Ni/ce/ ka/ra/ göz/le/ri/ mah/v et/ti/ sū/ret/ per/de/si

- ∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/- ∪ - - /- ∪ -
Şem/ʿ-i/ ʿaş/ka/ yan/dı/rıp/ tas/vī/r-i/ cis/min/dir/ ge/çen
- ∪ - -/- ∪ - - /- ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Ā/de/mi/ ā/med/-şü/d et/mek/te/ ʿa/zī/met/ per/de/si

- ∪ - -/- ∪ - -/ - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Han/gi/ zıl/la/ il/ti/cā/' et/sen/ fe/nā/ bul/maz/ a/ceb

- ∪ - - /- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Oy/na/tan/ üs/tā/dı/ gör/ kur/muş/ mu/hab/bet/ per/de/si

- ∪ - -/- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪-
Der/ge/h-i/ Ā/l-i/ a/bā/da/ müs/ta/kī/m ol/ Kem/te/rī
- ∪ - - / - ∪ - -(∪)/- ∪ - - /- ∪ -
Gös/te/rir/ vah/det/ e/lin/ kalk/tık/ça/ kes/ret/ per/de/si

External features

The poem has the metre: *remel* (fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilün). Insofar as it is possible to scan a poem from a transcription alone, we see that the metre is regular. Only in the last *mısra* is one syllable over long: "kalk (*tıkça*)." There is a rhyme on the letter ت *(ta) of rü'yet*, *hakīkat* etc. followed by a *redīf*: "*perdesi*." The first *beyt* rhymes with the *mısra* and in

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the last *beyt* the name of the author is mentioned: Kemterī. It is remarkable that Rāşid Ali Baba does not use the *mahlas* Rāşid as one would expect in a *perde gazeli*. Instead he uses the *mahlas* Kemterī, which he usually reserves for his other poems.[21]

Translation and interpretation

> The screen of the visible makes, in its beauty, the design of the creation into a sign.
> It is the screen of reality coming from the Master of the eternal ordinance.

The screen of a well-performed *Karagöz* play is a reflection of the real world which is made by God. The *Karagöz* play reflects reality and teaches a moral lesson.

> It is possible to observe inner nature in outward appearance.
> The screen of perception does not block the way for one who looks with insight.

Somebody with spiritual knowledge, who knows about mystical affairs, can understand the inner meaning, the moral, told by the play on the screen. It is interesting to see the contrasted terms inner nature and outward appearance. This contrast returns several times in the poem.

> If you do it thoroughly, whatever you look at will become clear
> The screen of the sleep of heedlessness is spread over the world.

Although in our world people are inattentive, if you examine everything carefully you find the essence.

> It is a skill to present this shadow play of the world to your eyes.
> The screen of outward appearance, how many people like Karagöz did it not destroy?

The puppeteer must possess considerable skill in order to show you a reflection of the real world in his play. The second *mısra* has several meanings:

1. So many beautiful people are destroyed because they do not look beyond the outward appearance of things to the deeper meaning.
2. An allusion is made to the end of the *Karagöz* play where Karagöz destroys the screen and, with this act, ends the play.

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21 Kudret: *Karagöz* I, 98.

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3. Here an interesting contrast is made with the double meaning of *kara gözleri*, which literally means the pupil of a person's eye and is an allusion to the eyes of beautiful people. Such people represent outward beauty. The other reading is Karagöz, the main character of the play. Although ugly, Karagöz has a noble character, and he therefore represents inner beauty. Here we find the same contrast as before between the inner meaning of things and their outward appearance.

> What burns by the candle of love and passes by is the image of your body.
> The screen of departure amounts to a man's coming and going.

This *beyt* is in fact a detailed description of the *Karagöz* technique. The puppets, although they do not resemble reality, are nevertheless images of the human body and are pressed against the screen by the puppeteer behind the candles lighting the screen. During the play the puppeteer continuously brings his puppets to the screen and takes them away again. The more mystical meaning is that the play is a reflection of reality and as such it tells about the lives of real people.

> No matter which shadow you seek refuge with, I wonder, does it not come to an end?
> See the master who performs has erected the screen of love.

Looking at a shadow that is a representation of the world of outward appearance is of no avail. You should watch the *Karagöz* play, because the puppeteer is telling you a story which has a moral lesson, just like the mystical poems of the *aşık* or love poetry. Here again we find the contrast between outward appearance and the deeper meaning.

> Kemter, be upright at the court of the family of the prophet
> Your hand shows the one being when the screen of multitude is lifted.

The court of the family of the prophet is clearly an allusion to the Ottoman Sultan. It is logical for Rāşid Ali Baba to make this allusion since he is working at the court, just like the puppeteer who recites this ghazal. The work of the artist, poet and puppeteer is very important because when the play ends and the puppeteer lifts the screen and takes away all the puppets and the adventures, the deeper meaning, or moral of the story becomes clear. Here again we find the contrast between the inner nature of things and their outward appearance in the form of the play and the adventures. The adventures of Karagöz and Hacivat is not elevated theatre but comedies of everyday life.

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2. *Perde gazeli* used by Nazīf Bey in the play *Ters Evlenme*,[22] and by Hayālī Küçük Ali in the play *Mandıra safası, Hımhımlı Mandıra*.[23] This ghazal was written as a *nazire* on the poem ofcited above.[24]

\- ∪ - -/- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - /- ∪ -
Şem/ʿ-i/ sī/ret/le/ zi/yā/lan/dık/ça/ hik/met/ per/de/si
\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - /- ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Gös/te/rir/ yüz/ bin/ ha/yā/l ā/lem/de /sū/ret/ per/de/si

\- ∪ - - /- ∪ - -/ - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Kıl/ te/fek/kür/le/ te/mā/şā/ his/se-/men/d ol/mak/ i/çün
\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Ā/de/me hay/ret/ ve/rir/ yan/dık/ça/ dik/kat/ per/de/si

\- ∪ - - / - ∪ -(∪) - / - ∪ - -/ - ∪ -
Kā/'i/nā/tın/ eh/l-i /hāl/ tas/vī/ri/ni /kıl/sın/ ha/yāl
\- ∪ - - /- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Şuʿ/le/len/miş/tir/ e/zel/den/ şem/ʿ-i /rü'/yet/ per/de/si

\- ∪ - - /- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - /- ∪ -
Uy/ku/dan/ bī/dā/r o/lup/ feh/m ey/le/ ʿak/lın/ var/ i/se
\- ∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/- ∪ - - /- ∪ -
Çeş/me/-i in/sā/na/ bu/ dün/yā/ ol/du /gaf/let/ per/de/si

\- ∪ - - /- ∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/- ∪ -
Nak/ş e/den/ nak/kā/şı/ bil/ al/dan/ma/ nak/ş-i/ zā/hi/re
\- ∪ - - /- ∪ - - /- ∪ - -/ - ∪ -
Kıl/ na/zar/ iş/te/ ku/rul/muş/tur/ ha/kī/kat/ per/de/si

\- ∪ - -/-∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/-∪-
Ā/le/m-i/ fā/nī/yi/ bā/kī/ san/ma/z ʿir/fā/n/ o/lan
\- ∪ - -/ - ∪ - - /- ∪ - - /- ∪ -
Ey/le/r ic/rā/ fen/n-i/ lu-ʿ/biy/yā/tı/ rih/let/ per/de/si

\- ∪ - - /- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Var/sa/ ey/ Hüs/nī/ ke/mā/lin/ keş/f o/lur/ her/ dem/ sa/na
\- ∪ - -/ - ∪ - -/ - ∪ - - /- ∪ -
Bak/ ne/ sū/ret/ gös/te/rir/ sey/r ey/le/ ʿib/ret/ per/de/si

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22 Ritter *Schattenspiele* I, 72-75; Kudret *Karagöz* III, 74-75.

23 Sevilen: *Karagöz*, 205.

24 Kudret: *Karagöz* III, 274, note 2.

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External features

The poem has the *remel* metre (fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilün) and the metre is regular; only in the second *mısra* of the third *beyt* is one syllable over-long : "*hāl.*" There is a rhyme on the letter ت (*ta*) of *rü'yet*, *hakīkat* etc. followed by a *redīf*: "*perdesi.*" The first *beyt* rhymes with the *mısra* and in the last *beyt* the name of the author is mentioned: Hüsnī.

Translation and Interpretation

> When the screen of wisdom becomes illuminated by the candle of inner nature
> In the world the screen of outward appearance shows 100,000 illusions.

If the shadow play is performed by a competent puppeteer who knows how to create a double meaning, you will observe all kinds of puppets. Here we find the concept of inner nature as used by Rāşid Ali Baba in the second '*beyt*' of his poem.

> Observe attentively in order to profit by it
> When the screen of careful attention burns it causes amazement to mankind.

In order to learn something from the play you have to watch carefully. You will then be amazed to see what double meanings the play contains.

> Let the mystics imagine the picture of all creation
> The candle of the screen of the visible has flamed up from eternity.

People who understand the play's double meaning will see all of creation before them. See, the shadow theatre, with a long history is going to be performed.

> If you are sensible, awake from your sleep and comprehend
> For the human eye this world has become the screen of the sleep of heedlessness.

If you are wise, you will watch the play carefully and understand its meaning. You will understand that even in the real world not everything is as it seems.[25] Rāşid Ali Baba uses the concept of the sleep of heedlessness in his third '*beyt.*'

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25 For the interpretation of the second hemistich I followed the rather free translation of Hellmut Ritter: *Schattenspiele* I, 73.

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> Know the artist who made the design; be not mistaken by its outward appearance.
> Look at it, now the screen of truth had been set up.

Realise that God created everything, but sometimes he disguised his intentions. So now the shadow theatre has been set up and you will be able to learn something.

> One who has spiritual knowledge does not consider the transitory world to be eternal.
> The screen of passing away performs the art of the puppet games.

Someone with spiritual knowledge knows that life in this world is not eternal. In this respect Life resembles the stage of the shadow play where the puppets enter and exit.

> O Hüsnī (external beauty) if you reach inner perfection each moment will be revealed to you
> Look at which countenance the screen of warning shows and respond to it.

> Hüsnī if you are able to understand double meaning you will comprehend everything in this play. Attend carefully to the play's warning and act accordingly.

The above poems demonstrate the underlying meaning of the *Karagöz* play. The shadow play is not real, but it is a shadow of the reality created by God. The tradition of words and poetry with both a profane and mystical meaning is very old in Persian and Turkish literature. In the *Makhzan al-asrār*, the 11th century Persian poet Nizami uses the shadow play and the *perde* (curtain or veil) as metaphors to illustrate the ambiguity of poetry.[26] It is very likely that poets such as Rāşid Ali Baba and Hüsnī were familiar with this well-known verse, either in the original, in the Turkish translation or as an idea incorporated in the work of Nizami's successors.

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26 Renate Würsch drew my attention to the famous verse from the *Makhzan al-asrār*: "*Perde-ye rāzī ki sukhan parwarīst - Sāye-ye āz sāye-ye peygambarīst.*" In some manuscripts and text editions the second word *sāye* has been replaced by *perde* (eg. the Dastgirdī edition, Teheran, 1334 Hicrī). According to J.T.P. de Bruijn the *sāye* appears in the oldest manuscript in the India Office Library of the British Library in London, dated 637 Hicrī (1240 AD), less than half a century after Nizami's death. It is of course impossible to know what Nizami wrote. J. Ch. Bürgel (Nizami über Sprache und Dichtung. Ein Abschnitt aus der "Schatzkammer der Geheimnisse". In: *Festschrift für Fritz Meier*. Wiesbaden, 1974, 9-28) explains Nizami's use of the shadow play and the *perde* as metaphor.

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Rāşid Ali Baba's ghazal contains more obscure imagery than that of Hüsnī. The former makes the obvious point that the shadow play is a reflection of reality. Hüsnī links the ambiguity inherent in shadow theatre because it is a reflection of reality with the ambiguity God created in real life. Hüsnī's ghazal, therefore, comes closer to the concept of the mystical ghazal.

3. *Perde gazeli* used by Hayālī Küçük Ali in the play *Karagöz'ün Hekimliği Oyunu*, recorded on tape by İlhan Başgöz and transcribed by Cevdet Kudret.[27]

\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Per/de/-i ʿib/ret/-nü/mā/da/ zā/hi/ren/ bir/ sū/re/tiz
\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
ʿĀ/ri/fan/ ma'/nen/ bi/lir/ler/ nük/te/-i /ʿul/viy/ye/tiz

\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - - - - / - ∪ -
Haz/re/t-i Ş/eyh/ Küs/te/rī/ tā/ Sul/tā/n Or/han/'dan/ be/ri
\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Mev/ki/ʿ-i/ ic/rā/da/ hik/met/ gös/te/rir/ bir/ ʿib/re/tiz

\- ∪ -(∪) - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Bir/ ha/yāl/ dir/ Ka/ra/göz/'le/ Hā/cı/ Ev/had/ nā/mı/mız
\- ∪ -(∪) - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Nus/h ü/ pend/dir/ kā/rı/mız/ hud/dā/m-i/ mül/k ü/ mil/le/tiz

\- ∪ -(∪) - / - ∪ - - / -(∪) ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Çok/ za/mān/dır/ hük/m-i/ is/tib/dād/da/ ol/muş/ken/ es/īr
\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Geç/ti/ ol/ zul/m ü/ ce/fā/lar/ nā/'i/l-i/ hür/riy/ye/tiz

\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Par/la/yıp/ şem/ʿ-i/ ʿa/dā/let/ deh/ri/ ten/vī/r ey/le/di
\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Şim/di/ ol/ şev/k-i/ sü/rur/la/ gar/k-i/ mes/rū/riy/ye/tiz

\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Cüm/le/ ev/lā/d-i/ va/tan/ mem/nū/n ü/ han/dan/dır/ bu/gün
\- ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ - - / - ∪ -
Biz/ de/ iş/bu/ sā/ye/de/ meş/gū/l-i/ [sub/h-i?]/ hiz/me/tiz.[28]

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27 Tape in the archive of the Ankara Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tiyatro Kürsüsü; İlhan Başgöz private archive. Text: Kudret: *Karagöz* II, 235-36.

28 Kudret: *Karagöz* II. 236, note 4 gives as a variant: *"meşgūl-i sunʿ-i hizmetiz"* instead of "*meşgūl-i subh-i hizmetiz.*"

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External features

The metre is *remel* (fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilātün, fāʿilün). Unlike the two preceding ghazals, the metre here is irregular. In the first *mısra* of the second *beyt*, there is a long syllable instead of a short one: "(*Sul*)*tā*(*n Orhan*)." In the first and second *mısra* of the third *beyt*, and in the first *mısra* of the fourth *beyt* there are over-long syllables: "(*ha*)*yāl*(*dir*)," "*pend*(*dir*)," "(*za*/)*mān*(*dır*)" and "(*istib*)*dād*(*da*)." The *beyt*s rhyme on the letter ت (*ta*) of *sūretiz, ʿulviyyetiz, ʿibretiz* etc. The first *beyt* rhymes with the *mısra*, but in the last *beyt* no author's name is mentioned. On tape Hayālī Küçük Ali addresses his listeners directly and explains that this *perde gazeli* was written after the Young Turk revolution of 1908.[29]

Translation and analysis

> To outward appearance, we are figures on the screen that provide a warning
> Those who are wise know that we are the points of sublimity.

Although it would appear that the puppets are unimportant figures in a performance where the audience is told a moral lesson, for the people who know better they are clearly very important because it is they who give the performance its double meaning.

> As far back as the time of the Holy Sheikh Küşteri and Sultan Orhan
> The place of the performance has shown wisdom, we are a warning.

Shadow theatre has always functioned as a warning to people.

> It is an illusion, Karagöz and Hacivat are our names
> It is our job to give advice and to admonish, we are servants of the state and the people.
>
> While for a long time we were subject to absolute rule
> Oppression and cruelty disappeared and we obtained freedom.
>
> The candle of justice shone and illuminated the world
> Now we are overwhelmed with that strong desire of pleasure and joy.
>
> Today all children of the nation are happy and laughing
> And we in this shadow are busy with the dawn of duty
> Now everybody is happy and we are about to start the play.

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29 Kudret: *Karagöz* II, 236, note 3.

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This *perde gazeli* begins in the same style as the first two examples in that references are made to the deeper meaning of the shadow play. Later the style changes completely. Although the language remains Ottoman, full of Arabic and Persian loanwords and grammatical constructions, the content tells us about historical events: the year of despotic reign of Sultan ʿAbdülhāmid II (1876-1909); the Young Turk revolution of 1908 and the emergence of the Turkish Republic (1923).

4a. Two *perde gazelleri* ascribed to Evliya Çelebī by Metin And.[30]

\- - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - -
Ol/ hok/ka/-de/hen/ tur/re/-i/ tar/rā/r i/le/ oy/nar (Sevilen, gonca-dehen)
\- - ∪ /∪ (∪) - - ∪ /∪ - - ∪/∪ - -
Tir/yā/k-i/ le/bi/ni/ sat/ma/k i/çün/ mā/r i/le/ oy/nar

\- - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - -
Çün/ dā/ğ-ı/ ga/mın/ yol/la/rı/nı/ sī/ne/ye/ düz/dü (Sevilen, pullarını)
\- - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - -
Bu/ ner/d-i/ ma/hab/bet/te/ gö/nül/ zā/r i/le oy/nar

\- - ∪/∪ - -∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - -
Ben/zet/me/k i/çün/ ā/le/mi/ bir/ zil/l-i/ ha/yā/le
\- - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - -
Sā/yen/de/ gü/neş/ göl/ge/de/ di/vā/r i/le/ oy/nar

\- - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - -
Eğ/len/me/ğe/ di/vā/ne/ gö/nül/ şim/di/ mu/zaf/fer
\- - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - - ∪/∪ - -
Zen/cir/-i/ se/r-i/ zül/f-i /si/yeh/kā/r i/le/ oy/nar

External features

The poem has a *hezec* metre (mafʿūlu/ mafāʿīlu/ mafāʿīlu/ faʿūlun). The metre is used consistently, with the exception of an extra syllabe in the second *mısra* of the first *beyt*: *lebini*. There is a rhyme on the letter ر (*rā*) of *tarrār, mār, zār* etc. followed by a *redīf*: "*ile oynar*." The first *beyt* rhymes with the *mısra*. In the last *beyt* no author's name is mentioned, which is not surprising since we have only a section of the ghazal.

30 And: *Geleneksel*, 312; Evliyā Çelebi: *Seyāhatname* 655-56.

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4b.

∪ - - -/∪ - - - /∪ - - -/∪ - - -
Ge/l ey/ eh/l-i/ na/zar/ zan/ney/le/me/ bu/ hay/me/yi/ hā/li

∪ - - - /∪ - - - /∪ - - -/∪ ∪ - -
De/rū/nu/ pür/ a/cā/yib/dir/ te/ces/süs/ ey/le/ ah/vā/li

∪ ∪ - - / ∪ - - - /∪ - - -/∪ (∪ ∪) - -
Gö/rü/nür/den/ gö/rün/mez/ der/le/r ā/lem/de/ çu/ be/si/ çok/dur
∪ - - -/∪ - - -/∪ - - -/∪ ∪ -?-
Zu/hū/r ey/ler/ te/mā/şā/ ey/le/ bir/ kez/ ni/ce/ ah/vā/li

The metre is *hezec*: (mafāʿīlun/ mafāʿīlun/ mafāʿīlun/ mafāʿīlun). The variant *faʿilātun* appears in the last foot of the second *mısra* of both *beyt*s and in the first foot of the first *mısra* of the second *beyt*. In the first *mısra* of the second *beyt* the metre is irregular: one long syllable is divided into two short ones: *çubesi*. There is a rhyme on the letter "ه" (*he*) of *eyle* and *nice* with as *redīf*: *"ahvāli."* The hemistichs of the first *beyt* rhyme on the letter "ا" (*alif*) of *hāli* and *ahvāli*. This poem is too short to be called a ghazal and is probably *kıt'a*. Therefore, it is not surprising that no author's name is mentioned.

Translation and analysis

4a.

This small round mouth plays with a lock of hair of the stealer of hearts
He plays with a curl to sell the sun-dried bricks of the wine
Because he arranged in his breast the ways of the mountain of grief
In this back-gammon of love the heart plays with the dice
In order to liken the world to a shadow of a ghost
In its shade the sun plays with the wall in the shadow
The heart is now victorious over the demons to amuse itself
It plays with the sinner of the love-lock of the head of the chain.

4b.

Come people possessed with insight to think about this vacant shelter
Whose interior is filled with strange things, enquire into the circumstances
Of the visible they say that it is invisible; in this world there are many of rods
They will appear, enjoy many events at once.

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The context in which Evliyā Çelebi mentions these two ghazals does not indicate at all that these ghazals are called *perde gazeli*:

> Bu Hasanzāde hayāl-i zıle müte`allik öyle eş`ār okurdu ki görenler `ābī `ilm-i ledün sāhibi zann ederdi. İşte bir gazeli: (This Hasanzāde recites poems about the shadow theatre in such a way that those who saw him thought he possessed inside knowledge of Divine Providence. See here a ghazal.)[31]

Both poems are only sections or *kıt`a's*, and the content of the first poem shows only a vague connection with the shadow play. On account of its content, the second poem could very well have been a section of a *perde gazeli.* However we cannot prove that these poems functioned as *perde gazelleri.*

5. Siyavuşgil claims that a poem by Birrī is the oldest specimen found. He does not give the Turkish text nor any reference to the source.[32] The text does not appear in the collections of Ritter, Kudret or Sevilen.

> *Regarde, o sage, avec tes yeux qui cherchent la vérité*
> *Et vois le cieux où la tente du théâtre d'ombres est déjà dressée.*
>
> *Contemple ce que le Montreur de l'Univers, derrière son écran,*
> *Te donne en spectacle, par les ombres d'hommes et de femmes qu'il crée.*
>
> *C'est Lui qui, assignant une attitude à chaque figure,*
> *La fait parler dans un langage qui lui convient.*
>
> *Regarde, toutes ces figures ne sont que des apparences,*
> *Et c'est la colère ou la beauté de Dieu qui se manifeste en elles.*
>
> *Contemple cet écran des spectres et n'oublie pas que*
> *Celui qui l'a dressé, peut toujours l'anéantir,*
>
> *Et ce qu'il en reste, c'est toujours Lui.*
> *C'est le propre de l'initié au panthéisme que de comprendre tout cela,*
>
> *Et ceux qui ne peuvent pas se débarrasser de la pluralité*
> *N'apprécieront jamais le sens de mes paroles.*
>
> *Le Şeyh Küşteri nous a montré le sens de l'unité et de la pluralité.*
> *O Birrī, contemple le théâtre d'ombres avec sagesse et profit.*[33]

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31 Evliyā Çelebi: *Seyāhatname*, 655-56.

32 Siyavuşgil: *Karagöz*, 15-16.

33 Siyavuşgil: *Karagöz*, 15-16.

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Today *Karagöz* shadow theatre is mostly performed for children and the puppeteer does not recite a *perde gazeli*. If there is a ghazal it takes the form of a very simple poem.

Conclusion

Although there is some evidence that *perdegazelleri* have formed an integral part of the *Karagöz* performances for centuries, most of the ones we know date from the end of the nineteenth century. The *perde gazeli* contains all the formal characteristics of the classical Ottoman ghazal. The poet uses the complete vocabulary of the religious mystical ghazal as well, but the *perde gazeli* does not tell us anything other than that *Karagöz* plays reflect reality and are therefore a reflection of the divine truth. The *perde gazeli* takes the audience by the hand and introduces them into the world of the theatre, in this instance the *Karagöz* play. This world is a reflection of the real world and can teach you a moral lesson. The spell is broken at the end of the play when Karagöz destroys the screen. You should watch the *Karagöz* play, enjoy yourself and, if you are attentive, you may learn a lesson from the adventures of Karagöz and Hacivat. The function of theatre as a didactic mirror to society is quite universal and the *perde gazeli* does no more than describe this function. However, the double meaning of the mystical ghazals is absent. The subject of the *perde gazeli* is not the love of the poet for his unattainable lover, which symbolizes the union with God. The *perde gazeli* draws attention to the symbolic power of the performing arts; its content does not explain the mystical function of shadow theatre.

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THE PROBLEMATIC TRADITION

Reflections on Ottoman Homoeroticism in Modern Turkish Literature and Literary Criticism

Priska Furrer
(Bern)

The acceptance of Ottoman literature in modern Turkey is complicated by a variety of factors. Foremost, and most obviously, there are the major linguistic changes that have taken place in Turkish, which render access to the original texts extremely difficult for the contemporary Turkish reader. But subliminally the reception of *dîvân* literature is overshadowed by another question, namely the fact that "Ottoman poetry is at its core love poetry" and "that the beloved is often, if not most often, by convention and in a tradition antedating the Ottomans, a young man."[1]

An example of today's uneasiness towards the Ottoman literary tradition can be seen in Nedim Gürsel's narrative *The First Woman* (*İlk Kadın*).[2] It is the story of a sixteen-year-old country boy, who, separated from his home and mother for the very first time in his life, now finds himself alone in the large, unfamiliar city of Istanbul, where he lives in the dormitory of the Galatasaray high school. Wandering around rather aimlessly between Çiçek Pasajı and the Galata Bridge one Saturday afternoon after school, his thoughts revolve around only one thing: the red-light district. All of the boy's erotic fantasies and first sexual experience are told in retrospect. The first-person narrator of the text is meanwhile much older, lives abroad, and writes about himself as a sixteen-year-old with the distance of an experienced man who has long since become an adult. In his memory he portrays the city of Istanbul as a woman, who, in a feminine voice, addresses the lonely boy he once was from her depths:

> *Katran rengi suyun kıyısında oturmuş kente bakıyor. Çevresini kuşatan kalabalığı, üstüste yığılmış arabaları, hurda gemileri görmüyor ama.* [...] *Derinden gelen, önce uzak bir vapur sireni boğukluğunda, sonra*

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1 Walter G. Andrews et al. (eds. and trans.): *Ottoman Lyric Poetry. An Anthology.* Austin 1997, 14.

2 In: Nedim Gürsel: *Kadınlar Kitabı* [1983]. 2nd ed. İstanbul 1988.

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akıp giden, aktıkça da arınıp yunan bir su saydamlığında tenini saran, gövdesini ısıtıp gevşeten bir sesin, hem yakın hem uzak, çok uzak bir sesin büyüsüne kapılmış mutlulukla gülümsüyor.
"Markiz pastanesinde, o en dipteki masada hep seni bekledim. Bir gün yeniden gelirsin diye. Günler, aylar, yıllar geçti. Gelmedin."

[...]
Uzanıp dokunmak bu sese. Sesin sıcaklığını duyumsayabilmek. Önce yumuşaklığını ayrımsamak, sonra güzel beyazlığını. Giderek elinden tutabilmek bu sesin; yüzünü, saçlarını okşamak. Koklayabilmek doyasıya. (54-5)

He sat on the bank of the tar-coloured water and looked onto the city perceiving neither the hustle and bustle, nor the mountains of cars and the ships ready for the scrap heaps. [...] Succumbing to the magic of a nearby, yet distant, very distant voice, he smiled happily. She came from the depths, first hoarsely, like the siren of a faraway ship, then flowed past as crystal clear water, enveloping his skin, warming and relaxing his body.
"I've waited for you the whole time in the Café Marquise, at that table at the back and always hoped you would return some day. The days, months and the years passed. You did not come."
[...]
To stretch out the hand and touch this voice. To be able to feel her warmth. At first to feel her tenderness and then the wonderful whiteness. Slowly to grasp the hand of this voice, stroke her face, her hair, to take in her scent.

Though the narrator is a mature man today and his love for Istanbul has remained steadfast, it has now taken on a historical dimension. He dedicates a hymn, a pledge of love to the city that extends over several pages, displaying a deep historical consciousness that the boy was yet to have:

Yıllar geçti tadına varmam, güzelliğini, çekiciliğini kabullenebilmem için. Seni yavaş yavaş tanıdım. Yabancı bir kadın gövdesini el yordamıyla keşfeder gibi. Oysa sen hep vardın. [...]
Lygos'tu adın. Üç yanını çevreleyen su saydam, suda balıkların ışıl ışıl. Ağaçlar uğulduyordu ormanlarında. Byzantion'du adın. Yarımadanın ucunda, Akropolis'in, Agora'n, hamamların, tunçtan Tanrı yontularınla küçücük bir kenttin. [...]
Sen hep vardın İstanbul. Öncesiz ve sonrasız bir zamandaydın. Konstantinopolis'ti adın. Üç sıra aşılmaz surların, surlarındaki mazgalların, kulelerin bayraklarınla, saraylarınla [...] *büyük bir imparatorluğun başkentiydin.*

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[...] *Üç denizin birleştiği yerdeydin. Lygos'tu adın, Byzantion'du. Adın Dar-ı Saadet, Dar-ül Hilâfe, Dar-ı Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye idi. Ve İstanbul'du. Yani Kentti. Evet, Kent.*
[...] *Yuvarlak beyaz yüzünü, çıkık elmacık kemiklerini okşuyorum uzaktan. Islak gövdene dokundukça parmaklarım yanıyor. Küllerimden doğuyorsun İstanbul!* (93-7)

Years passed before I came to have the taste to savour your beauty and charm. I sealed my acquaintance with you very slowly, the way one investigates the unfamiliar body of a woman by feeling. You, however, had always been there. [...]
Your name was Lygos. Clear water surrounded you from three sides, the fish in it sparkled. The trees rustled in your woods. Your name was Byzantium. You were a tiny city at the tip of the peninsula, you had your Acropolis, your Agora, your bathhouses and divine idols of bronze. [...]
You were always there, Istanbul. You existed in a time period without a before or an afterwards. Your name was Constantinopolis. You were the capital of a great empire, with your three rows of insurmountable city walls, the crenellations of your fortress walls, your towers, the flags, the palaces [...].
You were always there, at the confluence of three seas. Your name was Lygos, Byzantium, Place of Bliss, Seat of the Caliph, Seat of the Great Ottoman Empire. And Istanbul, that means city, yes, city. [...]
From the distance I stroke your round white face, your pronounced cheeks. My fingers are aflame touching your moist body. You arise from my ashes, Istanbul.

As in this quotation, a clearly feminine connotation of the city pervades nearly all sections of *The First Woman*. The city is not only a place where brothels are to be found and thus where women are available. She, the city, is also an object of desire which overlaps in the narrator's imagination with the image of his mother and the imagined first lover.[3] However, in the fifth of the six chapters making up the narrative, we suddenly encounter a change. Here, too, Istanbul is described as an object of longing, but now the city, without any explanation, undergoes a change of gender:

Hamamda terleyen beyaz tenli bir delikanlıdır İstanbul. Cism-i pâkı hem terdir, hem berrak. Tepeden tırnağa güldür, billûrdur. Selvi boylu, lâ'l dudaklı, inci dişlidir. Bezm-i ezelden beri mahmurdur gözleri. Bir afet-i

3 For a more detailed analysis of this aspect of *The First Woman*, see my article "City of Fantasies and Memory: Faces of Istanbul in Narratives of Nedim Gürsel, Demir Özlü, Leylâ Erbil and Nezihe Meriç." In: *Journal of Turkish Literature* (forthcoming).

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> *cândır İstanbul. Buyden hoş, renkten pakizedir nazik teni. Ya keman kaşı, zülf-ü siyahı? İlle de sine-i sâfi, şuh gerdânı! Çözülmüş düğmeler, yaka açılmış göbeğe inmiş, buna can dayanır mı!* (84)
>
> Istanbul is a white-skinned young man, sweating in the bathhouse. His flawless body is moist and transparent: roses and crystal from head to toe, tall as a cypress, ruby-red lips, teeth like pearls. Since unknown time his eyes have been heavy with sleep from the banquet. Istanbul, torture of hearts. The tender skin of pure colour wafts delicious. And the arched eyebrows, the blackness of the locks – his smooth chest, his brazen neck! His shirt, unbuttoned to the navel – how could one resist him!

The "stature of a cypress," "lips like rubies" and "teeth like pearls," "arched brows," "black curls" and the "bursting shirt" – all are images invoked in the classical *dîvân* poetry to describe the beloved. Here they are marked as a clear Ottoman element in a modern Turkish text: that is, the author unexpectedly mixes typically Ottoman elements into his normal contemporary Turkish, particularly in his invoking of the nowadays unusual *izafet* constructions such as *cism-i pâki* (his flawless body), *zülf-ü siyahı* (his black curl), and *sine-i sâfi* (his smooth chest). Of course this strategy brands the poetic nature of the paragraph; at the same time, however, it also establishes a distance and strangeness in relation to the rest of the text.

The above-mentioned section, however, is also very clearly a foreign element in its textual environment in other respects. Here – in one unique sequence – Nedim Gürsel introduces a new reflector figure, that is a new centre of consciousness, and this is especially noteworthy because it is not at all motivated by the course of the plot. Except for this sequence, *The First Woman* is written from the viewpoint of the first-person narrator or his sixteen-year-old former self. But now Gürsel suddenly introduces the thoughts and reflections of a new figure: the Ottoman teacher of his sixteen-year-old hero, a literary enthusiast whose sexual penchant seems to tend towards boys. At least this is suggested in sentences like "he became red to the ears when he spoke with the pupils outside the class," or "[Taşlıcalı Yahya's] *İstanbul Şehrengizi* was his favourite poem. At night he dreamt of the boys described in the Şehrengiz."[4] Excerpts from this very verse by the 16th century poet Taşlıcalı Yahya[5] are then also quoted:

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4 Gürsel: *İlk Kadın*, 85.

5 Cf. the art. Taşlıcalı Yahya. In: Atilla Özkırımlı: *Türk Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi*. 3rd ed. İstanbul 1984, 1109-10.

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Soyunup suya girerler seraser
Açılır gonca lebler sim tenler

Görürsün onları suda soyunmuş
Sanasın taze güller suya konmuş

Haramiler gibi derya-yı umman
Soyup her hubu eyler uryan (85)

They strip off their robes, and, diving into the water
Lips of rosebuds open, silver bodies

Were you to see them naked at high tide
You could take them for fresh roses on the water

And the sea, like a thief
Exposes their unadorned beauty, robbing them of their clothing

This is not the only relatively long quotation. Verses by Nedim, the famous poet from the Tulip Period (d. 1730), as well as from Yayha Kemal, an author from the first half of the 20th century regarded as a poetic traditionalist, are also cited. We can thus characterize *The First Woman* as a text in which Nedim Gürsel, a university-trained author who holds a doctorate in comparative literature, turns towards the Ottoman literary tradition. He does this in a way that has two distinct, but interrelated aspects in terms of its characterization of this literary tradition: firstly, Ottoman literature is characterized as being homoerotic; and secondly, as something completely foreign to the text's central character.

The *dîvân* poetry itself is linguistically inaccessible to the sixteen-year-old. Ottoman is after all a foreign language to him. Furthermore, the literature classes at the high school do nothing to bring the classical literature closer to the pupils: they consist solely of rote memorization. Gürsel's narrator though actually ponders the possibility that another type of instruction might have made a more emotional and more immediate access to the poetry possible. However, even in his own text, those few pages dedicated to Ottoman literature remain, nonetheless, somewhat of a foreign entity. The need to change the reflector figure from the narrator or his sixteen-year-old younger self to a completely new figure, the Ottoman teacher, is a clear indicator of this.

Such a distance in Nedim Gürsel's text points to the difficulties faced by modern Turkish society in coming to terms with Ottoman literature. It is of course foremost the language that makes access to the Ottoman tradition difficult for modern Turkish readers. But subliminally – though at times also articulated – there is also a question of a completely different

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nature, namely, the gender of the beloved. In many types of *dîvân* literature, particularly in the ghazal, the beloved is male, even though the authors had the opportunity to take advantage of the ambiguity offered by Turkish, which does not manifestly mark gender, either in suffixes or in pronouns. Nevertheless, it is often unambiguous that young boys are being described.[6] This fact raises problems today, for it is addressed in the context of the highly ideological modern discourses regarding homosexuality, and as such it strikes the most sensitive nerve of national identity and honour.

In the preface to the anthology "Ottoman Lyric Poetry," Walter Andrews writes:

> We must consider, at least, that the discourses in which "homoeroticism" and "homosexuality" are meaningful did not exist for most of the Ottoman period and so are not part of the consciousness of Ottoman poets in the ways our own contexts might lead us to expect.[7]

This type of enlightened detachment is rather rare and certainly easier achieved when one's own national and cultural identity are not involved. It should also not be forgotten that the West, in attributing its own schizophrenic homoerotic fantasies to the "degenerate East," has played a role in fomenting Turkish sensitivities. What is however decisive in the ideologizing and the moralizing in contemporary Turkish debates about what is called "homosexuality" (*eşcinsellik*) in Ottoman poetry is something else: namely, that such debate is part of the contemporary political power struggle in Turkey. In other words: the debate is more about the present and future than about the past and so more about politics than about literature. Speaking – or not speaking – about the male couple of Ottoman literature is interrelated with ideological positions.

First there is the position of the moralizing traditionalists who simply tend to disregard the delicate topic or deny it altogether. For instance, the conservative literary scholar Ahmet Kabaklı dedicates a chapter of his five-volume *History of Turkish Literature* to *dîvân* poetry.[8] From among the topics of this literature he mentions the following: love, nature and society. However, in the section on "love," he manages to get by without addressing a single word to the question of the gender of the beloved.

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6 Cf. A note on Gender. In: Andrews: *Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, 14-16.

7 *Ibid.*, 16.

8 Ahmet Kabaklı: *Türk Edebiyatı. II cilt.* İstanbul 1997, 451-780.

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In his study "Nedim and the Poetics of the Ottoman Court,"[9] Kemal Silay mentions several studies by Turkish scholars – Harun Tolasa, Ali Nihad Tarlan and Hasibe Mazıoğlu – in which the prickly topic of homosexual love is simply glossed over in silence or explained in purely mystical terms. In addition, he writes about his own training in Turkey:

> During my undergraduate education at Ankara University's Department of Turkish Language and Literature, I never heard a single lecture delivered about homosexual themes in Ottoman court poetry. When some liberal professors did attempt to make extremely guarded statements about the "possibility" of homosexuality in classical literature they endeavoured to discover a "foreign", specifically ancient Greek, origin for what was found in Ottoman poetry. This seems to stem from a moralizing and perhaps Islamist effort to avoid telling Turkish children about such unacceptable issues. Or, when it is undeniable, to blame such behavior on someone else.[10]

And he adds:

> One reason which might explain why scholars fail to investigate the elements of homosexuality in Ottoman literature may be that very few primary sources of this tradition, such as *dîvâns*, *mesnevîs* and others, have been edited and made accessible. The major reason for the neglect of this subject, however, is most probably a political and moralistic one. Almost all the departments of Turkish language and literature in Turkey have been and are still dominated by right-wing moralists and religious nationalists.[11]

Silay's own rhetoric expresses the fact that the open debate about the homoerotic element in Ottoman literature not just aims at breaking taboos, but is also implemented as a political weapon, intentionally and consciously aimed at conservatives and Islamists, seeking to demonstrate that their image of the Ottoman past is idealized and factually incorrect.

To what degree one is able to inflict damage with such a blow to the midriff of conservative self-perception can be seen in the example presented by the film *İstanbul Kanatlarım Altında* (*Istanbul Under My Wings*) by the director Mustafa Altınoklar, which in 1996 caused a major furore in Turkey. As it portrayed Sultan Murad IV as a homosexual and a drunkard, it was

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9 Kemal Silay: *Nedim and the Poetics of the Ottoman Court: Medieval Inheritance and the Need for Change*. Bloomington 1994.

10 *Ibid.*, 91.

11 *Ibid.*, 102, annotation 1.

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removed from the cinema in Kayseri by order of the mayor, a member of the Refah party. The Minister of Culture, belonging to the National Movement Party (MHP), welcomed the ban and declared that it was an expression of the mayor's "national consciousness" (*milli şuurunuzun bir ifadesi*).[12] In response, the literary critic Vedat Günyol wrote an article in the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper in which he attempted to show, citing examples, that "homosexuality was in the blood and soul of most of the sultans" (*eşcinsellik çogu padişahın kanında, canında var*).[13] He claimed that he did not want to associate any type of value judgment with this fact, but rather only sought "to expose the obtuseness (*abtallık*) of those poor persons who believe they represent contemporary Turkish culture." The thrust here is obvious: it has to do with present-day political opponents, and Günyol's conclusions make perfectly clear that his political position is, like that of his opponents, also interrelated with value judgements regarding the Ottomans:

> *Çağdaş dünya yaşamına, ilk kapıyı **Atatürk** olmuştur. Çağdaş uygarlığa gönül bağlamış bir deha olan Atatürk'le karşılaştırdığımız zaman, padişahlarımızın büyük bölümü zavallı kalmaktadır.*[14]
>
> The first one to open the doors to the modern world was **Atatürk.** When we compare them with Atatürk, who was a genius who had bound his heart to modern civilization, most of our sultans remain poor.

An example clearly demonstrating that assumed liberalism can combine with deep rejection of every kind of homoerotic tendency is İsmet Zeki Eyüboğlu's study "*Divan Şiirinde Sapık Sevgi*," which can be translated roughly as *Perverted Love in Dîvân Poetry*.[15] This book, which appeared in the 1960's, is a broadside against the position that classical Ottoman literature can be taken as a part of the "Turkish national heritage." Eyüboğlu castigates academics and school book authors in Turkey for veiling the contents of this literature in their consciously selective treatment of only harmless parts of the poetry. He personally undertakes the task of demonstrating, author by author and poem by poem, that a major part of the *dîvân* literature deals with love between two men. Even while repeatedly stressing the right of the poets to express without restrictions what lies

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12 Cumhuriyet Hafta 14. June 1996.

13 Cumhuriyet Hafta 28. June 1996.

14 *Ibid.*, original emphasis.

15 İsmet Zeki Eyuboğlu: *Divan Şiirinde Sapık Sevgi*. Ankara 1991.

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in their hearts,[16] deprecation and detachment lies very clearly behind the projected tolerance. Even the title of his book – "Perverted Love" – shows this and then there are his conclusions:

> *Şeyh Gali'i kendimizden sayamıyoruz dili yüzünden, Mehmed Akif de öyle. Divan şiirinin işlediği sevgi de Türk geleneklerine, Türk töresine, Türk yaşayışına uygun değildir. [...] Onun [Divan şiirinin] işlediği konularla Türk toplumunun, benimsediği sevgiyle Türk insanının ilgisi olmamıştır.* (203 f.)

> We cannot regard Seyh Galip[17] as one of us because of his language, and the same holds for Mehmet Akif.[18] Moreover, the love dealt with in *dîvân* poetry does not correspond to Turkish traditions, Turkish customs, or to the Turkish way of life. [...] No connection exists between the topics this poetry treats and Turkish society, between the love it adopts as its own and the Turkish people.

He also makes clear upon whom his attack is focused: it is those who "long for everything that was in the past, and who contend that western civilization originates in Islamic ideas, that the light of Islam illuminated the West."[19]

Let us, however, leave literary history and return to literature. For several years now, Turkish novels have been trying in a new and more relaxed way to deal with the Ottoman past. A whole series of authors have written historical novels that try to avoid the old dilemma of either glorifying the Ottoman past or totally vilifying it.[20] Nedim Gürsel, whose book *The First Woman* served as our starting-point, is one of these authors. In his most recent novel, *Boğazkesen*,[21] he has created a protagonist whose

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16 *Ibid.*, 36 f.

17 Şeyh Galib (1757-99) is regarded as the last great representative of classical poetry.

18 Mehmet Akif Ersoy (1873-1936), author of the Turkish National Anthem; because of his Pan-Islamic tendencies he was compelled to emigrate to Egypt. (Louis Mitler: *Ottoman Turkish Writers: A Bibliographical Dictionary of Significant Figures in pre-Republican Turkish Literature*. New York et al. 1988.)

19 *Ibid.*, 196.

20 For more details about this new literary trend see Priska Furrer: Die literarische Rückgewinnung von Geschichte – Bilder der osmanischen Vergangenheit in modernen türkischen Romanen. In: *Zeitschrift für Türkeistudien* XII, 1 (1999), 73-91.

21 The title, meaning "the blocker of the straits," refers to one of the historical names of the Rumeli Hisarı fortress on the Bosporus; the second meaning of the word, "the throat cutter," can be read as an allusion to the violence of the sultan's reign. For an interpretation of the novel see Priska Furrer: Rekonstruktion und Reflexion osmanischer Geschichte im Medium der Fiktion – innovative Tendenzen des historischen Romans am Beispiel von Nedim Gürsel: Boğazkesen. In: *Asiatische Studien* 52, 4 (1998), 1103-22.

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historical consciousness is far better developed than that of his counterpart in *The First Woman*. This protagonist is a writer who has actually penned an entire historical novel about Mehmet the Conqueror. In this novel-within-the-novel Mehmet the Conqueror's poetic activity under his pseudonym (*takhallus*) "Avni"[22] is referred to in a manner filled with a whole series of ambivalences and ambiguities: for example, the narrator reports on how Mehmet sits in a garden and dreams about his image of the ideal woman, whom he doubtlessly will never encounter. As he begins to express his feelings on paper, one of the servants looks over his shoulder and reads the following lines:

Bir güneş yüzlü melek gördüm ki âlem mahıdur
Ol kara sümbülleri âşıklarınun âhıdur
Karalar geymiş meh-i tâban gibi ol serv-i nâz
Mülk-i efrengün meger kim hüsn içinde şahıdur
Ukde-i zünnarına her kimse kim dil bağlamaz.
Ehl-i imân olmaz ol âşıklarun güm-râhıdur
Gamzesi öldürdügine lebleri canlar virür
Var ise ol rûh-bahşün din-i İsa rahıdur
Avniyâ kılma güman kim sanâ râm ola nigâr
Sen Sitanbul şahısun ol Kalata şahıdur (230)

I saw an angel with a face as radiant as the sun – like the moon in the universe
Those black curls are the sighs of the lover
That tender cypress is like the shining moon in black garments
Among the Franks, his comeliness reigns
Who would not gladly bind his heart to the belt of his monk's robe?
He who refused could not be a true believer, but for lovers a heretic
Whose very stare is deadly for them, yet his glances bring them back to life
What difference does it make if this restorer of life is a Christian?
Oh, Avni! Do not believe that this beauty obeys you
You are king in Istanbul, he in Galata

The servant likes the poem, particularly the last couplet. However, it becomes clear to him that the beauty whom the poem describes must in fact be a young priest in Galata. This in turn leads the servant to think:

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22 The dîvân of Avnî (Fatih Sultan Mehmed) has been published in Latin script by several editors: Saffet Sıtkı Bilmen: *Fatih divanı*. 1944; Kemal Edib Ünsel: *Fatih'in Şiirleri*. 1946; Ahmed Aymutlu: *Fatih ve Şiirleri*. 1959. Art. Avnî, Fatih (Sultan Mehmed) in: *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi* (Dergâh) I, 1977, 230-31.

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"Who could ever fully understand the secret passion of the Master of the World?" (*Akıl sır mı ererdi cihan padişahının sevdalarına?*)[23] Although the servant's perspective – which represents that of the "common people" – generates distance and strangeness here, it is noteworthy that no hint of moral condemnation is to be found in his reaction.

Considering the fact that the Sultan was dreaming about his ideal woman before writing the poem in praise of the young priest in Galata, his poetic activity could be regarded as entirely formed by literary tradition, not by personal preference for the male sex. But there are two or three other passages in the book that leave no doubt about him loving young boys in reality as well. Although this sexual preference is shown as only one facet of a fascinating and many-sided character, it was precisely this aspect that upset Islamists and nationalists and led to harsh assaults against the author Nedim Gürsel during a television programme on the occasion of the *Refah* Party's annual celebration of the conquest of Istanbul.[24] The topic of violence against women, which in my opinion plays at least as an important role in the novel,[25] did not cause a disturbance of the same magnitude. Given that the subject of homosexuality is still such a sensitive point at the centre of national honour, Nedim Gürsel's way of dealing with it is all the more noteworthy. It is a step away from the obsessive preoccupation with sexual orientation.

Boğazkesen is entirely a novel about passions: the passions of the conquerors and the passions of the victims, the passions of the first-person narrator in the present, and the passions of his literary subject, Mehmet the Conqueror. It is also, however, a novel in which the objects of passion – writing, power, world domination, the city of Constantinople, people and the gender of these people – are not only interchangeable, but clearly insignificant in comparison with a set of far more pressing questions, such as: what is the quality of these passions?; to what degree are they realized?; and, finally, whether they destroy the objects of desire or not.

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23 Gürsel: *Boğazkesen*, 230.

24 Speech of the author during the symposium: *Der Auftrag des Dichters in Selbstaussagen*, July 1997, University of Berne.

25 Cf. Furrer: *Rekonstruktion und Reflexion*, 1121 f.

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EROTICISM IN GHAZAL POETRY

Bâkî and Fuzûlî – the Two Most Famous Ottoman Poets of the 16th Century

Tunca Kortantamer*
(Izmir)

The type of love and the sexuality of the beloved in Ottoman poetry are the themes of an old debate among Ottoman scholars. The opinions on these themes seem to be quite different. Some of the researchers either name this kind of love mystical or Platonic. Others stress the tradition in poetry, that is how the poet imitates his predecessors. Another group believes in the abstract character of a ghazal poetry stylised beyond reality. A different view in the debate of the kind of love in Ottoman poetry believes in the reality of love. According to this view, love and the beloved do really exist; they are neither mystical nor ideal nor stylised.

A glimpse at the Ottoman poets' ghazals reveals that it is easy to find examples of all these views. Mystic, Platonic, traditional, abstract, stylised or realistic verses can be found in almost all of the poems. However, one should never forget that poets are people possessing different characters and who are brought up in different environments. Therefore the poet's life story, environment and his perception of the world should all be taken into consideration and his ghazal should be viewed in the light of this information.[1] In this way, the dominant characteristics can be revealed and more reliable information gathered about the poem's quality.

Fuzûlî and Bâkî are generally regarded as the two most famous poets of 16th century Turkish poetry. Hence, it will be of interest to examine this contradictory situation concerning their views in their ghazals.

Fuzûlî is mentioned often as Fuzûlî-i Bagdadî in the sources. His birthplace is unknown. The environment in which he was raised is accepted

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* I would like to thank İdil Kortantamer for the translation of this paper into English.

1 To see how the poets are different from each other, see Harun Tolasa: *Sehî, Latîfî, Âşık Çelebi Tezkirelerine Göre 16. Yüzyılda Edebiyat Araştırma ve Eleştirisi*. Bornova/ İzmir; Filiz Kılıç: *XVII. Yüzyıl Tezkirelerinde Şair ve Eser Üzerine Değerlendirmeler*. [Akçağ Yayınları] Ankara 1998.

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to have been Necef, Kerkuk, Kerbela as well as Bagdad. Fuzûlî, generally believed to have been born in 1480 or before, died in 936/1556.

Not much is known about his life story. One meets a well-educated, knowledgeable poet who has a good command of Persian and Arabic. Fuzûlî belongs to the Azerbaijan literature. However, he was employed by the Ottomans: he wrote most of his panegyric poems for them, he corresponded with them, and his influence on Ottoman poetry was remarkable. For all these reasons he is recognised as a representative of 16th century East Ottoman literature.

Nearly all the researchers agree that the concept of love that appears in Fuzûlî's ghazals is based on worldly love. Although he is not a mystical poet, he utilises the metaphysical background in which he was brought up to imbue his poetry with mystical motifs.

According to Mazıoğlu, a Fuzûlî scholar, the description of beauty, the union with the beloved and the pain of separation in his ghazals develops gradually and is distanced from the material in this process. The poet is satisfied with the dream of the beloved, expressing the eternal anguish in his heart. Indeed, he does not even want a union with the beloved, for this would diminish the pleasure of love. In short, worldly love is idealised solely on the level of feelings.[2] Karahan reminds us that there are different manifestations of love in his different poems, giving examples of materialistic, profane, divine, pantheistic and Platonic love. He believes that if it were possible to arrange them in chronological order it would be possible to trace a transition from the material to the ideal.[3] According to Tanpınar, Fuzûlî's concept of pain is masochistic. However, the fact that he changes pain into the reality of life and that he idealises it is a special case. This results in the language of tragedy.[4] Gölpınarlı draws our attention to the materialistic love and the love of male beauty in Fuzûlî's works, calling this Greek love. However, he furnishes no explanation for this aspect.[5]

After browsing through each of the 302 ghazals in the *Turkish Divan*,[6] we encounter the following situation: although mystical motifs are used

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2 Hasibe Mazıoğlu: *Fuzûlî Hâfız*. Ankara 1956, p. 102, 107ff.

3 Abdülkadir Karahan: Fuzûlî. In: TDV (ed.): *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 13 (1966), p. 243, 244.

4 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar: *Fuzûlî'ye Dair, Edebiyat Üzerine Makaleler*. İstanbul 1969, p. 157.

5 Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı: *Fuzûlî Dîvânı*. İstanbul ²1961, p. LXVI-LXVII.

6 Fuzûlî: *Türkçe Dîvân*, eds. Kenan Akyüz et al. [Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, Seri 1, 8], Ankara 1958.

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intensively in his poetry, Fuzûlî is nonetheless not a mystic poet. These mystical motifs help idealize his concept of love. The verses below, chosen from two different ghazals, typically express this:

Ḫalḳa ḫūblardan viṣāl-i rāḥat-efzādur ġaraż
ʿAşıḳa ancaḳ taṣarrufsuz temāşādur ġaraż [7]

What people expect from the beauty is the comforting union.
What love aims is to contemplate without doing anything.

Ārzū-mend-i viṣālüñdür Fużūlī ḫaste-dil
Vaṣlüñ ister devlet-i dīdāruñ eyler ārzū [8]

Fuzûlî; ill at heart, yearns to join you, wishes to be with you
The desire is the joy of seeing your face.

The beloved in Fuzûlî's poems is mostly a woman. Also included in his *Divan* are ghazals referring to Leyla and Mecnun. It is obvious that in some other ghazals the beauty of a woman is the topic. In these the beloved is likened to Leyla. For instance:

Esīr-i derd-i ʿışḳ u mest-i cām-ı ḫüsn çoḫ ammā
Bizüz meşhūr olan Leylā saña Mecnūn maña dirler [9]

Many are enslaved to love's malady, to beauty's intoxicating cup.
Yet it's you and I famous: they call you Leyla and me Mecnun.

The beloved is also sometimes likened to Şirin, Züleyha or to a *houri*. The depiction of a Christian girl is eye-catching in one of his *muhammes*.

The skin of the beauty in silk is like the rosewater in a crystal bowl. Her bosom like the shiny water and the buttons like the bubbles on it. She is coy yet no one can resist her look; one would be devastated by her undoing her veil. She has red lips and red earrings. She combs her hair. Fuzûlî envies the comb. The beauty of her face resembles the rose. Her shirt is rose-coloured, her dress is red. There is a crimson anklet on her foot. In the third part (bend) Fuzûlî calls her as follows:

Ey yüzi gül göñlegi gül-gūn u donı ḳırmızı
Āteşīn kisvet giyüb odlara yandurduñ bizi
Ay u gündür ḫüsn baḫşinde cemālüñ ācizi

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7 *Ibid.*, p. 262.
8 *Ibid.*, p. 364.
9 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

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Ādem oġlında senüñ teg doğmaz ey kāfir ḳızı
Güyā atañ meh-i tābāndur anañ āftāb [10]

Rose-faced with the rose-coloured shirt and red dress:
You have put on your dress of fire, and burnt us with it.
The moon and the sun are helpless in beauty compared to you.
No one ever born of mankind like you, the daughter of heathen,
Your father the shining moon, your mother the sun.

However, the beauty of a man is often mentioned in Fuzûlî's poems as well. In some verses this beauty is defined as *muğ-beçe* (offering wine, wine-bearer), *tersa-beçe* (Christian child), or *kuloğlu* (the Janissary son). In two acrostic poems the name Alî Balî is mentioned.[11] The metaphors in the poems are traditional and overused. There is no sense of eroticism in them and many mystical motifs are evident. For example, in the verses where *tersa-beçe* (the Christian child) is mentioned, there is an allusion to creation:

Secde-gāh itmişdi ʿışḳ ehli ḳaşuñ mihrābını
Urmadın ʿİsī lebi cān-baḫşlıḳdan dem henüz [12]

When Jesus lips didn't even utter revival
Lovers had prostrated themselves on your altar-shaped eyebrow.

Perde-i çeşmüm maḳām itmişdi bir tersā-beçe
Olmadın mehd-i Mesīhā dāmen-i Meryem henüz

A Christian child had existed on the curtain of my eye
When Virgin Mary's skirt wasn't a cradle to Jesus.

Fuzûlî depicts the concept of witness (*şāhid*)[13] in the mystic style in one of his ghazals:

Maña yüz gösterür her laḥẓa yüz miñ şāhid-i devlet
Çü mir'āt-ı ruḫuñ manẓūr-ı çeşm-i pāk-bīnümdür [14]

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10 *Ibid.*, p. 453.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 368, 381.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

13 For the word "*şâhid*" as a means for the perception of God's presence, see Tunca Kortantamer: *Leben und Weltbild des altosmanischen Dichters Ahmedî unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seines Diwans*. Freiburg i. Br. 1973, p. 347ff.

14 Fuzûlî: *Türkçe Divan*, p. 226.

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Hundred thousands who witness happiness show their face to me every moment
Because the mirror of thy cheek is the place wherein I lead my clean eye.

The following statement is given in the foreword to Fuzûlî's *Persian Divan*: "Ghazal is written for the lover to reveal his malady of love to his compassionate beloved or for the lover expressing his situation to his faithful beloved. This relation takes place between the growing-up youths and with the excitement and pleasure of becoming friends with good-natured youngsters. Ghazal has a language of its own and a definite realm of vocabulary."[15] Here the impact of tradition on the style of the ghazal is stated openly.

In Fuzûlî's *Turkish Divan* there are very few verses that arouse a sense of eroticism. Only one of the 302 ghazals is erotic. Apart from this specific erotic case, we have found only four couplets (*beyt*) which can be considered erotic. The following feelings are expressed successively in these couplets: the desire to kiss the foot of the beloved, the beauty that hitches up her skirt, the desire to embrace the beauty's body like a shirt, the wish to kiss hands or feet and the envy of the wineglass that kisses the beloved's lips over and over again. These couplets are:

Zülfi kimi ayaġın ḳoymaz öpem nigārum
Yoḫdur anuñ yanında bir ḳılca iʿtibārum [16]

The beloved doesn't allow me to kiss her feet like her hair that kisses them,
I don't even have the value of a hair for her.

Ele alur gezicek ol gül-i raʿnā etegin
Vehm ider kim duta bir ʿāşıḳ-ı şeydā etegin [17]

That most beautiful rose holds her skirt while wandering
Since she fears a lover to touch her skirt.

Ḫoşdur irmek ol beden vaṣlına pīrāhen kimi
Geh el öpmek āstīn tek geh ayaġ dāmen kimi [18]

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15 See Hasibe Mazıoğlu: *Fuzûlî – Farsça Dîvan* –. [Ankara Üniversitesi DTCF Yayınları 135, Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Serisi 20] Ankara 1962, p. 9.

16 Fuzûlî: *Türkçe Divan*, p. 316.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 350.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 410.

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It would be nice to embrace that body like a shirt,
Like the sleeves that kiss her hands, and the skirt that kisses her legs.

Döne döne laʿl-i mey-gūnuñ öper ey ġonce-leb
Ḳılmasun mı reşk-i cām-ı bāde ḫūnīn-dil meni [19]

Dear bud-lipped, the wineglass kisses your lips over and over again.
Why shouldn't this envy of the wineglass bleed my heart?

The ghazals in which these couplets can be found are in different parts of the *Turkish Divan* and none of the other verses in these same ghazals display any eroticism.

As we stated above, one of Fuzûlî's 302 ghazals is distinguished from the others by being erotic from beginning to end. This poem depicts a beautiful white person who comes to the Turkish baths in the morning. This beauty starts to undress. The body can be seen through the split of the dress. The person takes off the dress and remains naked. The person wraps up their body in blue cloth and looks like a peeled almond, white in a violet leaf. The person goes to the side of the pool and dips a foot in. Fuzûlî verbalizes this act as "The pool had the honour of kissing the feet." The person rubs the body with *kese*; combs the hair; shaves the legs and body. The bowl kisses the hand. The water meets the body. Fuzûlî envies them all. Then this beauty wraps the body in towels and goes out.

Ḳıldı ol serv seḥer nāz ile ḥammāma ḫirām
Şemʿ-i ruḫsārı ile oldı münevver ḥammām

Görinürdi bedeni çāk-i giribānından
Cāmeden çıḫdı yeñi ayını gösterdi temām

Nīl-gun fuṭaya ṣardı beden-i ʿüryānın
Ṣan benefşe içine düşdi muḳaşşer bādām

Oldı pā-būs-i şerīfiyle müşerref leb-i ḥavż
Buldı dīdār-i lāṭīfiyle żiyā dīde-i cām

Ṣandılar kim ṣatılur dāne-i dürr-i ʿaraḳī
Urdı el kīseye çoḫlar ḳılub endīşe-i ḫām

Kākülin şāne açub ḳıldı hevāyı müşgīn
Tīġ müyın daġıdup itdi yiri ʿanber-fām

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19 *Ibid.*, p. 415.

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Tās elin öpdi ḥased ḳıldı ḳara baġrumı ṣu
Yetdi ṣu cismine reşk aldı tenümden ārām

Çıḫdı ḥammāmdan ol perde-i çeşmüm ṣarınub
Dutdı āsāyiş ile güşe-i çeşmümde maḳām [20]

That tall slender beauty headed to the Turkish bath
With coyness in the morning.
The bath was enlightened with the light of his cheek

One could see the body from the split,
The dress is given the leave to fall, and the moonlike body is totally revealed.
Covered the body in blue cloth
It was as if a white almond had fallen into a violet.

The pool had the honour of kissing the feet.
The wineglass brightened up with the lovely face.

Those who thought the pearl-like sweat
Was for sale put their hands in their little sack in vain.

The comb sliding down the hair filled the air with sweet scent.
The razor scattered the hair colouring the floor crimson.

The bowl kissed the hand, envy washed away my sorrowful chest.
The water ran through the body, there was no comfort on my skin.

My dearest got covered, went out of the bath
And inhabited beyond the curtain of my eyes quietly.

The eroticism in this poem is neither abstract nor lost behind the classical motifs. On the contrary, it is vivid. Gölpınarlı remarks on this: "We do not believe that this ghazal was written for a girl or that Fuzûlî went to a women's baths. As we know in Divan literature, the poet watches the world from within, with his eyes shut. Therefore, this is a world that did not take place or that was not observed, yet was seen with eyes closed. Still, it does not lack the feeling of longing and yearning... Apart from this unnatural love, he has the love of women and girls and the concept of love in general. However, we do not consider that he trespasses the limits in this Greek love at any time. In his Persian Divan he curses those who lead the youngsters into indecent ways."[21] Here, Gölpınarlı has not forgotten to consider the traditional rhetoric.

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20 *Ibid.*, p. 306.

21 Gölpınarlı: *Fuzûlî Dîvânı*, p. LXVII.

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What is very interesting in this context is Tarlan's attitude. He tends to interpret Fuzûlî as a mystic. He pretends to ignore this poem. In the three volume *Fuzûlî Divanı Şerhi* he diminishes it totally.[22]

Yet, let us repeat the point: this ghazal is unique in the whole *Turkish Divan* and is distinct when compared to the common characteristics of the other ghazals. And still this poem belongs to his work. We may explain this dilemma as follows: a poet who could write such an erotic poem when he wished did not include eroticism in the rest of his work because he found it unsuitable for his understanding of poetry. The reason for writing this erotic poem is to show his knowledge of tradition and that he was capable of writing in this style.

To sum up, we could claim the following for Fuzûlî: his poems are lyrical, Platonic and mixed with mystical elements. In his poems he describes mainly feminine beauty, but at times also masculine beauty. Eroticism is almost non-existent in his work and the sole exception in his *Turkish Divan* is a witness to tradition.

By contrast, Bâkî represents the West and the centre of the Ottoman Empire, living in a glorious, prosperous and vital atmosphere. Coming from a poor family, Bâkî attended *madrasah* and soon attracted attention because of his talent for poetry. Already by the age of 19 he was one of the prominent poets of the time and hence introduced to the palace, where he quickly reached the elite ranks, enjoying in particular Kanuni's support. There is no information about Bâkî's family life, who vainly craved to be a Sheikh-ul-Islam. According to a rumour, Kanunî presented him to a courtly-raised poet named Maid Tuti (Tuti Kadın). What is actually known is that he married at an older age and had two sons. It is also known that his sons and grandchildren were professors and judges.[23]

Bâkî is known from his youth onwards to have been an upright, good-natured, cheerful, witty, conversable, frank and straightforward man and because of this had as many enemies as friends. It is also known that he indulged in cursing poetic repartees with the poets of his time.

The sources state that he was addicted to entertainment and pleasure and that he often attended Bozahane chats, dinner gatherings, Tahtakale trips, Balat, Samatya and Galata taverns in winter as well as Kağıthane, Bahariye and Tophane revelries in summer. However, it should also be noted that this form of entertainment served to bring the poets together.

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22 See Ali Nihad Tarlan: *Fuzûlî Dîvânı Şerhi*. [Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları: 640, 1000 Temel Eser Dizisi: 120] 3 vols., Ankara 1985.

23 See Fuad Köprülü: Bâkî. In: *İA*., vol. 12 (1944), p. 245.

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It is said that Bâkî's friendship in his youth with the young and handsome son of Ebusuud Efendi's superintendent Hasan Ağa, known under the pseudonym Ruhi, caused a lot of gossip.[24] After Rûhî's death in 1552, Bâkî became very interested in the young son of his teacher Kadızade Şemseddin Ahmet, Yusuf. It is even said that this was the reason for his going to Aleppo with his teacher, who had been appointed there as a judge. In his *Divan*, ghazals are devoted to Yusuf.[25] For instance:

Seni Yūsufla güzellikde ṣorarlarsa baña
Yūsufi bilmezin ammā seni raʿnā bilirün [26]

If I am asked to compare your beauty to Yusuf's
I can't say much about Yusuf, but I can say more about your beauty.

This verse in the ghazal given above is said to have been written for him.

Bâkî never gave up his closeness to young and handsome men. For example, while he was staying in Mecca – which lasted until 1579 – the interest he showed to a halva seller destroyed his friendship with some of the notables in the town. This is stated in a poem by his friend La'lî.[27]

In Bâkî's Divan there are ghazals which show how this tendency continued into old age. In one ghazal we read:

Pīrlikte bu dü-tā ḳaddümi çeng eylemege
Neydügin bilmeyüp ol tāze cevānum özenür [28]

This bended stature of mine, due to old age
Which that youngster yearns to strike like an instrument.

In another ghazal he complains:

Bāḳī'yi zār u zebūn itdüñ yigitlik bu mıdur
Sen tevānā nev-cevān ol nā-tevān bir pīr-i ʿaşḳ [29]

You made Baki groan, you weakened him
Is that what you call bravery?
You, a strong young man, him a weak old lover.

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24 *Ibid.*, p. 246.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 246.

26 Sabahattin Küçük: *Bâkî Dîvânı*. [Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları: 601] Ankara 1994, p. 325.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 246.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 246.

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And in another ghazal, where the beloved is as young as a child, Bâkî complains about old age.

Müşkil imiş ki dil-rubā ṭıfl ola dil-sitān ola
ʿĀşıḳ-ı zār u mübtelā pīr ola nā-tevān ola [30]

Tough it is if the beloved is young and merciless
Whereas the sighing passionate lover is old and weak.

In the same ghazal Bâkî asks the cupbearer to offer him more wine to relax and feel younger:

Bāḳiye sāḳiyā feraḥ vir ki fenā bula teraḥ
Şol meyi ṣun ki bir ḳadeḥ pīr içe nev-cevān ola

Give Bâkî cheerfulness, the cupbearer,
So that sorrow diminishes.
Offer him that wine which turns an old man
Into a youngster with a drink.

In any case, in Bâkî's poetry the beauty mentioned is so young, even as a child, that it attracts attention:

Ṭıfldur pend-i peder diñlemez ol māh daḫı
Şīr-i māder yirine içmege ḳanum özenir [31]

Still a child who doesn't listen to the father's advice
And a moonlike beauty who desires to suck my blood instead of the mother's milk.

These poems often bear erotic connotations:

Güzeller ṭıfl iken eyler ḳuculmaġa heves şimdi
Ṣarılmaḳ resm ü āyīnin bilürler daḫı ḳundaḳdan [32]

Yearning to be hugged starts as early as childhood with the beauties.
Yet they know how to embrace nowadays from infancy.

The two ghazals below are in this style:

Āh kim sevdüm yine bir dil-ber-i raʿnācuġı
Şimdiden biñ var yanında ʿāşıḳ-ı şeydācuġı

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30 *Ibid.*, p. 349.
31 *Ibid.*, p. 146.
32 *Ibid.*, p. 327.

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Nice şīrīn olmasun kim süd yerine anası
Sükker ile beslemiş ol ṭūṭī-i gūyācuġı

Ṭaḳınur göz degmesün diyü ḥamā'il boynına
Ṭaḳınur yavuz naẓardan n'eylesün anacuġı

Yaluñuz nev-restedür seyr itmege ḳorḳar daḫı
Ḳanda gitse bilesince ṣalınur lālācuġı

Dünyede öldügüme hīç ġam yimezdüm Bāḳīyā
Bir gice pehlūya çeksem ol melek-sīmācuġı [33]

Oh, again I loved a young charmer
Who even now has thousand tempted lovers around.

Why shouldn't that prattling one be so sweet
Being fed by the mother by sugar instead of milk?

That beauty carries charms on the neck
Whose dear mother tries to prevent the evil eye, what can she do?

That are fears to walk alone being a youngster.
The servant (lala) follows where that beauty may go.

Bâkî, I wouldn't mind to die,
If I could have that cherub faced for one night by my side.

The second ghazal:

Ṭıfl iken dāyesi ḳucaġında
Gül idi ḳopmaduḳ budaġında

Leb-i cānāne gibi ġonca-i ter
Ḳopmadı daḫı dehr bāġında
...
Bāde ḫayli alındı meclisde
Öpdiler sāḳīyi dudaġında

Sāḳī rez duḫterinüñ ol engüşt
Sīm ḫalḫālidür ayaġında

İki ḫançer ṭaḳınmış ey Bāḳī
Haste çeşmi ṣolında ṣaġında [34]

Being a rose that was not yet snapped from its twig
That beauty was just a child on the nanny's lap.

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33 *Ibid.*, pp. 431-432.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 363.

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Such an unripe bud as the beloved
Has not existed on the wide world's garden.
...
A lot of wine has been consumed in the dinner.
They have kissed the cupbearer on his lips.

Saki (cupbearer), thy finger holding the cup is the silver-white anklet
The grape maiden (wine) on her ankle wears.

Oh Bâkî, saki's brows are like daggers
On the right and left of his fatal eyes.

Most of the time Bâkî discusses the beauty of men. Bâkî calls the beauty in the poem the master (*begüm*) or *efendi*. Or the beauty is a young man from Rumeli (*Rum ili Şehbazı)* or son of a cavalry soldier (*sipahizade*) or son of a Janissary (*kuloğlu*). Sometimes he is with turban or bristle. These poems may become erotic. For example:

Bir ḳul oġlınuñ esīr oldı ḳapusında göñül
İntisāb itdi gedā bār-geh-i sultāne [35]

The heart has become enslaved to a Janissary's son.
So the poor has given his heart away to a sovereign's companion.

Cān nişār eyledi Bāḳī bilini ḳuçmaḳ içün
Der-miyān itdi bu gün varını dervīşāne

Bâkî has scattered his soul to embrace the beloved's waist
Giving everything he possessed, like a dervish.

Or:

Bir kerre būseñ alımaduḳ ḫaṭṭuñ irmedin
Āḫır müyesser oldı hele biñ belāyile [36]

We could not kiss you before you were old enough to have a bristle.
It was just after that with a lot of reluctance and trouble
(That you have granted a kiss).

Bâkî also has some ghazals where a woman's beauty is discussed. For instance:

Ol lebler ile aş yirer belki ḳanuma
İmrenmesün dehānı meded iki cānludur [37]

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35 *Ibid.*, p. 372.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 388.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

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Her lips perhaps crave for my blood
Yet help, let her mouth, which is double alive, not desire.

The hidden meaning of this couplet is that the woman is pregnant.
In another verse a metaphor of a newlywed bride attracts attention.

Tāvūs-vār cilveler itmekde baġda
Gūyā ki nev-ʿarūsa dönüpdür şükūfe-zār [38]

The flower stands like a peacock flirts in the garden
Just like a new-wed bride.

In a ghazal where solitude, absence from home and the sufferings of love are depicted in a pessimistic tone, he explains that he chose Platonic love and mentions that the beauty of a woman is of the sort that he has to keep away from.

Mürīd-i ʿaşḳ oldum ben tecerrüd iḫtiyār itdüm
Eger meyl ider isem bir zen-i dünyāya nā-merdim [39]

I have become love's disciple, chose to distance myself from sexuality.
I'm not a man anymore, if I have a liking for a woman in this world.

From time to time Bâkî writes ghazals with a mystical touch. In one of these ghazals he mentions how the presence of God intoxicates the soul like a love potion in one of the "elest" meetings. In another he states the need to see God's creation in every beauty one's eyes can behold.
In another ghazal he says of the beloved:

Āyīne-i cemāl-i ḥaḳīḳat-nümā yüzüñ
Āb-ı zülāl-i çeşme-i ṣıdḳ u ṣafā sözüñ [40]

Your face is the mirror of beauty, reflecting truth.
Your word is the sweet water of the fountain of purity and honesty.

Kimi ayaġuñ öpmege ṣarḳar kimi elüñ
Bāḳīye besdür ey gül-i ḫandān güler yüzüñ

Some bow to kiss your feet, some to kiss your hand.
For Bâkî, my dear cheerful rose, the sight of your joyful face is enough.

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38 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 312.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 261, 262.

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In one ghazal he says that his aim is to see the beauty of the beloved's face, not to hug him, whom he calls "*beyim*" (my master). In another, he is keen to just kiss the hand of the beloved in a religious festival (*bayram*).

However, most of the time Bâkî's ghazals are not so innocent. In many there are erotic verses which hint that a poem contains lived experience. Bâkî shows a weakness to fair skin in his poems. This has been noticed quite often. For example:

Gönül bir nāzik-endāmuñ viṣāli ḫānın özler kim
Teni pālūde-i ter gibi degseñ bir zamān ditrer [41]

The heart desires to join such a fragile stature of the beloved so much
That it shakes like a white pudding with every touch.

He adores the beauty he sees in the Turkish baths because the figure has a fragile stature, has no hair on his chest, is narrow hipped and has well-toned arm muscles:

Ṣaḥn-ı ḥammāmda dün gördüm o nāzik bedeni
Sīnede mūdan eser yoḳ daḫı pehlū da güzel

Eyledüm diḳḳat ile mūy miyānına naẓar
Cümleten bī-bedel ü sā'id ü bāzū da güzel [42]

I saw thy fragile body
On the platform of the baths yesterday.
There was not even a single hair on thy chest
And the sides were nicely toned.

I looked carefully at thy narrow waist,
Thy arms and toned muscles being so beautiful.

The desire to touch, to kiss or embrace the beauty sustains the elegant pulse of exciting eroticism in Bâkî's poetry, which though never becomes common or coarse. For example, the excitement of undoing the hair and letting it touch the hips and touching it oneself is such a case:

Biline yoḳ bedel velī ṣaçuñuñ
Girihin çözseñ ol miyāne deger

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41 *Ibid.*, p. 188.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 294.

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Elüñ ol zülfe degmek Bāḳī
Ḥāṣılı ʿömr-i cāvidāne deger [43]

There is no match (to the beauty) of your waist
When you undo that knot in your hair and when it touches your hip.

Shortly, it is worth an eternal life
Just to touch that hair, Bâkî.

To have the arm of the beloved around one's neck, the touch of the lips on the ear while whispering something, to kiss the neck and ears are images that one comes across in Bâkî's erotic verses. In one of his verses he naughtily depicts how to kiss the beloved:

Ol ṣanemden Bāḳīyā bir būse daʿvā ḳıl yüri
Söylemezse öp hemān aġzın sükūt iḳrārdur [44]

Ask that beauty with persistence for a kiss, Bâkî!
If there is no answer, kiss that mouth immediately
Since silence means acceptance.
He does not forget a kiss he got from the beloved in a dream.

Ḫābda almış idim būs-ı leb-i cānānı
Cān dimāġında daḫı şimdi o leẕẕet Bāḳī [45]

In a dream, I had kissed the lip of the beloved.
Bâkî, that taste is still hidden in the depths of my soul.

In some verses the amount of eroticism increases and he mentions the sucking and sometimes even the biting of the beloved's lips and tongue:

Telḫ-kām itme beni dostum acı söz ile
Lebüñ emdürmez iseñ ṭatlu dilüñ bārī gerek [46]

Bāḳīyi söyletmez olduñ laʿlüñ alsa aġzına
Döymez ol nāzik lebüñ beñzer ki dendān zaḫmına [47]

Don't grieve me, friend, with a painful word
Even if you don't let me suck your lip, I still need your sweet tongue.

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43 *Ibid.*, p. 171.
44 *Ibid.*, p. 136.
45 *Ibid.*, p. 426.
46 *Ibid.*, p. 269.
47 *Ibid.*, p. 354.

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You don't let Bâkî speak if he takes your lips in his mouth.
It must be that your fragile lips can't stand the sores of biting.

To embrace, to hug and kiss the beloved are depicted in the first ghazal with the characterization of a coy lover and in the second with an experienced lover:

Bilini kuçmadadur ol ṣanemüñ derd ü belā
Yoġsa ʿāṣıḳlara şīrīn lebi ḥāżır helvā

Ser-i zülfiyle ḫaṭṭın örter imiş dirler o şūḫ
Açmadı kimseye ammā orayı bād-ı ṣabā

Āteş urmış yüzi gül ḫırmenine ol māhuñ
Devr-i sāġarda ruḫı ʿaksini ḳılmış peydā

Ḳızarup ruḫları gül-güne-i tāb-ı mülden
Şuʿle-i sāġar-ı mey destine yaḳmış ḥınnā

Meclis-i meyde leb-i yāre ṭolaşur dirler
Elüme girmeye mi bir daḫı cām-ı ṣahbā [48]

It is such a trouble to embrace the waist of that icon-like beauty.
Yet that beauty's lips are so sweet and so ready to be kissed.

That ravishing beauty covers the bristle with the tip of the hair,
And the morning breeze has not uncovered it for anyone.

That moonlike beauty's face has set fire to the rose garden,
And the beauty's cheek was reflected to it, as the wineglass turned from hand to hand.

Rose-coloured have those cheeks become from the heat of the wine
And the light of the wineglass has coloured the hands red.

They say during the revels that the wineglass has touched the beloved's lips.
And if I come across that glass, oh I will.

Even the rhyme of the second ghazal is to embrace:

İsterse n'ola ḫaste göñül yāre ṣarılmaḳ
Mecrūḥ olıcaḳ lāzım olur yara ṣarılmak

Olmadı müyesser baña bir serv-i revānuñ
Laʿlini öpüp biline bir pāre ṣarılmaḳ

Öpdüm elini ḳucmaġa bilin edeb itdüm
Güldi didi bilmez daḫı bī-çāre ṣarılmaḳ

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48 *Ibid.*, p. 107.

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Dil-berlerüñ ey ġonca-dehen ʿādeti budur
Gül ruḫlarını ara öpüp ara ṣarılmaḳ

Żāyiʿ ola mı bunca belā dünyede Bāḳī
Yā Rabbi naṣīb ola mı dil-dāra ṣarılmaḳ [49]

What of it, if my ill heart wishes to embrace the beloved?
The wound has to be wrapped up, if one is wounded.

To embrace one tall, slender beauty
And to kiss the lips, wasn't granted to me.

Kissing the hands I was shy to hug
"This poor one doesn't know how to hug" laughingly that beauty said.

Oh, you bud-lipped, it is the habit of these charming beauties: kiss
and embrace over and over again.

All the tortures we have gone through, will they be in vain, Bâkî?
Will I ever be able to embrace the beloved, my God?

The event of undressing the beloved is of importance for the eroticism of Bâkî's ghazals. In one of the verses he asks the beloved to strip.

Ġoncalar içre nihān eyleme gül-berg-i terüñ
Yaʿni seyr eyleyelüm sīneñi çöz dügmelerüñ [50]

Don't hide the rose leaves in the buds!
Undo your buttons, let us see your chest!

In another ghazal he states that union will not take place unless the beloved undresses.

Bend-i ḳabā çözülmeye tā cāme çıḳmaya
Naḳd-i viṣāl ʿāşıḳ-ı nā-kāme çıḳmaya[51]

Unless you untie the knot and take that dress off
Our union is like the payment not granted to the desolate lover.

In a different verse Bâkî talks about how he undressed a beauty the other night:

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49 *Ibid.*, p. 253.
50 *Ibid.*, p. 271.
51 *Ibid.*, p. 394.

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Mestāne ṣoydı o mehi Bāḳī geçen gice
Nāziklik ile çözdi muḳaddem ḳuşaġını [52]

Bâkî undressed that moonlike beauty last night
In ecstasy, kindly he first undid the belt.

The love in Bâkî's poems has generally nothing to do with mystic, romantic or Platonic love. Moreover, the beauties can be bought if necessary.

Güzeller mihri-bān olmaz dimek yañluşdur ey Bāḳī
Olur va'llāhi billāhi hemān yalvarı görsünler [53]

Bâkî it is wrong to say that lovers are without mercy.
They will be merciful if you plead to them or just show them money.

In Bâkî's Divan there are 548 ghazals. In some of these eroticism appears vividly, often like a part of lived poetry. The examples of eroticism mentioned above cannot be defined as mystic, platonic, traditional abstract or stylised. While men have taken an noticeable part in Bâkî's life, there have also been women. In his ghazals there are verses which clearly depict that he inclines towards male beauty; his verses are however never common or coarse. On the contrary, they are beautiful and impressive.

In conclusion it is clearly evident that a basic difference towards eroticism exists between two very different poets of the same century. Nevertheless, they have some common points as well. Thus, generalizations need to be avoided and in our research we should consider all the individual and cultural aspects which determine the attitudes and experience of these two important representatives of Ottoman Poetry.

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52 *Ibid.*, p. 403.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 134.

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Ghazal in the West

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GOETHE'S APPROXIMATION OF THE GHAZAL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES*

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> Wie nahe hätte es gelegen, im *Divan* etwa die östliche Form des Ghasels vorzuführen. Aber jenes Wort von den hohlen Masken (aus dem Gedicht *Nachbildung* im Buch Hafis) gilt auch für sie, und so erscheinen nur einige wenige Abwandlungen, die kaum noch als solche kenntlich sind.
>
> (Wolfgang Kayser[1])

In what respect can one consider the ghazal a "Genre of World Literature" anyhow? This question of the underlying framework of all of our discussions may seem pedantic and even superfluous after the presentations on "The Ghazal in Classical Arabic and Persian Literatures" and "The Migration of the Ghazal from One Language Community to Another." Fortunately however, it seems an easy question to answer. For if one understands "World literature" as a collective term for all the literary works in world, then a considerable number of lyric texts, primarily but not exclusively, from the Middle East, which were written over the course of the past millennium, can be classified as ghazals. Should one prefer instead of a quantitative, a qualitative concept as the basis of "World literature,"[2] then the ghazal is undoubtedly one of the most important lyric genres, to which several of the most important poems of the world belong, comparable to the ode and elegy of Classical Antiquity, the sonnet of the Renaissance or the Romantic 'Lied' and their later manifestations.

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1 *Kleine deutsche Versschule.* 24th ed. Tübingen et al. 1992, 61. "How suggestive it must have been to present in the *Divan* the Eastern form of the ghazal. But the words about the hollow mask (from the poem *Emulation* in the Hafis book) also applied to it, and so only a few adaptations appear which are hardly recognizable as such."

2 Cf. Hendrik Birus: Am Schnittpunkt von Komparatistik und Germanistik: Die Idee der Weltliteratur heute. In: H. Birus (ed.): *Germanistik und Komparatistik: DFG-Symposion 1993.* Stuttgart et al. 1995, 439-57, here 443f..

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By no means do either of these explications correspond to Goethe's understanding of "Weltliteratur," as he coined the term in 1827.[3] With this term he was not interested in the classification or ranking of literary texts, but rather in the increasing globalization of the literary communication "of all those currently living," admittedly "under constant consideration of that which has remained and is known to us from the past."[4] Therefore Goethe was, above all, interested in the following questions with respect to foreign literatures:

1.) Whether they accept the ideas to which we hold dearly and which come in useful in our customs and art.
2.) To what extent they find the fruits of our scholarship enjoyable and appropriate the results of that scholarship.
3.) To what extent they employ our aesthetic forms.
4.) To what extent they once again treat as subject matter that which we have already fashioned.[5]

Our general theme "The Ghazal as a Genre of World Literature" can therefore be put into concrete form with respect to the third point above: Whether and to what extent Goethe and his followers employed this aesthetic form of oriental poetry? Indeed, Goethe was indisputably one of the greatest masters of verse in German poetry; one need only to read his fragment of a polymetric drama *Pandora* or *Faust, Part II*. Furthermore, he was instrumental in introducing to German literature the foreign verse forms he used in his *Römische Elegien*, *Venezianische Epigramme*, *Sonette*, the 'Ottave rime' *Urworte Orphisch*, and the 'tercines' *Bey Betrachtung*

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3 Cf. Hendrik Birus: Main Features of Goethe's Concept of World Literature. In: Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek et al. (eds.): *Comparative Literature Now: Theories and Practice. / La Littérature comparée à l'heure actuelle: Théories et réalisations. Selected Papers / Contributions choisies du Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature comparée, tenu à l'Université d'Alberta en 1994*. Paris 1999, 31-41.

4 "[…] allgemeine, freie Wechselwirkung aller zugleich Lebenden, in steter Rücksicht auf das was uns vom Vergangenen übrig und bekannt ist" (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: Flüchtige Übersicht über die Kunst in Deutschland [1800]. In: Friedmar Apel et al. [eds.]: *Goethe: Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*. Frankfurter Ausgabe. 40 vols. Frankfurt/Main 1985-99, vol. 18, 809 – henceforth abbreviated as *FA*).

5 "1.) Ob sie die Ideen gelten lassen an denen wir fest halten und die uns in Sitte u[nd] Kunst zu statten kommen. – 2.) Inwiefern sie die Früchte unsrer Gelehrsamkeit genießbar finden und die Resultate derselben sich aneignen – 3.) Inwiefern sie sich unsrer ästhetischen Formen bedienen – 4.) Inwiefern sie das was wir schon gestaltet haben wieder als Stoff behandeln." (Goethe: Schemata im Zusammenhang mit Ueber Kunst und Alterthum VI 3 <3>, in: *FA* 22, 722).

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von Schillers Schädel. At the same time, he was particular in the adoption of foreign metres and stanza forms. For example, in contrast to Hölderlin or Platen, he never used the ode forms of Classical Antiquity, just as he almost completely refrained from the artificial Italian and French stanza forms cultivated by the German Romantics.[6] In this sense, the poem *Nachbildung* (*Emulation*) from the *West-Eastern Divan* ends with the stanza:

Zugemeßne Rhythmen reizen freylich,
Das Talent erfreut sich wohl darin;
Doch wie schnelle widern sie abscheulich,
Hohle Masken ohne Blut und Sinn.
Selbst der Geist erscheint sich nicht erfreulich,
Wenn er nicht, auf neue Form bedacht,
Jener todten Form ein Ende macht.

Measured rhythms are indeed delightful,
And therein a pleasing talent basks;
But how quickly they become so frightful,
There's no blood nor sense in hollow masks.
Even spirit shudders at such tasks
If it can't, with new form occupied,
Put an end at last to form that's died.[7]

This reserve even applied for a long time to the sonnet. And around 1800 when Goethe finally composed his first – *Das Sonett* –, he ended it with the reserved tercets:

So möcht' ich selbst in künstlichen Sonetten
In sprachgewandter Maßen kühnem Stolze
Das Beste, was Gefühl mir gäbe, reimen;

Nur weiß ich hier mich nicht bequem zu betten
Ich schneide sonst so gern aus ganzem Holze,
Und müßte nun doch auch mitunter leimen.[8]

I too should like to mould the best inspiration of my feelings into the rhymes of artful sonnets, the bold price of numbers in skilled language;

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6 Cf. Wolfgang Kayser: Goethes Dichtungen in Stanzen. In: W. Kayser: *Kunst und Spiel: Fünf Goethe-Studien.* Göttingen 1961, 86-99, here 86.

7 *FA* 3, 32; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: *Poems of the West and East: West Eastern Divan – West-östlicher Divan. Bi-Lingual Edition of the Complete Poems. Verse Translation by John Whaley With an Introduction by Katharina Mommsen.* Bern et al. 1998, 65.

8 *FA* 2, 408.

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> but I do not find this a comfortable bed; normally I like to carve out of a whole block of wood, and here, from time to time, I should like to be using glue.[9]

Goethe's hesitant approximation of the ghazal transpired within the framework of his personal dialogue with an eminent Middle Eastern writer – admittedly no contemporary, but rather the Persian poet Ḥāfiẓ, who lived more than four centuries before him. Certainly, this dialogue could not take place directly with the posthumously collected *Dīwān* of Ḥāfiẓ, for Goethe did not know Persian and needed an interpreter. This, too, is typical for the dawning epoch of "Weltliteratur." For whereas in Classical Antiquity, the Latin Middle Ages and even in the following centuries the great literary works were either known internationally in the original or in loose vernacular adaptations, the expansion of the literary horizon towards Northern and Eastern Europe and towards the Middle and Far East was unavoidably linked with a decisive revalorization of literary translation.

So it was that Ḥāfiẓ came to Goethe's attention through the first complete translation: *Der Diwan des Mohammed Schemsed-din Hafis. Aus dem Persischen zum erstenmal ganz übersetzt von Joseph v. Hammer*, Stuttgart and Tübingen 1812-1813 [rather 1814]. The designation of origin "from the Persian," however, is accurate only *cum grano salis*. Rather, Hammer's formulation should be taken literally: "The translator has followed in Sūdī's footsteps."[10] Just as Hammer's transliterations of the Persian *incipits* are completely tinged with Turkish (for example, *gül* and *bülbül* instead of *gul* and *bulbul* for "rose and nightingale"), his translation is based much less on the original text than on the philological commentary of the Bosnian Sūdī (end of the 16th century), in which every line is first quoted in the original, then explained in Turkish and finally translated into Turkish. A decade later, Goethe would have appreciated as an epitome of the exchange of "Weltliteratur" the fact that his *West-Eastern Divan* developed from such a hybrid foundation, a fact which is in keeping with the spirit of his final usage of the term "Weltliteratur" on the occasion of the "translation of my latest botanic works":

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9 David Luke (ed.): *Goethe: Selected Verse: With Plain Prose Translations of Each Poem*. London 1986, 198.

10 "Der Uebersetzer ist in die Fußstapfen Sudi's getreten." (*Der Diwan des Mohammed Schemsed-din Hafis: Aus dem Persischen zum erstenmal ganz übersetzt von Joseph v. Hammer*. 2 vols. Stuttgart et al. 1812-13 [rather 1814], vol. 1, iv f.).

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> I translated several main passages, which my friend Soret could not understand in my German, into my French. He, in turn, translated them into his French, and I believe firmly, they would be perhaps more generally comprehensible in that language than in German. [...] These are the immediate consequences of "Weltliteratur" in general. Nations will be able to seize faster the mutual advantages.[11]

Still far removed from such a playful versatility however, Goethe felt above all a strong "anxiety of influence"[12] upon the appearance of Hammer's Ḥāfiẓ translation, the "the complete poems [...] of this masterful poet":

> and I had to react productively, because I would not have been able to withstand the powerful appearance otherwise. The influence was too lively; the translation lay before me and I had to find a reason for my own participation. All that what was kept and harboured by me which was similar to it in material and spirit distinguished itself and did so with even more vehemence as I felt necessary to flee from the real world, which was threatening itself both openly and quietly, into an ideal world, in which a pleasurable role was entrusted to my desire, ability and will.[13]

What thus began as some "Gedichte an *Hafis*" ("Poems to *Ḥāfiẓ*")[14] quickly became a *Versammlung deutscher Gedichte mit stetem Bezug auf den Divan des persischen Saengers Mahomed Schemseddin Hafis* (*Collection of German Poems with Constant Reference to the Diwan of the Persian*

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11 "Ein paar Hauptstellen, welche Freund Soret in meinem Deutsch nicht verstehen konnte, übersetzt ich in mein Französisch; er übertrug sie in das seinige, und so glaub ich fest, sie werden in jener Sprache allgemeiner verständig seyn, als vielleicht im Deutschen. [...] Dieß sind die unmittelbaren Folgen der allgemeinen Weltliteratur; die Nationen werden sich geschwinder der wechselseitigen Vortheile bemächtigen können." (Goethe to Sulpiz Boisserée, 24. 4. 1831. In: Sophie von Sachsen [ed.]: *Goethes Werke*. 133 vols. Weimar 1887-1919, Repr. München 1987, ser. IV, vol. 48, 189 f. – henceforth abbreviated as *WA*.) Cf. Hendrik Birus: Goethes Idee der Weltliteratur: Eine historische Vergegenwärtigung. In: Manfred Schmeling (ed.): *Weltliteratur heute: Konzepte und Perspektiven*. Würzburg 1995, 5-28, here 26f.

12 Cf. Harold Bloom: *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. Oxford et al. 1975.

13 "[...] und ich mußte mich dagegen productiv verhalten, weil ich sonst vor der mächtigen Erscheinung nicht hätte bestehen können. Die Einwirkung war zu lebhaft, die deutsche Uebersetzung lag vor und ich mußte also hier Veranlassung finden zu eigener Theilnahme. Alles was dem Stoff und dem Sinne nach bey mir Ähnliches verwahrt und gehegt worden, that sich hervor und dies mit umsomehr Heftigkeit als ich höchst nötig fühlte mich aus der wirklichen Welt, die sich selbst offenbar und im Stillen bedrohte, in eine ideelle zu flüchten, an welcher vergnüglichen Theil zu nehmen meiner Lust, Fähigkeit und Willen überlassen war." (Goethe: Annals 1815, in: *FA* 17, 259f.).

14 Goethe to Christiane v. Goethe, July 28, 1814, in: *FA* 34, 355.

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Singer Mahomed Schemseddin Hafis),[15] later a *West-Oestlicher Divan oder Versammlung deutscher Gedichte in stetem Bezug auf den Orient* (*West-Eastern Divan or Collection of German Poems with Constant Reference to the Orient*)[16] and finally ended in the *West-oestlicher Divan von Goethe* (Stuttgart 1819). Both Goethe's late *Divan* poem *An Hafis*[17] and a ghazal-like poem, finally not included in the *West-Eastern Divan*, show how Goethe saw this undertaking as a dialogue with his admired predecessor. This second poem goes:

Hafis dir sich gleich zu stellen
Welch ein Wahn!

Rauscht doch wohl auf Meeres Wellen
Rasch ein Schiff hinan

Fühlet seine Seegel schwellen
Wandelt kühn und stolz

Wills der Ocean zerschellen,
Schwimmt's, ein morsches Holz.

Dir in Liedern, leichten, schnellen,
Wallet kühle Flut,

Siedet auf zu Feuerwellen;
Mich verschlingt die Glut.

Doch mir will ein Dünckel schwellen,
Der mir Kühnheit giebt.

Hab doch auch im sonnenhellen
Land gelebt, geliebt.[18]

Ḥāfiẓ, I as great as you?
That could never be!

Swift upon the heaving blue
Sails a ship at sea,

Feels its canvas lift and fill,
Tosses bold and proud,

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15 So the complete title of Goethe's *Deutscher Divan* (December 1814), in: *FA* 3, 457.

16 *Ibid.* 549 (February 24, 1816).

17 *FA* 3, 216-18 (September 11, 1818); English trans.: *To Hafis* (*West-Eastern Divan*, trans. Whaley, 37-41).

18 *Ibid.* 605 (December 12, 1815).

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And – if ocean seeks to kill –
Drifts like rotten wood.

To your swift and easy lyre,
Quiet waters raise

Waves that seethe and turn to fire;
Kill me in the blaze.

But dark swells my soul will move,
And they make me bold:

I, too, did once live and love
In lands of sunshine gold.

One may criticize the difference between this poem and the ghazal form brought to a zenith by Ḥāfiẓ: the lack of the opening *Šāh-bayt* (aa); the repetition of the mono-rhyme (*qāfiya*) in the endings of the odd-numbered lines of verse (corresponding to the unrhymed half lines of verse [*miṣrāʿ*] in the Persian original) instead of in the endings of the even-numbered lines of verse (corresponding to the rhymed long lines of verse [*bayt*]); the connection of the half lines of the original through alternating linked verse; and finally, the complete restraint from the use of refrain-like rhymes (*radīf*).[19] This difference in form was mostly not due to lack of knowledge on Goethe's part. Indeed, Hammer clearly identified the necessary characteristics of the ghazal in the "Preface" to his Ḥāfiẓ translation:

> The two first lines of the first *bayt* or distich, known as the *Šāh-bayt* or royal distich, have the same rhyme. In the following distichs, only the second verse of each rhymes with the rhyme of the first distich. In the final line, the poet always calls himself by his surname.[20]

Hammer did try to preserve this form in almost half of Ḥāfiẓ's ghazals which he translated in German, although there were several drastic

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19 "Es gibt [...] im 'West-östlichen Divan' auch kaum ein regelrechtes, geschweige denn ein formvollendetes Ghasel (entweder stimmt die Verteilung der Reime nicht, oder der Rhythmus hapert); die Einflüsse des Ghasels bei Goethe liegen mehr in der Bildersprache, in Witz und Ironie sowie in der Relativierung der konfessionellen Schranken." (Art. Ghasel [Johann Christoph Bürgel] in: *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft* I, Berlin 1997, 722-24, here 723).

20 "[Es] haben die zwey Verse des ersten *Beits* oder Distichons, welches *Schachbeit* oder das Königsdistichon heißt, denselben Reim. In den folgenden reimen nur immer die zweiten Verse auf den Reim des ersten Distichons. Im Schlußverse nennt sich der Dichter immer mit seinem Beynamen." (*Der Diwan des Mohammed Schemsed-din Hafis*, trans. Hammer, vol. 1, ii.).

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modifications. 1) From time to time, he did without the inaugural rhyme of the *Šāh-bayt*. 2) The long line of Persian verse was often split into two shorter German lines of verse; the Persian distichs were thus transformed into unrhymed German four-line stanzas, the last lines of which were linked through mono-rhyme (xxxa / xxxa / xxxa / …). 3) In place of the normal end-rhyme as merely a "correspondence of the final sound including the vowels"[21] (*Band / Hand*), Hammer almost exclusively used 'identical rhymes' (*Freundinn / Freundinn*),[22] admittedly "rimes riches" (*gefallen / vorgefallen / hereingefallen / herabgefallen*).[23] As Hammer himself confessed, this has the result that "the same sound of the rhyme, which to Middle Eastern ears is a requisite beauty, is lost, and it is only in those cases where all stanzas of the original end with one and the same word that that same word recurs at the end of the stanza in the translation, as well."[24] 4) Hammer does indeed occasionally imitate the *radīf* (for example, every two lines: "Ist nicht umsonst"[25] or "Wer ist es?"[26] at the end of each stanza), but the proper end-rhyme, which necessarily proceeds it in Ḥāfiẓ's ghazals, is then always lacking.

These deviations from the essential ghazal form in Hammer's Ḥāfiẓ translation had two main consequences for Goethe. First, they gave him more freedom with respect to the admired paragon: for example, the fact that he mixed classical, oriental and contemporary ideas, or that he articulated them with the help of indigenous lyric forms – from the romance stanza to free verse. As Harold Bloom has already remarked with respect to Goethe, "the linguistic distance allowed him to absorb and imitate Shakespeare without crippling anxieties."[27] Secondly, Hammer's unfaithfulness to the metre and rhyme as essential elements of Persian poetry coupled with the unsatisfactory nature of his transliterations of Ḥāfiẓ's *incipits* (complete

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21 "Übereinstimmung des Auslauts unter Einschluß der Vokale" (Christian Wagenknecht: *Deutsche Metrik: Eine historische Einführung*. 3rd ed. München 1993, 135).

22 *Der Diwan des Mohammed Schemsed-din Hafis*, trans. Hammer, vol. 1, 56f. (Ghazal Tā 10).

23 *Ibid.* 62-64 (Ghazal Tā 14).

24 "[…] der gleiche Anklang des Reimes, welcher orientalischem Gehöre eine unerläßliche Schönheit dünkt, gänzlich verloren[geht], und nur dort, wo im Originale alle Strophen mit einem und demselbem Worte enden, kehrt auch in der Uebersetzung dasselbe Wort am Ende der Strophe wieder" (*ibid.* vi).

25 "[…] is not for nothing / in vain" (*ibid.* 71, Ghazal Tā 18).

26 "Who is it?" (*ibid.* 93-95, Ghazal Tā 32).

27 Harold Bloom: *The Western Canon. The Books and School of the Ages*. New York et al. 1993, 209.

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with numerous conspicuous typographical errors!) awoke in Goethe an unappeasable interest in the original. Thus, since December 1814, he studied not only William Jones' *Poeseos Asiaticae Commentariorum Libri Sex*, Hammer's *Fundgruben des Orients* (*Treasuries of the Orient*) and other new specialized literature, but he also learnt Arabic script and ventured to try Persian poetry together with Middle Eastern experts such as the 25-year-old Professor Johann Gottfried Ludwig Kosegarten (1792-1860). When, in the *West-Eastern Divan*, he published three poems in Arabic script complete with German translation and commentary, it was in no way intellectual boasting. One can therefore be certain that Goethe knew Persian ghazals firsthand.

His first attempt at a ghazal (aaxaxaxa...) was the *Divan* poem *Nachbildung*, which was addressed to Ḥāfiẓ. It begins with the stanza:

In deine Reimart hoff' ich mich zu finden,
Das Wiederholen soll mir auch gefallen,
Erst werd' ich Sinn, sodann auch Worte finden;
Zum zweytenmal soll mir kein Klang erschallen,
Er müßte denn besondern Sinn begründen,
Wie du's vermagst begünstigter vor allen.

In your own style of rhyme I'm now inclining,
The repetitions I shall be delighting,
To sense then words their proper place assigning:
I'll find no sound a second time inviting
Unless thereby the meaning it's refining
As, gifted one, in all your peerless writing.[28]

With a single exception, all of Goethe's later ghazal-like poems have the following formal aspect in common with this one: that, similar to the more improvised *Qiṭʿā* (arab. "fragment"), they do not have the opening "royal *Bayt*" (aa) and that they are connected with linked verse (abab...) rather than the unrhymed ends of lines (xaxa...) of the ghazal. At the same time, they adhere thematically to the challenge of the quoted "meta-ghazal": "No sound a second time will I indite | Unless thereby the meaning is refined." This is an anti-formalistic postulate, which, looking to Baudelaire, has been generalized in Roman Jakobson's structuralist declaration of a "semantic foundation of the phenomena of formal

28 *FA* 3, 32 (December 7, 1814); English trans.: *Emulation* (*West-Eastern Divan*, trans. Whaley, 65).

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distribution."[29] Goethe commented thusly on the occasion of Platen's *Ghaselen*, half a decade after his final abandonment of this lyric form:

> That which is characteristic for the ghazal is that it demands a wealth of content; the constantly recurring rhyme always wants to find a ready supply of similar thoughts. Therefore, not everyone succeeds; these, however, will please you.[30]

Which "wealth of content" was Goethe able to conjure up in ghazal-like poems? They refer almost without exception to oriental themes or at the least were stimulated by Middle Eastern sources and belong, therefore, to the *West-oestlicher Divan* and its immediate orbit. Where this connection is dissolved – as in the *Wiegenlied dem jungen Mineralogen Wolfgang v. Goethe. Den 21 April 1818*[31] –, the formal difference between the ghazal and similar romance lyric forms with recurrent rhyme (rondeau, terzine, sonnet, etc.) becomes blurred.[32] If one inquires of the spectrum of the "special spirit," then the second and third example of this type of poem by Goethe have specifically Islamic conceptions as their starting points. "The so-called Mohammedan rosary in which Allah's name is glorified through ninety-nine attributes"[33] is the basis for the crowning poem of the "Book

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29 "Or, ces phénomènes de distribution formelle ont un fondement sémantique." (R. Jakobson and C. Lévi-Strauss: Les chats de Charles Baudelaire. In: Roman Jakobson: *Selected Writings*. Vol. 3: *Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry*, ed. Stephen Rudy. The Hague et al.1981, 447-64, here 461).

30 "Es ist bei den Ghaselen das Eigentümliche, daß sie eine große Fülle von Gehalt verlangen; der stets wiederkehrende gleiche Reim will immer einen Vorrat ähnlicher Gedanken bereit finden. Deshalb gelingen sie nicht Jedem; diese aber werden Ihnen gefallen." (Johann Peter Eckermann: Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens, November 21, 1823. In: *FA* 39, 77f.) See also Eckermann's benevolent review of *Neue Ghaselen von August Graf von Platen*; in: *Ueber Kunst und Alterthum* IV 3 (*FA* 21, 590f.).

31 *FA* 2, 605f. English trans.: *Lullaby for the Young Mineralogist Wolfgang v. Goethe.* (Sebastian Donat and Hendrik Birus: *Goethe – a Last Universal Genius?*, trans. Susan Marie Praeder, Raymond Graham Pascoe, Robert Rice, Jeremy Roth. Göttingen 2002, 97).

32 So Friedrich Schlegel, in a letter to his brother August Wilhelm (January 15, 1803), characterized the ghazal as "a Persian poetic genre that very much joins to the glosse, the sestine and the sonnet and approximately takes the middle course between all of them" ("eine persische Dichtart, die sich sehr an die Glosse, Sestine und das Sonett anschließt und zwischen diesen allen ungefähr das Mittel hält"; Oskar F. Walzel [ed.]: *Friedrich Schlegels Briefe an seinen Bruder August Wilhelm*. Berlin 1890, 507).

33 "Schon der sogenannte Mahometanische Rosenkranz, wodurch der Name Allah mit neun und neunzig Eigenschaften verherrlicht wird, ist eine solche Lob- und Preis-Litaney." (*West-Eastern Divan*, chapt. "Dschelaleddin Rumi"; *FA* 3, 171).

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of Suleika": the "litany of praise" on the beloved, *In tausend Formen...*;[34] and the formal correspondence is the identical rhyme on "dich" ("you") which in the first four stanzas is expanded into a 'rime riche,' "(er)kenn' ich dich" ("I know you"). Furthermore, the poem *Ob der Koran von Ewigkeit sey?...*[35] in the "Book of The Tavern and the Tavern-Boy" makes reference, beginning with the first line, to a central doctrine of the Islamic theology. The identical rhyme on "sey" ("be"), twice broadened to "von Ewigkeit sey" ("eternal be") and "geschaffen sey" ("created be"), as well as the linked verse endings ("frag' | weiß | zweifl' ich nicht" ["I don't ask | know | doubt"], "Mosleminen Pflicht" ["faithful Muslims ought"], "kein Gedicht" ["no fiction"], "Angesicht" ["sight"]) are the formal counterparts to this jovial monologic catechizing.

With the dialogue poem *Da du nun Suleika heißest...*,[36] written four days after the final aforementioned poem, the poet, through use of the identical rhyme "seyn" ("be") with very different word connections, places himself directly in the tradition of famous Middle Eastern models: *Hatem Thai* (*Ḥātīm aṭ-Ṭā'ī*) und *Hatem Zograi* (*aṭ-Ṭughrā'ī*). And, similarly, Grand Duke Carl August von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach is celebrated under the name of *Schach Sedschan* (*Šāh Šujā'*) in the panegyric poem *An Schach Sedschan und seines Gleichen*,[37] which dates from the same time. Indeed, the coupling of this poem with the contemporaneous poem *Höchste Gunst*[38] in the "Book of Observations" with the suggestive identical rhyme "gefunden" ("found") gives the second poem oriental connotations.

When Goethe, after more than four months, once again came close to the ghazal form, he used as a connecting point the poem *Ob der Koran von Ewigkeit sey...*, although admittedly not the "serious" theological theme, but rather its function as a drinking song within the "Book of The Tavern and the Tavern-Boy." The fact that the word "Trunkenheit" ["drunkenness"] recurs constantly (with the exception of a central orphan line) like a refrain

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34 *Ibid.* 101f. (March 16, 1815); English trans.: *A thousand forms to hide in you discover ...* (*West-Eastern Divan*, trans. Whaley, 345).

35 *Ibid.* 104f. (May 20, 1815); English trans.: *Can the Koran eternal be?...* (*West-Eastern Divan*, trans. Whaley, 353).

36 *Ibid.* 74f. (May 24, 1815); English trans.: *Now you bear Suleika's name...* (*West-Eastern Divan*, trans. Whaley, 247).

37 *Ibid.* 47; English trans.: *To Shah Sedshan and his like* (*West-Eastern Divan*, trans. Whaley, 151).

38 *Ibid.* 47f. (May 27, 1815); English trans.: *Highest Favour* (*West-Eastern Divan*, trans. Whaley, 153).

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in the Ḥāfiẓian "love and wine" poem *Sie haben wegen der Trunkenheit...*[39] can be understood as a playful imitation of a drunken person's manner of speech. And it is also the case in the poem *Wo man mir Guts erzeigt uberall...*,[40] an encomium on the excellent 1811 wine vintage written ten days later and culminating with an address to Ḥāfiẓ. In this poem, the name of the wine "Eilfer" is repeated 37 times as an identical rhyme. Both poems represent Goethe's strongest formal approximation of the ghazal: the first through the linkage of the even verses with a mono-rhyme ("verklagt" ["accused"], "gesagt" ["said"], "es tagt" ["it is dawning"] etc.), while the odd lines of verse in analogy to the *radīf* repeat the one word "Trunkenheit" ("drunkenness"), thrice expanded to "Betrunkenheit" and once to "Liebestrunkenheit" ("drunkenness by love"). However, for the one and only time for Goethe, the song of "Eilfer" is without rhyme for the odd lines of verse. That said, he changed these to linked verse in a second, earlier broken-off version.[41]

The second phase of Goethe's approximating the ghazal form ended with the poem of homage *Hafis dir sich gleich zu stellen...*,[42] the beginning of which I have already quoted, and the poem in linked verse *Sprich! Unter welchem Himmelszeichen...*,[43] whose arrangement of the topic of love is in harmony with the "Book of Suleika," without, however, exhibiting specifically Middle Eastern motifs. This is similarly true of the thematically related latecomers of this lyric form: *Mit der Teutschen Freundschaft...*[44] and *Haben Sie von deinen Fehlen...*,[45] the latter of which was taken up as part of the "Book of Observations" in the final edition of the *West-oestlicher Divan*.

If Goethe's productive examination of the ghazal ended, at the latest, by the time of the publication of the *West-Eastern Divan*, this moment also marked the beginning of the prolificness of this lyric form in German

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39 *Ibid.* 107 (September 29, 1815); English trans.: *Because of all our drunkenness...* (*West-Eastern Divan*, trans. Whaley, 367).

40 *Ibid.* 597-99 (September 30, 1815).

41 *Ibid.* 599f.

42 *Ibid.* 605 (December 22, 1815); for its beginnig see above p. 471.

43 *Ibid.* 606 (January 8, 1816).

44 *Ibid.* 610 (March 19, 1818); English trans.: *With a German, amity...* (Johann Wolfgang Goethe: *The Collected Works*. 12 vols. Princeton 1983-95, vol. 1: Christopher Middleton [ed. and trans.]: *Selected Poems*, 223).

45 *Ibid.* 342 (through August 1819); English trans.: *Round your very frequent failing...* (*West-Eastern Divan*, trans. Whaley, 125).

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poetry. Emboldened by Goethe's example and simultaneously closer to his Persian models, Friedrich Rückert composed free renderings of the *œuvre* of Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī. These were the first true-to-form ghazals in the German language,[46] and Rückert opened the collection with the self-confident epigraph:

DIE FORM DES GHASELS

Die neue Form, die ich zuerst in deinen Garten pflanze,
O Deutschland, wird nicht übel stehn in deinem reichen Kranze.
Nach meinem Vorgang mag sich nun mit Glück versuchen Mancher
Sogut im persischen Ghasel, wie sonst in welscher Stanze.[47]

THE FORM OF THE GHAZAL

The new seed which I in your garden sow,
O Germany, for your rich harvest wreath will grow;
And thou who once *ottave rime* made
Thy gifts now in ghazals of Persia show!

Inspired by this, and beginning on the 16th of January, 1821, August von Platen wrote a series of ghazals and published them in four collections through the year 1823. Rückert did not fail to praise the poems, but insisted on having been "the first German tamer of this Eastern form,"[48] whereupon Platen referred to him as "Rückert, whom we have to thank for the first ghazals."[49] Just as Rückert opened his collection *Oestliche Rosen* (1821) with the artful poem *Zu Goethe's west-östlichem Diwan*,[50] Platen began his *Nachbildungen aus dem Diwan des Hafis* with a *Prolog an Goethe*.[51] Both

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46 Cf. Hubert Tschersig: *Das Gasel in der deutschen Dichtung und das Gasel bei Platen.* Leipzig 1907, 165; and Diethelm Balke: *Westöstliche Gedichtformen. Sadschal-Theorie und Geschichte des deutschen Ghasels.* Bonn 1952 [mimeograph.], 198-201.

47 Friedrich Rückert: *Gesammelte Poetische Werke.* 12 vols. Frankfurt/Main 1868, vol. 5, 200-85 ("Lyrische Gedichte. Fünftes Buch: Wanderung. Dritter Bezirk: Ghaselen"), here 200.

48 "[…] der erste deutsche Bändiger dieser morgenländischen Form" (Rückert to Platen, May 1821; quoted in: August Graf von Platen: *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Max Koch et al., 12 vols. Leipzig [undated], vol. 1, 472). Cf. Hartmut Bobzin: Platen und Rückert im Gespräch über Hafis. In: Hartmut Bobzin and Gunnar Och (eds.): *August Graf von Platen: Leben – Werk – Wirkung.* Paderborn 1996, 103-20, here 109.

49 "Rückert, dem wir die ersten Ghaselen verdanken" (Platen: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, 130-34, here 131).

50 Rückert: *Gesammelte Poetische Werke*, vol. 5, 286-367, here 286f.

51 Platen: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, 126-29.

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of these poets were not only inspired by Goethe to skilful formal imitations of ghazals, but also to their free translations in western stanza forms. Thus, although Platen had written his own highly virtuoso ghazals, he chose, with the *West-oestlicher Divan* as a model, the 'Schenken stanzas' and 'Suleika stanzas'[52] for his *Nachbildungen aus dem Diwan des Hafis*.[53] For, as he emphasizes in the "Introduction":

> The form of these poems would present the translator with an insurmountable obstacle. Only once have I tried to reproduce the original rhyme scheme…; in that case, however, I had to deviate from the odd original metre.[54]

Conversely, Platen directed his ambition at making his own ghazals "of higher quality, more full of ideas, bolder, formally more flawless and bare of all oriental allusions," so that one "would find nothing oriental about them, with the exception of their form."[55] Logically consistent then is the self-confident epigraph from his *Neue Ghaselen* (1823):

> *Der Orient ist abgetan,*
> *Nun seht die Form als unser an.*[56]

It is no wonder that his feud with Heine was enflamed by the latter's citation of Immermann's "Xenion":

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52 For the metrical terminology cf. Wagenknecht: *Deutsche Metrik*, 67 and 135. J. C. Bürgel (Platen und Hafis. In: Bobzin and Och [eds.], *August Graf von Platen*, 85-102, here 90f.) wants to derive this stanza form not from the *West-Eastern Divan*, but directly from the Spanish *redondilla*; cf. already Tschersig, *Das Gasel in der deutschen Dichtung*, 22, and Friedrich Veit: Graf Platens Nachbildungen aus dem Diwan des Hafis und ihr persisches Original. In: *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte* 7 (1907), 257-309, 390-438, and 8 (1908), 145-224, here 218.

53 Platen: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, 134-68; cf. Hartmut Bobzin: "Der Orient sey neu bewegt… ": Platens Studium des Persischen und seine Ghaselen-Dichtung. In: Gunnar Och (ed.): *"Was er wünscht, das ist ihm nie geworden": August Graf von Platen 1796-1835*. Erlangen 1996, 89-119, here 104-16; and Bürgel: Platen und Hafis. In: Bobzin et al. (eds.), *August Graf von Platen*, 85-102, here 88-101.

54 "Die Form dieser Gedichte würde schon vermöge des Reims dem Übersetzenden ein unübersteigliches Hindernis in den Weg legen. Nur einmal habe ich versucht, eine Ghasele in dem ursprünglichen Reimgange nachzubilden […]; doch mußte ich auch hier von dem eigenthümlichen Versmaße des Originals abgehen." (*Ibid.* 131; the here mentioned "Ghasele nach Hafis": *ibid.* 168f.).

55 "Platen selbst fand sie 'gediegener, gedankenreicher, kühner, in der Form vollendeter und entblößt von orientalistischen Anspielungen': 'Ich wünsche mir, daß die Gedichte Ihnen gefallen mögen, da Sie, außer der Form, nichts eigentlich Orientalisches mehr darin finden werden.'" (Quoted in: Platen: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, 13f.).

56 "The Orient is removed, | Now view the form as ours." (*Ibid.* 101).

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Von den Früchten, die sie aus dem Gartenhain von Schiras stehlen,
Essen sie zu viel, die Armen, und vomiren dann Ghaselen.[57]

From the outset, the ghazal had a different function for Rückert. For, while he employed it masterfully in his translations from the Persian, it played a rather minor role in his own lyric production. Thus, it was never used even once in the *Oestlichen Rosen*, with the exception of a few very loose variations.[58] In the twenty ghazals of the *Kindertodtenlieder*, written in 1834, one does find a removal of all things thematically Middle Eastern, which hardly stands out from the other types of Rückert's mastery of verse. To generalize: either the ghazal alludes unmistakably to oriental themes and thereby falls into the disfavour of the poetic tastes reigning since the middle of the nineteenth century; or it annihilates all oriental allusions and thereby loses its *raison d'être* as an autonomous form of poetry. In the face of this dilemma, only a limited range of possibilities, inaugurated by Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan*, remains for the ghazal in German poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[59] The remainder were more or less all happy exceptions, above all in the field of literary translation.

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57 "From the fruits, which they steal from Shiraz's garden grove, | They eat too much, the poor things, and vomit ghazals." (Heinrich Heine: Reisebilder: Die Nordsee. 1826. Dritte Abteilung. In: H. Heine: *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, ed. Manfred Windfuhr. 15 vols. Hamburg 1973ff., vol. 6, 139-67, here 166).

58 Cf. Johann Christoph Bürgel: Kommt, Freunde, Schönheitsmarkt ist! Bemerkungen zu Rückerts Hafis-Übertragungen. In: Wolfdietrich Fischer et al. (eds.): *Friedrich Rückert: Dichter und Sprachgelehrter in Erlangen: Referate des 9. Interdisziplinären Colloquiums des Zentralinstituts für Fränkische Landeskunde und Allgemeine Regionalforschung an der Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg.* Neustadt an der Aisch 1990, 131- 46, here 132f..

59 A survey of this field is given by Balke, *Westöstliche Gedichtformen*, esp. 186-301, and Hülya Ünlü: *Das Ghasel des islamischen Orients in der deutschen Dichtung.* New York et al. 1991.

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