JÄHILI POETRY BEFORE IMRU’ AL-QAIS

By

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Abstract

Classical Arab critics held conflicting and blurred views regarding the history of Jāhilī poetry. They believed that Imruʾal-Qais was the father of Jāhilī poetry and the creator of most, if not all, of the Jāhilī poetic conventions, but at the same time they referred to a host of distinguished poets who either lived before Imruʾal-Qais or were his older contemporaries, and whose works embody most of the conventions attributed to Imruʾal-Qais. The discrepancy of the classical critics seems to have been overlooked by the scholars of the last two hundred years who, instead of examining the inherited opinions and the work of individual poets, postulated a series of cul de sac theories on the origins of Jāhilī poetry, thereby adding more confusion to an already confused situation. The reason for this confusion is that the basic ground-work has not been done.

The aim of this thesis is three fold: to investigate the validity of the classical critics' assumptions; to trace the history of Jāhilī poetry before Imruʾal-Qais; to study the work of over thirty poets, so as to prove that Imruʾal-Qais drew on a well-established poetic tradition.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first
chapter deals with the source material and the language of Jāhilīyya; the second chapter covers the historical and religious background; the third chapter, which makes up more than half the thesis, discusses the work of over thirty poets. The thesis ends with a conclusion that highlights certain aspects of the Jāhilī poetic experience before Īmruʾal-Qais.
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* The same sign is also used as an apostrophe.
Note: The titles of the books used in the footnotes have been shortened to either the first word of the title or the word by which the book is known. For example: Tabari's Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk appears as Tarikh, and Abu al-Faraj's Kitab al-Aghani as Aghani.
Acknowledgements

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Introduction

When Sir William Jones first introduced the seven *Mu'allaqat* to the English reader in the second half of the eighteenth century, he generated an interest in Arab poetry in general and *Jahili* poetry in particular. But unfortunately the scholars who followed Sir William Jones have made no real attempt to map out the landscape of *Jahili* poetry. Instead, they concentrated on the *Mu'allaqa* poets, and considered them as being the product of one mould rather than poets representing the various stages of development in *Jahili* poetry. For example, there is hardly any study of the generation of poets before Imru' al-Qais, or of Imru' al-Qais's generation, or of the generations who came after Imru' al-Qais. Scholars seem to have overlooked the fact that each succeeding generation has its own distinct poetic qualities.

The only scholar to take a broader perspective of *Jahili* poetry is the Arab Jesuit Louis Cheikho. Although Cheikho went overboard in baptising the major *Jahili* poets in *Shu'arā' al-Nasrāniyya Qabl al-Islām*, his method enabled him to shift the emphasis from the *Mu'allaqa* poets to the poets of each tribe, and in consequence threw light on the history of each tribe as seen through the eyes of its contemporary poets.
Like Shu'ara' al-Masriyya Qabl al-Islām, our study Jahili Poetry Before Imru' al-Qais shifts the emphasis from the Mu'allaqa poets to other neglected areas of Jahili poetry but, unlike Cheikho's work, traces the history of Jahili poetry from the earliest known Jahili poet Muṭād b. ʿAmr al-Jurhumī to the Mu'allaqa poet ʿAbīd b. al-Abras.

In order to study this extensive period within a historical framework we have divided the Jahiliyya into three main periods: the Jahiliyya of Lost Civilisations, Ancient Jahiliyya and Late Jahiliyya. And since the output of Late Jahili poetry is richer and more varied than that of the Jahiliyya of Lost Civilisations and Ancient Jahiliyya, we have divided the Late Jahiliyya into the pre-Imru' al-Qais period, which is the end-point of the present study, the Imru' al-Qais period and the post-Imru' al-Qais period. The surviving poems of the Jahiliyya of Lost Civilisations and Ancient Jahiliyya have been studied in chronological order, while the pre-Imru' al-Qais poets of the Late Jahiliyya have been divided into four groups. The first group of poets includes al-Barraq b. Rawḥān, Leilā bint Lukaiz and Umaiha b. al-Julāh, and they have been studied as individual poets. The second group of poets have been studied within a historical context. The third group of poets includes al-Muraqqish al-Akbar and al-Muraqqish
al-Asghar whose work centres around the theme of love. The fourth group of poets includes Amr b. Qamī'a, Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī and Abīd b. al-Abras who have been left to the end because of their relevance to Imru' al-Qais who represents the second stage of development in Late Jahili poetry.

Like Shu'arā' al-Nasrāniyya Qabl al-Islām, Jahili Poetry Before Imru' al-Qais reconstructs the textual history of Jahili poetry by drawing on mainly classical Arab sources. It is only by examining the classical Arab sources will we be able to appreciate and understand Arab poetry in general and Jahili poetry in particular.
Chapter I

The Sources And The Language

*Are the Arab Sources Reliable?*

One of the problems in tracing the origins of Jahili poetry is the lack of sufficient, corroborated data relating to the political and cultural history of the Jahili Arabs. Most of the data we have on the Jahili Arabs come from Arab sources, like *Ayyam al-‘Arab*, *Akhbar al-Yaman*, *Kitab al-Tijan*, Jahili poetry, the Qur’an, Hadith and Amthāl literature, which were based on both oral and written traditions. Although no significant Jahili documents have surfaced to verify the Arab historians’ accounts, nevertheless the excavations of Thamūdī and Musnad ruins together with the discovery of Syriac and Aramaic texts as well as the reassessment of Greek and Roman work support the accounts of the Arab historians.

The Arab historians, like Tabarī, took great pains in collecting, collating and sifting the historical data about the Jahili Arabs and their Byzantine, Hebrew, Greek, Roman and Persian neighbours. The Arab historians did not take the information about the history of the above peoples at face value; they consulted the various
available sources and then tried to draw up a plausible and logical history. For example, Tabari's reference to Alexander the Great and the Persian king Darius, to Constantine the Great who built Constantinople and who adopted Christianity as the state religion and divided his kingdom between his three sons, as well as to Julian the Apostate's two-year reign during which he tried to put a stop to Christian influence and restore the old Roman religion, is in line with Greek and Roman records. In addition, Tabari's accounts of the Arab conquest of Persia and the founding of Kufa by Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, and Khalid b. al-Walid's conquest of Syria, are corroborated by an anonymous Syriac text written c.670-680. The same Syriac text also endorses Tabari's reference to Mundhir I as being the sixth Lakhmid king of Hira.

If Tabari's reference to the Greeks, Romans and Byzantines has a ring of truth, this would mean he took great care in ascertaining the facts about these civilisations. As these civilisations flourished much earlier or were contemporaneous with the Arab kingdoms he described, and although the sources were in languages he did not speak, Tabari was able to give credible sequential accounts of the non-Arab civilisations with approximate dating. If Tabari's reference to the above civilisations is correct,
is it not reasonable to assume that he must have applied the same meticulous method in vetting his Arab sources, both oral and written, before he wrote about the Arab kingdoms before Islam?

Tabari's handling of the sources and the sequential presentation of events and his grouping of related incidents and civilisations show he had a clear mind in seeing things and a definite approach in reading history. In quoting different versions relating to a particular event, Tabari tells us how different historians saw that event. Tabari, like most if not all Arab historians, always quotes his sources, be they books or chains of authorities. If we take the view that his chains of authorities are unreliable, then the whole approach to Arab history and culture is wrongly based and the sources should as a result be disregarded and everything that has been written about the Arabs since the nineteenth century is null and void. Should one rely on Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Hebrew or Syriac accounts of the Arabs? Are the non-Arab sources more reliable than the Arab sources or are they not biased since they reflect a one-sided view of the Arabs? If the non-Arab sources are considered reliable, what are the criteria used to ascertain their reliability? Since the non-Arab accounts of the Arabs have not been corroborated by contemporary Arab sources, what makes them more reliable than the Arab sources?
Further, the non-Arab sources made incidental references to the Arabs only when the Arab presence had a bearing on their respective regions. Therefore if we treat the non-Arab sources in the same way the doubting Thomases treat the Arab sources, then the non-Arab sources should also be discredited. This would result in the impossibility of writing a credible history of the Arabs or of any nation for that matter.

We are therefore left with two options: either to accept the Arab and non-Arab sources as genuine or to reject both of them. If we take the first option and take a critically balanced view of the accounts, we may be able to come up with a reasonable history of the peoples concerned. But if we take the second option then there is no point in writing anything based on discredited sources.

Are the Jahili Poems Authentic?

The question regarding the authenticity of Jahili poetry was first raised and resolved by the Umayyad and early Abbasid scholars like Abū Ṭālib al-ʿAlī (d. 154/771), Abū Ṭālib al-ʿAlī (d. 154/771), Abū Ṭālib al-ʿAlī (d. 154/771), Abū Ṭālib al-ʿAlī (d. 154/771), Abū Ṭālib al-ʿAlī (d. 154/771), Abū Ṭālib al-ʿAlī (d. 154/771), Abū Ṭālib al-ʿAlī (d. 154/771), Abū Ṭālib al-

As these scholars were themselves ṭawīl and editors of Jahili poetry and at home with the language and the
world of the Jahili poems, they worked out guidelines to distinguish a genuine Jahili poem from a forged one. The guidelines involved the study of the poem's style, language, imagery, metre, syntactical structure, rhyme schemes, themes, tone and terms of reference. The soundness of this approach is borne out by the extant Jahili diwans which show that no two poems, let alone two diwans, by two different poets, could have been written by one poet. Each Jahili diwan bears the unmistakable imprint of its author, as can be gauged from the work of Imru al-Qais which is distinct from that of Muhalhil, Abdīd b. al-Abras, Antara, al-Nabigha al-Dhubyānī and Zuhair.

In his critical work Islah mā Ghalat fīh Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Nimrī fī Maʾāni Abyāt al-Hamāsā, Abu al-Aswad al-Ghundijānī gives us a clear idea of the way classical scholars vetted the poetry texts in order to determine their authenticity. In this instance, Abū al-Aswad al-Ghundijānī examines Nimrī's edition and interpretation of Abū Tammām's Hamāsā and points out the textual, syntactical and semantic inaccuracies that pervade the text.

Poets and scholars regarded Hammad al-Rawi (d. 155/722) as one of the best, if not the best authority on Jahili poetry. His knowledge of Jahili poetry is acknowledged
by the Umayyad poet Dhu al-Rumma (d. 117/735), whose poems have more affinities with Jāhilī poetry than the poetry of any of his contemporaries. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 356/967) says on one occasion Ḥammād read a poem to a patron in the presence of Dhu al-Rumma. After the patron had rewarded Ḥammād, he asked Dhu al-Rumma: "What do you think of the poem?" Dhu al-Rumma said: "It's a fine poem, but it's not by him." When the patron asked Ḥammād if he was the author of the poem, Ḥammād replied the poem was by a Jāhilī poet and he was the only one who had a copy of that poem. Then the patron said: "How did Dhu al-Rumma know it was not your poem?" Ḥammād said: "Dhu al-Rumma recognised the Jāhilī idiom and terms of reference." In another instance Abu al-Faraj relates that once Farazdaq (d. 110/728) read one of his poems in the presence of Ḥammād who remarked that one of the verses in the poem was by a Yemeni poet. Farazdaq, unconcerned by Ḥammād's remark, said: "Who knows about it other than you? Do you expect me to leave the verse out when people attribute it to me, just because you're the only one who knows about it?"

Ḥammād's reputation as a leading authority on Jāhilī poetry is attested by the following stories. The first story goes, one day the Umayyad Caliph Hishām (d. 125/743) was unable to remember the author of the verse: (Khafīf)
and so he sent for Hammād who was in Kūfa. On hearing the verse Hammād told the Caliph that the verse was by the Jahili poet ʿAdī b. Zaid. The Caliph was pleased and rewarded Hammād generously. In the second story, the Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd II (d. 126/744), who was one of the finest poets of his time, sent for Hammād to test his knowledge of Jahili poetry. On that occasion Hammād recited 2800 Jahili poems. It is worth mentioning that the Umayyad caliphs were well-versed in Jahili poetry which they had been taught from an early age. The caliphs also held regular literary sessions in which scholars, poets and critics took part. Some of the poems quoted at these meetings were by Jahili poets. The Caliph Muḥāwiya (d. 60/680) was steeped in Jahili poetry. In one of the regular literary sessions he held at his court, the acknowledged ṭawīl and historian of Jahiliyya ʿUbaid b. Shariyya al-Jurhumī (d. 67/665), who was well over one hundred years old, recited a poem by Imruʿal-Qais, at the end of which Muḥāwiya said: "We thought the poem was by Dhū Nuwas." But ʿUbaid assured Muḥāwiya that the poem was by Imruʿal-Qais, which was the case.

What made Hammād become a ṭawīl of Jahili poetry? Abū al-Faraj says before Hammād got involved in poetry he was a robber. One day Hammād raided a house, and among the loot he found a bundle of papers which contained
Ansārī poetry. Ḥammād was so impressed by the Ansārī poems that he decided to become a ṭāwī.

Ibn Sallām (d. 232/846) credits Ḥammād for being the first ṭāwī to collect Jāhili poetry, but at the same time he accuses Ḥammād of being unreliable because he sometimes attributed certain poems to the wrong poets. In his view Khalaf al-Ahmar (d. 180/796) was more reliable as a ṭāwī than Ḥammād. It seems Ibn Sallām does not question the authenticity of Ḥammād's Jāhili poems, but the wrong attribution. In spite of Ibn Sallām's reservations, none of the classical scholars doubted the authenticity of the Muʿallagāt Ḥammād edited. This is confirmed by the extant editions of the Muʿallagāt made by Abū Zaid al-Qurashi, Anbārī (d. 304/917), Ibn al-Nahhās (d. 338/950), Zawzanī (d. 486/1093) and Tibrīzī (d. 502/1109). If we compare these editions we will find that a poem in one edition may have a few verses more or less than the same poem in another edition, or minor verbal differences. But the essence of the poems as well as the rhyme and rhythmic structure remain basically the same.

The question is where did Ḥammād find the Jāhili poems? Was he the first ṭāwī to discover the Muʿallagāt and to point out their importance? Were the poets of the Muʿallagāt unknown to the Umayyads?
According to Hammad, the Lakhmid king Nu'mān gave instructions to keep written records of Jahili poems, and the books containing the poems were stored in the king's white palace. When the anti-Umayyad rebel leader al-Mukhtār b. Abī Ubaid (d. 67/687) was told there was a treasure buried under the palace he dug up the treasure and found the poems. In Tabaqāt al-Shu'ara' Ibn Sallām says al-Nu'mān b. al-Mundhir kept a diwan which contained the poems of the major Jahili poets and the poems written in his praise and in praise of his family. This collection or part of it fell into the hands of the Umayyad caliphs of the Marwānid branch. It is possible the Lakhmid anthologies might have been some of Hammad's sources.

It can be deduced from Kitāb al-Aghānī that the MCAllaqāt and many Jahili poems were already popular before Hammad appeared on the scene. Chunks of the MCAllaqāt of Imru' al-Qais, Antara, Zuhair, al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī, Labīd and A'shā were set to music and sung by the famous Umayyad composer-singers. One of the early Umayyad composer-singers, Sā'ib Khāthir (d. 63/682), who died during the reign of Yazīd b. Mu'awiya (d. 64/683), set sections from Imru' al-Qais's MCAllaq to music. Other sections from the same MCAllaq were set to music by the following Umayyad musicians: Tuwais (d. 92/711), Ibn Misjah (d. 85/704), Ibn Suraih (d. 98/716),
Azza al-Maila' (d. 115/733), Jamila, Ma'inbad (d. 126/743) and Ibn Muhriz (d. 137/755). Also many poems by Jāhili poets like al-Munakhkhal al-Yashkuri, Muhalhil, Umayya b. Abī al-Salt and Hātim al-Tā'ī were set to music by the Umayyad musicians. All these musicians died before Hammad was born or before they were aware of his presence.

Poems by well-known Jāhili poets were set to music and sung in Jāhiliyya. In fact, there were poets who had their own musicians who set the poems of their patrons and of other poets to music and sang them. For example, Aṣira, was known in Jāhiliyya as "mashā' al-ʿarab" because most of his poems were set to music and became popular songs. Another Jāhili poet Uhaiha b. al-Julah had a slave-girl who was a composer-singer and who set his poems to music and sang them. Imru al-Qais's poems were also sung in Jāhiliyya, and so were the poems of al-Nabigha al-Dhubyānī.

Classical scholars held that the poet Abū al-Aswad al-Du'ali (d. 69/688), who under the instruction of the Islamic Caliph ʿAlī (d. 41/661), worked out the earliest rules of grammar, was one of the founders of the School of Basra. Abū al-Aswad was prompted to hammer out grammatical rules after he realised that the new generation of urban people, irrespective of their status, were speaking malhūn Arabic. His concern for the language
might have induced him to write down Jāhilī and Mukhadram poems and use them as examples to illustrate his grammatical points. Abū al-Aswad was followed by Yahyā b. Yaʿmar, who was a rāwī of Ḥadīth and was respected for his learning by Ḥajjāj. Ibn Yaʿmar was followed by the grammarian ʿAbdullāh b. Ishaq al-Ḥadramī and by Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlaʾ whose vast knowledge of the Arab language and tradition was unparalleled. The school of Kūfa was founded by scholars as illustrious as those of Basra. As these two schools were the major centres of learning, and since some of the scholars associated with them like Asmaʾ b. al-Mufaddal al-Dabbī were very important rāwīs, it is reasonable to assume that poetry was one of the main topics they dealt with, especially Jāhilī poetry, which was considered the unsurpassed art form. Indeed, the scholar Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlaʾ declined to write down the poetry of the Umayyad poet Jarīr (d. 110/728) and his contemporaries on account of being muhdath. Because of their attachment to Jāhilī poetry, the Basran and Kūfan scholars kept records of Jāhilī poems, not only for teaching purposes, but to emphasise their perfect qualities. This explains why there are textual discrepancies. Some of the above scholars lived before Ḥammād and some were his older contemporaries.

There were other rāwīs of Jāhilī poetry who were just as important as Ḥammād. One of these rāwīs was
Khalaf al-Ahmar who was highly respected by classical scholars and critics. Khalaf was a minor poet and, like Hammād, was accused of fabricating poems and attributing them to Jāhili poets. According to the Abbasid poet Diʾbil al-Khuzaʾī (d. 246/860), Khalaf told him before he died that he was the author of the epitaph poem attributed to the Jāhili Saʾlūk poet Taʾabbata Sharran.

Apart from one or two discrepancies, the poem has more affinities with Taʾabbata's poetry than with Khalaf's. The poem is also attributed to Taʾabbata's nephew and to the Jāhili Saʾlūk poet Shanfarā. Taʾabbata and Shanfarā were contemporaries of Imruʿal-Qais who died c.540.

It should be noted that Labīd (d. 41/661), who was regarded as a major Jāhili poet and one of the authors of the Muʾcallaqaṭ, lived for 145 years. His life spanned the reigns of al-Nābigha al-Dhubaynī's patron, the last Lakhmid king Nuʾmān, and Muʾawiya. Labīd, who was conversant with the art of writing, was also familiar with Jāhili poetry. Ibn Sallām says Labīd was once asked in Kūfa who was the greatest poet of Jāhiliyya, and his answer was: Imruʿal-Qais followed by Tarafa. Although Labīd stopped writing poetry after his conversion to Islam, that does not mean he stopped taking an interest in poetry. It is evident from Ibn Sallām's story that even after his conversion Labīd
still had definite critical views about Jahili poetry.

CAbdullāh b. CAbbās (d. 68/687), the cousin of the Prophet, had an inexhaustable knowledge of Jahili poetry and was the first mufassir to draw attention to the relevance of Jahili poetry to the study of the Qur'ān. Tanāsī says whenever Ibn CAbbās was asked about the meaning of a word in the Qur'ān or in the Hadīth, he invariably backed up his interpretation with a quotation from Jahili poetry. Ibn CAbbās advised people: "If you fail to understand the language of the Qur'ān, resort to poetry, for it is the register of the Arabs." The fact that Ibn CAbbās stressed the importance of Jahili poetry in relation to the elucidation of the Qur'ān would have pushed people to collect and study Jahili poetry for the sake of understanding the Qur'ān. And this in itself would have prompted poets like Labīd, CAmr b. MaCdi Karib (d. 21/642), Hassān b. Thābit and Hūta'ah (d. 45/665) to write down their own poems and the work of other Jahili poets. Further, the tribes among whose members were distinguished Jahili poets most probably wrote down their own poetry-lore for the same purpose. For this reason the tafsīr works and the Qur'ān dictionaries abound in quotations from Jahili poetry.

Aбу al-Faraq relates that QUmar advised people to
forget the poetry of polemics that raged between the Muslims and the Mushrikūn in the early days of Islam. Cūmar also intimated that if both sides insisted on remembering that kind of poetry then they should "write it down and treasure it." And "they wrote it down."

Anbārī says that Cūmar wrote to Abū Mūsā al-Askari (d. 44/665) urging him to encourage people to read poetry, because poetry formed the base of the Arab language and also engendered the noble spirit in people. And for this reason Cūmar suggested to Abū al-Aswad al-Du‘ālī to write a manual of Arab grammar, so as to preserve the language and enhance the understanding of the Qur‘ān and poetry.

According to the critic Ibn Ta‘īfūr (d. 280/894) Hirmāzī, an Ārabī rāwī and a friend of Abū Cūbaida, said that it was the Caliph CAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (d. 86/705) who collected seven poems, six of which were Jahilī poems which were highly prized in Jahiliyya, and the seventh poem was by the Mukhadram poet Aws b. Maghra‘ī (d. 55/675) who was already an established poet in Jahiliyya. Hirmāzī said that CAbd al-Malik first collected six poems, and while he was thinking of including a seventh poem, his son Sulaimān (d. 99/717), who was a small boy at the time, entered the majlis
and recited the poem of Ibn Maghra' in which the poet mentioned favourably the Caliph ʿUthmān (d. 35/656): (Basit)

Abd al-Malik was taken by the poem and decided to include it in his seven-poem anthology. The other six poems were the Muʿallaqat of ʿAmr b. Kulthum, al-Ḥārith b. Hilliza, ʿAntara and ʿAbīd b. al-Abras, the poems of the Mukhadram poets Suwaid b. Abī Kāhil (d. 60/680): (Ramal)

Hirmāzī also says the Caliph Muʿawiya instructed the rawīs to select poems for his son to read. The rawīs chose twelve poems eleven of which were: the Muʿallaqat of Imruʿal-Qais, Zuhair, Ṭarafa, al-Ḥārith b. Hilliza, Labīd, ʿAmr b. Kulthūm, ʿAbīd b. al-Abras, ʿAntara, Aʾṣhā, and the poem of Suwaid b. Abī Kāhil quoted above, and the poem of Hassān b. Thabit: (Kamil)

Ibn Taifūr stresses that the rawīs were unanimous in regarding the "Seven Long Poems" as the finest samples of Jāhilī poetry. The "Seven Long Poems" are the
Mucallaqat of Imru' al-Qais, Zuhair, al-Harith b. Hilliza, Tarafa, Amr b. Kulthum, Antara and Labid. He also says some rawis added to the "Seven Long Poems" the Mucallaqat of Abid b. al-Abras, Asha and al-Nabigha al-Dhutyani. Ibn Taifur and Ibn Da'ud (d. 297/910) state that the Mucallaqat were taught in schools in the ninth century and were very popular with children.

In discussing Jahili poetry Ibn Sallam says the critics and scholars of Basra rated highly Imru' al-Qais, while the Kufans were more inclined to Asha and the Hijazis preferred Zuhair. The fact that these Jahili poets were highly regarded by the Umayyad caliphs, the rawis and the much-respected scholars of the three centres of learning established during the early Umayyad period, confirms the genuineness of their poems and proves that the poems were already known long before Hammad made an impact as a rawi. Further, in Jaz al-Qur'ân, Baqillani emphasises the significance of Imru' al-Qais's Mucallaqa and how highly the critics regarded it. If the Mucallaqa had not been genuine, Baqillani would not have chosen it as the finest specimen of Jahili poetry in order to compare it with the Qur'ân and prove that its fine literary qualities did not stand up to the Qur'ân's inimitable style.

Another source of Jahili poetry was the Christian
monasteries. In Kitāb al-Aghānī Abu al-Faraj relates that once there was a group of people who were discussing the poems of the early Umayyad poet Abū Dahbal and other poets. When they could not agree as to who was the best poet they asked a Christian priest for his view. The priest responded: "Stay where you are until I consult my book of poems." The priest went through an old parchment and gave his verdict in favour of Abū

1 Dahbal. This episode supports the idea that Christian priests took an interest in poetry to the point of writing down poems by Muslim poets, and confirms Ibn al-Kalbī's claim that the Lakhmid kings kept records of their reign in their churches. Ibn al-Kalbī says that when he wrote the history of the Lakhmid kingdom he consulted the church records of the Lakhmid kings.

One of the important sources of Jāhilī poetry must have been the school syllabus taught in the Jāhilīyya Islamic and early Umayyad periods. What did the Jāhilī, Islamic and early Umayyad children learn at school? It appears from classical sources that children were taught Jāhilī and contemporary poetry among other things.

It was the policy of the Umayyad caliphs to urge their muʿaddibs to teach their children poetry. Muʿawiya told his children to teach their children poetry because the Umayyad dynasty he established owed its existence to
a poem by the Jahili poet Amr b. al-Itnaba. Mu'awiya admitted that when he felt he was going to be defeated at the Battle of Siffin he mounted his horse and as he was about to run away, he remembered Amr b. al-Itnaba's poem, which made him change his mind and hold his ground and ultimately win the war: (Wafir)

In Amali al-Murtada, Murtada (d. 436/1044) recounts story in which children were taught to read poetry in the Islamic and early Umayyad periods. The story goes that the Jahili poet Rubai b. Duba al-Fazari, who fought in the Dahis - al-Ghabra' war, went to visit Abd al-Malik before he became caliph. Abd al-Malik asked Rubai what he had experienced in his long life. Rubai recited a poem in which he said he was already around at the time of Imru' al-Qais's father king Hujr: (Munsarih)

Abd al-Malik said: "I read this poem when I was a small boy." Rubai recited another poem about the devastating effect old age has on people: (Wafir)
Abd al-Malik said: "I read this poem when I was a small boy."

Abd al-Malik employed Shābī (d. 103/721), rawī, mufaddīth, mufassir and historian of the Jāhiliyya, his children the Qurʾān, Ḥadīth and poetry among other things. As Abd al-Malik was an avid reader of Jāhili poetry and Shābī a rawī of Jāhili poetry, Jāhili poetry must have been one of the principal subjects Shābī taught Abd al-Malik's children.

The teaching of Jāhili poetry in schools was widespread in the Umayyad period. The patron of poets and musicians Abdullāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Tālib (d. 80/700), the nephew of the Caliph ʿAlī, suggested to the mufaddīb of his children not to teach them the poems of the Jāhili poet ʿUrwa b. al-Ward on ghurba, in case they might be tempted to emigrate.

Classical scholars were in agreement that the Umayyad poet Kumait (d. 126/744), a friend of Hammād, had a strong Jāhili background and a deeper understanding of Jāhili poetry than Hammād. Kumait drew his knowledge of the Jāhiliyya from his two grand-mothers, born and brought up in Jāhiliyya, and whenever he was in doubt about the terms of reference of certain Jāhili poems he consulted his grand-mothers. Kumait was a schoolteacher in a Kūfan
mosque where in all probability he taught children Jāhili poetry.

The Umayyad poets were familiar with Jāhili poetry, and many of the Jāhili poets lived right up to the Umayyad period and frequented the courts of the Umayyad caliphs and governors. Some of the Jāhili poets became friends of some of the Umayyad poets. For instance, Farazdaq says he was a friend of the poet Musawir b. Hind al-ABSī (d. 69/688) who was born during the Dāhis - al-Ghabra' war, about fifty years before Islam. Farazdaq, who emerged as a satirist during the reign of Uthmān, boasts that he knew a great deal of pre-Umayyad poetry, and considered himself the "heir" of the major Jāhili, Mukhadram and Islamic poets, whose work he read in "book form". In one of his naṣʿīd poems Farazdaq states that his extensive reading included the poetry of Muhalhil, Ābī b. al-Abras, Abū Duād al-Iyādī, Muraqqish, Imru al-Qais, Ālqama, Tarafa, al-Mukhabbal al-Sa'dī, Bishr b. Ābī Khāzim, Aws b. Hajār, al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī, Zuhair, A'shā Qais, A'shā Bahilla, Labīd, Ka'b b. Zuhair, Hassān b. Thābit, Hūtai'a, Abū al-Tamhān al-Qainī (d. 30/650) and al-Najāshī al-Hārithī (d. 40/660): (Kāmil)
Farazdaq's reference to the poetry of his predecessors being available in "book form", which he probably read either at school or early in his poetic career, proves that Jahili, Mukhadram and Islamic poetry was in circulation in written form in the Islamic and early Umayyad periods. It is worth noting that Farazdaq is responsible for perpetuating the story of Darat Juljul which he heard from his grand-father and which is mentioned cryptically in Imru' al-Qais's *Mu'llaka*.

It was the custom of the Jahili poets to have *rawīs* to publicise their work. In most cases the *rawīs* became poets in their own right. For example, the Jahili poet Imru' al-Qais was the *rawī* of Abu Du'ād al-Iyāḍī and Aws b. Ḥajaj's *rawī* was his step-son Zuhair b. Abī Sulma, whose *rawīs* were his son, the Mukhadram poet Kā'b (d. 26/646) and the Islamic poet Ḥūtā'ī'a, whose *rawī* was Hudba b. Khashasram.
(d. 50/670), whose ṭ̣āwī was the Umayyad poet Jamīl Buthaina (d. 82/701), whose ṭ̣āwī was Kuthayyir ʿAzza (d. 105/723).

One of the great achievements of the Prophet Muhammad (572-632) and his successors, the four Islamic caliphs, is their success in preserving Jahili culture. The Prophet's preoccupation with the Jahili civilisations is reflected in the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, which embody a wealth of information on every aspect of Jahili life. The Prophet regularly met historians of the Jahiliyya, ṭ̣āwis of Jahili poetry and Jahili and Mukhadram poets. The Prophet encouraged poetry recitals and installed in his own mosque a minbar from which the poet Ḥassān b. Ṭḥabīt could read his poems. The first Islamic Caliph Abū Bakr al-Siddīq (d. 13/634) was a merchant, renowned orator, genealogist, historian and ṭ̣āwī of Jahili poetry, and, like the Prophet, was favourably disposed to poetry. It was Abū Bakr who, at the instigation of the Prophet, taught Ḥassān b. Ṭḥabīt the vulnerable spots in the Qurashi Mushrikūn history and genealogy. The second Islamic Caliph ʿUmar, a critic of Jahili poetry, was always in the company of historians, ṭ̣āwis of Jahili poetry and Jahili and Mukhadram poets discussing Jahili poetry. The third Islamic Caliph ʿUthmān was the first caliph to turn his majlis into a caliphal court where historians, ṭ̣āwis of Jahili poetry and Jahili and Mukhadram poets talked about Jahili poetry and history.
The Jāhili Christian poet Harmala b. al-Mundhir b. Maqdi Karib, a celebrated historian and ṭawīl of Jāhili poetry, frequented Uthman's court. The fourth Caliph ĔAli was a poet, critic, grammarian, mufassir, and historian of the Jāhiliyya, and his critical judgements of Jāhili poetry were highly regarded. Mu'awiyah maintained the Jāhili and Islamic traditions of literary discussions at court and his predecessors' zeal for keeping records of Jāhili literature and history.

It is evident from the above study that there was an uninterrupted interest in the Jāhiliyya and in Jāhili poetry throughout the Islamic, Umayyad and Abbasid periods, and that Jāhili literature was available in book form in the Jāhiliyya, and subsequent periods. Therefore, the notion that Jāhili poetry was rediscovered by Hammad, or by the Umayyad and Abbasid scholars, no longer holds water.

The key to the authenticity of Jāhili poetry lies in the reappraisal of Jāhili poetry in general and the poems of individual poets in particular. Each Jāhili poet is distinguished by his individual style, and the poems of each poet have nothing in common with the poems of other poets other than the fact that they were all written in the Jāhiliyya. The distinguishing features of each poet will be discussed when we deal with the poetry of the poets who lived...
before Imru al-Qais.

What Was the Language of the Jahlis?

The Arab tradition relates that the Jahlis spoke one common language, with minor tribal idiosyncrasies. The same tradition traces this common language back to the times of Isma'il b. Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl, and makes a distinction between the language spoken by the Arabs before Isma'il and the language spoken since Isma'il. The pre-Isma'il language is called which emphasises the purity of the language, and the post-Isma'il language is called which stress the blended character of the new language.

According to Arab tradition Isma'il, who had an Egyptian and Fertile-Crescent background, grew up among the Jurhumis of Mecca and adopted their language. Isma'il also married Ra'la, the daughter of the Jurhumī king Mudād b. ḌAmr al-Jurhumī. The same tradition says that all the migrating Yemeni tribes spoke Arabic or a form of Arabic. This implies that the Jurhumis, who originally came from Yemen, spoke Arabic which became the language of the Banī Isma'il. If we assume that this tradition has a certain degree of validity, then the poems of Mudād b. ḌAmr b. al-Ḥarith b. Mudād b. ḌAmr al-Jurhumī, who was a
descendant of Isma'īl's father-in-law, may be taken as authentic poems or as poems embodying a genuine sentiment which reflects the tragic sense of loss and despair the Jurhumis experienced after they lost Mecca. Further, the poems attributed to Mudad add up to no more than three or four poems centred on the unhappy fate of the Jurhumis. The paucity of the poems and the limitation of the theme, as well as one poem being an ancient Meccan song, enhance the authenticity of the poems. In addition, Abu al-Faraj states that Mudad and his family left Mecca because they did not want to get involved in the war between the Jurhumis and the Khuzā'īs, and settled in Qanawmā where they lived up to the time of Abu al-Paraj. It is possible that these poems were perpetuated by the descendants of the Jurhumis who kept their tradition alive.

It is still uncertain whether the Yemenis spoke Arabic or a variation of Arabic, or a totally different language from Arabic. It is true that the Yemenis have a distinct script, but because of our inability to read it correctly and intelligently since there are no guidelines telling us how to read it, it may seem different from Arabic. But is it really different from Arabic? The fact remains that our knowledge of Musnad grammar is incomplete. The range of Musnad vocabulary and some aspects of the Musnad grammar reflect the
strong similarities that exist between Arabic and the Musnad language. Indeed, one of the key factors in working out the Musnad language has been Arabic. Had it not been for this factor our knowledge of the Musnad language would be poorer.

There are other indications which suggest that the Yemenis spoke Arabic. Firstly, the Caliph cUmar remarked that Imru' al-Qais was the first major Yemeni poet, which implies that the Yemenis spoke Arabic. cUmar's statement is confirmed by the Arab sources which quote a number of Yemeni poets preceding Imru' al-Qais, but none of them sustain comparison with Imru' al-Qais. The Arab sources were able to retrieve only a limited number of poems by Yemeni poets from the pre-Imru' al-Qais period, and, apart from one or two relatively long poems, most of the retrieved poems are in snippet form. This raises several questions: why should the Arab sources want to forge snippets of poems that refer to certain events in the distant past, and what would the sources gain by quoting the snippets and attributing them to people who had no bearing on their times? If these poems were not genuine why were they not of the length and quality of the poems of Imru' al-Qais or cAntara? The reason is that Imru' al-Qais and cAntara lived closer in time to the Prophet Muhammad than the earlier poets of the snippets.
Secondly, Tabari says the Yemeni tribes Tasm and Jadis spoke Arabic. Tabari also says when one of the Persian governors of Yemen died he was succeeded by his son Khurra Khusra who, like his father, was born and brought up in Yemen. Khurra was conversant with the Arab language and poetry and was a rawi of Arab poetry. When the Persian king heard of the new governor's Arab lifestyle he replaced him with another governor. From this episode we can deduce that Arabic was the language of Yemen, and this lends credibility to the story that Arabic was spoken at the court of Saif b. Dhī Yazan, who received the Arab notables among whom were Ābd al-Muttalib, the grand-father of the Prophet Muhammad, and the poet Abu al-Salt, who flocked to his court to congratulate him on freeing his country from the Abyssinians. The sources do not refer to the presence of interpreters when Saif b. Dhī Yazan met the Arab notables; but when Ābd al-Muttalib communicated with Abraha al-Habashi, the new Abyssinian ruler of Yemen, he did so via an interpreter.

Thirdly, before the rise of Islam, Mecca was essentially a Qurashi city whereas Medina was Yemeni. When the Prophet Muhammad, a Qurashi, sought refuge in Medina he had no problem in communicating with its Yemeni inhabitants. The sources do not mention that the Prophet engaged interpreters in Medina. As a matter of fact, the
Medinans supported the Prophet and helped him take over Mecca from the Qurashīs. The Prophet also appointed the Medinan poet Ḥassān b. Thābit as the poet of Islam whose role was to hit back at the Meccan Qurashīs and other Mushrikūn detractors of Islam. Moreover, the Arab armies were composed of Yemenis and Ma'addīs and wherever these armies settled the related tribes established themselves in separate quarters. In none of the sources do we get a hint that the Yemenis and the Ma'addīs spoke any language other than Arabic. Also the sources do not refer to the Ma'addī or the Medinan tribes settling in Yemen.

If Arabic was not the language spoken in Yemen how did it find its way to Yemen? It may be easy to disseminate religion by a handful of missionaries, but it would be impossible for a few settlers to establish a language among people who spoke a totally different language. Had it not been for the fact that Arabic was the language of Yemen, Yemen would not have produced poets like Waddāh al-Yaman (d. 91/709) who was born and brought up in Yemen where he wrote his famous love poem: (Sārī)

\[
\text{فَلَيْتُ أَلاَّ نَُجَّرُ دَارِّيَ \\
\text{إِنَّ أَبَاى رَجُلًُ غَائِرَ}
\]

which was set to Yemeni hazaj music. Furthermore, had the Yemenis spoken any language other than Arabic, the old language would have re-emerged in one form or another, in the same way as the Persian language evolved; or it would
have affected the basic structure of the Arab language spoken in Yemen. But the poem of Waddān proves that was not the case.

On the other hand, Ibn Sallām quotes Abū Āmīr b. al-ʿAlāʾ as saying: "the tongue of Ḥimyar and the remote parts of Yemen is not like our tongue, and their ʿArabiyya is not like our ʿArabiyya." Abū Āmīr b. al-ʿAlāʾ, who was notorious for teasing the Yemenis, was probably referring to an incident in which an Arab was hurt during his visit to Yemen. The story goes that an Arab visitor went to see the king of Ḥimyar. The king said to the visitor ʿنب ، which, in the Yemeni idiom, meant "sit down". The visitor jumped and hurt himself, because the same word meant "jump" in the visitor's regional idiom. So the king said to the visitor: "Your ʿArabiyya is not like our ʿArabiyya."

If we apply the principle of Abū Āmīr b. al-ʿAlāʾ to the regional idioms of the Mudarī tribes, we will find that the ʿArabiyya of one Mudarī tribe is different from the ʿArabiyya of another Mudarī tribe, as illustrated in the following example. When the Mudarī poet Mālik b. Nuwaira was imprisoned on a cold night, Khālid b. al-Walīd (a Mudarī) said to the Kinānī (a Mudarī) jailer أذنبرا لئركم ، meaning in the Qurashī (Mudarī) idiom "keep your prisoners warm". But as the word أذنبرا meant "kill" in the Kinānī idiom, the Kinānī
jailer executed Mālik. Classical Arab critics were aware of these tribo-regional idiosyncrasies and called this aspect of the language Addād, and wrote extensively about it.

Throughout the centuries the Arabian Peninsula has experienced intermittent movements of population due to wars and economic and environmental factors. The population movement factor was probably responsible for breaking down the regional and cultural barriers out of which the ḌArabiyya of Jahili poetry evolved.

The Arab language has survived the ancient languages like Akkadian, Aramaic, Greek and Latin. Why should this be the case? The answer to this question lies in the fact that the Arabian Peninsula is the home of the Arabs and of the Arab language. The fact that the Arabian Peninsula has never experienced invasions or waves of foreign migrations helped it preserve its language and its way of life.

Another important factor lies in the flexibility of the Arab language's basic semantic, grammatical and syntactical structure which has remained intact since Muḥalhīl and Imrū' al-Qais. If Arabic could survive as a rich and dynamic language for sixteen centuries, then there is no reason why it could not have survived from the time of Ismā'īl to the time of Muḥalhīl and Imrū' al-Qais which spans eighteen or nineteen centuries.
Footnotes

Page 1

1. Classical Arab writers called the Jāhilī Yemeni script Musnad, possibly a Jāhilī Yemeni term. In this work the term Musnad refers to the people, language and script of Yemen before Islam.

Page 2

5. Ibid., pp. 434-5.
7. Ibid., p. 106; Tabarî, Tarikh, II, p. 65.

Page 4

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabagāt, p. 21; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XII, pp. 294-6.

Page 5

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabagāt, p. 21; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī,
IX, p. 97; Abū Hilāl, Masūn, pp. 191-2; Abū Hilāl, Sharḥ, pp. 213-5, 225-6. Most of Abū Hilāl's Sharḥ is devoted to this issue.

2. See pages 47-8.

3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, pp. 70, 73; Yaqūt, Udābā', VI, iv, p. 137.

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2. Ibid., p. 73.

Page 7

1. Ibid., pp. 75-9; Ibn Hijja, Thamārat, pp. 90-2.


3. Ibn cAbd Rabbih, cIqd, V, p. 274.


5. cUbaid, Akhbar, pp. 418-20.


Page 8

1. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, p. 87.


3. Ibid., p. 21.

4. Yaqūt, Udābā', VI, iv, p. 140.
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2. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 23.


4. Ibid., VIII, p. 325.

5. Ibid., p. 322.

Page 10

1. Ibid., IX, p. 75. Ibn Qutaiba says that Imru’al-Qais’s Muʿallaga was a popular song (Ibn Qutaiba, Shiʿr, I, p. 113).


3. Ibid., IX, pp. 109-10; Jawālīqī, Muʿarrab, p. 262.


5. Ibid., XVII, p. 190; Abū ʿUbaida, Nagā'id, I, p. 78; Mufaddal, Amthāl, p. 83.

6. Diwan, p. 29.

7. Abū al-Faraj, Ağhānī, XII, p. 299.


9. Ibid.; Suyūṭī, Wasā'il, pp. 120-1.

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1. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, pp. 12-3.
3. al-Mufaddal al-Dabbī was a Kūfān scholar (Ibn Sallām, Tabaqat, p. 21).

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5. Ibid., p. 362.
7. Ibid., XV, pp. 368-9; Qurashī, Jamhara, I, p. 88.

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2. Ibn Rashīq, ḤUmdā, I, p. 30; Tanāsī, Nazm, p. 101
   Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, ḤIQD, V, p. 281.
3. Ibn Sallām, Tabaqat, p. 34.

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The poem was known in Jahiliyya as the yatima (Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XIII, p. 102).

Ibn Taifūr, Qasā'id, p. 39; Dīwān al-Hudhaliyyān, pp. 1-4.

Ibn Taifūr, Qasā'id, pp. 40-41.

Ibid., p. 41; Dīwān, I, pp. 74-5.

Ibn Taifūr, Qasā'id, pp. 35, 41.

Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VII, p. 115.

Tabarī, Tarīkh, I, pp. 627-8.

Ibid.

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4. Ibid., XVII, pp. 2-3.

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1. Ibid., p. 2.

Page 21

Farazdaq's grand-father Saiqa b. Najiya was a Jahili philanthropist and poet (Abû al-Faraj, Aghāni, XXI, pp. 276-81).

4. The authenticity issue was raised again in the nineteenth century, first by Theodor Nöldeke (1861) and then by Wilhelm Ahlwardt (1872), who, like Ibn Sallām before them, cast doubt on the genuineness of Jāhili poetry. Nöldeke and Ahlwardt argued that as the bulk of Jāhili poetry was written down in the 2/8 and 3/9 centuries, the poems must have undergone editorial changes, through the hands of the ṭāwīs of the poets, and through the hands of the ṭāwīs who wrote them down. The editorial changes involved the substitution of accessible words or expressions for difficult or archaic ones, and Islamic terms of reference for pagan ones, as well as the shuffling of sections or lines either within the same poem or in poems that had the same meter and rhyme. Margoliouth (1925) and Tāha Husain (1926) amplified the ideas of their predecessors and went so far as to say that most, if not all, of Jāhili poetry was a forgery. A number of Arab and Western scholars, like Charles Iyall, Erich Braunlich, Giorgio Levi Della Vida, A.J. Arberry and Nasir al-Dīn al-Asad, disagreed with the conjectures of Margoliouth and Tāha Husain and presented a far more convincing argument in defence of the genuineness of Jāhili poetry, which resolved the authenticity issue once and for all. For the differing views on the authenticity question see: D.S. Margoliouth, "The Origins of Arabic Poetry", JARS, July 1925, pp. 417-449; C. Iyall, Mufaddaliyyāt, II, pp. xx-xxi; C. Iyall, The Diwāns of ʿAbīd Ibn al-Abras and ʿAmīr Ibn al-Tufail, pp. 11-13; A.J. Arberry,

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1. Ibn Maṇzūr, Lisān, I, p. 587.
2. Ibid., p. 588; Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt, p. 10.
3. Ibn Ābd al-Barr, Qasd, pp. 20-1.
4. Ibid., pp. 20, 24.
7. Ibid.

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., pp. 13-4, 18-9.
3. Ibid., p. 17.
4. Abū al-Faraj's account of the Yemeni king Qaisaba b. Kulṯūm al-Sakūnī endorses the view that the Yemenis spoke Arabic but wrote in the Muṣnād script (Aḥānī, XIII, pp. 5-6). Beeston holds that the pre-Christian "Sabaic" language had characteristics distinct from Arabic, but the post-Christian "Sabaic" language "shows an increasing degree of approximation in vocabulary to Arabic." Beeston
also says that the lack of guidelines to read the consonantal, Arabian Semitic scripts "imposes great limitations on the linguistic analysis, it also makes even the understanding of the semantic content of the inscriptions often extremely speculative" (Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period, ed. Beeston and others, C.U.P. 1983, pp. 1-2).

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Page 27

1. Tabarī, Tārikh, I, p. 613.
2. Ibid., II, p. 215.

Page 28

2. Ibid., pp. 211-16.
3. Ibid., p. 216. There were other poets who, like Waddāh, were born and brought up in Yemen. An example is the contemporary of Waddāh Jahdar from the Banū Jusham b. Bakr, whose poems have the simplicity and clarity of Waddāh's poetry (Yāqūt, Buldān, II, pp. 210-11).
1. 

Tabaqāt, p. 11. Tāha Husain re-phrased the last part of the statement "and their language is not like our language", so as to emphasise that the Yemenis and the Ma'addīs spoke two different languages. In so doing Tāha Husain undermined his own argument (N. Asad, Masādir al-Shi'r al-Jāhili, p. 384).

2. To illustrate this point see Zajjāj, Majālis, p. 233.


4. Tabari, Tārīkh, III, p. 278.

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1. Wellhausen suggests that the Arab language was developed by the Christians of Hīra (Encyclopaedia of Islam, I, (n.e.), p. 565). Most Western scholars presume that the Arab language originated in Najd (Ibid.). Chaim Rabin maintains that the Arab language was based on one or several dialects of Najd, where Arab poetry came into being (Ancient West Arabian, Taylor's Foreign Press, London, 1951, p. 3). Lyall says "it is tolerably certain that there were wide differences of dialect and pronunciation in the Arabia of classical times, as there are in the Arabic spoken to-day in different parts of the Peninsula and adjacent regions. The immense vocabulary of the old poetry, and the great number of synonyms, must have grown up by the absorption, into one language of poetic convention, of the tribal word-stocks" (Mufaddaliyyāt, II, pp. xxv-xxvi).
Chapter II

The Jāhiliyya

The Arabs

The Arab tradition divides the Arabs into two groups. The first group was called al-Arab al-Áriba, the original Arabs who were the descendants of Ya'rub b. Qahtān, the grandson of the Adite prophet Nūd, who moved out of Iraq soon after the Winds of Bābīl incident, and were already speaking the heavenly language al-Árabiyya which they had been taught by the angel Jibrīl. The second group was called al-Árab al-Musta'riba, the mixed Arabs, who were the descendants of the prophet Ismā'īl, the son of the Akkadian prophet Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl and of the Egyptian Hājar. It is unclear how the Arabs acquired their name. Some classical scholars believe that the Arabs were named after their progenitor Ya'rub b. Qahtān, while others think they were called after the Tihāma town Áraba where Ismā'īl's children grew up. The urban and country Arabs were called Árab, and the Arabs of the bādiya were called Aṭrāb. The term Árab denotes urban and bādiya Arabs and Aṭrāb refers only to the bādiya Arabs.

The earliest known reference to the Arabs is in an Assyrian victory cuneiform inscription which mentions
an Arab leader by the name of Gindibu who, in an alliance with the kings of Syria and Palestine, commanded a force of one thousand cameliers against the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III at the Battle of Qarqara in 854 B.C. The names of Arab kings, queens and shaikhs crop up frequently in cuneiform texts from the time of the Assyrian king Tiglathpileser III (745-727) to that of the neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus (555-539). These texts invariably allude to flourishing Arab kingdoms and shaikhdoms in Hijāz and in the regions between North Arabia and Egypt. The Old Testament as well as the classical writers like Herodotus, Pliny, Josephus, Strabo and Ptolemy referred extensively to the Arabs, especially the Musnads, Thamūdis and Nabataeans, whose political and economic influence had a bearing on the regional issues of the day.

The classical Arab historians were aware of the existence of the Musnad, Thamūdī and Nabataean civilisations. Mahbūb b. Qustantīn and Ibn Khaldūn mention the Musnads and Thamūdis by name, and refer to the Nabataeans as Arabs who were ruled by king Aritah (Hārith). Ibn Khaldūn says he obtained his information on the Nabataeans and their contemporaries from the writings of Yūsuf b. Kariyyūn, who was in all probability Flavius Josephus. Ibn Khaldūn also says he found the work of Yūsuf b. Kariyyūn in Egypt, and boasts that he is the
first historian to use it.

By the time of the Prophet Muhammad the Arabs might not have had a clearly detailed knowledge of their distant past, but out of the limited knowledge they had, they painted their own comprehensive picture of their ancient world. The Late Jāhilī and Islamic traditions abound in factual data which have been corroborated by Greek, Roman, Syriac and archeological material, and there may be other data which one day will be authenticated. In any case, even if some of the data were found to be imaginatively conceived, still they could not be dismissed because they form part of the cultural heritage of the Late Jāhilī and Islamic Arabs. Therefore, in order to appreciate the Late Jāhilī and Islamic traditions, it is important to see the past as the Late Jāhilī and Islamic Arabs saw it, irrespective of whether their view of their heritage was lucid or blurred, since they developed their culture upon their understanding of their heritage. For this reason a survey of the Late Jāhilī and Islamic Arabs' conception of their distant past is relevant to the understanding of Jāhiliyya and the Islamic period.

The period covering the history of the Arabs from the earliest times to the rise of Islam is called the Jāhiliyya. The precise meaning of the term is unclear.
The traditional definition of Jāhiliyya as "the age of spiritual darkness" reflects a religious bias based on the unqualified interpretation of certain Qur'ānic āyas in which the Jāhilīs were taken to task for not seeing Allāh in monotheistic perspective. This unfavourable view, which gained currency soon after the establishment of Islam, has over the centuries blurred our appreciation and understanding of the immensely rich and varied Jāhilī civilisations out of which Islam was born. The Qur'ān, Hadīth and Jāhilī literature show that the Jāhiliyya was far from being a spiritual and cultural desert; on the contrary, it was a spiritually and culturally fertile period whose achievements left an indelible mark on the imagination of the peoples who came under the influence of Islam.

As there is no historical justification for the current meaning of Jāhiliyya as "the age of spiritual darkness", it is possible that the intended subtle nuances of the term had either been lost by the time it became necessary to define it, or they were deliberately overlooked because they clashed with the established view that glorified Islam. A likely explanation of Jāhiliyya is that, since the Jāhilīs were divided along tribal lines, they failed to project a vision capable of creating a political cohesive force that could have channelled their resources towards a
clearly defined goal similar to that of Islam. Another likely explanation is that the term Jahiliyya could simply mean "the preceding period" or "the past". This interpretation is endorsed by the Qur'an, the Prophet's sermons, remarks by the Sahabīs and by the Jāhilī poet Āmr b. Ma'ūdh Karib. According to Arab tradition the term Jahiliyya was first used by a woman who asked the Prophet about some camels she had in Jahiliyya: 

Zamakhsharī says the term Jahiliyya reflects two different ways of life covering the Jāhilī and the Islamic periods. Jahiliyya in the Jāhilī sense denotes a polytheistic and sybaritic way of life; and in the Islamic sense it denotes only a sybaritic way of life. On the other hand, the term was probably coined to convey an ambivalent attitude resulting from an insufficient and confused knowledge of the period concerned.

The Jahiliyya can be divided into three distinct but related periods, namely:

1. The Jahiliyya of Lost Civilisations
   (ca. 3000 B.C.-A.D. 400)

2. Ancient Jahiliyya
   (3000 B.C.-A.D. 400)
3. Late Jāhiliyya

(A.D. 400-A.D. 622) الجاهلية المتاخرة

It is almost impossible to fix the dates of each period due to the lack of reliable data, and also to the fact that some periods overlap. For example, the first two periods thrived simultaneously and the only difference between them is that the peoples of the first period became extinct, whereas the descendants of the peoples of the second period flourished in the third period.

1. The Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations

The early history of most civilisations is in the main preserved in the oral tradition written down many centuries after the events described had occurred. This is true of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs. Just as the epics of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans embody the memory of their respective early history, Jāhilī poetry, Ayyām al-ʿArab, The Qurʿān, The Hadīth, the sīras, Akhbār al-Yaman and Kitāb al-Tijān have kept the memory of the ancient Arabs alive for posterity. Moreover, the Arab works present a view of history which reflects the predicaments and the aspirations of the age in which they were written. The stories of Čād, Thamūd and Ayyām al-ʿArab, for example, were probably used to
emphasise the following points. First, those who reject the Oneness of Allah will suffer the same fate of destruction as the Ĉādites and Thamūdīs. Second, tribal and factional wars will lead to the annihilation of the tribes as it happened to Tasm and Jadīs. Third, disunity will result in the subjugation of the Arabs by foreign powers as in the case of the Lakhmids and the Ghassanids, or in the extermination of the tribes as it happened to the Hadrans who were wiped out by the Persians. Fourth, unity will lead to victory, as when the united forces of the Arabs defeated the Persians at the Battle of Dhū Qār. Fifth, the Arab language draws on a long and uninterrupted cultural tradition.

The lost civilisations are divided into two groups. The first group flourished in the distant periods of Jahiliyya, and includes the peoples of Ĉād and Thamūd who perished as a result of Divine Will. The second group which thrived in the period close to the Late Jahiliyya includes Tasm and Jadīs, the late Ĉāmālikites and the Hadrans who were decimated by wars.

The Ĉādites

According to Arab tradition the Ĉādites were the descendants of Iram b. Sam b. Nūh who came from Babylon and settled in Yemen. The polytheist Ĉādites developed
an advanced civilisation at the height of which Allah sent them His message through the prophet Hud in which He urged them to give up idol worship and believe only in one God. Hud, who was a merchant before he became a prophet, was scorned by the Adites who carried on worshipping their own gods. The prophet cast the curse of drought on the Adites. Rain stopped falling and the Adite land was ruined, the cattle died and the people suffered hardship. In the end the desperate Adites sent a delegation to their holy city Mecca to pray for rain. In Mecca the delegation was warmly received by the brother-in-law of one of the members of the delegation. After a month's feasting, during which the members of the delegation forgot the purpose of their visit, the brother-in-law host and his son asked two women singers to sing a song which would remind their guests of their mission. On hearing the song the guests sobered up and went to the Ka'ba to pray for rain. In the Ka'ba they heard a voice asking them to choose from the white, red and black clouds a cloud which would be sent to their homeland. They chose the black cloud thinking it was full of rain. No sooner had they chosen the cloud than they heard a voice telling them they had chosen the cloud of fire and destruction. The black cloud sailed to the land of Ad and burnt the land and the people. Only the prophet Hud and his followers were saved.
The Late Ādites were the followers of the prophet Hūd. Among the Late Ādites there was a man known as Luqmān who was a merchant, a follower of Hūd and a member of the Ādite delegation sent to the Ka'ba to pray for rain. While Luqmān was with the delegation in the Ka'ba he heard a voice calling him to make a wish, and so Luqmān wished he could live forever. The voice said that immortal life could not be granted to man, but Luqmān's life could be prolonged by letting him live the life-span of either seven successive apexes or seven successive eagles. Luqmān chose the life-span of seven eagles, for it was believed that eagles live a very long life. Luqmān lived the lives of the first six eagles, which came to six hundred years, and another eight hundred years being the life-span of the seventh eagle called Lubad. The tragic story of the Ādites and the longevity of Lubad and its failure to fly on the last day of its life, which signalled the doom of Luqmān, captured the imagination of the Jāhilī poets, notably al-Afwah al-Awdī, Abīd b. al-Abras, al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī, Aṣḥāb al-Mukhabbal al-Sādī and Labīd.

The Thamūdīs

The Thamūdīs came after the Ādites and lived in North West Arabia. Archeological finds, the earliest of which is an Assyrian tablet dated 717 B.C., as well as
Greek and Latin sources, have confirmed the Qur'ān's and
the Arab tradition's claim of the existence of the
Thamūdīs. The story goes that the Thamūdīs led a
prosperous life and lived in houses in the plains in the
summer and spent their winters on the mountains in houses
hewn into the mountains like those of Petra. As they were
idol worshippers, Allāh sent them the prophet Sālih to
show them the right path. First the Thamūdīs mocked Sālih,
then they told him that if he could produce a she-camel
out of a rock they would abandon their seventy gods and
worship Allāh instead. Sālih took up their challenge and
prayed. In response to Sālih's prayer Allāh sent a shiver
through the mountain, and the mountain gave birth to a
pregnant she-camel. Sālih told the Thamūdīs to let the
she-camel graze freely, and that she would drink water
for one day from their water basin and would provide them
with milk on the following day. Sālih also warned them
not to harm the she-camel lest they incur the wrath of
Allāh.

The she-camel gave birth to a baby camel. The
Thamūdīs let the two camels graze freely on their land,
but the sight of the two camels frightened their cattle,
and so the Thamūdīs killed the two camels. When Sālih
heard of the killing of the two camels he was outraged
and he informed the Thamūdīs they had only three days
to live, during which their faces would turn yellow
on the first day, red on the second day and black on the third day, then they would all die. The Thamūdīs did not take ʿSāliḥ seriously. But when they saw their faces changing colour they knew they were doomed. And on the third day their faces turned black and they were struck by thunder and lightning and they all died except ʿSāliḥ and his followers.

Tasm and Jadīs

Tasm and Jadīs were two Yemeni tribes that settled in Yamāma, famous for its tall palaces, gardens and lush vegetation. The two tribes lived in harmony until Tasm gained the upperhand, under its despotic king ʿImlīq. Tradition relates that one day a Jadīsī divorced couple approached ʿImlīq in order to decide the custody of their child. ʿImlīq's verdict was that the couple's son should become his slave and that the couple should be sold as slaves and that the man be given one fifth of the woman's price and the woman be given one tenth of the man's price. ʿImlīq's decision enraged the Jadīsī couple to the extent that the woman retorted indignantly:

(Tawīl)

أني آخا حكمت ليحكم بنا قابتم حكماً في مزيدة ظالماً لعمرى لقد حكست لا مروعاً ولا كنت فيما يبرم الحكم عالماً ندمت ولم أندم واني للضرة وأصبح بعلي في الحكمة نادماً

The woman's remark angered ʿImlīq who decreed that when
a Jadisi woman gets married, the bride should spend the first night with him. This went on for a while, because Jadis was politically and militarily weak, until one day the poet CAfira, the sister of a Jadisi leader, got married to her cousin. On her wedding night CAfira was taken to CImliq accompanied by the women singing: (Rajaz)

The following morning CAfira left CImliq's palace in her wedding dress stained with the virginal blood and with the front and back of the dress ripped open, leaving her blood-stained body exposed. CAfira, upset by what had happened to her and by the indifference of her people, burst out: (Rajaz)

CAfira's outburst stirred Jadis to take action; and so CAfira's brother and the Jadisi leaders met to work out a plan to get rid of Tasm. The Jadisi leaders invited CImliq and his shaikhs to lunch. As the Tasmi nobles sat down to have their meal, the Jadisis fell on them and killed them all with the exception of the Tasmi poet Riyah who escaped to Yemen to seek the help of the Yemeni king Hassān b. Tubba. Hassān marched on Jadis, and when he was about a three-day journey from
Yamāma Riyāḥ told Hassan that in Yamāma he had a sister known as Zarqāʾ al-Yamāma who was married to a Jadīsī and who could see as far as a three-day journey. Riyāḥ advised Hassan to cut down trees and bushes and use them to camouflage their advance on Yamāma. Zarqāʾ al-Yamāma saw the trees and bushes approaching Yamāma and warned the Jadīsīs of the impending attack. No one believed her. In the morning Hassan stormed Yamāma, killed every one and destroyed the palaces and the forts. As for Zarqāʾ al-Yamāma, Hassan had her eyes gouged out.

The ʿAmālikites

The last ʿAmālikite kingdom stretched from the Jazīra in Iraq to the borders of Syria and flourished around the third century A.D. The penultimate king, ʿAmr b. Zairib al-ʿImliqī, a descendant of the ancient ʿAmālikites, was threatened by Jadhīma al-Abrash al-Azdí, the ruler of the newly-established Azdí kingdom in Hīra. Jadhīma marched on ʿAmr and in the heat of battle ʿAmr was killed. The victorious Jadhīma was later lured into a trap by the new ʿAmālikite queen Zabbāʾ who subsequently killed him.

One of Jadhīma's advisers known as Qasīr escaped and returned to Hīra and incited Jadhīma's nephew and successor ʿAmr b. ʿAdī b. Nasr al-Lakhmī to avenge the death of his maternal uncle. ʿAmr gathered the Lakhmid
and Azdī people and prepared for war. Qasīr then suggested to ʿAmr that as the city of Zabbaʿ was impregnable, they should devise a scheme which would enable them to take the city with a minimum loss of life. The scheme was that ʿAmr should cut off part of Qasīr's nose and cause him other bodily harm, then Qasīr would go to the queen and make her believe that he had escaped from Hīra on account of the humiliations and injuries he sustained.

Qasīr was welcomed by queen Zabbaʿ and gradually gained her confidence to the extent that she told him of her secret escape-tunnel. In the meantime Zabbaʿ had been told by a kāhīna that her kingdom would be destroyed by king ʿAmr, and she would take her own life. Zabbaʿ, who had never seen ʿAmr, sent an artist in disguise to Hīra to paint an accurate portrait of ʿAmr. The artist stayed for a while in Hīra and after having seen ʿAmr a few times he painted his picture, then returned to Zabbaʿ with the portrait of ʿAmr with which she never parted.

After a while Qasīr told Zabbaʿ he would like to go to Hīra to get his belongings and he would also buy clothing, perfumes and other goods and trade them on her behalf. Zabbaʿ consented. Qasīr travelled to Hīra incognito and met ʿAmr secretly. Qasīr advised ʿAmr to provide him with the merchandise he would trade on behalf
of Zabbā'. Qasīr returned to Zabbā' loaded with goods which she was pleased to receive. The response of Zabbā' encouraged Qasīr to go on other trading ventures. On his third trip to Hīra, Qasīr asked ʿAmr to provide him with a thousand trusted men and load each camel with two jars, each containing a well-armed man. ʿAmr agreed to Qasīr's request and they all went to the city of Zabbā'. Once inside the city all the men got out of the jars and surprised the inhabitants and killed them. In the meantime Qasīr took ʿAmr to the escape-tunnel of Zabbā' and waited for her. When Zabbā' reached the tunnel she saw Qasīr and ʿAmr whom she recognised from the portrait, so she sucked her poisoned ring and died.

Hadīr

The city-state of Hadīr, situated along the Tigris and Euphrates, was ruled by Sātarūn, commonly known by the Arabs as Daizan, who had strong links with the Romans. Tradition has it that when the second Sassanid king Sābūr b. Ardashīr, known as Sābūr al-Junūd, was in Khurasān on some business, Daizan attacked Sawād al-ʿIrāq which had recently come under the Sassanid sphere of influence. Sābūr returned to Iraq and marched on Daizan who had retreated to his fortified city of Hadīr. In his city, Daizan sustained Sābūr's attacks for two years. Then one day Daizan's daughter Nadīra left the city to spend her
period of menstruation outside the city, as it was the custom of the Hadran women. On that occasion she met Sābūr and they fell in love with each other. Nādirā asked Sābūr what would he give her if she helped him to conquer the city. Sābūr said he would marry her and make her his favourite wife. She asked him to get a ringed dove and stain one of its legs with the menstrual blood of a blue-eyed virgin, then let the dove fly and the dove would alight on the city's wall. For the Hadrans believed in a legend that said that their city would collapse when a ringed dove which had one of its legs stained with the menstrual blood of a blue-eyed virgin alighted on their city's wall. Sābūr followed Nādirā's advice. When the Hadrans saw the dove alighting on their city's wall they knew they were doomed. Sābūr conquered the city, destroyed it and killed its inhabitants in A.D. 327.

Sābūr kept his promise to Nādirā and married her in Ḍāin al-Tamr. On the wedding night Nādirā kept tossing and turning in her bed and could not sleep because of the roughness of the mattress, even though the mattress was made of silk and filled with raw silk. While Sābūr was pondering the cause of Nādirā's restlessness, he noticed a myrtle leaf stuck between the folds of her body which was the source of her discomfort. As Sābūr was watching Nādirā's head he saw her brains through
her fine transparent skin and asked her what she was fed on. Nadīra said her diet consisted of cream, brains, the honey of virgin bees and the nectar of grapes. Sābūr was disturbed by Nadīra's confession and told her that although she had known him for a short time, yet she betrayed her father who took great care of her. Sābūr called one of his men and ordered him to tie Nadīra's hair to the tail of a horse and make the horse run until her body was torn to pieces.

The Ancient Jāhiliyya

Like the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations, the Ancient Jāhiliyya covers a similar time-span, but since it overspills into the Late Jāhiliyya, its history, both mythical and factual, is better preserved than the history of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations. Classical Arab scholars saw the Ancient Jāhiliyya in terms of dynasties and tribes: the dynasties being those of the Himyarites of Yemen and of the Lakhmids of Ḥira, and the tribes being those of the Jurhumīs, the Khuzāḳīs, the Qudāḳūs and the Ādānās.

The Himyarites

The Himyarite kingdom is traced back to the time when the patriarch Qaḥṭān, son of the Ādīte prophet Hūd,
migrated with his people from Babylon to Yemen. In their new abode Qaḥtān and his son Yaʿrub established the Himyarite kingdom which survived right up to the death of the son of Saif b. Dhī Yazan in the last quarter of the sixth century. The most famous of all the Himyarite monarchs was Bilqīs, queen of Sheba, whose mother was a genie. During that long span the Himyarites developed a civilisation which was the envy of the ancient world. They invented the Musnad script and their greatest agricultural achievement was the construction of the Marīb Dam, which was to play a central role in their economic prosperity. The bursting of the Marīb Dam led to waves of migration to various parts of the Arabian Peninsula including Syria and Iraq, as in the case of the Khuzāʿīs who settled in Mecca, the Lakhmids in Iraq and the Ghassānids in Syria.

The Lakhmids

In the third century A.D. the Lakhmid kingdom was established in Ḥīra by Jadhīma al-Abrash, the king of the Yemeni tribe recently settled in Ḥīra. After his death at the hand of the ʿAmālikite queen Zabbāʾ, Jadhīma was succeeded by his maternal nephew ʿAmr b. ʿAdī b. Nasr whose son Imruʿal-Qais (d.328) extended his influence to Syria, Ḥijāz, Najd and up to the borders of Najrān, and at the same time acted as governor for
the Romans and Persians. Imru’al-Qais’s descendants continued to rule from Hira as governors for the Persians until the last king Nu’man b. al-Mundhir was killed by the Persians at the beginning of the seventh century. The Lakhmid kings were known for running commercial enterprises.

The Jurhumis

The origin of the Jurhumis is partly mythological and partly earthly. The myth says that an angel expelled from paradise married a Yemeni woman who bore him a son named Jurhum who became the father of the Jurhumī tribe. Some time later the Jurhumīs moved from Yemen to Mecca which was ruled by the Āmālikites. In their attempt to keep the Jurhumīs out of Mecca the Āmālikites were overpowered and banished from Mecca by the Jurhumīs.

Ismā‘īl and his mother Hājar arrived in Mecca and were kindly received by the Jurhumīs. Ismā‘īl married Ra‘la the daughter of the Jurhumī king and had twelve sons. When Ismā‘īl died his eldest son Nābit succeeded him as the guardian of the Holy Ka‘ba which was first built by Adam and later rebuilt by Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl. Nābit was succeeded by his grand-father Mūdād al-Jurhumī as custodian of the Ka‘ba. As time went by the Jurhumīs’ lust for power engulfed them in wars against one another.
In the meantime the bursting of the Marib Dam forced many Yemeni tribes to migrate to various parts of the Arabian Peninsula. The Lakhmids made their home in Iraq and the Khuzā’īs in Syria and Mecca. When the Khuzā’īs reached Mecca the Jurhumis refused to have them as neighbours. War broke out between the two tribes in which the Khuzā’īs gained the upperhand and subsequently threw the Jurhumis out of Mecca. A group of Jurhumis who disapproved of the political excesses of their compatriots retreated to a place called Qanawnā before the coming of the Khuzā’īs. After the Khuzā’īs took control of Mecca, the Banū Isma‘il who left Mecca before the war were allowed back to Mecca, but not the Jurhumis of Qanawnā whose leader was the poet Mudad b. ʿAmr b. al-Hārith b. Mudād al-Jurhumi. The Khuzā’īs’ refusal to let the Jurhumis back to Mecca so upset the poet Mudad that he expressed his grief at the loss of Mecca in a series of moving poems.

The Qudā’īs

The Qudā’ī tribe is a Yemeni tribe whose sphere of influence included Iraq, Najrān and Syria. Ibn Hazm and Ibn Khaldūn say the Qudā’īs were mentioned by Greek writers like Ptolemy, but they are not certain whether the Qudā’īs of Ptolemy were the ancient Qudā’īs or the Qudā’īs of the Arab tradition. Ibn Khaldūn intimates
that the Qudā'īs might not have been of Yemeni origin, and were the allies of the Romans and the Byzantines until they were overthrown from Syria by the Ghassānids and from Najrān by the Banū al-Ḥārith b. Ka'āb.

Tradition relates that the Qudā'īs descended from Qudā'ī b. Mālik b. Himyar. Mālik b. Himyar divorced Qudā'ī's mother who was already pregnant with Qudā'ī. Qudā'ī's mother remarried Ma'add b. ʿAdnān, and when Qudā'ī was born, Ma'add adopted him and treated him like his own son. Ma'add was known as Abu Qudā'ī.

An important incident in the Qudā'ī tradition is that of Yawm al-Qāriz al-Awwal. Ibn Qutaiba and Abū al-Faraj recount that the poet Khuzaima b. Nahd, an eight-generation Qudā'ī, was in love with the daughter of Yadkur b. ʿAnaza, a sixth-generation Ma'addī. One day Khuzaima and Yadkur went about looking for qāriz leaves used for dyeing clothes, and on their way they found a well full of bees. Khuzaima suggested to Yadkur that one of them should go down the well to get the honey, but since he was fat, if he went down the well it would be difficult for Yadkur to lift him up, but as Yadkur was slimmer it would be easy for Khuzaima to lift him up. Yadkur agreed and climbed down the well, gathered all the honey and gave it to Khuzaima. While Yadkur was still in the well, Khuzaima asked him if
he could marry his daughter Fāṭima. Yadhkur refused, so
Khuzaima left him in the well. When Khuzaima was asked
about Yadhkur he said he knew nothing about him. After
a while, Khuzaima boasted in a poem addressed to
Yadhkur's daughter Fāṭima that he killed her father.
On hearing the poem Yadhkur's tribe attacked Khuzaima
and his tribe, killed Khuzaima and decimated his tribe.
The story of Khuzaima and Yadhkur has passed into the
proverb-lore and is crystallised in the proverb
لَوْ مَا قَتَّلْتُ الْخَلِّيْجَ أَبًا

The ʿAdnānīs

The ʿAdnānīs trace their origin to Maʿadd b. ʿAdnān,
a descendant of Qaidār b. Ismāʿīl. The legend has it that
the prophets Jeremiah and Barkhiya saved and took care of
the twelve-year old boy Maʿadd when Nebuchadnezzar's
armies swept across North Arabia and wiped out ʿAdnān and
his Arab forces. After the war Jeremiah and Barkhiya took
Maʿadd back to Mecca where he grew up. Maʿadd had many
children, the most famous being Nizār, whose four sons
Iyād, Rabīʿa, Anmār and Mudar became the patriarchs of
the major Arab tribes like Shabāb, Tamīm, Rabīʿa, ʿAbs,
Taghlib, Bakr, Asad and Quraish, that dominated the
political scene of the Late Jāhilīyya. With the exception of the Mudarīs, the descendants of Iyād, Rabī' and Anmīr moved out of Mecca and found new homes in various parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Fihr, an eighth-generation Mudarī, became the father of the Qurashīs. Qusayy b. Kilāb, a seventh-generation Qurashī, married a Khuzā'ī woman and re-established his ancestors' rights to the custodianship of the Ka'ba which had been under the control of the Khuzā'īs since the Jurhumīs were banished from Mecca. Qusayy had four sons, Ābd al-Dār, Ābd al-Uzza, Ābd Munāf and Ābd Qusayy, whose descendants included the Prophet Muhammad, Mu'tawwiyah and the Abbasid Caliph Abū al-Abbās al-Saffāh (d. 136/754). Ābd Manāf lived in the second half of the fifth century and had four sons who set up commercial enterprises which traded with Persia, Byzantium, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Abyssinia.

Mecca was a thriving commercial town, and most of the Meccan Qurashī nobles were engaged in one form of trade or another. Ibn Qutaiba gives an indication of the kind of trade in which some of the Meccan nobles were involved just before the rise of Islam: Abū Ṭalib, the uncle of the Prophet and the father of the Caliph Ālī, was a wheat and perfume merchant, Abū Bakr al-Siddīq was a cloth merchant, Āuthmān b. Āffān was a cloth merchant, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās made and sold spears and arrows, al-'Awwām was a tailor, al-Zubair b.
al-Awām was a butcher, Āmr b. al-Ās was a butcher, al-Ās b. Hishām, the uncle of the Prophet, was a blacksmith, ʿUqba b. Abī Muʿātīt was a wine merchant, Abū Sufiān b. Ḥarb, the father of the Caliph Muʿāwiya, was an oil and hide merchant, al-Ās b. Wā'il, the father of Āmr b. al-Ās, was a vet who treated horses and camels, Malik b. Dīnār was a scribe and publisher, al-Nadr b. al-Ḥārith b. Kalada was a singer, lute player and composer, and so were al-Ḥakam b. Abī al-As, the father of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, Qais al-Fihrī, the father of al-Dāhhāk b. Qais, Muʿammār b. ʿUthmān, the grand-father of Āmr b. ʿUbad Allāh b. Muʿammār, and Sīrīn, the father of Muhammad b. Sīrīn.

The Qurashīs were known in Jāḥiliyya as 1 علمائیة on account of their learning, their prominent position as custodians of the Kaʿba and their successful commercial ventures.

The Late Jāḥiliyya

Most of the detailed history of the Jāḥiliyya concentrates on the Late Jāḥiliyya, which covers the last two hundred or so years before Islam. During this period the kingdom of Kinda was founded in Central Arabia by Ākil al-Murar, the great-grand-father of the poet Imruʿ 2 al-Qais, in the second half of the fifth century. The
Ghassānid kingdom came into being in the fifth century in Syria and was closely associated with the Byzantines, though its influence on the Arabs was less extensive than that of its Lakhmid rival. But the best part of the history of the Late Jāhiliyya is depicted in Ayyām al-°Arab which revolves around the tribal wars, like Harb al-Basūs and Dāḥis - al-Ghabrā', each of which lasted forty years, and the wars of the Arabs with the Persians like the Yawm Dī Qār, which was a turning point in the history of the Arabs.

The Yawm Dī Qār's story goes that the Lakhmid kingdom was abolished when the last Lakhmid king of Hīra al-Nuṣrān b. al-Mundhir was killed by the Persians who replaced him with an Arab leader who did not have the support of the Arab tribes. Before Nuṣrān was killed he had entrusted his belongings with some of his Arab allies. The Persian king tried to obtain the belongings of Nuṣrān but without success. When the Persian king threatened to annihilate the Arabs for defying his orders, the Arabs took up the challenge and the two forces met at Dī Qār in which the united forces of the Arab tribes devastated the Persian armies for the first time since the foundation of the Sassanid kingdom in the third century A.D.

Before the Battle of Yawm Dī Qār the Persians dealt
with the Arabs via the Lakhmids, because the Arabs preferred to conduct their political affairs with the Persians through a recognised Arab representative. But when the Persians chose to deal directly with the Arabs, especially after the murder of Nu’man, the Arabs felt their political identity was being threatened, and the only way to overcome the Persian threat was to bury their tribal differences and rally together against their enemies. It seems the Persians did not take this vital factor into consideration, nor were they prepared for the old Arab war-strategy adopted at the Battle of Yawm Dhī Qār which relied on organising the Arab tribes into an army of five divisions called Khamīs, consisting of the vanguard, the centre, the right, the left and the rear divisions. Such tactics surprised the Persians and wrecked havoc among their forces.

The Yawm Dhī Qār was not the first time in which the Arabs resisted the interference of outside powers in their own affairs, particularly when that interference affected their independence. The Lakhmids joined forces with the Persians in their fight against the Byzantines, for example, because they needed the Persians to help them fight their Ghassānid rivals who were the allies of the Byzantines. The Battle of Yawm Halīma in which the Ghassānids defeated the Lakhmids and killed their king illustrates this point.
On the other hand, if an Arab ruler had no axe to grind against another Arab ruler, there was no way a foreign power could use one Arab against another. This is evident in the following example. The Persian king Qubād adopted the Mazdakī religion which allowed a man to marry his mother, his daughters and his sisters. Qubād tried to convert the Lakhmid king to Mazdakīsm but to no avail. Qubād also approached the king of Kinda and obtained a positive response. Then Qubād requested the king of Kinda to write to ʿAbd Manāf, the custodian of the Kaʿba, asking him to adopt the Mazdakī creed. ʿAbd Munāf declined the invitation. On hearing of ʿAbd Munāf's refusal Qubād ordered the king of Kinda to attack Mecca and kill ʿAbd Munāf and the Meccans who refused to be converted to Mazdakīsm. The king of Kinda ignored Qubād's orders because he was overtaken by a sense of "Arab brotherhood" and therefore would not fight a fellow Arab for the sake of an outsider.

The following incident is another example which shows that the Arabs preferred to deal with outside powers through an Arab king. When the Lakhmid king Qābūs b. Hind died in 582, the Persian king Anūshirwān appointed a Persian Mazrab as governor of the Arabs instead of a Lakhmid prince. The Arabs did not acknowledge the authority of the Persian Mazrab. Fearing the consequences of the Arabs' ultimate rejection of his power, Anūshirwān
dismissed the Mazrab and installed the Lakhmid prince al-Mundhir b. al-Mundhir b. Ma'am al-Sama' as king of the Arabs. Mundhir was later killed by the Ghassānid king al-Ḥarīth al-Aʿraj at the Battle of Yawm Abāgh.

In the first quarter of the sixth century the Yemeni king Dhu Nuwas, a Jewish convert, marched to Najrān in an attempt to convert the Najrānī Christians to Judaism. The Najrānī Christians who resisted conversion were thrown into a ditch and burnt alive. A Christian survivor escaped to Byzantium and urged the Byzantine emperor to save his fellow Najrānī Christians from Jewish persecution. The Byzantine emperor instructed the Abyssinian Christian king to go to Najrān and help the Najrānī Christians. The Abyssinian king and his army landed in Najrān, routed Dhu Nuwas and his forces and occupied Yemen. The deputy commander of the Abyssinian army Abraha killed his commander, took charge of the Abyssinian army and asserted his authority over the Yemeni provinces under Abyssinian control.

Abraha built a church in Sanqā' to outshine the Ka'ba, the Arabs' holiest centre of worship. The Arabs were not impressed by the church and took Abraha's challenge lightly. Consequently, Abraha mustered his troops and headed towards Mecca, determined to demolish the Ka'ba. Before reaching the Ka'ba, the legend says, a flock of
birds flew over the Abyssinians and pelted them with flint stones and decimated them. Abraha returned to San'āʾ where he died shortly afterwards and was succeeded by his son as king of the Yemeni provinces under Abyssinian control.

Yemeni resistance to the Abyssinians gathered momentum when Saif b. Dhī Yazan succeeded his father as king of Yemen. Saif sought the help of the Byzantine emperor in order to get the Abyssinians out of Yemen. When Saif realised the Byzantine emperor was reluctant to help him, he turned to the Persians who provided him with eight hundred Persian convicts. Saif and the Persian convicts sailed to Yemen and by the time they reached the shores of Yemen only six hundred of the convicts had survived the sea voyage. The arrival of Saif in Yemen boosted the morale of the Yemenis who had already taken up arms against the Abyssinians. Saif led the Yemeni resistance forces, defeated the Abyssinians and threw them out of Yemen. To mark this occasion Arabs from all over the Arabian Peninsula sent delegations to the court of Saif to celebrate his victory over the Abyssinians and the re-establishment of the Himyarite kingdom. Among the delegations were the Prophet Muhammad's grand-father 'Abd al-Muttalib and the poets Umayya b. Abī al-Salt and his father.

Religious Beliefs
The diversity of the Jāhilī civilisations produced various religious beliefs, with each tribe having its own god or gods or other forms of worship through which it communicated with Allāh, the supreme God of Jāhiliyya. First, there were those who believed in one God, in the resurrection and the hereafter and in the reward for the pious and the punishment for the sinner. Second, there were those who believed in one God, the resurrection and the hereafter but not in the prophets. Third, there were those who believed in one God but not in the resurrection nor in the prophets; they believed in the concept of time which would eventually destroy mankind. Fourth, there were those who believed in angels whom they regarded as the daughters of Allāh from his marriage to the genii. Fifth, there were those who believed in the genii. Sixth, there were those who rejected the concept of the Creator and the resurrection. Seventh, there were those who believed in the Christian faith. Eighth, there were those who believed in the Jewish faith. Ninth, there were those who believed in the Persian Mazdaki creed. Tenth, there were those who worshipped Venus, the sun, the moon, Jupiter, Sirius, Canopus, Mercury and Taurus.

Some of the rituals associated with the sun, which was known as Ilāha, have lingered on up to the present times. In Yemen, for instance, whenever a child loses one of his milk teeth, he is told at sunrise to hold his
tooth between his forefinger and his thumb, face the sun and throw the tooth in the direction of the sun saying: "O sun, replace my tooth with a better one." By doing so, it is hoped the new tooth would grow strong and straight.

Tradition relates that Allah was the One and Only God worshipped in the Ka'ba. The prophets Ibrāhīm and Iṣmā'īl introduced the monotheistic Hanīf religion based on the Oneness of Allāh. The Hanīf religion continued to thrive up to the time of Amr b. Luhayy set up idol worship in the Ka'ba. The introduction of idol worship curtailed the influence of the Hanīf religion which re-emerged before the rise of Islam as an alternative to polytheism. The Hanīf followers were ruthlessly persecuted by the Qurashi polytheists. The most prominent Hanīf followers were Khalīd b. Sinān who extinguished the Fire of al-Harratain with his stick, Zaid b. Nufail, the cousin of the Caliph Umar, the poet Umayya b. Abī al-Salt and Qus b. Sā'ida whose sermons in Ṭukāz impressed the Prophet before his prophethood. The Prophet held the Hanīfs in high esteem, and their teachings are echoed in the early Meccan suras. This is apparent in "Sūrat al-Ikhlās" which crystallises the essence of Qus b. Sā'ida's and Khalīd b. Sinān's concept of Allāh:

"إِنَّهُ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَلِّいُ"
what my father used to say." The Prophet did not contradict her and praised her father.

In Akhbar Makka Ibn al-Azraqî states that when the Prophet took Mecca he went straight to the Ka'ba, the pantheon of the Jâhilî gods, and destroyed the statues of three hundred and sixty gods. The names of some of the gods like Hubal, Wadd, Manât, al-Lât and al-Uzzâ have survived, but unfortunately there is a dearth of information on the origin, mythological background and function of each god and goddess. Arab tradition relates that idol worship was introduced to Mecca from Syria by Amr b. Luhayy.

According to one Arab tradition, when Amr b. Luhayy fell ill he was advised to visit a health spa in Syria. Amr went to the spa and was cured. While Amr was in Syria he noticed people worshipping idols and asked them what it was all about, and they told him they were praying to their gods for rain and for help against their enemies. He asked them to give him some of their images, and they gave him the images of Manât, al-Lât and al-Uzzâ which he took to Mecca and put around the Ka'ba. These goddesses were worshipped by the Thamûdîs, Nabataeans and Liyanites. In Nabataean mythology al-Lât was the consort of the god Dhû Sharâ who was worshipped as Dhû al-Sharâ by the Banû al-Hârith b. Yashkur b. Mubashshir of the Azd tribe. It is
possible that the people Amr met in Syria might have been Thamūdis, Nabataeans or Liyānites.

The goddesses Manāt, al-ʾlāt and al-ʾUzza grew in importance in Jāhilī idol worship to the extent that the Jāhilīs assumed they were the daughters of Allāh. Manāt was placed in Qudaid, between Medina and Mecca. She was worshipped by all the Arabs such as the Aws, Khazraj, Hudail and Khuzāī tribes and the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina, until the Prophet sent his cousin Alī b. Abī Talib to destroy her four or five days after he took Mecca. al-ʾLāt was placed in Taʾif. Her image, like the Nabataean al-ʾLāt, was in the shape of a square rock, and her priests were from the Thaʿīf tribe. She was worshipped by all the Arabs including the Quraishīs until the Prophet sent al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba to destroy her. al-ʾUzza was placed in Wādī Nakhla. She was a shaitāna who resided in three samura trees in Wādī Nakhla. The Prophet sent Khalīd b. Walīd who cut down the three samura trees, forced al-ʾUzza out of the trees and then killed her.

Ibn al-Kalbī says the Qurashīs worshipped a number of gods in the Kaʿba, and Hubal was the most important of them all. He was made of red cornelian in the shape of a man, and his broken right hand had been replaced with a gold hand by the Qurashīs. He was introduced to the Kaʿba by
Khuzaima b. Mudrika b. al-Ya's b. Mudar, an ancestor of the Prophet. The idol was known as Hubal Khuzaima.

In Kitāb al-Asnām Ibn al-Kalbī traces the origins of five of the major Jahili gods: Wadd, Siwāq, Yaghūth, Yacūq and Nasr. In the distant past there were five virtuous men called Wadd, Siwāq, Yaghūth, Yacūq and Nasr. When they died their families were grief-stricken. A man from the Banū Qābil tribe approached the aggrieved families and offered to make statues resembling the five deceased. The families agreed. The man carved five statues out of stone which looked like the deceased and exhibited them. When the relatives saw the statues of their dead they were so taken by them that they addressed them respectfully while going round them. This ritual was performed for a century, and in the following century the statues were held in higher esteem than in the previous century. In the third century people thought their predecessors venerated the statues in the belief that the statues were intermediaries between themselves and Allāh. As a result the statues acquired greater importance. This idol worship displeased Allāh and He sent the prophet Idrīs to show the people the right path. But the people ignored Idrīs's message and continued to worship the five idols until the time of the prophet Nūḥ who was then four hundred years old. For one hundred and twenty years Nūḥ entreated his people to worship Allāh as the only God. But when Allāh saw that Nūḥ was not making
any progress He instructed him to build the Ark. By the
time he finished building the Ark Nūh was six hundred years
old. Then Allāh flooded the earth. After the flood Nūh
lived for another three hundred years. In the flood the
five statues drifted about until they were swept ashore in
Jeddah and the wind buried them in the sand.

CʿAmr b. Luhayy was a priest who lived in Tihāma and was
in touch with a genie who was his seer. One day the genie
urged CʿAmr to go to Jeddah where he would find the statues
of Wadd, Siwāʾ, Yaghūth, Yaqūq and Nasr and bring them to
Tihāma, then call on all the Arabs to worship them. CʿAmr
travelled to the river of Jeddah, dug up the five buried
statues and brought them to Tihāma. During the pilgrim
season CʿAmr took the five statues to Mecca and called on
all the Arabs to worship them, and all the Arabs responded
to his call. The statue of Wadd was of gigantic proportions
and wore two garments, one was wrapped round his waist and
the other covered the rest of his body. He wore a sword,
had a bow on his shoulder, a twisted spear in one hand and
a pouch full of arrows in the other hand. The appearance
of Wadd suggests he might have been a warrior god. The five
idols were worshipped until the advent of Islam.

In Kitāb al-ʿAsnām Ibn al-Kalbī lists a number of gods
and goddesses and the tribes that worshipped them, but says
nothing about their mythological background.
Every family in Mecca had a family god whose image was kept in the house. Members of the family who intended to travel sought the blessing of the house god by touching its image, and the same ritual was repeated on their return.

The Ka'ba was the centre of worship where the Jahilis prayed and went round it seven times. The Jahilis went on pilgrimage to the Ka'ba once a year in Dhū al-Hijja for a week, and they also performed the waqfa on Mount Arafat.

Some of the Jahilis believed that the blood and the soul are one and the same. This is illustrated in Ta'abbata Sharran's remark to his maternal uncle Shanfara who asked him about the man he had killed:

أباه، أنا فلانت نفسها سكبا

The expression سالت نفسه is still in use in current speech. Other Jahilis believed that the soul is a bird residing in the body, and when a man is killed, the bird comes out of his head as an owl called hāma and hovers above the grave of the deceased crying: "Give me a drink", until the death of the deceased is avenged. When a man dies of natural causes, the hāma lives with the family of the deceased and reports news about the family to the deceased, as can be seen in Umayya b. Abī al-Salt's verse:

(Khafīf)

سلم الطير والتبر عليهم، فلهم في صدى القابر هام
The hāma belief survived into the Umayyad period as illustrated in the poem of Tawba addressed to his love Lailā al-Akhaliyya: (Tawīl)

ولو أن ليالي الأخيليّه سلمت على ودون تربة وصفائح
تسلمت تسليم الباناكية أو رقاheeاصد م من جانب الفجر صائحت
ولو أن ليالي في السماه لاشمخت بطرفي إلى ليالي العيون اللؤامع

Jāhilī poetry flourished against this culturally rich and varied urban background.
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1. Ibn Manzūr, Līsān, I, pp. 586-7; Wahb, Tījān, pp. 37-40; Asma’ī, Tārīkh, pp. 3-5, 7-8; Balādhurī, Ansāb, I, pp. 4-5.

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2. Ibid., pp. 283, 286, 291-2, 297-301.
3. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 222.

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1. Ibn Khaldūn is wrong in assuming he was the first Arab historian to consult the work of Josephus. For Josephus’s work had been used before Ibn Khaldūn by Ibn Qustānīn (Ĉūnān, VII, Fasc. i, p. 497), whose work was read and praised by Mas’ūdī (Tābīh, p. 132). Josephus’s work was also used by Ibn al-Ĉībī (Tārīkh, p. 117).

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1. Ibn Duraid's usage of the term "Jāhiliyya" in Wasf al-Matar wa al-Sahāb (p. 3), confirms this point of view.

Page 49

1. Wahb, Tījān, pp. 38-42.
2. Ibid.; Ibn Qutaiba, Maʿārif, p. 28; Tabarī, Tarikh, I, p. 216.

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1. ʿUbaid, Akhbar, pp. 369-70, 378-81; Wahb, Tījān, pp. 79, 84-7.
5. Wahb, Tījān, pp. 86-7; Hamza al-Isfahānī, Tarikh,
p. 85.

7. ʿUbaid, Akhbar, p. 380; Wahb, Tījān, p. 85.
8. Winnett, A Study Of The Lihyanite And Thamudic Inscriptions, p. 51; Khāzin, Min al-Sāmiyya, pp. 154-5.

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1. Tabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 226-32. Tabarī says that the Torah scholars state that there was no mention of ʿĀd and Thamūd in the Torah. Tabarī also says that the story of the ʿĀdites and Thamūdis was as popular in Jahiliyya as that of Ibrāhīm and Iṣmāʿīl, and there was a corpus of Jāhili poetry that dealt with ʿĀd and Thamūd (Ibid., p. 232).

2. Ibid., p. 629.


Page 53

1. Ibid., p. 165.

2. Ibid., pp. 165-6.

Page 54

1. Ibid., pp. 166-7; ʿUbaid, Akhbar, pp. 498; Ašā, Diwan, pp. 78-82; Tabarī, Tārīkh, I, pp. 629-30; Yāqūt, Buldān, IV, pp. 1029-34. The story of Tasm and Jadīs was current in Jāhiliyya as can be gauged
from the poetry of A°shā and al-Nimr b. Tawlib
(Tabari, Tarikh, I, pp. 630-1; Zamakhshari, Mustaqṣā, II, p. 121).

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1. Tabari, Tarikh, I, pp. 617-25; Mufaddal, Amthāl, pp. 144-7; Wahidi, Wasit, pp. 204-5; Yusi, Zahr, I, pp. 187-92, 208-10. The story of Zabbā' was popular in Jahiliyya. It is mentioned by Muta'llammis, Malik b. Nuwaira and Mukhabbal al-Sa'dī (Tabari, Tarikh, I, pp. 617, 623, 625-6).

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1. Asma'ī, Tarikh, pp. 3-5; Wahb, Tilān, pp. 39-40.
2. Wahb, Tilān, pp. 38-41; Mas'udī, Murūj, II, pp. 196-209.
5. Tabari, Tarikh, I, p. 613.
6. Ibid., p. 627.
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2. Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, I, p. 628.
7. Ibid., pp. 90-1.

Page 61
1. Ibid., pp. 92-4.
2. Ibid., p. 94.
3. Ibid., p. 96.
4. See pages 94-5.

Page 62
2. Ibid., p. 520; Hamdānī, Ikālī, I, p. 164; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Inbāḥ, p. 34; Balādhurī, Ansāb, I, p. 15.

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Zuhair b. Janāb alludes to this incident, which led to the separation of the Qudārī and Mādī tribes (Balādhurī, Ansāb, I, p. 19).  

4. Ibid., p. 271; Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 6-7.  

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2. Ibn Ḥazm, Jamhara, p. 11.  
3. Tabarī, Tarīkh, II, p. 256.  

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1. Abu Hilāl, Awa'il, I, p. 81.  
2. Ibn Saʿīd, Nashwat, I, pp. 244-8; Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 368-9; Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, Tarīkh, pp. 92-3.  

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1. Ibn Qutāiba, Maqrīzī, pp. 640-2; Asmaʾī, Tarīkh, pp. 102-6.  

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1. Ibid., p. 264; Ibn Manzūr, Līsān, VI, p. 70.
2. Ibn Qutaiba, Ma'ārif, p. 642.

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1. Ibn Sa'īd, Nashwat, I, p. 326.

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1. Ibn Khaldūn, Ibar, II, p. 566.
3. Dīnawarī, Akhbar, pp. 61-2; Ibn Sa'īd, Nashwat, I, p. 156.

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1. Dīnawarī, Akhbar, p. 63; Ibn al-Kalbī, Asnām, p. 29; Tabarī, Tarikh, II, pp. 137-9; Ibn Sa'īd, Nashwat, I, pp. 159-60.

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1. Abū Hilāl, Awa'il, I, p. 76; Qutrub, Azmina, pp. 116-7.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 235.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.

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5. Ibid., pp. 120-1; Ibn Qutaiba, *Shīr*, I, p. 300.

Page 73
5. Ibid.


Page 74

1. Ibid., p. 12.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 9.
4. Ibid., p. 15.

Page 75

1. Ibid., pp. 17, 28.

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1. Ibid., pp. 32-6.
2. Ibid., p. 34.

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1. Ibid., pp. 20-1.
1. Ibid., p. 287; Ibn Qutaiba, Shīrāzī, I, p. 446.
Chapter III

Jāhili Poetry

The patriarch Mudar b. Nizar b. Ma'add was a handsome young man and had a beautiful voice. One day Mudar fell off his camel and hurt his hand and cried in pain: "Oh my hand, oh my hand ..." The camels grazing nearby heard Mudar's cry, and were spellbound by his doleful voice, and gathered around him and listened in silent reverence. From Mudar's doleful cry emerged the Hūdā' song, and out of the Hūdā' song Jāhili poetry was born. Nothing is known about the origins of Jāhili poetry other than what is traditionally related in the above story or in a variation of it. It is therefore fruitless to postulate theories on the origins of Jāhili poetry that will ultimately lead to cul-de-sac conclusions.

There is a general consensus among classical critics that Jāhili poetry is of a recent history. Ibn Sallam and Jahiz credit Muhalhil b. Rabia and Imru'al-Qais as being the first poets to write long polished poems which paved the ground for the later Jāhili poets. In Kitāb al-Hayawan, Jahiz goes further than Ibn Sallam in bolstering his assumption on the origins of Jāhili poetry: "If we study this poetry we will find it pre-dates Islam by one hundred and fifty years, and if we study it in depth, we will find
it pre-dates Islam by two hundred years.\textsuperscript{1} Towards the end of the same work, Jahiz revised his above assumption and intimated that Jahili poetry pre-dates Islam by well over two hundred years.\textsuperscript{2} Another group of critics claims that al-Afwah al-Awdī, a contemporary of Muhalhil, was the first poet to write long, smooth poems; whereas Ibn Khālawaih regards Ibn Khidām, probably the same poet mentioned by Imruʿal-Qais, as the first poet to write poetry.\textsuperscript{3} In Majalis Thaʿlab, the critic Thaʿlab quotes Asmaʿī as saying that the earliest poets to write poems of thirty verses were Muhalhil, Dhūʿaib b. Kaʿb b. Amr b. Tamīm, Damra of the Banū Kināna and al-Adbaṭ b. Quraiṣ, all of whom lived four hundred years before the advent of Islam.\textsuperscript{4} On the other hand, there were notable critics like Abū al-Paraj who implied that Jahili poetry was the product of a long and uninterrupted tradition which could be traced back to the early Jurhumī poets who flourished centuries before Muhalhil and Imruʿal-Qais.\textsuperscript{5}

The bulk of Jahili poetry belongs to the late Jahiliyya but there is also a body of work which consists of poems from the Jahiliyya of Lost Civilisations and the Ancient Jahiliyya. The quality and length of the poems from the Jahiliyya of Lost Civilisations and the Ancient Jahiliyya negate the assumptions of Ibn Sallām, Jahiz, Ibn Khālawaih and Asmaʿī, but confirm the assumptions of those who believed in the continuity of an ancient poetic
The poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations falls into two groups: the poetry of the ČAdītes and Thamūdīs and the poetry of the Tasmīs, Jadīsīs, ČAmālikītes and Hadrans. The ČAdīte and Thamūdī poetry was dismissed by classical critics as unauthentic because they argued the ČAdītes and Thamūdīs spoke an older form of Arabic than the language of the poetry attributed to them. They also stressed that the ČAdite and Thamūdī poetry lacked the essential poetic qualities in terms of distinct language, rhythm, imagery and subject matter. A study of the poetry attributed to the ČAdites and Thamūdīs confirms the classical critics reservations in respect of its authenticity, but does not rule out the possibility that the poetry was written in the late Jāhiliyya.

The poems from the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations deal primarily with the incidents that led to the extinction of the tribes of that period. ČAfīra al-Jadīsiyya known as Shamūs, a contemporary of the Lakhmid king Jadhīma al-Abrash, is the author of one of two significant poems from the poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations. The poem gives vent to the pent-up
anger and frustration of a woman who has been emotionally and physically abused by the Tasmī king on her wedding night, with the consent of her brother, the leader of the Jadīsīs, her bride-groom and her people. Afīra denounces the Jadīsīs for letting the Tasmī king deprive them of their honour and stirs them to take action, for death is better than putting up with such a humiliating custom. Afīra goes on to say that if the Jadīsī men do not defend their honour they might as well swap places with their women-folk and wear the bridal dress and the bridal perfume: (Tawīl)

The poem provoked a series of events that precipitated the demise of Tasm and Jadīs.

The second poem from the Jahiliyya of Lost Civilisations by Riyāḥ b. Murra al-Tasmī was written.
after his escape from the Jadīsīs' massacre of his people. Riyāḥ read the poem before the Himyarī king Hassān b. Tubba, and begged the king's assistance to fight the Jadīsīs: (Tawīl)

The opening verbs of the first three lines of the poem probably allude to a missing narrative. The opening sequential fa in the fourth, fifth, seventh and eighth lines, dramatises the poet's horror at the way the Jadīsīs blatantly broke the code of hospitality when they invited the Tasmī king and nobles to lunch and then killed them while they were eating.

The Poetry of the Ancient Jāhiliyya

Apart from a few poems, the poetry of the Ancient Jāhiliyya is mostly snippets, devoid of poetic spark. There are also poems attributed to the Himyarī mythical
kings and poets, but classical critics discounted these poems in the same way as they had dismissed the poetry attributed to the ādites and Thamūdis.

Arab critics hold Mūdād b. ʿAmr al-Jurhumī as the first important poet of the Ancient Jāhiliyya. In spite of the various dates proposed by classical historians in ascertaining Mūdād's period, it is still impossible to fix this period within a time-bracket. Mūdād is remembered for a few poems, the finest of which are the two poems he wrote in exile after ʿAmr b. Luhayyāl- KHUZĀĪ, the new Lord of Mecca, rejected his request to return to Mecca. In the first poem Mūdād expresses his sorrow for having lost his Holy City Mecca to the KHUZĀĪs, and blames his people for incurring the wrath of Allāh who sent the KHUZĀĪs to punish them for desecrating the KABĀ. The poet dwells on the effect time and place have on people cut off from their roots. The sense of loss, eased by the poet's acceptance of Allāh's decree, evokes a mood of subdued nostalgia: (Tawīl)

[Arabic text follows]
Mudād's second poem is a bold reminder to the new lords of Mecca that they, like the Jurhumīs, will one day fall victims to the vicissitude of time and experience humiliation, disintegration and exile: (Basīt)

Mudād's poems are significant for words that refer to Allah: ; for terms that denote the Ka'ba and its custodians: ; and for metaphors and images that have become part of the poetic heritage:
Abū ʿUbad al-Bakrī relates that during the time of Juhaina b. Zaid, a seventh-generation Qudāʿī and uncle of the poet Khuzaima b. Nahd, a giant turned up at the Kaʿba, and the pilgrims who were praying and going round the Kaʿba were frightened by the giant's appearance and ran away. The giant called them to come back and told them not to be afraid, and then recited a prayer poem: (Rajaz)

لاَّهُ رَبّ الْبَيْتِ ذِي النَّاَرِ كَبْرٌ
وَرَبُّ كُلٍّ رَاجِلٍ وَرَأْسٍ كَبْرٌ
أَنتَ وَكَبْتَ الْقُلُوبِ الْكَلاَهِمْ
وَاهْجَعْتَ يَحَارُ نِمَّاً المَالِ
وَأِلَّهُ يَسَّرُّ الْمَرَّ الْحَارِبِ
مَسَّٰعَ أَيَّامٍ وَكُلٍّ ذَاهِبٌ

The pilgrims approached the giant and realised that the giant was a woman, and they asked her: "Are you human or are you a genie?" The giant said: "I am a Jurhumī woman." And then she explained that Allāh had cursed her people by sending ants to destroy them as a punishment for their crimes against Him: (Rajaz)

أَهْلُكُنا الذَّرْعُ رَمَّانَ بِعَالِمٍ
مَحْفَازَاتٌ وَمُنْوَتٌ لَهُمْ
الْذَّرْعُ وَرُكُوبٌ لَهُمْ

The Jurhumī woman asked to be taken to a certain place and
promised to reward those who would help her. Two Juhainī men agreed to her request and took her to Jabal Juhaina where she walked to an ants' colony and told her two companions to dig a hole there. The two men dug a hole and found a treasure. While the Jurhumī woman was speaking to the two Juhainī men the ants got at her and she said that the ants had been sent by Allāh to devour her: (Rajaz)

The first poem of the Jurhumī woman is the earliest prayer poem in which Allāh is invoked as Lord of the House and of Mankind, and also as the One Who controls our fate. The is the idgham of , more commonly used in the Taḥbiya prayers. The second and third poems are important for their use of the words , , and the phrases , because of their religious implications.

Munabbih b. Sa'd b. Qais b. Aīlān b. Mudar, a sixth-generation Maqaddī, was an ancestor of the Late Jāhili poet Ṭufail al-Khail al-Ghanawī who was known as Muhabbir.
on account of his fine poems. Ibn Sallām and Ibn Qutaiba quote a two-line poem by Munabbih in the form of a dialogue in which the daughter of the poet asks her father why his hair has turned grey, and her father says it is due to the problems brought on him by changing times: (Kāmil)

قَالَتْ مَعْيَةُ: مَارِيَ اِبْنِكَ - بَعْدَما نَفَدَ الزَّمَانُ - آتِيَ أَبَوُنِي مَنْكَرُ
أَمَّا إِنَّ أَباكَ شُيِّبَ رَأْسَةَ كَرْرُ اللَّبَأِيِّ وَالْمِلْخَافُ العَصْرُ

Later in his life Munabbih came to be known as Aṣur because of the last word in the second verse.

The next two poems are by Khuzaima b. Nahd, a corpulent and impetuous man. Khuzaima had fourteen brothers, one of whom was Hanzala b. Nahd, one of the most respected men of his day in Hijāz and Tihāma.

Abū ʿUbaid relates that Khuzaima had a quarrel with two of his cousins, Ḥārith and ʿArāba, sons of the formidable Qudāṭ leader Saʿd b. Zaid, and killed them, then reported the incident to his father Nahd b. Zaid. Khuzaima's father was perturbed by his son's rash action, and expressed his fear of the dire consequences the death of his nephews might provoke: (Basīt)
Khuzaima's first poem, the earliest recorded departure poem, was written at the end of one Spring season during which the families of Khuzaima and his girl Fatima spent in the countryside, as was (and still is) the custom in the Arabian Peninsula. When Khuzaima was told that Fatima and her people had returned home, and there was no way he could reach her, he said that as long as Fatima was alive he would always want her. The news of Fatima's departure prompted Khuzaima to write a poem in which he says when Gemini is trailing behind the Pleiades, signalling the end of the spring and the coming of the hot summer, he thinks of Fatima and fears she and her people may be on the move to another location: (Wāfir)

Kaḥzāma's swift reaction encapsulated in the departure and nasīb poem indicates that the departure and nasīb theme was an established convention. The significance of Gemini trailing behind the Pleiades at the end of the spring season was elucidated by the Abbasid poet Ibn Kunāsa (741-823).
Khuzaima's second poem describes the perfumed and wine-tasting mouth of the poet's love Fatima and his indifference to her response after he killed her father:

(Mutaqarrib)

The poem was set to music by the Umayyad composer-singer Tuwais.

According to Ibn Sallām and Ibn Qutaiba, one of the earliest poets was Duwaid b. Zaid b. Nahd, a tenth-generation Qudācī, who was probably the nephew of Khuzaima b. Nahd. Both Ibn Sallām and Ibn Qutaiba quote the same two poems by Duwaid with minor variations. Duwaid wrote the first of his two poems on his death bed:

(Rajaz)

As Duwaid prepares himself for his inevitable death he recalls the days of his youth when he fought and felled his equals, and the adventures he had with newly-wed young brides. The phrase in the third verse implies that it is the beginning of a new section in which Duwaid probably dwelt on the adventures he had with women.
and the problems he had to surmount to reach them, in a manner made familiar by Imru’al-Qais.

In the second poem Duwaid personifies time as a man who has thrown the full weight of his legs and hands on his own body, and concludes that the good that time does today will be undone by death tomorrow: (Rajaz)

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
ألْيَّ عَلَى الْدُّهْرِ رَجُلًا وَيَدًا
وَالْدُّهْرُ مَا أَصْلَحْ يَوْمًا أَفْسَدًا
يُشْهُدُ الْيَوْمَ وَيَفْسِدُهَا عِنْدًا
\end{center}
\end{quote}

Ibn Sallām regards the short poem of al-‘Anbar b. ‘Amr b. Tamīm, a tenth-generation Ma‘addī, as one of the earliest examples of genuine Jāhili poetry. The poem tackles the theme of the insecurity one feels when living in exile by employing the metaphor of a bucket half-full of water swinging while being anxiously lifted out of the well: (Rajaz)

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
قَدْ رَأَيْتُ مِنْ دُلْوِيِّ الْمَرْأَةِ وَالْأَثْرُ الأَقْصَرَ مِنْ هَيَةٍ وَاعْتَرُضَهَا
إِنْ لَا تَحْيَى مَلَائِيْ مَلِيْقَينَ دُرْ أَبَا
\end{center}
\end{quote}

Ibn Qutaiba cites a four-line poem by al-Hārith b. Ka‘b but says nothing about him nor about his period except that he was ancient. But since Ibn Qutaiba quotes Hārith after Duwaid b. Zaid b. Nahd, it is assumed he lived
after Duwaid. There are two persons bearing the name of al-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb. The first al-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb was killed by Dabba b. Udd b. Tābikha b. Mudrika, the grand-nephew of Khuzaima b. Mudrika, presumably before reaching old age. The second al-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb was the father of the Bal-Ḥārith tribe of Najrān, who, before dying in old age, advised his sons: (Kāmil)

فارغتهُ بِبَعْضِهَا فَرَوْرًا
فِئَانُهُ فَأَقْتِبِهَا
فَبِئَاضُهَا وَأَقْبَحُهُ كَجَعْلًا كَكَرْبًا
مَنْ قَدْ كَرَّهُ الْمَقْتُ حَطَّوَى قَصِيرًا
أَبْيَتُ أَراىَ نُجُومَ السَّابِه

The poem of Ḥārith describes a man pining over his lost youth, seeing his friends dying one by one leaving him to cope with decrepitude on his own, with no appetite for food and unable to move around, and all he does is star-gazing and reflecting on his life: (Mutāqārīb)

أَكْلُوا شَبَابٍ فَأَقْتِبَهُ بَعْضُهَا فَأَقْبَحَهُ كَجَعْلًا
فِئَانُهُ فَأَقْتِبِهَا
فَبِئَاضُهَا وَأَقْبَحُهُ كَجَعْلًا كَكَرْبًا
مَنْ قَدْ كَرَّهُ الْمَقْتُ حَطَّوَى قَصِيرًا
أَبْيَتُ أَراىَ نُجُومَ السَّابِه

On the other hand, the biographer Sijistānī attributes the same poem to Mālik b. al-Mundhir al-Bījī, an adherent of al-Nābi Shuʿaib's faith.
Sāma b. Lu'ayy, a fourth-generation Qurashi, had an argument with his brother Āmir, and in a fit of anger he slapped his face and blinded one of his eyes. Fearing retribution Sāma left Mecca and settled in Oman where he married a local girl. Al-Musayyab b. Alas recorded the life of Sāma in a long narrative poem, fifteen lines of which are quoted in Abu Ubaid's Muṣjam ma Isṭaṣjam.

Sāma is noted for an epitaph poem he scribbled on the ground with one of his fingers as he was dying after he had been bitten by a snake while he was riding his camel. The poem was familiar to the Prophet Muhammad: (Khafīf)

عين فاى لقاء بن لؤي
لا أرى مثل سام بن لؤي
قلماً عما وله رفياً لقاء
إن ثنيهما مثناً
قاصي خرجت من غيره.
ربك أسى فاتبا بن لؤي
حادث الموت لم تكن مهراء.
مطلق رامي ذاك بلطفه.
وخرس السراي رك رزيا.

Mālik b. Fahm b. Ghanm b. Daws al-Azdī, king of Iraq, possibly died in the last half of the second century or the early part of the third century A.D. Mālik taught his son Sulaima the skill of archery until he excelled in it. One night Sulaima shot an arrow in the air and the arrow accidentally struck his father and killed him without
Sulaima being aware of what he had done. Before dying Malik realised he had been shot by Sulaima and cried out cursing him for his misdeed: \(^1\) (Wāfir)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{جُنَّانِي لا جَنَّاءَ، اللهَ، خَيْرُواً،} \\
\text{سَلِيمَةً، إِنْهُ شَهَرَما جُنَّانِي} \\
\text{أَعلَهُ الرَّحْمَةَ كَلّ يَسْتَوم} \\
\text{فَلَمْ آشْدِرَ سَاعِدَهُ، رَمَّانِي}
\end{align*}
\]

The poem is one of the most famous and quoted poems of Jāhilī poetry. \(^2\)

Jadhīma al-Abrash (d.c.265) succeeded his father Malik b. Fāhm as king of Iraq, and he moved the capital from Anbār to Hīra which became the seat of power of the Lakhmid dynasty. Jadhīma was a priest and a seer, and worshipped two gods called Daizanān. Jadhīma was informed that a handsome Lakhmid young man named ʿAdī b. Nasr was living among the Iyādī tribe. Jadhīma was constantly harassing the Iyādīs, and in retaliation the Iyādīs sent some of their men to the priest of the gods Daizanān. The Iyādī emissaries made the priest drunk and stole the two statues of the gods Daizanān. The Iyādīs sent a message to Jadhīma telling him they were in possession of the Daizanān statues which would be given back to him if he promised to stop raiding their land. Jadhīma agreed on condition that they sent ʿAdī b. Nasr with the statues. ʿAdī and the statues
were dispatched and Jadhīma left the Iyādīs in peace. 1

Jadhīma appointed cAdī as his wine attendant. 2
Jadhīma's sister Raqāsh met cAdī and was struck by his beauty and told him she would like to marry him. cAdī told Raqāsh it was not possible, but Raqāsh said that it would be possible if he got Jadhīma drunk and then asked him for her hand. cAdī followed Raqāsh's advice, and while Jadhīma was in a state of drunkenness he consented to cAdī's proposal, and the marriage was immediately consummated. In the morning Jadhīma discovered he had been tricked into consenting to the marriage and regretted it. cAdī, fearing for his life, ran away and returned to the Banū Iyād where he died after being accidentally struck by an arrow while hunting. 3

Raqāsh gave birth to a son and named him cAmr, and Jadhīma was very fond of him. When cAmr was in his teens he was snatched away by the genii. One day two men were travelling from Syria to Hīra with gifts for Jadhīma, and on their way they met cAmr wandering in the desert, looking for food. cAmr revealed his identity and the two men happily took him with them to Jadhīma. Jadhīma was overjoyed to be reunited with his lost nephew, and he rewarded the two men by making them his boon-companions. 4

Ṭabarī quotes a poem of eleven verses by Jadhīma, and
says that in the opinion of Ibn al-Kalbī only three verses are genuine, but unfortunately he does not specify the three verses. The poem engaged the interest of the classical critics and lexicographers. Ibn Sallām quotes the first two and fifth verses as examples of authentic early Jahili poetry; Āmidī and ābū al-Qādir al-Baghdaḍī quote the first three and fifth verses; āl-Akhfash al-Asghar quotes the first five verses and Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusi quotes the first and third verses and says that the third verse was used by grammarians to illustrate grammatical points. The first verse is also quoted by ābū Zaid al-Anṣārī, Sibawayh, ābū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī and al-Aṣlam al-Shaṭṭārī.

Tabarī reports that while Jadhīma was on a campaign against Tasm and Jadīs, news reached him that the Ḥimyarī king Ḥassān b. Tubbaʿ asʿ had already devastated them, and so Jadhīma prudently retreated to Hira. Meanwhile, Ḥassān caught up with a Lakhmid contingent and routed it. The devastation of the Lakhmid contingent prompted Jadhīma to write the eleven-line poem in which he boasts of his unparalleled leadership over an unvanquished army, and rounds up by saying he is the lord of all men, and only Allāh is above him: (Ramāl)

زَجَّا أُؤْقِتُ في عَلَمٍ نَرْفَّيْنِ يُرْدُونِ شَكَالَاتُ
في قُدُوٍّ أَنَا كَاٰلِهِمْ فِي بَلَادِهَا غَرَوْتُ بَيْناً
The iqlab in the last four verses indicates that the change in the rhyming scheme was used either arbitrarily or to signify a switch from one section to another section, and might not have been considered a technical fault as it was held in the Late Jāḥiliyya.

In the wake of Jadhîma's defeat of the Āmālikites and subsequent death of their king Āmīr b. Zarib, al-Aṣwar b. Āmīr b. Hūnā'a b. Mālik b. Fāhm al-Azdī, a grand-nephew of Jadhîma, hints in a short poem how Āmīr b. Zarib was defeated by Jadhîma's powerful army: (Basîṭ)

After the murder of Jadhîma by the Āmālikite queen Zabbâ', Jadhîma's adviser Qasîr urged Āmīr b. Ādī to
avenge the death of his uncle. cAmr rallied the Lakhmids
to fight queen Zabba', but some of the Lakhmids preferred
to fight under the leadership of cAmr b. cAbd al-Jinn.
Qasir patched up the differences between cAmr b. cAdī and
cAmr b. cAbd al-Jinn, and eventually the two groups agreed
to be led by cAmr b. cAdī. In a short poem cAmr b. cAdī
alludes to his estrangement from cAmr b. cAbd al-Jinn and
to the latter's initial reluctance and then acceptance to
join forces with him: (Tawīl)

"دعوتُ ابن علی بن علی بن مالح بن مالح بعدما نتابع في غزْبِ السَّمَاء وَكَلَا،
فلما ازغزَوائنا عَن ضَدْنَا بِلَغْيِهِ، مَزياتُ هُواهُ مَريهُ آَبَى رَوالْيَ." 

It appears from an incomplete poem that cAmr b. cAbd al-Jinn's response was swift: (Tawīl)

"أَأَمَّا وَرَمَاهُ مَالَياتُ رُحْلًا عَلَى فَتَاةٍ الْمُرْأَى أو النَّسَر عَدُومًا
وَما قدْسَ الرُّهَبَانَ فِي كُلّ هِيْسَكْلِ أَبْيلُ الأَبِينَ السَّمِيحِ بِنَ مِرمَعَ.

Tabari points out that the poem is incomplete because it
lacks a third line to clarify its message. The importance
of cAmr b. cAbd al-Jinn's poem is its reference to the
worship of the goddess al-QUzzaand of the god Nasr and
to Christian belief in the region, as well as to the
worship of the genii as the name of the poet cAbd al-Jinn
suggests. Ibn al-Kalbī says that the genii were worshipped
by the Banū Mulaih, a branch of the Khuzāī tribe.
It is interesting to note that the Jahilīs believed that the poets were the hounds of the genii, as Amr b. Kulthūm intimates in his Muṣallaqa: (Wāfir)

\[\text{وَفَقَّتُ كِلَابُ العَجَّيْبِينَ،} \]

There was also a popular belief that the plague represented the sting of the spears of the genii.

The finest example of an early long poem which begins with an ḥājīlāl and departure scene is by Lāqīt b. Yaṣmur al-Iyādī who was killed by Kisrā Dhu al-Aktāf in the fourth century. There is uncertainty as to the period in which Lāqīt lived. Ibn Qutaiba says Lāqīt was killed by Kisrā Anūshirwān who lived in the sixth century. In al-ạlɛd al-Fārīd, Ibn Ṭabd Rabbih quotes some verses from Lāqīt's poem in connection with the Battle of Yawm Dhī Qār which occurred at the beginning of the seventh century; whereas Abū al-Paraj, Ibn Taifūr and Ṭabd al-Wāhid b. Ālī do not spell out Kisrā's name. On the other hand, Masʿūdī, Ibn Badrūn, Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Khaldūn associate Lāqīt with Kisrā Dhu al-Aktāf who annihilated Lāqīt's tribe, the Iyādis.

The story goes that the Iyādis who inhabited Jazīra attacked a convoy of Persian nobles and took them prisoners. Kisrā Dhu al-Aktāf heard of the incident and mobilised his army against the Iyādis. Lāqīt, an Arab
secretary at Kisra's court, sent a short poem to his people warning them of Kisra's intentions: (Wāfir)

سلام بالصحيفة من تبيب
فاح الله يلينكم دلالة
بنجهم الكثائيب كالجراء
أوان هلاكم كهلاء عام

The Iyādis disregarded his warning, Iaqīt then sent them a long poem of fifty six verses which begins with an atlāl and departure scene followed by the main topic of the poem whose purpose was to warn the Iyādis of Kisra's impending attack and to advise them to appoint an able leader and prepare for war: (Basīt)

ياشار عُنة ون مُحمَتلها الجَرَعا
هاجت لي الهم والاحزان والوجة
تامت فُؤادى بذات الجيزجرة خرَعَة
مُرت نريد بذات العُدبة البيمَا
بمقلي خاذل أدماء طاع لها
نبىت الرياش تنزجى وسطه ذرعًا
ووضح أشنب الأنياب ذي آشر
كالأفغوان إذا ما نوره لمعا
جرت لِبما بَينُنا حُبل الشموش فلا
يَمَا مُبينًا أرى منها ولا طمعًا
فما أزال على شحن يُسْرَقُهُ
طَيِّبٌ تعد رحلي حينما وضعا
إلى بعيين إذ آتى حمولهم
بطن السلوطح لا ينظر من تبئ
طورا أردمو وطرونا لا أبينهم
إذا تواضع خذر ساعة لمعا
بل أيها الراكتب المرجي مطينه
إلى الجزيرة مرتادا ومنتجعا
أبلغ يا دا وخلل في سراً بينهم
أين أرى الرجل إن لم أعنص قد نصي
باب هف تفيقي إن كانت أموركم
شتى وأحكم أدر الناس فاجتمعنا
أحرار فارس أبناء الملوك لهم
من الجموع جميع تزدهي القلعة
فهم سراعة إليكم ، بين مفاصل
شوكا واحرف يجمعين الصاب والسطعا
في كل يوم يسرون الحراب لكمرك
لا يهجهون إذا ما غافل هجاعا
خَزَرَ عيونهم كان لمحظهم
حرائق غاب ترى منه السنين يطعا
كما أراك نيازا في بِلهِنَية
وقد تدرون شهب الحرب قدستطاو
وَتَلَسَّوْنَ بِثَيَابِ الأُمُّيَّةِ ضَاحِيَةٍ
لاّ تَزَهّرُونَ، وَهَذِهِ الْلِّيْثُ قَدْ جَمَعَتْ
وَقَدْ أَظْلَمُوكُمْ مِنْ شَطْرِ النَّفْسِ كَرَمٌ
وَهُوَ الَّذِي ثَلَّمَ نَعْشَاكُمْ قَطَّعًا
يَاقِومُ، لاَ تَنَامُوا، إِنّكُنَّ غَيْرًا
عَلَى نُسَايَكُمْ كِسْرَى وَمَا جَمَعَ
صُوْنُوا جَيْدَّكُمْ وَأَجْلُوْا سُوءُكُمْ
وَجَدُّوا لِلْقَبِيْلِ النَّبِيِّ وَالشَّرِيعَ
فَاقِدُوا جَيْدَّكُمْ وَأِحْمَوْا ذِمَاكُمْ
وَإِسْتَشْرِعُوْا الصَّبِرْ لِلاَّسْتَشْرِعُوْا الْجُزَّاء
أَذْكُرُوا الْعِيْنَ وَرَاءَ الْسَّرْجِ وَعِرْسُوا
حَتَّى تُرَى الْحِيلَ مِنْ تَعْدَالِهِمْ رَجُوًا
وَاسْتَنْعَمُوا بِلَادَكُمْ فِي جَزَاءٍ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
وَجَرِّبْ أَهْلِكَ لَا تَهْيِكُوا هَلَا
وَاللَّهُ مَا انشْقَّكَ الْأَمْوَالُ مِنْ أَبَدٍ
لَأَهْلِهِمْ إِنَّ أَصْبَحَ أَمْرَةٌ ۡكِبْسَا
قَوْمُوا قِيَامًا عَلَى أَمْشَاطٍ أَرْجُلُكُمْ
فَإِذْ أَفْرَزْوَلَا قُدْ يَنَالُ الأَمْنُ مِنْ فَرْعٍ
وَقَلَّدُوا أَمْرَكُمْ، اللَّهُ دِرَكُ
رَحْبُ الْذِّرَاعِ بَأَمْرِ الْحَجَّةِ مُضْطَلِعًا
فَأَفْسَخُوا غَيْبِهِ بِرَأْيَ مَنْ كُنْتُمْ حَسْبٌ
يُصِبُّحُ فَوْؤَادِي لَهُ رَيْبَانَ قَدْ نَفَعًا
Somehow news of the poem reached Kisra and he ordered the killing of Laqīt and marched on the Iyādis and decimated them. The surviving Iyādis sought refuge in Byzantium.

Laqīt’s poem has a number of images which appear for the first time in the poetry of Ancient Jāhiliyya, but this does not necessarily mean that these images were not used before Laqīt, because some of the images do not have an individual touch that springs from a personal experience. One example is the image of the sparkling teeth of the loved one being compared to camomile flowers:

وواضحٍ أشبَّه الأنياب ذى أشرٍ
كالأفخوان إذا ما نُورَت لمَعا

The second example is the image of the departing camel bearing the howdahs seen appearing and disappearing in the sunlight:

إِنْ بِعْيَينَ إِذْ أَمْتُ حُموْلُهُمُ
بَطْنَ السَلَوْطُح لا يَنْتَظِر مَنَ نَبِعَا
The third example is the image of people wearing the clothes of peace and tranquility:

وَتَلْبِسُونَ ثِيَابَ الْأَمْنِ ضَاحِيَةً
لاَ تَفْرَعُونَ وهذا اللَّيْثُ قدْجَمَعَا

And the fourth example is the image of the deadly bloodshot eyes of vengeance seen as a blazing forest:

خُمْرُ عِيْنِهِمْ كَانَ لَحَظَّهُمْ
حَرِيقٌ غَابٌ تَرَى منه السَّنَا قَطْعًا

Classical critics considered Iaqīt's poem as one of the greatest action poems of Jāhili poetry. The poem was popular during the Umayyad period and an excerpt of the poem was set to music by the Umayyad composer Akdam b. Ma'bad.

The Poetry of the Late Jāhiliyya

The poets of the Late Jāhiliyya built on the poetry of the Jāhiliyya of Lost Civilisations and Ancient Jāhiliyya, and developed a wealth of poetic conventions which formed
the backbone of the Arab poetic tradition.

The proximity of the Late Jāhiliyya to the Islamic period made it possible for the Islamic scholars to retrieve Jāhili poetry and keep records of its cultural background. As a result, there is an abundance of Late Jāhili poetry. In order to study the large corpus of Late Jāhili poetry within a critical framework, we have conveniently divided the Late Jāhiliyya into the pre-Imru' al-Qais period, which is the endpoint of this study, the Imru' al-Qais period and the post-Imru' al-Qais period.

The Pre-Imru' al-Qais Period

The pre-Imru' al-Qais period covers the fifth century which witnessed the emergence of a host of poets whose lives and work had been documented in far more detail than those of any of their predecessors. And this is probably why classical critics considered the fifth century as the starting point of Jāhili poetry.

One of the prominent poets of the fifth century was al-Barraḳ b. Rawḥan b. Asad (d.c.470), a relative of the poets Muḥalḥil and Kulaib. As a small boy Barraḳ spent some time with cameliers and a Christian priest who taught him to read the Gospels.
Barraq was in love with his cousin the poet Laila bint Lukaiz and tried to marry her but was refused, for her father had promised her to Barraq's patron, an influential Yemeni prince, through whom he hoped to improve and strengthen the position of his people. Barraq, upset by the rejection, moved with his family to Bahrain, and as a result Laila's father postponed the marriage.

Meanwhile the war flared up between Barraq's Rabica tribe and the Yemeni Qudaçi and Ta'î tribes. Because of the absence of effective leadership among the Rabica tribe the poets Kulaib and Muhalhil appealed to Barraq, who was an acknowledged hero and respected leader, to take over the Rabica leadership. Initially Barraq turned down the offer, but later changed his mind and agreed to lead his people, especially after the Qudaçis and Ta'îs tried to win him over to their side: (Wafir)

Barraq led his people to battle, defeated the Qudaçî and the Ta'î tribes and asserted the independence of his
The Yemeni prince sent a word to Laila's father reminding him of his promise, and Laila's father complied with the prince's request. While Laila was on her way to the Yemeni prince, the son of the Persian king, with the help of some Yemenis led by a man called Burd al-Iyadi, attacked Laila's convoy and kidnapped her. The Persian prince tried to win Laila's affection but failed and imprisoned her. Laila sent an emotionally charged poem to Barraq and her brothers in which she urged them to save her.

Barraq responded to Laila's call and blamed her father for having been the cause of her misfortune, and promised to help her in spite of the long distance that separated them and the impregnable castle guarded by a formidable enemy: \((\text{Tawil})\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{آيمن دون ليلي عومنا المواقن حيود وضمر ترايبه الفاقن} \\
\text{وهم وأعراب وآرض حقيقه وحصن ودور دوينا وممنان} \\
\text{وقربا عني ليحبس في حاله وقلبي عن ذلك قلبي} \\
\text{وقلتي ما لا طبي إذا ونت بومصر الهام السقالين} \\
\text{وإني لازوجهم ونت يابلس وآيي ريم يا قوم لأشك واني} \\
\text{من سيل بزة الباري وقومه بهلي باري لا عائلا لديني} \\
\text{سأصدني بيض الصوارم وألقا وخيلني البد المواقن السواين} \\
\text{راى الله من يزوي الكتاب برية ومن هو بالله 석ر واصح مباعين}
\end{align*}
\]
Before attacking the Persians Barraq whipped up the martial spirit of his warriors by stressing that those who fight in the war of honour and survive will be proud for the rest of their lives, and those who die will earn immortal praise: (Basit)

Barraq stormed the Persian stronghold where Laila was imprisoned, rescued her and then married her.

Barraq's loss of his brother Gharsan in the Persian war affected him deeply, and he was also upset by his men who had gone home with the loot, leaving him behind to bury his brother: (Tawil)
Barraq dedicated another moving poem to his dead brother: (Tawil)

The repetition of the verb ّكِيتُ at the beginning of the first and second verses and its masdar at the beginning of the second hemistich, as well as the staccato rhythm of the sixth line:

\[ـَـٰـِـٰٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰـِٰـُـٰ~\]

intensifies the overwhelming feeling of loss experienced by the poet.

Barraq is always aware that war is a poisonous drink
to which he has become addicted: (Tawīl)

Barraq's animated description of a successful overseas campaign foreshadows cAntara's battle scenes: (Tawīl)

Barraq represents an early Jāhili chivalrous hero, whose heroic life parallels that of cAntara. Like cAntara, Barraq celebrated his exploits and was upheld by his people as their defender and saviour. Like cAntara, Barraq sang of his love for his cousin Ilālā, and of his successful endeavours in rescuing her from bondage. Barraq's clarity of language and flow of spontaneous rhythm: (Wāfir)
influenced *Antara's poetry: *(Kāmil)

Other echoes of the poetry of Barraq: *(Rajaz)

are detected in *Antara's Mu'allaqa: *(Kāmil)
It is interesting to note that Barraq's horse was called Adham like the horse of Antara, and both horses were black as the name suggests.

Barraq's forte lies in his effective use of jinās:

\[
\text{فَاـصِصُ مَـنْـسَـكُـلاَ بَـأَرْضٍ قَبَـيْـلَةُ عَلَـيْـهَا قَـبْـلَةُ السَـبِـعُ نَـمَـيْـفُ قَـاتَ الْجَـيْـبُ بَـأَرْضِ حَـيْـبَتَهَا}
\]

and in his sustained balance of the rhythmic phrase structure:

\[
\text{فَيَاَلَكَ مِـنْ صَـيْـحٍ وَأَنْـفِـضَـحٍ وَنَـفَـعٍ وَحُـجَـمٍ وَأَعْـرَـابٍ وَأَـسَـرُ سَـجِـيْـسَةٍ وَجَـصَـيْـسَ وَدُوَـرُ دُوَـرَهَا وَمَعَالَنُ}
\]

which create an atmosphere of dramatic intensity.

Lailā bint Lukaiz b. Murra b. Asad (d. 483), the youngest of Lukaiz's children, was a beautiful and cultured lady. Many noble men asked for her hand in marriage but she refused them all, because she was in love with her cousin al-Barraq b. Rawhān. When her father promised to marry her off to the Yemeni prince Amr b. Dhī Sahbān, Lailā reluctantly consented and refrained from seeing Barraq, and consequently she became known as Afifa or Lailā al-Afifa.

The son of the Persian king heard of Lailā's beauty and asked to marry her but was turned down. And so the Persian prince engaged Yemeni mercenaries led by Burd al-Iyādi to help him kidnap Lailā. While Lailā was on her way to the Yemeni prince, Burd and the mercenaries surprised Lailā's convoy, kidnapped her and took her to
The Persian prince made advances to Laila and failed, and then locked her up in his castle hoping to break her resolve. Laila resisted the prince's amorous overtures, and sent a passionate poem to Barraq and her brothers in which she appealed to them to save her from the humiliation of being in chains, and at the same time she assured them that her honour was intact: (Ramal)

Barraq stormed the Persian castle and saved Laila.
The Persian campaign claimed the life of Barraq's brother Gharsan. Laila was broken-hearted by the loss of Gharsan and described in an elegy how the fire of grief had melted her heart like lead, and only the presence of her noble hero Barraq helped her overcome her sorrow:

(Basit)

The unusualness of Laila's elegy is that the best part of the poem is devoted to Barraq rather than to the deceased. This technique was fully exploited by the Abbasid poet Mutanabbi (915-965) in his elegy dedicated to the
sister of his patron Saif al-Dawla, in which the poet begins by talking about the deceased and ends by praising Saif al-Dawla.

Uhaiha b. al-Julah al-AwsI (d.c.497) was a rich Medinian leader whose substantial property included two castles and ninety-nine wells. Uhaiha was a contemporary of the last Himyarī Tubba whom allegedly tried to destroy the Ka'b and liquidate the Aws and Khazraj tribes of Medina for killing one of his sons whom he had appointed as governor of Medina. When Tubba reached Medina he asked to see the leaders of Medina including Uhaiha. Uhaiha sensed danger in the invitation and warned his colleagues about it, but they discounted his fears.

The Medinian leaders went to see Tubba and at the meeting Uhaiha felt he was doomed. Uhaiha returned to his tent, had a drink and wrote his own epitaph poem and asked his woman-singer Mulaika to sing it: (Munsarih)
Uhaiha then told Mulaika of his escape-plan and said that when Tubba\textsuperscript{c} sent his guards to get him she should say he is asleep, but if the guards insist on waking him she should say he had gone back to his people. The guards went to fetch Uhaiha and were told he was asleep. The guards left but returned later in the night and insisted on taking him back with them. Mulaika told them he had gone back to his people. The guards rushed to Tubba\textsuperscript{c} and informed him of Uhaiha's escape. Tubba\textsuperscript{c} dispatched his soldiers after Uhaiha, but by the time they caught up with him he had already reached his fortified castle.

After a three-day siege, during which Uhaiha fought Tubba\textsuperscript{c}'s soldiers in the daytime and at night treated them to dates dropped from the castle, the soldiers, baffled by their enemies' hospitality, failed to take the castle and returned to Tubba\textsuperscript{c}. The soldiers' failure to capture Uhaiha enraged Tubba\textsuperscript{c} who ordered the killing of the other three Medinian leaders. Uhaiha was so upset by the murder of his friends that he mourned their loss which could have been avoided had they listened to his advice: \textit{(Wāfir)}

\begin{quote}
\textit{إلا يا لهف، فني أي لهف،}
\textit{إلى خلف من الأباام، خلف}
\textit{يطعونا، أما إذ كان يكتفى}
\textit{سانتى لا يكتفون ولا أرام}
\end{quote}

Uhaiha was married to a noble lady called Salma but
was at war with her people. As Uhaiha was preparing to attack Salma's people, Salma devised a plan to enable her to escape from the castle so as to warn her people. She tied a string round the stomach of her child and the child cried from pain, so Uhaiha stayed awake to look after the child. In the small hours of the morning Salma untied the string and the child stopped crying and fell asleep. She then complained that the child's crying had given her a headache, so Uhaiha comforted her by spending the rest of the night pressing a cloth round her head. Towards the end of the night Salma got up and said she had recovered and it was time for him to sleep. While Uhaiha was asleep, Salma scaled down the wall of the castle on a rope, rushed to her people and told them to get ready for battle.

Uhaiha marched on his wife's people and to his surprise he found they were expecting him. After a minor skirmish Uhaiha withdrew to his castle, and recorded the incident in a poem which opens with a reflective note that recalls the poems of the Ancient Jāhili poets. Mudād b. 'Amr al-Jurhumī, the Jurhumī giant woman poet and Khuzaima b. Nahdī (Wafir)

ٍصِحتُ عَنِ الْيَبَّ ثَالَاثُ وَرَماْيَ الدُّمُرَ عَوْلُ،
وَثُلُّ أَيُّ أَمْرَ يَمْعَطْ حَالَا،
وَبَكَّرُي صَبْحُ، أَوْ نَبُلُ
وَلاَعْبَتُي عَلَى الأَنْشَاطِ لَعْمَٞ،
عَلَّ أَنْوَاهِهِنَّ الْإِنْجِيـِلْ
The poet then refers humorously to his wife's betrayal and the tricks she played on him:

And the poem ends with Uhaiha counting his blessings for being secure in his castle which he built for all eventualities:
Uhaiha divorced Salma and she married Hishām b. ābd Manaf and bore him his son ābd al-Muttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad. Uhaiha's grand-son Muhammad b. Uqba was one of the first people to be called Muhammad before the Prophet Muhammad, and his great-grand-son al-Mundhir b. Muhammad was a Sahābi who participated in the Battle of Badr and was killed in Bi'r Mā'una.

Uhaiha was a successful merchant, and in spite of his wealth, he was notorious for his love of money and for being stingy; for he considered money as security in times of change: (Wāfir)

إذا ما جئتُها قد يعُبُّدُ عِينًا
أَهْنُتْ الْمَالَ فِي الْشُّهُوَةِ حَتَّى
أَصَارْتِي أَيْسِفًا عَبْدًا عَبْدًا
فَمَنْ نَالَ الْفَتْنَ فَلْيُقْتَسَمْهُ
فَمَنْ أُهْلِي سَبِيلَ الرَّشْدِ يَبْعَدُ
أَعْلَمُكُمْ وَقَدْ أَرْدَبْتُ نَفْسِي
فَمَنْ أَهْلِي سَبِيلَ الرَّشْدِ يَبْعَدُ

In another poem Uhaiha stresses the importance of saving money for he sees money as the only friend that will not let one down: (Basīt)

اِسْتَغْفِرْ أَيْنَ عَمَّنْ لاَ يُفْرَجْ رَكَّةً ذَوْ نَفْشٍ
مِنْ أَيْنَ عَمَّمْ لاَ عَمَّمَ لاِ خَالَالٍ
يَلْقَوُنَّ مَا عَنْدَهُمْ مِنْ حَقِّ يَجْرَاهُمْ
غَيْنَ عَنْ عِشْرِهِمْ وَالْمَالِ بالوَلَائِ
On the other hand, cAbdarî says that Uhaiha's proverb shows that Uhaiha was thrifty rather than stingy.

Uhaiha's poetry was of semantic, linguistic and metrical interest to classical scholars. In Majâz al-Qur'ân Abu cUbaida quotes Uhaiha's verse:

وَما يَدْرِى الْفَقِيرُ مَتَى غَنَاءٍ وَما يَدْرِى الْفَقِيرُ مَتى يُعِيلُ

to illustrate the Jahili background of the Qur'anic words and .

In Kitâb al-Nabât, Asmacî quotes a verse from one of Uhaiha's lost poems, which describes a thick palm grove, in order to explain the meaning of the tree:

(Sarîc)
In Laisa fī Kālām al-ʿArab, Ibn Khālawayh quotes a verse from one of Uhaiha's lost poems: (Khāfīf)

so as to give a rare example of how the singular of the form becomes plural when the opening fathā of the singular is changed into a dāmma. In al-Wāfi fī al-ʿArūd, al-Khāṭīb al-Tibrīzī uses the last verse of the Mulaika poem as an example of a mutlaq rhyme.

There are three metaphors associated with Uhaiha. The first metaphor is that of the stars presented as spies:

This metaphor crops up in a poem by the Andalusian woman poet Hafsa bint al-Hajj (d.1190), who was under the constant surveillance of the king:

The second metaphor is that of time devouring people:

The third metaphor introduces the Pleiades as a bunch
of ripe, white grapes: (Tawîl)

وفد لاح في الصح ائب كما ترى كعنقود ملأحة حين نُروا

Uhaiha's poetry was popular during the Umayyad period and some of his poems were set to music by Ibn Suraih. The theme of the Mulaika poem, which echoes Sāma b. In'ayy's poem in which the poet mourns his own imminent death, became a recurrent feature of Jahilî, Islamic and Umayyad poetry.

Wâ'il b. Rabî'â (c.440-494), known as Kulaib, was one of the great heroes of the fifth century. In c.492 he succeeded his father as leader of the Rabî'â tribes which included the Bakrî and Taghibî tribes, descendants of Bakr b. Wâ'il whose descent is traced back to the patriarch Rabî'â b. Nizâr b. Ma'âadd b. Adnân. Kulaib's sister Zahrah was married to Labîd b. Anbasa al-Ghassâni who was appointed governor of the Rabî'â and Mudarî tribes by the Kinda king Sulaima b. al-Hârith. Labîd's harsh treatment of the Rabî'â and Mudarî tribes upset Zahrah and she appealed to him to be more considerate to her people. Labîd lost his temper and slapped Zahrah violently in the face and almost blinded her. Zahrah was shaken and went to Kulaib and told him that the humiliation she had suffered was due to the submissive behaviour of her people: (Kamil)

ما كنت احب لولوادت جنة
فِي عيب لها من عظمان
حتى لتقي من ليلار ولامة
كَمْشَت هَلَا لِقَومَهَا العِيَانَ
The poem of Zahra and the state she was in so enraged Kulaiib that he rushed to his brother-in-law and killed him, and boasted of his deed: (Khafif)

The Kinda king informed the king of Himyar of the murder of his governor and subsequently war broke out between the Himyari and the Ma`addi tribes. After a series of battles culminating in the Battle of Khazaza, the Ma`addi tribes, led by Kulaiib, defeated the Himyari tribes and Kulaiib was proclaimed king of all the Ma`addi tribes. Kulaiib celebrated his leadership of the Ma`addi tribes and reminded the Himyari tribes of their defeat by his tribes at the Battle of Yawm al-Sullan in c.481: (Wafir)
Kulaib extended his authority to any land the clouds happened to pass over. His tyrannical rule vexed the other tribes and no one dared to challenge him until one day a camel belonging to Basūs, the aunt of his wife Jalīla bint Murra and of her brother Jassās, ventured into Kulaib's territory and he killed it. Basūs called for help and Jassās killed Kulaib. The death of Kulaib sparked off the Basūs War between Kulaib's Taghlibī tribe and Jassās's Bakrī tribe which lasted forty years.

The few surviving poems of Kulaib reflect the mind of a man obsessed with absolute power: (Tawil)

In a poem Kulaib addresses the Banū Asad reprimanding them for their reluctance to support the cause of his tribe, the Banū Taghlib: (Wafir)
The repetition of \( بني أسد \) in the second, third, fifth, sixth, seventh, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth verses, and of \( بني النصر بن روحان خليلي \) in the tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth verses dramatises Kulaib's displeasure.

Jalīla bint Murra (d.535) was the sister of Jassās and the wife of Kulaib b. Rabī‘a. The death of her husband at
the hand of her brother Jassás grieved her and made her vulnerable to the taunts of her husband's family which were so unbearable that she had to go back to her family. While she was staying with her family, Jalīla heard she had been abused by her sister-in-law. Jalīla answered her sister-in-law in a poem in which she scolds her for her unjustified abuse, and then goes on to describe how she had been traumatised by the tragedy, since those involved were her husband and her brother: (Ramal)
The poem was probably written at the beginning of the Basūs War at the turn of the fifth century. The poem's strength lies in its controlled emotion, sustained elegiac tone, clarity of diction and touching imagery. This poem and the Barāq poem of Lailā bint Lukaiz stand out as two of the finest specimen of women poetry of the Late Jāhiliyya.

Jassās b. Murra (d.535) was known as the protector of his neighbours: (Ramal)

إنّا بجاري لمسيري فاستؤذي الأنيهي
وأري سهاما بحبا كتيبة بين مبيت
سأؤدي حق جاري وسعي رهون فيه
أو أرى الموت فيبى لومة عند رجالي

On the day Kulaib killed Sarāb, Basūs's camel, Jassās offered his aunt ten camels as compensation for Sarāb, but she refused and insisted that Kulaib should be punished. In order to further her demands for revenge, Basūs complained in a loud voice to Jassās's brother Sa'd, making sure that Jassās who was nearby could hear her: (Tawīl)

لم تملك لو أصبحت في دار ميجر لما ضم سعد وهو جار لأبي
ولكنتي أصبحت في دار عرضا ما تبقى بها الذهب بعد على شايمي
Jassās could not bear the taunts of his aunt and replied he would kill Kulaib's favourite camel Fahl, meaning Kulaib himself. Jassās killed Kulaib and justified his action to his own father by saying that what he did was the only way to end the tyrannical rule of Kulaib who went around with his puppy (hence Kulaib's name) and laid claim to any land on which his puppy yelped: \(^1\) (Wafir)

The father of Jassas was shocked by the news, but assured his son he was solidly behind him: \(^2\) (Wafir)
Jassās was encouraged by his father’s answer and said that death was the only remedy for tyranny, for there is no escape from Allah’s justice: (Kāmil)

The killing of Kulaib was inevitable since Jassās had previously warned Kulaib that if he killed Sarāb he would be killed: (Rajaz)

After the breakout of the Basūs War between the two main branches of the Wa’il tribe, Jassās accused Muhalhil and his people that it was their abuse of power that started the war: (Sari)
Jalīla bint Murra was pregnant when she returned to her people. She gave birth to a son and called him Hajras. Jassās brought up Hajras and married him to his own daughter. At the end of the Basūs War, Hajras had an argument with a Bakrī man and was surprised to discover his Taghlibī connection. Hajras was shocked by the revelation and asked his mother and his uncle Jassās about the veracity of what he had been told. His mother and his uncle explained to him what happened to his father Kulaib and the circumstances that led to the Basūs War. When Jassās, Hajras and the leaders of the Bakrī and Taghlibī tribes met to sign the treaty of reconciliation, Hajras killed Jassās who became the last victim of the Basūs War.

Jassās's poetry is notable for its reference to Allāh and gives an idea of the Jahilīs' conception of Allāh. The expression "Lord of the great poets" indicates that the Jahilīs believed that Allāh was the source of the poet's inspiration. This belief is re-enforced by the third hemistich which presents Allāh as the "Lord Who knows the secrets hidden in the heart". Echoes of this belief survive in the proverb "the meaning of the poem..."
is in the heart of the poet”.

ÇAdî b. Rabîca, better known as Muhalhil (d.525) for writing polished and flexible poetry, and whose kunya was Abu Rabîca, was instrumental in sparking off and fuelling the Basus War. As a young man his amourous escapades prompted his brother Kulaib to nickname him زير نام. On the night Kulaib was killed, Muhalhil met his close friend Hammâm b. Murra for a drink. While they were drinking a maid entered the room and whispered in Hammâm’s ear that his brother Jassas had killed Kulaib. Muhalhil noticed a change of expression on Hammâm’s face and asked what was the matter. Hammâm told him the bad news. Muhalhil burst out laughing and scornfully said that Jassas would not dare to do such a thing. Muhalhil then offered Hammâm a drink and said: شرب قليوم خمر وغذا امر. Hammâm drank to please Muhalhil, but as soon as Muhalhil was drunk he sneaked out and returned to his people. Muhalhil woke in the morning and was told of Kulaib’s death and he cried out: (Kâmil)
Muhalhil buried his brother and mourned him, then shaved his head and swore he would give up his pleasure-loving life of women, gambling and drinking until he had wiped out the Bakris: (Wafir)
Muhalhil rallied his Taghlibi tribe and declared war on the Bakris after the Bakris refused to deliver Jassas to him so that he could punish him for killing Kulaib:

(Kamil)

Muhalhil's excessive zeal in pursuing the war against the Bakris shocked his people, particularly after he killed al-Harith b. 'Ubād's son Bujair, whose people were not involved in the war. Muhalhil justified his killing of Bujair by saying that although Bujair's people stayed out of the war, they were still Bakris: (Wafir)
And nothing would satisfy his thirst for revenge until he could answer Kulaib's daughter Umaid, who had innocently asked him after her father, that he had killed all the Bakri murderers of her father: (Wafir)

Muhalhil emphasises his deep sense of loss by repeating a hemistich and the opening word of the second hemistich eleven times in the existing version, and possibly more, according to Ibn Nubata al-Masri: 2
Muhalhil ends his poem with a chilling description of thunderous battles that could be heard as far away as Hajr, and of horses scampering in streams of blood:

The death of Kulaib and the subsequent Basūs War turned Muhalhil's carefree world into a vision of desolation, and embued Muhalhil's poems with an obsessive and desperate note generated by the tikrār technique which relies on the repetition of the same words, phrases and shatras, especially at the beginning of the lines, like:

(Khaṭīf)

ذُلِبَ الصَّحِبُ أوُرَدوُ كَلِبيُّ أَوْ تَحْوَلَ إِلَىَّ الْحَمْسُوَةُ حَلَأ
Muhalhil's effective use of the tikrār to magnify his distressed emotional state is illustrated in his threatening outburst: (Madīd)

Muhalhil's outcry in the first shatr, in which he makes the impossible demand on the Bakrīs to bring his brother Kulaib back to life, is emphasised in the second shatr by the repetition of איבְּעַלֶה which spells out the Bakris' inevitable doom. The repetition of the phrase איבְּעַלֶה at the start of the first three shatrs and the word איבְּעַלֶה in
the second shatr together with the recurrence of the letter "k" in Bakrī and Kulaib, of the letter "r" in Bakrī and Kulaib, of the letter "n" in Jiyji and Uihli, intensifies the fury of a man trapped in the web of vengeance. In other words, Muhalhil employs the tikrār technique to stress that, just as it is impossible for the Bakrīs to resuscitate Kulaib, it is also impossible for them to escape from his wrath. The word أَشْرَا must have been in common use in both its secular and religious sense, as it is attested by Muhalhil's poem and the Qur'ān. Tibrīzī and Jawhari quote:

\[
\text{بِلَالْبَكْرَ أَشْرَا لِكُلِّيَّةِ ثَلَاثِيَّةَ} \quad \text{بَلِّيُّكَ أَبُو} \quad 
\]

as an example of the madīd metre.

Classical critics dubbed Muhalhil's elegiac masterpiece "Dāhiya" and included it in an anthology of seven Jāhili poems known as "Muntaqayāt". The elegy is divided into several sections. In the first section Muhalhil blames the Bakrīs for committing a crime that led to unforeseen consequences, and compares the Bakrīs' crime to the action of a man throwing corpses down a bottomless pit: (Sarīc)

\[
\text{جَآَرَتْ بَنُو} \quad 
\text{وُلَم} \quad 
\text{يَمِدُّوا} \quad 
\text{وَأَلْرُ :} \quad 
\text{يَعُرَّفُ فَصَدَّهُ الطَّرْيَقُ} \quad 
\text{حلَّتُ رَكَابُ الْبُعْثِي} \quad 
\text{فَأَوْلَيْلَة} \quad 
\text{فِي} \quad 
\text{مَهْتُ جَسَّانَ الْمَيْلِ} \quad 
\text{الْوُسَقُ} 
\]
In the second section Muhalhil praises the leadership qualities of Kulaib for which he was chosen by his people, the Banū Hājar, to lead them at the Battle of Yawm Khazāzā in which they defeated the Banū Hamdān:

In the third section Muhalhil warns the Bakrīs that if
they do not bring back Kulaib to life, they will be consumed by the fires of war for killing their lord and king:

In the fourth section Muhalhil accuses the Bakris of cutting the rope of friendship that held the Banū Wā'il together:
Muhalhil's poetry abounds in dramatic hyperboles employed to heighten an emotionally-charged scene or an explosive psychological mood. For example, the hyperbole of Gemini is compared to newly-born she-camels standing beside a spring-born camel which is unable to move: (Wāfir)


cān kāwākūb al-jūzāt, yūd ma'udātā tu'lin dīnu sīmāt

Another hyperbole is that of the tied up kid seen like a prisoner: (Wāfir)


cān al-ḥadīd fi ṭanāra rīnī bi-qā'ir wa māynī l-ansīr

The third example is that of the Pleiades seen as young camels moving slowly on a rainy day. The fourth example is that of Kulaib leading an army as numerous as the leaves of the perennial ġurā tree: (Kāmil)


balaṣūlūlū waṣār tūṣ tūṭ ġiwarūlū ñūsir al-mārū wa tīwarāṣr al-āqīmū

The poetry of Muhalhil is relevant to the understanding of the Qur'ān. In interpreting the Qur'ānic phrase ʿawma lādā, Abu ʿUbaida quotes Muhalhil's verse: (Khafīf)


i̲n ṭāmta al-ḥājār ḥadā wa-lihā wa ḥūṣāla al-dā da maqāla

to illustrate the Jāhilī usage of the word ʿālīd.

Another verse of Muhalhil was used by Anbārī to point out the Jāhilī background of the Qur'ānic phrase
Abū ʿUbaida and Anbārī quote another verse of Muhalhil to back up their interpretation of the Qur'ānic phrase końتُ، لَكُ بَيْنَنَا فِي هَذَا (Khafīf)

The poetry of Muhalhil is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it throws light on the mourning and burial customs which entailed the wrapping of the dead in shrouds, and the aggrieved women uncovering and pulling their hair and weeping and beating their faces, while the men eulogised and enumerated the noble qualities of the deceased. Secondly, it alludes to the mythological tradition of the Jahilīs who believed that heaven and earth were separated by still waters: (Wāfir)

and believed in Canopus, who was a tax-collector turned into a star by Allāh for his misdemeanours and who ran away by crossing the Milky Way towards Yemen, and was followed by Sirius, who was in love with him, leaving behind her sister Procyon in tears because she was also in love with Canopus but was unable to cross the Milky Way: (Wāfir)
Thirdly, it tells us that the earth, which was floating in the wind, was pegged down by the mountains Allāh created from the waves: (Basīt)

Fourthly, it alludes to the Jāhilīs' belief in their kings as representatives of their gods, who acted as intermediaries between Allāh and mankind, and considered the blood of their kings as sacred as that of their gods, as embodied in the expression 2 (Sarī)

And for this reason Muhalhil swore by the and the sacred that he would fight the Bakris who killed their legitimate king (Sarī)

until none of them was left: (Kāmil)
The connection between the gods and the kings is confirmed by Muhalhil's verse which describes the goddess Shams wearing her black cloak and unwilling to rise in the morning as a mark of her disapproval of the murder of king Kulaib:

(Kamil)

\[\text{ما نَّمَى أَنْبَاءَيْكَ كُلَايْبَا أَظُلْتَ شَمسَ النَّهَارَ فَمَا رَيَّدَ طَلُوعَا} \]

Fifthly, it refers to the custom of slaughtering animals on the return of the traveller to his home: (Kamil)

\[\text{إِنَّكَ تَشْرِبُ بِالنَّارِ رَفْوَانُهُمْ ضِرْبَ الْقَدَارِ ذِيَّعَةَ الْقَدَّرَ} \]

The Prophet's saying: 

\[\text{النَّاسُ نَفَّاعُ الْمَوْت} \]

shows the currency of this custom at the time of the Prophet. The custom of \(\text{naqî} \) is still practised in the Arabian Peninsula.

Sixthly, it demonstrates Muhalhil's extensive use of \(\text{tībāq} \):

\[\text{كَانَى إِذْ نَمَى أَنْبَاءَيْكَ كُلَايْبَا بَيْنَ جَنَّيْ أَشْرَارُ} \]

\[\text{أَلْقَىَّ ثَنَيْهَا فَحَمْلُ سَلِبُ قَلِيَّ بَكْرَةَ وَمَكَانُ} \]

\[\text{يَنَامُضُ بَيْنَ كُبْكَانَ سَلِبُ قَلِيَّ بَكْرَةَ وَمَكَانُ} \]

internal rhyme, repetition, hyperbole and enjambement. This technique was later developed by the Abbasid poets and was known as \(\text{badī} \). In this respect, Muhalhil can be regarded as the precursor of the \(\text{badī} \) poets.

In the 520s Muhalhil's forces were devastated by al-Harith b. Ubād, and Muhalhil was taken prisoner. He was later released and withdrew to Yemen where he died a broken man. Muhalhil was the maternal uncle of Imru'al-Qais and the maternal grand-father of Amr b. Kulthūm who alludes to
him and to his great-uncle Kulaib in his Mu'allaga.

al-Harith b. 'Ubad (d.c.550) was born in the fifth century. In his teens Harith killed two young men, one of whom was the son of the SadusI leader, and consequently war erupted between the SadusI and the RabI'a tribes. The RabI'a tribe won the war which claimed the lives of Harith's father and brothers. The SadusIs later allied themselves with the QudaI and Ta'i tribes, and fought Harith's RabI'a tribe at the Battle of Yawm Khazaza and lost.

Harith, a relative of the poet Jassas b. Murra al-Bakri, disapproved of the motive behind the killing of Kulaib, and distanced himself from the Basus War. Muhalhil's decimation of Harith's Bakri tribe forced the Bakris to urge Harith to help them. Harith sent his son Bujair to Muhalhil to remind him of his neutrality in the war and to appeal to him to stop the killing of the Bakris who were after all his own people, but Muhalhil killed Bujair. Harith's reaction was that if the murder of his son would stop the war, then he would take no action. Muhalhil, adding insult to injury, boasted he killed Bujair with the strap of one of Kulaib's shoes. Muhalhil's remark incensed Harith who called for his horse Na'ama and cut its mane and tail, and ordered his men to shave their heads and declared war in one of the most dramatic poems of the Late
Jāhiliyya. The poem opens with a reflection on the impermanence of life and the eternity of Allāh: (Khafīf)

كل شيء مصيره إلى الولى غيبزي وسائق الأناجيل
وذرى الناس ينظرون جميعا ليس فيهم إلّا بعض أحيال

Ḥarith then moves on to describe the impact the death of his son had on him:

فَرَأَيْنِمُ الأَكْسَرُ بِنْي بْنيا جَلِلْي بِنِ الرِّجَالِ وأَبْنِي
وِحَضْرُي لِلْأَكْسَرَ بِنْي بْنيا مَآ أَلَّه مُنْ رِوْدُوسُ الْجِلْسَ
َلْفَ تِنَىٰ عَلَيْ بُجَيْسَرَ إِذَا مَا جَآتَت مَا يَجِلَّ مُرِيْبُ عَفْالَ
وَتَجَيْجٌ أَكْمَا مَا تَنْيُى وَبِيْدٌ مِنْ قَبْلِ اِلْجَلْسَ
وَسَبَّت كَلّ حُرُرْ وَلِيْجَةٍ تَدْعُو كَأَنّيْنِمُ بَاٰكْرَرٌ كَأَكْسَرِ
يَبْتَجِى اَلْمِنْيَرَاتِ لَالْجَلْسِ حَتَّى مَآ أَبْدَد مِنْ رِوْدُوسِ الرِّجَالِ
وَتَقَرَّرُ الْبُلْبُونَ بَعْدَ بُصُحَاٰبَاٰ
بَيْنَيْنِ الْجَلْسِ صَدْورُ الْمُوَيْهٌ
أَصْقُحَتْ وَأَرْبَى خُجٌّ مِنْ الْحُرَّ
بَنْي بْنيا جَلِلْيَ بِنِ الرِّجَالِ
لَمْ آَكَنْ مِنْ جَنِبِيْسَا عَلِيْ أَلِّى لَحَيْهَا الْجَلْسَ
فَقَدْ تَجَيْجَتْ وَأَلَّا كَيْ بِنِيْيَةٌ قَآْبُ تِلْبُ عَلِيْ عَرْبَعْيَ
وَاتَنَاها دُوَّابِي بَيْنَيْنِ بْنيا مَا تَسْلُى عَلِيْ عَرْبَعْيَ
فَقَالَ تِلْبُتْ حَلَفُكَ مُسْلِمُ ظَلَامُ يَتَيْخَرَ قَآْبٌ
فَقَالَ عَلَيْ عَرْبَعْيَ تِلْبُتْ حَلَفُكَ مُسْلِمُ ظَلَامُ يَتَيْخَرَ قَآْبٌ
يَآَ بَيْنِيْنِ تَقَلَّبْ قَيلُهُ مَا سَيْمَاٰ بْنياَ مَآ حَلَفُكَ مُسْلِمُ ظَلَامُ

Then Ḥarith ends the poem by dramatically repeating a hemistich fourteen times and by extolling the courage of his unbeaten army:
According to Ibn Badrûn, Harith's poem runs over one hundred lines with the shatr repeated fifty times.

Muhalhil responded to Harith's declaration of war with
a poem in which he repeated his call for his horse
Mushahhar fourteen times

Haarith fought and defeated the Taghibi's and took Muhalhil prisoner without knowing his identity. Haarith requested from his prisoner if he could pin-point Muhalhil. The prisoner agreed to do so in exchange for his freedom. Haarith consented. Muhalhil revealed his true identity and Haarith cut off Muhalhil's locks and let him go: (Khafif)

Haarith's magnanimity became proverbial:

Haarith pursued a relentless war against the Taghibi's, for at the beginning of his involvement in the war, he swore that he would make no peace with his enemies until the earth had talked to him. As the Taghibi's could no longer withstand the persistent onslaught of Haarith, they dug an underground tunnel and asked one of their men to hide in it and sing a verse: (Tawil)

whenever he saw Harith passing over the tunnel. When Harith passed over the tunnel and heard the song, he was told now
that the earth had spoken to him he was no longer under oath to continue the war. Harith agreed and stopped the

war.

In an early poem, possibly written before the Battle of Khazaza, Harith advises the Sadawsis not to delude themselves of their invincibility: (Basit)

The galloping rhythm of the unrhymed tarsiīconveys effectively the readiness and eagerness of Harith's vast battalions marching to war which are compared to green hills under the rain.

The poetry of Harith abounds in vivid scenes of battles, like the description of the two opposing armies seen as two birds locked in a fight, each bird trying to overpower the other with its wings: (Basit)
The ferocious determination with which Harith conducted the war of revenge for the murder of his son Bujair parallels that of Muhalhil: (Kamil)

The reference of j|-' v->jj proves that the Jahilis believed in a Supreme God Who decides what is permissible and what is prohibited to mankind. The fact that the Qur'an addresses this point to the Jahilis confirms the familiarity of the Jahilis with the concept of halal and haram.

Moreover, Labid’s verse: (Kamil)

indicate that the belief in the concept of halal and haram
was widespread in Jāhiliyya.

Zuhair b. Janāb al-Kalbi (d.c.560), whose grand-father was a poet, is one of the earliest poets of Late Jāhiliyya. Like most of his contemporary poets he participated in the wars that engulfed the fifth century.

Zuhair was appointed by the Yemeni king Abraha b. Sabbāh as leader of the Bakrī and Taghlibī tribes and was responsible for collecting taxes. One year the Bakrīs and Taghlibīs went through a season of hardship and were unable to pay their dues. Zuhair's persistence in obtaining the taxes impelled the Bakrīs and Taghlibīs to rebel against his ruthless rule. Zuhair declared war on the two tribes and crushed them, and captured their leaders among whom were Kulaib and Muhalhil: (Khafīf)
In another poem Zuhair celebrated his victory over Muhalhil and the Taghlibīs and caricatured Muhalhil in chains and with tears running down his face as if he was crushing colocynth: (Kāmil)

The expression کُنْفِتُ فِي بَدْيُكَ حَنْظَلٍ crops up in Imru’al-Qais’s Muʿallaqa which suggests that either Imru’al-Qais was influenced by Zuhair or he was using a poetic convention.

The Bakrī and Taghlibī tribes re-grouped their forces and elected Rabīʿa b. Harith b. Murra, Muhalhil’s father, as their leader and marched against Zuhair and defeated him and freed Kulaib and Muhalhil. In another battle, Yawm al-Sullān (c.481), the Bakrīs and Taghlibīs defeated Zuhair and smashed his armies. Zuhair was defeated again at the Battle of Yawm Khazāzā, after which he renounced his leadership over the Bakrīs and Taghlibīs and retired to Yemen. He was by then about one hundred years old.

In recognition for his leadership, gallantry and
astuteness, Zuhair was honoured and rewarded by the Ghassanid king al-Ḥārith b. Māriya and by the Himyarī king Abraha b. Sабbān who reigned around 440 A.D.

Zuhair was succeeded as leader of his tribe by his nephew. In an attempt to consolidate his authority over his people, Zuhair's nephew flouted the orders of his uncle. Zuhair was deeply offended by his nephew's behaviour and committed suicide by drinking himself to death. Zuhair was about one hundred and fifty years old.

In his old age Zuhair met one of his daughters who told her grandson: "Hold your grand-father's hand." Zuhair asked his great-grandson who he was, and his great-grandson told him his name, his father's name and his grand-mother's name. Then Zuhair told his great-grandson in a poem that he had bequeathed a glorious heritage to his offspring, and stressed that he had realised all his dreams except that of becoming a king: (Kāmil)

أبّي إِيّ إِبّ أَهْلِكَ فَقِدْ أُوْرُنُصْكُمْ بِحَبْيَا كَبِيْرَةَ
وُرْنُصْكُمْ أُبَاهُ سَا دَاتْ زُيَاذَكُمْ قُرْنَتَهَا
وَنَكِنْ مَا نَالَ النَّسْئَيْنَ قَدْ نَيْنَهَا إِلَّا التَّيْمَةَ
وَالْمَوْتُ حَلْيَةُ الْعَيْشَ الْفَيْضَيْنِ كَبِيْسِيْنِ وَبِهِ كَبِيْسِيْنِ
مِنْ أَنْبِيَّيْ أَرْبَيْيْ السَّيْقَةَ الْجَهَدُ لَوْقُدُ هَيَدَىٰ بِالْعَيْنِيَّةَ
وَلَكَنْ شَيْدُتُ الْدُّنْيَا لَلْأَنْفُسُ لَُئَافُ نَوْقَدُ فِي طَيْيْبَةٍ
The word * has two meanings. First, it means kingdom, as in the expression that is to say . Second, it means to stay alive, as in the expression . The second meaning survives in the greeting expression .

Towards the end of his life Zuhair wrote poems centred around the theme of exceptionally old age: (Tawil)

The word in the third line has two meanings both of which apply to the poem. The first meaning is "secret", and the second meaning is "to make love". Zuhair was so old and regarded impotent, and so the women, untroubled by his presence, gossiped freely thinking he would be unable to follow their intimate conversations, and the men were not afraid of him seducing their women. The latter meaning is
found in one of Imru' al-Qais's poems: (Tawīl)

الآن زعمت الشمس يوم أنني كنت ولا يحسن البارى

Another interesting word used in the poem is ٢ which refers only to women in travelling howdas.

Zuhair wrote an unusual poem which begins with a taif and nasib motifs followed by an atlal scene: (Tawīl)

٣

Sala'ah b. QAmr, known as al-Afwah al-Awdī, was one of the leaders of the Madhhijī tribe. He participated with Zuhair b. Janāb in the Battle of Yawm al-Sullān, and although his forces were eventually routed by the Nizārī tribes, he still boasted of the bravery of his people in battle and of the humiliation they had inflicted on their enemies which entailed the payment of a tribute: (Kāmil)
After his defeat at the Battle of Yawm Khazāzā, Afwah returned home and informed his daughter of the death of her two brothers, and of the nobles of Himyar taken prisoners by Kulaib b. Rabī‘a. His daughter asked him about himself and he showed her his wounds and said: (Kāmil)

In a controversial poem Afwah extols the purity of the noble line of Qaḥṭān, its power and its great deeds, and at the same time he berates the Nizarīs as being the descendants of Isma‘īl and Hājar; in other words, the Nizarīs are not full-blooded Arabs but half-breed Arabs. The poem starts with a contemplative section on the changing times and their effect on people: (Ramal)
Afwah then goes on to pour his scorn on the Banû Hājar, reminding them of the previous battles in which his people routed them:

Afwah concludes with the boastful claim that his noble Madhijî people had done great deeds long before the Nizârîs were in existence:

"أَجْمَلُ الْخَيْلِ تَمَدُّوْدُ الْرُّطْلَيْنَ"
The poem was highly appreciated by classical critics and some of the lines like

إِذَا نَعْمَة قَوْمٌ مَّنْهَةٌ وَحِيَةً المرء ثَوبٌ مُسَتَّـمَّعٌ

have passed into common speech. The poem is noted for the line:

وَرَى الْطَّيْـيْـرَ عَلَى آَثَارَنَا رَأَى عَينَ ثَقَةٌ أَنَّ سَماَرُ

which describes predatory birds accompanying Afwah's powerful army to battle, because they expect to feast on the corpses of Afwah's enemies. Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādi regards Afwah as the first poet to introduce the image of birds accompanying an army to battle, and this debunks Ibn Taifūr's assumption that this image was introduced by al-Nābigha al-Dhubyani. The appearance of the same image in
one of Kulaib's poems: (Wāfir)

\[\text{امامهم عكس们 الهوى السماوي} \]

indicate that either Kulaib got the image from Afwah or Afwah got it from Kulaib or it was an inherited poetic convention. On the other hand, Jahiz questioned the authenticity of the poem on account of the verse:

\[\text{كسهاب التندف يرميك به فارس في كفه للحرب نار} \]

by arguing that the idea of the meteor being thrown at a target was introduced by the Qur'ān; but Jahiz undermines his own argument by quoting Jahili verses similar to the verse of Afwah in question. It seems Jahiz had overlooked the fact that a shooting star was a Jahili metaphor for either the death of a king or the birth of a child.

Afwah's poem provoked al-Find al-Zimmani to write a long poem in which he demolishes Afwah's claim of the superiority of the Qahtānī noble lineage, influence and courage, and mocks the Qahtānīs who could not withstand the thrust of his Rabīʿa tribes at the Battle of Yawm Khazaza. The two poems of Afwah and Find have the same rhyme and metre and represent the earliest examples of nagaʿid poetry. The provocative nature of Afwah's poem prompted the Prophet Muhammad to ban it as part of his policy to eliminate any element that might cause discord among the tribes.
In his old age Afwah was unhappy with the political in-fighting among his people and threatened that if they did not bury their differences and elect a competent and astute leader he would not remain with them: (Basit)

The simplicity of Afwah's language and the accessibility of his imagery based on mundane experiences had popular appeal, and some of his lines passed into everyday speech, as in the case of the dog barking at the
Afwah wrote his own epitaph which is unlike the epitaphs of Sāma b. Lu'ayy and Uhaiha b. al-Julāh. Afwah's poem throws light on the Jāhilī burial and mourning customs: (Tawīl)

"Afwah's reference to the grave as..."
the view that the Jahilīs believed in life after death, and this explains why they meditated on their dead after the burial. It was the custom of the Jahilīs to wash the dead body, wrap it in a shroud and pray for the deceased, then carry the body on a pall to the cemetery. Before the burial, the family of the deceased recounted the good qualities of the deceased and ended by saying: 

The family of the deceased would leave a camel tied to the grave of the deceased without food or drink, for it was believed that on the day of resurrection the deceased would rise and ride the camel to wherever he was supposed to go. The camel was called Baliyya. The Jahilīs talked to their deceased for two reasons: to deny the fact that their loved ones were really dead, and to keep their memory alive.

Classical grammarians and critics used Afwah's poetry to illustrate certain grammatical and badi points. In Ialsa Fī Kālām al-ʿArab, Ibn Khālawīh quotes a verse of Afwah in order to give a rare example of the mamdūd noun whose plural can be in the mamdūd or maṣūr form: (Ramal)

The plural of in the mamdūd form is and in the maṣūr form . In al-Rawd al-Muri, Ibn al-Banna' quotes a verse of Afwah as an example of tibāq: (Sarī)

وأفضع الهوجل مسانتنا، بوجسل عبارة عنترس
The first means land, and the second means she-camel. In *Naqd al-Shir*, Qudama b. Ja'far quotes the verse of Afwah: (Basīt)

سُودَ غَمَدَّ أَلْهَا بِنْيَ بَحْرِ هْٰذَا كانَ أَضْلُّ أَنَا أَجْتَهَلَّ الْعَمَّ

as an example of *tarsī*.  

Afwah was very old when he died in the sixth century.

Shahl b. Shaibān b. al-Zimānī al-Bakrī was known as al-Find (mountain) al-Zimānī (d.c.530) on account of his towering height. Like al-Harith b. Ubād he stayed out of the Basūs War. But the annihilation of his Bakrī tribe compelled him to join forces with Harith against Muhalhil and his Taghlibī tribe in the 520s. Find was then about one hundred years old. At the end of a series of battles the Taghlibīs suffered a crushing defeat, and Find celebrated the Bakrī victory in his famous poem: (Hazaj)

كَيْتَ أَنَّمَا الْأَلْبَاطَةَ لَيْدًا فَتَأْتِي الْقُوَّةَ مَلْعُوبًا

عَلَى الْأَيَامِ أُنْ لَجَعُن مَوْعِظَةَ كَأَنَّ أَيَّتَاهَا فَمَا قَصَّرَ أَلْبَاطُ فَأَمْسَى وَهُوَ عُرْيَانُ

فَمَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِي الْمَعْلُوْمَ نَجْعُلُهُ كَأَنَّ ذَا أَنَا مَنْيًا مَعْلُوْمَةً وَلَيْثُ عَضْبانُ

يُدْبِرُ فِيهِ تَوْهِينَ وَخَطْبٍ وَآمَرَانُ

وَتَعْمَلُ كَفَّارًا الْأَلْبَاطَةَ مَلْعُوبًا وَالْزَّقُ مَلْعُوبًا

وَيَضَعُّ الْحَمَّامَ عَلَى الْجَلْحَةِ الْمَلْعُوبُ وُدُّعَانُ

وَفِي الْشَّمْرِ نُجَاحًا حِينَ مَنْ لَا يَحْيِكَ إِحسَانُ
In a poem written after the Battle of Khazāzah, the victorious Bind undermines the boasting of al-Afwah al-Awdā who glorified the power and noble lineage of Qahtān at the expense of Bind's Maʿaddā tribes. Bind's poem of seventy-eight verses, which has the same rhyme and metre as Afwah's poem, is the earliest longest Jahili poem before Imruʿal-Qais. Ibn Maimūn says that the purpose of Bind's poem was to demolish (بناقض) Afwah's poem without specifying which poem he had in mind. A closer reading of Afwah's poetry leaves the reader in no doubt as to which poem Bind was knocking down. The rhyme, metre, theme and counter-argument of Bind's poem point to Afwah's poem quoted earlier.

After a short atlāl opening Bind scornfully plays down Afwah's bravado and advises him not to cry over a bygone dream, for the defeated Qahtānīs have been reduced to nannygoats looking for knives with which to be slaughtered: (Rāmal)
To counter Afwah's claims, Find says that honour and glory belong to the Nizaris, because Allah had singled them out of all the tribes to be the beacon that dispels the darkness which overwhelms the other tribes:

"To counter Afwah's claims, Find says that honour and glory belong to the Nizaris, because Allah had singled them out of all the tribes to be the beacon that dispels the darkness which overwhelms the other tribes:"
Find concludes that the Ma'addīs are proud of being the children of Hājar and her son Isma'īl, and they are also proud of having been chosen by Allah as custodians of His House the Kā'ba:

اَنَا مِنْ هَاجَرٍ الْمِجْدُ الكَبَارِ
عُنْقَدَتُ الحَبْوَةَ قِيدًا اَلزَّار
ِلَّذِينَ فِي دَارٍ بِها حَلَّ الفَخْارِ
مِثْلَ مَا حَنَّتَهُ عَلَى الْبُوُكَ الْظُّؤْوارِ
مَنْ تَنْتَظِمُ النَّطَرُ لِهِ رَبٍّ وَجَارٍ
فَقَدْ رَاَنَا اللَّهُ عِيْزَهُ اَهْمَهُ
خَلَّاَتُهُ وَالْخَلَّاَتُ كَثْنَاءً
بَلِيْدِ الْعَلْيَا وَلِلْخَيْارِ

Sa'd b. Malik (d.c.530), the father of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, grand-father of Qāmi's and great-grandfather of Ňarafa b. Ňabd, was one of the leaders of the Bakri tribes. When Jassās's father consulted the Bakri leaders on whether to hand over Jassās to the Taghilibīs, Sa'd swayed the Bakri council to his view that the Bakris must fight to the last man rather than deliver Jassās to the Taghilibīs. Sa'd then called for a camel to be slaughtered and swore on its blood that the Bakris would fight to the end. Some of the Bakri leaders like al-Hārith b. Ňabād and al-Find al-Zimmānī did not join in the oath and refused to be dragged into the inevitable war. As the war began to take its toll on the Bakris, Sa'd taunted
al-Ḥarīth b. ʿUbaḍ for not joining them in the war: (Kāmil)

Harith was moved by the poem, and agreed to get involved in the war.

The image of war baring its legs, implying the breakout of hostilities, makes its first appearance in Saʿd's poem, but it does not mean that Saʿd was the first poet to use it. The phrase بَيْنَاتُ أَخْدُورُ was employed in Jāhiliyya as a metaphor for virgins, for the ostrich eggs symbolised virgins.
Jahdar b. Dubai (d.c.530) was one of the Bakri heroes. Just before the Battle of Yawm Qida, al-Ḥārith b. ʿUbad suggested that the Bakri women should fight along with the men against the Taghlibis, and that the women should carry clubs and leather bottles full of water and should remain behind the men's lines, and that the men should shave their hair in order to be distinguished from the enemy, so that when the women saw a wounded shaven-headed man they would give him water and nurse his wounds, but if the wounded man had an unshaven head they would club him to death. Jahdar, who had an ugly face but fine locks of hair, said that if they shaved his hair they would disfigure him. So, for the privilege of keeping his hair, he promised to fight the first Taghibī that appeared the following morning. Jahdar kept his hair, and on the following morning a Taghibī warrior appeared before the battle and was attacked and killed by Jahdar. In the heat of battle Jahdar was severely wounded. As the Bakri women went around nursing their wounded men and clubbing to death the wounded enemies, they saw Jahdar without recognising him and took him for an enemy because of his unshaven head and clubbed him to death: (Rajaz)
Salama b. Khālid b. Ka'b, better known as al-Saffāh al-Taghlibī (d.c.555), was entrusted by Kulaib b. Rabī'ā to light two fires on Mount Khazāzā (hence the name of the Battle of Yawm Khazāzā) so as to warn his forces of any surprise attack by the enemy. When the Madhhijī tribes got wind of the Rabī'ā's whereabouts they launched their attack; Saffāh lit the two warning fires and the two armies clashed and eventually the Madhhijīs were routed: (Wāfir)

سَافِحَ اَل-'طْلَبَيْنِ بِهِمْ فِي خَمَشِ يَدَّهُ كَعْبِيَةَ مُطْسَرَاتٍ طَلَّلَ مِنْ أَسْلَادِهِ وَكَنَّ تَوْلَا سَهَاءَ الْقُوْمِ أَحْضَبَهُمْ مَّالَتٍ فَكَنَّ مَعَ الْصُّبْحَاءِ عَلَى جَذَامٍ وَخَمَرَ بَالسَّيْفِ مُسْهَرَاتٍ

Saffāh participated in the Battle of Yawm Kulāb al-Awwal (c.540s) which involved the uncles of Imru' al-Qais b. Hujr. At the Battle of Yawm Kulāb al-Awwal, Saffāh earned the title of Saffāh for his magnanimity. He was the orator of the Taghlibīs in the Basūs War.

Al-Akhnas b. Shihāb (d.556) was known as Fāris al-Ṣaṣā on account of his horse Ṣaṣā which had the same name as the horse of Jadhima al-Abrash. Akhnas, who was regarded as the poet of the Basūs War, believed in life after death and Allāh's retribution: (Kāmil)

وَلَقِدْ شَهِدَ اللَّحْمُ يَوْمَ دَفَاعِهِ فَأَخْذَتْ مِنْهَا خَطَّةَ المَتَالَ
In *al-Wafi fi al-`Arud wa al-Cawafi*, al-Khatib al-Tibrizī quotes a verse from one of the lost poems of Akhnas to illustrate *al-Tajnis al-Nājis*¹ (Tawīl)

Akhnas's longest surviving poem begins with an *atlal* section in which the ruins are compared to a decorative title written on hide by a scribe: (Tawīl)²

The most important part of the poem is considered by classical critics as a relevant document for its reference to the geographical locations of some of the tribes: ³
In Risālat al-Sahil wa al-Shahi, Maʿarri explains the meaning of the word عَرْضُ as "road". Ibn Qutaiba and Baṭalyūsī quote the last verse of the poem as an example in which the word سَارِبُ is used to mean "unfettered".

Awf b. Saʿd b. Mālik acquired the name of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar after a verse in which he compared the ruins of houses to pen decorations on hide. Muraqqish was the uncle of Amr b. Qamī'a and of al-Muraqqish al-Asghar. Muraqqish fought with al-Ḥarith b. Ubād at the Battle of Yawm Qīdā in the 520s. As a small boy, Muraqqish and his brother Harmala studied under a Christian priest.

Muraqqish was in love with his cousin Asmā' with whom he grew up, and asked his uncle Awf b. Mālik to marry her. His uncle consented on condition that Muraqqish proved his metal as leader and attended the courts of kings. Muraqqish joined the court of a Yemeni king who treated him kindly and generously.
While Muraqqish was in Yemen his uncle went through hard times which sapped his resources, and consequently married Asma' to a rich Murādī who took her to his home town in Najrān.

Having met his uncle's conditions, Muraqqish returned home and was told that Asma' was dead and was shown her supposed grave. Muraqqish regularly visited the grave. On one occasion he dozed off by the grave and was awoken by children quarrelling over a bone which one of the children said belonged to the sheep buried in the grave in which Asma' was supposed to have been interred. Shaken by what he heard, Muraqqish asked the children to tell him the story of the grave, which they did.

Muraqqish set out with his maid and her husband to the land of the Banū Murād to see Asma'. But on his way to Asma' Muraqqish's health deteriorated and the party rested in a cave. The Ghufalī husband of Muraqqish's maid convinced his wife that as Muraqqish was dying they should go back to their people and leave him to die on his own. Muraqqish heard what they were plotting, and while they were not looking he scribbled a poem addressed to his brothers on the camel's saddle, telling them to kill his maid and her Ghufalī husband for abandoning him: (Kāmil)

\[
\text{بَا صاحِبِيَّ نَلْوَأْناَ لَا نَعَلَكَ} \\
\text{إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ رَهَبٌ أَنَّ لَا نَعَلَكَ} \\
\text{قُلْلَ بِطَأْكَمَا يُقُرَّطُ سَيِّيَا} \\
\text{أَوْ يُسْنِمَ الإِسْرَاعُ سِيْبًا مَعْتَيْلاً}
\]
The maid and her husband went back to Muraqqish's people and told them Muraqqish was dead. Muraqqish's brother Harmala noticed the poem on the saddle and read it, and pressed the maid and her husband to tell him the truth about the fate of his brother. The maid and her husband confessed everything and told him where they had left Muraqqish. Harmala killed the maid and her husband and rushed to the cave.

Muraqqish's cave was the haunt of a shepherd. The shepherd visited the cave and got acquainted with Muraqqish who found out that he was working for the husband of Asma'. The shepherd told Muraqqish he had never seen 'Asma', but her maid regularly came to him to get milk for her mistress. Muraqqish gave his ring to the shepherd and promised him a reward if he put the ring in the milk container. When the maid of Asma' came to get the milk, the shepherd put the ring in the milk container. While Asma' was drinking the milk, she felt something in her mouth, removed it and recognised it as the ring of Muraqqish. She asked her maid
about the ring but the maid said she knew nothing about it. Asma' asked her husband to call the shepherd, and the shepherd told them about the ring and Muraqqish. Asma' said that they should all go immediately to the cave to save Muraqqish. After a journey of a day and a night they reached Muraqqish and took him with them to their home where he died shortly afterwards. By the time Harmala reached the cave Muraqqish was already dead and buried.

In one of the last poems Muraqqish wrote while he was in the cave, he says he dreamt of Sulaimā, meaning Asma', sitting with her friends around the fire. Although Sulaimā had been married to another man and moved to another region, he would always be loyal to her: (Wafir)

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Muraqqish's treatment of the theme of baldness and grey hair is distinct from that of the Ancient Jahilli poet A'sur b. Sa'd and of his own contemporaries. Muraqqish compares his baldness and his grey hair to camomile flowers growing on a strip of dry land lying between two rain-watered strips of land, and employs the crow as a metaphor for black hair and youth: (Tawil)

Most of the poems of Muraqqish open with an atlāl or with a nasib, or with an atlāl followed by a nasib. Muraqqish's finest nasib is a description of beautiful girls leaving town on camels and stopping to set up a camp on their way to their destination: (Tawil)
In another nasīb Muraqqish compares the howdas on the camels to dawn trees and to big ships: (Khafīf)

Muraqqish's best known poem is an elegy written for his cousin Thā'laba b. ǦAwf b. Mālik who was killed by Muhalhil in the Basūs War. The ātlāl and nasīb sections have the famous line after which he was named: (Sarīc)

Muraqqish is aggrieved by the death of his cousin, but resigns himself to the fact that life must go on:
In Kitāb al-Addād, Anbārī says that although the meaning of the word "وراء" is "at the back", it is also used to mean "in front". To illustrate the latter meaning Anbārī quotes Muraqqish:

لَيْسَ عَلَى طَوِيلِ الْحَيَاةِ نَذَمُ وَأَلْعَزَءَ المَرْءَ مَا يَعْلَمُ

and the Qur'ān:

"مَنْ وَرَأَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ "

"وَكَانَ وَرَأَاهُمْ مَلِكُ يَصْدَخَ كَلَّ سَفِيَّةَ غَصْبَا "

In al-Ishārat wa al-Tanbihāt, Muhammad b. ʿAlī al-Jurjānī quotes Muraqqish's verse:

النَّسُورُ يَسْتَقِمُّ وَالْوَجُوهُ دَأَّا يُبْرِرُ وَأَطْرَافُ الْبِكْنَانِ غَنَّمَ"
as an example of the mafruq simile.

The tragic love story of Muraqqish and Asma' must have been popular in Jāhiliyya, for it was mentioned by Tarafa in a poem: (Tawīl)

وقد ذهبت سلي بعقلة كلها
كما أحرزت أسماء قلب مرقص
والنحات اسماء ام ديداً ينتفي
فأرى أن لا تؤمر ينتهي
ترجح من أرض العراق مرقص
إلى السرو أرض سانه نحوه الهوي
فعودى بالورد أرض بيده
باست رائد من أخلاقة شينه
فنايتين ذويتى وحبهاتى
وما كل من يموي النفس هو نفتأه

نوجدها بكللى مال مجد مرقص
باسماء، إذ لا يستنق عوادته
فظى نجده وجد عقب مرقص
وعلقت من سلمي خيالاً أمامه

The love story of Muraqqish and Asma' has all the ingredients of an Udhrī love story: the constant love of the man who dies broken-hearted because his girl was married off to another man. In this respect Muraqqish can be regarded as the forerunner of the Udhrī poets.

Rabī'ah b. Sufiyān b. Sa'd b. Mālik, known as
al-Muraqqish al-Asghār, participated with his uncle al-Muraqqish al-Akbar in the Basūs War. al-Muraqqish al-Asghār owned a small herd of camels which he took around wherever he went.

Muraqqish was in love with Fātima, the daughter of the Lakhmid king al-Mundhir b. Ma‘ al-Sama‘. Before meeting Fātima, Muraqqish was the lover of her maid Hind bint Ājlān who was in the habit of picking up men at night from a spot where people brought their animals to drink. A close friend of Muraqqish, Āmr b. Janāb, suggested to Muraqqish he should take his camels to the watering spot frequented by Hind. Muraqqish followed his friend's suggestion. In the evening Hind went to the watering spot, saw Muraqqish who was very handsome and invited him to spend the night with her in her house next to Fātima's palace. The next day Hind undressed in front of her mistress who noticed bruises on her thighs and asked her what caused them. Hind told Fātima the bruises were from the man she slept with the night before. Fātima asked whether he was the same handsome young man she saw from her palace window leaving her house in the morning. Hind said that he was the same young man. Fātima expressed her desire to meet him.

The king, who was suspicious of his daughter's character, had appointed special guards to keep watch on his daughter and gave orders to spread a cloth all around
the palace to check the footprints of her visitors. So Hind fetched Muraqqish, covered him with a cloth and carried him on her back to Fāṭima. Muraqqish spent the night with Fāṭima, and in the morning Hind took him out on her back to her house. In the morning the king called the guards to check if Fāṭima had had any visitors and they told him that the only visible footprints were those of Hind and they seemed deeper than usual.

Muraqqish visited Fāṭima night after night, but people thought he was spending his time with Hind. One day cʿAmr b. Janāb pressed Muraqqish to tell him what was going on between him and Hind. Muraqqish revealed his secret, and cʿAmr, who looked like Muraqqish but for his hairy legs, begged him to let him go to Fāṭima in his place. Muraqqish reluctantly agreed. cʿAmr was taken to Fāṭima by Hind. But when cʿAmr and Fāṭima were about to make love, she felt his hairy legs and pushed him away, and called Hind to throw him out. cʿAmr returned to Muraqqish and told him what happened, and Muraqqish bit off his finger in a fit of remorse: (Tawīl)
أَرَكَّبْتُ بُدْتَ الصَّالِمِ مِنْهَا مَعَاصِمَ
سَحَّرَةٌ طَيِّبِهَا عَلَى ٍدُرْسُهَا مُضْمِنَة
بَنيَّا خَيْلٍ هِلْ تُرْىٍ مِنْ طَفْعَانِ
تَعَالَ النَّهَارُ وَاجْعَرَنْ عَنْ الصِّرَابِمَا
مُحَلُّكَٰنِ مِنْ جَوُّ الْوَرَيْعَةٍ بَعْدُ مَا
بِجُراَعٍ فَنَسَىٰ وَدَّىٰ رَوَايَاٰهُ
وَرَكَّزَهَا قَوْاً وَجَلَّرَعُوا المَحَارِيٰا
كَفَّارَ بَيْنَ سَدَائِلِهِ وَاجْحَرَأٌ
وَإِنَّ لَأَسْحَحَى فَصَيْحَةٌ جَالِعَأٓ
وَلَأَسْحَحِيْ لَحَنَقُوهُ بِيْنَا
سُلِكَ الْقُرْرُ وَالْجَرَطُ نُحْنَى جَنَانَهُمَا
أَلَا حَبَّاً وَجَهَّىَٰهُ نَبَيَّةٌ تَبَانِيْهَا
وَحَسِبَكَ عَفْةٌ فَقَطِيَّةٌ طَاعُمَا
فَخَوَافَةٌ أَنْ نَُّلْقَيْ أَحَا لِيَهَا
وَرِيْهِ وَإِنْ كَلَّتُ قِلْوُىٰ تَرَاجِمْ
هَا وَبَنِفْسِيٰٓ ءِبَافُطِيٰمٍ، العَرَايِجَا
وَبِيْنَهُمَا الْعَرِيْسُ الْكِرِّيٰمُ السَّجَيِّمَا
فَأَفِلَحَّمِ أَنْ الحَبَّٰي تُضْفَوْنَ عَنْ الْبَيْلِٰ
أَلَا يَأْسَسُي بالكَرْكِبِ الطَّلْقُ فَعَاطِمَا
إِلَاءٌ، قُرُدَّٰي مِنْ نَوَالِيَهَا فَاطِمَا
أَفِلَحَّمِ أَنْ النَّساَءٍ بِنَبَلَةٌ
وَأَشْوَا بِأَحْىٰٔ لَا أَبْعَطُكَ هَايِمَا
مُتَّىٰ مَلْيَسُ دَوْ الْقَرْصُ خَيْلِيٰهَا
وَتَعَمِّدُ عَلَىٰ لَا مَحَاةٌ طَالَاٰهَا
وَآنِي جَنَبُ جَلَّذٍ فَاَطْعُعْهَا
فَعَنَّسَكَ وَنَّلْوُهُ إِنْ كَنَّكَ لَإِيَأَاٰهَاٰ
[كانَ عَلَىٰ نَوَاجَ آلٖ مُخْرَقٍ
بَيْنَ نَبَوْسِيَّةٍ بِحَقَدَ النَّاسٍ أَمَّرَةٌ
فُسَنََٰهُمْ وَلَعْمَ أَمَّرَةٍ علىٌ عَلَىٰ لَا يَأْيُذُ
وَيَعْجُبُهُمْ أَنْ نُؤْمِنَ امْتَتَىٰٔ جَالِعَأٓ
أَيْنَ حَيْبَّٰيُ أُضْحَكَتْ تَسْكَنَتْ وَاٰحَدَاءٓ]
A painful cry that springs out of remorse pervades the poem and is sustained by repeating certain forms of address at the beginning of some hemistiches:

Muraqqish's next poem was highly appreciated by classical critics and was included in the "Muntaqayat" section of Abu Zaid al-Qurashi's anthology Jamharat Ash'ar al-`Arab. The ṭāラ and taif themes are followed by a wine motif: (Tawīl)
Muraqish ends the poem with a description of his horse in the heat of battle:

\[
\text{طوية جينا فهّر يَبْزَبُ مَنْحُ}
\]

\[
\text{أبْنَى قَبْلُ لَيَسَ فِيَ مَعَابَةً}
\]

\[
\text{كُمْبَتْ كَذَٰلِكَ الْسَّرْفُ أَرْجَلُ أَفْرُحُ}
\]

\[
\text{وَأَفْرُحُ يَبْرَاءُ، أَيْ أَمْرُي، أَرْجُحُ}
\]

\[
\text{وَبَجَرُ جَمْعُ مَعْنَى وَبِجَرُ جُ}
\]

\[
\text{تْيَبُعُ أَشْيَالِهِ حَمْسُ حَسْنَةُ}
\]

\[
\text{ذِرَاءُ بِشَكَّاتِهِنَّ مَدْجُجُ بَعْدُ ما}
\]

\[
\text{شَهِدَتْ بِهِ فَغَرَّةُ مُسْتَبْدَأَةُ}
\]

\[
\text{عِظَانِ أَوْلَاهَا عِيدَ مَصْحُ}
\]

\[
\text{كَمَا اسْتَكْفِحَتْ مَنْ الْظَّباءَ جَدِّيَةً}
\]

\[
\text{كَأَمْهُ، إِذَا ذَكَّرَهَا الْلَّدَدُ أَفْحَيَ}
\]

\[
\text{يَحُجُّ جَمْعُ الْحَمُّوَيِّ جِنَّ مَفْضُوْتُ}
\]

\[
\text{وَجَرَّةُ مَنْ نَتَحُضْ عَيْلَ وَأَبْيَضُ}
\]

CAmr b. Qamī'a (d. 530s), the grand-son of Sa'd b. Malik, was a small boy when his father died, and he was brought up by his uncle Marthad. When CAmr was a young man his aunt tried to seduce him and failed, but she told her
husband that cAmr had made advances to her. His uncle was outraged and grabbed his sword and went after him. cAmr ran away and sought refuge in Hīra, and from there he sent a poem to his uncle telling him he was innocent: (Tawil)

\[
\text{لمرك ما تنس بعد رشيدة نوارني سرح لأصرم مرنا}
\text{ وإن ظهرت من قوارص جمع وافر من لومن مارا وأصدنا}
\text{على غير جرمن أن أكون جنينه} يسوى قول باغ كاذب فتحننا
\text{لمرى لينعل الصرد تدعو بمخيلة} إذا ما النبات في القامة ندنا
\]

According to Ibn Qutaiba, cAmr was attached to the court of Imru' al-Qais's father king Hujr of Kinda. On the other hand, Abū al-Paraj says Imru' al-Qais met cAmr for the first time when he asked cAmr's people for a poet to accompany him to Byzantium. cAmr accepted to go with Imru' al-Qais, but he pointed out that he was an old man and had many children; and Imru' al-Qais told him he was more than welcome if he did not mind eating game: (Tawil)

\[
\text{شكرت إليه أني ذو خلالة} وأني كبير ذو عيال مجنب}
\text{فقال لنا أهلا وسهلا ومرحبا} أذا سركم لحم من الوحش فأركبا
\]

cAmr and Imru' al-Qais set out on their journey to Byzantium, and it was not long before Imru' al-Qais noticed that cAmr was homesick and comforted him: (Tawil)
In the same poem Imru' al-Qais imagines ām's mother crying because she missed her son:

بِكَيِيٍ صَاحِبِي كَمَا رَأَي الْدُوَّر دُوَّرَة
وَأَيْشَنُ أَنَا لِحَقَان بِقَيْسَة
فَقَلَتْ لَهُ لَا تُبَكِّ عَيْنَكَ إِنَّا نَحْوَال مَلِكًا عَدُوٍّ نَفْتَمَدَّرَا

Amr died on his way to Byzantium. He was by then over ninety, battered by a barrage of invisible arrows shot at him by the daughters of time: (Tawil)

Some of Amr's poems begin with an atlal theme and some are atlal poems in their own right. A calm and reflective tone pervades Amr's poems and his language is simple and accessible as seen in his nostalgic poem on the passing of youth: (Munsarih)
Anbārī and Sijistānī take the word āmāma as an addād example, that is to say a word that has a reversible meaning.

Camr's next poem is one of the earliest examples of wine poetry and does not follow the Khalīlī metres:

In al-Ṣāhil wa al-Shāhij, Maqarrī says that al-Khalīl b.
Ahmad called Amr's unusual poem mudhali because the last foot ends with an extra harf sakin.

Amr's poem in praise of Mundhir, king of Hira, is in two parts. The first part has a departure and nasib themes which depict Umama and her party leaving the neighbourhood - the howda-bearing camels were like tall palm trees, and the houri-eyed girls in the howdas were like gazelles stretching themselves to reach the branches: (Mutawarih)
The second part is devoted to Amr's journey to king Mundhir, braving the heat of the desert on his strong and fast camel, at a time when the gazelles seek shelter from the heat of the sun:

Amr then appeals to Mundhir not to believe what his enemies say about him:
And the poem ends with a description of the king’s courage in battle:

In ḌAmr’s next poem, the ʿtaif of Umāma visits the ʿtaif of ḌAmr in a dream. In verse ten, the object of ḌAmr’s love is Khawla, which could be another name of Umāma or an imaginary name. The use of the two names could mean that the ʿtaif-nasīb motif is merely employed as a poetic convention. Classical critics thought highly of this unusual ʿtaif-nasīb opening: (Mutagārib)
ناتك أمامه إلا سولا
يوفي مع الليل بعيدها
ولو شهدت لم توات النواع
فذاك تبدى من ودها
وقيل أجد الخليل أهتماما
مع الصبح لما استتروا الجمالا
ويعتين بعد نعال نعالا
وذكرت لها بعد سجل سجالا
وحلت يرظن سيرا عجلاء
بوازل تحدى بأحداثها
فلملا ناوا سبقت عبرت
تراها إذا أحتتها الحادبا
فبالطال بدلن بعد الهجر
وفيهم خولة زين النسا
لها عين حوراء في روضة
وتجرى السواك على بارد
كانت المدام بعيد المنام
كانت الدواب في فرعها
وجه يحارات له الناظرون
إلى كفم مثل دعص النفا
وحصف تقلب بيض طفالا
Amr then scolds his girl for abandoning him, he who is the hero unbeaten in battle and in the art of words:

The poem is interesting for the words 'جَالِمًا' and 'ジーٌّ' used in a non-religious context. The appearance of the two words in the Qur'an attests to their religious usage in Jahiliyya.
One of Amr’s poems features two important religious words which indicate they were in common use long before they became associated with Islam: (Tawil)

\[
\text{وَأَنْبِيَ إِذْ دِينَٰهُ يُوفِيقُ دِينَٰهُ إِذَا نَسْكَوْنَا أَفْرَعُهَا وَذَيْنُهَا وَمَنْزِلَةً بَالْحَجِّ أُخْرِىَ عَرَفَتُهَا لَهَا نَفْعَةً لَا يُسْتَطْعَ بِرَوْحَهَا}
\]

Amr’s attempts in probing the mystery of immortality brought him to the conclusion that however bright and colourful the blaze of youth might be, there will come a time when that burst of energy will be reduced to dust: (Wafir)

\[
\text{وَمَا عَيْشَ الْفَتَى فِي الْنَّاسِ إِلَّا حَسَّا أَشْعَتْ فِي رِيحٍ شَهَابًا فَيُسْطَعُ تَادَةٌ حِسَّا سَناً دَسْحِيَ اللُّونِ ثُمُّ يَصِرُّ هَابًا}
\]

Amr’s weariness of old age and his grief for the death of his friends have made him ponder on the impermanence of life, and he appeals to time to treat man gently, as man is not made of rock or iron: (Mutaqarib)

\[
\text{صَبِرْتُ وَفَارَقْتُ الْأَقْرَبُونَ وَأَيِّنْتَ النَّفْسُ إِلَّا خُلُوْدًا}
\]
There are images which crop up again and again in Amr’s poetry. The first image is that of an old man unable to shield himself from the arrows of time, who tells his love Taktum, who is moving out of town on a camel resembling a ship, that death is the fate of all living creatures, be they crocodiles, bulls or heroes: (Khafif)

١٠٨١

إن قلبي عن تكبير غير سالي
 helm ترى عيرها تجيز سراعا
 هل حالة ملكة من ملك
 ثم راحوا بالنف إن نف مطال
 ن ان يرفعوا صدور الجمال
 ثم أصحوا على الدنيا لا يالو
 صوران خذور تحت الهلال
 أن رأني، تغير اليوم حالي
 فرعت تكتنم وقالت عجيبا
 في جميع الأيام بعد الليالي
 يابينة، الخير إنما نحن رهن
 ل浓缩 الأيام بولد الليالي
 كان ينحى القوى على أمثال
 أقصنتي سهامه إذ رحنت
 وتولت عنه سليمي نبالي
The second image is that of an ageing man whose hair is turning grey: (Tawīl)

In another poem ĔAmr says that old age has discoloured and worn out his dress of youth and he sees his condition like that of the āṭlāl: (Khafīf)
The third image is that of smoke rising to veil the girls as they place the cooking pots on the fire: (Tawīl)

وَإِذَا الْمَأْذَرَةٍ بِالْدَّخَانِ تَقَنَّعَتْ وَاسْتَعجَّلَتْ نَصْبَ الْقَدَورِ فَمَلَّتُ

درت بازافي العَابِي مَلَاقٍ بِئِيَّةٍ من قَمِعِ الْيَثَارِ الفَلْحِ

In the next poem the veil of smoke is seen rising behind the curtains, while the slavegirls crouch around the cooking pots like old dry roots: (Khafīf)

ليس طعمه عَمَّ الْآرَانِبِ إِذْ قُلَّصَ دَرُّ الْقَنَاحِ فِي الصِّبْرِ

ورأيت الْبَا لِي عَكُوفَةٌ عَلَى قَرَأَةَ قَدْرِ

ورأيت الدُّخَانَ كَالْرَّيْدَ غَلْغَةَ الأَصْحَبِ يَنْبَعُ مِنْ وَرَأِ السَّيْدِ

حَيْضُر شُفَكْمُ وَخَيرَكُمُ دَرُّ خِروضٍ مِنِ الآرَانِبِ بِجَكْرِ

The bait poem of ḪAmr in which the setting of the new moon is compared to the clipping of the nail of the little finger: (Muttaqārib)

كَانَ ابنْ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ جَانِحاً فَسِيَّطَ أَثْدَا الأَفْقِ مِنْ خَنْصِر

influenced the way the Abbasid poet Ibn al-Muṭazz saw the new moon, as can be gauged from the following three poems. In the first poem Ibn al-Muṭazz compares the new moon to
a nailclipper: (Kāmil)

In the second poem the new moon is depicted as a silver boat loaded with ambergris: (Kāmil)

In the third poem the new moon is portrayed as a silver sickle picking narcissi out of the night's flowers: (Sarīc)

It can be deduced from the poetry of Āmr that the immortality of the soul was one of the main concepts that preoccupied his contemporaries. This is evident from the two verses: (Mutaqārib)

and: (Tawīl)
The word **العِبَاد** in **Amr**'s verse: **(Tawīl)**

**بَيْنِيَّهِمْ مَقَوْمَةً وَمَغَالِقُ يَعْوُدُ بِأَزْوَاجِ الْعِبَادِ مَنْ يَحْبُّهَا**

does not refer only to Christians as it was commonly assumed, but it includes all people irrespective of their religious affiliations; as we have pointed out earlier the Jāhilīs regarded themselves as Allāh's creatures.

Jāriya b. al-Hajjāj, known as Abū Du‘ād al-Iyādī (d.c.555), was fortunate to have a rich and generous neighbour called Hammām as his patron who protected him and showered him with gifts, and their friendship became a by-word: "Like the neighbour of Abū Du‘ād". In gratitude Abū Du‘ād dedicated many poems to his patron: **(Kamil)**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{فَإِلَّا أنَّكَ هَمَّتَيْنِ بِمَرَّةٍ أَصْدَدَتُ} \\
\text{أَمٍْعتُ نِعْمَةَ مَاجِدَيْنِ يَسِيَّتُ عَلَى مَعْلُومٍ أَتَلَامُ خُمْساً} \\
\text{وَجَعْلَنا دُوْنَ الْوَلِيْ فَأَصْبِحْتُ} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Abū Du‘ād had a wife known as Umm Habtar, and she was always criticising him for being extravagant. Abū Du‘ād took his wife's quibbling light-heartedly: **(Khafīf)**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{أَصْبِحَتُ أَمْ هَجَّرَتْنَكَ} \\
\text{فَنِّيَّيْنِ دُخُّلْنِيَ حَقَّيْنِ} \\
\text{أَمَّلَتَ أَنْ أُكُونَ خَيْرَ المَالِ} \\
\text{وَتَهَبَّ بَنَالْعَ الْمَالِ دَوْنَيْنِ} \\
\text{أَمْلَتَ لِي بَيْنَيْنِ أَنْ أُكُونَ الْمَال} \\
\text{أَوْ زَوَّاَرَ بِمَعْلُومٍ} \\
\end{align*}
\]
Abū Du‘ād’s wife was annoyed for not being taken seriously, and gave her husband the cold shoulder. Abū Du‘ād mused over her behaviour: (Basīt)

_most of the lines of the poem have passed into the repository of proverb-lore and are still used in contemporary speech._

Abū Du‘ād’s longest surviving poem, considered by classical poets and critics as his greatest, is a polythematic qasida in forty verses. In the opening nasīb section the poet compares the howdas of the departing ladies to sailing boats and to palm trees, and the veiled faces of the ladies to the sun covered by clouds: (Khafīf)
Abū Du‘ād goes on to talk about his cousin who accused him unjustly, and about the dead relatives he loved and missed, and whose souls have turned into owls perched on their graves:

1

Abū Du‘ād then moves on to describe camels, horses and the hunt:

2
is an example of the rarely used plural form whose singular form is ٌ-ٌ-ٌ-ٌ-ٌ. The form has also another plural form, as in the word ٌٌٌٌٌ in al-Muraqqish al-Asghar's verse:

Abū Du‘ād was in charge of the stables of al-Mundhir b. Māʿ al-Sama‘. Abū Du‘ād had a vast knowledge of horses and wrote several poems on them, which were highly commended by classical critics. His famous poem on his graceful and fast-running horse on which he used to go hunting early in the morning was a favourite of Abū al-Aswād al-Du‘ālī: (Khafīf)
The poem forms the background to the well-known description of horses in action in the *Mu'allaga* of Imru'al-Qais.

There is a fragment of a love poem of two lines by Abū Du'ād which describes the passion-driven poet entering a house and finding a gazelle as beautiful as the moon uncovered by the clouds. The poem's narrative tone and rhythmic pace suggest that it must have been culled from a longer poem: (Kamil)

\[\text{وُقَدْ دُخِنَتْ الْبُيْنَةُ بَعْدَ فُرُزُّنِي لِي السَّيْنِرَةَ الْقُرْدُمَ مُفَاعِدًا،}
\[\text{إِذَا غَزَّزَ النَّارُ عَافُيَةً كَنْبَأَرْنَ فَطَعَّعْهَا العَمْشَا.}

In a *qita* Abū Du'ād reflects on death saying that neither man nor monument can escape death: (Basīt)

\[\text{وَكُلُّ جَعْشُ وَإِن طَالَتْ سَلَامَتُهُ بِوَمْا سَنْدَرَكِهِ النَّكِيَّةُ وَالْحُبُّ}
\[\text{كَانَ عُرْضُ للَّمُوْتِ مُنْصُوبُ}

Abū Ziyād was the *kunya* of CAbīd b. al-Abras (d.530s) whose grand-father Suwaid b. ṣAmr al-Asadī took part in the Battle of Yawm al-Sullān. Nothing is known about CAbīd's early life except that when he was a young man, a man from the Banū al-Zinya saw him resting under a shady tree beside his sister May and insinuated: (Rajaz)

\[\text{ذَلِكَ عَبْيَد قد أَصَابَ بِنَا ياَ نَبْنِهُ أَتْشُحَا صَبِيبًا}
\[\text{فَحَلَتْ فُوْلَدتُ فَوْلَادًا.}
Cābiḍ was upset by the man's insinuation and cried: "Lord, if the man has wronged me by falsely accusing me, help me to fight him." Cābiḍ slept and dreamt that someone stuffed his mouth with a ball of poems and ordered him to get up. Cābiḍ woke up reciting his first poem: (Ramal)

بابن الزَّنَّةِ مَا غَرَكَّمْ لكم الوَيْلِ بِسَبِالْحَجَر

Cābiḍ was involved in the affairs of his people, the Banū Asad, who were under the tutelage of King Hujr of Kinda. Once the Banū Asad refused to pay their tribute and beat up the tribute collector. The king marched on the Banū Asad and ruthlessly subdued them and transferred them to the Tihāma region and imprisoned their leaders. Cābiḍ was shocked by the scale of the retaliation and appealed to the king to be merciful to his people and to free the prisoners: (Kāmil)

بابنَبُن فَابْكَيْنِ ما بَيْنِيُّ أَسَتُّ فَقَهْمُ أَهْلُ الْسَّدَادَةِ
حِيْلَا ً أَبْيَتُ اللَّعْنَ ـ حِيْلَا ً إِنْ ـ فِيُّ أَتْلُتُ آنِهُا
في كَلِّ وَادٍ بَيْنِينَ يَتَرِبْ فَالْفُضْوُرُ إِلَى الْبَيْمَانِهِ
تَثْبِيبُ عَانٍ ـ أَوْ مِيْبَا جَلْخِرٍ ـ أَوْ صَوْتُ هَاتِهِ
وَمَتَعْتُهُمَّ ـ كَبَدُدًا فَتَتَّنُّ حَلَّوَا عَلَى وَجَلِلْ نَبَاسُهُ
سَيْسُتُ بَنِى أَسَدٍ كَنَا بَسَسُتُ بَيْسُتُهَا الْحَمَاسُهُ
جَعْلُتْ كَنَا عَوْدُ يَنِينٍ مِنْ سَسُمٍ وَأخْرَ مِنْ شِمَاةٍ
The king was touched by the poem, freed the prisoners and let the Banu Asad return to their homeland.

C̣Abīd improved his relationship with the Kinda court, not only with the king, but also with the king's brothers, as can be deduced from his panegyric addressed to the king's brother Sharahil: (Kāmil)

C̣Abīd was beset by domestic problems. In an amusing poem C̣Abīd records a tiff he had with his wife in their old age. Thinking of his wife's strained behaviour C̣Abīd is not sure whether she is threatening to leave him because he is old, short of money and has fewer friends, or she is just being coquettish - if her intention is simply to leave him, he will not care, but if she is playing him up, it is rather late in the day for her to entertain such pretensions, for she, like him, has also passed her prime,
and so raising her eyebrows will get her nowhere: (Kharīf)

Abīd teases his wife by saying that she should be ashamed of letting herself be tempted by the promises of stingy and penniless men, and that she should be so lucky to find another man like him:

And he never forgets to remind her of the glorious days of his youth when he visited beautiful girls, led the army to war and indulged in desert adventures:
And tails off with the contented note of a man satisfied with his life:

ذَالِكَ عَبِّيَسُ رَضِيَّتُهُ وَتَوَلَّى كُلُّ عَبِيَّ مَصِيرُهُ مَتَält

It appears from another poem which begins with a reference to ruins and loaded camels trudging along a gorge like ships that matters got worse for Ābīd, for his wife became impossibly rude to him, and constantly threatened to leave him now that he had grown old and useless: (Wāfīr)

And Ābīd told his wife not to be so hard, but if she really wanted to leave him so she could lead the kind of life she was dreaming of, he would not stand in her way:
cAbīd admits that he had lost his youth, but not the memory of his youth, when he indulged in the pleasures of life, like visiting the homes of beautiful and graceful virgins whose eyes were like those of oryxes:

قَدْ هِيَ رَوْحَدُكَ بَعْضَ عَزْنَايْنِ فَإِلَّا أَنَّ تَرَقَأَ مَهِينٍ
وَعُيَّنَيْ بِالْأَزْدَى قَلْعِيْكَ حَتَّى إِذَا ما شَيْتَ أَنْ تَتَسَأَ لُيْيِنَ

cAbīd was killed by the Lakhmid king al-Mundhir b. Maʾ al-Samaʿ (d.554). The story goes that cAbīd went to Hīra to visit Mundhir, and passed by the tomb of Ghariyyān where two of the king's boon-companions were buried. The day of cAbīd's arrival coincided with the day which had been designated by the king as "The Day of Bad Luck", for, on that day, whoever passed by the tomb would be killed. cAbīd was escorted to the king who had been advised to spare him, since he was a fine poet. The king delayed cAbīd's execution and requested from him to recite his popular poem which he declined. cAbīd was then asked in what manner he would like to die. cAbīd retorted that the choice of death granted to him was no better than that of the Cūdites:

(Tawīl)
Abid requested to be given wine until he was dead drunk and then to have his wrists' veins cut and be left to bleed to death. Mundhir then asked Abid to read a poem of his own before being killed. Abid said indifferently that being alive or dead did not matter to him: (Mutāqārib)

Mundhir demanded another poem. Abid responded sarcastically, implying that in spite of the different names we call death, the end result is the same: (Mutāqārib)

Abid was given wine which he drank until he lost consciousness, and was killed in the way he requested.

After the Banū Asad killed King Hujr (c.529), Abid invariably taunted Imruʿal-Qais by reminding him of his
debauched life which rendered him incapable of avenging the death of his father: (Tawil)

and: (Tawil)

Apart from a few references to Imru' al-Qais's failure to crush the Banū Asad soon after the murder of Hujr, 3 Abīd is silent on Imru' al-Qais's devastation of the Asadī tribe, nor does he allude to Imru' al-Qais's journey to Byzantium and to his subsequent tragic death. The reason for Abīd's silence suggests that Abīd might have died before Imru' al-Qais routed the Asadīs, possibly in the 530s.

Like many Late Jahili poets Abīd tends to exaggerate his age. He says that he is so old that anyone who had been shrivelled by old age is surprised to see that he is still around and asks Time whether it has touched him. Abīd says he is two hundred and twenty years old and he knew the first Lakhmid king and had only just missed meeting Dhu
al-Qarnain and David. Abīd ends the poem by stressing that immortality is denied to man and only Allāh is eternal:

(Kamil)

The literary biographer Sijistānī took Abīd’s word in respect of his age at face value, overlooking the fact that Abīd was exaggerating the length of his life in order to boast of his vast experience of the political upheavals he had witnessed. Judging from Abīd’s poems and the contemporary political events mentioned in his poems, he must have lived over one hundred years.

Perhaps more than any of his contemporaries and older contemporaries, Abīd preludes most of his long poems with an atlāl section followed by a nasīb, or with just a nasīb. In his atlāl openings Abīd invariably likens the ruins of the abandoned town of the girl he loved, now inhabited by ostriches and gazelles, to the writings in a book: (Khafīf)
or to a tattered dress: (Basīt)

1

or to the title of a book: (Tāwil)

2

or to the decorations on a sheath: (Khafīf)

3

and he also likens the remains of the fireplaces to the faded writings in an old parchment: (Kāmil)

4

Sometimes Abīd charges his atlāl scenes with unexpected poignancy: (Tāwil)

5

and he also likens the remains of the fireplaces to the faded writings in an old parchment: (Kāmil)

4

Sometimes Abīd charges his atlāl scenes with unexpected poignancy: (Tāwil)

5

Abīd emphasises his sadness at the sight of the deserted dwellings of his girl Sulaimā, haunted by ostriches and
deers, by comparing himself to a dove calling other doves to mourn the cherished dove that, according to tradition, had been lost since Nūḥ's time. At other times the ruins have a dazzling effect on ʿAbīd like that of the vintage wine of Bābil: (Sārīc)

In one of his best ḥtālā and nāsīb preludes ʿAbīd says that on one occasion he stopped with his friends at the deserted dwellings where his love Hind once lived, and asked the ruins what happened to its inhabitants: (Bāsīt)

ʿAbīd, now getting old, with his hair turned grey, and dropped by women, falls back on the days when he indulged in dawn-drinking bouts in the company of refined and voluptuous women who happily responded to his touch, and the thrilling time he spent with them was constantly on his mind:
Abīd then regrets the passing of youth, and concludes that old age stigmatises people in a society of action:

In the nasīb section of another poem Abīd compares the soft houri-eyes of his girl to those of an oryx lovingly watching over its calf grazing with the herd or resting under a tree: (Tawīl)

And when his girl smiles her bright teeth sparkle like the dew-fresh camomile flowers of the meadows:
And he longs for her company like a man dying for water:

إِلَّا إِنَّكَ لِسُعُدَّتِي وَإِنَّ تَأْتِيُهَا إِلَّا إِنْ تَأْتِيُهَا مَا عُشِّبَ كَالخَانَمَ الصَّدِيدِ

One of cAbīd’s nasīb openings depicts a dawn scene with camels carrying cAbīd’s girl and her friends on colourful howdas, like palm trees loaded with fruit, ready to move out early in the morning. cAbīd’s girl was covering her delicate face with a veil held by her untattooed hand, which implied she was a respectable woman, for only whores had tattooed hands: (Basīt)

And her mouth tasted like vintage wine kept in a container sealed with musk for which foreign winesellers demanded the earth:

cAbīd ends the section with a description of the lightning
lashing the nimbus clouds, and of the downpour, and concludes that if he were to drink the rain it might cure his love-stricken heart:

لِبَرَقَّ الْلَّيْلَ أَقْبَهُ فِي سَكَنْتِهِ وَفِينَ سَوْدَاءَ مَرْكُوبَهُ فَقُرِّفَّهَا حَرَقَّ بِمَاوَاهَا دَقِينَ وَمَتَنَّهَا رَقِقَ وَقُوَّتَهَا دَيْمَهُ فَذَلِكَ الْمَاءُ لَوَ أَنَّى شَرَبُتْ بِهِ إِذَا بَلَغَتْ كَبِيدًا شَكَكَاءَ مَكَلوُهُ

A recurrent theme in Ābīd's poetry is the storm and the way lightning, clouds, wind and rain affect the landscape: (Kāmil)

There is a poem which classical critics are at variance as to its authorship. Asma'ī attributes the poem to Aws b. Hajar while Abu cUbaida ascribes it to Ābīd. With the exception of this poem, the storm, lightning, clouds and rain themes rarely appear in Aws's existing poems. Whereas the recurrence of the same themes, as well as the use of tarsī, love, wine and fatalistic motifs, in
addition to the reference to Mount Shatib, which was in the Banū Asad region, in ʿAbīd's poetry strengthen the argument in favour of its attribution to ʿAbīd. The poem opens with ʿAbīd's girl reproaching him for his heavy drinking and uncontrollable passion as he cajoles her to postpone her admonishing until the following morning, since he knows that he will one day sober up, then die and be buried, wrapped in a white shroud, in the bend of a wadi: (Basīt)

The rest of the poem is devoted to the storm which is arrestingly delineated. ʿAbīd observes the lightning flashing through the clouds like dawnlight, and the clouds so low he could almost touch with the palms of his hands:

The downpour was battering and sweeping everything away, the lightning over Mount Shatib was like the white legs of a black horse racing with other horses, and the lightning-lit cumulus clouds, which resembled a fine colourful dress
or the light of a lamp, thundered like the husky voice of a
she-camel tired of calling her camelets to graze; and all
the land was covered in water:

Most of Abid's reflective verse has become part of
the proverb-lore, and many of his verses are still being
used now in contemporary speech: (Basit)

And: (Tawil)
And: (Khafif)

صَبَرُ النَّفْسِ عندَ كلِّ مُلَمٍّ إنَّهُ الْحَيَّةُ المُحَتَّمٍ
لاقِصَّمُ في الأَمْوَرِ فَقَدْ لَفَتَّتْ عَسَالَاهُ بِفَتِىٰ احْتِيَالِ
رَبَّمَا تَجَبَعُ النَّفْسُ مِنَ الْأَمَسْرِ لَهُ فَرْجَةٌ كَحِلُّ العِقَالِ

Abīd’s travel scenes have crows of departure: (Kāmil)

٤ وَلاَ نَظْهَرْنَ وَدَّ أَمَرَى فِيْلْ خُبْرُهُ
٥ وَلَا تَنْبِئُنَّ الرَّأِيْ مِنْهُ عَلَى قَبْرٍ
٦ لَّا ذَرُّ هَدَىٰ فِي وَصْلٍ أَحَلٍ قَبَابِ
٧ فَنَعْمَا اللَّهُ صَدَفَتْ بِهِ ذَاكَ وَآَزَّذَرُ
٨ عَلَّ كُلِّ حَالٍ خُبْرُ زَادَ المُزْوَدُ
٩ فَنِلَاكُ سَبِيلُ لَّسْ نَبُوْحَ
١٠ لَعَلَّ الْأَذى يَبْرَجُو رَأَىٰ وَمَوْنَىٰٓ
١١ فَأَعْتَبَشُ مِنْ يَرَجُو خِلَالٍ بَضَائِرٍ
١٢ وَلَا مُوْنُ مِنْ قَدِ ماتُ قَبِلَ بِمُحْلِيَّدٍ
١٣ حِيَالِ الْمَبايِّل لَفَتَّى كُلُّ مَرْضَدٍ
١٤ مَفَلَقَّتْهَا بِيَوْمٍ عَلَى غَسْرٍ مَوْعِدٍ
١٥ بِفُسْلُهَا حَبَّ اللَّيْلِ المَنْيَةٍ مِنْ غَدِ
١٦ أَخْرَى مِنْهَا فَكَانَ قَدْۚ
١٧ فَإِنَّا وَمُسْلِمُ قُدُّ بِمَيْنَا لِكَالْدُوٰٰى
١٨ تُبُرُوحُ وَكَافِقِيَّ الْبَنَاتِ لِيُشَهَّدُي

١ And: (Khafif)

٢ Abīd’s travel scenes have crows of departure: (Kāmil)

٣ and camels moving in and out of town like ships sailing along the Tigris: (Tawīl)
As an old man, Abīd was haunted by the days of his youth when times were better and his people were prosperous, and he particularly recalls frequenting with his young and noble friends houses where girls sang and played the lute in musk-scented rooms: (Tawīl)

Classical critics were unanimous in their praise of Abīd’s next poem. The critic Abū Zaid al-Qurashi included it in the "Mujamhara" section of his classic anthology Jamharat Ashīr al-‘Arab and considered it equal to any of The Seven Mu‘allaqāt. The critic Tibrīzī added Abīd’s poem together with a poem by al-Nābigha al-Dubyānī, and another poem by Aṣhā to the seven Mu‘allaqāt, thereby editing a new anthology entitled The Ten Mu‘allaqāt.
Classical critics were puzzled and fascinated by the poem's rhythmical structure which did not fit into the Khalili metrical patterns, and for this reason they compared it to the rhythm of a speech and of the spoken idiom. On the other hand, Ibn Jinni and Hāzim al-Qartajānni refer to the metre of the poem as Mukhallal al-Basit, because each hemistich ends with a falsulun foot. The poem has four remarkable features each of which centres around a theme. The first feature is the atlāl opening which is different from other atlāl openings on account of its Ma'arrrian notion that the land on which his people once thrived had in time past been the home of other tribes:

(Basīt)

The second feature is the extended image of the eyes over-flowing with tears which are first compared to water coming out of an old punctured leather bottle, then to a river running down a hill or in a valley, and then to a stream flanked by palm trees:
The extended eye-image is effectively sustained by the comparative device and the conjunction. Ābīd's rhythmic structure of the image and the technique of the extended image influenced the Taftāla poet Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb's (1926-64) conception of imagery. Sayyāb, like Ābīd, uses the same technical tools to build his extended image: (Rajaz)

The third feature is meditative, and centres around Ābīd's belief in the Oneness of Allāh who never fails those who seek His help:

لا يَغْيَظُ النَّاسُ مِنْ لا يَغْيَظُ الْعَدْوُرَ وَلَا يَتَّعَفُّ التَّلْمِيذُ
لا يَتَّعَفُّ اللّٰهُ عَنْ تَعْمَلُهُ إِلَّا السَّجَيْةَاتُ وَالتَّلْمُوْلُ
فَقَدْ يَتَّعَفُّ اللّٰهُ عَنْ حَبْبِي شَالٌِ وَيَتَّعَفُّ السَّجَيْةَاتُ لَيْسَ حَبْبِي
سَاعِدُ بِأَرْضٍ إِذَا كُنْتُ بِهَا وَلَا تَتَّمُّلُ إِلَّى غَرِيبٍ
The fourth feature revolves around the striking comparison of the speed of ʿAbīd's horse to a hungry hawk crouching dejectedly in its nest, as though it has lost a hawkling, and with its feathers covered in snow; and all at once it sees a fox, and quickly shakes the snow off its feathers, and swoops on the fox. And when the fox sees the hawk approaching, it instinctively tries to run away, but realises there is no escape, so it straightens and fluffs up its tail defensively, and the hawk bounces on the screaming fox and claws it to the ground and kills it:
Abīd was aware of his unique poetic genius and boasted that his unrivalled mastery of the art of poetry and prose was comparable to the swimming skills of a fish: (Wafir)

Abīd's religious ideas and language are echoed in the Qur'ān as illustrated in the following examples:

The Qur'ān:

وَكَلِّ ذِي غَيْبَتِ يُؤْوِيٌّ وَغَابُ الْمَوْتِ لَا يُؤْوِيٌّ
Abid's poetry is wide-ranging, and shows he was far more inventive and original than any of his predecessors and contemporaries. His poetry is a watershed: on the one hand, it crystallised the Jahili poetic experience from its early days to the end of the pre-Imru' al-Qais period, and on the other, it opened new vistas for the succeeding generations. And because of this, the poets of the Imru' al-Qais and post-Imru' al-Qais periods found Abid's poetry richer in terms of subject matter, imagery and rhythm, and drew heavily on it, to the extent that some of his imagery was so extensively imitated that in the end it became part of the Jahili poetic conventions. The following examples of Abid's varied imagery illustrate this point: (Basit)
Classical critics maintain that Imru' al-Qais was the Jahili poet who invented and established the forms and poetic conventions of Jahili poetry. But this is not the case, as we have seen from our study of the poetry of the Jahiliyya of Lost Civilisations, Ancient Jahiliyya and the pre-Imru' al-Qais period of Late Jahiliyya. Indeed, by the time of Imru' al-Qais, Jahili poetry had developed a clearly defined poetic tradition with its distinct language, metres, rhyming patterns, conventions and structural and thematic forms which became the standard tradition of...
Jahilli poetry. Classical critics also credit Imru' al-Qais with having introduced certain images and scenes into Jahilli poetry, overlooking the fact that such images and scenes betray the influence of 'Abid's poetry, as can be gauged from the following examples:

Love scenes - 'Abid: (Basit)

Imru' al-Qais: (Tawil)

and: (Tawil)

and: (Kamil)

and: (Tawil)
cAbīd: (Kāmil)

خُوُّدُ مَبَتَّشِّةً العَيْنَةَ كَا نَا بَرْدِيَّةٍ نَبَتَتْ خَلَالَ غُرُوسٍ

Imru‘al-Qais: (Tawīl)

وَكَنَّكَ لَعِفَٰفٍ كَالْبَلْدِيِّ مُخْرَجٍ وَسَاقِ كَأْقُبِ السَّمِّي المُذَلِّ

cAbīd: (Tawīl)

نَبَصَّرْ خَلِيلِي هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ طَفَائِنٍ. بِمَانِيَةٍ فَدُ تَعْصُدْيُ وَتَرَوْعُ

Imru‘al-Qais: (Tawīl)

بِبَصَّرْ خَلِيلِي هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ طَفَائِنٍ سَوَالِكَ فَبِكَا خَلَى سَعَمْبَ

cAbīd: (Basīt)

هَبَتْ نُؤُومٍ وَلَيْسَ سَاعَةٌ اللَّهِيَّةُ مَكَأَ اٰفَنَرَّتْ بِهِذَ اللَّوَامِ إِصْبَاحٍ
قَانَهَا اللَّهُ تُلْخِانِيَ وَقَدْ عَلَيْهِ أنْ يَقُمَّيْ إِنْدَاءٍ وَإِصْبَاحٍ
كَانَ الشَّيْبُ بِذِهِنَا وَيَعْجُبُنَا فَا وَهُمْنَا وَلَا يَعْتَنَا بِسُرَاحٍ

Imru‘al-Qais: (Tawīl)

فَجَنَّتْ وَقَدْ نَصُوْنَتْ لَمْ تُبْعَاذَ لَهُ لَهُ الْبُسَّةَ المَفْضَلَ
فَقَالَتْ يَمِينُ اللَّهِ مَالِكَةُ حِيَّةٍ وَمَا إِنَّ أَرَى عَنْكَ العَمَيْةَ نَجِلَ
خَرَجَتْ بِهَا يَمِينٌ تَجُرْ وَرَاءُنَا عَلَى أَرْبَعَيْنِ دَيْلٍ مَرْضُ مُرْحَلٍ

cAbīd: (Khafīf)

وَصَحَّا باطِلٍ وأَصْبَحْتُ مُسْبَحًا لَا يَوْمًا أَسْتَكْتا أَسْتَكْتا
Imru' al-Qais: (Tawil)

ألا رحمتم بساحة اليوم أنتى كبرت والآخرين الأ لهم مثل

Abid: (Basit)

هذا، وحرب عوان قد خنوت لها حتى شبت لها نارا بإشعال

Imru' al-Qais: (Tawil)

سوت إليـها بندة ما نام أهلها سمو حباب الماء حالا على حال

Abid: (Khafif)

يغشى الطَّلَّام والظلم وبنوى بليتون المعزازة المعززل ولهناد يدخل الحباء على ممَّضومة الكشجم طفقتة كالكرزال تنطابش جيدة لها ثم مات ستتان الكيب بين الرمال ثم قالت فداد لنفسك تنسي ونيدا يملال أهلك مال

Imru' al-Qais: (Tawil)

ومالك يضاء القوارض طيلة أعوب تنسيني إذا قمت جربال كفعت النفقا يملى الوحدان فوتها بما أحمس من لينس ونسال لطيفة على الكشجم غير متفصا إذا أقتلت ممرجة غير متفال

Lightning - Abid: (Wafir)

أرَّفِ لوَضَوِي بَرَقِي فِي نَخاص تَلاَلا في مَتلاة غصاَص لَوَافِح دَلْه بَالَاء سَحَم نَتْجُ الماء مِنَ حَلل الخصاَص صاحب ذات سحَم مَكَتَّح يتوَضَّح الأَرض قَطْرَا ذا افلحاص.
and: (Sarīc)

فَيَهُوْ كَتيَبُ الْمُسْلِمِ أوْ الْمُسْتَرْضِ يَكْفِيُ اللَّادِعُ النَّسِيَّ.

Imru' al-Qais: (Tawīl)

أَعْتَى عَلَى بِرَقِ أَرْأَاهُ وَمِيِّضَ يُضَيِّقُ بَيْنَ رَيَاشِهِ وَفَرَاة

وَهَذَا نَخَرُجُ وَعَيدُ نَأَيْلُهُ وَبَرَدِيَّ النَّعْمَةِ

أَكْفَ نَخَرُجُ مِنَ الْمَيَامِيَّاتِ كَانَهَا

and: (Tawīl)

أَحَلَّ تَرَى بَرَقَا كَانَ وَمِيِّضًا كَمَثْلِ الْيَدَيْنِ فِي ذَا مَكَالِ

أُهِانُ السَّلِيمِ فِي الْذِّينَاتِ الْمَغَتَّلِ

and: (Tawīl)

وَلِلِّكُوْفِجَ الْبَحْرُ أَرْخَى سُدُوْلَهُ عَلَى بِأَنْوَاعِ الْهُمْوَةِ الْكُبْرَى

Horses - ʿAbīd: (Tawīl)

خَلْوَةُ بِرْجُلِيَّةِ كَانَ فِرْوجُهَا فِي سَبُوبِ حِينَ خَسِنَتْ فِي الأَلِ

Imru' al-Qais: (Tawīl)

وَأَنَّ أَذَا أُسْتَدْرَبَتْ سَدَّ فَرَجَةُ إِلَى فِرْوجٍ الأَرْضِ لَيِسَ بِأَعْزَرٍ
Imru' al-Qais's comparison of the speed of his horse to that of a hawk swooping down on its prey is a replica of cAbîd's last scene in his popular poem mentioned earlier: (Basît)
Watery eyes - ١ Abīd: (Basīt)

عَيْنَاتُكَ دِمَعُهَا سَرْوُبٌ كانَا نَحْتَبِيهِ شَيْبٌ
وَاهْيَاتُهَا أَوْ مَعْيَنَتُهَا دُوْتَهَا كَلِبٌ
أَوْ فَلَحُّ ما بَيْسُنَّ وَأَوْ دَمَعُهَا لَعَنَّهَا ذَلِلُتْ
أَوْ جَذَوْلُ في ظِلَالِ ظَلِلُ اَلْمَاءِ مِنْ نَحْتَبِيهِ سَكَوْبُ

Imru’al-Qais: (Basīt)

عَيْنَاتُكَ دِمَعُهَا سِجَالُ كانَا شَأْنُهَا أُوْشَالُ
أَوْ جَذَوْلُ في ظِلَالِ ظَلِلُ اَلْمَاءِ مِنْ نَحْتَبِيَّ سِجَالُ

and: (Tawīl)

دَمَعُكَ غَرْبًا جَذَوْلُ فِي مَفَاشِيْهِ كَمَرَّ أَخْلَيْجِي فِي دِفْجِ مُصَوْبٌ

The over-lapping of Abīd's and Imru’al-Qais's scenes and images is not coincidental but shows the direct influence of the older poet Abīd on the younger poet Imru’al-Qais. Since Abīd was one of the court poets of Imru’al-Qais's father, it was during his stay at court that he came into contact with Imru’al-Qais with whom he engaged in a test of poetic aptitude known as munāfara, as shown by the following poem in which Abīd begins with the first bait followed by the second bait by Imru’al-Qais followed by the third bait by Abīd then followed by the fourth bait by Imru’al-Qais, and the alternating pattern goes on until
قال عبيد:
ما حبيبة مسيحة أحبنتها بعينيما أبنتها وأخلاقها
قال أمير القيس:
تلك السعيرة تستعدي في سنتببها فأنحرجت بعد دير المكث أكداها
قال عبيد:
ما السود والبيض والأماه واحدة لا يستطيع تفن الناس إحساسا
قال أمير القيس:
تلك السحاب إذا الرحمن أرسلها روئى بها من م 줄ق الأرض أنيساما
قال عبيد:
ما مرتفعات على هول مراكنها يتقطعون طول المدى سهيرا وأمراها
قال أمير القيس:
تلك النجوم إذا حالت مطالعها سبعتها في سواد الليل أفيصا
قال عبيد:
ما القاطعات لأرض لا أنسى بها تأتي سراها وما يزجيق أنكاسا
قال أمير القيس:
تلك الرياح إذا هبت عواصفها كأنى بأذى للنار كنناها
قال عبيد:
ما الافجاعات جدارا في علالنيته استد من قلبك كمنعوه باسا
قال أمير القيس:
تلك المصاب كما يبقين من أحد بكليمين حمصى وما بثينين أكدياما
قال عبيد:
ما السائرات ميلع العطاك في مهالي لا تستكبر ولو الثلاثنها فاما
قال أمير القيس:
تلك الجياح على السُوق قد سستحوا كانوا كن غنم عدابة الرؤي أعلاها

the two poets call it a day: (Basit)
Furthermore, Ābīd's influence on Imru‘al-Qais manifests itself in the depiction of horses as well as in the structure of the polythematic qaṣīda that begins with an atlāl section followed by a nasīb and a chase section.

It seems that it was an oversight of classical critics to attribute innovative qualities to Imru‘al-Qais which established him in their eyes as the father of Jāhili poetry, when in fact, those same qualities belonged, as we have seen, to Ābīd, or had become part of the Jāhili poetic heritage before Imru‘al-Qais. Therefore, we can reasonably assume that Ābīd is the first major influence in shaping and determining the course of development of Jāhili poetry. But this does not diminish the major role played by Imru‘al-Qais in articulating the poetic tradition established by his predecessors and older contemporaries.
Page 89

2. Ibn Sallam, Tabaqat, p. 33.

Page 90

1. Ibid.
2. VI, p. 277.
5. II, pp. 479-8. It is unclear whether the Muhalhil of Asmaci is the same Muhalhil of Ibn Sallam or another Muhalhil.
6. Abu al-Faraj and other critics invariably refer to poets who flourished from the time of the first important Jahili poet Mudad b. Amr al-Jurhum to Imru' al-Qais.

Page 91

2. Ibid

Page 92

1. Ubaid, Akhbar, pp. 496-7; Abu al-Faraj, Aghani, XI,
pp. 165-6.

Page 93
2. Ibid., p. 1032.

Page 94
2. He is also known as Āmūr b. al-Ḥārith b. Mudād (Yaqūt, Buldān, IV, p. 623; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, XV, p. 11; Ibn Hishām, Sīra, I, p. 120).

Page 95

Page 96
1. Abū ʿUbaid, Muṣjam, I, p. 35.
2. Ibid., pp. 35-6.

Page 97
1. Ibid., p. 36.
2. Qutrub, Azmina, pp. 116-26; Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbar, pp. 311-5. ʿ-insertion and ḥ-jīma were used in Jāhiliyya, but
after Islam 贻 proposed to 贻 supreme because the use of 贻 forbidden. (Khalil, C'ain, III, pp. 95-6).

Page 98

1. Ibn Sa'id, Nashwat, II, p. 580-1; Tufail al-Ghanawi, Diwan, p. 17; Marzubani, Mu'jam, p. 184.
5. Abū Ṫubaid, Mu'jam, I, pp. 32, 34.
6. Ibid., p. 32.

Page 99


Page 100

1. Ibid., p. 79; Ibn Qutaiba, Marārif, p. 617; Abū Ṭubaid, Mu'jam, I, p. 20.

Page 101

1. Ibn Sallām, Tabagāt, p. 28; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi'i, I, p. 104; Abu Ḥubayd, Muṣam, I, p. 35.
3. Ibid.

Page 102

1. Ibn Sa'īd, Nashwat, I, p. 467.

Page 103

1. Abu Ḥubayd, Muṣam, I, p. 46.
2. Ibid., pp. 47-8.

Page 104

1. Ibid.
3. Ibn Sa'īd, Nashwat, I, p. 219. Tabari says Mālik was
first succeeded by his brother cAmr, then by his son Jadhima (Tarikh, I, p. 612).


Page 105

2. Ibid., p. 615.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 615-7.

Page 106

1. Ibid., pp. 613-14.
2. Tabaqat, pp. 32-3.
4. Ikhtiyarain, p. 718.
5. Nashwat, I, p. 68.
8. cAbth al-Walid, p. 100; Sahl, p. 523.
11. Ibid.

Page 107

1. Ibn Qutaiba, Shicr, I, pp. 157-8, 270.

Page 108

1. Tabarî, Tarîkh, I, p. 621.
2. Ibid., pp. 621-2; al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Ikhtiyârain, p. 724.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibn al-Kalbî, Asnâm, p. 34.

Page 109

5. Aghani, XXII, pp. 35-8; Qasa'id, pp. 63-8; Addâd, I, p. 707.
2. Ibid.

Page 113

1. Abu cUbaid, Muğjam, I, pp. 69-75.

Page 114

1. Ibn Taifūr, Qasā'id, p. 63; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, I, p. 282.

Page 115


Page 116

1. Ibid., pp. 141.
2. Ibid., pp. 141-2.

Page 117

1. Ibid., pp. 142-4.

Page 118

1. Ibid., pp. 144-5.
2. Ibid., pp. 144, 148.
3. Ibid., pp. 146-7.

Page 119

1. Ibid., p. 147.

Page 120

1. Ibid., p. 142.
2. Ibid., p. 146.
3. Ibid., pp. 143-4.

Page 121

3. Diwan, p. 216.

Page 122

1. Thačālibi, Fiqh, p. 73.

Page 123

1. Ibid., pp. 148-9.
2. Ibid.

Page 124

1. Ibid., pp. 149-50.
Page 125


Page 126


Page 127

1. Ibid., pp. 49-50.


Page 129


3. Asmā‘ī, Asmacīyyāt, p. 120; Mubbarrad, Kāmil, III, p. 60; Jāḥiz, Bayān, II, p. 361.


Page 130


3. pp. 36-7.

Page 131


Page 132


4. Ibid.


Page 133

1. Ibid., p. 152.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., pp. 152-3.


Page 134
2. Thаʿalībi, Thimar, p. 308; Cheikhho, Shuʾrāʾ, p. 165.

Page 136

2. Ibid., pp. 62-4; Marzubānī, Asḥār, pp. 183-7.

Page 137

2. Ibid., pp. 154-5; Maidānī, Majmāʿ, II, pp. 181-2; Zamakhsharī, Mustaqṣā, I, pp. 176-7; Thаʿalībi, Thimar, p. 308.

Page 138

1. Maidānī, Majmāʿ, II, pp. 181-2; Cheikhho, Shuʾrāʾ, pp. 154-5.

Page 139

2. Ibid., p. 249.
3. Ibid., pp. 250-1.
Page 140

2. It was also believed that poets had jinn seers who inspired them to write their poems (Zamakhshari, Rabii, pp. 383-4).

Page 141

1. Ibn Sallam, Tabaqat, p. 33.
2. Ibn Habib, Kunä, p. 28.

Page 142

1. Ibid., p. 390; Cheikho, ShuCarâ, pp. 163-4.

Page 143

1. Ibn cAbd Rabbih, cIgd, V, p. 220.

Page 144

2. Ibid., pp. 169-70. Abu Hilal says the same shatr was repeated over twenty times (Sina cAtain, p. 194).
Page 145

1. Ibid., p. 170.
2. Ibid., pp. 167-8.

Page 146

1. Ibid., pp. 176-7.

Page 147


Page 150

1. Qali, Amali, II, p. 130.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

Page 151

1. Idas, I, p. 191; Farra', Ma'ani, II, p. 169.

Page 152

2. Cheikho, Shu'arā', p. 173; Abū Hilāl, Āwā'il, I, pp. 75-6.
4. Ibid., p. 172.

Page 153

1. Ibid.; Abū Hilāl, Āwā'il, I, pp. 75-6.
3. Dabbi, Amthāl, p. 121.
5. Ibid., p. 163.

Page 154

1. ʿAmr b. Kulthūm, Muqallada, p. 89.
2. Abū al-Paraj, Aghānī, V, p. 46; Cheikho, Shu'arā'.
pp. 270-1.

Page 155


Page 156

1. Ibn cAbdūn, Sharh, pp. 116-7. Abū Hilāl says that the same shatr is repeated more than twenty times (Sīnā'atāin, p. 194).

Page 157

3. Ibid., p. 415.

Page 158

1. Ibn cAbdūn, Sharh, p. 117.
3. Ibid., p. 277.

Page 159

1. Ibid., p. 279.
Page 160


2. Ibid., pp. 17-20; Cheikho, Shu'ārā', pp. 205-6.

Page 161


Page 162


2. Ibid., XIX, pp. 23-4; Raqīq, Qutb, pp. 418-9; Cheikho, Shu'ārā', p. 207.

3. Abū al-Faraj, Aḥānī, XIX, p. 22; Dabbī, Aṃthaḷ, p. 24; Marzuḥānī, Muḥjam, p. 130.

Page 163


Page 164

1. Murtadhā, Aṃalī, I, pp. 240-2; Dīwān, p. 28.


5. Ibid., pp. 72-3.

Page 165

2. Ibid., pp. 11-2.

Page 166

1. Ibid., p. 12.

Page 167

3. Qasā‘id, p. 149.

Page 168

5. Maimani, *Tarā’if*, p. 3.

Page 169

p. 172; Cheikho, Shu'Carā', pp. 70-1; Maimanī, Tarā'if, pp. 9-10; al-Akhfash al-Asghar, Ikhtiyarāin, pp. 745-8.

Page 170


2. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi'r, I, p. 223.


Page 171

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 323; Batalyūsī, Hulal, pp. 18-9.

4. P. 344.

5. Ibid.


Page 172


The same word also means "light sleep" (Abū Hilāl, Muqādam, p. 156).

2. Qudāma, Naqd, pp. 38, 43.


1. See pages 165-7.
3. Ibid., pp. 291-2; Usāma, Manāzil, pp. 138-9.

Page 174

1. This verse refers to the proverb لا تَكُن كَالَّذِين يُبَحَّثونَ عَن النَّاسِ (Thaʿalibī, Khas, p. 14).

Page 175

1. Ibid., p. 293.

Page 176

1. Ibid.; Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, V, p. 46; Qālī, Dhail, p. 26; Batalyūsī, Hulal, pp. 244-6.
2. Qālī, Dhail, p. 26; Batalyūsī, Hulal, pp. 245-6.

Page 177


Page 178


This incident is mentioned in ʿAmr b. Kulthūm's
Muʿallaqa (Abū Hilāl, Awā'īl, I, p. 38).


3. Ibid., p. 184; Ghundijānī, Ṣamāʾ, p. 169; Abū ʿUbaid, Muʿjam, I, p. 86.

4. Usāma, ʿAsā, p. 244.


Page 179

1. P. 262.


Macarrī, Sāhil, pp. 598, 602.

Page 180

1. P. 599.

2. Tafsir, p. 225; Farq, p. 428.

3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghānī, VI, p. 129; Cheikho, Shuʿaraʾ, pp. 184-7; Khalīl, ʿAin, V, p. 40; Abū ʿUmar al-Zāhid, ʿAsharat, p. 137.


Page 181


2. Ibid., pp. 986-900, 992-3.

Page 182
1. Ibid.

Page 183

1. Ibid., pp. 993-4.
2. Ibid., pp. 995-9.

Page 184

1. Ibid., pp. 1050-1. The metrical structure of the first shatr is not right; the first foot needs an extra weak syllable to scan correctly. This discrepancy appears in the Mufaddaliyyat and in all the classical commentaries of the Mufaddaliyyat.
2. Ibid., pp. 1027-32.

Page 185

1. Ibid., pp. 1011-13.
2. Ibid., pp. 1052-62.

Page 186

1. P. 68.
2. Ibid.

Page 187

1. P. 182; Jurjānī, Dalā'il, p. 467; Ibn Rashīq, Qurāda, p. 181.
Page 189


Page 191

1. II, pp. 545-52; Mufaddal, Mufaddalīyyat, pp. 241-3.

Page 193

1. Abū al-Paraj, Aghānī, XVIII, pp. 139-41. The second ājz is based on a proverb (Mu'arrij, Amthāl, p. 57).
2. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi'r, I, p. 376.
3. Abū al-Paraj, Aghānī, XVIII, p. 144; Diwan, p. 54.
4. Abū al-Paraj, Aghānī, XVIII, pp. 144; Diwan, p. 54. Āmīr's use of the greeting expression أَهْلَا وَسَلَّمَا وَمَرَحْبًا proves that Abū Hilāl and Sāliḥ are incorrect in saying that the greeting expression was introduced by Saif b. Dhī Yazan (Awā'il, I, p. 117; Subul, I, p. 147).

Page 194

1. Ibid., p. 69.
2. Diwan, p. 23; Abū al-Paraj, Aghānī, XVIII, p. 142. أَنْ مَنْ refers to the proverb مَا سَأَلَهُ وَفَأَلَهُ (Dabbi, Amthāl, p. 47).
Page 195

1. Addād, p. 124; Addād, pp. 84-5; Abū al-Tayyib, Addād, I, pp. 3-4.
2. Diwan, p. 47.

Page 196

1. Ma'arrī, Sahil, p. 578.
2. Diwan, pp. 55-6.

Page 197

1. Ibid., pp. 56-8.

Page 198

1. Ibid., pp. 42-3.

Page 201

1. Diwan, p. 15.
2. Ibid., p. 63.
3. Ibid.

Page 202

1. Ibid., pp. 31-2.

Page 203

1. Ibid., p. 34.
2. Ibid., p. 37.

Page 204

1. Ibid., p. 66.
2. Ibid., pp. 66-7.
3. Ibid., p. 64; Batalyūsī, Farq, p. 585; ʿAbd al-Rahmān, Khāleq, p. 223.

Page 205

3. Ibid., p. 278.
5. Ibid., p. 31.

Page 206

1. Ibid., p. 15.
2. Ibid; Muqātil, Ashbān, p. 288.
5. Ibid., p. 374.

Page 207
1. Ibid., p. 375.
3. Asma'i, Asma'iyyat, pp. 185-6.

Page 208

1. Ibid., p. 187.
2. Ibid., pp. 188-9.

Page 209

1. 'Ukbarî, Mashûr, I, p. 131.
2. Ibid., pp. 130-1.
3. Abū al-Faraj, Aghâni, XVI, p. 375.
4. Ibid., p. 376.

Page 210

5. Abū al-Faraj, Aghâni, XXII, p. 81.

Page 211

1. Ibid., p. 82.

Page 212

1. Ibid., p. 106.

Page 213

1. Ibid., pp. 106-8. To raise one's eyebrows was regarded as a sign of haughtiness (Abu Hilal, \textit{Mu\textsuperscript{c}jam}, p. 147).
3. Ibid., p. 110.

Page 214

1. Ibid., p. 111.
2. Ibid., pp. 132-3.
3. Ibid., p. 133.

Page 215

1. Ibid., pp. 133-4.
2. Abu al-Faraj, \textit{Aghani}, XXII, pp. 87-9, 90-1.

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2. \textit{Diwan}, p. 62. The \textit{\textsuperscript{c}Ajz} is a proverb (Tha\textsuperscript{c}alib\textsuperscript{i}, \textit{Thimar}, p. 252). Mac\textsuperscript{c}arri\textsuperscript{I} assumes that the \textit{bait} was written after the prohibition of wine, but does not justify his assumption (Ghufran, p. 466).
3. Abu al-Faraj, \textit{Aghani}, XXII, p. 89; Ibn Qutaiba, \textit{Shi\textsuperscript{c}r}, I, p. 268.
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2. Ibid., p. 94.

Page 218

1. Diwan, pp. 61-2.
2. Sijistani, Mucammarun, pp. 75-6.

Page 219

1. Ibid., p. 101.
2. Ibid., p. 52.
3. Ibid., p. 105.
4. Ibid., p. 67.
5. Ibid., pp. 91-2.

Page 220

1. Ibid., pp. 97-8.
2. Ibid., p. 101.
3. Ibid., pp. 101, 103.

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1. Ibid., p. 104.
2. Ibid., p. 53.
3. Ibid.

Page 222
1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., pp. 127-8.
3. Ibid., p. 128.

Page 223
1. Ibid., pp. 128-9.
2. Ibid., pp. 89-90.

Page 224
1. Diwan, p. 34.
2. Ibid.

Page 225
1. Ibid., pp. 35-7.
2. Ibid., pp. 48-9; Ibn Qutaiba, Shi'ir, I, p. 269.

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1. Ibid., pp. 111-2.

2. Ibid., p. 43. It appears from the verse that the proverb أَشْأَمُ مِنْ عَرَبِ الْبِنَّ (Maidānī, Majma'c, II, pp. 194-7) predates Ṣābīd.


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1. Ibid., pp. 24-5.


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1. Ibn Sa'id, Nashwat, I, p. 396.

2. Ibn Taifur, Qasa'id, p. 36.

3. Arūd, pp. 40-1; Minhāj, p. 257.


5. Ibid., p. 12.

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Page 230

1. Ibid., pp. 17-20.

Page 231

1. Ibid., pp. 76-8.

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4. Ibid., p. 123.
5. Ibid., p. 53.

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1. Ibid., p. 43.
2. Ibid., p. 106.
3. Ibid., p. 49.
4. Ibid., p. 114.
5. Ibn Rashīq, ʿUmda, I, p. 49.

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1. Diwan, p. 40.
2. Diwan, p. 17.
3. Ibid., p. 29.
4. Ibid., p. 262.
5. Ibid., p. 35.

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1. Diwan, p. 68.
5. *Diwan*, p. 34.

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1. *Diwan*, p. 28.

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4. Ibid., p. 18.

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1. *Diwan*, p. 70.
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3. Diwan, p. 44.

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1. Abîd, Diwan, pp. 72-4; Tanasi, Nazm, pp. 155-6.

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1. Umda, p. 94.
Conclusion

In the previous chapters we have studied the work of over thirty poets and found that the bait and shatr structures, and virtually all the meters, like ramal, khaflf, mutaqārib and munsarîh, are as old as Jâhili poetry. We have also found that the tadmîn (enjambment) and the thematic forms like the prayer poem, epitaph poem, love poem, reflective poem, wine poem and chase poem, as well as the structural forms, like the muzdawâj, rajaz, qitâ and qasīda, were in use long before Imru' al-Qais.

The assumption that Imru' al-Qais was the inventor of the polythematic qasīda, particularly the one that begins with an atlâl section, falls apart when the work of Imru' al-Qais is compared to the work of his predecessors like Mudâd b. ʿAmr al-Jurhumî, Uhaiha b. al-Julâh, or his older contemporaries Muhâlîl, al-Rârîth b. ʿUbâd, Zuhair b. Janâb, al-Find al-Zimmânî, al-Akhnas b. Shihâb, al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, al-Muraqqish al-Asghar, ʿAmr b. Qâmil, Abu Dūʿâd al-Iyâdî and Abîd b. al-Abîs, all of whom wrote polythematic qasîdas and atlâl poems. Indeed, Imru' al-Qais does not regard himself as the originator of the qasîda that begins with an atlâl section, and he admits in more than one poem that he modelled his atlâl poems on the work of Ibn Khîdhâm: (Kâmil)
of Ibn Haram:

بِسْبَقْةِ الْخُوَلِ،ِ بِيْنَ الدُّخُولِ فِيِ وَغَلَامِ،ِ

of Ibn Humam:

بِبِكْيِ الْخَيْرِ كَمَاِ بِكْيِ إِلَىِ حَرَامِ،ِ

and of Ibn Hidham:

وَجُولًا عَلَىِ الطَّلَّالِ الْحَلِيثِ أَلْعَنُا بِبِكْيِ الْخَيْرِ كَمَاِ بِكْيِ إِلَىِ حَرَامِ،ِ

It is not clear whether the names of the four poets are variations of the same name or they belong to four different poets. Abu Ubaida says he was told by some country people from the tribe of the Banu Ja'far b. Kilab that the verse in Imru'al-Qais's Mu'allaqat: (Tawil)

كَأَنَّ عُدَاةَ الْبَيْنِ يُؤْمَنُ نَحْمُدْهَا،ِ لَدَىِ سَمَرَاتِ الدَّارِ نَافِعُ حَنْفَٰلِ

was by Ibn Khidham. Ibn al-Kalbi says that the first five verses of Imru'al-Qais's Mu'allaqat were by Ibn Haram; whereas others attribute the same five verses to Muhalhil: (Tawil)
Ibn al-Kalbi also thinks that Imru' al-Qais b. Haritha b. al-Humam b. Mu'awiyah, the Ibn Humam of Imru' al-Qais, was the inventor of the *atlāl* genre, of which only one example has so far surfaced: (Basit)

Ibn Humam, together with Zuhair b. Janab, fought Muhallil at the Battle of Khazaza. As for Ibn Hidham, Ibn Sallam says that nothing is known about him other than the reference in Imru' al-Qais's verse.

Classical critics were intrigued by the thematic forms of *atlāl* and *nasīb*, and made every attempt to trace their origins, but came to no definite conclusion. When discussing the *atlāl* and the *nasīb* conventions, Ibn Qutaiba avoids tackling the question relating to their origins, and dwells on their function in the *qasīda*. He defines the polythematic *qasīda* as having four principal themes: *atlāl*, *nasīb*, chase and praise. The *atlāl-nasīb* section is associated with the beloved, the chase with a detailed description of the landscape with its flora and fauna and of the poet's riding beast, be it a camel or a horse, and the fourth section is in praise of the poet's patron. Ibn Qutaiba thinks the purpose of introducing the
first three themes is to create a longing for the
countryside with which the poet's urban audience or
readers were familiar, before the poet moves on to
eulogise his patron. Ibn Qutaiba's view of the *qasida*
would be valid had all the *gasidas* been written in the
same mode; but not all the *gasidas* begin with an
atlāl-nasīb opening, nor do they have hunting scenes nor
panegyric sections. The word *gasīda* has four different
meanings. Firstly, it simply means a poem, irrespective
of its length. Secondly, it means a poem exceeding seven
verses according to one theory, or exceeding ten verses
according to another theory. Thirdly, it means a long
polythematic poem as detailed by Ibn Qutaiba. Fourthly,
it means a long polythematic poem with no fixed themes.
Therefore, Ibn Qutaiba's definition of the *gasīda* applies
to the Umayyad and Abbasid panegyric *gasīda* rather than
to the flexible Ḥālī polythematic *gasīda*.

In *Ta'wil Mushkil al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Qutaiba says the
reason why the poet starts with an atlāl motif is to
drive home the message that nothing is eternal except
Allāh.

On the other hand, Ibn Aibak al-Dawādārī quotes
Ma‘arrī as saying that as the Arabs were merchants and
were sometimes away from home, they always remembered
nostalgically their families, their homes and the atlāl
that punctuated the landscape of the Arabian Peninsula, where they stopped to rest during their journeys. For this reason the old name of the month of Jumād al-Ākhira was حنين.

It is interesting to note that the poets of the Imru al-Qais and post-Imru al-Qais periods did not extend the scope of the atlāl imagery of their predecessors as they had done with the nasīb imagery, but they just reproduced the inherited imagery.

The earliest reference to a town once inhabited by people and now the haunt of gazelles is in a two-line poem by Mudād b. ʿAmr al-Jurhumī: (Tawīl)

\[
\text{الله يوفي نذره كل سرم}
\text{سكنا بها قبل الظلمة ورالة}
\]

As we discussed earlier the Khuzāʾīs settled in Mecca after they had banished the Jurhumīs. It would appear from Mudād's poem that he was following an atlāl convention to express sadness for the loss of Mecca.

The second surviving atlāl prelude consists of two verses by Uhaiha b. al-Julāh, in which he mentions the name of Suʿād and of his wife Salmā: (Kharīf)
Abū al-Faraj says that Uhaiha wrote the poem after Salmā escaped from Uhaiha's castle in order to warn her people that her husband was planning to attack them. As the poem is about the disappearance and betrayal of Salmā, there is no reason why the name of Suqād should be mentioned alongside Salmā's in the poem, unless she was an old flame Uhaiha recalls in order to help him forget his treacherous wife. It is possible that Uhaiha, like Khuzaima b. Nahd before him, might have met Suqād in the country in the Spring or the Autumn, when the town people in the Arabian Peninsula used to, and still do, spend some time in the countryside and return to their town homes at the end of each season, leaving behind traces of their seasonal sojourn. There is also the possibility that the poet might have revisited the same spot which rekindled memories of the happy season.

In the case of Suqād and Salmā it is likely that after recovering from the shock of his wife's betrayal, which reduced his world to ruins, Uhaiha was trying to compare the contrasting experiences he had with the two women. In the absence of the full text of Uhaiha's poem, which according to Abū al-Faraj is a long poem, it is pointless to indulge in labyrinthine conjectures.
The case that the atlāl was used merely as a poetic device and thought of as good an opening as any is further endorsed by a poem of al-Muraqqish al-Asghar, which begins with the description of the deserted dwellings of his lover Hind bint ālAjīlān who was the maid of princess Fatīma bint al-Mundhir, the daughter of the king of Hīra: (Bāsīt)

لايسَتْ عَجِلَانَ بَالجَوْرُ رَسُومُ، َِّمِ لِمَ بَشَعَمنَّ وَالعَهِدُ قُلْبِيَمُ
لايسَتْ عَجِلَانَ إِذْ نَحْنُ، َِّمِ وَأَيُّ حَالِ مِنَ الدُّهَرِ تُدُومُ
[أَمِينُ بِسَمِّي رَسُومُهَا عِينَكَ مِنْ رَسُومُهَا بِسَجْرُومُ]
أَصَبْحَتْ فِنِّفَارًا وَقَدْ كَانَ بَا في سَالِكِ الدُّهَرِ أَرَابُ الْهُجُومُ
بَادَوا وأَصَبْحَتْ مِنْ بَعْضِهِمُ أَحْيَنِي خَالِدًا وَلَا أَرِيَمُ

As we have pointed out earlier, Hind's home was next to the palace of Fatīma, and it is inconceivable that the house and the palace could have been abandoned and left to crumble soon after al-Muraqqish al-Asghar's short-lived love affair with both the princess and her maid, unless they were destroyed by war or natural disaster like an earthquake. The poem makes no reference to the house or the palace having been demolished by war or natural disaster. Therefore, the employment of the atlāl prelude in this case is no more than a convenient device to evoke an atmosphere of nostalgia before moving on to other themes.
The same can be said of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar's poem which begins with a mention of the atlāl of the dwellings of his love Asmā'\(^1\) (Tawīl)

The first verse, if translated, reads: 'Do you remember? I was near her, but she left us. I have seen her in thehabitation of Asmā', but now I fear her beautiful harem is deserted. Yet the birds have returned to it.'

We have seen from Muraqqish's life that Asmā' was his cousin and both of them lived in the same neighbourhood before the marriage of Asmā' to a Murādī who took her with him to his home in Najrān. After her departure the people of Asmā' and of Muraqqish did not leave their homeground, nor were their abodes reduced to atlāl, yet Muraqqish talks of the deserted dwellings of Asmā' as being inhabited by birds. Moreover, Muraqqish died in the arms of Asmā'. Muraqqish's description of the atlāl of the dwellings of Asmā' is the product of the poet's imagination rather than a reflection on a lived experience. al-Muraqqish al-Akbar, like al-Muraqqish al-Asghar, uses the atlāl purely as a literary device current in his day.

Abū Du'ād al-Iyādī wrote three poems with atlāl preludes, but only the atlāl opening lines have survived.
The first of the *atlāl* openings is: *(Wafir)*

أين رَنَّمَ نَعْقِي أو رَمَى
وَخَمِّلَ كَالْحَمَامَاتِ الْفَرَايَ
أطَعَّتْكَ الْمَخْتَوْنَ فَقَلَتَ ضَبًا
كَانَ وَكَفَّتْهَا رَأْيِيَّةَ الْمَرَاد
وَلَهُ يَشْيَّاقُ سُنْكَلُ فِي بِنَازِر
عَفَّتُهَا الْمَرْبِيحُ وَالْفَلْحُ الْأَرْوَادِ
ذَكَرْتَ بِهَا سَعَادَيْنَ فَمُعْتَجَبَ جَيْلًا
عَلَى رَسُومٍ تَنْسَبُّ عَنْ سُحَاد

The second *atlāl* opening is: *(Ramal)*

فَدُعْٓبَ الْخَانُ فَهَرَّا لمْ يُخْلَلْ
بَيْنَ أَجَدَادِ خَفَافٍ فَالْخَلَلْ
وَفَنا رَنَمْ وَأَضْحَى كَالْجَلَلْ
فُطَّسَ الْنَّهَى الأَلْلِ كَانَوا بِهَا
جَبَّاهُ الْشَّوْقِ الَّذِي كَانَ صَحَّا
جَبَّاهُ الْيَوْمِ عَلَى ذَلِكَ الْجَلَل

And the third *atlāl* opening, which Abū al-Paraj says was set to music by several composers, is: *(Khafīf)*

بَعْدَ يَدْ يَلِبِّكَ الْمَهْتَاجَ
فَعَلَا رَنَمْ سَتَزَلُّ بالسَّبَاحَ
غَيْبَهُ الْمُسْلَمَ وَطُحْلُ مَلِكَ
دَائِمَ السوْدَيْنِ ذِى أَحَاضِبٍ دَاجَ

Abū Du‘ād’s general treatment of the *atlāl* theme indicates that the *atlāl* theme was employed as a poetic convention.

Some of al-Hārith b. ʿUbād’s poems start with an *atlāl* prelude followed by a martial theme: *(Khafīf)*

جَلْبَ عَرْقَتَ الْمَدَى رَنَمْ مَحْليًا
أَرَّيَ بَيْنَ أَهْلِهِ يُتْجَهُوَْلا
The switch from the **atlal** section to the next theme is abrupt, which suggests that the **atlal** prelude is used simply as an opening convention.
One of Muhalhil's poems starts with an atlāl opening, then moves on unexpectedly to another theme like the poems of al-Ḥārith b. ʿUbād that have an atlāl prelude: (Khafīf)

In another poem Muhalhil includes the following two atlāl verses: (Khafīf)

The fact that Muhalhil orders his eyes not to weep over the atlāl because of the deep sense of anger he felt over the murder of his brother Kulaib proves the currency of the atlāl convention.

The ruins are sometimes described as being those of a deserted town or village where the poet stopped over for the night or where he had love affairs with the local girls or as being those of the poet's once prosperous
town which had been destroyed by war, as can be deduced from Abīd b. al-Abras's *atlāl* poem: *(Tawîl)*

The words *atlâl* and *rab* are usually translated as "vanishing traces of tents" and "desolate encampment", yet the description of the *atlâl* and *rab* indicate that they are the remains of *mâazîl* (houses), *dîar* (houses, palaces, castles), *yîwot* (houses, tents) or *râb* (bowers, tents) of a once thriving town or village. If the *atlâl* and *rab* had been abandoned campsites of nomads, there would have been no traces left since the nomads would have obviously taken the tents and all their belongings with them on their departure. Therefore, the way of seeing the *atlâl* and *rab* and the manner in which they are delineated re-enforce the urban background of the poets who lived before Imrū al-Qais.

In the hunting scene of the *qasîda* the poet makes no reference to nomads living in the *bâdiya* nor to a nomadic way of life; he simply paints a vivid, idealistic
and romanticised picture of his riding beast and of the landscape with which he had grown familiar through his extensive travels across the length and breath of the Arabian Peninsula in search of adventure or fortune.

It was the custom of the Jāhili inhabitants of towns bordering on the ḍādiya to go hunting during the season as illustrated in Abū Du‘ād’s poem: (Mutagārib)

And this custom persists to this day in the Arabian Peninsula. In no Jāhili gasīda do the poets hint that the hunt was undertaken for survival purposes; the urban people
hunted for sport, whereas the nomads hunted for survival.

One of the areas where the classical critics held different opinions is the *tadmin*. Some critics thought that the use of the *tadmin* shows technical weakness on the part of the poet; while others like Nasr Allah b. al-Athīr believed that the *tadmin* is an essential device which helps sustain the flow of ideas in a poem or a prose text. Nothing is known about the Jāhili poets' views on the *tadmin*, but what is certain is that there is scarcely a Jāhili poem which is devoid of *tadmin*. Indeed, when Tibrīzī wanted to give an example of *tadmin* he chose an extract from a poem by the earliest known Jāhili poet Mudād b. Amr al-Jurhumī: *(Tawīl)*

وقالت، والدمُّ سَكَبٌ، مبادِرٌ
وقد شَرَقَتَ بالماء منها المحاجر
وقد أَبَصَرَتْ جَانَ، من بعدها أنيبها
بنا، وهي يبدَءُ موجباتاً، دوازُرٌ:
كأن لم يكن بين الحجرون إلى الصفا
أَنيَسُ، ولم يَسَرَ بِسَحَة سامر
فقلت لها، والقلب متي سُكانتها
يَقَلْبُ بين الجوانح طائرٌ:
بَلَى، خَنُ كَنَا أَهلِهَا، فأوالدنا
عُروقَ اللِّيالي، والجُنُودُ العوائرُ
The *tadmin* and the *husn al-takhallus* devices are key factors in maintaining the unity of the Jahili qasida.

It appears from our study of the classical Arab sources that the poetry of the Jahiliyya of Lost Civilisations, Ancient Jahiliyya and the pre-Imru‘al-Qais period of the Late Jahiliyya, was the product of an urban society, and that virtually all the Jahili poetic conventions were already established before Imru‘al-Qais, and that Imru‘al-Qais was following a well-trodden path.
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1. Ibn Qutaiba, Shicr, I, p. 128.

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2. Ibn Qutaiba, ShiCr, p. 128.

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1. Ibn Qutaiba, ShiCr, I, p. 128; Ḩamīdī, Mu'talaf, pp. 7-8.
2. Ḩamīdī, Mu'talaf, p. 7.

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1. ShiCr, I, pp. 74-5.

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1. Ibid., p. 85.
2. Ibn Ṣābdūn, Sharh, p. 81.
3. See pages 60-1.

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1. Ibid., pp. 49-51.

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2. See pages 180-3.

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1. Usama, Manāzil, p. 185.
2. Ibid., pp. 281-2.

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1. Ibid., p. 278.

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1. Ibid., pp. 273-4.
2. Ibid., p. 178.
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4. Iskafi, Mabadi', pp. 30-35; Ibn Manzur, Lisan, VIII, p. 102. Tibrizi says * refers only to arboreal houses (Sharh, II, p. 1019). Lyall mistranslates * as "tent traces", "resting places" and "camping places" (The Mufaddaliyyat, II, p. 171, verses 1 and 3, p. 181, verse 1; cAmr b. Qam'a, Diwan, p. 34, verse 1, p. 52, verse 4; The Diwans Of cAbid Ibn al-Abras And cAmir Ibn al-Tufail, p. 24, verse 1).

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1. Asma'î, Asma'îyyat, pp. 190-1.

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Laqlīt b. Yaʿmur al-Iyādī

The original poem is on page 110. The following translation is from M. A. Muʿid Khan, Diwan of Laqlīt Ibn Yaʿmur al-Iyādī, Beirut, 1971, p. 45.

Greetings from Laqlīt through this letter, to those of the tribe of Iyād who dwell in the land between the rivers.

The Lion Kisra has come to you; may not your occupation with the grazing of goats cause you to ignore his approach.

**Seventy** thousand armed men have come, pressing forward their hosts like locusts.

With a swelling heart we have come to you, as this may be the time of your destruction like that of the tribes of Ād.
The original poem is on pages 110-113. The following translation is from Diwan of Lagīt Ibn Ya'mūr al-Iyāḍī, pp. 45-49.

O abode of 'Amra in the sand-dunes, the place where she used to dwell, to see it derelict has excited my sorrows (and filled me with) anguish and pain.

At the turn of the valley a young damsel has captured my heart; and carried it with her to the chapel of Dhāt al-'Adhba.

She is of fastidious nature, does not adhere to her purpose: neither frustration of hopes, nor the attainment of ambition are to be expected of her.

Her dream comes to me wherever my saddles are placed (i.e. wherever I am encamped). It keeps me awake in spite of my being afar off.

When their baggage-train moves toward the place of Salutaha, they do not look to what is being followed by them; but I with my own eyes have seen them marching forward.

Sometimes I see them going, and sometimes I am unable to see them, as they shine for a while, and then disappear in the mirage.

O you who are driving your camel in haste towards the land between the rivers in search of grass and water.

Convey to the tribe of Iyād my message, and to their leaders in particular; I have a word to tell them, of the meaning of which there can be no doubt, provided I am not disobeyed.

How sad it is that you are disunited and your affairs in confusion, while others are united and well-organised.

They are nobles of Persia, sons of kings, whose armies look down upon mountains and clouds.
They are marching speedily towards you, gathering weapons and deadly poisons for you.

Everyday they are grinding their spears and lances for you without taking rest, while you who are neglectful are drowned in slumber.

I am amazed to see you drowned in the sleep of negligence, although you know that the shooting star of war has appeared.

Beginning from your borders, grave danger is gradually encircling you.

O my people do not trust Kisra and the army he has gathered, where (the safety of) your womenfolk is concerned, if you have regard for their honour.

Protect your horses, clean your swords, and prepare arrows and strings for your bows.

Intensify the vigilance of your spies in the rear of the advancing troops, and be alert until the invading cavalry have retreated.

Spend your ancestral wealth in the defence of your soul's honour, and in guarding your women-folk, and do not perish out of fear and fright.

May God bless you. Hand over your affairs to one who is brave and experienced in matters of war,
Ye two comrades of mine, stay awhile, hurry not on so fast: in sooth the departure [which is at hand] is a guarantee that ye will not be blamed.

And perchance your delaying may send on ahead some evil thing [so that it will not affect us]: or it may be that, if ye hurry away, ye may miss some good that is coming to you.

* * * * * * * * *

O camel-rider, whoever thou mayst be, bear this message, if thou lightest on them, to Anas son of Sa'd, and Ḥarmalah:

'Great will be the virtue of you twain and your father, if the man of Ghufailah escapes being slain!'

Who shall tell my people how that Muraqqish has become to his companions a troublesome burden?

The beasts of prey have bitten off his nose, and have left him in the mountains with the thick-maned [male hyæna] and his mate waiting for him to die,

As though in his mangled limbs the beasts had come down to a waterspring—since the whole of the kin of Dubai'ah are far away.
The original poem is on pages 185-186. The following translation is from *The Mufaddaliyāt*, II, pp. 181-182.

Are the abodes deaf, that they give no answer? Yet, if a tent-trace had the gift of speech, much could it tell.

The place is desolate, and the remnants of habitation like the tracery which a pen draws on the surface of a piece of leather.

'Tis the home of Asmā, who has smitten my heart with love-sickness, and from mine eyes falls a stream of tears.

Void is it now: its plants are moist and rank, flowering freely its many-coloured herbs, growing close and thick.

Nay, but is not thy grief due to the departing litters that started in the morning, looking as though they were date-palms of Malham?

About them floated odours of musk: the faces [of those who sat in them] were like bright gold, and the tips of their fingers were tinged pink as it were with 'anam.

Not all the chances of fortune brought to my heart such a pang as the death of my comrade who was left lying in Taghlam.

O Tha'labah, smiter of helmet-crests with the sword, leader of the kin when ways were dark around!

Go then! may thine uncle's son be a sacrifice for thee! Nought abides for ever but Shābah and Adam.

If any living thing could escape its fated day, then would escape the light-limbed mountain goat, banded with white streaks on its fore-legs,

Among the lofty peaks of 'Amayah, or where Khiyam lifts it up just short of the heaven.

Below it are the eggs of the white vulture, and above it the tall-shouldered mountain-summit, soaring high.

It roams thereupon wheresoever it will; and if Destiny gave it but a respite, it might live until it grew decrepit:

But the guile of changeful Fortune wrought its destruction, so that it slipped from the mountain ledges, and was dashed to pieces.

No cause for grief is it to a man that he has missed length of days: there in the darkness before him is what he knows!

The sire perishes and the son remains behind—every one born of a father must one day be orphaned;

And mothers get gain from their pains [of travail and tendance]—then comes the time when the barren is in as good a case as they.
Ah, be thou safe from harm! No parting for me to-day, Fatimah, nor evermore, so long as the tie of thy love endures!

The daughter of the Bakrite shot thee [with an arrow] from [a bow made of] the top branch of a lote-tree, while [our camels,] with eyes sunken [from long travel, sped by] with us [so swiftly that] they seemed to be ostriches [hurrying along].

She showed herself to us on the day when the tribe set forth, with [her long hair] hanging down, and [her mouth] sweet with its rows of teeth set not too closely together,

Which a cloud-mass full of rain, lighted-up by the sun, has watered well from streaming white clouds [below the dark masses above].

In Dhat ad-Dal she showed thee wrists of hers, and a cheek smooth and long, and bright like a silver mirror, soft.

His heart is cured of its intoxication with her, notwithstanding that when there comes into it a recollection of her, the earth swims about him as he stands.

Look forth, O friend: seest thou aught of ladies camel-borne, that go forth swiftly on their way, seated in litters broad?

They moved away from the wide strath of al-Warl'ah after that the day had risen high, and they crossed the detached strips of sand.

They have decked themselves out with rubies, and gold beads between, and large balls of molten gold, and onyx from Dhafer, and pearls two and two.

They took their way among the villages, and crossed the bend of the valley, their camels stepping out swiftly; and they left behind them Qaww, and passed forth along the mountain paths.

Ah, how lovely is the face whose brightness she shows us, and the tresses of hair long as cables, coal-black!
As for me, I feel shame before little Fātimah when I am hungry and lean, and shame before her also when I eat;

And I feel shame before thee, though the wide desert be between us, lest thou meet a brother of mine who has severed himself from us [and may tell of my evil qualities].

And verily I, though my young camel be spent, batter the ground with it, and with myself, O Fātimah, with the batterings [of recklessness].

[O Fātimah, verily love grows in spite of [the Beloved’s] hate, and imposes on the noble soul difficulties to be overcome.]

Hail to thee! mayst thou have a mild and genial constellation, O Fātimah, even though the turning of thy way be not united with mine!

Good greetings to thee! and know thou that my need is of thee: so return to me somewhat of thy favour, O Fātimah.

O Fātimah, if all other women were in one land, and thou in another, I would follow after thee, distraught.

When the Beloved one wills, she cuts the bond that binds her to her lover, and is wroth with him without a cause, casting him off without appeal.

And whoso lights on good, men praise his enterprise, and whoso goes astray, shall not lack one to blame his error:

Seest thou not that a man will cut off his hand, and take upon himself the severest tasks, from fear of the blame of his friends?

Is it by reason of a dream that thou hast become one that writes upon the ground in extremity of grief? And sometimes dreams visit one who is asleep: [may not this be one?]

* * * * * * * * *

Janāb swore an oath, and thou didst obey him: so turn thy blame upon thyself, if thou must have some one to revile;

[And he is as though he were wearing the crown of the House of Muḥarriq, for that he has wronged his cousin, and come off safe himself.]
The original poem is on pages 191-192. The following translation is from *The Mufaddaliyyāt*, II, 186-187.

Is it for a home now void that the tears stream forth from thine eyes—an abode whence its people have passed in the morning and journeyed away?
The flat-nosed gazelles therein lead about their younglings to feed, and the fawns in the open valley are bay and bright red in hue.
Was it of Bint ‘Ājlān that the shade cast itself our way by night, while my saddle lay by, where we slept a little removed?
And when I started awake at the phantom, and terror grew, lo! 'twas but my saddle, nought else, and the country was white and bare.

Nay, but 'twas a visitor able to wake from his sleep a man, and pierce him again with anguish that rends his heart in twain.
At each of our nightly halts she comes to trouble our rest—ah! would that she stayed not only by night but when dawns the day!

She turned and departed, leaving behind her a gnawing pain, and sore was my torment when her eyes seemed to gush with tears.
Not wine of the white grape, fragrant as musk [when the jar is broached], and set on the strainer to clear, and ladled from cup to cup—
A captive it dwelt in the jar for twenty revolving years, above it a seal of clay, exposed to the wind and sun,
Imprisoned by Jews who brought it from Gōlān in lands afar, and offered for sale by a vintner who knew well to follow gain—
Is sweeter than is her mouth when night brings me near to her—nay, sweeter her lips than the wine, and fuller of pure delight.

At dawn I went forth on a steed clean-skinned, as a palm-branch lean:
I trained him until his flesh was worn down and fined away:
His cheeks long, perfect in shape, none finds in him aught to blame; a bay of a bright red tinge, one leg ringed, a star on brow:
A proud man I ride on his back to where sit the chiefs in moot.
I ponder within which course to take with the most of gain:
Pursued, he outstrips all speed: pursuer, he wins with ease:
he knows how to thread all straits, and gain for his master spoil.
Behold how he gallops, gay, on his back a full-armed knight:
when all of the troop are spent, he prances from side to side.
On him have I ridden, one of raiders in far-stretched line, who meet in the folk they raid a spear-play to match their own.
He bounds like a young gazelle that springs from the covert, tall and head-high he answers when thou callest on him for speed:
He gushes, as forth spouts fast the flow of a pent-up fount beneath in the sand, where gravel and bushes lay bare the spring.
The original poem is on page 195. The following translation is from Charles Lyall, *The Poems of Amr Son of Qami'a*, CUP, 1919, p. 27.

Alas my soul for Youth that's gone!
no light thing lost I when he fled.
Time was I dwelt in joy of prime,
hurling back wrong, casting down the wild goats,
Trailing my skirts and robes of price
to the nearest tavern, shaking forth my locks.
Nay, envy not a man that folk
say 'Age has made him a Judge of men':
Though he love life and live long safe,
long living leaves its print on his face.

Some men there be that are their people's life,
and some bear a stain like a spot of grease.
The original poem is on page 195. The following translation is from *The Poems of Amr Son of Qam' a*, p. 48.

Many the man whose senses have led him to folly, in that he says on a day 'Verily 'Amr has become a drunkard!'
If I be a drinker of much wine, at least I drink at my own cost and not as a spunger upon others, and the camel is not safe from my slaughtering sword.
The wine-skin is a kingdom to him who possesses it, and the kingdom therein, though small, how great it is!
Therein is the morning draught, which makes of me a lion of 'Ifirrin, with great wealth mine—
At the beginning of the night a glorious warrior, at the end of the night a male hyæna unable to keep his legs.
God curse thee for a drink! would that the resolute man could keep himself away from thee!
Umamah is gone far from thee, and there is left for thee only to ask after her the encampments where she dwelt, and ever-growing remoteness from her has taken the place to thee of union;
A distant destination has carried her far away, bringing alienation in exchange to those who offered sincere affection.
The leader of the camp gave the call for departure: then quickly all betook themselves to making ready for the start;

[The handmaids] brought near all the male camels with lofty humps, broad in the sides, that devour [in their speed] the way that lies before them:
Whensoever [the other camels] clothed themselves with the unknown [i.e., entered upon travel in a land of which they did not know the way-marks], and slackened down, after going at a quick pace (rasīm), to a lesser speed (nīqāl),
There guided them in the right path one having his loins girt up, overtaking them with a male camel strong in the back, of Arhab's breed, great in size.
Thou wouldst think the burdens of the tribe [i.e., the litters of the ladies and the baggage], when in the mirage [the camels] travelled along in a string together, were tall palm-trees
Drinking up water [with their roots] in the midst of a well-filled pool that has overflowed, so that it has become broad and long.
[The handmaids] had clad their litters with curtains which hung down loosely over them,
And in them were black-eyed ladies like gazelles that reach out to crop the hanging branches in the upper parts of the valley of as-Salīl.
The train put Qudais and the outskirts thereof to their right, and the gravelly plain of Ra'a'm to their left;
Yearningly they gazed on the cloud-mass, as they watched it letting loose its buckets-full of rain on al-Furudāt:
And when they came down to the place where the Spring rain had fallen, they exchanged their seats in the camel-litters for curtained canopies.

Yea, many the waterless desert in which the mirage plays, wherein those that journey by night fear to lose their way,
Have I traversed with a mind between hope and fear, what time the gazelles creep into their refuges for shade,
Mounted on a spare she-camel, [hard] like the boulder in a stream-bed with little water left in it, swift as a wild-ass, that makes no complaint of weariness;
Towards the Son of ash-Shaqiqah have I directed her course, fearing punish­ment, yet hoping for a boon—
Towards the Son of ash-Shaqiqah, the best of kings, and the most faithful of them when he makes covenants.
Art thou not the kindest of them to those under thy protection, and the most bountiful of them when they contend in respect of fame for bounty?
May my folk be thy sacrifice! [I come.] petitioning the return of thy favour.
Thou wast angry, and didst think true the word that was said about me;
An enemy came to thee, and thou didst believe him: why didst thou not wait (—mayst thou be rightly guided!—) till an enquiry was made?
I never said that of which they falsely accused me, nor did I ever apprehend that it would be said of me.
If that was true which they told thee of me, then may not my right hand join to my left!
Look closely into my case and follow after the truth: for verily I am a man who fears to be punished without having committed any crime.
* * * * * * * * *
Yea, many the day of battle, when the souls rise [to the throats of men through fear], wherein thou dost assail with thy spear-thrusts the flanks of the [enemy's] infantry,
Hast thou been present at, and hast extinguished the fires of its fury, and brought back therefrom the thirsty camels fully satisfied with their drinking.
And many the clamorous host, to behold which cures sore eyes, like the night clothed in shadows [from its masses of men],
When the flashing of the helmets on the heads of the warriors therein is like brilliant lamps that put out all lesser flames,
Hast thou brought upon thy foes, notwithstanding their distance, in a morning attack: to some thou bringest clothing [compared to plumage], and others thou strippest of their plumes.
Umāmah is gone far from thee, and there is left for thee only to ask after her
the place where she dwelt, and the vision of her that comes when thou
dreamest—

Its appointed time is when night closes in, and as soon as dawn breaks it
refuses to stay any longer.

Yea, this is what she gives in exchange for my love of her; and if she were
here she would not grant me a single boon.

Sooth, fear seized my heart when they proclaimed their purpose, and men
said, ‘Our comrades are preparing for an early departure’;

And the two captains of the caravan hurried her swiftly away at earliest
dawn, after stirring up the male camels to rise from the place where they
couched—

Camels full-grown, driven along in line with their litters upon them, with new
foot-coverings cut for them after their old ones worn out.

And when they had passed on, my tears sprang forth, and poured in buckets
after buckets in longing for her.

Thou mightest have seen them, when the two captains drove the train on
through the hollow plain, hastening along at a swift pace;

They have been given in exchange for shade exposure to the sun, and in
place of curtained canopies have had to put up with camel litters.

Among them is Khaulah, the pearl of women, fairest in beauty among all
mankind;

She has the full black eyes of an antelope in a meadow, where in the midst
of the greenery it reaches out to bite the branches of a tall arṭā-bush.

She passes the tooth-stick over a cool row of teeth that might be thought to
be the white thorns of the sayāl, but they are not that;

After she has slept but a little they are as though they had been steeped in
strong wine, and she gives thee to drink therewith cool sweet water.

The locks that hang from her head are as long as cables with others joined
on to them.

A face she has which dazzles those who gaze upon it, so that they fancy them-
selves to be gazing upon the new moon.

Withal she has hips round like a heap of moist sand, and a hand with soft
white fingers deft and skilful.

At night from love of her I was like nothing so much as the thong of a sandal
under her feet—no, not even the worth of that!

How then dost thou sever the tie that binds thee in sincerity to a man of
glorious fame, who desires not to withdraw from it?

He desired a favour, and thou didst lead him to hope, and that which thou
didst promise concerning it proved to be false:
A warrior who builds up glory, a man like a sword-blade which the armourer
by long polishing has made bright and spotless;
He leads a band of warriors to meet another like itself, and he springs down
to fight afoot when they desire foot-fighting.
Thou mightest compare their cavalry in the onset, when the mill of Death
whirls, to she-camels barren for a year.
The warriors stride on foot towards the mail-clad foemen, stretched out like
the necks of camels mixed drab and red in colour that push on their
foals.
And they clothe their keen blades with the heads of the men they meet, and
the horsemen of our side shield our footmen from harm.
That which has passed over us [of victories and stubborn fighting] makes it
impossible for me to accept injurious treatment, and in contentions we are
the superiors when it comes to the struggle,
By means of a speech before which those who attempt to break us in are
abased, and we come out superior to them when they essay the contest
for superiority.
And many the poet of a tribe filled with hatred against us have I vanquished,
and his people were put to shame and abased;
And many the noon-tide, hot as blazing fire, have I journeyed through, what
time the black locust sought his midday rest;
And many the night I have travelled, with no waymark to help me, through
its thick darkness, wherein the wayfarers fear to light on perdition.
The original poem is on pages 211-212. The following translation is from Charles Lyall, The Diwāns of Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḥarrān and Ṣāmīr ibn al-Tufail, Luzac, 1913, p. 61.

Weep, 0 mine eye, for Asad's sons!
Sunk are they in anguish of heart.
Once had they tents of leather red,
vast herds of camels, and plenteous wine,
And short-haired steeds of noble race,
and spears well straightened in the clip.
Give pause, 0 King! avoid the curse!
stay! in thy sentence ruin falls.
in every valley from Yathrib's town,
and from the Castles to far Yamāmah,
Sounds wailing of captives, or the shriek
of fire-scathed wretch, or the death-bird's hooting.
Najd hast thou barred to them, and now
in fear they dwell in low Tiḥāmah;
Trembling the sons of Asad crouch,
as the dove trembles o'er her eggs:
A poor nest built she of two twigs
of nasham⁴ and of panic-grass.
If thou leave them, it is thy grace;
and if thou slay them, it is no wrong:
Thou art the Lord and Master, thou,
and they thy slaves till the Resurrection;
Submissive under thy scourge are they
as a young dun camel under the nose-ring.
The original poem is on page 212. The following translation is from The Diwāns of Ḥabīd Ibn al-Abras and Ḥāmir Ibn al-Tufail, pp. 45-46.

Of a truth the morrow shall bring with it its happenings, and the morning light and the eventide are their time of tryst; And mankind revile their leader when he has missed the way to attain success: but he that walks straight is not blamed. And a man is ever the prey of Fate — unawares it comes and bears him down. But to Mahdad how shall we say farewell? To the Lord Sharāhil, great in bounty to all who come, like palms fruit-laden, with runnels flowing about their stems; Euphrates-like he pours his gifts, and the burden bears like mountain-masses, unfailing ever his generous hand.